

Afternoon Lecture Series
Gwynne Potts on William Croghan
March 11, 2020

If William Croghan were here, and we were able to ask him to tell us about the core experience of his life, I am confident he would say it was the seven years he spent as a Continental Army officer in the American Revolution.

He was born in Ireland in 1752- probably in Dublin. His family was a nest of Irish quislings, as a man who works today at the National Museum of Ireland told me- Irishmen who collaborate with the enemy. In reality, the term indicates the Croghans adjusted to and even became part of the occupying English government. It appears William was placed in the British army as a young ensign with the 16th Regiment of foot, stationed in Dublin for a generation, and that he arrived in North America with that regiment in 1767. William apparently sold his commission in New York when his regiment moved to West Florida, and he relied upon his uncle, George Croghan, to secure a position with Albany merchant, Thomas Shipboy. Shipboy was a Scots-Irishman who had come to North America to serve with the British army during the French and Indian War and stayed in Albany for the rest of his life. He was Sir Wm Johnson's clothier, but also a prominent member of the Albany militia and opposed to the Stamp Act, and we do not know the extent to which he may have formed Croghan's political thoughts.

We have to think about George Croghan for a minute, because he introduced both GRC and WC to the American frontier. There's no known image of Croghan, but when I "met" him about 35 years ago, I thought of him as Mickey Rooney. The fellow seemed to know everyone, and they knew him. The *English* mistrusted him because he was Irish (and they assumed, Catholic. Wrong: Anglican), the *Scots* and *Germans* mistrusted him because he was known to laugh at Quakers and Presbyterians, and the *Irish* mistrusted him because he was much too snug with the Brits. The only people who welcomed him somewhat universally were the Native Americans, with whom he spent an extraordinary amount of time as the Crown's Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the northern region of colonial North America.

George Croghan was married traditionally once to a Euro-American woman and fathered a daughter, Susanna, who was Wm Croghan's cousin and the future wife of Maj. Augustin Prevost of the British Royal American Regiment. *This will be important to William later in the Revolution.* George Croghan later took as his wife a prominent Mohawk woman, who was the matrilineal leader of the Turtle clan. She passed her social status to her daughter, Catherine (or Adonwentishon), Croghan's *second* daughter and the future wife of Joseph Brant. *This will be important to GRC,* because Brant later very nearly murdered Clark and certainly destroyed his 1780 Detroit expedition. George Croghan bought an enormous house in Philadelphia and became one of the most prominent men in North America after he put down Pontiac's Rebellion, about the time his nephew, William, arrived from Ireland, and over time, I began to see him more as Cary Grant. The Six Nations had given him 6,000,000 acres in and around Ft Pitt in 1749, and until the Revolution, he maintained a presence there, which he considered to lie at least 12 miles within Virginia. All of which leads us to this:

Young William Croghan formed the 10th company of the 8th VA Continental Regiment in Pittsburgh in Feb, 1776, but because of the distance between Pittsburgh and Williamsburg, VA, he arrived with his 147 soldiers too late to join the rest of the regiment that had left for the first Battle of Charleston. Croghan's company, therefore, was temporarily assigned to the 1st Virginia that left immediately to join George Washington in New York.

They arrived at Fort Lee in mid-September 1776, on the New Jersey bluff directly across the Hudson River from Harlem Heights, where the newly built Ft. Washington stood. William Croghan's Revolution began the day the 1st VA crawled up the cliff to Ft. Washington and was put to work building trenches in preparation for the arrival of Brit Gen. Wm Howe, who was at that moment marching up Broadway to capture them all. Within the month, Croghan and 2400 other soldiers escaped the fort with Washington, leaving Nathaneal Greene behind in charge of 3000 men, and rode north to White Plains.

This was Wm Croghan's first great stroke of Revolutionary luck. Hessian General Wilhem Knyphausen quickly captured Ft. Washington, and one-third of his prisoners would

die in captivity. *Knyphausen* is important, because with the exception of Yorktown, Knyphausen and his professional Hessian soldiers would be at the center of every major British force William Croghan met during the war. The Continental Army both feared and admired him; in fact, when it was all over, Lafayette went out of his way to visit him in Germany in 1786.

