

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

BENJAMIN PIERCEALL

of Hampshire County, Virginia, and Washington County, Pennsylvania

This chapter has been in part deleted. See Note, page 1041.

SECTION 1.

BENJAMIN PIERCEALL, son of Job Pearsall, Chapter 48, Section 1; resided in Hampshire County, Virginia, and Washington County, Pennsylvania; married Rebecca Babb, daughter of Jacob Babb. The Babbs came from Goshen Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Children:—

1. John Peirsol. Chapter 49, Section 2.
2. Sampson Peirsol. Chapter 50, Section 1.
3. Benjamin Pearsall. Chapter 51, Section 1.
4. Samuel Pearceall. Chapter 49, Section 11.

The Indian war which followed upon the close of the French and Indian War was at an end in 1766 and this closed a period of hostilities which had lasted during a period of twelve years. Immediately upon the termination of danger from Indian depredations the frontier of the Northern Neck of Virginia advanced along the Braddock road towards Pittsburgh and the settlements began to multiply in western Pennsylvania. Probably not less than fifty houses constituted the town of Pittsburgh at the commencement of 1774. From Fort Pitt far up the Monongahela and along many of its branches were settlements. Upon the eastern tributaries of the Ohio and down that stream for more than a hundred miles, were to be seen cabins of frontiersmen but not a single settler had yet ventured across that river. Small cultivated fields broke in on the monotony of the wilderness for a short distance up the east side of the Allegheny from the forks, while toward the mountains Forbes' road, or the road by Fort Ligonier over the mountains to Bedford, was, in general, the northern limit of civilized habitations. No sooner had these settlements begun than there came about a conflict between Virginia and Pennsylvania concerning their common boundary west of the Youghiogheny.

Pittsburgh had become the center of the Indian trade, and of those who came out many began to take up lands, more especially along the military routes, in the valleys of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny, and in the vicinity of Pittsburgh. The Ohio Company, too, revived its claim, and settlers moved on to the territory embraced within its grant. In general it may be said that the settlers were, for the most part, from Virginia, while the Indian traders were Pennsylvanians; and that while it was to the interest of the former to drive the natives back, exterminate or get rid of them by any means, and the more summary the better, the latter wished, on the contrary, to cultivate friendly relations with them. This gave rise to a conflict of interests; and, though the Virginians seemed to have the better of it in the possession of the lands, the Pennsylvanians held the center of trade and

population with its celebrated fort, which commanded the water courses, a matter of the greatest importance in those early days.

Major Edmondson, who commanded the little garrison of Fort Pitt, received orders from the commander-in-chief, in October, 1772, to dismantle the fort and withdraw. There at once started a condition of civil warfare with the Virginians on one side and opposed to them were the traders and Indians. It is of course well known that the dispute between the states was finally settled by continuing Mason and Dixon's line westward for the full five degrees of longitude and recognizing the Virginia titles when they were older than the Pennsylvania warrants. [History of Allegheny County, page 62.]

Benjamin Pearsall was among those who came from Hampshire County, Virginia, and settled in the country south of the forks of the Ohio but west of the Monongahela. He located on Chartiers Creek in what is now Washington County, Pennsylvania, near Fromans Fort. Colonel Aeneas Mackay and others wrote to Joseph Shippen, secretary to the governor of Pennsylvania, from Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774, that since our memorial to his honor the governor on the 25 of June, accompanied by some notes, there has several occurrences of so extraordinary a nature happened that we hope no apology is necessary for giving you this trouble. The traders who were coming by land are all come in safe. Captain Whiteyes is returned with the strongest assurances of friendship from the Shawanees, Delawares, Wyandottes and Cherokees with whom he had been trading on our behalf. Upon his return he found his house broken open by the Virginians and about thirty pounds worth of his property taken which was divided and sold by the robbers at one Fromans Fort on Chartiers Creek. [On the historical map of Pennsylvania this fort is set down as having been located opposite to Canonsburg.]

The Pennsylvania authorities unfortunately were slow in attending to the defense of the traders so they took the matter of reprisal into their own hands and stirred up the Indians against this particular party of Virginians. It happened that the Indians did not discriminate between the peaceable settlers and the guerilla-like partisans of Virginia. To the Indians all Virginians were equally guilty. Hence one day when Benjamin Pearsall was working in the field with his grandson Jacob a band of Indians came suddenly upon them from the cover of the underbrush and while Jacob hurried to the house for assistance his grandfather stood his ground against the red men. Although he killed several of them they were too many for him and before his sons could come to his relief he had been killed and scalped. The family tradition is that his granddaughter, Anne, rode bareback with her hair streaming down her back to warn the neighbors of the Indian outbreak. [Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 4, page 540. Pioneer Forts of Pennsylvania, page 427.]

