Lord Dunmore's War

The frontier advanced irrepressibly. The Americans, defying every attempt of the English government to limit them to territory prescribed in its Indian treaties, trespassed the rich valley of the Clinch and its tributaries and pushed into Kentucky and along the banks of the upper Ohio. They came to hunt and then to settle in lands which the Shawnee and the Cherokee claimed as their hunting grounds.

The chiefs of these tribes had often warned white men to stay away. Captain Will had expressed the wish of his race when in 1770 he had uttered his admonition to Boone and his party. But an insatiable hunger for bottom lands more fertile and extensive than their own drove pioneers on, leaving them indifferent to the growing resentment of the aforementioned tribes. The English government, aware that trouble was brewing and that war might eventually ensue, maintained Shawnee representatives at Fort Pitt.

The Shawnee had good reason to complain. Throughout the summer and fall of 1773 separate groups of surveyors appeared in several regions of the Virginia frontier to lay out tracts for homesteaders already on the ground and for placements for government grants to veterans of the French and Indian War.

At Fish Creek—near present Moundsville, West Virginia—a young and adventurous Virginian, George Rogers Clark, built a cabin. From there he with a small party made exploratory expeditions down the Ohio and subsequently undertook the task of surveying the interior of Kentucky.

At about the same time Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia,
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granted that zealous aspirant of western lands, George Washington, permission to have 10,000 acres surveyed for him on or near the Scioto River or on the Falls of the Ohio. Whereupon Thomas Bullitt, official surveyor for the colony of Virginia, went with a party to Chillicothe where he met the great Shawnee chief, Cornstalk, who warned him that the aggression of the whites was “designed to deprive us of the hunting of the country, as usual . . . the hunting we stand in need of to buy our clothing.” Bullitt, seeing justification in the argument, refused to continue the survey. Learning of this, Dunmore recalled him in the fall of 1773. The lands which Washington sought were finally surveyed under the supervision of Bullitt’s successor, John Floyd, in the spring of the following year.

The Shawnee, hoping that the English government would do them justice, protested the white aggressions to Alexander McKee, deputy of Sir William Johnson, who was the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department. The King’s orders, they remonstrated, restricted settlement to the Great Kanawha River, but this boundary agreement was being violated and their hunting grounds overrun. Though they frowned upon the retaliatory acts of their young men, they admitted they were powerless to restrain them, “for when they are disappointed in their hunting, and find the woods covered with the White People . . . they are foolish enough to make reprisals without waiting to apply to the great men that should redress their complaints and regulate the conduct of their White Brethren toward them.”

In the face of the treaties it had ratified the British government could hardly deny the justice of these arguments. Lord Dunmore was therefore reprimanded for allowing and even encouraging the aggressions. In his reply to Lord Dartmouth he confessed his inability to restrain the frontiersmen. He had learned from experience. He wrote:

. . . the established Authority of any government in America, and the policy of Government at home, are both insufficient to restrain the Americans; and that they do and will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them . . . they do not conceive that Government has any right to forbid their taking possession of a
Vast Tract of Country, either uninhabited, or which serves only as a shelter to a few scattered tribes of Indians. Nor can they be easily brought to entertain any belief of the permanent obligation of treaties made with those people, whom they consider, as but little removed from the brute creation.

The white men cared little that their invasion would mean eventual starvation for the Indians. Most of them were hunters who believed, as did Boone, that the privations they endured should be compensated by the profitable sale of their peltries. But Sir William Johnson saw them with an Indian's eye. The white hunters were, he said, "idle fellows . . . to lazy to cultivate
lands,” attracted by the plenty of game they found to employ “themselves in hunting, in which they interfere much more with the Indians than if they pursued agriculture alone, and the Indian hunters . . . already begin to feel the scarcity this has occasioned, which greatly encreases their resentment.”

The Shawnee wanted no trouble with their white brothers. This is shown by the generosity which Captain Will extended toward Boone and his companions in 1770. But nobility of feeling made no impression on the hunters. Captain Will, they felt, had robbed them outrageously, and he should be punished in proportion to the magnitude of his crime.

The whites justified their invasion of the Ohio Valley by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix by which the Six Nations of New York and Pennsylvania had ceded lands south of the Ohio as far west as the Tennessee River. This confederacy—which sought British protection in its effort to dominate all the other tribes of Canada, the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley—had made the cession in order to keep intact their old holdings in New York and Pennsylvania.

The Shawnee had protested the Treaty through the Seneca, the westernmost tribe of the confederacy. To the Six Nations the Ohio Valley meant little directly; to the Shawnee it meant much. But the Seneca refused to listen to the protest and therefore declined to pass it on to the rest of the confederacy. And the Shawnee had to bow to the circumstances because they were not native to the region but had settled on it with the permission of the Six Nations.

