CHAPTER III.

THE INDIAN OCCUPATION.

THERE is nothing found either in written history or in tradition to show that the section of country which now forms the county of Fayette was ever the permanent home of any considerable number of the aboriginal people whom we know as Indians, the successors of the mysterious mound-builders.

When the first white traders (who preceded the earliest actual settlers by several years) came into this region, they found it partially occupied by roving Indian bands, who had here a few temporary villages, or more properly camps, but whose principal permanent settlements were within a few miles of the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, both above and below that point. These were composed of the Delaware and Shawanese[1] tribes and some colonized bands of Iroquois, or "Mingoes," as they were commonly called, who represented the powerful Six Nations of New York. These last named were recognized as the real owners of the lands on the upper Ohio, the Allegheny, and the Monongahela Rivers, and it was only by their permission[2] that the Delawares and Shawanese were allowed to occupy the

its vicinity, he at last assigned it to the swine that generally, as he said, attended the Spanish in those days, it being, in his opinion, very necessary in order to prevent them from becoming estrays and to protect them from the depredations of the Indians.

"Lewis Dennie, a Frenchman, aged upwards of seventy, and who had been settled and married among the Confederates (Six Nations) for more than half a century, told me in 1810 that, according to the traditions of the ancient Indians, these forts were erected by an army of Spaniards, who were the first Europeans ever seen by them (the French next, then the Dutch, and finally the English); that this army first appeared at Oswego in great force, and penetrated through the interior of the country searching for the precious metals; that they continued there two years and then went down the Ohio." After giving several reasons why this account was to be considered unworthy of belief, Mr. Clinton continued: "It is equally clear that they were not the work of the Indians. Until the Senecas, who are renowned for their national vanity, had seen the attention of the Americans attracted to these erections, and had invented the fabulous account of which I have spoken, the Indians of the present day did not pretend to know anything about the origin of these works. They were beyond the reach of all their traditions, and were lost in the abyss of unexplored antiquity."

[1] Zeisberger, the Moravian, says, "The Shawanos, a warlike people, lived in Florida, but having been subdued in war by the Moshkos, they left their land and moved to Susquehanna, and from one place to another. Meeting a strong party of Delawares, and relating to them their forlorn condition, they took them into their protection as *grandchildren;* the Shawanos called the Delaware nation their *grandfather.* They lived thereupon in the Forks of the Delaware, and settled for a time in Wyoming. When they had increased again they removed by degrees to the Allegheny." When they came from the East to the Ohio, they located at and near Montour's Island, below the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela. The Delawares came with them to the West, both tribes having been ordered away from the valleys of the Delaware and Susquehanna by the Iroquois, whom they were compelled by conquest to recognize as their masters.

[2] The fact that the Six Nations were the acknowledged owners of this region of country, and that the Shawanese and Delawares were here only on sufferance, seems clear. At the treaty held with the Indians at Fort Pitt, in May, 1768, a Shawanese chief complained bitterly to the English of their encroachments, and said, "We desired you to destroy your forts. . . . We also desired you not to go down the river." In the next day's council, Guyasutha, a chief of the Six Nations, rose, with a copy of the treaty of 1764, and said, "By this treaty you had a right to build forts and trading-houses where you pleased, and to travel the road of peace from the sun rising to the sun setting. At that treaty the Delawares and Shawanese were with me and they know all this well; and they should never have spoken to you as they did yesterday." Soon after, the Shawanese chief, Kissinaughta, rose and said, apologetically, to the English, "You desired us to speak from our hearts and tell you what gave us uneasiness of mind, and we did so. We are very sorry we should have said anything to give offense, and we acknowledge we were in the wrong."

In the same year (1768), when the Pennsylvania commissioners, Allen and Shippen, proposed to the Indians to send a deputation of chiefs with the white messengers, Frazer and Thompson, to warn off the white settlers who had located without authority on the Monongahela River and Redstone Creek, in what is now Fayette County, the "White Mingo" (whose "Castle" was on the west side of the Allegheny, a few miles above its mouth) and three other chiefs of the Six Nations were selected to go on that mission, but no notice was taken of the Delaware or Shawanese chiefs in the matter, which shows clearly enough that these two tribes were not regarded as having any ownership in the lands.

And it is related by George Croghan, in his account of a treaty council held with the Six Nations at Logstown, on the Ohio, below Pittsburgh, in 1751, that "A Dunkard from Virginia came to town and requested leave to settle on the Yo-yo-gaine [Youghiogheny] River, a branch of the Ohio. He was told that he must apply to the Onondaga Council and be recommended by the Governor of Pennsylvania." The Onondaga Council was held on a hill near the present site of Syracuse, N. Y., and the central headquarters of the Six Nations.

