

= Crawford expedition =

The Crawford expedition , also known as the Sandusky expedition and Crawford 's Defeat , was a 1782 campaign on the western front of the American Revolutionary War , and one of the final operations of the conflict . Led by Colonel William Crawford , the campaign 's goal was to destroy enemy American Indian towns along the Sandusky River in the Ohio Country , with the hope of ending Indian attacks on American settlers . The expedition was one in a long series of raids against enemy settlements which both sides had conducted throughout the war .

Crawford led about 500 volunteer militiamen , mostly from Pennsylvania , deep into American Indian territory , with the intention of surprising the Indians . The Indians and their British allies from Detroit had already learned of the expedition , however , and gathered a force to oppose the Americans . After a day of indecisive fighting near the Sandusky towns , the Americans found themselves surrounded and attempted to retreat . The retreat turned into a rout , but most of the Americans managed to find their way back to Pennsylvania . About 70 Americans were killed ; Indian and British losses were minimal .

During the retreat , Crawford and an unknown number of his men were captured . The Indians executed many of these captives in retaliation for the Gnadenhutten massacre that occurred earlier in the year , in which about 100 peaceful Indians were murdered by Pennsylvanian militiamen . Crawford 's execution was particularly brutal : he was tortured for at least two hours before being burned at the stake . His execution was widely publicized in the United States , worsening the already @-@ strained relationship between Native Americans and European Americans .

= = Background = =

When the American Revolutionary War began in 1775 , the Ohio River marked a tenuous border between the American colonies and the American Indians of the Ohio Country . Ohio Indians ? Shawnees , Mingos , Delawares , and Wyandots ? were divided over how to respond to the war . Some Indian leaders urged neutrality , while others entered the war because they saw it as an opportunity to halt the expansion of the American colonies and to regain lands previously lost to the colonists .

The border war escalated in 1777 after British officials in Detroit began recruiting and arming Indian war parties to raid the frontier American settlements . An unknown number of American settlers in present Kentucky , West Virginia , and Pennsylvania were killed during these raids . The intensity of the conflict increased in November 1777 , after enraged American militiamen murdered Cornstalk , the leading advocate of Shawnee neutrality . Despite the violence , many Ohio Indians still hoped to stay out of the war , which proved difficult because they were located directly between the British in Detroit and the Americans along the Ohio River .

In February 1778 , the Americans launched their first expedition into the Ohio Country in an attempt to neutralize British activity in the region . General Edward Hand led 500 Pennsylvania militiamen on a surprise winter march from Fort Pitt towards the Cuyahoga River , where the British stored military supplies which were distributed to Indian raiding parties . However , adverse weather conditions prevented the expedition from reaching its objective . On the return march , some of Hand 's men attacked peaceful Delaware Indians , killing one man and a few women and children , including relatives of the Delaware chief Captain Pipe . Because only non @-@ combatants had been killed , the expedition became derisively known as the " squaw campaign " .

Despite the attack on his family , Captain Pipe said that he would not seek vengeance . Instead , in September 1778 , he was one of the signers of the Treaty of Fort Pitt between the Delawares and the United States . Americans hoped this agreement with the Delawares would enable American soldiers to pass through Delaware territory and attack Detroit , but the alliance deteriorated after the death of White Eyes , the Delaware chief who had negotiated the treaty . Eventually , Captain Pipe turned against the Americans and moved his followers west to the Sandusky River , where he received support from the British in Detroit .

Over the next several years , Americans and Indians launched raids against each other , usually

targeting settlements . In 1780 , hundreds of Kentucky settlers were killed or captured in a British @-@ Indian expedition into Kentucky . George Rogers Clark of Virginia responded in August 1780 by leading an expedition that destroyed two Shawnee towns along the Mad River , but did little damage to the Indian war effort . As most of the Delawares had by then become pro @-@ British , American Colonel Daniel Brodhead led an expedition into the Ohio Country in April 1781 , and destroyed the Delaware town of Coshocton . Clark then recruited men for an expedition against Detroit in the summer of 1781 , but Indians decisively defeated one hundred of his volunteers along the Ohio River , effectively ending his campaign . Survivors fled to the militant towns on the Sandusky River .