The Shawnee would have accepted the Treaty with less bitterness had the authorities been able to check the abusive conduct of the frontiersmen. Lord Dunmore reflected long on what should be done with these backwoodsmen. Should they be allowed to hold their lands and unite with the Indians? He dreaded the consequence. Should they be permitted “to form a Set of Democratical Governments of their own, upon the banks of the Old Colonies”? This he believed the English government would not allow to be carried into execution. He had no choice but to take the frontiersmen “Under the protection of Some of His
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Majesty’s Governments already established.” Thus Dunmore surrendered unconditionally to the frontiersmen.

At the beginning of 1774 Colonel William Preston, surveyor for Fincastle County, which then included the territory south of the Ohio below the mouth of the Great Kanawha, instructed the officers and soldiers who had obtained land warrants from Lord Dunmore to meet his deputy surveyor, John Floyd, at the mouth of the Great Kanawha on April 14 for the purpose of locating their lands.

On the appointed day forty-three men assembled at the designated place and cautiously proceeded down the river. The Shawnee decided to defend their hunting grounds. While three of the white men were prospecting for land near the mouth of the Little Guyandot, they were captured and held for three days. Given their freedom, they were warned that henceforth any Virginian found on the Ohio would be killed. Whereupon the expedition scattered, some of the men later returning home by water from New Orleans and others by the Wilderness Trail.

Meanwhile another party of pioneers met further up the Ohio at the mouth of the Little Kanawha. The party intended to descend the Ohio and establish a settlement in Kentucky. Among them were George Rogers Clark and Captain Michael Cresap, a trader and farmer from western Maryland who had failed in business and had moved to the Ohio Valley. In pursuance of their plans the party received word that an advanced group of their hunters had been fired upon near the mouth of the Great Kanawha. This was a warning from the Indians, but the whites accepted it as a challenge; they pressed forward, intent on surprising and destroying one of the Shawnee towns. They selected Cresap as leader of the enterprise, but he advised them to desist from their intentions, warning them that it would precipitate a general war for which they perhaps would be justly blamed. He recommended that they return to Wheeling and wait until they should learn what arrangements, if any, Virginia had made with the Indians for the peaceful occupation of the region. The hunters accepted Cresap’s advice.

In those days Virginia claimed all of western Pennsylvania,
especially Fort Pitt and the valley of the Monongahela. Her representative there was Dr. John Connolly, justice of the peace of Augusta County, an energetic but irascible man who made his headquarters at Pittsburgh. Connolly was occupied in organizing a militia, in reconstructing the fort which had been dismantled in 1772 and which he renamed Fort Dunmore, and in negotiating with the Indians to gain support for the surveying and settling ventures being conducted in Kentucky under the official auspices and protection of Virginia. He gave no encouragement to the frontiersmen arrived in Wheeling. Convinced that the Shawnee were ill-disposed toward the whites and that war between the two groups was inevitable, Connolly advised Cresap by letter to use his influence with his men to cover the country with scouts until the settlers should fortify themselves.

On receiving this message Cresap resolved on warfare. He erected a new post; he called a council of war and read Connolly’s letter to his men; he summoned all the Indian traders and solemnly declared war. The frontier soon blazed with attacks on Indians within striking distance of Wheeling. The first of these attacks was made upon a canoe containing a Shawnee, a Delaware and a white man named Stephens.

As the canoe descended the Ohio shots rang out from the dense underbrush along the riverbank. The Indians fell, but Stephens was rescued from the river by Cresap’s men who, oddly enough, happened to be near by. Stephens naturally believed that Cresap’s men had killed the Indians, though Cresap himself professed innocence of the matter. The next day he received word that five canoes full of Shawnee were descending the river from Pittsburgh. Collecting fifteen men, he pursued and overtook the Indians near Grave Creek. The Indians abandoned their canoes. A skirmish ensued, in which one of the Shawnee and a white man were killed. The settlers took a considerable amount of booty from the abandoned boats.

The skirmish was merely the prelude to one of the most inhuman episodes in the epic of the pioneers. At Mingo Town—up the river from Wheeling and near the present town of Steubenville, Ohio—was located a permanent camp inhabited largely by women, children and old men who belonged to the Six Na-
tions but who called themselves Mingo. Their leader was Tah-gahjute, who had assumed the name of Logan in honor of his friend, James Logan, secretary of the province of Pennsylvania.

Chief Logan was the friend of the white men. His father was a Frenchman who when quite young had been kidnaped and adopted into the Oneida tribe. For many years Logan lived in Shamokin—now Sunbury, Pennsylvania—where he became a chief of great influence among the Indians of the Susquehanna. During the French and Indian War he had maintained a strict neutrality and had, by taking refuge in Philadelphia, avoided the wiles of Indians friendly to the French.

Obliged to abandon his ancestral home, Logan lived in various places in Pennsylvania until, in 1772, he removed to the Ohio. He was fond of saying that he had two souls, one good and one bad, and that when his good soul prevailed he was kind and humane, but that when his bad soul ruled he was perfectly savage and delighted in seeing blood flow. Cresap’s men had once resolved to attack Logan’s camp but had changed their minds and returned home.

