

Reverend Charles Beatty's Journal – 1756

March of the Augusta Regiment to Build Fort Augusta

'During the war, among the Provincial officers was Rev. Charles Beatty, who was appointed Chaplain to one of the Pennsylvania Battalions. His journal of the year 1756 contains facts relating to this locality which are to be found nowhere else, and that is our excuse for printing it.'

"Having received His Honour, the Governor's Commission to be Chaplain to the Regiment of Foote in the Provincial service under the command of Col. William Clapham, and having the advise and concurrence of the Commission of the Synod, who appointed supplies for the congregation in my absence - set out from home in order to join the Regiment at Harris' Ferry, Monday, May 3, 1756. I was accompanied as far as Schuylkill by my elders, and some other friends and having stopped at a friend's house, not far from the road to refresh myself, reached as far as the sign of the ship on the Lancaster Road, at which I lodged. Felt my need of the Divine presence to be with me in my dangerous or at least difficult undertaking.

"Tuesday, May 4<sup>th</sup> – Set off very early in the morning; breakfasted at Rev. Mr. Smith's at Pequea, who accompanied me as far as Mrs. Calwell's where I parted with my good friend Mr. Daniel McLean, who accompanied me from home thusfar. Reached Lancaster in the afternoon - put up at Mr. Saunders'. Col. Clapham and Capt. Lloyd came to see me, and telling me that the Governor was in town, I waited upon his honor in the evening, who received me very kindly. Went to bed early, as I had been wet with the rain on my journey.

"May 5<sup>th</sup> – Left Lancaster about ten o'clock, in company with the Governor, colonel, and several other officers and gentlemen, having dined at B. Hughes', reached Harris' Ferry in the evening. A little after our arrival, the soldiers were ordered to attend prayers, but while I was waiting with the Governor and other gentlemen for the men Harris' house took fire, and the alarm and confusion was such as to prevent public prayer.

"6<sup>th</sup> – Had morning prayer. Met with an accident when lifting up poles for a tent, the ridge pole fell and cut me just above the eye, and the blood settled about it.

"Sabbath, 9<sup>th</sup> – Preached from Exod. xxxiii.15. This I thought a proper subject to begin with, as we are going on a very important affair.

"Sabbath, 16<sup>th</sup> – Preached twice to a number of country people, as well as to the soldiers, with freedom to myself, and the audience seemed serious, and some impressed.

"Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> – Preached at Roan's meeting house, in Paxtang, at the invitation of the people, with liberty and sweetness. The attention of the people engaged and some affected. Called after sermon to see Mr. Elder, but found him not at home.

"Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> – Preached at Yellow Breeches, over Susquehanna, at a house belonging to the Presbytery of Donegal, at the people's invitation. Returned in the evening to camp. One of my pistols went off as I was laying it down, but God be praised, did no hurt.

"Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> - This being appointed by the Governor to be kept as a day of Fasting and Prayer – his honor, the Governor, being present, it was generally observed. Preached twice to a great audience, many attending from both sides of the river – in the afternoon from Luke xiii.3.

“Lord’s Day, May 23<sup>rd</sup> – Preached but once, as the people were engaged.

“Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup>. – The Governor left the camp in order to return to Philadelphia, at which the men were drawn up under arms, the cannon fired. Accompanied him with most of the officers belonging to the Regiment, as far as Swartara Creek, and returned to camp in the evening. Crossed Susquehanna with my good friend Mr. Armstrong; went as far as Tobias Hendricks’ where we lodged, prayed in the family. Next morning conversed with the landlord, who had been sometime sick.

“Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> – Reached Carlisle; prepared to preach in the evening at the desire of the people, but it raining prevented.

“Thursday – Preached in the afternoon to a considerable number, with freedom, and had reason to think that it was blessed to some of God’s people. Returned to Mr. Armstrong’s.

“Friday – Preached at William Abernethy’s. Returned safely in the evening camp.

“Sabbath, May 30<sup>th</sup>. – Preached twice – in the afternoon to the country people.

“Monday, 31<sup>st</sup>. – Set off from Harris’ in the company with Dr. Lloyd and several officers; and a company of men followed. Arrived safely at McKee’s store, where we found the Colonel. The reason of our staying so long at Harris’ was to get batteaux built to transport our stores and provisions to Shamokin. Had but a poor night’s lodging, not having my tent or any bedding.

“June 4<sup>th</sup>. – Major Burd with the last division of the regiment joined us. Second Lieutenant, George Allen, and forty men, dressed as Indians, sent out as scouts to Shamokin.

“5<sup>th</sup>. – The Colonel in the afternoon marched with four companies. Reached Foster’s, about three miles, where we encamped.

“Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup>. – Rose early; and after prayers, began our march; halted for breakfast after four miles, then marched on to Armstrong’s when we encamped.

