

Dunmore's War: The Last Conflict of America's Colonial Era, 1774

A BGES Civil War Field University Program

with Dr. Glenn F. Williams

June 25–29, 2025, from Mineral Wells, WV

Dunmore's War, a largely overlooked yet pivotal conflict of 1774, unfolded in the rugged Ohio Valley, primarily in what is now West Virginia, marking the final major clash between American colonists and Native American forces before the Revolutionary War. We are pleased to offer an exclusive tour that explores this fascinating chapter of history, led by historian Glenn F. Williams Ph.D., author of the definitive book on the subject, *Dunmore's War: The Last Conflict of America's Colonial Era* (Wetholme Publishing, 2017).

The goal of this tour is to unravel the complexities of this conflict and provide an accurate portrayal of its events and significance. We will visit several key sites associated with the 1774 military campaign, gaining a deeper insight into the Virginia militia's defense of the colony's backcountry settlements from raids and ambushes, as well as the offensive expedition into Indian territory that ultimately restored peace.

The tour also highlights the critical role played by the Six Nations of Iroquois (also known as the Iroquois Confederacy), or Haudenosaunee, a powerful Indian polity that claimed dominion over the Ohio Country tribes by "the right of conquest." Participants may be surprised to learn the Virginia colony enjoyed the friendship and assistance of Native allies, including as Delaware (Lenape) warriors, who accompanied Dunmore's army as scouts and auxiliaries.

Finally, the tour aims to dispel the enduring myth that Virginia militiamen fought "like Indians" to achieve victory. Dr. Williams draws on extensive primary source research to provide expert analysis of the militia's organization, training and operations of the militia, as well as the causes, conduct, and outcome of this six-month-long conflict.

Join us in this unique opportunity to engage with a crucial yet often neglected episode in American history, brought to life by one of its foremost scholars.

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Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Meet at the headquarters hotel at 6 p.m. to greet all the members of the program as well as pick up your nametags and handout packets. Glenn Williams will present an introduction to the 1774 conflict between the Colony of Virginia and a confederation of Ohio Valley Indians led by the Shawnees, with an overview of the tour program and a Q&A session.

Dinner is on your own.

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Boarding the bus at 8 a.m., we head to our first destination the site of Fort Fincastle. This colonial military installation was erected by militia troops under the command of Capt. William Crawford to defend the Ohio frontier and protect settlements near the mouth of Wheeling Creek—modern-day Wheeling, West Virginia—from raids by hostile Native American forces. Named for the Viscount of Fincastle, one of Lord Dunmore’s titles, the fort was recommended by the royal governor to serve as both a defensive structure and a communications hub along the Ohio River. It was intended to connect another proposed post at the confluence of the Great Kanawha and Ohio Rivers, later named Fort Blair at Point Pleasant, with Fort Dunmore. Formerly known as Fort Pitt, Fort Dunmore, located at the Forks of the Ohio—where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers meet to form the Ohio at Pittsburgh—was renamed when Virginia asserted its claim to the area, making Pittsburgh the seat of the “Pittsburgh and Environs” district of Augusta County, Virginia.

The Wheeling Creek settlement played a significant role in the history of Dunmore’s War. It was the site of early skirmishes between settlers and Native Americans, events that helped precipitate the conflict. Once the war began, Maj. Angus McDonald led 400 Virginia militiamen from Fort Fincastle on an expedition to raid the Shawnee village of Wakatomika—located near modern-day Dresden, Ohio, on the Muskingum River—before returning to the fort. Later, when Governor Dunmore launched his offensive against the Shawnee principal town of Chillicothe on the Scioto River, Fort Fincastle served as an intermediate supply depot, forwarding provisions downriver. It was also the point where the Northern Division, or Right Wing, assembled before advancing to the mouth of Hockhocking Creek. This division included Maj. William Crawford’s detachment of 500 men, along with a packhorse train and cattle herd, which marched overland from Redstone, as well as Col. Adam Stephen’s main force of 700 troops, who descended the Ohio River in a flotilla of canoes and other watercraft from Pittsburgh.

After the American War for Independence began, the Virginia government renamed the post Fort Henry, in honor of Gov. Patrick Henry. The fort successfully withstood attacks by Native American warriors allied with the British in 1777 and 1782.

After lunch, we will travel to Prickett’s Fort State Historic Site near Fairmont, West Virginia. This reconstructed “private” fort, originally built on the property of settler Jacob Prickett, provided emergency shelter for his family and neighbors during Dunmore’s War and later during the Revolutionary War. The fort also served as a mustering and garrison point for local militia and as a base for Capt. Zackquill Morgan’s ranger company, which conducted patrols to monitor the frontier and intercept enemy raiding parties. At this site, participants will gain insight into frontier life, particularly how settlers and their families “forted up” in times of danger.

