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HARP / MUNKERS-MUNKIRS

Samuel Crowley – First Casualty of the Revolutionary War

by Hartford | Published October 8, 2019 | 10 comments

SAMUEL CROWLEY

Samuel Crowley is believed, by some historians, to be the first casualty of the American Revolution.

Samuel is my sixth great-grandfather, through the Munkers/Munkirs line.

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I suspect we all – at least all of us who have studied American history in school – are familiar with the phrase, “The Shot Heard Round the World.”

We learned about it as school children: April 19, 1775, the day the Minutemen confronted the British Redcoats at Lexington and Concord. Historians debate some of the details... but Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Concord Hymn” etched the phrase into our American historical narrative, connecting it permanently with the beginning of the American Revolution.

Have you, however, ever heard of, “The Battle of Point Pleasant”? I doubt you have.

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Monument at the site of the Battle of Point Pleasant, believed by many to be the first battle of the Revolutionary War

Well, neither had I. Until I researched the line of my maternal grandmother, Cecil Munkirs. I traced back generation-by-generation, person-by-person, over a period of several months, until I came to my 4x great-grandmother, Agnes Crowley (1793-1884). Agnes seems to have been quite a character in her own right (more about her on another occasion). Her father was John Crowley, and John's father is the subject of today's post: Samuel Crowley (1741-1774) – my 6x great-grandfather.

Samuel was a Virginian – a “longhunter.” Longhunters (sometimes written ‘long hunters’ – two separate words) were a unique and sturdy group of 18th century frontiersmen of whom Daniel Boone is the most famous. They went on long hunting trips (hence the title, “longhunters”) – often six months or more at a time – into the unexplored regions beyond western Virginia, into what is now Kentucky and Tennessee. They rarely went out in groups of more than two or three. ([Wikipedia article on Longhunters](#)).

In October, 1774, Samuel Crowley and his brother Benjamin were scouts for Virginia militia Commander Andrew Lewis in what has traditionally been known as Lord Dunmore's War. On October 10 the forces commanded by Commander Lewis confronted a large force of American Indians led Chief Cornstalk in what is known as The Battle of Point Pleasant.

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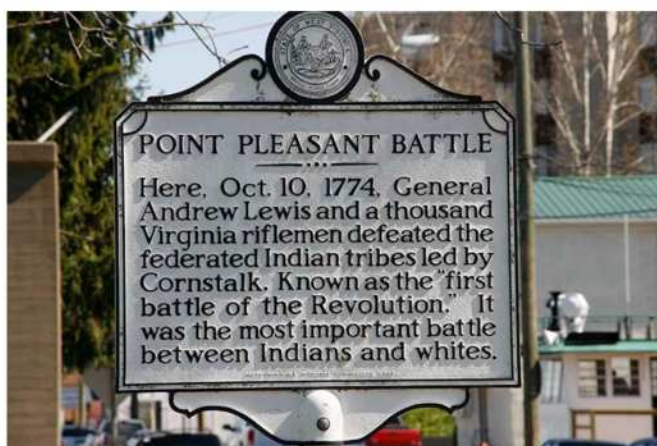
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of the American Revolution.

Of course a somewhat larger group insists that while the Battle of Point Pleasant was indeed a very important battle, even a critical turning point in the movement toward Revolution, it was actually the final battle of the Indian wars.

Who's right? So far as I'm concerned that's a debate for others to carry on. If you want more background there is additional information at the end of this post. Plus, entering "Battle of Point Pleasant" into your search engine will lead to lots of information on both sides of the debate.



Battle of Point Pleasant Historical Marker – indicating it is known as the “first battle of the Revolution.”

I do think it's significant that both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution – who have a vested interest and a lot of experience in this area – recognize colonial combatants who fought and died at Point Pleasant as Patriots of the American Revolution. Not only that, there was literally “an act of Congress” which recognized The Battle of Point Pleasant as a battle of the Revolutionary War (see the excerpt from the Congressional Record below).

So what does all this have to do with our Virginia longhunter ancestor, my 6x great grandfather, Samuel Crowley? Let's return to October, 1774.

Lord Dunmore was the colonial governor of Virginia. He was in fact the last Royal Governor of Virginia. He took a number of actions designed to stifle the growing revolutionary restlessness in the Virginia Colony, including disbanding the Virginia

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of the Virginia Colony. My great grandfather, Samuel, was assigned to the command of Commander Lewis as a scout and Indian spy. It was in that capacity he was serving when Commander Lewis' army reach Point Pleasant.