Another fact that shows the Six Nations to have been the recognized owners of this region of country is that when the surveyors were about to extend the Mason and Dixon line westward, in 1767, the proprietaries asked, not of the Delawares and Shawanese but of the Iroquois (Six Nations) permission to do so. This permission was given by their chiefs, who also sent several of their warriors to accompany the surveying party. Their presence afforded to the white men the desired protection, and the Shawanese and Delawares dared not offer any molestation. But after the Iroquois escort left (as they did at a point on the Maryland line) the other Indians became, in the absence of their masters, so defiant and threatening that the surveyers were compelled to abandon the running of the line west of Dunkard Creek.

Finally, it was not from the Delawares and Shawanese but from the Six Nations that the Penns purchased this territory by the treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768.

hunting-grounds extending from the head of the Ohio eastward to the Alleghenies. Still they always boldly claimed these lands as their own, except when they were confronted and rebuked by the chiefs of the Six Nations. At a conference held with the Indians at Fort Pitt in 1768, "the Beaver," a chief speaking in behalf of the Delawares and Mohicans, said, "Brethren, the country lying between this river and the Allegheny Mountain has always been our hunting-ground, and the white people who have scattered themselves over it have by their hunting deprived us of the game which we look upon ourselves to have the only right to. . . ." And it is certain that, though the Iroquois were the owners of these hunting-grounds, they were occupied almost exclusively by the Delawares and Shawanese. Washington, in his journal of a trip which he made down the Ohio from the mouth of the Allegheny in 1770, says, "The Indians who reside upon the Ohio, the upper part of it at least, are composed of Shawanese, Delawares, and some of the Mingoes. . . ." And in the journal of his mission to the French posts on the Allegheny, seventeen years before, he said, "About two miles from this (he then being at the mouth of the Allegheny), on the south side of the river (Ohio), at the place where the Ohio Company intended to lay off their fort, lives Shingiss, king of the Delawares."[1] The exact point where this "king" was located is said to have been at the mouth of Chartiers Creek, and the principal settlements of his people were clustered around the head of the Ohio. From here and from the neighboring settlements of the Shawanese went forth from time to time the hunting-parties of these tribes, which formed the principal part of the Indian population of the territory of the present county of Fayette.

These Indians had, as has already been remarked, but very few settlements east of the Monongahela, and most of those they had were more of the nature of temporary camps than of permanent villages. Judge Veech, in his "Monongahela of Old," mentions those which he knew of as existing within the limits of Fayette County, as follows: "Our territory (Fayette County) having been an Indian hunting-ground, had within it but few Indian towns or villages, and these of no great magnitude or celebrity. There was one on the farm of James Ewing, near the southern corner of Redstone and the line between German and Luzerne townships, close to a fine limestone spring. Near it, on a ridge, were many Indian graves. Another was near where Abram Brown lived, about four miles west of Uniontown. There was also one on the land of John M. Austin, formerly Samuel Stevens', near Sock. The only one we know of north of the Youghiogheny was on the Strickler land, eastward of the Broad Ford."

[1] King Shingiss, however, was inferior in rank and power to Tanacharison, the Half-King, who was a sachem of the Six Nations, residing near the head of the Ohio.

There was also an Indian village on the Monongahela, at the mouth of Catt's Run, and it is said that this village was at one time the home of the chief Cornstalk, who commanded the Indian forces at the battle of Point Pleasant, Va., in 1774.

On the Monongahela, at the mouth of Dunlap's Creek, where the town of Brownsville now stands, was the residence of old Nemacolin, who, as it appears, was a chief, but with very few, if any, warriors under him, though it is not unlikely that he had had a respectable following in the earlier years, before the whites found him here. It was this Indian who guided Col. Thomas Cresap across the Alleghenies, in the first journey which he made to the West from Old Town, Md., for the Ohio Company in 1749. The route which they then pursued was known for many years as "Nemacolin's path." Later in his life this Indian removed from the Monongahela and located on the Ohio River. It is believed that the place to which he removed was the island now known as Blennerhassett's Island, in the Ohio, below Parkersburg, W. Va.; the reason for this belief being that there is found, in Gen. Richard Butler's journal of a trip down that river in 1785, with Col. James Monroe (afterwards President of the United States), to treat with the Miami Indians, mention of their passing, in the river between the mouths of the Little Kanawha and Hocking, an island called "Nemacolin's Island." This was, without much doubt, the later residence of the old chief of that name.

