

Who Is There to Mourn for Logan? Or Hawkeyes and Horseheads

By J.R. Elrod

Presented to The Indianapolis Literary Club, January 20, 2026.

One of America's most celebrated speeches is nearly forgotten today. In 1867, one historian described it as "A speech that first attracted the attention of Mr. [Thomas] Jefferson, and has since been repeated by every school boy as a specimen of Indian eloquence." Included in the ubiquitous *McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader*, the speech is often entitled Logan's Lament.

William McGuffey's textbooks, first published in the 1830s, were a staple in classrooms throughout the 19th Century and frequently rediscovered in the 20th Century. Henry Ford absorbed the Readers as a child and enthusiastically recommended them to anyone seeking self-improvement. These textbooks were based on phonetics and progressed in difficulty. McGuffey selected wide-ranging texts and followed them with discussion questions to encourage comprehension and critical thinking.

Professors of education have utterly failed in their endless efforts to improve upon McGuffey's common-sense methodology, to the detriment of generations of students.

McGuffey's inclusion of Logan's Lament is remarkable. The selection is neither poetry nor prose, but rather a diplomatic missive—a formal denial of a request to attend a peace treaty. Equally surprising is the identity of the speech's author: a Native American war chief known as Captain John Logan.

The short speech, often compared to the Gettysburg Address for its brevity and poignancy, captures the sadness, rage, and pride of an Indian whose family was murdered by white settlers. The speaker mourns becoming the last of his line. Its prose is so elegant and moving that it rings more like poetry rather than history.

Historians of the 19th Century vigorously debated its authenticity. Some doubted an illiterate Indian like Logan could articulate such noble thoughts. Part of the intrigue arose from the fact that the speech was delivered deep in the Indian country of modern-day Ohio to an audience of one: a backwoods fur trader named John Gibson. Could the son of a tavern owner from provincial Lancaster, Pennsylvania, craft the English words that so movingly captured the warrior's thoughts?

The dispute raged until Theodore Roosevelt, in his series *The Winning of the West*, weighed the historical evidence and decisively ruled that the speech was indeed authored by Logan and faithfully translated by Gibson.

Logan was a Mingo, the name for bands of Iroquois living in the Algonquin lands of the Midwest. In the speech Logan recounts why he went to war against the settlers, and why he would not attend the peace treaty held that October in 1774:

I appeal to any White man to [say] if ever he entered Logan's Cabin hungry and I gave him not meat, if ever he came cold or naked and I gave him not Cloathing. During the Course of the last long and bloody War, Logan remained Idle in his Tent an Advocate for Peace; Nay such was my love for the Whites, that those of my own Country pointed at me as they passed by and said Logan is the friend of White men: I had even thought to live with you but for the Injuries of one man: Col. Cresop, the last Spring in cold blood and unprovoked cut off all the Relations of Logan not sparing even my Women and Children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the Veins of any human Creature. This called on me for Revenge: I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my Vengeance. For my Country I rejoice at the Beams of Peace: But do not harbour a thought that mine is the Joy of fear: Logan never felt fear: He will not turn his Heal to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one.

Haunting words are they not? Who is there to mourn for Logan? Who mourns for the Indians?

One cannot help but think of Logan as a historical "last of the Mohicans."

...

James Fenimore Cooper is considered by many to be the first American novelist; but not because he was the first American to write a novel. Cooper was the first to stop imitating the British novelists and begin writing about Americans set in America. His greatest character was of course Natty Bumppo, better known as Hawkeye, a white frontiersman and the protagonist who goes to the rescue of two damsels in distress, taken captive by the villain, a Huron Indian called Magua.

Written in 1826, *The Last of the Mohicans* is set seven decades earlier in upstate New York during the French and Indian War. The two youthful sisters are en route to meet their father, the British Colonel Munro, then in command of a wilderness fort. The women are double-crossed by their Indian guide

Magua. Hawkeye comes to the rescue. In him, we find the prototypical American icon: the strong, resilient, capable backwoodsman; a personification of American rugged individualism.