This is where the plot thickens. Ostensibly, the plan was for Lord Dunmore, leading an army of British regulars (Redcoats) to meet Lewis and the militia at Port Pleasant and, using their combined force, subdue Cornstalks warriors.

However, according to some historians, Lord Dunmore had actually reached a secret agreement with Chief Cornstalk: Dunmore would hold back the regulars, allowing Cornstalk to attack the militia and destroy them. This was to serve the dual purpose of allowing Cornstalk to eliminate the threat to the Indians presented by the spread of the settlers into Indian lands, while at the same time eliminating the threat of the militia as a force in any upcoming rebellion (that is, the American Revolution which officially began only months later).

If, in fact, Dunmore made such an agreement with Chief Cornstalk, then the argument that this was the opening battle of the Revolution would be greatly strengthened. It would have been a planned and calculated effort on the part of the British to collude with the Indians for the purpose of subduing the colonials. However that is a point of great contention! Some historians believe Dunmore reached such an agreement...other historians do not accept that assertion.

Whatever Lord Dunmore's motivations, he **was** late arriving at the appointed place. That is documented fact. The question is, of course, **why** was he late? Did he actually make a secret agreement with Chief Cornstalk?

On the evening of October 9, 1774, two great armies were gathered in close proximity to one another. About 1000 colonial militia combatants, under the leadership of Commander Lewis, waiting for Lord Dunmore...but knowing the Shawnee were close at hand. And, not far away, about 1000 Shawnee and other Native American warriors, under the leadership of Chief Cornstalk.

Early on the morning of October 10 colonial scouts were deployed to gather information... in some of the written reports they were referred to as "spies." One of these was Samuel Crowley (often written, "Samuel Croley"). A second scout was with him. Some accounts say the second scout was his brother, Benjamin Crowley; other accounts report Samuel's partner that morning was a scout named Robertson. In either event the scouts/spies

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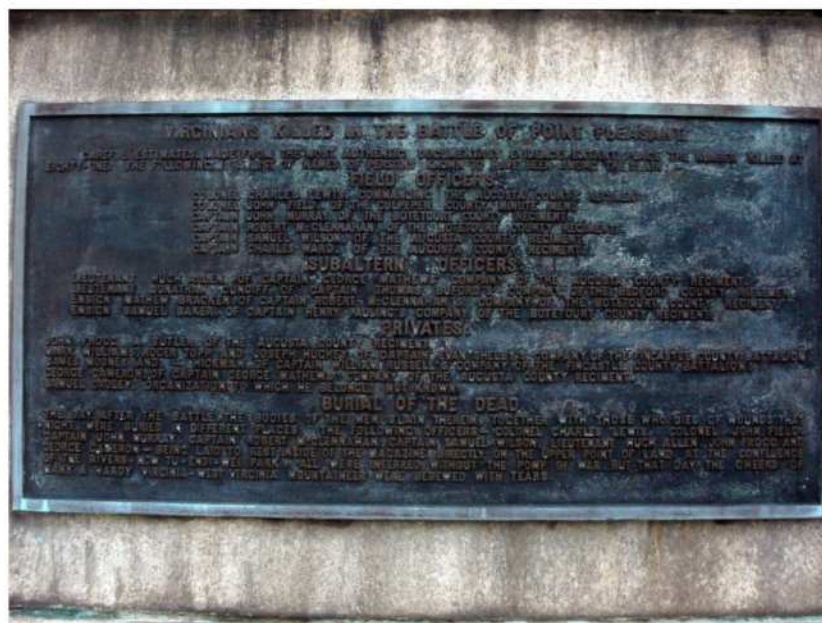
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Samuel Crowley and his partner encountered the Shawnee advancing for battle. Seeing the scouts, the Shawnee quickly reacted to begin firing on the scouts. One of the scouts was shot and killed...the other managed to get away, return to his comrades in arms, and raise the alarm that the Shawnee were on the way.

Samuel is the scout who died. And at that moment Samuel Crowley became, in the minds of many, the first casualty of the American Revolution.



