

Just 160 Years Ago the Doors of the Jail In Historic Williamsburg, Va., Clanged Shut Behind One of "Most Hated Men in America"

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

IT IS a June morning in the year 1779. Citizens of Williamsburg, Va., out for a stroll along its elm-shaded sidewalks, glance curiously at a procession that is plodding up historic Duke of Gloucester street. In the center of the group of armed men ride two horsemen. They are clad in the uniform of British army officers but its scarlet brilliance is now dusty and travel-stained. They ride with bowed heads, leaning dejectedly over their saddle horns on which rest their hands, held closely together by bracelets of iron.

Who are these two captives at whom the passers-by in old Williamsburg are staring? That one in the lead, who lifts his head long enough to give back at them a coldly contemptuous glance is one of the most hated men in America. For he is Henry Hamilton, until a few months ago British governor-general of the Kentucky frontiersmen call him the "Hair Buyer General" because they believe he has been offering his Indian allies a higher price for scalps than for prisoners.

His companion is Capt. Guillaume La Mothe, a famous French-Canadian partisan leader, who is held responsible for some of the scalping raids against the Kentucky settlements. But his raiding days are over now, for when George Rogers Clark and his heroic band of Kentuckians besieged Fort Sackville in the old French town of Vincennes and forced Hamilton and his garrison to surrender, La Mothe, recently returned from one of his forays, was among those who were taken prisoners.

The story of George Rogers Clark's epic march across the "Drowned Lands" from Kaskaskia to Vincennes and his capture of that post is a familiar one to every American. But the school histories, always more concerned with the victor than with the vanquished, while paying a well-deserved tribute to Clark's prowess, have little to say about the subsequent fate of his adversary. This article proposes to tell the "aftermath of Vincennes" because it is a chapter in the history of Williamsburg, whose recent restoration to its former glories as the colonial capital of Virginia causes thousands of Americans to make patriotic pilgrimages there every year.

Hamilton's Story

That "aftermath" can best be told, perhaps, in the words of the man who experienced it—Hamilton himself. In July, 1781, the ex-governor of Detroit sat himself down in his lodgings in Jermyn street, London, and wrote a long report to his superior officer, Gen. Sir Frederick Haldimand, governor-general of Canada. That report, which is still preserved in England, tells in detail how he was besieged by Clark and his Kentuckians at Vincennes, how he surrendered, how he and his men were sent as prisoners of war first to the "Walls of the Ohio" (Louisville, Ky.) and then to Virginia. He then continues:

"On the 29th. (May, 1779) A Rebel Captain with a Guard marched on from Beaver dam to Richmond, from thence to Chesterfield, where we remain'd till the 15th. June, on which day an Officer having a written order under the hand of the Governor of the Province Thomas Jefferson for taking me in Irons to Williamsburg. I was accordingly handcuff'd, put upon a horse, and my servant not being suffered to go with me, my Valise was fasten'd behind me—Capt Lamothe was order'd to accompany me, being in like manner handcuff'd—The fatigues of the march having heated my blood, to a violent degree I had several large boils on my legs, my handcuffs were too tight but were eased at a Smiths shop on the road thus sometimes riding and sometimes walking we arrived the 2d evening at Williamsburg having come 80 Miles—We were conducted to the Palace where we remain'd about half an hour in the Street at the Governors door, in wet cloaths, weary, hungry, and thirst, but had not even a cup of water offered to us—During this time a considerable Mob gather'd about us, which accompanied us to jail—On our arrival there we were put into a cell, not ten feet square where we found five criminals and Mr. Dejean who was also handcuff'd.

"This poor man could not refrain from tears on seeing our equipment. We had the floor for a bed, the 5 felons were as happy as rum could make them and so



Old jail at Williamsburg, Va., in which Gen. Henry Hamilton was held prisoner for more than a year. (Picture taken before the restoration.)

we were left to our repose for that night.

"The next day we three were taken out about 11 o'clock, and before a number of people our handcuffs taken off and fetters put on in exchange—I was honored with the largest which weighed eighteen pounds eight ounces—As I thought opportunities might not offer frequently, and seeing some of the delegates present, I took occasion while my irons were riveting to speak a few words.