An old Indian named Bald Eagle, who had been a somewhat noted warrior (but not a chief) of the Delaware tribe, had his home somewhere on the Upper Monongahela, probably at the village at the mouth of Catt's Run, but whether there or higher up the river near Morgantown is not certainly known. He was a very harmless and peaceable man and friendly to the settlers, yet he was killed without cause about 1765, and the cold-blooded murder was charged by the Indians upon white men. Of the Bald Eagle and the circumstances of his death, Mr. Veech says, "He was on intimate terms with the early settlers, with whom he hunted, fished, and visited. He was well known along our Monongahela border, up and down which he frequently passed in his canoe. Somewhere up the river, probably about the mouth of Cheat, he was killed, by whom or on what pretense is unknown.[2] His dead body, placed upright in his canoe, with a piece of corn-bread in his clinched teeth, was set adrift in the river. The canoe came ashore at Prov-

[2] Withers, in his "Chronicles of Border Warfare," states the case differently, and gives the names of the murderers. He says, "The Bald Eagle was an Indian of notoriety, not only among his own nation, but also with the inhabitants of the Northwestern frontier, with whom he was in the habit of associating and hunting. In one of his visits among them he was discovered alone by Jacob Scott, William Hacker, and Elijah Runner, who, reckless of the consequences, murdered him, solely to gratify a most wanton thirst for Indian blood. After the commission of this most outrageous enormity, they seated him in the stern of a canoe, with a piece of journey-cake thrust into his mouth, and set him afloat in the Monongahela."

ance's Bottom, where the familiar old Indian was at once recognized by the wife of William Yard Provance, who wondered he did not leave his canoe. On close observation she found he was dead. She had him decently buried on the Fayette shore, near the early residence of Robert McClean, at what was known as McClean's Ford. This murder was regarded by both whites and Indians as a great outrage, and the latter made it a prominent item in their list of grievances."

A number of Indian paths or trails traversed this county in various directions. The principal one of these was the great war-path over which the Senecas and other tribes of the Six Nations traveled from their homes in the State of New York on their forays against Cherokees and other Southern tribes in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Tennessee. This was known as the Cherokee or Catawba Trail. Passing from the "Genesee country" of Western New York, down the valley of the Allegheny, it left that river in the present county of Armstrong, Pa., and traversing Westmoreland, entered the territory of Fayette near its northeastern extremity, crossing Jacob's Creek at the mouth of Bushy Run. From there its route was southwestwardly, passing near the present village of Pennsville to the Youghiogheny River, which it crossed just below the mouth of Opossum Run;[1] thence up that small stream for some distance, and then on, by way of Mount Braddock, to Redstone Creek, at the point where Uniontown now stands. From there it passed in a general southwesterly direction, through the present townships of South Union, Georges, and Spring Hill; and crossing Cheat River at the mouth of Grassy Run, passed out of the county southward into Virginia, on its route to the Holston River and the Carolinas. From this main trail, at a point a little south of Georges Creek, in Fayette County, there struck off a tributary path known as the Warrior Branch,[2] which passed thence across the Cheat and Monongahela Rivers, and up the valley of Dunkard Creek into Virginia. It was at this trail, near the second crossing of Dunkard Creek, that the surveyors who were running the extension of the Mason and Dixon line, in October, 1767, were compelled to stop their work, on account of the threats of the Delaware and Shawanese warriors, and their positive refusal to allow the party to proceed farther west; and it was not until fifteen years later that the line was run beyond this trail.

An Indian path much used by the natives was one which led from the "Forks of the Ohio" (now Pittsburgh) to the Potomac River at the mouth of Wills' Creek (where Cumberland, Md., now stands). This was known as "Nemacolin's Path" or trail, though it was doubtless traveled by Indian parties many years, and perhaps ages, before the birth of the old Delaware whose name it bore.[3] This trail, starting from the head of the Ohio, joined the Cherokee trail in Westmoreland County, and from the point of junction the two trails were nearly identical as far south as Mount Braddock, at which point Nemacolin's trail left the other, and took a southeasterly course, by way of the Great Meadows, in the present township of Wharton, the Great Crossings of the Youghiogheny, near the southeast corner of Fayette County; thence it crossed the southwestern corner of Somerset County into Maryland. There were numerous other trails traversing the county of Fayette, but none of them as important or as much traveled as those above mentioned.

