

# COL. SAMUEL J. ATLEE.

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Samuel John Atlee was a Colonel in the American Revolution, and one who did effective service in the emancipation of the colonies from British rule. His father married Jane Alcock, who was maid of honor to the Queen of England, and, the match being clandestine, they immediately sailed for America. They had three children. Samuel John Atlee, the subject of this sketch, was born in the year 1739 on the farm now known as the King Tommy Henderson farm, in the Pequea valley, Salisbury township, near the "Three Crowns Inn," on the Old Road, a short distance east of the White Horse tavern.

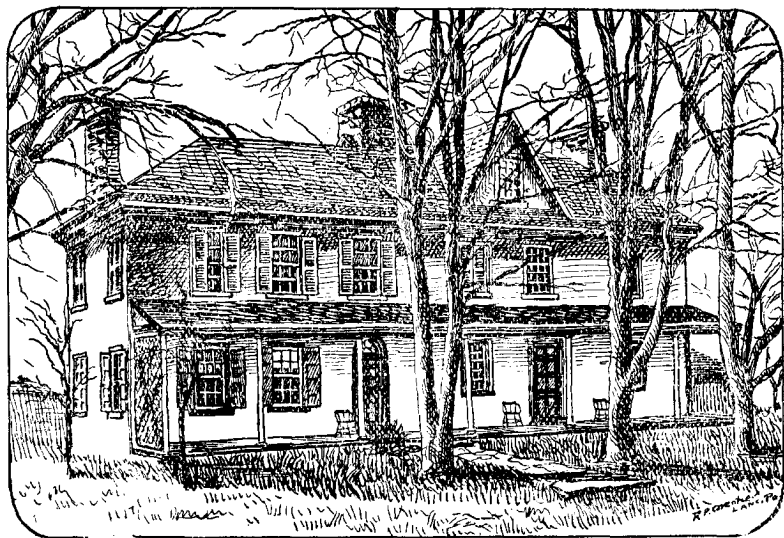
Being a youth of great ambition and daring, he at the early age of sixteen obtained the command of a company in the provincial service (war of 1755) in the regiment under Col. Burd, and was present at Braddock's defeat. During the continuance of that war it was his fate to be taken prisoner twice, once by the Indians and again by the French. He remained in the service eleven years. When yet in the service at the age of twenty-three years he married on April 19, 1762, Sallie Richardson, the beautiful daughter of Isaac Richardson, who lived at the Richardson homestead, one mile north of the "Three Crowns Inn" (now owned by the Christian Kurtz heirs). The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. Geo. Craig, who was then rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, Pequea.

After his marriage, and after the expiration of his military service, he read law, and was engaged in the pursuit of his profession until the breaking out of the Revolution. At the commence-

ment of hostilities with the mother country Captain Atlee, being one of the few in the county of Lancaster who had any knowledge of military tactics, undertook to drill his fellow-citizens in order to breast the impending storm. His unremitting attention was devoted to this object during the greater part of the year 1775, and in the beginning of 1776, by virtue of an act of the General Assembly of March 5, of the same year, he raised in the Pequea valley and Chester county the first regiment of State Infantry, of which he was appointed Colonel. Although his regiment was called out simply for the defence of the province, yet Colonel Atlee and his command voluntarily marched to New Jersey to co-operate with the American army in that quarter. He achieved imperishable honors with his regiment at the battle of Long Island, on which occasion he was taken prisoner, having only a Sergeant and sixteen men left, the rest having been previously killed or taken prisoners. He suffered eighteen months' imprisonment, part of the time on board a prison ship. During his imprisonment he lived for two weeks on chestnuts. The British sailors were in the habit of cutting up raw pork into small pieces and throwing them to the prisoners, calling "Pig! Pig!" The prisoners were so nearly starved that they killed their dogs and ate them and roasted their leather breeches for food.

Colonel Atlee was chosen a member of the Continental Congress in 1778, and held a seat in that body up to 1782. In appearance Col. Atlee was very handsome, with a fresh, ruddy complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, straight and portly, and very military in his carriage. He died in 1786, aged forty-seven years. His son, Isaac Richardson Atlee, was married to Mary Clemson, the sixth daughter of the second James Clemson, Esq., of Pequea valley, who lived a short distance southwest of

the "Three Crowns Inn." Mary Clemson was one of the seven daughters of James Clemson\*, and the sixth to elope with the man of her choice. The house in which she was born and raised is yet standing, and was built in the year 1735. Isaac Richardson Atlee migrated after his marriage to near Frederick, Md., where his descendants are still living.



