



ANDREW ELLICOTT

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ANDREW ELLICOTT

His Life and Letters

BY

CATHARINE VAN CORTLANDT MATHEWS

ILLUSTRATED



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P R E F A C E

IT HAS long been the desire of the descendants of Andrew Ellicott that a record of his life and work should be made in the definite and permanent form of a biography. This has been felt to be a recognition which is justly due to the useful and enduring nature of most of his public work.

Except for a brief statement of the main facts of his life given in the Genealogy of the Fox, Ellicott, and Evans families; a short but excellent biographical sketch in *Stuart's Civil and Military Engineers of America*; and a few stray newspaper articles relative to his work on the surveys and plans of the city of Washington, no really adequate account of Major Ellicott's career has hitherto found its way into print, and thereby, into public notice. This book therefore presents for the most part entirely new material, and is taken largely from a mass of valuable and interesting papers, letters, diaries, and documents of various sorts, which are in the possession of Mr. Ellicott D. Curtis and other of Major Ellicott's descendants, and which have never before been published.

Especial mention should be made of Mrs. T. K. Alexander of Washington, D. C., who, besides the many papers and journals of Major Ellicott which are in her possession, has collected many documents relative to his part in the surveys and plans of the District of Columbia.

The thanks of the author for kindly advice and assistance given are due to Mr. Henry W. Lanier of Doubleday, Page & Co., to Mr. John B. Church of Geneva, N. Y., and to Dr. Richard B. Coutant of Tarrytown, N. Y.

NEW YORK, January, 1908.

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Engraved especially for this work.	

ANDREW ELLICOTT

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CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE

1754-1784

THERE is a growing tendency on the part of the present generation toward an increasing appreciation of the men — whether they were soldiers or statesmen, pioneers or settlers, men of science or men of letters — who in the early days of the nation made of their lives, their courage, their aspirations, and their talents, stepping-stones to the greatness of the America of to-day. The growing interest in what these men accomplished, and how they accomplished it, shows a realization, full of hope for the country's future, that the strength and worth of individual effort is the test of the nation's worth as a whole.

The latter half of the eighteenth century was exceedingly rich in its men. The list is long of the soldiers, statesmen, jurists, men of public affairs, who came forward as their country had need of them. It was less rich in scientific men of distinction, and for this reason, the names of such men as Franklin, Rittenhouse, Priestley, Ellicott, and a few more like them stand out on the annals of that half-century with a peculiar prominence, and the

biographies of these men hold the attention quite as closely as those more brilliant pages which record the triumphs or the defeats of the military and naval heroes of the nation.

“The memoirs of Andrew Ellicott,” wrote the president of an American college, “will form a valuable addition to the history of our country, taking us away from the beaten ground of battle-fields and Senate Chambers and Cabinets, to the services which science can render in the settlement of a new country.” It was justly said. Andrew Ellicott was among the first of those men whose scientific and mathematical attainments were used for the public benefit, and whose work was of permanent value to their country. He was a surveyor, an astronomer, a mathematician, and when the nature of his public work so required, he was a soldier and a diplomatist as well. Even in his youth receiving appointments of importance, “without the help or favor of any one” (as he was proud to record in a letter written in his thirtieth year), he early succeeded in inspiring a complete confidence in his ability, exactness, and integrity. He was employed throughout his whole life, by both the Federal Government and the individual States, to settle vexed and difficult questions of boundaries and State lines, to lay out towns and cities, and to survey new roads through the wilderness, at a time when a highway had all the importance of a railroad of to-day. The boundary work required tact and diplomacy as well as the most exact mathematical knowledge, while the laying out of future cities necessitated that he should possess not only judgment and practical common-sense, but also a fine foresight as to possible conditions, which, even though non-existent in

his day, must nevertheless meet with his most careful consideration.

The problems he was required to solve were many and difficult, and the record he has left behind him is one of hard work well and often brilliantly done. Whether what he accomplished for the Government is read of in the histories of the United States or in the unassuming words of his own letters and diaries, this one fact is equally impressive, that the country has always had need of the man of science, and that, without the services he has always been able to render her, she would be far from having the solidity she can boast to-day.

It has been said that genius which implies a combination of high faculties tends to be inherited, and in view of Andrew Ellicott's indisputable possession of a combination of high faculties, it is not surprising to find that his father, Joseph Ellicott, was remarkable in his day for a variety of mechanical and scientific attainments, and that the whole Ellicott family as far back as 1600 had shown in each generation a marked inventiveness and a knowledge of mathematics above the ordinary.

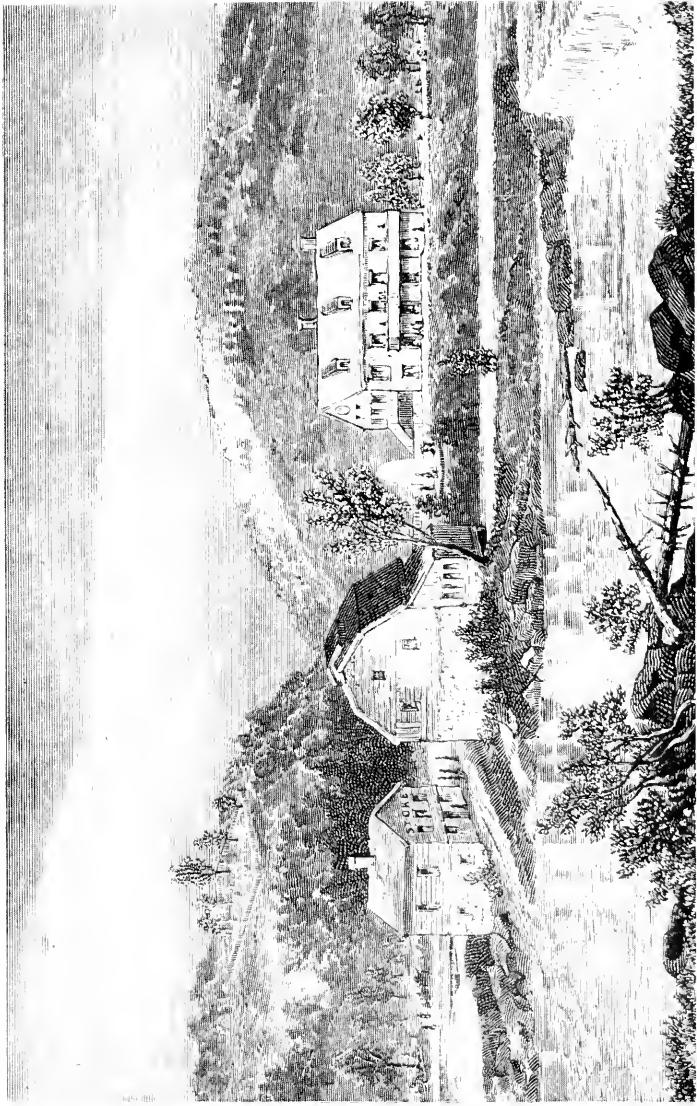
The account of the settling of Andrew Ellicott's progenitors in America is brief though romantic. In 1731 one Andrew Ellicott of Devonshire, England, an influential member of the Devonshire Society of Friends, meeting with some business reverses at home, came with his eldest son, Andrew, to make a visit in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.¹ It was by no means the intention of the elder Ellicott to settle in this country, and when his wife,

¹ Bucks County was one of the three original counties established by William Penn in 1682.

whom family tradition describes as a woman of great goodness and intelligence, wrote the following lines on their departure, she little thought that she was not to see her husband again. Her verse, in reality a prayer, runs thus:

“Through rocks and sands
And enemies hands
And perils of the deep,
Father and son
From Collosston
The Lord preserve and keep.”

Andrew Ellicott's reason for making this visit to America is not known, although it is alleged that it was to be a visit only; but while here the younger Andrew, then about twenty-three, met and loved Ann Bye, daughter of a landed proprietor of Buckingham township. Being, so runs the story, overwhelmed with grief at the thought of leaving her, he persuaded his father to remain on this side of the water, and they chose for their future home a place of about fifty acres on the main road between New York and Philadelphia, about five miles from Doylestown, the county seat, and very near Buckingham Meeting House, where, romance being triumphant, the younger Ellicott married Ann Bye in 1731. His choice was wise. Ann Bye was a woman of remarkable character, of fine physique, and possessed of a superior mind. She had a skill in medicine, a valuable possession in those days, which brought her no little fame in the surrounding country. She became the mother of five sons, all men of intelligence and fine appearance. Joseph, her eldest son (father of the Andrew Ellicott with whose life we are occupied), was perhaps the most gifted of the five, though



ELLCOTTS UPPER MILLS WITH "FOUNTAINVALE" AT THE RIGHT
Reproduced from a wood-cut, showing the buildings as they were in 1791.

they all appear to have shown great mechanical skill and business ability.

Joseph Ellicott was born in 1732. He "attained to some degree of eminence in the arts and sciences," and he possessed a knowledge of mechanics, together with a decidedly clever ability to turn that knowledge to practical account. He was High Sheriff of Bucks County in 1768-69, was a member of the Provincial Assembly, and enjoyed the friendship of Franklin and Rittenhouse. Added to his skill in mechanical contrivance of other sorts, he had a talent for clock-making, and had seriously studied this delicate art while on a visit to England in 1766. On his return home, he constructed a wonderful musical clock, from the making of which he derived much pleasure. This clock is still in existence.

Joseph Ellicott married early in life. His wife was Judith, daughter of Samuel Bleaker. Owing to an inheritance of land in England, which he sold at a large figure, he was placed in very comfortable circumstances, and enabled to give his children a somewhat better education than he had himself obtained. But he could bestow nothing on his son Andrew so valuable as the gift for mathematics and science which was to raise him to such eminence in his profession.

Andrew Ellicott was born January 24, 1754, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and it is probable that he secured the rudiments of his education at the little Quaker school in the township of Solesbury. Later he studied in Philadelphia and under Robert Patterson,¹ to whom he affec-

¹ Robert Patterson, born in Ireland in 1743, came to Pennsylvania in 1768. He served in the Continental Army during the Revolution. In 1779

tionately refers at a later date as “the preceptor of his youth and at all times his disinterested friend.”

While it is unquestionable that Andrew Ellicott was fortunate in being even for a time under Robert Patterson’s guidance, he owed most of his success to the qualities which were his inheritance. The genius for mathematics, the good judgment, the strong family affection, and, not least, the fine physique which stood him in such good stead in the vicissitudes of climate to which he was more or less exposed throughout his life, all came to him from his father, Joseph Ellicott.

The tastes of father and son ran in like channels always, and before Andrew was fifteen his father was trusting him to assist in the making of the musical clock. This complex specimen of clockmaking art is described as having “a case of mahogany, in the shape of a four-sided column, about eight feet high, each side of which is neatly finished; on the capital of this pillar is the clock, with four faces, being designed to set in the middle of the room.

“On one face is represented the sun, moon, earth, and the planets, all moving in their different orbits as they do in the heavens. On another face are marked the seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years (the years representing one century), all having their different hands pointing to the true time. Also the image of the moon, by which its age and apparent light are registered. On

he was elected Professor of Mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania, and occupied that chair for thirty-five years. In 1805 he was appointed Director of the Mint by President Jefferson. He was President of the American Philosophical Society from 1819 until his death in 1824.

a third face are marked the names of twenty-four musical tunes, being favorite ones of the times before the American Revolution. In the centre of this face is a pointer, which being placed against any named tune, repeats it. The smaller cylinder plays a tune every hour, the larger one every three hours. The smaller cylinder *before* striking the hour, the larger one *after* striking the hour. On the fourth face is to be seen, through glass, the curious mechanism of the clock."

It is easy to imagine the interest of Joseph Ellicott's flock of children (he had nine in all, of whom Andrew was the eldest) in the wonderful clock and the astonishing way in which it could play "The Lady's Anthem," "Ballanca's Strain," "The Lass with the Delicate Air," "Captain Read's Minuet," "The Hounds are all Out," and "Willingham's Frolic," together with eighteen other tunes, all equally popular at the time. But the really remarkable thing is that a lad of fifteen was trusted to assist at so intricate a piece of work. It argues no little faith in Andrew's ability on the part of his father, and is an assurance that he must early have given proof of the trustworthiness, exactness, and skill which so distinguished him in after life.

The agricultural life of Bucks County¹ offering no opportunity for the use of the peculiar mechanical ability of the family, Joseph Ellicott and two of his brothers, in 1760, made a horseback trip through the middle States, with a view to locating mills on some advantageous site.

¹ A curious and interesting account of life in Bucks County at the time of Andrew Ellicott's birth is to be found in Day's "Historical Collections of Pennsylvania," pp. 155-157.

Ten years later they bought a large tract of land in Maryland, on the Patapsco River, about ten miles west of Baltimore, and established there extensive mills, known respectively as Ellicott's Upper and Lower Mills. In a division of the property, the Upper Mills fell to Joseph Ellicott, and he built himself a mansion (which he called "Fountainvale"), furnished it handsomely, and surrounded it with a large and beautiful garden. In this garden was a fish pond, as well as a constantly flowing fountain, the water for which was conveyed underground in iron pipes from an unfailing spring on higher ground. From this fountain the place took its name.

Much that was of lasting public benefit is ascribed to the clever and inventive Ellicott family, who never sought to protect by patent the many useful devices their ingenuity suggested. Their flour mills were quickly followed by cotton mills, the cotton mills by an iron foundry. They opened offices in Baltimore and owned a wharf there. Quick and easy transportation becoming a necessity of their prosperity, they interested themselves in the promotion of the Baltimore and Fredericksburg Turnpike, the building of the bridge over the Monocacy River, and the Cumberland Road, — this latter a turnpike of considerable importance. They built school-houses for the children of their employees, and a Friends Meeting House at Elk Ridge Landing.

One of the family, John Ellicott, put up the first rolling mill and blast furnace erected in Baltimore, and he is said to have been the first person in this country to utilize the waste heat arising from the gases evolved in the blast furnace as an agent for the economical genera-



THE QUAKER MEETING HOUSE AT ELLICOTT'S MILLS, MARYLAND
Built by the Ellicott family about 1760 and still standing in 1908.

tion of steam. This John Ellicott was of the opinion in 1789 that the time was approaching when "roads would be so constructed and adapted to machinery that *steam cars* would roll their rapid wheels from city to city"; and about the same time he was actively interested in the construction of a steamboat of his own invention. Unfortunately for him his experiments in this direction came to an untimely end, — the exploding of the boiler of this boat resulting for the inventor in the loss of his right arm.

The first experiments ever made in this country in the use of plaster of paris as a fertilizer were made by the Ellicotts at the Upper Mills. They introduced the use of the "elevator," the "conveyor," and the "hopper boy" in milling. They also substituted marking by stencil plates for the old method of branding by hot irons. Practical inventions and the general progress of science and mechanics seem to have been of absorbing interest to them always, and Andrew Ellicott was brought up in an atmosphere which did much to foster his unusual talents.

Having secured his education and feeling himself able to establish a home of his own, Andrew Ellicott was married, December 31, 1775, at Newtown, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Sarah Brown, whose father was a prominent "Friend," and a cousin of Jacob Brown, the "Fighting Quaker" of the War of 1812. The young couple went at once to the Ellicott colony in Maryland.

In 1778, although military service was in direct opposition to the principles of the Society of Friends, Andrew Ellicott was commissioned by Governor Johnson of Mary-

land, first, Captain, and later, Major, in the Elk Ridge Battalion of Militia. That he accepted this commission is not the only thing that goes to show that, while respecting the Quaker principles, he was not in entire sympathy with their outward manifestations. He never used the "plain language" (thee and thou), in either speech or writing, never dated his letters First or Second Month, as is the Quaker usage, and after attending the Quaker Quarterly Meeting in 1786, he writes: "Our meditations were only interrupted once. Mine turned upon that easy sum for the Quadrature of a Circle found out by Mons. Leibting," naïvely implying that the one interruption was to him a hindrance to mathematical reflection instead of an aid to spiritual meditation.

Where the question of war was concerned, the elder Ellicotts were tenacious of their peaceful principles, yet in the Revolution, "they early espoused the cause of Independence in heart and soul. No Tory blood ran in the veins of a single Ellicott. Although they belonged to the peaceful Society of Friends, and were not expected to march to the bloody field, yet in all the ways that a peaceful citizen can serve his country in time of war, they were ever among the foremost in the land." This testimonial to their patriotism adds that "Andrew Ellicott, the son of old Joseph Ellicott, transgressed the principles of Friends to serve his country by becoming a Major under General Washington."¹

Many years after the Revolution, Andrew Ellicott, David Rittenhouse, and Bishop Madison of Virginia became engaged in a lively discussion concerning the doc-

¹ From the Howard District Press, 1847.

trine of Friends in regard to war, in which Major Ellicott (by this title he was always known in later life) insisted that in regard to defensive war the Friends were all wrong. The incident seems to show that his maturer judgment approved his years of military service, and his joining the Elk Ridge Battalion appears to have been the deliberate expression of his personal convictions, rather than a hot-headed impulse of his youth.

From the time of his marriage in 1775, Andrew Ellicott's life became publicly active and crowded with work and responsibility. One survey of importance after another occupied him, and his long life of usefulness was to know but little leisure.

Toward the end of the year 1781 he published "The United States Almanack for the Year of our Lord 1782; Being the Second after Leap-Year, and the Sixth Year of American Independence." "By Andrew Ellicott, Esq." is below in type modestly small, and the little publication contains much information of various sorts, with facts, weather, and verse curiously mingled, after the engaging fashion of the almanacs of the period. It refers, on one page, to "our last year's Almanack," but of this latter, or its predecessors, if any, no trace remains.

As may be imagined, American Independence being yet so young, many of the Almanack's historic dates and facts deal with British defeats and American victories, and not the least clever and curious of its varied contents is the "Prognosticks, &c. of the Allegany Philosopher."

"This great Sage," it begins, "as mentioned last year, lives on the other side of the Allegany Mountain, a place favourable to longevity, where he enjoys the most perfect

health. Tho' he has counted ninety-nine revolving years, his judgment is nervous and sound, and his ideas of philosophy unimpaired.

“This Sophist informs us, that Mrs. Britain, at this time, continues in a very low, lingering, languishing condition; her pulse, indeed, sometimes beats high, but the strongest efforts which she makes to keep up her importance, seem to arise from a sudden flow of animal spirits, and like the spasms of convulsion, are to be considered as injurious to the machine which is agitated by them. The disorder in her *bowels*, with which she has been for some years afflicted, gains ground; but she is most alarmed at the *inflamed* state of her *extreme parts*; and, indeed, they have so unpromising an aspect, that it is doubtful whether all the cooling medicines prescribed by her ablest physicians will be able to prevent *amputations*. The old lady exhibits the most striking symptoms of an inward decay, and is, evidently, hastening to her dissolution, though the precise moment, by the planets, cannot be ascertained. Her *constitution* is so much debilitated by severe shocks of various kinds (and particularly injured by that dreadful distemper the *King's Evil*;) that it is impossible she can survive them, without a miraculous revolution in her favour. With a broken *constitution*, and a bad habit of body, she must never expect to do what she *has* done. His sentiments concerning her recovery are every hour more and more confirmed, when he thinks of the frequent application which has been made of the *lancet*; for though phlebotomy may be highly serviceable in certain circumstances, the stoutest patient in Christendom may, like a devoted pig, be blooded to death.

“ He farther informs us that, by the most acute observation of the planets, she will be forced to acknowledge this year, in the fullest manner, the Independence of these United States, which will be recognized by all the powers of Europe; when heaven-born PEACE, with her balmy wings, will pervade this convulsed country, and heal the desolations that war has made.”

Month by month the Almanack goes quaintly on; we learn on the same page that they were to “ expect hard thunder ” on the 13th of June, and that “ The tears of compassion are sweeter than dewdrops falling from roses on the bosom of the Spring.”

In December we are told that:

“ As all to change and dissolution tend,
Poor Almanacks, even they must have an end.”

And so, with a recipe for pickling hams, a brief sermon on the text of Job v. 7, and a list of the justices of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, the Almanack of Andrew Ellicott Esq. for the year 1782 comes to a close.

Records of his earlier surveys were not kept, and it is not until ten years after his marriage that we have the first of those letters and diaries which tell the story of his life so simply and so unassumingly that the biographer cannot do better than to let them speak for him. They form a clear and fascinating picture of the men and manners, the country and the State of Andrew Ellicott's day, while through even the briefest of them, shines out the character of the man himself, in all its simplicity, integrity, and kindness. Between the lines of almost every scrap of manuscript he has left behind him, may

be traced the quiet, sensible courage, the quick and keen observation of men and things, the tremendous capacity for hard work, and the complete indifference to the lures of wealth or fame, which seem to have been recognized by all who came in contact with him as the most characteristic qualities of the man.

In the summer of 1784 he was at work upon a boundary survey of importance, and he writes to his wife from the "Very Border of the Wilderness" — in the first letter of his which is preserved to us:¹

"DEAR SALLY

"July 2^d 1784.

As my Health is thy first concern, I have the Pleasure of informing thee of my good State at present, I am as Hearty or more so than ever; but I do not like the Country— I shall write a long Letter in the Course of a few days— I saw Abraham Doan and his Cousin Hetty brought to Goal,² with two other Robbers they have committed notorious acts of Villany on the Frontier, one of their Company was Killed in Robbing a House in the neighbourhood, where I was — Give my kind respects to Mammy Brother and Sisters, and believe me to be with the greatest Esteem thy Loving

Husband."

¹ This is the only letter in which Major Ellicott used the "plain language." In none of his other letters or manuscripts does the "thee" and "thou" appear.

² The Doanes were a noted family of outlaws at the time of the Revolution; the father was a Quaker and a respectable man, but his six sons as they grew to manhood became a gang of desperate outlaws and cattle thieves, notorious upon the frontier for outrages of all sorts upon their neighbors. — Day's "Historical Collections of Pennsylvania," p. 160.

“ON THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT WELCOME July 30th 1784.

“MY DEAR

We have finished our Houses and are now living very comfortably on the Top of the highest Mount in this part of the World; our Observatory is in good order, and Well Stored with Instruments; my Companions are very agreeable Men, and I think we enjoy all the Happiness that people in our Situation could expect— It is now one month since we left the inhabited part of the Country—

. . . The following is a True Picture of Our living

We brakefast between 6 and 7

Observe the Sun's Altitude between 7 and 10

Dine between 12 and 1 after which we always drink our two Bottles before we leave the Table

Then Observe the Sun's Corresponding Altitude—

At 6 we have a large Bowl of Wine Sillybubb —
This rule we never break— We have each of us a Cow—

We drink our Tea about 7— And sometimes observe the Heavens greatest part of the Night.

You and our Dear Children are never out of my mind, and I remember with the greatest pleasure that companion of my Bosom, whose chief study hath ever been to make me happy— . . . About the last of October I shall set off for Home— every day, till that Time will be as long as a month spent with you

I am Dear Sally thy Loving

Husband.”

The companions whom he mentions as “agreeable” were Dr. James Madison, President of William and Mary

College, and later the first Bishop of Virginia; Robert Andrews, a man of prominence in public affairs, and John Page, a friend of Jefferson, and afterwards Governor of Virginia. These three, together with himself, had been appointed by the State of Virginia to complete the survey of the boundary between that State and Pennsylvania, carrying on the line of Mason and Dixon (famous later as the dividing line between slavery and freedom), which Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon had been forced by the Indians to abandon, unfinished, in the summer of 1767.¹ Confusion between the people of the border, as to where Virginia began or Pennsylvania ended, as well as to the more important question of under whose laws and jurisdiction they held their homes, had reached such a state in 1779 that Commissioners met in Baltimore, and as a result of the meeting, recommended that "Mason and Dixon's line be extended due west five degrees, to be computed from the river Delaware for the southern line of Pennsylvania, and that a meridian line from the western extremity thereof to the northern limits of the said state be the western boundary of Pennsylvania forever." This was made a law, and stands to-day.

After some lines, not entirely satisfactory, had been run by local surveyors, four Commissioners of prominence were appointed by each of the two States in 1784 to settle the affair in good earnest: by Virginia the four

¹ The Indians complained "that already a great path came from the Northward, with many people, wagons, and horses, another big path came from the East by the rivers, and if a path were made over the mountains to the Westward, the game would go with it, and the Indians would suffer." They were, as well, greatly alarmed at the strange instruments of the English astronomers which they thought "bad medicine."

mentioned above, Madison, Andrews, Page, and Ellicott, while Pennsylvania sent as her representatives, Dr. John Ewing, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, John Lukens, Surveyor General of Pennsylvania, Thomas Hutchins, afterwards styled "Geographer of the United States," and David Rittenhouse, already distinguished in Europe as well as at home for his astronomical genius. That Andrew Ellicott, a young man of thirty, not a resident of the State which appointed him, and who was able to say he had not the help or favor of any one, should have been chosen to act with these seven eminent men shows that his ability was early recognized.

Dr. Madison and Mr. Page having left the field after a certain portion of the work was at an end, the boundary line was carried to completion by Mr. Andrews and Major Ellicott. It was for the latter's skilful accomplishment of his share of the work that the College of William and Mary¹ gave him the degree of Master of Arts, mentioned in his next letter to his wife.

"DEAR WIFE

"Sept. 16th 1784.

On Monday next we Shall leave this Place, and begin to run the Boundary Line between Virginia and Pennsylvania— This Country is very healthy, but always wet — we have been almost dayly involved in Clouds since we came to this Mountain on the 13th day of August Last— The University of Williamsburgh have gave me an honorary Degree of Master of Arts— I am every minute thinking about you, and our dear Children, and praying

¹ The College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, Virginia, is the oldest college in the United States, Harvard excepted, and at the beginning of the Revolution it was the wealthiest.

the Divine Ruler of the Universe to take you under his Care 'till my Return, I have much calculation on hand this Morning, and therefore under the necessity of cutting this Short—

Dear Sally your

Loving Husband.

I have 3 Little Fawn-Skins to make the Children Stays.
A. E.”

“IN OUR TENT NEAR BEESON-
TOWN October 3^d 1784—

“MY DEAR

I received your Affectionate Letter I am exceedingly distressed at the sickness which you experience at the Mill— My feelings are Particularly hurt by reflecting on the Trouble which will necessarily fall to your Lott— The greatest consolation which I have in this Back-Country, is in reflecting that the All-Wise, disposer of Human-Events, had Preserved you and our Dear Children, from the surrounding Sickness and Death— . . . I intend being at Home the first Friday in November.— If the weather is good (6 or 7 days preceding)— you will probably meet me on the Road, if you Ride up towards Dossey's Tavern on that Day— a Meeting that would be more Joyfull to me, than the Greatest Estate, or Most Superb Title this Country can bestow— . . Nothing but Sleep draws my reflections from you, and our little Babes; and my constant prayer is that you, and they, may enjoy the Health which I do, and that such a long seperation may never again take place

I am My Dear Your Affec-

tionate Husband.

My Chest of Clothes I shall send away Tomorrow.”

The survey went forward as rapidly as its difficulties would permit, and a fragment of one of Major Ellicott's diaries, whose first date is November 9, 1784, records the progress of each day, including his journey homeward.

November 9th 1784

This morning tho very Cloudy I went with our Hands to the Elevation mentioned yesterday—Soon after we got there the Hemisphere was filled with fine rain and mist which not only obscured the Vistas to the East, but rendered all Knowledge of the Country useless each made use of his own Ideas to find the Encampment and every person got completely lost but by an unaccountable good fortune we all got in before dark— the Pennsylvanians were more unfortunate three of their men got Lost yesterday and lay out all last night

10. this morning went with the joint Hands to the unfortunate Elevation and tho Cloudy with some rain finished the Vista fixed up the Mark— then went to a second Elevation and began another Vista— Mr. Rittenhouse and Col. Porter got lost and were brought in by the firing of Guns— Rain and some Snow

11. Finished the Vista mentioned yesterday fixed up the Mark and went to a second Elevation and determined the Direction of the Line and began falling the Timber— This Day moved our Camp— Cloudy and rain all Day— some Snow.

12. Finished the Vista begun yesterday put up the mark and went on to another Hill of a most stupendous Height— the Prospect is noble and romantick— from this mountain we could Trace our Parallel of Latitude for 40 Miles— which to a mathematition is a prospect the

most pleasing of any other— fine rain and snow prevented our setting up any marks which put an end to our operations about 1 o'clock PM— the remainder of the Day M^r. Andrews and myself Viewed the romantick Banks of the South Fork of Fish Creek

The most remarkable Curiosity is a rock of upwards of 100 Yards Long 50 feet thick and 15 Yards wide Broke from its Base and Tumbled many Feet down the Precipice It appears to have happened about 20 Years ago probably occasioned by an Earth-Quake If we can have clear Weather for two Days we shall compleat our operations for this season— The sun has shined but twice since this day Week and then but a few minutes He is deprived of his Beams more than half the season in this Country.—

13. Heavy Rains all last Night which yet continue and will probably all Day— The Hills which compose this Country are so exceedingly High that when it rains in the Valleys or rather Crevices or Chinks it Hails or Snows on the Elevations. this observation is intended only to include Spring and Autumn—

About 10 OClock it ceased raining and M^r Andrews and myself went to the Elevation with our Hands and began to open the Vista in a short time we were joined by the Pennsylvanians— we fixed up our marks and finished the Vista by 2 o'clock P.M. The rain then began to fall so plentifully that we were obliged to return to our Encampment— This Day five months I parted with my affectionate Wife and family in order to join in the Execution of this Important Business— . . .

14. Being Sunday we moved our Camp to within

two miles of the Observatory which we expect will be our Last Moving on this Line— Two days will in all probability finish the Parrellel of Lattitude— some nights past I found myself troubled with a smart Fever occasioned by continually being exposed to the Rain which has been falling every Day and night since Monday last— This Country will one time or other exceed in Grazing the continual rains keep up the Life of Vegetation and supply the Plants with a great Sufficiency of Juices—

15th. This Day to our great Satisfaction we finished the Wood Cutting of the 5° West Longitude and discharged all our Hands in the Evening it only remains to measure 1' 75" of Time East from the meridian of our Observatory to compleat the Business of the season this in all probability will be executed tomorrow— Cloudy with Squalls of Snow all day—

16. This morning we all went to the Observatory in order to measure East from our meridian. . . . we then fixed the South West Corner of Pennsylvania which is a Squared White Oak Post unmarked standing some Chains East of the West End of the Vista— The Completion of this Business has given me the greatest Satisfaction possible not merely on account of the Accuracy but the prospect of a speedy return to my Affectionate Wife and Family who are continually in my mind— Tomorrow we shall set off for the Inhabitants and proceed to our good Friend Jacob Beesons and refresh some Days before we mount the mountains— Cloudy with squalls of Snow.

17th. This morning about 4 OClock we packed up our Beds and Blankets and about day Light set off for the Inhabitants— about sun down we got to Jackson's—

Fort— Cloudy the sun shined about 1 Hour— We had an Elegant Supper provided and spent the Evening in Philosophick Sociability—

18. Rained all Last Night and continued untill about 12 OClock. After Dinner we set off for the Widow Seatons after we Left the Fort about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an Hour the Rain began to fall plentifully and continued untill we got to our intended Quarters— the Pennsylvanian Commissioners went to Coll. McClaries— This Country exceeds anything I could suppose for Cloudy Weather and Rain— I intend to advance a Conjecture to account for it if the Inclemency of the Weather should detain me the Course of one Day in the Mountains; but why in the mountains? that thou shall know when I advance the Conjecture— Mr. George Seaton is lately from below he informs that the sickness still rages with much malignity— I fear for my Family; but rest assured of the goodness and Justice of the Decrees of the Deity— My Companion Doct^r Andrews is while I am now writing putting on a solemn phiz & Ceremoniously Christening Children which of us is the Best employed would be hard to determine— A Methodist Preacher is in Company with us this Evening he appears to be a man of few Words— His name is Cooper— The Methodists are a Sect of Christians with whom I am but little acquainted in the main I am inclined to Judge favourably of them— this one Circumstance is much in their favour. Clergymen and Preachers of any denomination are scarce the People but little acquainted with the true principles of Christian Religion and the want of Money on this side of the Mountain deters the Ministers of this Faith who teach for pecuniary Reward from

coming among them— The methodists on the other side of the mountain to remedy this make up a sum of Money to defray the necessary expences and send some of their Preachers out here who stay six months at a time and teach without reward— The Person now by me is one of the six on this station he came out last June about the same time I did—

19. Rain 'till about 10 O'clock after which the sun began to shine. we then packed up our Beds and Blanketts and proceeded to Beeson-Town where we arrived about 6 O'clock P.M.— I find myself much rejoiced at the Prospect of once more returning Home and enjoying the Pleasure of Domestic-Happiness— my Ambition is nearly satisfied— I have without the Intrest of Friends or Relations or my own application been appointed to various posts— nominated by the State of Virginia one of their Commissioners on this important Occasion— applied to by Congress to assist at the Division of the new States— and presented by the University of Williamsburgh with the Degree of M.A.

20th. Rain at this Place; but snow on the mountain, which is distant 4 or 5 miles— some of the Fruit-Trees I observe are yet Green under the Hill, and the Top of the Laurell Ridge tip't with the Robe of Winter — I now number my days with as much solemnity as Steines Prisoner in the Bastille— so much is my mind fixed on Home— This Afternoon is remarkably stormy the Wind High and Chilling and the Rain extreme Cold. I have got my Horses shod and intend leaving this Place next Tuesday. My Servant John C. Roth both offends and pleases me his great affection for Baccus hurts him; but

his drollery sometimes raises a Smile which obliterates his failings— I value any Animal capable of giving me Pleasure—

21. Stormy all last Night— the day Squally with High Winds— in the afternoon after finishing my mathematical Exercise I went to the Methodist Meeting— One Mr. Todd from Maryland was the Preacher— at this Meeting I met with an old School-mate a son of Mr. Hugh Smith of Bucks County—

22^d. . . . Settled all our Accounts with our Friend Jacob Beeson:— As I was riding through the Town about 10 OClock I met with a Face that appeared Familiar— the owner addressed me by name upon recollection I recognized George Mitchell— he formerly went to the same Scholl I did—

23^d. After Brakefast we packed up our Blankets and about 10 OClock began our Journey, at 1 OClock we found ourselves on the Top of Laurell-Hill— Although this was the first morning we saw Ice below the mountain Winter appeared here with all Its attendants— The Ice would almost bear our Horses the Wind extreme cold— and Snow now falling the Roads much worse than they were ever known before after travelling 11 miles we took up our Quarters at one Mr. Daughertie's—

24. Before Day this Morning we eat Brakefast and began our Journey about Sun-Rise—the Weather extreme cold and the Roads bad to a degree before unknown the ground covered with Snow which hid the Mud-Holes and rendered Traveling not only tedious but dangerous About 5 OClock P. M. we took up our Quarters at one Mr. Mountains. at 4 OClock we passed the Memorable

West Line began by Mess^{rs}. Mason & Dixon and completed by us this Season and verified by the most exact Astronomical Observations— Mr. Mountain has a Sufficiency of Liquors and Provisions but falls short in the Article of Bedding— he has but three one Occupied by himself and Wife one by the small Children and the Other by the Bar-Maid— for this last I endeavoured to stipulate for my fellow Traveller and colleague the Rev^d Doc^{tr} Andrews on account of his late ill state of health but she Absolutely refused having any thing to do in a Bargain in which he was concerned alledging that he had tied so many Knots and finished so many bad Bargains which the Parties would gladly dispense with if they could that It was dangerous to meddle with him— I then requested a part for myself the other she might occupy herself if she pleased to this she objected I then offered her my Blankets and Sheets to this She agreed with pleasure I then told the Doc^{tr} the Bed was his and gave him my title but the Hussey immediately Reniged and reclaimed the Bed— We then concluded to spread our Blankets and Sheets before the Fire— this we performed and lodged amidst an Heteroclite of all the Characters of the Mountains—

25. Began our Journey before Day-light— we passed the highest Ridges of the Allegany about 2 OClock P.M. in the Evening we took up our Quarters at one Mr. Tittles and have a large open House to ourselves.

26. At day light we settled our Bill and mounted our Horses about 9 OClock we made the foot of the Allegany at the Junction of the Maryland and Virginia Roads— at this Stage we Brakefasted and then my

Colleague and self took an Affectionate farewell he goes by the way of Winchester to Williamsburgh— he is a Sensible lively Companion and a good man— about 12 OClock I got to Wills Creek the Climate is quite altered and I laid aside my Cap— In the Evening I made Old-Town and put up at Mr. Simpkins— my Friends in this Place flocked about me as if I had been raised from the Dead—

27th. . . . proceeded on my way— . . . about Sun set I got to Hancocks-Town— . . . I find myself now almost clear of the Mountains. I have now seen them in Extremes. I saw them last June cloathed in their Various foliage and I have now seen them crowned with Snow— during the whole of this change I have been seperated from my Family by complying with the duties I owe to my Country; but in no time have I been a Stranger to the soft emotions raised by reflecting on my Domestick Happiness and anticipating my return to an aged Mother an Affectionate Wife and small Children added to Brothers Sisters and a number of Friends—

28. Early in the Morning I set off and got to Conecochegue about 12 OClock which I forded though very high about the Middle of the Afternoon I reached Hagers-Town and put up at the Gen. Washington— passed the Evening with Daniel Hughes Esq^r Col. Gibson Doc^{tr} Young and some others—

29. About 10 OClock I left Hagers-Town and pushed on for Frederick-Town which place I reached about Sun Down and put up at Cap^t. Morriss's Tavern. . . .

30th. Early this morning I left Frederick-Town and arived at Home about Eight OClock in the Evening and Found my Wife and little Children alive though in a bad

state of Health one of the Children had been a long time in a Languishing state and no Hopes of its recovery; but I find myself truly thankfull to the Father of Mercies Who has preserved them and myself for an Interview on this side the Grave—

CHAPTER II

BALTIMORE AND THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF PENNSYLVANIA

1785

IN April, 1785, Major Ellicott moved with his little family to Baltimore, where he had a house on the east side of Liberty Street. The continued ill-health of his wife and children while on the Patapsco led to this change of residence. One of his children, his little son George, had continued, so writes his father, "wasting away until the 17th of March and then left this uncertain Life for one more durable," and he adds this touching little sentence, "For two Months I was scarcely ever from it." Shortly after the loss of this little boy, he says that he leased his property at Ellicott's Mills, and "removed the remaining part of my family to my House in Town." The address of a letter to his wife, written on his next absence from home, is:

"Mrs. Sarah Ellicott
Baltimore Town near
the Chapel on Church Hill."

They were scarcely settled in this new home, when Major Ellicott again left for the field, to complete the last season's survey, and to undertake a new one. This

was to run the west line of Pennsylvania from the Ohio River north to Lake Erie. In the words of the commission, he was appointed by the State of Pennsylvania as “a commissioner in conjunction with David Rittenhouse and Andrew Porter, Esquires, or either of them, or such other Commissioner or Commissioners as may be appointed by Council, to run and mark the Boundary of this Commonwealth from the River Ohio where it crosses the same to the Northwest Corner of the State.”¹

On hearing of his appointment, Major Ellicott immediately wrote as follows to “His Excellency John Dickinson” at Philadelphia:

“SIR/

By a Letter which I received from Mr. Rittenhouse dated the 28th of April, I understood that the Executive Council (at the Head of which you preside), have appointed me one of your Commissioners to run the Western Boundary of your State over the Ohio;—As I have been employed in favour of Virginia on this business to that River, I find I can attend with conveniency afterwards in favour of Pennsylvania. . . .

