
EPISODE TWO

THE COURT HOUSE, JUNE 20, 1815¹

[When the table and chairs are placed, enter the aged Caretaker, who, after lighting candles from the desk, arranges the chairs. As he is doing this, ROGER and TIMOTHY ALDEN come into sight. From the opposite direction appear GENERAL MEAD and PATRICK FARRELLY]

GENERAL MEAD. *[As the group meet]* Good evening, gentlemen. *[To TIMOTHY ALDEN]* Mr. Alden, in the short time you have been with us, I have noticed that, like your cousin here, the Major, you are promptness itself.

TIMOTHY ALDEN. My eagerness to see this important plan well started would make me on time tonight if never before.

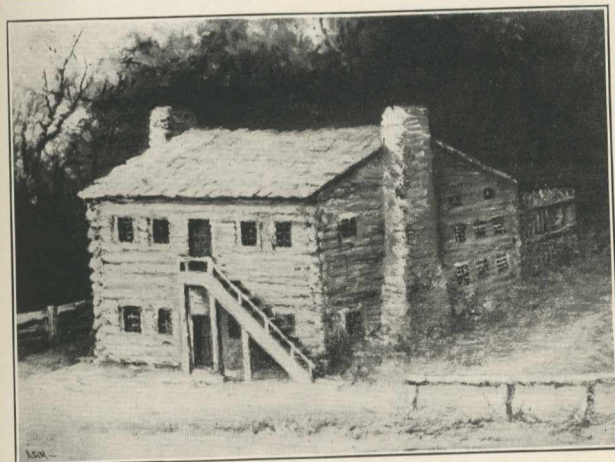
[During the dialogue, ROGER ALDEN has passed in and gone to speak with the Caretaker]

FARRELLY. Shall we go upstairs to the Court Room, gentlemen, or wait for the others here outside?

TIMOTHY ALDEN. *[Moving forward]* We should begin as soon as possible. We have much to do tonight.

[As they pass in, DR. BEMUS, who has ridden up rapidly and fastened his saddle horse in the background, meets JOHN REYNOLDS and JESSE MOORE coming from one side, the REV. MR. JOHNSTON and JOHN BROOKS from another]

¹This scene is built up from a summary of the meeting published, July 1, 1816, in THE ATLEGHENY MAGAZINE, edited by Timothy Alden. It appeared also in THE CRAWFORD MESSENGER published by Thomas Atkinson.



THE COURT HOUSE

CENTENARY PAGEANT

BEMUS. [*Genially, as they all bow to one another*] Good evening, Reynolds. Good evening Justice Moore. [*To JOHNSTON*] Good evening, Reverend Sir. How are you, friend Brooks? How are my fellow conspirators? ATKINSON. [*Coming up quickly, and interrupting just as they are about to reply*] Gentlemen, am I late? am I late? I don't want to lose anything of so important an occasion.

REYNOLDS. My good friend, you know we have planned to let you open the meeting. We couldn't begin without you.

THE OTHERS. [*With a slight look of amusement, particularly BEMUS*] No, no, certainly not.

ATKINSON. [*Importantly*] Just as I was leaving, John Thompson came in with orders for a bill of sale he wants printed tomorrow. My watch had run down and—

[*He is interrupted by the entrance of MAGAW, HACKNEY, HURST and LORD*]

JOHNSTON. I think these make our full number. Better go in, Tom, and start the meeting.

[*As ATKINSON goes in, followed by REYNOLDS and MOORE, JOHNSTON and BROOKS greet the new-comers*]

JOHNSTON. Good evening, Mr. Magaw.

BROOKS. Glad to see you Hackney and Hurst. Now our number is complete.

JOHNSTON. Mr. Lord, if what I hear you intend to do tonight is true, I wish to express my appreciation of your fine public spirit.

[*LORD rather puts him off as he enters*
They have been moving in as they talk. As they enter the room, ATKINSON speaks]

ATKINSON. [*From the desk, as he raps for order*] Fellow

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

citizens of Meadville, we have met tonight, as you very well know, to take final formal action on a plan we have repeatedly discussed for founding a collegiate institution in this part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I move you, that, as a first step, our esteemed fellow citizen, the veteran of Lexington, Major Roger Alden, be called to the chair.

