

BLOOD STAINED HISTORIC VALLEY FORGE RESTORED

Beautiful Park Has Been Created and Washington's Headquarters Preserved in Stone.

Pennsylvania Has Atoned For a Century of Unpardonable Neglect by the Nation.



INDEPENDENCE DAY, 1906, sees bloodstained, historic Valley Forge restored, and not only restored, but greatly beautified, improved and turned into a public park for the enjoyment of the people.

It is a fortunate thing that the time has passed when the pilgrim to Valley Forge in search of sights and relics of the historic camp, perhaps the most hallowed of our Revolutionary reminders, was obliged to tramp over fields of none too friendly farmers and be constantly annoyed by signs warning off trespassers. Apart from which, the fatigue of such a trip was great, as there were no roads leading over the campground and no signs marking the way to historic spots, only fields of waving grain or woodlands overgrown with underbrush. Consequently the hardest kind of walking over the steep hills was required to view but a few of the sights. Only the young and physically robust were therefore able to enjoy the pleasures of Valley Forge.

Through the untiring efforts of a number of patriotic men, prominent among them Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker, all this has been changed, and the State of Pennsylvania has been induced to assume and complete a task which was first offered to and refused by the Federal Government, although the undertaking was clearly within its province, as the campground of Valley Forge is a relic which should belong not only to Pennsylvania, but to the entire Nation, as every patriotic American must wish for its preservation and would feel proud in being part owner.

But whether by Pennsylvania or the National Government, it must be at least gratifying to the Nation to learn that the neglect of a century has been atoned for, and under the able and enthusiastic direction of the newly-formed Valley Forge Park Commission, a work of almost incalculable historical value has been done on the bleak heights above the Schuylkill, to which Washington's barefoot army crawled when the defeat of Germantown left them no other refuge.

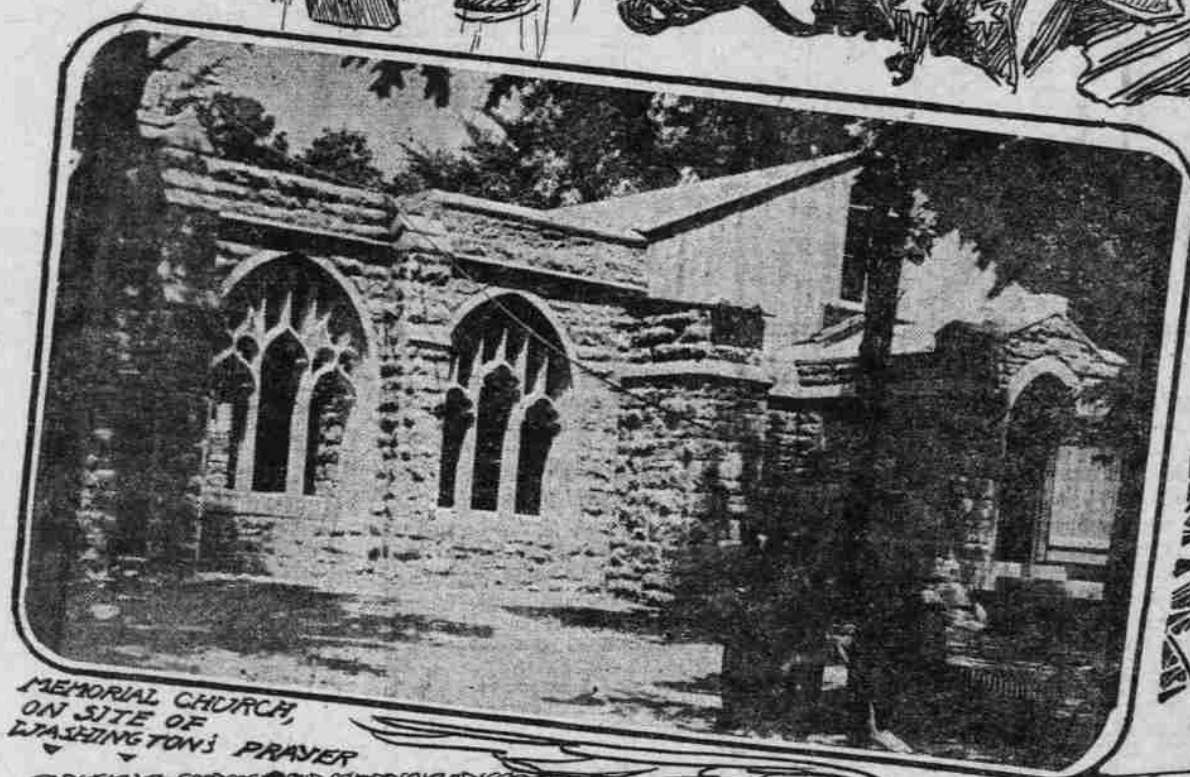
Fort Washington and Fort Huntington have been restored. An iron tower 100 feet in height for observation purposes is being finished on Mount Joy, and from this tower not only a bird's-eye view of the entire campground and beautiful surrounding country can be had, but also Philadelphia, 20 miles distant, can be made out. A beautiful commemorative chapel of the Episcopal Church has been built on the spot where Washington, in his direst hour of distress, knelt in prayer. The headquarters of the commander in the Isaac Potts house have been purchased, completely restored and turned into a revolutionary museum. Roads have been built which make possible quick communication between all points of the park, besides which, lawns and flower beds have been laid out and planted and even a guardhouse has been built to further heighten the park effect.

