

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: DUNMORE’S WAR: “NO OTHER MOTIVE
THAN THE TRUE INTEREST OF THIS
COUNTRY”

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Dunmore’s War, named for the last royal governor of Virginia, John Murray, fourth Earl of Dunmore, was the last Indian conflict of America’s colonial era. Set mostly in the mountains, valleys and farmlands of the Ohio country from April to November 1774, the conflict started when Indian war parties initiated a war of vengeance with a campaign of small-scale attacks and raids against homes and settlements on Virginia’s frontier. By July 12, after the passive defensive measures on the part of local militia proved inadequate in stemming the violence, Governor Dunmore planned an offensive response with the combined forces of the affected counties to take the war to the Shawnee and Mingo towns. About 2,500 militia soldiers, not counting those who remained behind to guard the settlements, marched against approximately 1,000, mostly Shawnee, Indian warriors. The course of the campaign resulted in only one, but decisive, large-scale engagement in October. By

November the Indian leaders sued for peace and accepted the surprisingly lenient terms that Lord Dunmore proposed in order to spare their towns from destruction.

Relying almost exclusively on primary sources, the narrative places the 1774 conflict in the context of pre-Revolutionary War Virginia. It is in the main a campaign history that examines the military operations of Lord Dunmore's War, but takes into account diplomatic efforts and political factors. It reviews the motives and actions of each participating polity as pursuing its own interests, albeit with a focus on Virginia. It will show that Virginia called on its colonial militia to fight a defensive war that achieved the strategic objective of safeguarding its borders and protecting the lives and property of its citizens from invasion. Furthermore, the narrative demonstrates the colonial Virginia militia as a more competent military organization than is often portrayed.

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"NO OTHER MOTIVE THAN THE TRUE INTEREST OF THIS COUNTRY"

by

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Preface

THE QUIET TIME

A decade after the American colonies declared independence, Dr. Benjamin Rush stated in the *Address to the People of the United States*, given in January 1787 in Philadelphia, “There is nothing more common than to confound the terms of the American Revolution with those of the late American War.”¹ As Rush and other contemporaries reminded their own and future generations, America gained its independence through two distinct processes. The political revolution began to develop with resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765 and eventually became a movement toward independence by 1776 still remained incomplete in 1787 when delegates met to draft a new constitution. The Revolutionary War, or the “late war” of which Rush spoke, started with a discharge of musketry on Lexington Green the morning of April 19, 1775, and ended when the last British troops departed United States territory on “Evacuation Day,” 25 November 1783.

Between 1765 and 1770, two constitutional disputes had strained but not severed relations between Great Britain and its American colonies. The series of constitutional disputes that eventually led to the War of American Independence are therefore summarized in this Introduction. The narrative of this book begins in late 1773, just as a new crisis began to build momentum, but before it spun out of control. The last dispute serves as the backdrop against which Dunmore’s War serves as the

¹ Benjamin Rush “Address to the People of the United States,” June 3, 1786, reprinted in George Stade, ed., *Founding America: Documents from the Revolution to the Bill of Rights* (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble, 2006), 308.

focus of this study. Too important to be ignored, the growing constitutional crisis bears explanation for context.

For the most part, the American colonists considered themselves as British, supporters of the Empire, and loyal subjects of King George III of England. The debate over Parliament's universal power to enact and impose internal taxes on the colonies had flared twice since the end of the French and Indian War. In both, the government had appeared to resolve the controversies more in the colonists' favor. The British government sought to address the debt it had incurred while fighting the global Seven Years War by imposing taxes to raise revenue that would have the American colonies pay for their own administration, police, and defense. In doing so, the British government also saw an opportunity to make the royal governors less dependent on their colonial assemblies, and therefore more responsive to the government at home.

This represented a reversal of British colonial policy. Prior to the second half of the eighteenth century, Parliament and the ministry followed a course described by British statesman Edmund Burke as "a wise and salutary neglect," that granted de facto autonomy and enabled British America "to take her own way to perfection."² The elected representative houses of the several colonial General Assemblies enacted the tax legislation that collected the revenue needed to run their own governments and pay for their own defense. The colonists jealously guarded this responsibility as it served as an effective check on the power of royal or proprietary governors. As long

² Edmund Burke, with Francis R. Lane, ed., Edmund Burke's Speech in the House of Commons March 22, 1775, on Moving His Resolution for Conciliation with the Colonies (New York: Silver, Burdett, and Company, 1900), 29.

as they were “not squeezed . . . by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government,” Burke said, such policies offered little interference to internal provincial government and permitted them to prosper.³ As a result, Americans were generally submissive to Parliament’s regulation of commerce, under which colonies as well as mother country prospered. Satisfied with the permissive political arrangement, colonists left management of foreign and military affairs to the Crown. Although the laws that restricted trade with foreign countries never proved popular, aside from encouraging merchants to engage in smuggling to avoid paying certain revenues, the associated import duties did not generate great hostility in most colonies. Virginians and other American colonists viewed the imperial relationship more as a trade partnership and military alliance superintended by a protector-king, rather than one of a superior to a subordinate. When Parliament and the ministry elected to raise revenue by internal taxation, Virginians and other colonists viewed it as an arbitrary and unconstitutional abuse of power that interfered with colonial governance and threatened their liberty, and resisted.

Resistance to the Stamp Act of 1765 resulted in its repeal by Parliament only a year after enacted. Similarly, the non-importation and non-consumption agreements protesting the Townshend Revenue Acts of 1768, although they did not prove as effective as in the earlier crisis, contributed to the repeal of duties on all enumerated British imports except tea in 1770. Before taking his office as royal governor of New York, John Murray, fourth earl Dunmore, endorsed repeal in an address to the House

³ Burke, 29.

of Lords by declaring, “The Americans, if left to themselves, would soon be quiet.”⁴

After Parliament passed the controversial Tea Act in 1773, the several colonial assemblies’ Committees of Correspondence, and various Whig groups like the Sons of Liberty in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, discussed resistance, but had yet to decide on a concerted course of action. Indeed, the intervening period of nearly three years has come to be called the “Quiet Time.”

At the same time, the colonies and their governments stood less than united on many issues. In New York, separatists who inhabited lands on patents granted by New Hampshire, rejected New York’s jurisdiction in an area they termed the Hampshire Grants. Patents sold by the Connecticut government for land included in its charter from the Crown overlapped that included in Pennsylvania’s proprietary charter. To further complicate matters, interests in both colonies purchased title from the Six Nations of Iroquois for ceding the same territory. The resulting dispute over jurisdiction of the Wyoming Valley caused sporadic violence known as the Pennamite - Yankee Wars. Pennsylvania and Virginia also became embroiled in a boundary dispute over which colony had proper jurisdiction over the region surrounding the Forks of the Ohio. A proposal to create a new proprietary colony called Vandalia threatened to further deny land granted Virginia in its royal charter. Yet, with regard to the Indians, the Virginia frontier had remained relatively quiet since the end of the war called Pontiac’s Uprising until disturbing signs of trouble began to appear in 1773.

⁴ R.C. Simmons and P. D. G. Thomas, eds., Proceedings and Debates of the British Parliament Respecting North America, 1754-1783, Volume 3 (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1984), 166-7; John E. Selby Dunmore (Williamsburg: The Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, 1977), 4,

Americans generally stood united in the belief that Parliament had no constitutional authority to impose taxes or other laws on British subjects not represented in that body. Instead, they held the position they could only be governed by laws or pay taxes passed with their own consent, or by their elected representatives in their respective provincial assemblies. They contended that they lived in colonies settled by freeborn English, who did not forfeit their rights as such when they relocated. They equated their position to that of Ireland, where with few exceptions, the Irish Parliament, not the British, enjoyed legislative primacy over the king's subjects. In their view, the king sat above the colonial legislatures as the supreme magistrate of the empire in the same manner that he did above the British and Irish Parliaments. To do otherwise, American colonists maintained, treated them as the people of a conquered nation that had been absorbed into the Empire, not as native British subjects. As they considered the king as incapable of doing wrong, colonists perceived that the king's ministers deceived him into giving his consent to impose a number of unconstitutional practices on them. They also believed he would restore their rights if he could only be properly informed because, as Burke said, "the colonies owe little or nothing to any care of ours."⁵ With most American Whigs seeking a redress of grievances not independence in mid-1774, one could argue that Virginia represented the most loyal of the thirteen colonies.

The imperial crisis is therefore secondary to the narrative. There are times when the events overlap and influence Virginia's preparations and conduct of operations against the western Indians. For example, as the year 1773 ended, colonial

⁵ Burke, 29.

newspapers carried news of the massacre of a party of settlers in Virginia's westernmost county in the same editions with the first accounts of the Boston Tea Party. Although no one realized it at the time, the events marked the beginning of the end of the Quiet Time, both on the frontier as well as in the imperial relationship.

Dedication

To my dearest wife, Patricia, for her patience and understanding while I was engaged in this ordeal. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many individuals and institutions that have assisted in this project. With the risk of leaving out many, I will name very few individuals for the sake of brevity. Otherwise, the many fine professionals on the staffs of the museums, historic sites, libraries and archives mentioned in the Introduction were of immense help on this project.

Among the first is the library at the National Headquarters of the Society of the Cincinnati in Washington, DC. Not only did the Society honor me with award of its Tyree-Lamb Fellowship, but the library's collection on eighteenth century military manuals and treatises make this resource one of the "go-to" places for researching military history of the period. Library Directoress Ellen McMasters Clark and her staff are not only helpful, but intuitive in locating research documents that ultimately proved helpful, many times, before you even ask. Similarly, the David Library of the American Revolution in Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania is an excellent place to research and write. The library awarded me a residency, and frequent trips to do research there always proved fruitful. Executive Director Meg Sweeney and Librarian Kathy Ludwig went out of their way to assist me.

I am indebted to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for its assistance. I spent many hours in its John D. Rockefeller Research Library, which houses many pertinent and useful primary as well as secondary resources, but to the museum staffs as well. I especially wish to thank Mr. Erik Goldstein for his inviting me to the artifact storage facility where I was able to not only see, but touch and hold, objects like Lord Dunmore's brace of saddle pistols and the fuse he carried on the campaign.

Other members of the staff, too numerous to name here, included curatorial and interpretative staff members who freely shared information on 1774 Virginia with me. Two other institutions, the New York Public Library in New York, New York, and the Filson Historical Society, in Louisville, Kentucky, made many primary source documents available that greatly assisted this research.

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Introduction

Dunmore's War, named for the last royal governor of Virginia, John Murray, fourth Earl of Dunmore, was the final Indian conflict of America's colonial era. Set mostly in the mountains, valleys and farmlands of the Virginia backcountry and Ohio River Valley from April to November 1774, the conflict started when Indian war parties initiated an aggressive campaign of vengeance with small-scale attacks and raids against homes and settlements on Virginia's frontier. By June 10, after passive defensive measures on the part of local militia failed to stem the violence, Governor Dunmore directed the county lieutenants to respond more vigorously, including with limited offensive action. On July 12, the governor took the field to assume personal command. He planned a coordinated response with the combined forces of the three most affected counties to take the war to the Shawnee and Mingo towns. About 2,500 militia soldiers, not counting those who remained behind to guard the settlements, marched against approximately 1,000 defending Indian warriors, mostly Shawnees, not counting those raiding the backcountry at large. The campaign resulted in only one, but decisive, large engagement in October. By November the Indian leaders sued for peace and accepted the terms that Lord Dunmore proposed in order to spare their towns from destruction.

This dissertation is in the main a campaign history that will examine the military operations of Lord Dunmore's War, but also takes into account diplomatic efforts and political factors. It will show that Virginia called on its colonial militia to achieve strategic objectives consistent with the justified defense of the province and

provisions of its royal charter. Furthermore, the narrative will demonstrate that the colonial Virginia militia was a more competent military organization than is often portrayed.

Relying almost exclusively on primary sources, the narrative places the 1774 conflict in the context of pre-Revolutionary War Virginia, and addresses several themes. First, Governor Dunmore acted in what colonists perceived were the best interests of the colony. As a result, his policies were generally popular and earned him the admiration of those he governed. At times, however, they conflicted with those of the British government and put him at odds with the Secretariat of State for the Colonies, also called the Colonial Office, the ministerial department to which he reported and from which he received his orders and instructions. Second, an Indian war in the Ohio country had become inevitable in early 1774, and the Shawnees represented the nation with the most hostility toward the British and colonial westward expansion. While Lord Dunmore received at least nominal support from the British Indian Department, he took an active and direct role in diplomacy with the various native peoples living in the Ohio Valley and bordering his colony. Third, the Virginia governor led his colony's forces in defense of what they viewed as legally acquired territory, and demanded no further land concessions from those they defeated. Fourth, the narrative presents a detailed examination of the organization, training, tactical doctrine and operations of Virginia's colonial militia, which will challenge many popularly-held beliefs. Fifth, and finally, Virginia's victory in Dunmore's War held important implications for both sides in the War for American Independence, especially with regard to Indian participation.

Dunmore's War proved to be the last Indian conflict of America's colonial era. Overshadowed by the American War for Independence, which began six months after it ended, Dunmore's War remains under-studied and largely misunderstood. Many historians have either relegated it to the status of a footnote, or briefly summarized the episode as a prelude to the Revolutionary War. This is unfortunate because the war is an intrinsically interesting subject with significance in its own right. Furthermore, its namesake, John Murray, the fourth Earl of Dunmore and last royal governor of the colony of Virginia, was a major historical figure.

Many of the currently available histories explain the conflict as little more than an attempt to wrest land from aboriginal inhabitants, and vilify Virginia settlers in general and Lord Dunmore in particular. Others describe it as either a relatively unimportant preliminary to, or an intentional diversion of attention from, events occurring at the same time in Boston and Philadelphia that signaled the approaching revolution. In contrast, this project will show that Virginia called on the colonial militia to defend its border from invasion and secure strategic objectives consistent with the legal acquisition of land and its royal charter. The causes and conduct of the Indian war were not connected to origins of the struggle for American independence. However, the results of Dunmore's War held important consequences, which manifested themselves early and throughout the latter conflict.

Various histories of the period that mention of Dunmore's War, especially if written since the late twentieth century, almost universally characterize Virginia as the aggressor and its soldiers as land-hungry opportunists at best or lawless and racist banditti at worst. For example, in his book, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania, author

C. Hale Sipe, described the conflict between the Virginians and the Shawnees as “an altogether unjustifiable war.”⁶ The primary sources cited to support that conclusion reflect the less than objective perspective of participants who favored the interests of Pennsylvania in its 1774 boundary dispute and dominance of the Indian trade. As a result, they vilified Virginians in general and Lord Dunmore in particular. The different views found in Virginia records and the writings of Virginia participants have been largely ignored, marginalized or dismissed as “triumphalist” in much of the recent scholarship.

Without ignoring the evidence that has provided the basis of opposing interpretations, this dissertation will study the situation as Virginians recorded them. The documentary evidence from Virginia sources shows that the colony’s government did not base its policies only on self-serving aggression. Virginia’s acquisition of Indian land between 1768 and 1772 met the established legal requirements, but conformed to the restrictions set forth in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 as well, and were ratified by the British Crown. Virginia’s expansion into the newly ceded land was allowed by law, as contemporary Virginians and government officials viewed it, but reflected the tenets of Enlightenment philosophy on the settlement of new land.