Several villages of Christian Delawares lay between the combatants on the Sandusky River and the Americans at Fort Pitt . The villages were administered by the Moravian missionaries David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder . Although pacifists , the missionaries favored the American cause and kept American officials at Fort Pitt informed about hostile British and Indian activity . In September 1781 , to prevent further communication between the missionaries and the American military , hostile Wyandots and Delawares from Sandusky forcibly removed the missionaries and their converts to a new village ( Captive Town ) on the Sandusky River .

In March 1782 , 160 Pennsylvania militiamen under Lieutenant Colonel David Williamson rode into the Ohio Country , hoping to find the warriors who were responsible for raids against Pennsylvania settlers . Enraged by the gruesome murder by Indians of a white woman and her baby , Williamson 's men detained about 100 Christian Delawares at the village of Gnadenhütten . The Christian Delawares ( mostly women and children ) had returned to Gnadenhütten from Captive Town in order to harvest the crops they had been forced to leave behind . Accusing the Christian Indians of having aided hostile raiding parties , the Pennsylvanians murdered them all by hammer blows to the head . The Gnadenhutten massacre , as it came to be called , would have serious repercussions for the next American expedition into the Ohio Country .

= = Planning the expedition = =

In September 1781 , General William Irvine was appointed commander of the Western Department of the Continental Army , which was headquartered at Fort Pitt . Although a major British army under Lord Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown in October 1781 , virtually ending the war in the east , the conflict on the western frontier continued . Irvine quickly learned that the Americans living on the frontier wanted the army to launch an expedition against Detroit to end ongoing British support for the American Indian war parties . Irvine investigated , then wrote to George Washington , the American commander @-@ in @-@ chief , on December 2 , 1781 :

It is , I believe , universally agreed that the only way to keep Indians from harassing the country is to visit them . But we find , by experience , that burning their empty towns has not the desired effect . They can soon build others . They must be followed up and beaten , or the British , whom they draw their support from , totally driven out of their country . I believe if Detroit was demolished , it would be a good step toward giving some , at least , temporary ease to this country .

Washington agreed with Irvine 's assessment that Detroit had to be captured or destroyed in order to end the war in the west . In February 1782 , Irvine sent Washington a detailed plan for an offensive . Irvine estimated that with 2 @,@ 000 men , five cannons , and a supply caravan , he could to capture Detroit . Washington replied that the bankrupt U.S. Congress would be unable to finance the campaign , writing that " offensive operations , except upon a small scale , can not just now be brought into contemplation . "

With no resources available from either Congress or the Continental Army , Irvine gave permission for volunteers to organize their own offensive . Detroit was too far and too strong for a small @-@ scale operation , but militiamen such as David Williamson believed that an expedition against the American Indian towns on the Sandusky River was feasible . It was to be a low @-@ budget campaign . Each volunteer had to provide at his expense a horse , rifle , ammunition , rations , and other equipment . Their only payment would be an exemption from two months of militia duty , plus whatever plunder might be taken from the Indians . Because of ongoing Indian raids ? the wife and

children of a Baptist minister were killed and scalped in western Pennsylvania on May 12 , 1782 ? there was no shortage of men willing to volunteer .

Because of Washington 's reservations , Irvine believed he was not authorized to lead the expedition himself . However , he did what he could to influence the planning of the campaign . Irvine wrote detailed instructions for the yet to be chosen commander of the volunteers :

The object of your command is , to destroy with fire and sword ( if practicable ) the Indian town and settlement at Sandusky , by which we hope to give ease and safety to the inhabitants of this country ; but , if impracticable , then you will doubtless perform such other services in your power as will , in their consequences , have a tendency to answer this great end .