[Some of the men are still standing. Some have seated themselves]

MARLIN. *[Somewhat excitedly]* I second that.

ATKINSON. Are there any other nominations? *[He looks about]* None. Those in favor of Major Alden as chairman, please say "aye."

[It is voted unanimously]

ATKINSON. Major Alden will please take the chair.

[The REV. MR. JOHNSTON escorts him to the chair, ATKINSON withdrawing]

R. ALDEN. *[At the desk]* I thank you gentlemen. Nominations for a secretary are in order.

FARRELLY. I nominate another of our distinguished citizens, John Reynolds.

R. ALDEN. Are there any other nominations? *[Looking about]* None. Those in favor of Mr. Reynolds for secretary will please say "aye." *[Vote is taken]* The vote seems to be unanimous.

[ATKINSON, rising, escorts REYNOLDS to the small table. REYNOLDS acknowledges the applause. All now take seats. There is an air of settling to the work of the evening]

T. ALDEN. *[Rising]* Mr. Chairman. *[He is recognized by the chair]* As a result of our many talks together,

CENTENARY PAGEANT

preparatory to this meeting, I move you the following as a preamble to the business of the evening.

Be it known to all whom it may concern, That we whose names are affixed to this instrument have voluntarily associated ourselves together for the purpose of establishing a Collegiate Institution.

The importance of advantages for a classical education, and the want of an institution where such an education may be obtained in the extensive region watered by the Allegheny River and its numerous contributory streams, and destined, in all human probability, to be overspread at no great distance of time, with as many inhabitants as any interior section of the United States of equal magnitude, *[Applause]* are sufficient reasons for awakening our attention to this subject.

The example of our venerable ancestors, who early made provision for the liberal and pious education of their sons; the nature of our government, the welfare of which, in no small degree under Almighty God, on the prevalence of knowledge, virtue and religion; *[Applause]* *[Look of ATKINSON at BEMUS]* the eventful period in which we live, indicating that the time is nigh at hand when there will be an unprecedented call for the labors of the heralds of the gospel, *[Approving nods at JOHNSTON]* afford additional arguments on the expediency of our present undertaking.

As friends to the best interests of our fellow creatures, and influenced, as we trust, by a desire for promoting the glory of God, we will cheerfully exert ourselves to lay the foundation of a seminary, in which a regular course of liberal arts and sciences shall be duly taught. *[Nods of approval]*

From the patronage we hope to receive, and from a reliance on the smiles of Heaven, we indulge the expecta-

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

tion that our endeavours for the literary and scientific, moral and religious benefit of the rising and future generations, will not be in vain; and that many young men of genius and piety, in this part of our republic, will soon enjoy the advantages for acquiring such an education as will enable them to become an honor to their country and a blessing to the world. [*Warm and prolonged applause*]

MEAD. I heartily move the acceptance of that preamble.

FARRELLY. I second that, Major Alden. Are you ready for a vote? It is carried.

BROOKS. Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask whether it is as yet settled—it was not at our last meeting—that the College, if founded, is surely to be in Meadville.

[MAGAW, during this speech, has been trying to make LORD rise to his feet. T. ALDEN and the others look at LORD. LORD rises slowly, as if shy]

LORD. Mr. Chairman, if this College be placed at Meadville, my friend, Daniel LeFevre and I will give toward its endowment two hundred and twenty-five acres of land. [*Loud applause*] And when the funds will permit the erecting of the first building, I stand ready to present the College, for its site, five acres of the hill land behind my house. [*Louder applause*] I move, therefore, that the site of the College be in Meadville.

MAGAW AND MARLIN. [*Contending for place*] I second that, I second that.

[*Vote is carried amid great applause*]

MAGAW. Mr. Chairman, it is probably fitting that we should at once name this new College. As so great a part of the region this College is designed to benefit is watered by the River Allegheny, and as that name means

CENTENARY PAGEANT

“eternity,” I move you that this College, which is to stand for education even as the everlasting hills be called Allegheny.

