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DANIEL GREATHOUSE AND THE YELLOW CREEK AFFAIR

Daniel Greathouse probably has a more prominent place in American history than any other descendant of John Stull, though sadly he is portrayed as a villain and scoundrel. He is alleged to have led a massacre of a group of Indians which included the sister and brother of John Logan, reputed to be a chief, and second son of Skikellemus, a celebrated Chief of the Cayuga Nation. Logan had become a liaison between the English and the Indians and had respect by the leaders of both groups.

Although later writers have painted a picture of Chief Logan as a humanitarian and great friend of the white man before the incident, a contemporary account from the diary of missionary David Zeisberger paints a picture of a troubled Logan about two years before the massacre [spelling and punctuation not corrected]:¹

"Sept. 15 1772. Set out with Nickels [an attendant furnished him by the commandant at Fort Pitt] & crossing the Allegany River, came on Indian ground. Arrived at Mr. [John] Gibson's, a Logstown about 18 Miles, & found my Interpreter there. 16th--Came to the Mingo village on Bever Creek . . . This village is commonly called Logan's town. About half an hour before our arrival, we saw Captⁿ. Logan in the woods, & I was not a little surprised at his appearance. As we were obliged to ride, as it is commonly called, in Indian file, the path not admitting two to ride abreast, I had passed beyond Logan without seeing him. He spoke to my interpreter, who was a little distance behind, to desire me to stop. I looked back & saw him a few rods from the path, stand, under a tree, leaning on the muzzle of his gun. A young Indian, with his gun, stood beside him.

I turned back & riding up to him, asked him how he did, & whether he wished to speak with me? (I had seen him at Pittsburgh.) Pointing to his breast, he said, "I feel very bad *here*. Whereever I go the evil *monethoes* (Devils) are after me. My house, the trees & the air, are full of Devils, they continually haunt me, & they will kill me. All things tell me how wicked I have been." He stood pale & trembling, apparently in great distress. His eyes were fixed on the ground, & the sweat run down his face like one in agony. It was a strange sight. I had several times seen him at Pittsburgh & thought him the most maritial figure of an Indian that I had ever seen. At the conclusion of his awful description of himself, he asked me what he should do? Recollecting to have heard at Pitsburg, that he had been a bloody enemy against the poor defenceless settlers on the Susquehanna, & the frontiers, in the last french war in 1758 & 9, & it was also reported of him, (though positive proof could not be had) that he had murdered a white man (one Chandler) on the Allegany mountains, I observed to him, perhaps, Captⁿ. Logan, you have been a wicked man, & greatly offended God, & he now allows these devils, or evil thoughts, which arives in your heart, to trouble you, that you may now see yourself to be a great sinner & repent & pray to God to forgive you. . . .

He attended to what I said, & after conversing a little longer, in the same strain, We left him, in the same distress as I found him. After parting from him, various thoughts, but none satisfactory, occurred to me, relative to the cause of the distress & agitation of so renowned a warrior. I sometimes thought (such was his ferocious character) that knowing of my journey, he had placed himself in a convenient spot for robbery or murder. For my interpreter & Nickels had each a loaded piece, the Indian a common musket, & the english man a rifle always loaded, for the purpose of killing game. Perhaps it was some sudden compunction, arising from reflections on his past guilt."

The first published histories of the Yellow Creek Massacre were by former President Thomas Jefferson in 1800,² by (Rev.) Joseph Doddridge in 1824,³ and John Jeremiah Jacob in 1826.⁴ Later documented

¹From *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger*, by E. de Schweinitz, 1870, p. 380 and recounted in *The History of Beaver County, Pennsylvania*, by (Rev.) Joseph H. Bausman, 1904, pp. 24-25.

²His *Notes of the State of Virginia* was first published in London in 1787. However the two paragraphs of material originally published on the Yellow Creek incident (in Query VI) caused such an uproar that President Jefferson collected considerable data between 1797 to 1800 and published it as *Appendix to the Notes on Virginia Relative to the Murder of Logan's Family* (Philadelphia, 1800).

³*Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia & Pennsylvania*, by (Rev.) Joseph Doddridge was first published in 1824. Though his account was similar to Jefferson's, as a minister he was prejudiced against the whites and quick to paint the attack upon the Indians as "wanton and unprovoked." His picture of Logan as "a lover of the white and a strenuous advocate for peace" appears to be flawed, as is much of his book.