I have the Honour to be

Your Excellencies

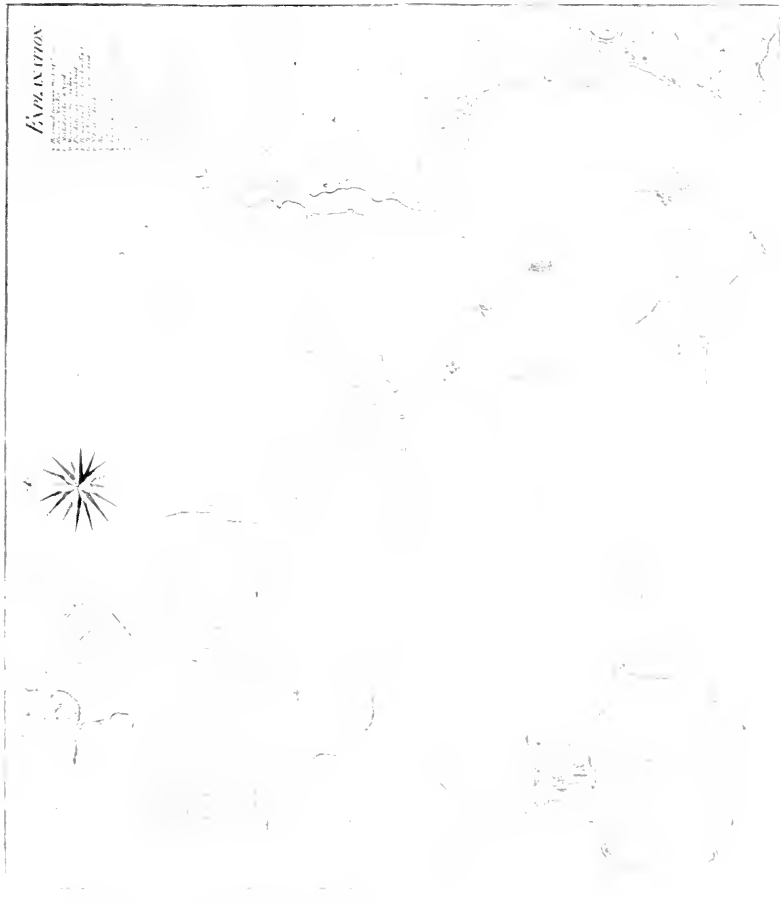
Hbl Servt

BALTIMORE
May 4, 1785.

ANDREW ELLICOTT.”

Beeson-Town was to be the meeting place of the Boundary Commissioners for the season of 1785,—their joint report of the previous season’s work having ended in

¹ Extract from the minutes of the Executive Council, Philadelphia, May 5, 1785.



MAP OF BALTIMORE ABOUT 1792
 Reproduced from the original in the library of the Maryland Historical Society.

these words: "The advanced season of the year and the Inclemency of the weather have obliged us to suspend our operations, but we have agreed to meet again at the South West Corner of Pennsylvania on the sixteenth Day of next May, to complete the object of our Commission." Agreeably to this arrangement, Major Ellicott left home on the 13th of May, and proceeded to Beeson-Town to meet the other Commissioners. He himself would still represent Virginia until the Ohio River was reached, and the Pennsylvania-Virginia line complete. After this he would become, according to his appointment by the Executive Council, one of Pennsylvania's Commissioners for determining the western boundary of that State. His diary of the journey to Beeson-Town and of the ensuing work begins on the day of his departure from home:

"In the beginning of May I was acquainted by the ingenious Mr. Rittenhouse of my being appointed a Commissioner in behalf of Pennsylvania after we crossed the Ohio, and on the 13th I took a Sorrefull farewell of my Family and proceeded on for the Western Country and lodged at our seat on Patapsco—¹

14. Left our Seat and proceeded (with my Brother Joseph who is going with me on this expedition) to Frederick Town which place we reached about 8 OClock in the Evening. The lands from Baltimore to Monocasy are generally very Bad the Inhabitants poor and Mechanicks very Lazy we had much Trouble in getting one Horse shod on the Road it detained us not less than 3 Hours— Lodged at Capt. Morriss's—

¹ Ellicott's Mills.

15. . . . In the Afternoon about 3 OClock we made Hagers-Town and took up our Quarters for the Remainder of the Day— I am at this Time very lame occasioned by a Kick of a Horse on my left Leg just about the Ancele it happened about noon and for some time I thought the Bones must be shattered—

16. Myself and Brother brakefasted with our good friend Col. Hart after which we proceeded to Hancock-Town the Land after we leave Fort Frederick is very Broken and except the Banks of Potowmack scarcely fit for Agriculture the Buildings are very sorry; but the Inhabitants very Hospitable— at our Stage I found a great number of the Neighbours reading a News Paper printed more than 3 Months ago but it nevertheless engaged their Attention and many conjectures were made upon the Politicks of the Day—

17. . . . Rode to Old-Town— . . . this Evening I spent with the Celebrated Col. Cressap he is now more than 100 Years Old he lost his Eye sight about 18 months ago; but his other faculties are yet unimpaired his sense Strong and Manly and his Ideas flow with ease—

18. . . . Rode to Mr. Gwyns. A considerable number of people are settling at Cumberland they expect in a Short Time to rival Hagers-Town in the Back Trade they will fail for want of an Extensive fertile Country Adjoining the place— at this Stage we found a considerable number of Mountaineers disputing about Religion— they were inclining to Methodism— O My God! what mischiefs Arise in this Sublunary World among us small and inconsiderable beings about the forms which will best please thee and enable us to reach that bliss promised us both by Reason and Revelation—

19. Rode to M^r. Mountains— [He was of course going over, in his journey, the same ground he had covered the previous autumn, stopping at the same places, and following the same roads.] From Gwynnes to this place a distance of about 26 Miles the Trees are yet divested of their Various foliage and traces of winter are yet Visible the Gardens refuse to the Industrious Husbandman the Sweets of a Vegetable Diet—

20. . . . About 4 OClock in the afternoon arrived at Beesons Town— as we descended the Laurell Hill we could sensibly observe the gentle gradations towards summer till [we] came to the Bottom where the Trees were compleatly cloathed in their Robes of Summer— In this Town I met with my Colleague M^r. Nevil from the State of Virginia— The Eastern Commissioners have not yet arived but their Baggage passed by Yesterday and proceeded to Muddy-Creek— we took up our Quarters at our Commisaries M^r. Jacob Beesons to wait their Arival. . . . The People about this Town are busied about making new Roads under the Direction of M^r. Beeson— . . . an Industrious good Citizen who directs his views to the ease and convenience of his Neighbours in my oppinion is a Character which Royalty might envy—

23. We have certain advice that some Indians and White People got in a Frolick at Pittsburgh last week when two of the latter were killed by one of the former— he committed the Murder with a Knife of a large and strong make— . . . The Inhabitants of this part of the Country Might live much more comfortably than they generally do— Their Houses or rather Cabbins are badly built they are small and ill planned and all the

Family live in the Same Apartment which serves for Parlour, Bed-Room, Washing-House, and Kitchen—

24. A very Heavy Rain last Night and great part of this Day— the Fences which crossed the Runs I perceive are carried away and in all probability the Indian Corn will suffer very much— the delay of the Pennsylvania Commissioners which detain us at this Place added to the wet Weather makes this life by much too inactive— . . . without Action the Mind becomes torpid and the body Lethargick— And doubtless when the Deity formed Man he intended him for Action and hence the Judgment against Adam —

“In the Sweat of thy Face, shalt thou eat Bread”

Milton.

For want of a Bible I found myself under the necessity of applying to Milton for the sentence against Adam which though not literally scriptural is sufficiently pointed for my purpose—

25. A clear windy day but too cold for the Season the Time hangs very heavy upon me but few Acquaintance and those unacquainted with the Principles of our business by which I am unable to communicate my Ideas of forming and running a Meridian across such a broken and uncultivated Country— was but Mr. Rittenhouse Here I think my mind would enjoy itself and our business go on with accuracy and expedition— The Indians are very mischievous over the River if they do not become more placable we shall not attempt to carry our Line into their Country this Season—

My Female acquaintances are very few the Women have generally strong and course Features and by no means regular but they carry evident marks of Health—

26. Very cold for the Season . . . by a person from the Mountain we learn that it snowed on the Laurel-Hill— Four Men came into Town from the Indian Country where 4 of their company were killed by the Natives— Mr. Peter Patrick was one of the unfortunate. . . . We as yet have no account of the Pennsylvanian Commissioners their delay is very surprizing . . .

27. . . . Mrs. McLane wife of Col. McLane who is now laying off Districts over the River Ohio made an agreeable entertainment for us the Principle Ladies in Town attended— Mirth and Sociability enlivened the Evening ”

This entertainment was perhaps given in return for one of which he had written to his wife a few days before in the following letter:

“ MY DEAR

“ May 25th 1785

. . . We are yet laying at Beeson-Town. . . . Yesterday my Assistant Col. Nevil, and myself had a Tea Entertainment, at which the Principle Ladies of the Place attended:— considering our Situation, and the situation of our Company, it was conducted with much Gallantry, Mirth, and good Humour: and though you was distant many long Miles, I nevertheless enjoyed your enchanting company in Idea— Pray be carefull of your Health, and the Health of our Little ones— Keep our Pew full— and pay the utmost respect to our good Parson West. . . . Give my respects to Young Mr. West, I intend him to draw our Pictures on my Return,— he will make a Capital figure as a Limner— . . .

With utmost Affection

and Love your Dutifull

Husband.”

The journal continues:

28. Spent the forenoon in Walking about the Country— In the afternoon received advice that the Pennsylvanian Commissioners were on the Mountains and expected to join us Tommorrow Evening— this Intelligence has given a new stimulus to my Spirits especially when I consider that my good and Wise Friend David Rittenhouse is one of the Gentlemen with which we are to spend this Season— . . .

✓ 29. Being Sunday — In a humble frame of mind I adored the Transcendant goodness and boundless Majesty of the Deity I viewed myself as an Atom in the Creation and wondered why pride should be in Man;—but small and Inconsiderable as we may appear when compared to the Infinity of the Universe we nevertheless appear to be objects under the Ruling care of Divine Providence else why was this Celestial Spark which enlightens Man and inquisitive Reason to search after the Hidden Mysteries of Nature, given us . . .

30. A fine Morning— . . . About 11 OClock the Eastern Commissioners to my Joy arived — the Afternoon was spent in much good Humour and mirth and philosophick enquiry — The Evening I passed at Mrs. Campbells whose good Sence and lively Imagination added to her personal Charms and Sociability could not fail of giving the greatest satisfaction to a person blessed with the fine feelings of Human Nature— Envy and detraction have Levelled their envenomed Darts at her reputation; but Time which like Fire tries all things will pronounce her an Honour to her Sex and She will be remembered for her good qualities when the little disturbers of her repose are buried in Oblivion—

June 1st., 1785. . . . My Assistant Col. Nevil has lost both his Horses some days ago which will occasion our Movements tomorrow to be attended with some Inconvenience— Many of the People on this Side of the Mountain affect Learning the following is a Specimen of Maj: Brownfields Talents in that way — as he rode up to a Tavern he made the following elegant oration — “ hoollo the Host! the Host!” at which the Servant appeared he then continued “ take my labourous dumb-Animal, and put him in a seperate department by himself, and give him proper Nutrils such as a dumb Animal may consist on, and I will abscond for It in the Morning” the boy not understanding this strange harrangue, ran to his Master, and desired him to walk to the Door, for the Person there was a frenchman, and he could not understand one word he said— at another time he observed that “ there would be a *great conjunction* of *Rain* or *Snow* for there was a large *Circumstance* round the *MOON*” and when he made application for his Licence in order to keep a Publick-House in Beeson Town— he made the following Speech before the Court— “ Gentlemen by the consent of the People and the probation of the County I intend to present my House to the use of the Publick—”

3^d. Parted with all our Friends and Rode to the Widow Seatons— in the Evening Had an Interview with the Pennsylvanian Commissioners— . . . The Inhabitants of this Western-Country on account of their little care in keeping themselves and Houses Clean are . . . infested with Bugs and Fleas— The Inhabitants of Beeson-Town though in many Respects Valuable Members of the Com-

munity appear to have no Idea of distributing their business into several apartments; but one Small Cabbin answers all the purposes of Parlour Bed-Room, Kitchin and Wash House— This may be termed *Multum in Parvo*— . . .

5. . . . The man attended with Horses for Col. Nevil we then proceeded for the Wilderness by the way of Jacksons Fort which place we reached about 11 OClock and being Sunday we attended Divine Service if a Rapsody of words so unconnected that no Human being could place one Sentence to the end of another to make common Sence may deserve that Epithet— after this business being ended we proceeded up Ten Mile to Its first Fountain— The Bottom-Lands on this Stream are very good but they are narrow being bounded by High-Hills unfit for Cultivation— In the Evening we reached the Waters of Fish-Creek where we joined Our Hands and Encamped. . . .

6. . . . Some of my Horses Missing, after making some search, we gave them up— Struck our Tents and Decamped— about 11 OClock we encamped with the Pennsylvanians on the Main N. Fork of Fish-Creek where we expected the Meridian to pass— in the Afternoon began opening a Vista Due N. from S. W. Corner of Pennsylvania [This was where they had left off work the previous season].

7. The Morning was clear and promised us a favourable day but by noon the Rain began to fall very plentifully accompanied with Heavy Thunder— In our way to the Corner we roused some fine Deer— this part of the Country is not only a Wilderness at present but must ever continue so— the Vallies are too small for Cultivation and the Hills too steep and high, and in short they

are only separated by Crevices— their Tops are so narrow that frequently two Waggons would reach across—

We are much pestered with Muskeetoes and Knats the last are numerous beyond conception and we have no other way to keep clear of them but by making a Smoak— . . . we find by experiance that Tobacco-Smoak is an excellent preservative against them — one Pipe will clear a whole Tent— They are extreame small and tender the slightest touch crushes them to death— when we leave our Tents we have to muffle up our Faces and keep Gloves on our Hands in order to oppose their Attacks— The large Horse-fly is very numerous and pleagues our Horses excessively— the poor Animals try to run into the Smoak of our Fires to get clear of them— Poison-Vine is in great abundance— my Hands are as compleatly blistered as if I had applied a plaster of cantherides— I cannot see anything in this Wilderness that can make it tolerably agreeable— This evening we discovered a mutiny among our People in both Camps but for prudential reasons did not give any intimation of the discovery—

8. Early this Morning, one Brown who was the soul of the Mutiny received a severe cudgeling and several others discharged— we then went with the remaining hands and began work; . . . In the afternoon my Brother Joseph went with some Hands to enlarge the Pile of Stones about the Corner Post—

9. Doc^{tr}. Barton, my Brother, and Self went to our old Observatory notwithstanding a heavy Rain—

10th. Last Evening was remarkably fine and gave us an opportunity of making such a number of Observations as enabled us to obtain our direction with uncommon

presicion— The Horse Flies was so bad that they drove our Horses almost Mad the poor dumb Animals would lay down and rowl in order to get Clear of them—

Here the diary ends, but the letters to his wife continue the story of the work.

“GRAVE CREEK WATERS

June 20th 1785.

“MY DEAR

We have now been about two Weeks in the Wilderness, and our Work goes on very well, we cut about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a Mile p^r Day over the most hilly Country upon Earth. — the greatest Harmony possible subsists among us, M^r. Rit-tenhouse in perticular has frequently complimented me, which I confess has somewhat raised my Vanity, because he is commonly sparing, but where he conceives there is real Merit— My Brother Joseph directs one Company of the Hands, I believe to [the] great satisfaction of both Employer, and Employee— We live considering our Situation very well; but by constantly shifting our encampment, it is out of our power to observe that regularity we are enabled to do at Home— When I say we live very well, it must be considered with regard to the many disadvantages under which a set of people in a Wilderness must labour— If I could picture this part of the Western-Country, you would wonder why it could ever be an object of contention. — Conceive a Country composed of an infinite number of very High Hills, narrow at the Top, and only seperated by narrow Crevices, or Chinks, as for Vallies there is none— these Hills are Inhabited at present by Bears, Wolves, Deer, &c. and covered by tall Timber, and Weeds; among the latter are many Serpents, particu-

larly the Rattle Snake— which have frequently brought the following lines of Doc^{tr} Goldsmith to my Memory,

“Where at Each step, the Traveller fears to Wake”

“The Rattling terrours, of the Vengefull Snake”

— — When I reflect on the Hardships we daily experiance, in climbing over this Country, I again follow the same Poet and exclaim,—

“How ill are things like these exchanged for thee”

If it should become sickly in Town, send the Children to the Mill, a change of Air may probably be nessessary — If real Love, and Affection, ever attended a Solemn Marriage Contract I think it was ours— and the greatest pleasure I now enjoy is in anticipating my return to your Loving Embraces.— Pray give my Respects to our good Friend Parson West, and his Family— and excuse this hasty Letter, which I am under the nessessity of writing upon my Knee in the Woods—

I am My Dear Your

Loving and Affectionate

Husband.”

“WATERS OF WHEELING

July 6 1785.

“MY DEAR

. . . We are yet in the Wilderness; but expect to Reach the Settlement in 10 or 11 days, we go on with great regularity, and cut a most beautiful line, this day we had a Prospect along it of about 15 Miles, it appeared as streight as a well stretched Cord, and we could not discover the least error by a most excellent

Telescope— My Brother Joseph at Present runs the guide Line for the Choppers, and keeps in great favour— my attendance on the Line is never more than four Hours on one Day, which is spent in putting up Marks in the Line— we rectify our Course by Observation in the Night when we suppose there can be any error—

Our living is generally very good, we have Wine, Spirits, and Whiskey,— Bacon, Bear, Deer, and Turkey— but have been twice without Provision till Hunger began to be sensibly felt — I have a desire that you would send me your Picture, have it done by young West, one so small that it may be enclosed in a Letter which must be sent to Beeson Town— do gratify me in this reasonable Request— I have enclosed a Line to young West on the Occasion—

I am my Dear

Your Affectionate

Husband.

P. S. Our Waiters are now preparing some Goose-Berry Tarts— this Fruit is natural to this Country—

Do not forget the Picture — I know you would not, if you could be sensible of the Pleasure it would give me.

A. E.”

“MY DEAR

“July 29th 1785.

I have now been living about one Week at M^r Charles Well's, where I have been treated as one of his Family he has become one of the Richest Men on this side of the Mountain— his last Wife is a very agreeable Woman— our Line is now about 2 Miles beyond this Place and we propose moving after it Tomorrow— from a Hill where



SARAH ELLICOTT

The wife of Andrew Ellicott. From a miniature.

our Axe-Men are now Encamped we have a most beautiful Prospect of the Line for about 12 Miles—

I expect we shall reach the River Ohio in the course of 4 Weeks— we have all been very Healthy but several of our Men [have] been hurt by the falling of Trees one . . . got his arm broke in two places— . . .

I bear my absence from you and our little Children but badly and frequently force a smile when my Heart is shut against Mirth— I shall write largely to you and all my Friends when we get to the River— I shall then draw upon the State of Virginia for my pay which will be a very considerable sum— when that comes to hand my desire is that you would have the House finished and furnished with everything that you may deem necessary— . . .

I am my Dear Sally

Your Affectionate and

Loving Husband.”

“MY DEAR

“August 4th 1785.

On Monday last I left Mr. Charles Well’s, where I had my Head-Quarters for 9 or 10 days; and have again taken to the Tent— we now go about 1 Mile p^r Day, having made an addition to our Axe Men, and expect to compleat the Boundary between Virginia, and Pennsylvania, in about 20 days— . . . Was I but convinced of your Wellfare, I think I should enjoy a considerable share of Human Happiness; but I find myself so attached to you, by Real Love, and Sympathetick Affection, that I always have fears on this Head— . . . Your

Affectionate and

Loving Husband.”

On the 23d of August the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Virginia was completed, and the joint Commissioners could report, "We have carried a meridian line from the southwest corner of Pennsylvania northward to the river Ohio, and marked it by cutting a wide vista over all the principal hills intersected by the said line, and by falling or deadening a line of trees generally through all the lower ground, and we have likewise placed stones marked on the east side 'P.' and on the west side 'V' on most of the principal hills and where the line strikes the Ohio, which stones are accurately placed in the true meridian boundaries of the states as aforesaid."¹

He writes his wife of the completion of the work:

"MY DEAR

"Aug. 24th 1785.

We now lay encamped on the Banks of the Ohio and intend Crossing it Tomorrow—

The Boundary Line between the States of Virginia and Pennsylvania was completed on the 23 Day of this Month it makes a most beautifull appearance from the Hills being between 60 and 70 Miles due North and cut very wide and perfectly streight— The Indians appear very peaceable and I do not apprehend there can be any danger within the compass of our business from them— many Families are now settled over the River and are not apprehensive of being interrupted—

I have enclosed my Account against the State of Virginia In the Letter directed to Mess^{rs} Usher and Donaldson who will let you have what Money you want to finish and furnish the House— I want Carpets for the

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, 1785, vol. x.

Entry and Front Room they may be Had of Usher and Donaldson— the other things I shall leave intirely to your Judgment and Taste—

I expect my pay this Season will enable me to put my Affairs in such a situation that Money will never have charms sufficient to draw me from you another Season— Many are the Solotory Hours I spend in traversing these vast Woods and I never take a walk but I find the want of your Company— . . .

My principle Companion is M^r Rittenhouse who is a Gentleman I daily find new reasons for Admiring; but how fluctuating is Human Happiness? this good Man will leave us in September—

I would choose you should get one Looking Glass of M^r William Murphey Book Seller in Market Street; but this is meddling with things which belong to your Department—

I am My Dear Your

Affectionate Husband.”

“MY DEAR

“September Sunday 11th 1785.

As this Letter goes by the way of Philadelphia, in all probability it will not come to hand in less than 20 days from the Date— in that case you may begin to look for my return, in about 5 Weeks afterwards— We are now encamped about 12 Miles West of the Ohio, our Work goes on very well considering the Country we have to go through — the Hills extreme brushy, and no inhabitants within many miles—

We have had several of our Workmen badly Hurt by the falling of Timber in our Line— One unfortunate per-

son by the name of Cross, was caught under the Top of a Tree last Wednesday, and died on Fryday— the same Night we buried him in the Middle of the Line, and raised him a Monument of Logs— such a Circumstance in the Wilderness, is attended with an uncommon degree of Solemnity—

I shall have to go to Philadelphia soon after my return, and intend taking you along— I shall want some new Shirts, let half of them be full Ruffled, make what Preparation you think proper for yourself, and do not fear the expence.—

Tomorrow my Dear Friend the Great Mr. Rittenhouse leaves us, and proceeds for Philadelphia, his absence will be greatly felt by our little Band, but by none more than myself, he has been my constant companion in all our little Excursions, after the natural Curiosities of this Country,— we have discovered some worthy the Attention of Philosophers,— specimens of which we have preserved— . . .

The following is an exact description of our way of Living, — we brakefast early on Coffee or Chocolate— we dine on good Beef, or Venson— and afterwards take a glass of good Wine— In the Evening we have a dish of Tea, and a Bowl of Syllabubb— we have three fine Cows— Description cannot paint my anxiety for your welfare, and the welfare of our Children, and many are the waking Hours I spend in my Tent, in the dead of Night, anticipating my return to your Arms, and once more enjoy the Charmes of your Mind, and conversation— . . .

I am my Dear Sally

Your Affectionate and

Loving Husband.”

The boundary line was carried some forty or fifty miles north of the Ohio River, when, the weather becoming so wintry as to make it impossible to proceed further that season, the work was suspended until the spring of the following year, when it was completed by Andrew Porter and Alexander McLean.¹

Soon after his return to Baltimore, Major Ellicott made his contemplated trip to Philadelphia, although it appears that Mrs. Ellicott did not accompany him as he had planned.

His Journal of the two weeks' visit is contained in a small thin copy-book, having a cover of thin cardboard with a peculiar and primitive attempt at marbling; on the front cover is written "Journal of Andrew Ellicott, 1785." The book contains altogether but twenty leaves, yet in that small space is written much that goes to show the regard in which Major Ellicott was held by his distinguished contemporaries. The first entry is Nov. 28, 1785.

"I set off in the Stage for the City of Philadelphia our Company consisted of a Young Quaker by the name of Todd a Jew a Young Englishman and a Miss Dodds-worth her real Character I could not come at she is possessed of many polite Accomplishments a Native of England and has made the tour of Europe in the Evening we arived at the Head of Elk-

29. About 5 OClock we left the Inn and about 6 OClock in the Evening arived at Philadelphia- I went directly to my much esteemed Friend David Rittenhouses and was received by that great man with every degree of Respect-

30. Visitted my old Acquaintance

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, 1786, vol. xi.

December 1st 1785. Visitted the University and was received by the President and Professors with perticular marks of distinction— the President is Doc^t Ewing whose Abilities are too well known to need any comment— the Professor of Mathematicks is M^r Robert Paterson to whom I am in part indebted for the small share which I claim in the Arts—

Spent the Evening with my Friend David Rittenhouse at the celebrated Doc^t Benjamin Franklins the present Governour of this State— the old Gentleman tho infirm in body possesses the former Vigour of his mind—

2. this Evening attended the Meeting of our Philosophical Society we had a proposal of Doc^t Magellans laid before us; it was a donation of 200 Guineas with a condition that 10£ yearly should be paid as a prize to the person who should make the best Improvement in Natural Philosophy or Navigation (Natural History excepted) we had likewise a long Paper of Doc^t Franklins read proposing some improvements in Navigation—

3. Rainy continued at my Friend D. Rittenhouses—

4. Immediately after brakefast I went by perticular Invitation to spend the Day with Doc^{tr}. Franklin— I found him in his little Room Among his Papers— he received me very politely and immediately entered into conversation about the Western Country — his Room makes a Singular Appearance, being filled with old philosophical Instruments, Papers, Boxes, Tables, and Stools— About 10 OClock he sat some water on the fire and not being expert through his great age I desired him to give me the pleasure of assisting him, he thanked me and replied that he ever made it a point to wait upon himself and

although he began to find himself infirm he was determined not to encrease his Infirmities by giving way to them— After his water was hot I observed his Object was to shave himself which Operation he performed without a Glass and with great expedition— I Asked him if he never employed a Barber he answered, “ no ” and continued nearly in the following words “ I think happiness does not consist so much in perticular pieces of good fortune that perhaps accidentally fall to a Mans Lot as to be able in his old age to do those little things which was he unable to perform himself would be done by others with a sparing hand— ” Several Foreigners of Distinction dined with us— About 9 O Clock in the Evening I took my leave of this Venerable Nestor of America—

5. Attended the Lectures at the University— My Friend Mr. Rittenhouse lives like a true Philosopher — his Wife is a most admirable Woman he has two Children both Daughters they are compleatly accomplished— to do them justice would exceed the utmost exertions of my Pen— the oldest is named Elizabeth and the youngest Ester— they are the Children he had by a former Wife

6. Examined several Book stores whilst I was in one a Maccarony looking fellow came in and Asked for some Musick but not being able to find what he wanted he swore the Natives of this Country had no kind of taste for the fine liberal Arts— I conceived myself aimed at by the general reflection and asked him upon what principle he made such a general reflection he Answered “ I have now sought this Town all over and am not able to find a perticular piece of Musick— ” perhaps sir you are a Musick Master; Yes sir at Your service — Upon my word sir it

is very Extraordinary for a Teacher of Musick to pass a general reflection upon all the Natives of the United states— you who are only a professor of one of the least of the Polite Arts has ventured to condemn a whole Continent for want of a tast in the “ fine Arts ” as you term them if you had a genious for visiting our seminaries of Learning and possessed of one degree of Candour you would freely Acknowledge your Mistake — he saw my ill-nature and left me to my own reflections—

I cannot help Indulging one reflection respecting the divided and distressed political state of this Commonwealth — It is my native Country I love it beyond any other and I feel its distresses— the Opposite Parties are nearly ballanced and very violent— and a third is now springing up composed of Foreigners of a perticular Class from whom we are not to expect anything but discord. — I fear they are now opening Pandoras Box they call themselves the New adopted sons of Pennsylvania— What a Being is Man see him professing the meek and divine religion of Christ see him on the days of divine service like a saint humbly calling upon the object of his Faith for speritual Assistance and see this same meek humble immitator of his Master armed with envy and discord destroying the repose and quiet of his fellow Mortals and you will have a Picture of Man! How are the exceptions to this Picture to be valued?—

Drank Tea With Gen. Hand and Col. Harmer at my old Friends Mary Jenkins—

7. Spent the forenoon at the University Dined with the President the Rev^d. John Ewing D.D— Spent the Afternoon at Mr. Samuel Vauns— he has the Best Philo-

sophical Aperatus in the United States and a great variety of Petrifactious Fossils &c— In the Evening I returned to my good Friends Mr. Rittenhouses— where I find real satisfaction his Philosophy and agreeable Manners his Ladies good sence and uncommon good Nature added to the lively conversation and wise observations of the Daughters would make even a monk fond of their society—

I expected that I should at least be clear of persecution from the schemers during my stay in this City — but my expectations were vain I am now pestered with a Gentleman by the name of Fitch,¹ he has a Modle of a Machine for working Boats up Rivers by a Steam Engine— It is well known from Experiments that Steam may be carried to any degree of strength but whether its Force can be applied with the complicated Maclinery to advantage can only be determined by actual Experiments ²

8. This day I spent in part with my old Friend Gen^l Lacey— the Evening I spent with the President ³ his Philosophical knowledge added to his other Qualifications and uncommon Sociability for one of his Age has but few examples in the Annals of History—

9. Rainy— Continued at Mr. Rittenhouses all day.

10. . . . I met some of my old Neighbours in Market— . . . Dined at the Presidents of the University— Settled my business in the Evening and prepared to leave this City on Monday next—

¹ John Fitch, a native of Connecticut and an inventor of some note.

² Major Ellicott subsequently became much interested in Fitch's experiments, and when the steamboat was finally built and tried on the Delaware River in August, 1787, we find that Governor Randolph of Virginia, *Andrew Ellicott* and others gave Fitch certificates as to the merits of his experiment. — McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," vol. i., p. 434.

³ Benjamin Franklin.

11. Sunday — . . . Although my Family are constantly in my mind whenever I am distant from them— I nevertheless cannot help feeling some emotion on leaving a Family where I have lived with so much ease and satisfaction, in leaving a Gentleman possessed of all the Qualifications which generally adorn a Human being, a Gentleman with whom I have been joined in Publick Business, and in which we shared the Featigues of Two Campains in the Wilderness—

12. After an Affectionate farewell about 5 OClock in the morning I went to the stage Office and took possession of my seat— the stage was full and one of the Company was the Female Travelour mentioned in the beginning of this — I think her Character is develloping— It will not be misterious many Hours longer — but to my great satisfaction a Most Amiable Lady the Wife of Major Lenox and Daughter of John Lukens Esq^r is one of our company — in the Evening her Husband met us at the Head of Elk at our Lodgings—

13. Got up and dressed at 4 OClock in the Morning— rested very badly last Night— . . . and an anxiety about my Family contributed not a little to my watchfull disposition — none of my fellow Travelours yet up, I think I could now without the Sperit of Divination give a true Character of our Female Rover— but as it is none of my business I shall conclude with remarking that People may do Wrong If they please; but when it is as easy to do right as wrong right ought infinitely to have the preference— . . . got home this evening about 7 OClock and had the happiness to find my Family in good Health.

CHAPTER III

THREE BOUNDARIES AND THE FIRST MEASUREMENT OF NIAGARA

1786-1790

WHILE living in Baltimore, Major Ellicott taught mathematics in the Baltimore Academy. He also represented that city in the Maryland legislature, and it was during his residence there that he was elected to the American Philosophical Society,¹ of which he became so prominent a member and for which he wrote so many valuable scientific papers. His public work went on without any indication of rest on his part, and one survey followed closely upon another. Early in the spring of 1786, he was called to Philadelphia to confer with General James Clinton² and Mr. Simeon DeWitt,³ commissioners from New York, about the running of the northern boundary

¹ His certificate of membership bears date Jan. 20, 1786, and the signatures of Benjamin Franklin, President, and of John Ewing, William White, and Samuel Vaughn, Vice-presidents.

² James Clinton, a brother of Gov. George Clinton, born 1736. He was a general in the Revolution, of distinguished ability and bravery. He was a member of the State legislature, 1788-1792, and died in 1812.

³ Simeon DeWitt, born 1756. Served in the Continental Army as Assistant Topographer 1778-1780, and as Chief of General Washington's Topographical Staff, 1780-1783. He was State Surveyor-General of New York, 1784-1834; Commissioner on boundaries, 1783, 1785 and 1790; Canal Commissioner, 1810; Chancellor of the University of the State of New York, 1825-1834; was a member of the American Philosophical Society and one of the chief promoters of the Erie Canal. He died in 1834.

of Pennsylvania from the Delaware River to the west side of the south branch of the Tioga River, a distance of ninety miles.

This line, begun by David Rittenhouse in 1774, was abandoned unfinished at the beginning of the Revolution, and no further steps had been taken in the matter of its completion until Major Ellicott was called to Philadelphia to meet the two gentlemen just mentioned. The diary of the trip, which according to his custom was carefully kept, tells us that on the 17th of April, 1786, he

“ Set out in the stage about 4 P.M. for the City of Philadelphia in order to meet some Commissioners from new York on Publick business my Travelling Companions very agreeable— . . . Lodged at Bush Town

18th. Set off about 4 OClock in the Morning Brakefasted at Susquehannah— our Driver Overset the stage but fortunately no one got Hurt— dined at Wilmington and Arived at Philadelphia about 6 OClock P.M. I find Vegetation much more forward here than with us at Baltimore which is a most extraordinary circumstance as it is generally the reverse owing to the South situation of Baltimore went and spent a short time with some Indians from or near Canada— they are men of Consequence and in all probability their business is Important—

19. Early in the Morning Visitted my valuable Friend David Rittenhouse and was received with the usual marks of real Friendship and by desire took up my Lodging with him. As I have formerly spoke of his Amiable Family I shall not attempt it again under full conviction that it is not in my Power to do them Justice— I find the Gentlemen from New York have arived—

Well Persons to whom this Presents shall come.

GREETING.

The American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia

for the purpose of presenting to the Society a copy of the ...

of the ... and Philosophical Society ...

In testimony whereof the seal of the Society is hereunto set, and the same is hereunto put in force, this ... day of ... 18...

Attest
James M. Wilson
Secretary



(John Quincy Adams, President)
John W. Foster, Secretary
John W. Alden, Treasurer
John W. Alden, Librarian
John W. Alden, Corresponding Secretary
John W. Alden, Recording Secretary

CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
Reproduced from the original.

After Brakefast went to find the Lodgings of the Commissioners from New York— and Visitted them *Incog*— Gen. Clinton appears to be a thoughtfull old Gentleman and Mr. Dewit a man of 27 or 28 Years from report he is a Gentleman of strong natural Parts added to much thought and observation for one of his age— After informing them that the Gentleman from Baltimore had arived and expected them at Mr. Rittenhouses Tomorrow at 11 OClock A.M. I took my leave— I visitted my old Friend Doc^t Ewing in the Afternoon—

20th. After Brakefast the New York Commissioners waited upon us and we agreed upon some Points— and meet again Tomorrow — Nothing else of Consequence—

21. Settled some more business with the New York Commissioners they are sensible judicious Gentlemen— And I find the Accounts I have had of Mr. Dewit hardly equal to his merit— In the Afternoon to my great joy Col. Porter came to Town— In the Evening attended a Meeting of Our Philosophical Society a great number of respectable members were present— Returned at 11 OClock at Night— And am now listening to Miss Hetties Vocal Musick— Musick thou Softener of the Savage Mind thou Power divine how little attention do we pay to thy merits and how ill are thy services rewarded, to thee we apply for Consolation and look for thy Assistance in our Devotions

22. this Evening settled all our business with the Commissioners from New York—

23. Not only being Sunday but Likewise the Birth Day of my Friend Mr. Rittenhouse— he was born April 23^d 1732— and one of those instances where strength of Genious independent of a liberal Education or even the

common advantages has raised himself a Monument of Fame more durable than all the glittering pomp attendant on Wealth and Power— Without Tutors and almost without the Aid of Books he mastered the most critical and sublime parts of science and is now justly esteemed the first Astronomer in this New World and perhaps inferior to none in the Old— his life is as remarkable as his genius with a modest diffidence ever attending merit added to the most prudential Conduct has secured his fame without creating one Enemy or exciting Envy

Spent great part of this day at W^m. Bartons Esq^r he is a most judicious Gentleman and Valuable Citizen— and was presented by himself with some of his Political Writings

24. Spent generally in planning the Opperations for the two Lines intended to be carried on this season— Dined at the University—

25. Completed our business I settled my Accounts and prepared to set off in the Stage tomorrow— for Baltimore ”

His commission as Pennsylvania’s representative for this survey bears date June, 1786, and evidently a mutual arrangement with the two commissioners from New York, had been the appointment of an early date for the beginning of this boundary work, as Major Ellicott was in the field by July, and on the 11th of that month wrote to his wife from “ Tyoga ”:

“ MY DEAR

We arrived at this place on Sunday last in good Health and Spirits— . . . Contrary to our expectation

we found the White people, and Indians living together in great Harmony in the Neighbourhood of this Place; which circumstance is much in favour of both parties. We have obtained some curiosities on the River; but the Most remarkable is a Tooth of some sea Monster, which weighs many pounds, the part used for grinding, is on the Surface about 6 Inches, by 3, and as smooth as when used by the Animal to which it formerly belonged— . . .

I am Your Affectionate

Husband.”

He wrote later from the

“BANKS OF THE SUSQUEHANNAH, Augst 6th, 1786.

“MY DEAR/

. . . I have just returned from attending divine Service in the Indian Camp— this will no doubt appear Strange to you; but stranger yet when I assure you that I have found more true Religion, and Christianity among them, than the White Inhabitants on the Frontiers; they are of the Church of England, and have the Service Compleat in their own Language. they Sing Psalms to admiration:— much Superior to the Dutch Methodists in Baltimore— Pray do not fail informing our Friend Doct^r West of this circumstance— The Indian Town of Shanaug is about 12 Miles from our present position, the Head Sachem with his Family have been with us many Days— He has a Daughter by the Name of *Sally*, and a Niece who lives with us, and share in all our Amusements such as Cards, and Draughts, commonly called Checkards— Commissioner DeWitt has taken a Picture of the Daughter which I intend to have Coppied Large by Billy West — so much at present on account of the Indians —our business

goes on very well— the New York Commissioners are agreeable and judicious Gentlemen, which contributes not a little to render our Situation as agreeable as could be expected— . . . I am so very busy with the stars this night, that I neither have time to copy this, or even to read it after it is wrote— . . .

Your Affectionate & Loving

Husband.”

His associate in the work was his friend David Rittenhouse. Writing to Robert Patterson of the work itself, Major Ellicott says, “In order to carry on the parallel of latitude with as much expedition and economy as possible, we dispensed with the method of tracing a line on the arc of a great circle and correcting into the parallel, as pursued by Mess^{rs} Mason and Dixon in determining the boundary between this state and the state of Maryland, and which we followed in completing their line in 1784. We commenced our operations by running a guide line west, with a surveying compass from the point mentioned on the Delaware, 20½ miles, and there corrected by the following zenith distances taken at its western termination, by a most excellent sector, constructed and executed by Dr. Rittenhouse.”¹

By Oct. 12, 1786, the joint Commissioners could report that they had “finished ninety miles of the said Boundary, extending from the River Delaware to the Western Side of the South Branch of the Tyoga River and marked the same with substantial milestones.”²

¹ Here he adds tables, calculations, etc., at length. *Am. Phil. Soc. Trans.* (1st Series) IV, 39.

² *Pennsylvania Archives*, XI, 522.

In the following year (1787) he was re-appointed by the Executive Council to complete the boundary from the 90th milestone, where they had left off the previous season, to Lake Erie. His co-worker this year was Col. Andrew Porter, and the two Commissioners from New York were Abraham Hardenbergh and William Morris. Major Ellcott's first letter to his wife, during his absence on this survey, is dated Philadelphia, May 10, 1787.

“MY DEAR

Tomorrow morning I shall set out for Lancaster in the Stage,— I have been delayed some days longer than I expected in this City, on account of getting our Instruments in the best order— . . . The people of this State continue much divided on the subject of Government; and Politics run high— Mr. Webster the Lecturer, and authour of the *Gramatical Institutes*, has been here but a short time; but in that time has had the fortune to enter into the spirit of the contending parties, and has already got his hands full. I yesterday saw three attacks against him. these northern gentry appear mightily pestered with a restless, and uneasy spirit, which some good people who are now lodging with me, suppose must proceed from the remains of that witchcraft, which formerly prevailed in their country —

I am My Dear your

Affectionate Husb^d.”