Return to the hotel. Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Friday, June 27, 2025

Departing at 8 a.m., we will head to Cedar Grove and Charleston, West Virginia. Our first stop is the site of an early settlement established by Walter Kelly below the falls of the Great Kanawha River—near modern-day Cedar Grove. In July 1774, Indian raiders attacked Kelly’s farm, killing all male inhabitants except one and taking a woman captive. Col. John Field, the county

lieutenant of Culpeper County, was visiting Kelly at the time. He narrowly escaped capture and eventually encountered a militia patrol from the Greenbrier Valley.

In September of the same year, all three detachments of the Southern Division, or Left Wing, of Dunmore's army, led by Col. Andrew Lewis, passed through this area during their march toward Point Pleasant.

Next, we will visit Charleston, West Virginia. After lunch, we will explore a section of Coonskin Park along the Elk River. Here, the first two detachments of Colonel Lewis's wing of the army established an encampment. These detachments included the Augusta County Line, commanded by Col. Charles Lewis (Andrew's brother), and the Botetourt County Line, led by Col. William Fleming.

While stationed on the Elk River, the troops faced a shortage of packhorses. To address this, they built canoes to transport provisions and supplies down the river, returning for additional loads to support the advancing army. They also used these canoes to evacuate sick and wounded soldiers to the rear. Additionally, the troops constructed a fortified magazine to store incoming supplies, which were later transported to the army.

Return to the hotel. Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Saturday June 28, 2025

The focus today will be the Battle of Point Pleasant, which took place on October 10, 1774. Departing the hotel at 8 a.m., we will travel to Tu-Endie-Wei State Park/Point Pleasant Battlefield State Park and explore the area where Col. Andrew Lewis's Left Wing troops arrived at the confluence of the Great Kanawha and Ohio Rivers on October 6. The Augusta and Botetourt Lines encamped here as they prepared to cross the Ohio River to its north bank, awaiting the arrival of Col. William Christian's Fincastle County Line detachment, which brought additional packhorses and cattle. Meanwhile, about 4 miles to the north, Shawnee war chief Cornstalk prepared to lead his warriors and their allies in a surprise attack on the Virginians' camp in the early morning hours of October 10.

Key points of interest at the park include the monument commemorating the battle, the site of the ammunition magazine (where officers killed in the battle were interred), and markers honoring the principal Virginia commanders and Chief Cornstalk.

Just north of the park, on Main Street, we will stop at the site of Fort Blair, built shortly after the battle. Named for the Baron of Blair, one of Lord Dunmore's hereditary titles, the fort served as a fortified magazine when Colonel Lewis' Left Wing crossed the Ohio to its north bank on their march to join Governor Dunmore and the Right Wing at Pickaway Plains for the attack on Chillicothe. The fort also served as a hospital for soldiers wounded in the battle until they recovered sufficient strength to be evacuated. After the hostilities ended, a garrison of Virginia troops remained at the site.

When the Revolutionary War began, Virginians troops rebuilt and renamed the post Fort Randolph, in honor of Peyton Randolph, who presided over the first two Virginia Conventions and served as president of the First Continental Congress in 1774 and the Second Continental Congress in 1775 until his death. In 1777, when Cornstalk visited Fort Randolph to inform Capt. Matthew Arbuckle that the Shawnees had decided to ally with the British in the Revolutionary War. However, Cornstalk was murdered after the scalped corpse of a militiaman was found near the fort. The following year, in 1778, Fort Randolph withstood an attack by Britain's Native American allies.

After lunch, we will enter the riverwalk on the Ohio River's left bank to view the mural of the battle painted on the flood-control wall. We will follow the upstream path, tracing the approximate route of Col. William Fleming's reconnaissance-in-force column at the beginning of the battle.

Next, we will travel to the junction of 6th Street and Highland Avenue, near the bridge at Crooked Creek, to discuss the reconnaissance-in-force led by Col. Charles Lewis. A short walk along the road and stream will illustrate the distance between the two columns as they attempted to link up during the battle.

We will then proceed to Old Town Creek, the approximate site of the abandoned Shawnee village known as Old Town. Here, we will discuss the Shawnees' approach march to Point Pleasant, their preparations for battle, and their retreat after the fighting waned.

If time permits, we may also visit the replica of Fort Blair at Krodel Park.

Return to the hotel. Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Sunday June 29, 2025

Today we depart at 8 a.m. and head to Parkersburg, West Virginia. As we cross the Ohio River, we will discuss the advance of Dunmore's Right Wing from Pittsburgh and Wheeling, as well as its crossing to and landing on the river's north bank.

Our first stop is Hockingport, Ohio, at the mouth of the Hocking River—known in 1774 as the Hockhocking River. At this location, Virginia troops erected a fortified magazine named Fort Gower. This served as a forward supply base to support the advance of the Northern Division into Shawnee territory and the town of Chillicothe, the campaign's objective.