SECTION 2.

JOHN PEIRSOL, son of Benjamin Pierceall, Chapter 49, Section 1; resided in Washington County, Pennsylvania; married Sarah Custard, daughter of George Custard and sister of Noah Custard of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. They were Shenandoah Valley folks having settled quite early in Rockingham County, Virginia. Children:—

1. Jacob Peirsol. Chapter 49, Section 3.
2. Anne Peirsol.
3. Rebecca Peirsol.

The Pennsylvania Archives, disclose:—Washington County Rangers of the Frontier, 1778-1783, John Parcell.

Tax List for Mifflin Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, 1791, John Pierceall. Washington County Militia depreciation pay Continental Line John Piersall. Soldiers of the Revolution, John Pearsall, Private. John Peirsol First Corporal, Captain G. Wigton's Company, 18th Section of Riflemen, commanded by Colonel Thomas Humphrey, located at Camp Dupont November 12, 1814. John Peirsol served in Captain Hood's Company which was part of the forces recruited in 1782 in the counties of Allegheny, Westmoreland and Washington for a special expedition against the Indians. County of Washington, Company of Captain Zadok Wright, Militia of the Fifth class, ordered rendezvous June 14, 1782, ordered out for the campaign August 19, 1782, and in 1784 in the Seventh Class of Captain James Archer's Company. 4th Battalion Militia, Allegheny County, 7th Company, Tuesday May 1, 1792, Ensign John Persall.

John Pearsall served in the company of Captain Andrew Hood in the expedition under Colonel William Crawford against Sandusky. This was part of the old warfare between the settlers of the country west of the Alleghenies and the Indians of the six nations and their allies. The outbreak of the Revolution had found the frontier pushed back to the country adjacent to the forks of the Ohio River and the burden of holding these Indians in check was placed on the inhabitants of this section which inter alia included the counties of Allegheny, Washington and Westmoreland in Pennsylvania. With these frontiersmen it was really a hard and continuous war of self preservation. The Sandusky campaign began in a series of depredations in March and April 1782 upon the frontiers of Ohio, Washington, Youghioghany and Westmoreland Counties, which means the country from the Kanawha north to the lakes and in very much the same manner as had been the constant practice of the western Indians ever since the commencement of the war between the United States and Great Britain.

In consequence of these predatory invasions the principal military and militia officers of the above named counties tried every method in their power to set on foot an expedition against the towns of the Wyandot Indians which they found they could effect in no other way than by giving all possible encouragement to volunteers. The plan proposed and which brought the force together, was as follows:—Every man furnishing himself with a horse, a gun and one month's provisions, should be exempt from two tours of militia duty. Likewise every one who had been plundered by the Indians should, if the plunder can be found at their towns, have it again, proving it to be his property, and all horses lost on the expedition by unavoidable accident were to be replaced by horses taken in the enemy's country.

The time appointed for the rendezvous or the general meeting of the volunteers was fixed to be on the twentieth of May, 1782 and the place the old Mingo Indian town on the west side of the Ohio River about forty miles below Fort

Pitt by land and about seventy-five by water. Colonel William Crawford was chosen to command the expedition. The volunteers had not all crossed the river before the twenty-fourth and they then distributed themselves into eighteen companies among which was that of Captain Andrew Hood in which John Pearsall joined as a private. The captains were chosen by vote. The force was then organized with one colonel commandant and five majors. There were four hundred and sixty-five that voted. The force however never became a military unit and each individual acted more or less as it pleased himself. There were some companies which became military units but they could not act as they might have done owing perhaps to the inability of the commander to secure the cooperation of all the forces in his plans.

