

DAVID STEEL + SURVEYOR

Capt. David Steel is the surveyor 'of good reputd' sent by Gen. Bouquet from Fort Pitt in 1765 to establish a British garrison on Chartiers Creek. He chose the promontory over the Creek where Old St. Lukes stands today. In 1774 he was in the militia at Ft. Pitt.

He 'look the usual oaths to his Majestie's Person and Government, (The King of England), and was commissioned on February 22, 1775 Ensign of Pittsburgh and its Dependencies. He was Surveyor of the Highway, and in 1776 a deputy sheriff of the Court of West Augusta County, colony of Virginia (which in 1778 became Yohogania County, later to become Washington County, PA.). Up to 1786 'Parish" and "County" were synonymous and a Vestryman had both civil and church responsibilities under the Established Church policy in the colony of Virginia, which then included Pittsburgh. In 1779 he became Deputy Surveyor. He served with well-known men such as William Lea, Nathan Couch, Oliver Miller and John Neville.

His military career included serving in the Pioneers (Army Engineers) under Col. Isaac Cox in 1776 to build blockhouses and forts near Holiday's Cove along the Ohio River. He enlisted in the 13th Virginia West Augusta Regiment, Continental Line, on December 6, 1776, under Col. William Russell. He was part of the guard for the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. In the battle of Germantown, he took command of a Regiment when a Colonel was wounded. We know that on March 1, 1778, he rendezvoused at Cox's Station under Cols. Cox and John Canon, and he built additional forts. He served under Gen. Lachlan McIntosh until his retirement on September 30, 1778.

The family owned several tracts of land, including one on Chartiers Creek near the Ohio River at McKees Rocks, and another tract in Peters Township (before Allegheny County was erected in 1789) named "Steel's Discovery" near the confluence of Toms Run and Chartiers Creek. His neighbors included Daniel South, Presley and John Neville, across the Creek from St. Luke's Church. The 1790 census showed that "1 free white male of 16 years and upward, 2 free white males under 16 years, and 3 free white females" resided in the home. There were no slaves. On April 27, 1818 he applied for a military pension, which was granted. David died 10 months later.

David married Jane Welsh (Welch, date unknown) in Philadelphia and they gave birth to Elizabeth (who married William Montgomery), and David. Another son Thomas (1788-1838) married Elizabeth (1775-1827), who gave birth to Jane, wife of Samuel Nixon, and these four are buried in Old St. Luke's Burial Ground. David and Jane also bore Adeline (wife of Ralph Shirley), Elizabeth (wife of George Eckard), Mary Anne (wife of John Eyman), and Thomas Wesley Steel.

David, born September 6, 1749, died February 4, 1819 and he was buried in Old St. Luke's Burial Ground. His epitaph "This world's a farce, And all things show it; I once thought so, but now I know it" is reputed to be from John Gay who wrote *The Beggar's Opera*. His wife Jane died May 10, 1820 (burial site unknown). Also known to be buried at Old St. Luke's are Elijah Steel 1818-1840 and David Steel 1823-1849.

(In 1915, the D.A.R. placed a tablet on the Oliver Avenue exterior wall of Trinity Cathedral and the Presbyterian Church to honor officers of the Colonial and Revolutionary armies. Capt. David Steel is Included. We thank Charles H. Nixon, Catherine Brown and Lynne Wohleber for their research assistances.)

David Steels Will

In the Name of God. Amen. I, David Steel of St. Clair Township and County of Allegheny, being weak in body but sound in my faculties of mind and understanding do make this my last will and testament.

1. I bequeath my soul to God from whence it came and my body to the grave there to rest to that day (of) resurrection.
2. I do will and bequeath to my wife Jean (Jane) Steel all and singular my goods and chattles of every kind to support her in

her old age. Also my accounts and sums of money due to me either from private individuals or the United States to her to use in her lifetime as she sees proper and at her death to be given for the use of those who used her best in her lifetime.

Given under my hand and seal this twenty-ninth day of December 1818.

(Will filed February 19, 1819)

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