

WAR STORIES.

Historic West Point.

West Point holds a peculiar place in the affection of the American people. One reason is that its name is inseparable interwoven with the military glory of the nation; West Point and the army are almost synonymous. The association of the spot with the names of our great military leaders and heroes makes it a national shrine. But, long before it became a school for soldiers, West Point had illustrious traditions as a spot of peculiar sacredness to the American people. Within its vicinity were enacted some of the most celebrated events of the Revolutionary War.

The history of West Point dates back to 1723, when a tract of land, comprising one thousand four hundred and sixty-three acres, was granted Charles Congreve by the English Crown, upon the condition that within three years he or his heirs should settle and cultivate at least three acres for every fifty described in the grant.

Early in the War of the Revolution, the value of this spot was known both to the Americans and the British. It was regarded as the most important post in the colonies. Early in 1775, Congress passed a resolution ordering three forts to be erected immediately in the Highlands. Here were stored, as the safest place in the colonies, large quantities of cannon and other military supplies, as well as provisions.

That the British knew the value of this point is shown by the instructions sent that same year by the British Government to its officers, to get possession of the Hudson and East Rivers, and thus to cut off all communication between New York and Albany and the provinces to the north.

The defenses of West Point and the vicinity were strengthened from time to time, but in 1777 Washington felt great uneasiness, for he suspected that the enemy were about to move up the river. Despite all his precautions, in October of that year the British under General Clinton took all the forts in the Highlands, destroying works and stores to the value of a quarter of a million of dollars.

After an occupation of only twenty days, the news of the surrender of General Burgoyne caused them to return to New York. Washington now ordered the utmost speed in refortifying the Hudson. Fort after fort was erected and strongly garrisoned. In April, 1778, a great chain was stretched across the river from the most eastern part of West Point to Constitutional Island. The chain was placed on a boom made of logs sixteen feet in length and pointed at the ends to offer little resistance to currents. The whole chain weighed one hundred and eighty-six tons, and some of the links weighed one hundred and thirty pounds each.

All this time, West Point was private property, though its owner was petitioning Congress to purchase it. General Knox, the Secretary of War, in a report to Congress, dated July thirty-first, 1786, stated that:—

"West Point is of the most decisive importance to the defense of Hudson River, for the following reasons: First, the distance across the river is only about fourteen hundred feet, a far less distance than at any other point. Second, the peculiar bend, forming an almost re-entrant angle. Third, the high bank on each side of the river, favorable for the construction of formidable batteries.

"Fourth, the demonstrated practicability of fixing across a chain or chains at a spot where vessels, in turning the point, invariably lose their rapidity and force, by which a chain at any other part of the river would be likely to be broken."

No action was taken upon the matter until in September, 1780, upon recommendation of General Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, Congress purchased the tract for a permanent military post for the sum of eleven thousand and eighty-five dollars. Additional purchases were made in 1824 and in 1829.

West Point and its dependencies never again fell into the hands of the British, though, through the treachery of its commander, it was once very nearly delivered to the enemy. Sir Henry Clinton felt that no price would be too great to pay for West Point and other forts in the Highlands, with their garrisons, vessels and stores. The capture of these points would open the Hudson to the British, facilitate intercourse with the forces in Canada, and cut off communication between the patriots of the Middle and the Eastern States. But West Point was so well garrisoned that, in order to gain the prize, he needed assistance from within the American lines.

General Clinton at length found the ally he needed in General Benedict Arnold, of the Continental Army. Arnold had an enviable reputation for bravery. He had distinguished himself at Lake Champlain, at Quebec, and at Saratoga, but he had not received from Congress the reward he expected. Arnold was extravagant and, while military governor of Philadelphia, he had been guilty of peculations and had been suspected of treasonable connections. The patriots of Pennsylvania had asked for his removal, and on their charges he had been tried and sentenced to be reprimanded by the commander-in-chief.

Arnold brooded over his real and fancied wrongs till he at length became bent on revenge. Already he was in correspondence with the British, and was receiving money for the intelligence furnished them. He now began to offer to deliver West Point to General Clinton in exchange for military advancement and a large sum of money. In order to carry out the plan, Arnold made application for the command of West Point, giving as a reason for his preference that his wounds would not admit of active service in the field. Washington, who was friendly to Arnold, granted the request, and, on August third, 1780, Arnold took command of West Point and all its dependencies, from Stony Point to Fishkill.

It was perhaps the gloomiest time in our history. The army numbered only three thousand men, and these were in rags and almost starving, while General Clinton's force in and about New York city amounted to more than twelve thousand. Not only New York city, but the Virginia coast, most of Georgia, and the Carolinas were held by the British. The States were rent by factions. They had almost no public credit. Altogether, the prospect was most disheartening. Washington himself confessed in a letter of May twenty-third, 1780, "I have almost ceased to hope."

Washington felt that a decisive blow must be struck. He planned a combined attack of the French and American forces upon New York. The French were to reach the city by way of Long Island; the Americans, by crossing Kingsbridge, above New York.

On September eighteenth, Washington started for Hartford, where he was to hold a conference with the French officers. Arnold felt that the time was propitious for his treachery, and, on the evening of the eighteenth, he sent to General Clinton, asking him to send John Andre to treat with him about the surrender of West Point. Andre, who was adjutant-general, had long been aware of the proposed treason. Indeed, the correspondence with General Clinton had been conducted through him.

Andre left New York on the twentieth, in the sloop Vulture, having received from his chief strict orders not to change his dress, nor to receive papers, nor in any way to act as a spy. He did not meet Arnold on the Vulture, as General Clinton had expected, for Arnold chose a rendezvous which involved less risk to him, but more to Andre. The plotters met in a wood a little below Haverstraw. So long did the interview last, for Arnold was greedy and demanded a larger price than Andre was empowered to pay, that day began to break. Arnold persuaded Andre to go with him to a farmhouse a few miles distant, and to remain there till the following night, when he would be taken to the Vulture. Andre did not know, till it was too late to go back, that this house was within American lines.

The plotting went on through the day. Arnold was to weaken the garrison by dividing the troops into small detachments and sending them to various redoubts in the neighborhood. Under pretense of needed repair, he was to remove a portion from the great boom which was stretched across the river. The British, who were already embarked on the Hudson, were to proceed to West Point. Arnold was to send to Washington for aid, but was to surrender his post before Washington could arrive. The British fleet was in command of Rodney, but Clinton himself would intercept Washington and his reinforcements and cut them off. Arnold would plead a weak garrison as an excuse for his surrender, and after a little he would join the British and reap the reward of his treachery.

At sunrise, firing from one of the forts drove the Vulture down the river. Hope of escape by water was now out off, and at nightfall Andre, wearing citizen's dress, crossed the river, and started on horseback for White Plains. He bore a pass from Arnold, made out to Mr. John Anderson. In his stockings were several

papers describing the condition of West Point, all in Arnold's writing. All went well until the following morning, when Andre was stopped by three patriots, named John Paulding, Isaac Van Wart, and David Williams, who demanded his business and destination.

Andre replied that he was a British officer upon urgent business. Then, seeing his mistake, he said he was on business for General Arnold and then showed his pass. The patriots were not satisfied; they insisted upon searching him, when they found Arnold's papers. Andre offered his captors large bribes for his freedom, but they took him to the nearest military post and delivered him up.

Washington returned from Hartford on the evening of the twenty-fourth, earlier than Arnold had expected him. The general spent the night at Fishkill, and early the next morning sent word to Arnold that he and his suite would breakfast with him. Washington and Lafayette remained on the west side of the river to examine some redoubts, but the aids-de-camp went on to Arnold's headquarters. While at breakfast a letter was handed Arnold. He expected to read that the British were on their way up the river, but found, instead, that Andre was captured, and that the papers found on him were on their way to Washington.

Arnold excused himself, called his wife from the breakfast room, and bade her a hurried farewell, then, dashing down a steep path to the river, now known as Traitor's Path, he made his escape to the Vulture, which was still awaiting Andre, and reached New York that evening.

Andre was tried by court-martial at Washington's headquarters at Tappan, and sentenced to be hanged as a spy. He was executed on the second day of October, calling on those present to witness that he died like a brave man.

The patriots who captured Andre were rewarded by Congress with medals and pensions. Monuments have been erected in honor of Paulding and Van Wart. But for the honesty and patriotism of these three humble men, our history might read differently.

West Point to-day attracts many visitors. Besides being of historic interest, it is the site of the United States Military Academy. West Point is fifty-one miles from New York, situated on a bold, sheltering plateau in the midst of impressive scenery. It is reached by a steep and winding road along the river bank. Storm King, Crow's Nest, and Break Neck Mountain are plainly visible.

The Military Academy, established by an act of Congress in 1802, is situated more than one hundred and fifty feet above the river. The remains of Fort Putnam are still to be seen, and there are some links of the great chain. Here is a mortar taken from the British by Mad Anthony Wayne, and smaller ones from Saratoga, as well as guns taken in the war with Mexico.—By Adelaide L. Rouse, in Forward.

Railroad Men During the War.

While columns and pages have been written about the deeds of heroism and daring of officers and soldiers in the civil war, there is not a great deal on record about the splendid service that was performed by the railroad men almost from the beginning to the end of that remarkable struggle. As a matter of fact, the story of the part that the railroad men played would fill many interesting volumes. These observations are suggested by an incident related by Mr. Edward Thomas, of Sharon, well-known throughout this section as an old-time locomotive runner and master mechanic.

TIRED OUT.

There's many a farmer's wife sits on the porch in the growing shadows of a summer evening, knitting to the full what it is to feel tired out; as if there were not another ounce of effort left in her. But she knows how sound her slumber will be and how refreshed the morning will find her. That's the tiredness of a healthy woman. But it's another thing for the sick woman to feel tired out. Rest only seems to increase her suffering. Just as in profound silence a discord jars the ear more forcibly, so now that she has stopped moving about, this tired woman feels more acutely the aching back and throbbing nerves. Sick women, hundreds of thousands of them, have been made well by the use of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It establishes regularity, dries weakening drains, heals inflammation and ulceration and cures female weakness.

"Words cannot tell what I suffered for thirteen years with uterine trouble and dragging-down pains through my hips and back," writes Mrs. John Deason, of Great Hill, Astoria, Ore., N. W. Ter. "I can't describe the misery—it was to be on my feet long at a time. I can't get nor sleep. Often I wished to die. I saw Dr. Pierce's medicine advertised and thought I would try it. Had not taken one bottle till I was feeling well. After I had taken five bottles of 'Favorite Prescription' and one of 'Golden Medical Discovery' I was like a new woman. Could eat and sleep and do all my own work." The Combs Sanse Medical Adviser, is sent free on receipt of stamps to pay expense of mailing only. Send 21 one-cent stamps for the book in paper covers, or 4 stamps for the volume bound in cloth. Address Dr. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

