General George Rogers Clark.

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A magazine sketch can give but a faint idea of the courage, energy, capacity, and indomitable tenacity of General George Rogers Clark. The stern and appalling difficulties he encountered assume the wild charm of a startling romance, and had I space for the details of time, place, and circumstances, the story of his adventures would transcend fiction itself. In short, his life was a life of self-reliance and daring deeds which placed pre-eminence above those of any hero that ever lived or led an army. In brave, humane, and high-toned chivalry he was truly distinguished. Though daring and fierce to his enemies, his generous and social impulses made him the idol of his friends. Quick to resent an injury, yet prompt to forgive it, fiery in pursuit, yet cool and calculating in action, he never stopped nor shrank, but in wisdom to gain strength for the rebound.
Full of generous deeds and native nobility of soul, 
he was a brave defender of the "Dark and Bloody 
Ground," the splendid country now called Kentucky.

George Rogers Clark was born November 29, 1752, in Albemarle County, Virginia. In 
early life he was, like Washington, a surveyor, 
and then a major in the wars of Lord Dunmore 
against the Canadian, French, and Northern In-
dians. Having much read about the newly discov-
ered world called Kentucky, and the bloody 
conflicts between the white and red men for pos-
session, he determined to see for himself the pres-
ent condition and future prospects of the disputed 
land. His arrival in the promised land was in 1775. 

He found there a few isolated forts in the heart 
of a vast wilderness claimed by the most savage 
and warlike people in the world, against whom 
unaided individual courage, though great, could 
not prevail. He at once laid his plans, and went 
mentally and bodily into the work, and marvellous 
was the result. Clark, with his bold and pen-
etrating mind, saw that one course to settle the 
many conflicting claims to the richest region

prettiest
All the country south of Kentucky River, at that time was claimed by the noted Bed. Henderson, and the great land Transylvania Company, in which the most influential men of the Union, and nobility of England were interested. This claim was by a purchase made by the above named Company from the Cherokees South, at the treaty of Watana; while the Colony of Virginia claimed the whole region from the Ohio river to the Cumberland mountains, by her purchases from the Delawares and Shawnees, and from other tribes of the North west, called the Six Nations, at the celebrated treaty of Fort Stanwix, by Lie. William Johnson and his co-English authorities. This owner of a purchase and lasting peace with the Indians produced a flood of immigration to Kentucky which caused great alarm among the Six Nations, many of whose chiefs had not been in the treaty, and knew nothing about it; and the Six Nations not being paid according to the Contract, and being agitated by the British trading posts where large prices were paid for Kentucky scalps, all the tribes were about to unite and exterminate the intruders. Clark feeling the helpless condition of the early settlers and the dangers threatening them, determined to put his own life at stake
Their defence. The powder and lead being well-nigh exhausted, and the forces being widely separated, there was no council of action; so he called a meeting of the citizens at Harrodsburg Station to send delegates to Virginia to ask for a supply of ammunition, at which convention Gabriel Jones and Geo. Clark were appointed, and their commission was signed by Harrod and eighty-five others. Clark and Jones now set off through a pathless wilderness of three hundred miles, over rugged mountains to the seat of Government Williamsburg, and finding the Legislature adjourned, Jones despaired and gave it up. But not so with Clark, who by undaunted resolve, went straightway to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, and implored him to save the people of Kentucky from the destruction impending over them. The Governor being sick in bed, wrote Clark a letter to the Executive Council, but they declining to take any responsibility, Clark said to them in firm and threatening language, that if Virginia did not think Kentucky worth saving, he would appeal to a power that was ready, willing and wanting to save and protect it. This being just at the time of the Burr and Wilkinson intrigues with
Bain, which then claimed Louisiana and the whole country west to the head of the Mississippi, the Executive Committee, being fully understanding Clark's plan and independent of his want of ammunition, ordered it to be supplied. Bain at that time controlled the navigation of the Mississippi River, and New Orleans being the only market for Kentucky, many of the leading men of Kentucky, aware of the great commercial advantages Spain offered, preferred the protection of Spain to that of England. Clark, from his penetrating knowledge of human nature, was obtained, as I have said, the ammunition for Kentucky, but found great difficulty in getting it to the different forts in the far off wilderness. At last having conveyed it to Pittsburgh fort, he was joined by Jones, and improvising a craft, they descended the Ohio, and though fired at frequently by Indians on the shore, they landed near limestone, took the presents laid out, put their craft afloat, and took the treasure in the woods. Jones went to the nearest station, and procuring some ten men, started back to bring in the wounded, but was attacked by the Indians, and with Jones was killed. Clark, however, kept on to Harrodsburg station, got Martin and others to aid him, brought the treasure safely in, and supplied the different stations with the means of defense.
Clark was always ready to rally out against the invaders of Kentucky, but with quick perception he saw no need to such petty warfare, and that the cry must be raised at the root of the tree; and as there was not sufficient force in Kentucky to invade the savage strongholds and break up the British trading-posts, he again went back to both Virginia and Pennsylvania, through a wild

