

A Glasburn Family Tradition Authenticated

By OMA GLASBURN ROBINSON

At the age of three, David Glasburn, who was born in 1831 in Covington, Virginia, rode on horseback in front of his mother, Mary Persinger Glasburn, all the way from Virginia to Indiana. His only impression in after years was that of a very long and tiresome journey on a wilderness road. His father, Frederick, who was most anxious to have a good home for his family as soon as possible, died from overwork seven years after settling on a farm in Johnson County, Indiana, leaving David at the age of ten without a father.

As David grew up, he was especially proud of the fact that his family had always stood by the country in times of need; that representatives of the family had taken an active part in all its wars. He himself had participated in the Civil War. His older brother, Samuel, had fought in the Mexican War. Three of his uncles, George, Samuel, and Peter, had taken part in the War of 1812. Samuel had enlisted twice, and Peter had been killed in action.

But David Glasburn was proudest of the record of his grandfather, David Glasburn, whose name he bore. Knowing this intense interest of his, I often read my history lesson (especially when it happened to concern the Colonial Days and the Revolution) aloud to my father before the fireplace at our home, and he said to me again and again: "My grandfather took part in all those wars."

At that time, I, too, was filled with happiness and with pride to think that my people had always done their bit. I was content with the accounts as received, little realizing then the value of exact records of incidents in connection with people and historic places. It did not occur to me to ask the few simple questions which would have given me, in all probability, all the information that I later so greatly desired. As a result, I am at present painstakingly searching for the exact records of my great-grandfather who "took part in all those battles."

As near as I can ascertain, David Glasburn came from the Rhineland in Germany and settled in Virginia about 1760. Following 1766, I find occasional mention of him in the records of Augusta and Botetourt counties. From casual remarks by

my father concerning his grandfather's activities, I was quite sure that he had taken part in the Battle of Point Pleasant which occurred October 10, 1774, on the banks of the Great Kanawha River. This was the most important battle in Lord Dunmore's War, but a careful search of all records failed to reveal the name of David Glasburn.

I was especially hopeful that it might be found in the *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg. This is a volume which was "compiled from the Draper Manuscripts in the Library of the Wisconsin State Historical Society." After a careful perusal of all names in the various companies, I failed to find the name I sought.

However, on page 419, I came across a list of men that held my interest. Their names had been taken from the Draper Mss. (collection number 2zz35). It was a page from Ensign Newell's notebook, written on October 23, 1774, thirteen days after the battle. The notebook was in Newell's handwriting and contained a list of those wounded in the battle, he himself being one of them. The account mentioned three in Captain Shelby's company, two in Captain Russell's company, and one in Captain Campbell's company.

Then came the list of wounded in Captain Arbuckle's company, including the following names, as printed in the Thwaites-Kellogg volume (followed by others not here reproduced) :

John McMullin
David Glascum
John Freeland
William Morris.

As I carefully studied these names, it dawned on me that the *David Glascum* could be the *David Glasburn* for whose name I was searching, as he was in Captain Arbuckle's company. The Captain's farm was just above Glasburn's farm on the North side of the James River. It was of Thomas Carpenter that, a few years later, David Glasburn, my great grandfather, had bought a farm on "the South Side of the James for 100 pounds." In fact, all the men mentioned in the lists had become familiar to me through a study of the early records of the Virginia counties, Augusta and Botetourt, when searching for information relative to David Glasburn.

In all my study, I had never come across the name *Glascum* that I could recall. To check this, I again went over the early census records of Virginia, and, in fact, the indices of all books pertaining to the early history, and the name *Glascum* was not to be found. I became more certain all the time that the name *Glascum* should be *Glasburn*.

I wrote the Wisconsin State Historical Society at Madison, where the original manuscript from which the names had been taken by Thwaites and Kellogg is carefully preserved. Fortunately, my letter reached Miss Annie A. Nunns, who is Assistant Superintendent of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and to whom reference is made in the introduction to the *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*.

At first, I was informed by Miss Nunns, in regard to the original document, that "the 'c' in Glascum is a large, old-fashioned capital 'c' that might easily be mistaken for a 'b', particularly when it occurs in the middle of a word." However, she gladly offered to furnish me with a photostatic copy of the manuscript. I sent for it immediately, but before I received it, a second letter came from Miss Nunns that was most gratifying. She said in part:

I am mailing you the photostat today, and I am positive you are right in your identification of 'Glasburn'. I had not examined the manuscript personally before, but when I did, and went over it with the Head of the Manuscript Department, she says that she was quite mistaken in thinking the letter to be 'c'. Sorry that our mistake, first made in *Dunmore's War*, and later repeated, should have misled anyone, even for a short time.

When the photostat arrived, it proved conclusively both that the later identification by Miss Nunns and my inference were correct. The supposed name *David Glascum* actually was *David Glasburn*.

David Glasburn

In *The History of the Battle of Point Pleasant* by Virgil A. Lewis, the above mentioned mistake is not only incorporated, but is even more misleading. On page 51, in giving the list of wounded, he spelled the name David Glascom instead of David Glascum as in *Dunmore's War*.

I am especially pleased that this mistake has been found, for it is definite proof that my father's story was correct. His grandfather (my great-grandfather), David Glasburn, had fought in the Battle of Point Pleasant, as is fully attested by the fact that his name was on Ensign Newell's list of the wounded, which list was prepared thirteen days after the most important battle of Lord Dunmore's War.