= = Organizing the expedition = =

On May 20 , 1782 , the volunteers began gathering at the rendezvous point at Mingo Bottom ( present Mingo Junction , Ohio ) , on the Indian side of the Ohio River . They were mostly young men of Irish and Scots @-@ Irish ancestry , and came primarily from Washington and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania . Many were Continental Army veterans . The exact number of men who took part in the expedition is unknown . An officer wrote to General Irvine on May 24 that there were 480 volunteers , although additional men may have subsequently joined the group , bringing the total to more than 500 . Given the daunting nature of the task ahead of them , many of the volunteers made out their " last wills and testaments " before leaving .

Because this was a volunteer expedition and not a regular army operation , the men elected their officers . The candidates for the top position were David Williamson , the militia colonel who had commanded the Gnadenhütten expedition , and William Crawford , a retired Continental Army colonel . Crawford , a friend and land agent of George Washington , was an experienced soldier and frontiersman . He was a veteran of these kinds of operations , having destroyed two Mingo villages during Dunmore 's War in 1774 . He had also taken part in the failed " squaw campaign " .

Fifty @-@ year @-@ old Crawford had been reluctant to volunteer , but he did so at the request of General Irvine . Williamson , although popular with the militia , was in disfavor with regular army officers such as Irvine because he had allowed the Gnadenhütten massacre . Hoping to avoid a repetition , Irvine made it known that he favored Crawford 's election as commander . The election , which was acrimonious , ended in a close vote : Crawford received 235 votes to Williamson 's 230 . Colonel Crawford took command , and Williamson became second @-@ in @-@ command with the rank of major . The other majors included John B. McClelland , Thomas Gaddis , and either James Brenton or Joseph Brinton .

At Crawford 's request , Irvine allowed Dr. John Knight , a Continental Army officer , to accompany the expedition as surgeon . Another volunteer from Irvine 's staff was a foreigner with an aristocratic bearing who called himself " John Rose " . Rose asked to serve as Crawford 's aide @-@ de @-@ camp . Unknown even to General Irvine until several years later , " Rose " was actually Baron Gustave Rosenthal , a Baltic German nobleman from the Russian empire who had fled to America after killing a man in a duel . Rosenthal is the only Russian known to have fought on the American side of in the Revolutionary War .

= = Journey to the Sandusky = =

Crawford 's volunteers left Mingo Bottom on May 25 , 1782 , carrying provisions for 30 days . In planning the operation , General Irvine had estimated the 175 @-@ mile ( 282 km ) journey to Sandusky would take seven days . The campaign began with high spirits . Some volunteers boasted they intended " to exterminate the whole Wiandott Tribe . "

As was often the case with militia , who were poorly trained amateur soldiers , there was difficulty maintaining military discipline . The men wasted their rations , and often fired their muskets at wild game , despite orders to the contrary . They were slow to break camp in the mornings , and often failed to take their turn at guard duty . Crawford also proved to be a less capable leader than expected . Rose wrote that Crawford in councils " speaks incoherent , proposes matters confusedly ,

and is incapable of persuading people into his opinion . " The expedition often halted as the commanders debated what to do next . Some volunteers lost heart and deserted .

The journey across the Ohio Country was mostly through woods . The volunteers initially marched in four columns , but the thick underbrush compelled them to form just two . On June 3 , Crawford 's men emerged into the open country of the Sandusky Plains , a prairie region just below of the Sandusky River . The following day , they reached Upper Sandusky , the Wyandot village where they expected to find the enemy . However , they discovered it had been abandoned . Unknown to the Americans , the Wyandots had recently relocated their town eight miles ( 13 km ) to the north . The new Upper Sandusky , also called the " Half King 's Town " , was near present @-@ day Upper Sandusky , Ohio ) and close to Captain Pipe 's town ( near present @-@ day Carey , Ohio ) . The Americans were unaware that Pipe 's town was nearby .