No such qualm tormented Daniel Greathouse, a border ruffian who often visited the farm of a settler named Joshua Baker on Yellow Creek across the river from the camp. There Indians often bought liquor and other articles for the elders and milk for the papooses. On May 3, 1774, four Mingo, two men and two squaws, came to the farm while Greathouse and a group of frontiersmen were present. The Indians were in an angry mood, for on the previous day three whites had shot two Mingo on the Indian side of the Ohio not far from their village.

Greathouse and his friends, however, soon restored their spirits with firewater and invited them to a game of shooting at the mark. One of them, Logan’s brother, put on a military coat belonging to one of the white men and, swaggering around, exclaimed, “I am white man.”

Offended by this claim, the owner of the coat asked the Indian to return it. When the drunken Indian ignored the request, the white man shot him and three other Indians dead. During the day Indians twice crossed the river either to join or to inquire for their comrades. Each time they met with gunfire. By the end of
the day eight Indians had been killed. One of the dead was Logan's sister-in-law, who was carrying her papoose by John Gibson, later a revolutionary hero and the secretary and acting governor of Indiana Territory.

Logan's bad soul now ruled and thirsted for bloodshed. He did not know who was responsible for the crimes, but he blamed Cresap as the leader of the white men. Full of anger and fire-water, of which he was uncommonly fond, he gathered a small band of Mingo and led them against the settlement. That day he took thirteen scalps, among them those of six children.

Three times Logan repeated his forays, ambuscading and defeating a group of Virginians who had pursued him and murdering McClure, their leader. Then his anger subsided almost as quickly as it had risen. He forbade his men to torture one of the prisoners whose life he saved at the risk of his own. Then calling the prisoner to his wigwam, Logan gave him some gunpowder ink and dictated a note to him. This he tied to a war club and left in the cabin of a settler whose entire family had been scalped. The note, "written with ferocious directness," was "a kind of public challenge or taunt to the man whom he wrongly deemed to be the author of his misfortunes." It said:

To Captain Cresap—What did you kill my people on Yellow Creek for. The white People killed my kin at Coneestoga a great while ago, & I thought nothing of that. But you killed my kin again on Yellow Creek, and took my cousin prisoner then I thought I must kill too, and I have been three times to war since but] the Indians is not Angry only myself.

The Shawnee still opposed war. Cornstalk, having pledged his faith to shield the Pennsylvania traders who happened to be sojourning in Shawnee country, sent five of his men to guide their return to town from camp. When they arrived Cornstalk appointed a party in charge of his brother to conduct them to Pittsburgh. With them he sent a warning letter to McKee, informing him of the recent murders but announcing his determination to keep the Shawnee quiet until "wee see whether it is the intention of the white people in general to fall on us." Corn-
stalk also requested McKee to inform the governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania of the peaceful disposition of his people and to urge them to put a stop to such crimes as had been committed by white men.

McKee had no influence with any of the officials mentioned in the letter. Indeed, Connolly not only refused to receive the Shawnee messengers but ordered their arrest. The traders, fearing bloodshed should Connolly be obeyed, spirited the messengers across the river just as militiamen appeared to take them into custody. The messengers, unaware of Connolly's orders, descended the Ohio on their return home. When they encamped at Beaver Creek they were suddenly surprised by militiamen who killed one of them and then retreated "in a most dastardly manner."

Still most of the Shawnee opposed war. They overlooked the crimes of the whites and even requested them to ignore "what our young men may now be doing." But the relatives and friends of the murdered Shawnee clamored for revenge. Hoping to appease them, the headmen of the tribe called a meeting at their important village of Wakatomika on the Muskingum. It was in vain—the bereaved Indians could not be restrained; they were determined to take thirteen white lives for the thirteen friends and relatives they said the white men had murdered. They joined the Mingo under Logan, who in June 1774 conducted them in a series of raids against innocent and unsuspecting families on whom they fully satisfied their vengeance.

At the outbreak of hostilities the frightened settlers deserted their cabins for the safety of the east. In a letter informing George Washington of the massacre of Logan's people, Valentine Crawford, who resided at Jacob's Creek in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, said that all of the settlements west of the Monogahela had been ruined. "There were more than a thousand people crossed that river going Eastward in a single day," he wrote. Two days later William Crawford, brother of Valentine, wrote to Washington that the settlers were "much alarmed, many hundred having gone Eastward over the Allegheny Moun-
tains, and the whole country is vacated as far as the Monongahela.”