⁴John Jeremiah Jacob had married Michael Cresap's widow, Mary (Whitehead) Cresap. He wrote *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Late Captain*

histories such as Thwaites & Kellogg in 1905⁵ and others, relied heavily on the interviews of Lyman Copeland Draper in the 1840's and 1850's and are often secondary or even more remote.⁶

It is easy to look back and condemn Daniel Greathouse and his associates for their actions when we do not have to experience the ever-present fear and danger they had to bear for themselves and their families. We cannot know the actual reasons and justification they felt that brought them to commit this seemingly heinous act. The vicinity in which Daniel Greathouse, Joshua Baker and the others involved were living was on the fringe of civilization at that time. "The settlement thus made constituted a kind of advance *guard*, through which an Indian enemy would have to penetrate before they could reach the interior."⁷ The settlers always lived in fear of Indian attack; even three decades later this fear was still very real.⁸ Their fear was heightened by the murder of two men in the employ of William Butler, a Pittsburgh trader, while canoeing with goods down the Ohio River to Shawnee villages. Speaking of this time, John J. Jacob noted in his 1826 writings, "there existed between our people and the Indians, a kind of doubtful, precarious, and suspicious peace."

Perhaps it is wise to recount an extract of a contemporary letter written only six months after the affair took place. It related incidents leading up to the Yellow Creek affair which suggest the settlers had good reason to be concerned for their safety. It was written at Fort Redstone and dated Oct., 1774:⁹

"It will not be improper to investigate the cause of the Indian war which broke out in the spring, before I give you a sketch of the history of the expedition which his Excellency Lord Dunmore, has carried on successfully against the Shawanese, one of the richest, proudest, and bravest of the Indian nations. In order to do this, it is necessary to look back as far as the year 1764, when Colonel Bouquet made peace with that nation. The Shawanese never complied with the terms of that peace; they did not deliver up the white prisoners; there was no lasting impression made upon them by a stroke from the troops employed against them that campaign; and they barely acquiesced in some articles of the treaty by command of the Six Nations. The RED HAWK, a Shawanese chief, insulted Colonel Bouquet with impunity; and an Indian killed the Colonel's foot-man the day after the peace was made.--This murder not being taken notice of, gave rise to several daring outrages committed immediately after. . . . [several murders by the Indians recounted]

"It is probable you will see Lord Dunmore's speech to some chiefs of the Six Nations, who waited on his Lordship; it mentions the particular murders and outrages committed by them every year successively, since they pretended to make peace with Colonel Bouquet. The most recent murders committed by the Indians before the white people began to retaliate, were that of Captain Russell's son, three more white men, and two of his negroes, on the fifteenth of October, 1773; that of a Dutch family on the Kenhawa, in June of the same year; and one Richard, in July following; and that of Mr. Hogg and three white men, on the Great Kenhawa, early in April 1774. Things being in this situation, a message was sent to the Shawanese, inviting them to a conference, in order to bury the tomahawk and brighten the chain of friendship. They fired upon the

Michael Cresap, first published in 1826. His reasons were primarily to exonerate Cresap's name as leader of the Yellow Creek Massacre. Jacob found that even in 1826 few were living who had or would admit to having first-hand knowledge of the incident.

⁵*Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, 1905.

⁶Draper's papers are now housed at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and have been extensively examined. In spite of Draper's diligence in trying to obtain the true story of the Yellow Creek affair, when one studies these accounts he received, only one is by a man who claimed to have been at the massacre, Michael Myers. Most accounts by old men who, even if one believes had clear memory of the events 75 years before, were not participants and could not speak first hand. Some of the most damaging accounts against Greathouse and Baker are second hand. The much touted account of Judge Henry Jolly, as interviewed by S. P. Hildreth, was not sent to Draper until 1849. The fact is, Judge Jolly was only 16 years old when the affair occurred and was not a participant, so his recollections were a second or third hand account, at best. It appears Jolly used Dr. Joseph Doddridge's narration of the events at Yellow Creek in stating that "information that I have since obtained, was derived from (I believe) good authority." Michael Cresap Jr. (b. 1775), son of (Capt.) Michael Cresap, stated in a letter to Lyman C. Draper that he had gotten his information from an "informant" who had gotten it his information from Joseph Tomlinson and (Capt.) George Cox, so Cresap's account was third hand. It is interesting to note that Cresap stated: "It is understood that Dr. Doddridge got his statement from Gen. Biggs. Cox was then living near Wellsburg & Doddridge knew it, but didn't obtain Cox's statement." (Draper papers, 2S 303) One wonders, why would Doddridge neglect to interview Cox who was a participant and a primary source of information?

⁷*Chronicles of Border Warfare*, etc., by Alexander Scott Withers, p. 125.

⁸"Ohio County - Personally came before me the Subscriber one of the Justices for Ohio County William Griffith and made Oath according to Law that about six Days before your April Term to which I was Summoned to attend, the Indians Tuck and kiled Six Persons within 3 or 4 miles of my House in that Dangerous Situation I could not in any Justise to my Family Leave home[.] Sworn before me this thirtieth day of September 1790. -- William Sutherland." (Ohio County Court Records, Apr. 1790)

⁹Fort Redstone is now Brownsville, Fayette County, PA. This letter is preserved in the American Archives, 1.1016. A copy was recounted in *Early History of Western Pennsylvania*, p. 179.