"I told them that the ignominious manner in which we were treated without any proof of criminality, or any hearing, without even a crime being laid to our charge, was a reproach to those only who could act in that manner by prisoners of War, under the sanction of a Capitulation—That after a proceeding so unjust I was prepared for any extremity, but desired the persons present to observe that punishment was exercised on us before any enquiry had taken place or any person who might have accused us being confronted with us—some by their gestures ap-



GEN. HENRY HAMILTON

peared to feel for us, but no one utter'd a word, and when our fetters were properly fixed we were remanded to our Dungeon from which the five felons were removed—The light we received was from a grate, which faced the Court of 20 feet square with walls 30 feet high—The prison having been built 60 Years it may be conceived we were subject to one very offensive convenience, in the heat of summer almost suffocating, our door was only open'd to give us water, we were not allowed any candle, and from the first to the last of our confinement we never could find that the Governor or Council had order'd provision of any kind to be made for us except Water with which we were really very well supplied.

"Having been by order of the Governor (with the advice of his Council) prohibited the use of pen Ink and paper, or the converse of any one but our Jailor we had no employment but in our reflections—

"August 31st.—Major Hay with other Prisoners from Chesterfield arrived at Williamsburg, the Soldiers were confined in the debtors room, the officers 5 in Number were put into the Dungeon with us which made the heat intolerable.

"At eleven at night we were obliged to alarm the prisoners in the next cell who pass'd the word to the Guard for the Jailor, our Surgeon being on the point of suffocating an asthma to which he was Subject having seized him at this time with that violence that he lost his pulse for ten minutes, we had tried by wafting a Blanket to draw some air thro' the grate but this was insufficient and if he had not had presence enough of mind to open a vein, he would probably have expired, for the state of the air was such that a Candle with which we had lately been indulged, would barely live if held at the top of the Cell.

"The door of our Cell continuing shut for several days, the poor prisoners Young and old, Men and Women, offered to be

lock'd up and debarr'd the use of the court, if we might be allow'd that liberty, which at length we had.

"October 1st.—A Parole was tendered us which having read and duly considered we all rejected, as some people thought a spirit of obstinacy rather than prudence dictated on this occasion.

"As we had suffer'd already from the simple assertions of obscure persons, one of whom was John Dodge was well known by several Virginians to be an unprincipled and perjured renegade and as we had experienced the unhumanity of the executive power, it plainly appeared that this parole was offer'd from no other motive than to lay us open to the malice of the first informer, when we should probably have been imprisoned as before, with the additional Stigma of having broken a parole, which it was next to impossible to observe in all its parts.

"October the 9th. The Soldiers were sent from the Jail to the Barrack, where being allowed to cut wood a part was sent to the Jail for us, and even the American soldiers on guard, tho' miserably bare of clothing themselves, used to spare a part of their own fuel for the dressing our victuals.

"On Christmas Day the Soldiers were march'd away to King William County—The weather at this time became so intensely cold, that we could not rise from the floor but continued day and night in our blankets. The scurvy began to make it's appearance, and our legs to swell—The Jailor then concluding we could not survive the severity of the cold in our present situation, took us to an upper room in the Jail, where prisoners had formerly been kept, this tho it had no window but an open grate was more tolerable than the Dungeon, we could light a fire in the Chimney and by sacrificing part of our blankets to stop the grated window and stuff the cracks in the ceiling we made a shift to endure in the daytime, at night we were remanded to our Dungeon.

His Captivity Ends

"August 1st. (1780) We were march'd from Williamsburg—Major Hay and I sent to the Jail at Chesterfield—Capt La Mothe and Mr. Dejean some time in last October accepted the parole formerly rejected, the former went to Hanover, the latter went to Coll Clarke but what is become of him, I have not since learn'd."

