

*Do not
print this. I
have spoken to
Mrs L. & she
has authorized
a shorter letter.*

115 Chestnut Avenue
Takoma Park, Maryland
August 18, 1935

Dr. E. G. Swem
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Swem:

In publishing some of the military records of Philip Lightfoot it seemed to me advisable to give as a foreword the little sketch which I very hastily put together Thursday.

Naturally it should be known how the papers came to be in my possession; therefore the sketch is to show briefly their "line of descent": Major Philip, his greatnephew and heir Edward Lightfoot, Edward's son John T. Lightfoot, John's widow, and his sister who gave them to me.

I also thought it was about time for Major Philip to have a press agent! This week I hope to get more light on him and his father from the Orange and Culpeper records.

If you wish to give the personal letters a more careful examination I shall be glad to bring them in when I return; or if at any other time you come to Washington and want to see the papers I shall be glad to have you do so. It is only fair that you should have ample time to examine them carefully.

With deep appreciation of your kindness, I am very sincerely

Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot

THE MILITARY RECORDS
OF MAJOR PHILIP LIGHTFOOT
compiled from his original papers
by Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot

Philip Lightfoot, attorney at law,
member of the bar of Culpeper, Va. had been commissioned a lieutenant ← 1
in the Va. Militia in 1794. His commission signed by Gov. Henry Lee is
still extant as is also his commission as captain in the U. S. Army, ← 2
dated Jan. 10, 1799.

It was during his captaincy that most
of his military records were written, though there remain many personal
letters addressed to him as Major and one record inscribed "Major Light-
foot's letter giving Military Orders, 1814", addressed to "Major Philip ← 3
Lightfoot, Culpeper C. H." (Court House)

According to the records of the War
Dept. Philip Lightfoot was honorably discharged from the army in 1800.
Later he received a commission from the Gov. of Va. which he did not ac-
cept, according to a tattered draft of his reply, as follows; - ← 4
"Messrs. ~~Wm~~Wirt, Alexander Stuart, Jn. Clarke and D. Carr
Gentlemen

The last post brought me yours of the 10th Instant,
enclosing from the Governor of Virginia, appointing me
.....in a Corps of Volunteers intended..... raised in this
State. I am very much attached to military life and in the event of a
War I should among the first to defend my Country's rights

(and avenge) her wrongs.

I thank you for the honor conferred upon me, but having commanded a Company in the Army of the United Statesat an early peroid of my life and holding a command Superior to that now offered me in the Militia, shall decline acceptance of it; long since having determined never to serve again as an officer. The commission sent me is herewith enclosed.

I have the honor to be
Gentlemen, yr. obt. servt.

P. Lightfoot."

No doubt the offer of a commission of higher rank caused him to reconsider his decision and to serve again as an officer. There remains only a small fragment of this last commis- sion. The printed words are "..... you will notify your accept- ance by an endorsed..... immediately proceed to recruiting..... im- mediately to announce to us and to your.....

.... highest respect

your fellow-citizens

(signed) Wm. Wirt
Alexr. Stuart
Jn. Clarke
D. Carr "

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(addressed to)
Philip Lightfoot, Esq.

The fragment of the inside page shows in

William Wirt's handwriting:-

"..... in Virginia to deliver any objection(?) the British foot-hold on too small for a War of any duration

*recruit no man of debauched habits of any kind..... but none especial- ly habits of drinking or gambling and no man above 40.'

Let me know your determination as soon as possible
W.W."

William Wirt, Attorney General of the U. S., essayist and author of the Life of Thomas Jefferson, was a personal friend of Philip Lightfoot's. A complete letter of his is extant, dated Richmond, July 5, 1809. After asking Philip to attend to a suit for him in Culpeper he wrote, "How are you coming on in the financial world? I hope that Fortune has at least taken off her bandage in relation to you, and seen and done justice to your merits. Heaven bless you-- Let me hear from you. Yr. frd. Wm. Wirt." L 6

There remains (1914) a small brick building on Philip Lightfoot's Madison Co. estate which, according to tradition, was used by Wm. Wirt as a law office when he began the practice of law in Va. and when he was a frequent guest in Philip Lightfoot's home. His office was near the old mansion which is described by Rev. Philip Slaughter in his Memoir of Col. Joshua Fry as "a house hoary with a century's mosses and having in it an historical room dedicated to the muses of music and the dance, in which William Wirt in his youth played his pranks and wrote his comedies."

On the fragment of the last commission accepted by Philip Lightfoot the date and the rank are missing but records in the War Dept. show that he was Major and Aide de Camp to Major General Williams, 1st Division, Va. Militia, War of 1812. His subsistence account shows that he also received pay for his private servant and for "traveling 100 miles from Camp Carter to Culpeper Courthouse, my residence."

