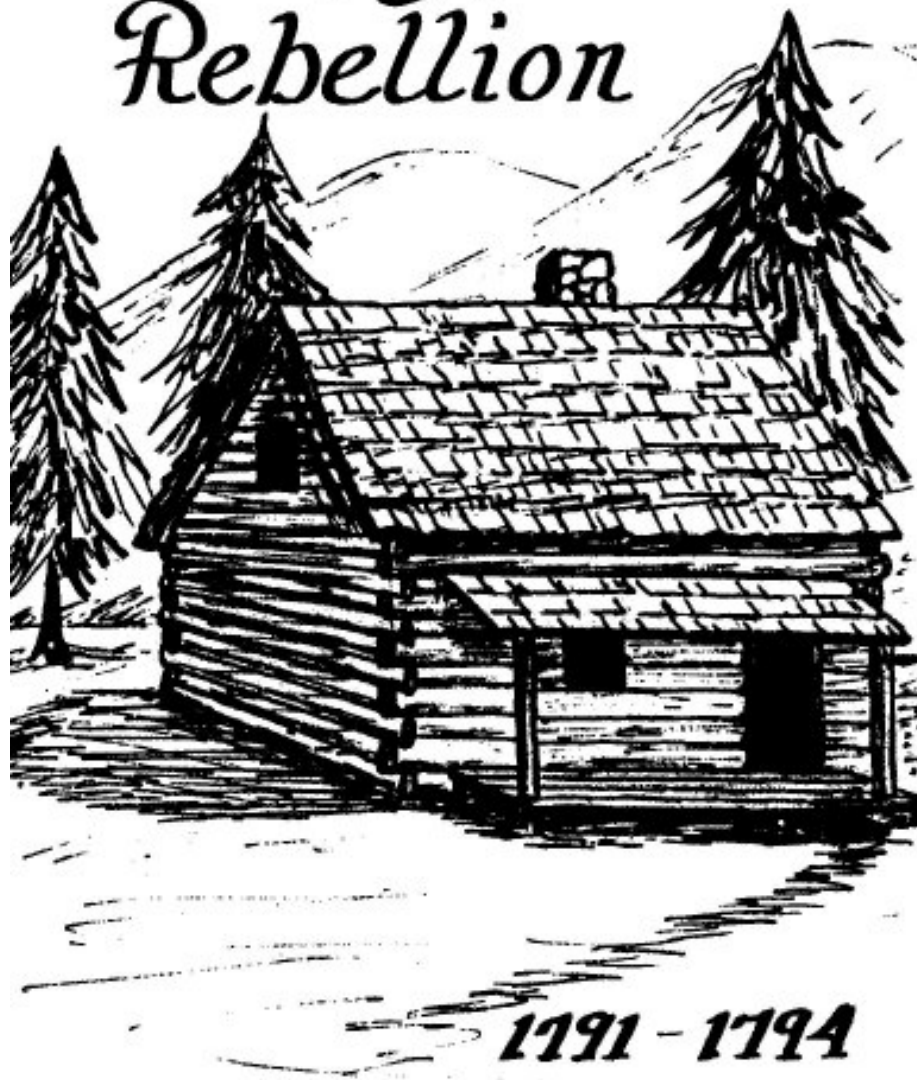


# *Whiskey Rebellion*



# THE WHISKEY REBELLION

JULY 1791 - NOVEMBER 1794

The “Whiskey Rebellion” of 1791-1794 was an exciting yet confusing period in the history of Western Pennsylvania. It was filled with action, violence, civil disobedience, and clashes of interest. It was important to American history as it was the first test of the power given the federal government under the new Constitution. In our young country, it was also seen as a struggle between the rich of the East and the poor farmers of the West.

In 1791, our war with Great Britain was over and the federal government of the United States needed money for unpaid debts which had been accumulated by the individual states before and during the Revolution. Alexander Hamilton proposed the money be raised by a duty on imported liquor and liquor distilled within the country. The excise bill aroused a storm of protest. In Pennsylvania, the State House of Representatives, led by representatives of Allegheny, Westmoreland, Washington and Fayette counties, passed a resolution renouncing the excise as did other states. Despite the efforts to block the bill, it passed on January 27, 1791 by a vote of 35 to 21 in the United States House of Representatives. It then passed the Senate and became law in March, 1791.