"Thus the captivity of the "Hair Buyer General" in old Williamsburg ended. The severity of his treatment was due in large part to John Dodge, whom Hamilton calls an "unprincipled and perjured renegade" (a characterization, incidentally, which American historians endorse). Dodge had been a trader in Detroit whom Hamilton had imprisoned for suspected disloyalty but who managed to escape and return to the East. Then, according to Milo M. Quaife, in the book "The Capture of Old Vincennes" (published in 1927 by the Bobbs-Merrill company):

"Gifted with a fluent tongue and a pliable conscience, Dodge sought to revenge himself upon his former adversary by representing to the Virginia authorities that Hamilton at Detroit had been guilty of repeated violations of the recognized laws of warfare and of humanity. Relying upon this highly untrustworthy testimony, Governor Jefferson declined to accord Hamilton the treatment due an honorable prisoner of war; instead, he was made the scapegoat of the now odious system of warfare it had been his duty to administer, and was long treated as a common felon; at length General Washington interposed his powerful influence in opposition to this procedure and Hamilton obtained his exchange and was allowed to return to England."

Is History Unfair In Recalling Him as "Hair Buyer General"?

Not only does this distinguished historian (Dr. Milo M. Quaife, secretary of the Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library) show that Hamilton was very unjustly treated while a prisoner at Williamsburg, but he also doubts if history has dealt fairly with the British in perpetuating his "Hair Buyer General" title. Four years ago the Burton Historical Collection was presented with the ledgers and account books of Alexander and William Macomb, fiscal agents for the British government at Detroit during the Revolution. Nowhere in these records, according to Dr. Quaife, is there any reference to the purchase of scalps.

In an interview with Dr. Quaife which Ralph L. Peters of the Detroit News staff obtained at that time, the historian said:

"I am convinced that Hamilton hasn't been given a fair deal—in more modern parlance, he hasn't been given much of a break.

"Now I have no desire to make a hero of Hamilton. It is entirely true that Hamilton, as lieutenant-governor of Detroit, sent out Indian parties to attack the frontier settlements. It is true that these war parties committed innumerable outrages. Those are facts—and they are terrible facts.

"But it seems only fair to point out that, in sending out such parties, Hamilton was doing no differently than Montcalm, Sir William Johnson and many others before him—and as others did after him without receiving the censure that accrued to him.

"There is De Peyster, for example, the man who took command at Detroit after Hamilton had marched to Vincennes and been captured by Clark. De Peys-



Window of Hamilton's cell in the restored Williamsburg jail.

ter continued to send out war parties against the Kentucky settlements just as Hamilton had done. The Indians committed outrages—but De Peyster has come down to the present day as pretty much of a popular figure.

"Hamilton and De Peyster were not responsible for the raiding parties. They were acting under orders. The responsibility rests squarely on the king and the ministry at home. Hamilton and De Peyster were agents of the government, discharging the duties imposed on them.

"Indian warfare was a terrible thing. I certainly have no desire to condone it. Here was the situation, however. England and the Colonies were at war. As far as England was concerned, it was a civil war, a rebellion. The English wanted to hold the territory north of the Ohio. There were but a few white soldiers available—so they turned to the Indians.

"In taking that action, no matter how much we may deplore it today, the fact remains they were doing what every civilized nation has done through the ages—employing savage allies when they were needed. As recently as the World war, you will recall, the major powers used native forces to aid them in battle.

"Jefferson included in the Declaration of Independence an indictment of the king for using 'merciless Indian savages' against the colonists—yet the Continental congress was not slow in making overtures for like employment of the savages.

"However the Indian warfare may have seemed to the settlers against whom it was directed, it is wholly unfair for posterity to single out Hamilton for peculiar responsibility or infamy. Yet, upon him George Rogers Clark fixed the dreadful name 'the Hair Buyer' and by this he remains even to the present time.

"I have been able to find no evidence, when properly examined to show that Hamilton ever bought a scalp. On the other hand, there is evidence to show that he made repeated efforts to control the savage instincts of the Indians. He denied, in private reports to his superiors, and to Jefferson and others as well, that he ever bought a scalp.

"Those are some of the reasons why I feel that Hamilton was not as bad as he has been pictured—that he hasn't been given a fair hearing."