Philip Lightfoot's legal training fitted him to serve as Judge Advocate in the Army as is shown by his original records of Courts Martial and by a fragment of a draft of his letter to Congress, as follows:-

"To the Honorable..... The Speaker and Gentlemen of the L 7

We can picture the elegance of their regalia when we read that Philip's masonic apron was of satin with "genteel trimmings"! This was procured for him by Phil. R. Thompson whose letter from Richmond states that he will get "the genteelest trimmings I possibly can."

4 8

Note-- The date 1794 for the foundation of the Lodge was copied from Green's Notes on Culpeper Co. but that must be a misprint because this letter about the masonic apron is dated 1793.

House of Representatives of the United States

Your memorialist late Captain of the 8th Regiment.....

.....Army of the United States, humbly
sheweth that he acted as Judge Advocate by the orders of Major General
Charles Coatesworth Pinkney to that part of his Division stationed at
Harper's Ferry from the 14th day of December 1799 until the disbanding
of the Army which happened on the 14th day of June 1800, except when
your memorialist was a few days on command in the City of Richmond
..... will appear by the ... (torn off)

(Other side)

"Compensation for his service he believes will be readily conceded.
Your memorialist has not only discharged the duty of Judge Advocate,
but attended also to his command in the line, the law regulating the
Military establishment of the U. S. not requiring the appointment of
such an officer, which he presumes was omitted in consequence of the
more important subject."

To go back to the year 1794--- on Dec.
9th a charter was issued by the Grand Lodge of the Masons of Va. for th
formation of Fairfax Lodge at Fairfax(the original name of Culpeper)
It was signed by the Chief Justice of the U. S. -- John Marshall and
among the officers of the new Lodge Philip Lightfoot was Warden.
He is pictured in Green's Genealogical and Historical Notes on Culpeper
Co., Va. thus;- "Major P. Lightfoot is well known to many of you---
an old bachelor whose white cravat and linen bosom were always spot-
less-- the only man ever known who could walk from his residence to the
Court House without getting a stain on his shining shoes."

Philip Lightfoot bought for his country
estate a beautiful old home on the Robinson River which was built about
1766 by Rev. Henry Fry on a plantation of nearly 4,000 acres which has

since been divided into several farms. This land when patented to Joshua Fry, Rev. Henry Fry's father, was in Spotsylvania Co. In 1734 Orange Co. was formed from Spotsylvania, in 1748 Culpeper Co. was formed from Orange and in 1792 Madison Co. was formed from Culpeper. The old mansion which measures 67 feet across the front, with massive columns as large as those of the Arlington Mansion, is still in Madison Co.

Rev. Henry Fry's daughter Martha married Goodrich Lightfoot, elder brother of Major Philip (Slaughter's Memoir of Col. Joshua Fry.....and Autobiography of his son Rev. Henry Fry) It was from his brother Goodrich and family that Philip bought this old home (Get date of deed)

Philip is buried in Saint Stephen's Churchyard, Culpeper, Va. His gravestone is thus inscribed;-

"Major Philip Lightfoot
died April 17th, 1855
in the 81st year of his Age.

An honest man is the noblest work of God."

After his death many of his papers were put in a trunk and stored in the cellar of his Madison Co. estate. Years passed and finally the trunk crumbled to pieces, then John Turner Lightfoot, great-greatnephew of Major Philip and owner of the old Fry-Lightfoot home, put the papers in a large canvas sack and they remained in the cellar many years more.

When the writer and her husband visited the John Turner Lightfoots about 30 years ago she heard for the first time of "Uncle Phil's old papers" and she begged to see them. Her enthusiasm stirred the rest of the family and soon everybody was reading the old letters for the first time since Major Philip's death.

In these letters the writer found the

proof that Major Philip's father was Capt. Wm . Lightfoot who served in the Fr. and Ind, Wars and who had become almost lost to Va. genealogy because in his old age he had moved to Ky. with most of his ten children leaving but two sons in Va.-- Goodrich and Philip.

The letters to Philip from relatives, friends, legal and business associates contain much of interest of a day that is passed. After the death of the writer's beloved cousin, John Turner Lightfoot, his family sent to her the collection of Philip Lightfoot's papers and military records, knowing that she, more than anyone else, would treasure them.

Plans have been made for the writer to prepare a series of papers on Captain William Lightfoot and his Descendants, data which has never before been published. All living descendants of Capt. Wm. Lightfoot of Orange and Culpeper Counties, Va. who died in Ky. in 1805, are requested to communicate with the writer so that no ~~xxx~~ ~~xxx~~ line of descent from this worthy veteran of the Fr. and Ind. Wars shall remain unknown.

Philip Lightfoot's military papers are to be published first and it is hoped that the descendants of the men named on his muster rolls and pay rolls will be interested in their ancestors military service.

Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot