

Anthony Wayne

From the original picture in the possession of the British.

London: Fry & Co. Printers, 11 St. Martin's Lane.

The only such portrayal of Anthony Wayne: an 1863 lithograph of a painting by Alonzo Chapel

The Valley Forge Cattle Drive and the Pilfered Barrel of Booze

Joseph H. McCracken, III

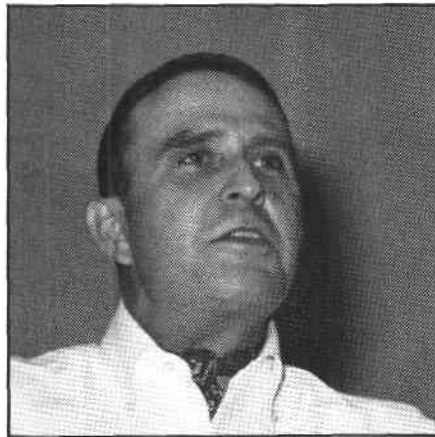
Perhaps no other American field commander was at the center of as much Revolutionary War action as was Anthony Wayne. Of all of the skilled and experienced European military officers who came to the assistance of the infant United States, none contributed more to achieve the successful result than did Frederick William Steuben. The gratitude of the United States is evidenced by the multitude of monuments and larger-than-life statues securing their proper place as national heroes. But, what else did they do and enjoy in life? What were their likes and dislikes? Let's peek behind history's facade.

Steuben arrived in the United States from Paris in December of 1777 carrying a letter written to Washington by Ben Franklin referring therein to "Baron" Steuben, formerly a "Lieutenant General" in the service of the King of Prussia. Was this conspiratorial persuasion on the part of Franklin? In all probability he well knew that Steuben had only achieved the rank of Captain, but certainly his vast experience acquired in various divisions under the command of Frederick the Great was sorely needed by the American army. No doubt Franklin and his Paris cohorts were firm subscribers to the self-fulfilling philosophy:

If you are going to lie, be sure it is on the side of God and right!

It is interesting to note that one of Steuben's letters refers to the fact that Johann de Kalb was the only other German Baron in the American army and that neither of them had any desire or preference for the use of the title in the colonies, and as a matter of fact it raised suspicion and distrust in some minds. In truth and fact, he had been bestowed with baronial knighthood — being the "Order of Fidelity of Baden" by the Hohenzollern Prince at Hechingen, Prussia, largely through the efforts of his friend Duchess Friederike! Most of his portraits and sketches show this red-and-white cross or star worn on a ribbon around his neck.

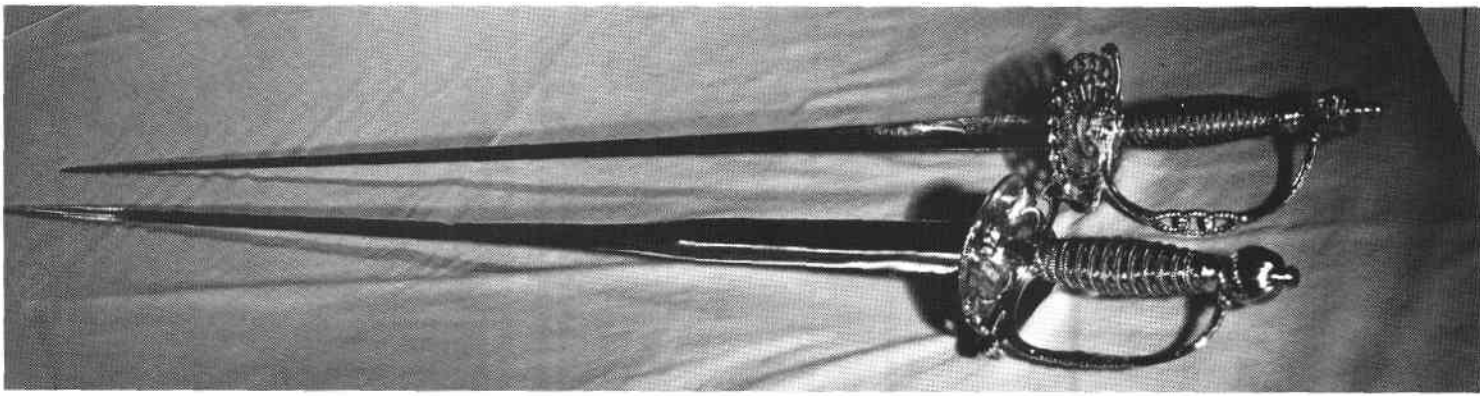
There is abundant description in the documents of the time as to the condition of the eleven thousand men camped at Valley Forge and Steuben's personal



correspondence indicate his astonishment. It was there that our two heroes met for the first time. They were to serve together repeatedly in many campaigns - Monmouth, Stoney Point, and of course, Yorktown - and remained fast and close friends for the remainder of their lives. There is no evidence that Wayne, being a brigadier general, was in any way disturbed or jealous of the fact that Steuben was appointed a major general with the additional office of Inspector General of the Army.