It was not surprising that the independent farmers of Western Pennsylvania particularly resented the excise tax on whiskey. In 1791 there were 272 licensed stills in Washington County, about one for every 20 or 30 families. Not only was there a tax on the whiskey produced but on each still. Whiskey was an important part of the social and personal life of the area. It was used daily by the people. It was on the table with meals and taken between meals as a strengthener. It was used for medicinal purposes at a time of very limited medical knowledge. Whiskey could ward off the bitter cold of winter and the heat of summer. The Westerners liked their own brew and would have had difficult importing it from the east because of distance and the hazardous journey involved.



Hugh Henry Brackenridge

Whiskey was also important to the economy of Western Pennsylvania. It was difficult to transport the grain of area farms over the poor mountain roads to markets in the East. A pack horse could carry four bushels of rye or the equivalent of 24 bushels of rye distilled into whiskey. Most families in Western Pennsylvania were small farmers with very little cash. Whiskey sold to the army for rations was one of the few sources of money for the farmers. It was also a much needed commodity for barter. It could be traded for goods at the market or used to pay wages. Whiskey was also considered an important fringe benefit for hired



Albert Gallatin

hands needed on the farms. The tax of seven cents a gallon on all domestic distilled spirits was about one-fourth the cost of a gallon of whiskey in the West. This compared to about one-eighth the cost in the East. The people of Western Pennsylvania felt they had an unfair share of the tax burden and they also feared other necessities of life would soon be taxed.

The new tax was first protested under the leadership of moderate men, including Hugh Henry Brackenridge of Pittsburgh and Albert Gallatin of Fayette County. It was later that the moderates lost control to more radical men. The first opposition from the Monongahela country was expressed in numerous petitions and resolutions of protest. A meeting was held at Brownsville on July 27, 1791 at which William Findley spoke for moderation and the writing of a petition to protest the tax. The next meeting was set to be held in Pittsburgh on September 7th. An interim meeting held in Washington County on August 23 to elect delegates for the planned Pittsburgh meeting came under the control of radicals who drew up and adopted a violent resolution that classified excise officers as public enemies to be treated with contempt. The people were not to communicate with them and were not to “aid, support or comfort” them in any way.

The Pittsburgh meeting was attended by eleven delegates. Edward Cook, of Fayette County, was elected chairman. The resolutions adopted protested the government's financial policy and stated that the excise was subversive to liberty and discouraging to agriculture and manufacture. It also urged the people not to accept excise offices so the law would be ineffective.

The first violent acts were scattered and disorganized. An incident occurred on September 6, 1791, when Robert Johnson, one of the first excise tax collectors for Washington and Allegheny counties, was walking near Pigeon Creek in Washington County. He was attacked by a gang of sixteen men. According to his story, they were dressed in women's clothing, but he recognized several of them, including John, Daniel and David Hamilton. They cut off his hair, tarred and feathered him, seized his horse and left him to find his way as best he could. Warrants were issued by the federal courts for those responsible but the process server was also whipped, tarred and feathered, robbed, and left in the woods.

Other excise officers or suspected tax sympathizers were attacked in late 1791. They were abducted, beaten, tarred and feathered, branded with hot irons and robbed. There were no further overt acts until the summer of 1792. During this lull, associations against the whiskey tax were being organized.

During August of 1792, events again began to turn to violence. William Faulkner of Washington was threatened with harm if he allowed his home to be used as an excise office. He agreed but when there was a delay in his compliance his house was attacked, shots were fired and he was again threatened.