JOHNSTON. Mr. Chairman, before the vote is put, I should like to feel sure that no one else finds, as I do, some objection to the use of an Indian name. For myself, I should much prefer a name which would perpetuate some worthy citizen, like Major Alden or General Mead here, some great historical figure, or a name which at least should have no suggestions of savagery and barbarism.

[*During this, MAJOR ALDEN and GENERAL MEAD are shaking their heads in dissent*]

MAJOR ALDEN. I had understood, sir, that, after carefully considering the matter, we were, with your exception, united on the name “Allegheny.” I should be glad to entertain a motion, however.

JOHNSTON. [*Seeing the lack of sympathy in the faces about him*] If the general wish is contrary, I do not want to make one, Mr. Chairman.

[*There is a slight pause, during which the Chairman looks about him. MOORE is conferring with ALDEN, who passes him notes*]

MOORE. [*Rising with these in hand, the others, except JOHNSTON, settling back as if a dangerous place had been passed*] Mr. Chairman, I think we may now proceed to organize Allegheny College. Therefore, I move you that the officers be a President, Vice-President, Professors and Tutors.

BEMUS. [*Rising slowly and speaking with a slight drawl*] Do I understand, Mr. Chairman, that these officers are to serve without salary?

[*General look of amazement*]

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

MOORE. [*With dignity*] Certainly not. I don't understand the objection.

BEMUS. [*Even more solemnly*] Have we the necessary funds to pay them?

MOORE. [*With rising indignation*] Why, no—that is, not exactly. I don't understand.

BEMUS. [*Still solemnly*] I always dislike to criticise the English of my brothers of the law, but as one who operates on people, I should like to operate on my friend's English, and amend his motion to read: "The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Professors and Tutors when funds permit." [*Suddenly he grins broadly at MOORE. There is general laughter*]

MOORE. [*With a somewhat wry smile*] I accept the amendment.

[*The chairman puts it and it is carried*]

MEAD. [*Rising*] And now, gentlemen, I nominate for the first President of Allegheny College, the man in whose brain it had inception; who, coming among us, has kindled our interest in it; who has seen no difficulties where we have felt them insurmountable; in brief, the man who has made this meeting tonight possible. Already he is well known in New England and in the eastern part of these middle States as a descendent of the early settlers of this country, as a distinguished graduate of Harvard College, a wise and learned teacher, an eloquent preacher, a man of varied activities, great zeal and large resource. Known and loved by many of the wisest and best of his home region, so coveted as a leader that even in his brief stay here, he has been called in vain to Cincinnati to take charge of an educational institution there. He has already won, in his brief stay here, our admiration and confidence. I nominate the Rev.

CENTENARY PAGEANT

Timothy Alden as President and Professor of Oriental Languages and Ecclesiastical History.

[*Amid the general applause, MARLIN, HACKNEY, HURST and ATKINSON are all striving to catch the chairman's eye, shouting "I second that motion"*]

MAJOR ALDEN. [*Pounding for order*] Other nominations are in order.

FARRELLY. I move the nomination be made by acclamation.

[*There is a general shout of "I second that"*]

MAJOR ALDEN. Those in favor of electing the Rev. Timothy Alden as President and Professor of Oriental Languages and Ecclesiastical History by acclamation, please say "aye."

[*There is a general shout of "ayes"*]

MAJOR ALDEN. Mr. Alden is elected. I will ask General Mead and Justice Moore to escort him to the chair at my right.

[*This is done amid applause*]

T. ALDEN. Gentlemen, I deeply appreciate the great honor you have conferred upon me—the realization of the great dream of my life. I should like to talk to you of education in this country—

[*A warning cough from MAJOR ALDEN*]

but time and [*With a smile*] the chairman forbid. Suffice it to say at this moment that our action tonight will provide this section of our country with a needed opportunity for higher education, and I hope it is the beginning of an institution which will take a worthy place beside the twenty or thirty colleges now existing in this

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

country. Later, when the necessary business of this evening is out of the way, I shall talk to you in detail of the plans I have to win money and books for Allegheny College, both here and in the East. Already we have the promise of land for endowment and site; I believe—

[*Another warning cough from MAJOR ALDEN. T. ALDEN smiles*]

I perceive that my good cousin here may give freely of his money, but that knowing the press of business before us, he will give me no more time. I am satisfied, for with you all I hope to work out, in detail, the future of the College we have founded tonight.