Hawkeye's character is juxtaposed against Duncan, the dashing young officer from the southern colonies who is in love with the Colonel's younger daughter, Alice. Duncan is a man of refinement, education, duty, and courage. But he is not the folk hero, as a conventional do-gooder never can be. Hawkeye—a feared sharpshooter called the Long Rifle by his Indian foes—is the hero.

The Last of the Mohicans is no melodrama of cowboys fighting Indians. It deftly examines the origin story of the nation we call America. It challenges our original sin.

The New World was not unoccupied when the “poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free” first arrived. From John Smith and Pocahontas to the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock, the story of America is also a story of friendship met with displacement. This uneasy, unresolved tension reflects a profound guilt: this great nation extinguished the cultures, languages, and customs of hundreds of fierce and fascinating tribes who had filled these lands for a millennium before us.

A certain portion of Americans have no doubt never felt empathy for the fate of these pagan Indians. But as a quintessential American cultural marker, we as Americans want to believe, had we lived back then, we would have been a friend of the Indians. It is true today. It was true exactly two centuries ago when Cooper wrote his enduring work.

This cultural marker is what makes Hawkeye a beloved American icon. He was not simply an Indian-fighter. He lived among the Indians and learned their ways. He was devoted to his adopted Indian family, the Mohican chief Chingachgook and his son Uncas—the last two of the Mohicans. These Indians were not sidekicks to Hawkeye; no Tontos to the Lone Ranger. Hawkeye fought their fights and warred against their tribal enemies. Hawkeye depended on their wisdom and strategy, not vice versa.

It is Hawkeye's ability to transcend both sides of the frontier that makes him irresistible. Hawkeye could walk freely among both colonial officers and war chiefs.

Hawkeye is the classic American folk hero. He is the legend that surrounds the historical Daniel Boone. Boone was no friend of the Indians in real life. He was a conventional land-grabbing settler. His claim to fame was widening a lesser-known Indian trail to accommodate packhorses and wagons. He explored and founded settlements in Kentucky, the age-old hunting grounds of the Shawnee, completely disregarding their warnings to leave. Boone paid the price when his own son was killed by Indians in a

raid on his settlement. Boone's historical rescue of his daughters from Shawnee warriors may have inspired Cooper's book.

The legendary notion that Boone could pass freely from army encampment to Indian council gave rise to a thousand tales where only this frontiersman could set things right: protecting the good Indians, fighting the bad Indians, and exposing the conspiracy of corrupt arms dealers and greedy landgrabbers.

In characters like Hawkeye or the legends of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, we see our better angels. These fantasies offer a vision of what America could have been, and it helps ease the pain of America's true history.

You might be surprised to learn that Cooper also addressed America's other original sin, slavery. The Colonel's daughters are half-sisters. The elder, Cora, was biracial: her mother, the Colonel's first wife, was a wealthy heiress from the West Indies and "remotely descended from a slave." But it was no shameful secret. The Colonel warned Duncan, knowing him to be a southerner, that any man who looked down on his daughter out of racial prejudice would, I quote, "feel the weight of a father's anger."

Cooper brings the two original sins of America together when the Colonel speaks at the Indian funeral given for Cora:

Tell them that the Being we all worship, under different names, will recognize their kindness; and that the time shall not be distant when we may assemble around His throne without distinction of race, or sex, or color.

Those words, it bears repeating, were written in 1826 in a hugely popular novel.

The funeral at the end of the book is also for Uncas, who died in the battle as well. At Uncas's interment, his father asked, "Why do my brothers mourn?" After all, Uncas has gone to the Great Spirit to forever roam the "happy hunting grounds." But Chingachgook mourned for himself, saying "I stand like a lone pine in a clearing of pale faces . . . I am alone." He has become the last of the Mohicans.