Memorial honoring Virginians who died in the Battle of Point Pleasant. You will find the name of "Samuel Croley" as the last man listed under "PRIVATES." A larger, easier to read image of this memorial is below

There appears to be no doubt Samuel was the first man to die that day in the Battle of Point Pleasant. Several reports attest to the fact. A monument now stands to the battle and its combatants. Samuel Crowley is buried in a mass grave along with other soldiers who died in the battle. His name is inscribed in various places on the grounds, including on the monument itself (though the engraver misspelled his name as "Samuel Corley"... in many of the documents related to the battle and his death his name is properly spelled "Croley"). His wife applied for and received a modest pension from the Virginia House of Burgesses. She used it to help raise their seven children. These pension application documents have become very important historical documents of the Revolution. Part of the testimony used to support Samuel's pension application forms

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at Lexington and Concord – never with shots fired at the two scouts which began the Battle of Point Pleasant. But after extensive study and consideration, both the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution recognize Samuel, and the others who died at The Battle of Point Pleasant on October 10, 1774, as true Revolutionary War Patriots...and Samuel was the first to die that day. He was a true Patriot and, in the hearts and minds of many, he was the first to die in the American Revolution.

Below is a chart showing the relationships from Samuel Crowley to me.

After that you will find other documents, including an excerpt from the Congressional Record of 1908 in which the U.S. Senate recognized the Battle of Point Pleasant as a battle of the Revolutionary War.

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Samuel Crowley is the 6th great-grandfather of Hartford Cheney Inlow (* = Direct Line)

* Samuel Crowley (Abt 1741-1774) married * Elizabeth Strong (1744-1815)

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* John Crowley (768-1847) married Elizabeth McClain (1766-1805)

|

|

James Munkres (1788-1854) married * Agnes C. Crowley (1794-1883)

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Wesley E. P. Moore (1820-1870) married * Jemima Evalina Munkres

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Henry A. Lynn (1847-1930) married * Paulina Elizabeth Moore (1845-1930)

|

|

Solomon Lynch Munkirs (1861-1939) married * Maud Lynn (1869-1968)

|

|

Roy Victor Harp (1890-1972) married * Cecil Munkers (1889-1972)

|

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Rev. Hartford Cheney Inlow (1919-2001) married * Esther Louise Harp (1915-1986)

|

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* Hartford Cheney Inlow

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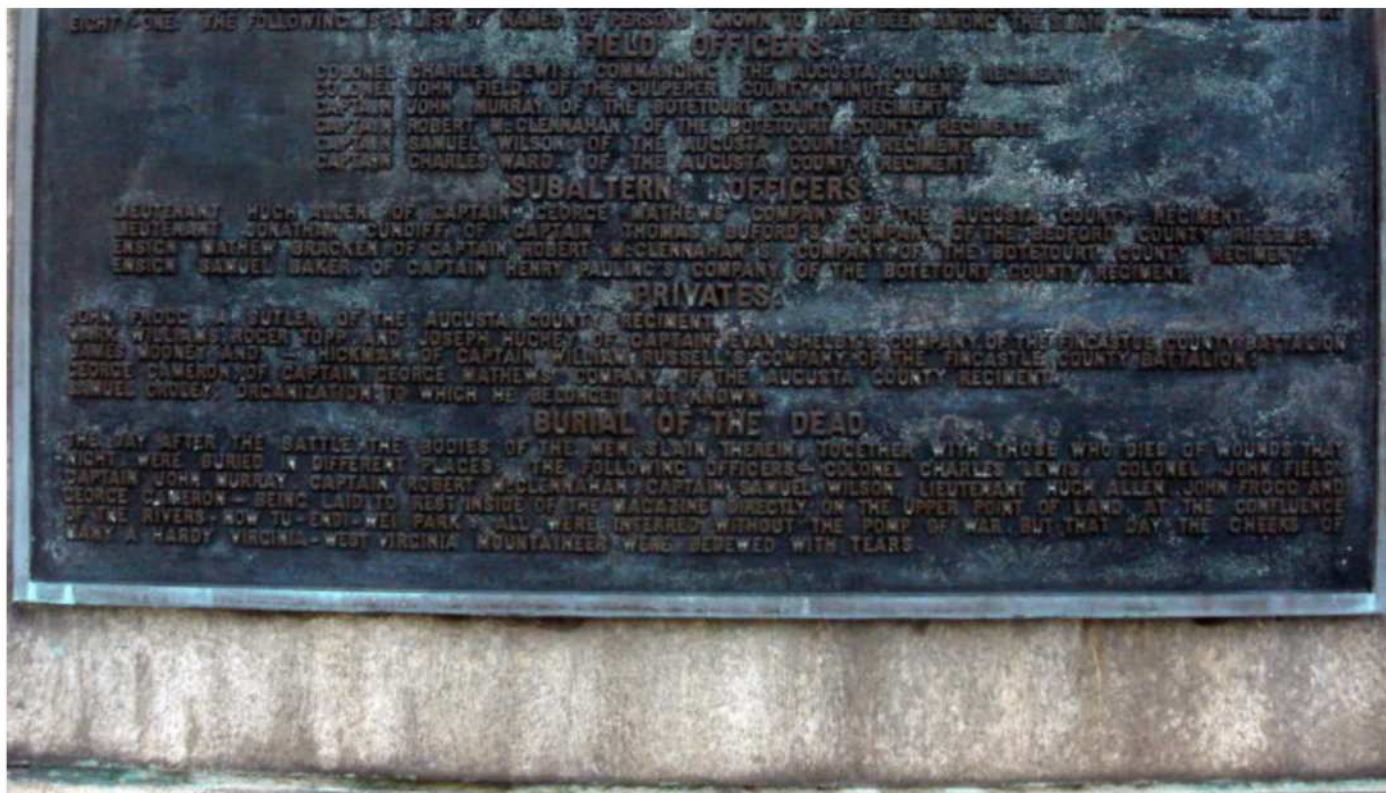
Here is a link to an excerpt from the Congressional Record of February 21, 1908, in which the U.S. Senate passed bill No. 160, recognizing the Battle of Point Pleasant as a battle of the Revolution. The bill did not pass the House of Representatives