They began their march on Saturday, May twenty-fifth, 1782, making an almost due west course and on the twenty-ninth they reached the Old Moravian town upon the Muskingum about sixty miles from the Ohio River. The march had been too rapid at the start and some of the men who had lost their horses on the night preceding started back home. How many there were thus forced to return is not disclosed by the records. The march continued and on Tuesday, June fourth the column arrived at the spot where the old Indian town of Sandusky formerly stood. The inhabitants had moved eighteen miles further down the creek nearer the lower Sandusky. This caused the Americans considerable surprise as neither of their guides had been aware of the removal. They therefore concluded that there were no Indian towns nearer than the lower Sandusky which was at least forty miles distant. This put a damper on the whole expedition and a number of the men expressed a desire to return, some of them alleging they had only five days provisions left, upon which the field officers and captains determined in council to proceed that afternoon and no longer. Just as the council had decided to close the campaign there arrived a messenger from a scouting party of light horse, who communicated the intelligence that they had seen a large body of Indians running toward them. It was not long before an engagement ensued in which the advantage was with the Americans. Night coming on found both sides holding their own with the Indians receiving heavy reinforcements. The action continued all of the next day, the Americans remaining in their entrenched position. Early on this day the field officers assembled and agreed, as the enemy were every moment increasing and the Americans had already a number wounded, to retreat that night. The whole body was to form in three lines keeping the wounded in the center. The casualties had been four killed and twenty-three wounded. Just as the troops were about to form several guns were fired by the enemy whereupon the men became alarmed and said that their intention to retreat had been discovered by the Indians who were firing alarm guns. Upon which those in front hurried off and the rest immediately followed and it became a case of every one taking care of himself. Notwithstanding the irregularity of the retreat there were but few casualties among those who remained with the body of the troops who were regular Indian fighters and who with competent officers should have made a better showing against the red men. The records show that John Pearsall remained with the expedition until the end and that he was carried on the records as having given full and satisfactory service. [Pennsylvania Archives, Sixth series, Vol. 2, page 363.]

SECTION 3.

JACOB PEIRSOL, son of John Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 2; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, in the village of Harmony; married Elizabeth Savage. She is said to be the daughter of George Savage of Chester County, Pennsylvania. The family originally came from Maryland where Edward Savage and William Savage were in Dorchester County, before 1672. Children:—

1. Mary Ann Peirsol, married George Hinds. Child:—*1. Naomi Hinds.
2. John Peirsol, born February 13, 1801. Chapter 49, Section 4.
3. Samuel Peirsol. Chapter 49, Section 8.
4. Sarah Peirsol, married Jesse Moor.
5. George Peirsol, married — Donaldson.
6. Elizabeth Peirsol, married Samuel Cookson.
7. Ruth Peirsol, married Joseph Bannon.
8. Sampson Peirsol. Chapter 49, Section 9.
9. Jacob Peirsol. Chapter 49, Section 10.

The Pennsylvania Archives disclose:—Receipt Roll of a company of Militia commanded by Captain Armstrong Grennon of the First Battalion, 26th Regiment of Pennsylvania Militia, commanded by Major Andrew Jenkins, doing duty at Erie under the orders of Major General Meade, dated February, 1814. Commencing on the 15 of February and ending 22 March, 1814. Jacob Peirsol, Private. And also the receipt roll for the said pay signed by Jacob Peirsol.

SECTION 4.

JOHN PEIRSOL, son of Jacob Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 3; born February 13, 1801; died June 5, 1875; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania; married May 26, 1825, Naomi Mace, daughter of Jacob Mace and his wife Elizabeth Heath; born July 24, 1801; died February 27, 1883. Children:—

1. Elizabeth Peirsol, born February 26, 1826; married Detmer B. Shanor.
2. Mary Ann Peirsol, born September 1, 1827; married first, James Burns; married second, Phillip Lides.
3. Sarah Peirsol, born September 6, 1829; married William Humes.
4. Margaret Peirsol, born August 6, 1831; married James Noonan.
5. Jacob Babb Peirsol, born May 1, 1833. Chapter 49, Section 5.
6. Samuel Heath Peirsol, born April 13, 1835; died unmarried April, 1852.
7. Sampson Harrison Peirsol, born September 30, 1836; married Mary Henderson.
8. George Wesley Peirsol, born November 25, 1839. Chapter 49, Section 6.
9. John Nelson Peirsol, born November 25, 1841; married Margaret J. Parks. Children:—*1. Mary Peirsol, married Sheldon. *2. Ida Peirsol. *3. Myrtle Peirsol, married Davenport. *4. Iva Peirsol. *5. Harry Peirsol.
10. James Kastor Peirsol, born September 21, 1843. Chapter 49, Section 7.

SECTION 5.

JACOB BABB PEIRSOL, son of John Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 4; born May 1, 1833; died February 19, 1913; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, Lenntown, Nebraska, and Lineville, Wayne County, Iowa; married Feb-

ruary 26, 1860, Eliza Pieschy Smith of Logansport, Indiana; born 1839; died February 18, 1912. Children:—

1. Naomi Sarah Peirsol, born November 13, 1861; died August 5, 1863.
2. James Nelson Peirsol, born November 28, 1863; married February 23, 1893, Ida B. Linney; born May 13, 1873.
3. Margaret Peirsol, born April 19, died September 24, 1871.
4. John Calvin Peirsol, born April 19, 1871; married 1905, Mary Willsey, born 1876.
5. William George Peirsol, born November 16, 1868.
6. Erwin Harrison Peirsol, born December 18, 1873; died April 17, 1874.
7. Jacob Stanley Peirsol, born March 31, 1875.
8. Eliza Cornelia Peirsol, born May 12, 1880.
9. Mettie May Peirsol, born November 7, 1882; died January 23, 1895.

