

Parshall Terry - V

Son of Jonathan Terry and Jemimah Parshall

Born August 8, 1734, near New London, Conn.; died at East Palmyra, New York, May 15, 1811, (Harvey's History of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.) The date of death seems to be wrong by one year, as in 1810 his son, Nathan, applied for administration papers at Ganandaiqua, New York, to settle the estate. The place of birth is in doubt, as there is evidence in family histories that, Jemimah Parshall Terry resided all her life in the vicinity of Southold, Long Island. The place of death has been questioned because of a sworn statement made at Terrytown, Pennsylvania, by Captain Jonathan Terry, son of Parshall, that his father "died among his friends in this place in a good old age." However, Jonathan was not talking especially about the place where his father died, but was denying false rumors which had found their way into print, to the effect that Parshall Terry was killed by his son, Parshall, jr. during the massacre of Forty Fort in July, 1778. Under these conditions, the term "this place" may have been loosely used. Terrytown may or may not have been definitely meant.

Parshall Terry was a tailor. It is said that he could make a coat for a man in a day and that he often did it for one dollar.

He was one of the proprietors and directors in the Connecticut-Susquehanna Purchase Company, whose object it was to settle the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania. In 1762, he and ninety-three others went into the Wyoming Valley, but they remained there only ten days. They returned to Wyoming Valley in May, 1763; their activities in this valley were opposed both by Indians and by the followers of William Penn, referred to as Pennanites. On October 15, 1763, the colony was attacked by the Indians and about twenty of the settlers were killed. This attack was a complete surprise as they had shortly before made a treaty with the Indians in which they had agreed to purchase the country. The attack was really a part of the Pontiac War of United States History.

It is related that Parshall Terry and his brother Nathaniel were in the field together when they were suddenly attacked by the Indians. Nathaniel was the first to observe the Indians and warned his brother. At the same time he was shot dead by an approaching Indian. Parshall, who was unarmed, secreted himself by a fallen log where he was concealed in a patch of tall grass or nettles and remained securely hidden, although the Indians passed several times within a few feet of him. Some years afterwards at a conference, Parshall met an Indian who told him that he was in the Wyoming attack, that he saw two men near each other, that he shot and killed one of them but the other one must have fallen into the river and drowned himself, or the Devil took him, for he (the Indian) had watched a long while and would have seen the other man had he been alive.

After this attack, the settlers left the Valley temporarily, but returned in 1769. This time they met with serious opposition from the Pennanites, which lasted several years before the Connecticut colony was finally settled in the Valley. During all of these struggles, Parshall Terry took active, energetic, go-ahead part and was especially hated by the Pennanites. Twice they seized him and carried him to Easton where they threw him into jail, but he managed to escape both times.

Parshall Terry built the first grist mills at Terrytown, Wyoming Valley. It is related that his son, Jonathan, drove rails in the hoofs of the family mare, and crossed the river on the ice to Wilkes-Barre. Here he had his mare shod, purchased millstones, packed them on a "jumper" and drove home on the ice. The trip required three days. Years afterwards this mill was known as "Grandpa Terry's little mill."

Parshall Terry I, is said to be the first to discover coal in Wyoming Valley. It is said that one day he was using a camp fire and had made a crude fire box out of some black stones which he gathered up. Later, after going to bed he got up to find that the "stones" were also burning. He sold his farm which contained one of the richest deposits of coal in the Valley, for a bull and a barrel of eels.

Parshall was one of the first settlers of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. He resided in Kingston township until about 1790, when he removed to Wyalusing, later to Terrytown in what is

now Bradford County; Pennsylvania. He was an elder in the First Presbyterian Church at Wyalusing. Services were held alternately at Wyalusing and Terrytown. In April, 1794, he made an affidavit in a law case in Circuit Court giving a brief account of the settlement in Wyoming Valley,

Parshall Terry was a private in the 24th Regiment, Connecticut Militia in 1778; and is named among the refugees at Forty Fort. He subsequently served as militiaman at Continental post in Wilkes-Barre under Col. Zebulon Butler. (Harvy's History of Wilkes-Barre -- note Vol. II, page 902).

In 1818 he deeded his holdings in Pennsylvania to his son Jonathan and daughter, Deborah, who had married John Horton, and went to East Palmyra, New York. It seems that all his family except Jonathan, and Deborah, had moved to Palmyra. Records of deeds show that he had considerable land holdings in and around East Palmyra, One purchase made was 950 acres, the deed to which was signed July 3, 1789. He was perhaps a land speculator.

Married (1) at Matituck, Long Island, May 15, 1755, Deborah Clark, born June 7, 1736, at Matituck; died at Stroudsbourgh, Pennsylvania, in July, 1778, during the flight from the battle and massacre of Wyoming Valley; daughter of William Clark of Matituck, and Brookhaven, Long Island, and his wife, Mary Reeves (maiden name) widow of John Benjamin. Married (2) Sarah Lee Horton, widow of Lieutenant Isreal Horton. She had eleven children, Their combined families numbered twenty-two. They had a private school in their home. Married (3) Bethia Wells, according to James P. Terry's record. Stuart T. Terry first records it thus, but later interlined a note which says "His third wife was Joana Moore of Southold. She married a Parshall who moved to Morrision, New Jersey, where he died. She moved to Orange County, New York, where they were married."