Because of increasing hostilities, another conference was called at Pittsburgh on August 21, 1792. In addition to David Bradford, James Marshall, and Edward Cook, three of the leaders of the first Pittsburgh conference, a number of other prominent men appeared. Among them were John Canon, Benjamin Parkinson and John Hamilton, all of Washington County, and Albert Gallatin and John Smilie of Fayette County. The townspeople of Pittsburgh did not want to take any part in the meeting. At this meeting a committee of correspondence was appointed and sent to Congress. This resolution caused a great protest in the East. President George Washington issued a counter statement warning the malcontents to "desist from all unlawful combinations and proceedings whatsoever, having for object or tending to obstruct the operation of the laws."



George Clymer

As a result of the second Pittsburgh meeting and the Faulkner "riot", the Secretary of the Treasury sent George Clymer to Western Pennsylvania to assess the situation. He returned with an unfavorable report on the Monongahela country. He stated that Washington was the worst county in opposing the excise tax. He found Fayette County more moderate, Westmoreland County was not generally against the excise and Allegheny County had taken no decisive part in the protest.

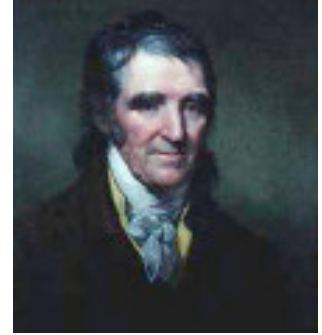
Although Fayette County received a favorable report from Clymer, it became the scene of more violence in 1793. Benjamin Wells, the tax collector for Fayette and Westmoreland counties, was attacked and threatened in his home. President Washington offered a reward for the capture of each assailant, but they were not identified or arrested.

A meeting was held in Fayette County in March of 1794 to try to make some changes in the situation and make the excise more acceptable. The aim of the meeting was to remove all excise officers in the area and substitute "reputable men". This meeting was a turning point in the development of the resistance to the tax. Thereafter, the people were split into two groups; the "influential" and "respectable" citizens were at least secretly for the law, while the poorer farmers felt abandoned to the mercies of the federal government. The latter group began to rely more heavily on violence.

Any farmer who did not oppose the tax was in great danger. Events reached such a fevered pitch that a virtual reign of terror existed in Washington County during the summer of 1794. The insurrectionists would shoot holes in the stills and damage them. This was humorously referred to by John Holcroft, leader of the rioters, as "mending the stills". From this he coined the expression of "Tom the tinker's" men, which he applied to the rioters. Within a few days it became the popular name of the opponents of the excise tax who resorted to violent action against their neighbors' stills.

Besides having several joint conferences, the farmers formed societies of their own. One of these was the Mingo Creek Society established on February 28, 1794. Brackenridge, the Pittsburgh attorney, has left the only surviving account of this society's organization, and he states that "it was the cradle of the insurrection inasmuch as it fostered the contempt for law and the exaggerated ideas of liberty that brought on the trouble". Their meetings were held in the Mingo Creek Presbyterian Church located between what is now Monongahela and Finleyville on the beautiful valley through which ran Mingo Creek.

The worst part of the insurrection was brought on by the opposition in the Monongahela country to trials in Philadelphia for breaking the federal excise law. The farmers were incensed with the prospect of attending a court three hundred miles from home for an unpredictable number of weeks during the busy season. They also had the burden of paying lawyers and obtaining witnesses. A bill was finally passed in Congress in June of 1794 to change the place of venue to closer state courts. However, the processes had already been issued under the original law and were returnable to Philadelphia. William Findley had the view that Alexander Hamilton was deliberately trying to create a situation that would excuse the use of an army to strengthen the federal position.



William Findley

United States Marshall David Lenox left Philadelphia on June 22, 1794 to serve processes against the people who had not paid their excise tax. Lenox experienced no difficulty in Cumberland, Bedford and Fayette counties and served his writs without any trouble. After he arrived in Monongahela country, Lenox rode out with John Neville to serve four or five remaining writs.

