

## CHAPTER XX.

## GENERAL CLARK'S DRAFT.

During the spring and summer months of 1781 the Pennsylvania frontier was sorely disturbed by the efforts of General George Rogers Clark to raise troops for an expedition, in the interest of Virginia, against the British post at Detroit. In the summer of 1778 Clark had conquered the Illinois country and the valley of the Wabash for Virginia, and, as it afterward turned out, for the United States. Virginia claimed all that northwestern country by king's charter, but, since king's charters had fallen into disfavor in America, she felt more reliance in a claim based on actual conquest. Clark was ambitious for the enterprise against Detroit and was supported by many of the leading men of the Kentucky and Virginia borders. They saw Detroit as the source of all their afflictions, and were eager for the conquest of that breeding place of savage warfare.

Clark was in Richmond in January, 1781, where the prestige of his exploits easily gained for him the approval and support of the state government. He received a commission as brigadier general and ample funds to buy provisions in the country west of the Alleghany mountains. A small body of Virginia regulars, about 140, was placed at his service and he was empowered to raise and equip volunteers in the border counties.

Agents were sent ahead of Clark into the country between Laurel Hill and the Ohio river and began to buy

flour and live cattle.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Brodhead complained to the president of Pennsylvania that the food supply on which he was dependent was to be taken out of the country in the interest of Virginia, and he revealed a jealousy of Clark's enterprise. "I have hitherto been encouraged to flatter myself," he wrote, "that I should, sooner or later, be enabled to reduce that place (Detroit), but it seems the United States cannot furnish either troops or resources for the purpose, but the state of Virginia can."

Brodhead threatened to prevent the sending of any supplies out of the country, but in February he received a letter from General Washington, directing him to give aid to General Clark's undertaking and to detach from his own little force Captain Isaac Craig's field artillery and at least a captain's command of infantry, to assist the Virginia expedition.<sup>2</sup>

General Clark arrived on the Pennsylvania frontier about the beginning of March and made his headquarters at the house of Colonel Crawford, on the Youghiogheny. A part of his time he spent with Colonel Dorsey Pentecost, on Chartiers creek. He instituted vigorous efforts to raise men in the same region where he had found the hardy volunteers for his first raid into the western territory. Then arose a bitter contention throughout all Southwestern Pennsylvania. The frontiersmen seemed to be about equally divided between support and opposition to Clark's plans. It was generally known by this time that all of the Virginia county of Yohogania and much of the counties of Monongalia and Ohio belonged to Pennsylvania, but the boundary line had not been surveyed west of the Monongahela river and the magistrates from Pittsburg southward were all Virginians.

Among the settlers there were many factions. Some would obey no law but that of Pennsylvania, and declared that Clark, as a Virginia officer, had no business in that neighborhood. Others adhered to Virginia until the line

1 Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, vol. viii., p. 767; vol. ix., p. 190.

2 Pennsylvania Archives, vol. viii., pp. 743, 766, 769.

should be officially surveyed and ardently supported Clark's plans. A few refused to obey any law or acknowledge any jurisdiction, saying they did not know which state was over them. They could not decide such a great dispute, and had enough to do to plant their corn and potatoes and to keep their rifles in good condition for the savages. Some were for a new state of their own, stoutly protesting that the wiseacres at Philadelphia and Richmond never could understand the needs of the over-mountain people. Many of the bolder spirits on the border said they did not care a bad penny whether Clark were a Virginian or a Pennsylvanian; if he could clean out Detroit he would strike a heart blow to the enemy and rescue the border from savage depredations. So they were for him.

Clark's intention was to raise 2,000 men in Southwestern Pennsylvania, float them down the Ohio to the Wabash, ascend that stream as far as possible and march overland to Detroit. When he arrived at Colonel Crawford's he found that the frontiers were being raided by bands of Shawnees from the Scioto, Delawares from the Muskingum and Wyandots from the Sandusky. An expedition against those tribes was more popular among the Pennsylvanians than a campaign against distant Detroit, and therefore Clark made an ostensible change in his plans. He gave it out that he was going against the Ohio savages, for the immediate benefit of the Westmoreland frontier; but his real aim was not altered to conquer Detroit and an additional empire for the Old Dominion.<sup>3</sup>

Brodhead was not deceived, but many Pennsylvania officers were. On March 23 Clark wrote to President Reed, of Pennsylvania, asking his endorsement of the project, for the effect it would have on the frontiersmen who called themselves Pennsylvanians. Clark wrote: "If our resources should not be such as to enable us to remain in the Indian country during the fair season, I am in hopes they will be sufficient to visit the Shawnees, Delawares and San-