[Point Pleasant – US Senate Action on Point Pleasant Monument 1908](#)



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Memorial honoring Virginians who died in the Battle of Point Pleasant. You will find the name of "Samuel Croley" as the last man listed under "PRIVATES."

Crowley Newsletter
 Spero in Deo

Vol. 10, No. 3 November, 2005

Crowley Progenitors: Picking up the thread from Sue Crowley's Article in Vol. 10, No.1 March, 2005
 by Samuel Crowley Descendant Don Perkins

Samuel Crowley b. 1742, in Virginia, d. 10 Oct. 1774 may well be the first soldier to die in the American Revolution since the U.S. Congress declared the Battle of Pt. Pleasant VA now WV/VA to be the first battle of the American Revolution. No. 10, Jeffrey Crowley in Sue Crowley's Crowley Progenitors was the father of Benjamin and Samuel Crowley. Their mother is Effie Neame. Jeffrey's will was probated in Feb 1762. This is where our story begins. Our major source is Jack Grantham of TX. He did not discover the line before Jeffrey, but he filled in many of the details. Sue Crowley has breached his brick wall for us!

Jack Grantham's research is well supported by authentic sources. The present day Crowleys reunite annually in Williamsburg, KY. Family records confirm Jack Grantham's and other Crowley researchers' sources. Grantham says these Crowleys bred, traded, raised, and raced horses. Jeffrey owned a racetrack known as Jeffrey's Path and raced horses there and at other tracks. Jeffrey also grew peaches and made peach brandy for sale to inns and ordinary houses all over Virginia. From these the Crowley family's prominence grew.

Benjamin and Samuel grew up able to ride, shoot, hunt, race and trade with the best. Living on the frontier, they also traded with the Indians and learned Indian languages. They used these talents to spy on the Indians in time of war.

Benjamin and later brother Samuel became Long Hunters in the 1760's and made a small fortune in skins. Benjamin rode with the Boones, Finleys, Callaways and introduced Samuel to them during their trips to Kentucky. Virginia law required all able bodied males to join the militia at age 16. Benjamin fought in the French & Indian Wars. Samuel joined him later in the Botetourt County, Virginia Militia.

Benjamin Crowley married Sarah Strong. Samuel married her sister Elizabeth. The Strongs were another prominent VA family. By 1774, Samuel and Elizabeth Crowley had 7 children. He was age 33 then.

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Robertson came into view. A Shawnee warrior fired and mortally wounded Crowley, while Robertson raced back giving the alarm. We won that battle. So it may very well be that Samuel Crowley was the first American to die in our War of Independence.

Samuel Crowley was the only Virginia Ranger recognized by the Virginia House of Burgesses for his sacrifice. His wife Elizabeth Strong Crowley received a widow's pension for the care of her seven children.

Elizabeth Crowley stayed in Virginia until 1791 growing peaches and making brandy until her children were old enough to travel and she could sell her land. Her oldest son James and the Widow Crowley signed over the deed and left to make a 900 mile journey first by wagon over the famed Wilderness Road and then by river down to join with Benjamin and Sarah Crowley in Oglethorpe County, GA.

