



Simon Girty: The Renegade "White Devil" Warrior of the Pennsylvania Wilderness Frontier (1843)

A.W. Patterson

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Simon Girty (1741 –1818) was an American colonial of Scots-Irish birth who served as a liaison between the British and their Indian allies during the American Revolution. He was portrayed as a villain, called "the White Savage", in many early history texts of the United States, and was also featured this way in nineteenth and early twentieth-century United States fiction.

As children, Girty and his brothers were taken captive in Pennsylvania in a Seneca raid and adopted by Indian families. He lived with the Seneca for seven years and became fully assimilated, preferring their culture. He was returned to his birth family but retained a sympathy for the Indians.

After he gained the respect of the Mingoes by running the gauntlet successfully, the Mingo pulled out all of Simon Girty's hair, leaving just a scalplock on his crown. Later, Simon was given "breechcloth and leggings, a deerskin shirt, and moccasins." Simon Girty lived with Guyasuta for seven years. He was returned to the British in November 1764, during a prisoner exchange after the end of Pontiac's War.

During the period when Simon Girty lived with them (1756-1764), Guyasuta and the Ohio Seneca fought in many battles against the British in the French and Indian War. Guyasuta was instrumental in defeat of Major James Grant at the Battle of Fort Duquesne on September 14, 1758. The French and Indian War officially ended in 1763, but hostilities between the Indians and the British continued in Pontiac's War. Guyasuta and the Ohio Seneca were allied with Pontiac, and fought the British alongside his warriors at the July 1763 Siege of Fort Pitt, the July 31, 1763 Battle of Bloody Run, the August 5–6, 1763 Battle of Bushy Run, and the September 14, 1763 Devil's Hole Massacre (the deadliest engagement for British soldiers during the war). It's unclear if Simon Girty fought along with Guyasuta in this war.

On October 17, 1764, British commander Henry Bouquet demanded that the Ohio Indians return all captives, including those not yet returned from the French and Indian War. Chief Guyasuta and other native leaders reluctantly handed over more than 200 captives, many of whom had been adopted into Indian families. On November 14, 1764, Simon Girty returned to the British after a prisoner exchange, and resurfaced near Fort Pitt. Simon Girty knew 11 languages, had become fully assimilated with the Seneca, and preferred their way of life.

Simon Girty was the principal interpreter at the signing of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix between the Iroquois and the British.

Contents

- Simon Girty
- Character and causes of desertion
- His attack on Wheeling
- Rescues Kenton
- His battle at the Piqua Towns
- Present at the burning of Colonel Crawford

- His present speech before a grand council of the Indians at Chillicothe
- His attack on Bryant's Station and battle of the Blue Licks
- His subsequent life
- Whiskey insurrection
- Wayne's war and victory
- Conclusion.

This book originally published in 1843 has been reformatted for the Kindle and may contain an occasional imperfection; original spellings have been kept in place.

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