



By STAN GOES (Feature Editor)

The Letters Of George Washington

G. Washington

it will be recollected, occupies a prominent page in the early history of the Republic."

The first letter read as follows:

"Head Quarters, Oct. 21, 1777. SIR: From all the intelligence I have received I am persuaded the enemy are about to retreat from Philadelphia, despairing of getting up their shipping. I therefore desire you, after sending out necessary scouts, and satisfying yourself of their situation, to throw yourself down in their way, and in case of their actual retreating to harass their retreat to the utmost of your power. I shall at the same time advance and pursue with the utmost diligence, if the conjecture should prove true. Your obedt servant, G. WASHINGTON"

A second letter was written by Washington three days later, telling how rain had prevented "the detachment I wrote you about" from marching. The Revolutionary War leader ordered that "you will have all the roads leading over Schuylkill properly waylaid and secured," and added "I need not suggest the propriety of secrecy (sic) upon this occasion."

Washington also gave instructions for a possible "junction" with the forces of "Gen'l McDougal," and penned a postscript that receipt of the letter should be acknowledged "by the return of the express."

In addition to the letters from Washington, Gen. Potter allowed the little Fond du Lac newspaper to print a 1773 letter signed by Benjamin Stoddert, who later served as Secretary of the Navy from 1798 to 1801.

Another long document, titled "At a General Court

Martial Held near Cross Roads in Bucks County May 19th, 1778," also was published. The court martial was for a soldier named Christian Snider, charged with stealing from the Tories. Specifically, he was accused of taking a shirt and two pairs of stockings.

Found guilty, Snider was given "twenty-five lashes, well laid on, upon his bare back, in the presence of the Brigade."

Snider's commanding officer, charged with encouraging "plunder" and breaking up a house, also was found guilty. The court recommended that he be "cashiered" and "given over to the civil law."

WHO WAS Potter's grandfather, the man to whom the letters from Washington were written?

Local history books in Fond du Lac reveal nothing about the Potter family, although the General and his wife were from an impressive background. Research indicates that Potter was a grandson of Gen. James Potter, born in County Tyrone, Ireland in 1729, the son of John and Elizabeth Potter.

The Potters settled in Pennsylvania, and James Potter became a lieutenant colonel with the colonial forces. He rose to brigadier general during the Revolutionary War, fighting at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine and Germantown. By 1782 James Potter was a major general with the Pennsylvania Militia, and later a land speculator in that state. He died in 1789.

The ancestry of Fond du Lac's Gen. Potter unfortunately is clouded by another John Potter Jr., who died in Madison while serving as a member of the legislature. Data compiled in the Wisconsin Historical Collections also lists him as a descendant of Gen. James Potter of Revolutionary War fame.

Information that can be assembled about Fond du Lac's General Potter shows that he was a native of Pennsylvania, born in 1800, and that in 1823 he married Amella Burnside, the cousin of Ambrose Everett Burnside who was to gain national prominence as one of the leaders of the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War.

A son, James, was born of the marriage in 1825 in Bellefont, Pa. — and it seems natural to assume that John Potter named the boy after his famous grandfather who fought as a leader in Washington's Army. Two other sons, William and Thomas, also were born to the Potters and both went on to earn the title of "doctor."

John Potter reportedly was a cousin of Andrew Gregg Curtin who became governor of Pennsylvania, minister to Russia and served three terms in Congress. This connection, as well as acquaintanceship with other prominent Pennsylvanians, gave him more than ordinary prestige.

During the Mexican War, John Potter served with the Pennsylvania Militia and from that conflict carried the title of General. With Army service behind him, and at the age of 51, he brought his family to Fond du Lac in 1851.

He became the operator of a lumber mill, and also branched into politics. Potter was elected mayor of Fond du Lac in 1859, and from 1860 to 1862 served as county treasurer.

During this same era, on Feb. 13, 1856, James Potter married Eliza A. Root and they became parents of a daughter, Ellen, and a son, Henry Root Potter. The family homestead at this time was on Merrill Avenue, "near Main."