Word of the Mingo and Shawnee raids soon reached Governor Dunmore at Williamsburg. Desiring to protect the frontiersmen and sensing the futility of pacific hopes, he relayed the information he had received to the House of Burgesses and called out the militia of western Virginia. The House of Burgesses replied as follows:

It gives us pain . . . to find the Indians have made fresh encroachments and disturbances on our Frontiers; we have only to request that your Excellency will be pleased to exert those powers with which you are fully vested by the Act of Assembly, for making provision against Invasions and Insurrections, which we have no doubt, will be found sufficient to repel the hostile and perfidious attempts of those savage and barbarous Enemies.

Accordingly, Dunmore considered two possible plans of operation, one of which he would adopt and direct in person. He planned either to conduct the campaign on the Ohio, or, that proving impossible or inadvisable, to invade the Ohio wilderness and strike at the Shawnee capital on Pickaway Plains in the valley of the Scioto. His army was to consist of two wings or divisions, one of which, the right or northern, he was to command in person. The other, composed exclusively of mountain men from the counties west and southwest of the Blue Ridge, was to be under his most experienced officer, Andrew Lewis, the veteran of the French and Indian War, who was now a colonel.

Before he left Williamsburg with his division Dunmore ordered Major Angus McDonald with a body of 400 to build a fort at the creek that runs through the present city of Wheeling, West Virginia, and to cross the Ohio and destroy the Shawnee village of Wakatomika. McDonald began construction of the fort, which he called Fincastle, and then, leaving it under Captain William Crawford who had come from Pittsburgh with 200 men, descended the Ohio to the mouth of Fish Creek—now in Marshall County, West Virginia. At that point he crossed
the river into Shawnee country, burned Wakatomika which the Indians had deserted, destroyed 500 bushels of old corn and cut down seventy-five acres of growing corn.

Unable to meet the Shawnee in battle, however, McDonald returned to Wheeling, then proceeded to Greenway Court where Dunmore had established temporary headquarters, and apprised him of his failure. In view of this unfortunate turn of events the governor resolved to adopt the plan of invading the Ohio wilderness. From Greenway Court he marched to Fort Cumberland, crossed the mountains to the mouth of Red Stone Creek in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and arrived at Pittsburgh where he was joined by John Connolly with 200 men.

Now leading 1,300 men, Dunmore floated down the Ohio to Wheeling, ordered Crawford with his troops to the mouth of the Hocking and then continued down the river to Harris' Ferry in Wood County, West Virginia, thirteen miles below the present city of Parkersburg. Swimming his cattle and horses, he crossed over to the Ohio side. On a triangular point of land at the mouth of the Hocking he built Fort Gower, named in honor of his friend Earl Gower, a member of the House of Lords.

From Winchester Dunmore had sent Lewis a letter requesting him to raise "a respectable Boddy of men and join me at the mouth of the grate Kanaway [Great Kanawha] or Wailen [Wheeling] as the most Convenient for you." The colonel accordingly summoned the officers of the southern counties of Virginia to a council at which he requested them to enlist troops and to meet him at "Camp Union," so designated because they were all to unite there on the Big Levels of the Greenbrier, at present Lewisburg, West Virginia. Within a few weeks large groups of men were gathering on the ground. Clad in hunting shirts, leather leggings, homemade breeches and caps either made from skins of wild animals or knit from wool, they came from stockaded villages, from lonely clearings, from smoky camps.

Each man was armed with a long flintlock or an English musket and was equipped with bullet pouches, a powder horn, a tomahawk and a long butcher knife which prompted the Indians to refer to Virginians in general as the Big Knife. Many of them were experts in Indian fighting. Some had been with Washing-
ton at Fort Necessity; others had fought with Forbes at the capture of Fort Duquesne; still others had been with Bouquet at Bushy Run. All of them had seen service in some border warfare.

By the first week of September 1774 Colonel Lewis had assembled his men and was ready to march to the junction of the Elk and Great Kanawha rivers—at the present site of Charleston, West Virginia—where he planned to make dugout canoes in which to transport his supplies up to the Ohio. His force consisted of four commands: the Augusta County Regiment under his brother, Colonel Charles Lewis; the Botetourt County Regiment under Colonel William Fleming; the Fincastle County Battalion composed largely of backwoodsmen from the Watauga region under Colonel William Christian; and several independent companies under Colonel John Field.

One of Christian's captains was Evan Shelby, in whose company were his intrepid son, Isaac, and John Sevier's brother, Valentine. Some of Christian's men had not yet arrived. His battalion, therefore, would not be ready in time to march with the others. The future conqueror of the Cherokee burned to distinguish himself. He asked for permission to go along with what men he had, but Lewis permitted only two of the best companies to march. He ordered Christian to remain at Camp Union with the rest of the battalion until he could gather 300 men. Christian feared his men would be as disappointed as he. “What to do I dont know,” he wrote Colonel Preston, “when our men hears they are to stay behind.”

