

# NEWSMAKER LIGHT HORSE HARRY LEE

Our appetite for news is insatiable. We relish instant breaking news on the television, the internet, in website, blogs, videos, in books and magazines, and finally, in the daily newspaper. Tell me what is going on, please!

One resource that met the need for news in the 18th century America was the newspaper. Starting with the Boston Gazette in 1704, the first continuously printed paper, the colonists in the major east coast cities did have newspapers that increasingly printed local as well as news from England. In the furor surrounding the Revolution War, and the need to shape political opinion, Thomas Jefferson launched the *National Gazette* in 1791, while Alexander Hamilton utilized *The Gazette of the United States* in his political efforts. But settlers west of the Allegheny Mountains citizens relied on word of mouth, military dispatches and letters to know the news from the rest of the world - until July 29, 1786 when the Hugh Henry Brackenridge started the *Pittsburgh Gazette* as a weekly newspaper. Joseph Hall and John Scull were the first editors, using a wooden printing press, the first to cross the Alleghenies from Philadelphia. The first major article that was printed there was the text of the Constitution of the United States.

In the years that followed, the weekly was owned by Morgan Neville, then Neville Craig. who in 1844 made the paper a daily. Fortunately it survived the great Pittsburgh fire in 1845. The paper's editorial policy was conservative, and it advocated the end of slavery and later would endorse the election of Abraham Lincoln. It reported the first national convention in Pittsburgh of the new Republican Party, February, 1856.

Just as local news has always been in the forefront of area newspapers, so we in our newsletters respect both the current events, and the history of Old St. Luke's and her 1790 and 1852 churches, her past clergy and the members of this church who were caught up in the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion. In this newsletter we will put a focus on a newsmaker figure and wonder how the members of this church read and talked about him.

## **Newsmaker.**

### **General "Light Horse Harry" Lee, III**

Henry Lee III was born to a very prominent family in Dumfries, Virginia in 1756. He graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) in 1773 and he began his legal career. When the Revolutionary War began, he enlisted and became a Captain of a Virginia dragoon detachment. He quickly was promoted to the rank of Major and he commanded a mixed corps of cavalry and infantry that was quickly named Lee's Legion. His fame as a leader of light troops quickly spread, and he was given the nick-name of Light Horse Harry .because of his expert horsemanship.



He served in several battles, and he was present when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown to end the Revolutionary War. Lee married his second cousin "Divine" Matilda Ludwell in 1782. They had three children, Philip, Lucy and Henry IV. Matilda died in 1790.

After the War, Lee served in the Continental Congress until 1788. He favored adopting the Constitution. In 1791 Lee was elected Governor of Virginia. He married wealthy Ann Hill Carter in 1792. They gave birth to six children: an unnamed infant, Charles, Anne, Sydney, **Robert Edward Lee, January 19, 1807**, and Mildred.

The *Pittsburgh Gazette* covered the ongoing local response to the imposition in 1791 of a federal tax on whiskey. The dramatic insurrection of farmers in the four counties around Pittsburgh on July 15 to 17, 1794 made the headlines. When President Washington's efforts to negotiate compliance of the tax failed, some 13,000 militiamen were called into active duty. Washington led the troops to Bedford, and before he returned to Philadelphia, he instructed Lee as to his duties and to lead the troops into southwestern Pennsylvania. He was to suppress the opposition, both by military force and judiciary processes. Lee led half of the troops into Uniontown on November 1, and on November 8, they camped at Parkinson's Ferry (Monongahela, Pa.).

Lee issued a proclamation to uphold the government, to accommodate the army, to take an oath to support the Constitution and obey the law. He identified the insurgents and some 150 farmers were arrested for treason on November 12 in what has been called "the dreadful night," to be marched to Philadelphia for federal trial. A week later, excise collectors seized the stills of scofflaw farmers. Gen. Neville opened collection offices in the four counties. On November 19, Lee pardoned all who had been arrested, except 28 in Pennsylvania and 5 in Virginia. Once peace was affirmed in the area Lee turned his command over to Gen Daniel Morgan, who opened winter camp at Parkinson's Ferry. The excise tax was repealed by President Jefferson in 1802.

When George Washington died in 1799, Congress called upon Lee to deliver the eulogy at the funeral of his friend on December 26, 1799. The first lines have become famous: *"First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life...."*

Henry Lee died in near poverty 1818, His son, Robert Edward Lee, was the iconic General of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia in the Civil War 1861-1865.

## References:

- "The Whiskey Rebellion, The Frontier Test of the American Constitution" Jerry A. Clouse, Pa. Historic and Museum Commission. 1994.
- "Alexander Hamilton" John C. Miller, Barnes & Noble. 1959