Similarly, many authors cast the Shawnees in the role of innocent victims. In Forced Founders, Woody Holton argued that the Shawnees had resisted the urge to take the warpath until “Virginia land dealers made one last effort to obtain Kentucky

⁶ C. Hale Sipe The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania (Butler, Pa.: Wennawoods Publishing 1931, reprinted Lewisburg, Pa., 1999), 494.

in 1774.” Holton further asserted that the Virginians conspired to provoke hostilities that would provide the “‘pretense’ for attacking Indians.” He maintained that they found their casus belli when “a half-French Mingo named John Logan raided Virginia and Pennsylvania settlements in retaliation for the murder of his family by a group of Virginians.”⁷ While the statement contains a basis in fact, it appears that Holton did not consider the hostile actions committed against Virginians by bands of Shawnee warriors that preceded or precipitated it. The statement also raises a question about Holton’s sources, as those consulted for this study show that Logan was not a “half-French Mingo,” but the son of an Oneida father and Cayuga mother.

In The Unknown American Revolution,” Gary Nash similarly blamed the war on Virginia aggression when he described the Shawnees as “trying to protect their homeland in the face of unauthorized white encroachment”⁸ Put another way, perhaps without realizing it, Nash’s statement affirms that the Shawnees acted in their own national interests, as any polity would – including the Virginia colony. He, like other authors that present similar interpretations, fails to mention that the Six Nations ceded Shawnee hunting ground to the British. The omission maintains the focus on the dispute between the Shawnees and Virginians without an explanation of the Iroquois Confederacy’s involvement in creating the contentious situation. The significance of Six Nations suzerainty over other native peoples is essential to a complete understanding of the situation on the frontier in 1774 and the causes of Dunmore’s War, and is addressed in detail in this dissertation

⁷ Woody Holton Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 33-34.

⁸ Gary Nash The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America (New York: Viking, 2005), 133.

Some historians argue that Virginia sought to fight a war of conquest against Indians, and it mattered little which nation or tribe, in order to take their land. In The Shawnees and the War for America, Colin G. Calloway wrote “the governor [Dunmore] ... and his associates seized on the Indian raids” by Logan’s Mingo war party “to drum up a war against the Shawnees.”⁹ This dissertation, in contrast, will show that Logan’s faction of Mingoes had already allied themselves with that of Shawnees who were predisposed to war. Patrick Griffin asserted in American Leviathan that after Virginians “understood that [defeating] the Cherokees would serve neither their purpose nor Dunmore’s,” they “began changing their story about Cherokee hostility” and provoked the Shawnees into a war instead.¹⁰ The review of primary sources for this study reflects the error in Griffin’s interpretation. It will show that Shawnee war parties had not only raided backcountry settlements before some infamous Virginia ruffians – not organized as militia – massacred Logan’s family, but continued to do so as the Mingo retaliated, while Virginia and Cherokee leaders attempted to resolve their separate dispute peacefully at the same time.

Careful analysis of the comprehensive survey of sources cited in this narrative supports the position that Virginia’s soldiers primarily fought a defensive war against unprovoked Shawnee and Mingo attacks on the south bank of the Ohio. Governor Dunmore resorted to conducting an offensive operation only after it appeared to offer the most militarily and cost effective means to end the war and secure the frontier as soon as possible. It was for this reason that he ordered the militia into the colony’s

⁹ Colin G. Calloway The Shawnees and the War for America (New York: Viking, 2007), 52.

¹⁰ Patrick Griffin, American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier (New York: Hill and Wang Publishing, 2007), 112-113.

service in July 1774. This dissertation will also show that interpretations such as Griffin's statement that "Volunteers intent on booty and land made up Dunmore's force," does not accurately characterize average soldiers' or officers' motivation.¹¹ The taking of what Griffin described as "booty" referred to the possibility of taking Indian horses as an enticement for recruits to join the expedition. Horses represented military resources and therefore legitimate spoils of war, or "plunder," to which the victor was entitled according to the conventions of eighteenth century warfare. Indian raiders certainly sought every opportunity to acquire horses by seizing them from Virginians. While the two terms are often used interchangeably today, historians should consider eighteenth century usage by consulting Samuel Johnson's or other period dictionaries. Griffin chose the more pejorative "booty," connoting goods taken by robbery, rather than "plunder," for spoils taken in war. Although possibly unintentional, the choice of "booty" further casts Virginia soldiers in the role of the aggressor.

Thomas A. Lewis draws a similar inference of the soldiers' motivation in West from Shenandoah when he quoted from a poem Lieutenant James Newell wrote in his journal. Lewis stated that "Even the private soldiers seemed to understand exactly what was at stake," which is true, but he then took Newell's statement "Each will have his part" out of context.¹² Newell's verse continued, "The Ohio once ours, we'll live at our ease," which referred to securing the boundary between the Virginians and

¹¹ Griffin, 117.

¹² Thomas A. Lewis West from Shenandoah: A Scotch-Irish Family Fights for America 1729-1781 (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2004), 199.

Shawnees, not seizing the latter's homeland.¹³ Both authors mentioned above characterized looting and land hunger, not defending home and family, as the principal motives for individual Virginia soldiers to serve. In the pages that follow, one will read what actually motivated the volunteers in their own words, as recorded on their pension applications or correspondence and Newell's cited poem as transcribed in its entirety.

When the expedition proved successful in bringing the hostile Indians to negotiate terms, the war-ending Treaty of Camp Charlotte proved far less draconian than one would expect from an aggressor bent on land acquisition through conquest and genocidal extermination. Although Dunmore demanded that the Shawnees and Mingoies return all captives, including those they had never repatriated at the end of Pontiac's War a decade earlier, he required no cession or encroachment of their homeland. The peace terms affirmed the Ohio River as the boundary between the Virginia colony and the land reserved to the Shawnees according to the treaties Crown authorities had negotiated with the Iroquois in 1768 and the Cherokees in 1768 and 1770, but no demand for "deeds to Kentucky" from the Shawnees as Holton argues.¹⁴ The surrender of several chiefs or leading warriors to serve as hostages represented the sternest measure Lord Dunmore demanded. A common practice in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, hostages served as security that the Shawnees would honor their promise to release all of their white and black prisoners,

¹³ James Newell, Orderly Book and Journal entry dated Camp on Point Pleasant, October 17, 1774, Virginia Papers 11ZZ1-12, Lyman C. Draper Manuscript Collection; and transcribed in Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds. Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), 361.

¹⁴ Holton, 33.

as well as guarantee that their headmen would meet Virginia commissioners to sign the final treaty at Pittsburgh the following spring. The defeated party met the condition to demonstrate a sincere desire to negotiate a lasting peace treaty and show the victor that it was not using an armistice in order to disengage from a losing battle so it could renew hostilities later.

Previous treatments of the military institutional aspects of Dunmore's War have been no less unsatisfactory. Like the explanations of the causes and precipitating events, the available literature includes many inaccurate, albeit oft-repeated or broadly interpreted general descriptions of the Virginia forces. More often, they focus on the social and cultural composition rather than the tactics employed and how the armies fought. With nearly forty pages on the events that led to and including the 1774 Indian conflict, James Corbett David's excellent biography Dunmore's New World offers a notable exception to the usual cursory treatment. However, his focuses more on political and diplomatic maneuvers than military operations. When they appear at all, the typical battle description reads like, "McDonald encountered resistance on the outskirts of Wakatomica. In the ensuing skirmish, two Virginians lost their lives and three Indians were scalped."¹⁵ In contrast, the pages that follow will present a complete and detailed operational account with due consideration of military practice and organization.

The authors who do address the tactical operations attribute any success Virginia militiamen enjoyed to their adopting the tactics of their Indian adversaries, an over

¹⁵ James Corbett David Dunmore's New World (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 85.

simplification. In Point Pleasant 1774: Prelude to the American Revolution, for example, John F. Winkler argues that Dunmore, who “had not seen the massacres of British regulars” in the backcountry battles of the French and Indian War, and therefore did not know that “Battles in the western woods were not for men skilled in fighting in regular formations.” He continued his argument by stating, “They [the battles] were for men who could fight as irregulars.”¹⁶ Winkler described that “if attacked” the militiamen “would scatter and find cover behind trees and logs. Then, in a contest of firearms at a distance of about 100yd ... demonstrate their superior skill with their weapons.”¹⁷

The reader of this dissertation will see the militia’s success resulted more from adapting British tactical doctrine to “bush fighting” in North America than “adopting” Indian fighting methods. Both of Dunmore’s principal subordinates, Colonels Andrew Lewis and Adam Stephen, as well as a number of the other officers, had served in Colonel George Washington’s 1st Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War. Stephen, like Washington, had survived Braddock’s Defeat on the Monongahela in 1755. Such officers learned that victory over Indian enemies came by combining regular and irregular tactics, and they trained their men accordingly. In contrast to Winkler’s description, the evidence related in the narrative that follows shows that under the tutelage of veteran officers, colonial militiamen had read instructional texts such as Humphrey Bland’s Treatise on Military Discipline and applied the lessons about fighting irregulars in Europe to their own experiences

¹⁶ John F. Winkler Point Pleasant 1774: Prelude to the American Revolution (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2014), 27.

¹⁷ Winkler, 36.

fighting Indians. It is important to note, however, that Bland's instructions could not simply be used as written, but had to be modified and adapted to the conditions and enemies encountered in North America.

This thesis is supported in at least two under-appreciated works that are not often cited in academic or popular treatments on the topic of eighteenth century warfare in North America. In Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast, Guy Chet cautioned against accepting the “romantic belief that in America, irregular terrain and the irregular tactics of the enemy rendered the scientific principles of European warfare invalid.” He argued that British and colonial American forces could not have achieved their objectives by simply adopting the Indian mode of *petite guerre*, or guerrilla warfare, “a tactical doctrine that is predicated on abandoning territory in exchange for enemy lives.” Instead, the British and colonial Americans acted on the combination of strategic offense and tactical defense. In the narrative that follows, the reader will note that Dunmore's plan of campaign reflected this concept. Light troops on scouting and flanking missions “usually employed defensive tactics in battle situations . . . rather than employing the tactics of Indian war bands.” Although the light troops' tactics may have at times, or first glance, appeared similar to those of their Indian opponents, they did so to draw an enemy into a fight in order for the main force units “to bring their full firepower to bear in any engagement.” The reader will note that the course of the battle of Point Pleasant generally conforms to this model.¹⁸

¹⁸ Guy Chet Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 144.

In Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763, Stephen Brumwell concentrates on the experience of the British regulars, and similarly attributes British and colonial American victories over Indian opponents to the “mixture of regular and irregular warfare.” For example, one should not construe adding the order “tree all” to the battle drill in which troops practiced and rehearsed their counter-ambush techniques with adopting Indian tactics. Brumwell explains that fighting an indigenous enemy in the American wilderness “demanded diverse combat skills; the resulting fusion of Old and New World techniques.” Troops deployed to act as flank guards for a marching column taking advantage of the cover offered by trees, logs and rocks when attacked by a concealed enemy represents such a fusion, not an abandonment of one style in favor of the other. The employment of skirmishing tactics, in which detachments moving in open order sought to initiate contact with an unseen enemy with a series of small fire-fights, provides yet another example of blended tactics. As the very description implies, skirmishing offered a means of locating and drawing an enemy force into battle where the superior fire of cohesive units determined the outcome of a general engagement.¹⁹ When using the term “Indian fighting” in reading the narrative of this dissertation, the reader should do so in the context of the Virginians fighting *against*, not *like*, their opponents.

Building on Chet’s and Brumwell’s foundation, this dissertation will show that the Virginians adapted conventional European tactics to the American woods and blended them with techniques learned from their native allies and adversaries. Virginia’s colonial soldiers achieved success in battle against Indian enemies by

¹⁹ Stephen Brumwell Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 193, 217

adhering to a modified British doctrine, which emphasized unit cohesion and fire superiority, although not necessarily by fighting in compact ranks and shunning natural cover. Similarly, Indian warriors nearly abandoned their traditional tactical doctrine at the Battle of Point Pleasant. Their general practice usually dictated fighting a battle of annihilation rather than one of attrition. Cornstalk's plan to advance en masse seeking to surprise, overwhelm and destroy their opponent in a quick victory was in keeping with this practice. When the attack failed to achieve the desired outcome, Indian forces surprisingly conducted a battle of attrition for several hours before the Shawnees finally disengaged and retired. In addition, the reader will recognize Virginia's colonial militia as a much more efficient military organization than it has been often portrayed. The forces involved in 1774 campaign likewise effectively followed British – or European – logistical procedures, appropriately adapted to operations in North America with the “protected advance” to sustain its forces in the field throughout the campaign.

If they examine the conduct and course of the campaign at all, many treatments of Dunmore's War share a common weakness in characterizing the Virginia colony's military organization and operations as amateurish. In the critically acclaimed Council Fires on the Upper Ohio, Randolph C. Downes wrote “Each of the commandants was therefore directed” by Dunmore “to adopt offensive tactics whenever possible,” but never provided an explanation of what offensive tactics he meant.²⁰ Griffin, for example, argues that the men selected “their own captains” and

²⁰ Downes, Randolph C. Council Fires on the Upper Ohio (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989), 176.

determined “where they would range” and dispatched “their own scouts.”²¹ Based on an analysis of personal and government records, the following narrative will inform the reader how the colony chose its military leaders and demonstrate that the Virginia militia conducted well-planned and competently executed operations that closely followed the British army’s established doctrine and logistical procedures.

Similarly, much of the currently available literature does not present a completely accurate portrayal of the composition, organization and training of Virginia’s colonial militia. Winkler, for example, explains “the militias of Virginia counties were organized like those of English counties.”²² Although accurate in a very general sense, the statement omits the very important distinctions that existed between the Virginia and English militias despite their common heritage. For example, an English parish filled its portion of the county’s quota by ballot, or draft, after which the selected men served terms of three years. Following a period of initial training, the militia man joined a unit that mustered periodically and could respond to local alarms or augment the regular British army for homeland defense during emergencies. In contrast, the reader will see that unless exempt by law, all free white male Virginians between the ages of eighteen and forty-five had an obligation to serve. They all trained periodically and served whenever the county or colony called them for military service.

²¹ Griffin, 112.

²² Winkler, 25.

Winkler also stated that in each jurisdiction the “militiamen constituted the county regiment, which at full strength had ten companies with 500 men.”²³ The reader of the following narrative will note that the administrative groupings of the Virginia militia actually bore less resemblance to such a regular organization. Lewis’ book likewise reflected another general misconception about the raising of militia forces when he wrote “apparently, there were no recruiting problems.”²⁴ The reader of this dissertation will not only gain a more accurate understanding of service in the Virginia colonial militia in general, but also note the difficulty encountered by officials when raising forces needed for active duty, specifically in 1774.