Lewis tried to restore Christian's pride by assuring him that he and his men could get down in time to cross the Ohio with the rest of the force. Lewis' efforts at persuasion were in vain—Christian did not relish remaining behind with the worst troops who had been assigned to garrison duty in the surrounding small forts. On September 5 Lewis received from Dunmore a message requesting him to march with all his men to the mouth of the Little Kanawha. He replied that time did not permit him to change his plans and that he must proceed to the mouth of the Great Kanawha.

Dawn on the following day found Camp Union a swarm of busy and noisy men. All morning long commands and shouts and
mutterings mingled with the lowing of cattle and the neighing of horses that were being corralled and laden with supplies. In the afternoon the Augusta Regiment, joined by a company of the Botetourt Regiment, fell in line, passed to the playing of drums and fifes over the high hill west of the encampment and disappeared into the wilderness.

The rest of the Botetourt Regiment, the Fincastle Battalion and the independent units followed within six days. Field’s Culpeper Minute Men, forty strong, moved so rapidly that they soon caught up with the Augusta Regiment. At the head of the expedition were several hundred axmen, clearing the way and tracing a road, and behind them followed the caravan of pack horses, wagons and cannon.

Fleming kept a careful journal of his itinerary. In sun and rain the long column wound like a serpent of prismatic colors across the lofty summits of the Alleghenies, among dangerous cliffs, and over creeks and rivers, until two weeks later it left behind the rocky masses of the hills. Autumn had already begun to transform the forest into a huge canvas of glowing colors. The glistening green laurel and the somber hemlock contrasted magnificently with the golden linden and sugar tree and the crimson sumac.

At last on September 22 the Botetourt Regiment entered a broad valley covered with buffalo grass and studded with maples and pawpaws. To the east meandered the Great Kanawha. Marching up its northern bank, the troops arrived at the mouth of the Elk where they joined the Augusta Regiment. The soldiers of both units were soon busy felling trees and reducing them to canoes.

Colonel Fleming’s thoughts often dwelled on his wife and small son back home. While the canoes, twenty-seven in number, were being completed, he took time from his many duties to write his family a letter. This expressed the general pioneer belief that any campaign against the Indians was a crusade in defense of property, country and home and that, therefore, it enjoyed Divine blessing:

My Dr. Nancy, that You & Lenny are daily in my thoughts, you need not doubt, but as much as I love & Regard you both, I can not Allow myself to wish me with you, till the expedition is
finished knowing that it would Sink me in your esteem, & that you would dispise a wretch that could desert an honourable Cause, a Cause undertaken for the good of his Country in general and more immediately for the Protection of his Family, as included amongst the Frontier settlers let thoughts like these Animate you and support your Spirits, and remember my D' Girl that the Divine Being is Omnipresent as well as Omnipotent, that He who rides on the Wings of the Tempest, and directs the Artillery of Heaven, beholds with serenity, the Rage of a Battle & directs each deadly Shaft where to strike—for a Sparrow falls not to the Ground without his knowledge. His Mercy is more conspicuously displayed, in instances of Preservation & Protection in the fiercest Battles and greatest dangers, than in a calm undisturbed Rotation of time in a quiet peaceable life. thefor My D' think me as safe on this Expedition, tho we should have a Skirmish or two with the Indians, as if at home. And should it be the Will of God, that I should fall, I must & can not otherwise think, but that he who dies in the Service of & in the defense of his Country, dies in an Act of Religion.

On September 30 Lewis resumed his march toward his destination. After sending his supplies ahead in the canoes, he led his army along the northern bank of the Great Kanawha, crossed several small streams and on October 6 arrived at the mouth of the river where he encamped on a cape of land which his soldiers called Point Pleasant. There three messengers, one of whom was Simon Girty, brought him a letter in which Dunmore requested him to march with all his men to the Indian towns near Pickaway Plains. Though annoyed by this last-minute change of plans, Lewis prepared to set out in the morning. But destiny, having other designs, forestalled him.

From the peaks of the Alleghenies, from the highlands along the Great Kanawha, Cornstalk's spies had seen the progress of Lewis' army all the way from Camp Union to Point Pleasant and had reported it to the chief in his capital on Pickaway Plains. Cornstalk and his headmen had immediately resolved on war and had summoned the warriors to arms. They came by the hundreds, eager for battle.

Cornstalk planned to frustrate the two divisions of white troops
by attacking them before they could unite. If Lewis could be beaten, he reasoned, Dunmore could be shot down in the narrow defiles of Hocking Valley. In accordance with his scheme, on October 9 Cornstalk approached the Ohio with his braves and halted in a dense forest in the valley of Campaign Creek near the present village of Addison in Gallia County, Ohio, three miles above the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Soon after dark he began to send his warriors across the river on rafts, until between eight and eleven hundred of them were on the southern side about three miles from Point Pleasant.

The warriors found themselves in a wilderness so dense that they could not see the moon and stars. In the darkness they tramped across decayed trunks of trees strewn in all directions and through weeds interspersed with spicewood until, just before dawn, they approached the camp of the whites. In the dim gray light they made out the forms of two men hunting deer along the bank of the river. They fired, killing one of them. The other ran into camp, giving the alarm.