Meanwhile, in White Plains, Washington had made Jacob Purdy's house his HQs. He would come back to the Purdy house again and again through the Revolution, and because Croghan would spend so much time in this area working as a scout for the Continental Army, he surely knew the house well. Howe soon drove Washington out of White Plains and the Continental Army slogged through November rain and sleet to Ft. Lee, and on to Newark, Elizabethtown, and Brunswick, heading vaguely in the direction of PA. From 1776 through 1779 and beyond, this is generally where the American Revolution was fought. In fact, Wm Croghan spent most of four years riding back and forth across NJ for Washington.

The army's 1776 crawl across the Garden State was miserable. One soldier recalled the sufferings "were beyond description – no tent to cover us at night, exposed to cold and rains by day and night." Virginia recruit, James Monroe, was on his first military assignment in New Jersey – he was 18- when he described his first sight of Washington near Newark. "I saw him at the head of a small band, or rather, in its rear, for he was always near the enemy, and his countenance and manner made an impression on me which I can never forget."

The army slipped across the Delaware River and into PA in early December, and you know what happened next. With a small pox epidemic among his men, rampant desertion, and half the army due to return home at the end of the year, Washington was desperate. He offered \$10 to every volunteer to stay, he quoted Henry V to them, and he sent his scouts back to NJ in search of a British weakness. He made what he knew would be a last gasp effort to keep the Revolution alive, and planned a Christmas night attack on the Hessian force at Trenton, settling on the passwords, *Victory or Death*. I wrote, "The additional month Washington begged from his soldiers was the last chance the Americans had to achieve a military victory before Congress surely would have been forced to

negotiate a defeated peace, so there was little to lose with a bold plan. Huddled in shivering knots along the Delaware on Dec 23 and 24, 1776, his men listened as Thomas Paine's newly printed *The American Crisis* was read aloud by the literate among them, "These are the times that try men's souls."

The Trenton attack worked and the Americans rode back to PA that night to plan one last battle for the season. Princeton. This one didn't go exactly as planned, but then, almost nothing the Continental Army did went as planned. Hugh Mercer was killed when the Brits mistook him for Washington, but by the end of the day, Washington left the field satisfied he had created enough word of mouth to keep the Continental Congress happy into spring. The army camped for the winter at Morristown, NJ, where every man was inoculated against small pox and volunteer soldier, Charles Willson Peale, painted Washington's first war-time portrait. Already deep in winter, this Morristown camp was a slipshod affair full of hastily and poorly constructed shelters, characterized by smoky chimneys that frequently caught fire, poor supply lines and chaotic leadership. Croghan was a young officer, and so he shared a two-room duplex with three other young officers—four men in each room. Washington, however, wintered with his aides and personal guard at the nearby Ford Mansion.

The Crown grew weary of this prolonged rebellion and made two 1777 plans to end it. Because London believed the Revolution's heart lay in New England, Gen John Burgoyne was sent down from Canada to stop that area's influence at the Hudson River, leaving the Revolution beyond the river to wither and die. At the same time, generals Howe and Charles Cornwallis were sent to the Chesapeake Bay with orders to find Washington's army and destroy it. Seeing the plan, Washington went to Philadelphia to confer with the Continental Congress, who immediately left town, but while there, on 2 August, he first met the Marquis de Lafayette, who was 19 years old and newly commissioned a major general.

Howe had landed north of Baltimore in late July, and so Washington's Army marched straight through Philadelphia as a show of strength in the first week of September, before turning south for what would be the bloodiest battle of the American Revolution.

When we speak of 9-11, a common memory comes to all our minds. If we could ask Virginia Revolutionary War veterans about 9-11, a common memory would come to *their* minds: the Battle of Brandywine Creek, fought Sept 11, 1777, in extreme south east Pennsylvania. The battle began at dawn at Chadd's Ford, where Knyphausen's army engaged Anthony Wayne's division. Adam Stephen's, John Sullivan's and Lord Stirling's divisions were stationed slightly up the creek, preventing Knyphausen from moving around Wayne. (Lord Stirling was a Scottish peer who fought with Washington; his name was William Alexander.) Knyphausen commanded 5000 soldiers that day, but Washington, Lafayette, Hamilton and Greene worried that something was wrong. Where was Howe, where was Cornwallis? Washington sent Stephen and Stirling north, to Sandy Hollow hill, to have a look around. They ran/walked there, but seeing nothing, returned, and the day wore on.

