

THE CAPTURED AND KILLED MEN OF “LOCHRY’S DEFEAT”

__August 21, 22 and 24, 1781, Ohio River and mouth of the Wabash River, present-day Lawrence County, Indiana

Introduction

The sixth year of the Revolutionary war was perilous on the western frontier. British Rangers and their indigenous allies operated at will from Detroit and Niagara into the Mohawk Valley, west and central Pennsylvania, present West Virginia and against Kentucky settlements.

With Fort Pitt vulnerable while Continental and many State troops were occupied in the South and East, Gen. George Rogers Clark persuaded Virginia authorities and Gen. Washington that Clark should lead an attack on Detroit. Gathering resources in men, arms and supplies proved more dream than reality in the course of several months’ planning and negotiations. Finally Clark decided to risk an expedition at least into Ohio country, gathering about 400 Virginia troops and militia to rendezvous at Ft. Henry (present Wheeling). At least 100 Pennsylvania recruits from the Ft. Pitt vicinity of old Westmoreland County were expected to join them by July 24.

The Pennsylvanians under Col. Archibald Lochry, Lieutenant of Westmoreland County, took longer to form than was hoped. They left Pittsburgh on July 25 in 5 Companies in a force of about 80. At Ft. Henry they learned that Clark’s body had left and set another rendezvous point down the Ohio. Col. Lochry’s group arrived at the second point to find that Clark had again moved on, both groups short of supplies and weary of trying to slog along shore and manage boats and horses. Col. Lochry and his men nonetheless continued downriver, hoping to catch up with the main body.

Accounts vary as to how a group from Gen. Clark’s force under Maj. Charles Crecraft was taken on the Ohio August 21, a few with Capt. Shannon were taken on the next day, and how exactly most of a Company that had deserted Clark’s group made its way upriver only to encounter Lochry’s men. But on August 24, near the mouth of the Wabash River, most of this body went ashore and some remained on a boat or raft on the River.

A British account sums up the ensuing ambush, and is transcribed in whole below Source Notes. It gives a more accurate account of the results of the ambush than is given by Andrew Thompson, in a letter of 29 Aug. 1781 printed in Mr. Pershing’s article (cited below). Guy Johnson’s letter also gives a broader picture of the situation on the frontier at this time.

Gen. Clark’s force turned back. Clark and at least some of his force sojourned in Kentucky (then part of Virginia) for some time. Gen. Clark’s *Orderly Book* for the expedition period, dated July 8, 1781-November 18, 1782, is among the Lyman C. Draper manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, document 63J1-129.

The following document is not titled in the manuscript, but its subject is identifiable by the names listed and by the capture dates given in prisoner-of-war records (see below). Lower-case letter prefixes, added by the transcriber, indicate which of the seven sub-commands each man belonged to (see below). Some are listed without prefixes; they were either command/field staff or not allocated to a unit in available material.

A part of a name in brackets [] is supplied by Lt. Anderson’s list or POW lists (see below). Significant name variants in parentheses () are from Capt. Stokely’s list (see below).

Killed

- 1. Colo. [Archibald] Lochry
- b 2. Capt. William Campbell
- 3. Ensn. Relph [Ephraim Ralph]
- 4. Ensn. Maxwell
- 5. Ensn. [Daniel] Cahel
- c 6. Serjt. [Hugh] Galaher (3)
- f 7. Serjt. [Samuel] Evans
- e 8. Serjt. Ebenezer Burris
- d 9. Serjt. [Jno] Fursyth
- d 10. Serjt. [Jas] Blask [Black]
- b 11. Sgt. [William] Allison
- c 12. Corpl. [Isaac] Paton
- c 13. [Corpl.] John Gibson
- c 14. John Young
- c 15. Robert Dougan
- c 16. John Straiton
- c 17. John Burns
- c 18. W'm Hudson
- c 19. John Pheasant
- f 20. Zenis Hardon
- f 21. John Miligan
- f 22. John Corn
- f 23. Mathew Lamb
- c 24. Joseph Baily
- c 25. John Smith
- d 26. W'm Cain
- d 27. Adam Ervin [Erwin]
- d 28. Peter McLin
- d 29. Archibald Askin [Erskin]
- g 30. David Elinger [Allinger] (Dilinger) (1,3,4)
- g 31. George Butcher
- g 32. Peter Bareckman
- g 33. Josia(s) Brooks
- g 34. John Row
- g 35. Jonas Peter
- g 36. Ja's McRight
- b 37. John McKinley