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<sup>3</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., pp. 189, 239.

dusky towns. Defeating the enemy and laying those countries waste would give great ease to the frontiers of both states."<sup>4</sup>

President Reed approved of the campaign, but the letters of both Clark and Reed were unreasonably delayed. President Reed wrote, on May 15: "It will give us great satisfaction if the inhabitants of this state cheerfully concur in it, and we authorize you to declare that, so far from giving offense to their government, we shall consider their service with you as highly meritorious."<sup>5</sup> This letter was carried to the frontier by Colonel Christopher Hays, the Westmoreland county member of the Supreme Executive Council. Hays was directed by the council to aid Clark's expedition, but it soon developed that he was opposed to it. Although he arrived in Westmoreland about the beginning of June, the letter which he carried was not delivered to Clark until July 3, when it was too late to do much good.<sup>6</sup>

Hays called a meeting of all the commissioned officers of the Westmoreland militia to arrange a plan for the frontier defense. Doubtless he was confident that he and his friends could control this meeting, but he was disappointed. The officers met on June 18, at the home of Captain John McClelland, on Big Sewickley creek, and, to the chagrin of Colonel Hays, decided by a majority vote to give aid to General Clark. It was resolved to furnish 300 men out of the county militia to join Clark's army, and Colonel Lochry was directed to see that this quota was raised "by volunteers or draft."<sup>7</sup>

This was the first effort made on the Pennsylvania frontier to raise soldiers by draft and it caused a great outcry. The meeting of officers directed Colonel Lochry to consult General Clark respecting the manner of drafting men in Virginia and to agree on a day for a general rendezvous. Lochry met Clark one week later at Crawford's settlement and the rendezvous was ordered for Monday, July

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 1x., p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 1x., p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 1x., pp. 141, 331.

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. 1x., pp. 239, 247, 369, 559.

16. This day was chosen to enable the farmers to finish their wheat and oats harvesting before taking down their rifles and powder horns.

By act of March 28, 1781, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania created the county of Washington, to comprise all the territory of the state west of the Monongahela river. James Marshel was appointed county lieutenant and he set to work to establish the Pennsylvania jurisdiction in a region where most of the inhabitants were Virginians. The Virginia officers clung to their commissions and were supported by the stronger faction. Such men as Colonel Pentecost, John Canon, Gabriel Cox and Daniel Leet worked hard to muster men for General Clark, while Marshel and his adherents were just as active to defeat the Virginia project. This rivalry, which grew exceedingly bitter, was fatal to Clark's enterprise and unfortunate for the real interests of the frontier. It is probable that Clark, if unitedly supported, would have taken Detroit, overawed the savages and saved the border many years of desolating warfare.<sup>8</sup>

On the day of the rendezvous the attendance at the several designated places was discouragingly small. Clark and his lieutenants immediately proceeded to raise men by draft. Such action was without warrant of law. It gave opportunity for the rougher element among the Virginians to exploit their hatred of their Pennsylvania neighbors. The work of drafting was carried on with many examples of pillage, cruelty and personal violence. Virginia raiding parties scoured the country on both sides of the Monongahela, seizing and beating men, frightening and abusing women, breaking houses and barns, plundering cellars, impressing grain and live stock and causing a general reign of terror. The long restrained animosities growing out of the boundary dispute now had play. Examples of the acts of violence have been preserved in letters written by the pioneers.

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<sup>8</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., pp. 193, 233, 304, 315, 332, 356, 367.

One of the men most vigorous in denouncing the Virginia proceedings and advising their neighbors to resist the draft was Captain John Hardin, who kept a grist mill near Redstone. His eldest son was Lieutenant John Hardin, of the Eighth Pennsylvania, afterward famous as General Hardin, of Kentucky. At the head of 40 or 50 horsemen, General Clark visited Hardin's settlement, announcing his purpose to hang the stubborn old pioneer. Hardin could not be found, but the Virginians caught one of his sons and kept him bound for several days. They broke open the mill, fed the grain to their horses, took possession of the dwelling, killed sheep and hogs for their food and feasted for three days at Hardin's expense. Then General Clark declared the old man's estate forfeited for treason, but was kind enough to give the property to the wife.<sup>9</sup>

A settler who visited one of Clark's camps made so bold as to say that the draft was illegal. He was arrested and confined in a log jail and Clark gave judgment that the man should be hanged in due course of time. The threat of execution was not carried out. It was merely one of the general's "bluffs," for which he was somewhat notorious. Some of the events of this time suggest that Clark had begun to drink pretty hard. He was in the home of Monongahela rye and the wealthier Virginia settlers were generous in their hospitality.

