

# The Effects of Lord Dunmore's War on Tribal Sovereignty

## Placard 4

(Excerpted from Colin G. Calloway's *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (Cambridge Press 1995)

By the eve of the Revolution, Indian people from Quebec and Maine to Georgia and the Floridas were complaining in vain to colonial authorities about trespasses on their land, and about schemes to get it. Delawares, Munsees, and Mahicans warned the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia in December 1771 that the flood of settlers across the mountains was likely to produce disaster: "Unless you can fall upon some method of governing your people who live between the Great Mountains and the Ohio River and who are now very numerous, it will be out of the Indians' power to govern their young men, for we assure you that black clouds begin to gather fast in this country."

The British authorities recognized the justice of the Indians' complaints and identified the roots of the problem, but could do little about it. Frontier people came to believe that the British government and its agents favored Indians and the Indian trade over settlers...When the Revolution broke out, American patriots called it a war for liberty. Most Indian people knew, and the British reminded those who didn't, that it was also a continuation of the struggle about Indian land and who was to get it...Indians and whites alike had long struggled to avert [violence], but by the eve of the Revolution, murder and revenge, not



Hokesqua (also known as Cornstalk), Leader of the Shawnee



How might images like the one above affect people's opinions of Indian battles and Indians themselves?

mediation and accommodation, typified relations.

In 1774, American frontiersmen lured a part of Mingo Indians into their camp, got them drunk, and then killed and scalped them, mutilating the pregnant sister of a Mingo chief known as Logan. The act was the most brutal in a spate of killings along the Ohio that spring. Despite Delaware efforts to avert it, and amid considerable diplomatic scrambling in Indian country, open war exploded between Virginia and the Mingoes and Shawnees. Lord Dunmore's War was both the latest in a series of escalating frontier conflicts and a precursor of the one to come..." (Calloway 23)

Virginia's Governor, John Murray, Fourth Earl of Dunmore, led the British against the Shawnee, Mingoes and Delawares, who were finally defeated at the Battle of Point Pleasant in October of 1774. The tribes signed the Treaty of Camp Charlotte. In the agreement, those tribes allowed non-Indian use of the Ohio River, a return of all their British war captives, and an end to their claims to lands south and east of the Ohio. (u-s-history.com)

Most of North America was still Indian country in 1775. Indian people still dominated most of the continent and walked the streets of colonial towns. Much of colonial life involved Indians; much of colonial war, diplomacy, and commerce revolved around them...the Revolution that erupted in 1775 was bound to affect and involve Indians; but it also ushered in a new era and a new society from which they were to be increasingly excluded...The Revolution did not terminate them overnight, but did produce a new government and society increasingly committed to the notion that Indian country east of the Mississippi should cease to exist. (Calloway 23 – 24)

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### **Be The Expert:**

- 1. Why was violence the most typical response to growing conflicts between Indian tribes and settlers?**
- 2. Why would the newly formed United States want to get rid of Indians and end their tribal sovereignty?**
- 3. If you were an Indian leader during this time, who would you side with? The British or Americans? Why?**

Additional Sources:

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1035.html>