What a wonderful work this is can be readily appreciated by anyone who made a pilgrimage to Valley Forge before the process of restoration began. Then, barring perhaps the Washington headquarters, the points of historical interest were not to be found by any save students of the period and the vicinity.

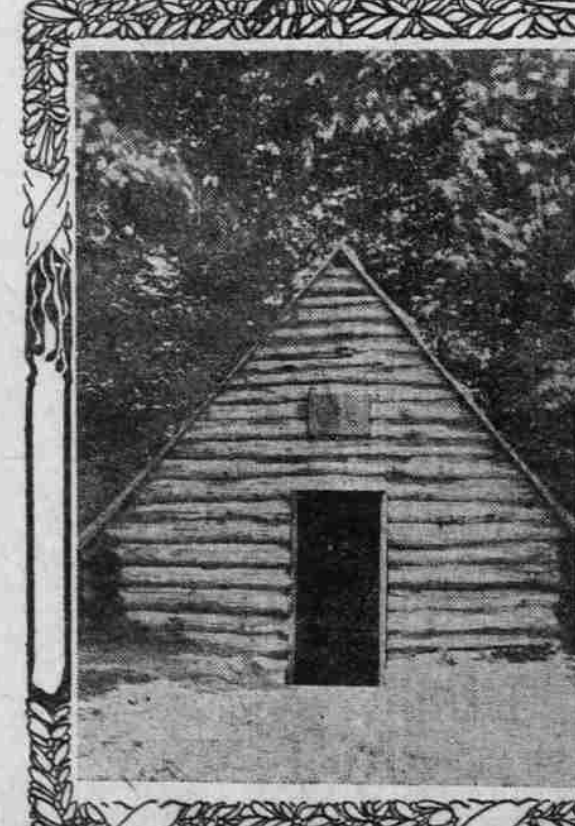
"Where are the intrenchments?" was a question asked hundreds of times in the old days. There was no one to answer it, for then the region was unpoliced and the rustic, with that familiarity which breeds contempt, lacked interest to give proper direction. There were no guides or officers to point out places of interest or stop the vandals in their destructive work. Nor was the usual recourse of taking a carriage, and being driven through this region, possible, for there were no roads out through.

Where the tourist expected to see the forts and line of intrenchments, were nothing but piles of leaves and underbrush. Solving the plan of encampment was out of question, for there was no point from which to study the surrounding country, and even had there been, the heights were so overgrown with trees and littered with debris that the landmarks were all obliterated.