Colonel Gabriel Cox, who lived on Peter's creek, near Finleyville, went about with a band of armed men, drafting the reluctant settlers. He sought John Douglass, one of the newly elected magistrates for Washington county, but did not find him at home. Thinking to catch John in bed, Cox and his men returned to the house at night, burst in the door and frightened wife and children nearly to death. Douglass was not there and Cox threatened the trembling wife with his sword. The poor woman could not or would not tell where her husband was.

Colonel Marshel wrote to Philadelphia: "Cox and his

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<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., pp. 343-345.

<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., p. 344; vol. x., p. 81.

party have taken and confined a considerable number of the inhabitants of this county; in a word, the instances of high treason against the state are too many to be enumerated.' Thomas Scott, an honored leader among the pioneers, wrote that Clark's conduct had been "highly oppressive and abusive," adding, "The particulars are numerous and horrid."<sup>11</sup> Christopher Hays and Scott wrote jointly, "The general's expedition has been wished well, and volunteers to that service have been encouraged, . . . but we have heartily reprobated the general's standing over these two counties with an armed force, in order to dragoon the inhabitants into obedience to a draft under the laws of Virginia."<sup>12</sup>

The factional contentions among the borderers caused the failure of Clark's expedition. The Virginia general mustered his forces at the mouth of Chartiers creek, a short distance below Pittsburg, and thence marched to Wheeling, where his boats were built. Above Wheeling the Ohio was too shallow in midsummer to permit of navigation. Clark waited at Wheeling at least two weeks, vainly expecting other additions to his band. Realizing, at length, that the army which he had hoped to lead could not be assembled, and that he must move, if at all, before his stock of provisions was seriously reduced or many of his volunteers had changed their minds, he embarked his men, on the morning of August 8, and began the descent of the Ohio river. His force numbered about 400, with Captain Craig's battery of three field pieces. Although his proud spirit would not permit him to give over his enterprise, he felt little confidence in its success. Just before his embarkation he wrote to Governor Jefferson, of Virginia, that he had "relinquished all expectation," adding, "I have been at so much pains that the disappointment is doubly mortifying."

Had General Clark waited but a few hours longer, his expedition might not have been entirely fruitless. In the

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<sup>11</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., p. 325.

<sup>12</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., p. 355.

evening of the day in whose morning he departed from Wheeling, there arrived at that place, by overland march, about 100 volunteers from Westmoreland county, under the command of Colonel Archibald Lochry. These fine riflemen would have been a material addition to Clark's strength and a junction of forces would have avoided that grievous disaster which befell Lochry at the mouth of the little stream which has since borne his name.

At every opportunity on the voyage down the Ohio some of Clark's men ran away, and by the time he reached Fort Nelson, opposite Louisville, his force was wholly inadequate for a march into the Indian country. He remained in Fort Nelson several weeks, but before the cold weather came on most of his men dispersed and returned in small parties to their homes in Pennsylvania and Virginia.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., p. 333; Winsor's *Westward Movement*, p. 193; *Frontier Forts*, vol. II., p. 194.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## LOCHRY'S DISASTER.

The destruction of Colonel Lochry's detachment, while it was trying to overtake General Clark, was the heaviest loss suffered by Westmoreland county during the Revolution. It involved about one hundred choice men of the border, including the energetic county lieutenant and half a dozen capable officers. In the spring of 1781 the General Assembly of Pennsylvania voted the formation of four companies of rangers, to be enlisted and employed in the northern and western counties for the remainder of the war. One of these companies was allotted to Westmoreland, and was raised by Captain Thomas Stokely. It was made up of experienced woodsmen, and, being intended for a permanent corps, was counted on to perform much better service in defense of the settlements than had been rendered by the small bodies of militia called out at intervals for short periods. This company, recruited to the number of 38, was involved in Lochry's disaster. Another party lost in this expedition was Captain Samuel Shannon's company of volunteers, about 20 strong, enlisted for four months for the frontier defense. Captain Robert Orr, of Hannastown, raised and equipped a small company of riflemen, and Captain William Campbell commanded a squad of horsemen.<sup>1</sup>

The militia officers of the county had directed Colonel

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<sup>1</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. viii., pp. 749, 751; vol. ix., pp. 18, 28, 330; Western Annals, p. 332.