Steuben immediately implemented some command reorganization and began conducting classes in close and extended order field drill. He quickly began to learn the English language from the personnel at Valley Forge and most assuredly became the "patron saint" of U.S. Military drill instructors. It is reported that one of his first acquired words, habitually misspelled, was "Goddam." Later that year he began drafting his "Regulations" in French, with his aides translating into English, and thereafter from pure English into military jargon. These were ultimately printed in 1779 and were the first published and issued regulation manuals of the U.S. Army.

Anthony Wayne had been appointed a colonel at the outbreak of the war and formed a Pennsylvania militia command and was initially assigned to Arnold's invasion into Canada, but was from that effort re-assigned to command for a short period of time at Fort Ticonderoga. It was during this period that he began to acquire the nickname



A full-length view of the swords of Anthony Wayne, now in possession of the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and shown by their permission.

“Dandy Tony,” and it was descriptive not only to his habit as a clean, smart, neat dresser, but also because of his orders to his troops, one being that:

Every soldier who neglects to appear as decent as the nature of his situation will admit, is unfit for gentlemen’s company—

Throughout his campaigns he repeatedly insisted on good grooming and his companies had a special barber whose task it was to “shave the soldiers and dress their hair” and, as a consequence, the writings of the time indicate that his commands suffered less sickness than others.

He was successful in command at Fort Ticonderoga, promoted to a brigadier general and assigned to Washington’s headquarters. After Brandywine and Paoli, he took up encampment at Valley Forge in command of the Pennsylvania brigades. It is interesting to note that he fought tooth-and-toenail with James Mease, the designated “Clothier General” of the Continental Army, whose warehouses contained abundant tons of supplies, but whose stubbornness and martinet adherence to military red tape provided excuse to defy Wayne for the release of cloth and clothing for the manufacturer of uniforms. However, surreptitiously, Wayne rounded up sufficient shoes, cloth and tailors to outfit most of his command.

In February of 1778, matters at Valley Forge were in a critical state of disarray. Ample clothing continued to be short or none; some brigand made off with Wayne’s best horse, and food, of course, was a constantly critical problem. Washington had received information that there were thousands of “fat” cattle in the rural areas south and east of Philadelphia. Believing some foraging parties could alleviate the situation, he dispatched Major Henry Lee and some of his “horse” to move into Maryland and on February 19, Wayne and several hundred of

his command moved south out of Valley Forge to approach Wilmington. The Delaware river had not frozen that far south but farther north British scouts kept due vigilance. Seeing no British ships anchored in the river, they crossed to the Jersey shore, searched throughout the south, then turned north to cover central New Jersey. They commandeered all horses and cattle over a wide strip of territory all the way north to Billingsport, covering some 350 square miles.

Wayne moved soldiers and cattle in an elusive fashion through the central New Jersey woods far to the east of Philadelphia in order to reach Coryell’s Ferry where he could recross the Delaware into Pennsylvania. One night there appeared a New Jersey militiaman, awakening Wayne, and advising of the approach of a British van! The Wayne command deployed to the British approach and sent a message for assistance to Trenton where Count Casimir Pulaski was in command of a brigade of dragoons. With their muster combined, Pulaski attacked ‘head on,’ routing the British and enabling Wayne and the livestock to escape westerly across the river into Pennsylvania. On the road back into Valley Forge, additional Pennsylvania cattle were gathered into the herd, but the final result of the effort was disappointing. They arrived at camp with only some 45 or 50 head.

However, on this drive Wayne was able to pick up approximately 30 good horses. He selected several for himself and put the remainder on the road to “Light Horse Harry” in Maryland to be used for the remounting of his dragoons. Lee was ecstatic over the gift from Wayne and, showing his appreciation, wrote a hasty dispatch as follows:

General, you never in your life omitted one single opportunity but you afforded indubitable testimony of your attachment to malt liquor. I now present you with one barrel, excellent in quality.



A portrait of Frederick William Steuben by Ralph Earl.

With the assistance of his landlady-hostess, Priscilla Stephens, Dandy Tony arranged a party at his Valley Forge quarters, in preparation for the arrival of the "barrel of booze." The merriment was short-lived! Lee had sent a full barrel of high test malt liquor, but sadly the couriers along the way had taxed, tapped and pilfered it to their satisfaction and only a few quarts sloshed about in the bottom of the barrel when it arrived at Wayne's residence. *War is hell!*

But it is ameliorated by the ladies!