Washington again sent Stephen, Stirling and now, Sullivan's divisions back up the hill, and this time, they met the rest of the British army, commanded by Howe and Cornwallis. As the Americans discovered them, the British were sitting down to tea in preparation for a rear attack on the Continental Army. Stirling's, Sullivan's and Stephen's divisions, including Will Croghan and Jonathan Clark, were the only things standing between the British army and Washington's defeat and probable death. Washington found the battle about 4 pm, when only Stephen's men were left in the fight. As dusk set in, Lafayette was shot and there was nothing left for Casimer Pulaski to do but organize the retreat. It was the greatest loss of life the Continental Army would endure in the Revolution: 1300 dead and wounded.

The Continentals straggled into Chester. Washington biographer, Douglass Southall Freeman, wrote that the general conducted the Brandywine operation as if he had been in a daze, and Philadelphia's Dr. Benjamin Rush, who was a darling of the Revolutionary era, wrote that Nathanael Greene was a sycophant to the general, speculative and without enterprise; Sullivan was weak, vain, without dignity, fond of scribbling and in the field, a mad man; Stirling was a proud, vain, lazy ignorant drunkard and Stephen was a sordid, boasting, cowardly sot.

American opinion now turned against the Revolution, and Washington had to do something “to remind the English that an American army still existed.” He and his officers planned to re-enact the battle of Trenton at Germantown, PA, about 9 miles above Philadelphia, where most of Howe’s army had quartered following the Battle of Brandywine. But while the army had traveled to Trenton on a 15-foot wide path, the approach to Germantown required a seven-mile wide swath, marching toward the British barracks stationed at Germantown in the dead of night. It was a mess. Sullivan ran into fire at Mt Airy, alerting the Germantown barracks that the Americans were coming. Some of the British soldiers who escaped Sullivan ran to Ben Chew’s house, where Washington and Stirling were about to pass. But, Washington *didn’t* pass; he instead spent an hour in an unnecessary skirmish that took the lives of 57 of his men. Meanwhile, seven miles away, Green heard the fire and went into double time, assuming he had missed the main battle.

If this weren’t enough, Adam Stephen veered from his division, with captains Croghan and Clark in tow, to see what the commotion was at the Chew house, running into Anthony Wayne’s division and causing a friendly fire event. In the melee, the 9th Virginia lost sight of its commander and wandered into British hands, resulting in its surrender as POWs. The prisoners included young John Clark, George Rogers’ and Jonathan’s brother, who would die seven years later as a result of TB contracted on a New York British prison ship.

Historians have written that the battles at Brandywine and Germantown caused the French king to support the American effort, and yes, the army *did* take the field with Howe and Cornwallis, but the saving grace of the Continental Army’s 1777 campaign was the work of Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold, who defeated Burgoyne at Saratoga in October. Consequently, at the end of 1777, both British battle plans had failed to end the Revolution; Washington was alive and the Continental Congress continued to exist. Even worse, the French had joined the fight.

As the British army marched into Philadelphia, Washington went to Pottsgrove to give his soldiers and himself a chance to recover. Why did he decide to stay in this area rather than return to New York? Because the British army wintered in Philadelphia, of course, but equally importantly, most of his rifles were manufactured nearby in Lancaster

by a Jewish merchant and manufacturer named Joseph Simon, who used a facility in Reading, PA to store the army's armaments. Washington wanted to stay between the British army and Reading, Pennsylvania.

And so, in December, 1777, about 10,000 Americans straggled onto Isaac Potts' farm where the British army had camped en route to Germantown. Of the 10,000 men who made camp at Valley Forge, one-quarter would die before May. Croghan's luck continued. He was present at every encampment muster call, and not only had he lived through the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, he's going to live through Valley Forge! By contrast, Jonathan Clark remained in Virginia until April.

At Valley Forge, Wilhem von Steuben, a bull of a man, cajoled, intimidated and generally barked the Continental Army into fighting shape. By spring, the army had grown, been re-clothed, and was better trained than it ever had been. Croghan was promoted to major in Gen. Chas Scott's division, which was part of Lafayette's brigade, and he would move back and forth from the regular army to Scott's smaller detachment for the next two years. The smaller detachment had a special duty because Washington recently had named Scott as his chief intelligence officer, and Scott used Major Croghan as his primary conduit between the army and Washington's New York HQs. *WC had become one of George Washington's spies.*

Sir Henry Clinton replaced Howe as Britain's North American commander, and was ordered out of Philadelphia and back to New York City in June, 1778 because the universal assumption was that the final battle of the American Revolution would take place in New York Harbor. Washington saw the British pack up, and moved out of Valley Forge the next day.