General Potter operated the Potter and Duchman Lumber Co., and James, who had worked with his father in the mill, later gained experience as a railroad agent.

When the Civil War began James Potter enlisted, serving with honor and earning a reputation for "daring deeds" on missions as a spy behind rebel lines. On some of his scouting excursions he reportedly mingled with Confederate troops in an attempt to gain useful military information. When the war ended he retained the rank of lieutenant in the Veterans' Reserve Corps.

GENERAL John Potter branched out as a lumberman, running mills in Menasha as well as Fond du Lac. He was regionally well known, and when he and his wife observed their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1873 friends made it a memorable occasion.

Less than a year later, however, when Mrs. Potter was visiting in Menasha, she suffered a stroke and died. The date was Aug. 27, 1874 and one Fond du Lac editor sadly noted: "How painful must have been the parting between these aged people."

Apparently Mrs. Potter had done some teaching in her younger days, for Editor Edward Beeson of the Fond du Lac Journal wrote that many men could look back with pleasure on the days when they were one of "Auntie Potter's boys." In his columns he called her "one of the noblest women who ever graced humanity."

General Potter died at the family home, 42 Fourth St., on Nov. 20, 1886, at the age of 86. Despite extremely bad weather, friends attended his funeral from other cities as well as Fond du Lac. Pallbearers were E. F. Moore, John Nichols, R. L. Morris and Alfred Robbins, with burial in Rienzi Cemetery.

The Fond du Lac Journal called him "esteemed as a gentleman of genial qualities, a respected member of society and an honest and honorable citizen."

Over the years it is not known what—if anything—happened to the letters Potter had from George Washington. Yet at least one of them remained with his son, James, who was to pass it on to his son, Henry.

Mrs. James Potter died Nov. 23, 1891 at the age of 63. Friends noted that "consumption" had kept her in poor health for many years. In addition to her husband, she was survived by her daughter, Mrs. Winthrop Scribner of Eldorado, and son, Henry.

James Potter died June 15, 1894 at the age of 68 after having come to Fond du Lac from Eldorado to attend a circus. He had been staying for several weeks with his daughter in Eldorado, and planned to make the return trip that night. While chatting with a friend near a saloon across from the railroad depot, he suffered a fatal heart attack.

The Potter name was to sparkle in Fond du Lac during succeeding years, however, with Henry Root Potter becoming a business leader and president of the old Commercial National Bank.

H. R. Potter—as he was called—had married the former Clementina B. Russell, a foster daughter of the Rt. Rev. J. H. Hobart Brown and his wife, on May 13, 1866. The Potters' only child, a son, Hamilton, died in infancy, and thereafter they lavished much attention on nieces and nephews.

During his career as a banker and businessman, Potter enjoyed telling of his father's participation in the Civil War and about the letter that his grandfather had passed on from George Washington.

Upon his death in 1931 the letter was mentioned again, and it seemed safe to assume that it was then the property of his widow. When she died in 1939, however, her belongings were carefully appraised for distribution of the estate to relatives.

There was mention of "keepsakes," but no specific reference to the Washington correspondence which, of course, would have grown in historical importance. The executor of the Potter estate could not recall that such a letter was ever acknowledged as being in existence.

And so the mystery remains.

WHERE ARE the missing letters written by George Washington to the grandfather of "General" John Potter, an early Fond du Lac settler? Nobody seems to know.

Yet in 1853 General Potter, who reportedly earned his military rank in the Mexican War, walked into the office of the Fond du Lac Fountain City Herald newspaper and offered them for publication. Editor Royal Buck ran the letters under the heading "Relics of Revolutionary Times" in the Jan. 4, 1853 edition.

Mention of at least one of the letters also was made as recently as May 13, 1931 in the Commonwealth Reporter obituary of a descendant, H. R. Potter, a prominent Fond du Lac banker.

The story telling of Potter's death stated: "One of Mr. Potter's most cherished possessions was a letter written to his great grandfather, Brig. Gen. John Potter, by Gen. George Washington."

The letter was not mentioned in the will of Potter's widow, who died Nov. 6, 1939, and an attorney who was close to the family says he has no recollection of such a letter existing.

