## Pennsylvania: Clement Biddle

Born on May 10, 1740 in Philadelphia, PA, to a devout Quaker family, Clement Biddle appeared to be destined for life as a successful businessman working in his father's shipping business. <sup>89</sup> However in the early 1760s, despite his Quaker upbringing, Biddle raised a Pennsylvania militia unit called the "Quaker Blues." Biddle and his unit fought a series of battles to defend a group of friendly Native Americans from the "Paxton Boys", a vigilante group of Western Pennsylvania settlers that emerged in response to Chief Pontiac's Revolt. When the threat posed by this group ended, Biddle returned to his father's shipping business. <sup>90</sup>



After the battle of Trenton, Clement Biddle was the American officer who accepted the swords from the defeated Hessian officers Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Almost a year after the American Revolution began, Biddle raised a second company of Quaker soldiers and was rewarded by being given the position of Deputy Quartermaster of "the flying army", a mobile

reserve unit that consisted of soldiers from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. <sup>91 92</sup> As an officer in the regiment, Biddle participated in many of the major battles during Washington's 1776 New York Campaign. Additionally, Biddle was present at some of the major battles around Philadelphia in 1777, the encampment at Valley Forge (where he was the Commissary General), and the battle of Monmouth. After briefly retiring from the army, Biddle ended the war as the quartermaster general for the Pennsylvania militia with the rank of colonel. <sup>93</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Pennsylvania: Clement Biddle," U.S. marshals Service, last estimated release October 21, 2019,

https://www.usmarshals.gov/history/firstmarshals/biddle.htm. (Accessed October 21, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup>Rossiter Johnson, "Clement Biddle," in *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans* (Boston: American Biographic Society, 1906), pg. 308.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Johnson, The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans, 308.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> John Allen Miller, "The Flying Camp Battalion," Emmetsburg Area Historical Society, last estimated release November 1, 2019, <a href="http://www.emmitsburg.net/archive\_list/articles/history/rev\_war/flying\_camp\_battalion.htm">http://www.emmitsburg.net/archive\_list/articles/history/rev\_war/flying\_camp\_battalion.htm</a>. (Accessed November 1, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Johnson, The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans, 308.



Transcription of the 1790 census schedule with Clement Biddle's name and profession at the bottom

In the years immediately following the American Revolution, Biddle sought to grow his own personal wealth, while also working as the marshal of the Admiralty Courts. The Admiralty Courts were in the judicial branch of government created by the Continental Congress prior to the adoption of the U.S. Constitution. 94 In this position, Biddle gained experience that helped him as a U.S. marshal.<sup>95</sup> In addition to his national duties, Biddle worked as local notary and in a few other different capacities for Philadelphia's Court of Common Pleas. 96 Finally, Biddle pursued various private business opportunities, including the opportunity to act as George Washington's personal business manager in the Northern part of the United States. 97 Collectively, Biddle's legal experience and personal connection to President Washington likely factored into his appointment as the first U.S. marshal of Pennsylvania.<sup>98</sup>

As such, Biddle led the enumeration of Pennsylvania's population for the 1790 census. In an effort to complete the 1790 census, within the deadline set by Congress, Biddle deputized 32 people to serve as his

assistants. 99 Despite this large work force, Biddle did not complete his enumeration of Pennsylvania's population for more than a year, finally submitting their results on August 19, 1791.<sup>100</sup> Much like in New York, Biddle strayed from the instructions and his team collected occupation data on heads of household in Philadelphia, if the individual spoke to the enumerator or had a permanent job within the city limits. 101 102 It is unclear why Biddle's deputies included a limited amount of economic data in Pennsylvania's 1790 census schedule. Perhaps, Biddle was following a special set of instructions from Pennsylvania's Governor Thomas Mifflin (December 21, 1790 - December 17, 1799), although there is no contemporary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Pennsylvania: Clement Biddle." <sup>95</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> "From George Washington to Clement Biddle, 3 December 1787," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-05-02-0423. (Accessed October 21, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Pennsylvania: Clement Biddle."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> "Assistant marshals for the state [Pennsylvania]]: 1790," in Heads of Families/1790/A Century of Population Growth New York & Pennsylvania, 3:9.

<sup>100 &</sup>quot;Pennsylvania". Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States: according to "An act providing for the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States," passed March the first, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, pg. 45. PDF. Retrieved from Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/content/census/en/library/publications/1793/dec/number-of-persons.htm. (Accessed October 21, 2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> "Head of Family [Pennsylvania]: 1790/Philadelphia County continued," in Heads of Families/1790/A Century of Population Growth New York & Pennsylvania, pgs. 208-245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Alexander, John K. "Poverty, Fear, and Continuity," in The Peoples of Philadelphia: A History of Ethnic Groups and Lower-Class Life, 1790-1940, ed. Allen F. Davis & Mark H. Haller (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 16-17. Retrieved from

https://books.google.com/books?id=EUcxD | Ha38C&pg=PA13&source=gbs toc r&cad=3#v=onepage&g&f=false. (Accessed October 21, 2019).

evidence supporting this theory.<sup>103</sup> Alternatively, Biddle may have hoped to utilize the economic data he collected and his position a U.S. marshal to further his private business interests.<sup>104</sup> Regardless of Biddle's motivations for including the economic data, Pennsylvania's 1790 census schedule is unique because the census did not begin collecting economic data nationwide until 1810.

The final 1790 census tabulation noted that Philadelphia was the second largest city in the country, behind New York City, with a population of 28,522 people. Also, Pennsylvania was the second most populous state, behind Virginia, with a total population of 434,373 people.

After the census, Biddle had developed gout, which prevented him from chasing two fugitives at the behest of the Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson in 1792. <sup>107</sup> Furthermore, he was unimpressed with the minuscule compensation he received as a marshal. For these reasons, Biddle did not ask President Washington to renew his appointment when his four years expired. Instead, he returned to working in the private sector and spending time with his family. <sup>108</sup> Clement Biddle died in Philadelphia on July 14, 1814, when he was 74 years-old.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> W.S. Rossiter, "The First Census of the United States," pgs. 44-45.

estimated release September 29, 2019, <a href="https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-13-02-0351">https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-13-02-0351</a>. (Accessed October 21, 2019). [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series, vol. 13, 1 June–31 August 1793, ed. Christine Sternberg Patrick. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007, p. 529.]

105 "Pennsylvania", Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States: according to "An act providing for the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States," passed March the first, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, pg. 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Pennsylvania: Clement Biddle." <sup>108</sup> *Ibid*.