Prisoners

- a 1. Major [Charles] Craigrift [Creraft], VA/PA, 30
- c 2. Capt. Thomas Stokely, PA, 27
- d 3. Capt. [Robert] Orr, 30
- e 4. Capt. Samuel Shannon
- c 5. Lt. [Jos.] Robinson
- f 6. Lt. Isaac Anderson
- d 7. Lt. [Samuel] Craig, 22
- b 8. Lt. [Jas.] (John) Scott
- g 9. Lt. [Mel(k)r] Baker, VA, 35
- d 10. Ens. [Patrick] Hunter, PA, 22
 - 11. Adj. [John] Guthrie
 - 12. Qrmr. [Richard] Wallace
- c 13. Serjt. Jno Trimble
- f 14. Serjt. [Norman] McCloud
- 15. Patrick Johnson

- c 16. Richard Fleming, VA, 29
- c 17. Robert Watson, PA, 22
- c 18. Abram Anderson
- c 19. Michael Ha(i)re, PA, 33
- c 20. William Mar(r)s
- c 21. John Sence
- c 22. Mic'l Miller
- c 23. Patrick Murphy
- c 24. James Cain
- f 25. Ja's McPherson
- f 26. William Martial (Marshal), VA, (4)
- f 27. Peter Conoly
- f 28. John Farrel
- f 29. Denis McCarty
- e 30. Solomon Atkin [Aikens], PA, 21
- e 31. John Lavear
- e 32. Mathias [Josias] Fisher, PA, 21
- e 33. George Dice [(Hice)], VA, 21 (3,4)
- e 34. John Porter, PA, 30
- e 35. John Smith, PA, 20
- d 36. Ad'm Oury
- d 37. Sam'l [Campbell] Lefever, 22
- d 38. John Hunter
- d 39. Joseph Ervin (Capt. Irwin), 50 (4)
- d 40. Manassa Coyl [Kile], PA, 23
- d 41. Hugh Stear
- g 42. John Cat, VA, 24
- g 43. Volantine Lawrence
- g 44. Jacob Lawrence, 20
- g 45. Christian Fast
- g 46. Charles McLin [(McGinn)], PA, 26 (3,4)
- g 47. W'm Roach [Roark], PA, 22
- g 48. Henry France [Franks]
- g 49. Ab'm Highly, VA, 20
- g 50. George Mason, PA, 23
- b 51. W'm Witherenton, PA, 21
- b 52. Cairy Cuighly [Quigley], PA, 25
- a 53. Tho's James
- a 54. Tho's Atkison
- a 55. John Stackhouse
- a 56. William Clark, VA, 26
- a 57. Eliha [Elihu] Risley
- b 58. Ja's Dunseith
 - 59. Daniel Cain
- b 60. William Hurst, PA, 22
- b 61. Robert Wilson
- b 62. Isaac [Ezekiel] Lewis, PA, 22
- a 63. Alex'r Burns, VA, 45
- d 64. Hugh More, PA, 33

Prisr's 64

A true Copy
A't S. DePeyster
Major

Source Notes

Thanks to Rick Toothman for pointing to the Kentucky Historical Society source and to Chris McHenry's book on this episode. Thanks also to Brian Core for help with the Kentucky source.

The principal source of the above list is British Library, *Gen. Frederick Haldimand Papers, Additional Manuscripts*, #21,845, folio 125, copy of list of the killed and captured made by British Maj. Arent S. DePeyster in Detroit, transcribed from microfilm by the undersigned. Microfilm was kindly supplied by the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Another transcript of Maj. DePeyster's list was published in *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, September, 1928, as "Lost Battalion of the Revolutionary War, PA," by Edgar J. Pershing, together with some of the captured documents and some correspondence from the *Haldimand Papers* that he does not accurately identify as to source.

A poor photostat of this document was given to the National Archives in 1930 by Miss Mary Oursler, who wrote on it an interpretation of some of the names, including the assertion by author Pershing that the surname 'Pheasant' stood for 'Pershing'. An inscription states that the copy had been obtained for Mr. Pershing. This was microfilmed among Micropublication 246, *Revolutionary War Rolls*, in the 1940s, and appears on roll 84, frames 387 through 390.

Maj. DePeyster's list is curiously detailed as to identities of both the captured and killed. The other accounts of killed and captured in various actions out of Detroit and Niagara occasionally highlight well-known officers, but otherwise only list numbers of scalps, killed, captives taken and civilians released. It is labeled a "true Copy" of a list not otherwise identified. How it came into Gen. Haldimand's hands is unknown. No correspondence transmitting the list to Headquarters has been found. Since it lists those killed as well as many captives who were not documented by the Commissary of Prisons, it cannot be presumed to have been transmitted with a group of prisoners taken to Quebec. Since it includes among those killed Sgt. Ebenezer Burris, who according to Lt. Anderson was killed in an accident before the ambush, it must have been compiled with active co-operation of the survivors, especially officers. Since it is a very impressive list of one of the largest groups of Rebels taken outside a settlement-fortification setting, possibly it was kept as a private memorandum of that fact, perhaps even by Joseph Brant. It may have been seen as a counterpoint to the still-captive British troops surrendered by Gen. Burgoyne.