When the Fountain City Herald published the letters in 1853 they were introduced with the following editorial comment: "Through the politeness of Gen. Potter of this city, we are permitted to publish the following relics of the 'times that tried men's souls.' They were found among the papers belonging to Mr. P's Grandfather, to whom the letters of Gen. Washington were addressed, and who,

'They Think They're People'

Women Puzzling To You? Here Are Some Tips

(Precis Features)

NEW YORK — "When women get to thinking they're people, that's when everybody has trouble."

These words were first scratched on the walls of a cave in lower Afghanistan by a Neanderthal hero—or so tradition hath it.

After a fierce struggle that nearly cost him his life, he had finally dragged home the bear's head only to be bawled out by his Missus for (1) Being so slow about it; (2) Picking up such a tough cut; (3) Getting his new tiger skin all torn up and (4) Completely forgetting that it was their anniversary.

Since then, it is reported, the same comment has been whispered, shrieked, bellowed, banded about, moaned, groaned, mumbled and grumbled by some 27,492,859,213 males.

To understand women, however, the first point to keep in mind is that they do, indeed, tend to harbor the illusion that they are people. Once a man has faced up to the fact that he must humor the female in this respect, he is ready to proceed to the first lesson.

1. How to deal with the Feminine Mystique. When a woman insists that she is a person, don't argue with her. You will never win. Instead, pretend to agree, then change the subject to something quite impersonal such as how much you love her new hairdo.

2. Do's and don't's of flattering the female. According to experts of a popular line of men's toiletries, every woman loves to think of herself as unique (like every man) and the most flattering thing you can tell her, is: "Darling, you're different from all the rest."

3. How to woo and win a woman. Women know instinctively that all the senses play an important role in courtship and marriage — hence their generous use of perfumes, scented lotions, makeup, soft lights, sweet music, tinkling jewelry, delicately-flavored lipsticks, breath-sweeteners and skin softeners to snare and hold the male in that tender trap. Don't forget that their sorceries work both ways and what is enticing to the gander is equally alluring to the goose.

4. How to give a gift she'll appreciate. If you want to make a big hit with a girl, give her a little gift for no

reason at all, rather than a big one for an obvious occasion.

Probably the wisest advice on the subject of women is contained in a Lerner-Lowe song from the musical "Camelot." Few females failed to