The evidence presented in the following pages will show that the county lieutenants followed the requirements of the colony’s militia law and the procedures established for defending their own and assisting neighboring communities, as well as the province at large. It will further establish that the militia of the Virginia colony existed as a pool of available manpower that county, independent borough, or provincial governments could mobilize for military service. In addition, contrary to Winkler’s description, the local companies and county regiments constituted administrative – not tactical – units organized according to regional population densities and not mission-oriented considerations. The governor appointed all company officers based on the recommendations of their respective county lieutenants. The governor also signed and issued commissions to the men who the county officials recommended to raise and lead tactical units and authorized them to recruit volunteers and draft individuals to fill their ranks. Ideally, a company

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lewis, 199.

embodied for actual service was organized with fifty rank and file men, plus officers, sergeants and musicians, along lines similar to, but not exactly like, those in the British army. When in actual service, these tactical companies executed missions as determined by the established chain of command, and not autonomously as Griffin described. While not on a level equal to that found in the regular British army, the men of the Virginia militia nevertheless submitted to a level of discipline often not reflected in the popular view of frontier Americans. Officers exercised military authority under which men who committed acts of misconduct were held accountable.

Many of the available interpretations depict the Virginia General Assembly as unwilling to support Lord Dunmore with an appropriation of funds and authorization for military action against the hostile Indians. Downes, for example, wrote, “The legislature of Virginia had failed to accept the governor’s proposals to assume the financial obligations necessary” for offensive operations, “and it also refused to make any appropriations or to pass additional legislation to facilitate [any] defensive measures.”²⁵ Griffin similarly stated that since the legislators “would not act. So Dunmore would” on his own.²⁶

Primary evidence found only in the Pennsylvania records would tend to support such conclusions. The Virginia records contain contradictory testimony. This dissertation will demonstrate that although the General Assembly did not agree with Dunmore that the situation warranted the appropriation of funds and authorization to raise an army of provincial regulars to deal with the situation, Peyton Randolph,

²⁵ Downes, 175.

²⁶ Griffin, 114.

Speaker of the House of Burgesses, offered a more appropriate recommendation. Randolph informed the governor that the Several Acts for Repelling Invasions and Suppressing Insurrections already empowered him with the authority to call militia into service and employ them in this kind of emergency without additional legislation. Perhaps Downes mistook the speaker's explanation that the Invasion and Insurrection Acts constituted a more appropriate application of the governor's war powers for dealing with the emergency for a refusal to act. The reader will also learn that according to the law, the colony's General Assembly normally appropriated the money after the emergency ended and reimbursed military expenses and paid militia soldiers for their service in arrears, not in advance. The record shows that the Virginia government followed the established procedure when it paid its soldiers and the related expenses for the Indian campaign in July 1775, albeit after the Revolutionary War began and Dunmore had fled Williamsburg.

The events related in the following pages occurred during a period in Colonial America when resistance to certain British imperial policies had not yet risen to a struggle for independence. Although the Revolutionary War is not the subject of this dissertation, Dunmore's War influenced the events of latter conflict. As long as both sides adhered to the terms of the Treaty of Camp Charlotte and the subsequent councils held at Fort Pitt in 1775 and 1776, the Ohio frontier remained relatively peaceful. Combined with the respite from fighting that ensued in the east between the British evacuation of Boston and the invasion of New York in 1776, the Americans sufficient time to decide in favor of and declare their independence. When Cornstalk announced that Shawnees' decision to enter the war as British allies and resume

hostilities in November 1777, it presented Virginia the motive and opportunity to invade the north bank as a component of the greater struggle. American success in that theater resulted in Britain's recognition of the Northwest Territory, encompassing the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan as within the territorial boundaries of the United States in the 1783 Treaty of Paris.

Numbers of officers and soldiers became veterans and gained valuable combat experience in the Indian conflict. The available pension records reveal the service of many common soldiers and officers later served in the Revolutionary War. The notable veterans of Dunmore's War who fought in the American War for Independence included Daniel Morgan, Michael Cresap, George Rogers Clark, Isaac Shelby and Daniel Boone on the Patriot side, John Connolly, Alexander McKee and Simon Girty on the Loyalist, as well as Cornstalk, Pluggy, Blue Jacket, White Eyes, and Guyasota among the participating Indians.

This dissertation will employ historical narrative, organized chronologically, to present a view of the related events on the Virginia frontier in 1774 without reference to the later events of the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, this study examines the subject matter in the context of its own time and place, and not distorted through the prism of ours. It therefore relies almost exclusively on primary source evidence, published as well as un-published. The sources include archival documents, period newspapers, and the writings of participants, which are critically examined and interpreted with consideration for eighteenth-century grammar, definitions and word usage, as well as context.

When I first became intrigued with the subject, and long before initiating any serious research, I surveyed the available literature. Every treatment, regardless of medium, included a citation to one monumental work, the Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774, or *DHDW*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps. Published in 1905, it is an anthology transcribed from the pertinent documents found in the files of the Lyman Copeland Draper manuscript collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society. The publication provides a researcher with easily accessible and notated compilation of relevant documents.²⁷

I used the Thwaites and Kellogg book as a guide to review the microfilm publications of the appropriate volumes of original records in the Draper collection in their entirety. The latter also includes images of documents not found in the anthology, as well as the full documents of which Thwaites and Kellogg only transcribed excerpts. For example, the printed publication lacks the documentary evidence of how Virginia and Cherokee leaders resolved their differences without war, but which are in the collection of papers. To differentiate between the two sources, documents found only in the collection of originals carry the citation of the Draper Manuscript identification number, whereas the transcriptions also cited the page numbers from the *DHDW* in parentheses.

The amount of primary source material examined differentiates this study from others and went far beyond reviews of document collections. I surveyed government documents from Virginia, as well as neighboring Pennsylvania. Both offer first-

²⁷ Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), front matter.

person accounts of the same events from different perspectives, albeit often prejudiced by the writer's partisan position on the inter-colonial boundary dispute, which adds another layer of complexity as well as detail. Likewise, period newspapers, particularly the two versions of the *Virginia Gazette*, not only include government proclamations and other official information, contemporary reportage on the Indian war and the inter-colonial border dispute, but the latest news and rumors concerning political and commercial activity from throughout the colonies and the British Empire at large. Even more interesting, both *Gazettes* have letters to the editors, some of them with highly opinionated commentary on the news-making events of the day.

The records of the British government, mostly from the Colonial Office, show the involvement of a distant authority attempting to resolve conflicts between the two colonies as well as managing the involvement of the respective Crown superintendents of Indian affairs and the commander in chief of his Majesties forces in North America. The papers of Sir William Johnson, the Crown's superintendent of Indian affairs for the Northern Department, records the efforts of the Indian Department to mediate inter-tribal as well as Indian-colonial disputes, and its actions to preserve and promote the favored status of the Six Nations of Iroquois in British-Indian diplomacy.

While the Thwaites and Kellogg anthology addresses military operations, it concentrates almost exclusively on those in Augusta, Botetourt, and Fincastle Counties of Virginia. The manuscript collections found at the Filson Historical Society, such as the Bullitt Family Papers, complements the published transcriptions

for the military events in those areas. The equally important West Augusta District, also known as the Forks of the Ohio region or Pittsburgh and its environs, remained largely uncovered in the Thwaites and Kellogg material. This research project therefore made extensive use of documents transcribed in the published Pennsylvania Archives Colonial Series and other sources to fill this void. The George Chalmers Manuscript Collection at the New York Public Library, for example, contains the personal journal maintained by Major John Connolly, the Virginia militia commander in the district, and that of the resident deputy Indian superintendent, Alexander McKee. As Johnson's deputy for the Indians of the Ohio country, McKee's journal complements the correspondence found in Sir William's papers. The journals of both men contain reflections on the military situation as well as their own records of the negotiations conducted in the Indian councils held at Pittsburgh. These records likewise helped to fill gaps in the Thwaites and Kellogg publication and Pennsylvania colonial records.

A number of sources contributed to the better understanding of time and place, apart from its military aspects. In an area I believe remains largely unexplored in treatments on Dunmore's War or westward expansion, the writings of Adam Smith, John Locke and Benjamin Franklin add the dimension of Enlightenment philosophy to the acquisition Indian land. The observations of non-military participants, such as the travel narratives of Nicholas Cresswell and John Ferdinand Dalziel Smyth, two visitors from Great Britain, add much to the narrative. In addition to what they offer to the story of their view as non-participating witnesses to the conflict, their commentary on colonial American culture in 1774, particularly on what Virginians

found too ordinary to consider remarkable in their own writing, helped to add some “color” to several descriptions. Similarly, the journal of Lieutenant Augustine Prevost, a British regular officer who visited Pittsburgh as Dunmore’s expedition made ready to march in September 1774, offers a critical witness of Virginia’s military preparations through the eyes of a professional soldier.

As this dissertation is primarily a military history, in addition to official reports and the personal records and correspondence of officers, I sought to include the voices of enlisted soldiers as well. Many Virginia veterans of the Revolutionary War also served in Dunmore’s War, and several of their pension applications include descriptions of their experience in the earlier conflict. In an effort to verify their information, as well as to place them in the correct units or garrisons, I relied on published transcripts of unit muster rolls and public service claims. To aid in this effort, I found three sources very helpful. These include William A. Crozier’s Virginia Colonial Militia 1651 – 1776, Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck’s Virginia’s Colonial Soldiers and Warren Skidmore and Donna Kaminsky’s Lord Dunmore’s Little War of 1774. Although its title suggests an operational history, the Skidmore-Kaminsky book offers a compendium of military muster and pay records, as well as public service claims, transcribed from collections of the Library of Virginia. It proved a most comprehensive and useful resource for the study of Dunmore’s War for its focus on company-sized units and individual participants.

This dissertation will put the reader in the skirmish lines with the militia. To that end, the descriptions of the engagements will not only include the recollections of certain participants, but apply them to the tactical doctrine found in contemporary

military manuals and treatises known to have been used in colonial America. I will show that A Treatise on Military Discipline by Humphrey Bland, arguably the most widely read text of its kind in the British army for much of the eighteenth century, formed the doctrinal basis for the Virginia militia's tactical operations in 1774.

For studying the experiences of the Shawnees, Mingoos and Delawares first hand, I relied mainly on records from several reputable and mostly sympathetic, albeit mostly white, witnesses. These include the published accounts and correspondence of the Moravian Missionary Rev. John Heckwelder and the itinerant Baptist preacher Rev. David Jones, both of whom lived and travelled among the Indians of the Ohio area in 1774. I also relied on the minutes of conferences and councils in which British and colonial officials or third parties transcribed the speeches of, and conversations with, Indian participants. In some cases, multiple witnesses recorded their observations of the same event from contrasting perspectives. Not only did the records kept by representatives of different colonial governments and the Indian Department sometimes differ, but the Quakers of the Friendly Association assumed responsibility for insuring the others did not take unfair advantage of the Indians and therefore kept records to corroborate the Indians' oral traditions and wampum documents.

A number of captivity narratives add insight about the Ohio Indians' tribal politics, military practices and the treatment of prisoners in the mid- to latter-eighteenth century. While neither related events that occurred in 1774, the oft-cited narratives of Mary Jemison and James Smith present vivid accounts how the Ohio Indians took and treated captives, especially those cases in which they adopted and

assimilated prisoners into their societies. Smith further described the Indian way of war from a first-person perspective gained when he accompanied war parties in combat. The narrative of John Leith, a youth who worked at a trading post in the Delaware town of Standing Stone, offers the unique view of the conflict from life in a native community. A local headman adopted Leith soon after the war started in April 1774 to preserve him from harm at the hands of vengeful Mingo who were then roaming the neighborhood. The benevolent chief gave the youth his liberty when word reached them in November that hostilities had ended with the Treaty of Camp Charlotte.

The research conducted for this dissertation included visiting museum collections that offered opportunities to study material culture related to Dunmore's War. The Fort Pitt Museum and Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for example, both had exhibits featuring objects with provenance from the French and Indian War and Pontiac's Rebellion, such as a war club and human scalp, but which are also appropriate for Dunmore's War. The Dewitt Wallace Decorative Arts and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museums at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, not only have relevant artifacts on exhibit, but members of the curatorial staff invited me to examine related objects in the collection not usually on display. Among latter, for example, the staff allowed me to see and hold objects related to Lord Dunmore, including his sword and brace of saddle pistols, as well as the fusée – or carbine – he carried as his personal weapon on the campaign.

Research for this dissertation also included visits to several historical sites. Walking the terrain on a historic battlefield is especially useful – whenever possible –

in military history. In 1903, noted British historian George Trevelyan Macaulay wrote about visiting battlefields in “Clio, A Muse and Other Essays Literary and Pedestrian.” He described the practice of what he called “Battlefield hunting” as “one of the joys that history can afford” a professional historian, avocational researcher or casual visitor who can “stir himself to get to see the country.”²⁸ Following Macaulay’s advice, I conducted a military terrain analysis at the site of the Battle of Point Pleasant. The “charm” of a historic battlefield rests in its “fortuitous character” of being the location where a significant battle event occurred.²⁹ Even amid modern development, comparing the inherent military probability of significant terrain features to the written accounts of participants enabled me to follow the course of the engagement with a higher degree of accuracy than found only in written accounts. Walking the terrain also allowed a way to better experience the battle, albeit without the threat of personal harm, than possible only by researching in an archive, reading a book, or sitting at a computer. Furthermore, I agree with Macaulay in believing that visiting a battlefield “is almost the greatest of outdoor intellectual pleasures.”³⁰

Visiting sites other than battlefields also offer valuable opportunities to study history not possible elsewhere. The sites of Forts Dunmore [Pitt], Fincastle [Henry], Blair [Randolph] and Gower, as well the reconstructed Prickett’s Fort, provided a perspective on the use of military posts for the defense of backcountry settlements and their inhabitants, as well as those used as forward supply magazines that

²⁸ George Trevelyan Macaulay “Clio, a Muse and Other Essays Literary and Pedestrian,” Stern, Fritz, ed., *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1972), Ibid. 238.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

supported offensive operations. In addition to the different functions of fortifications, visits to the sites of historic forts also provided the opportunity to compare and contrast those constructed as military posts with fortified private homes the owners built to shelter their own and their neighbors' families. The sites of the militia rendezvous at Camp Union and the fortified bivouac of Camp Charlotte, where the Shawnee chief Cornstalk and Governor Dunmore negotiated the war ending treaty, are appropriately marked. The site where Logan, the Mingo leader who refused to participate in the formal negotiations, recited his famous "Lament" is preserved as an appropriately interpreted park.

Other than those with only military significance, several other sites contributed to conveying an understanding of other aspects of Dunmore's War. Johnson Hall, the preserved baronial manor of Sir William Johnson in the Mohawk Valley near Johnstown, New York, is the location of the Pan-Indian council held in July 1774. Visiting the site and observing the artifacts on exhibit there can give the researcher a better understanding of the crucial diplomatic roles played by the British Indian Department in general and Johnson in particular, as well as that of the principal chiefs of the Six Nations, or Iroquois Confederacy. It was on these grounds that the Six Nations exerted its dominion over dependent and allied nations and tribes of the Ohio country, which effectively isolated the Shawnee from potential allies and ensured that Dunmore's War remained a limited conflict.

Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia's eighteenth century colonial capital, offers a wealth of material culture, both original as well as faithfully reproduced, which provides insight on the political leadership of Lord Dunmore. The restored magazine, from

which the governor requisitioned weapons and ammunition to equip and supply some of the militia who participated in his campaign, is particularly noteworthy.

Visualizing the magazine in Williamsburg at one end and Camp Charlotte at the other, with intermediate storehouses along the route of the expedition's protected advance – e.g., Camp Union, Elk River and Point Pleasant for the Left Wing, or Southern Division, and Winchester, Fort Pitt, Fort Fincastle and Fort Gower for the Right Wing, or Northern Division – allows one to better understand the complexity and enormity of the campaign's logistical support. One can also compare the eighteenth century colonial metropolis and Tidewater plantations exhibited at and near Colonial Williamsburg with the austerity of the colony's backcountry settlements and farmsteads by visiting the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton, Virginia. The interpretation also allows the researcher or visitor to observe the similarities and differences between the communities of colonial Virginia settlers and the Indian towns of the Ohio area. Visiting the site of the restored and rebuilt buildings and stockade at the 1773 Westmoreland County courthouse at Hanna's Town – and its associated exhibits – near Greenburg, Pennsylvania, enhanced my archival research about the Virginia and Pennsylvania boundary dispute and the latter colony's position in the Indian conflict and frontier society. Similarly, a visit to the preserved Irvin Allen / Michael Cresap House Museum in Oldtown, Maryland, provided a better understanding of Captain Michael Cresap, the man who is often and erroneously blamed for the murder of Logan's relatives and thereby causing Dunmore's War. Located along the march route of the Right Wing from its

rendezvous at Winchester to Fort Pitt, the Cresap House was the scene of the council of war at which Lord Dunmore changed his original plan of campaign.

While some historians do not add the study of material culture to their research designs, I integrated and embraced it with regard to Dunmore's War. Visiting museums and historic sites yielded information which enhanced what I found in the archival sources. By using all of the senses, I had the opportunity to not only see, but in cases touch, feel and hold the primary source represented by the artifact in the context of its own time and place. Visiting historic sites associated with the conflict similarly added the sense of time and place to my study of Dunmore's War.

Applying military terrain analysis to the accounts of the Battle of Point Pleasant allowed me to put them into a more realistic context. Museums and historic sites associated with Dunmore's War further enhanced my understanding and feeling of personal connection with this period of history.

In conclusion, the dissertation that follows is the most comprehensive and detached study of Lord Dunmore's War and its implications completed to date. While it is focused on military operations, it also addresses the political and diplomatic aspects that precipitated and continued during the conflict, and explains the causes to which both sides attributed the hostilities in 1774. In addition, it presents a more detailed study of the Virginia colonial militia than found available elsewhere. Finally, it should stand as the most complete and readable account of the last Indian conflict of America's colonial era.

Chapter 1: Our Customs Differing From Yours – Cultural Friction and Conflict

Powell's Valley

It is 1773 Virginia.³¹ Early in the morning on Sunday, October 10, eight men, six whites and two blacks, lay sleeping in their camp on the west bank of Wallen's Creek in Powell's Valley on the Virginia frontier. Before bedding down the previous night they had unburdened their pack horses so that bundles of supplies, including sacks of flour and other provisions, lay about them. Their cattle and tethered horses slept or grazed nearby. The men would soon have to rise, gather the livestock, load the pack animals, and resume the march. They needed to go only a few more miles along this branch of an Indian trail known as the Warriors' Path to rejoin their group's main body.³² History would soon count members of the caravan among the first victims

³¹ NOTE: The Virginia Colony had two competing newspapers in 1773, both named the *Virginia Gazette* and published in Williamsburg: one by the printing house of Alexander Purdie and John Dixon; the other by William Rind, and later his widow Clementina. Hereafter, to distinguish between them, the older Purdie and Dixon newspaper will be cited as *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), and Rind's as *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind). Unless otherwise specified, all are located in Special Collections, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

³² *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), December 23, 1773; Alexander Scott Withers *Chronicles of Border Warfare, or, A History of the Settlement by the Whites of North-Western Virginia: and of the Indian Wars and Massacres in That Section of the State* (Clarksburg: Joseph Israel, 1831; reprinted, edited and annotated, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Cincinnati: Stewart and Kidd Publishers, 1895), 144-146.

claimed in a clash of cultures that became the last Indian conflict of America's colonial era.

As dawn approached, the horses suddenly became restless and agitated. A party of nineteen Indian warriors had observed and shadowed the group ever since it entered the valley. Returning from a congress of several nations' representatives to discuss how to contend with continued white expansion into the hunting ground on the south bank of the Ohio, the band presumably included fifteen Delaware, two Cherokee, and two Shawnee warriors. No official state of war existed between the British and the several nations whose hunters they might have encountered in these woods. If the members of the caravan had even seen the Indians they would certainly not have assumed they were hostile, and therefore took no extraordinary security precautions. The braves moved silently forward as they would on a hunt when approaching unsuspecting deer until each came to a position that offered an unobstructed view of their quarry. The warriors raised their muskets, cocked their firelocks, and took aim at the figures huddled near a campfire against the coolness of the early autumn morning.³³

At daybreak, musket fire and blood curdling war whoops pierced the stillness as the warriors rushed in and overran the camp. The warriors who killed brothers John and Richard Mendenhall with the opening fusillade immediately pounced on and scalped their lifeless corpses. The braves who fired at James Boone and Henry Russell had

³³ William Ogilvy to Maj Gen Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Charlestowne, June 8, 1774, Enclosure: Isaac Thomas deposition dated Fincastle, February 12, 1774, Thomas Gage Papers, hereafter Gage Papers, Series II: American Series; Subseries 1: Correspondence and Enclosures: Volume 119, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

intentionally aimed at their hips to disable, not kill. The wounds, though severe, left them alive but writhing in agony on the ground and unable to move. The Indians tortured the unfortunate young men without mercy and made sport of their suffering by repeatedly striking them with knives and tomahawks to prolong the ordeal.

Weakened by excruciating pain and loss of blood the pair vainly attempted to fend off the blades with their bare hands. James recognized his main assailant as Big Jim, a Shawnee acquaintance of his father. The young man pleaded with the Indian to spare their lives, but to no avail.³⁴

The rest of warriors split into small groups and continued the carnage. One group captured the horses or plundered the provisions and supplies, while the other assailed those who had survived the initial onslaught. Charles, one of the black men, stood paralyzed with fear as two warriors claimed him as their captive. Although wounded, Isaac Crabtree and Samuel Drake fled into the woods and evaded capture. Adam, the other slave, escaped unscathed. From his hiding place concealed in the brush by the river bank, Adam watched the Indians unleash their wrath on his companions. The other warriors, impatient to get away, shouted for the braves tormenting Henry and James to hurry. After they killed and scalped their victims, the assailants disappeared into the woods with their trophies. One of them left the bloodied war club by the bodies, the traditional sign that boasted the warriors' triumph and warned enemies to pursue at their peril.³⁵

³⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), December 23, 1773; Withers, 144; Robert Morgan Boone: A Biography (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2008), 136-137. Some sources alternate spelling between "Mendenhall" and "Mendinall."

³⁵ Withers, 144-146; John Mark Faragher Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992), 93; Morgan, 136-137.

The murdered men were part of an expedition planned and organized by Captain William Russell and Daniel Boone to “reconnoiter the country, toward the Ohio and . . . settle in the limits of the expected new government” of Vandalia. They had moved in three groups. Boone began the trek on September 25, when his and five other families left their homes on the Yadkin River in North Carolina. After entering Powell’s Valley in southwestern Virginia, they halted to rendezvous with a party led by William Bryan, Boone’s brother-in-law, which increased their numbers to about fifty men, women and children. Whereas Boone and his neighbors moved their entire households, including baggage, furniture, domestic animals and cattle, Bryan’s men planned to build houses and prepare their fields over the winter and then return to move their families to the new settlement in the spring. Boone’s enlarged column camped and waited for the others to catch up just north of Wallen’s Ridge, a few miles from the scene of the fateful incident.³⁶

Boone had sent three members of his party, including his seventeen-year-old son James, with John and Richard Mendenhall to Castle’s Woods to obtain tools, farming implements and additional supplies. Located in the Clinch River valley, the community represented the largest and most distant of Virginia’s frontier settlements in the newly established Fincastle County, and home to Captain William Russell. With Russell’s assistance, the young Boone and the Mendenhalls acquired the needed supplies, plus additional cattle, horses, and pack saddles. On Friday, October 8, the captain sent them on their way, accompanied by his seventeen-year-old son Henry Russell, two slaves named Charles and Adam, a hired man known as Samuel Drake,

³⁶ *Virginia Gazette* #2, December 23, 1773; Withers, 144; Morgan, 136-137. Vandalia, the proposed fourteenth colony, would have encompassed much of present West Virginia and Kentucky.

and an experienced woodsman named Isaac Crabtree, to help manage the convoy and cattle. They expected to reach the main body within two days. The next day, after gathering the last of their harvests, Russell followed with thirty men from Clinch River, including his neighbor David Gass.³⁷

They had agreed that Russell would assume overall command when he joined the group, while Boone served as the guide into the uninhabited area that the Iroquois called *Kain-tuck-ee*, or meadow land. A renowned frontiersman as well as a gentleman from a prominent family, Russell represented the natural choice for the leader. He had attended the College of William and Mary, served in the French and Indian War, and had become a successful tobacco planter, militia officer and justice of the peace in Fincastle County. Seeking to claim land due to him for his wartime service, Russell's reputation and leadership skills attracted enough volunteers to give the enterprise a better chance of success. Although Boone exemplified the skills of the consummate woodsman, had visited Kentucky on numerous long hunts, and had scouted their destination the previous winter, his name remained relatively unknown outside of the Virginia and North Carolina backcountry.³⁸

By Sunday morning, Daniel Boone waited in restless anticipation for the arrival of his son's caravan and Russell's contingent from Clinch River. Earlier that morning, following an altercation with another emigrant, one man had quit the venture. While heading home along the Warriors' Path, the deserter happened on the killing field by

³⁷ John Gass to Lyman Draper, letter dated November 6, 1847, Daniel Boone Papers, 24C79, Lyman C. Draper Collection of Manuscripts (hereafter Draper Manuscripts), Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; Withers, 144-146; Faragher, 90. The 'expected new government' refers to the proposed inland colony of Vandalia.

³⁸ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), December 23, 1773; Withers, 145n.

Wallen's Creek. Fearful of continuing alone, he backtracked to the camp. As soon as the man arrived, Boone learned the news that a number of Indians had attacked "the rear of our company" and his oldest son, James, "fell in the action." While Boone directed the rest of the men to prepare to defend the camp against a similar raid, Daniel sent his brother, Squire, with a dozen armed men to investigate.³⁹

Travelling in front of the Clinch River men with David Gass, William Russell arrived on the scene first to find Henry's corpse "mangled in an inhuman manner." As the grief-stricken father described, "There was left in him a dart arrow, and a war club was left beside him."⁴⁰ As soon as Squire Boone and his men arrived, they searched for any warriors who remained behind in ambush, and then began the grim task of burying the dead. Rebecca Boone had given Squire two linen cloths to use as winding sheets. Russell and Squire Boone wrapped their relatives' remains in one and the Mendenhall brothers in the other, and laid them all to rest. The attack had scattered the cattle and caused such other damage at the main camp that the settlers now found themselves in extreme difficulty. Boone later recalled, "Though we defended ourselves, and repulsed the enemy," the unhappy affair had so discouraged the whole company that few wished to continue to the Ohio. The men held a council to decide what course of action to pursue, took a vote, and "retreated forty miles, to the settlement of Clinch river." While others returned home, Daniel and Rebecca

³⁹ Boone, Daniel "The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone," Samuel Metcalf, ed., A Collection of the Most Interesting Narratives of Indian Warfare in the West Containing an Account of the Adventures of Daniel Boone (Lexington: William G. Hunt Printers, 1821), 13; William Ogilvy to Maj Gen Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Charlestowne, June 8, 1774, Enclosure: Thomas Sharp deposition dated Fincastle, February 20, 1774, Gage Papers; Withers, 144-145, 145n; Faragher, 91-2; Morgan, 136-137.

⁴⁰ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), December 23, 1773; John Gass to Lyman Draper, later dated November 6, 1847, Daniel Boone Papers, 24C79, Draper Manuscripts.

Boone, who had sold their farm in North Carolina, remained at Castle's Woods for the winter in a cabin on the Gass property.⁴¹

Several of the men scouted the vicinity but found no signs to indicate whether or not the missing members had survived. Although mentally scarred by the ordeal, Crabtree's physical wounds proved minor, and he managed to walk back to Castle's Woods within a few days. The uninjured Adam, possibly disoriented and suffering from shock, took a week and a half to find his way home. The search party presumed the Indians had either killed or taken Drake captive, and no one saw him alive again. After his captors had herded Charles along for some distance, they apparently concluded that an enemy scalp served their purposes as well as a live captive, or possibly argued about who actually owned the prisoner and what to do with him. Scouts later found the man's scalped body by the trail some miles distant from the massacre site.⁴²

Once back at home, Captain Russell attempted to account for the dead and missing. He took depositions and compared survivors' recollections with his observations of the detritus at the scene. The captain concluded that the Indian attackers had killed five white men and one black without provocation, and one white and one black man had survived. Russell reported the incident to his superior officer in the militia, Colonel William Preston, the county lieutenant of Fincastle County. The next summer, Virginia's royal governor, John Murray, the fourth Earl Dunmore, would

⁴¹ Boone "The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone," 13; Faragher, 95; Morgan, 137-138.

⁴² Faragher, 95; Morgan, 137-138.

cite the massacre, along with other incidents, to justify Virginia's hardline stand when addressing Indian delegations attending a general Indian congress at Fort Pitt.⁴³

An account of the "inhuman affair . . . transacted on the frontiers of Fincastle [County]" appeared in the December 23 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* published by Clementina Rind. The article read in part like a military report. Captain Russell's command, which had gone to "reconnoiter," became "separated into three detachments." Thus divided, the Indians attacked the smallest of them, killing five whites and one black. After the unexpected assault, the party retreated after "getting intelligence" of the enemy. The paper asserted that the story came from "good authority," which suggested the Russell-Preston correspondence.⁴⁴ A Baltimore newspaper carried a different account of the tragic event on November 27, preceding Rind's by almost a month. Based on a description by "a gentleman of credit lately from New River in Virginia," that version differed in some details such as the circumstances, as well as the numbers of participants and casualties. Several newspapers, including the *Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser* of Philadelphia, reprinted the second-hand version before the presumably more authoritative narrative even went to press in Williamsburg.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, the two accounts renewed the colonists' concern about continued depredations, and caused alarm among backcountry inhabitants, those who planned to acquire land in the frontier districts, and Crown officers charged with keeping peace

⁴³ Withers, 145n.; Faragher, 94-95; Morgan, 137-138. What were believed to be Drake's remains were found two decades later about one eighth mile from the massacre site.

⁴⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), December 23, 1773.