“Monday, 7<sup>th</sup>. – Began to fell timber for building a Fort 160 feet square, called Fort Halifax.

“Tuesday. – Scouts returned, having gone only 18 miles when they imagined they were discovered and surrounded by the Indians. Many alarms, reports, and detentions.

“Sabbath, 13<sup>th</sup>. – Preached from Rev. iii.12. Received a proclamation from the Governor of a cessation of arms against the Indians on the East side of the Susquehanna for 30 days, and at the same time as account of several persons killed and scalped at the forks of Swatara, supposed to be by those Indians discovered at Lee’s house on the 8<sup>th</sup> inst.

“Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup>. – A number of the soldiers mutinied, chiefly Dutch.

“Sabbath, 20<sup>th</sup>. – A general court-martial to try the prisoners most of whom were discharged as innocent. This prevented most of the officers from attending. Preached upon conscience, with a particular application to those who mutinied.

“Friday, 25<sup>th</sup>. – Ensign Atley came to camp, and brought up under guard two Dutchmen, deserters, who had sacrilegiously mutilated an Indian in his grave.

“Sabbath, 27<sup>th</sup>. – Were alarmed by the advance guard firing at a mark. The whole regiment were under arms, advanced immediately, expecting to engage every minute, which prevented sermon in the forenoon. So, just as service began in the afternoon, had another alarm, but few, alas! seemed to regret the disappointment. Wickedness seems to increase in the camp, which gives me a great deal of uneasiness.

“Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup>. – Orders were given that all should march the next morning.

“Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup>. – Up early to prepare for marching. Desired the Colonel to leave the women behind, according to his promise, especially those of bad character. Accordingly they were ordered to be paraded, and the Major had orders to leave such as he saw fit behind; but when this came to be done, one of the officers pleaded for one, and another for another, saying that they could wash, &c., so that few were left of a bad character, and these would not stay but followed us that night and kept with us.

“Friday and Saturday. – Crossed the river by batteaux, officers and men. then started to march in seven divisions, Indian file, instantly expecting an attack. Before starting had prayer and exhortation.

“Sabbath, 4<sup>th</sup>. – One of the batteaux which had on it a cannon was upset, which occasioned a great deal of labour, and what profane swearing was there. If I stay in the camp my ears are greeted with profane oaths, and if I go out to shun it, I am in danger of the enemy-what a dilemma is this? But my eyes would be toward the Lord.

“Monday. – Marched twelve or fifteen miles, and saw many traces of the enemy as near at hand. That night under cover of darkness we recrossed the river in batteaux, the Colonel and myself in the first division.

“Tuesday. – The Colonel and Captain Shippen went out in a boat, and from the river saw five Indians in the Fork, and with a glass, saw others skulking on the hills. After breakfast and prayers, marched and reached Shamokin about 10 o'clock and immediately set about securing ourselves by a fascine breast-work, fixed our swivels and blind bushes, mounted some of our cannons as well as we could. The situation is fine.

“Wednesday. – The batteaux having been unloaded were sent down to Halifax for the remainder of the stores, under an escort commanded by Lieut. Davis, who was advised to encamp on the Islands to prevent surprise by the enemy, signs of whom were seen in every direction.

“Sabbath, 9<sup>th</sup>. – The camp was alarmed by the bellowing of the cattle, and it was supposed the Indians were driving them off, and a surprise was expected. Two parties were sent out, which recovered eleven of the twenty cattle, but saw no Indians. This postponed preaching until afternoon.

“Monday. – Capt. Young, the paymaster, arrived from Philadelphia, under an escort of forty men from Halifax, and with alarming accounts from the Governor about the Indians high up the East branch.

“Sabbath, the 18<sup>th</sup>. – Some alarms of Indians, and the going off of Capt. Lloyd's detachment, made a sermon later than usual, and but few of the officers attended. Was enabled to bear a solemn testimony for God against sin and vice in general, and particularly that so common amongst us.

“Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>. – This morning very early the scouts, which consisted of about 100 men, dressed like the Indians, some being blacked, other painted, crossed the river into the Fork, in order to go toward the West, with ten day's provisions; thus by taking the Indians in their own way, hoped to be able

to beat them in their turn. Was grieved that they seemed to have little regard for the blessing of God, which alone can make them successful. Had an inclination to go with them, but they did not seem very desirous of it, and the Colonel thought it best for me to stay, so I took this as a hint of Providence.

“Sabbath, July 25<sup>th</sup>. – Preached twice today-most of the officers attended as well the men. Was enabled to speak with freedom and power. Two men arrived today from Philadelphia with a letter that France had declared was against England on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May.

“Monday, 26<sup>th</sup>. – The Colonel let me know that if I had a mind to go home and see my family, he would grant me leave by a furlough to go with the batteaux to Harris’.”

Taken from the “History of the County of Dauphin”