Maj. DePeyster's list is here supplemented by captured Pennsylvania Officers' Commissions in British Library's *Haldimand Papers, Additional Manuscripts*, #21,842, folios 188 (Ens. Patrick Hunter, Westmoreland County PA Militia, 10 June 1780), 190 (Lt. Joseph Robinson, Capt. William Campbell's Light Dragoon Troop, 1 Aug. 1781) and 221 (Lt. John Scott, Capt. Thomas Stokely's Company of PA Rangers, Aug. 1781), that provided accurate first names and unit identifications.

Age and place of residence for some captives are from lists of prisoners-of-war held in Quebec in British Library's *Haldimand Papers, Additional Manuscripts* #21,843, especially folios 213, 279-281, 289-293 and 295-296, Prisoner-of-war lists from the Commissary of Prisons, Montreal. The prisoners were taken to Sandusky, most were then taken on to Detroit, and 39 of the 64 captives were sent to Quebec. The lists were generated as persons were brought in, moved or exchanged, with periodic overall lists of rations to account for. The undersigned read and largely transcribed these before the happy discovery that Chris McHenry had published a slightly abridged transcript of most of these lists in *Rebel Prisoners at Quebec 1778-1783* (Lawrenceburg, IN: By the author, 1981), with admirably few errors and omissions.

According to a footnote in Reuben G. Thwaites and Louise Kellogg, eds., *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Capt. Shannon escaped from Sandusky and reached a hill opposite Wheeling, where he was retaken by a "marauding Indian" and tomahawked (Madison, WI: State Historical Society

of Wisconsin, 1912; reprinted by Heritage Books, 1993; pp. 46-47).

The original document lists men mainly by Company, without identifying the arrangement. The inferred Company identifications are supplemented by the captured Commissions, above, and by the list of Isaac Anderson, from his *Diary August 1, 1781-July 16, 1782*, Cincinnati Historical Society Manuscript Collection; a photocopy and transcript of the *Diary* is in McHenry, *The Best Men of Westmoreland* (Lawrenceburg, IN: By the author, 1981). Lt. Anderson escaped from Montreal with Qmr. Wallace on May 26, 1782, and reached Philadelphia on July 2, 1782. Anderson provided a copy of this list and first-hand news of the expedition to the Supreme Executive Council; the list was poorly transcribed and published in the *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series*. A transcript of Lt. Anderson's *Diary* is among Lyman Draper's manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, document 13J52-64. It was also published in James McBride, *Pioneer Biography* (Cincinnati, OH: 1869-1871) I:278-287. Lt. Anderson's list omitted a few men listed in Maj. DePeyster's copy, but added some not in DePeyster's list: two men he attributed to Capt. Robert Orr's Company: Jno Stewart and Jos. Crawford, both said to have been killed, and Pvt. John Allenton, attributed to Capt. Stokely's Company. Lt Anderson's allocation of men to units is denoted in the above transcript by letter prefixes: a = Major Crecraft's; b = Capt. Campbell's; c = Capt. Stokely's; d = Capt. Orr's; e = Capt. Shannon's; f = Capt. William Shearer's under Lt. Anderson; g = Capt. Michael Catt's under Lt. Baker.

Capt. Thomas Stokely's list of men he remembered in Lt. Baker's command, dated June 7, 1813, (source not given), is transcribed in Chris McHenry, *The Best Men of Westmoreland*.

Another list of Capt. Catt's Company is transcribed and published as a Pay Roll from the George Rogers Clark *Illinois Papers* in the Virginia State Library, in Margery Heberling Harding, comp., *George Rogers Clark and His Men* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1988, Document Miscellaneous 15, p. 97). It identifies the unit as "Capt. Michael Catt's Compy in the Volunteer Regiments Commanded by Colo. Zacquille Morgan, Raised for the Western Expedition under the Command of Brigadier General Clark," and is dated "from the time of joining the Army (June y. 28th 1781) until the 13th day of August following." This roster includes a few men not involved in the incidents that resulted in the above lists (Capt. Michael Catt, Ensn. Josiah Sanburn, Sergt. Wm. Murphy, Pvt. Jno. Vandiments and Pvt. John Smith) and has a column listing dates "When Deserted." The published version also has columns for "When taken by Colo. Lochry," "When Restored to arms," "When taken Prisoner in Battle," "When Landed in the Jersies" and "When Dischg.," information taken from sources other and later than the Pay Roll. Aside from the five men not involved in the above, all of this Company are listed as deserting on August 12 and being taken by Colo. Lochry on August 14. Note that an additional John Smith was killed and a third by that name was captured. Some of the men of this Company at the time resided in present German, Georges and Nicholson Twps. of Fayette Co., PA, which Virginia considered to be within its Monongalia County until 1783; some resided in present Monongalia County, WV, and at least one resided in present Harrison Co., WV.