He writes again from Wyoming, May 29, 1787:

“MY DEAR

. . . Last evening General Pickering, and several Gentlemen of distinction arrived at this Place from Phila-

delphia; and on this day the Court is to be opened under the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania— this circumstance must be one of the most pleasing kind to the honest well disposed People of this unhappy district, which has constantly been in a state of anarchy, and confusion since its first settlement— General Pickering has great merit for his exertions to bring the Connecticut claimants to a quiet submission to the jurisdiction of the State— word is this moment brought in that some of our Saddles was stolen last night, I hope the Villains have left our Horses— this People fly from the Idea of Government like Pidgeons from a Storm— the thought of a Court of Justice is to the consciously guilty, as terrible as the Talons of a Lion to the Shepherds Flock— Our Horses are all safe but every Bridle is gone—

I am my Dear your

Affectionate Husband.”

“MY DEAR

“CHEMUNG, June 6th 1787

. . . We have had good luck thus far on our Journey, and found the River in fine order for boating— . . . the Indians are well disposed, and intend accompanying us as usual— The great Onandago Chief Cap^t. Cornelius Sturgeon, of whome you will find mention made in my Journal of last year, was murdered at the Tyoga Point last March by one of his own Tribe, and Townsman.— it appears to have been a premeditated piece of work, and had its rise from two causes, *First* he was an absolute despot in his Tribe, and imposed an implicit compliance with his orders.— he was punctually obeyed, thro’ fear, not love!— *Secondly* he began to adopt the Dress, and customs of

the United States, and introduced them into his own Family— this gave great umbrage— as he was a man of some Literature, he knew the value of Letters— and the evening on which he was killed in conversation with Cap^t. Spalding, he informed him that he intended to send his son to me in Baltimore, to be educated— he lived the life of a brave man; and died the death of a *Tyrant!*— The friends of the Murderer purchased his life for a sum of money not exceeding £.375; a poor recompence for the life of a great man; and too much for that of a Despot— I knew the man— I almost envied him, his manly courage, and abilities; but detested the Tyrant— I have no other information— . . .

I am my Dear your
Loving & Affectionate
Husband.”

On August 29, 1787, a semi-official report of the work was sent to the President and Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.¹ It is headed “Observatory on the West side of the Conawango,” and is signed by both Colonel Porter and Major Ellicott. There is little doubt, however, that it was composed by the latter.

“GENTLEMEN.

We arrived at the Cawwanishee Flats on the 11th day of June where the 90th milestone was set up last season. The Susquehannah was remarkably low, which prevented our Boats making the necessary expedition. From the 90th milestone we sent out Instruments up the Thysesta in Canoes about 10 miles, our water carriage then failed, and we had recourse to our Pack-horses, but the rugged-

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, vol. xi, 178.

ness of the country at the Heads of the Susquehannah, Genesee and Allegany Rivers soon killed and rendered useless about two thirds, but fortunately for our business, when the Horses failed, we found ourselves on a small branch of Allegany River, necessity then pointed out the propriety of using water carriage as much as possible. We immediately set about making canoes, and by the spirited exertions of our men, with no other implements than three falling axes, two or three Tomahawks and a Chisel, 1½ Inch wide, we completed in six days for the use of our Pennsylvania party 5 excellent Canoes, two of which are between 40 and 50 feet in length. These Canoes with our Stores, Instruments and Baggage, we hauled 10 miles down a shallow stream to the main Allegany River, our progress now began to appear less difficult and we prepared to proceed down the River to a proper place for correcting the random Line by Astronomical observations, but the day preceding our intended movement, we were ordered by the Indians to discontinue the Line till a Treaty should be held. We met them at the time and place appointed, explained the nature and propriety of the business we were about, and were finally permitted to proceed. We have notwithstanding these difficulties completed the Line to the 167th milestone from the Delaware and expect to have 28 miles more finished in a few days and the fullest expectation of finishing the business this season in good time, if not impeded by some Uncommon difficulty or accident.

We have the Honour to be

Your very Hbl Servants

ANDW ELLICOTT

ANDREW PORTER.”

The next two letters in the correspondence concerning this summer's work are to his wife, the first headed

“MY DEAR

“VENANGO, Sep^r 13th, 1787.

. . . We arrived at this place the day before yesterday . . . The Commandant Cap^t. Hart of Connecticut treated us with every respect we could desire. We shall set out in one Hour up French Creek in order to finish the Line, which will probably be completed in about 45 days—We have passed all the Indian settlements, and consequently got clear of the greatest beggars that perhaps any country ever produced— a few days after my writing to you last, I formed and executed an expedition to Lake Erie— I took a large Canoe with 11 people, . . . we went up the Conawango River to a most beautiful Lake called by the Indians Chautauque,— It is in some places $4\frac{1}{2}$ Miles wide, and in the narrowest place about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile,— And in length about 25 Miles— We went in our Canoe to the upper end, and then proceeded by land to Lake Erie,— The distance between these Lakes is about 9 miles along the Path, but not more than 7 on a straight Line,— Lake Erie makes a grand appearance, and lashes the surrounding shores with Billows as large as those formed in the vast Atlantic— the sight of the Human Eye is bounded by the convex Waters and lost over the deep,— Could I but convey to you the pleasing sensations I had in this excursion, I should think my time better spent than when employed in Observing the heavenly Bodies,— Paint in your imagination a mighty River pouring her Waters into the Gulph of Florida, suppose this River traced up to a small Stream,— this stream I pur-

sued to its source which is Lake Chautauque, then from this Lake distant only 7 Miles, conceive a body of fresh Water many hundreds of Miles in circumference, and this Lake connected with others, by water communications into the very middle of North America,— put these circumstances together, and view the advantages which must naturally fall to the share of Posterity, and join with me in admiring the works of a great and superintending Power—

The United States of America have more natural advantages than any other Governments, or Powers in the World, and if they Judiciously turn to their own account those advantages which they have from the nature of the Country, they must become both rich and powerfull. . . . My constant prayers are for your health and happiness and that of our Dear Children— . . .

I am my Dear your

Loving Husband.”

“OBSERVATORY ON LAKE ERIE October 11th 1787.

“MY DEAR

We arived here on the 8th and the same day erected our Observatory and in the evening began our Astronomical Observations, which I expect will be completed in 10 days from this date at furthest— we shall then have the Pleasure of turning our Backs upon the Wilderness and setting out for home— Notwithstanding many unexpected difficulties arising from the want of a true knowledge of the Country, the death of our Horses and detention by the Indians, we shall contrary to the most sanguine expectations compleat the business in good time—

I must confess to you that I cannot avoid the vanity of self aprobation in the compleation of this arduorous and troublesome undertaking, a business which has this season engrosed both the day and night— the method pursued this year was much more extensive and scientific than any other season since the commencement in 1784— . . . As I shall set out so very soon for home I might like some Lovers have saved myself the trouble of sending this— and been the bearor myself— . . .

Your Loving

Husband.”

The next day, he and Col. Porter wrote jointly to Mr. Rittenhouse:¹

“DR SIR.

“LAKE ERIE, Oct. 12, 1787.

We arrived here on the 8th and the same day began our course of observations which will probably be completed in 5 or 6 days — The random Line passed between Le Beauf and Presque Isle about 5 miles north of the former, and we conjecture about 6 miles south of the latter. Considering the unexpected difficulties we had to encounter for want of a competent knowledge of the Geography of the Country, the death of our Horses, time taken up in making Canoes, and treating with the Indians, our business has gone on beyond our most sanguine expectations, and will be completed in 14 or 15 days. We divided the Line in such a manner as to make 6 stations at each of which we determined a point in the parallel of Latitude, by about 336 observations. Neither attention

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, vol. xi, 203.

nor exertions have ever been wanting on our parts towards Scientific and permanent completion of the business entrusted to us, and the general behaviour of our men has been such as to entitle them to our thanks.

We are Sir

Your humble Servants

ANDREW ELLICOTT

ANDREW PORTER."

The four Commissioners, after an arduous summer, reported on October 29, 1787, that they had extended the Line on from the 90th milestone to Lake Erie, and "marked the same in a lasting and permanent manner by milestones, or posts surrounded by mounds of earth where stones could not be procured."¹

Nearly a hundred years after this line was run, the marks set up in 1786-87 had in some cases entirely disappeared, and those still standing were in such a dilapidated condition that it became necessary to go over the line again, and Commissioners were appointed from the two States to restore the boundary marks. To the work done by Major Ellicott and his associates these later Commissioners gave praise in generous measure. "The operations of the early Commissioners" — said they — "do their memory great credit. The variation from the true geographic parallel is small, when the difference in precision between the instrument of that day and this is taken into consideration."

The point made by these men of a later generation is one that should be held in mind whenever the fineness and

¹ Pennsylvania Archives, vol. xi, 526.

accuracy conceded to be the distinctive mark of all Major Ellicott's engineering work is considered. His instruments were always handmade, usually his own work or that of his brother Benjamin, or his friend David Rittenhouse, and these instruments, primitive as they were, had to undergo the hard test of being jarred and jolted over the roughest of roads into the very heart of the wilderness, or wherever their owner's work might lead him. The lines which Major Ellicott ran with these instruments might easily have been hopelessly incorrect, had his own astronomical wisdom, or his genius for painstaking exactness been less than it was.

In 1788, by the direction of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, Major Ellicott made a survey of the islands in the rivers Alleghany and Ohio, within the bounds of that State.¹

In 1789, he moved with his family to Philadelphia and settled at No. 16 North 6th Street. This change of residence was probably due to the fact of his having so many interests and so many friends in Philadelphia. In the same year, Benjamin Franklin encloses him the following certificate in a letter signed "Yours most affectionately."

"I do hereby certify whom it may concern, that I have long known Mr. Andrew Ellicott as a Man of Science; and while I was in the Executive Council have had frequent Occasions, in the Course of Public Business, of being acquainted with his Abilities in Geographical Operations of the most important kind, which were performed by

¹ Colonial Records, vol. xiv, p. 615. *See also* Pennsylvania Archives, vol. xi, 1788.

him with the greatest Scientific Accuracy. Given at Philadelphia this 10th Day of August, 1789.

B. FRANKLIN

late President of the State of Pennsylvania.”

This certificate was sent in answer to a request from Major Ellicott that he be recommended to the Government for some surveys soon to be made. While willing and even anxious to render his friend any service in his power, Mr. Franklin said that he had promised himself never to ask a favor for any one, from either the Government or the President. While keeping to this resolution, he did the next best thing in putting over his own signature his appreciation of Major Ellicott's ability. Whether the certificate was used or not is uncertain, but in the late summer of this same year he was commissioned by the United States Government to run the western boundary of the State of New York, a survey made necessary by the doubt as to whether Presqu' Isle (now Erie, Pennsylvania) lay east or west of the west boundary of New York. The inquiry was agitated by Phelps and Gorham, who, having purchased the Massachusetts pre-emption claim to Western New York, were naturally anxious that so desirable a site as that of Presqu' Isle should be proved to lie within their claim. In September, 1789, with his brothers Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott among his assistants, and with Frederic Saxton as the representative of Phelps and Gorham, he began the survey, which by reason of its difficulty occupied him until the fall of the following year. The difficulties he in part foresaw, as is shown by the following letter to Gov. Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania:

“ SIR —

Being appointed to run the Line between the western boundary of the State of N. York, and the late purchase made by this State (of Congress) of a Tract of Country lying on the South side of Lake Erie, I shall mention some difficulties which will probably attend the execution of this business — and *first*, because the Point which limits the State of N. York to the Westward — lies within the British Settlements on the West End of Lake Ontario, it will therefore be necessary to obtain leave from the Commandant at Niagara or the Governor of Canada to go within the British lines to commence the business. As this will be a matter of science only, and cannot possibly interfere with either their Jurisdiction or Property, we may reasonably expect that a proper representation made by authority will be attended with success. The *second* difficulty will be with the Indians, but as they are particularly attached to and influenced by the Cols. Butler¹ and Brandt,² I would beg leave to suggest the Idea of obtaining their interest by some means or other.³

AND^W. ELLICOTT.”

The line was to run due south of the west end of Lake Ontario, and to make the point of beginning accurate, as Major Ellicott states, it was necessary to go into Canada, to ascertain the west end of Lake Ontario by

¹ Colonel Walter Butler.

² Joseph Brandt, the Mohawk Chief.

³ He mentions elsewhere that “the Seneca Chiefs who will attend on behalf of their nation will expect two Rifled guns.” He therefore requests that he may be provided with them.

observation and measurement. But the Revolution had been recent and English feeling ran high, and the discourtesy and hindrance with which Major Ellicott had to contend, are set forth at length in his interesting report to General Washington of the first half-year's work.¹

“ PHILADELPHIA,

Jany. 15th, 1790.

“ SIR

I arrived in this City the day before yesterday, after a long and tedious journey from Fort Erie, and have the satisfaction to inform your Excellency that so much of the Survey on which I was employed, that fell within the Territory of his Brittanick Majesty is compleated. I find the Geography of the Country about the Lakes very erroneous, too much so to be even a tolerable guide. The south side of Lake Erie is laid down half a degree too far to the South, in the American Atlas published in 1776, and said to be corrected by Maj^r Holland, De Brahm and others. The same Lake is by Hutchinson and McMurry placed 20 miles too far north, similar error attend all that country thro' which I passed. . . . A corrected Chart of the west end of Lake Ontario, The Strait of Niagara, and part of Lake Erie comprehending the whole British settlement of Nassau shall be handed to your Excellency as soon as I come to New York. . . .

On my arrival at the Garrison of Niagara on the 21st day of October last, I was introduced by the officer of the day, in company with Gen^l Chapen of Massachusetts, and Mr. Joseph Ellicott of Baltimore to the Commandant

¹ The original of this letter is preserved in the State Department at Washington.

Lieut^t Col. Harriss. After the introduction, I produced my Commission which the Col. looked over, and then addressed himself to me in the following words. — ‘Pray Sir what request have you to make from this paper?’ (meaning the Commission) to which I replied, ‘In order to execute the duties of my appointment it will be necessary to go into the Territory of his Britannick Majesty, but as you may not be authorized to grant such permission, an express has been sent on by our Secretary of foreign affairs to his Excellency Lord Dorchester, Governor of Canada, to obtain this privilege, and if the express has not yet arrived, my present request is only that myself and party may have the liberty of staying in the Country, with such privileges as are allowed to other gentlemen from the United States, and wait his arrival.’ To which the Col. replied ‘You cannot have permission to stay in this Country, you must leave it Sir.’ I then informed him that our going away so precipitately must be attended with inconveniency to our selves, and the present expence of the United States sacrificed to no purpose, and as I was confident that the express would arrive with the first Vessel, and from a desire to have the business executed with all possible despatch I should not be very punctilious about the privileges, but would willingly be confined to one single Acre of ground, or any other space, and under any restrictions, which he himself should prescribe, to which he replied ‘Your request cannot be granted Sir you must leave this Country and that with expedition.’ I then informed him that myself, and companions were much fatigued with a long and painful journey, and our Horses broken down with

hard duty and the want of food, and that our return home might be marked with some degree of certainty, I requested the privilege of continuing some few days in the Country to refresh ourselves and recruit our horses. To which he returned 'I cannot be answerable for your situation. You are not to continue in this country and if you stay anywhere in it I shall hear of you and take measures accordingly.' I then observed to him that I had some Gentlemen in my party, who were very desirous to view the falls of Niagara and as this was the only probable opportunity which would ever fall in their way, I requested that their curiosity might be gratified, particularly as the falls were not near any of their posts. To which he answered 'Your Gentlemen cannot be gratified. They cannot see the falls. Too many people have seen the falls already.' I then began to make some observations on the common usage of all civilized Nations with regard to matters of Science and natural curiosities, but was soon interrupted by the Col. 'who desired that I would not multiply words on that subject' that he 'was decisive and we must depart.' He then addressed himself to Col. Butler of the Rangers (who was present) as follows. 'Col. it is our *Lunchion* time, will you go and take a cut with us.' Then turning to me, he said 'You may retire to the Tavern in the Bottom, and purchase such refreshments as you may want, in the mean time (pointing to my Commission, which lay on the Table) 'I will take a copy of that paper, after which, the Adjutant shall return you the original.' We were then attended by the Officer of the Day to the Tavern. After some consideration I thought it best to make one other request to the

Commandant, which was, that myself and party might have permission to go to the Indian Settlement on Buffalo Creek, which is 30 miles from the Garrison, and in the Territory of the United States, and there await the arrival of the express. This request was handed to Col. Harriss by my companion Gen^l Chapen, but shared the same fate as the others. Some time after dark the Adjutant waited on us with the enclosed PASS, without which we could neither get out of the Garrison nor pass the Indian Settlements in our own Country. From the tenor of the pass, it appears that the Military jurisdiction of the British Garrison at Niagara is extended to the Jenesseo River, but this in my opinion is more fully confirmed by their general conduct in that quarter. After leaving the garrison, we had five miles to ride to join our party, on our arrival we gave immediate orders to have our Baggage prepared and every measure taken for an early movement the next morning, but before we had time to leave the ground a Lieut. Clarke waited upon us and renewed the orders of the Col. and added 'that the Commandant desired that our departure might be attended with expedition.' We left the ground about 9 o'clock in the morning and proceeded to the Jenesseo River a distance of near 100 miles, where we received Lord Dorchester's permission to execute any part of our business which might fall in the Territory of his Britannick Majesty, by an Express sent on by Cap^t Guion, who had in the meantime arrived at Niagara from Quebec. Although our Horses were unable to return, I was nevertheless determined to go on with the business. We then employed Canoes to carry our Instruments and Baggage down the Jenesseo River

to the carrying place, where we procured a Boat, and returned up Lake Ontario to Niagara. On our return, we were treated with politeness and attention, we entered immediately upon the execution of our business which was attended with uncommon difficulty and hardship. No Horses were to be had in that County at any price, we were therefore under the necessity of employing a greater number of men than would otherwise have been wanted which has added considerably to the expence.

I have the Honor

To be with the greatest Esteem your
Excellencies Hb^l. Servt.

ANDREW ELLICOTT.”

The pass was as follows:

“By John Adolphus Harriss Esquire — Lieut Colonel of the 1st Battalion, 60th Regiment, commanding Niagara, etc., etc.

Permit the Bearers, Andrew Ellicott, Joseph Ellicott, Benjamin Ellicott, Jonathan Browns, Isaac Bornet, John Sullivan, Israel Chapen and Frederick Seaton [Sexton] to pass from hence without delay and by the *nearest Route* to the Genecies.”

The following spring the work was taken up once more, and carried as rapidly as possible to completion. Major Ellicott wrote to his wife at the beginning of the season from Wyoming, June 12, 1790.

“DEAR SALLY

We arrived at this place yesterday morning in good health, and spirits; Our horses as yet appear likely to

stand the Journey well. The fleas begin to be extreme troublesome, and I dread them much more than the hardships attending such an expedition— . . . You are not one moment out of my mind, and I am constantly praying that the *Deity* may have you, and our Children, under his care.

I am My Dear your

Loving Husband.”

There is then a gap in the usually frequent letters, and the next is headed

“PRESQUE ISLE-FORT, October 11th 1790.

“MY DEAR

Yesterday I completed the business I came out upon, after much hardship, trouble, and difficulty; and shall tomorrow set out for Niagara, and from thence with every expedition possible by the way of New York home. I find myself under the necessity of taking that Rout, in order to get the Instruments and Baggage to Philadelphia. . . . The trouble which you must have experienced in my absence, . . . has constantly while my Camp has been enjoying the blessings of sleep, drew tears from my eyes, and shut up every avenue to repose. I have not met with any remarkable incident in this expedition except in the Time of a terrible storm, being seperated from the company, and sleeping out, without fire, or any covering, five miles from Camp. . . .

I am my Dear your

Loving and Affectionate

Husband.”

The line which he describes as having given him so much hardship and difficulty was found to pass some twenty miles east of Presqu' Isle. It is the present western boundary of the State of New York and the east line of what is known as the "Presqu' Isle Triangle," which was later purchased from the Government by the State of Pennsylvania, and is now part of that State. Writing to a friend in Albany, N. Y., Major Ellicott remarks that "the Indians did not appear to be well disposed toward the execution of our business, but after a treaty, and receiving some small presents, accompanied with rum and tobacco, permitted us to go on."¹ He also adds that the land contained in the survey just made is good, and "from its peculiar situation an important object to the State."

It was while making the traverse of the Canadian side of the Niagara River that Major Ellicott first saw the Falls of Niagara, and the first actual measurements of the entire length of the river and of the falls and rapids from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario were made by him then, with his two brothers Joseph and Benjamin as his assistants. The table of measurements made by Major Ellicott and given by him in his report is as follows:²

	Miles	Fall
From Lake Erie to the head of the Rapids . . .	20	15 ft.
From the Rapids to the Falls	1½	51 "
The Great Fall		162 "
From the Falls to Lewiston	7	104 "
From Lewiston to Lake Ontario	7	2 "
Total	<u>35½</u>	<u>334 ft.</u>

¹ Albany Gazette, Nov. 29, 1790.

² Stuart's Civil and Military Engineers of America, p. 27.

These measurements of Major Ellicott's, though made so long ago, show very little difference from those of to-day, and the above table, made by him, was the one used as lately as 1871 in all books descriptive of the Falls of Niagara.

A careful and interesting "Description of the Falls," contained in a letter from Major Ellicott to Dr. Rush of Philadelphia, was published in the *European Magazine and London Review* for October, 1793. In this he says of the chasm that no person can approach it without horror, and adds: "Down this chasm the water rushes with a most astonishing velocity, after it makes the great pitch. In going up the road near the chasm, the fancy is constantly engaged in the contemplation of the most romantic and awful prospects imaginable, till, at length, the eye catches the Falls:—the imagination is instantly arrested, and you admire in silence!"

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY OF WASHINGTON IN THE TERRITORY OF COLUMBIA

1791-1793

THE winter months were usually to Major Ellicott an entire and an exceedingly pleasant contrast to the summer ones. He exchanged the hardships and responsibilities of the rough and uncomfortable life of the surveys in the wilderness for the ease of the pleasant home in Philadelphia, where he could enjoy his dearest possessions, the wife and the little flock of children, who were, after all, the real interest and joy of his life. In these leisure months, too, he could continue undisturbed his astronomical and scientific pursuits, attend the meetings of the Philosophical Society, and enjoy what was to him a keen delight, the society of men interested like himself in scientific research and discovery, the bright and unrestricted exchange of thought with men of equal mind.

However delightful these two or three months of home comfort and rest might be, they were always quickly succeeded by the necessity of accepting appointments for further State or Government surveys. The honesty of his purpose and the excellence of his work had attracted the favorable notice of the foremost men of his day, and

year by year the commissions he received called him to tasks of greater importance, and to fields of work that made increasing demands upon his skill and resource.

With the spring of 1791, a long talked-of undertaking of national interest had reached at last the point where an active beginning was to be immediately made. This was the surveying and laying out of a permanent seat of government for the United States. The matter of the selection of such a site had long been under discussion, and had been the subject of sharp controversy, the Northern States wishing it to be near Philadelphia, — a not unnatural desire for the Pennsylvanians to have, — and at one time Germantown had actually been selected. But the fertility of the country about Philadelphia, advanced by many members of Congress, as a reason for its becoming, if chosen, a prosperous and desirable centre, was not, in General Washington's estimation, of equal importance to future desirability, as the advantages offered by a site on the Potomac River.

Washington's views being finally accepted, he was empowered by Congress, July 16, 1790, to select a tract on the River Potomac, not to exceed ten miles square, for the permanent site of a national capital. He chose a square of land, which included the villages of Georgetown in Maryland and Alexandria in Virginia, and which is, except for the land afterwards ceded back to Virginia, the present District of Columbia. The slopes and elevations of this tract he saw, in imagination, crowned with noble buildings, and the deep waters of the Potomac suggested to him opportunities for commerce, and for quick and easy communication with other States. He chose,



An Exact Perspective View of the CITY of PHILADELPHIA, as it appeared in the Year 1778. Engraved from a Drawing by Wm. B. Smith, from a View taken by the late Mr. J. B. Smith, in the Year 1778. Published by Wm. B. Smith, in the Year 1778. Philadelphia: Printed and sold by C. S. BOWLER, at No. 11, N. 3rd St. 1878.

THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA ABOUT 1778
 Reproduced from a print in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

with his characteristic farsightedness, not for that year only, or the next, but for the future, and the demands of the future.

The site secured, it was necessary that the selected tract should be at once accurately surveyed, and that an architect should be engaged to lay out the proposed Capital City. For the latter work Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French military engineer of ability was chosen, and subject to the suggestions or directions of the President and of Thomas Jefferson, then Secretary of State, he set about making the plans. Three commissioners were also chosen, and given authority over the work in hand. They were General Thomas Johnson, the Honorable Daniel Carroll of Maryland, and Dr. David Stuart of Virginia, Washington's family physician.

The survey of the ten miles square being the most immediate necessity, Major Ellicott was requested by Mr. Jefferson, at General Washington's suggestion, to go immediately to Georgetown and commence the survey. This was in February, 1791. Mr. Jefferson's letter informs Major Ellicott that he is "desired to proceed by the first stage to the Federal Territory on the Potomac for the purpose of making a survey of it." With his accustomed promptness Major Ellicott set out at once, and on February 14 he writes to Mrs. Ellicott of his arrival in Alexandria:

"MY DEAR/

I arrived at this town on tuesday last in good health;—but in consequence of bad weather could not proceed to business, (till friday last.) I have been treated with great

politeness by the Inhabitants, who are truly rejoiced at the prospect of being included in the Federal district. I shall leave this town this afternoon to begin the rough survey of the ten miles square. . . .

I am my Dear in great hast

Your Affectionate Husband.”

The same day he wrote to Mr. Jefferson giving an outline of his plan for the ten miles square. A draft of the letter has been preserved, and is as follows:

“SIR/

I arrived at this Town on Monday last but the Cloudy weather prevented any observations being made untill friday evening which was very fine.

. . . I shall submit to your consideration the following plan for the permanent location which I believe will embrace every object of Advantage which can be included within the ten miles square (Viz)— Beginning at the most

¹ inclination of the¹ upper cape of Hunting Creek and running a streight line North westerly ten miles making an angle at the beginning of 45° with the Meridian for the first line. Then by a streight line into Maryland north easterly at right angles to the first, ten miles for the second line. Thence by a streight line at right angles to the second south easterly ten miles for the third line. Thence for the fourth line at right angles to the third south westerly ten miles to the beginning on the upper cape of Hunting Creek— Or the beginning may be expressed more in the spirit of the Proclamation thus “Running from the Court House in Alexandria due south

¹ Sic.

west and thence a due south east course till it shall strike the River Potomac." . . .

. . . You will observe by the plan which I have suggested for the Permanent Location a small deviation with respect to the courses from those mentioned in the Proclamation. the reason of which is that the courses in the Proclamation strictly adhered to would neither produce straight lines nor contain quite the ten miles square besides the almost impossibility of running such lines with tolerable exactness.

I am Sir with the greatest
Respect and esteem your
Hb^l. Serv^t.

AND^w. ELLICOTT." ¹

Early in March, Mr. Jefferson wrote to Major L'Enfant desiring him to "proceed to Georgetown, where you will find Mr. Ellicott employed in making a survey and map of the Federal Territory," and he adds, "The special object in asking your aid is to have drawings of the particular grounds most likely to be approved for the site of the Federal Town and buildings, you will therefore be pleased to begin on the eastern branch and proceed from thence upwards, laying down the hills, valleys, morasses and waters between the Potomac, the Tyber, and the road leading from Georgetown to the eastern branch, and connecting the whole with certain fixed points on the map Mr. Ellicott is preparing." ²

Major Ellicott was at this time hard at work upon the survey, assisted by Mr. Briggs, Mr. Fenwick, his

¹ From a draft among Major Ellicott's papers.

² Jefferson's Correspondence, vol. iii, p. 221.

brother Benjamin Ellicott and a unique character, Benjamin Banneker, the negro mathematician and astronomer.¹ His work left Major Ellicott little leisure for correspondence, and there are but few letters from him during the next two or three months. He writes from Georgetown, March 21st, 1791.

“ MY DEAR—

I have taken a few minutes to write to you by Col. Thompson— who I expect will deliver this together with a small bundle containing a pair of Black Silk Mitts and a small smelling Bottle, which I hope you will receive as a small testimony of as pure an affection as ever had a place in a Human Breast— I have met with many difficulties for the want of my old hands— and have in consequence of a most severe attack of the *Influenza* worked for many days in extreme pain— I am now perfectly recovered and as Fat as you ever saw me—

. . . It is now late at night, and my letter carried to a great length; but when I call to mind our happy connection, the consequence of an early attachment, founded in Virtue and in Love, I know not where to conclude; so many objects pleasing to my recollection, crowd in upon me—

I am my Dear Sally

Your Affectionate

Husband.”

Benjamin Banneker, the mulatto mathematician, was born in 1751. His talents attracted much notice. Thomas Jefferson was interested in his career, and Condorcet, the Secretary of the French Academy of Science, wrote him a complimentary letter. The Maryland Historical Society has published a sketch of his life, and a public school in Washington is named for him, the “Banneker School.” He died in 1804.

“Mr. Ellicott,” says a correspondent of the “Gazette of the United States,” “finished the first line of this survey of the Federal Territory in Virginia and crossed, below the Little Falls, the River Patowmack on the second line.” This information is headed “Alexandria, Feb. 23d.” On March 26th the “Gazette” announces, “Mr. Ellicott and Major L’Enfant are now engaged in laying out the ground on the Patowmac on which the Federal buildings are to be erected.”

The President and Mr. Jefferson were constantly and actively interested in the plans made, suggesting and directing them in accordance with their ideas of the needs and demands of the future. On March 28, the President came on from Philadelphia to interview the Commissioners and consult with them. A dinner was given him by the Mayor and Corporation of Georgetown, “previous to which,” he notes in his Diary, “I examined the surveys of Mr. Ellicott who had been sent on to lay out the district of ten miles square for the federal seat, and also the works of Major L’Enfant who has been engaged to make a draught of the gr’ds in the vicinity of Georgetown and Carrollsburgh on the Eastern Branch.” March 30 he says: “This business being thus happily finished and some directions given to the Commissioners, the Surveyor and Engineer with respect to the mode of laying out the district; surveying the grounds for the City and forming them into lots, I left Georgetown, dined in Alexandria and reached Mount Vernon in the evening.”

One of these suggestions of the President’s was that the Executive Mansion and the Legislative Department

should have the distance of a mile between them to avoid any interference of the one with the other. As to the arrangement of the streets Mr. Jefferson was of the opinion that they could not do better than to imitate the straight streets and cross streets of Philadelphia. He placed at Major L'Enfant's disposal a collection of drawings and plans of the principal cities of Europe, which he had gathered while travelling abroad, and writes him, in a letter of April 10, 1791, that he has examined his papers, and "found the plans of Frankfort-on-the Mayne, Carlsruhe, Amsterdam, Strasburg, Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, Montpellier, Marseilles, Turin and Milan," which he "sends in a roll by the post." He says further, "For the Capitol I should prefer the adoption of some one of the models of antiquity which have the approbation of thousands of years and for the Presidents house I should prefer the celebrated fronts of modern dwellings which have the approbation of all good judges. Such are the Galerie du Louvre, the Gardes Meubles and the two fronts of the Hotel de Salen."¹

While these wise heads were engaged over the plans of architecture and situation whose result is the beautiful and unique arrangement of parks, circles, and avenues, which has been described as "Philadelphia griddled across Versailles,"² Major Ellicott was pushing on the work of the survey through the somewhat unattractive outlying lands of the district. He writes slightly of its advantages, or the lack of them, from the "Surveyors Camp, State of Virginia," June 26, 1791.

¹ Jefferson's Correspondence, vol. iii, p. 236

² The City of Washington, John A. Porter, p. 543.

“MY DEAR SALLY

Since my last which was forwarded by our friend Adam Hoops¹ nothing material has transpired except the return of the President— . . . The Country thro’ which we are now cutting one of the ten-mile lines is very poor; I think for near seven miles on it there is not one House that has any floor except the earth; and what is more strange, it is in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and George-Town,— we find but little Fruit, except Huckel berries, and live in our Camp, as retired as we used to do on Lake Erie— Labouring Hands in this Country can scarcely be had at any rate; my estimate was twenty; but I have to wade slowly thro’ with six,— this scarcity of hands will lengthen out the time much beyond what I intended.— As the President is so much attached to this country, I would not be willing that he should know my real sentiments about it.— But with you, (*my Dear*) whose love, and affection, I have constantly experienced, almost from my infancy, I am not afraid to make my sentiments known.—

This country intended for the Permanent Residence of Congress, bears no more proportion to the Country about Philadelphia, and German-Town, for either wealth or fertility, than a Crane does to a stall-fed Ox!— . . .

I am My Dear Sally your

Affectionate Husband.”

A letter from Georgetown, August 9, 1791, shows his good feeling towards his co-worker Major L’Enfant.

¹ Major Adam Hoops, a distinguished soldier and engineer. He was at one time on General Washington’s staff, and was with General Sullivan in his celebrated campaign. He was associated with all the early surveys of western and northern New York.

“MY DEAREST SALLY

Next Monday two weeks at farthest I shall leave this for Philadelphia—

I am now so compleatly tired of being from home that I would willingly resign my appointments rather than suffer so much anxiety and pain— . . . I am determined though poverty should pursue me to live at home and cherish the most affectionate of wives— . . . We have a most eligant Camp and things are in fine order but where you are not there are no charms— One of our Hands was killed last week by the falling of a Tree— I expect my companion Major L’Enfant which is pronounced in English *Lonfong* will pay you a visit in my name some time next week he is a most worthy French Gentleman and though not one of the most handsome of men he is from his good breeding and native politeness a first rate favourite among the ladies—

I am my dear Sally

Your Affectionate

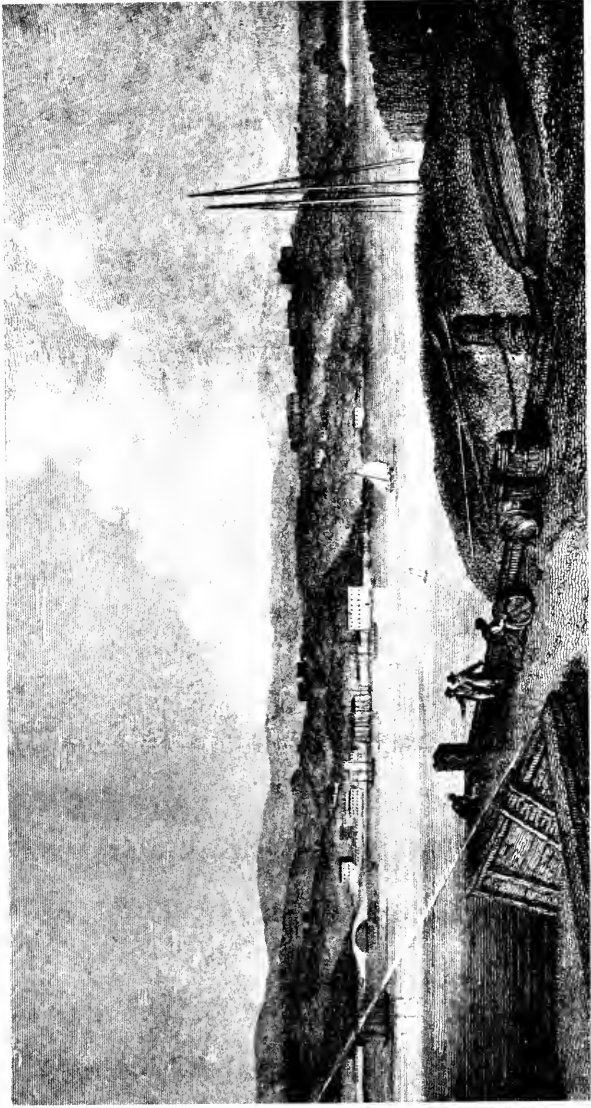
Husband.”

The 17th of October, 1791, is a memorable date, as being that of the first public sale of lots in the new City, which the Commissioners had by now decided to call the “City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia.” One of the briefest of Major Ellicott’s letters announces the fact of the sale and the consequent activity of all concerned:

“MY DEAR SALLY/

“GEO. TOWN O^t 17th, 1791.

Lady Washington has undertaken to have this handed to you immediately on her arrival in Philadelphia— The



THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, D. C., IN 1800

Reproduced from a steel engraving by Heath, published in 1804. From an original in the Library of Congress.

most pleasing information I can give you at present is that I am in good health— but hurried off of my legs and bothered out of my senses,— This is the day of the sale of the Public lotts in the new City of Washington— You may expect that I have but few leisure minutes for writing— Lady Washington will leave [this] place immediately.

I am My Dear Sally

Yours Affectionately

AND^w ELLICOTT.”

Trouble had for some time been brewing between Major L’Enfant and the Commissioners over various matters, and this sale of lots brought the smouldering wrath between them to a blaze. The situation then reached a crisis which necessitated its being laid before the President, and he wrote to David Stuart, one of the Commissioners from Philadelphia, on Nov. 20, 1791, that he had “heard, before the receipt of your letter of the 29. of october and with a degree of surprise and concern not easy to be expressed, that Major L’Enfant had refused the map of the Federal City when it was requested by the commissioners for the satisfaction of the purchasers at the sale.” He adds, “It is much to be regretted, however common the case is, that men who possess talents which fit them for peculiar purposes should almost invariably be under the influence of an untoward disposition. . . . But I did not expect to have met with such perverseness in Major L’Enfant as his late conduct exhibited.”¹

In the same letter General Washington characterizes Major Ellicott as “a man of uncommon talents . . . and of a more placid temper.” It was well that he was

¹ The Writings of Washington, Ford, vol. xii, p. 87.

possessed of those desirable qualities. He was shortly called upon to exercise them both, for the troubles between L'Enfant and the Commissioners growing worse instead of better, the former was dismissed in March, and the task of completing his share of the work fell upon Major Ellicott, Mr. Jefferson writing the Commissioners to that effect on March 6, 1792, in a letter which states that "it having been found impracticable to employ Major L'Enfant about the Federal City in that degree of subordination which was lawful and proper, he has been notified that his services are at an end. . . . Ellicott is to go on and finish laying off the plan on the ground and surveying and plotting the District."¹

While it is true that L'Enfant must have been hot-headed and hard to deal with, the three commissioners seem to have seen to it that the paths of those who were placed under their authority were made as thorny as possible on all occasions. Yet they were all three men of prominence, and their faults appear to have been of disposition rather than of incompetence. General Johnson, who had been Governor of his State, is described as having been "of a brusque and impetuous manner, given to strange oaths but of a kindly disposition and marked executive ability." Daniel Carroll was at this time a member of Congress, owner of a great estate, "aristocratic in feeling and somewhat dictatorial in tone." Dr. Stuart was a practising physician in Alexandria, "an elderly benevolent gentleman, fond of quoting the classics."²

¹ Jefferson's Correspondence, vol. iii, p. 336.

² History of Washington, Charles Burr Todd, p. 20.

Major Ellicott soon found that to preserve peace with these gentlemen called for the fullest use of his good temper; he wrote Mrs. Ellicott on the 18th of April, 1792:

“. . . My time here has yet passed heavily on. — I have not even been so polite as to pay one regular visit. — I shall endeavour to do my duty; but many difficulties of a serious nature have arisen between the proprietors, and commissioners, which, (require all my address to prevent the bad effects thereof and) adds much to my embarrassments.— If nothing uncommon should intervene to prevent, I shall certainly be with you some time next month. May god protect you—

I am my dearest Sally

Your Affectionate

Husband.”

He was at this time beginning the plan of the city which was to supersede L'Enfant's incomplete one. The plan which L'Enfant had made and submitted to the President had failed to meet with entire approval: it had been sent to the House of Representatives, Dec. 13, 1791, for their inspection, had been withdrawn, and given back to L'Enfant, who positively refused to permit any use to be made of it afterwards, and Major Ellicott then drew a new plan, made from his knowledge of the now unavailable plan of Major L'Enfant; from materials which he had in his own possession, and from his actual surveys of the ground. This plan was adopted and engraved; its making was of course a question of time, and it was not until 1793 that he was able to leave Washington, with the

business, so far as his personal attention was required, completed. He was hurried, throughout all this time, by the desire of the Commissioners to sell lots as fast as possible, and hurry was naturally directly opposed to his careful, painstaking methods of work. His disagreement with the Commissioners (to be referred to shortly in his correspondence) grew from their accusation that he wasted time. This view of theirs accords ill with his letter of Oct. 10, 1792:

“MY DEAR SALLY

I have been so buisy for two weeks past, that I have scarcely had time to either shave, or Comb my Head, and do not expect one minute's leisure before next Sunday—The President and his Lady were here yesterday, she Wanted to be the bearer of a Letter to you, but I had not time to write— . . . I have sent by the bearer M^r. Green, (a Friend of mine) a silver Pipe as a present for Father Brown. You will observe the innitials of his name in cyphers on the Bowl.— May God bless you, and our little ones—

I am D^r Sally yours

Affectionately

AND^w ELLICOTT.”