The wise Delaware (Lenape) Chief Tamenund, whose character oversaw the council deciding Cora's fate, echoed those sentiments. The book ends with his own lament:

The pale faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red men has not yet come again. My day has been too long. In the morning I saw the sons of the Tortoise happy and strong; and yet, before night has come, have I lived to see the last warrior of the wise race of the Mohicans.

The true theme of the book is the end of an era. Who mourns for the loss of America's First Peoples?

Cooper's choice of name for the elder sachem was intentional. The real life Delaware chief Tamanend signed the treaty with William Penn in in the 1680s that established the Unbreakable Chain of Friendship and a century of largely peaceful Indian-settler relations in Pennsylvania. Tamanend was so revered he became America's first patron saint.

By the 1770s, fraternal orders called the Sons of Tammany began to form and May Day was marked with St. Tammany festivals full of music and maypoles. In an era when armies marched under the banners of saints, the Continental Army replaced the image of St. George with the face of St. Tammany. At Valley Forge, the amassing regiments celebrated St. Tammany's Day with extra rations and libations.

It is a shame that America has forgotten Tamanend. It remembers Tammany Hall, the building erected by the fraternal Order of St. Tammany, where Boss Tweed ruled the New York City political machine. A statue of Tamanend himself greeted all who entered.

Even if we have never heard of the great chief, we have all seen an iconic version of Tamanend's face. In 1932, a football team was formed called the Boston Braves and later renamed the Redskins, using a distinct logo of an Indian's face in profile. For the better part of a century, the jerseys of the Washington Redskins honored Tamanend. Then historically illiterate iconoclasts demanded Tamanend's head. In their ignorance and self-righteousness, these fools could not discern the difference between the Cleveland Indians' offensive Chief Wahoo and the respectful image of Tamanend. Now the "Commanders" have erased a true historical Indian that Americans had revered for almost 350 years.

But who will mourn for Chief Tamanend?

...

In the 200 years since Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, Hawkeye's leitmotif has remained part of the American identity. The 1992 film version of the book, with Daniel Day Lewis's masterful performance as Hawkeye, was a huge box office success.

A few years earlier, the basic character of Hawkeye was rewritten into the Civil War era: a disillusioned Union soldier requests reassignment so he can see the West before it's gone. The unsold screenplay turned novel turned screenplay again, was authored by Michael Blake. He could have entitled it "The Last of the Lakota," but he chose the title *Dances with Wolves*. Kevin Costner's portrayal of Dunbar

shows him seeking acceptance and mutual understanding with Kicking Bird, fighting alongside the good Indians against the bad Indians, and eventually fleeing the brutality of his own attacking U.S. Army.

It was nominated for 12 Academy Awards and won 7, including Best Picture—and this was in an era when the Academy chose movies that people actually wanted to watch.

This was not the result of a late 20th Century new enlightenment or political correctness. Many of the biggest stars of the 1960's played Indians or half-bloods in title roles: Hoosier and Beech Grove native Steve McQueen starred in *Nevada Smith*, Elvis Presley in *Flaming Star*, and Burt Reynolds in *Navajo Joe*—the latter two of whom claimed Cherokee ancestry in real life.

We, as Americans, want to share in the Native American experience. The fictional Hawkeye gives us that opportunity. We want to imagine there were backwoodsmen of intelligence and reason who had a vision of an America big enough for both the colonists and the Indians.

...

Then and now, it is hard to say what it meant to be a friend of the Indians. By the late colonial era, the eastern woodland tribes were entirely dependent on western goods: muskets, gunpowder, tomahawks, hunting knives, pots, blankets, and rum. Many tribes, particularly in New England and upstate New York, followed a gradual path of assimilation—retaining Indian culture but adopting modern trades and agriculture. Other tribes saw only two irreconcilable cultures.

