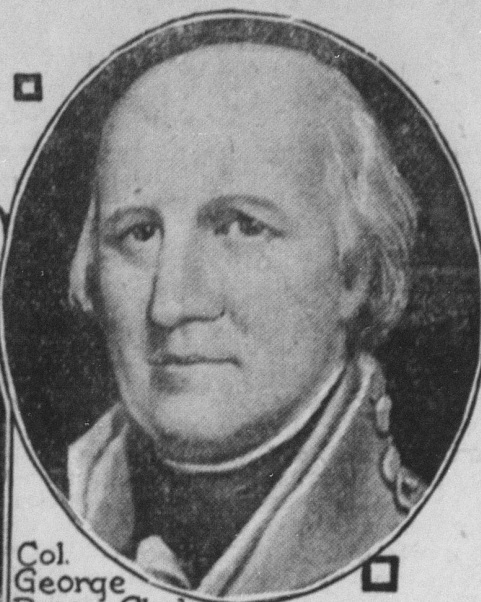


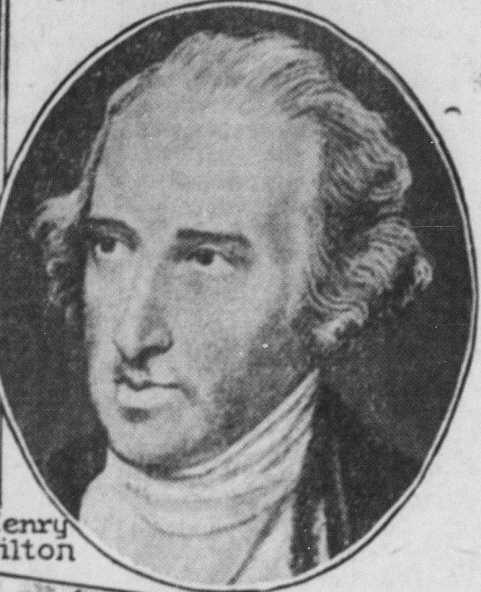
The Capture of Vincennes



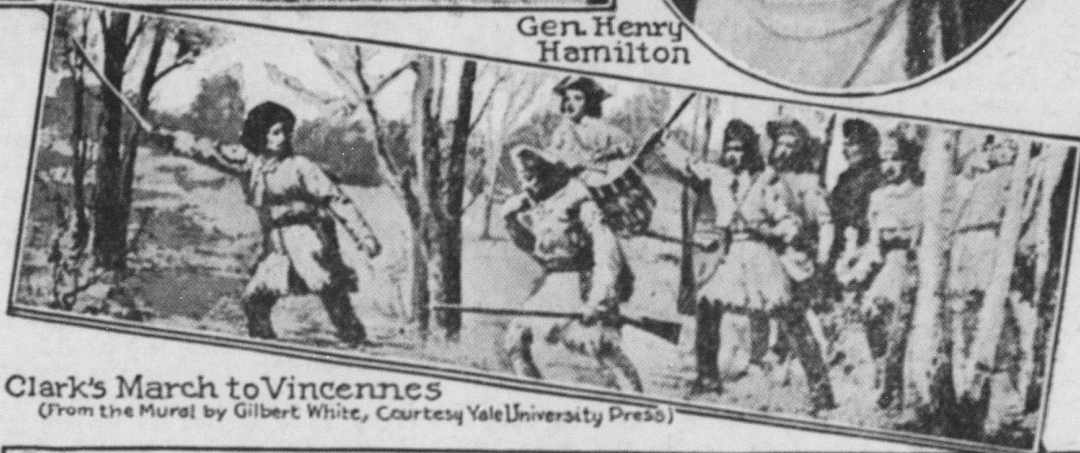
The Surrender of Fort Sackville (From the Painting by F. John Courtesy Bobbs-Merrill Company)