- mile.

- cent

- hund

- of miles.

- one hundred and fifty

- and

- some

- boats at Pittsburgh fort, came on to the falls. Being here joined by a few Kentuckians dwelling his army of invasion, he floated down to a point near to Kaskaskia, the great trading post at that time of the Canadians, French and English to which all the Western tribes of Indians resorted. His

- rapid;

- the night before his attack he

- through a tangled forest of thirty

- and taking the enemy by surprise, captured them all though ten times his number. In like manner did he take Kaskasia and St Louis forts, making prisoners of the English officers and sending them to Virginia.

The French traders and missionaries were the first whites to intermingle among the Indians and gain their friendship. The English having taken possession of
Canada, sent their officers and traders to these posts, believing they were not welcomed either by the French or Indians; but Clark, by his inherent knowledge of mind, soon made friends of both French and Indians by pledging exclusive trade for the French traders, and protection to all the persons of Virginia and Kentucky. Thus having by his thievish accomplishment, more than many officers with an army of ten thousand men could have done, he swore his newly made friends to their allegiance to Virginia and peace with Kentucky. He left a single officer with the aid of the inhabitants to hold the place and prepared for his march to Fort Vincennes.

Before leaving the kindly took the French priests and Indian chiefs by the hand, saying to the chiefs: “We are brothers, and in you I have confidence, and if I hear of the English disturbing your command, I will bring an army to your defence.” and expressing a hope to meet the priests in heaven, he asked for prayer and departed with his little fragment of an army to attack the British strongholds in the West. He first spies ahead, one being the noted Col. Rigo, a Spaniard of Philadelphia, and the other an influential chief, to gain the friendship of the French and Indians in the British forts in advance of the assault. All things being ready
Clark again plunged into the dark and dismal wilderness, and after marching day and night through rain,leet and mud they came to the Wabash, which being out of its banks the low flats were for miles inundated and frozen over with ice an inch thick.

The shivering men already worn down and half starved hailed, and, gazing in each other's faces with feelings of despair, muttered: "Let us go back!" But seeing his commander with his tomahawk cut a club and black his face with powder, some of which he drank, all eyes were on him as he turned his face to his command, and with a voice of determination ordered Col. Bowman to fall in the rear, and push to death any that might refuse to follow him. In he plunged, waist deep and sometimes to the chin, breaking the ice as he went, until he came to shallow water where he halted for the moment to see whether he had lost any of his men. Seeing some of them about to faint, he put the weaker men by the edge of the strongmen for the next five miles, till they came to trees and bushes which afforded some support. They at last, getting on higher ground within hearing of the guns of the Fort, the anticipated enjoyment of fire and rest gave such life and hope to the whole company.
that when Black addressed them, they exclaimed with one voice, "We will take the fort or die in the attempt."

One of Black's spies came to his camp and told him that Col. Hamilton, the British Commander had knowledge of his approach but that the French and Indian inhabitants, six hundred in number, were in sympathy with the Americans. Stop here and think of the wonderful sagacity of Gen. Black. Having already taken three fortresses held by forces outnumbering his own without the loss of a man, we now see he has laid the foundation for the capture of Fort Vincennes. He marched boldly on and with the eye of an eagle scanned the ground, and marching and countermarching behind high ground where his small numbers could not be seen and where one man alone by hiding the flag higher might be thought a full company. He, moreover, placed his sharpshooters behind a hill but close to the port holes of the artillery, so that, as soon as they opened, a shower of balls cut down the gunners, after which not a man could be got to work the guns. Hamilton, seeing this and that the citizens were against him, was paralyzed with alarm of which Black took advantage, and with pretended feelings of humanity ad
pressed him in the language both of a conqueror and a friend, showing his astonishing insight into human nature. He said to the Commanders that he was fully able and determined to storm the place but to save bloodshed and the destruction of property he was willing simply to hold his men prisoners instead of killing them, and to permit him to march out with his side arms, and moreover he would send him and his men under guard to Detroit, but if he should be forced to take the place by assault he would not be responsible for the consequences.

That his army was largely composed of Kentuckians who had come with panic in and fine resolve to recover the scalp of their friends, for which he had paid large prices, and if any of any of them should lose their lives in the attempt, he might expect the most deracinating torture. This singular epistle which Clark knew would touch the feelings of self-preservation soon brought an answer — "Walk in!"

And thus it is seen that Clark's magic power over the minds of men accomplished more, though his force was but little over one hundred men, without any loss whatever, than others by brute force could.
were done with an army of a thousand, and the loss of one half. He now, after rending his British prisoners off, eighty in number, to Fort Pittsburg, organized a Colonial Government, and having a sufficient force, returned to Louisville and built a fort, where he established his head quarter as Commander in Chief of the Northwest. The poor British posts which had furnished the savages with arms and munitions of war, and paid premiums for scalps, being now broken up by our noble defenders, Kentucke felt safe, and the flood of immigration became great. Kentucke's security, however, did not continue, for it was not long till the foe again lurked in every path from foot to foot and house to house, cannon in the care, and murdered all who passed, until Clark, becoming wary in his conflicts with them, determined to invade Ohio and desolate their own homes. His name being as great a charm to his friends as a terror to his enemies, he called for troops and soon had an army by his side awaiting his orders, with which force he defeated the enemy in every pitched battle, and like a tornado swept over their Country.
 Plenty of victory sent the air, and seeing this town on flames, the savages for the first time felt the power of the white man and begged for peace. The conflicts which Clark had with the Indians and British from time to time are too numerous for detail; suffice it to say, he was never defeated even by an enemy of double his number; while the white commanders, contending with the same foes with double their numbers, were defeated with great frequency. At Braddock’s defeat, of the 1200 men engaged, 714 were killed. In St. Clair’s defeat, out of 1400 men, 90 were killed and wounded. Braddock’s officers were eighty-six in number, of whom sixty-three were killed, himself among them. St. Clair had from eighty-six to ninety officers, of whom sixteen were killed and wounded — a record Braddock’s defeat. Harrod’s defeat were generally calamities; and that at Lower Blue Lick even more distressing, where, out of 182 men who went into battle, nearly one-half were killed, seven taken prisoners and tortured in the flames. This latter little army was composed of the first men in Kentucky whose loss was not only heart-rending to their families, but fearful
In all, as all hope for the lives of the few left had departed with the dead, isolated and hopeless in the far-off wilderness, surrounded by friends that sought their lives, what but dread fear could torment them by day and by night? Clark stationed at Logan’s, was their only hope left, and he, when he heard of the defeat, quickly gathered a large force, followed the Indians to their homes, defeated them in every battle, and put their towns, to the great joy of Kentucky.

I will only mention a few more of the many calamitous defeats, both in this and Kentucky, to show the need of men Clark had to contend with and to contrast his command with that of others. The destruction of Col. Estill and his command where Mr. Herling was killed, and the defeat of Capt. Holden at the Blue Licks are but drops of blood in the great sea that was spilt on this once “dark and bloody ground.” I will now indulge in but one more incident, which may be of interest to the reader, to show how the savages tortured their prisoners. When Col. Crawford was defeated by the Indians in Northern Ohio, he, about the only one left alive was, a few days after his capture, put to...
Savages, blacked his face that he might know his impending fate, bound him tight, and kept him long enough to suffer more than death. Then they stripped him naked, and that same twenty loads of powder into his body, and having turned down wood to lively embers, they put him on them and piling brush around him quickly engulfed him in flames. His hair as first burned from his head, his eyes were next burned, all of which he bore with incredible fortitude, uttering only in low and solemn tones, “Ye Lord have mercy upon my soul,” till his tongue was past beyond utterance and his feet (on which he had been around on the coals) were crushed to the bone, then he quietly lay down with his face upon the fire, thereupon an old squaw, with a wooden shovel, pared the embers on his back till life became extinct.

A Knight, the surgeon of Crawford’s Command, as captured with him, and with his own face painted black for execution, witnessed the whole horrid scene. They beat him, as they did Col. Crawford before his execution, almost to a jelly, and often threw the bloody scalps of his friends in his face, and knocking down a fellow-prisoner, a squaw cut off his head.
which was killed about and buried into the ground.

Sir Knight, after great sufferings, was saved. I
myself marched once Crawford's battle ground in
a war of 1812-14, and saw the trees decimated by tho
ells.

Gen. George Rogers Clark never suffered such
fate, nor did one of his Command. He never was
right asleep, but often took his enemy a-napping,
scrubbing as he went, as he often did, through Ohio,
Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, till his name became
terror to the Western tribes. His first arrival in
Kentucky was marvelous. Having made his way
on the Ohio river, lined on either side with villages
at almost daily captured boats and murdered
white families, he landed in a bold and trackless
forest, filled with lurking foe, and alone, without
map or guide traveling over a hundred miles, and
using deep and dangerous streams, he won the
related fortress of Harrodsburg, after which he
was found foremost in the defense of all the inter-
rior forts, and afterwards beyond the border in
the far West in bloody conflicts with fearful odds,
ever victorious. No General ever led an army
with more celebrity and bravery, and his battle cry
The onset was, "Victory or death, honor or disgrace;" he invariably led the way. He had the 
right of Napoleon in strategy, the resource of 
Cæsar in execution, and the wisdom of Scipio Afri-
canus in leading an army into the enemy's com-
pany. His addresses to his men going into battle 
had much to do with his brilliant victories. "We 
men," he would say, "about to engage with a 
 savage and cruel enemy who, if they take you, 
will torture you in the flames, and better a 
thousand times die in battle. But victory being 
better than toil, you can, by a manly and un-
flinching courage gain it, when cowardice and 
confusion will be death to all."

I must be indulged in showing that all 
the dreadful defeats, and many they were, of our 
western Indian warfare arose from the want of 
proper Commanders of which the following, from 
what "Annals of the West" is proof:

He Van Bleeck, who was in the Quartermaster's 
office, on the 4th of November 1791, at daybreak, 
had saddled his horse to return to Fort Washing-
ton, now Cincinnati, Ohio, when a Tremendous
He opened upon the Kentucky Division; but as he knew St. Clair's force to be double that of the enemy, he felt no nervousness till his horse fell dead at his feet, and he saw a friend running to him with a broken arm hanging by his side. Taking his arms, he commenced firing at any Indian whose head he saw watching him from behind a tree, and seeing an enemy running to and fro, he thought they were fighting, but found they were trying to get out without firing a gun.

Seeing himself now alone, he himself saw, and almost every chief passed dead men, and at one place some thirty, greatly officers, lay scalped. He soon overtook an adopted brother, shot through the hips, and next his uncle with a shattered arm, and the ground was literally covered with dead and dying men, and the path of their disgraceful flight was strewn with fire-arms that the Cowards their flight had thrown away. In this battle any of our best officers were slain. The savages with frantic fury rushed into the ranks of the white, and cut down officers before they themselves could be slain, and in this way did Maj. Gen. Blakely lose [his life].

and Marshall's history of Kentucky, says that an Indian actually whipped the scalp from his head while himself being put to death. In this deadly contest great was the slaughter for the want of discipline and the camps being scattered and detached and taken by surprise — a thing that never happened with General Clark. I will add the following from General St. Clair's official report: "I made a hasty fire commences at daybreak, finding the men falling in all directions, I ordered charge with the bayonet by the regulars, which was done with gallantry, but to no purpose. The savages giving way without loss, and pouring in their fire upon the regulars, every charge thinned their ranks until the savages became so furious as to rush upon them, seize the bayonets with their left hands and with their ten fingers cut them down. Every officer in the Second regiment, and Butler's battalion, except three, having fallen, the artillery silenced, every officer except Captain Ford dead, and the horses killed, I ordered a retreat. [The American State Papers] Thus it has been seen that the Indians of Northwestern America have shown themselves in a thousand little fights to be the best soldiers in the world. Washington
Mrs. was a Colonel in Braddock's defeat, and Edwards retreated with a command of his own as often heard to say he would rather fight two Englishmen than one Indian.

The name of General George Rogers Clark is confined to Kentucky or the United States, and reached the ears of Napoleon, whose Minister to the United States, the noted Ducet, conferred on him the office of Generalissimo, with the title of Major General in the armies of France. Clark was selected to lead an army of Kentuckians to besiege New Orleans and hold it in the name of France at war with Spain; but Spain having shortly afterwards ceded Louisiana to France, Mr. Monroe was dispatched to France, and Napoleon, about to engage in a war with England, knowing that her fleet would quickly sail for New Orleans, offered the whole of Louisiana, reaching from the Gulf to the head of the Mississippi for $13,000,000. So Clark's expedition, in which all Kentucky was nearly embarrased, was rendered unnecessary by Spain's cession to France, and France's cession to the United States.

Monuments have been reared in honor of.
delicacies whose lives were spent in feud and
hostility, while those who bore their
chests a hundred times, and swooned themselves out
of hardships and privations to save their
country from ruin, sleep in their graves
forgotten and unembraced by those who now throw
upon their downy beds, unshackled by
Indians' axes, sharp, the sharp crack of
the rifle, and the cry of distress.

The writer lived in those days of sadness and
sorrow when our fate seemed certain either by
a tomahawk or the torturing flames. Distraught
families and forts far apart, many miles
from any help, in the midst of a vast circle,
were surrounded by cruel savages that lurked
every path and crowded around the little
village threatening total destruction to all. At
despair, we had once so willing
and ready as Clark to meet the foe face
and hand to hand, in bloody conflict
thing of daily occurrence, but we had no
means of Clarke's strategic and magic pow
containing and controlling masses. When
The reader knows that our war with Great Brit-
ain commenced in 1776, and that the colonies
beyond the mountains, being themselves hand
sessed, could afford us no aid, he will see
as we were, in a helpless condition,
tangling against fearful odds.
The English immediately and early besieged
Western trading posts in order to put the
Ians upon the frontiers of Pennsylva-
nia, Virginia, and Kentucky, and the red men
of the whites, preferring the strong side, listen-
to the promises of the English to restore
them their homes that Indians had,
violation of the treaty of Fort Stanwix
the possession of. The Iroquois were de-
termined to join the Southern and Western tribes
for the recovery of their common hunting grounds
all, from his warring knowledge of human
men, kept back spies as Kenton and
Ballard on the alert, and finding out that
commander Hamilton of Fort Vincent had
promised the Chiefs that if they could as-
semble 5,000 warriors by the middle of May
would furnish 200 British Soldiers and
artillery to quickly aid Kentucky if
my man remain and child in it, he,
order to slip this plot in the bed and take
us by surprise, not being able to get suffi-
cient force in Kentucky, soon a third
up to Virginia and Pennsylvania and
bounced from these colonies, themselves hard
armed, 175 men. With this force he made
a winter campaign racing in mud and
a heart chill deep, taking Gen. Hamilton's
cycle without losing a man. Thus we
and the lives of the parents and grandparents
many who in Louisville, who bet for the
administrations of Gen. George Rogers Clark would
never have had our existence, and who do
in the despair of fortune and the luxuries of life
no time to visit the grave of one of
the greatest military men of this globe
man who accomplished more by his short
victories than Washington did with the aid of a
brilliant army; or than Jackson did in
a single battle behind his breast-works.
Clark was by nature a Shakespeare in his way, and as he was the father of Kentucky, and aided much in helping the Indians and British from Virginia, the mother of Kentucky, he says, "Honor to whom honor is due."