⁴⁵ *Pennsylvania Chronicle and Universal Advertiser*, December 6, 1773.

with the Indians. Wondering how hostilities might bear on the land patents promised him and other veterans for military service in the French and Indian War, Doctor Hugh Mercer of Fredericksburg, Virginia, wrote Colonel Preston to inquire if “the Massacre” could be attributed to the “Indian’s Jealousy of our settling near them, or to a private Quarrel.” He also asked any party received “certain intelligence” as to what nation of Indians’ warriors had killed young “Mr. Russell?”⁴⁶

Sharing Mercer’s concern, Major General Frederick Haldimand, Lieutenant General Thomas Gage’s second in command, who had assumed the duties as acting commander in chief of his Majesty’s forces in North America with Gage absent on leave, asked in a letter to Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, to be informed on the identity of Indians who attacked Captain Russell’s party on its way to the Ohio. The general had his suspicions, and told Johnson that although “Some say they were Cherokees” he rather suspected them to be members of the “Shawanese than any other.”⁴⁷ Alexander McKee, posted at Fort Pitt as Johnson’s deputy superintendent for the Ohio Indians, heard of the incident from traders returning from down river, and recorded in his journal that another party of Shawnees had returned home from the frontiers of Virginia bringing

⁴⁶ Dr. Hugh Mercer to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fredericksburg, January 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, 3QQ15, Draper of Manuscripts; Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Documentary History of Dunmore’s War 1774, hereafter DHDW (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905), 1-2. Hereafter, if a transcript of the original document also appears in DHDW, the page numbers will appear in parenthesis after the manuscript citation.

⁴⁷ Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand to Sir William Johnson, letter dated New York, March 18, 1774, Alexander C. Flick, ed., The Papers of Sir William Johnson, hereafter PSWJ, Volume 8 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1933), 1083-1084. Haldimand exercised temporary command in North America during the Gage’s absence at home in England on leave.

“a Number of Horses; and ... had killed Six White Men & Two Negroes.”⁴⁸ Aware of unrest among the nations of the Ohio country after almost ten years of relative, albeit tenuous, peace, many thought another Indian war might have been on the horizon.

Lord Dunmore initially suspected the Cherokee. He wrote to John Stuart, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department and Johnson’s counterpart, for his assistance in bringing the guilty parties of that nation to justice. In return, Dunmore told Stuart to assure the Cherokees he would take every step within his power “to prevent any encroachments on their Hunting Ground” by Virginians.⁴⁹ Stuart, however, informed Haldimand that the Cherokees’ “behaviour and professions” toward the British remained friendly. Although inclined to believe that none from that nation shared in any of the guilt, Stuart nonetheless recommended that Crown officials keep the Cherokees in “good humour,” but to be alert for any signs of hostility. He then asked Alexander Cameron, his deputy superintendent for the Cherokees, to investigate further.⁵⁰

Cameron indicated that he had seen or heard nothing that would implicate the Cherokees in the Powell’s Valley massacre. Although a war party that had gone out just before the incident returned with the scalps of four white men, *Tuckassie Keowee*, the son of *Oconostota*, the “Great Warrior,” told Cameron that they had

⁴⁸ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated February 27, 1774, Milton W. Hamilton, ed., PSWJ, Volume 12 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1957), 1080; Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, K. G. Davies, ed., Documents of the American Revolution 1770-1783, hereafter DAR, Volume 8, Transcripts 1774 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1975), 258.

⁴⁹ Earl of Dunmore to John Stuart, letter dated Williamsburg, December 20, 1773; and, Daniel Boone Papers, 6C16, Draper Manuscripts.

⁵⁰ John Stuart to Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Charles Town, February 3, 1774, DAR, 8: 34-37.

attacked, killed and taken the scalps from some Frenchmen on the Wabash River after mistaking them for enemy warriors. *Tuckassie* then told Cameron that seventeen Delawares and three “Seneca [Mingo]” left the Overhill Cherokee town of Chota in early October. He said they went home through Kentucky by way of the Louisa River on the Warriors’ Path, and may have crossed paths with and killed the whites.⁵¹ In sworn depositions before Fincastle County magistrates, members of Boone’s main party identified two Cherokees among a group Indians they saw in the area days before the massacre.⁵² Stuart eventually secured the conviction and execution of only one Cherokee man, leading some Virginians to complain that he had not pursued justice as vigorously as he should have.⁵³

The incident caused little concern outside of Virginia and the western counties of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Williamsburg printers Alexander Purdie and John Dixon produced a newspaper that began operation before that of their rival, Mrs. Rind, but which shared the name *Virginia Gazette*. Both appeared every Thursday, and often ran articles that covered the same events. The day that Mrs. Rind’s printed the story, the Purdie-Dixon *Gazette* made no mention of the ambush, even though they issued a two-page supplement to their December 23, 1774, edition. Under the dateline Boston, November 29, an anonymous author, presumably Samuel Adams,

⁵¹ Alexander Cameron to John Stuart, letter dated Keowee, March 1, 1774, DAR, 8: 56-58. The Great Warrior was one of the names by which English settlers knew the Cherokee chief *Oconostota*. Variations of his name also include *Aganstata*, *Oconastota* and *Cunne Shote*. Besides Great Warrior, he was also called First Warrior, and the Warrior of Chota. At this time, he ranked second only to the First Beloved Man, or principal chief, his cousin *Attakullukulla*.

⁵² William Ogilvy to Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Charlestowne, June 8, 1774, Gage Papers.

⁵³ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR, 8:257; John Richard Alden *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1966), 263-4.

announced the arrival of the ship DARTMOUTH, laden with a cargo of 114 chests of detested tea, which he described as the “worst of Plagues,” shipped to the colonies by the East India Company in accordance with the Tea Act.⁵⁴

The Ohio Frontier

By late-1773 trouble had been brewing on the frontier for some time. Less than a month before the attack in Powell’s Valley, Sir William Johnson sent a report to William Legge, second Earl Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, stating the numbers of settlers going from Virginia and seeking new settlements, leaving large tracts of unsettled country behind them, had caused much alarm among the Shawnees. Johnson believed, however, that the Indians had little reason to complain as long as the settlers stayed within the “old claims” of Virginia, and not the recently acquired land. The Six Nations of Iroquois and the Cherokees, the two most powerful Indian polities and nominal British allies bordering the thirteen colonies, had recently ceded or relinquished control of the newer claims by the 1768 Treaties of Hard Labor and Fort Stanwix, and the 1770 Treaty of Lochaber. Johnson explained that many settlers could “not be confined by any Boundaries or Limits” without a government presence to enforce Crown policies. While the lawless and disorderly among them committed “Robberies & Murders” and caused concern among the Indians, he conceded that even the law-abiding displayed a general prejudice against

⁵⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), supplement, December 23, 1773; *Virginia Gazette* # 2 (Rind).

all Indians, which in turn caused young Indian warriors or hunters to seek revenge even when slightly insulted.⁵⁵

Of all native peoples inhabiting the Ohio country in 1773, the Shawnee, or *Shawanos*, western Delaware, or *Lenni Lenape*, and Mingo, or *Mingwe*, lived closest to the Virginia settlements. Ironically, they were neither indigenous, nor had lived in the region significantly longer than the neighboring colonists. Bands of Shawnees and several little known native tribes had inhabited the Ohio Valley until the Iroquois invaded their homelands, destroyed their towns, and dispersed their people during the Beaver Wars of the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ The Six Nations then used the conquered depopulated area as a hunting ground for many years before they permitted several bands, which had migrated from their homelands under the pressure of colonial expansion and inter-tribal disputes, to settle there under its dominion. Superintendent Johnson explained to General Gage that the [then] Five Nations “had conquered all, and actually extirpated Several of the Tribes there,” and placed the Shawnees, Delawares and others on “bare Toleration in their Stead, as sort of Frontier Dependents,” and to act as a buffer for the Iroquois homelands.⁵⁷

In order to better maintain control over their dependents and access to the hunting grounds, the Iroquois sent some emigrants from the Six Nations, mostly Senecas, to settle among the Ohio Indians. Whites knew these Iroquoian people as the Mingo, derived from a name the Delawares applied to all the members of the Iroquois

⁵⁵ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, September 22, 1773, PSWJ 8: 890.

⁵⁶ Donald B. Ricky, ed., *Indians of Maryland: Past and Present* (St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Somerset Publishers, 1999), 50-51. Evidence suggests the presence of a small Shawnee community in the Ohio valley sometime prior to the Beaver Wars. If so, its inhabitants would have been among those dispersed.

⁵⁷ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, November 18, 1772, PSWJ 8: 640; Ricky, 51-53.

Confederacy. After living removed from under the influence of their chiefs, many Mingo people began to view themselves as autonomous from their parent nations, but generally remained obedient to the Confederacy's central council at Onondaga through the leadership of its local viceroy, the skilled diplomat and leading warrior, *Guyasuta*.⁵⁸

The Six Nations of Iroquois was arguably the most powerful Indian polity in northeastern North America at this time. In the sixteenth century, according to tradition, the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Oneida agreed to unite under the Great Law of Peace to become the *Haudenosaunee*, or People of the Longhouse. To Europeans, they became known as the Five Nations of Iroquois, and the Iroquois Confederacy, or League. Although each remained free to pursue its own interests as long as not in conflict with those of other member nations, representative sachems, or civil chiefs, from each moiety assembled around the central council fire at the Onondaga principal town to resolve internal disagreements, discuss issues of mutual concern, and decide on collective action. The Five Nations grew into a powerful political, military and economic force that first destroyed its non-league Iroquoian rivals, and then struck at various Algonquin stock enemies. During the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the council admitted the Tuscaroras to the Confederacy as wards of the Oneida – who represented them at the council fire – and the League thus became the Six Nations.

⁵⁸ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gov. Richard Penn, letter dated Johnson Hall, January 29, 1772, PSWJ 8: 938.

Victorious in numerous wars of conquest, the Iroquois Confederacy claimed suzerainty over vanquished nations and territory. Through those who they considered subordinates and allies, the Confederacy extended its diplomatic and economic influence, and acted as a conduit for the British, to native peoples deep into the interior through an alliance called the Silver Covenant Chain of Friendship.⁵⁹ The Iroquois-British alliance proved mutually beneficial, and enabled each to use the other's strength and power – whether real or perceived – to leverage their own with friend and foe alike. Under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession, and known as Queen Anne's War in the colonies, other European nations recognized the Six Nations' people as British subjects and their land within the king's dominion. General Gage cautioned that believing the Six Nations had ever acknowledged themselves as being subjects of the English would be a "very gross Mistake." The general believed that if told so, the news would not please the Iroquois to learn of that status. Gage therefore recommended that the British should not venture to treat them as subjects, but as allies who accepted the king's promises of protection from encroachment by either his European foes or his white American subjects.⁶⁰

Of all Ohio Valley Indian entities, the Shawnees arguably held the most hostility toward British interests. In 1742, Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvania colony's long-time Indian agent, described them as "the most restless and mischievous" of all the Indian nations. They, and to a lesser extent the western Delawares, felt oppressed by

⁵⁹ Samuel Johnson *A Dictionary of the English Language*, hereafter Johnson's Dictionary, fifth edition, Volume 1 (London: Printed for W. Strahan, et al., 1773), DEP-DEP, TRI-TRI.

⁶⁰ Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage to Sir William Johnson, letter dated New York, October 7, 1772, PSWJ 12: 994-5.

the imperious Six Nations, who looked on them as dependent or tributary peoples. The genesis of this relationship, according to Weiser, came after they suffered a decisive military defeat, after which the Delawares figuratively had “their Breech-Cloth taken from them, and a Petticoat put upon them,” by the Iroquois. They humbly called themselves “Women” when they addressed their “Conquerors,” which the Six Nations also called them when they spoke “severely to ‘em.” In less stressful conversations, the Iroquois called the Delawares “Cousins,” who in turn addressed them as “Uncles” in recognition of their subordinate status.⁶¹ When Weiser described the subordination of the Shawnees, he explained that it had happened according to a different process. Because the Iroquois had never conquered them, they never officially considered the Shawnees in the Confederacy, but described them as “Brethren” to the Six Nations. In return for granting permission to settle on land under their dominion, however, the Iroquois claimed “Superiority” over them, and for which the Shawnees “mortally hate them.”⁶²

Reflecting this animosity, Shawnee representatives repeatedly told Sir William Johnson and his deputies that the Iroquois Confederacy “had long Seemed to neglect them” and “disregard the Promise ... of letting them have the Lands between the Ohio & the [Great] Lakes.”⁶³ They complained that the Six Nations cared little for the interests of the native peoples they considered under their dominion, and appeared

⁶¹ Sir George Thomas, ed. Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations at Philadelphia, to which is Prefixed an Account of the first Confederacy of the Six Nations, their present Tributaries, Dependants, and Allies (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1743; reprinted London: T. Sowle Raylton and Luke Hinde, 1744), vi; and, Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, Record Group 75, Microfilm Publication, M668, Roll 2, National Archives Records Administration (hereafter, NARA), Washington, DC.

⁶² Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations at Philadelphia, vii; Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA.

⁶³ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, February 15, 1772, PSWJ 8: 406.

more intent on pleasing the British and protecting their own interests when they negotiated matters of war and peace, or the cession and sale of land. The Iroquois ceded land west of the Blue Ridge, including the Shenandoah Valley, to Virginia at the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster. *Tachanootia*, the Onondaga spokesman for the Six Nations, told those attending that treaty, “but as to what lies beyond the Mountains, we conquered the Nations residing there.” If the Virginians ever wanted to get a “good Right to it,” he continued, it must only by his people.⁶⁴ Although they disagreed on how far west that cession extended, after white settlers began to occupy it, the Iroquois granted Virginia the remaining land south and east of the Ohio in 1752 at the Treaty of Loggstown. As the Six Nations representative, *Tanacharison*, the “Half King” leader of the Mingoes and the Ohio country, speaking on behalf of the Six Nations council at Onondaga, signed a “deed” that recognized and acknowledged “the right and title” of the king of Great Britain to all the lands within the colony “as it was then, or hereafter might be peopled.”⁶⁵

On both occasions, the Iroquois neither considered Shawnee interests nor recognized Cherokee claims to the same area. To counter the influence of their overlords, the Shawnee expended considerable diplomatic energy attempting to form their own “Association” among the Ohio region Indians to help shake their dependency and oppose the military, economic, and political domination of the “6 Nations (&

⁶⁴ Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations in the Court-House in the Town of Lancaster, on Friday the Twenty Second of June, 1744 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1744), 16; Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA.

⁶⁵ Extracts from the Treaty with the Indians at Loggstown in the Year 1752, p 18, Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA.

English).”⁶⁶ In a somewhat duplicitous effort to convince other native peoples that they served as a channel for Iroquois policy while advancing their own interests, the Shawnees endeavored to draw the “Six Nations emigrants on Ohio,” the Mingoes, into their confederacy.⁶⁷

An Algonquin language-stock people, the Shawnee nation functioned as a confederation of five semiautonomous tribal units which shared a common language and culture, called septs: the *Chilabcahtha* (Chillicothe), *Assiwikale* (Thawekila), *Spitotha* (Mequachake), *Bicowetha* (Piqua), and *Kispokotha* (Kispoko). Although the system had an uncertain origin, by the latter eighteenth century each sept had its own council of elders that selected its chiefs, and met at its principal town – whose name derived from that of the sept – and participated at a central council as well. Each sept could act independently as long as it did not create conflict with the others, while the central council of elders decided matters of mutual importance, especially those involving diplomatic, military and economic activities with European or other Indian nations.⁶⁸

When they acted in concert, each sept assumed leadership in a certain facet of governance in which all others recognized its expertise. The two principal divisions,

⁶⁶ Col. Guy Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, January 1, 1773; and Sir William Johnson to Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Johnson Hall, June 30, 1773, PSWJ 8: 688 and 837, respectively; Arthur Parker *The Constitution of the Five Nations* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1916).