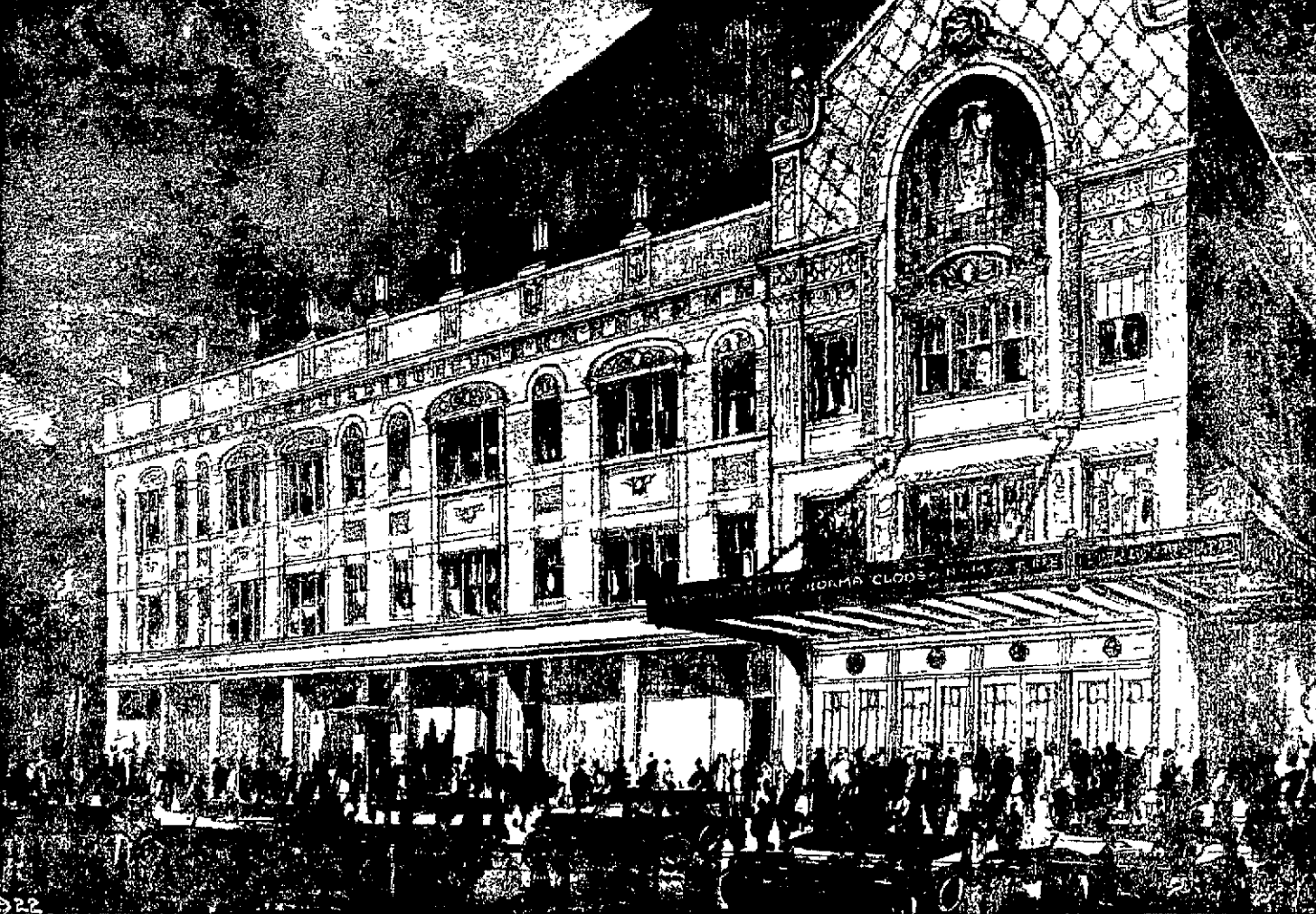
agree when Richard Burton, who played King Arthur in the Broadway production, sang:

"The way to handle a woman is to love her, Simply to love her . . ."

Youth Beat

KEEP DAD AROUND LONGER: The bicycle people are on a very large promotional drive. One facet is to urge teens to put dad on wheels for health's sake. A family bike holiday on Father's Day last June attracted more than 500 cyclists who followed the Chicago Park commissioner over the 15-mile bikeway through the city's well-planned parks. A family that cycles together doesn't cyc-out!! (Ooooh no!)

HOW TO STAY AWAKE: How to stay awake to study for exams? Apparently, sleep comes on when the body temperature drops. This happens when the muscles relax and the body is inert. Thus stand up and walk around when drowsiness attacks. Do a few nip ups, jog around the room. The resultant muscle tension raises body temperature, and wards off demon sleep.



RECOGNIZE THIS BUILDING? It's the architectural version of the Fond du Lac Theater, constructed in the 1920s, when movie houses were palaces to help film-watchers forget the generally routine—and normal—pattern of their lives. It was called the Fischer Theater when it was built, and the long rows of upper story windows were for occupants of the

modern Fischer Apartments. The Fond du Lac, Retlaw and Garrick Theatres served Fond du Lac movie-goers throughout the years of the Depression when "Bank Nite" and dinnerware giveaways helped boost sagging spirits. Movie fans also followed "the humped ball" in popular singalongs, usually accompanied by a "live" organist.

Albino Star Signs Pact For Records

By MIKE JAHN

NEW YORK — Johnny Winter, the Texas albino guitarist and the newest star with progressive rock audiences, has signed a five-year contract with Columbia Records, with the most money ever offered by that company for a new artist, according to Chve Davis, president of Columbia.

The signing climaxed a two-month battle by all the major recording companies for Winter's signature.

