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Grade level: 8

Primary Source: "Col. Crawford's Campaign and Death," April 25, 1857 by William Walker. Accessed at <http://www.wyandot.org/crawford.htm>.

Barr, Daniel P. *A Monster so Brutal: Simon Girty and the Degenerative Myth of the American Frontier, 1783-1900*. Volume 40, 1998 *Essays in History*. Corcoran Department of History, University of Virginia.

Allow students, in groups or individually, to examine the document at the above link and the attached excerpt while answering the questions below in order. The questions are designed to guide students into a deeper analysis of the source and sharpen associated cognitive skills.

Level I: Description

1. Who witnessed the 4 stories of Colonel Crawford's death? Were they eye witnesses?
2. What is happening to Colonel Crawford in these accounts?

Level II: Interpretation

1. How does Simon Girty react to Crawford's call for help in each passage?
2. Why do you think he laughs during Crawford's execution?

Level III: Analysis

1. How do these passages support the American image of Girty as a traitor and an evil savage?
2. Is there any one of the accounts that you have read that seems to be more sympathetic towards Girty? Which one and why do you feel that way?

Barr, Daniel P. *A Monster so Brutal: Simon Girty and the Degenerative Myth of the American Frontier, 1783-1900*. Volume 40, 1998 *Essays in History*. Corcoran Department of History, University of Virginia.

The flames arose and the scorching heat became almost insupportable. Again [Crawford] prayed to Girty in all the anguish of his torment, to rescue him from the fire, or shoot him dead upon the spot. A demoniac smile suffused the countenance of Girty, while he calmly replied to the dying suppliant, that he had no pity for his sufferings; but that he was then satisfying the spirit of revenge, which for a long time he had hoped to have an opportunity to wreak upon him. (Mary Jemison retelling Hiokatoo's story)

In the midst of these extreme tortures [Crawford] called to Simon Girty and begged him to shoot him. Girty made no answer. He called to him again. Girty, by way of derision, told the colonel he had no gun. At the same he turned to an Indian who was behind him, laughed heartily, and by all his gestures seemed delighted at the horrid scene. (John Knight telling what he witnessed)

Overcome by agony, Crawford cried out, "Girty! Girty! For God's sake, Girty, shoot me through the heart!" The raucous din grew ominously silent as all eyes came to rest on the man called Girty. After a moment of introspection, he rose from his seated position by the fires and strode to where Crawford lay sobbing. "I cannot," Girty replied softly. "As you can see, I have no gun." Turning away from Crawford's mangled figure, Girty grinned at the onlookers and belched forth a sinister giggle.

ENTIRE DOCUMENT:

"Col. Crawford's Campaign and Death"

by William Walker, dated April 25, 1857:

At the time Col. Crawford was making preparations for his intended coup d'etat, a large party of Indian warriors, composed of Wyandotte, Delawares and Shawnees, were reconnoitering along the Ohio river, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, and unawares of the preparations that were being made for an invasion of their country by the enemy, 'til the latter crossed the river and made the Old Mingoe Towns their place of rendezvous.

The Indian war party had made no noticeable demonstration upon the settlers over the river except the capture of a negro boy somewhere upon the Kenawha river.

Failing in acquiring booty in prisoners, horses, &c., were on the point of returning, when they were astonished at the discovery of a large force crossing the Ohio, and evidently prepared for a long march. The war party was not at a loss in determining their destination and purpose, as the smoke of the late Moravian Village had as yet, scarcely ceased to ascend. Their destination was doubtless to the Sciota and Sandusky Villages.

A swift Messenger was detailed and sent forward to these villages to apprise them of their discovery.

The war party kept in advance of the invading Army, watching its movements and endeavoring to ascertain its numerical force. Upon arriving at a certain river, supposed to be the Muskingum, another runner was dispatched with additional information.