⁶⁷ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, December 26, 1772, DAR 5: 247-9.

⁶⁸ Thomas Wildcat Alford *Civilization: As Told to Florence Drake* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), 44; James H. Howard *Shawnee! The Ceremonialism of a Native American Tribe and its Cultural Background* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 107-8; Jerry Clark, *The Shawnee* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), 33. Among other variations, the *Chilabcahtha* are also identified by Chilicothe, Calaka, Chalaakaatha, and Chalahgawtha; the *Assiwikale* as Oawikila, Hathawaekela, Thawekila, Thaawikila, and Thawegila; the *Spitotha* as Mekoche, Mequachake, Maykujay, Mekoche, and Mekoche; the *Bicowetha* as Piqua, Pekowis and Pekowi; and *Kispokotha* as Kispokos, Kiscopocoke, Kispokotha, and Spitotha.

the Chilicothe and Thawekila, held responsibility for managing internal politics and led in matters that affected the tribes when they acted in unison. The Mequachake held responsibility for matters related to health and medicine, and provided healers. The Pequa answered the nation's needs for leadership in spiritual concerns and rituals. Finally, the Kispokos provided the Shawnees with their principal war chiefs and led in military matters.⁶⁹

Under the terms of the 1758 Treaty of Easton during the French and Indian War, the Six Nations granted the newly formed confederacy of Shawnee and western Delaware Indians living in the Ohio country a degree of independence, provided that they recognized continued Iroquois dominion over the land, including the exclusive authority to sell it to the British.⁷⁰ Although the treaty affirmed Six Nations control over the land they inhabited or used as hunting ground, through the diplomatic skills of the Delaware chief *Pisquetomen*, the Ohio Indians demanded a boundary to separate Indian from British territory in return for a cessation of hostilities and renunciation of their alliance with the French. When they departed Easton for home, Shawnee and Delaware sachems understood that the British promised not to maintain military posts on Indian land in the Ohio valley after the war.

The Shawnees and other Ohio Indians welcomed the announcement of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 at the end of the Seven Years War, and viewed it as an affirmation of the promises made at Easton. The Proclamation read, in part, “that the

⁶⁹ Ricky, 254.

⁷⁰ Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government, Volume 8, Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, hereafter CRP (Harrisburg: 1852), 187-8, 204.

several nations or tribes of Indians with whom we are connected, and who live under our protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the possession of such parts of our dominion and territories,” and reserved the land between the Appalachians and the Ohio River as their hunting grounds. As a means of more efficiently managing westward expansion, however, the Proclamation directed the military commanders in chief and the governors of the thirteen colonies, “for the present,” to prohibit British subjects from establishing settlements within the boundaries of the colonial charters but beyond a line formed by the heads of any of the rivers that flowed toward the Atlantic Ocean from the west or northwest, or any other land in their territory, that the Indians had not yet ceded to or sold to the Crown, “until our further pleasure is known.” Although many British subjects had already settled in the frontier districts on land ceded before 1763, the Proclamation put a halt to all purchases of Indian land by private interests. Thereafter, only official representatives of the Crown acting in their official capacity could conduct transactions to acquire Indian land in the context of formal treaties.⁷¹

These provisions reflected the convention European powers used in their efforts to colonize the New World, which became known as the Doctrine of Discovery. In principle at least, Europeans generally recognized the Indians’ right of original occupancy. In the context of Colonial America, the doctrine enabled a nation to extend its imperial domain over land previously unknown to, or unclaimed by other Europeans, and thereby preempt the right of any others to do so. When a European nation acquired the unsettled colonial territory of a rival, whether by purchase,

⁷¹ Edmund Burke, ed. Annual Register, Vol. 6 (1763), sec. 1, (London: Robert Dodsley, 1763), 208-213.

diplomacy, or military victory, it only acquired the preemptive exclusion until the Indians ceded or sold them the land.⁷²

The British Crown and American colonists saw the acquisition of Indian land as the means of fulfilling their mission to spread civilization, defined as Anglo-Christianity and English culture, across the continent. In his Second Treatise on Government, English philosopher and apostle of the Enlightenment John Locke wrote that “God and his Reason commanded him [man] to subdue the Earth, i.e., improve it for the benefit of Life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour.”⁷³

The colonists moving to the frontier found what they characterized as a vast “desert,” meaning a waste country, wilderness, or an uninhabited place, just waiting for them to “improve,” or “to advance nearer to perfection” and “raise from good to better.”⁷⁴

They improved the land by clearing the forest and dividing it into parcels of privately owned property set apart by fences. The settlers altered the land for cultivating crops or grazing cattle, and constructed homes, barns and outbuildings. The new inhabitants established industry and commerce with mills, kilns, mines, and forges. The immigrant populations expanded and established villages and towns with churches, courthouses, jails, taverns and shops. Finally, they connected their communities with other communities by roads, fords, bridges, landings, and ferries, to advance civilization.

⁷² Robert J. Miller Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, and Manifest Destiny (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1-5, as well as conversations and e-mail correspondence.

⁷³ John Locke Two Treatises of Government, (London: Black Swan in Pater Noster Row, 1698; reprinted, Edited with an Introduction and Notes, Laslett, Peter, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), II, 32.

⁷⁴ Johnson’s Dictionary, DES - DES, IMP - IN.

According to Locke, “Land that is left wholly to Nature, that hath no improvement of Pasturage, Tillage, or Planting, is called, as indeed it is, *wast[e]*.”⁷⁵ American colonists looked to the British Crown, and their colonial governments, to acquire the largely uninhabited wasteland from the Indians, either by force or diplomacy, so they could obtain their own parcels to improve and make their own property. Benjamin Franklin, an American disciple of the Enlightenment, expressed this sentiment in his 1751 essay, “Observation Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.” He described the filial relationship between the Crown and colonies, in part, by stating “the Prince that acquires new Territory, if he finds it vacant, or removes the Natives to give his own People Room” fulfilled a paternal obligation. Similarly, a man who invented “new Trades, Arts, or Manufactures” shared the credit with he who acquired land so that both “may be properly called Fathers of their Nation, as they are the Cause of the Generation of Multitudes.”⁷⁶ The colonists’ land hunger should therefore not be characterized as simply motivated by greed, but in the context of eighteenth century attitudes as inspired by Enlightenment ideals.

Enlightened philosophies, however, were alien to the native peoples. In contrast to their white neighbors, Indians believed in a mystic or spiritual relationship between man and nature in which the Great Spirit, or creator, provided the land and the beasts upon it for their use; but not for any one person to alter or possess. Had they been familiar with Locke’s work, Indians would have argued that land in which “all the Fruits it naturally produces, and Beasts it feeds, belong to Mankind in common.”

⁷⁵ Locke Second Treatise of Government, §42: 18-20 (297).

⁷⁶ Benjamin Franklin “Observation Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.,” Larabee, Leonard W., Wilcox, W.B., Lopez, Claude, and Oberg, Barbara B., eds., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 34 Volumes (New Haven: Yale University Press (?), 1959-1998), Volume 4 (1961), 229, 231.

Since these were produced by the “spontaneous hand of nature,” Indians would have argued that the land needed no improvement.⁷⁷ The Six Nations sachem *Canassatego* recognized this cultural divide when he addressed the Virginia commissioner at the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster. “Brother *Assaragoa*,” an Iroquoian word meaning Long Knife, or Big Knife, in reference to the ceremonial swords Virginia governors wore as a symbol of office and with which the Indians identified them, “our Customs differing from yours, you will be so good as to excuse us.”⁷⁸ Although the Six Nations agreed to cede the land between the “back of the great mountains” of Virginia and the Ohio River at that treaty, he expressed the Indians’ concern on how the new inhabitants improved the land. When living near them, the settlers’ practice of raising domesticated animals became a source of contention because “white Peoples Cattle . . . eat up all the Grass, and made Deer scarce.”⁷⁹

Similarly, at the Treaty of Easton in 1758, the Seneca sachem *Tagashata*, a Six Nations deputy speaking on behalf of all Indians, related that “Our Cousins [the Minisinks]” complained that they were dispossessed of a great deal of land due to “the English settling too fast” so that they “cou’d not tell what Lands [still] belonged to them” and forgot what they sold. He further maintained the colonists claimed the wild animals as well as the land, and no longer allowed the Minisinks to “come on . . . to hunt after them.”⁸⁰ Indians often felt that even after they ceded land in friendship

⁷⁷ Locke *Two Treatises of Government*, II: 32.

⁷⁸ *Treaty Held with the Indians of the Six Nations in the Court-House in the Town of Lancaster, on Friday the Twenty Second of June, 1744* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1744), 36; *Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800*, NARA.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Minutes of a Treaty Held at Easton, in Pennsylvania, In October, 1758* (Woodbridge, N.J.: James Parker, 1758); reprinted, edited with an Introduction and Notes, Laslett, Peter, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge

white settlers still dealt harshly with them. With no corresponding concept of private property and land ownership, Indians believed that the game animals were still theirs or common to both. They maintained that when they sold land, they did not propose to deprive themselves of hunting wild deer. They discovered that the settlers not only claimed “all the wild Creatures” on the land, but did not “so much as let us peel a single Tree,” or use “a Stick of Wood” for shelter or firewood. Understandably, many native people took great offense at such practices.⁸¹ Similar cross-cultural misunderstandings caused hard feelings, mistrust, animosity, and often led to conflict.

Many colonists did not wait for formal land cessions or purchases from the Indians. The Royal Proclamation caused dismay among those who already lived or had their eyes fixed on acquiring lands beyond the limits of settlement. They considered land between the Appalachians and the Ohio the fruits of victory over the French and their Indian allies, fairly won in a hard-fought war. Many Americans, including George Washington, understood that what he derisively called the “Ministerial Line” established by the Proclamation had to be “considered by the Government as a temporary expedient.”⁸² The very wording, “*for the present, until our further pleasure is known,*” reinforced this sentiment. Otherwise, many argued, the provision for the governors of the provinces of North America to grant “without fee or reward” the land bounties promised to officers and soldiers for their wartime service, and the ten-year exemption from having to pay the same quitrents as on other purchased

University Press, 2009), 19. The Minisinks, also called the Munsees, were a division of the Delawares sometimes called the Wolf Clan.

⁸¹ Minutes of a Treaty Held at Easton, in Pennsylvania, In October, 1758, 19-20.

⁸² George Washington to Earl of Dunmore, letter dated Williamsburg, November 2, 1774, Abbot, W. W. and Twohig, Dorothy, eds., The Papers of George Washington, hereafter PGW, Colonial Series, Volume 9, January 1772 – March 1774 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 357.

lands, would have been hollow.⁸³ Furthermore, by calling it the ministerial and not royal proclamation, Americans did not fix the blame on the king, but on ministers they believed had deceived him.

After the Crown issued the Royal Proclamation, Sir William Johnson and John Stuart, Superintendents of Indian Affairs for the Northern and Southern Departments, respectively, requested the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, commonly called the Board of Trade, for permission to conduct negotiations with the Indians to identify and survey the actual boundary. Hoping to avoid another Indian war and satisfy native peoples as well as land speculators, settlers and colonial officials, the Board of Trade issued its preliminary instructions in 1765. Specifically, the Board directed the Indian superintendents to draw the line from Fort Stanwix, at the portage between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek in the north, south and west to the Ohio River, then along its course to its confluence with the Great Kanawha River, proceeding up the Kanawha to its headwaters, then south to the border of East Florida. In early 1768, the Board of Trade's president, William Petty-FitzMaurice, the Earl of Shelburne, transmitted the king's command to complete the "Boundary line between the several Provinces with the various Indian Tribes ... without loss of time."⁸⁴

Before any negotiations between Crown officials and Indian nations could begin, the British Indian Department's officers had to mediate peace between the two powerful

⁸³ Burke Annual Register, Vol. 6 (1763), sec. 1, (London: Robert Dodsley, 1763), 208-213. Emphasis is my own.

⁸⁴ Earl of Shelburne to Sir William Johnson, letter dated Whitehall, January 5, 1768, Callahan, Edmund Baily, ed., Documents Related to the Colonial History of New York, hereafter DRCHNY, Volume 8 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1857), 3.

native polities bordering the colonies. After repeated requests by colonial officials of North Carolina and Virginia on behalf of the Cherokees, Sir William Johnson invited that nation and the Iroquois Six Nations to send their representative sachems to meet at Johnson Hall, his baronial manor in the Mohawk Valley, to discuss ending the war between them. In February 1768 both sides agreed to sign the peace treaty.⁸⁵ The Cherokee representatives returned home well-pleased and satisfied with the council's results, which opened the way for the next round of negotiations.

In the Northern Department, Indians from several nations began arriving at the abandoned British military post of Fort Stanwix in August. Eventually, 3,400 Indians, including representative sachems, leading warriors and their families, assembled. They represented the Six Nations and their several dependent and tributary tribes, as well as native peoples from outside of the Iroquois Confederacy such as the Seven Nations of Canada and the Wyandots. Sir William Johnson convened the council. Negotiations began among the various Indians, and with William Franklin, the royal governor of New Jersey, commissioners from the colonial governments of Pennsylvania and Virginia, as well as representatives of the "Suffering Traders" of Pennsylvania. Led by William Trent and Samuel Wharton, the last group sought land cessions for themselves and fellow Indian traders as compensation for the property they lost and other financial hardship incurred during Pontiac's War. Although he attended as Johnson's deputy superintendent for the western Indian nations, George Croghan also had a private interest in the proceedings as one of the aggrieved traders. Doctor Thomas Walker and Andrew Lewis

⁸⁵ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Shelburne, letter dated Johnson Hall, 14 March 1768, DRCHNY 8: 36-38.

represented Virginia interests, until Lewis departed on October 12 to attend the council with the southern Indians at Hard Labour. The discussions lasted from September 20 until October 24, when the participants began work on formulating the treaty. The sachems of the Six Nations presumed to act as proprietors of all Indian land, and affixed their totems to the Boundary Line Treaty and “a deed executed for the lands to the Crown of Great Britain” on November 5, 1768.⁸⁶ The final agreement not only established a boundary line on behalf of the Iroquois themselves, but for the Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, and others. Although representative chiefs from those entities attended, the Iroquois signed on their behalf, and ceded their interests in land east and south of the Ohio River to the British.⁸⁷

As required by the Royal Proclamation, Sir William Johnson, a representative of the Crown acting in his official capacity, purchased the ceded land from the Six Nations, who claimed dominion over it. In return, the favored Iroquois received the entire £10,460 British payment, much to the consternation of the Indian people who actually lived or hunted on the ceded land. The new boundary line ran from just west of Fort Stanwix south to and along the Delaware River, then west to and along the West Branch of the Susquehanna to the upper Allegheny Rivers, then followed the latter downstream to Fort Pitt at the Forks of the Ohio River, then down the Ohio, passed the mouth of the Great Kanawha, to mouth of the Tennessee River, then known as the Cherokee or Hogohege. The treaty therefore extended the boundary prescribed in the

⁸⁶ Executive Journal, Council of Virginia, dated December 16, 1768, Hillman, Benjamin J., ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, hereafter Council Executive Journals, 1754-1775, Volume 6 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), 308-9.