[*Amid prolonged applause, he sits down*]

HURST. [*Rising even before the applause ends*] I wish to nominate as Vice-President a man whose service here in the church has won for him the regard of all of us, the Reverend Robert Johnston.

JOHNSTON. [*Rising quickly*] Gentlemen, before I even conditionally accept the honor, I think you should know that there is a chance I may be called away from this region. If so, I must go. If, with this understanding you care to elect me, I shall be deeply gratified, but I stand ready to withdraw my name at once.

[*Cries of "No, no, sit down."*] MAJOR ALDEN *looks at* HURST]

HURST. I do not care to withdraw my motion.

MAJOR ALDEN. Are there any other nominations? None. Those in favor will please say "aye."

[*It is carried unanimously*]

BEMUS. [*Rising*] Wishing to check the obviously spendthrift methods of my friend, Justice Moore, I

CENTENARY PAGEANT

move that for the present, the President and Vice-President be the sole instructors in all departments of literature and science.

MOORE. [*Quickly*] I second that.

MAJOR ALDEN. Is there any discussion?

[*The vote is put and carried*]

T. ALDEN. [*Rising*] Mr. Chairman, I should like to move you that Allegheny College admit as Probationers such as are designed to receive a classical education at this College, and instruct them according to their discretion; that from the Probationers who may be duly qualified, the first Freshman Class shall be admitted as alumni of the College on July 4th, 1816; that the public academies now in existence or hereafter to be established in the Counties of Crawford, Erie, Warren, Venango, Mercer and Butler, composing the north-western judicial district of Pennsylvania, may be so far connected with Allegheny College as to receive and prepare Probationers for matriculation in this seminary, and in this case, that the principal Instructor, being a man of competent classical education, and of good character, be considered as one of the Faculty, and be added to the list of Tutors of the College.

MARLIN. I second that motion.

MAJOR ALDEN. We have rather thoroughly canvassed these questions before. Is there any discussion now?

[*The vote is passed*]

MOORE. I move that a committee, appointed for the purpose, prepare an address to the legislature requesting a charter, and that a second committee be appointed to draft a code of laws and regulations for the government of the College.

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

MAJOR ALDEN. Does the speaker wish to suggest the names of the members of the committees?

MOORE. Unless there be objection, I prefer to leave the selection to the chair.

MAJOR ALDEN. If requested, I have no doubt the speaker will divide the motion for the two committees. *[He pauses]* If not, is there any discussion? *[He pauses again]* I take it we have sufficiently discussed these matters outside. Those in favor will please say "aye."

[Vote is carried]

BEMUS. My friends, I am still worried about those salaries, particularly as in the proposed Instructor of Probationers we have just added another man to the Faculty. In order that if any members of the Faculty of Allegheny College are future patients of mine, I may be sure of payment for my skilled care, I move that a subscription book be immediately opened by the Treasurer of the College, John Reynolds, Esquire, for donations in any kind of property which may be useful to the institution. Pretty hard to get by that wording, I guess. I will start that list with \$300.

[Applause, which grows louder as subscriptions come in]

FARRELLY. *[Springing up]* Put me down for \$200.

JOHNSTON. \$50 from me.

HURST. \$100 here.

MAGAW. \$200.

MARLIN. Same here.

GENERAL MEAD. Put me down for \$300.

REYNOLDS. I'll stand for the same.

MOORE. *[Rising]* Necessity seems to compel me to show I am equally interested with Dr. Bemus in the welfare of that future Faculty. Put me down for \$300.

CENTENARY PAGEANT

MARLIN. *[Who, with HURST, has been urging HACKNEY to speak]* Mr. Hackney asks me to say that Mr. Huidekoper told him to pledge \$300.