SECTION 6.

GEORGE WESLEY PEIRSOL, son of John Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 4; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, Wood County, West Virginia, and Courtland, Trumbull County, Ohio; married first, Agnes Jackson; married second, Catherine Melissa Thompson. Children of first marriage:—

1. Lulu Peirsol, married Boales.
2. Jennie Peirsol, married Aiken.
3. Herbert Jackson Peirsol, resided at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania; married November 25, 1895, Lillie May Bryer.
Children of second marriage:—
4. Edna Peirsol, married Willard.
5. Lillian Peirsol.
6. Grace Peirsol.

SECTION 7.

JAMES KASTOR PEIRSOL, son of John Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 4; born September 21, 1843; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, Oakland, Alameda County, California, and Fort Bragg, Mendocino County, California; married May 30, 1867, Marietta Cope; born December 11, 1844; died October 26, 1884. Children:—

1. Howard John Peirsol, born October 26, 1868; married 1911, Mamie L. Little, who died August, 1916.
2. Frank Clayton Peirsol, born October 31, 1870; married July 23, 1897, Edith Kinzie.
3. Alice May Peirsol, born August 30, 1874.
4. Florence Naomi Peirsol, born January 18, 1881; married July 5, 1906, Fred M. Weber.

It is an unusually distinguished honor to be placed upon the Government Medal of Honor Roll. The act which brought this distinction to James Kastor Peirsol undoubtedly ranks among the bravest and most reckless recorded in the history of the war with the South.

During the first years of the rebellion James K. Peirsol was attending college at Mount Union, Ohio. After the disastrous peninsular campaign of McClellan in 1862 emergency men were called for and James K. Peirsol was among the first to enlist in a company of college students, and served three months in the mountains of West Virginia, taking part in all the movements of the 86th Regiment O. V. I. At the expiration of this service he returned to school, but in February, 1864, he enlisted again in Company F, 13th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, as a private and was at once promoted to sergeant. Their regiment was assigned December 24, 1864, to the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Cavalry Corps, when it took up duty of picketing and scouting on the left of the Army of the Potomac and taking part in the battles of Stoney and Hatchers Run February 5-7, 1865.

On the afternoon of April 5, 1865, when at Farms Cross Roads, General Davies' Brigade having captured a wagon train and a battery of artillery, the enemy made desperate efforts to retake the battery and pressed the little brigade so hard that the 3rd Brigade went to his assistance. The enemy continued to push this combined force back towards Jetersville, when the 13th Ohio Cavalry was ordered to make a charge. The Confederate cavalry were in line advancing through an open field, their left on a wagon road that ran parallel with the Richmond and Danville railroad. Their right was well up toward Flat Creek, a tributary of the Appomattox River, while their infantry was coming down from the direction of the Amelia courthouse. The 13th Ohio Cavalry deployed into the open field, its right flank moving up the wagon road. James K. Peirsol was at this time acting as sergeant-major of the regiment.

Amid a hail of bullets and yells of the enemy Colonel Clark's ringing voice called Draw sabres! Forward 13th! Charge! With a cheer the boys dashed at the enemy's line bearing it back into and beyond a piece of woods from which it had emerged. Several rallies were made by the enemy but the 13th with sabre and pistol pressed on the disorganized line, running down and capturing many.

Sergeant Peirsol while getting through the timber captured a Johnny and sent him to the rear. Then seeing a group of the enemy, one of whom carried their battle flag, fleeing over a fence, Sergeant Peirsol together with three other comrades started after them. Two of the Union men could not keep up the pace and fell behind. The other sergeant, Samuel Bond of Company B, lost control of his horse in jumping the fence that the Confederates had just cleared. This left the field to Sergeant Peirsol except that Hiram Platt, a lieutenant of the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry, had obliqued over from the wagon road. The enemy observing their infantry coming to their aid, as they reached the brow of the hill, halted. Sergeant Peirsol was now almost alongside of the flag-bearer and as he dashed up the hill the group of Confederates was yet in great confusion and did not seem to realize that a Yankee was so near. A sharp quick decisive encounter ensued between Sergeant Peirsol and the flag-bearer and in less time than it takes to tell the flag of the 2nd Alabama Cavalry was in the hands of Sergeant Peirsol who, shaking it at the Confederates and with a yell, spurred his horse down the hill to gain the cover of the woods before an attempt was made to recapture the flag. The confusion and excitement of the enemy were so great that although a lively fusillade was kept up they all missed Sergeant Peirsol and he got away safely.