Instantly drums beat to arms. Sleepy soldiers rolled out of their blankets and primed their flintlocks or rifles. Lewis, believing that the Indians constituted only a scouting party, ordered his brother and Colonel Fleming, each with 150 men, to march up the river. They had not advanced more than a mile when the Indians fired on them, killing the scouts in front.

The report of the rifles, resounding in camp like the clap of thin thunder, convinced Lewis for the first time that the attack was a serious one. He immediately dispatched Colonel Field with 200 men, who arrived to find that the men under Charles Lewis were bearing the full fury of the attack. Lewis, fighting in the open instead of "taking a tree," had been mortally wounded.

"I am wounded," Lewis said calmly, "but go you on and be brave." With these words he handed his gun to a man near him and, assisted by a few others, returned to camp where a few hours later he died.

Fleming, attempting to rally his men, was also wounded. Two bullets entered his left arm below the elbow and broke the bones and another pierced his chest "about three Inches below my left Nipple." Declaring himself "effectually disabled," he walked
back to camp where he found that a part of his lung, “as long as one of my fingers,” had come through the wound in his chest. When it was restored by one of his attendants he felt a “surprising state of ease.” He was destined to survive his wound by many years.

Colonel Field meanwhile had restored the battle and had soon forced the Indians to retreat. Standing behind a large tree, he saw an Indian approaching and jeering at him. He aimed, but too late: two Indians, coming from the opposite direction, shot him dead. Evan Shelby immediately turned his company over to his son Isaac and assumed command of the force. For an hour victory flitted from side to side before finally resting with the whites.

As the frontiersmen advanced their foes turned to engage them in hand-to-hand combat. Groans and cheers and jeers and yells mingled with war whoops and rifle shot.

“Be strong, be strong,” thundered Cornstalk, running hither and thither among his braves. “Lie close; shoot well; drive the white dogs in!”

The braves, fighting desperately, taunted their foes for being now too close to death to think of playing their fifes. “You white sons of bitches,” they jeered as they fired or swung their tomahawks, “where are your whistles now?”

The whites, receiving reinforcements, gradually forced their foes to give ground. While the best warriors covered the retreat others carried off the wounded and threw as many of the dead as they could into the river for, like all other Indians, they were averse to allowing their comrades, whether dead or alive, to fall into the hands of their enemies. As the Shawnee fell back they reached a strong position provided by underbrush, stumps and steep banks behind which they entrenched themselves.

The whites, realizing the folly of attempting to dislodge them, strung out their line for a mile and a half and continued the fight in a crouching position. The engagement gradually wore down to a series of skirmishes until, toward sunset, Isaac Shelby directed a flank movement by a march along the east bank of Crooked Creek.

The Indians, mistaking this for the expected reinforcements under Colonel Christian, grew discouraged. As the sun sank they
began to take to their canoes and to make for the opposite shore. Some of them called back that they, as well as the whites, had 1,100 men and that tomorrow they would return and resume the fight. This was mere bravado; they had suffered too heavily to make good their threat; they abandoned some of their dead together with a number of guns, blankets, tomahawks, powder horns and war clubs.

Darkness came, shrouding the forest with a terrible silence. The whites buried their dead, left the bodies of their enemies to the wolves and vultures, picked up the articles left on the field and dragged themselves back to camp. Forty-six of their comrades had been killed and eighty wounded. Of their officers, seventeen had been killed or wounded, including their second, third and fourth in command. The fifth in command, Colonel William Christian, reached Point Pleasant when the battle was over.

On September 27 Christian had left Camp Union with his battalion and had arrived eight days later at the mouth of the Elk. After dispatching a letter to Lewis informing him of his whereabouts, Christian marched up the northern side of the Great Kanawha. On the day of the battle Lewis had sent messengers to inform the colonel that he was hotly engaged and to request him to hasten his assistance. Christian quickened his march, but he arrived on the battlefield only to learn to his great disappointment that the battle was over.

The Indians meanwhile marched wearily through the wilderness to their villages on the Pickaway Plains. There Cornstalk called a council of his tribe to discuss what should be done. He upbraided the other chiefs for not permitting him to make peace with the whites before the battle.

“What,” Cornstalk asked, “will you do now? The Big Knife is coming on us, and we shall all be killed. Now you must fight or we are undone.” Silence greeted his words. Cornstalk continued: “Let us kill all our women and children and go and fight until we die.” Silence again. Then Cornstalk rose and struck his tomahawk in a post in the center of his council house. “I’ll go,” he said, “and make peace.”