A significant portion of the true-life Mohicans were very receptive to the Moravian missionaries. Under the Moravian model, the Christianized Indians lived in their own beautiful villages with a church at its center, a school nearby, and neatly laid out log houses with fenced vegetable gardens behind them. Church services were conducted in German with Indian translators and hymns sung in Iroquois.

The great Mohawk war chief, known as Joseph Brant, was educated at Dartmouth, translated the Gospels into the Mohawk language, and became a Freemason on a trip to England where he was introduced to royals. He led Indians into battle alongside the British during both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. After the war, he created a trust to hold Indian lands in Canada for the benefit of the tribe and commenced an ambitious plan to build their own sawmills and granaries.

At the other end of the spectrum was the Delaware prophet Neolin who had a vision of heaven where God would reward the Indians if they returned to their old ways: living off the land without western goods, especially alcohol. These teachings inspired Pontiac's Rebellion, the first pan-Indian alliance that

attacked and captured several British forts shortly after the French and Indian War. Neolin's vision was borrowed by The Prophet and his brother Tecumseh a half century later in Indiana as they raised a pan-Indian alliance in hopes of pushing the settlers back across the Ohio River.

The most reviled turncoat of the American Revolution was, in his own way, a friend of the Indians. Compared to the renegade Simon Girty, Benedict Arnold was fairly harmless. Girty had been captured by the Indians as a teen and, despite the horrors of watching his stepfather tortured and burned at the stake, grew up as an ardent member of the Mingo (Seneca) tribe. Girty served at Fort Pitt in the early part of the Revolution but switched to the British. For the remainder of the war and until the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, he personally led Indian war parties as they laid waste to men, women, and children along the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky.

Girty makes for a great nihilist anti-hero but not a real-life Hawkeye.

Though Neolin was an isolationist, he remained open-minded and intellectually curious. He frequently engaged in long theological discussions with missionaries who visited the Delaware. Neolin even adopted a young captive, a trader from Pennsylvania. The Indians called him Horsehead. Girty called him his most hated enemy. His name was John Gibson, the one who received Chief Logan's speech. Gibson was indeed a friend of the Indians in the image of Hawkeye.

...

Born in 1740, Gibson's mother was the daughter of an exiled Huguenot nobleman, and she taught her sons French and Spanish. His father retained a schoolmaster to give him a classical education, including Greek and Latin. His aunt and older sister became founders of the Juliana Library one of only three lending libraries in the colony, and named for its patron, Juliana Penn, the wife of the proprietor of the colony.

As the French and Indian War raged, eighteen-year-old Gibson joined the Forbes Expedition to take the French fort at the Forks of the Ohio River, Fort Duquesne, and served as an officer at the rechristened Fort Pitt.

After only a couple of years in the army, Gibson left to become a trader with the Shawnee. He would learn several Indian languages. When Pontiac's Rebellion reached the Ohio Country in 1763, a Delaware war party captured Gibson and a few other traders with him. One of the men was killed immediately—

burnt at the stake right beside the river. Another of his compatriots met the same fate before it was Gibson's turn. The story of his escape was recorded by Gibson's nephew:

Suddenly [an Indian woman] entered the circle with a determined mien, and knife in hand. . . . Gibson at once concluded it was for the purpose of plunging it into his bosom, perhaps to save him the horrors of a worse, more painful fate, or to satisfy some fiendish spirit of revenge. Instead . . . this Pocahontas cut the thongs which bound him to the stake and led him away thus adopting him in place of her son lost in the previous war—and to this ancient custom none had a right to interpose.

During this time Gibson was adopted by the Delaware prophet Neolin and made a full member of the Delaware tribe.

In the treaty following the war, Gibson and several other traders were given the rights to Indian lands as reparations. They formed a company to sell the land. It was called the Indiana Company—the first time that name was used to describe the lands along the Ohio River Valley.

Gibson later married an Indian woman. She was Logan's sister. And she gave birth to a daughter in the spring of 1774.