Monmouth County is about 2/3 of the way between Philadelphia and NYC. The place where the two armies actually met was near Freehold, NJ, but the British army had camped around the court house the night before, and so the name of the battle is associated with that site. The British entourage formed a ten-mile long train that was cumbersome and traveled through the day in increasingly muggy weather. The Continental Army, leaner, meaner, quicker, and better trained than ever before, traveled at night, and thereby saved the soldiers and horses from the heat.

Gen. Chas Lee was an Englishman who had enjoyed a good reputation as a Prussian mercenary, and came to America in 1775 assuming he would become the Continental Army's commander -in-chief, but Congress chose Washington as its commander and made Lee his second-in-command. Lee was captured by the Brits earlier in the war because Banastre Tarleton recognized Lee's hounds at a boarding house where, at the moment of capture, the general may have been enjoying his landlady's company. There is a strong possibility that Lee became a double spy while being held captive in a luxurious state, and when he re-appeared at the end of the Valley Forge encampment, some were skeptical.

Wayne, Greene, Hamilton, Steuben and Lafayette became united in their opposition to Lee after he opposed the full battle they urged during the New Jersey crossing. Saying it would be a suicidal move, Lee instead suggested harassment just to slow Clinton down. Washington agreed, settling on an advance unit to attack Clinton's rear guard, and offered the unit's command to Lee, who refused and suggested instead a "young, volunteering general," rather than the army's second in command. Washington then offered the job to Lafayette, who said, "*mais oui!*" This decision brought Scott's light infantry into the advance plan. Lee, later realizing the advance guard would be 5000-men strong, reversed his decision and accepted the job. Was this because Lee didn't think Lafayette was up to the job, or because he suddenly saw the operation as a chance for glory? We don't know; the history of the Battle of Monmouth Court House was written by Lee's enemies. Lee went to bed without issuing orders, and Hamilton summed up the plan as one that "would have done honor to the most honorable society of midwives and to them only."

Charles Cornwallis commanded Clinton's rear guard, comprised of the Coldstream Guards and the Grenadiers. When he spotted Lee's detachment the next morning, Cornwallis turned the guard around, and anyone who has seen the musical *Hamilton* knows what happened next. Panicked, Lee sent word to Washington to hurry with the army, and later swore he abandoned Anthony Wayne on the front line in an attempt to re-organize his men. As Lee struggled to gain control, Chas Scott, and William Croghan assumed he was in retreat and followed suit, running into Washington, who was in a race to the front.

Scott later wrote that Washington swore a blue streak at Lee and placed Lafayette in command on the spot. The battle lasted all day, and for the first time in four years, Washington's army remained on the field until the end of the day. Clinton's army was gone before the Continental Army broke camp the next morning, and Washington led his army on to Middlebrook, NJ to set up camp.

Lee was court-martialed, although Aaron Burr, who probably experienced heat stroke during the battle, wrote a letter to the adjutant general in support of Lee, who had no choice but to leave the army. Burr chose to leave after the Battle of Monmouth, still ill and permanently disillusioned with the culture of partisanship among Washington's officers. And if you didn't know, now you do know, who wrote the story of the battle.. Washington re-organized the Continental Army Sept 14, 1778. The 4th Virginia Regiment absorbed the 8th regiment; Charles Scott took a year-long break from the military, and Col. John Neville became the commander of the newly reorganized 4th VA Regiment with William Croghan as his major.

Now in Gen. William Woodford's brigade rather than Lafayette's, the 4th regiment generally enjoyed the Revolution's down time in late 1778 and 1779, and it appears Croghan had as good a time as any. He led scouting parties from the Ramapo Mountains in southern New York to the outskirts of NYC, south to Perth Amboy (Sandy Hook), NJ, reporting back to Washington's HQ, and making occasional trips into Philadelphia. "We spend our time very sociable here and are never disturbed by the enemy," he wrote on March, 1779. Why did the British army take a year off from the American Revolution? Because the French had arrived in Rhode Island and were harassing British ships in New York Harbor. Gen. Clinton was frightened, and Parliament was not financially prepared to initiate another full-scale war with France 3000 miles from home. What to do? Answer: London decided to move the war south.

