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HISTORY

Documentary research done concurrently with the archaeological excavation confirmed that there was a far greater historical rationale for commemorating Fort McIntosh than had been realized when the project began. Here was a fort, ignored for many years by most historians, but which for ten years played its role in the American Revolution and the bloody Indian wars of the decade which followed. It was the site of a treaty which led to the legislation that opened the Northwest to settlement, and the first permanent base of what was to be the Army of the United States.

The Army's survival was important for more reasons than that it gave Fort McIntosh the distinction of being its first permanent base. That there was an army at all was a historic landmark event, for the creation of a peacetime standing army broke with the American tradition of dependence upon the militia - and it was only after bitter Congressional debate that the regular army was established. Once the army was in place (it happened to be here) it never was possible for foes in Congress to disband it. Our first "regulars" were here to stay.

While this is the story of an archaeological search and site restoration, it deserves a wider audience because the men involved were not ordinary men, even in their time. They took part in events which left marks on the pages of our

history which would have surprised even those who played the leading roles.

In the spring of 1778, the Continental Army had come out of its long winter at Valley Forge; recruits were coming in; the British had abandoned Philadelphia, and the news of the French Alliance had reached General Washington. Now Congress could heed the pleas of settlers across the Alleghenies who were asking for help against Indian raids instigated by the British at Detroit.

An attempt by the militia to control the Indians had been a fiasco, so Congress ordered Washington to detach two Continental regiments, and authorized the formation of two more at Fort Pitt. It requested Virginia to provide 1,500 militia, and North Carolina to furnish a troop of dragoons. It also appropriated \$932,000 to cover the costs of an expedition against Detroit, which was to leave Fort Pitt no later than September 1, 1778.

Washington ordered the 8th Pennsylvania and the 13th Virginia back to Fort Pitt and placed Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh, then commanding the North Carolina Brigade at Valley Forge, in command.

The 8th had logistical problems and was detoured to assist settlers fleeing Indian and Tory raids in the Susquehanna Valley, so it did not arrive at Fort Pitt until September 6. In the interim Virginia voted not to support the expedition but agreed to supply 800 militia for a harassing campaign against Indian towns in Ohio.

When McIntosh arrived at Fort Pitt he found neither men, supplies, nor packhorses, and so decided to prepare for a 1779 campaign by building a chain of fortified bases between the Ohio and Detroit. Fort McIntosh was to be the first of these and the jumping off point for the harassing campaign. It was a pivotal decision, for when the troops began to build this first fort north of the Ohio, they were abrogating a series of treaties which had promised that the Ohio River would forever be the boundary between whites and Indians.

His available troops included fewer than 350 men of the 8th Pennsylvania out of the 680 who had left Hannastown in January 1777, about the same number of the 13th Virginia, two independent companies, a handful of dragoons and, eventually, the 800 militia. The latter trickled in, and lacking men, food, forage and packhorses, McIntosh could not begin his march until the beef cattle arrived on November 3. Late that day, leaving two companies of the 13th under Lt. Col. Richard Campbell to complete the building of Fort McIntosh, he began the march up the Tuscarawas Trail with 500 Continentals and 800 militia, plus 500 packhorses and 600 beef cattle.

The long column made good time that first day arriving at the site of the present Seven Oaks Country Club that night, but it was the last day of any real progress. Lack of forage, reluctant militia, insubordinate officers and bad weather hampered the march and it was not until November 19 that McIntosh reached the Tuscarawas River, south of present-day Canton, Ohio and began to build his second fortified base, Fort Laurens. This he garrisoned with 175 men of the

13th Virginia and then returned to Fort McIntosh in late December. When Fort Laurens was later besieged by Indians, McIntosh led a column of Continentals and militia to its relief in April of 1779, before he was transferred to the Southern Theater.

During the remainder of the Revolution, Fort McIntosh was garrisoned by companies of the 13th Virginia, the 8th Pennsylvania and the Maryland Corps. The commanders of the Western Department had to cover a wide frontier with small garrisons of the Continentals, not only at Fort Pitt and Fort McIntosh, but at Forts Hand on the Kiskiminetas, Henry at Wheeling, Laurens, Randolph at the mouth of the Kanawha, plus two small posts at Reardon's Bottom and Holiday's Cove.

In 1784, Fort McIntosh began a new and important phase of its history, for on December 4 of that year the first four companies of the 1st American Regiment under Lt. Col. Josiah Harmar arrived, with their immediate missions to guard the Commissioners of the United States and Pennsylvania at the parley which resulted in the Treaty of Fort McIntosh.

When the Commissioners for the United States and the Chiefs of the Delaware, Wyandot, Ottawa and Chippewa nations signed the Treaty of Fort McIntosh in January 1785, Congress could then enact in May the Land Ordinance of 1785, which provided for the orderly sale of presurveyed public lands. Instead of employing natural boundaries, all future territories of the United States would be laid out in rectangles, each a township of six square miles, containing

36 lots of 640 acres each, to be sold for a dollar an acre. Implemented by further legislation, this culminated in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

The last years of Fort McIntosh are synonymous with the early history of the Army of the United States for the 1st American Regiment, (except for 80 men of the Continental Corps of Artillery, part at presentday West Point and part at Fort Pitt) constituted the entire Army of the United States. This Regiment became successively the 1st Regiment of the United States Infantry, the 1st Infantry, the 1st Sub Legion, again the 1st Infantry, and in 1815, was redesignated the 3rd Infantry. This gave the regiment, based on its first service at Fort McIntosh, the distinction of being the oldest in the Regular Army.

In 1785 Major John Doughty, who commanded the Continental Corps of Artillery, moved his headquarters from West Point to Fort McIntosh. The detachment at Fort Pitt and the company of Pennsylvania Artillery under Captain Thomas Douglas, which had come to Fort McIntosh as part of the 1st American Regiment, were combined; and in 1786 Congress designated it, along with the company at the fort at West Point, as the 1st Battalion of United States Artillery. Thus it can be said with full justification that the United States Army had its beginnings at Fort McIntosh, at the present-day town of Beaver.

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