That same spring, the Governor of Virginia, a Scottish nobleman known as Lord Dunmore, seized control of Pittsburgh from Pennsylvania, claiming it stood within the bounds of Virginia's charter. This was part of Dunmore's bid to start a war; Indian wars usually ended with treaties where big shot colonials got Indian lands, making them very rich.

Dunmore sent a circular to the border settlements warning of an eminent Indian attack and encouraging the frontiersmen to strike first. Michael Cresap, who had a reputation as an Indian-fighter, rallied a militia to ambush peaceful Indians passing down the Ohio. Upping the stakes, Cresap marched toward a Mingo hunting camp at the mouth of Yellow Creek—it was Logan's camp.

Logan, whose Indian name was probably Tah-jah-gute, was the son of a high ranking Six Nations official called Shikellamy. Shikellamy was a Frenchman captured at Montreal as a child and raised by the Oneida. Logan's mother was Cayuga.

As one contemporary noted, Logan was "considerably above six feet high, strong and well proportioned, of a brave, open, manly countenance, as straight as an arrow; and to appearance, would not be afraid to meet any man." Another described him as the most martial Indian he ever saw. A missionary recalled

him as “a man of quick comprehension, good judgment and talents.” He spoke English and was friendly with his neighbors. One settler recalled Logan gifting his little girl a pair of beautifully wrought moccasins.

As they marched on Logan’s camp, Cresap chatted with a young frontiersman, George Rogers Clark. Both men had stopped and had a friendly visit with Logan on their way downriver. After some discussion, Cresap, Clark, and most of the men decided against the attack and went home. But a man named Daniel Greathouse was not dissuaded and rallied other men to continue. Greathouse went to Logan’s camp. Logan was not there. Greathouse invited the Indians to come to a settler’s house across the Ohio river to drink and gamble on target-shooting the next day.

Seven Indians crossed the river, including Logan’s brother, mother, and sister--John Gibson’s wife. The women and Logan’s brother went inside. The Indians shot the targets first. When it was the frontiersmen’s try, they turned their guns away from the targets and shot the Indians. Inside, men hidden in the house attacked the other Indians.

Logan’s sister ran from the house pleading that she was Gibson’s wife. Unmoved, they shot her in the forehead. The little girl was still strapped in the papoose upon her back.

The baby might have been killed too, but Indians rushed in canoes across the river, having heard the shots and screams. The frontiersmen hid in the treeline and fired on the canoes, forcing them back. In all, thirteen Indians were killed in what became known as the Yellow Creek Massacre.

Gibson’s infant daughter was taken to one of George Washington’s land agents. Letters to Washington contain first-hand accounts of the affair. The baby was reunited with Gibson, and she lived with him well into adulthood.

Enraged, Logan and his warriors killed at least thirty men, women, and children during their stealthy attacks on families in remote cabins and settlements. He left a war club with a note written in gunpowder ink on one of the victims. It raged at the murders at Yellow Creek and the child taken captive—referring to Gibson’s daughter.

Fear swept the frontier. Thousands of settler families fled the borderlands. Dunmore raised an army of 2,500 men.

Gibson, though previously in command of the militia at Fort Pitt, declined to seek a commission. He worked with Dunmore to keep the neutral Delaware safe. When Dunmore’s army marched on the

Shawnees, Gibson followed and brought White Eyes and other Indians with him in hopes of making peace. He performed this duty even as some of the very men who murdered his wife marched in the army beside him.

As the main army under Dunmore advanced on the Shawnee towns, the chiefs decided to sue for peace and requested someone who understood their language be sent to them to make arrangements for a treaty council. Gibson was chosen.

Here I quote from my manuscript, a book on John Gibson:

John Gibson departed with a flag and an offer of peace.” Midway on his trek to the Indian towns, Gibson found Logan “standing with folded arms, at the side of the path where it crossed a small stream.” The trader greeted his brother-in-law, saying, ““How do you do, my friend Logan? I am glad to see you.”” Logan sullenly replied, in English, ““I suppose you are,’ and turned away.”