While the Continental Army again made camp at Morristown, NJ during the "hard winter" of 1779-1780, Cornwallis and Clinton took the British army to the Carolinas and Fla. Croghan's 4th Virginians arrived at Morristown from Ramapo with Woodford's brigade on Dec 3, 1779 and worked through the night building huts with chimneys – hard work, he reported, as it snowed a foot that night. His Dec 8 journal recorded "about 3

oClock in the afternoon when near all the Virginia Hutts were raised, Orders came for us to get in readiness to march to Philadelphia” On the following day, he wrote “we are informed we are immediately to proceed from Phila to South Carolina or Georgia- Gen. Muhlenberg’s Brigade mustered by Col Cabell & Gen Woodford’s by me.” Washington had decided to order most of the Virginia Continentals, and parts of the South Carolina and North Carolina regiments to Charleston to hold off the British attack.

Maj. Wm Croghan left Morristown for good at 3 pm on Dec 12th, 1779 and arrived at a Mr. Taylor’s in New Germantown sometime that night. I wrote that Croghan went to Taylor’s house in New Germantown, PA (near Harrisburg), where his “boy” sorted and repacked his clothes before he squeezed in a visit to his Uncle George in Lancaster. I was wrong. About half way between Philadelphia and Morristown NJ was a tiny place called New Germantown, today called Oldwick. It lay no more than 25 miles from any of the Continental Army’s New Jersey winter encampments. I believe *this* was where Croghan kept his enslaved man, his clothing and whatever possessions he owned during most of his four years in New Jersey.

Croghan set out for Trenton in a heavy rain around 2 the next afternoon, Dec 13, 1779, but was prevented from reaching Philadelphia by the weather. The temperature was brutally cold the next day, when he and Gen. Woodford again tried to cross the Delaware, but with the river now blocked by ice, the men opted to ride up to Burlington. After six days, Croghan, Woodford and their enslaved men reached Pennsylvania, where Woodford went on to Philadelphia and Croghan to Lancaster. Snow covered the ice, causing the horses to slip and fall frequently, and a severe northwest wind blew constantly in his face, forcing him to spend another night in a tavern. He arrived in Lancaster on the evening of Dec 20th, where the snow was a foot deeper than in Philadelphia, and he stayed with George Croghan until the 22nd. He was back in Philadelphia in time to dine with Woodford on the 23rd, and although Croghan’s journal doesn’t acknowledge Christmas, it did record the troops’ movement across the Delaware, when the river finally froze well enough to support the horses and wagons. Virginia’s Continental army was moving south.

The march was disorganized and difficult. Empty wagons went ahead to open the road, horses gave out in the effort to cope with 6 foot snow drifts, men lost fingers and toes, some regiments wandered off the unseen roads and into ravines, food could not catch up with the army, and men mutinied. They reached Fredericksburg, Virginia 5 February and stayed until the 16th, a good deal of the time spent celebrating Washington's 48th birthday and attending local balls. Croghan spent the night of the 15th with Woodford at the general's house, and was present when word came from Gen. Benjamin Lincoln in Charleston that the British army AND navy had arrived. They left the next day, and from this point on, Croghan traveled with John Neville, who was bringing the artillery along- a slow slog through the mud and floods left by the snow. Two weeks later, the army stopped for another 10 days in Petersburg, where "every evening we had either private or public balls, the town affording the greatest number of accomplished ladies (in proportion to the inhabitants) of any place I recollect." They finally arrived in Charleston March 30, and on the 31st, Croghan accompanied generals Lincoln and Scott around town to inspect the barracks and other works. That very night, the enemy broke ground ten or twelve hundred yards from the American defensive lines. A planned river reconnaissance to be conducted by Jonathan Clark and Wm Croghan was canceled on Apr 4 due to heavy enemy fire that did not stop- day or night.

