

GIST'S JOURNAL

Christopher Gist, the companion and guide of Washington, kept a journal, from which we make the following extract, as it throws additional light upon the character of Washington, and also narrates more particularly an incident of the journey which the latter mentions only casually:

"We rose early in the morning and set out about two o'clock, and got to Murderingtown, on the southeast fork of Beaver creek. Here we met an Indian whom I thought I had seen at Joncire's at Venango, when on our journey up to the French fort. This fellow called me by my Indian name, and pretended to be glad to see me.

"I thought very ill of this fellow, but did care to let the Major know I mistrusted him. But he soon mistrusted him much as I did. The Indian said he could hear gun from his cabin, and steered us more northerly. We grew uneasy, and then he said two whoops might be heard from his cabin. We went two miles farther. Then the Major said he would stay at the next water. We came to water; we came to a clear meadow. It was very light and snow was on the ground. The Indian made a stop and turned about. The Major saw him point his gun at us, and he fired. Said the Major, 'Are you shot?' 'No,' said I; upon which the Indian ran forward to a big standing white oak, and began loading his gun; but we were soon with him. *I would have killed him, but the Major would not suffer me.* We let him charge his gun; we found he put in a ball; then we took care of him. Either the Major or I always stood by the guns. We made him make a fire for us by a little run, as we intended to sleep there. I said to the Major, 'As you will not have him killed, we must get him away, and then we must travel all night;' upon which I said to the Indian, 'I suppose you were lost and fired your gun?' He said he knew the way to his cabin, and it was but a little way. 'Well,' said I, 'do you go home, and, as we are tired, we will follow your track in the morning; and here is a cake of bread for you, and you must give us meat for it in the morning.' He was glad to get away. I followed him, and listened until he was fairly out of the way, and then we went about a half mile, when we made a fire, set our compass, fixed our course, and traveled all night. In the morning we were at the head of Piny creek."

Christopher Gist, was one of the most noted pioneers and woodsmen that appeared on stage during the troublous times from 1750 to 1783. He was a native of England, and there is some evidence that he had been educated for priest's orders in the English Episcopal Church. He was certainly a woodsman of the highest order, hardy and fearless, a good judge of land, a good surveyor, and well versed in Indian management and diplomacy.