⁸⁷ The 1768 Fort Stanwix Boundary Line Treaty, Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA; Sir William Johnson to Earl Hillsborough, letter dated Fort Stanwix, October 21, 1768, PSWJ 16, 2007; Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians at Fort Stanwix to Settle a Boundary Line, DRCHNY 8: 38-50.

Board of Trade instructions much further west. Part of the cession included the Indiana Grant as compensation to the Suffering Traders for their losses. To justify extending the cession, the Six Nations sachems “Do Declare it to be our true Bounds with the Southern [Cherokee] Indians & We Do have an undoubted Right to the Country as far South as that River which makes our Cession to his Majesty much more advantageous than proposed.”⁸⁸

Meanwhile, at Hard Labour, South Carolina, Stuart had reached an agreement with the principal Cherokee chiefs which established the southern Indian-Colonial boundary on October 17, 1768. To the great relief of British subjects who already settled there despite the Royal Proclamation, the Cherokees relinquished their claims to all lands between the Appalachian Divide and the Ohio, but only as far as the Great Kanawha River. However, many colonists had settled and the Loyal Company’s lands were beyond this line. More importantly for Virginia interests, the Treaty of Hard Labour negated much of what the colony had gained in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix.⁸⁹

When Virginia’s commissioner Andrew Lewis reported on the “ensuing Congress with the Cherokees,” the members of Virginia’s Colonial Council described the proposed boundary as “highly injurious to this Colony, and to the Crown of Great Britain.” They based their objections on grounds that it gave the southern Indians, or Cherokees, “an extensive tract of Land” between the Kanawha and Cherokee Rivers which the Six Nations had owned and ceded at Fort Stanwix. Virginia officials

⁸⁸ The 1768 Fort Stanwix Boundary Line Treaty, Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA.

⁸⁹ Council dated 16 December 1768, Council Executive Journals 6: 309.

further maintained that Stuart essentially gave the Cherokees land, “a great part of which they never had, or pretended a right to, but actually disclaimed.” The Council directed Lewis to return to South Carolina, accompanied by Walker, to inform Stuart of the importance of a just boundary before he ordered the line surveyed. Otherwise, Virginia would not cooperate in determining a boundary until they received more explicit and precise instructions from the king.⁹⁰

Sir William Johnson’s Fort Stanwix boundary did not join to form a coherent demarcation with that settled by Stuart in the Treaty of Hard Labour. Johnson maintained that the Six Nations could cede any of the land along that boundary as they held dominion over it by right of conquest, despite claims by those Indians which inhabited or hunted it. Therefore, the Six Nations ceded land on the Susquehanna and Allegheny inhabited by the Delawares and Munsees, as well as the Cherokee and Shawnee hunting ground in Kentucky, and even some arguably Cherokee country in present Tennessee, by the treaty signed at Fort Stanwix.⁹¹ Johnson’s explanation also affirmed the Virginia position.

Although he expressed displeasure with Johnson for not complying with his instructions and exceeding his authority, Lord Hillsborough, minister of the then newly created Secretariat of State for the Colonies, nevertheless communicated the royal ratification of the treaty and boundary, except for certain private grants, in December 1769. That same month, fifty-three men petitioned Virginia’s Governor

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ The 1768 Fort Stanwix Boundary Line Treaty, Ratified Indian Treaties 1722-1800, NARA; Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, 13 November 1768, with deed enclosed, PSWJ 16: 210.

Norborne Berkeley, fourth Baron Botetourt, for permission to “take up and survey” 60,000 acres on the Cumberland River from the lands situated on the east side of the Ohio “having lately been recognized by the Six Nations of Indians” as conveyed to “his Majesty’s Title.”⁹²

Ratification of the Fort Stanwix boundary required Stuart to renegotiate the southern boundary due to the great loss and inconvenience it caused the many British subjects who inhabited lands that the Cherokees had not ceded but the Iroquois had. Along with commissioners from the Virginia and North Carolina, Stuart convened a meeting with sixteen Cherokee chiefs on October 5 at Lochaber, South Carolina, the home of Alexander Cochrane, his deputy for that nation. By the eighteenth, the Cherokee leaders signed the deed relinquishing all claims to the land from the North Carolina and Virginia border west along the Holston River to a point six miles east of the Long Island of the Holston, then north by east on a straight line to the Ohio at the mouth of the Great Kanawha.⁹³

Although an improvement, the arrangement still did not please the Virginians much more than the Treaty of Hard Labour had. Authorized by a resolution of the General Assembly to request Stuart to negotiate “a more extensive Boundary,” Governor Botetourt urged the southern Indian superintendent to immediately negotiate a treaty with the Cherokees in which Virginia would gain the cession of those lands to which

⁹² Joseph Cabell Jr., et al, to Baron de Botetourt, petition dated December (?), 1769, James Rood Robertson, ed., Petitions of the Early Habitants of Kentucky to the General Assembly of Virginia, 1769-1792 (Louisville: Filson Club Publication, 1914), 35n.

⁹³ John Stuart to Baron de Botetourt, letter dated Lochaber, October 18, 1770, with copy of the Cherokee deed enclosed, Kennedy, John Pendleton, ed., The Journal of the House of Burgesses for Virginia, 1770-1772 hereafter JHB (Richmond; Library of Virginia, 1906), xv-xvii. The Long Island of the Holston River is the site of present-day Kingsport, Tennessee.

his Majesty had already consented in the Fort Stanwix Treaty. With the necessary appropriations passed, Botetourt commissioned Colonel John Donelson to survey the new boundary as soon as possible after the Indian superintendent and commissioners concluded the new treaty.⁹⁴ Botetourt did not live to see it. After he died on October 15, 1770, William Nelson, president of the colonial council, assumed the role of acting governor.

Stuart informed Cochrane that the treaty had not pleased the Shawnees either. They sat as “the head of the Western confederacy” formed for the purpose of maintaining their property in the lands the British obtained from the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix and preventing white people from settling there.⁹⁵ Johnson and the Iroquois leaders feared that the Mingoes, residing in the neighborhood of the “disaffected tribes,” would feel increasingly alienated. They did not want their emigrants to fall under the influence of the Shawnees, who they considered no real friends of the Six Nations, to the point where they “followed other councils.” Seeking to exert renewed authority on their kin, Johnson called for a congress of deputies from the Six Nations to meet with the Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, Miamis and others, to put a halt to their attempts to seduce the Mingoes, or Six Nations on the Ohio, from their allegiance to the Iroquois Confederacy.⁹⁶

Williamsburg

⁹⁴ Journal Entry for Friday, June 15, 1770 session; Baron de Botetourt to John Stuart, letter dated Williamsburg, June 21, 1770, JHB *1770-1772*, 74 and xiii, respectively.

⁹⁵ John Stuart to Alexander Cochrane, letter dated Charles Town, February 23, 1771, DAR 3: Transcripts 1771 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1973), 42-43.

⁹⁶ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, April 22, 1773, DAR Volume 6, Transcripts 1773 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1974), 129-130.

Lord Hillsborough selected John Murray, the fourth Earl Dunmore, then serving as royal governor of New York, to succeed Botetourt in Virginia. The new governor's father, William Murray, influenced by his wife Catherine's Nairne relatives, and much to the embarrassment of the rest of the Murrays, had joined the losing side in the failed Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. William Murray served the Young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, or Bonnie Prince Charlie, as a vice chamberlain, or assistant to the manager of the royal household. Although too young to serve in the rebel army, John left his studies at Eton when his father secured him the honorary position of a "Page of Honour" to the prince. After the forces loyal to King George II decisively crushed the rebels in the April 1746 battle of Culloden Moor, William initially evaded capture, but eventually surrendered to the king's forces. Indicted by a grand jury, he stood trial "by Reason of his having been concerned with the late Rebellion."⁹⁷

Fortunately, his brother and son's namesake, John Murray, the second Earl of Dunmore, and a "General of Our Foot" in the British army, intervened on his behalf. The Crown spared William from execution for "High Treason," as well as "all other Treasons, Crimes and Offenses" committed before December 22, 1746, for which he stood convicted. The government commuted the death sentence to confinement. Two years later, in 1748, George II granted William a royal pardon with "license to

⁹⁷ George II to William, third earl Dunmore, Royal Pardon and License to Reside at Beverley in Yorkshire, dated January 21, 1748, Handwritten Mss, Dunmore Family Papers I, 65 D92, Box III, Folder I, Special Collections, Earl Greg Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

reside in Beverly, at Yorkshire,” which enabled him to succeed the unmarried John as third lord in 1752, when his elder brother died leaving no heirs.⁹⁸

In 1749, the year after the Crown pardoned William, the second Earl Dunmore brought his brother’s son into the British army in a manner most appropriate and befitting a young Scottish aristocrat. John, who had served many years as the colonel of the regiment, purchased his nephew and successor to the earldom an ensign’s commission in the 3d (Scottish) Regiment of Foot Guards. Under the unique dual rank system of the day, the young John Murray’s appointment not only included a much sought after membership in the elite unit, but a captaincy in the British army as well.⁹⁹ When William died in 1756, Captain John Murray became the fourth Earl Dunmore, with an inheritance that included the additional hereditary titles of Viscount Fincastle, and Baron of Blair, Monlin, and Tillimett.¹⁰⁰

As a young officer in pursuit of military distinction and advancement, however, Dunmore experienced a series of disappointments. As soon as Great Britain declared war on France in 1756, he unsuccessfully sought field assignments. Despite the

⁹⁸ Ibid, and John E. Selby Dunmore (Williamsburg: Virginia Independence Bicentennial Commission, 1977), 5-6.

⁹⁹ John Newcastle, writing for King George II, to John Murray, Commission as Ensign in the Foot Guards, dated Kensington, May 30, 1749, Handwritten Mss., Dunmore Family Papers; Selby, 6. Dunmore’s uncle and namesake, John, second Earl, had been colonel of the regiment for nearly four decades. During this period, the Crown privileged officers in the Guards Regiments with dual rank commissions. This enabled them to hold one rank in the Guards, as well as a higher rank in the army structure. Commissions in the Guards were more valuable and therefore purchased at a higher price than for those of the same rank in non-Guards units as well. For example: a captaincy in the Guards included a lieutenant colonelcy in the army. Subalterns, i.e., ensigns and lieutenants, like Dunmore, in the Guards were also captains in the army. When assigned or serving outside of their regiments, Guards officers functioned, and were treated and addressed by the higher army rank. The British Army abolished the practice after the Crimean War in the 1850s.

¹⁰⁰ John Debrett, Debrett’s Correct Peerage of England, Scotland and Ireland, with the Extinct and Forfeited Peerages of the Three Kingdoms, Volume 2, Scotland (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1805), 771. In some documents Dunmore’s other titles are written as Moulin; and Tillemott, Tillemot, Tillemount, and Taymount.

assistance of well-connected friends and relatives, and possibly tainted by his father's treason, his requests for posting to the Anglo-German army commanded by Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick-Lunenburg on the European continent or assignment to that of Brigadier General James Wolfe in North America went for naught. Except for participating in a few raids against the coast of France, he took part in no campaigns of any note. Although Dunmore served in an army engaged in a desperate global conflict, he gained little combat experience and no distinction.¹⁰¹

Dunmore's fortunes began to change in 1761 when his fellow Scottish aristocrats elected the brash thirty-year old to a seven-year term as one of the Representative Peers of Scotland in the House of Lords. That same year, his friend and army comrade William Fitzmaurice Petty, a military aid de camp to King George III, inherited the title second Earl Shelburne and a seat in the Lords on his father's death. Frustrated in his pursuit of a military career, although nothing prevented serving officers from sitting in Parliament, Dunmore informed the well-connected Shelburne of his intention to "resign all thoughts of the army" in 1762.¹⁰²

Dunmore eventually received the appointment, and briefly served, as Royal Governor of New York in 1770. He thoroughly relished his short time as governor and took the opportunity to acquire a sizable holding of land and other wealth in that colony. In an era when realizing personal profit from one's political position did not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest or corruption, Dunmore made the most of his

¹⁰¹ James Corbett David, "Dunmore's New World: Political Culture in the British Empire, 1745-1796," unpublished manuscript, Doctoral Dissertation, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 2010, 33-35.

¹⁰² Lord Shelburne to Lord Dunmore, letter dated September 23, 1762, Handwritten Mss, Dunmore Family Papers I, 65 D92, Box III, Folder 22; Selby, 4, 7-8. Shelburne became First Lord, or President, of the Lords of the Board of Trade in 1763.

appointment. Although considered a promotion, he reluctantly accepted the governorship of Virginia, but delayed his arrival in Williamsburg for several months. He assumed his new post in September 1771.

The Ohio Frontier

Donelson set out on his mission to survey and mark the colony's new western border in the fall of 1771. Cochrane and "several chiefs of the [Cherokee] Indians concerned," including *Attakullakulla*, the "Most beloved" or principal chief, who the British called Little Carpenter, accompanied the surveyors. After they had surveyed the line, Virginia's new governor reported to Secretary of State Hillsborough that the new line did not run exactly according to the instructions, and took in a larger tract of the country than the Treaty of Lochaber had defined. During the process of surveying, Donelson secured the several Cherokee chiefs' agreement to adjust the negotiated boundary from that as drawn on the map. The arbitrary line ran through difficult and unremarkable ground, which the Indians described as not good for hunting anyway. The new surveyed boundary followed easily recognizable terrain features that could never be mistaken, and proved less costly to survey. Still short of the limits established by the Fort Stanwix boundary and less area than Governor Botetourt desired for the colony, Virginia's new area extended to the Louisa (or Kentucky) River. From its confluence with the Ohio, the new boundary followed the Louisa to its northernmost fork, ran west along the ridge of mountains to the headwaters of the Cumberland, and then east to the Holston River where it met the

cession agreed upon at Lochaber. Although not a formal treaty, the arrangement became known as the Great Grant, or the Cherokee Treaty of 1772.¹⁰³

In February of that year, the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation that created a new county, named Fincastle in honor of one of Dunmore's hereditary titles, by incorporating areas of Botetourt County plus the land acquired by the recent boundary-line adjustments.¹⁰⁴ In April, a group of anxious settlers petitioned the Virginia Assembly for a large grant on the Louisa River. By October, the governor and Council ordered a Commission of Peace to establish the county court and appoint justices of the peace, as well as create the militia establishment and commission its field officers.¹⁰⁵

While the Iroquois and Cherokee relinquished their claims, and collected the purchase prices (although evidence exists that the Cherokee may never have received the £500 promised them), none of the diplomatic actions addressed the concerns of the Shawnee for the loss of their hunting ground. For all intents and purposes, especially as colonists, Crown officials, and the Six Nations viewed it, the Ohio River represented the new boundary between the British colonies and Indian country. Not surprisingly, the Shawnees disputed the treaties, and looked upon any white encroachment as an invasion. As early as April 1771, John Stuart informed Lord Hillsborough that the "dissatisfaction of the Western tribes ... at the extensive cession of land at the Congress at Fort Stanwix" caused them to form confederacies and

¹⁰³ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Hillsborough, letter dated Williamsburg, March (?), 1772, DAR Volume 5, Transcripts 1772 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1974), 51-53; Kennedy, JHB 1770-1772 (Richmond: Library of Virginia, 1906), xxvi. *Attakullakulla* is a variation of *Ada-gal'kala*.

¹⁰⁴ William Walker Hening, ed., Statutes at Large, hereafter Statutes, Volume 8 (Richmond: J. & C. Cochran, 1821), 600.