The warriors chorused assent. Instantly Cornstalk sent Mat-
The governor as yet had no knowledge of the recent battle. He had heard rumors that Lewis had been attacked, but since that officer had 1,100 men and would soon be joined by Christian with 300 more, he was confident that the southern wing could cope with the Indians. On October 11, leaving a garrison of a hundred men at Fort Gower, Dunmore led the bulk of his force toward the Indian villages and sent Lewis word to meet him there. When Dunmore was within fifteen miles of the principal village he met Eliott and the chiefs, who informed him of the recent battle and requested peace. The governor immediately sent Captain John Gibson to tell them in their own language that he would listen to their proposals but that he would not withdraw from their country until satisfactory terms were made. The next day he advanced to within six miles of the village where he halted and formed an encampment which he called Camp Charlotte in honor of the Queen. Here on October 18 he opened negotiations with the chiefs.

Cornstalk appeared at the council meeting wearing a topknot of red feathers, a beaded ornament on his forehead, bone and silver rings in his ears and painted half-moons across his cheeks. He bitterly denounced the white men seated around him for murdering his people and stealing their land. Having thus restored his wounded ego, he surrendered.

On the same day Lewis, having placed Fleming with about one hundred men in command at Point Pleasant with instructions to build a small stockaded fort there, crossed the Ohio and started for the Indian villages. His men, flushed with success and burning to avenge their losses, pushed on rapidly, hoping to strike at the Indians in the first villages they reached. Imagine their chagrin when Dunmore sent word informing them that he had almost concluded a treaty and requesting them, therefore, to return to Point Pleasant.

Instead of obeying the orders, Lewis' men advanced, causing the worried Indians to leave Camp Charlotte to protect their villages from impending attack. Dunmore, fearing that his work of peace would be undone, took Gibson and fifty men and
marched to Lewis' headquarters. The next day he gathered the officers, told them what he had done and once more requested them to return to Point Pleasant. This time they reluctantly obeyed. Soon after they recrossed the river they scattered and departed for their homes.

The peace which Dunmore concluded with the Shawnee and their associates was only a preliminary understanding pending final negotiations. Temporarily, the Indians agreed to give up without reserve the prisoners they had taken in wars with the whites, to surrender stolen Negroes, horses and other valuables, and to cease hunting or visiting on the side south of the Ohio. As a guarantee for the faithful compliance of these terms, the Indians agreed to deliver up hostages. In the following year the chiefs were to meet in Pittsburgh to enter into a supplemental treaty by which the terms were to be ratified and fully confirmed.

Most historians have greatly exaggerated the importance of the single-battle conflict known as Lord Dunmore's War. In his celebrated work on the frontier Theodore Roosevelt wrote that the battle of Point Pleasant "rendered possible the settlement of Kentucky, and therefore the winning of the West. Had it not been for Lord Dunmore's War, it is more than likely that when the colonies achieved their freedom they would have found their western boundary fixed at the Allegheny Mountains."

Virgil A. Lewis of West Virginia, perhaps from an understandable desire to glorify the early history of his state, agreed with Roosevelt that the battle at Point Pleasant made possible the settlement of Kentucky and added that this in turn provided George Rogers Clark with the springboard from which he launched his conquest of the Illinois Country. He continued as follows:

In the treaty Convention of Paris in 1783, whereby the independence of the United States was being recognized, and the western boundary of the new Nation determined, the British representatives voted to place this at the crest of the Alleghenies, and the Spanish representative in that body voted with them.
But the Americans stoutly asserted that, not only had they conquered the vast Illinois region, but that Virginia had established civil government therein. So the Mississippi river, and not the Alleghenies, became the western boundary of the United States. Verily, the men who fought the battle of Point Pleasant, were Empire Builders, and the victory achieved by them on that field changed the course of American history.

None of the quoted opinion is substantiated by documentary evidence. On the contrary, it controverts accurate historical information. The Shawnee never kept their promise to stay out of Kentucky. We shall presently see that they attacked Boone and his party in that region just six months after they had agreed to the treaty of Camp Charlotte and that they continued to wage war against the whites throughout the American Revolution.

Kentucky, like other frontier regions, was settled despite the presence of the Indian menace. To believe otherwise is to admit ignorance of the impelling character of the American frontiersmen. Virgil Lewis’ other assumptions are also unfounded. Samuel Flagg Bemis, one of the keenest authorities in the history of American diplomacy, states that Rayneval—private secretary to Vergennes, French minister of foreign affairs—asserted in a memorandum that Clark’s excursions in the Illinois Country could not seriously be advanced as an American claim. Bemis also points out that Clark had withdrawn his garrisons to the Falls of the Ohio by 1783 and that the Illinois Country was, therefore, a “no man’s land.” At that time most of the territory was controlled not by Clark’s garrison at Fort Nelson but by the British garrisons at Detroit and Michilimackinac.

Thus Lord Dunmore’s War had none of the significant results most historians impute to it. Yet it was not without importance in frontier history. It was distinctly an American victory. The soldiers and officers who fought in it were not regulars but colonials, and the training and experience they derived from it redounded to the advantage of American forces from the Southern provinces during the Revolution.

