

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN NEVILLE

1731 - 1803

By Rev. Richard W. Davies

It is appropriate to observe the milestone anniversaries of the living and the dead. this is the privilege of history. We take note in 2003 of the 200th anniversary of the death of an early member of Old St. Luke's Church.

John Neville was born in Price William (now Fauquier) County, Virginia, July 26, 1731. In 1755 he married Winifred Oldham, just before he served with George Washington in the skirmish against the French, at the location today named Jumonville, just north of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. This was the beginning of the French and Indian War. He then served under Gen. Edward Braddock in the unsuccessful attack against the French at Fort Duquesne. In 1755, Winifred gave birth to a son, Presley, in the family home in Winchester, Virginia.

In Winchester, as a neighbor of George Washington, John began his dream of being a significant landowner. He was Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, and a Vestryman of the Episcopal Church. A daughter Amelia was born in 1763, the same year the French and Indian War ended. The Neville family lost three additional female children.

In 1775, the Virginia Provincial Council sent John, then a Colonel, to command Ft. Dunmore, which was the deserted Ft. Pitt, and renamed by Governor Dunmore to honor himself. Neville built the first log house beside Chartiers Creek, naming it Woodville. He remained at the Fort until 1777. John and his son Presley served in the American Revolution until being captured in 1780. The Woodville residence was expanded in 1781.

In 1783, John was brevetted Brigadier General by the Continental Congress. He served in the Superior Executive Council of Pennsylvania. By Virginia Certificate, John owned 400 acres at Woodville. He represented Washington County to ratify the U.S. Constitution. In 1787, the Church of England was reconstituted in the new United States as the Episcopal Church. The mansion at Bower Hill was built. John was a neighbor of the Col. William Lea family. We believe that the Lea and Neville families held Christian devotions in each other's homes. In 1790, they led the call to build a frame church on Lea's land, named St. Luke's, and with a resident clergyman.

In 1794, Washington called Neville to be the Inspector of Revenue and to collect the excise tax on distilled spirits. The result was the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion, and hatred was heaped on Neville by anti-federalists farmers. Neville moved to Pittsburgh in 1794, and to Neville Island in 1801. Winifred died in 1797. At John's death, July 29, 1803, (click [HERE](#) to see his tombstone) he was buried in land donated by John Penn in 1787 as a church site, where the second Trinity Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh was built on Sixth Avenue in 1825. He was moved to Allegheny Cemetery in 1900 when the Oliver Building was built on a portion of the burial ground.

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