Crawford 's officers held a council of war . Some argued the abandoned village proved that the Indians knew about the expedition and were concentrating their forces elsewhere . Others expressed the desire to call off the expedition and return home immediately . Williamson asked for permission to take 50 men and burn the abandoned village , but Crawford refused as he did not wish to divide his forces . The council decided to continue the march for the rest of the day , but then to go no further . As the column halted for lunch , John Rose was sent north with a scouting party . Soon , two men returned to report that the scouts were skirmishing with a large force of Indians which was advancing towards the Americans .

= = British and Indian preparations = =

While planning the expedition , General Irvine had advised Crawford that , " Your best chance of success will be , if possible , to effect a surprise " against Sandusky . The British and Indians , however , learned about the expedition even before Crawford 's army had left Mingo Bottom . Thanks to information from a captured American soldier , on April 8 the notorious British agent Simon Girty relayed to Detroit an accurate report of Crawford 's plans .

Officials of the British Indian Department in Detroit had accordingly prepared for action . In command at Detroit was Major Arent Schuyler DePeyster , responsible to Sir Frederick Haldimand , the Governor General of British North America . DePeyster used agents such as Girty , Alexander McKee , and Matthew Elliott , who all had close relations with American Indians , to coordinate British and Indian military actions in the Ohio County . In a council at Detroit on May 15 , DePeyster and McKee told a gathering of Indian leaders about the Sandusky expedition and advised them to " be ready to meet them in a great body and repulse them . " McKee was sent to the Shawnee villages in the Great Miami River valley to recruit warriors to repel the American invasion . Captain William Caldwell was dispatched to Sandusky with a company of mounted Butler 's Rangers , as well as a number of Indians from the Detroit area led by Matthew Elliott .

Indian scouts had spied on the expedition from the beginning . As soon as Crawford 's army moved into the Ohio Country , the warning was sent to Sandusky . As the Americans approached , women and children from the Wyandot and Delaware towns were hidden in nearby ravines , while British fur traders packed their goods and hurried out of town . On June 4 , Delawares under Captain Pipe and Wyandots under Dunquat , the " Half King " , along with some Mingos , joined forces to oppose the Americans . The size of the combined Delaware , Wyandot , and Mingo force has been estimated at anywhere from 200 to 500 . British reinforcements were nearby , but Shawnees from the south were not expected to arrive until the next day . When the American scouts appeared , Pipe 's Delawares pursued them , while the Wyandots temporarily held back .

= = Battle of Sandusky = =

= = June 4 : " Battle Island " = =

The first skirmishing of the Crawford expedition began at about 2 p.m. on June 4 , 1782 . The scout

party led by John Rose encountered Captain Pipe 's Delawares on the Sandusky Plains and conducted a fighting retreat to a grove of trees where they had stored their supplies . The scouts were in danger of being overrun , but were soon reinforced by the main body of Crawford 's army . Crawford ordered the men to dismount and drive the Indians out of the woods . After intense fighting , the Americans gained possession of the grove , later known as " Battle Island " .

The skirmish became a full @-@ scale battle by 4 : 00 p.m. After the Americans drove Captain Pipe 's Delawares out of the woods and onto to prairie , the Delawares were reinforced by Dunquat 's Wyandots . Elliott also arrived on the scene and coordinated the actions of the Delawares and the Wyandots . Pipe 's Delawares skillfully outflanked the American position and then attacked their rear . A few Indians crept close to the American lines in the tall prairie grass . The Americans responded by climbing trees to get a better shot at them . Gunsmoke filled the air , making it difficult to see . After three and a half hours of incessant firing , the Indians gradually broke off the attack with the approach of nightfall . Both sides slept with arms at the ready , and surrounded their positions with large fires to prevent surprise night attacks .