The next letter, of December 14, shows that the placidity of his temper had become much disturbed.

“MY DEAR SALLY

Our work here is so far advanced, that I have some thoughts of staying about three weeks longer than I intended when I wrote to you last.— It will prevent the necessity of my returning here again to stay any con-

siderable time.— I begin to dislike the whole place, and have become too illnatured to associate with any beings except my four assistants.— I have spoke to but one female, and to her but once, for a week past— I eat alone in the Office, to which I confine myself as closely as a Bear to his den in the Winter— . . . I am my dear Sally, neither flattering you, nor myself, when I declare that in my opinion, you are the first Lady of all my acquaintance, whether considered as a Mother, wife, or an agreeable companion— and if I should ever propose staying at this place more than a month unless in your company, shew me this letter, and ask me what my feelings were when writing it—

I am my Dear Sally

Your loving Husband.”

On Jan. 1st he signed a certificate that —

“ . . . These lines [the District boundaries] are opened, and cleared forty feet wide, that is, twenty feet on each side of the lines limiting the Territory: And in order to perpetuate the work, I have set up squared mile stones, marked progressively with the number of miles from the beginning on Jones’s Point, to the west corner, . . . thence to the place of beginning on Jones’s point; except in a few cases where the miles terminated on declivities, or in waters: . . . On the sides of the stones facing the Territory is inscribed, ‘ Jurisdiction of the United States,’ On the opposite sides of those placed in the commonwealth of Virginia, is inscribed ‘ Virginia,’ And on those in the State of Maryland, is inscribed ‘ Maryland.’ On the third and fourth sides, or faces, is inscribed the Year, in which the stone was set up, and the variation of the Magnetic

Needle at that place. In addition to the foregoing works I have completed a Map of the four lines with an half mile on each side, including the said District, or Territory, with a survey of the different waters.

Witness my hand this first day of January, 1793.

AND^W ELLICOTT.”

Of the boundary stones set to mark the limits of the city itself, two at least are still standing, the “North Meridian Stone” on North Capitol Street, and the fourth stone, set by Major Ellicott at 15th and C streets, N. E. Both stones have been passed as boundaries long since. The city has extended at least a mile beyond the North Meridian Stone, and it was in fact entirely lost to sight until 1903, when the Engineer Corps of the District of Columbia, after much troublesome search, located it. It was almost entirely buried beneath dirt and rubbish and was considerably below the established grade of the street. Its preservation was accomplished by levelling off the top and placing thereon a copper slab whose inscription records the fact that it marks the original north boundary of the City of Washington. The location of the stone is thus known and marked, although the stone itself is beneath the surface and out of sight.

The stone at 15th and C streets, which had at one time been moved, was found in 1895 and re-set in its old place. It is also inscribed, and, like the North Meridian Stone, stands as a fitting memorial of the original limitations of the city.¹

On January 9, 1793, Major Ellicott wrote to Mr. Jefferson:

¹ Records on file in the War Department, Washington.

“ SIR

From a conversation which I had with you some time ago I remember you was desirous of discovering the Indian name of the Eastern Branch of the Potomak— By some old surveys it appears to be Annakostia—

The reasons of my Disagreement with the Commissioners and ultimate determination to quit the business of the City of Washington on the first day of May next shall be published immediately after that date— And I have no doubt but that from a clear investigation of facts my conduct and exertions will be approved by the candid and deserving.

I am Sir

with much Esteem

Your real Friend

AND^W ELLICOTT.”¹

It is evident he felt keenly that he was meeting with injustice; and that his friends also felt that any criticism of his method of work or of his industry was unfair, is evidenced by the following “ certificate ” from Mr. Briggs:

“ CITY OF WASHINGTON, January 12th 1793.

“ . . . Nothing . . . but extreme indisposition— and not always even that— has ever appeared to me to divert his attention from his business, or to abate his anxious endeavors to promote the general interest of the City of Washington, with the approbation, if possible, of both commissioners and proprietors.

I shall produce one instance, out of many, of his extreme attention to his duty: when we were running the boundary lines of the Territory of Columbia, being obliged to

¹ From a draft among Major Ellicott's papers.

transact . . . the general business of his office in George Town on saturday evenings and sundays, he used actually to arrive at our camp on the lines, at no less distance than seven miles from that town, on monday morning before it was light enough to see distinctly without a candle;— It was also his usual custom to breakfast by candle-light in the morning; the labors of the day commenced before sun rise, and he did not retire from them but with retiring day-light— frequently not even for dinner— In short, I do not believe it possible for a man, aiming solely at the augmentation of his private fortune, or the attainment of his reigning wish, to be more indefatigable in the pursuit, or constant in his exertions, than Major Ellicott always appeared to me to be in the faithful execution of the public business committed to his charge.

Such conduct in a public servant, although the rigid moralist may call it no more than duty, is certainly meritorious, and demands the esteem and approbation of every unprejudiced mind.

T: BRIGGS.”

His own opinion of his detractors Major Ellicott expresses roundly in his next letter to his wife:

“MY DEAR SALLY

“GEO. TOWN Jan^y 15th 1793.

Owing to my disagreement with the commissioners, and one, or two, other causes, I was prevented from dining with you, on the first of this month— My disagreement with the commissioners, has gone to such a length, that I have given them notice, that I shall leave the work on the first day of May next— I have received treatment from them, that

would justify me in any measure whatever— . . . Neither credit, nor reputation, will ever be the lot of a single person, who enters into their service. . . . I dislike the place, and every day adds to my disgust.— Where you are, there is all my happiness, and if I can manage matters in such a manner, as to be able to support you, as you deserve, without leaving you again, you may rest assured, that my arms shall enfold you every night, and as far as my conversation can add to your amusement, it shall the remainder of our lives be daily dedicated to your service.—

Your loving and affectionate

Husband.”

But the high estimation in which he was held by the President, by Mr. Jefferson, and by all who could appreciate his entire honesty of purpose, turned the scales so completely in his favor that his next letter records his triumph, and his pleasure in that triumph:

“MY DEAR SALLY/

“GEO. TOWN April 10th, 1793.

I have just taken a few minutes to acquaint you that I am in good health, and have been so ever since I left your Arms— The singular situation into which I was thrown immediately on my arrival at this place, and the doubtful issue, prevented my writing until a final determination, which was had yesterday. My victory was complete; and all my men reinstated in the City, after a suspension of one month.— As my reputation depended on this determination, I neglected nothing in my power to defeat the commissioners; but had to contend very un-

equally owing to all my papers being seized by their order the day after I returned from Philadelphia. — And this day they were all restored to me again!!! this victory has cost me at least £75. The defeat of the commissioners has given great pleasure to the inhabitants of this place, and when I went into the City yesterday after the determination, the joy of every person concerned in the business was evident, and it was with difficulty that they were prevented from huzzaing.— Briggs behaved like a true friend, and a man of sense and prudence. . . .

I am my Dearest Sally

Your Affectionate

Husband.

P. S. Yours by the President came to hand — I think my victory in some measure was owing to him.”

As to how far the city plan was L’Enfant’s or how far Major Ellicott’s, there can be no definite statement made. The completed plan, from which the engravings were made, was drawn by Major Ellicott, “partly from L’Enfant’s draughts, partly from his own materials.” The fact that L’Enfant’s plans were used whenever practicable, and as far as practicable, has never been denied.

At the last, it must be said that they were both men of unusual talent (working for many months together), and that a city of unusual beauty and nobility of design is the product of their work, a work directed largely by the wise and far-sighted President. A fair-minded statement, and perhaps as brief and exact a one as could be made of the relative part played by each toward the accom-

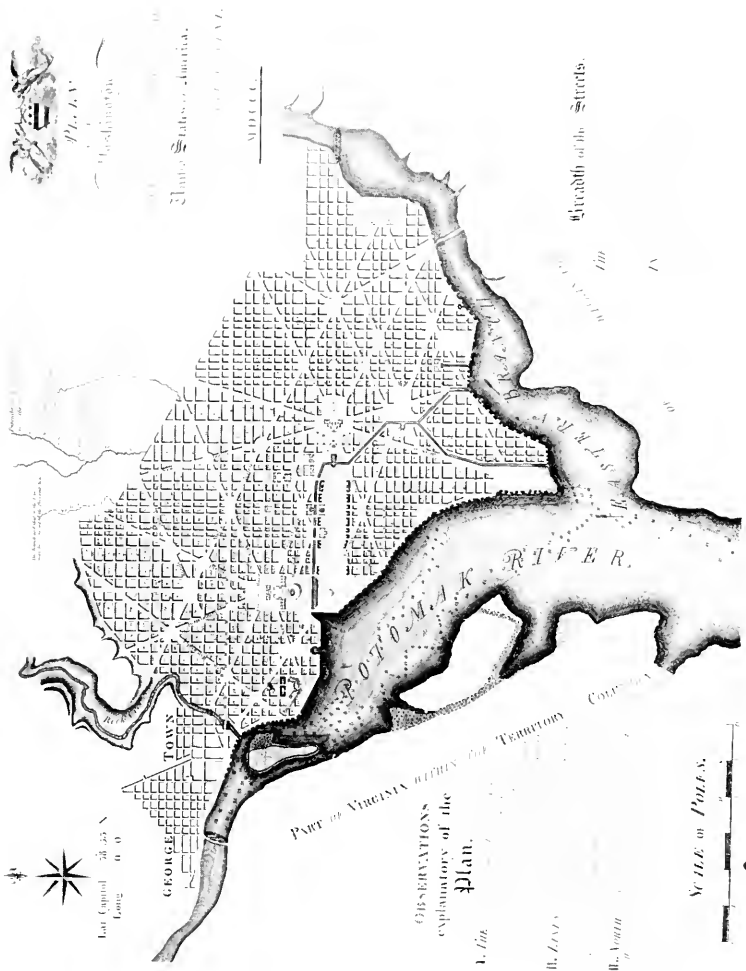


PLANNED

Washington

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MDCCC



Lat. Capital 38 25 N
Long 77 0 0

GEORGETOWN

POTOMAC RIVER

breadth of the streets

OBSERVATIONS
explanatory of the
Plan.

1. Plan

2. Views

3. Account

SCALE in FEET

PLAN OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, D. C.
From a copy of the original plan by Andrew Ellicott.

plishment of the plan of the city, is found in a letter from three later commissioners to Mr. Dennis, chairman of a committee of Congress, headed "At the Commissioners Office, March 23, 1802."

" . . . Major L'Enfant's plan of the city," it states, "was sent to the House of Representatives on the 13. December 1791, by President Washington for the information of the House, and afterwards withdrawn. Many alterations were made therefrom by Major Ellicott with the approbation of the President and under his authority. All the appropriations (except as to the Capitol and the President's house) were struck out and the plan, thus altered, sent to the engraver. These changes from L'Enfant's plan took place in the year 1792, and the public plan appears to have been engraved in October of that year. . . . This plan being made partly from L'Enfant's draughts and partly from material possessed by Ellicott."¹

And in the report communicated to the House of Representatives by Mr. Dennis, April 8, 1802, he says:

"Your committee finds that the plan of the City was originally designed by Mr. L'Enfant, but that it was in many respects rejected by the President of the United States and a plan was drawn up by Mr. Ellicott, purporting to have been made by actual survey, which recognized the alterations made therein and which was engraved and published by the order of General Washington in the year 1792.

"This plan was circulated by the Government through-

¹ American State Papers, vol. xx, p. 333.

out the United States and sent to the public agents in Europe, by authority of the Government, as the plan of the city, and is the only one which has ever been engraved and published.”¹

This would seem to be final, but the last word on the subject may be left to General Washington himself, who wrote with his own hand:

“ . . . That many alterations have been made from L’Enfant’s plan by Major Ellicott with the approbation of the Executive is not denied. That some were deemed essential is avowed, and had it not been for the materials which he happened to possess, it is probable that no engraving from L’Enfant’s draughts ever would have been exhibited to the public, for after the disagreement took place between him and the commissioners, his obstinacy threw every difficulty in the way of its accomplishment.

Mr. Davidson is mistaken if he supposes that the transmission of L’Enfant’s plan to Congress was the completion thereof, so far from it, it was only given as a matter of information to show what state the business was in.”²

It is not necessary to seek to detract in any way from the originality and acknowledged brilliance of Major L’Enfant’s plan, in order to prove of what paramount importance Major Ellicott’s completion of it was toward the accomplishment of the plans as a whole. General Washington’s words may fitly be taken as the final ones, and his statement that but for Major Ellicott no permanent plans would ever have resulted is surely the most

¹ American State Papers, p. 330.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xx, p. 334.

fitting and lasting tribute to the importance of the services which Major Ellicott rendered in the making of the City of Washington, a city which fully realized all the expectations and hopes concerning it, and which has even more of beauty than it had in the visions of its founders.

What Major Ellicott accomplished on these Washington surveys and plans has been held by some students of his life to have been his most important public work. This view is somewhat difficult to take, when his further surveys, and his negotiations with the Indian tribes, and with the representatives of a foreign country are taken into consideration. That it stands high on the list of his services to his country is undeniable, and the appreciation of its permanent value will ever increase, and not diminish, so long as the words of General Washington are remembered, — that without Major Ellicott the plans of Washington in the beauty and freshness of their first conception would have been lost to us forever.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD TO PRESQU'ISLE FORT

1793-1795

By May, 1793, the business at Washington had so far progressed that Major Ellicott was able to leave its further details to his brothers Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott and his two assistants Mr. Briggs and Mr. Fenwick. All four were competent engineers and had been associated with him on the surveys of the Federal city from the beginning.

Major Ellicott had been able, even while actively engaged upon the work at Washington, to give a portion of his time at least to other matters. In November and December, 1792, he had made a survey for his friend Robert Morris, in western New York, which, locally at least, had been of great importance.

Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham, who had purchased from Massachusetts her pre-emption right to lands in western New York, in 1790 sold a large tract of this land to Robert Morris. This tract included the location of Geneva, then a small settlement, beautifully situated on Seneca Lake on or near the site of the old Indian village of Kanedasaga, and adjoining the lands known as the "Livingston Indian Lessees Company's Tract."

The original line between these two tracts had been run by Col. Hugh Maxwell for Phelps and Gorham, and by a Mr. Jenkins for the "Lessees." It began at the 82d milestone of the north line of Pennsylvania, and ran through to Lake Ontario. This line was known as the "Pre-emption Line" and passed, according to the Maxwell-Jenkins survey, a mile and a quarter west of Geneva village.

Robert Morris, being dissatisfied with this survey, in November, 1792, employed Major Ellicott to go over the Pre-emption line and ascertain its correct position. This he did, having with him as assistant Augustus Porter, and they found the true line to run as far *east* of Geneva as the Lessees' surveyor had made it *west*. Axemen felled the timber on the new line, to a width of thirty feet, and the survey was made down this line to the head of Seneca Lake.

Mr. Jenkins claimed that the attraction of the magnetic needle by certain minerals was responsible for his mistake. But the beautiful site of Geneva which he was anxious to secure for his employers has ever been held by those most nearly concerned to have been the real attraction. Judge Porter, in his "Reminiscences," says: "I was with Mr. Ellicott and assisted him in the survey." He further tells how, working with the end of the lake between them, twelve miles apart, they signalled by lanterns at night, the distance making any other mode of communication impossible. "The mode of doing so was as follows: I raised two lights, one quite high, the other less elevated. Mr. Ellicott did the same, both being provided with telescopes. He then moved his shorter light

(his longer one being fixed on the line he was running) in the direction he wished me to move mine, right or left, until my shorter or moveable light was on the true meridian, when, as previously agreed on, he was to indicate I was right by placing his lower light immediately under his higher one.”¹

Major Ellicott's line, ever afterwards conceded to be the true line, and used in all subsequent surveys, was run by means of a transit instrument made by himself. There was at that time but one other such instrument to be found in the United States, and that was one made by Major Ellicott's good and gifted friend David Rittenhouse. This is learned from a letter written in 1795 by Simeon DeWitt, then Surveyor General of the United States.²

This brief but decisive piece of work finished, Major Ellicott returned to Washington, and was there until the following May, when he went home to prepare for a task full of danger, difficulty, and privation. On the 15th of April, 1793, “In the name and by the authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” he had been appointed by Governor Mifflin, together with Gen. Wm. Irvine and John Wilkens, Jr., commissioner for viewing and laying out, on the most eligible ground, a road from Reading to Presqu'Isle.

There is but little in the terms of the commission to suggest to the imagination the dangers and hardships in-

¹ Reminiscences of Judge Augustus Porter. Manuscript in possession of the Buffalo Historical Society.

² Field Book 35, Sub-division B. Manuscript Department of the State Library at Albany.

volved, and we should not have a hint of Major Ellicott's entire realization of the character of these wilderness missions on which he so cheerfully set forth, were it not for a warning which he gave to a young man whom he engaged to go with him as a surveyor on this very expedition. With his characteristic straightforwardness Major Ellicott was careful to explain to this young man, Enoch Lewis by name, that the "proposed expedition would not be accomplished without privation and exposure, and that the hardships incident to a long journey in the wilderness far beyond the limits of the white settlements, and the risk of sickness with such miserable attendance as a camp could supply, ought not to be encountered without due consideration, and that the dangers arising from the revengeful feelings of the Indians with whom a fierce war had been recently waged, and whose peaceful dispositions could not be relied on, were not to be disregarded."¹

In spite of this clear understanding of what was to be expected in the wilderness, Major Ellicott started cheerfully off himself, and took his own eldest son, Andrew, then a lad of seventeen, with him; and Enoch Lewis, in no wise daunted by the warning he had received, went with them.

A fragment of a diary, kept on some leaves torn evidently from a notebook, records the journey toward the place of beginning.

May 20th. left the city of Philadelphia and proceeded to Pottsgrove the weather extreme cold for the season and we found fires necessary.

¹ Memoir of Enoch Lewis, p. 24.

21st. Left Pottsgrove about 6 OClock A. M. and proceeded to Reading where we dined and from thence continued our journey to Womoldorphs Town This day we had one shower—

22^d. Left Womoldorphs Town about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour after four OClock A. M. and proceeded to Lebanon where we brakefasted at this place I discovered that owing to the negligence of the Stage driver or to theft part of my baggage was missing I immediately despatched Mr. Burgess back to make the necessary inquiries. We then proceeded to Harrisburgh where we continued all night. . . .

23^d. Rested badly last night owing to a prodigious noise occasioned by a concert of Musick at our lodgings—The musicians put a trick upon the inhabitants and one of them tricked his Companion by slipping off with all the money which amounted to about 50 dollars— A heavy rain this morning — The Stage will not leave this till tomorrow this day was therefore spent at Harrisburgh. The fidler who was left by his companion had no money to pay his reconing the landlord let him off by a promise of payment at some future day— This was a trick upon the landlord to get clear of the reconing for the heroes joined each other over the River and proceeded with expedition towards Carlisle. The trick they put upon the inhabitants of Harrisburgh was by advertising a concert of musick by a full band for the benefit of a Mr. Abbot. Tickets of admission 3/9— The whole concert consisted of a drunken Fidler and a performer on the German Flute.

24th. Proceeded to Carlisle— Examined the Horses which had been sent on from Pittsburgh for our use they

are poor miserable creatures and I fear not able to perform the journey

25th. Left Carlisle about 9 O'clock in the morning.—one of our horses exceeding lame. Arrived at Strasburgh about 7 O'clock in the evening— My company now consists of the following Gentlemen Viz Mess^{rs}. Simpson, Burgess, Lewis, Evans, Hoops, Smith and A. A. Ellicott.

26th. Proceeded to M^r. Wilds Tavern at the foot of the sidling Hill.

27th. Proceeded to M^r. Wards lately Todds Tavern— Stopped . . . and paid a visit to my old Friend Geo. Woods Esq^r— His son George had the evening before brought home his young wife — I partook of the home-bringing entertainment.

28th. Proceeded to Stoystown. . . .

29. rode to Baldrages. . . .

30. Arrived at Pittsburgh— General Irvine¹ joined me on the 2^d [of June]. . . . Pittsburgh as I have already observed in my journal 11 years ago stands at the confluence of the Allegany and Monongehilia Rivers the junction of which forms the Ohio— The situation will be regarded as a great thouroughfare and the trade, of course, considerable— being on a point of land and a large river on the two sides . . . the inhabitants can never enjoy the advantages of extensive walks—

¹ William Irvine was born in Ireland in 1741. He was educated to be a surgeon, and at the time of the Revolution was practising in Carlisle, Pa. He joined the Continental Army, and became a Brigadier-General. Subsequently to the Revolution he commanded troops at Fort Pitt and other posts. He was a commissioner or agent in charge of public lands, was a member of Congress from 1793 to 1795, and at the time of his death was President of his State Society of the Cincinnati. He died in Philadelphia in 1804.

Sunday June 8th. This and the three preceeding days have been the hottest I ever experienced in this country and could find no means of keeping myself comfortable but by frequently bathing in one or other of the rivers—Yesterday we sent off the surveyors to measure the road from this place to Venango.”

From lack of record of any adverse circumstances, it is inferred that the survey went on throughout the summer of 1793 without any interference or opposition from the Indians, and in the fall the surveying party returned home by the way of Pittsburgh for those winter months when field work was an impossibility.

By the following spring, however, the Chiefs of the Six Nations were aroused to what they chose to consider an invasion of their territory, and Major Ellicott's letters to various officials who were associated or interested in the building of the Presqu'Isle road give more than a hint of the apprehended hostility of the Indians. He wrote to General Irvine from Pittsburgh, May 23, 1794:¹

“DEAR SIR

I arrived in this place early on tuesday morning last and have since been endeavouring to obtain such information as may be relied on respecting the disposition of the Indians, but the accounts are so vague, and in some cases so contradictory, that nothing less than a spirit of divination could enable a person to draw any certain conclusions from them. One company of surveyors from

¹ Copied from a draft among Major Ellicott's papers.

a strong presumption of danger quitted the woods on Wednesday last and returned to this place. . . .

With esteem yours

A. ELLICOTT.”

And to A. J. Dallas, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, evidently in answer to a communication from Governor Mifflin:¹

“SIR/

“PITTSBURGH, June 6th, 1794.

. . . Please to inform the Governor that I shall make a point of attending carefully to the present situation of the roads, and of the contracts immediately after my return from Le Beuff and Venango, for which posts I shall set out this Afternoon in order to have our stores and Instruments taken care of. . . .

I am Sir your real

Friend

A. ELLICOTT.”

Governor Mifflin had already instructed Captain Denny, commandant at Presqu’ Isle, to “promote the work of the Commissioners in every way, but peculiarly to avoid giving any occasion of offence to the Peaceable Indians or to the British Garrisons in that quarter.” Despite this pacific injunction the Governor wrote to President Jefferson a month later urging the necessity of protecting the frontier and saying that “a firm hand will better make the Indians behave than a seeming deference.” This latter view was also that of Major Ellicott.

The business of the Commissioners was not only the laying out of roads, but also the “laying and establish-

¹ Copied from a draft among Major Ellicott’s papers.

ing Towns and outlets within the several tracts of land heretofore reserved for public uses, situated respectively at Presque Isle on Lake Erie" (now Erie), "at the mouth of French Creek" (now Franklin), "at the mouth of Conewango Creek" (now Warren), "and at Fort Le Beouf" (now Waterford), all in Pennsylvania.

The surveys were much hindered by the Indians, who claimed that the lands now being surveyed had not been legally purchased from them. Major Ellicott mentions apprehended trouble from them in a letter to Captain Denny, written from Fort Franklin, June 14, 1794.¹

"SIR/

From the best information which can be collected respecting the present disposition of the six nations there is reason to apprehend that owing to British influence they are meditating an attack upon this place— On which account considering the weak state and great importance of this post both to the United States and State of Pennsylvania it appears necessary for your detachment to remain at this place until the arrival of Cap^t. Obeal who has been sent for by Gen. Wilkins and myself— It must be evident that if we should proceed to Lebeuf and the Indians to obtain possession of this post that our retreat would be cut off and the inhabitants of Cassawago left to the mercy of the savages.

I am Sir

with great esteem

and regard

AND ELLICOTT."

¹ From a draft.

The result of the private conference with Captain O'Bail (Corn-planter)¹ is not recorded, but a conference was held by General Israel Chapin, Commissioner to the Six Nations, at Buffalo Creek, June 26, 1794, where they were fully represented by their most eloquent chiefs. The previous day Major Ellicott had written to General Chapin from

“DEAR SIR/

“FORT LE BEUFF, June 25th 1794.²

. . . . I shall have no objection to an interview with the Chiefs of the six nations and hearing their complaints if any— Cap^t Obeal is mistaken about his warrior being lost below Venango— he is now at that place and has been constantly treated with respect by the white people— In a drunken frolic an Indian was killed by one Robinson at that Post and they in return have killed five for him. . . . I shall be glad to see you, my old friend. I am with much esteem

Your real Friend

A. ELLICOTT.”

Relative to these Indian troubles, Major Ellicott wrote to Governor Mifflin from Le Bœuf, June 29, 1794.³

¹ “Cornplanter” (Captain O'Bail) the half-breed Seneca chief, son of John O'Bail, an Indian trader, was born in 1732. Although he had been, with his tribe, the enemy of the Americans during the frontier warfare of western New York, he later became their sincere friend, and greatly influenced his people in their favor. He died at the Seneca Reservation, Pa., in 1836.

² From a draft.

³ From a draft.

“ SIR,

In my last Letter . . . I mentioned that you might expect to hear from me both from Fort Franklin and Le Bouef, but . . . no opportunity occurred of writing from the first. On my arrival there the place appeared to be in such a defenceless Situation, that . . . we remained there some time and employed the troops in rendering it more tenable. . . . The Garrison at present consists of twenty-five men, . . . double that number would not be more than sufficient, considering the Importance of the Safety of the Settlements on French Creek. At Fort Franklin Gen^l Wilkins and myself wrote to the Corn-planter to attend there that we might have an opportunity of explaining to him the nature of our business. . . . After repairing Fort Franklin we proceeded to this place, and are now beginning to strengthen the works here so as to render it a safe deposit for military and other Stores. . . .

I am your Real Friend

A. ELLICOTT.”

The conference at Buffalo Creek was far from being final or satisfactory, and the chiefs spoke in “ threatening language of the dissatisfaction of those tribes (the Six Nations) with the new settlements.” After a second conference with the Indians on July 4, when General Chapin reached more satisfactory conclusions with them, he expressed it as his opinion that but for these two conferences, “ blood would have been shed,” and that quickly, by the turbulent tribes. In spite of these negotiations Major Ellicott wrote on July 29, that “ Respecting the disposition of the Indians we are much in

the dark on that subject, they have never appeared about this post since their council with us in June, except in the character of spies.”

To his wife he wrote:

“MY DEAR SALLY

“LE BOEUF August 1st 1794.

We yet continue very quietly at this place, having no communication with the Indians, and have had no intellegance from Philadelphia since the 13th of June last, and if no directions should come on to the contrary, we shall leave this place for Philadelphia next sunday two weeks— . . . We live here like a parcel of Monks, or Hermits, and have not a woman of any complexion among us — our linnen is dirty, our faces, and hands brown, and to complete the picture, our beards are generally long— O sweet Woman! without thee man is a Brute, — and society a blank: thou shapest man into a valuable being, and directeth his ambition to useful pursuits. Can that man be possessed of rational sensibility who adoreth not a woman? — no — . . .

I am my Dear Sally your

Affectionate Husband.”

As to the actual work, Major Ellicott was able to inform Governor Mifflin, on September 1, 1794, that “The plan of a Town for the place [Fort Le Boeuf, now Waterford, Pa.], is finished, but from its size could not well be forwarded by this conveyance,” and adds “We have built a Mohawk boat, (which will be found very serviceable if we go on to Presqu’Isle), to which may be added a number of fine canoes,” and expresses his opinion of the possibilities of the place as a settlement in a later letter to the Governor.

“ SIR/

“ LE BOEUF Oct. 1st, 1794.

We have been for some days past anxiously waiting to hear the result of the pending treaty with the Six Nations at Buffaloe Creek. . . . Cap^t Denny takes the same precaution as if the Fort was actually blockaded which confinement is very disagreeable to the detachment and has soured the minds of some of the Officers and the men generally who have heretofore been used to frontier scouting. They have manifested a desire to see the Lake but this being denied them (perhaps with propriety) has contributed considerably to increase their dissatisfaction. . . .

If any encouragement had been given or countenance shown by the Commandant I am confident that at least thirty houses would have been erected at this place this season which would have added considerably to the importance of this part of the State and been a centre round which settlements would shortly have been made. But without encouragement and notwithstanding the risk, one house is commenced, two others up to the square, and about 400 logs ready for building on lots which have been applied for.

It appears to me it would be highly advantageous to the State to have a Town laid out on the Public reservation at Venango and the lots disposed of in the same manner as the Legislature intended those at Presqu’Isle. Every person acquainted with the geography of this State must not only be sensible of the importance of the following situations, Viz. Venango, Mouth of the Conowango River, le Boeuf, and Presqu’Isle, but also of the propriety of some encouragement to such adventurers as may settle

at those places, for by a generous conduct emigrations from the State down the Ohio may be greatly checked and a very valuable part of the commonwealth put in a fair way of being peopled.

You need be under no apprehension of this post being surprized. The Vigilance of Cap^t. Denny will be found superior to any attempt of that kind.

In my last communication I mentioned the advantage which would result to the Public by having the Presqu' Isle road opened and put in order this fall by the detachment stationed at this place. The necessity of this measure appears to be daily increasing, and if gone into it will give the men an opportunity of seeing the Lake which was a leading motive with many of them for entering into the service. If they only see Presqu'Isle and the south side of Lake Erie I can answer for their becoming adventurers as soon as it can be done with safety.

A. ELLICOTT."

On the same day he writes to his wife from —

"LE BOEUF, Oct 1st 1794 at 5 O'clock in the Morning.

"MY DEAR SALLY

We are yet stationed at this place, but will shortly have to leave it and return home, — not by the command of Cap^t. Cornplanter, Wood-Bug, Dogs-about-the-fire, hot-Bread, hot-Ashes, Big-Boil-of a Kettle, Broken-Twig, Standing-Stone, flying-Cloud, Bears-Oil, Mud-eater, Big-fish-carrier, Old-Turkey, The-Tarrepin, Snake, He-cant-find-it, the-stringer-of-***ts, Twenty-Canoes, or any other two-legged King of this country; but by the command of a much more powerful Monarch, who is now making a

most violent attack upon my fingers, and toes; that is Cap^t. or King Frost.

We are all in a fine state of health, but almost naked for the want of cloaths, As yet we have been able to keep ourselves moderately warm with Blankets, and Bear-Skins. As to women, we know nothing about them except by recollection,— we have not seen one of any colour for near four months. without joking I expect we shall *certainly* receive orders to return in less than two weeks, if not, I shall *certainly* set out on the fifteenth of this month. . . . for about three months past we have scarcely been out of the sight of the Fort. From this circumstance my DEAR, you suppose that we are in danger, but that is not the case, we are not in danger near the Fort, and for fear of danger never leave it— There has not been an Indian seen within twenty miles of this place for almost three months, which is the only reason we have to suppose them not friendly — we amuse ourselves with playing Checkerds, or what is an infinitely more intricate, and noble game Chess, which is played on the same board, with Kings, Queens, Bishops, Knights, Castles, and Pawns, — I have with my own hands, with my Pen-Knife made three complete sets, each consisting of thirty two pieces, and one half set curiously wrought in bone.

There is some discontent among the Troops, and too much sparing among the Officers — . . .

I am my D^r Sally

your Loving

Husband.”

The close of that season is recorded in a letter to Governor Mifflin, from Pittsburgh, on the first of November.¹

“ SIR

I arrived at this place last evening from le Boeuf with my small party in good health but much featiegued-

I have brought down the saddle of a fine fat Buck which I shall endeavor to keep 'till your arrival at this Place.

I am Sir with great respect

Your real Friend

AND. ELLICOTT.”

The following season Major Ellicott's letters to his wife were much more frequent, probably because opportunity of forwarding them occurred more often; the first which has been kept is from Fort Le Bocuf, July 3, 1795.

“ MY DEAR SALLY

We arrived at this place on Monday last in good health, and without any accident happening to us since we left the City- The Town which we laid out here last summer has encreased as much as could be expected; there are three decent families settled in it, who supply us with Milck, and butter.- We shall set out for Presqu' Isle immediately after the arrival of our Canoes, which are at present detained in consequence of the low state of the waters- There does not appear to be danger from the Indians, they are very friendly; We have one with

¹ From a draft.

us who belongs to the Nobility, he is a nephew to King
Guia Shuthongn and step-son to Chitteaughdunk! . . .

I am Your loving and
Affectionate Husband.”

Fort Le Boeuf, where he was then at work, was an old French fort built prior to 1750, for in 1753 George Washington, then a major, had been sent to Le Boeuf by Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia to inquire of the French commandant at that place why the French had thus established a post within the dominions of his Britannic Majesty.

Major Washington, in his diary of Dec. 13, 1753, observed Fort Le Boeuf to be “situated on the South or West Fork of French Creek near the Water, and is almost surrounded by the Creek and a small Branch of it, which forms a kind of Island. Four Houses compose the Sides of it. The Bastions are made of Piles driven into the Ground, standing more than twelve Feet above it, and sharp at the Top. With Port-Holes cut for Cannons, and Loop-Holes for the small arms to fire through. In the Bastions are a Guard-House, Chapel, Doctors-Lodging, and the Commanders private Store. Round which are laid Platforms for the Cannon and men to stand on. There are several Barracks without the Fort for the Soldiers Dwellings, covered some with Bark, and some with Boards, made chiefly with Loggs. There are also several other Houses such as Stables, Smiths Shops, etc.

“According to the best judgment I could form, there are an Hundred men, exclusive of officers. . . . They

had 50 canoes of Birch Bark, and 170 of Pine, beside many others which were blocked out in readiness of being made.”¹

The Fort, as General Washington described it, must have been much as it was in 1793–94 while Major Ellicott was there. It was probably a typical frontier fort, of the better sort, of that period, and well and strongly built, for as late as 1848 a part of the old block house was still standing. From here Major Ellicott went on to finish the work at Presqu’ Isle.

Presqu’ Isle was also on the site of an old French fort, and was the headquarters, and depot of stores for the posts between Erie and Pittsburgh. It took its name “Presqu’ Isle” from the adjoining peninsula, and the eminence, on which the old fort with its attendant settlement stood, commended itself to Major Ellicott as a most favorable and commanding situation for the new town of Erie. He laid it out with regular and spacious streets, and with a care which has made it one of the pleasantest towns in Pennsylvania. The bluff on which it is situated affords a prospect of Presqu’ Isle Bay and of the Lake beyond. Reservations were made “of certain lots for the use of the United States to build forts, magazines, arsenals and dock-yards thereon.” Monuments inscribed appropriately, according to Major Ellicott’s invariable careful custom, were erected at suitable points. One at the northeast corner of the town, on the edge of the bluff, was inscribed “ERIE 1795,” on one face, and “N. lat. 42° 8’ 14’’” — on the other.

From here Major Ellicott wrote several letters to his wife:

¹ The Writings of Washington, Ford, vol. i, pp. 30, 31.

“ MY LOVE

“ PRESQU’ISLE, July 19th, 1795.

I have just embraced an opportunity by a person who is leaving this place in about ten minutes, to inform you that our business is going on with as much order, and despatch as could be expected. . . . We take fish in abundance, — Last evening Gen. Irvine’s son and Andrew made up a party, and in less than two hours brought into Camp about two hundred, weighing from one to six pounds— I have purchased from the Indians some fine Martin skins to replace your old Muff & Tippet— . . .

Your affectionate Husband.”

“ MY DEAR SALLY

“ PRESQU’ISLE, July 22^d, 1795.

This day we were joined by a detachment from the Army of the United States— which added to the State Troops renders our situation both secure and agreeable— We have hoisted the Union Flag, and fire a morning, and evening gun. There is a constant communication between this place, and the British side of the Lake,— my acquaintance in that quarter have written me some friendly letters, and appear desirous to be upon good terms with us. — such is the effect of the Presqu’ Isle establishment.

This letter will be taken to Pittsburgh by a person, who is conducting a lady to her people near Morgan’s Town. She has been a prisoner with the Indians for thirteen years. . . .

I am my Dear Sally your

Affectionate Husband.”

“PRESQU’ISLE Sep^{tr}. 11th, 1795.

“We are now completing our work at this place, and shall leave it in two weeks at farthest. — we shall then proceed to conawango where we shall not remain more than three weeks.— We have little or no news in this quarter, and what little we have, is concerning Mr. Jay’s Treaty.¹ — The Indians continue peaceable, and well disposed; the military establishment here will have a powerful effect in keeping them quiet. — Our Surgeon Doct^r Kenedy,² and a young Gentleman who resides in our Camp have built a sail Boat, which has added much to the rendering our situation agreeable.— We have cranberries in abundance, which we use with our bread in place of Butter— I have generally enjoyed a good state of health; but owing to my anxiety about your welfare, added to so much hard labour falling to my share, I have lost much more than my superfluous flesh— . . .

I am

My Dear Sally your affectionate

Husband.”

The latter part of September, the surveying party, with their work of road and town-building now nearly completed, moved on to Conawango, where they had laid out the present town of Warren, on a plain of about 300 acres on the right bank of the Alleghany River, just below the mouth of Conawango Creek. The town was

¹ Jay’s Treaty with Great Britain, signed Nov. 19, 1794, was published in this country July 2, 1795.

² Dr. Thomas Ruston Kennedy, who afterwards married Major Ellicott’s daughter Jane.

laid out along the river bank, in an attractive manner, a square or park in the centre of the town, around which were to be grouped the public buildings. A letter to Mrs. Ellicott from this place announces that the work which had consumed two years was nearly at an end.

“MY DEAR SALLY

“CONAWANGO, Oct. 8th, 1795.

We arrived at this place on the first day of this month, and expect to complete our business in ten days at farthest. — Since we left Presqu’Isle many of our people have been taken ill with the fever and ague, and this day we shall send off a party of the sick troops to Fort Franklin — On our way to this place I had one fit of the ague; but have prevented a return by taking freely of the bark.

As soon as we finish at this place we shall proceed to Pittsburgh where we shall be detained a few days, to refresh ourselves, and get some new clothes — We are as ragged as beggars, and almost as dirty as Indians. . . .

I am My Dear Sally your

loving Husband.”

Two weeks later a letter from Pittsburgh announces that it is actually completed.

“MY DEAR SALLY

‘PITTSBURGH October 23rd, 1795.

I have this moment arrived at this place in as good a state of health as could be expected considering our long marches thro’ the wilderness from Presqu’Isle to Conawango during almost the whole time we were wet with cold rains and on our passage down the river to

Venango we were covered with snow. . . . Andrew continues to enjoy a remarkably good state of health which has generally been the case with all our young Gentlemen—But some of our people have suffered considerably and one we had the misfortune to bury on the bank of the river on our way down. As my return home will be in so short a time I shall omit many anecdotes which can be better related than written—

I am my Dear Sally

Yours Affectionately.”

At Pittsburgh, the different members of the surveying party and the military guard all met, and enjoyed a short period of rest and relaxation after the hard summer's work. The leading men of the place were attracted to their company. A “good table,” emphasized as a sharp contrast to the wilderness fare, was a feature of their brief stay; and the evenings were made agreeable with much brilliant and entertaining conversation, in which old battles and thrilling experiences of the frontier were re-lived, and re-told, and to which, we are told, Major Ellicott did not fail to contribute “his genial flow of instructive thought.” A week later he was once more at the dearly loved home in Philadelphia.

CHAPTER VI

THE FLORIDA BOUNDARY

1796-1800

A PARTICULAR importance attaches to the next work on which the government required Major Ellicott's services. It was the fixing of a definite boundary line between the United States and the Spanish possessions in Florida, one of the main points in the Pinckney-Godoy Treaty of October 27, 1795.