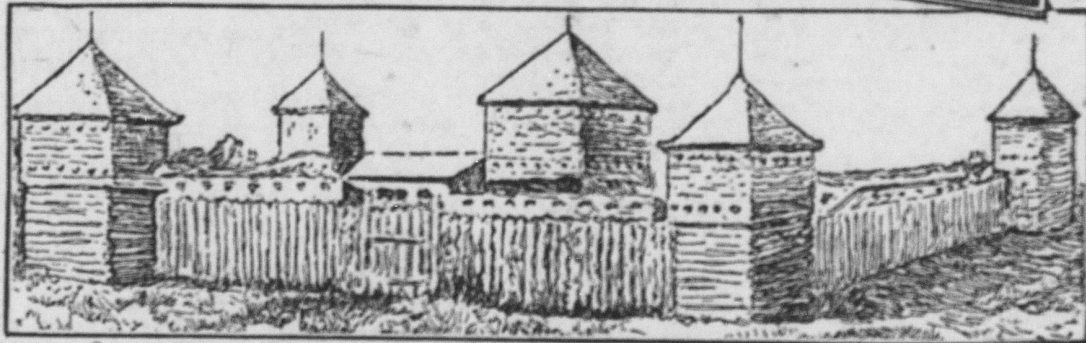
Col. George Rogers Clark



Gen. Henry Hamilton



Clark's March to Vincennes (From the Mural by Gilbert White, Courtesy Yale University Press)



Fort Sackville, Vincennes, Ind. (From an Old Drawing)

I BY ELMO SCOTT WATSON
 YOU were asked to make a list of Italians who have had an important part in making American history, how many would there be? Christopher Columbus, of course, would head the list, and after him would come Amerigo Vespucci, for whom America was named, and John and Sebastian Cabot, who were Italians even though they did sail under the banner of England in the era of discovery. You'd probably include Henri de Tonti, the "Man With the Iron Hand," companion in arms of the great French explorer, La Salle.

But there's still one missing. He was one of the foreigners who aided the American colonies in their struggle for independence and thus had a part in founding this nation. Every American knows of La Fayette and De Kalb, the Frenchmen; Kosciusko and Pulaski, the Poles; and Von Steuben, the German—all of whom fit that description. But how many of them know about Francesco Vigo, the Italian?

He was a "soldier, banker, spy, patriot, diplomat and merchant prince"; he labored mightily in the cause of American independence and long afterwards in the interests of the new Republic; he is not only entirely worthy of being included in any list, no matter how small and select, of Italians who profoundly influenced American history, but he also deserves a position of honor in the remembrance of Americans with the Frenchmen, the Poles and the German previously mentioned.

If this is true, why is Vigo so little known to most Americans? Because he is one of those "forgotten heroes," who by some strange turn of fate have been denied the fame that is rightfully theirs. But fortunately for Vigo's fame, a fellow-countryman, who won renown a few years ago by excavating the buried Roman city of Leptis Magna in northern Africa, has turned his talents from archeology to biography and the result is the first full-length "portrait" of this little-known hero of the American Revolution—the book "Vigo: A Forgotten Builder of the American Republic," by Bruno Roselli, published by the Stratford company of Boston.

It is especially appropriate to examine this "portrait" at this time, for February 25 will mark the one hundred fifty-fifth anniversary of the capture of Vincennes by George Rogers Clark, one of the outstanding achievements of the struggle for liberty because of its later results. Without the aid of Francesco Vigo, George Rogers Clark might not have won that splendid victory, nor from it have come those important results.

Most of the school histories mention Vigo's name, but they assign him a minor role in the story of Clark's conquest of the Old Northwest. But Mr. Roselli has revised that view of him. Of his early life, this much can be said: He was born at Mondovi, Italy, on December 3, 1747. Early in life the spirit of wanderlust seized him and he ran away from home, eventually arriving in Spain, where he enlisted in the Spanish army for service in the colonies as a muleteer, a driver or caretaker of the long-eared animals which carried army supplies.

Vigo was first sent to Havana, Cuba, with his regiment and after a year there was sent to New Orleans, where we find him listed as a "fusilier" in the militia of that colony. Next he became a member of a body of irregular troops and by some means made his way up the Mississippi river to St. Louis, where lived His Excellency Don Fernando de Leyba, governor of Upper Louisiana, which had been ceded to Spain by France in 1762.

"The post was small and presently the two men came face to face," writes Roselli. "They fully understood their mutual needs, and, while starting from the opposite ends of the social ladder, they had the wisdom to find at once a common meeting ground." So, a little later "the two men entered into a secret partnership; forming an alliance which their neighbors only surmised at first, but which became a matter of public record at de Leyba's untimely death." Thus Vigo embarked upon the career which was to make him famous throughout the Mississippi valley at the time as the "Spanish merchant," a contemporary designation which is largely responsible for later error in regard to his nationality.