SECTION 8.

SAMUEL PEIRSOL, son of Jacob Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 3; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania; married Hannah Cheney. Children:—

1. Ann Peirsol (the records of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Archives call her Elizabeth), married Thomas Boggs.
2. Mary S. Peirsol, married William Vezy.
3. Hannah Peirsol, married Daniel Campton.
4. Sarah Ruth Peirsol, married William Cochran.
5. William C. Peirsol.
6. Nancy Jane Peirsol, married James Cotton.
7. Jacob Peirsol, died in the army 1861-64.

SECTION 9.

SAMPSON PEIRSOL, son of Jacob Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 3; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania; married Nancy Allison. Children:—

1. William Peirsol, married Martha A. ——. See Y, this Section.
2. James B. Peirsol, married Margaret ——. See Z, this Section.
3. Annie Peirsol.
4. Elizabeth Peirsol, married James Wordman.
5. Amanda Peirsol, unmarried.

SECTION 10.

JACOB PEIRSOL, son of Jacob Peirsol, Chapter 49, Section 3; resided in Beaver County, Pennsylvania; married Eliza J. Hill. Children:—

1. Sarah Peirsol, married Frank McCracken.
2. Nancy Peirsol.
3. Elizabeth Peirsol, married John Brewer.
4. George Peirsol.
5. William J. Peirsol.
6. Samuel Peirsol.
7. Hiram Peirsol.
8. Mary Peirsol.
9. Cynthia Peirsol.

SECTION 11.

SAMUEL PEARCEALL, son of Benjamin Pierceall, Chapter 49, Section 1, born circa 1765; resided in Washington County, Pennsylvania; married ——. Child:—

1. Samuel Piersall. See Z, this Section.

Samuel Pearceall was a private in Captain Cunningham's Company 1782-85 and served on the frontier. A return of the Militia officers of the Fourth Regiment of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Monday, August 19, 1793, gives the name of Samuel Pearceall as Captain. (Pennsylvania Archives.) The Pension Rolls of pensioners under the act of 1831 for the relief of Revolutionary soldiers disclosed the name of Samuel Piersol who served in the Pennsylvania Indian spy service as living in 1834 in Beaver County, Pennsylvania, and being at this time 69 years of age.

- Z. SAMUEL PIERSALL, born 1798 (aged forty July 19, 1838); died September 2, 1865; married first, Anna Miller, March 19, 1823. He married second, May 18, 1837, Mary Ann White. She was born October 13, 1821. Children of first marriage:—
1. Jeremiah Piersel, born July 19, 1825; died September 1, 1878.
 2. Harriet Piersel, born December 16, 1827; died March 20, 1865.
 3. Anliza Piersel, born May 22, 1829; died June 16, 1906.
 4. Levi B. Piersel, born January 23, 1831; died September 5, 1904; married July 8, 1860, Isabella Houghton who was born at Vernon, Vermont, March 12, 1838; died October 10, 1903. Children:—*1. Everett Samuel Piersel, born October 1, 1864; died January 14, 1907; married July 31, 1900, Emma Elizabeth Knollman, daughter of Henry Knollman and his wife Charlotte Kahle of Cincinnati, Ohio. *2. Alba Chambers Piersel, born November 25, 1867; married January 1, 1896, Blanche Smith, born May 16, 1865.
 5. Amanda Piersel, born April 14, 1832; married February 12, 1889, William Pollock.
 6. Lusetta Piersel, born April 17, 1834; died March 3, 1837.
 7. Samuel Piersel, born March 6, 1836; died September 21, 1836.
Children of second marriage:—
 8. Sarah Melvina Piersel, born March 31, 1838.
 9. Joseph Newton Piersel, born June 20, 1840; died 1912; married first, Elizabeth Baker; married second, Rebecca ——. Children:—*1. Myrtle Piersol. *2. William Piersol. *3. Estelle Piersol. *4. James S. Piersol.
 10. Mary Jane Piersel, born September 15, 1843; died May 23, 1899; unmarried.
 11. John Piersel, born March 29, 1845; died April 1, 1898.
 12. Hannah Ann Piersel, born June 18, 1848; died July 25, 1848.