This Pinckney-Godoy Treaty, settling as it did a number of important things concerning the "Mississippi territory," was a diplomatic triumph on the part of Mr. Thomas Pinckney, Ambassador from the United States. Friction, long continued, between the Spaniards and the Americans on the lower Mississippi lands had made definite settlement of some sort imperative. "Spain" (writes Washington in September, 1794) "has imposed the necessity of sending an envoy extraordinary to her. Mr. Pinckney is gone thither, he is to seize any favourable moment to execute what has been entrusted to him concerning the Mississippi." And it was, apparently, a very favorable moment that he seized, for, conferring with the "Most Excellent Lord Don Manuel de Godoi," as Spain's representative in the matter, Mr. Pinckney secured

such important acquisitions for the United States that Washington made congratulatory mention of them in his Farewell Address.

De Godoy's several dozen resplendent titles occupy the entire first page of the treaty, yet Mr. Pinckney's simple claim to be a "Citizen of the United States" weighs heavily against them, especially as the "Citizen of the United States" gained all that he was sent to gain, which was in brief:

"1st. The establishment of the southern limits of the United States from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, by a well defined line between them and Florida.

"2d. The establishment of the western boundary by the Mississippi River, and the extinction of Spanish claims to all territory on its eastern bank north of thirty-one degrees, the limits of Louisiana.

"3rd. It secured the free navigation of that long coveted river, and opened an outlet to the Gulf, and to the markets of the world. The western pioneer thus obtained an unmolested right of way for a thousand miles down that majestic stream, and

"4th. By the privilege of a port of entry at New Orleans, he secured a safe deposit for American produce and for importations from all European nations.

"5th. Another article of the treaty established a court in which American claims against the Spaniards might be adjudicated and enforced, and justice, though long delayed, be done our injured citizens.

"6th. This treaty of 'friendship, limits and navigation' required each contracting party to restrain the

Indians within their territories from any aggression upon their neighbors, and thus provided for the peace of our homes against this insidious foe.”¹

Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge remarks that it was an extremely good treaty and conceded all we asked. “By it the Florida boundary was settled and the free navigation of the Mississippi was obtained. We also gained the right to a place of deposit at New Orleans, a pledge to leave the Indians alone, a commercial agreement modelled on that with France, and a board of arbitration to settle American claims.”²

All these concessions were especially valuable at this time to the United States, but the treaty, though ratified by the Madrid government, in 1796, was not fulfilled by them. Kentucky, however, demanded its execution, in which demand she was upheld by the Federal government, and, the treaty having provided that each nation should appoint a Commissioner and Surveyor to meet at Natchez and perform the work, President Washington, in a commission bearing date May 4, 1796, appointed Andrew Ellicott Commissioner to survey and mark the boundary line between the American and Spanish possessions, to run, as provided for in the treaty, along the thirty-first parallel from the Mississippi eastward to the Appalachicola (Chattahoochee) River, and as an argument which he might use in case of need, a detachment of United States troops was to accompany him.

His instructions from Timothy Pickering, Secretary of State, dated Sept. 14, 1796, impressed upon him the

¹ Life of Thomas Pinckney.

² Life of Washington, H. C. Lodge.

importance of the exactitude of the work which was before him, and the great desirability of preserving peace and harmony in his dealings with both the Indians and Spaniards with whom he would be brought in contact, and adds that according to the terms of the treaty, he should be at Natchez, "before the 25th of October next ensuing," — an impossibility under the conditions of travelling at that time.

Major Ellicott set out upon this important errand on the 16th of September, 1796, and his journal, faithfully kept from the day of his departure from Philadelphia until his return thereto May 18, 1800, is a picture of the country and the period of which he wrote, absorbing in its interest.

The mode of travel by land and water, the country through which he passed, its natural features whether of beauty or desolation, the temperature, soil, vegetation, and mineral resources, all claimed his notice. The settlers and Indians, the outlaws and adventurers always to be found thronging the edge of a new country, the Spaniards themselves, dilatory and annoying, withholding to the last what they knew they must yield in the end, all, in fact, that came under his keen observation is described in a manner full of fascination, and the journal has a literary value entirely aside from the political and scientific importance of the work which it records. The survey itself was really a link in the chain of American expansion, and Major Ellicott's record of the circumstances attending the work are all the more interesting because the principal actors seem hardly aware that there is to be such a thing as American expansion, still less that they, down there

on the edge of the wilderness, at the end of a stormy century, are forging one of its links. The journal was afterwards published (Philadelphia, 1803), a square, sturdy, calf-bound volume with many maps and tables of astronomical observations, the latter "Addrest" to Mr. Robert Patterson, Vice-President of the American Philosophical Society.

An eminent historian says of this book, "He wrote a Journal, which alone would entitle its author to a high rank among the literary and scientific men of the period. It was an early and successful essay to make the people of the United States acquainted with the climate, soil, topography, and vast resources of the country acquired by the Louisiana purchase."

The charm of the book as a whole is great, and it is difficult to choose such parts of it as will tell the story of Major Ellicott's work in brief, without necessarily leaving out much that is of interest and value. The first forty pages are given over to the journey from Philadelphia to Natchez, at which place he was to meet the Spanish Commissioner. Such a journey in the year of grace 1796 was no light undertaking. It led him first by horseback to Pittsburgh, while his baggage and instruments followed more slowly by wagon. The way led across the beautiful mountains and valleys of western Pennsylvania, long since familiar to him from his early surveys across them. It led through cleared land and forest, over roads often discouragingly steep, and always discouragingly poor, and to reach accommodations for man and horse at seasonable times, whether it was a tavern or the house of a friend, required riding early and

late. Pittsburgh once reached, the rest of the journey was to be made by boat or bateau down the Ohio and the Mississippi to the place of meeting.

The importance of water ways as routes of travel in those early days can scarcely be over-estimated. The desirability of travel by water, compared to an over-land route on primitive roads, was great, for the roads (where roads there were at all) had hardly yet emerged from being trails. The person who had a distance to travel simply made for the river which flowed nearest to his starting-point and destination, and procuring the sort of a boat best adapted to his needs, intrusted himself and his goods to the stream. This was the course Major Ellicott pursued and his journal begins:

September 16th 1796, I took leave of my family about ten o'clock in the morning, and proceeded to Chester and dined; then rode to Wilmington and staid all night. . . .

17th, Left Wilmington at half past five in the morning, breakfasted at Christiana, dined at Elkton, proceeded to the Susquehannah, crossed the ferry and lodged at Havre de Grace. . . .

18th, Left Havre de Grace at five in the morning, breakfasted at Hartford, dined at Baltimore, and lodged at my mother's on Potapasco. . . .

The country from the Susquehannah to Potapasco does not appear to be in a better state of cultivation, than it was twenty-six years ago. This disagreeable circumstance, is no doubt principally owing to the system of domestic slavery, which yet continues to prevail in the southern states. . . . That domestic slavery is wrong in



Reproduced from a lithograph in colours, printed in 1854.

a moral point of view is evident from the ordinary principles of justice: And that it is politically wrong may be deduced from the following facts. *First*, that a tract of country cultivated by slaves, is neither so well improved, rich, or populous, as it would be if cultivated by the owners of the soil, and by freemen. *Secondly*, slaves cannot be calculated upon as adding to the strength of the community, but frequently the contrary, for reasons too obvious to detail. . . .

21st, Set out before sunrise, rode 10 miles and took breakfast, . . . went on to M'Callister's town and dined. The town is handsome, and appears to be improving, which is not the case with Reister's town. The population of towns, and villages, is generally very rapid till it becomes sufficient for the commerce of the surrounding country, and afterwards increases, or decreases, with the general state of the improvement of the district, unless aided by something peculiarly favourable in its situation. . . .

[His own experience in laying out towns had led him to consider such matters from the viewpoint of a keen and interested observer.]

22nd, . . . Proceeded to Shippensburgh. On the way crossed a spur of the Blue mountain, on which peaches were uncommonly plenty, and in great perfection. . . .

23d, Set out about 3 in the afternoon and rode to Strasburgh. . . .

24th, Left Strasburgh early in the morning. . . . Breakfasted at Dunn's, dined at Bird's and stayed all night at Wild's Tavern at the foot of the Sideling Hill. . . .

25th, Took an early breakfast and rode to Hartley's and dined from thence proceeded to Wards' and stayed all night. . . .

26th, Proceeded to the foot of the Alleghany mountain, . . . ascended the mountain about ten o'clock in the morning and proceeded to Stoy's town and dined, then rode to Mr. Wells's¹ and stayed all night. . . . A number of farmers on the mountain were engaged in cutting their Buckwheat, and Oats; . . . The summer on the mountain, is not sufficiently long to bring Indian corn to perfection.

27th, Left Mr. Wells's before sunrise, . . . crossed the Laurel Hill, and took breakfast at Freeman's Tavern: crossed the Chestnut ridge and dined at Baldrages: proceeded from thence to Greensburgh, and stayed all night. . . .

28th, . . . Left Greensburgh at seven o'clock in the morning, and rode to Col. John Irwin's, and took breakfast, from thence to M'Nairs and dined. Left M'Nairs in a heavy rain, which continued till I arrived at Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh, which twenty-five years before could boast but twenty log huts outside the fort, was in 1795 "a thriving town containing at present about two hundred Houses, fifty of wch are brick and framed, & the remainder Log."² It was a great centre of western emigration, and the boat building industry was a busy one.

"For seven months of every year the streets of the town were crowded with emigrants arriving and depart-

¹ This was Mr. Charles Wells, with whom Major Ellicott had stayed for some time in 1785, while at work on the boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania.

² Journal of Thomas Chapman.

ing and its water front was fringed with boats of every description. Boat building was the chief industry of the place, and as no boat ever came back the industry never flagged. At either river bank could be procured at a moment's notice canoes cut from a single log, pirogues able to carry fifteen barrels of salt, skiffs of from five hundred to twenty thousand pounds burden, batteaux, arks, Kentucky broadhorns, New Orleans boats for use on the Mississippi river, and barges and keel boats with masts and sails. Provided, according to his needs with one or more of such craft, and a copy of the Navigator, to warn him of the dangerous rocks and eddies that obstructed the way, the trader or emigrant would push off into the stream and float slowly down with the current." ¹

Major Ellicott, on his arrival, immediately busied himself in securing boats for the river journey. He quickly procured three, a flat-bottomed "Kentucky boat" and two others, but on the 16th was still in need of a fourth. "On the 20th Gen. Wilkinson, and his family arrived, and he very politely gave his Boat up to me; it was a second hand one, but the Cabbin was new and spacious."

The wagons with the stores, instruments, and baggage, being necessarily much slower in making the trip from Philadelphia did not reach Pittsburg until Oct. 3d. Some of the instruments, injured by the jolting of the wagons, required repairing, and from one cause and another it was the 24th of October before they were fairly under

¹ McMaster's History of the People of the United States, vol. iii, p. 483.

way. They were, even then, troubled for several days by fogs, shoals, and leakage of the boats, caused by dragging them over the stones in the shallows. Also, some of the men got intoxicated in a "small trifling village" they passed, "whose inhabitants are principally supported by selling liquor to the indiscreet and dissipated in the neighbourhood, and to the imprudent traveller."

"29th, . . . Encamped in the evening opposite to the Mingo bottom which is rendered memorable for the inhuman murder of the Indians of that name, who resided on it, either by, or at the instigation of Capt. Cresap, Harman Greathouse, and a few others. This outrage was followed by a war of retaliation, which continued for many years with a cruelty scarcely to be equalled in the annals of history.¹

The evening became calm, and the atmosphere loaded with smoke, occasioned by the dead leaves and grass, over a vast extent of the country being on fire, which during the night, illuminated the clouds of smoke and produced a variegated appearance beautiful beyond description. Our smoky weather in spring and autumn, is probably the effect of fires extending over the vast forests of our country. . . .

November 1st, . . . Stopped at Wheeling and took the latitude, and then proceeded to the mouth of Grave Creek and encamped. Went to view the amazing monuments of earth, thrown up many ages ago by the aborigines of the

¹ Major Ellicott alludes to that massacre of the Indians by the whites in 1774, in which, among others, the entire family of Logan, the celebrated Cayuga Chief, were wiped out. It has been stated in Captain Michael Cresap's defence that he was elsewhere at the time, though he was probably aware of the intended massacre.

country, for some purpose unknown to us. One of those monuments is more than 70 feet high: it has a cavity or depression on the top, in which a large oak tree was growing."

Shoals still troubled them and head winds rendered their progress slow. They reached Marietta¹ Nov. 7, and remained there three days to repair the boats. From there Major Ellicott wrote to his wife:

"MY LOVE

We have this moment arrived at this place, after a tedious passage of two weeks from Pittsburgh— The water being so low that we are frequently under the necessity of dragging our Boats over the gravel, and shoals. My Boat is a very elegant one, and furnished with a large Cabbin, glass windows, and a stove— My guard are in the Boat with myself— There are six of us in the Cabin, where the time passes away as comfortably as could be expected by persons in our situation— Game is remarkably plenty on this River, we almost live upon Turkeys, and excellent fish.— last night we had ten large fat Turkeys, laying on the top of our Cabbin ready for the cook— You have never been ten minutes out of my mind since I left Philadelphia. When I say I love you, it is not sufficient, I do more, I love our children,— but I adore you— All my hopes of future happiness, depend upon you. The Post is waiting farewell.

Your affectionate Husband."

He left Marietta, which he calls a handsome town, as soon as the boats were in good order, passing

¹ Named for Marie Antoinette.

Blennerhassett's Island on his way, and the Journal continues:

"11th, . . . Passed the little Kanhawa, and afterwards a miserable village by the name of Belle Prae, next a floating mill, and lastly, the mouth of little Hockhocking.

The ordinary streams of water in that part of the western country, so universally fail in the summer, and beginning of autumn, that the inhabitants . . . have recourse to floating mills, or to others driven by the wind, or worked by horses to grind their corn. Those floating mills are erected upon two, or more, large canoes or boats, and anchored out in a strong current. The float-boards of the water wheels, dip their whole breadth into the stream, by which they are propelled forward, and give motion to the whole machinery. When the waters rise, and set the other mills to work, the floating ones are towed into a safe harbour, where they remain till the next season. . . .

14th, . . . Arrived in the evening at Point Pleasant,¹ a small and indifferent village on the east side of the river, just above the mouth of the great Kanhawa. . . . Near to where the village now stands, was fought the memorable battle between a detachment of Virginia militia (commanded by Col. Lewis,) and the Shawnee and Delaware Indians. The engagement continued several hours, and the victory was a long time doubtful and alternately appeared to favour each party; Courage, address and dexterity equally characterized both; but the Virginians remained masters of the field.² . . .

¹ Birthplace of U. S. Grant.

² Major Andrew Lewis of Washington's Virginia Regiment, at the battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, gained a victory over the Shawnee Confederacy

15th, Arrived at Gallipolis.¹ . . . This village is situated on a fine high bank, on the west side of the river, and inhabited by a number of miserable French families. Many of the inhabitants that season fell victims to the yellow fever, which certainly originated in that place, and was produced by the filthiness of the inhabitants, and an unusual quantity of animal, and vegetable putrefication. . . . Of all the places I have yet beheld, this was the most miserable. There are several Indian mounds of earth, or barrows, within the vicinity of the village. . . .

18th, . . . Passed the mouth of Sandy Creek, which is one of the boundaries between the States of Virginia and Kentucky. . . .

20th, . . . I left the boats, and went on shore . . . to view the salt works, which are about one mile from the river, in the state of Kentucky. . . . The salt lick, or spring, is situated in the bed of a small creek, which when high overflows it.”

He gained from the manager a very full description of the method of salt making which he sets down at some length. For the next few days they encountered bad weather, and had to drag the boats over extensive shoals,

under their celebrated chief “Cornstalk” in what was probably the most severe battle with the Indians that had taken place in this country up to this time. It was at this battle that Lieut. George Rogers Clark first distinguished himself.

¹ Gallipolis was settled by a class of French emigrants, entirely unfitted for frontier life, who were induced to come out by the “Scioto Company” of which Joel Barlow was agent. The whole affair was fraudulent, and after great hardships and losses only a struggling remnant remained, living in misery and wretchedness, which, according to the travellers of that day, was depicted on their sad countenances.

while the weather was so cold that the men's clothes froze stiff as they came out of the water.

“25th, Proceeded to Cincinnati where we arrived about ten o'clock in the forenoon and found ourselves under the necessity of procuring another boat, in place of one which was rendered useless by dragging it over rocks, stones, and shoals and repairing the one I had from General Wilkinson. The waters were so low that no boats but ours had reached that place from Pittsburgh since the preceding August, and . . . no others could be reasonably expected. Our success was owing to the number of people we had with us, and whose quiet submission to unusual hardships does them great credit. . . .

29th, . . . Left Cincinnati in the evening. Cincinnati was at that time the capital of the North Western Territory: it is situated on a fine high bank, and for the time it has been building is a very respectable place. . . . During our stay we were politely treated by Mr. Winthrop Sargent, secretary of the government, and Captain Harrison¹ who commanded at Fort Washington.”

They reached Louisville December 8.

“The town of Louis Ville stands a short distance above the rapids on the east side of the river. The situation is handsome, but said to be unhealthy. The town has improved but little for some years past. . . .

10th, . . . Discovered a Kentucky boat fast upon a log, and upon examination found that it was deserted, and suspected that the crew were on shore in distress, which

¹ William Henry Harrison, afterwards President of the United States.

we soon found to be the case. The crew consisted of several men, women, and children, who left the boat two days before in a small canoe when they found their strength insufficient to get her off. They were without any shelter to defend them from the inclemency of the weather, and it was then snowing very fast. We spent two hours in getting the boat off, and taking it to the shore, where we received the thanks of the unfortunate crew, and left them to pursue their journey.

14th, . . . Passed the Wabash. . . .

15th, Much ice in the river. Stopped at an Indian camp, and procured some meat. Dined at the great cave. This cave may be considered as one of the greatest natural curiosities on the river, and I have constantly lamented that I could not spare time to make a drawing of it, and take its dimensions. . . .

16th, . . . Passed Cumberland River. . . .

17th, . . . Passed the mouth of the Tennessee, and in two hours afterwards arrived at Fort Massac, and was politely received by the commandant Captain Pike,¹ who with the surgeon Doctor Hammel dined with me. . . .

18th, . . . Arrived at the mouth of the Ohio . . .

19th, Set up the clock, and prepared to make some astronomical observations. . . . The map of the Ohio river which accompanies this work is laid down from the best materials I could procure. . . . The Ohio river is formed by the junction of the Allegany and Monongahela rivers at Pittsburgh. . . . It may not be improper here to observe, that all the Indians residing on the Allegany, ever since my acquaintance with the western country, have

¹ Father of Captain Zebulon Montgomery Pike, of Pike's Peak fame.

called that branch, as well as the main river, the *Ohio*, and appear to know it by no other name.

The *Ohio* is certainly one of the finest rivers within the United States whether considered as to magnitude, the great extent of its course, or the outlet it affords to an immense and fertile country rapidly filling with inhabitants.

The flat, or bottom lands on the *Ohio*, are not surpassed by any in the United States for fertility; but in many places they are small, and inconsiderable; being limited by hills or mountains, on one side, and the river on the other. A large proportion of the hills, and mountains, are unfit for agricultural purposes, being either too steep, or faced with rocks.

The country produces all the immediate necessities of life in abundance, and far beyond the present consumption of the inhabitants; the residue, with many other articles, such as hemp, cordage, hard-ware, some glass, whiskey, apples, cider, and salted provisions, are annually carried down the river to New Orleans, where they find a ready market. . . . The people who reside on the *Ohio* and its waters, are brave, enterprising, and warlike, which will generally be found the strongest characteristic marks of the inhabitants of all our new settlements. It arises from their situation; being constantly in danger from the Indians, they are habituated to alarms, and acts of bravery become a duty they owe to themselves, and to their friends. But this bravery, too frequently when not checked by education, and a correct mode of thinking, degenerates into ferocity.

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The day after we arrived at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, they were both so full of ice, that it would have been impossible to navigate either of them with any degree of safety On the 22d both rivers closed, and made a romantick appearance, from the piles of ice which were thrown up in a variety of positions.

We now became alarmed for the fate of our store boat, which we left behind on the 11th, and otherwise found our situation very disagreeable; not expecting to be overtaken by such extreme cold weather, we were not prepared to meet it. . . . For a number of days the cold was so intense that we had to keep up large fires both day and night, to prevent our being frozen. . . .

On the 23d we sent three men up the river, to obtain if possible some intelligence respecting our store boat

[On the 26th at sunrise] the ice gave way again, and . . . it continued to move the whole day in so great a mass, that the water was not to be seen: Both rivers made the same appearance, and as our boats were now safe, we were enabled to contemplate the prospect which was grand and awful, with some degree of pleasure and composure. The concussion of the ice at the junction of the two rivers produced a constant, rumbling noise, for many hours, similar to that of an earthquake. . . .

On the 2d of January 1797, the party which had been sent up the river returned, after going as high as fort Massac; but could obtain no intelligence respecting our store boat. But on the 6th our anxiety was in some degree removed by the arrival of Messrs. Ellicott, junr. Rankin, and one of the labourers, who had left the boat, . . . and

proceeded down the river, sometimes on the ice, and sometimes on the land, till they fell in with us. . . . They made the land near the mouth of the Wabash, where they landed the stores, and the whole party (being about twenty in number,) encamped. . . . This journey . . . does them great credit, . . . committing themselves . . . to the wilderness, to perform what they supposed to be a duty.

During the winter season, . . . a number of Indians hunt and reside in the swamp; and it happened fortunately for us, that several companies of them were encamped in our neighbourhood, and by whom we were supplied with meat in exchange for flour: . . . Our men . . . took a great number of raccoons, and opossums. . . . They abound in the swamp.

A few days after we had encamped at the confluence of the rivers, Mr. Philip Nolan,¹ so well known for his athletic exertions, and dexterity in taking wild horses stopped at our camp on his way from New Madrid to fort Massac, having two boats at the latter place shut up by the ice. From him I obtained much useful information relative to the . . . inhabitants of Natchez; which at that time was a matter of mere curiosity, but which eventually I found extremely useful. Being pleased with his conversation, and finding that he had a very extensive knowledge of that country, particularly Louisiana, I requested the pleasure of his company down the river, . . . to which he agreed. After staying with us one night he proceeded up to Massac, and remained there till our

¹ Philip Nolan was afterwards murdered by the Spaniards at Waco, Texas, in 1801. He is the hero of the Rev. Edward Everett Hale's "Philip Nolan and his Friends," and "The Man without a Country" bears his name.

store boat reached that place, and accompanied her, with his two boats down to us.

While in our camp he observed a number of Indians, who were from the west side of the Mississippi, and spoke to them in the several languages with which he was acquainted, but they could not understand him; he then addressed them by signs, to which they immediately replied, and conversed for some time with apparent ease, and satisfaction. This was the first time I had either seen, or heard of this curious language. . . . Mr. Nolan . . . informed me it was used by many natives on the west side of the Mississippi, who could only be understood by each other in that way, and that it was commonly made use of in transacting their national concerns.

A vocabulary of part of this curious language, has been sent on to the American Philosophical Society by William Dunbar, Esq. of the Mississippi Territory, and contains a much more particular account of it than I could give. . . . The 30 [of January] was spent in loading our boats, and preparing to leave our encampment. On the top of the stump of a large tree to which the zenith sector was fixed, a plate of lead was laid, containing the latitude, and longitude of that place. The stump was then covered by a mound of earth of considerable magnitude, but which will probably be demolished in a few years by the annual inundations.”

They reached the Spanish Fort at New Madrid on the 2d of February, and, although they were greeted with a salute of artillery and treated with much respect, the Spanish Commandant endeavored to detain them, produc-

ing a letter from the Governor General, the Baron de Carondelet, containing an order not to permit the Americans to descend the river till the posts were evacuated, which could not be until the waters should rise. This order appeared extraordinary to Major Ellicott, and he quaintly observes he "believes it was not less so to the Commandant." Through the medium of Mr. Maxwell, a Roman Catholic priest at the post, who acted as interpreter, they held a conversation which ended in the commandant remarking that "as the waters *had* risen, one half of the objection at least was done away, and they should meet with no impediment from him."

The Journal continues :

"At four o'clock in the afternoon we took leave of the Commandant and his officers, whose hospitality and politeness, I shall ever acknowledge with sensibility. As we left the shore, we were again saluted by the artillery of the fort. . . . My mind was occupied the whole evening in reflecting upon the order of the Governor General. . . . It occurred to me, that if similar orders were given to the other commandants below, and they should be less liberal and friendly towards the United States, we might be detained several months during a discussion . . . attended with delay, inconvenience and additional expense. . . .

[February] 8th, . . . Arrived at the Chickasaw bluffs. . . . The Commandant received us politely, but in a manner, which convinced me that he did not expect us. . . . He enquired about an express which had lately gone up the river with despatches . . . to the Commandant at New Madrid. We told him the express had not arrived at

that place when we left. . . . I thought it probable that the Governor General had sent on other orders more pointed, and less equivocal, to stop us at that post.

9th, . . . Though treated in the most polite and hospitable manner my suspicions were increased. . . . The Commandant and officers appeared, (or affected,) to be almost wholly unacquainted with the late treaty between the United States and his Catholic Majesty. And . . . no preparations . . . had been or were making to evacuate that post. . . . I informed Mr. Nolan that I strongly suspected something . . . with which we were unacquainted. He replied, "keep your suspicions to yourself, . . . whatever I can discover, you shall know, but the utmost caution will be necessary." . . .

10th, Left the Bluffs about eight o'clock in the morning. . . . In the afternoon . . . encamped at a remarkable place, where the Chickasaws and Choctaws formerly held their consultations.

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15th, . . . Were brought to about two o'clock in the afternoon by Col. Howard, an Irish gentleman in the service of his Catholic Majesty, who had two armed gallies with him; after detaining us about one hour we proceeded down the river.

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19th, Arrived at the Walnut Hills, where the Spaniards have erected some considerable works. . . . The Commandant, though he treated us very civilly when on shore, had us brought to by the discharge of a piece of artillery, which was wholly unnecessary as we were near the landing, and making to it as fast as we could. . . .

The Commandant . . . enquired my business, with which he appeared to be almost wholly unacquainted, . . . which could only be considered as the effect of affectation."

Shortly after leaving Walnut Hills on the 22d, a letter from Governor Gayoso of Natchez, which had arrived by an express after they embarked, was sent out to them by a man in a canoe. It contained the request that to "prevent misunderstanding" Major Ellicott should leave the detachment of troops, which the Governor had learned he was bringing with him, at the mouth of the Bayou Pierre. This request Major Ellicott characterizes as improper and unnecessary in the extreme, but remembering his instructions to "preserve harmony," he deemed it wise to avoid wrangling, discussion, and consequent irritation on both sides, at the very moment of his arrival, and accordingly the escort were left temporarily at the Bayou Pierre, while Major Ellicott accompanied by his corps of surveyors went on down the river to Natchez, where he arrived February 24th after five months of such traveling as would have seemed most wearisome and hard, to any one possessed of a less abundant vitality than his, and of an interest less keen than that which it is evident he genuinely felt in every possible phase of life and nature.

CHAPTER VII

THE FLORIDA BOUNDARY (*Continued*)

ALTHOUGH warned by the attitude of the different officials whom he had so far encountered that Spain would not endeavor to make his path especially easy, nor yet cooperate very heartily with him on the boundary work, Major Ellicott had no reason to foresee that it would be over a year from the date of his arrival at Natchez before he would be able even to begin his work. He notified Governor Gayoso at once of his arrival and readiness to commence the survey, by the following note:

“LANDING AT THE TOWN OF NATCHEZ

Feb. 24th 1797.

“SIR,

It is with pleasure that I announce to you, my arrival as commissioner on behalf of the United States, for carrying into effect the third article of the treaty lately concluded between the said United States, and his Catholic Majesty. I wish to be informed, when it will be convenient for your Excellency to receive my credentials.

I am, sir, with due respect,

Your humble servant,

ANDREW ELLICOTT.”

To which the Governor returned this Bunsby-like reply:

“SIR,

“NATCHEZ, 24th Feb. 1797.

By your favour of this day, delivered to me by Mr. Nolan, I learn with pleasure your arrival at this post, in the character of commissioner in behalf of the United States, to ascertain the boundaries between the Territory of his most Catholic Majesty, and that of the said United States.

I have the honour to be, with the highest respect,

Sir, your most humble servant,

MANUEL GAYOSO DE LEMOS.”

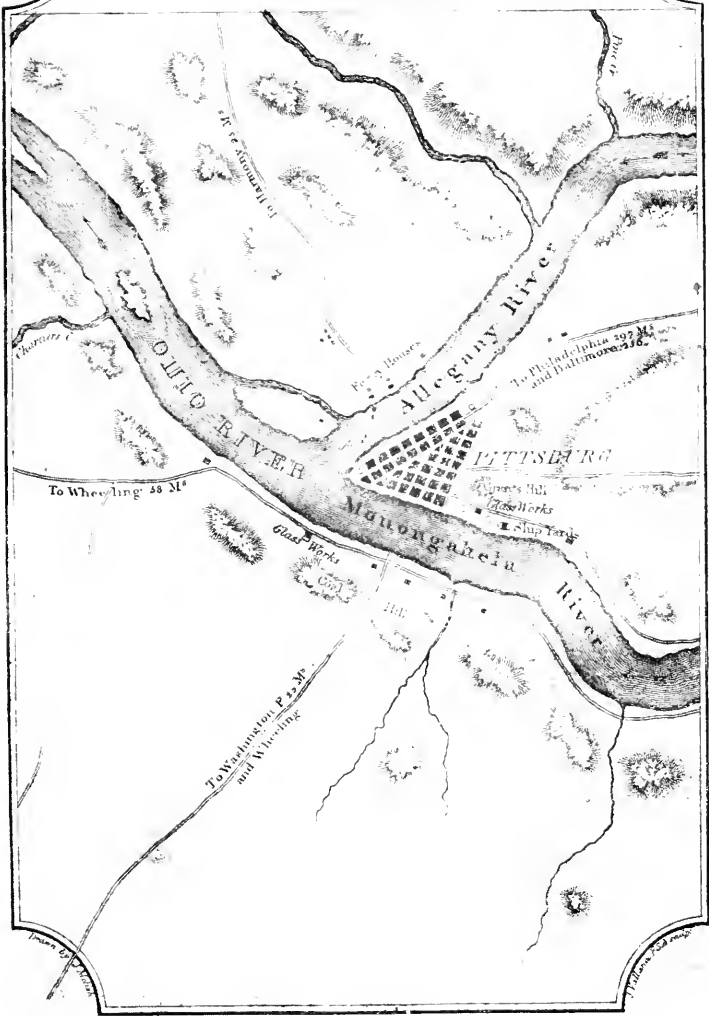
The Governor's note is typical of his policy. It was the beginning of a long official correspondence on the subject between himself and Major Ellicott, and his skill in never permitting anything definite to escape from his pen excites wonder if not admiration. As after events sufficiently show, his actions were not at all times as colorless as his letters, and the reasons for his delay are briefly stated by Gayarre as follows:

“The Baron de Carondelet had determined not to deliver up the posts ceded by the treaty of 1795 until the failure of his last attempt to detach the Western Country from the Union should be ascertained, for in case of success of course the treaty would have been annulled by the disruption of the American Confederacy. Therefore when the Spanish authorities heard of the approach of Andrew Ellicott, they had recourse to every artifice to postpone the execution of its stipulation.”¹

“We encamped,” writes Major Ellicott, “on the top of a hill at the upper end of the town about one quarter

¹ Gayarre's History of Louisiana, vol. iii, p. 366.

VIEW of the COUNTRY
round
PITTSBURG



PITTSBURG ABOUT 1800
From a map in Melish's "Travels in the United States."

of a mile from the fort, and on the 29th hoisted the flag of the United States. In about two hours after the flag was hoisted, a message was received from the Governor directing it to be taken down! This request met with a positive refusal, and the flag wore out upon the staff." As Natchez was now, by the terms of the treaty, United States territory, the request was insolent in the extreme, and deserved the contempt with which it was met.

Spain's policy was apparently to give up nothing until forced to do so; this notwithstanding the fact that Natchez and the surrounding country were full of Americans and English-speaking people anxious to avail themselves of the privilege of living under the government of the United States. On one excuse or another the beginning of the survey was put off; it could not be begun until this or that or the other should occur. Major Ellicott was powerless to act without the co-operation of the Spanish Commissioner, Baron de Carondelet, who remained at New Orleans making no pretence of coming up to Natchez. Far otherwise, for the Journal records that "Mr. Philip Nolan who had at different times been much favoured by the Spanish government, in being permitted to take, and dispose of the wild horses which are to be found in vast numbers west of the Mississippi, had lately been at New Orleans. He had much of the Baron de Carondelet's confidence, who informed him that the troubles were becoming serious up the river (meaning Natchez), but that he was determined to quiet them by giving the Americans *lead* and the inhabitants *hemp!*" Moreover, a letter fell into Major Ellicott's hands, dated June 16, 1796, written by Governor Gayoso to a confidential friend, stating boldly

that the treaty was not intended to be carried into effect, and that delay on their part would soon reduce it to a dead letter. He begins his first letter to his wife from Natchez:

“MY LOVE

NATCHEZ, April 1st 1797.

. . . We are living very idly, in a fine beautiful country on the bank of the Mississippi River which is now thirty three miles wide.— Our business is delayed by the Spanish Government and I suspect will be ultimately set aside this season.— I have a large Keg of Pecon Nuts put up for you. . . . The weather in this Country is already as hot as it is in Philadelphia in July— The Trees were green in the beginning of last Month.— We have been very politely treated by the inhabitants of this country who are to the great mortification of the Spanish Governor desirous of becoming Citizens of the U. S. . . . May the great disposer of human events take you and our dear Children under his protection is the prayer of your

Affectionate Husband.”

Far from evacuating the forts north of latitude thirty-one Governor Gayoso strengthened them, pretending, when forced to give a reason, that the Spanish had reason to fear an invasion of the British from Canada. He increased the forces both at Natchez and Walnut Hills, sent armed galleys up the river, even as high as the mouth of the Ohio, and inflamed the Indians to acts of open hostility. Meantime Major Ellicott brought down the escort he had left at the Bayou Pierre, and the lieutenant in command recruited a number of men from the country around, who,

as Governor Gayoso was informed upon his objecting, could by no possibility be considered Spanish subjects. A detachment of troops under Lieutenant Pope came down the river later and joined forces with the soldiers already there, making the military position of the Americans fairly strong.

The citizens of Natchez, anxious to see the departure of the Spanish, made wild and impracticable offers of all sorts to Major Ellicott. One was a proposal to raise one hundred volunteers to aid in taking the Spanish fort by force. A Mr. Dayton¹ of Connecticut drew up a plan "of a very general nature" and covering many sheets of paper, but just what he proposed is not clear. Still others waited on the American Commissioner with a scheme for taking Governor Gayoso captive, and sending him a prisoner into the Chickasaw nation! But Major Ellicott's cool judgment caused him to say apropos of all these plans, "Bad men and fugitives from justice think all government, however lenient, oppressive. They hate law and are at all times ready to oppose it. It is therefore necessary to enquire dispassionately into the situation and probable views of every officious patriot before we submit to become scaling ladders to his ambition, or instruments to impede justice or prostrate government."

The full share of people who stir up the more inflam-

¹ Generally known as "diving Dayton." Being largely in debt in New England, he went to the banks of the Connecticut River and putting on a new suit of clothes, left his old ones on the bank, writing on the sole of his old shoes, "the last of poor Dayton!" He then left the country, going to Natchez. It was supposed he had committed suicide, but some one from Connecticut, meeting him later in Natchez, concluded he must have dived from the Connecticut to the Mississippi.

mable citizens to acts wholly unwarranted, were not lacking at Natchez; and the somewhat difficult task fell to Major Ellicott of using measures strong enough to maintain the dignity of the United States, while at the same time he restrained the people from actions not only violent, but utterly lacking in common-sense. In June, 1797, however, an entirely unforeseen circumstance caused an unexpected demonstration against the Spanish, which led to Governor Gayoso, with his officers, being shut up for two weeks in his own fort. This occurrence chastened his spirit, and destroyed his dignity in the eyes of the Indians, whose respect for the Americans was considerably increased by the humiliation of the Spanish Governor.

A Baptist minister, Mr. Hannah by name, slightly under the influence of liquor, became embroiled with some Irish Roman Catholics, who gave him a sound beating. He appealed to Governor Gayoso for redress. The Governor immediately (by what process of reasoning is not known) ordered him put into prison with his legs in the stocks. The public mind, Major Ellicott remarks, "might be compared to inflammable gaz," where any chance spark would make an explosion. The town was thrown in an uproar by Mr. Hannah's arrest, and the Governor with his officers and several Spanish families, were forced to take refuge in the fort, where they remained two weeks. Wishing during this time to confer with Major Ellicott, Governor Gayoso was obliged to leave "the fort by a circuitous route, through thickets and cane brakes, made his way to the north side of his aid's plantation, and thence through a cornfield to the back of the house, and entered the parlour undiscovered, where

I joined him. . . . The humiliating state to which he was reduced, by a people whose affections he had courted, . . . had made a strong and visible impression upon his mind and countenance.”

Major Ellicott showed a degree of wisdom and statesmanship on this occasion which won him the esteem of the principal inhabitants of Natchez and the surrounding country. He helped them to form a committee for local government upon a peaceable basis (this committee was recognized by Governor Gayoso), and to draw up resolutions declaring themselves to possess the freedom of American citizens. Whether the Spanish evacuation of the posts came early or late, it was to be distinctly understood that Spanish rule did not extend to them or to their possessions.

But all the while the business of marking the boundary was no nearer. Major Ellicott wrote to his wife Oct. 7, 1797: “The business on which I came here yet remains suspended, and God knows whether it ever will be attempted or no.— I wish it was decided.” He fears she could not credit his former statement about the width of the Mississippi and says: “The Mississippi continued to overflow the country the distance of 37 Miles, from the beginning of March till the beginning of August, when it retired within its banks— this is the case every year, . . . This wonderful River is now at this place, but about a half of a mile wide. This will explain what seemed incredible in one of my former letters.”

In July Governor Gayoso was appointed Governor General, *vice* the Baron de Carondelet, and consequently succeeded him as Spanish Commissioner for marking the boundary. His place at Natchez was filled by Captain

Stephen Minor. It seems but fair to say that Major Ellicott esteemed both Governor Gayoso and Captain Minor highly, recognizing perfectly that their policy of delay was probably due to explicit instructions from their government. It in no way impaired his personal regard for them.

“In the beginning of December, a considerable detachment of troops from the army of the United States arrived at Natchez: . . . unfortunately . . . the Commandant¹ . . . was much indisposed by an inflammatory complaint on one side of his head, and face, . . . that evidently had an effect upon his understanding.” He treated both the Spaniards and the inhabitants in a manner which Major Ellicott calls “outrageous,” and evidently came near to stirring up once more all the local troubles at Natchez, which had just been smoothed over with such diplomacy.

In January, 1798, the pressure which had been brought to bear for the evacuation of the posts was finally successful, and Governor Gayoso wrote from New Orleans that he was instructed to vacate the posts and commence the boundary line.²

Feb. 10, Major Ellicott wrote to his wife:

“MY LOVE

. . . I embrace a few minutes at midnight, (as the boat is just going off and the night taken up in making out

¹ Captain, afterwards Major, Isaac Guion, 3d United States Infantry. After being honorably discharged from the service in 1802, he settled in Natchez, where he died in 1825.

² Monette's History of the Valley of the Mississippi, vol. i, p. 530.

my despatches for the Secretary of State,)¹ to assure you that myself, and all the party in a good state of health, and that we shall in a few days proceed to business— I have at length worried the Spaniards out.”

But it is not until the 29th of March that the Journal records, “Late in the evening, I was informed through a confidential channel, that the evacuation would take place the next morning, before day, in consequence of which, I rose the next morning at four o’clock, and walked to the fort and found the . . . rear guard just leaving it, and as the gate was left open, I went in, and enjoyed from the parapet, the pleasing prospect of the gallies and boats leaving the shore, and getting under way: they were out of sight . . . before daylight. The same day our troops took possession of the works.”