By the time George Rogers Clark appeared on the scene Vigo was rated as one of the wealthiest men in that part of the country with agencies for his fur-trading business in Kaskaskia, Vincennes and as far north as Mackinac. The story of Clark's capture of Kaskaskia in 1778 is too familiar to need recounting here, but Vigo's part in the capture of Vincennes, the next step in Clark's ambitious plan to wrest the Old Northwest from the British, is not so well known.

Clark realized that until the British were driv-

en from Vincennes, the real center of their power in that region, his hold on Kaskaskia was precarious at best and his chances for extending his conquest were very slight. The only answer to his problem was to attack Vincennes and capture or drive away Gen. Henry Hamilton, the British commander, and his force there. Of this Roselli says:

"Clark, at Kaskaskia, was helpless until he knew what was going on at Vincennes, over 200 miles away through a muddy wilderness infested by those scaly Indians of General Hamilton whose prowess had brought upon that stern fighter the nickname of 'Hair-Buyer.' No news had leaked through since August 1st. (1778); winter with its terrors was already upon them; and spring was bound to reopen the line of supply between British Vincennes and British Detroit. Vigo, at this time, already a prosperous merchant who could not with impunity forego his interests, and an Italian to whom the future of this Franco-Anglo-Hispano-American continent might have seemed immaterial, left everything, and, with no remuneration whatsoever, started upon his career as a gentleman-spy. He took with him a single servant, and made for Vincennes.

"His one chance to accomplish his mission depended upon the following succession of events: He must be taken prisoner—prevail upon his savage captors not to scalp him—appear before Hamilton—manage to avoid not only imprisonment or execution, but even expulsion—linger on in Vincennes, seeing everything in the fort and everybody in the settlement—then make good his escape. Not an easy program; but one which he followed according to plans and schedule."

For Vigo succeeded in doing just as he had planned. He was captured by Indians, brought safely to Fort Sackville at Vincennes, questioned by Hamilton, succeeded in allaying the British general's suspicions enough so that Hamilton allowed him to depart after he had been at Vincennes for some time upon his signing a pledge that he would return to St. Louis "without doing anything injurious to British interests." Vigo scrupulously kept his pledge by returning to St. Louis, after which he immediately departed for Kaskaskia and made the report to Clark on the condition of the garrison at Vincennes which determined Clark's decision to march against that post.

But this spying trip of Vigo's was not his only contribution to the success of Clark's expedition. In fact, it was the least of it, for far more important was his financial help which made the expedition possible. During the summer of 1778 Clark had only Virginia currency, which was no good with the French merchants of that town, for the purchase of supplies until Vigo induced them to accept it. Now Clark was again in need of money—to pay his men, to buy arms and supplies. Again Vigo came to his rescue. On December 4 he cashed a draft of Clark's on Oliver Pollock, the Virginia agent at New Orleans, for more than \$8,000 and on January 28 he cashed another for nearly \$1,500.

"Forty-eight hours later, Clark and his party of 172, rapidly equipped with Vigo's cash and supplies, were disappearing in the wilderness, eastbound," writes Roselli. "A long time would pass before the gallant colonel beheld Pollock's sarcastic letter explaining his refusal to extend further credit to the Americans: 'How Colonel Clark and the State of Virginia expect such heavy sums to be paid by men without money, is a mystery which only time can point out.' It is

the quintessence of irony that the fiscal agent's letter was written on the very same day when Vigo, the stranger, was turning over his entire fortune as an unprotected, unregistered, unlimited loan, which he never could collect if Clark failed—and which he never did collect even though Clark, by winning a skirmish, annexed an empire."

For, as every American knows, Clark did win his "skirmish" at Vincennes, a skirmish which ended in the surrender of Fort Sackville by Hamilton to the Virginia leader on February 25, 1779, and the capture of this post strengthened the hand of the American peace commissioners at the close of the Revolution in demanding that the western boundary of the new Republic should be the Mississippi river instead of the Allegheny mountains. But how many Americans know what was the reward of Vigo for his services in making that possible or what was his later career?