One of the local families involved in the Whiskey conflict was the Neville family. Brigadier General John Neville was well known and influential at this time. He had amassed a considerable fortune and his home at Bower Hill in the Chartiers Valley was one of the finest in the Western Counties. His son, Presley Neville, was also a veteran of the Revolutionary War. His country home, which he called "Woodville", was situated on a slope across Chartiers Creek from Bower Hill. General Neville had openly opposed the state excise tax only a few days before his appointment as inspector for the government. This infuriated many people and they began to call him a "turncoat". His son also sympathized with the federal tax. Neville had reason to fear for his life because now he had become an "excise inspector".



WOODVILLE

John Neville played an important role throughout the Revolution, climaxing his career in September 1783 when he was appointed brigadier general. His postwar career was less spectacular. As revenue inspector, he had the unenviable job of collecting the excise tax on whiskey in western Pennsylvania. In 1794 participants in the Whiskey Rebellion, protesting the tax, burned the home he was living in at the time. Woodville, a frame house that Neville had built in 1785, survives as the property most closely associated with him.

As Lenox and Neville rode about the countryside, four processes were served. The recipients, according to Lenox, showed their contempt for the law. They came to William Miller's farm in Peter's Creek. Miller refused the writ and Lenox told him not to oppose the law. Just then Neville called to Lenox to hurry because a party of men was running across the field as though to head off the marshal. A shot was fired and Lenox stopped and upbraided the men. The farmers allowed the two men to ride away. Rumors of this incident spread quickly.

Dr. Absolom Baird of Washington, the brigade inspector of the county militia, was at the Mingo

Church to hear appeals from some members of the Mingo Creek regiment for exemption from service. When a man appeared crying that “the Federal Sheriff was taking people away to Philadelphia”, word was immediately sent around to the people to assemble at the Mingo Church. Many came and some were armed. After some heated discussion, it was decided to capture the marshall, David Lenox, and then decide what was to be done with him. At this time they thought Lenox was at Bower Hill with Neville. John Holcroft was chosen to command the expedition and the men were ordered to meet opposition with opposition.

When the insurrectionists arrived at John Neville’s home, words were exchanged, then shots were fired and several people were wounded. One of this number, Oliver Miller was fatally wounded. The bloodshed aroused the community and the following day a body of 500 men, under the leadership of Major James McFarland, rode out the same route. In passing the Bethel Presbyterian Church, which is near Couch Fort (Fort Couch), Reverend John Clark hailed the insurgents and tried to dissuade them from their purpose. He pleaded in vain.

General Neville had at this time ordered about ten soldiers out from Fort Pitt to guard his home. Major James McFarland tried to reason, but it was refused and firing began. During a show of White Flag surrender, Major McFarland was shot and killed. This infuriated the farmers and they burned General Neville’s barn and other buildings. From these fires the mansion caught fire and was destroyed. General Neville dressed as a woman and escaped with his family.

Major McFarland was one of the most popular men in the community. The next day he was buried in the Mino church yard. (Also buried in this cemetery are other notable men of the Whiskey Rebellion - John Holcroft, Benjamin Parkinson and David Hamilton.) When this confrontation was over, the protestors had to have a meeting to discuss what to do next. They decided to have their meeting at the Mingo Meeting House.

On Monday afternoon, July 21st, a young man from Mingo settlement led his horse off the Monongahela Ferry, and then rode down Water Street and out Market Street to the house of Hugh Henry Brackenridge. Here he dismounted and entered the front room that served as an office and handed the lawyer a folded note from David Hamilton. It was an invitation to attend a meeting of the committee at the Mingo Meeting House the next Wednesday. Brackenridge went to that meeting along with a number of other prominent Pittsburghers.

The meeting was opened with the election of Edward Cook as chairman. Benjamin Parkinson put the main problem before the gathering. He said, “You know what has been done. We wish to know whether what has been done is right or wrong and whether we are to be supported in it or left to ourselves.” Marshall said it was not necessary to judge what had been done. Bradford then rose and argued in favor of supporting those who had attacked and destroyed Bower Hill.

When Bradford finished, Brackenridge spoke. He said “What has been done might be morally right but it was legally wrong”. In construction of law it was high treason. He went on to say, instead of a local offense, it was a case within the power of the President to call out the militia. This shocked the audience. At the end, Brackenridge proposed that representatives from each county meet with the President in Philadelphia to ask for amnesty. He offered to be one of the party.

This Mingo meeting marked the emergence of David Bradford as an advocate of the policy of sustaining violence by violence. Brackenridge had intended the next conference to be one of pacification. Bradford saw it as an opportunity to stir up further trouble. On August 6th, he sent an inflammatory letter to the inhabitants of Monongalia County, Virginia, urging them to send delegates to the Parkinson’s Ferry meeting. “We have fully deliberated with heart, head, hand and voice that we will support the opposition to the excise law.”

David Bradford’s rashness led him to plan to rob the mail from Washington to Pittsburgh in order to learn what the people’s opinion was of the opposition to the excise tax. The plan was changed to a robbery of the Pittsburgh-Philadelphia post. David Bradford sent his cousin, William Bradford. The post rider was stopped on July 26th near Greensburg and the packets containing the mail were taken. Benjamin Parkinson delivered the packet to David Bradford in Washington and, along with James Marshall and three other men they took it to Canonsburg. There they stopped at the Black Horse Tavern, kept by Henry Westby, and retired to an arbor behind the tavern. According to tradition, they sent for several local



David Bradford

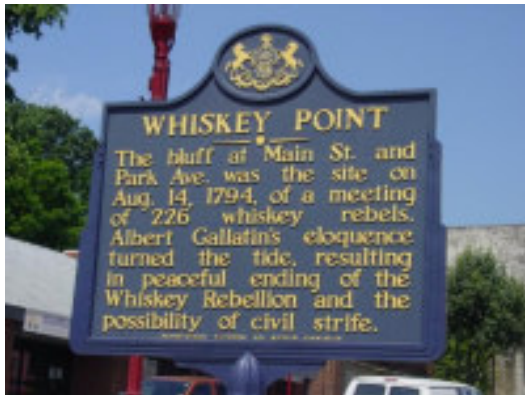
leaders including John Canon and Thomas Spear. The mail was then opened and found to contain no letters from Washington bearing on the disturbances. There were, however, several from Pittsburgh, denouncing the action of the malcontents.

The leaders decided the time had come for action. They were to call up the local militia and they were to meet at their usual place of rendezvous on Wednesday, July 30th, and were to march on Friday to Braddock's Field (Braddock's Field is about eight miles from Pittsburgh, the site of the present boroughs of Braddock and North Braddock). Rumors spread rapidly and the people of Pittsburgh were in a state of panic. It was rumored that the insurrectionists were going to set Pittsburgh afire.

When the militia had settled at Braddock's Field, negotiations began between the officials of Pittsburgh and Bradford. Bradford wanted them to get rid of certain individuals (excise collector's) within the city. One of these, Abraham Kirkpatrick, was blamed for the resistance that had led to James McFarland's death. When the mob reached the city, they were wined and dined so hospitably by the citizens of Pittsburgh that the attack never took place. Within two short weeks, the insurrection had sprung up and now on this day and night at Braddock's Field it had reached full power. Within two more days it was to disappear completely.

After they dispersed at Braddock's Field, attention was passed to the forthcoming meeting at Parkinson's Ferry meeting from the radicals by packing it with delegates known to favor a moderate policy.

Parkinson's Ferry (now known as Monongahela City) was situated on the West Bank of the Monongahela River at the mouth of Pigeon Creek. Its name was taken from that of a brother of the fiery Benjamin Parkinson, who operated there a ferry and a combination tavern and store and who could be easily persuaded to sell lots in the town that he believed was about to spring up on the site. Parkinson's Ferry was chosen for the meeting because of its central location; roads from most of the adjacent population centers



intersected there. The place where the conference met on that day was a wooded bench on the shoulder of a hill overlooking the river, a spot still known as Whiskey Point. The delegates sat on stumps and fallen trees, or on the grass. There were two hundred twenty-six delegates; forty-three from Allegheny county, ninety-three from Washington, forty-nine from Westmoreland, thirty-three from Fayette, two from Bedford and six from Ohio County, Virginia. The conference selected Edward Cook as chairman and Albert Gallatin as secretary. Several resolutions were discussed and no decisions were made.

Gallatin gave this opinion: "What reason have we to suppose that hostile attempts will be made against our rights? And why, therefore, prepare to resist them? Riots have taken place which may be the subject of judiciary cognizance, but we are not to suppose a military force on the part of the government." Night came and the men stayed at nearby farms and slept wherever they could.

The next morning a liberty pole was raised bearing a flag which had been made to represent the six counties who had sent delegates to the meeting. Benjamin Parkinson appeared with a board which he fixed upon the pole. Boldly lettered upon it were the words, "Equal Taxation and No Excise. No Asylum for Traitors and Cowards."

A proclamation had been issued (see pages 9 & 10) by George Washington on August 7 that summarized the troubles in Western Pennsylvania and announced that he would call out the militia to combat the treasonable activities in that region. The reading of this proclamation at the Parkinson's Ferry meeting had a bad effect on the men and they became very angry. James Marshall, suggested it was best to disperse and go home. This met with stout opposition. It was between Albert Gallatin and Brackenridge to make speeches to calm and convince the men to await the commissioners' propositions. The standing committee met and set the time and place of the next meeting - September 2nd at Brownsville.

Developments in the Monongahela country had been watched with ever increasing anxiety in the East. The term “White Indians” was then in common use by the government party to designate the insurgents.

The meeting was held at Brownsville on August 28th and the conference committee had its report printed and copies were distributed among the members. It became apparent that the report was recommending submission. This caused an undertone of protest. It took more time and persuasion to pass the proper resolutions and send delegates to the President. Even Bradford’s recommendation of submission had resulted in a decline of his popularity.

The second Parkinson’s Ferry meeting was brief. David Bradford was there. Resolutions were adopted promising submission to the law and stating it was the opinion of the delegates that there was a general disposition “to submit to all laws”. William Findley and David Redick were appointed as a committee to carry resolutions to President Washington and to present to him the true state of mind in the Monongahela country toward the enforcement of Federal authority.

President Washington’s patience came to an end. He ordered the militia and Federal troops from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia, in all 12,950 troops, into Western Pennsylvania under General Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia.

While Washington was in Carlisle, Pennsylvania on military matters, Redick and Findley appeared as commissioners on behalf of the Parkinson’s Ferry group. Their meeting, probably on October 9, was brief. They handed him the papers they had brought and tried to arrange for a longer conference. Washington and Hamilton replied with firmness that the evidences of submission were not convincing and that the Army must proceed.

After suffering many hazards in traveling the mountains in torturous rainy weather, flooded streams and lack of food, the Army finally arrived at different locations. By the time the troops reached Uniontown, the Surgeon General found it necessary to establish a hospital for the 116 men who could not go on. One camp was at the mouth of Mingo and another was at Perry’s Ferry on the West bank of the Monongahela River above Elizabeth. A detachment was stationed in Washington - tradition says on the Washington College campus.



General Henry Lee

The third Parkinson’s Ferry meeting, which convened on October 24th to hear the report of Findley and Redick, was completely controlled by moderates. The radicals had either fled the country or had been silenced by the approach of the Army. The meeting put forth new assertions that civil authority had been re-established and they sent Findley, Redick, Douglas and Thomas Morton to see the President. Washington was already on his way back to Philadelphia but the Commissioners did see Alexander Hamilton at Bonnet’s Camp. After listening to them, he suggested that “for the sake of decorum” they interview Henry Lee. The four then set off for Uniontown where Lee was quartered. Lee listened to their assurances politely, waited until the next day and then handed them a written address

to the people. The address stated that the inhabitants of the region had, in general, been involved in treason and had changed their sentiment only because the Army was coming. The Commissioners heard this accusation with dismay and unsuccessfully tried to set the matter straight.

After the Army moved in, the Mingo Creek settlement suffered the most. The soldiers dragged about forty suspects from their beds and imprisoned them in the cellar of the Buck Tavern owned by Benjamin Parkinson and operated by a man named Stockdale, eight and one-half miles west of Parkinson’s Ferry. They were kept in the cellar from one to two days and were then driven twelve miles to Washington.

David Hamilton of the Mingo Creek settlement had his still seized by collectors on November 14th. Hamilton, noting the inclemency of the weather, persuaded the men to remain overnight and plied them with Jamaica ginger and whiskey. They finally dropped into a drunken stupor and Hamilton’s friends carried the still to a safe hiding place. After this episode, the section where Hamilton lived was called “Ginger Hill.”

The Army did not stay long in the Monongahela country. By November 19th, less than three weeks after its arrival, the Army had begun its return.

Twenty prisoners were marched to Philadelphia for trial. Two were convicted and the rest were pardoned by the President. David Bradford, the man who had wanted to be the Washington of the West, was one of the insurgents who had fled. He rode out of Washington a few days before the entrance of the



John Adams

troops. A flat boat had been waiting for him at the mouth of Grave Creek, but as he was pursued, he started down the river in a canoe. Near the mouth of Sandy Creek, he took refuge on a coal boat belonging to some army contractors. Two hours later a party of four soldiers from Gallipolis overtook him. The soldiers boarded the boat and actually laid hands on Bradford, when a young man, himself a fugitive, seized a rifle and forced them to withdraw without their victim. Bradford was pursued as far as Redbanks by Captain Jolly, but he succeeded in escaping to Spanish territory. He settled in Louisiana where he spent the rest of his life as a wealthy planter. Bradford himself was pardoned by President John Adams on March 9th, 1799.

In addition to the individual, personal and financial losses, the three year rebellion had cost the United States Government \$669,992.34. It had however, played an important part in strengthening the grip of the Federalists on the national administration. The Whiskey Insurrection failed in fulfilling the diverse economic and political purposes that had rekindled the fire of revolution. The Federal Excise Tax was repealed in 1802 after Thomas Jefferson took office as President.

The Whiskey Rebellion reveals a great deal about conflicting ideas, economics, and cultures during the 1780's and the 1790's. Its nature, as a precedent-setting event, offers unique perspectives on the establishment of constitutional, military, and political precedents in the young republic. Many of these contexts, which contribute to making events comprehensible, remain unexplored today.

(Researched and compiled by Diane E. Smith Widmer and Annabelle Caldwell, 1990)



**The Whiskey Rebellion Flag, 1794**

**You can purchase a copy of “Whiskey Rebellion 1791--1794” (text version)  
at  
The Monongahela Area Historical Society’s Museum Gift Shop.**



## **BY AUTHORITY**

**By the president of the United States of America**

## **A PROCLAMATION**

Whereas, combinations to defeat the execution of the laws laying duties upon spirits distilled within the United States and upon stills have from the time of the commencement of those laws existed in some of the western parts of Pennsylvania.

And whereas, the said combinations, proceeding in a manner subversive equally of the just authority of government and of the rights of individuals, have hitherto effected their dangerous and criminal purpose by the influence of certain irregular meetings whose proceedings have tended to encourage and uphold the spirit of opposition by misrepresentations of the laws calculated to render them odious; by endeavors to deter those who might be so disposed from accepting offices under them through fear of public resentment and of injury to person and property, and to compel those who had accepted such offices by actual violence to surrender or forbear the execution of them; by circulation vindictive menaces against all those who should otherwise, directly or indirectly, aid in the execution of the said laws, or who, yielding to the dictates of conscience and to a sense of obligation, should themselves comply therewith; by actually injuring and destroying the property of persons who were understood to have so complied; by inflicting cruel and humiliating punishments upon private citizens for no other cause than that of appearing to be the friends of the laws; by intercepting the public officers on the highways, abusing, assaulting, and otherwise ill treating them; by going into their houses in the night, gaining admittance by force, taking away their papers, and committing other outrages, employing for these unwarrantable purposes the agency of armed bandits disguised in such manner as for the most part to escape discovery;

And whereas, the endeavors of the legislature to obviate objections to the said laws by lowering the duties and by other alterations conducive to the convenience of those whom they immediately affect (though they have given satisfaction in other quarters), and the endeavors of the executive officers to conciliate a compliance with the laws by explanations, by forbearance, and even by particular accommodations founded on the suggestion of local considerations, have been disappointed of their effect by the machinations of persons whose industry to excite resistance has increased with every appearance of a disposition among the people to relax in their opposition and to acquiesce in the laws, insomuch that many persons in the said western parts of Pennsylvania have at length been hardy enough to perpetrate acts, which I am advised amount to treason, being overt acts of levying war against the United States, the said persons having on the 16th and 17th of July last past proceeded in arms (on the second day amounting to several hundreds) to the house of John Neville, inspector of the revenue for the fourth survey of the district of Pennsylvania; having repeatedly attacked the said house with the persons therein, wounding some of them; having seized David Lenox, marshal of the district of Pennsylvania, who previous thereto had been fired upon while in the execution of his duty by a party of armed men, detaining him for some time prisoner, till, for the preservation of his life and the obtaining of his liberty, he found it necessary to enter into stipulations to forbear the execution of certain official duties touching processes issuing out of a court of the United States; and having finally obliged the said inspector of

the revenue and the said marshal from considerations of personal safety to fly from that part of the country, in order, by a circuitous route, to proceed to the seat of government, avowing as the motives of these outrageous proceedings an intention to prevent by force of arms the execution of the said laws, to oblige the said inspector of the revenue to renounce his said office, to withstand by open violence the lawful authority of the government of the United States, and to compel thereby an alteration in the measures of the legislature and a repeal of the laws aforesaid;

And whereas, by a law of the United States entitled “An act to provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions,” it is enacted that whenever the laws of the United States shall be opposed or the execution thereof obstructed in any state by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshals by that act, the same being notified by an associate justice or the district judge, it shall be lawful for the President of the United States to call forth the militia of such state to suppress such combinations and to cause the laws to be duly executed. And if the militia of a state, when such combinations may happen, shall refuse or be insufficient to suppress the same, it shall be lawful for the President, if the legislature of the United States shall not be in session, to call forth and employ such numbers of the militia of any other state or states most convenient thereto as may be necessary; and the use of the militia so to be called forth may be continued, if necessary, until the expiration of thirty days after the commencement of the of the ensuing session; Provided always, that, whenever it may be necessary in the judgment of the President to use the military force hereby directed to be called forth, the President shall forthwith, and previous thereto, by proclamation, command such insurgents to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes within a limited time;

And whereas, James Wilson, an associate justice, on the 4th instant, by writing under his hand, did from evidence which had been laid before him notify to me that “in the counties of Washington and Allegany, in Pennsylvania, laws of the United States are opposed and the execution thereof obstructed by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshal of that district”;

And whereas, it is in my judgment necessary under the circumstances of the case to take measures for calling forth the militia in order to suppress the combinations aforesaid, and to cause the laws to be duly executed; and I have accordingly determined so to do, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal the most solemn conviction that the essential interests of the Union demand it, that the very existence of government and the fundamental principles of social order are materially involved in the issue, and that the patriotism and firmness of all good citizens are seriously called upon, as occasions may require, to aid in the effectual suppression of so fatal a spirit;

Therefore, and in pursuance of the proviso above recited, I, George Washington, President of the United States, do hereby command all persons, being insurgents, as aforesaid, and all others whom it may concern, on or before the 1st day of September next to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes. And I do moreover warn all persons whomsoever against aiding, abetting, or comforting the perpetrators of the aforesaid treasonable acts; and do require all officers and other citizens, according to their respective duties and the laws of the land, to exert their utmost endeavors to prevent and suppress such dangerous proceedings.

In testimony whereof I have caused the seal of the United States of America to be affixed to these presents, and signed the same with my hand. Done at the city of Philadelphia the seventh day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, and of the independence of the United States of America the nineteenth.

**G. WASHINGTON,**

By the President,

**Edm. Randolph**

Source: Claypoole’s Daily Advertiser, August 11, 1794