The Indians continued on their flanks and front till, from the direction then taken by the Army, they were satisfied that the Sandusky Villages was the point aimed at, when another messenger was dispatched to communicate this important news.

Thus were the steps of Crawford's Army dogged from the Ohio river till it emerged from the wilderness to the great plains of Sandusky. Crawford all his time unconscious of the presence of enemies spies then affording the Indian allies ample time to make all needful preparations to give the invaders a suitable reception. Nothing of importance occur'd on the Sandusky plains except a skirmish or two till the Army reached the neighbourhood of Upper Sandusky, when the Army, thro' its scouts, discovered a strong force posted six or seven miles north of the latter place. The Army advanced, as Girty said, "Helter Skelter and in the most disorderly manner". The Indians posted themselves in a deep ravine thickly skirted with underbrush and running nearly at right angles with the usually travelled road: an open and undulating prairie on the left and the Sandusky river three fourths of a mile to the right. On reaching the brow of the hill which descends into the ravine, not in battle order, Girty says, an unexpected and gauling fire was the first intimation the invaders had of a formidable opposition; Crawford and his Army calculating confidently that they would carry everything before them. This threw the undisciplined Army into "noise and confusion", when a retreat was ordered, to an Island of timber (Now called "Battle Island", three miles North of Upper Sandusky, the County seat of Wyandott County, Ohio) three miles in their rear; arriving there, the retreating Army halted and resolved to maintain that position.

The particulars of that battle and its results so disastrous to the invaders are matters of history; and as many different accounts as I have read, I give the preference to that contained in Dr. Doddridge's Notes. I therefore, pass on without giving the Wyandott version, as it would be very imperfect.

You ask for the "Wyandott Account of the burning of Crawford , 'of Girty" &c. After the capture of the Colonel and Doctor Knight the Delaware and such Muncie and Mohican (cognate tribes with the former) Chiefs as were in the neighborhood assembled in Council to deliberate upon the disposition to be made of Crawford It appears that Captain Pipe supposed the prisoner to be Col. Williamson, and so reported, Wingetund not having, as yet, seen the prisoner. Nor was he undeceived till he saw him at the stake. During their deliberations it was suggested that the Wyandott Sachem, Half King, would interpose to save the prisoner from his impending fate. Wingetund determined upon anticipating this movement by sending to the Sachem an ambiguous and ingeniously prepared message, accompanied with a string of wampum to give it additional weight and importance. I cannot pretend to give the message verbatim, but it was in substance this: "Your nephew, the Delaware has heretofore acted in our other important matters under your direction and advice. I have now an object in view which I ardently wish to accomplish, and wish to act on my own responsibility, and now act on my own responsibility and now ask my wise Uncle, in this one instance, to let me have my own way without interference. Will my Uncle grant this request? The Half King not suspecting any ruse in this message, but supposing the Delaware had in view the raising of a war party of his own people, readily pledged himself to non-interference. It has been asserted that Girty was present at this Council and made the suggestion and coined the message, in order to insure Crawford's execution; but this is incorrect. He was not present. The Delawares, as well as Wyandotte, regarded him with very little favor, except as a mere instrument, a decoy duck, a cat's paw, for the time being. The Delawares laid no claim to Doctor K., he being captured by a Shawnee warrior. The Wyandotte say that no Wyandott Chief or principal or leading men were present at the horning of C... Some young men may have been present as idle spectators.

I would here remark that it is due injustice to Girty to say that he did evince an anxiety to save the unhappy prisoner. The Wyandotte, at least, give him this credit. But the circumstances of his seeking, in the dead of the night, and obtaining an interview with Crawford on the night of the retreat, and pointing out a place where he could pass the lines of the Allies undiscovered, destroyed what little confidence they had previously reposed in his fidelity.

This caused the threat of Captain Pipe to the former who was interceding, "If you say one more word on that subject I will plant another stake for you, and burn you alongside the white Chief".

Your's truly
Wm. Walker