It is not a story of which we, as a nation, can very well be proud. After the Revolution Vigo made his home at Vincennes. He continued to provide money to sustain American credit in the newly won wilderness. He tried to build up a series of trading posts and protected trade routes between Philadelphia, Detroit and New Orleans that would bind the Indians to the American cause. His extensive loans finally led to financial disaster for the rich "Spanish merchant" and his plan for the trading posts and trade routes was defeated by American inertia and ineptness in dealing with the Indians. When he tried to get back some of the money which he had lent Clark and others, a peevish and suspicious federal government refused to honor his claims, despite the fact that Clark made full acknowledgement of the justice of the claims in letters to Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and to George Mason.

To Vincennes came William Henry Harrison, first governor of the territory, who became Vigo's friend. Years later while the Italian was pressing his claims against the government, Harrison, then President, used his influence (unsuccessfully, albeit) to get them paid.

To Vincennes in 1834 came the noted traveler, Maximilian, prince of Wied, who wrote in his journal: "Another interesting character lives here, but forgotten, neglected, and in great poverty. I mean Colonel Vigo, who rendered important services to the Americans. They, indeed, gave him the rank of Colonel, but now suffer him to starve!"

In 1876 the "Vigo claims" totaling \$40,808.00 were paid by the government to the second generation of his in-laws. But the payment had come just 40 years too late to save Francis Vigo from "repeating the words which had become his refrain in the long evening of his last days: 'Everybody has forgotten me—everybody.'" He died on March 22, 1830, and his once wealthy "Spanish merchant" possessed at that time, exclusive of his credit (?) upon the government exactly \$77.62.

Indiana remembered him to the extent of naming a county after him. The bronze voice of a bell, which he gave to his fellow-citizens of Indiana sounds every day from the courthouse of Vigo county at Terre Haute to recall his memory, and over a grave in the cemetery at Vincennes the Daughters of the American Revolution have erected a memorial which tells that here lies "Francis Vigo, patriot, whose devotion to the cause of American liberty made possible the capture of Fort Sackville."

© by Western Newspaper Union.

Fifty Famous Frontiersmen

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

A Modern Knight Errant

WHEN the city of Prescott, Ariz., decided to erect a memorial to the Rough Rider who went from Arizona to Cuba in the Spanish-American war, there was more than one reason why that monument should be an equestrian statue of Bucky O'Neill. For in the words of one historian "O'Neill was the most many-sided man Arizona has ever produced. A knight-errant of the Nineteenth century, he was always ready to couch a lance for the weak and the distressed. A child's appeal, a woman's tears, disarmed him at once. Yet when the occasion came he could be hard and cold as chilled steel."

O'Neill's was a fighting heritage, for his father was a captain in the celebrated "Irish Brigade" from Pennsylvania during the Civil war. After graduation from college in 1879 Bucky went to Phoenix, Ariz., and started in newspaper work. Then he practiced law, got into politics and eventually became sheriff of Yavapai county and in that office repeatedly proved the "cold, chilled steel" quality of his courage in dealing with the various types of bad men who infested the territory.

That territory wanted to become a state. So when the Spanish-American war broke out Bucky was one of those who thought that Arizona might win statehood if her men proved themselves worthy in battle. "Who wouldn't gamble for a star?" he said, as he signed up to fight, and he meant another star in the flag, that of Arizona. He was one of the first, if not the first, volunteer mustered into service. Later he became a captain in the Arizona troop of Roosevelt's Rough Riders.

At Las Guasimas O'Neill stood looking down at the body of a dead Rough Rider that had been found by the vultures before his comrades could get to him. "Colonel, isn't it Whitman who says of the vultures that they pluck the eyes of princes and tear the flesh of kings?" he asked Roosevelt, who writes of the incident: "I answered that I could not place the quotation. Just a week afterward we were shielding his own body from these birds."

That came on the banks of the San Juan river during the advance against Santiago. Bucky was strolling up and down in front of his men, coolly smoking a cigarette and apparently oblivious of the Spanish bullets singing around him. A sergeant begged him to lie down lest he be hit. With a laugh, O'Neill replied "Sergeant, the Spanish bullet isn't made that will kill me!" The next moment a bullet did strike him and, in the words of Roosevelt, "even before he fell his wild and gallant soul had gone out into the darkness."