messengers, and it was with difficulty they escaped with their lives. Immediately on their return, letters were written by some gentlemen at Fort Pitt, and dispersed among the inhabitants on the Ohio, assuring them to be on their guard, as it was uncertain where the Indians would strike first. In the mean time, two men, of the names of Greathouse and Baker, sold some rum near the mouth of Yellow creek, and with them some Indians got drunk, and were killed Lord Dunmore has ordered that the manner of their being killed be enquired into. Many officers and other adventurers who were down the Ohio, in order to explore the country have lands surveyed, upon receiving the above intelligence, and seeing the letters from the gentleman at Fort Pitts, though property to return. Captain Michael Cresap was one of these gentlemen. On their return to the river, they fell in with a party of Indians and being apprehensive that the Indians were preparing to attack them, as appeared by their maneuvers, the white people being the smallest number thought it advisable to have the advantage of the first fire, whereupon they engaged; and after exchanging a few shots, killed two or three of the Indians and dispersed the rest; hostilities being then commenced on both sides, the matter became serious.

No doubt the killing of Indians by Michael Cresap a few days before the Yellow Creek affair heightened fears of the settlers about future Indian attacks. Although this compiler had for a long time intended to include the account of the massacre from the *History of the Panhandle*, a secondary source, he has decided to let John Sappington tell the story first hand. Sappington was one of the men involved in the massacre and even admitted to having killed the brother of John Logan. Although his interview was recorded 26 years later, Feb. 13, 1800, it is the only surviving detailed account of the affair by an admitted participant:¹⁰

"I, JOHN SAPPINGTON, declare myself to be intimately acquainted with all the circumstances respecting the destruction of Logan's family, and do give in the following narrative, a true statement of that affair.

"Logan's family (if it was his family) was not killed by Cresap, nor with his knowledge, nor by his consent, but by the Great-houses and their associates. They were killed 30 miles above Wheeling, near the mouth of Yellow creek. Logan's camp was on one side of the river Ohio, and the house, where the murder was committed, opposite to it on the other side. They had encamped there only four or five days, and during that time had lived peaceably and neighbourly with the whites on the opposite side, until the very day the affair happened. A little before the period alluded to, letters had been received by the inhabitants from a man of great influence in that country,¹¹ and who was then I believe at Capteener [Captina], informing them that war was at hand, and desiring them to be on their guard. In consequence of those letters and other rumours of the same import, almost all the inhabitants fled for safety into the settlements. It was at the house of one Baker the murder was committed. Baker was a man who sold rum, and the Indians had made frequent visits at his house, induced, probably, by their fondness for that liquor. He had been particularly desired by Cresap to removed and take away his rum, and he was actually preparing to move at the time of the murder. The evening before a squaw came over to Baker's house, and by her crying seemed to be in great distress. The cause of her uneasiness being asked, she refused to tell; but getting Baker's wife¹² alone, she told her, that the Indians were going to kill her and all her family the next day, that she loved her, did not wish her to be killed and therefore told her what was intended, that she might save herself. In consequence of this information, Baker got a number of men to the amount of 21, to come to his house, and it was determined that the men should lie concealed in the back apartment; that if the Indians did come and behaved themselves peaceably, they should not be molested; but if not, the men were to shew themselves and act accordingly. Early in the morning seven Indians, four men and three squaws, came over. Logan's brother was one of them. They immediately got rum, and all, except Logan's brother, became very much intoxicated. At this time all the men were concealed, except the man of the house, Baker, and two others who staid out with him. Those Indians came unarmed. After some time Logan's brother took down a coat and hat belonging to Baker's brother-in-law, who lived with him,¹³ and put them on, and setting his arms a kimbo began to strut about, till at length coming up to one of these men, he attempted to strike him, saying "white man, son of a bitch." The white man,¹⁴ whom he treated thus,

¹⁰Sappington did not include this admission in his interview, but admitted to Samuel McKee, the man who was recording his narrative ". . . that he himself was the man who shot the brother of Logan in the house . . . and that he likewise killed one of the Indians in one of the canoes, which came over from the opposite shore. He likewise told me, that Cresap never said an angry word to him about the matter . . . He further told me, that after they had perpetrated the murder, and were flying into the settlements, he met with Cresap (if I recollect right, at Redstone old fort), and gave him a scalp, a very large fine one, as he expressed it, and adorned with silver. (Attested by Samuel McKee Junr. at Madison County, KY on Feb. 13, 1800 and published by President Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes*, Appendix 4, along with Sappington's interview taken the same place and date).

¹¹This person was John Connelly, Lord Dunmore's agent.

¹²Joshua Baker's wife was a sister of Nathaniel and Benjamin Tomlinson who were both participants.

¹³This man was Benjamin Tomlinson.

