

## THE CENTENNIAL.

### A large attendance at Mozart Park Yesterday.

The programme was Fully Carried Out Notwithstanding the Threatening Weather--Addresses by Hon. G. W. Atkinson, Hon.B.B. Doverer, C.W. Seabright, H.C.Richards, and Dr. C.F. Ulrich -- The Fireworks.

Despite the fact that yesterday was ushered in with a big rain, about daylight, and that the weather was threatening throughout the day, with occasional showers, there was a very large attendance at Mozart Park, to witness the program arranged for the celebration of the Centennial of the formation of the town of Wheeling. More than one thousand five hundred people were present during the afternoon, to listen to the addresses and witness the daylight fireworks, while at night the attendance was very largely increased, reaching in all about four thousand. Had the weather been bright and sunny during the day, the attendance would have been doubled, as there was widespread interest in the event.

The invited guests left the McLure House, in carriages, about half past one o'clock, and were driven to the foot of the Incline, at Forty-third street, reaching the pavilion at about a quarter after two. There was quite a large audience present, when the speakers arrived, and the pavilion soon filled up.

The meeting was called to order about half past two, and Councilman H. C. Richards was called upon to preside in the absence of Mayor Caldwell, who could not be present. Mr. Richards made a happy little address on taking the chair, and then introduced as the first speaker of the day Hon. G. W. Atkinson who said:

### ADDRESS OF HON. G. W. ATKINSON

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen.-- The late Rev. John Jasper, in a sermon before a colored congregation at Richmond, a few years ago, insisted that "the world do move," and he was right. The town of Wheeling was launched at one hundred years ago to-day on the waters of human history by hopeful and ambitious builders. Thus far she has plowed her majestic way unshaken and unchecked. While she has not led the van of human progress; while she has not grown as many other cities have, yet we who live within her limits, and love her as our home, rejoice to-day that she is the flagship of the State, and we hail her as the best, if not the handsomest, of all the crafts on all the seas of earth and history.

One hundred years ago the borough of Wheeling consisted of a wooden "fort," a soap factory, an "apple jack distillery", a keelboat, a blacksmith shop, a dozen log cabins, and the Zane family. "Edgington's Lane" had not yet been discovered, Leatherwood was still in the wilderness, West Liberty ... Benwood was in the womb of time, and the people, including "Indians not taxed" crossed the Ohio River on Martin's ferry or waded. The town was then lighted by pine torches, the people grew fat on bear meat and hominy, and their principal occupation was killing Indians and wolves for their pelts and scalps. The only mill here then was a sorghum mill, and buckwheat cakes and molasses were luxuries that could only be enjoyed by the rich. The men wore buck-skin pants, coon-skin caps and moccasins, and all them were as contented as lords, because they were monarchs of all they surveyed. Lewis Wetzel lived where this park is now located, and it is said of him that, he could scent an Indian a mile, could run as fast as "Nancy Hanks," and "his gun was always loaded." What a rich field, my fellow citizens, for historic observations; but I am limited to nine minutes and fifty-nine seconds by the watch and Committee, and cannot, therefore, dwell here.

Look at Wheeling of to-day. There she stands in the valley below, with her forty thousand inhabitants, her splendid mills, factories and forges, her elegant and commodious public school buildings, and her 30 churches with spires pointing toward the sky to welcome the sunshine of the morning; and her people -- -- honest, industrious, law-abiding, liberty-loving as any other human beings who drink the water of the Ohio as it sweeps past their homes in its meandering way to the sea.

What marvelous progress she has made in 100 years! Since this city was founded steam has been utilized, railroads have been constructed, electricity discovered, the cotton gin and sewing machine thought out, and telegraphy and telephones invented. By these wonderful discoveries the nations of the world are in touch with one another, and the civilized inhabitants of the globe are practically one family.

When Gibbon closed his discussion of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he said the second century was the happiest period of the world. That century, I grant, was the climax of progress, but it is totally eclipsed by the closing decade of our nineteenth century, because the bow of universal progress to-day arches every sky. The regions of almost forgotten monarchs like Marcus Aurelis, who ruled and ruined before Wheeling was planted are sleeping beneath the tread of freedom's hosts, and on every sepulcher of history are strewn the ashes from the campfires of the army of progress. Over the relics of ignorance on all sides and everywhere

free man to-day are building stately homes, and are making the world better and broader and nobler and grander.

