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The Conquest of the Illinois (1920)

George Rogers Clark

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The Conquest of the Illinois (1920) George Rogers Clark
George Rogers Clark (1752 – 1818) was a surveyor, soldier, and militia officer from Virginia and the highest ranking American military officer on the northwestern frontier during the American Revolutionary War. He served as leader of the Kentucky (then part of Virginia) militia throughout much of the war. Clark is best known for his celebrated captures of Kaskaskia (1778) and Vincennes (1779) during the Illinois Campaign, which greatly weakened British influence in the Northwest Territory.

The Illinois campaign (1778-1779) was a series of events during the American Revolutionary War in which a small force of Virginia militiamen led by George Rogers Clark seized control of several British posts in the Illinois country, in what is now the Midwestern United States. The campaign is the best-known action of the western theater of the war and the source of Clark's reputation as an early American military hero.

The importance of the Illinois campaign has been the subject of much debate. Because the British ceded the entire Northwest Territory to the United States in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, some historians have credited Clark with nearly doubling the size of the original Thirteen Colonies by seizing control of the Illinois country during the war. For this reason, Clark was nicknamed "Conqueror of the Northwest", and his Illinois campaign—particularly the surprise march to Vincennes—was greatly celebrated and romanticized.

The Memoir was chiefly written in 1789 and 1790, when Clark was still in full possession of his mental and physical powers; and led to the conclusion that the Memoir, far from being "the reminiscences of an old man who strove for the dramatic in his presentation of facts," is to be regarded as a generally trustworthy and highly valuable historical narrative of the events with which it deals.

Originally published in 1920; reformatted for the Kindle; may contain an occasional imperfection; original spellings have been kept in place.

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