RESIDENCE OF COL. SAMUEL J. ATLEE, PEQUEA.

[The following paper, although not read before the Society, has been deemed of sufficient importance by the Executive Committee to take its place in this connection.]

Samuel John Atlee was not a native of Pennsylvania. He was born in Trenton, New Jersey, in the year 1739.

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\* James Clemson's grandfather, Jacob Clemson, came from Sweden to America in 1636 and settled in New Jersey; then in Philadelphia, where he is buried in the Second Street Friends' Churchyard.

Colonel Atlee's father, William Atlee, of Fordhook House, England, the first of the name to reach America, left home in March, 1733, with Lord Howe, as his private secretary, when the latter came over as Governor of Barbadoes. He married Jane Alcock, daughter of an English clergyman, and cousin of William Pitt, the old Earl of Chatham. She was Maid of Honor to the Queen. The King and Queen wanted her married into the Royal family, but she eloped and followed Atlee to America. They were married at Bridgeton, in the Parish of St. Michael, Barbadoes, on June 1, 1734, according to the Canons and Constitution of the Church of England. Immediately after their marriage they went to Philadelphia and took a house on Second street. From there they removed to Market street, where their first child, William Augustus (grandfather of the late Dr. John Light Atlee) was born, July 1, 1735. The family then removed to Trenton, where three children were born, namely: Samuel John, Joseph Edwin and Amelia. Mr. Atlee died in Philadelphia, April 27, 1774, and was buried in the yard of St. Stephen's Episcopal church. His wife died at Lancaster, Pa., January 18, 1777.

Samuel John Atlee was married April 19, 1762, by the Rev. Thomas Barton (not by Rev. George Craig), to Sarah Richardson. They settled on a farm about twenty miles from Lancaster. They had nine children. Their eldest son, William Richardson, married Margaretta, daughter of Major Anthony Wayne. They had but one child, Mary Wayne Atlee, who married an Evans. Their issue was one child, William, whose name was changed by an act of the Legislature to Wayne, and he is now the Treasurer of the Society of the Cincinnati, of Pennsylvania, and

great-grandson of Samuel John Atlee and General Wayne (often called "Mad Antony.")

Samuel John Atlee was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress, November 20, 1778, and served continuously until October 28, 1782. In October, 1783, he was elected a Supreme Executive Counsellor for Lancaster county. He served in the General Assembly in 1782, 1785 and 1786. He was appointed February 29, 1784, by the Supreme Executive Council, one of the three Commissioners to treat with the Indians, going from Fort Stanwix (Rome, New York,) to Sunbury, and thence to Fort McIntosh (now Beaver, Pa.) His name appears as a witness to the signing of the treaty at the latter place, on January 21, 1785, between the Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, on the one part, and the Sachems and Warriors of the Wiandot, Delaware, Chippewa and Ottawa Nations, on the other. During this journey he contracted a severe cold, from which he never recovered, and while in attendance at the General Assembly in Philadelphia, ruptured a blood vessel in a paroxysm of coughing, and died November 25, 1786. His remains were interred in Christ churchyard, Philadelphia, and in June, 1883, a Memorial Tablet was erected in the church inscribed as follows:

**In Memory of**

**COL. SAMUEL JOHN ATLEE,**

Second Son of William Atlee, Gentleman,  
of Fordhook House, England, who  
served this country well in the try-  
ing times of the Revolution,

both as a

Soldier and in her Councils.

He died on the 25th day of November,  
1786, in the 48th year of his age, and  
his remains were interred in the  
yard of Christ Church. This  
Tablet was erected by his  
Kinsman and Descendants

"*Dos Magna Parentium Virtus.*"

The Independent Gazetteer, or the Chronicle of Freedom, published in Philadelphia, dated November 29, 1786, contains the following:

“On Saturday, the 25th inst., Departed this life, in the 48th year of his age, Colonel Samuel John Atlee, and yesterday his remains were interred in Christ churchyard. Divine service was performed by the Revs. Andrews and Blackwell. The corpse was preceded by the clergymen of the various denominations in this city, and borne to the grave by the following gentlemen: Gen. Humpton, Col. Proctor, Col. Williams, Col. Farmer, Col. Oswald, Col. Mentges, Col. Bayard, Major Tudor. Pall bearers, Alex. Lowrey, Esq., Adam Hubley, Esq., Geo. Ross, Esq., Joseph Work, Esq., members for Lancaster county; Samuel Evans, Esq., member for Chester county; Wm. Will, Esq., member for city of Philadelphia.”

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Other Author(s): Ehler, Amelia B.

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