A shell hit Croghan's tent about midnight on April 17th, but the fuse didn't ignite and the only harm done was to his tent, table and floor. For the next three weeks, Continental officers- Croghan included- attempted to convince the town leaders to surrender with honorable terms. On the 21st, while Croghan was across the Cooper River at "Lampries" (Lempiere's barracks), a proposed truce was sent to Clinton, who re-wrote and returned the conditions, leading Lincoln's officers to reject them and inform Clinton he could resume fire whenever he wanted. Croghan reported the fighting began exactly "at 9 pm with greater Virulence & fury than ever and continued w/o intermission until day light. I had an exceedingly good view of the Firings on Both Sides, which far exceeded my Ideas....this day we received 12 oz. of Very Bad beef." The next day, he "received orders from Gen Scott to return to Charlestown w/ directions to have my Baggage at Lampries returned to town by my Waiters (suggesting more than one enslaved man). I was sorry to receive such

orders, being in great doubt of my ever having it in my power to again leave except as a prisoner.”

He was right. The battle dragged on another three weeks. Col. Richard Parker was shot through the head, soldiers and townspeople died daily, all dogs were killed to save food, and entrenched British soldiers were now close enough to be heard calling the Americans “Bloody dogs, etc.” On Ap 25th, Cornwallis took Mount Pleasant, including Haddrell’s Point- soon to be Croghan’s home, and the next day, French general DuPortail arrived from Philadelphia with Lt Edmund Clark, bringing a regiment of French engineers. Croghan reported Charlestown was completely surrounded on the 28th, and on May 4th, the commissary provided the officers with “About 6 oz of Extream bad meat & a little Coffee & Sugar.” Almost as a footnote, he noted the British had taken the Charlestown battery and “carried away the American hospital ship.”

This was his last Charleston Battle journal entry, giving us an idea of the following week. The Continental Army surrendered in a formal ceremony at 11 am, 12 May 1780. Clinton refused to accept honorable terms as the basis for the surrender and Croghan joined 244 other officers and about 3000 soldiers in grounding their arms to the tune of the Turk’s March. In terms of prisoners taken and loss of strategic location, this would be the single largest American defeat in the Revolutionary War. By the way, 245 officers surrendered with 240 enslaved servants, who shared their imprisonment.

Wm Croghan had known his uncle’s greatest friends and supporters, Philadelphia merchants Michael and Barnard Gratz, since his arrival in America. The Gratz brothers took him in while he was in Philadelphia, and Croghan knew, liked and respected their wives and daughters. Each brother sent him pocket money throughout the war, and it’s primarily through his letters to the Gratzes that we know what happened next.

As bleak as things were, Croghan was something of an enviable figure among the prisoners. The father-in-law of his cousin Susanna, Geo Croghan’s elder daughter, was, Gen Augustin Prevost, who recently had commanded the British military’s southern activity. The general’s brother, who was married to the future Mrs. Aaron Burr, and his son, Augustin, Jr. were making their ways at that moment from Savannah to Charlestown, and Croghan had high hopes of an early parole. On the 18th of May, he wrote Michael Gratz

to tell him he was “just now going to Haddrell’s Point, where I am to remain on parole, “and he concluded with compliments to Geo. Croghan, “pray let him know I have wrote the Major, his son-in-law.”

As it happened, Croghan remained a prisoner for nearly nine months before he and a number of other officers, including Col. Jonathan Clark, were placed on a schooner bound for Edenton, NC, where they rented wagons and horses to carry them north. It was on this trek that Croghan stayed a night either near or with John and Ann Clark, and we assume this was the first meeting between Croghan and his future wife, Lucy Clark. He was assigned to Ft Pitt, a job he loathed, where he watched GRC’s doomed Detroit expedition shove off with a sense of foreboding, and where he had to report both the massacre of 97 Christian Moravian native villagers and the gruesome death of Col. Wm Crawford, carried out by the Delawares as frontier revenge. Croghan was still there when he learned in August, 1781, that Washington and Rochambeau were moving their armies south from NY for what they *hoped* would be the Revolution’s climactic clash. He dashed across PA to meet the army before it camped around Charles Cornwallis’ 8000-man division, now trapped between Yorktown, VA and the Atlantic Ocean. Reunited with the army, he discovered he had not yet been exchanged for a Brit officer and could not fight. (He would have been hanged if he had been captured fighting without an exchange.) Croghan instead worked behind the lines for three weeks in an ostensibly bi-partisan siege that was, in fact, commanded by French officers and made possible by French engineers and the Comte de Grasse, who sat implacably in the Chesapeake aboard the *Ville de Paris*, and on 19 October 1781 he witnessed Cornwallis’ surrender.