It was five months after the Spaniards’ departure, in August (1798), that Winthrop Sargent, recently appointed Governor of the Mississippi territory, arrived at Natchez, together with General Wilkinson, who came to take command of the troops. It is therefore evident that Major Ellicott was right in considering that he and his immediate associates bore the brunt of the difficulties incident to the evacuation of the posts, and that to them belongs the credit of “worrying the Spaniards out.” That it was not only his mind and body that were worn out by the long delays is shown by a letter to his wife in which he says that “his shirts will soon be gone,” and that as new ones at New Orleans are so dear that he

¹ Major Ellicott’s reports to the Secretary of State during his entire stay in the South were very full and accurate.

would rather go naked than buy them there, he desires some new ones, made by her own hands, to be forwarded to him. "One half of them are to be Ruffled," he is particular to explain, and he also needs some silk stockings, but he begs her above all to send him a miniature of herself, and adds: "This I have long wanted, and been pressing you for the favour more than ten years."

Immediately on the departure of the Spanish, Major Ellicott left Natchez for Clarksville, and lost no time in starting the long delayed line. Here he was later joined by Governor Gayoso, who appointed Captain Minor and Mr. William Dunbar to attend the survey on behalf of his Catholic Majesty. The Governor's visit is mentioned in his next letter to his wife.

"MY DEAR GIRL

"CAMP BAYOU SARAH, June 19th 1798.

. . . This forenoon Mr. Dunbar the Spanish Commissioner myself and Andy spent on the line,— the afternoon I intended to have dedicated in writing to you;— but on our return I found the Tent filled with company— I wished them a thousand times at the devil.— They did not leave us till after coffee.— It is impossible in this country to write after night, and even sometimes in the day, on account of the amazing swarms of flies, Musketos and gnats; all thirsting after the blood of man.— Our beds are all surrounded with a kind of thin curtains called bears to keep them off when we go to rest, — mine are elegant silk ones.— . . .

Mr. Gillespie, Andy, and a fine boy in my family by the name of Walker (who I intend for Polly if they live to meet) are the life of our business. . . .

Governor Gayoso paid me a visit a few days ago at my Camp in the woods— We met and saluted in the Spanish manner by kissing! I had not been shaved for two days— Mens kissing I think a most abominable custom.— . . . It is now 9 OClock at night and my eyes almost put out by the Musketoos—

May God preserve you and our dear children is the prayer of

Your Affectionate Husband.”

“ On the 7th of June, we moved our camp to Little Bayou Sara. The weather had now become extremely hot, and the season being uncommonly wet, and our men badly provided for with tents and other covering, they were generally indisposed and unfit for duty. We were therefore reduced to the necessity of either abandoning the business for some time, or employing slaves; the latter was adopted.

The first twenty miles of country over which the line passed, is perhaps as fertile as any in the United States; and at the same time the most impenetrable, and could only be explored by using the cane knife and hatchet. The whole face of the country being covered with strong canes, which stood almost as close together as hemp stalks, and generally from twenty to thirty-five feet high, and matted together by various species of vines, that connected them with the boughs of the lofty timber, which was very abundant. The hills are numerous, short and steep: from those untoward circumstances we were scarcely ever able to open one fourth of a mile per day, and frequently much less.”

The beginning of September Mr. Dunbar went back to

Natchez, leaving Captain Minor alone to represent Spain. Major Ellicott was sincerely sorry for his departure, speaking of it as a real loss to the public and an irreparable one to himself. Late in October they broke camp and went on to Darling's Creek; from there he writes to his wife:

“MY LOVE

“Novbr 8th 1798.

. . . Andy, M^r. Gillispie, and young M^r. Walker . . . are many miles in advance with the line. M^r. Gillispie a young man of fine talents, and education is at this time acting as surveyor in the place of M^r. Freeman who has turned out an idle, lying, troublesome, discontented, mischief-making man. At the desire of General Wilkinson, Governor Sargent, Judge Bruin and the first characters in the country whose opinions I have sent on to M^r. Pickering I expeld him from the camp, — his abuse of the spanish commissioner my friend Major Minor, contributed not a little in determing me to take this measure— . . .

Andy is enterprizing, industrious, and one of the most valuable persons concerned in the business. . . .

Your affectionate and loving Husband.

P. S. I have received Brother Joseph Letters tell him I shall write to him from New Orleans. . . . I shall then have more leisure and a table to lay my paper on.”

While still at Darling's Creek, a letter from General Gayoso to an officer in the Spanish service fell into his hands; so important were its contents that Major Ellicott forwarded the information it contained to the State

Department with all haste, using a cipher to insure safety in its transmission. His letter translated from the cipher is as follows:¹

“NATCHEZ, Nov. 14th, 1798.

“Shortly after the ratification of the late treaty between the U. S. and his Catholic Majesty was carried to Kentucky, Mr. Murray an attorney at law in that State proceeded down the Mississippi to visit Gov^r Gayoso and the Baron de Carondelet. A few days after Mr. Murry’s interview with those gentlemen Mr. Power was despatched up the river apparently upon a trading voyage. He had secreted in a cask of sugar four despatches in cipher one was directed to Gen^l Wilkinson, another to John Brown Senator of U. S. the third to Judge Sebastian, and the fourth to Mr. Lackasang at the rapids of the Ohio. These four men and Mr. Murry receive annual stipends from the Crown of Spain and several others whose names I have not learned receive occasional payments. Mr. Power delivered the despatches above mentioned himself. He met Gen. Wilkinson at Cincinnati in September last was a year. They affected for some days to be upon bad terms, but were privately closeted at night.

This correspondence in cipher has been carried on for several years, it is ingeniously managed, the letters are deciphered by the help of a pocket dictionary.

The first object of these plotters is to detach the States of Kentucky and Tenesee from the union and place them under the protection of Spain. If that could have been effected this season the treaty would never have been

¹ In Mass. Hist. Soc. Pickering Papers, 21: 341.

carried into effect: and to ascertain the probability of such an event, Mr. Power was sent in the beginning of last June into the States before mentioned.

The design of detaching the western country from the union is but a small part of the general plan which is very extensive and embraces objects of immense magnitude; nevertheless, to ensure success, this point must be first carried; which being effected and by the system of promotion adopted by the court of Madrid, Gov^r Gayoso will be at Quito and the Baron de Carondelet at Mexico about the same time: so soon as this arrangement takes place or sooner if the necessary officers can be corrupted a general insurrection will be attempted, and cannot fail of success if the first part succeeds. Gen^l Wilkinson is to proceed from Kentucky with a body of troops through the country by the way of the Illinois into New Mexico which will be a central position — the route has been already explored. Nine tenths of the officers of the Louisiana regiment are at this time corrupted and the officers of the Mexican regiment which is now in this country are but little better. The apparent zeal of the Spanish officers on the Mississippi for the dignity of the Crown, is only intended to cover their designs till the great plan which is the establishment of a new empire is brought to maturity. Their principles are highly revolutionary. This being understood the policy of the present Spanish Governors in this country in enticing our citizens to settle under their jurisdiction may be easily discovered.

From the manner by which I have obtained the fore-mentioned information (which I am convinced is correct) I am unable to make any other use of it than to communi-

cate it to our first magistrate and the department of state that the plan so far as it affects the U. S. may be counteracted— it must remain secret.

I am, Sir, with much esteem

Your friend & hbl. Serv^t

AND^w. ELLICOTT.”

December found Major Ellicott at New Orleans, one object of his visit being to secure Governor Gayoso's signature to the reports on the work already done. The Governor signed them without demur; and with an almost childish enjoyment of the ceremony which he was able to display and with an attention to unimportant detail which greatly amused Major Ellicott.

“On the 23d of February, Governor Gayoso and myself signed four reports, two in English, and two in the Spanish language. . . . Great ceremony was used at signing the instruments. The Governor had a large table covered with fine green cloth placed in the hall of the government house, on which the reports were laid. A lighted wax taper for melting the sealing wax was placed by the side of a new silver standish, which appeared to have been made for the occasion, but the construction and form of the different parts was very whimsical. The sand-box was in the form of a drum, braced with fine silver wire, and ornamented with engravings representing various implements of war. The vessel that contained the ink represented a bedded mortar, . . . likewise decorated with engravings; this device the Governor observed was in character, as the matter drawn from the mouth of the vessel frequently proved very destructive. The pounce-

box was in the form of a globe, . . . on which was engraved the equator, ecliptic, colures, tropicks, &c. . . . The Governor and myself seated ourselves at the table and signed the reports; they were then handed to our secretaries and attested."

From New Orleans he wrote to his wife:

NEW ORLEANS, Jan^y 10th 1799.

"MY DEAREST OF ALL EARTHLY BEINGS ↓

I have now been in this place six days.— it is carnival, or holiday time— it is supposed that I have come on a visit in consequence of which I have been treated with singular attention and parade;— but this is not the case, my business is different from that of pleasure.— I have obtained some very important information which I have sent to our Secretary of State. pray be careful not to mention anything of the above. . . . Mr. Freeman is one of the greatest rascals and liars in existance he has done everything in his power to put a stop to our business and it was with difficulty that I could for some months prevent a duel between him and Andy— My business with the spanish Government has been difficult and complex but I have at length succeeded in everything I had in view— . . . I shall write to you several times before I leave this Town, and will send you some curiosities with my picture by the first vessel which goes to Baltimore or Philadelphia— . . . Adieu my love."

The "curiosities" are more particularly enumerated in his next letter, sent by the Captain of the vessel that carried the gifts themselves.



ANDREW ELLICOTT

From a miniature painted in New Orleans in
1799.

“NEW ORLEANS, Feby 17th 1799.

“MY DEAR GIRL

The bearer of this Capt^t Morris will deliver you a cask of sugar manufactured within one mile of this City — he will likewise deliver you a small Box containing two fashionable fans of this country — some china-bowls part of my camp Furniture — a collection of shells a present to Jane from Miss Bruin the eldest daughter of the Honb. Judge Bruin — some Pecan Nuts and a miniature Picture of myself — it is between two small pieces of wood — care must be taken that it does not get wet. — It is done by a spanish lady — some copies have been taken of it — It is an excellent likeness — You will therefore see that I am much altered since I left Philadelphia — The first year that I spent in this country I was three months confined with sickness, — good nursing alone saved my life, and that of Andy — the one fourth of my people died within that period — last year we were all healthy and continue so. — When you look at the picture you will see the face of a person whose life has been devoted to the service of his country who has ever since he left Philadelphia been up by brake of day and thro the encampment except when sick, and then he was lifted into a chair at the usual time of his rising — A person who disconcerted all the plans in this country injurious to the interests of the United States, and tho frequently attacked by a set of as complete villains as ever fled from one country to another, he succeeded in every attempt to serve his country, and will without bloodshed have the treaty in a very few months completely carried into effect: — a part of the boundary will be confirmed by Gov. Gayoso and my-

self on tuesday next, after that I shall proceed as soon as the wind will serve to Pensacola. — When you consider the uninterrupted constant series of difficulties I have had to encounter you will not wonder at the serious cast of my countenance to remedy which, the lady who took my likeness, frequently desired me to laugh.

But from one circumstance I feel a sincere pleasure which arrises from the friendship and attention I have experienced from every person of respectability in this country which you will see manifested when I publish my correspondence, which with the Astronomical observations will make four volumes.

My love to our connections and compliments to our friends. — May God preserve you and our dear children is the devout prayer of your

Loving and affectionate

Husband.”

All was accomplished now but the homeward voyage, and for that a vessel was procured and named the “Sally” and on the 1st of March, “we proceeded down the Canal¹ to Bayou St. John’s and the next day gave the Governor and officers of government an entertainment at the draw-bridge. . . . I was able to engage but two sailors, and they were both deserters from a British privateer. . . . With those two sailors, who were completely illiterate I undertook to navigate the vessel. Several masters of vessels offered their service, but the price they demanded was so high, that it was thought more economical to do it myself.”

¹ This canal from the Lake Pontchartrain “to the city walls, immediately behind the hospital” was built by the Baron de Carondelet.

New Orleans Feb 17th 1799

My Dear Girl

The bearer of this Cap^t Morris will deliver you a cask of sugar manufactured within one mile of this City — he will likewise deliver you a small Box containing two fashionable fans of this country — some china-bowls part of my camp Furniture — a collection of shells a present to Jane from Miss Brown the eldest daughter of the Hon^{ble} Judge Brown — some Peewee nuts and a miniature Picture of myself it is between two small pieces of wood — care must be taken that it does not get wet — It is done by a Spanish lady — some copies have been taken of it — It is an excellent likeness — You will therefore see that I am much obliged and I left Philadelphia — The first year that I spent in this country I was three weeks confined with sickness — good nursing alone saved my life, and that of ~~my~~ son Andy — the one fourth of my people died within that period — last year we were all healthy and continue so. — When you look at the future you will see the face of a person whose

whose life has been devoted to the service of his ~~own~~
country who has ever since he left Philadelphia been
up by broke of day and thro' the encampment, except
when sick, and then he was lifted into a chair. A person
who disconcerted all the plans in this country inju-
rious to the interests of the United States, and tho' frequent-
ly attacked by a set of as complete villains as ever
fled from one country to another, he succeeded in we-
ny attempt to save his country, and will without
bloodshed have the treaty in a very few months
completely carried into effect. - a part of the boundary
will be confirmed by Gov Jay and myself on
tuesday next, after that I shall proceed as soon as the
wind will serve to Pensacola. When you consid-
er the constant uninterrupted series of difficulties I have
had to encounter you will not wonder at the serious
cost of my countenance ~~the~~ ^{to} ~~remedy~~ which the lady who
took my likeness frequently ~~disaid~~ ^{disaid} ~~me~~ ^{me} to laugh -

But from one circumstance I feel a warm pleasure
which arises from the ^{and attention I have received from} friendship of every person of es-
timate in this country which you will see manifested
when

when I publish my correspondence, which with the Astro-
nomical observations will make four volumes.

My love to our connections and compliments to
our friends. May God preserve you and our
dear children is the devout prayer of your

Loving and affectionate
Husband

Geo. Elliott.

P.S. you should have the picture set very early
or it will get injured.

G.E.

²¹
As Sarah Elliott)



A SEAL USED BY ANDREW ELLICOTT
Drawn and enlarged from impressions on
his letters of 1785.

They were now to experience annoyance of another sort. While on the way to Mobile, the conduct of some Creek Indians who visited one of their encampments led Major Ellicott so certainly to anticipate trouble from that nation that a special messenger was despatched to Col. Benjamin Hawkins¹ requesting an interview with the Creek Chiefs and himself at Pensacola, which place the "Sally" would reach about April 20.

They continued to coast slowly up toward Mobile. It is described in the Journal as having a handsome situation, "and some of the houses are tolerably good, and for so small a place, the trade is considerable. . . . The fort is of brick, and stands a short distance below the city. . . . It was taken from the British during our Revolutionary war, by Don Galvez.² . . . Since that time, it has been re-built, and put in a good state of defence."

"On the 19th . . . we crossed the bar and sailed for Pensacola, but . . . on the way were obliged to come to for a few minutes under the stern of a forty-four gun frigate, and produce our passport. On my arrival at Pensacola, I found elegant, and convenient lodgings provided for me, which I had reason to believe, were at the expense of the house of Panton, Laslie, Forbes & Co." . . .

¹ Col. Benjamin Hawkins, born 1754, died 1816. He was an officer in the Revolution. In 1785 he was appointed Commissioner to treat with the Cherokee and Creek Indians; in 1795 he was appointed agent to superintend all Indians south of the Ohio. He was appointed to Congress in 1782-1786, and in 1789 was one of the first two Senators from North Carolina. At one time he established a settlement in the heart of the Creek Wilderness.

² "In 1779 Spain declared war against England, and a force from New Orleans under the young governor Galvez, campaigned effectively against the British about Pensacola." — Hosmer's "Short History of the Mississippi Valley."

Here on the 28th of April, Col. Hawkins interviewed "Mad Dog," a chief of the Creek Nation, and arranged for a council at which the Creeks, Governor Folch of Mobile, Major Ellicott, and Captain Minor, together with Colonel Hawkins, were to confer. The Mad Dog remarked that Governor Folch would not attend the council. "He knows," said he, "what I shall say to him about his crooked talks. His tongue is forked, and as you are here, he will be ashamed to show it. If he stands to what he has told us, you will be offended, and if he tells us that the line ought to be marked, he will contradict himself; but he will do neither, he will not come."

"On the 4th of May we were joined by Col. Maxant, . . . who represented Governor Folch who was taken so unwell . . . that he thought proper to return back! . . . So soon as the Mad Dog discovered that Governor Folch was not going to attend the treaty, he . . . with some degree of pleasantry said: ' . . . I told you so, a man with two tongues can only speak to one at a time.'"

At the treaty Colonel Hawkins explained the nature of the proposed line to the Chiefs showing them "that the line we were tracing was not a line of property, but of jurisdiction, a line between white people, and not intended in any way to affect the Indians in either their property, manners, customs or religion." The Chiefs appeared satisfied, and said that whereas many crooked talks had heretofore been sent into their country, this talk seemed straight, they were therefore willing the boundary should be marked, and would send some Chiefs and Warriors as an escort to the surveying party.

"Mr. Gillespie, the surveyor on behalf of the United

States began the guide line from the Coenecuh to the Chattahocha, being escorted by the military of the United States and of his Catholic Majesty, together with two Chiefs and twenty warriors of the Creek nation," while Major Ellicott thought it wise to remain in Pensacola with Colonel Hawkins, and keep an eye on Governor Folch. It appeared their suspicions were well-founded, for within a few days a large delegation of Creeks arrived, who were heard to say that the talks were again "crooked."

"The Governor," says Major Ellicott, "at this time certainly found himself much embarrassed between us and the Indians. To deliver talks, and issue presents to those who resided . . . within the United States, would have a strange appearance to us, and to send them away without any, after an invitation, would give them great offence."

To get out of this predicament Governor Folch informed them unexpectedly that they must look to the United States for presents and deliver their talks to Colonel Hawkins! "It was in vain to tell them that they came without our invitation, and therefore not entitled to any [presents], some must be given, and a compliance was a matter of course. After receiving from us to the amount of two or three hundred dollars, they left the place apparently well satisfied."

In a letter to his wife at this time (June 18), he says:

"Our work goes on rapidly . . . Col. Hawkins has been with me two months,— . . . His influence with the Indians is really wonderful. . . . This country is hot both day and night, and cursed with poverty, and muskittoes;—

The inhabitants of this town have to import earth to make their gardens with. What Bartram¹ has described as a Paradise appears to me like purgatory, but somewhat worse! A Principality would not induce me to stay in it one hour longer than I can possibly avoid it.— If it had not been for pride I would certainly have ran away from it six months ago. It might do for a place of Banishment.”

Nevertheless, he describes the place as remarkably healthy, and the bay as a beautiful body of water well stored with a variety of fine fish, crabs, and oysters, and says the harbor is “justly considered one of the best on the whole coast.”

“The old fortifications stood on some sand hills back of the city, and too distant to yield it any substantial protection; [yet] the Spaniards never once attempted to molest the inhabitants, or injure the buildings, during the siege of the forts, which lasted two months. The garrison made a gallant defence, and the surrender was hastened by one of the magazines accidentally blowing up. During the whole siege . . . Don Galvez conducted himself both as a man of courage and humanity. Mr. Bowles, . . . Mr. Philip Key of Maryland and several other Americans of distinction, were at that time officers under General Campbell who commanded the troops of his Britannic Majesty.”

“The trade of Pensacola,” he adds, “is at this time

¹ “Travels of William Bartram through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy and the Country of the Chactaws,” published in Philadelphia in 1791.

principally carried on by the house of Panton, Laslie, Forbes and Company. Mr. Panton resides at Pensacola, and Mr. Forbes at Mobile, where they live in an elegant stile, highly esteemed for their great hospitality and politeness."

On leaving Pensacola, it was found that their difficulties with the Indians were by no means over. At the Flint River they were warned by "Indian Willy," a "person of property who resides . . . a few miles above the mouth of Flint river, to the following effect: 'Gentlemen, I have sent my Negro, to inform you that about twenty Indians lay near my place last night, they intend mischief; many more are behind: . . . Be on your guard, and remember I have nothing to do with it.'

The hostile Indians soon appeared, with the avowed intention of plundering the camp, but the firm front which Major Ellicott's party showed caused them to abandon their plans. They therefore contented themselves with stealing some horses, and the next morning Major Ellicott learned that the little schooner in which he had come up to the Flint River (the "Sally" drawing too much water for that stream) had been plundered during the night, the sails cut to pieces, and the running rigging carried away. "Upon receiving this information, my son, with two of the labourers . . . went to repossess her; on their way they saw a small party of armed Indians, who fled on their approach: as they drew near the vessel, they discovered three Indians on board of her; seeing that their numbers were equal, they gave a whoop, and sprang forward, on which the Indians jumped on shore, and fled with precipitation into the woods."

Patching up the rigging they went on toward Fort St. Mark's (Apalachee) where the larger schooner (the "Sally") was awaiting them. "Immediately after we left the shore, it began to rain, but we soon made such a covering with our tents, the cut sails, and some oil cloths, that our people and their arms were kept dry. . . . The rain was so heavy that it would have been impossible for the Indians to attack us . . . in open canoes and they have no other."

These hostile Indians were afterwards discovered to have been the very Upper Creeks who under their Chief "Tame King" had visited Governor Folch. From this it is easy to see what manner of "talks" he gave them when relieved of the presence of the Americans.

At St. George's Sound, on their way to Appalachee, a difficulty of a different sort presented itself. It took the shape of the two following letters:

"SIR,

"FOX POINT, September 22d, 1799.

I beg leave to make known to you, that I am at present on a small island on this coast, . . . with the crew of his Britannic Majesty's schooner 'Fox,' . . . which was unfortunately wrecked five days since, . . . I trust, sir, your humanity will induce you to stop here, and devise with me, some means of removing those unfortunate men, who have nothing more than some provisions saved from the wreck to exist on, the island producing nothing; on the contrary, for two days, during the late gale, the sea made a breach over it, so that . . . we were with nearly two feet water on the ground.

Understanding that you have been driven by the Indians

from the country where you were employed, I beg leave to inform you, that General Bowles, the Chief of the Creek nation is with me, he expresses his wishes to see you much, as he thinks your unfortunate differences may be settled. He has no force here, therefore you may be assured no treachery can be intended. . . .

With the most anxious wishes of seeing you soon

I am your most humble servant,

JAMES WOOLDRIDGE

Lieutenant in the Royal Navy.”

The other letter was in the following words:

“ SIR,

“FOX POINT, September 22^d, 1799.

I am now at the mouth of this river on my return from Spain by the way of London, and the West Indies, . . . to rejoin my nation the Creeks. . . . I wish much to see you. Although we may differ in politics, yet as gentlemen we may associate, and be friends, at least we may be civil to each other; I pledge my honour to be so to you and rely on yours.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

WM. A. BOWLES.”¹

¹ William A. Bowles was an adventurer born in 1763. He obtained a commission in the British Army. He was later dismissed the service. He became an actor, and also painted portraits. After a checkered career, he was appointed trading agent for the British on the Chatahootchie. His turbulence led to his being taken prisoner by the Spanish and sent to Madrid; from thence he was sent to Manila, in 1795. Later he returned to the Creek Nation, whom he had previously joined, marrying a squaw and becoming a Chief. He was again taken by the Spaniards, and died a prisoner in Morro Castle, Havana, in 1805.

The arrival of "General" Bowles in the Creek country was a matter of importance, and Major Ellicott sent the news by special despatches in several directions at once. His own conduct is set forth in a letter immediately sent on to Colonel Hawkins. Enclosing the two letters he says:

"On receiving those letters, . . . I did not decide in what manner I should act until some time in the afternoon, when I concluded to go on in the open boat to those unfortunate people."

He told them "that the country which I had the honour to serve, . . . had early resolved to observe a strict neutrality between the present belligerent powers in Europe. . . . That the officers and crew were certainly in their enemies country, and came into it with hostile views, an attempt therefore on my part to extricate them, might be viewed by the Spanish government, as a deviation from that line of conduct we had determined to observe. . . . They were not to expect any other aid from me, than what was immediately connected with humanity. . . . The next day the . . . commissary delivered to the Lieutenant 15 cwt. of flour, and 3 bags of rice. . . . Gen. Bowles . . . is certainly a man of enterprise and address, added to considerable talents. He declared to me, that he was not taken by the Spaniards some years ago at Apalachy in the manner reported, but for political reasons it was necessary to give it that appearance. That in 1794, it was proposed to him by the Minister of his Catholic Majesty, to receive a commission in that service, and return to his nation, and attack the United States; which he declined, . . . and was shortly after, and not until then confined. Soon after Mr. Pinckney arrived in

Spain, he [Mr. Bowles] was informed by the Prince of Peace,¹ that the American Minister was his enemy, and was again offered a commission which he declined to accept, though in confinement. . . . Immediately upon the late treaty between the United States, and his Catholic Majesty, being made public, he protested against it . . . as interfering with the dignity of his people and nation, the Creeks, who were as free, and independent as any other nation in the universe. That the article by which the United States and his Catholic Majesty, are bound to restrain the hostile attempts of the Indians within their respective territories, was an atrocious violation of the law of nations, and should never be submitted to whilst his people had a drop of blood to spill.

Further that he had warned the court of Madrid against running the boundary, and . . . also demanded an immediate evacuation of the post of St. Marks. . . . Had he arrived in time, he should have arrested the Spanish Commissioner, and his party. He likewise intends to seize Mr. Panton's property at Apalachy.

This is the substance of the conversation. . . . What credit may be due to his information . . . you are better able to judge of than myself: some Indians will probably be led away, . . . and some temporary inconvenience experienced by the United States; but I cannot think that the nation . . . will risk its existence to gratify . . . his ambition. He speaks in the style of a King; "my nation," and "my people," are his common expressions. . . .

Mr. Bowles behaved . . . whilst with me in a polite and friendly manner."

¹ Godoy.

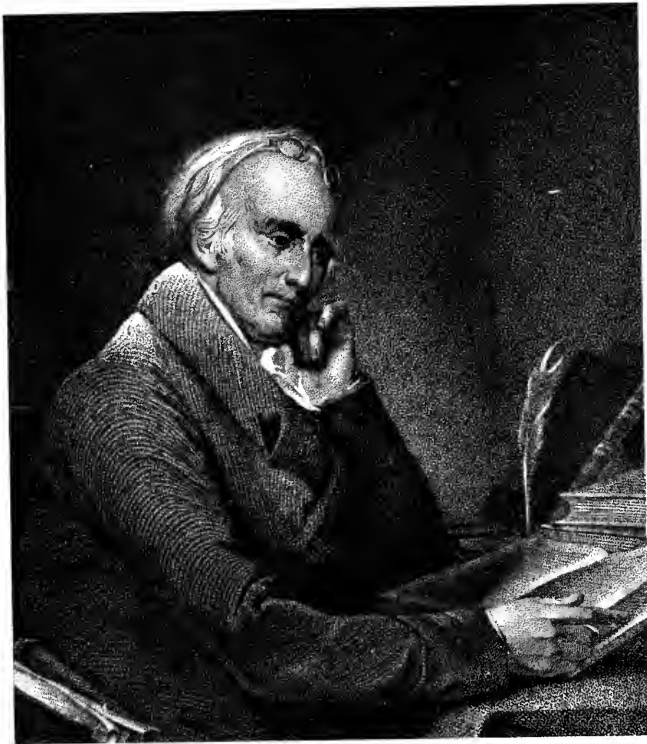
The turbulent General Bowles is also spoken of in a letter to Mrs. Ellicott written from Fort St. Marks, October 12, 1799.

“MY LOVE

I arrived at this place on the 7th inst^t after a most disagreeable passage from the Mouth of Flint River . . . Seven days of the time we had nothing but bread and Coffee to subsist on except a few fish we caught— From this you will naturally conclude that we set out in a hurry— we did so — we fled from the Indians who had come to a determination to plunder our camp we kept them off by force and made our retreat good with but little loss of Property except horses which has been considerable. Andy behaved with courage and coolness . . . and was one of the three who drove away an equal number of Indians from a small schooner in our employ, which they had plundered, and destroyed the Rigging, and robbed the persons on board of all their cloaths. . . .

On my way to this place I fell in with M^r. Bowles. . . . His return is a subject of surprize to the Spaniards. . . . They dread his influence with the Indians, what part he will act I cannot pretend to say, but rather suppose he will let the U. S. alone, and attack the Spaniards— He behaved to me with great politeness and furnished me with the necessary Charts, and directions to sail round Florida Point—

The arrival of M^r. Bowles is a matter of such importance that I have already sent expresses to Pensacola, St. Augustine, to Col. Hawkins, and to the Secretary of State—



BENJAMIN RUSH

Reproduced from a steel engraving by J. B. Longacre after a painting
by Sully.

I am now living on board the U. S. Schooner *The Sally* in which I shall sail for St. Mary's after laying in the necessary sea-stores. . . . We all enjoy good health, tho' living in swamps and marshes, and frequently exposed to rains, and night dews—¹ . . . ”

¹ He ascribes his good health to the excellence of some pills put up for him by Dr. Rush of Philadelphia before he left home. “ Each of these pills was composed of two grains of calomel, with $\frac{1}{2}$ a grain of gambage, combined by means of a little soap.” It was not until his supply of these was exhausted that he fell ill.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FLORIDA BOUNDARY (*Continued*)

“IMMEDIATELY on my arrival at St. Marks, I communicated Mr. Bowles’s design of taking that place to the Commandant. . . . But the caution had no effect: Mr. Bowles remained unmolested until he had in part regained his former influence with the Indians, and then besieged and took the Fort of St. Marks, which was defended by about one hundred infantry, and more than one dozen pieces of good artillery.

At St. Marks, I was treated by the Commandant Mr. Portel and his lady, with politeness and hospitality. Madame Portel is an agreeable Spanish lady and possesses a considerable share of vivacity, and good understanding. . . .

Fort St. Marks, (frequently called Apalachy,) is situated on a point of land at the confluence of the Apalachy, and another stream of nearly the same size; they are too small to be called rivers. The Fort is built of hewn stone, and the work tolerably well executed: on the north side of the Fort, and adjoining the wall, is a deep wet ditch, which extends from one of the streams of water to the other.

The country round the Fort; . . . is almost as level as the water in the Bay, . . . and when the tides . . . are aided by a brisk S. W. wind, it is overflown. . . . The soil does not appear to be more than two or three feet deep;

. . . and is supported by an horizontal stratum of limestone of an indifferent quality. The Fort is built of this stone, and likewise an old tower, which stands about a league S. W. from the Fort. . . . The quarry from whence the stones were raised to build the tower is but a short distance from it. When or for what purpose this tower was erected appears to be uncertain, but from its mouldering condition, and the total decay of the wood formerly connected with its walls, it is probable that it was built shortly after the Spaniards took possession of that country. On the top there appears to have been a light-house. . . . There is about half an acre of ground round the tower, raised by art so high, as not to be overflowed, which was probably used as a garden. . . .

Some miles north of St. Marks, there is a tract of country, though not extensive, which is tolerably good, and here the Spaniards had a small settlement or colony; but it was conquered about sixty years ago by an enterprising party from Charles Town, South Carolina; it is now totally abandoned and scarcely a vestige of the settlement remains, except the ruins of a fort, and one or two pieces of old artillery, almost in a state of complete decomposition."

Having gone up the Apalachee River from St. Marks, to meet the surveying party, who had been all the while, notwithstanding Spanish intrigue and Creek and Seminole hostility, vigorously pushing on the work of the boundary line, Major Ellicott left in the "Sally," for the trip around Florida to the St. Mary's River, where he would again meet Mr. Gillespie, the surveyor, and his party and complete the line. He says:

“ My undertaking this voyage, was a matter of necessity, and not of choice, and could it have been avoided with advantage to my country, I certainly should not have taken upon myself so important a charge. Having on board the commissary Mr. Anderson with all his accounts, and vouchers, for the money expended since we left the city of Philadelphia in 1796: and all the papers, drafts, and astronomical observations, relative to the boundary, and some other important geographical positions, with the originals of all my correspondence, for more than three years, together with the apparatus, and baggage of the party, including the military escort: to which may be added, about twenty persons, of whom but five had ever been at sea before, and of those five two only were sailors. . . .

Thus circumstanced, I left St. Marks on the 18th of October, in a small light built schooner, of not more than 38 or 40 tons burden. . . .

On opening one of the barrels of beef, which had been salted up at St. Marks, it was found . . . useless: . . . the remainder was unfortunately found to be in the same situation. This discovery appeared to produce some uneasiness among the crew, several of whom were for returning to St. Marks for a fresh supply; but as we had a great sufficiency of bread and flour on board, the proposition met with such a decided negative, accompanied with a reprimand, that it prevented any complaints during the voyage, though we were frequently in disagreeable situations.”

After a good deal of bad weather they reached Tampa Bay October 27th. The 29th they sighted Cape Sable,

and “came to an anchor on the west side of . . . Sandy Key, which is a . . . short distance south of the Cape. . . . Myself and some of the crew, took our boat, and went to the island, where in a very few minutes, we shot about twelve dozen plover. There are some bushes scattered over the island; . . . and amazing piles or stacks of the prickly pear, . . . the fruit was large and in high perfection: we eat very plentifully of it. . . . Though this island is called Sandy Key, and has the appearance of a body of sand, it is little more than a heap of broken and pulverized shells. . . .

31st. Went on shore on Key Vaccas where our people in a short time killed four deer, of that small species, common to some of those islands. They are less than our ordinary breed of goats.

November 2d. Took some large turtle and fine fish. Visited by Captain Burns of New Providence whose vessel lay at the east end of Key Vaccas. He was on a turtling and wrecking voyage. . . .

3d. Killed some more small deer and salted them up. . . .

5th. . . . Came to an anchor under a small Key, . . . and [went ashore,] but was compelled to return by the incredible number of musquetoës; on coming to the boat, I found the men had jumped into the water to avoid the attacks of those troublesome little animals. . . .

7th. Made sail early in the morning and came to an anchor at one o'clock P. M. in the harbour . . . of the old Matabombe, where we found it necessary to take in wood and water. This island is noted for affording a greater quantity of good water than any other of the Keys, on

which account it is much frequented by the turtles and wreckers. . . . This island . . . is said to have been the last residence of the Coloosa Indians, the original inhabitants of East Florida: From whence they were gradually expelled by the Seminoles, or Wild Creeks. From Matabombe they were taken to . . . Cuba by the Spaniards, and incorporated with their slaves. But this measure does not appear to have been taken without provocation: these Indians were remarkable for their cruelty, which they exercised indiscriminately on all the unfortunate people, who were wrecked within their reach on that dangerous coast. The island of Matanza, (slaughter,) which lies about one mile northeast from the watering place, was so called from those Indians massacring about three hundred French, who had collected on it, after being wrecked on the reef."

While at Matabombe Major Ellicott had a practical illustration of what the gratitude of that audacious "man of enterprise" General Bowles, amounted to, and though he had expected but little, he met with even less than his expectations. He says:

"I expected to have been overtaken at St. Marks, by a vessel laden with a quantity of provision from New Orleans. . . . Supposing this vessel would pass through St. Georges Sound, and if so, be liable to be captured by Lieut. Wooldridge, and his men, . . . I mentioned the circumstance of this vessel and provision, to the Lieutenant, . . . and to Mr. Bowles, . . . and requested them to furnish her with a passport to follow me round Cape Florida, to St Mary's. . . . They were informed that no objection would be made to their taking such a supply of provision

as their immediate necessities required. . . . They returned me many thanks and . . . assured me the vessel should not be detained . . . but forwarded immediately,"

On the 8th arrived at Matacombe, laden with provisions, the schooner "Shark" which had been captured at St. Georges Sound by Lieut. Wooldridge, and his crew. They refused to give Major Ellicott so much as a barrel of pork, and without even making a return for the provisions so generously provided to them when they were in distress, they "crowded all sail, and stood over the reef." "Thus," remarks Major Ellicott, "were we requited for our favors!" To add to his indignation, a letter later received from Mr. Panton informed him that the "Shark" was no other than his own expected vessel of provisions. "It was," wrote Mr. Panton, "unfortunately captured somewhere on the coast!" So that General Bowles and Lieutenant Wooldridge had not only broken their promise, but had coolly sailed away with their benefactor's cargo!

The captain of a privateer whom they fell in with, more kindly in his behaviour, furnished them with some salt pork which with the turtles and deer made a sufficiency of meat until they could lay in more supplies.

"[November] 12th. About two o'clock in the morning I was called up to see the shooting of the stars (as it is vulgarly termed), the phenomenon was grand and awful, the whole heavens appeared as if illuminated with sky rockets, flying in an infinity of directions, and I was in constant expectation of some of them falling on the vessel. They continued until put out by the light of the sun

after daybreak. This phenomenon extended over a large portion of the West India islands, and was observed as far north as St. Marys where it appeared as brilliant as with us."

The following morning, being passed by a sloop which for some reason excited their suspicions, they gave chase and captured her. It proved when her captain was brought on board the "Sally" that she was a Spanish "prize" being taken north by her captor, and her papers were perfectly satisfactory.

The master and his people "had been seven days on allowance of one biscuit, and a pint of water each per day, with what fish they could take, which they had to eat without salt. The master took breakfast with me, and when he was ready to return, I directed our commissary to furnish him with a barrel of biscuit, and some salt, upon which he observed that he had, never before been so fortunately chased and taken," The "prize" vessel was wrecked a day later in a gale which blew for four days with unabated violence.

"18th. The wind was more moderate. . . . In the afternoon were brought to by a New Providence privateer, commanded by Captain William Ball, who had been but a short time from Ireland, and who treated us . . . with a degree of insolence far beyond anything I had ever before experienced. But after examining my instructions and commission, and viewing the signature of President Washington with all the attention and veneration that would have been paid to a holy relick, he became more moderate, and made us sufficient compensation for his insolence, by

presenting us with a fine turtle, and after wishing us a pleasant passage, we parted."

After another violent storm they went ashore November 23rd at the mouth of Fresh Water River, "and gathered a large quantity of very fine limes: a party of our people likewise took their rifles, . . . and were uncommonly fortunate in killing deer and turkies. . . .

Along the Florida Reef and among the Keys, a great abundance and variety of fish may be taken: such as hogfish, grunts, yellow-tails, black, red, and gray snappers, mullets, bone-fish, amber-fish, margate-fish, barracoota, cavallos, pompui, groopers, king-fish, siber-fish, porgys, turbot, stingrys, black drum, Jewfish, with a prodigious variety of others. . . . Turtle are to be had in plenty; those we took were of three kinds: the loggerhead, hawk-bill and green. . . . We likewise found a remarkable species of prawns, which live in great numbers in holes in the rocks: they frequently weigh two or three pounds a-piece, and are improperly called lobsters; they want the large claws that lobsters have. Their meat is harder and less delicate than that of the lobster. . . .

Key Biscanio [near the mouth of the Fresh Water river] is much frequented by the privateers, wreckers and turtlers from the Bahama Islands. . . . In that harbour we found several of [these], by whom we were politely treated, particularly by a Captain Johnston, who furnished me with seven or eight pounds of salt pork. . . .

25th, about noon we got under way and proceeded over the reef into the Gulf Stream. Shortly after, . . . we saw a vessel bearing down upon us, but did not discover that she was a privateer until she attempted to

bring us to by a shot: being determined to make the best use we could of the first fair, strong breeze we had had . . . we crowded all our sail, and the privateer did the same, but in two hours she gave up the chase.”

Still a third gale drove them out of their course and put them back, “to our mortification,” records Major Ellicott in the Journal.

“December 2d. . . . In the afternoon came to an anchor . . . in a good harbour. The satisfaction which the crew, and myself experienced . . . may be more easily conceived than expressed. We were now able to take a night’s repose, free from those cares and anxieties which must ever attend the reflecting mind in our past situation; exposed to the turbulence of the sea in a little vessel, having but two young illiterate sailors on board, along a dangerous coast with which we were all unacquainted, and experiencing three violent gales, which we afterwards found had wrecked as many vessels, much better calculated to resist the fury of the winds and billows than ours. . . .