The Samuel Crowley story is then carried on by his seven children:

1. Effie married Jeremiah Burnett, Jr.
2. Agnes married Thomas Perry
3. James (b. 1763) married 1786 Mary McClain
4. Mary (b. abt. 1765, d. 1835) married James Kimsey
5. John (b. 1768) married (1) Elizabeth McClain (sister of Mary)
6. Littleberry I or Greenberry and sometimes called Benjamin. (b. 1773, d. 1816) married Mary Polly Gibson.
7. William (b. 1774, d. ca. 1875) married ?? Ch. Littleberry II.

Brothers Littleberry I and James migrated from Georgia to Powell Valley, TN in 1803. Records also show brother William as deed witness by 1808 in Tennessee. Campbell County, TN. court records show a petition signed by Littleberry I, Wm., James, John and Jeremiah Croley in 1813. Mary Ann Croley married Burgess Siler about 1825 and they settled in Whitley County, KY where many of their Croley Descendants still live. Samuel Crowley's name is on two monuments at Tue Endie Wei Park (Shawanese for "place mingling two waters") where the Battle of Point Pleasant was fought. He was buried with the officers and other scouts assigned to the Commander who were killed or mortally wounded in battle. The graves are under an enormous black granite disc slanted to read the inscriptions. His name is misspelled Samuel Corley. However examination of the rolls shows there was no Corley, but there were two Croley names. One was Sam Croley and the other was his nephew James Crowley. Evidently the stone engraver got his o's and r's reversed. An 85-foot tall stone monument a short distance away has several bronze plaques telling about the battle and listing who died. One of them says Samuel Croley, Milita, unit unknown.

Samuel Crowley is buried under the Pt. Pleasant Battlefield Powder Magazine. The rolls are contained in numerous books about the closing war of the French and Indian Wars and the opening battle of our War of Independence. Battleday Celebrations are held annually at Pt. Pleasant with parades, Governors luncheons, Governor's Ball and Memorial Services. Samuel Cro(w)ley is represented in the Parade of Warriors. For questions e-mail me at dorp12@juno.com

The Crowley Clan Newsletter is compiled by Marian Crowley Chamberlain



Article on Samuel Crowley and the Battle of Point Pleasant

PAGE 2--THE DISPATCH, LEXINGTON, N. C. THURSDAY, APRIL 15, 1976

The first battle of Revolutionary war

PT. PLEASANT, W.Va. (UPI) — Two hungry soldiers, wandering from camp to hunt for breakfast meat, suddenly look up through the morning mist that hangs along a riverbank into the painted faces of advancing Indians.

From trees, logs and anything else that affords them cover, the Indians cut loose with a volley of musket shots.

One soldier drops, dying of his wounds. The other escapes to spread the alarm.

Troops are roused from sleep. Before long, the forest comes alive with the blasts of firearms, the orders of Indian and white commanders, the screams of dying men.

Depending on the historian, the conflict either was a local one between settlers and Indians, or the first battle of the American Revolutionary War.

Tradition favors the former, giving Lexington the

They re-enacted the skirmish two years ago, and this year, in America's 200th birthday observance, the town has reason to swell with pride. After all, if their version is correct, the Indians were part of a British conspiracy and the bloodshed in this frontier town of two centuries ago was the first brushfire of the revolution.

Nothing can sway folks like Jack Burdett from that stance.

An attorney, Burdett singlehandedly took on the task of reconstructing Ft. Randolph, put up the year after the battle. He collects historic memorabilia and can rattle off facts and figures as if he's in a courtroom, directing the town's "defense" of its historic claim.

"Congress supports us, you know," he says with a relish, pointing to a 1908 act that designated the town as

With revolutionary fires about to break out among the "original 13," Lord Dunmore, then governor-general of Virginia, made his move. He named a Dr. Connolly as Indian and land agent, and some curious things began pulling the Indians and white settlers closer to open conflict.

In a Williamsburg newspaper, he ran an ad that alluded to "10,000 incidents" by Indians. It was a call to arms for a "necessary" war to punish them.

A fresh Indian war, some historians pointed out, would have kept the colonists too busy to worry about England's tax measures, and simultaneously drained them of fighting forces.

Burdett, who heads the city's bicentennial committee, notes that Indians were used as British mercenaries, and Cornstalk's battle plan failed to suggest a typical frontier raid. There

Another point that Mason Countians lean on heavily is the curious failure of Lord Dunmore to aid Lewis as planned, even though he was encamped with more troops only a short distance away.

Cornstalk, who had led his 1,000 warriors from various tribes across the Ohio River into battle, was to be shot to death about three years later at Ft. Randolph by settlers enraged over the murder of a white hunter.