The utter neglect of a spot of such great historic interest as Valley Forge



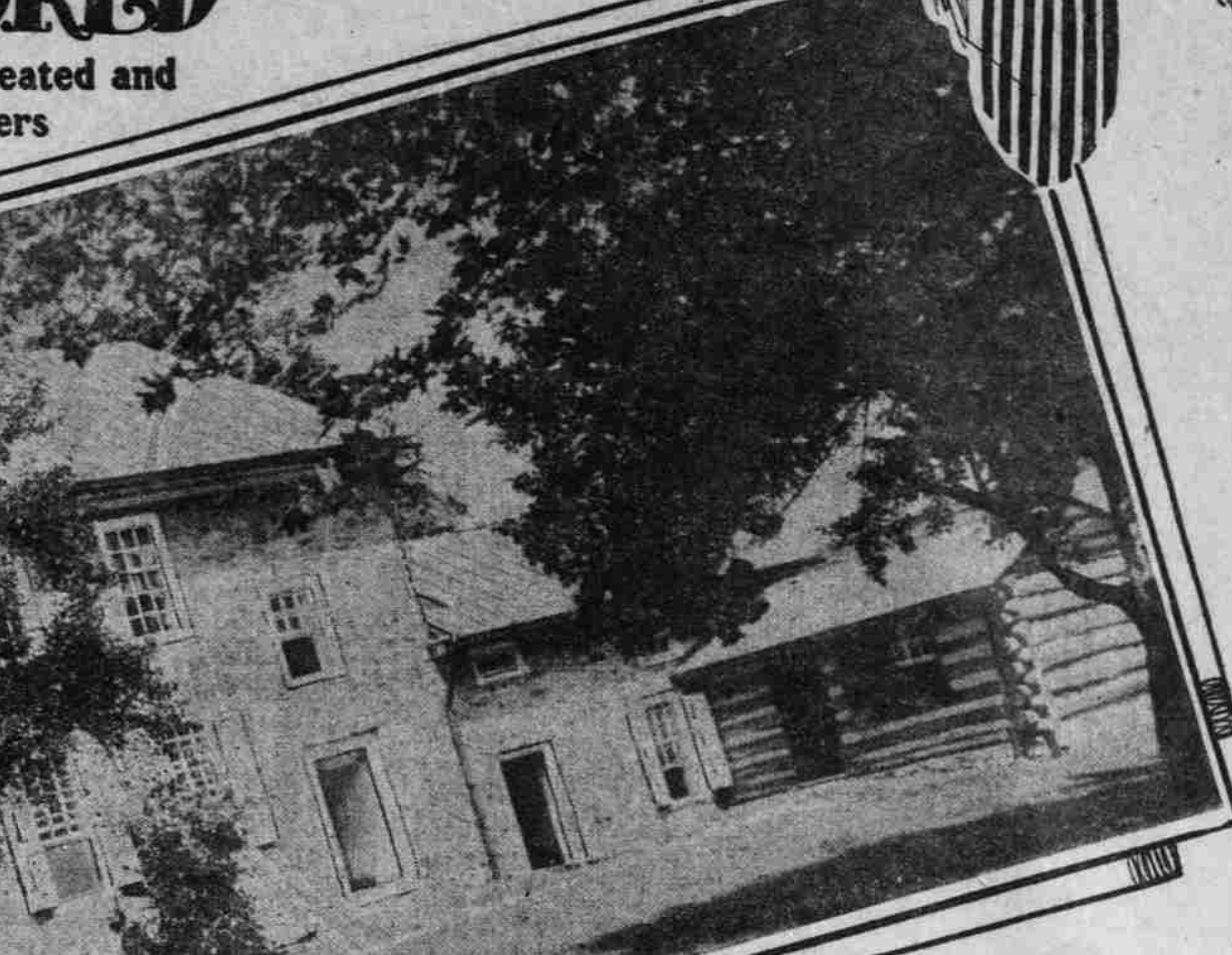
MEMORIAL CHURCH ON SITE OF WASHINGTON'S PRAYER