Lochry to raise 300 men for Clark's campaign, but only one-third of that number could be enlisted. The reluctance of the settlers to engage in an incursion into the Indian country grew out of the fact that their own homes were threatened daily. During the summer of 1781 the Indian raids into Westmoreland county were unprecedented in number and destructiveness. Many families deserted their improvements and sought safety east of the mountains, and most of those who stood their ground felt it to be their chief duty to protect their families and property. It was with great urging and exertion that Colonel Lochry secured nearly 100 men for the western campaign. It is probable that he ordered the companies of Stokely and Shannon into this special service, but the two other companies were strictly volunteer formations of militiamen. No evidence is found that Lochry resorted to the draft to raise his contingent.

Lochry's men were detained until the harvest was finished, but on August 1 they began to gather at Carnaghan's blockhouse, eleven miles northwest of Hannastown.<sup>2</sup> There the formal muster was held on the following day, and on Friday, August 3, the little band, under Colonel Lochry's command, began its march to join Clark at Wheeling. Only 83 men took the road. These were the pick of the frontier riflemen, but they were poorly provided for a campaign. Their chief article of food was flour, carried on horses. They were badly clothed, one writer saying that they were "in a manner naked." Before their arrival at Wheeling, they were joined by a few additional men, so that the entire force was nearly 100.

The first camp was at Gaspard Markle's mill, on Big Sewickley creek, two miles east of West Newton. At that place Lochry received, by a fast-riding express, a letter from the president of Pennsylvania, approving Westmoreland's participation in Clark's enterprise. In reply to this,

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<sup>2</sup> For the details of the expedition see Lieutenant Isaac Anderson's Journal, in Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, vol. xiv. Also Frontier Forts, vol. II., p. 334; Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, vol. ix., p. 369.

before marching in the morning, Lochry wrote his last letter that has been preserved, saying therein: "I am now on my march with Captain Stokely's company of rangers and about 50 volunteers from this county. We shall join General Clark at Fort Henry. . . . I expected to have had a number more volunteers, but they have by some insinuations been hindered from going."

The determined little band did not travel by way of Fort Pitt. It crossed the Youghiogheny at the site of West Newton, crossed the Monongahela at Devore's ferry, where Monongahela City now is; went overland by the settlements on the headwaters of Chartiers and Raccoon creeks, and reached Fort Henry in the evening of Wednesday, August 8. Here was a disappointment. General Clark had departed by boats that morning. To prevent the desertion of his men, he had found it necessary to remove farther from the settlements, and he left a message that he would wait for Lochry at the mouth of the Little Kanawha. But Lochry had no boats and could not follow immediately. For four days he was detained at Wheeling while seven boats were built, and these four days were fatal.

From the mouth of the Little Kanawha Clark's men began to desert, cutting across through the woods toward the settlements on the Monongahela, and to prevent the entire breaking up of his small force the general was compelled to move on down the river.

On August 13 Lochry's boats were ready and most of his men embarked in them, while the horses were conducted along shore. At this time the Ohio river was the dividing line between the white man's country and the Indian's. The boats kept near the southern shore and all encampments were on the left bank. Although Colonel Lochry and his men did not know it, they were watched by Indian spies following them through the forests and thickets on the farther shore, keeping in touch by swift runners with the Indian chiefs on the Scioto and the Miamis. On those

streams the red warriors were gathering to resist Clark's advance, and a greater chief than any among the Ohio tribes had come with his Mohawks from Central New York to fight the white invaders.

At Fishing creek Lochry met 17 men who had deserted from Clark and were trying to make their way to Fort Pitt. These he forced to join his party. At the Three Islands, below the Long Reach, Lochry found Major Charles Crascraft and six men who had been left by Clark in charge of a large horse boat for Lochry's animals. Into this boat the horses were put, and after that the party was able to move with increased speed. Crascraft did not remain with Lochry, but in a skiff hurried away after Clark.

On the following day, August 16, Colonel Lochry sent Captain Shannon and seven men in a small boat, to endeavor to overtake Clark and beg him to leave some provisions for the Westmoreland men. Lochry's flour was almost exhausted, and food could be secured only by sending out hunters, whose excursions delayed progress. On August 17 two men who were sent out to hunt did not return, and they were never heard of. It is probable they were killed by Indians.