Logan had just returned that day from an attack on the Holston, carrying several scalps and towing two black men and a young boy as captives.

Chillicothe was a town of log houses on a large plain, all planted in corn. Gibson entered a cabin and met with Cornstalk and the other chiefs of the Shawnees.”

...

The Indians convened a council and Gibson delivered the speech from Dunmore. He noticed with disappointment that Logan was not present to hear the terms of his mission. After the business was completed, Gibson “walked about, talked, and drank” with his old friends. Then he “felt himself being plucked by the cape of his capote.” Turning, he saw Logan behind him, “his face convulsed with passion, and beckoning to follow him.”

One of the Shawnee distrusted Logan and begged Horsehead not to go. The trader had no certainty as to Logan’s intentions. The Mingo had laid in wait to kill him a year ago. He considered Gibson’s daughter a prisoner and captive who rightfully belonged with her Indian family and tribe.

Logan insisted, saying, “Gibson, come.” Horsehead obeyed and followed the wearing Mingo’s rapid retreat into the wilderness.

They continued about a mile from the village until they reached the privacy of a “thick copse of hazel bushes.” Logan motioned for Gibson to sit on a log. He did and Logan “burst into a torrent of tears.”

Gibson sat silently. Once Logan “regained the power of utterance,” he began to speak in Delaware. Gibson recalled his delivery “in accents dictated by an abiding sense of his wrongs, and in tones expressive of the hopeless desolation of his heart.” The speech was “the last passionate throb” of a heart broken by betrayal.

After some time, the conversation turned to the subject of the war and the impending treaty. Logan refused to attend the treaty and uttered a short and haunting allocution.

On the last day of the treaty, Gibson read the speech he had received from Logan in the woods. The soldiers were awed. They erupted in cheers. The ovation was so great that Dunmore himself recited the speech twice more.

Within weeks, the speech circulated throughout the colonies. Thomas Jefferson copied it into his pocketbook. James Madison included it in a letter to a friend in January. It was published in newspapers in New York and Virginia in February. By the end of the year it had been published in Britain and on the Continent, and schoolboys in both the Old and New World began memorizing it for exercises in oratory.

...

As the outset of the Revolution, Gibson carried the enormous 6-foot Congress Peace Belt to the western tribes, seeking their neutrality during the war. By one report, Logan sought to attack Gibson during his travels.

Logan had been struck by melancholy and perhaps regret. One missionary recalled a conversation with Logan: “Life, said he, had become a torment to him; he knew no more what pleasure was.” While rumored to have taken part in raids during the Revolutionary War, he did not lead them. Logan was murdered by his own nephew in 1780.

...

In Gibson’s travels as an Indian agent, he brought with him Richard Conner, a Maryland man who had lived as an Indian among the Shawnee and married a captive named Peggy. The elders consented to

their marriage only if they agreed their children would remain with the tribe if they left. The Conners had to leave their infant son James behind when Peggy was released as a captive under a treaty. While the Conners were living with the Moravian Indians, Gibson helped Richard ransom his son James back. James's younger brothers may be familiar to you: John Conner founded Connersville, Indiana, and William Conner built the house still preserved at Conner Prairie.

...

During the Revolutionary War, Gibson's heart remained with the Indians. First, he convinced the Virginia Assembly to allow him to raise an Indian regiment to fight in the east. It was scuttled when the neutral Delaware became threatened by the British-aligned tribes. Washington commissioned Gibson as a Colonel in the Continental Army and, recognizing his abilities in Indian affairs, posted him at Fort Pitt for the duration of the war. He lived openly with his Indian wife and children at the fort. His half-Indian son, John Gibson, Jr., served as an officer on his staff. He actively pushed to build a fort near the Delaware capital and the Moravian Indians to protect them from the hostile British-aligned Indians.