It would be another two years before the British army left NY, and during that time, Croghan made many trips to Caroline Co, VA before arriving at the Falls of the Ohio to become GRC’s deputy surveyor for Virginia State Line veerants. Clark’s parents, younger sisters and little brother, William, arrived at the falls in March 1785, and while the pretense may have been surveying work, Croghan and Continental surveyor, Richard Clough Anderson, obviously made many trips to the Clarks’ home with other agendas. Anderson married Elizabeth “Betsy” Clark in 1787, and just before the marriage, former

New Jersey Continental Congress delegate, John Cleves Symmes wrote to congratulate him and plead for another cause.

“god bless you my friend and give you many days of happiness in the arms of your Betsy...I beg dear friend that you will present my best references to Mr. and Mrs. Clark, to the young Ladies and the two brothers. I assure you that I hold affection for them all. ...Tell me whether there is like to be a second wedding soon at the house of Mr. C – the first I consider a certain.. Let me have your guess, for sure I am that you will have it in your power to make a good one. If you see that William is like to be crowned, tell me, and I shall know then what part I am to take.”

Lucy Clark, sister to Betsy and George Rogers Clark, had two suitors! Symmes was 23 yrs older than Lucy, a lawyer, NJ senator and member of that state’s Supreme Court. He was named Ohio territorial Court judge in 1788 and had bought 311,000 acres in Ohio for development when he arrived in Louisville. Now a widower, Symmes roamed the Ohio River Valley in search of a wife, making several trips to John Clark’s house, where he obviously was smitten. Had Lucy married Symmes, she would have become the step-mother to the wife of Gen. Wm Henry Harrison, and to John Cleves Symmes Jr, who was famous in his time for the promotion of the Hollow Earth Theory. Lucy’s suitor went on to marry Catherine Livingston, a daughter of NJ governor, William Livingston, sister-in-law to John Jay and cousin to Serena Livingston. Lucy, of course, chose instead to marry Washington’s Irish officer, Maj William Croghan, and within five years, she gave birth to three children and moved to her newly constructed and almost completed, home.

Lights Up

I wrote the first seven chapters of *George Rogers Clark and William Croghan* in a dual pattern, using the war experiences first of Clark, then of Croghan, to tell the story of the American Revolution. The men arrived permanently in Kentucky in the middle section of the book, where Croghan and Clark worked together as Virginia’s state line surveyors whenever Clark was in town- and that wasn’t often. He was sent first to NY and then to Ohio in 1785 to work as one of three federal Indian negotiators, and between 1780 and 1786, he lead three expeditions into the North West Territory- two to the Chillicothe

Shawnee villages and one disastrous march back to Vincennes. It was after the 1786 Vincennes campaign that his career collapsed. William Croghan picked up the surveying slack created by Clark's national obligations, and when Clark resigned as principle surveyor, Croghan was named his successor.

I used to think of Clark and Croghan as opposites- a hot-tempered frontier hot-shot as opposed to a cool-headed, steady Continental major, and these are fair characterizations. But I came to understand the men shared common causes and common philosophies. They were both American officers, after all; one appears to have idolized Jefferson; the other Washington, but unlike most worshippers, each was close to his idol. Clark and Croghan were associates to Jefferson and Washington, not groupies.

In the end, each man was a pragmatist, brought to Kentucky not by a need to survive, but by choice, having arranged positions that would ensure their success in the wilderness. When Clark became inundated with demands from Richmond, it was Croghan who corresponded with the governor to explain missing receipts and to apply pressure for reimbursements, and it was Croghan who met with state leaders and protected Clark by carefully recording militia declarations urging expeditions north. When Wilkinson, Brown and yes, even Anderson, undermined Clark's authority with Virginia, Shelby, Logan and William Croghan stood strong. And when the avocational engineer, George Rogers Clark, managed to convince the Indiana Territory to allocate \$100,000 for construction of his long-sought canal around the Falls, Croghan shared the investment, and attempted to market the project by inviting Aaron Burr into the company.

And finally, it was William Croghan who brought Clark to his home when all else no longer was possible. He buried Clark in his grave yard, and four years later, joined him, where the two Revolutionary officers remained together for more than 45 years.