¹⁴This white man was John Sappington himself.

kept out of his way for some time; but growing irritated he jumped to his gun, and shot the Indian as he was making to the door with the coat and hat on him. The men who lay concealed then rushed out, and killed the whole of them, excepting one child, which I believe is yet alive. But before this happened, one with two, the other with five Indians, all naked, painted and armed completely for war, were discovered to start from the shore on which Logan's camp was. Had it not been for this circumstance, the white men would not have acted as they did; but this confirmed what the squaw had told before. The white men, having killed as aforesaid the Indians in the house, ranged themselves along the bank of the river, to receive the canoes. The canoe with the two Indians came near, being the foremost. Our men fired upon them and killed them both. The other canoe then went back. After this two other canoes started, the one containing 11, the other 7 Indians, painted and armed as the first. They attempted to land below our men; but were fired upon, had one killed and retreated, at the same time firing back. To the best of my recollection there were three of the Greathouses engaged in this business. This is a true representation of the affair from beginning to end. I was intimately acquainted with Cresap, and know he had no hand in that transaction. He told me himself afterwards at Redstone old fort, that the day before Logan's people were killed, he, with a small party, had an engagement with a part of Indians on Capteneer about 44 miles lower down. Logan's people were killed at the mouth of Yellow Creek on the 24th of May 1774, and on the 23d, the day before, Cresap was engaged as already stated. I know likewise that he was generally blamed for it, and believed by all who were not acquainted with the circumstances, to have been the perpetrator of it. I know that he despised and hated the Great-houses ever afterwards on account of it. I was intimately acquainted with general Gibson, and served under him during the late war, and I have a discharge from him now lying in the land office at Richmond, to which I refer any person for my character, who might be disposed to scruple my veracity. I was likewise at the treaty held by lord Dunmore with the Indians, at Chelicothe. As for the speech said to have been delivered by Logan on that occasion, it might have been, or might not, for any thing I know, as I never heard of it till long afterwards. I do not believe that Logan had any relations killed, except his brother. Neither of the squaws who were killed was his wife. Two of them were old women, and the third, with her child which was saved, I have the best reason in the world to believe was the wife and child of general Gibson. I know he educated the child, and took care of it, as if it had been his own. Whether Logan had a wife or not, I cant say; but it is probable that he was a chief, he considered them all as his people. All this I am ready to be qualified to at any time."

JOHN SAPPINGTON

Although the follow deponent, Charles Polke, is not a proven participant, he did relay first hand knowledge in his certificate dated Nov. 15, 1799 at Shelby County, KY.¹⁵

"About the latter end of April or beginning of May 1774, I lived on the waters of cross creek, about 16 miles from Joshua Baker, who lived on the Ohio, opposite the mouth of Yellow creek. A number of persons collected at my house, and proceeded to the said Baker's and murdered several Indians, among who was a woman said to be the sister of the Indian chief, Logan. The principal leader of the party was Daniel Great-house. To the best of my recollection the cause which gave rise to the murder was, a general idea that the Indians were meditating an attack on the frontiers. Capt. Michael Cresap was not of the party; but I recollect that some time before perpetration of the above fact it was currently reported that Capt. Cresap had murdered some Indians on the Ohio, one or two, some distance below Wheeling."

George Edgington, who was not a resident of the area at the time, was not a participant.¹⁶ He later married the widow of Daniel Greathouse's brother William, so he had close knowledge of the cause of Greathouse's death. Edgington wrote to Lyman C. Draper from West Liberty, PA in 1845:¹⁷

"On the Town Fork of Yellow creek, where the Indian town was, a small one; and they concluded to move Elsewhere down the river, stopped at Baker's drank. Mrs. Baker told Dan^l. Greathouse that a squaw told her (in a drunken fit) that the Indians intended to murder Baker's family before leaving. Greathouse went & raised a party of ab^l. 30 men, George Cox, Edward King & others & went to Baker's; there an Indian was drinking & strutting around in a military coat, some one shot him, & King then stabbed him while in the agonies of death, saying "Many a deer have I served in this way." Then killed another Indian there; & two squaws -- the two latter shot by Dan^l. Greathouse & John Sappington. One of the squaws had a child,

¹⁵This certificate was sent by the Honorable Judge Harry Innes who sent it to Jefferson with his own statement that Polke had a respectable character. Jefferson published it in his *Notes on the State of Virginia, op. cit.*

¹⁶His family came from Hampshire County, (W)VA, setting on Redstone Creek in PA, then removed to Holliday's Cove in Ohio County, (W)VA in Aug., 1780.

¹⁷From the Lyman C. Draper papers at University of Wisconsin, 2S, Bk. 3, p. 34.

which was saved & sent to Col. Gibson as its father. Twelve Indians were killed in all. Greathouse died of the measles the following year."¹⁸

Whether justified or not, Daniel Greathouse's name has been indelibly recorded in history as the leader of a group responsible for the murder several Indians including members of Chief Logan's family. The most important question, the answer of which may never be known for sure, is whether or not this action was provoked. It important to note that Daniel Greathouse was bestowed the primary blame as leader of the massacre after he died in 1777 and was not around to defend himself. It is also important to note that others very much involved such as Benjamin Tomlinson and John Sappington were not later vilified and, in fact, became prominent community leaders in Maryland and Kentucky.¹⁹ Even Greathouse himself does not appear to be seriously vilified during his life, but later writers, often using secondary and hearsay accounts as their basis, have laid the lion's share of the blame on him as planning and leading the massacre.²⁰ It is obvious that later writers got a lot of "mileage" out of making a martyr out of Logan and vilifying Greathouse and his associates. It is important to note that neither Greathouse nor other participants in the Yellow Creek incident were jailed or charged with a crime, even though Virginia law officials were known to bring such charges when acts of atrocity were committed against the Indians.²¹

Logan was apparently convinced that the murders of his family members had been committed by (Capt.) Michael Cresap and supposedly made an eloquent speech blaming Cresap for the murders which was published by President Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*.²² It appears from the facts related below by Benjamin Tomlinson that Logan gave no such speech. John Sappington's statement was that he heard of it "after the fact." Tomlinson claimed the speech was written and delivered by (Col.) John Gibson.

¹⁸Daniel Greathouse did not die until 3 years later, in 1777.

¹⁹Louise F. Johnson of Round Rock, TX wrote the following to the compiler on Mar. 25, 1990: "It is dubious that any of the people who were at the Yellow Creek incident knew of Logan's history of being a friend to the white men." [if indeed his friendship has not been overblown and romanticized by later writers.] "If the men who committed the killings at Yellow Creek were looked upon by their neighbors and contemporaries as execrable murderers then it is incredible that both John Sappington and Benjamin Tomlinson were elected to highly respected state offices, with such a burden of guilt heaped upon their reputations."

The facts are that Benjamin Tomlinson moved to Wills Creek area in northern Allegany County, MD where he was a Justice of the Peace and was elected *nine times* to the Maryland legislature between 1791 and 1819. John Sappington moved to Madison County, KY where in April of 1798 he was a Justice of the Peace and described as "lately a representative for Madison County." They were hardly considered men of low character or murderers by their peers.

²⁰One of the worst accounts was that of Charles Wilson Hanko in his *The Life of John Gibson*. On page 21 Hanko wrote "According to Randall and Sipe, Wollen, and Jefferson, [each author referenced by Hanko] there was in the cabin an unscrupulous cut-throat named Daniel Greathouse, and a group of his fellow thugs. Greathouse invited some of the Mingo to Baker's cabin, plied them with liquor, and massacred them." The truth is that NONE of the contemporary accounts cited by Hanko called Greathouse a "cut-throat" nor his accomplices "thugs" nor did any of Hanko's sources claim Greathouse single-handedly "invite" them, "plie" them or "massacre" them! Then Hanko relates yet another unsubstantiated version of the massacre which does not single out Greathouse, concluding "Now, regardless which story is correct . . ." Hanko's writings are misleading, inaccurate and opinionated trash cloaked in a guise of historical scholarship.

²¹Louise F. Johnson sent considerable historical documentation about a small party of between 20 and 30 men who fell on a group of Cherokees, killed the Chief, four of his tribesmen and wounding two others on May 5, 1765 just north of Staunton, VA (then Augusta County). (Col.) Andrew Lewis wrote to (Gov.) Francis Fauquier of Virginia on May 9, 1765 stating, "In my letter to their Chiefs, I have endeavoured to persuade them [the Cherokee Chiefs] that your Honor will undoubtedly take every just means to give them satisfaction by ordering the murderers to be apprehended and put to death . . ." Lewis's subsequent letter on June 3, 1765 noted that two of the men who had killed the Indians had been apprehended, but one was rescued by local men before being jailed and the other was jailed only three nights and on the fourth a mob of least local 100 men surrounded the prison and broke the prison door down and released him after the jailer refused to release him. Lewis reported to the Governor that these men declared ". . . they had most of the County to back them, and that they would never suffer a man to be confined or brought to justice for killing of savages." Gov. Fauquier advised Lewis ". . . to apprehend the rest of the villains and raise and arm as many men as you can safely depend on to escort them down to this gaol [Williamsburg] to prevent a rescue." The Governor also sent Proclamations to be posted against the mob and offered rewards for the capture of their ringleaders and abettors. However, the men, who called themselves the "Augusta Boys," banded together and had much public sentiment and were never actually punished for the incident. (For more detail, see the book *The Tinkling Spring Headwater of Freedom. A Study of the Church and Her People 1732-1952*, by Howard McKnight, Th.D., 1954, pp. 421-423 and the *Biography of Andrew Lewis*, pp. 131-138). As Louise Johnson points out, there is no evidence than any similar actions were taken against Daniel Greathouse or any of the men involved in the Yellow Creek Massacre which occurred only 8 years after the above incident.

²²Even President Thomas Jefferson admitted that the popular accounts of the events at Yellow Creek and leading up to it were "imperfect and erroneous."

Without question, Gibson had motives to infuriate the Indians against Cresap and smear Cresap's name.²³

On Apr. 17, 1797 Benjamin Tomlinson gave the following interrogatory at Cumberland, MD which was presented in court on behalf of Michael Cresap's heirs in order to clear the Cresap name from inclusion in the Yellow Creek Massacre. The testimony and answers to questions by Tomlinson, then only 44 years old, give many interesting insights into the affair:²⁴

"The first witness we introduce is Benjamin Tomlinson, Esq., who is still living - a man universally respected, and whose testimony no man dare to call in question. It is given by way of interrogatory.

Question 1st. What number of Indians were killed at Yellow Creek?

Answer. Logan's mother, younger brother, and sister, who was called Gibson's squaw; this woman had a child half white, which was not killed.

Ques. 2d. Do you recollect the time and circumstances of the affair at Yellow Creek.

Ans. Yes; the time was the third or fourth day of May, 1774, and the circumstances were that two or three days before these Indians were killed at Yellow Creek by the whites, two men were killed and one wounded in a canoe belonging to a Mr. Butler, of Pittsburg, as they were descending the Ohio river near the mouth of Little Beaver, and this canoe was plundered of all the property; and moreover, about this time the Indians were threatening the inhabitants about the river Ohio, and I was also informed they had committed some depredations on the property of Michael Cresap. I assisted in the burial of the white men killed in Butler's canoe.

Ques. 3rd. Who commanded the party that killed the Indians at Yellow Creek, and who killed those Indians. Do you know?

Ans. The party had no commander. I believe Logan's brother was killed by a man named Sappington; who killed the others I do not know, although I was present. But this I well know - that neither Captain Michael Cresap nor any other person of that name was there, nor do I believe within many miles of the place.

Ques. 4th. Where was Logan's residence, and what was his character?

Ans. I believe his residence was on Muskingum. His character was no ways particular; he was only a common man among the Indians - no chief, no captain.

Ques. 5th. Where and when did Logan die?

Ans. To this question I answer, that I do not know when or where Logan died, but was informed by Esquire Barkley, of Bedford, that he became very vile; that he killed his own wife, and was killed by her brother.²⁵ I am, however, certain he did not die until after Dunmore's treaty on the Scioto.

Ques. 6th. Was Logan at the treaty held by Dunmore with the Indians at Camp Charlotte, on the Scioto? Did he make a speech? And if not, who made a speech for him?

Ans. To this question I answer: Logan was not at the treaty; perhaps Cornstalk, the chief of the Shawanee nation, mentioned among other grievances the Indians killed on Yellow Creek; but I believe neither Cresap nor any other persons were named as the perpetrators. I perfectly recollect that I was that day officer of the guard, and stood near Dunmore's person, and consequently I saw and heard all that passed; that also two or three days before the treaty, when I was on the out-guard, Simon Girty, who was passing by, stopped with me and conversed; he said he was going after Logan, but he did not like his business, for he was a surly fellow; he, however, proceeded on, and I saw him return on the day of the treaty, and Logan was

²³John Gibson (1740-1822) was an Indian trader and considered a "big shot" among the Indians. He also resented Cresap and his guarding of the borders. Gibson was no doubt deeply upset that the Indian mother of his child was among the Indians killed at Yellow Creek. So, his reasons for fabricating the letter are clear - he could stir up the Indians, blemish Michael Cresap's character and get revenge for the killing of his squaw. Cresap openly admitted killed "bad" Indians on his scouting expeditions, but was obviously not involved in the Yellow Creek Massacre and did not want to take any blame and negative public reaction for the killing of what were being claimed as "good" Indians. Even Gibson must have been surprised by the rally of Cresap's friends and relatives against the false claims of Cresap's involvement at Yellow Creek. This disclaimer by Cresap's relatives continues to the modern day.

²⁴This interrogatory was published in the Appendix of *A Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Late Captain Michael Cresap*, by John Jeremiah Jacob, 1866, pp. 133-137.

²⁵Brantz Mayer's Address, p. 67, (recounted by Jacob) says: "Logan, at an Indian Council held at Detroit, became wildly drunk, and, in the midst of delirious passion, prostrated his wife by a sudden blow. She fell before him apparently dead. In a moment, the horrid deed partly sobered the savage, who, thinking he had killed her, fled precipitately lest the stern Indian penalty of blood for blood might befall him at the hand of some relative of the murdered woman. While travelling alone and still confused by liquor and the fear of vengeance, he was suddenly overtaken in the wilderness between Detroit and Sandusky, by a troupe of Indians with their squaws and children, in the midst of whom he recognized his nephew or cousin Tod-kah-dohs." Logan mistakenly thought his cousin or nephew was pursuing him for retaliation, Logan threatened to kill all in the party and in his attempt to shoot his relative, was instead was killed by him. Tod-kah-dohs, was probably a son of Logan's sister and died about 1844, aged about 100 on the Allegheny Seneca Reservation. He recounted his killing of Logan to Dah-gan-on-do, also known as Captain Decker, who related it to Lyman C. Draper.

not with him. At this time a circle was formed and the treaty begun. I saw John Gibson, on Girty's arrival, get up and go out of the circle and talk with Girty; after which he (Gibson) went into a tent, and soon after returning into the circle, drew out of his pocket a piece of clean, new paper, on which was written, in his own hand-writing, a speech for and in the name of Logan. This I heard read three times - once by Gibson, and twice by Dunmore - the purpose of which was, that he (Logan) was the white man's friend' that on a journey to Pittsburg to brighten this friendship, or on his return from then, all his friends were killed at Yellow Creek; that now, when he died, who should bury him? - for the blood of Logan was running in no creature's veins; but neither was the name of Cresap or the name of any other person mentioned in this speech. But I recollect having seen Dunmore put this speech among the other treaty papers.

Ques. 7th. If Logan was not at the treaty, and made no speech, pray from whence it came and who was the author of that famous speech?

Ans. In addition to what is stated above, I say there is no doubt in my mind that it originated altogether with and was framed and produced by Colonel John Gibson.

Ques. 8th. Do you recollect the names of any gentlemen who were present at the treaty?

Ans. Yes; I recollect the following persons, and believe they are still alive and live at the following places, to-wit: General Daniel Morgan, Berkley county, Virginia; Colonel James Wood, now Governor of Virginia; Captain David Scott, Monongahela; Captain John Wilson, Kentucky; Lieutenant Gabriel Cox, Kentucky; Captain Johnson, Youghiogheny; Captain James Parsons, Moorfield; General George R. Clark, Captain William Harrod, Colonel L. Barret, Lieutenant Joseph Cresap and Captain Wm. Henshaw, Berkley.

Ques. 9th. Was the question as to the origin of the war discussed at the treaty?

Ans. Yes; the Indians gave as a reason, the Indians killed at Yellow Creek, Whetstone creek, Beech Bottom and elsewhere. But the Indians were in fact the first aggressors, and committed the first hostilities.

Ques. 10th. Were not some white men killed by the Indians in the year 1773?

Ans. Yes; John Martin and two of his men were killed on Hockhocking, about one year before Dunmore's army went out, and his canoe was plundered of above £200 worth of goods.

I lived on the river Ohio, and near the mouth of Yellow Creek, from the year 1770 until the Indians were killed at Yellow Creek, and several years after; I was present when the Indians were killed, and also present at the treaty in September or October, 1774, near Chillicothe, on the Scioto; and certify the foregoing statement of facts are true, to the best of my recollection.

BENJAMIN TOMLINSON

Cumberland, Apr. 17, 1797

(Gen.) George Rogers Clark wrote to (Dr.) Samuel Brown on June 17, 1798:²⁶

". . . I have a perfect recollection of every transaction relating to Logan's story. The conduct of Cresap I am perfectly acquainted with. He was not the author of that murder, but a family by the name of Greathouse . . . Logan's family were killed and from the manner in which it was done, it was viewed as a horrid murder . . . The act was more barbarous than related by Mr. Jefferson. Those Indians used to visit and return visits with the neighboring whites on the opposite side of the river. They were on a visit to a family by the name of Greathouse²⁷ at the time they were murdered by them and their associates . . . Logan's speech to Dunmore now came forward, as related by Mr. Jefferson. It was thought to be clever although the army knew it to be wrong as to Cresap. But it only produced a laugh in camp. I saw it displeased Capt. Cresap and told him "that he must be a very great man, that the Indians palmed everything that happend on his shoulders." He smiled and said that he had an inclination to tomahawk Greathouse for the murder . . ."

(Col.) Ebenezer Zane wrote that this action, along with other smaller ones by whites "goaded the savages to take up the hatchet and precipitate the war for revenge which followed." There had certainly been previous occasional atrocities committed by the Indians in the border areas and there was a lot of distrust by them with the settlement which was beginning to move into Kentucky, but the general feeling among

²⁶This letter was owned in 1912 by (Col.) Reuben T. Durrett who believed it was a copy and stated, "I received this letter from a brother of Leonard Bliss, who was killed by Godfrey Pope in 1842, with some other matters, printed and manuscript, which he had received from his brother's estate after his death. I knew that Leonard Bliss had valuable papers which referred to General Clark and therefore was glad to purchase from his brother a copy of the Louisville News Letter and this manuscript letter of General Clark and some other papers which apparently came straight and were genuine." The letter was published in "Virginia Series, Vol. III - George Rogers Clark Papers 1771-1871, *Illinois Historical Collections*, 1912, pp. 3-9.

²⁷Brown is incorrect; the Indians were visiting the Baker, not Greathouse, family.

knowledgeable contemporaries was that relations with the Indians would have remained relatively peaceable and the war with them would have been avoided had it not been for Daniel Greathouse and his band.

Immediately after the Yellow Creek Massacre many of the settlers in the vicinity of Yellow Creek took their families and went to Redstone Fort, now Brownsville, PA for safety. On May 8, 1774 (Capt.) William Crawford, the man to whom (Gen.) George Washington had entrusted the surveying and sale of western land, wrote to Washington about the massacre and noted that the Indian child was then living at his house.²⁸ Crawford also noted that it had ruined the settlement and that more than 1,000 people had crossed the Monongahela river to safer areas *in one day*. [emphasis mine]

An attempt was made to meet with the Indians at Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh), and some did meet there with authorities, but none of the Mingoes or Shawnees appeared. Sadly, Logan thereafter swore vengeance to kill 10 settlers for every one of the 10 Indians killed at Yellow Creek. Some 30 settlers were reportedly killed in the summer of 1774 alone.

(Gen.) Richard Butler, in writing to (Gen.) Arthur St. Clair about the several killings of Indians by white men, including those at Yellow Creek, wrote on Aug. 23, 1774:

"These facts I think was sufficient to bring on a war with a christian instead of a savage people, and I do declare it was my opinion that the Shawanese did not intend a war this season, let their future intentions be what they might; and I do likewise declare that I am afraid from the proceedings of the chief of the white people in this part of the country that they will bring on a general war, as there is so little pains taken to restrain the common people whose prejudice leads them to greater lengths than ought to be shown by civilized people, and their superiors take too little if any pains, and I do think are much to blame themselves in the whole affair.

Retaliation by the Indians for the Yellow Creek affair gave John Connelly, the agent for John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, good cause to bring war against the Indians. Connelly had been circulating letters to the settlers along the Indian frontiers even before the Yellow Creek incident stating that war with the Indians was at hand, which helped to fuel the fears. After Connelly took charge of Fort Pitt in the early part of 1774, he renamed it Fort Dunmore. On June 10, 1774, just six weeks after the Yellow Creek affair, he called out the militia of southwest Virginia under the command of (Gen.) Andrew Lewis. (Maj.) Angus McDonald's Frederick County militia company razed Indian towns on the Muskingum River. They were attacked by the Indians on Oct. 10, 1774 and the battle of Point Pleasant ensued in which the Indians were soundly defeated. A peace treaty was signed with the Indians in Nov., 1774.

This writer concludes are that Daniel Greathouse, his brother John Greathouse and probably one other male member of the Greathouse family were indeed involved in the Yellow Creek Massacre. Daniel Greathouse was perhaps even the leader. But there was good reason for the settlers to believe, from recent killings, that a massacre of white settlers was about to take place. It is possible they overreacted and the group of Indians murdered were not the anticipated attackers, but at this point we will never know for sure. It does seem certain that Chief Logan, John Gibson, John Connelly and others took advantage of the incident and used it to aid their own agendas. Daniel Greathouse died three years later and eventually received the lion's share of the blame, perhaps from others trying to shift suspicion from themselves as willing participants. Historian Otis K. Rice summed up the matter stating:²⁹

"Historians . . . now regard Dunmore's War not as a series of isolated hostilities in the spring and summer of 1774 but as a culmination of policies and events dating back to at least 1768. The real cause lay in the clear intentions of Virginia speculators and settlers to occupy the Kentucky country and the determination of the Shawnees to retain their lands . . ."

The writer must also agree with Louise Franklin Johnson who wrote:³⁰ "The sad thing is this incident would have faded into obscurity had Jefferson not tried to prove to the world the veracity of the speech attributed to Chief Logan. At this late date, trying to prove that Daniel Greathouse and his party had reason to suspect treachery from the Indians at Logan's hunting camp, is going to be akin to trying to convince the

²⁸This infant was only half Indian and was reportedly sent to (Col.) John Gibson at Carlisle, PA who had traded with the Indians for several years and was the reputed father.

²⁹A *Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Late Michael Cresap*, by John Jeremiah Jacob, with an introduction by Otis K. Rice, 1971, p. 45.

³⁰Private communication, Feb. 18, 1990.

world that Benedict Arnold was a patriot."

Another sad truth is that the Indian problems in the Virginia panhandle did not stop with the end of Dunmore's War. Nearly 20 years later on June 1, 1791, *The Washington Spy* reported to the citizens of Elizabeth-Town (now Hagerstown), MD:

"We are sorry to inform our readers of the continual accounts of Indian massacres on our frontiers. The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser, a paper of established veracity, mentions that, on the 26th April, at the mouth of Yellow creek, 2 men were killed; on the 1st and 2d ult. at Big Wheeling & Grave-Creek 20 men killed. Ensign Biggs and 2 wounded; the day following, at Small Creek, Capateen, Ensign Enoch & 4 killed; & the same evening, one Telton was killed and scalped near the mouth of Short-Creek, distant about 6 miles from West Liberty, the county town of Ohio. Thus in the space of eight days only, in that quarter, fell a sacrifice to savage thirst of blood, twenty-eight citizens of the United States, exclusive of the wounded. Surely the frontier inhabitants are waiting as impatiently for the arrival of the troops, as the sick man for his doctor, or the criminal for his reprieve."