RESTORED ENTRANCE TO FORT WASHINGTON



RESTORED GRAVE OF UNKNOWN SOLDIER



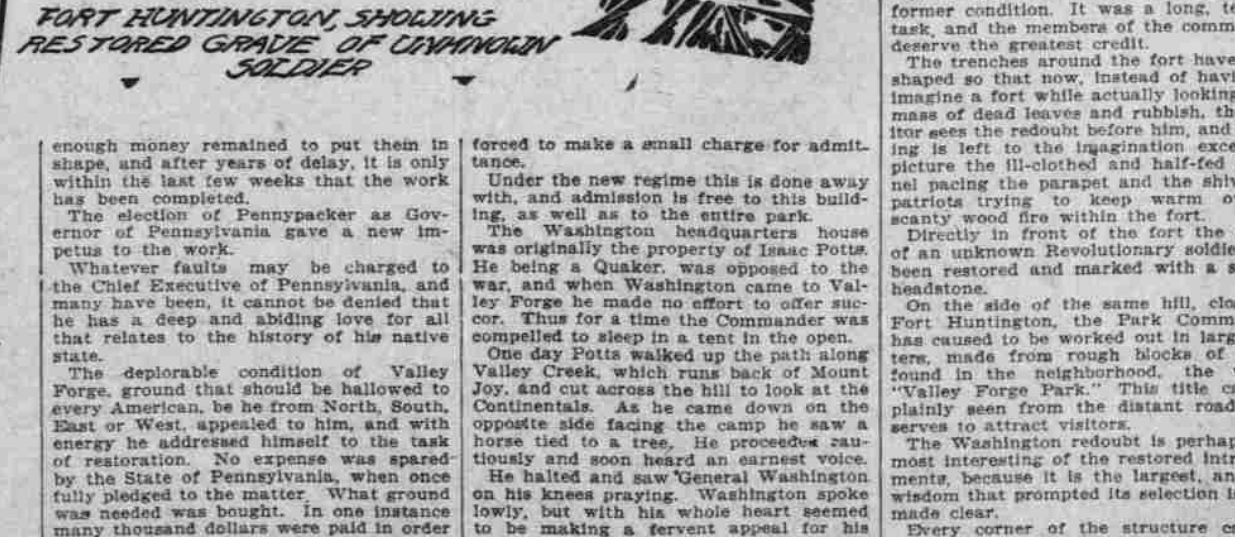
WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS VALLEY FORGE, PRESENT APPEARANCE RESTORED



GUARD STANDING AT BASE OF AN INNER INTRENCHMENT, SHOWING DEPTH OF SAME



RESTORED GRAVE OF UNKNOWN SOLDIER



RESTORED ENTRANCE TO FORT WASHINGTON

enough money remained to put them in shape, and after years of delay, it is only within the last few weeks that the work has been completed.

The election of Pennypacker as Governor of Pennsylvania gave a new impetus to the work.

Whatever faults may be charged to the Chief Executive of Pennsylvania, and many have been, it cannot be denied that he has a deep and abiding love for all that relates to the history of his native state.

The deplorable condition of Valley Forge, ground that should be hallowed to every American, be he from North, South, East or West, appealed to him, and with energy he addressed himself to the task of restoration. No expense was spared by the State of Pennsylvania, when once fully pledged to the matter. What ground was needed was bought. In one instance many thousand dollars were paid in order that the star redoubt, a piece of ground worth perhaps a few hundred, should not get away from the commission.

In years to come Americans will speak gratefully of how Pennypacker saved Valley Forge to the Nation. It is quite safe to venture the prophecy that long after the historic building, its restoration, the restoration of Valley Forge will be regarded as the chief monument to Governor Pennypacker. And it is certainly a grand, patriotic memorial, of which any man should be proud.

The first spot in the new Valley Forge Park to which the tourist directs his steps is the Washington headquarters, as it is close by the railroad station. Here he finds an altered condition of affairs. During the days before the state acquired the historic building, it belonged to the Centennial and Memorial Association of Valley Forge, who, with the assistance of the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America, kept it in most admirable condition. But as their funds were limited, they were forced to make a small charge for admittance.

Under the new regime this is done away with, and admission is free to this building, as well as to the entire park.