My countrymen, let us look still farther into the future and welcome the coming of a brighter and more glorious morn, radiant and effulgent, when the waves of the sea shall sing the glad chorus of an age of progress as far superior to the Wheeling of to-day as it now surpasses the Wheeling of hundred years in the past. Let us raise the curtain of the future and behold Wheeling in the closing of another century, and imagine if we may the progress it has made. I fear a glimpse of its grandeur would dazzle and blind us, as did a spark from the Divine Presence strike the site from the eyes of the apostle to the Gentiles. We today look through a glass darkly, and cannot even conjecture what the future of the Earth is to be.

This growth and development thus far is largely attributable to the genius of our people. Germany can justly claim the honor of being the seat of the greatest universities on the globe, France the school of soldiers, and England the pioneer of manufacturers but our country masters the world in inventive genius. Freedom stimulates genius. No Chaldean astronomer ever measured a year or foretold an eclipse. The alphabet was invented in the East, but no line of profane history was transmitted to us written in that alphabet. The Egyptians piled up monuments toward the sky, but the free Greeks and Romans, under republican forms of government, were alone the architects of temples which have been used as models throughout the centuries. If we trace the literature of all people from the Alexandrian age to the present; we find that genius withered as liberty declined, and grew with the growth of freedom. It has always been true that genius moved hand-in-hand with liberty and free thought. Wheeling grew and prospered because her people owned themselves and thought for themselves and worked for themselves. To-day the unbroken chord of freedom makes all our people one.

I doubt, my fellow citizens, if we have a just apprehension of the ideas principles and facts of life as are revealed to us in American citizenship. Men are qualified for ideal citizenship only in so far as they comprehend its demands and its responsibilities. He who is blind to the city's interests is also blind to its wants. He who is either from ignorance or bigotry unable and unwilling to measure the needs of his government, is unfit to assume any of its burdens and direct in the management of its affairs. The true citizen is a representative of his city in its broadest life, and to rise to its heights of manly effort requires a broad and earnest comprehension. Each individual citizen therefore, reinforces society, and organization and unity of purpose are essential to the best possible results.

The lesson of the hour, my friends, is to keep abreast of the procession of the army of progress, keep step with the development of the centuries, always keep our powder dry and be ready to shoot or gie up their guns. And while we are here celebrating, let us not forget the men and women who founded this city and made possible the privileges and blessings we are enjoying to-day.

    Their work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure  
    Let their examples stand  
    Collosal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman  
    pure,  
Till in all lands and through all human story,  
    The path of duty be the way to glory.

For though the giant ages heave the hill,  
    And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break, and work their will,  
Though world on world in myriad my-  
    riads roll  
    Round us, each with different powers,  
    And other forms of life than ours.  
What know we greater than the soul?  
    On God and God-like men we build  
    our trust.

Mr. Atkinson closed with a reference to a Wheeling Directory, published by James Bowen, in 1839. He extracted much information from the pages of this little publication, and among other statements, the information that in 1810 the population was 914, in 1820, 1569, in 1830, 5, 221, and in 1836, 8,850.

#### **MR. PENDLETON'S REGRETS.**

The following letter of regret, from Hon. John O. Pendleton, was then read by Chairman Richards:

"Washington, D.C., July 21, 1895.

"W.C. Handlan, Esq.

"Dear Sir: I had expected to accept your kind invitation for Wednesday, but last Thursday was suddenly called here on important business. It looks now as though I shall not get through in time. Please accept my thanks and also regrets. Ever yours,

"JOHN O. PENDLETON."

#### **ADDRESS OF DR. ULRICH.**

The Chairman then very handsomely introduced Dr. C. F. Ulrich, who was received with much applause. After a brief and happy preface in English, in which he narrated his arrival in Wheeling, on foot, a boy of ten, in 1836, he began his address in German. He paid a deserved tribute to the foreign-born population of Wheeling, many of whom came to America to escape hardship and oppression in the Old World, and said that although the German-born citizens had a warm love for the Fatherland, they infinitely preferred America and in devotion to their adopted country and in patriotism were not surpassed by any element of the population. He referred to the great influence exerted by the German citizens upon the city at large, and said that such was their power that it might almost be said Wheeling was half German. He eulogized the Ohio, comparing it favorably with some of the most noted of the rivers of France and Germany, and then recounted the hardships and trials and struggles of the early settlers of the valley and city, naming over many of the pioneers and recounting their achievements. He said that when he came here, in 1836, there were few German citizens and they exerted but little influence, but they grew in numbers and in power, until now they were not only very numerous but were universally respected as the best element in the population. He eulogized the city, the Parks, the suburban railroads, and the suburbs, and made particular mention of Wheeling Park, and the Elm Grove railroad as examples of what had been done for the community at large by Germans. Mozart Park was also referred to in a similar manner. Some reference was made to a recent pulpit utterance against the holding of the celebration "in a beer garden", and he said that although a man might have to pass twenty-five saloons a day, he need not go in and drink, and in like manner he might attend a pleasure ground where beer was sold, among other things, without sacrificing either character or convictions. The "beer element", he said, had done much for Wheeling, and could be depended upon to do more in the future, despite such uncalled for and unseemly attacks. He closed with a beautiful poem, and was loudly applauded..