A Payroll of Capt. Stokely's Company of Westmoreland County Rangers, by James Nicholson, dated 17 July 1783, from Comptroller General's records, Pennsylvania Archives, Microfilm Roll 20, frame 1177, is transcribed in McHenry, *The Best Men of Westmoreland*. This supplements a few name identifications as noted above.

Of the survivors, the following applied for Pensions based on their Revolutionary War service: Isaac Anderson; Manassa Coyle; Samuel Craig; Christian Fast; Mathias Fisher; Henry Franks; Michael Hair; George Hice; Abram Hiley; Patrick Hunter; William Hurst; James Kean; Jacob Lawrence; Ezekiel Lewis; George Mason; Denis McCarty; James McPherson; Robert Orr; Adam Owry; Cary Quigley; William Roark; Hugh Stear; Thomas Stokely; William Worthington. The Company service of Lt. Craig and of Ens. Hunter are found there.

Also of interest is the application file of Anthony Brandenburgh.

Microfilm of the *Haldimand Papers* is commercially available.

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Below is a transcript of a letter, G. Johnson (Guy Johnson) to General Haldimand, from *Haldimand Papers* Add'l. Mss #21767, folio 226:

Niagara 18th Sept'r 1781

Sir,

Since my last which was of the 30th ult'o I have receive'd agreeable intelligence from several Indian partys, and some are returned. The first of which was Capt. Caldwell's, with Capt. Lottridge and part of the Indians who burnt the Settlement of Waysink &ca and brought in two Prisoners but not being well acquainted with that part of the country, which was not their original destination, they cou'd not proceed farther, however part of the Indians left them at that time & proceeded to other places in four different Partys, from three of which I have heard; one brought in two prisoners, another a Scalp, a Third under Otsitago an Onondaga took 7 Prisoners and one Scalp at Cobus kill and released 3 women, bringing off above 20 head of Cattle with any Sheep & some Horses. The other party with Capt. Skerop is still out, but the most material intelligence will be transmitted by Brig'r Powell respecting the Success of the Indians on Ohio with Capt. Brant who fell upon a part of Clark's Troops killed 37 & took 64 in the former of which was the Comman'g Officer, & in the latter a Major & several Officers, and as M'r McKee has now Joyned, & they are become about 700, They will probably defeat M'r Clark's intentions who by the Papers taken seems to be but poorly Supported. The Brigadier will likewise transmit to your Excellency the Success of Lieut. Clement of my Department who with 74 Indians with Deigawanda of Onondaga, killed 22 Rebels including 3 officers, and is returning with 8 Prisoners. Capt. Woodward one of the Killed was among the most enterprizing Partizans on the frontier and he with Cap't McKean killed lately by Lieu't Dachsteaders party have been long wished for by my officers and Indians.

The Prisoners all agree in Saying that the frontiers are drained of Troops to reinforce Washington, and that he with the French Auxiliaries have been defeated lately at the White plains near New York.

Several of the Seneca Chiefs arrived here Yesterday, and have had a meeting with me respecting what was lately communicated to them about Provisions, Liquor &ca; they admit that by the care that has been taken, their Crops in general (particularly those of the Senecas) are large and promising, but that many Tribes have either not made so good a use of their grain, or are less acquainted with the means of helping themselves, and for whom they are Sollicitous, but when I can meet the Chiefs of the different Villages, which must be soon, I hop to make these matters more easy, and likewise to get several prisoners out of their hands. In my last I mentioned that I had reduced the Indians on the Ground to less than a Thousand, from Four, but it is to be understood that many partys will be constantly going backwards and forwards, and many events may happen that may bring in large bodies of them, which will occasion an additional Consumption of provisions, and which my Utmost Efforts cannot prevent, tho' they shall not be wanting. It is indeed a great deal to get so many Indians, to Settle at a distance, and to relinquish promises I find [were] made them long since, That in case of accident by War they shou'd be maintained; or to overcome the habit contracted by their living long here on Kings Provisions, without planting. So that the quantity of provisions necessary cannot be estimable from the Number on the ground, altho' the fixing so many on planting grounds brings them much nearer their old Establishment before Sullivans invasion when their nearest settlement was above 90 miles and their farthest 250 miles from hence, and consequently few were here in general except when they were called upon, and the Issue of Provisions, as well as the amount of Expences must have been much less.

M'r McKee requested that I shou'd take an opportunity to lay the enclosed Letter before your Excellency representing his situation, which I humbly presume to recommend as he is a deserving Officer. I have settled his Acco'ts which are paid and will be shortly transmitted, and I have the Honor to be, with much respect,

Sir,

Your Excellencys most Obedient
and most Humble Servant
G. Johnson

His Excellency General Haldimand

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