[T. ALDIN has risen in excitement as the pledges come in. Shouts of approval. A call for HACKNEY, who is covered with confusion]

LORD. *[Rising]* Daniel Lefevre, who gave the land with me has asked me to pledge him for \$300.

[Applause. He remains standing during the next vote]

MAJOR ALDEN. *[Hammering for order]* Gentlemen, gentlemen, your enthusiastic generosity makes you forget that you are pouring in subscriptions before you have authorized the subscription book. Are you ready for the question?

[Cries of "Question, question." He puts the vote and it is carried with a shout. As MAJOR ALDEN starts to speak, LORD breaks in]

LORD. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Rev. Mr. Alden, President of the College who, it is understood is shortly to visit the eastern and middle states, be requested to solicit benefactions in aid of the objects of this new institution.

HURST. I second that.

ROGER ALDEN. Gentlemen, you hear the motion. Any discussion?

[It is carried]

The last speaker, gentlemen, in his enthusiasm for the attack upon the purses of the eastern and middle states prevented me from saying that I should like *[He glances at a paper T. ALDEN has placed before him]* to add to the \$2150 just placed on the subscription book, \$500.

[Great applause]

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

MAJOR ALDEN. [*Hammering for order*] Is there any other business? If not, a motion to adjourn is in order.

MARLIN. [*Getting in his first motion with enthusiasm*] I move we adjourn.

MAJOR ALDEN. Those in favor will please say "aye."

[*There is a general rising, with laughter. They stand for a moment, chatting. A boy on horseback appears at upper stage riding hard*]

BOY. [*Meeting the first group as they come out*] Where's the doctor? Oh, where's the doctor?

LORD. [*Pointing toward where BEMUS stands in the center of the group*] There he is, my lad. Oh, Doctor, you're wanted.

BOY. Oh, doctor, doctor, come quick. My brother's dreadful sick.

BEMUS. What's the trouble sonny?

BOY. We don't know. That's why Ma sent for you.

BEMUS. How long has he been sick?

BOY. Since early this morning. Oh, come quick, doctor, he's awful bad.

BEMUS. Go on, sonny. I'll catch you. [*Turning with mock solemnity to ALDEN*] Mr. President, in the name of all doctors everywhere, I beg you to put sense enough into the heads of the graduates of this new institution of yours so that when sick they won't wait all day before asking a tired man to see a patient who is only the worse for the waiting. And so, home, home all of you to your comfortable beds!

[*Pretending to grumble, he goes to untie his horse. The other men laugh, but there are sympathetic faces. Breaking into small groups, they leave the stage. The BOY, who has been waiting on horseback, makes off at a wild gallop the moment he sees the doctor is following*]

EPISODE THREE

ALDEN AND CORNPLANTER, 1817

[*Up from the ravine, there come, in single file, twenty-five Indian men and women. The men bear tomahawks and scalping knives; the women and girls carry trinkets, beads, and other articles in baskets. They carry also the parts of a totem, which they set up in the middle of the stage. As soon as the idol is in place, the men begin the motions of their religious dance, moving slowly round in an ellipse. The leader shouts "yo-he-wauh" from time to time, and the rest answer an eighth of a tone lower. After they have made a revolution, contorting, bowing to the image, raising their hands in thanks, they strike off at a tangent to give way to the women. As the men begin dancing, CORNPLANTER appears at center back with two braves. Unnoted by the dancers, he has stood glowering down upon them, his arms crossed. Just as the men are about to stop dancing, a woman gives a warning cry.*]

At right TIMOTHY ALDEN, his son, and a guide are seen coming in. The Indians draw back defensively, laying hands on knives and tomahawks]

GUIDE. [*Coming forward, he is met halfway by CORNPLANTER*] Kientdwohke, Cornplanter, sachem of the Senecas. Mr. Alden, jinestage of our white brothers, is on his way to the people of Red Jacket, because they will not listen to the voice of the great white spirit. Knowing the kindness with which you have always treated the ministers, the jinestage, who have come among your people, he pauses on his way to greet you, and to present to you his young son.