#### **HON. C. W. SEABRIGHT.**

Chairman Richards next introduced ex-mayor C. W. Seabright, who gave an interesting sketch of the city as he knew it when he arrived here in 1849. He said the first man who greeted him when he came to the Sixth ward, was Squire Schultze, who said, "Wo komme sie hier?" He made many happy allusions, among other things, saying when he came here a ferry was running across to the Island, "and now", he said, look at the improvement--the Charleston is running there yet." (Laughter.) Mr. Seabright referred to the public institutions of the city, to its churches, its public improvements, the number, extent and solidity of its great business enterprises, and said that not only did we have here the making of a great city, but we had a great city in fact. He expressed a regret that the city government did not see fit to take hold of the celebration as a public matter, and commended the Committee in charge for so ably and patriotically doing what the city itself had failed to do.

#### **CONGRESSMAN DOVENER.**

Congressman B.B. Dovener was next introduced, and made a splendid address, eminently fitted to the occasion. He said there were few things so profitable and interesting as a glance at the past, particularly when that task could be pointed to with pride. A few things, as a matter of course, might have been done differently and better, but in the main, the retrospect it was a pleasing one, and one in which, as a whole, the people of Wheeling could take a pardonable pride.

He referred to the removal from the grave at Tunis on the north coast of Africa, by W.W. Cochran, in 1883, of the remains of John Howard Payne, which had there lain for a century, almost forgotten and wholly

neglected. His body was welcomed home with great honor by the American people, the President of the United States met the cortege at the city of Washington and his pallbearers were the Judges of the Supreme Court. John Howard Payne was not a great soldier, a great statesman, a great orator, or a great philosopher. He was a simple poet and musician who had given to a welcoming world "Home Sweet Home" a melody which will live forever in the history of all nations and in the minds of all peoples. With this incident as a text, the speaker referred to the heroes who invaded the wilderness and drove back the savage foe and laid the foundations of a great city, and said the time had fully come when some tribute or testimonial should be erected to the memory of the pioneers who had planted the little colony on the banks of the Ohio in the closing days of the past century. To-day, we are enjoying the fruits of the tree thus planted on the banks of the Ohio in the distant past, and here should be some fitting acknowledgment of the great work done in the days long gone by. Pittsburgh, he said, had reconstructed old Fort Duquesne, and no greater service or more commendable act could be done by some of our liberal-minded men than to erect a monument which should recount the deeds and perpetuate the names of the men who had come here from across the mountains, the axe in one hand and the rifle in the other, to make at infinite labor and amidst great dangers, the beginnings of the present city and the many prosperous towns which cluster about it, on both sides of the river.

Capt. Dovener's address, though brief, was a most earnest one, and was listened to with the greatest attention and was loudly applauded by the audience.

The addresses were concluded about a quarter after four, and the display of daylight fireworks was at once commenced, while dancing was inaugurated in the pavilion. While the younger persons were tripping to the measures of the orchestra, the others disbursed over the Park, watching the fireworks or promenading and the remainder of the day was spent in a most delightful manner, despite the threatening rain.

## **IN THE EVENING**

As the evening approached the rush of people to the Park increased, and by six o'clock the street cars running downtown as well as those moors from Benwood were well filled, while a steady stream of pleasure-seekers poured into the lower station building of the incline and a like crowd constantly emerged at the upper end and took its way toward the pavilion. At seven o'clock the crush had become so great that the incline, run at its fastest rate, was unequal to the task of transporting the crowd, and half an hour later the lower station building was packed to suffocation with an impatient and struggling crowd, while each street car arriving at Forty-third street, was not only crowded, but men were holding on to the cars by every protection. This crowd kept increasing until nearly nine o'clock, despite all efforts to get the people up to the hill-top, and many got tired with waiting and went away from the foot of the incline.

At nine o'clock there was between eight and nine thousand people at the Park, and every building was thronged, while all the open space about the pavilion was crowded with spectators watching the fireworks display. This display was a very good one, and gave the greatest satisfaction.

When the crowd started to leave the Park there was a repetition of the rush about the top incline station, and it was long after midnight before the last of the crowd had been transported to the bottom of the hill en route home. It was by far the greatest crowd ever seen at Mozart Park and was one entirely worthy of the city and of the event celebrated.

Transcribed by Dr. Charles A. Julian, June 15, 2009.