

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
CONCERNING GENERAL
RICHARD MONTGOMERY
TOGETHER WITH HITHERTO
UNPUBLISHED LETTERS. 1876**

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Biographical Notes Concerning General Richard Montgomery Together with Hitherto Unpublished Letters. 1876 by Louise Livingston Hunt

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LOUISE LIVINGSTON HUNT

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The letters published in this paper, and the biographical notes concerning General Montgomery, written by Mrs. Montgomery, have been carefully transcribed from the original manuscripts.

L. L. H.

MONTGOMERY PLACE,

November 10, 1876.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
CONCERNING
GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY:
WITH
Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts.



Among that small band of military leaders who shared the perils of our early struggle for independence, the name and fame of Richard Montgomery should be held especially dear by the people of New York. He has now been dead a hundred years, yet during that period but one short biography of him has been written; and although his memory is still revered by the American people, little is generally known of his personal history. Few and meagre are the materials left to aid us in attaining accurate knowledge other than that contained in the public records of his day. What we have found is nevertheless of value, from the fact that in these hitherto unpublished documents, the prominent characteristics of General Montgomery appear strongly marked throughout; and every anecdote and tradition, every letter, however trifling, contains proofs of his keen love of justice, of his unwavering devotion to liberty, of his indomitable will and courage, and of his abiding sense of duty.

It is not the province of the writer of this article to discuss the professional merits of General Montgomery, or even to attempt any consecutive narration of his campaign in Canada. To string together the accounts that have been furnished by the letters and manuscripts preserved at Montgomery Place, to present these fragmentary but authentic papers to the public in entire form, and to bring the reader into closer acquaintance with the hero of Quebec,—such is our purpose.

General Montgomery was by birth an Irishman. In his youth he served in the British army, during the French and Indian War. Always an ardent lover of liberty, he had a great admiration for republican institutions. Perhaps, while he served with honor in the British army, his Irish blood may have inclined him to be restive under British rule. Be this as it may, on his return to England, after the close of the seven years' conflict, he is said to have formed friendships with Fox, Burke and Barré, becoming deeply imbued with their views of the rights of the Colonies. Superseded and disappointed in the purchase of a majority, he quitted England forever, to make this country the home of his adoption.

While still a Captain in the British army, Montgomery had met Janet Livingston, the daughter of Robert R. Livingston, one of the Judges of the King's Bench. He was on his way to a distant post and had come on shore with all the officers of his company at Clermont, Judge Livingston's country place on the Hudson. Subsequently when he returned to settle in America, he renewed his acquaintance with her, and with the consent and approbation of her parents, married her, in July, 1773. Among the papers before us are the letter of Montgomery to Judge Livingston, asking for the hand of his daughter, and Judge Living-

ston's reply. This correspondence shows the stately steps by which matrimony was approached in the olden time.

"KINGSBRIDGE, MAY 20TH, 1773.

"SIR:—Though I have been extremely anxious to solicit your approbation, together with Mrs. Livingston's, in an affair which nearly concerns my happiness and no less affects your daughter: I have, nevertheless, been hitherto deterred from this indispensable attention by reflecting that from so short an acquaintance as I had the honor to make with you I could not flatter myself with your sanction in a matter so very important as to influence the future welfare of a child. I therefore wished for some good-natured friend to undertake the kind office of giving a favorable impression; but, finding you have already had intimation of my desire to be honored with your daughter's hand, and apprehensive lest my silence should bear an unfavorable construction, I have ventured at last to request, sir, that you and Mrs. Livingston will consent to a union which to me has the most promising appearance of happiness, from the lady's uncommon merit and amiable worth. Nor will it be an inconsiderable addition to be favored by such respectable characters with the title of son, should I be so fortunate as to deserve it. And if to contribute to the happiness of a beloved daughter can claim any share with tender parents, I hope hereafter to have some title to your esteem.

"I am, sir,

"With great respect,

"Your most obedient servant,

"ROBERT MONTGOMERY."

"CLAREMONT, 21ST JUNE, 1773.

"SIR:—I received your polite letter by the hands of Mr. Lawrence at Poughkeepsie, from whence I returned last night.

"I was there so engaged in the business of Court, both night and day, that I had no time to answer it, and tho' I would have stolen an hour for that purpose, it required a previous consultation with Mrs. Livingston.

"Since we heard of your intentions, solicitous for our daughter's happiness, we have made such enquiries as have given a great deal of satisfaction. We both approve of your proposal and heartily wish your union may yield you all the happiness you seem to expect, to which we shall always be ready to con-