It has been mentioned by Dr. Franklin, that the water of the Gulf Stream does not sparkle in the night. This, so far as my observations go is incorrect: . . . the water of the Gulf Stream was the most sparkling and luminous: . . .

The same ingenious writer and philosopher, likewise observes, that the Gulf weed is a sign of being in the Stream. This is in part true, but by no means: . . . a general rule, because the water on the borders of the Stream, is constantly mixing with the adjoining water, and leaving some of the weed behind, which: . . . is

carried off many leagues: . . . These remarks cannot affect the character of Dr. Franklin, either as a writer or philosopher: his character is formed of materials which will elude the destroying hand of time itself, and will be revered so long as liberty and science command the affections and esteem of mankind."

They engaged a pilot for the inland passage to St. Marys, but as he proved to be far from skilful and after removing the "Sally" from a good harbour to a bad one, next distinguished himself by running her aground, they let him go, and on arriving at St. Simons, engaged another.

"9th. . . . After engaging the pilot, I spent a few hours in examining the ruins of that once handsome and flourishing town; [Frederica] which during . . . Gen. Oglethorpe's administration was the seat of the colonial government of Georgia. The town . . . as nearly as I could judge, appeared to have been regularly laid out, that is, the streets at right angles to each other, and the whole surrounded by a wall of earth, except that part lying . . . on the water which was defended by a small battery of "tabby work," (as it is called in that country), which is a composition of broken oyster shells and lime. The walls of the principal houses . . . were of the same composition. The appearance is similar to rough-cast, and some of the walls seemed as solid as though they had been cut out of a rock. . . .

The character and services of Gen. Oglethorpe do not appear to be sufficiently appreciated. . . . His time was employed either in defeating the Spaniards, (by whom his

little colony was several times invaded), erecting forts, joining the meandering waters in the low flat country by canals, to render the communication more expeditious, . . . and otherwise increasing the value and consequence of his government. . . .

At half an hour after twelve o'clock, the tide serving we left Frederica and arrived at St. Marys at half past six the same evening. This passage was one of the quickest ever known.

At St. Marys we met our companions who came through the wilderness from the mouth of Flint River, . . . [after a journey] . . . rendered tedious and disagreeable by the autumnal rains. . . .

The night of that same day he wrote his wife:

“MY LOVE

“ST. MARY'S, December 9th, 1799.

I have this moment arrived at this place after a long and Dangerous voyage from West Florida.— I had but two sailors and had to navigate the *Sally* myself— . . . The Vessel's cook¹ died on the passage and we left him in the gulph Stream— I shall write perticularly in a few days. . . . May God Protect you and our dear Children.”

The Journal proceeds:

“When I arrived at the town of St. Marys, . . . finding that I could not obtain quarters in the town for myself and people, free of expense to the public, I re-

¹ John Ransom; he was a soldier in the Revolutionary Army until discharged for age. Major Ellicott took him into his employ “through charity and to gratify his wish to return and die in the land of liberty for which he had fought.”

moved on the 12th to Point Peter, and encamped¹ in a forest of live oak, where a number of people were engaged in cutting ship timber for the United States: the offal wood served us for firing. . . . After we had encamped, the instruments were unpacked and set up: and a course of observations, and some mathematical operations begun. . . . We found provisions in that part of Georgia very high and scarce, and many of the inhabitants were importing corn, and other necessaries of life for their own consumption: from this circumstance we kept but a small supply by us." . . .

His despatches to the Secretary of State were forwarded with all the regularity possible, and his letters to his wife usually, it is inferred, were sent with them. He writes:

“DEAR SALLY

“POINT PETER, JAN^y. 12th, 1800.

I have sent my sea journal to M^r. Pickering with a request that he would hand it to you when he had read it— You will see by that, that I am already a part of a seaman, but it has been thro’ necessity, and nothing but necessity would make me attempt it again—

Since I left you, I have travelled in all ways, sometimes in an open canoe, at others in a boat, sometimes with pack-horses, at other times on the Ocean— No sum that could be mentioned, or honour conferred, would tempt me to go thro the same fetigue, and anxiety of mind again— But thanks be to providence that the business

¹ “This system I pursued from the time I left Pittsburgh in 1796 until my return to Philadelphia in 1800, and whatever attention and shelter the men might require, I occupied no quarters myself at the expense of the public.” — Journal, p. 270.

is now nearly completed notwithstanding the intrigues of the spanish government, and the opposition from the indians. . . .

I have just learned with sincere sorrow that General Washington is no more. A greater man will not die this age.— his whole life was spent in the most arduous employments for the service of his country . . . ”

“East Florida [he says in the Journal] is but little better than a wilderness.

The Florida Keys and reef, . . . furnish a great number of harbours, . . . and advantageous stations for cruizers, . . . But instead of any advantage being derived, . . . from these favourable situations, they serve as dens and hiding places for the privateers and pickaroons of the Bahama Islands, by which the trade of both nations [Spain and the United States] has suffered immensely in spoliations. . . . The coast and islands being uninhabited even by a single solitary settler from Apalachy, almost round to St. Augustine! From which the inhabitants of the Bahama islands cut and carry off, . . . the valuable ship timber. . . .

The first permanent settlement in East Florida, was attempted by some French protestants in the year 1562, to secure . . . a retreat from religious persecution. But the King of Spain . . . dispatched Don Pedro Malendez de Aviles, . . . to destroy this infant settlement, which he effected in a most cruel and barbarous manner in the year 1565 and established a colony at St. Augustine. . . . In 1856 St. Augustine . . . was taken . . . by sir Francis Drake, and in 1665 it was again taken and

plundered by Captain Davis, who headed . . . a body of Buccaneers. In 1702 an expedition was carried on against it by Col. Moore, Governor of Carolina; his force consisted of five hundred English troops, and seven hundred Indians, with whom he besieged the city for three months without success and then retired.

Except those incidents the history of East Florida from the settling of the colony in 1565, is little more than a succession of Governors, until Gen. Oglethorpe took possession of Georgia, which circumstance excited considerable jealousy at the court of Madrid, and a large force was sent against him, which he not only defeated, but . . . carried his conquests to the gates of St. Augustine, and laid siege to that city in 1740; but being badly supplied with almost every article necessary to give success to such an undertaking, he was obliged to relinquish his design. By the peace of 1763, the Floridas were ceded to his Britannic Majesty George the third, but who . . . was reduced to the necessity in 1783 of . . . restoring them to his Catholic Majesty who yet retains them. . . .

On the 19th [of January, 1800,] the observations at Point Peter were closed, and the instruments taken down and packed up.

The 23d we left . . . St. Marys, and proceeded up the river as far as it was navigable for the United States Schooner and then made use of canoes until an end was put to our navigation on the 6th of February, by drift wood, logs and other impediments. . . .

[February] 7th. We began our observatory, and sent a party to examine whether there was any communication between the river and Okefonoke Swamp. . . .

This being the season that the Alligators, . . . were beginning to crawl out of the mud and bask in the sun, it was a favourable time to take them, both on account of their torpid state, and to examine the truth of the report of their swallowing pine knots in the fall of the year. . . . For this purpose two alligators of about eight or nine feet in length were taken and opened, and in the stomach of each was found several pine and other knots, pieces of bark, and in one of them some charcoal; but exclusive of such indigestible matter the stomachs of both were empty. So far the report appears to be founded in fact: but whether these substances were swallowed on account of their tedious digestion, and therefore proper during the time those animals lay in the mud, or to prevent a collapse of the coats of the stomach, or by accident owing to their voracious manner of devouring their food, is difficult to determine. . . .

Some of the Alligators we killed were very fat, and would doubtless have yielded a considerable quantity of oil. . . . Their tails are frequently eaten by the Indians and negroes, and Mr. Bowles informed me that he thought them one of the greatest of delicacies. . . . I confess their appearance was so disagreeable and offensive to me, that I felt no inclination to undertake the dissection of one of them.

The second party which had been sent to ascertain the connexion, . . . between the river St. Marys and the Okefonoke Swamp returned on the 17th, . . . and the day following a traverse was began, to connect the observatory with that part of the Swamp from whence the

water issued, in order to determine its true geographical position.”

On the 26th Major Ellicott and Captain Minor took a party of laborers to the Swamp and “had a large mound of earth thrown up.” This mound is at the point where the land boundary between the States of Georgia and Florida ends; the St. Marys river being the boundary from thence eastward to the Atlantic. “Ellicott Mound” is indicated on all maps of Florida or Georgia, near the head of the river St. Marys, in the Okefonoke Swamp.

“The astronomical part of the boundary . . . being now completed, it only remained to make out the report with the maps or charts of the line. As a proper place for doing this business we agreed to go and encamp on the south end of Cumberland Island, where fire-wood could be had without any expense to the public, and where we could be more retired and less interrupted by company.”

From Cumberland Island he wrote to his wife:

“MY LOVE

“April 5th 1800.

On wednesday next I expect we shall be ready to ratify the Journal, with the Charts, and plans.—It has been to me an arduous task,—the journal which includes the report to the two nations, is very lengthy, not much short of a quire of paper, and the Charts, and plans extend in length about 18 feet,—the whole of which with an infinite number of calculations I have gone thro in less than 4 weeks. . . .

I intend going from this place to Savannah in the Sally. . . . From Savannah I propose going on to Phila-

delphia in a larger vessel. You will hear from me next in the Delaware.

I am almost worn out and would not again undertake such a piece of work as the journal report and charts for the whole county of Camden. . . .

My health except three months sickness at Natchez, (where good nursing alone saved my life) has been tolerably good. but my complexion is gone, and only to be restored by our northern climate.—

. . . I once more have a speedy prospect of returning to you, for whom alone, with our dear children, relations, and friends, does life appear desirable.— I have done my duty to my country, to the extent of my abilities, and my ambition is fully gratified. . . . I am, my dear Sally,

Your Affectionate Husband.”

The Journal continues: “The reports¹ with the maps . . . being completed on the 10th of April, we . . . left Cumberland island, . . . for St. Marys, . . . where on the 25th I again took the direction of the vessel, having but one sailor, exclusive of two or three of our labourers who had come round Cape Florida with me. . . . The wind serving we . . . proceeded along the sound to the Plumb Orchard. . . . The 26th . . . I paid a visit to the family of the late Major General Green, who now resides on Cumberland Island. . . .

27th. . . . We crossed the bar, put to sea, and laid our course for Tybee light-house. . . . About 9 o'clock in

¹ The report signed by Major Ellicott and Don Estevan Minor has been lost. It is thought to have been destroyed in a fire which consumed the Treasury Building.

the evening we saw the light. . . . A short time after midnight the light in the lantern of the light-house went out. . . .

May 1st. . . . We sailed up to the City of Savannah."

Here they left the "Sally," and chartered a sloop for the passage to Philadelphia, where they arrived at eight o'clock in the evening of May 18th, 1800, where all the hardships and trials he had encountered by land and water, during his long absence of three years and five months "were more than compensated for by the pleasure I experienced in meeting my family."

This Florida boundary required, as has been amply shown, much that was entirely aside from the actual survey. It called for a display of tact and statesmanship where the Spanish officials and the citizens of Natchez were concerned, and for unceasing coolness and courage both then and later on. It was no light matter to run the line through what was practically the enemy's country, and it was a still more difficult feat to bring his party safely home around so dangerous a coast. It was probably one of the most important pieces of work which Major Ellicott ever undertook for the government, and President Adams and Mr. Pickering, the Secretary of State, gave their most cordial approbation to the way in which he accomplished it. Thomas Jefferson wrote him he was "happy to see that the location of the boundary had been so scientifically executed," and says it will be a "great gratification" to see the Journal in print. His associates in the American Philosophical Society received the Journal with warm praise for both its literary and

scientific value; Dr. Benjamin Rush saying it could not fail of placing his name with those of Franklin and Rittenhouse; and that the public recognized its interest and worth is shown by the fact that it was twice reprinted.

“I cannot take leave of the different subjects of this journal,” is its ending, “without acknowledging my obligations to that kind Providence, which preserved me from the dangers that have been described, and probably from many others unseen, and unknown. . . .”

May the now peaceful shores of the Mississippi, never be made vocal with the noise of the implements of war, and may its waters never be dyed with human blood! — With this wish, thanking my reader for his patience in looking over these pages, I bid him adieu.”

CHAPTER IX

THE LAND OFFICE OF PENNSYLVANIA

1800-1812

THE Florida boundary work, and the warm commendation it received made Major Ellicott a figure of more prominence than ever in the scientific world. The title given him— “Geographer General of the United States,” seemed fitly bestowed. No one could at that time more justly claim the appellation.

The year following his return was spent quietly at his home in Philadelphia. He was principally occupied in putting his Journal in a form suitable for publication, in writing papers on various subjects for the Philosophical Society, of which he was not only a valued member but an officer as well, and in carrying on a large correspondence with many eminent men both at home and abroad.

Of the quiet days of rest following upon the arduous ones whose record is given in the preceding pages, no better picture could be drawn than is contained in two or three letters to Mrs. Ellicott, who in the early part of 1801 was visiting their daughter Mrs. Griffiths (Mary Ellicott) in New York. They take the form of diaries rather than letters and each little incident of the every day living is given, in a manner that must have made them very satisfying to the absent wife and mother.

“MY DEAR

“PHILADELPHIA, Jan^y. 15th 1801.

Got up later than common, read the news paper, eat brakefast.— Went to the Museum,— detained till 11 OClock by a heavy rain,— then paid Doc^{tr} Priestly a visit,— returned and dined. . . . Weather too warm for the season, many windows raised. . . . Walked in the afternoon with neighbour Donaldson,— returned, drank tea. At 7 OClock intend going to M^r. Peale’s Lecture.— I observed to Jane, who is now by me, that it was doubtful whether I should have a letter from you tomorrow or no,— she replied, very doubtful!—

Peale’s Lecture to-night will be upon Monkeys. I told Jane at dinner it would be proper for young ladies to be present at the Lecture, to see the resemblance between Monkeys, and fops. Jane’s mind was occupied with the subject till tea, and then enquired if it was M^r Peale’s opinion that Monkeys and Foxes were of the same species, and classed by naturalists under the same head?— She mistook the word fops, for foxes! Without pretending to much knowledge in natural history I really think the resemblance much more striking between a Monkey and Fop, than between a Monkey and Fox. Returned from the Lecture at ½ past 8, and found Billy Hawkins, Billy Graff, Kittie Graff, and Jane at cards, and Doc^{tr}. Mitchell and Sally looking on.— Was very well pleased with the Lecture. . . . The card party has this moment broke up, the watchman is crying ‘P - A - S - T — T - E - N — O - C - L - O - C - K!’ and I have laid down the book I have been reading in for more than an hour and pray that the Deity may take us in his holy keeping, and grant us a comfortable nights repose.”

“January 16th.

“Got up, read the newspaper,— took brakefast.— then went to Market,— wrote a long letter to my friend M^r. Cochran at Natchez.— A visit of two hours from Doc^{tr}. Rush,— Dined, did not mention your name: no letter from you:— it does not require a note of admiration.— Shall begin a letter to M^r. Jefferson this afternoon;— but do not expect to finish it before monday or tuesday next.— Stuttering Evans has just left me, he was two thirds slewed, (as the Rahway people call being in liquor), he endeavoured to talk to me about a mistake in M^r. Rittenhouse’s Treasury accounts which has been lately discovered. . . . I have this moment heard to my surprize and grief, of the death of my friend M^r. Jones a member of Congress from Georgia. You remember my dear he was at our house the sunday that M^r. Graff, Brackenridge, and others dined with us.— . . . I shall immediately go to tea, and from thence to the Philosophical Society. At ½ past 7 OClock as Vice President of the Philosophical Society, I took the chair in that learned body, so often occupied by Franklin, Rittenhouse and Jefferson.— There was much business before the Society, and we did not adjourn till near 10 OClock this evening. I have just returned home, shall carry this to the post office and then go to bed. My love as usual.

Yours Affectionately,

AND^w. ELLICOTT.”

“MY SALLY

“PHILADELPHIA January 17th. 1801.

Last night after returning from the post office which was past 10 OClock I added a paragraph to my letter to

Mr. Jefferson. Went to bed at 11 O'clock— got up early this morning, read the newspaper, eat breakfast.— sent Jane to Market.— added a paragraph to my letter to Mr. Jefferson.— at 10 O'clock was visited by Doct^r Priestly, who you know, is considered as one of the greatest men now alive— he looks very well, and is remarkably lively for a person of his great age— Dined at 1 O'clock. Finished my letter to Mr. Jefferson. . . . Received a letter from Anderson at the City of Washington. . . . No letter from you this day,— a variety of company great part of the afternoon.— My throat sore and somewhat painful.— . . . Walked out before sun-down to the Center-House, returned and drank tea: After tea: examined some communications to the Philosophical Society which were referred to me to report on. Some of them are interesting, particularly two, or three from my friend Mr. William Dunbar of Natchez. Jane has been reading one on the language by signs now practised by several of the South western tribes of indians. I have seen them used. Nine o'clock in the evening. Throat still sore and I feel myself feverish. Received two watches from Mr. Patterson to regulate, and a sextant to adjust. Company till about 10 O'clock— drank some beer and went to bed, wishing you health, and more happiness and ease than it is in my power to give you. . . .”

“MY DEAR

“PHILADELPHIA January 19th, 1801.

I got up early this morning,— felt uncommonly well, read the newspaper.— eat breakfast,— Went to the University where I spent 2 or 3 hours.— returned, find that I am represented in the British news papers as being much

alarmed at the arrival of Mr. Bowles on the coast of Florida,— this affords me a good opportunity of setting that affair in its true light to the publick. Eat dinner,— too rainy to walk out.— Read Peales new electrical system of the universe!— it is extravagant, visionary, nonsense, but he thinks that Sir Isaac Newton's principia is not even the A. B. C. of it! He is much more capable of classing butter-flies, catterpillars, snakes and bull-frogs, than of making improvements in Astronomy.— . . . In the evening Uncle Linton came to stay with us till morning.— Drank tea gave Uncle Linton Peale's Lecture to read. He soon got tired of it.— Conversed till 11 OClock and went to bed.

“January 20th.

“. . . A young man of this City who was in low circumstances, yesterday drew a prize of 3000 dollars in the Church Lottery. he thanked G—d upon receiving the information and exclaimed “I shall be able to pay my debts.” It appears that he was security for two or three men who ran away and left him the money to pay.— Plagued with a long visit from Doct^r Barnwell, the most tedious uninteresting man alive, five times he took hold of the latch of door to go, and as often I thanked god. Dined and went to my room . . . I do my dear most cordially thank you for your letter, and assure you that I shall experiance a singular happiness at our meeting, and will endeavour never to be outdone in affection.— You no doubt wonder at the numberless blunders in my letters.— I will now explain it. They were only intended for yourself, and not to be shewn to any person, and were

always written while I was conversing with company or
some of the Children . . . believe me

to be your affectionate

Husband.”

So the quaint record runs on, showing the manner of his life when leisure, his rarest possession, was his for a time. With the dearly loved young family around him, with friends whom he valued close at hand, and privileges which he cherished always available, he was free to indulge his favorite pursuits, and to benefit from a change of thought and occupation as a less active man would benefit from absolute idleness.

In July of this year Major Ellicott went to Washington, and the visit held for him what he calls one of the most flattering and honorable incidents of his life. It was the offer from his good friend President Jefferson of the post of Surveyor-General of the United States. The offer was not one to be either lightly accepted or rejected, and he so writes to Mrs. Ellicott from Georgetown, July 4, 1801:

“MY LOVE

. . . On my arrival at this place I was cordially received by the President and different officers of Government— The President has offered me the Office of Surveyor General of the U. S.— I have not yet agreed to accept, neither do I intend making my mind up on that subject till you and myself deliberately weigh the advantages, and disadvantages.— Should I accept, we should have to reside, at least for some years, in the western

Country:— But it would put it in my power immediately to provide for Andrew, by giving him either a Clerkship in the Office, or the deputation of a district, and I think would enable us to make all our Children more independent.— If you are at home when you receive this consult Jane upon the subject; but keep it secret from others. The Salery is two thousand dollars p^r Annum, which is equal to that of the Governour, and more than double that of the Judges.

I am my dear Sally

yours Most Affectionately

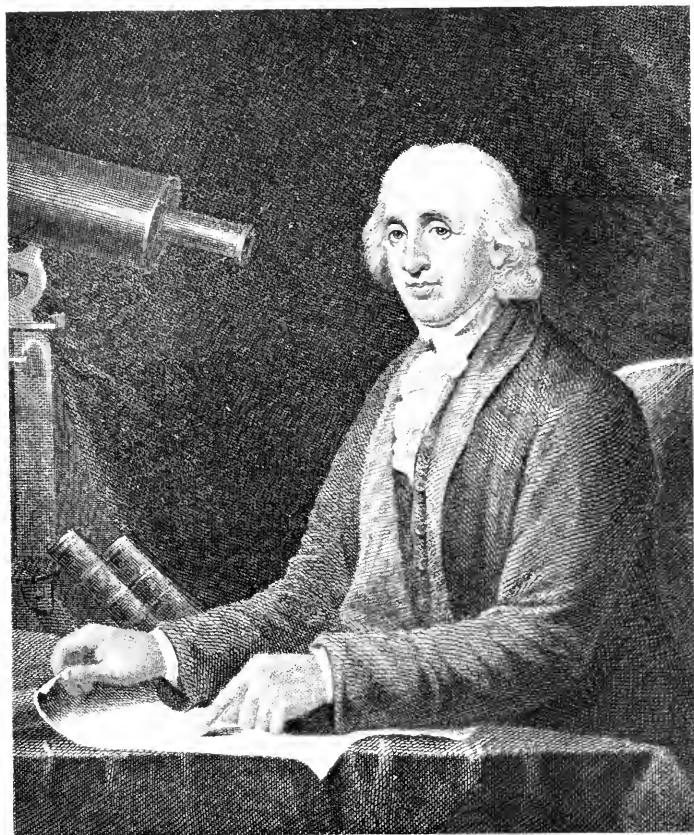
AND^w. ELLICOTT.”

He had, obviously, no objection to the office of Surveyor General, but the offer was eventually declined, because of various fixed regulations concerning the administration of its duties which made it seem, on mature consideration, far from desirable.

He writes, in a letter relative to this business of the Surveyor Generalship, that he is “distressed because his pay” (for the Florida boundary) “has been withheld. I have been obliged to sell my valuable library, and dispose of my Theodolite to procure money for market tomorrow, and for nothing but faithful services, never used a farthing of public money, never lost a single observation by absence or inattention, and never when out on public business was caught in bed by the sun.” He adds, as in sharp contrast to the treatment he has received, that “the Spanish Commissioners divided about twenty six thousand dollars and have been complimented by the court of Madrid.”

The complaints contained in this letter are only too true, and it is safe to say that Major Ellicott was never generously, or even fairly, treated as to his salary or his expenses on any of his public service, except at those times when he held an office with a fixed salary. His pay for State and Government boundary or other work was always detained until long overdue, and only too often was withheld entirely. To the shame of his employers, who so illy requited his honest and disinterested services, this fact must stand recorded. Honor and fame he had in good measure, together with friendship and good-will from those who stood highest in the land, but for the payment of the salaries which were justly due him, and for the lack of which he suffered such severe financial embarrassment, he had always to plead and contend and only too often to go without them in the end.

A better financial outlook came in October, 1801, when he was appointed Secretary to the Land Office of Pennsylvania by Governor McKean of that State. To hold this office it was necessary that he should reside at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This he and his family found to be a pleasant home. The salary was good, and the duties were light, leaving him abundant leisure for the pursuit of his astronomical and scientific researches, and for the large correspondence dealing with matters scientific, political, or personal, which was one of his chief pleasures. He wrote his letters slowly, in most cases drafting them carefully, and many of them show a knowledge of literary construction and a choice of words which is above the average of the letters of that day. His correspondents during a period of forty years included, among many



David Rittenhouse

Reproduced from a steel engraving by J. B. Longacre after the painting
by C. W. Peale.

others, such men as David Rittenhouse, Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Priestley, Dr. Rush, Dr. Caspar Wistar, Bishop Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Gallatin, Alexander Hamilton, Robert Morris, Jeremiah Day,¹ President Madison, Winthrop Sargent, Robert Patterson, Timothy Pickering, as well as the two distinguished French astronomers and scientists, M. Delambre² and M. Lalande.³ Robert R. Livingston, then Minister to France, wrote him concerning his letters to the two latter that he should think himself "happy in being the channel of your further correspondence, being assured that the result will be useful to mankind;" and he encloses at the same time a letter from M. Delambre, Secretary of the National Institute of France.

To his brother Joseph, now Secretary of the Holland Land Company at Batavia, Major Ellicott wrote often and affectionately. In Joseph's youth, his brother Andrew had helped him to positions which had led to the prosperity he now enjoyed; he never forgot what he chose to consider his obligation, and during the lean years, when the Government pay came slowly or not at all, he never withheld substantial aid from the brother to whom he felt himself indebted. The two brothers thought alike on most questions of the day, and their letters to each other were

¹ President of Yale College.

² Jean Baptiste Joseph Delambre, a distinguished French astronomer, born at Amiens, 1749. He was elected to almost every scientific association in Europe and in his own country honors were showered upon him, and he was made a Chevalier of the Order of St. Michael; he died at Paris, 1822.

³ Joseph Jérôme le Français de Lalande, born at Bourg, in 1732, was professor of astronomy at the College of France for forty-five years. He was the author of several works on astronomy and science. He died at Paris in 1807.

always very long and full, and touched on many points of various interest. Major Ellicott's eldest son Andrew, his companion on so many surveys, had recently married, and on a trip which he made to western New York, with a view to choosing a place to settle, was the bearer of the following letter from his father to his Uncle Joseph:

“DEAR BROTHER

“LANCASTER, Jan^y 3^d, 1803.

This will be handed to you by Andrew, if he should be so fortunate as to reach your settlement at this disagreeable season of the year. He seems inclined to leave the mill if he can fix himself advantageously in your country, of this, (with your advice), he will be able to judge when on the ground. I should have wished his continuance at the mill, if it had only been to prevent the buildings falling down, which will inevitably be the case in two, or three years, unless rented, or leased out. . . .

I have a large work now in the hands of the Printer, but the publication will be delayed much longer than I could wish on account of the Maps, which are not yet ready for the engraver, and I have not one moment I can spare from the duties of my office to work upon them except on sundays. . . .

Our Legislature last winter were economy *mad*, and had it not been for a few dispassionate members, government would have been prostrated to make room for the goddess of meanness:— In short, had the plans of some popularity seeking gentry succeeded, the business of the government would have been suspended for want of competent officers, and clerks. Gov^r McKean is a friend to liberal salaries; but the officers must do their duty, and close their publick

accounts quarterly or retire:— this regulation has introduced such order in every department of the government, that the whole goes on like a well-regulated piece of machinery. . . .

Your affectionate brother

AND^W. ELLICOTT.

P. S. “With what little french I learned while in the Floridas and New Spain, added to a little attention to it since my return, I am now able to read it off in english without any difficulty, and can translate it as fast as I can write. I have lately received some valuable presents in books both from France, and England.

A. E.

“I have enclosed a copy of this letter taken in 15 seconds, by which you will see the value of a copying machine— Mine is not larger than a common travelling desk.”

That young Andrew liked what he saw of western New York is evidenced by the following letter written to Mrs. Ellicott while she was on a second visit to Mrs. Griffiths in New York:

“LANCASTER 24th February in the
evening 1803.

“MY DEAR

I suppose you begin to think me very negligent about writing and I really think so myself.— Immediately after you went away I began my compound grid-iron pendulum, which occupied every moment of my time, (out of office hours) including sundays till yesterday morning when I completed it, and then went and dined with the Governour. . . .

Andrew and his Cousin Joseph Evans arrived this morning from the Genesee country in good health. — Andrew has determined to move there in the Spring. . . .

Exclusive of my earnest wishes to see you, I think you are beginning to be wanted at home. My love to our connexion

and believe me to be your affectionate

Husband.’

Life moved on easily for the household at Lancaster through the next few years. There was enough of work to occupy Major Ellicott’s days, enough of salary to remove all financial care, enough of leisure to be given to those subjects of science, astronomy, and the phenomena of nature, which were always more or less in his thoughts. Something of the matters which interested him is shown in the following letters written him by Robert Livingston and Thomas Jefferson in the fall of 1803:

“SIR

“PARIS, 30th. Sept^r, 1803.

I did myself the honor to deliver your letter to Mr. Delalande a few days after I received it, he appeared to be very much pleased at the contents, & has requested me to transmit you his answer which I send herewith— I know of nothing new in the line you mention which you will not find in the proceedings of the national institute which I presume you receive— The fact of the fall of stones from the sky, having been put, by some late enquiries almost beyond a doubt the Philosophers are now disputing whether they are generated in the atmosphere

or whether we owe them to volcanic eruptions in the moon, as much remains to be said on both sides; prudent men have not yet thought it proper to pronounce judgment. But it may be new to you to learn that while the moon is pelting at us with red hot pebbles, the fix stars are counteracting her measures, & raying down cold upon us— This I assure you upon the authority of Count Rumford who has made a number of very new & very important discoveries on the transmission of heat & cold, for cold it seems is not a negative quality, but as much a body as heat, & may like it be reflected from a polished surface. If two polished brass balls are heated to the same degree & one of them is covered with linnen or varnish it will cool much quicker than that which is uncovered: if covered with a black animal substance; still quicker; because black absorbs the rays of cold &c.—

His work is not yet published, but he tells me he means to go to England as soon as possible for the purpose of publishing— If Dr. Priestly should fall in your way I will pray you to present my comp^{ts} to him, & to mention this subject to him— his ingenious researches will probably add much to them— I am sorry he has not executed the resolution that he told me he had formed of paying a visit to the arts & sciences in this country that I might have had the pleasure of seeing him while I remain here—

I am, Sir, with much esteem

Your most ob^t. hum. Serv^t

ROBT R. LIVINGSTON.”

“DEAR SIR

“WASHINGTON Dec. 23, 03.

I received last night your favor of Dec. 17. . . . I find nothing surprising in the raining of stones in France, nor yet had they been mill-stones. there are in France more real philosophers than in any country on earth: but there are also a greater proportion of pseudo-philosophers there. the reason is that the exuberant imagination of a Frenchman gives him a greater facility of writing, & runs away with his judgment unless he has a good stock of it. it even creates facts for him which never happened, and he tells them with good faith. Count Rumford after discovering cold to be a positive body will doubtless find out that darkness is so too. as many as two or three times during my seven years residence in France, new discoveries were made which upset the whole Newtonian philosophy; two or three examples happened of spontaneous combustion of the living human body, of houses, &c. in all these cases the evidence of nature, derived from experience, must be put into one scale, and in the other the testimony of man, his ignorance, the deception of his senses, his lying disposition &c. and we must see which preponderates. . . . Accept my friendly salutations & assurances of esteem.

TH: JEFFERSON.”

In this year the Journal, whose careful preparation had taken so much time, was published, and added much to its author's growing fame. In this year also he received a visit from Captain Meriwether Lewis, who when it was “proposed to send an exploring party to trace the Missouri to its source, to cross the Highlands and

follow the best water communication which offered itself from thence to the Pacific ocean, immediately renewed his solicitations to have the direction of the party.— While attending at Lancaster to the fabrication of the arms with which he chose that his men should be provided, he had the benefit of daily communication with Mr. Andrew Ellicott, whose experience in astronomical observation and practice of it in the woods, enabled him to apprise Captain Lewis of the wants and difficulties he would encounter and of the substitutes and resources offered by a woodland and uninhabited country.”¹

There is perhaps no other incident of Major Ellicott's life which so appeals to the imagination as this, where the veteran explorer and engineer brings forth, for the eager young man whose hope of conquering a wilderness is so strong within him, all the lore of the land primeval, all the knowledge fought for and gained in the woods of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Western New York and on the rivers and bayous of the southern states. It was the counsel of a ripe experience that Major Ellicott gave. Danger had been his own daily comrade throughout long years, privation and hardship he had met at the very outset of his career, and he had long ago learned how to make friends with them. How much or how little of Captain Lewis' success may be traced to his wise counsel we cannot know, but one would like to have been a listener at the conferences of the two men, to have heard with Captain Lewis the secret of baffling and subduing the

¹ Memoir of Captain Meriwether Lewis by Thomas Jefferson, in the History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Elliott Coues, vol. i, p. xx.

adversities of nature, and the way to travel unharmed through a wilderness that sought to devour you.¹

Another visitor of distinction was Baron Humboldt — to whom Major Ellicott gave the following note of introduction to Aaron Burr, then Vice-president:

“DEAR SIR

“LANCASTER, June 11th, 1804.

I beg leave to introduce to your acquaintance and civilities the bearer, the Baron De Humboldt: — He is now on his return to Europe from an interesting tour thro south America.— You will find him a gentleman of information, science, and real worth.— Your attention to him will confer a particular favour on your

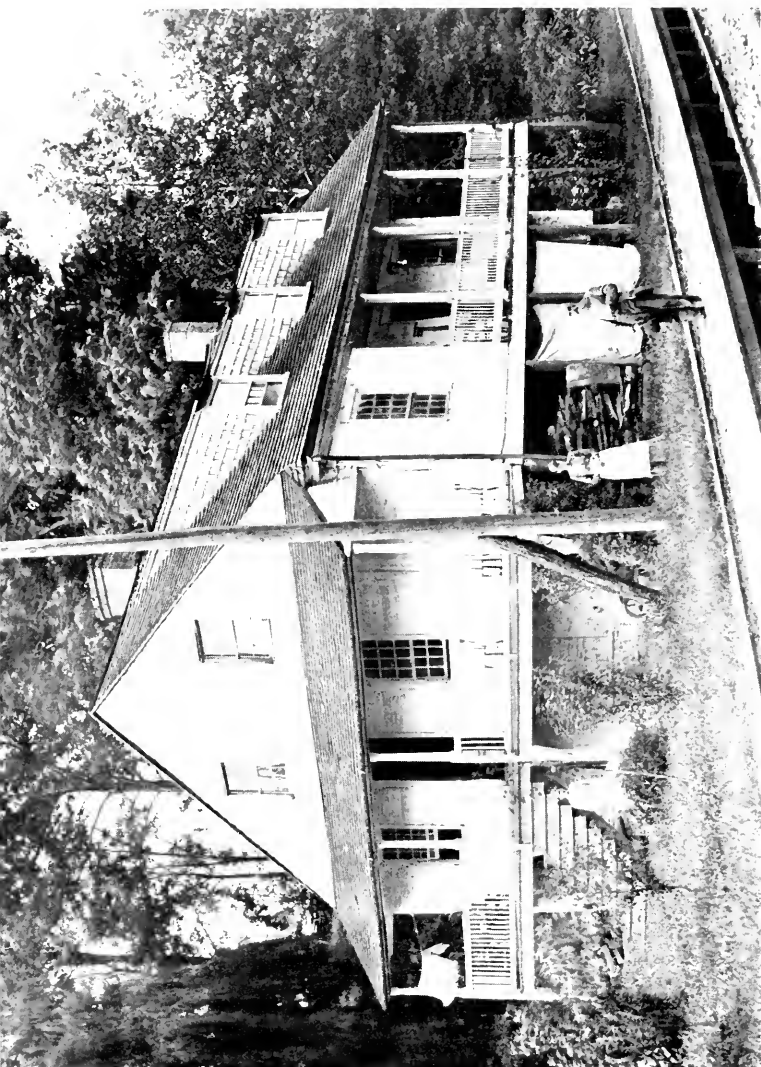
real friend, and

Hb^l Serv^t

AND^w ELLICOTT.”

In 1808 Major Ellicott had the honor to be elected a member of the National Institute of France, and until 1808 the pleasant life at Lancaster and the uneventful performance of the duties of the Land Office went on undisturbed. But in this year the government of Pennsylvania underwent a political change unpleasant in its consequences to Major Ellicott. He was removed from the Land Office by Simon Snyder, the newly elected governor, who succeeded Governor McKean. It is certain that Major Ellicott's political views were directly opposed to the party now in control of the State. It is also

¹ The expedition of Captain Lewis is mentioned many times in letters from President Jefferson to Major Ellicott. “Captain Lewis,” says a letter of Oct. 25, 1805, “has furnished us a most accurate map of the Missouri for 1600 miles and has added 164 or 8 new animals to the American list.”



"FOUNTAINVALE" AT ELLICOTTS MILLS
As it was in 1890.

certain that the party which had elected Snyder admired Wilkinson, and as we have seen, Major Ellicott had turned important evidence as to Wilkinson's schemes in the southern territory over to the State Department as soon as it came into his possession. His unpopularity with Wilkinson's adherents was an inevitable if unjust consequence of his faithfulness.

He continued to reside at Lancaster after his enforced resignation from the Land Office, but he keenly felt the injustice of the treatment accorded him and expressed his opinion of such perversion of the powers given to public officials in some vigorous and plainly worded attacks upon Snyder and his followers, which he published in a Lancaster paper over the signature "Citizen." He was both hurt and angry, and with good reason. He wrote to Joseph Ellicott in 1810 —

"If I had money, I should go to the Mills and put them in order, and if they were once agoing, the Presidency of the United States would not tempt me to leave them. But to this place, from my fine garden, and young thriving fine fruit trees, and grape vines, all the work of my own hands, I feel more attached than to any other place.— Grafting and inoculation I think I have brought to the highest degree of perfection.— This year I had a peach tree loaded with peaches only three years old from the stone, and grafted, and another but two years from the stone and inoculated. They were certainly the finest peaches produced in this place this season."

In the same letter he says —

“Nancy¹ reads, and translates french with great ease—several of her translations have appeared in print. I have taken much more pains with John, but he has not the same turn for learning a language.”

A little pride in his own acquaintance with the French language is shown more than once in his letters and journals. He read and wrote it with ease, and often his quotations from French literature show more than a slight degree of familiarity with it. He wrote to Timothy Pickering in 1811 —²

“DEAR SIR/

LANCASTER, March 12th 1811,

Till this moment I did not recollect my promise to send you the extract from Helvetius — it is as follows, ‘Il sait combien il est utile de tout penser & de tout dire, & que les erreurs cessent d’être dangereuses, lorsqu’il est permis de les contredire:’ Which I translate thus:— ‘It is known how useful it is to think and speak freely; and errors themselves cease to be dangerous, when it is permitted to contradict them.’ Mr. Jefferson says in his inaugural address —

‘Let them stand undisturbed, as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated, when reason is left free to combat it.’ — The ideas are the very same.

That part of Mr. Jefferson’s Notes on Virginia, where he speaks of the bad policy of encouraging the introduc-

¹ Ann Ellicott, afterwards Mrs. David B. Douglas. It is remembered of her that in her old age she still read French with ease and pleasure.

² Manuscript in Massachusetts Historical Society, Pickering Papers, 29, 436.

tion of foreigners, appears to be borrowed from Montesquieu's rise and fall of the Roman empire.

Wishing you a safe and happy return to your family
I am with

great esteem, and respect

Your sincere friend and hb^l. serv^t

AND^w. ELLICOTT."

The persecution of the politicians did not entirely cease with his removal from office. Of the manner in which they further sought to annoy him, he writes —

“The legislature of Pennsylvania in the month of January 1811 under the administration of Simon Snyder deprived me of the use of a reflecting telescope belonging to the commonwealth— The telescope was placed in my hands by a former legislature during the enlightened and patriotic administration of Mr. McKean, . . . but having been long neglected was unfit for use;— I therefore had it sent to London and repaired. On its being returned it was set up and made use of both for making astronomical observations and to gratify the curiosity of such members of the legislature as had a desire to view the stars and planets. But when Mr. Snyder became governor the scene was changed, science and literature became obnoxious to men whose uncultivated minds could not comprehend their use to society. So thought and so acted the goths and vandals when they first invaded Italy.— . . .

“The telescope of the commonwealth is now useless and being in the hands of ignorant incompetent persons who neither know its use nor how to manage it when set up, will if science should ever again be revived in Pennsyl-

vania, have once more to be sent to Europe to be repaired. Fortunately having an accromatic telescope of my own my observations have not been entirely suspended."

He says elsewhere, "Did not the Journals of our legislature attest this fact, it would not be believed by posterity."

He wrote fully and freely to his brother Joseph of his annoyance and troubles, but in April, 1811, he has something pleasanter to tell—the prospect of an important survey for the State of Georgia.

“DEAR BROTHER

On sunday last I received an appointment from the state of Georgia, to determine the boundary between that state, and N. Carolina:— It will be a tolerable job, tho not immediately productive. . . . A considerable portion of last winter, I was compelled to spend in the City of Washington on Wilkinson's business, for which I received two dollars p^r diem, when the best economist could not in that place exist upon less than three: I therefore consider myself robbed of one dollar p^r diem. M^r and M^{rs} Madison treated me with the greatest respect, and attention, and consulted me confidentially on some very important points. I am convinced M^r Madison, would oblige me with pleasure, and is only deterred from the fear of offending the present ruling power in this state, whose animosity appears to know no bounds. The following facts speak a language not to be misunderstood. — During my absence last winter, the legislature by a formal resolution deprived me of the use of the state Telescope, and thereby put a stop to a course of obser-

vations which I was carrying on in conjunction with the National Institute of France.— Immediately after the passage of the resolution, my friends in Philadelphia proposed to erect an observatory in the State-House yard, as an appendage to the Philosophical Society, and the University, and to be placed under my direction and management. This was no sooner discovered at this place, than a resolution was brought forward in the lower house, to dispose of that property; and was only stopped by abandoning the plan. . . . Judge Cooper . . . who was certainly one of the firmest, and most impartial judges in the commonwealth, has been removed from his office: He is certainly the first literary, and scientific character in the State; but his talents, and firmness at this time, render him very obnoxious. . . . A resolution has already been laid upon the table for the removal of Judge Wilson. . . . The citizens of this State are certainly labouring under some strange infatuation: it was only the week before last, that Jonathan Roberts one of our Senators declared in his place ‘that this commonwealth possessed too much talents, that their growth was too exuberant, and ought for the security of the citizens to be clipped.’ Tho this observation might be applied to the talents of Judge Cooper it certainly has no bearing upon me. . . .

Believe me to be your affectionate

Brother”

Major Ellicott took his son Joseph with him on the Georgia survey. They embarked at Philadelphia, July 6, 1811, on the Georgia Packet, sailing for Charleston, N. C. “On the evening of the 5th my two youngest

daughters Nancy and Rachel arrived from Lancaster to see us set sail," so runs the first entry in his diary of this survey.

This diary, in its present form, appears to have been written up from notes, after his return home, and his close observation of the physical features of the country, the methods of cultivating the land, the style of houses, the manners and customs of the people, as well as the way in which he caught and imprisoned in his written pages the spirit of the times, the evanescent ways of thought of the people among whom he travelled, make it a matter of regret that so much of the diary must of necessity be omitted here.

The trip down was slow, and after their arrival in Georgia the surveying party had to make a difficult journey of a hundred miles on foot, because the Governor of Georgia¹ failed to provide horses for them. It was late October before they neared the place of beginning. October 25th the diary notes that the party after toilsomely traversing the wooded mountain ridges, arrived at Mr Lynch's, and adds that the

“Captain Lynch just mentioned was the author of the Lynch laws so well-known and so frequently carried into effect some years ago in the southern states in violation of every principle of justice and jurisprudence. Mr. Lynch resided in Pittsylvania in the state of Virginia when he commenced legislator and carried his system into effect:— the detail I had from himself and is nearly as follows. —

¹ D. W. Mitchell.

The Lynch-men associated for the purpose of punishing crimes in a summary way without the tedious and technical forms of our courts of justice. Upon complaint being made to any member of the association of a crime being committed within the vicinity of their jurisdiction the person complained of was immediately pursued and taken if possible. If apprehended he was carried before some members of the association and examined:— if his answers were not satisfactory he was whipped till they were so. Those extorted answers generally involved others in the supposed crime who in their turn were punished in like manner.— These punishments were sometimes severe and not unfrequently inflicted upon the innocent thro spite or in consequence of answers extorted under the smarting of the whip. . . .

Mr. Lynch informed me that he had never in any case given a vote for the punishment of death some however he acknowledged had been actually hanged tho not in the common way a horse in part became the executioner: the manner was this.— The person who it was supposed ought to suffer death was placed on a horse with his hands tied behind him and a rope about his neck which was fastened to the limb of a tree over his head. In this situation the person was left and when the horse in pursuit of food or any other cause moved from his position the unfortunate person was left suspended by the neck,— this was called aiding the civil authority.— It seems almost incredible that such proceedings should be had in a civilized country governed by known laws it may nevertheless be relied on. I should not have asserted it as a fact had it not been related to me by Mr. Lynch

himself, and his neighbour Mr. Lay one of the original association together with several other Lynch-men as they are called. This self created judicial tribunal was first organised in the state of Virginia about the year 1776 from whence it extended southward as before observed.

Mr. Lynch has the appearance of an antient athlet and had he lived in the times of the Olympic games would probable have figured 'on the *bloody arena*':— he possesses a strong but uncultivated mind is hospitable and generous to an extreme to which may be added a great stickler for equality and the rights of man as established by law! so contradictory are the ideas and conduct of the only creatures supposed to be endowed with reason and judgment in the universe."

Another anecdote deals with gentler matters and is prefaced with the remark that:

"Literary and scientific information is yet in its infancy . . . Few books are to be met with in the country houses and for the greater part of those they are indebted to the Rev^d. Mr. Wemms who has for a number of years past been in the practice of frequenting the courts and other publick places with a cartload of well chosen books to dispose of reserving a very moderate profit to himself. The excentricities of this man are much more than counterbalanced by the aid he has rendered to letters in that part of the United States. He is a musician as well as a preacher and commonly carries a violin to divert himself with in his bookselling excursions. I was informed that in passing thro a swamp

in that country his cart got mired in the mud from which after endeavouring in vain for some time to extricate it he uncased his violin seated himself on the seat of his cart and amused himself with playing hail Columbia, yankey doodle and other patriotick tunes till some persons travelling the same road fell in with him and aided him to lift his cart out of the mud.”

After leaving Mr. Lynch's, the Journal proceeds:

“October 27th was spent in examining the most prominent ridges a few miles to the westward . . . and a traverse was directed to be carried on to the cane creek mountain. . . .

On the evening of the 3^d of November the party returned from the cane creek mountain after having completed the traverse, but the general opinion was that we should have to carry our apparatus part of the way by hand as it would be impracticable to take our waggon to the place. The attempt however was made and by great labour in cutting, digging and making a road we arrived at the end of the traverse on the 8th at the point designated as our second position. . . . While at this position our observations were much impeded by clouds forming about the tops of the mountains and ridges but the greatest inconvenience we experienced arose from the smoke occasioned by the annual custom of the indians in burning the woods. Those fires scattered over a vast extent of country made a beautiful and brilliant appearance at night; particularly when ascending the sides of the mountains. Not infrequently the intervalls between the ridges were nearly filled with a dense fog in the night

which extended horizontally like water almost to the summits of the mountains which then had the appearance of islands. Those fogs generally began to ascend after sun rise and for two or three hours so completely enveloped the mountains as to render them invisible.

In consequence of the smoke already mentioned our business was so much interrupted that we were not prepared to leave the second position till the 4th. of December when we set out for our third position. . . . The weather in the mountains had now become cold and the ground on which we slept was frozen hard. Every person belonging to the party was put to hard labour such as opening and digging the road and making bridges: — sometimes all hands were required at the waggon to prevent its overturning on the sides of the mountains at others to aid the horses in ascending the hills. We brakefasted constantly before day and were at work by the time it was sufficiently light and never suspended our labour till compelled by the approach of night. . . . Our fare was as bad as our labour was severe. . . . We reached our third position on the 11th. of December. . . .

On the morning of the 16th at 3 OClock we were awakened by an earthquake which was followed by two others at 8 OClock A. M. the latter one was so strong that my ink stand would have been overturned had I not taken hold of it. After that time shocks were felt almost daily in some parts of the southern country particularly in the vicinity of the mountains for more than two months which created considerable alarm in some places, together with a spirit of prophecy, and a few cases of reaching and vomitting similar to sea-sickness. . . .

On the 25th. of December at sun rise after walking over several ridges . . . we began clearing away the timber for the purpose of extending the prime-vertical west but the labour was so much more than we expected that we did not reach the river that day tho we laboured till nearly dark, after which we had to travel along several craggy ridges and ascend the Chatoga mountain to our camp where we arrived about 9 OClock in the evening without having taken any other nourishment than pure water after 4 OClock in the morning. This was the severest days labour I ever experienced having for want of a sufficient number of hands to carry an axe in one hand and the telescope of the transit instrument in the other. The ridges being covered with dwarf locust, briars, and thorn bushes not only tore our clothes into tatters but our limbs and bodies were lacerated — the blood trickled off the ends of all my fingers. Nothing but well dressed buck-skin is a sufficient guarantee for the body and its members in those mountains.”

It was May, 1812, before the work which had commenced nearly a year before was completed, and Major Ellicott free to take passage to New York in the ship “America,” sailing from Savannah.

During two winter months he and his assistants had slept on the frozen ground. Their fare had been pork and cornmeal, their discomforts had been endless. At the end, when the survey was finished and the true boundary established beyond question, Major Ellicott was again forced to travel on foot, and this time nearly two hundred miles, to present his report and accounts to the Governor,

at Milledgeville, the seat of government. The survey showed that Georgia had claimed more than was really within her State limits, and the true boundary between Georgia and North Carolina ran eighteen miles further south than Georgia had supposed. The Governor's curious method of expressing his disappointment at the result of the survey was one with which Major Ellicott was, unfortunately, only too familiar. The payment of the sum agreed upon beforehand for his services was withheld, and instead of receiving "three thousand dollars for the year's work, beside all necessary expenses," which he had been cheerfully promised, the Governor in the end unwillingly advanced a small sum, barely sufficient for his personal expenses. The final adjustment of the claim was left to the Legislature of Georgia, which in November, 1812, "Resolved that Andrew Ellicott had received full and ample compensation for his services," and the claim remained unpaid.

CHAPTER X

WEST POINT AND THE LAST SURVEYS

1812-1820

A QUARTER of century had passed since Major Ellicott wrote of the appointments he had already received that they had been given him "without the help or favour of anyone." It was a statement that held good throughout his whole career. There is no single instance of his ever having sought employment; instead of this, he was sought out again and again, and urged to undertake work that no one less gifted as an astronomer and engineer could accomplish satisfactorily. That he was never properly compensated for what he did was in no way due to lack of appreciation of the merit of his work. It was rather the result of the financial policy of the whole country at that period. He fully realized that the non-payment of just claims by the State or National Government extended far beyond his own affairs, and he himself wrote regarding the situation that in this country, "the economy of public money is considered as the standard of merit."

Financially he might, and did, suffer, but few men in the country could claim more of honor and reputation than came to him absolutely unsought. A recognized leader of science during the last thirty years of his life, he was frequently consulted on public affairs by the chief

men of the nation. Thomas Jefferson wrote to him in 1803 asking him to recommend any persons whom he considered qualified to be the leaders of such expeditions as the proposed scientific explorations in the west, one of which was headed so successfully by Captain Meriwether Lewis. In 1807, when the Coast Survey was established, plans for the work were submitted to Major Ellicott,¹ and the Secretary of the Treasury wrote him that "The President of the United States being authorized by an Act of last Session to cause the whole of the Coast of the said States, together with the adjacent Shoals & Soundings, to be surveyed, it is his intention that the work should be executed with as much correctness as can be obtained within a reasonable time: and he has directed me to apply to you, requesting that you would have the goodness to suggest the outlines of such a plan as may, in your opinion, unite correctness and practicability." Prior to the purchase of Florida by the United States, Albert Gallatin advised with him about the acquisition of this territory, writing him in detail on the subject, and these are but a few of the instances which show the respect entertained for his opinion, his wide experience making him eminently capable of giving valuable advice on all matters in any way connected with his especial field of work.

A year of rest followed the months of labor spent in settling what Major Ellicott calls, in a letter to Timothy Pickering, "the long controversy between Georgia and N. Carolina relative to their boundaries." The rest, it

¹ McMaster's "History of the People of the United States," vol. iii, p. 468.

is more than probable, was necessary, for this difficult and ill-rewarded survey seems to have held a more than usual amount of hardship and exposure. Until July, 1813, there is no mention of any further employment, but in that month another post eminently suited to his tastes and abilities was offered for his acceptance in the following letter from James Monroe, President Madison's Secretary of War:

“The Secretary of War asks Mr. Ellicot to inform him if the appointment of Professor of Mathematics in the Military School at West Point in the State of New York with the pay & emoluments of a Major of Infantry in the Army, equal to One thousand Dollars per annum, with additional allowance for quarters, fuel, & servants, will be acceptable to him?

The Secretary begs Mr. Ellicott to accept the assurances of his great respect & consideration. —

WAR OFFICE,

July 28th 1813.”

This appointment brought the promise of a regular salary, congenial duties, and a position authoritative enough to be desirable, “the Professor of Mathematics ranking as the head or president of the institution.” Major Ellicott seems to have accepted it without hesitation, and to have made immediate preparations to leave Lancaster for West Point. His commission sets forth that the President, “reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism and abilities of Andrew Ellicott” has appointed him “with the advice and consent of the

Senate”¹ to be Professor of Mathematics at the Military Academy “to be obeyed and respected accordingly.”

Of this appointment Major Ellicott wrote to his brother Joseph:

“DEAR BROTHER

“LANCASTER October 17th, 1813.

Your favour by M^{rs}. Ellicott enclosing 200 dollars has been duly received. On her return home, she found me just recovering from a severe illness, which had nearly sent me to the world of spirits. . . .

About two weeks ago I received the appointment of Professor of Mathematics in the military academy of the U. S. at West-point, and am now preparing to remove to that place:— this appointment was unexpected, and unsolicited either by myself or any of my friends:— the emoluments it is true are small, but I believe sufficient to support myself and small family; in point of respectability it is inferior to none in the government, and in Europe the first scientific characters are attached to their military academies, and there, as well as in this country, the professor of mathematics is considered the principal, or president of the institution.

I confess I felt some gratification in receiving this appointment unsolicited. . . . My removal however, exclusive of the expense, will be attended with a considerable sacrifice. We shall have to dispose of almost the whole of our furniture at what it will bring; which in such cases is generally less than half price, and purchase again in New York at an advance. Had our coast not been blocked up by the British, we could have had

¹ Executive Journal of the Senate, vol. ii, p. 509.

The President of the United States

To all who shall see these presents, Greeting,

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism and abilities of Andrew Ellicott I have nominated and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, do appoint him a professor of Mathematics at the military Academy to rank as such from the first day of September eighteen hundred and fourteen. He is therefore to be obeyed and respected accordingly.

Given under my hand at Washington, this fourth day of January eighteen hundred and fifteen and in the thirty ninth Year of the Independence of the United States,

By the President
Jas Monroe
Secretary of War

CERTIFICATE OF ANDREW ELLICOTT'S APPOINTMENT AS PROFESSOR OF
MATHEMATICS AT WEST POINT
Reproduced from the original.

our baggage and other articles taken from Philadelphia to West-point by water at a small expense; but by land it would cost as much as some of the articles are worth;—at all events, we shall have to employ two waggons to New York, which will require at the present prices at least 150 dollars. The reason of the advance on land carriage, is owing to our coasting trade being absolutely annihilated by the blockade, and almost the whole of our coasting vessels destroyed by the British, the seaboard is reduced to the necessity of employing waggons instead of vessels. . . . But a few days ago a number of waggons arrived at this place with cotton from Georgia! . . .

. . . Mrs. Ellicott informs me, that you have some thoughts of retiring from the employ of the Holland company next spring, if so, would it not be as convenient to reside with us at West-point, as at any other place in the U. S.? We shall endeavour to make the place as agreeable as possible. I am, with due regard and esteem
your affectionate brother

AND^W. ELLICOTT.”

By the middle of November the journey from Lancaster to West Point had been accomplished. The necessary sacrifices had been cheerfully made, and only the advantages of the change were considered, if the letters written on the subject are to be taken as an index to the way in which the family regarded the new place of residence.

Mrs. Ellicott wrote to Joseph Ellicott on their arrival and almost before they were settled in their new quarters:

“MY BEST OF BROTHERS, “WEST POINT, Nov. 17, 1813.

To apologize for not writing sooner would take up too much time as it is rather late. Mr. E. is gone to bed in health but rather fateagued, and indeed we have had somewhat a troublesome time but as we are safe in the west point fort, we must forget troubles and be thankful as we believe it is for our future benefit, it seems a duty in me, to give our best of friends a little information of our proceedings, it cannot be interesting to any one except those who has proved to be interested in our welfare. We sold our furniture which came to about one hundred and ten pound, (trifling things sold well, but valuable things went off at less than half price,) which with the two hundred dollars which you sent Andrew, and fifty which I had saved of mine paid our rents and other debts. We made an attempt to sell a number of books, but found no purchasers if they hapned to be bid up to half their value, and as we found it nessary to bring them on with a number of boxes of instruments, which took more than one waggon, we filled the second with our beds, cloathing, desk, two card tables, stone table, one looking glass, my rocking chair, wheel and reel, our moving altogether cost us more than three hundred dollars, we gave the waggoners about fifty dollars at starting, and Mr. Griffith settled the rest, and not only that but purchased all our kitchen furniture with some other nessaries, before we arrived at New York. He laid in a little store for our beginning which hapned very well as we cannot purchase scarcely any thing at present at this place, but it is expected to be

much better next summer. We arrived here last Saturday, but Mr. Ellicott has not yet had an answer from Mr. Armstrong how, or when, he is to receive his pay, but he expects to have information soon.

We found a tolerable good, rough house prepared for us, and I believe we shall be very comfortable, when we have it in our power to lay in a good winter store. I find it is customary for the officers to receive pay for their rations, and provide in what way they choose for themselves. Two servants is allowed, but we shall do with one, and receive allowance for the other, we intend to live in a very frugal way, and I am in hopes, the savings of the first year will clear us with Mr. Griffith.

I have not seen any butter since our arrival, but have a prospect of some next week. There is four families at this place, the french teacher has a family, the appointed Doctor has a family, a widdow Tomson has two or three very fine daughters, she boards about thirty of the cadets, we have here about ninety soldiers stationed and about Ninety kadets, the latter has vacation next month untill March, not more than twelve will spend the winter here. It really is the most romantic place I ever beheld, we have not yet been out of the house it has been so very cold, the snow is two inches deep. The thermometer stood for three days below freezing point. Nancy is with us, but returns in three or four weeks to New York. I most sincerely wish you Letty and John could spend some time with us next summer, you would find soldiers fare and a hearty welcome from your

affectionate Sister

SARAH ELLICOTT."

This letter of Mrs. Ellicott's gives a picture, accurate if slight, of West Point in 1813. The Academy, founded in 1802, was, at the time when Major Ellicott was appointed to be its professor of mathematics, undergoing a process of reconstruction, and the choice of Andrew Ellicott for its senior professor showed a wise realization on the part of those in authority as to what would best afford it the desired prestige, lost to it during the last few years, by the opposition shown toward its progress by William Eustis,¹ the Secretary of War.

The duties at the Academy were of a nature such as Major Ellicott could thoroughly enjoy; the salary though small was adequate, for the family was smaller than it had been for some years. Three of his daughters, Jane,² Mary³ and Sarah⁴ had been married before they left Lancaster, Letitia⁵ and Ann⁶ were married while at West Point, — of his sons, Andrew⁷ the eldest was married and living in Western New York, Joseph⁸ and John⁹ (also away from home) were as yet unmarried as was Rachel,¹⁰ the youngest daughter. Andrew and John both saw service in the War of 1812. They were employed in the Land Office at Batavia under their Uncle Joseph, and when Fort Erie (opposite Buffalo) was besieged by

¹ William Eustis was Secretary of War under James Madison from 1809 until 1812, when he resigned owing to the public dissatisfaction with his administration of the affairs of the War Department.

² Married 1802, T. R. Kennedy.

³ Married 1801, N. G. Griffiths.

⁴ Married 1805, Henry Baldwin.

⁵ Married 1819, John Bliss.

⁶ Married 1815, D. B. Douglas.

⁷ Married 1801, Sarah Williams.

⁸ Married 1823, Eliza Sherman.

⁹ Married 1822, Helen Griffiths.

¹⁰ Married T. H. Woodruff.

the British, the two Ellicotts, with the other clerks from the Land Office volunteered to aid in its defence. Andrew had been commissioned a Captain of Artillery in 1811,¹ and saw other active service beside the defence of Fort Erie. He wrote to his uncle from the camp near the Niagara River:

" December 26th 1813,
SIX MILES FROM THE RIVER.

" MR. JOSEPH ELLICOTT

DEAR UNCLE

I received your favor of the 24th last Evening enclosing forty Dollars which will be very convenient. You may feel yourselves quite safe in Batavia, the Indians have recrossed into Canada, and the British keep close quarters in fort Niagara. We have patrolling partys in Lewiston every day. Yesterday we brought in the dead (only two bodys) that remained unburied, one of them with his head cut entirely off and cut altopieces, the other scalped. The Grave where the British buried our people was opened, but the Spectacle that it presented is too horrid to relate. Seven bodies were found in the Grave among which were old constable Gillett and two sons. . . . I am just off the piquet Guard. I have not closed my eyes since the day before yesterday and the express is hurrying me you will therefore excuse blunders. Please to inform Sarah that I am well and shall return this week if the forces arrive that are expected.

Your Affectionate

Nephew AND^w A. ELLICOTT."

¹ Andrew A. Ellicott in 1811 was commissioned Captain of the 6th Artillery, Niagara County Militia.—Military Minutes of the Council of Appointment, published by the State of New York, vol. ii, p. 1224.

This eldest son of Major Ellicott's had much of his father's cleverness, much of his endurance and disregard of danger.

Life at West Point went on with the same regularity and ease that had characterized the early days at Lancaster. Although now too far from Philadelphia to attend the meetings of the Philosophical Society, Major Ellicott continued to write on scientific subjects, and to devote much time to astronomy. Living midway between Albany and New York, he had, in both places, friends of like interests with his own, and he enjoyed more or less intercourse with them and shared in their advantages for scientific research.

In 1815 he was elected a member of the "Society for the Promotion of Useful Arts" of Albany and was so notified by the Secretary of the Society, Dr. T. Romeyn Beck.¹

In the spring of 1817 he went to Montreal, having received an appointment from the Government as Astronomer to the commission then meeting at that place for the purpose of carrying into effect some of the articles of the Treaty of Ghent. This treaty of peace between the United States and Great Britain, signed at Ghent by the American and British Commissioners on the 24th of December, 1814, and ratified at London by the Prince

¹ Theodoric Romeyn Beck, M.D., LL.D., born in 1791, was graduated from Union College, Schenectady, at the age of sixteen. In 1815 he was appointed Lecturer on Medical Jurisprudence at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Fairfield, New York. He was surgeon of the Rennselaer Cavalry in the War of 1812. From 1817 to 1848 he was Principal of the Albany Academy. In 1823 he published the work on Medical Jurisprudence which has made his name familiar to the medical and legal profession both of Europe and the United States. He died in 1855.

should be paid as a prize to
the person who should make
the best improvement in Water
Philosophy or Navigation (Wa-
ter & Gravity & related) and
whom a long Chain of
Dr. Franklin's and Dr. Hutton's
various improvements in Na-
vigation — 3

Business continued at New
York & other parts —
11 Dec 85
I immediately set myself to work
in pursuit of a solution to spend
the Day with Dr. to Franklin — I
found him in his little room
among

Among his Papers — he united one
very pretty and immediately enter-
ed into conversation about the Na-
tion's County — his own makes
a singular appearance, being filled
with all Philosophical Instru-
ments, Pins, Boxes, Labels, and
tools — I went to look he sat
water on the line and not being
that long he his great eyes I de-
vised him to give me the place
the I offered him, he called
it that he was made it or sent
to wait upon himself and although
he began to bind himself when

Regent on December 28th of the same year, dealt with questions of boundary, as well as with peace and the slave trade, and it was for the definite settlement of one of the boundaries laid down by the treaty that Major Ellicott was appointed to attend the commission as Astronomer for the United States. He was directed to make such astronomical observations as would determine the forty-fifth parallel of latitude. Leave of absence from the Military Academy being granted him, he left West Point on the 18th of May, and one of the small, closely written diaries into which so much that was of interest could be crowded was begun on that day.

“ May 18th 1817 left West-point in the Paragon, Capt. Rhorebach at $\frac{1}{2}$ after 12 OClock in the morning, and arrived at Albany about 5 OClock P. M. . . .

19th. Sent our baggage and instruments in a private Waggon for Whitehall. . . .

20th. Left Albany for White-Hall between 5 and 6 OClock A. M. and arrived at the latter place about 8 OClock P. M. The road tolerably good except the last 12 miles which may be considered as bad. We passed many towns and villages on the road but the principal are Troy, Lansingburgh and Waterford. On the road between sandy-hill and White-hall we found a well the water of which was 40°. a degree of cold far beyond any thing I had before experienced in either spring or well water. . . .

21st. . . . From the ages and number of the persons recorded on the Tomb and head-stones in the burying ground of this place I should be led to believe it an unhealthy position, particularly among the children.

Our vessels of war used in lake Champlain are lying at this village dismantled among them is the *La Confiance*¹ taken by comodore McDonald [*sic*]. At 4 OClock P. M. set out in the steamboat for St. John's, passed Tyconderoga just after sundown and Crown-point at 10 OClock.

22^d. Stopped at Burlington about daylight and took in wood and a number of passengers:— passed Platsburgh about 8 OClock P. M. Rouse's point about noon, the Isle aux Noix at 2 OClock and arrived at St. John's between 3 and 4 OClock.

23^d. Got our Instruments and baggage sent on and proceeded to La Prairie in the afternoon where we arrived before sun-down. Crossed over to the city of Montreal.

24th. . . . The City of Montreal far exceeds any idea I had formed of it, in either population, wealth or situation. The population is supposed to amount to about 20000 persons, a considerable majority of whom are french and of the catholic faith. The catholics have three Chapels and three nuneries. The largest Chapple was built in 1725, and capable of containing 3000 persons. The Episcopalians have one church yet unfinished, and the Prysbyterianians one meeting house in the same situation. . . .

25th. Sunday. At Montreal.

26th. Left Montreal at 2 OClock P. M. in the stage and proceeded to the head of the island, thence by a ferry to another, and thence to the main land on the north side of the River, and from thence up the river to a deep wide part called Lake St. Francis, where we arrived just after midnight, and on the morning of the

¹ The British frigate *Confiance* surrendered to Commodore Macdonough at the battle of Lake Champlain in 1814.

27th. About 1 OClock A. M. went on board an open boat and proceeded to the head of the Lake where we arrived about sun-rise, and from thence to Calhoun's opposite to St. Regis:— the distance from Montreal to Calhoun's is estimated at between 80 and 90 miles on this rout, part by water and part by land. — this distance we passed over in 17 hours without sleeping. After taking some refreshments we lay down and slept soundly for some hours— In the afternoon joined the Commissions on St. Regis island.”

Of the actual work no record is contained in the diary; it seems to have occupied the space of a month, the next entry being

“ July 6th 1817. The object of my journey to this place being completed, on the 8th we crossed over to the north side of the river and . . . at 2 OClock P. M. went on board Cap^{tn} Baldwin's long or Durham boat and proceeded down Lake St. Francis but having no wind after 4 OClock P. M. we did not arrive at the lower end, or Coteau du lac till 1 OClock on the morning of the 10th. Slept or rather lay in a miserable tavern in dirty blankets, early in the morning walked down to the Custom-house examined the Locks and military works at the rapids of the Coteau du lac. Having concluded contrary to the custom of travellers to pass the rapids of the Ceders in the boat we went on board and shortly came in sight of them, if I had ever seen them before I should have went round them by land, but it was now too late. in a few minutes we were enveloped by breakers, and spray, before us for nearly a mile it looked like decending the

side of a hill down which the waters were precipitated with inconceivable fury,—this rapid was passed in a few minutes. A very short time brought us to the second, which was soon passed they are said to be the most dangerous. At the bottom of this rapid we put ashore to view the locks and a canal cutting to the grand river. The work is wholly executed by soldiers, the officers acting as engineers. Great part of the work is cut thro stratified stone. . . .

Having satisfied our curiosity we passed thro the last rapid of the Ceders and entered Lake St. Louis, and proceeded to Chateaugay a small Village inhabited by french canadians who furnish pilots for the la Chine rapids and to Montreal; being late in the afternoon when we arrived at this village we remained in it till the next morning.

11th. Passed the la Chine rapids, which are said to be the most difficult on the river, and arrived at Montreal about $\frac{1}{2}$ after 9 OClock A. M.”

The diary ends abruptly, though the return to West Point must have been but a matter of four or five days longer at the most.

The duties at the Academy were growing more than in the first years of Major Ellicott's appointment. A greater number of cadets were admitted, and his labors were consequently increased. He taught his classes Hutton's Mathematics, a Compendium of Arithmetic, Logarithms, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Land-surveying and Conics. Analytical Trigonometry and Calculus were added later, and it became necessary that two young men should be added to the staff of instructors to aid him in his

work. These two assistants, Charles Davis and Claude Crozet, helped materially to lighten his burden. Under his direction a somewhat higher standard of work than the Academy had heretofore known was established, and the entrance examinations were made more difficult, so much so, in fact, as to exclude many candidates.

Major Sylvanus Thayer,¹ himself a graduate of the Academy, was in this year appointed to be its superintendent, and under his wise and able administration was begun that system of strict regularity and efficiency that has ever since been typical of West Point. Major Thayer and Major Ellicott were warm friends and entirely at one on all matters connected with the building up of the Military Academy, and the maintenance of that high standard for which they both labored unceasingly.

When in 1819 Major Ellicott was once more called upon to make further observations for determining the forty-fifth parallel of latitude, he left his post, although it was only for a short time, with reluctance. A letter from the Secretary of State to Major Thayer, requesting a leave of absence for Major Ellicott for the purpose of this survey, is dated

“ SIR

“ WASHINGTON, 27 May 1819.

In the absence of the President of the United States² and the Secretary of War³ and having been requested

¹ Major Sylvanus Thayer, was born at Braintree, Mass., in 1785. He was Superintendent of the Military Academy, of which he was a graduate, from 1817-1833. He was constructing engineer of the defences of Boston Harbor from 1833-1857. He died at Braintree in 1871.

² In the summer of 1819 President Monroe was making a tour through the New England and Northern States.

³ John C. Calhoun.

by the latter with the President's approbation, to perform any duty properly belonging to the Head of that Department, for which a special occasion might arise, I have to request your assent that Mr. Ellicott may have permission of absence from West Point, to assume the duties of astronomer on the part of the United States to the Commission under the fifth article of the Treaty of Ghent.

I am Sir respectfully your obedient and

very humble Servant

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS."

There is no journal of this survey, the only family papers concerning it being the following letters to Mrs. Ellicott:

"MY DEAR SALLY

"ALBANY, July 24th, 1819.

We arrived here the day before yesterday . . . but the instruments did not arrive in time to have them sent off to day, we shall therefore be detained here till Monday the 26th — if no accident should happen we will reach Burlington next Wednesday night.

I disliked leaving home extremely, . . . but having done it, I feel much better reconciled than I thought possible when I parted with you at our gate.

Since I came here, I have had much conversation with my old friend, and astronomical companion S. De Witt, surveyor gen^l of this State, who is a man of science, and a good practical astronomer: he informs me, that he spent several days with Mr. Hastler and the British astronomer on the boundary last summer; but could not entirely com-

prehend the nature of their operations, and (between ourselves), he assured me that as far as he could comprehend them, they appeared better calculated for expense than accuracy.

Give my compliments to Major Thayer, — you know my opinion of his worth. . . .

I am my dear Sally

your affectionate husband

AND^W. ELLICOTT.”

“BURLINGTON, STATE OF VERMONT. July 31st, 1819.

“MY DEAR SALLY

We arrived here on the 29th . . . (in the midst of a heavy fall of rain), and put up at the house where the British Astronomer¹ resides— Yesterday I sent Mr Tuttle down the Lake with our Instruments, and shall follow him in the next steamboat, which is expected to pass this place about one OClock tomorrow morning.

Mr. Hastler has taken away every instrument with which he was furnished by the government to determine the boundary, this he done contrary to the opinion of our Commissioner Mr. Van Ness: By this conduct of Mr. Hastler, we should have been without any instruments this season had I not fortunately brought on my own.

So far I have experienced no fatigue whatever, my young men cannot say as much, and it appears to me that they could preform the labourious duty of sleeping eighteen hours out of 24, if not interrupted.

As to our business I can say nothing at present, and candidly confess that I do not yet comprehend the method

¹ Dr. J. L. Tiark.

pursued by the British astronomer and Mr. Hastler, it is different from anything I have yet seen or heard of, not more than one observation in ten can possibly be applied to the boundary,— those that can are probably good, but their mode of calculation is labourious in the extreme. . . .

I am, my dear Sally,

Your Affectionate husband

AND^w ELLICOTT.”

Having directed the survey, and remained in the field as long as his actual presence was necessary to the accuracy of the work, Major Ellicott left it in the hands of his assistant, Mr. Tuttle, and returned to his duties at the Academy, to take up the fall and winter work, as well as the pursuits which were his pleasure.

There was throughout the succeeding winter and spring no hint, no intimation, that the useful and honored career was drawing to its close, nothing to warn his family that but a few months remained of the active, vigorous life. He went to his classes and his studies able and strong to meet the duties of each day. The summer of 1820 came and found all things tranquil and well with him. There was no illness to be borne, no abating of his vigor, no lessening of the interest which all his life long he had taken in everything, great or small, which in any way promoted knowledge, or advanced philosophy and science, or affected the welfare and progress of his country. On the 25th of August, 1820, he was stricken with apoplexy, while returning from a visit to his daughter, Mrs. Griffith, in New York, and in spite of all that the best medical

attendance could do to relieve or save him, he died three days later, at his home at West Point. The sad news is briefly told in a letter from his son-in-law, Mr. Griffith, to another son-in-law, Captain David B. Douglass, the husband of his daughter Ann:

“WEST POINT, August 28th, 1820.

“MY DEAR SIR,

I have a most painful duty to perform. Our dear good Father Ellicott, was taken on board the Steam Boat, (on his return from my house in New York) on Friday morning last with a stroke of appoplexy occasioned as we suppose by irregular Gout. A Medical Gentleman on board immediately did everything proper for his restoration, he was taken home from the dock apparently sensible but unable to speak. A dispatch was sent for M^{rs}. G. and myself who fortunately arrived at the moment the Steam boat was setting off on Saturday evening, we arrived at 11 OClock & found him in a situation to preclude all hope of recovery, nevertheless everything that skill & tenderness could devise was afforded without the wished for effect: he died this morning (Monday) 1/2 past 12 OClock & will be interred tomorrow afternoon. I am surrounded by affliction which added to my own is beyond expression.

I am D^r. Sir

Yours Affectionately

N. C. GRIFFITH.”

That his death was felt to be a loss to the country is evidenced by the wide regret for that loss expressed in the periodicals of the day. His talents, his honesty of pur-

pose and his worth as a citizen, no less than as a scientist of brilliance, were acknowledged and lamented.

The best commentary on the work to which his life was devoted is the fact that, in almost every instance, his surveys endure to-day, accepted and uncorrected. This is the more remarkable when one remembers his crude instruments, made and mended for the most part by himself, which made accuracy so difficult, and would have made it, with less painstaking methods than his, almost impossible.

Andrew Ellicott lived in what has been truly called the critical period of American history, and, entirely apart from the mathematical side of it, his work was more than once a part of that history. To personal comfort or personal ambitions he seemed to give no thought, all his interests, outside of his immediate family, centred on the furtherance of scientific knowledge, and the faithful performance of whatever duties were intrusted to him.

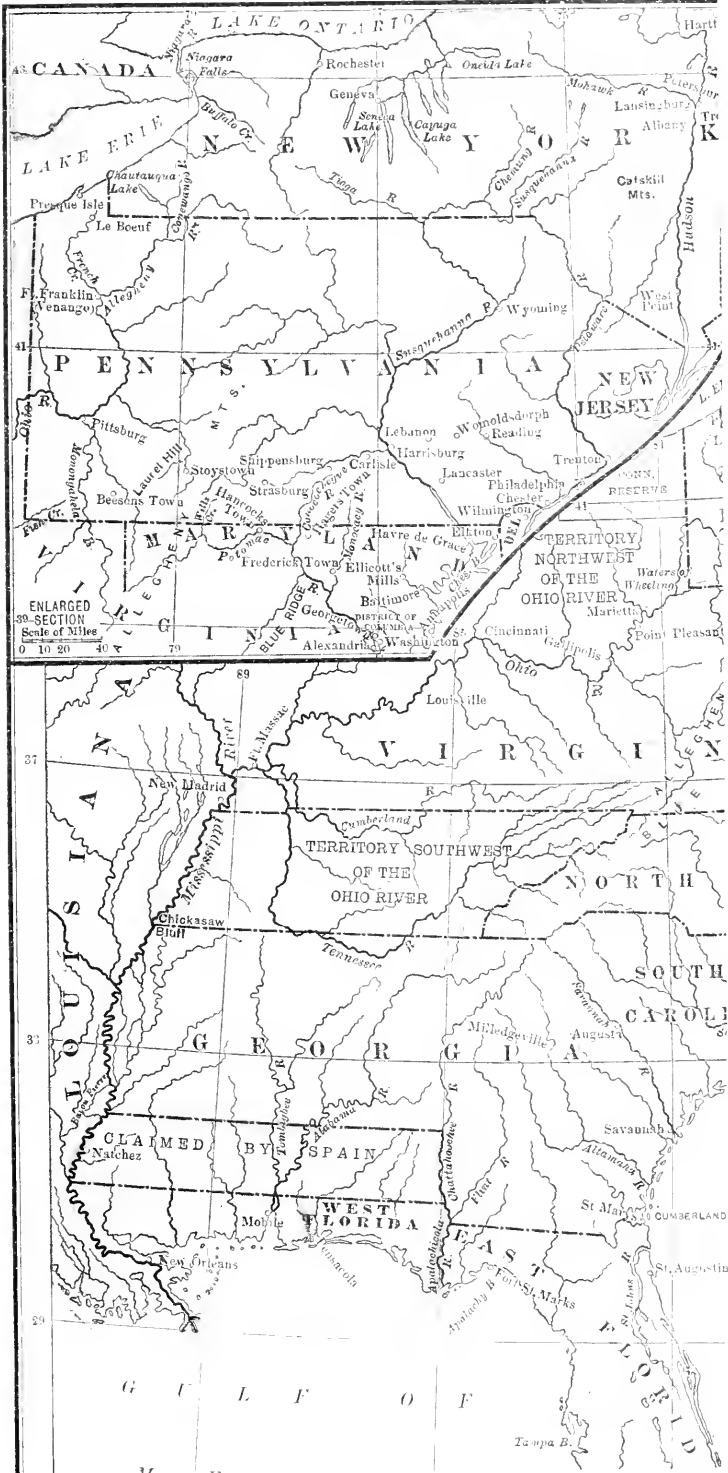
And when the last work was done, the last letter written, the last diary closed, it was clearly shown that he had held by the true and honest principles of his youth to the very close of his life. He did his work faithfully and well always, often he did it with a cleverness and a success very far above the average. He loved his children and his home, he loved his wife more than all. He was a loyal friend, and one generous of kindly deeds and appreciative words to those who made his circle. He was a good citizen and a patriot in the truest sense, and too often, as has been seen, for the services he rendered to his country he received no tangible return. He was a scientist and an astronomer of genius, and had he possessed the leisure and the means requisite for a life of devotion to science

there is no doubt that his name would have been written in the country's history in brilliant letters.

It is impossible to read the simple, earnest record of his life and not see that here was one of the men to whom the furtherance of the country's progress was in part intrusted. One of the men of whom she did well to be proud, for in the early days of America's growth, or now, amid the greater questions of her civic life, or in any conditions of national life that may confront her in the future, her need has been and will always be, that her sons shall have those sterling qualities, — love of country, love of home, love of truth, — which will enable them to meet and solve her problems, and her cry is always the same, a brief demand but a very comprehensive one —

“Give us *men!*”

It was in answer to this cry that Andrew Ellicott and the men of his generation stepped forward. Such problems as were set before them they worked out satisfactorily and well, and the clear and honest record of their lives holds this promise for the country's future, — that while her need of them endures, the men to meet that need will not fail throughout the land.



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