These trails were the highways of the Indians,—the thoroughfares over which they journeyed on their business of the chase or of war, just as white people pursue their travel and traffic over their graded roads. "An erroneous impression obtains among many at the present day," says Judge Veech, "that the Indian, in traveling the interminable forests which once covered our towns and fields, roamed at random, like a modern afternoon hunter, by no fixed paths, or that he was guided in his long journeyings solely by the sun and stars, or by the courses of the streams and mountains. And true it is that these untutored sons of the woods were considerable astronomers and geographers, and relied much upon these unerring guide-marks of nature. Even in the most starless night they could determine their course by feeling the bark of the oak-trees, which is always smoothest on the south side, and roughest on the north. But still they had their trails or paths, as distinctly marked as are our county and State roads, and often better located. The white traders adopted them, and often stole their names, to be in turn surrendered to the leader of some Anglo-Saxon army, and finally obliterated by some costly highway of travel and commerce. They are

[1] The place where this trail crossed the Youghiogheny was identical with that where Gen. Braddock crossed his army, on his march towards Fort Du Quesne, in 1755.

[2] Judge Veech describes the route of this trail (proceeding northward) as follows: "A tributary trail called the Warrior Branch, coming from Tennessee, through Kentucky and Southern Ohio, came up Fish Creek and down Dunkard, crossing Cheat River at McFarland's. It ran out a junction with the chief trail, intersecting it at William Gans' sugar-camp (between Morris' Cross-Roads and Georges Creek, in Spring Hill township), but it kept on by Crow's Mill, James Robinson's, and the old gun factory (in Nicholson township) and thence towards the mouth of Redstone; intersecting the old Redstone trail from the top of Laurel Hill, near Jackson's, or Grace Church, on the National road."

[3] It received this name from the fact that when the old "Ohio Company" was preparing to go into the Indian trade at the head of the Ohio, in the year 1749, one of the principal agents of that company—Col. Thomas Cresap, of Old Town, Md.—employed the Indian Nemacolin (who lived, as before mentioned, at the mouth of Dunlap's Creek, on the Monongahela) to guide him over the best route for a pack-horse path from the Potomac to the Indian villages on the Ohio, a short distance below the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela. The old Indian pointed out the path in question as being the most feasible route, and it was adopted. In 1754, Washington followed its line with his troops as far north and west as Gist's plantation, in Fayette County; and in 1755, Gen. Braddock made it, with few variations, his route of march from Fort Cumberland to Gist's, and thence northwardly to near the point in Westmoreland County where he first crossed the Monongahela.

now almost wholly effaced and forgotten. Hundreds travel along or plow across them, unconscious that they are in the footsteps of the red man."

The Indian history connected with the annals of Fayette County is very meagre. During the military operations of the years 1754 and 1755, when the opposing forces of England and France marched to and fro over the hills and through the vales of this county, they were accompanied on both sides by Indian allies, who did their share of the work of slaughter, as will be narrated in the history of those campaigns, given in succeeding pages. After the French and their Indian allies had expelled the English power from the region west of the Alleghenies, in 1755, nearly all the Indians of the Allegheny and Monongahela Valleys sided with the victorious French; but many years elapsed from that time before there were any white settlers here to be molested, and when they did come to make their homes here they suffered very little from such outrages as were constantly committed by the savages upon the inhabitants west of the Monongahela. This was doubtless largely due to the fact that the red men regarded the people east of that river as Pennsylvanians, with whom they were on comparatively friendly terms; while those west of the same stream were considered by them to be Virginians, against whom they held feelings of especial hatred and malignity. With the exception of the murder of two men on Burnt Cabin Run,[1] and the taking of some prisoners south of Georges Creek, the inhabitants of the territory that is now Fayette County were entirely exempt from the savage incursions and barbarities with which the people living between them and the Ohio River were so often visited during the thirty years of Indian warfare and raidings which preceded Gen. Anthony Wayne's decisive victory on the Maumee, in August, 1794.

[1] The circumstances attending this Indian outrage are thus narrated by Judge Veech: "This case, as related by Joseph Mendenhall, an old soldier and settler at the place known as Mendenhall's Dam, in Menallen township, was thus: About three and a half miles west of Uniontown, on the south side of the State or Heaton road, which leads from the poor-house through New Salem, etc., and within five or six rods of the road, on land now (1869) of Joshua Woodward, are the remains of an old clearing of about one-fourth of an acre, and within it the remains of an old chimney. Two or three rods southeastward is a small spring, the drain of which leads off westward into the 'Burnt Cabin fork' of Dunlap's or Nemacolin's Creek; and still farther south, some four or five rods, is the old trail or path called Dunlap's road. The story is that in very early times—perhaps about 1767—two men came over the mountains by this path to hunt, etc., and began an improvement at this clearing, and put up a small cabin upon it. While asleep in their cabin, some Indians came to it and shot them, and then set fire to the cabin. Their names are unknown. So far as known, this is the only case of the kind that ever occurred within our county limits."

[2] It was supposed at that time that Penn's Western Boundary would not fall to the westward of the Laurel Hill.