Most astounding, Gibson was the driving force behind a treaty with the Delaware that would have made them an ally of America, secured them in their lands, and granted them a representative in Congress. Gibson believed Congress would recognize the Delaware and their lands as a reward for their allegiance against the British. Of course, the treaty was never ratified by Congress. Gibson's vision of America did not prevail, but if more had thought as he did, the Delaware Nation might have been the fourteenth state in the Union.

...

When the Frenchman, Count Buffon, wrote his polemic entitled *Natural History*, which claimed Europe was universally superior to America in terms of climate and resources, Thomas Jefferson countered him in his *Notes on Virginia* in 1785. He included Logan's speech as proof of the nobility of America's native peoples. This cemented the speech's place in American history. Noah Webster placed it in his *Little Reader's Assistant* in 1791.

Twenty-five years after it was first delivered, Logan's Lament became a presidential campaign scandal for Jefferson in the 1790s. In the speech, Logan erroneously referred to "Colonel Cresap" as the murderer of his family. Michael Cresap's father, Thomas, was a colonel—but neither of the Cresaps was at Yellow Creek. A Maryland lawyer named Luther Martin published in newspapers several diatribes

accusing Jefferson of fabricating Logan's speech in his *Notes on Virginia* for the malicious purpose of defaming the Cresap name.

Martin, an Anti-Federalist who would be most remembered for refusing to sign the U.S. Constitution at the convention and later representing Aaron Burr at his trial for treason, had married Michael Cresap's daughter. By this time, she was dead, as was Michael and Thomas. Of all the skeletons in Jefferson's closet, an error in a decades-old Indian speech seemed unlikely to upend a campaign. But the scandal became serious enough that Jefferson reached out to Gibson and several others who had first-hand knowledge of the events. In a deposition, Gibson explained that he corrected Logan about Cresap's involvement. But, as a diplomatic matter, Gibson was bound to convey the speech as he received it.

Jefferson published the several responses he received in his revised edition of *Notes on Virginia*, setting the stage for historians to debate the authenticity of Logan's Lament.

...

We should take great pride that Horsehead John Gibson, the bearer of Logan's speech, is rightly regarded as one of the earliest Hoosiers and a Founding Father of Indiana.

At sixty years of age, in 1800, Gibson was appointed the first and only Secretary of the Indiana Territory. Arriving six months before Governor William Henry Harrison, Gibson served as de facto acting governor. It is quite fitting that John Gibson of the Indiana Company became the first governor of Indiana.

Gibson ably advised the youthful Harrison in Indian matters. When Tecumseh became enraged at the Treaty of Vincennes held at Grouseland, and called Harrison a liar in Shawnee, Gibson knew it was a prelude to an attack. Gibson called up the guard, defusing the situation and saving the future president's life.

At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Harrison left the state to command the U.S. Army, and Gibson became acting governor again. With Fort Wayne and Fort Harrison under siege, Gibson defended the western front once again. The danger was so great, he moved the capital from Vincennes to Corydon.

...

While forgotten now, when James Fenimore Cooper wrote *The Last of the Mohicans*, John Gibson was a frontier legend. Alexander Withers, one of the first chroniclers of the Colonial West, recounted a tale of Gibson in 1759 in command of a unit ambushing an Indian camp. A bullet pierced his coat as he charged

and slew Chief Little Eagle with his sword, severing his head. That night, the warriors who escaped raged against Gibson, calling him the Long Knife. Thus Withers attributed to Gibson the genesis of the scornful appellation used by the Western Tribes for Virginians and later all American soldiers, the Long Knives.

Withers was wrong as to both the source of the name and the nature of Gibson.

It is ironic that Gibson was the opposite of Daniel Boone—a friend of the Indians in real life, and an Indian-fighter only in legend.

...

In conclusion, who is there to mourn for Logan? All of us. And we long for a world with more Hawkeyes and Horseheads.