Most of the officers and men who served at Point Pleasant
fought again for the independence of their country. Lewis himself, at the head of an American force, was responsible for driving Dunmore from Virginia. At least ten of his former officers won fame in the Revolution and many of his former soldiers took part in Clark's conquest of the Illinois Country. Among the officers in Dunmore's division was Daniel Morgan, hero of Quebec in 1775 and of Cowpens in 1781. At the beginning of the Revolution Morgan had led his rifle corps, composed of many of the same expert sharpshooters who had served under his command in 1774, into Washington's camp at Cambridge. General William Campbell and General Isaac Shelby, both of whom were captains under Lewis, became the commanding officers in 1780 at King's Mountain where the frontiersmen won an important victory against a British force under Major Patrick Ferguson.

We have seen elsewhere how Colonel William Christian, one of Lewis' regimental commanders, defeated the Cherokee in 1776 at the head of an expedition whose officers and men had also fought under Lewis. Of the officers who had been with Dunmore in 1774, four served in 1788 as members of the Virginia convention that ratified the Constitution of the United States. Several more were destined to become United States senators and governors of Western states. Thus Lord Dunmore's War may be considered a focal point in frontier history.

On their way homeward from Camp Charlotte Dunmore's officers uttered one of the earliest expressions of American patriotism. Sojourning for a few days at Fort Gower, they held a meeting on November 5 to express their true sentiments in regard to the impending contest between Great Britain and her rebellious American colonies. As loyal subjects of George III they had faithfully followed the King's representative in war, but as Americans they sympathized warmly with the Continental Congress.

To assure their countrymen that they would stand with them in the conflict, the assembly at Fort Gower passed resolutions and directed that these be published in the Virginia Gazette. Their speaker recalled that they had lived in the woods three months without any word either from the delegates at Philadelphia or from Boston where hostilities were likely to begin. They
were the officers, he said, of a considerable body of men; they had lived weeks without bread or salt and had slept "in the open air without any covering but that of the canopy of Heaven"; they could march and shoot with any army in the known world. In view of their prowess they were disturbed by the possibility that they might be falsely accused of being hostile or indifferent to the American cause. They wished to dispel such fears in their countrymen by assuring them that they would not fight save "for the honour and advantage of America in general, and of Virginia in particular." They would remain faithful subjects of George III as long as he ruled over a free people, and they would defend the honor of the Crown and the dignity of the British Empire

... at the expense of life, and everything dear and valuable. But as the love of liberty, and attachment of the real interests and just rights of America outweighs every other consideration, we resolve that we will exert every power within us for the defense of American liberty, and for the support of her just rights and privileges; not in any precipitate, riotous, or tumultuous manner, but when regularly called forth by the unanimous voice of our countrymen.

With this dedication to the freedom of their native land, the victorious officers of Lord Dunmore crossed the Ohio and returned to their homes.

One Indian had refused to bow before triumphant white arms. That Indian was Chief Logan. During the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, Dunmore had sent Gibson to invite Logan to attend the conference. The chief replied, "I am a warrior, not a counselor; I shall not go."

So saying, Logan took Gibson aside and suddenly addressed him in a speech which in its simple eloquence has few equals of its kind in primitive oratory. It soon became popular. It was recited in schools and churches, and in time it found its way into the leading newspapers of America and England. Thomas Jefferson, that admirer of literary beauty, praised it highly and subsequently tried to prove the truthfulness of the reference to

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Cresap in it. The result was that some of Cresap's relatives and friends attacked the speech as fictitious and attributed its authorship to John Gibson, to Simon Girty and even to the "fertile brain of Thomas Jefferson," though Cresap's defenders failed to provide a reasonable and convincing motive for the deception.

Gibson and George Rogers Clark, who were present when the speech was read, attested to its genuineness. Gibson simply wrote it down, translating it literally and returning with it to Dunmore. When the governor read it solemnly to his soldiers and officers, they understood that Greathouse, not Cresap, had been instrumental in the murder of Logan's family. Clark, turning to Cresap, teased him for being so great a man that the Indians blamed him for everything. Cresap swore "he had a good mind to tomahawk Greathouse for the murder." The chief's speech was no acknowledgment of defeat. It was a direct recital of the wrongs done him, "a fierce and exulting justification of the vengeance he had taken on white men." Said Logan:

I appeal to any white man to say if he ever entered Logan's cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the last and bloody war, Logan remained quiet in his cabin, an advocate of peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed as they passed and said, "Logan is the friend of white men." I had ever thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man, Colonel Cresap, who the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered all the relatives of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called upon me for revenge. I have sought it; I have killed many; I have fully glutted my revenge. For my country, I rejoice at the beams of peace. But do not harbor the thought that mine is the joy of fear. Logan never felt fear. He will never turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one.