Cleaning Fluid Stops Bleeding

Science Conquers Hemophilia
With Oxalic Acid,
Ink Remover.

TORONTO.—A startling discovery that the common hat-cleaning fluid and ink remover, oxalic acid, stops the "royal curse" hemophilia and all other kinds of hemorrhage, has been announced here.

The report was made to the Federation of American Scientists for Experimental Biology by Arthur Steinberg and William R. Brown of Kensington hospital, Philadelphia.

At first the assembled biologists gasped in surprise and refused to believe. Oxalic acid is a poison and is known, in test tubes, to do exactly the opposite in helping blood to clot quickly.

Even when the Philadelphians disclosed that more than 500 humans, in more than a dozen large hospitals, have had their hemorrhages stopped, and in some cases their lives saved, with oxalic acid, the biologists continued skeptical.

Process Demonstrated.

The fact that a tiny amount of the acid injected into a living body acted exactly the opposite from its test tube ways was finally demonstrated before the eyes of a group of doubters. They went to a University of Toronto laboratory, where acid was taken from the shelf, injected into a rabbit and reduced the animal's blood clotting time from two and a half minutes down to one and a half. Hemophilia has been called the "curse of kings and 'curse of the Hapsburgs" because it is common in the Hapsburg royal family and to some extent in the Spanish and Russian royal lines.

Tests Successful.

Six American hemophiliacs; the report stated, had their time of stopping hemorrhage cut to less than that of normal persons by injections of oxalic acid.

One was a child who had scratched his throat eating rock candy. His normal time to end bleeding was 45 minutes. The acid reduced this time to 45 seconds.

It was necessary to continue giving the acid from time to time until the wounds healed in these hemophiliacs.

The report told of the acid-stopping childbirth hemorrhage where all other remedies had failed. It stopped hemorrhage of "obstructive jaundice" in 15 to 30 minutes, after vitamin K, the new clotting vitamin, had failed. It was used for several different types of "bloodless" operations successfully.

Free Fair Tickets For Blind Visitors

NEW YORK.—Blind visitors to the New York World's fair may enter the gates with an attendant or guide at the price of a single admission ticket, it was announced by Robert B. Irwin, executive director of the American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West Sixteenth street.

The foundation and the New York Association for the Blind have set up a service whereby blind persons, both residents and out of town visitors, may employ guides through the association. The association will furnish accommodations for blind visitors at its residential clubhouse, and the New York Travelers' Aid society will make arrangements for blind visitors desiring other accommodations.

Park Service Inaugurates Charge for Auto Trailers

Following recommendations of the advisory committee on camping, the national park service has announced a revision of fees in federal recreational demonstration areas, inaugurating a trailer charge, but reducing individual fees.

A 30-day trailer permit will cost 50 cents. A charge of five cents a night per camper, and 20 cents per week for the use of tent camp sites is established for organized camps. The regular fee of 25 cents a night per camper for organized camping facilities by groups is reduced to 15 cents. No charge is made in rates for permanent camps used for seasonal organized camping.

Sixty organized camps have been prepared for this season, with more than 1,000,000 camper-days use expected, the park service said.

Dog, Missing 14 Months Returns to Mistress

CLEVELAND.—Olga Choma, 20, would give a lot if her dog, Brownie, could talk. Fourteen months after he disappeared he trotted back in her yard with a new license on his collar.

The license was issued to Mrs. Louisa Micak, who said the dog was given to her a year ago by a friend. Her friend had found Brownie.

Miss Choma identified Brownie as hers, and at the suggestion of a police prosecutor arbiter, paid Mrs. Micak \$3 for Brownie's "keep."



By L. L. STEVENSON

Spooks: Recently word spread that an old brownstone house rapidly falling into ruin on the outskirts of the Bronx was haunted. The tale ran that the ghost was that of a woman who had been killed there by her husband many years ago. No one saw the ghost but several persons declared that in the darkness of the night they heard unearthly groans. Finally four young men, all deeply interested in psychic phenomena, decided to investigate. Meeting at midnight, they boldly entered the house. What was taken to be a moan or a groan sent three of them out hurriedly. The fourth remained. His companions waited for him breathlessly and just when they had made up their minds to notify the police, out he came. With him he brought not one "ghost" but two. They were a pair of small owls that had evidently decided that a ruined and deserted house made a fine residence.

Zoological: Friends of Medrano and Donna, Hispanic dancers, observed them sneaking in and out of vegetarian restaurants lately. As they seldom eat anything but meat, so much curiosity was aroused that a checkup was made. It seems that on their last trip to Argentina, the dancers acquired a pet ocelot. It's a gorgeous, sleek animal, closely related to the leopard. When young, it makes a playful and entertaining pet. But when it grows older, it reverts to nature and becomes a fierce, meat-eating beast. So, to keep their pet tame and happy, Medrano and Donna have been endeavoring to fool it with a diet of vegetable and meat balls.

Stories: Several correspondents have called attention to the fact that the Hitler death prediction, published here a little while ago, was old. I hadn't happened to hear it before. A week after it appeared, one of the wire services carried a Monterey, Cal., dispatch giving the same yarn with a slightly different twist. Thus I wasn't the only one. Curious how such tales keep bobbing up. Comes to mind the corpse in the subway, the woman who died of leprosy in a hotel bedroom, the old woman hitch-hiker who, when given a lift, disappeared from the back seat, the famous "Jersey devil" and a number of others, always told by the friend of a friend who'd had the experience. And possibly, the foundation for a fine lot of American folklore.

Pictures: Chatted a bit with Miss Betty Broadbent, the "tattooed Venus" in the Strange As It Seems building at the World's fair. It seems that Miss Broadbent, blonde and lovely, has to wear two pairs of stockings whenever she appears in public because of the decorations on her legs. She loves to dance but never can wear an evening gown. She has nice shoulders but there is an American eagle extending from one to the other. Though tattooed from the nape of her shapely neck to her heels, on her body is the picture of only one living person—Colonel Lindbergh. She also declared that when she decided to become a tattooed girl she ordered a large picture first so if she lost her nerve, she couldn't back out.

Salutes: To Katharine Cornell for her excellent portrayal of an actress in "No Time for Comedy." To Katharine Hepburn for her simulation of a girl of wealth in "The Philadelphia Story." To young Sidney Lumet for the way he acts the poet's son in "My Heart's in the Highlands." To that wonderfully garbed grand dame who took three dirty-faced gamins into a swank midtown soda dispensary, loaded them up with ice cream and sent them away each clutching a half dollar. To John Chapman for his Third avenue columns, which are satires of Broadway gossip columns.

End Piece: Ira Wolfert was driving to a Brooklyn hospital with his two children. Each had to have an immediate tonsil operation. His thoughts on the youngsters, he passed a red light. A policeman stopped him. He tried to explain the circumstances. The officer wouldn't listen. So Wolfert went to traffic court, waited all morning and paid a fine. It's tough to be a cop. And it's tough to be the father of two sick children.

Nazi Medical Cost Rises; Blame Elderly Laborers

WASHINGTON.—A report to the commerce department from the American consul at Frankfurt-on-Main said Germany's medicine bill jumped 8 per cent in 1938 to \$104,000,000. The 1938 expenditure per person, the report said, was \$2.98, compared with \$1.40 in 1929. "The increased expenditure per person is said to have resulted largely from bringing into employment older and less robust persons, the report added.

Pretty Patterns That Are Oh So Practical!

SOMEWHAT formal, so that you can wear it smartly for shopping and runabout, is the wide-shouldered dress with buttons down the scalloped bodice and braid used to give the effect of a bolero. The circular skirt has a charming, animated swing to it. In batiste, linen or flat crepe, it's a dress you'll thoroughly enjoy all summer long.

Indispensable Slacks Suit. If you're planning to have a lot of outdoor fun this summer (and of course you are) then a slacks suit is an indispensable part of your vacation wardrobe. This one includes a topper with front gath-



ers that flatter your figure, well-cut, slim-hipped slacks, and a bolero with wide revers that you can wear with daytime frocks, too. Denim, gingham, flannel or gabardine are practical materials for this.

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