The Five Fighting Zanes

WHEN it came time for old William Zane to die, he could take pride in the fact that he had given, to frontier history five stalwart sons who would make the name of Zane forever famous there. They were:

Col. Ebenezer Zane, founder in 1770 of the settlement which was to become the present Wheeling, W. Va.; a soldier in Lord Dunmore's war of 1774; builder and commander of Fort Henry, the scene of two famous Indian sieges—in 1777 and 1782; an early settler in Ohio on the present site of Zanesville; blazer in 1793 of "Zane's Trace," which followed the route of an old Indian trail from Wheeling to Limestone (opposite Maysville, Ky.) and over which poured a flood of settlers into Ohio and Kentucky; a colonel of militia and a leader of men down to the day of his death in 1811.

Isaac Zane, captured by the Wyandots at the age of nine; a "white Indian" for ten years as the adopted son of Chief Tarhe; then, returning to his own people, a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses; back again to the Wyandots to become the husband of Myeerah, the "White Crane," daughter of Chief Tarhe, and to take her with him into the Ohio country to establish the settlement which now is Zanesfield and there to live with her until his death in 1810.

Silas Zane, one of the first settlers near Wheeling; a captain of Virginia troops in the Continental army while the Indians were besieging his brother's fort in 1777 but present there during the siege of 1782; a trader in the Indian country after the Revolution and, about 1785, a victim to Indian treachery on the Scioto river.

Jonathan Zane, captured at the age of two by the same Indians who carried off his brother, Isaac, he lived with them only a short time before being returned to his own people; a stalwart fighter during the stirring events around Fort Henry; a pioneer into Ohio and the partner of his brother in marking "Zane's Trace."

Andrew Zane, an early settler at Wheeling; hero of a famous exploit during the siege of 1777 when he escaped from the Indians by jumping over a 70-foot cliff, only to be killed by them a short time later.

"The Fighting Zanes"! Only five of them? No! For there was another—a sister worthy of her brothers—Betty Zane, the girl whose swift feet brought the much-needed powder from Ebenezer Zane's cabin to the hard-pressed defenders of Fort Henry during the siege of 1782 and whose brave defiance of death that day did much to make the name of Zane forever famous.

© 1923, Western Newspaper Union.

CAP AND BELLS



WORSE STILL

They were discussing a mutual friend.

"Brown is a good fellow, really," said Jones, "but he treats his poor wife miserably."

"This seemed to surprise Grey.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Does he beat her?"

"No, no!" said Jones. "He just refuses to argue with her."

Hither and Yon

Husband (during quarrel)—Now, I know why women are called birds.

His Wife—Oh, and why is that?

Husband—Because you are always chirping.

His Wife—I understand it was on account of the worms we pick up.—Border Cities Star.

HOT AND COLD



"There seems to be a coolness between them."

"Yes, the trouble is they're both too hot tempered."

Portfolios

"So foreign cabinets change the holders of portfolios rather frequently?"

"Yes," said Senator Sorghum. "Sometimes they don't look as much like portfolios to me as they do overnight suitcases."

Well Trained

"Your mistress tells me, Jane, that you wish to leave us to become an attendant at a lunatic asylum. What makes you think you'll like it? What experience have you had?"

"Well, sir, I've been here three years."

One Better

Plaintiff (in a county court)—I have witnesses to prove it.

Defendant—I have witnesses to prove that there were no witnesses present.—London Answers.

No Hope

Manager—You may be boss your self some day if you stay with us.

Jimmy—Aw! I stayed two weeks in de last place on dat kind of a promise.

Reminders

Jud Tunkins says the world is still a pleasant place to live, only you've got to read the big hotel advertisements to be reminded of the fact.—Washington Star.

No Cause for Rejoicing

"Senator, I see you helped celebrate Washington's triumph at Yorktown."

"Yes, I have nothing of my own to celebrate."

Needed Three

Plump One—In the bus this morning three men jumped up and offered me their seats.

Slim One—Did you take them, dear?—Stray Stories.

No Self-Starter

Boss—Would you care if I gave you only \$15 a week to start?

Gaga Gertie—Hub, I couldn't even start caring for that!