of rare abilities. Mr. Thomas is a Welshman, and came to the United States about 1852. He worked for awhile on the Atlantic Coast Line and other roads; but for nearly forty years was connected in various capacities with the road from Chester to Lenoir, now known as the Carolina and North-Western; but when he first became connected with it was known as the King's Mountain railroad. He was the first superintendent after the change of gauge. Mr. Thomas was in Yorkville last Friday evening attending a meeting of the Masonic Lodge, and somehow some of his friends got him to talking about the war. He was in the Confederate service as an engineer, and although his first and most important duty was to pull trains of soldiers, when not so engaged, he was employed in carrying cotton to the coast and exchanging it with the blockade runners for bacon, flour, arms and ammunition, at first from New York and later from England. He was his own conductor, and frequently reported directly to General Lee himself. He ran into Petersburg just about the time the Yankees were investing the city, and fearing probable capture, he was anxious to get away with his engine. "I went to General Lee," said Mr. Thomas, "and told him I wanted to take my engine out. He wanted to know whether the Yankees had not destroyed the bridge. I told him I had walked over it during the day and found it all right. He then asked me whether they had shot at me, and I told him yes; but being a small man, they had not hit me. The old general smiled at this and wanted to know whether I was not afraid I would be hurt in crossing the bridge, if the Yankees should weaken it from below. I told him that wartime was no time to think of getting hurt; but if anything should happen, I would not fall any further than the bottom of the river. This seemed to please him and he told me he would give me a pass if I would take one of his big guns with me. I said all right that if I went through the gun would go with me. The gun was loaded on a car, and the next night I started out slipping along as noiselessly as possible without any lights. As I approached the bridge, lights suddenly flashed from a large house on the side of the railroad, and a moment or two afterward big shells came screeching over me. My fireman was almost frighten-

ed to death, and I did not like it much either. On the other side of the river was a big cut, and when I got into that I stopped, thinking they would not reach me; but after a little the mortar shells commenced dropping around me and I saw I would have to get out of that. I opened the throttle as far as it would go, and away I went with the shells, buzzing all around me. But they did not hit us, and after a time I got down to Richmond, hauled my engine through the streets with a team of mules, got it on another track and used it for a long time afterward. That, I reckon, was about one of the narrowest escapes I had during the war."

In the Nation's Dark Days.

America, we hope, will never again know a civil war, but it is well for the young people of to-day to understand how terrible was the great war when State fought against State, neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, and father against son. Mr. John Uri Lloyd tells, in Frank Leslie's Monthly, the story of a Kentucky village in war time.

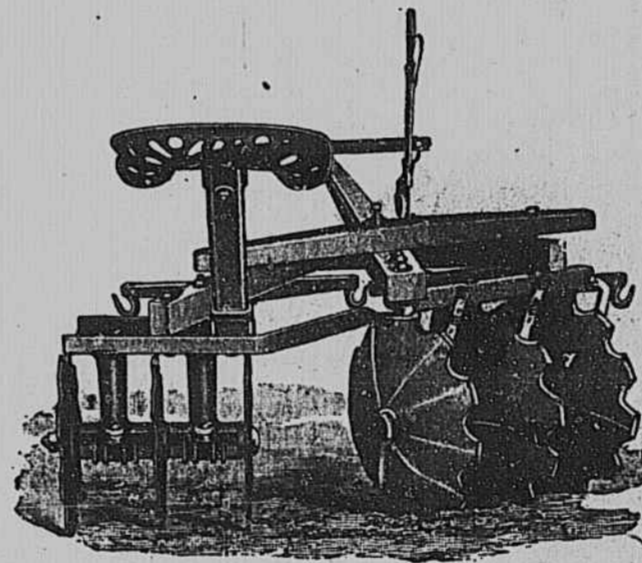
When men saw life's duty differently, and one man believed in the Union and another in State's rights, neither raised a hand to prevent the other from joining the cause that his conscience told him was right. A man called at the little house of his neighbor, kissed the children, and shook hands with the parents. "I may not see you again," he said. "To-night I go to see Morgan." The host went to his little wardrobe, took from it his greatcoat, thrust a pistol in the pocket, and threw it over the arm of his guest. Both were poor men and winter approached. The visitor tried to return the coat, but the other said:—

"No, you take the coat. Your path is to be one of privation; besides I'll not need it. To-morrow morning I start North to enlist. My government has overcoats to spare, and pistols, too. You who go South may find neither. God bless you, friend; may we return to meet again."

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