

FOREMAN MASSACRE

This data was compiled by Harry Forrester, January 2021

The Foreman Massacre occurred in the Narrows about seven miles south of Wheeling West Virginia. During the 1770's this region was the edge of the western frontier. Most all of the native Indians had been driven from their homes and were pushed west across the Ohio River. Not to say the Indians did not occasionally return to seek revenge.

Fort Henry was located today where 10th and Main Streets are in Wheeling, West Virginia. The fort was around one acre in size or about 150 feet x 150 feet. The fort was a wooden picket style with a blockhouse on each corner. The fort was originally constructed by the British in 1774 and was only in use until 1784.

The fort underwent two sieges in 1777; September 1, 1777 and September 21, 1777 and one more in 1782, by both the British and Indians. During the last siege several militia reinforcement units (citizen soldiers) arrived from Hampshire County to lend assistance.

There was little for the cooped up militia to do and they were soon eager for Indian combat. So on September 26, 1777 the Commander, David Shepherd, granted William Foreman permission to investigate the smoke seen 11 miles to the south. It was assumed the Indians had burned Tomlinson's Settlement and its fort at Grave Creek or today's Moundsville, West Virginia. Captains William Foreman, William Linn and Joseph Ogle and a company of forty to forty seven men marched down to Grave Creek located at now Moundsville, WV. All the while the Shawnee Indians observed them from the other side of the Ohio River. Given the late hour it was decided to spend the night before returning to Fort Henry.

William Foreman was the Captain and commander of the group. However he lacked any real Indian fighting experience. That night Foreman chooses the warmth of a large camp fire and so they gathered around it to sleep. However; the Indian Scout, John Lynn, feared the Indians were watching them and warned Foreman that it was not advisable. Lynn and his eighteen men camped in the darkened woods away from Foreman and his men. The next morning Lynn told Foreman that he heard sounds of canoes during the night, but was once again ignored. William Foreman was not going to let any backwoods scout tell him how to run his men. So when it was time to start home Foreman and his group proceeded up along the river and through the narrows. However Scout John Lynn and his group (19 men) ascended the hill at the south end of the Narrows. Both proceeded a few miles without incident.

The Indians were waiting in ambush at the north end of the Narrows just where it widens out. They were hiding on both sides of the trail in overwhelming numbers, rose up and laid down a deadly fire. Foreman, his sons and many others totaling 28 men were rapidly killed except a few that escaped up the hill. The number killed varies in reporting from twenty one to twenty eight. This makes the total involve vary from thirty eight to forty five!

John Lynn came part way down the hill attempting to intervene but it was too late. A few known to escape up the hill were Captain Joseph Miller, Lieutenant Anthony Miller, Robert Harkness, John Collins and Henry Dorton. Dorton was a black revolutionary soldier who later wrote of his first hand experience.

Per Dorton ten days later he returned with a unit from Fort Henry to bury the dead. He recalls burying fourteen in one grave and seven in the second grave. Per Henry Dorton he was one of twenty two who escaped. This would make John Lynn's group on the top of the hill numbering seventeen men.

In 1835 a monument was placed at the site of the graves. Then in 1875 and remains and the monument was moved to Mt, Rose Cemetery in Moundsville, WV. However it is very unlikely any remains would have still existed; after 98 years given the remains were directly buried in the earth.

Source Data

Thwaites and Kellogg

Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300

Biennial report Department of Archives & History State of WV pg 47

Historic Hampshire Pg 90

Lowry History

Henry Dorton biography

Last Name	FirstName	result	Cited by
Avery	George	died	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Brazier	Thomas	died	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Clark	Hugh	died	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Foreman	Pvt Hambleton	died	Lowry History
Foreman	Captain William	died	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47
Foreman	Pvt Nathan	died	Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Greathouse	Jacob	died	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Greene	Pvt James	died	Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Harris	Pvt Isaac	died	https://www.familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/1324135 , Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Hedges	Ezekiel	died	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300, family history http://mosesrawlings.freesevers.com/hedges.html
Ingle (Engle)	Pvt William	died	Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Johnston	Pvt Samuel	died	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47
Lawson	Moses	died	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
McGrew	Pvt Robert	died	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47
Miller	Pvt Anthony	died	Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Miller	Pvt Anthony	died	Lowry History
Ogle	Ens Jacob	died	History of Early Settlement
Peterson	Pvt Edward	died	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47, Lowry History
Pew	Jacob	died	Historic Hampshire Pg 90
Polk	John	died	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300, https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/LV6W-HXZ/john-polke-1750-1777
Allman	C.B.	escaped	Foreman Massacre Sept 27. 1777 by Klein & Cooper pg 6
Castleman	Harry	escaped	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Chambers	John	escaped	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 300
Collins	John	escaped	History of Foreman's Defeat
Dorton*	Henry	escaped	himself
Engle (Ingle)	Pvt William	escaped	Thwaites and Kellogg, Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 301
Harkness	Robert (Robin?)	escaped	Escaped up hill shot in face, newspaper 1876. History of Foremans Defeat
Harrod	William	escaped	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 301, Thwaites and Kellogg
Linn	Capt William	escaped	History of Foremans Defeat - he was on top of hill?
Lynn	John	escaped	https://www.wencyclopedia.org/print/Article/2019 , was on top
McCarty	Patrick	escaped	http://www.wgenweb.org/mineral/forepart.htm
McLain (McLane)	Daniel	escaped	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 301, was on top
Millar	Windle	escaped	http://www.wgenweb.org/mineral/forepart.htm - died
Miller	Lt Anthony	escaped	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47, family history
Ogle	Capt Joseph	escaped	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 301, ran up hill
Wetzel	Martin	escaped	Frontier Defense on The Upper Ohio pg 301
Wilson	Ens. David	escaped	Biennial report of the Department of Archives and History of the State of West Virginia pg 47