In November, after the Shawnees agreed to the armistice that ended the fighting, soldiers of the Right Wing camped here during their march home. On November 5, the Northern Division's officers drafted the "Fort Gower Resolves," in which they pledged their loyalty to the Crown while also vowing to defend American liberty—even by force of arms—should the British government reject the colonists' petitions for "Redress of Grievances."

We will then travel to the Circleville, Ohio, area. Stops in the vicinity include the site of Camp Charlotte, located in the community of Leistville. The fortified camp on the Pickaway Plains

served as a secure base from which Virginia troops could launch raids against Shawnee villages, attack the principal town of Chillicothe, or retreat if defeated.

Cornstalk, the Shawnee commander, decided it was best to seek terms for peace and approached Governor Dunmore at the fort. The two leaders agreed to an armistice known as the “Treaty of Camp Charlotte” on October 19, 1774. Logan, however, did not participate in either the Battle of Point Pleasant or the negotiations. Refusing to surrender, he led his Mingo followers in an attempt to escape to the Great Lakes region. In response, Governor Dunmore sent a militia detachment under Maj. William Crawford to cut off their retreat by attacking the town of Salt Lick, located on the site of modern-day Columbus, Ohio.

Our final stop will be Logan Elm Memorial Park. According to tradition, it was in this area that the Mingo leader Logan agreed to stop fighting and dictated his famous “Lament” to John Gibson, whom Governor Dunmore sent to persuade him to surrender.

We will return to the hotel by 5 p.m., marking the end of our tour.

About The Faculty

Glenn F. Williams is a retired Army officer who began a second career in public history. He recently retired from federal civilian service as a Senior Historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. In this role, he facilitated staff ride exercises at historic battlefields for military units, developed and posted “This Day in Army History” features on CMH’s social media platforms, and served as project officer for the Army’s 250th birthday and the Semiquincentennial commemorations of the Revolutionary War.

He is the author or coauthor of three monographs in the *Campaigns of the Revolutionary War* series: *Opening Shots in the Colonies 1775–1776*, *Northern Campaigns 1778–1781*, and *War on the Revolutionary Frontier 1775–1783*, which was released starting in 2024. His other positions at CMH include serving as Historian of the National Museum of the U.S. Army and Historian/Operations Officer of the Army Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration.

Outside of CMH, Glenn has held various prestigious roles in public history. He served as Historian of the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, Curator/Historian for the USS *Constellation* Museum, and Assistant Curator for the Baltimore Civil War Museum at President Street Station.

Glenn is also a prolific author. His book *Year of the Hangman: George Washington’s Campaign Against the Iroquois* (Westholme, 2005) received the Thomas J. Fleming Award for the Outstanding Revolutionary War Book of 2005 and was named among “The 100 Best American Revolution Books of All Time” by the *Journal of the American Revolution* in its spring 2017 issue. His 2017 book, *Dunmore’s War: The Last Conflict of America’s Colonial Era* (Westholme, 2017), earned him the Shelby Cullom Davis Award from the Ohio Society of Colonial Wars and the Judge Robert K. Woltz Award from the French and Indian War Foundation, recognizing his contributions to 18th-century American military history.

In addition to these works, Glenn is the author of several journal and magazine articles, contributed to *Battles of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812: Two Interpretive Maps* (National Geographic, 2012), and wrote the essay “Let It Begin Here: The Battle of Lexington and Concord” for *The 10 Key Campaigns of the American Revolution* (Regnery History, 2020).

In retirement, Glenn continues to research and write books, present lectures, advise filmmakers, and lead staff rides for military units, as well as battlefield and historic site tours for general audiences. He holds a B.S. in History from Loyola University, an M.A. in History and a Certificate in Public History from the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and a Ph.D. in History from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Hotel Information

The headquarters hotel is the Hampton Inn Mineral Wells, 64 Elizabeth Pike, Mineral Wells, WV 26150; 304-489-2900. The rate is \$115 a night plus tax. Cutoff date for the block is June 10, 2025. Be sure to ask for the Blue and Gray Education block.

Transportation

The servicing airport is West Virginia International Yeager Airport (CRW) in Charleston, WV. It's a 1-hour, 10-minute, 73-mile drive to Mineral Wells. John Glenn Columbus International Airport (CMH) is also an option, which is 2 hours and 125 miles away.

Recommended Reading

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program.

Lewis, Virgil A. *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant Fought Between White Men and Indians at the Mouth of the Great Kanawha River (Now Point Pleasant, West Virginia, Monday, October 10th, 1774, The Chief Event of Lord Dunmore's War*. Originally published in 1909; reprints available from several trade publishers. ISBN: 978-0666826107.

Williams, Glenn F. Williams. *Dunmore's War: Last Conflict of America's Colonial Period*. Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2017. ISBN: 978-1594161667.

Registration Form

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Name (s): _____

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How did you learn about the Blue and Gray Education Society?

Registration includes four lunches, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold bottled water.

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_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of \$_____ (must be \$75 or more which is tax deductible).

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