

# Who was Chief Logan?

*By Roy Marinak*

Our clubhouse, the Chief Logan Lodge, was named after John “Captain” Logan of the Mingo Indians. But, did you know that he actually never served as an Indian Chief? There are few written accounts on the life of John Logan, however, the following is what I have been able to piece together.

Born in 1718, John “Captain” Logan or Tachnachdoarus (The Spreading Oak) was the oldest son of Shikellemus, chief of the Mingo Indians. In 1728 Shikellemus was sent by the Iroquois council to look after the interests of the Six Nations in the Susquehanna valley near the present town of West Milton, PA. Chief Shikellemus kept his son John close by his side and entrusted him with many missions. In 1737, while attending an informal archery contest, John Logan’s eye was badly injured by his opponent’s arrow, permanently disfiguring him. In 1738 he married a Shawnee known as Vastina and over the next few years they had six children together. However, by the spring of 1748 Vastina and five of their six children had fallen ill and died.

In December 1748, Chief Shikellemus also died and the colonial government asked John Logan to serve as the Iroquois Deputy Governor as they anticipated the Indian Council naming him as the new Chief. However, because of his eye injury, the council looked upon John Logan as disfigured and disqualified him from the position. By 1750, near present day Tyrone, Logan built a cabin along the Juniata River where he lived with his son, sister, and brother. He remained there until the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, during which he worked as a Patriot spy.

When he returned to Tyrone after the war, he found that a white settler had bought the ground where his cabin stood. He then located to Chickalacamoose, where Clearfield now stands and built another cabin. However, this home also was later taken over by a white settler after Logan had left to visit his brother in Ohio. Logan then returned to the Juniata River where he camped for a time in Riggles Gap before relocating to Tuckahoe, the property owned by the Bell family, where he lived until 1785. Although the exact location of his death is in dispute, it is reported that Logan died in 1820 at the age of one hundred and two. Henry W. Shoemaker in his biography of Logan wrote, “During his life of a century or more he never drew his knife or bow against any man, red or white, except for a just cause. He shed no human blood, except that of the Tory spies and renegades, who would have destroyed stillborn the liberty of the colonies. His influence was always exerted for moral betterment, for liberty, for justice, and above all, for peace. His supreme belief was that through doing good, happiness alone would come.”

Although he never officially served as Chief, the founders of our club obviously held John Logan in high regard as they placed the name of “Chief Logan” on our lodge. I’d like to imagine “Chief” Logan camping along the banks of Riggles Gap Run, cooking game over an open fire and enjoying the beauty and solitude of the Gap as we still do today.