Three days later two of Captain Shannon's men, half starved, were picked up from the southern shore. They told a story of the first disaster. Their little party had landed on the Kentucky side, below the mouth of the Scioto, to cook a meal, and the two survivors, with a sergeant, had gone out to hunt. When they were about half a mile in the woods they heard the firing of guns in the direction of their camp. They had no doubt that Indians had fallen upon Shannon and his four companions, and, being too badly frightened to return to the river bank to investigate, they immediately set out up stream to rejoin Lochry. In scrambling through the underbrush the sergeant's knife fell from its sheath, and, sticking upward in the bush, the sergeant instantly trod upon its keen point. The blade passed through his foot, and the unfortunate man died in a few hours, after suffering great agony.

The direst result of this calamity was not the death of the captain and his men, but the capture from them of a letter from Lochry to Clark, revealing the weakness of Lochry's party and its distressed condition. Through this information the fate of the Westmoreland men was sealed.

Lochry was now fully aware that both shores of the river were beset by savages, and for two days and nights no landing or halt was made. The little flotilla passed swiftly down the stream. But this could not be long continued. It became absolutely necessary to land somewhere, to feed the horses and seek meat for the men.

In the forenoon of Friday, August 24, the boats approached a quiet and charming level spot at the mouth of a little creek on the Indian shore. This stream has since been called Lochry's run. It is the dividing line between Ohio and Dearborn counties, in the southeastern corner of Indiana. On that quiet summer morning it seemed to be the abode of eternal peace. The river was low, and a long sandbar, reaching out from the Kentucky shore, compelled the boats to pass close to the level spot on the northern bank. A buffalo was drinking at the river's edge, and one of the riflemen brought it down. Colonel Lochry at once ordered a landing, for here was meat for his hungry men and luxuriant grass for his horses. The boats were beached and men and horses were soon ashore.

Suddenly half a hundred rifles blazed from the wooded bank that flanked the little strip of meadow. Some of the whites were instantly killed and others wounded. The men made for the boats and many got into them, shoving off toward the southern shore. Painted savages then appeared, shrieking and firing, and a fleet of canoes, filled with other savages, shot out from the Kentucky shore, completely cutting off the escape of the white men. The Westmorelanders returned the fire for a minute or two, but were fatally entrapped, and Colonel Lochry stood up and called out a surrender. The combat ceased, the boats were poled back to shore and the little force landed a second time. Human blood was now min-

gled with that of the buffalo in the languidly flowing river.

The Westmoreland men found themselves the prisoners of Joseph Brant, the famous war chief of the Mohawks, with a large band of Iroquois, Shawnees and Wyandots. George Girty, a brother of Simon, was in command of some of the Indians. The fierce Shawnees could not be controlled, and began at once to kill their share of the prisoners. While Lochry sat on a log a Shawnee warrior stepped behind him and sank his tomahawk into the colonel's skull, tearing off the scalp before life was gone. It was with great difficulty that Brant prevented the massacre of the men assigned to the Mohawks and Wyandots.

About 40 of the Westmorelanders were slain, most of them after the surrender. The captives whose lives were spared numbered 64. Among those who escaped death were Captains Stokely and Orr, the latter being severely wounded in the left arm.<sup>4</sup>

The mutilated dead were left unburied on that lovely spot beside the Ohio, and the prisoners were hurried away into the Indian country. Some of them were scattered among the savage tribes, but most of them were taken by the Mohawks to Detroit, where they were given up to Major DePeyster, the British commandant. They were transferred to a prison in Montreal. From that place a few escaped and the remainder were released and sent home after the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States.

As far as the records show, the following were the only members of this expedition who returned to their homes in Westmoreland:<sup>5</sup>

Richard Wallace, of Fort Wallace, who was quartermaster to Colonel Lochry.

Captain Thomas Stokely, Lieutenant Richard Fleming, Robert Watson, John Marrs, Michael Hare, John Guthrie,

<sup>4</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, vol. ix., p. 458; Washington-Irvine Correspondence, p. 67; Western Annals, p. 333; The Girtys, p. 129; Hist. Collections of Pa., p. 97; Winsor's Westward Movement, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, vol. ix., pp. 574, 733; Colonial Records of Pa., vol. xiii., pp. 325, 473; Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, vol. xiv.

John Scott, James Robinson, James Kane, John Crawford, Peter McHarge and James Dunseath.

Lieutenant Isaac Anderson, of Captain Shannon's company.

Ezekiel Lewis, of Captain Campbell's company.

Captain Robert Orr, Lieutenant Samuel Craig, Jr., Ensign James Hunter and Manasseh Coyle.

James McPherson, one of the captives, accepted British service, and acted with the Indians on the northwestern border until after Wayne's victory in 1794.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Howe's Historical Collections of Ohio, vol. II., p. 104.