

## Shawnee Chief "Cornstalk" Attacks Botetourt Militia at Point Pleasant



### Chief Cornstalk

The Shawnees and Mingo were causing havoc in the mountains of Virginia during the early 18th century. After the French and Indian War, Europeans began to pour into the region from Pennsylvania, traveling down the Wilderness Road into the mountains of Virginia (later Kentucky and West Virginia). They were Germans, Scotch-Irish, and Quakers from Philadelphia. The large quaker families of the Boones from Philadelphia drifted across these mountains in search of new homes. They had ten to fifteen children and the son of George Boone IV, Squire Boone (there were

several generations by this name) moved in Botetourt County.

Also, the Francis Easom family came to Botetourt from Talbot County, Maryland and during the process two of their daughters were kidnapped. Edward Franklin (of Spotsylvania County) patented 400 acres in 1734 on the NW side of Blue Water Run above the Little Mountain on a ridge in the Octonia Line at the foot of Piney Mountain (called Neds Mountain). A rock mill was nearby to process the octonia rocks in the region. Later on, the Orange County Minute Book of 1736 was petitioned by John Cleveland to reassign the road duty on Piny Mountain Run near Octonia Mill, stating that Edward Franklyn, Laurence Franklyn (and his son, Benjamin) should work the lower part of the road. This is exactly the site of the original land patent (in Orange County, later Botetourt County).

When the Indian situation arose, volunteers, from the ages of sixteen to sixty, turned out to put down the problem. A son of Francis Easom, Samuel, enlisted, as well as James Franklin (probably killed) and William Franklin who had purchased land in Buchanan, on the banks of the James River. William Franklin was listed as wounded in the battle of Mt. Pleasant on October 10, 1744 and was released about a week later. The battle of Pt. Pleasant (or Kanawha) was fought primarily between the Virginia Militia and the Mingo and Shawnee Indians.

During 1774 there was an increase of violence between the european settlers and Native Americans in western Virginia. Thus, the Virginia Governor John Murray, the Earl of Dunmore, attempted to impose peace by sending militia into the Ohio Valley. Lord Dunmore created two armies, personally leading seventeen hundred men from the north, while Andrew Lewis (of Botetourt Militia) directed eight hundred troops through the Kanawha Valley. Shawnee chief Keigh-tugh-qua, or Cornstalk, elected to strike the southern regiment before it united with the force of Lord Dunmore.

On October 10th, about twelve hundred Indians under Cornstalk attacked

the troops of Captain Lewis troops at the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers at present-day Point Pleasant. The battle resulted in significant losses on both sides and forced the Shawnee to retreat to protect their settlements in the Scioto Valley of present-day Ohio.

As a condition of the subsequent Treaty of Camp Charlotte, Native Americans relinquished property and hunting claims on land south of the Ohio River. Consequently, the Battle of Point Pleasant eliminated Native Americans as a threat on the frontier for the first three years of the Revolutionary War and cleared the way for more rapid settlement of the region.