In the first day of fighting , the Americans lost 5 killed men and 19 wounded . The British and Indians suffered 5 killed and 11 wounded . The American volunteers scalped several of the Indian dead , while the Indians stripped the clothing from dead Americans and scalped at least one . Fifteen Pennsylvanians deserted during the night and reached home to report Crawford 's army had been " cut to pieces . "

= = = June 5 : Reinforcements = = =

Firing began early on the morning of June 5 . The Indians did not close , but remained at a distance of two or three hundred yards . Such long range firing with smooth bore muskets caused little loss to either side . The Americans thought that the Indians held back because they had suffered heavy losses on the previous day . In fact , the Indians were buying time , waiting for reinforcements to arrive . Crawford decided to hold his position trees and make a surprise attack on the Indians after nightfall . At this point , he was still confident of success , although his men were low on ammunition and water . Simon Girty , the British agent and interpreter , rode up with a white flag and called for the Americans to surrender , which was refused .

That afternoon , the Americans finally noticed that about 100 British rangers were fighting alongside the Indians . Unaware that the expedition had been watched from the beginning , the Americans were surprised that British troops from Detroit had been able to join in the battle on such short notice . While the Americans were discussing this , Alexander McKee arrived with about 140 Shawnees under the leadership of Blacksnake , who took up a position to Crawford 's south , effectively surrounding the Americans . The Shawnees repeatedly fired their muskets into the air , a ceremonial show of strength known as a feu de joie ( " fire of joy " ) , which shook American morale . Recalled Rose , the feu de joie " completed the Business with us . " With so many enemies gathering around them , the Americans decided to retreat after dark rather than make a stand . The dead were buried , and fires were burned over the graves to prevent their discovery and desecration . The severely wounded were placed on biers in preparation for the withdrawal .

That night the Americans began to withdraw silently from the battlefield . Indian sentries detected the movement and attacked , creating confusion . Many volunteers became lost in the dark , separating into small groups . Crawford became concerned about his family members ? his son John , his son @-@ in @-@ law William Harrison , and his nephew , also named William Crawford . With Dr Knight , Crawford remained near the battlefield as his men passed , calling for his missing relatives and not finding them . Crawford became angry when he realized the militia , despite his orders , had left some of the wounded behind . After all the men had passed , Crawford and Knight , with two others , finally set off , but were unable to find the main body of men .

= = = June 6 : Battle of the Olentangy = = =

When the sun rose on June 6 , about 300 Americans had reached the abandoned Wyandot town .

Because Colonel Crawford was missing , Williamson assumed command . Fortunately for the Americans , the pursuit of the retreating army was disorganized because Caldwell , overall commander of the British and Indian forces , had been wounded in both legs . As the retreat continued , a force of Indians finally caught up with the main body of Americans on the eastern edge of the Sandusky Plains , near a branch of the Olentangy River . Some Americans fled as the attack began , while others milled around in confusion . However , Williamson made a stand with a small group of volunteers and drove off the Indians after an hour of fighting . Three Americans were killed and eight more wounded in the " Battle of the Olentangy " . Indian losses are unknown .

The Americans buried their dead and resumed the retreat , the Indians and British rangers pursuing and firing occasionally from at long range . Williamson and Rose kept most of the men together by warning them that an orderly retreat was their only chance to get home alive . The Americans fell back more than 30 miles ( 48 km ) , some on foot , before making camp . The next day , two American stragglers were captured and presumably killed before the Indians and rangers finally abandoned the chase . The main body of Americans reached Mingo Bottom on June 13 . Many stragglers arrived in small groups for several days more . In all , about 70 Americans never returned from the expedition .