In his last breath, Cornstalk delivered a curse on Pt. Pleasant, and to this day, many blame the chief's invocation on the city's frequent brush with tragedy.

Blessed with rich bottom land divided today into farms, the pastoral town where the legendary Daniel Boone once operated a trading post was named by George Washington as he surveyed at the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers.

— the disappearance of tenant farmers in the "lost colony" who lived on his 10,000 acres in Mason County.

A four-day observance is planned in October at the 202nd anniversary of the battle, deliberately on a smaller scale than the 1974 bicentennial observance.

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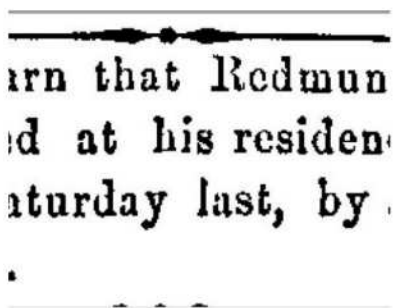
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declares it as the site of the first Revolutionary battle. harbor and thumbed their noses at the Stamp Act.

Newspaper article, Lexington, North Carolina, 1976. Notice the author refers to the two scouts as soldiers out foraging for breakfast, who happen to stumble upon Cornstalk's advancing warriors

Point Pleasant Revolutionary War

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POST COMMENT

10 thoughts on “Samuel Crowley – First Casualty of the Revolutionary War”

10 comments



Charles Croley

May 31, 2020, 1:40 pm

Hey cuz, I'm a descendant of Samuel, still a Croley. Nice to find out the story . Gonna ride my Harley to the monument soon.

REPLY

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Hartford Post author

November 26, 2020, [4:47 pm](#)

A few years ago my wife and I were driving through that area, but I didn't discover until later about Samuel! Have to make the trip again! I have other ancestors in that area, as well.

[**REPLY**](#)



Diana

November 27, 2020, [12:41 am](#)

I, too, have traveled through the area. This is a good reason to go back someday – post covid. Meanwhile, I'm glad to "meet" any Crowleys/Croleys that pop up.

[**REPLY**](#)



Diana

November 21, 2020, [11:23 am](#)

I've just learned that Samuel Crowley was my 7X great grandfather. I traced back from my paternal grandmother – maiden name Crowley and discovered him. Reading your original post above has been very interesting, adding to my knowledge of the events.

[**REPLY**](#)



Hartford Post author

November 26, 2020, [4:52 pm](#)

Thanks for writing, Diana. Samuel is my 6X great grandfather, through my maternal grandmother. Very interesting story and very interesting character. Great to meet another cousin!

[**REPLY**](#)



Greg Bishop

December 1, 2020, [3:00 am](#)

Benjamin Crowley is my 6th great grandfather -Samuel was 7th great uncle. Very interesting story. will have to stop next time I am in the area

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Diana

December 1, 2020, 3:44 am

Was Benjamin Crowley from the Crowley prairie in Texas? If so, he was in my direct family line, too.

REPLY



Susan

June 25, 2021, 1:43 am

I found this history amazing! You must be so proud of your ancestor! I came across this online information because my gr gr gr gr gr Grandfather was killed at point pleasant as well. He was a special unit soldier hunting deer and was killed by Shawnee. I wonder if he was a long hunter and would like to know more about it. My ancestor was killed in Sept 1774 and his name is William Mitchell Clay. He was with a man named Cowardly who was only wounded. I looked up some resources on the Battle and _____"clay" is down killed and _____ Cowardly is down as wounded. [https://familypedia.wikia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Point_Pleasant_\(1774\)/Alphabetical_Roster](https://familypedia.wikia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Point_Pleasant_(1774)/Alphabetical_Roster) <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/52867675/William-Mitchell-Clay>. I dont think my ancestor was a spy but who knows, He was definitely and older man – older than most

REPLY



Kristen Thomas

September 8, 2021, 4:12 am

He is also my great, great..... paternal grandfather. Nice to see this article recognizing such bravery. 😊😊

REPLY



Hartford Post author

September 26, 2021, 1:46 pm

That's very cool! Sorry I haven't responded earlier...I was having a lot of trouble with the site...it wouldn't load at all...thankfully my web-host knows much more about it than I, and was able to fix in in only a few minutes.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING? SEARCH HERE...

I Samuel is your paternal grandfather, we must be related somewhere along the line. So... hello, cousin! Thanks for writing! Hart

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