ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY
October 10

The Battle of Point Pleasant was fought on October 10, 1774.

CSO: SS.8.20, SS.8.21, ELA.8.1

1. How did the Virginia Militia under Colonel Andrew Lewis learn of an impending attack from the Shawnee?

2. According to the letter, what were the Indians doing with their dead that made enumerating their losses difficult?

3. In the letter to Lord Dunmore, what was one of the “most inglorious designs that ever disgraced the name of a British soldier?”

4. What are the two ‘facts’ stated in the letter to Dunmore about the grievances the colonies had against the British?

Think Critically: Why is the Battle of Point Pleasant arguably the most significant battle fought in present-day West Virginia? What would have happened if the Virginia Militia had been unable to successfully pacify the Native Americans in the Ohio Valley prior to the American Revolution?
EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM STAUNTON, IN VIRGINIA,
DATED NOVEMBER 4, 1774.

On the tenth of October, our Army being encamped in
the Fork of the Great Kenhawa, two men went out early
to hunt, but were fired upon by a number of Indians, when
one of them was killed; the other made his escape, and
brought the intelligence to the Camp. Colonel Lewis im-
mediately ordered out three hundred men, who, after march-
ing about three quarters of a mile before sun-rise, were
attacked by a number (supposed to be from eight hun-
dred to one thousand,) of desperate savages. They soon
made our men retreat about one quarter of a mile, when a
reinforcement coming up, they continued fighting till noon,
and were never above twenty yards apart, often within six,
and sometimes close together tomahawking one another.
The Indians then began to fall back, but continued fighting
at a distance till night came on and parted them. Such a
battle with Indians, it is imagined, was never heard of be-
fore. We had upwards of fifty men killed, and ninety
wounded. Amongst the slain were many brave men, both
officers and privates; and a Magistrate of this place, Mr.
Frog, a very worthy gentleman, was also killed. So eager
were the Indians for his scalp, that one man shot three of
them over him, endeavouring by turns to scalp him. The
number of Indians killed cannot be ascertained, as they
were continually carrying them off and throwing them into
the River; but from the tracks of blood, the number must
have been great. Our men got upwards of twenty scalps,
eighty blankets, about forty guns, and a great many toma-
hawks; and intended in a few days to go over the River
to meet the Governour, twenty or twenty-five miles from
their Towns. The Indians the Governour lately concluded
a peace with, it is assured, were in this battle. We sup-
pose they have had the other struggle before this time, and
are very impatient to know the issue.
Williamsburg, December 5, 1774.

To his Excellency the Right Honourable John, Earl of Dunmore, his Majesty's Lieutenant and Governor-

* List of the Killed and Wounded Virginians.—KILLED.—Colonel Charles Lewis, Major John Field, Captains John Murray, Robert M'Clenachan, Samuel Wilson, James Ward, Lieutenant Hugh Allen, Ensigns Candiff and Baker; Privates, 44.

WOUNDED.—Captains W. Fleming, (since dead,) J. Dickenson, Thomas Blueford, John Stidman, Lieutenants Goodman, Robeson, Lard, Vanners; Privates, 79.

Boston, February 20, 1775.—On reading the account of the battle between the brave Virginians and their savage neighbours, it brought to my mind the keen resentments and mortifying reflections that must naturally kindle in the breasts of an experienced General, brave officers, and intrepid soldiers, to remember that the professed design of Britain, in maintaining Standing Armies in America, was the protection of the Colonies, and yet known at the very moment, the noble Virginians were bleeding, dying, and winning the laurels of victory, they were confined and basking in their tents, to execute one of the most inglorious designs that ever disgraced the name of a British Soldier, viz: enslaving a free Province that has supported itself more than one hundred and fifty years, against her savage foes. These resentments and reflections must still increase, when they feel and know the irresistible conviction this proceeding will give to every honest man in Britain or America, of these two facts: First. That the real design of keeping a Standing Army in America, was not protecting but enslaving the Colonies. The second thing thus demonstrated, is, that the Colonies do not need or desire protection from the Standing Armies, but are able and willing to defend themselves, and therefore they must view their stay in America as useless and burdensome. In this situation it is natural for Americans to imagine the honest, generous souls of the gentlemen of the Army will kindle to such a degree, when their inglorious and base employment is compared with that of the virtuous Virginians, gaining the art of war and glory of victory, that they would rather resign their commissions or lives, than suffer the eternal disgrace of having their names handed down to posterity, with these facts to sully some future page in British or American story. Can we expect less from these generous spirits, than that they let their corrupt employers know the just indignation they feel at this abuse and disgrace that is, and will be fixed eternally on their names, as the dupes of tyranny?