= = Fates of the captives = =

While Williamson and Rose were retreating with the main body of men , Crawford , Knight , and four other stragglers were traveling south along the Sandusky River in present @-@ day Crawford County , Ohio . On June 7 , they came upon a party of Delawares about 28 miles ( 45 km ) east of the battlefield . Knight raised his gun , but Crawford told him not to fire . Crawford and Knight knew some of these Delawares , who were part of a band led by a war chief named Wingenund . Crawford and Knight were taken prisoner , but the other four Americans escaped . Two of them were later tracked down , killed , and scalped .

Captives taken by American Indians during the American Revolution might be ransomed by the British in Detroit , adopted into the tribe , enslaved , or simply killed . However , after the Gnadenhütten massacre , the Ohio Indians had resolved to kill all American prisoners who fell into their hands . The number of Americans executed after the Sandusky expedition is unknown , since their fate was usually recorded only if one of the prisoners survived to tell .

While some were executed quickly , others were tortured before being killed . The public torture of prisoners was a traditional ritual in many tribes of the Eastern Woodlands . Captives might have to endure excruciating torture for hours and even days . The British Indian Department used its influence to discourage the killing and torturing of prisoners , with some success , but in 1782 the Indians revived the practice of ritual torture in order to exact revenge for the slaughter at Gnadenhütten .

= = = Crawford 's execution = = =

Crawford and Knight were taken to Wingenund 's camp on June 7 , where they found nine other prisoners . On June 11 , Captain Pipe painted the faces of the prisoners black , the traditional sign they were to be executed . The prisoners were marched to the Delaware town on Tymochtee Creek , near the present @-@ day village of Crawford , Ohio . Four prisoners were killed with tomahawks and scalped along the way . When the war party stopped , the seven remaining prisoners were made to sit , with Crawford and Knight a short distance away from the others . Delaware women and boys killed the other five with tomahawks , beheading one of them . The boys scalped the victims and slapped the bloody scalps in the faces of Crawford and Knight .

About one hundred men , women , and children had gathered at the Delaware village to witness the execution of the American leader . Dunquat and a few Wyandots were present , as well as Simon Girty and Matthew Elliott . Captain Pipe , who knew Crawford from the 1778 Fort Pitt treaty , spoke to the crowd , pointing out that Crawford had been captured while leading many of the men who had committed the Gnadenhütten murders . Crawford had nothing to do with the massacre , but he had

taken part in the "squaw campaign" in which several of Pipe's family members had been killed. Pipe apparently mentioned this as well.

After Pipe's speech, Crawford was stripped naked and beaten. His hands were tied behind his back, and a rope was tied from his hands to a post in the ground. A large fire was lit about six or seven yards (6 m) from the pole. Indian men shot charges of gunpowder into Crawford's body, then cut off his ears. Crawford was poked with burning pieces of wood from the fire, and hot coals were thrown at him, which he was compelled to walk on. Crawford begged Girty to shoot him, but Girty was unwilling or afraid to intervene. After about two hours of torture, Crawford fell down unconscious. He was scalped, and a woman poured hot coals over his head, which revived him. He began to walk about insensibly as the torture continued. After he finally died, his body was burned.

The next day, Knight was marched towards the Shawnee towns, where he was to be executed. Along the way, he struck his guard with a log and managed to escape. He successfully made his way back to Pennsylvania on foot. By the time hunters found him on July 4, he was in poor health and barely coherent. They carried him to Fort McIntosh.

== Wapatomica executions ==

On the same day that Crawford was executed, at least six American prisoners were taken in two different groups to the Shawnee town of Wapatomica on the Mad River, in present Logan County, Ohio. These prisoners included Major John B. McClelland, who had been fourth in command of the expedition, as well as William Harrison (Crawford's son @-@ in @-@ law) and Private William Crawford (Colonel Crawford's nephew). Four of the six, including McClelland, Harrison, and Crawford, were painted black. The villagers, made aware of the coming of prisoners by a messenger, formed two lines. The prisoners were made to run the gauntlet towards the council house, about 300 yards (270 m) distance. As the prisoners ran by, the villagers beat them with clubs, concentrating on those who had been painted black. The blackened prisoners were then hacked to death with tomahawks and cut into pieces. Their heads and limbs were stuck on poles outside the town. One of the prisoners, a scout named John Slover, was taken to Mac @-@ a @-@ chack (near present West Liberty, Ohio), but escaped before he could be burnt. Still naked, he stole a horse and rode it until it gave out, then ran on foot, reaching Fort Pitt on July 10, one of the last survivors to return.

