

Mississippi was actually held by us, under military and civil rule, at the close of the war, that it was possible for us to secure, in the Treaty of Paris, the concession of the Mississippi instead of the Ohio as our western boundary. It has been properly said that, "with respect to the magnitude of its design, the valor and perseverance with which it was carried out, and the momentous results which were produced by it, Clark's expedition stands without a parallel in the early annals of the valley of the Mississippi."

Clark was a young Virginian who had settled in Kentucky in 1775, had secured the organization of Kentucky as a county of Virginia, and been the leader in the defence of the frontier. The Kentucky and Illinois country suffered greatly during the early years of the war from Indian depredations. Clark saw clearly that the sources of these depredations were the British posts of Detroit, Vincennes on the Wabash, and Kaskaskia on the Mississippi; and he went to Virginia and laid before Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, a scheme for the conquest of the North-west, the boldness of which at once enlisted the interest and co-operation of Henry, Jefferson, and other influential men. With his little army of one hundred and fifty men, he surprised and captured Kaskaskia on the night of July 4, 1778, did much by wise diplomacy to attach the French and Indians to the American cause, and in February, 1779, marched upon Vincennes. The hardships of that march of one hundred and sixty-six miles were almost incredible. In that great era of brave deeds there was no braver deed than this. A portion of Clark's own account of the march and the capture of Vincennes, taken from his Memoirs, composed at the special request of Jefferson and Madison, is given in the present leaflet. The weakness of his force alone prevented Clark from moving on Detroit. The county of Illinois was established by the General Assembly of Virginia, covering all the territory; and this remained under the actual control of Virginia at the close of the war and when the Treaty of Paris was under consideration. "The arms of Clark had settled the question of possession and civil as well as military rule of this great territory, which now holds so many millions of people. These prominent facts were before the British minister and before the world. He could not say that this part of the land was in the power of England any more than Virginia herself was after the battle of Yorktown, and he was too accurate a jurist to yield to any claim of Spain or to hear the objections of France."

The last years of this great man's life were spent in solitude and poverty near Louisville. He felt keenly the ingratitude of the republic; and, when late in his life the State of Virginia sent him a sword, he exclaimed to the committee: "When Virginia needed a sword, I gave her one. She sends me now a toy. I want bread!"—thrust the sword into the ground, and broke it with his crutch.

John Reynolds called George Rogers Clark "the Washington of the West," and John Randolph styled him "the Hannibal of the West." See chapter entitled "The Hannibal of the West," in Dunn's *Indiana*, in the "American Commonwealths" series, for the best brief account of Clark's exploits. W. F. Poole's chapter on "The West," in the sixth volume of the *Narrative and Critical History of America*, contains an invaluable mass of material concerning Clark and his work. A good biography of Clark is a desideratum. The memoirs, from which the present leaflet is taken, are printed in Dillon's History of Indiana. A letter from Clark to George Mason, covering his Vincennes campaign, has been published under the title of *Clark's Campaign in the Illinois* (Cincinnati, 1869).