The Washington headquarters house was originally the property of Isaac Potts. He being a Quaker, was opposed to the war, and when Washington came to Valley Forge he made no effort to offer succor. Thus for a time the Commander was compelled to sleep in a tent in the open.

One day Potts walked up the path along Valley Creek, which runs back of Mount Joy, and out across the hill to look at the Continentals. As he came down on the opposite side facing the camp he saw a horse tied to a tree. He proceeded cautiously and soon heard an earnest voice. He halted and saw General Washington on his knees praying. Washington spoke lowly, but with his whole heart seemed to be making a fervent appeal for his men, the tears meantime streaming from his eyes.

The Quaker quietly withdrew and returned home. Much agitated, he told his wife what he had seen, and said that if there was anyone on earth that the Lord would listen to it was George Washington, adding that he felt a presentiment that under such a commander there could be no doubt of the colonies gaining independence, and that God in his providence had willed it so.

His wife and he then espoused the patriot cause openly, and invited Washington to use their home as his headquarters.

This famous prayer of Washington's is most fittingly commemorated by a beautiful chapel now in the course of erection on the exact spot where Potts heard him appealing for divine aid.

It stands on the Bridgeport road, and the cornerstone was laid by Rev. W. Herbert Burk, and fellow enthusiasts of the Protestant Episcopal persuasion. Mr.

Burk is the present rector of the church. It was in this chapel that President Roosevelt attended services when on a visit to Senator Knox, who lives not far distant. Although there are but few dwellings in the immediate vicinity, the services are popular and well attended, worshippers coming for miles around every Sunday.

On the left of the church is the woods before which Steuben drilled the raw Continental recruits into good soldiers. Before the spot, across the road and in full view of the chapel, is the pure white shaft that tops, in its railed enclosure, the grave of John Waterman, of Rhode Island, who gave his life there for the holy cause of liberty. The monument is not intended for him alone. It is dedicated to all those who died at Valley Forge. They have restored in every detail one of the huts of the Revolutionary soldiers. It faces the Bridgeport road, standing near the chapel, in a wood that was once filled with such huts, the foundations of which can still be plainly seen, each a wretched retreat of starving, freezing men.

Having inspected these places at close range, the visitor can retrace his steps along the Bridgeport road half a mile, when on the site of a hill about 500 feet off the road he arrives at Fort Huntington. It had been almost restored to its former condition. It was a long, tedious task, and the members of the commission deserve the greatest credit.

The trenches around the fort have been shaped so that now, instead of having to imagine a fort while actually looking at a mass of dead leaves and rubbish, the visitor sees the redoubt before him, and nothing is left to the imagination except to picture the ill-clad and half-frozen sentinels pacing the parapet and the shivering patriots trying to keep warm over a scanty wood fire within the fort.

Directly in front of the fort the grave of an unknown Revolutionary soldier has been restored and marked with a simple headstone.

On the side of the same hill, close by Fort Huntington, the Park Commission has caused to be worked out in large letters, made from rough blocks of stone found in the neighborhood, the words "Valley Forge Park." This title can be plainly seen from the distant road, and serves to attract visitors.

The Washington redoubt is perhaps the most interesting of the restored intrenchments, because it is the largest, and the wisdom that prompted its selection is now made clear.

Every corner of the structure can be seen from the platform provided for visitors. The magazine in the center of the fort remains as it was in the days of the Continentals, the trenches have been shaped, restored and sodded, and the shelves of the interior made trim and businesslike. A really beautiful task.

A road from this redoubt leads through that part of the park where General Scott and the Virginians camped, where Wayne and the Pennsylvanians had their quarters, where General Poor's New York troops kept their line. Following the interior line of intrenchments the visitor successively passes the encampments of General Glover's Massachusetts troops, General Learned's New Hampshire troops, General Patterson's Vermonters, General Weedon's Virginians and General Muhlenberg's Pennsylvania and Virginia troops.

Now that Valley Forge Park has become a reality, it is hoped that the states will mark with monuments the places where their troops were located.