== Aftermath ==

== Final year of the war ==

The failure of the Crawford expedition caused alarm along the American frontier, as many Americans feared that the Indians would be emboldened enough and launch a new series of raids. More defeats for the Americans were yet to come, and so for Americans west of the Appalachian Mountains, 1782 became known as the "Bloody Year". On 13 July 1782, the Mingo leader Gulasuta led about 100 Indians and several British volunteers into Pennsylvania, destroying Hannastown, killing nine and capturing twelve settlers. It was the hardest blow dealt by Indians in Western Pennsylvania during the war.

In Kentucky, the Americans went on the defensive while Caldwell and his Indian allies prepared a major offensive. In July 1782, more than 1 @, @ 000 Indians gathered at Wapatomica, but the expedition came to a halt after scouts reported that George Rogers Clark was preparing to invade the Ohio Country from Kentucky. Most of the Indians dispersed after learning that the reports of imminent invasion were false, but Caldwell led 300 Indians into Kentucky and delivered a devastating blow at the Battle of Blue Licks in August. After his victory at Blue Licks, Caldwell was ordered to cease operations because the United States and Great Britain were about to make peace. Although General Irvine had finally gotten permission to lead his own expedition into the Ohio

Country , rumors of the peace treaty killed enthusiasm for the undertaking , which never took place . In November , George Rogers Clark delivered the final blow in the Ohio Country , destroying several Shawnee towns , but inflicting little damage on the inhabitants .

Details of the forthcoming peace treaty arrived late in 1782 . The Ohio Country , the land that the British and Indians had successfully defended , had been signed away by Great Britain to the United States . The British had not consulted the Indians in the peace process , and the Indians were nowhere mentioned in the treaty 's terms . For the Indians , the struggle with American settlers would resume in the Northwest Indian War , though this time without the assistance of their British allies .

= = = Impact of Crawford 's death = = =

Crawford 's death was widely publicized in the United States . A ballad about the expedition , titled " Crawford 's Defeat by the Indians " , became popular and was long remembered . In 1783 , John Knight 's eyewitness account of Crawford 's torture was published . The editor of Knight 's narrative , Hugh Henry Brackenridge , deleted all mention of Crawford 's trial and the fact that Crawford was executed in retaliation for the Gnadenhütten massacre . By suppressing the Indians ' motivation , Brackenridge was able , according to historian Parker Brown , to create " a piece of virulent anti @-@ Indian , anti @-@ British propaganda calculated to arouse public attention and patriotism . " In an introduction , Brackenridge 's publisher made clear why the narrative was being published :

But as they [ the Indians ] still continue their murders on our frontier , these Narratives may be serviceable to induce our government to take some effectual steps to chastise and suppress them ; as from hence , they will see that the nature of an Indian is fierce and cruel , and that an extirpation of them would be useful to the world , and honorable to those who can effect it .

As intended , Knight 's narrative increased racial antipathy towards Native Americans , and was often republished over the next 80 years , especially whenever violent encounters between white Americans and Indians was in the news . Although American frontiersmen had often killed Indian prisoners , most Americans regarded Indian culture as barbaric because of the use of torture , and Crawford 's death greatly reinforced this perception of Indians as " savages " . In the American national memory , the details of Crawford 's torture overshadowed American atrocities such as the Gnadenhütten massacre . The image of the savage Indian became a stereotype ; the peacekeeping efforts of men like Cornstalk and White Eyes were all but forgotten .