Wayne's wife, Polly, whom he had married early in life, remained on their Pennsylvania farm throughout the war, attending to their farming and leather tannery business and this was most accommodating to Wayne's proclivities. While at "Fort Ti" he took ample opportunity for leave to

Albany to enjoy the convivial company of army personnel and was there smitten by the two daughters of General Schuyler and wrote to a friend:

They are accomplished, fine, sweet girls, and very handsome—it would have been cruel to endeavor to win the affection of an innocent, good girl (referring to the fact that he was married). I therefore studiously endeavored to keep out of the way of temptation, but was, notwithstanding, necessitated to pass four or five evenings out of six in their company.

It was later noted that they made a beautiful red cockade for his tricorne hat!

Through the efforts of some of his friends, he met and became a constant companion of Sally Robinson and Hetty Griffiths, both of Philadelphia. It was soon common knowledge that they were considered to be the *proteges* of Dandy Tony, and

as a matter of fact, they were finally known throughout the city as "Wayne's daughters!"

These spirited young ladies were just a few among the many to receive aid and comfort from Tony Wayne: among them being Mrs. Hay at Fort Ti, the reknown Priscilla Stephens at Valley Forge and Mary Vining of Delaware, about whom we will hear more later.

While at Fort Ti, maintaining a full complement of soldiers became an enlistment problem, and Wayne's advice in this regard is reported to have been:

The best and surest way to get men is to win the affections of all the handsome country girls—there are not enough laundresses to go around!

Also, while at Fort Ti, his heart was broken when Udnay Hay was transferred to Albany and had to move away, of course taking Mrs. Hay with him. However, the situation brightened when he received a letter from his friend Joseph Wood in Philadelphia advising:

My God, what swarms of fine girls in this town. I wish, my friend, I had the setting of some of their tails.

Dandy Tony frequently corresponded with his close friend Captain Walter Stuart of Philadelphia and one day wrote to him:

Like the bee, I move from flower to flower and sip the honey from each rose—tis all gaiety.

Wayne's itch became intense when one of Stuart's letters, speaking of the ladies of Philadelphia arrived:

They have lost that native innocence in their manners which formerly was their characteristic and supplied its place with what they call an easy behavior. They have really got the art of throwing themselves into the most wanton and amorous postures which their manner of speech adds none a little to. By Heaven it is almost too much for a young soldier to bear.

Subsequent to the breakout from the Valley Forge camp the Marquis de Lafayette returned to Philadelphia with quite an entourage of gay and sociable Parisian ladies and gentlemen and subsequently introduced Dandy Tony to the stunning young Delaware lady, Mary Vining. History records that she became the love of his life. One day in the spring of '78 he returned to his headquarters surprised to find a messenger had arrived from Wilmington with a handsome silver-hilted sword. The delivery messenger declared that it was but a "token of appreciation from a feminine admirer," but gave no further detail. The sword was

not inscribed. At fist, Wayne thought it might be from Sally or Hetty—his "Philadelphia daughters"—but it would not have been sent from Delaware, and they were not given to such gestures. It is believed by some—though speculation—to have been the culmination of a remark made by Mary Vining to Wayne on the occasion of one of their companionships wherein she had stated:

For such a Knight, a sword should be as graceful as his wit. You need, my general, a suaver sword.

Oh, Brother—*War is Hell!* If this tale of Mary's gift is not true, *it ought to be!*

Now the Baron also had an eye and finesse for the ladies. During the New York campaigns he was a guest in the home of Chancellor Livingston and was introduced to a strikingly beautiful "Miss Sheaf" and one of his associates overheard the following:

I am very happy in the honor of being presented to you, Mademoiselle, though I see it is at an infinite risk. I have from my youth been cautioned to guard myself against mischief, but I had no idea that her attractions were so powerful.

General Steuben's aide and lifelong friend, William North, wrote relating his experiences at Yorktown and illustrated some of the character of these men. It seems a British shell passed overhead and exploded very close to where the two men were standing. Said North:

The Baron threw himself in the trench. Wayne, in the jeopardy and hurry of the moment, jumped in and fell upon him. The Baron, turning his eyes, saw that it was the brigadier. 'I always knew you were brave, General,' he said, 'but I did not know that you were so perfect in every point of duty; you cover your General's retreat in the best manner possible.'

Thus, our "heroes" who gave so much of themselves to give us a free nation, were men just like you and just like me—just plain by God human—I think? Perhaps it is best summed up by an expression from Sir Francis Bacon in the 16th century:

I know not how or why, but martial men are given to love — I think it is as they are also given to wine and spirits — for peril commonly asks to be paid in pleasure!

When Steuben received his Patent of Nobility, he added "von" in front of his name in the German tradition. When he came to America, he and de Kalb used the French "de" to avoid association with the British Hessian mercenaries. Mr. McCracken has republicanized the name by using neither. Ed.