Winter was first heard of in an article in Rolling Stone, the San Francisco music newspaper. He was mentioned in a story about the Texas rock scene.

This prompted Steve Paul, owner of the Scene, the hip New York club, to fly to Texas in search of Winter. They met in Houston, and Steve became Johnny Winter's manager.

He brought him to New York, where he played jam sessions at the Scene, and performed at the Fillmore East.

Winter quickly became the favorite of New York's rock underground. Even the establishment was impressed.

Steve Paul leased a 30-acre estate in upstate New York for Winter, and Life and Look assigned writers and photographers to cover the story. Johnny Winter and his three-piece group, called Winter, appeared in Boston Sunday with the Janis Joplin Revue, and then at Fillmore East.

Commonwealth Reporter features

Friday, February 21, 1969

'John, You've Gone Too Far'

Lennon Album Nudity, Not Art

By RICHARD ROBINSON

NEW YORK — John Lennon and his love, Yoko Ono, may have created a money-making sensation with their "Two Virgins" nude album cover, but from one 18-year-old Beatles fan the word is "John, You've Gone Too Far This Time."

Her name is Rainbo, and her comment about John is the title of her first record. "It's not art. It's just a dirty picture," said Rainbo, brushing her blond hair back to let her green eyes sparkle. Apparently, many Beatle fans agree since the record is creating a sensation in many parts of the country.

"The record isn't really putting him down," explained Rainbo. "I still love him, but he still went too far this time."

Originally from Texas, Rainbo came to New York City several months ago to visit her cousin Rip Torn and his wife Geraldine Page. During her visit she met a record producer who asked her to record the song about John.

After hearing the tune, she agreed.

Although she's upset with Lennon's photo, Rainbo doesn't nix all nudity. "Somebody could come along and use nudity and there is probably a way to do it if you use it right. But for the fans John has, the teen-age girls, it was very tasteless."

It's On The Record

- 1. EVERYDAY PEOPLE, Sly and Family Stone.
2. TOUCH ME, Doors.
3. BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP, Foundations.
4. CAN I CHANGE MY MIND, Tyrone Davis.
5. WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN, Brooklyn Bridge.
6. YOU SHOWED ME, Turtles.
7. CRIMSON AND CLOVER, Tommy James.
8. THIS MAGIC MOMENT, Jay & Americans.
9. HANG 'EM HIGH, Booker T & M.G.s.
10. I'M LIVING IN SHAME, Supremes.
11. I STARTED A JOKE, Bee Gees.
12. BABY, BABY DON'T CRY, Miracles.
13. IVE GOTTA BE ME, Sammy Davis Jr.
14. GAMES PEOPLE PLAY, Joe South.
15. RAMBLING GAMBLING MAN, Bob Seger.

One Man Band

NEW YORK — Some of those weird musical sounds heard on the soundtrack scores of "Rosemary's Baby" and "In Cold Blood" were the work of Multi-Vider, developed by Conn Band Instrument Co., which enables a musician to achieve harmony while playing alone. Play a wind instrument, push a button, and you can achieve four octaves — sub bass, bass, soprano and alto, separately or in any combination.

Wimpy Firm Putting Bite On Britain

WASHINGTON — Britishers are putting the bite on an American institution — the hamburger.

The British devour burgers, which they call "Wumpies," at the rate of 50 million a year. "The chaps find them cheap and cheerful," remarked one food official.

J. Lyons & Co. Ltd., the restaurant chain that owns the Wimpy concession, introduced its version of the hamburger in 1954 at a London food show. Within a week, sales soared to 3,000 daily.

"A number of our early customers regarded the hamburger as nothing but a bit of sausage in a bun," recalled a Lyons executive. "But once they got over the idea that it was American, they went for it straight away."

Today, more than a hundred Wimpy Bars stretch across the British Isles, the National Geographic Society says.



RAINBO'S HIT SINGLE, "John You've Gone Too Far This Time," puts down John Lennon's nude album cover with Yoko Ono, although she believes nudity can be handled with taste, in an arty way. (Pop Scene Photo)