¹⁰⁵ Council dated 10 October 1772, Council Executive Journals 6: 504-506.

alliances with other nations. In consequence, they were “indefatigable” in sending messengers and making peace overtures to the Cherokees in order to balance the power of the Iroquois, who they held responsible for their loss. The Southern Department’s Indian Superintendent further expressed the opinion that the extension of the colonial boundaries into the Indian hunting grounds had “rendered what the Indians reserved to themselves on this side of the mountains of very little use to them.” Deer were already becoming scarce due to the influx of white hunters and erection of new settlements.¹⁰⁶

After reading the reports from the Indian superintendents, General Gage informed Lord Hillsborough the Ohio tribes had become “discontented” because great numbers of whites had crossed the Alleghenies to settle between the mountains and the Ohio, “so near to the Indians as to occasion frequent quarrels.” However, the general felt confident in Johnson’s assurance that the Six Nations “resolved to manifest their fidelity to the English” in enforcing the treaty and “bring the Western nations to good order.”¹⁰⁷

The British army relinquished responsibility for frontier security when it ordered a number of posts abandoned and demolished, and their garrisons redeployed to eastern cities. General Gage informed William Barrington, second Viscount Barrington, the Secretary at War, “If the Colonists will afterward force the Savages into Quarrells by using them ill, let them feel the Consequences, we shall be out of the Scrape.”¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁶ John Stuart to Earl of Hillsborough, letter dated Charles Town, April 27, 1771, DAR 3: 85-86.

¹⁰⁷ Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage to Earl of Hillsborough, letter dated New York, December 4, 1771, DAR 3: 25-26.

¹⁰⁸ Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage to Viscount Barrington, letter dated New York, March 4, 1772, Carter, Clarence Edwin, ed., The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, and with the War

evacuation of regulars from Fort Pitt on October 10, 1772, pleased the Indians, but caused a vacuum of authority that both Pennsylvania and Virginia sought to fill. Pennsylvania's Assembly, controlled by the Quaker Party, would never approve the proposal for raising and supporting even a small number of troops that Lieutenant Governor Richard Penn sought to garrison Fort Pitt in the place of the king's forces.¹⁰⁹

Forks of the Ohio

Both Virginia and Pennsylvania claimed jurisdiction of the region between the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers, including the strategic Forks. Virginia's government considered the area a part of Augusta County, established in 1738. When Pennsylvania established its Westmoreland County west of the Laurel Ridge in 1772, its boundary overlapped a portion of western Augusta. Virginia's claim ultimately rested on the London Company's corporate charter of 1609, and the royal colony charter that replaced it in 1624, which fixed its area between two hundred miles north and south of Old Point Comfort on the Atlantic, then west to the "Western (Pacific) Sea." Except for specified cessions of land to other colonies at various times, by 1773 Virginia's dominion still stretched in a widening vector to the west and northwest, encompassing present Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and part of Minnesota. Pennsylvania based its claim on William Penn's 1661 proprietary charter for a colony between the Delaware River

Office and the Treasury, 1763-1775, hereafter Gage Correspondence, Volume 2 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1969), 600-601.

¹⁰⁹ Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated New York, December 2, 1772, Gage Correspondence, Volume 1 (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1969), 340-341.

on the east to five degrees of longitude on the west.¹¹⁰ This description left the western border open to four possible interpretations. The western limit could be defined either by an irregular boundary that mirrored all points on the Delaware, or a fixed straight line corresponding to either the point farthest east, farthest west, or at the median of the two. Any of these solutions for determining Pennsylvania's western boundary encroached on land included in Virginia's charter.

In an attempt to confirm the grants awarded the Suffering Traders at Fort Stanwix, William Trent and Samuel Wharton travelled to England in 1769, and met with some influential parties to form the Grand Ohio Company. Backed by investors in London and Philadelphia, including Thomas Walpole and Benjamin Franklin, they approached the Board of Trade with a plan to establish a new inland colony on the recently ceded Indian land. Originally to be called Pittsylvania, they changed the name to Vandalia in honor of Queen Charlotte, George III's wife, as she purportedly descended from the Germanic tribe, the Vandals. The proposed venture immediately complicated matters on the frontier.

The Board of Trade cited "the necessity ... for introducing some regular system of government" to a part of Virginia that the commissioners believed was located too far from the civil government at Williamsburg. The distance from that capital, the argument ran, rendered the people living there "incapable of participating of the advantages" of being part of that colony. Therefore, they recommended that the region be separated from the colony of Virginia and incorporated into Vandalia by

¹¹⁰ Percy B. Caley "Lord Dunmore and the Pennsylvania-Virginia Boundary Dispute," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine Volume 22 (1939), p. 87.

letters patent under the Great Seal of Great Britain. They envisioned the new colony's area as bounded on the west, north, and northwest by the Ohio River, from the border of Pennsylvania to a point opposite the mouth of the Scioto, then down the Louisa to its headwaters and eventually the Holston River, and on the east by the Allegheny Mountains.¹¹¹ Although Lord Hillsborough disapproved, the Privy Council overruled him and forwarded the Vandalia plan to the king. The Virginia government opposed the new creation since Vandalia's area would come at the expense of territory granted by the colony's royal charter and recently acquired by the Indian treaties. George Croghan, who expected a settlement based on his suffering trader status, stood to gain either way. Had George III assented to the new colony, Vandalia's would have overlapped and created competing land claims with those issued by Virginia. The king, however, never signed the charter.

As soon Lord Dunmore assumed the governorship in 1771, he began receiving petitions for patents on western lands. Presiding over the largest, wealthiest, and most populous British colony on mainland North America, Dunmore seemed eager to establish himself as the king's viceroy and protect the interests of the colony over which he presided. In a personal letter to Hillsborough, he viewed the granting of patents and "settling ... some of the vacant lands which the new boundary-line now offers ... as a means of ingratiating myself very much with the people of this colony." Dunmore's ambitions were not unlike those of other colonial officials in using the

¹¹¹ Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to the King, letter dated Whitehall, May 6, 1773, DAR 6: 134-142; Edward Montagu to the Virginia House of Burgesses Committee of Correspondence, letter dated London, January 18, 1770, JHB 1770-1772, xvi-xvii.

advantage of government office for personal gain, and sought to acquire land “advantageous to my family” while in Virginia.¹¹²

Dunmore found that he and George Washington shared common interests in this regard, and were on friendly terms. Both aspired to acquire land, and gain a return of the investment through speculation. As speculators and other land-hungry colonists joined veterans seeking to redeem their bounties, they desired to have their claims “legally surveyed and patented” as soon as possible.¹¹³ Many settlers had also started flooding into the recently ceded areas since the last war. In a letter to his brother Jonathan, the busy twenty-year-old surveyor George Rogers Clark wrote that “this Cuntry settles very fast.” With the new boundary treaties signed and ratified, Clark added, “the people is a settling as low as ye Siotho [Scioto] River 366 [miles] Below Fort Pitt.”¹¹⁴

In an effort to establish Virginia authority and bring some order to the situation on the frontier, Governor Dunmore authorized Captain Thomas Bullitt to organize a party to survey the land in northern and eastern Kentucky. Leading about forty men, he started down the Ohio from the Kanawha River. On entering Shawnee country, Bullitt visited the principal Shawnee town of Chillicothe, and met with the chief named *Keiga-tugh-qua*, who the English called Cornstalk, and other leaders. After informing them the land on the south bank “had been sold to the white people by the

¹¹² Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Hillsborough, letter dated Williamsburg, March (?), 1771, DAR 5: 53-54.

¹¹³ Earl of Dunmore to the Surveyor of Fincastle County [William Preston], Certificate of Military Land Claim for Alexander Waugh, dated Williamsburg, December 17, 1773, Handwritten Mss, Catalog Number 1969.51.019, Collection, History Museum of Western Virginia, Roanoke, Virginia.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., and George Rogers Clark to Jonathan Clark, letter dated Grave Creek Township, January 9, 1773, James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781*, hereafter Clark Papers (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 191), Volume 8, Virginia Series Volume 3: 32.

Six Nations and Cherokees as far down the Ohio as the mouth of the Cherokee River,” he continued on his way. After reaching the Falls of the Ohio in July, he remained into August to lay out the settlement that later became Louisville, Kentucky. Bullitt’s visit, however, alarmed the Shawnee. Meeting at Fort Pitt, Shawnee deputies addressed *Guyasuta*, the Seneca chief and diplomat representing the Six Nations interests in the Ohio country and exercising authority over the Mingo, and Alexander McKee, Sir William Johnson’s deputy superintendent, to express their dismay that “our nations had not been considered when the purchases were made.”¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, Dunmore “thought it might conduce to the good of His Majesty’s service” to personally visit the “interior and remote parts” of the colony. The governor planned to go in the summer of 1773, when not much provincial business would be conducted in Williamsburg between the sessions of the General Court.¹¹⁶ George Washington, actively lobbying for the governor to honor the land grants promised to the veterans of the Virginia Regiment by Governor Dinwiddie and the General Assembly in 1754, and to open the area for settlement, invited Dunmore to visit Mount Vernon on his way. If the governor wished to leave as early as the first of July, Washington offered to accompany his lordship “through any and every part of the Western Country” he thought proper to visit. Washington recommended and arranged for fellow Virginia Regiment veteran William Crawford, a good woodsman

¹¹⁵ Shawnee Deputies to *Guyasuta* and Alexander McKee, speech dated Pittsburgh, June 28, 1773, DAR 6: 166-167. Variations of spelling Cornstalk’s Indian name include *Keiga-tugh-qua*, include: *Hokolesqua* and *Wynepuechsika*. Variation of *Guyasuta*’s name include: *Keyashuta*, *Kayasota*, *Kayashuta*, *Gaiachuton*, *Geyesutha*, *Koyashota*, *Ca-ya-sho-ta* and others.

¹¹⁶ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, March 18, 1774, DAR 8, Transcripts 1774 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1974), 65-67.

who was familiar with the lands in the region, to act as their guide. In addition, Washington offered to contact the now retired long-time deputy superintendent of the western Indians, George Croghan, to arrange a meeting with some local tribal leaders.¹¹⁷

Unfortunately, tragedy struck Mount Vernon on Saturday, June 19, when Martha "Patsy" Parke Custis, Martha's child from a previous marriage, died suddenly from an attack of epilepsy. Expressing being "most exceedingly sorry," the governor offered his condolences to the bereaved stepfather and especially the grieving Mrs. Washington for the loss of the "poor young lady." Dunmore understood that George could no longer accompany him, but communicated his intention to pay his respects to the mourning family in person at Mount Vernon on his way.¹¹⁸

Dunmore's mission apparently had two purposes. First, he wished to exert Virginia's jurisdiction over the area to counter the Pennsylvania claims. Second, he opposed the creation of Vandalia, and would show the Privy Council and Board of Trade that the frontier districts did not fall beyond the reach of his government's civil and military protection. Formulating his plan, he sought the support of local residents, including some who had accepted Pennsylvania civil offices, like his guide Crawford, who served as the president and chief magistrate for Westmoreland County. While many Virginians lived there, others considered themselves Pennsylvanians. When Dunmore visited his home on the Youghiogheny, Crawford provided the governor

¹¹⁷ George Washington to Earl of Dunmore, letter dated Mount Vernon, April 13, 1773, PGW, Colonial Series, Volume 9, January 1772 – March 1774 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 217-218.

¹¹⁸ Earl of Dunmore to George Washington, letter dated Williamsburg, July 3, 1773, PGW, Colonial Series, 9: 258-9.

with information about the region and locations of the best land. In return, Dunmore assured Crawford that he would receive the patents for the land Virginia owed him for his wartime service.

On his arrival in Pittsburgh, Dunmore found that the neighborhood had “upwards of ten thousand people settled [but] had neither magistrates to preserve rule and order among themselves, nor militia for their defence in case of sudden attack of the Indians.” The withdrawal of the British garrison the previous year left no agency to keep order, and the fort had been partially demolished with the remains in such disrepair that it had little defensive value. Yet, Dunmore noted the presence of an Indian settlement directly opposite to the town on the far side of the river, which presented “the utmost necessity of such establishment.” He found many inhabitants who agreed with him and claimed that people flocked around him and begged him to appoint magistrates and militia officers in order to remove “these onerous inconveniences under which they labored.”¹¹⁹ To further put their concerns at ease, he assured everyone that his government would honor land patents they received from other valid authorities. Dunmore thus won over a number of Pennsylvanians, including Colonel Croghan, as one of the Suffering Traders, and Doctor John Connolly, both of whom stood to gain much in the Vandalia project.

Although his high forehead, beak-like nose and steel-eyed gaze gave him a hawk-like appearance, Thomas Jefferson described the thirty-two-years-old Connolly as “a

¹¹⁹ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, March 18, 1774, DAR 8: 65-67.

chatty, sensible man.”¹²⁰ A native Pennsylvanian, he had received an education and, in his words, “bred to physic,” or the practice of medicine, but confided that his ambition had always been to be a soldier. Connolly proudly stated that he had served as a volunteer in two campaigns at his own expense, including the British attack on Martinique in the West Indies during the Seven Years War, and on the frontier during Pontiac’s War. The experience afforded the aspiring military officer the opportunity to observe the great difference “between the *petite guerre* of the Indians, and the military system of the Europeans,” and concluded it essentially necessary “for a good soldier in this service to be a master of both.” Besides experience, Connolly’s service had also earned him a military patent for land.¹²¹ Dunmore further interested Connolly with a promise of an additional 2,000 acres of land at the Falls of the Ohio, and invited him to meet him for further discussions at Williamsburg in the autumn. An excited Connolly wrote to George Washington that since “Lord Dunmore hath done us the honor of a visit,” he now shared the Virginian’s high regard for the governor as “a Gentleman of benevolence & universal Charity.” Washington wrote the governor in September to congratulate his lordship on his safe return to the capital after his “Tour through a Country,” he described as “if not well Improv’d, at least bless’d with many natural advantages.”¹²²

¹²⁰ Thomas Wharton to Thomas Walpole, letter dated Philadelphia, September 23, 1774, “Selections from the Letter-Books of Thomas Wharton, of Philadelphia, 1773-1783,” Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 33, Number 4 (1909), p. 444-447.

¹²¹ John Connolly “A Narrative of the Transactions, Imprisonment, and Sufferings of John Connolly, and American Loyalist and Lt. Col. in His Majesty’s Service,” Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 12, Number 3, 1888, pp. 310-311.

¹²² John Connolly to George Washington, letter dated Pittsburgh, August 29, 1773, and George Washington to Earl of Dunmore, letter dated Mount Vernon, 12 September 1773, PGW, Colonial Series, 9: 314-315, and 322-324, respectively.

Meanwhile, Sir William Johnson wrote William Legge, second Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies and President of the Board of Trade, with “intelligence” received from Fort Pitt. His deputy, Alexander McKee, reported that “a certain Captain Bullet with a large number of people from Virginia” had gone down the Ohio beyond the proposed boundary of Vandalia, to survey and lay out lands “which are to be forthwith patented.” The news disturbed the Indians “a good deal,” and left the Shawnee, in particular, “much alarmed at the numbers who go from Virginia in pursuit of new settlements.”¹²³

Coincidentally, King George III and the Privy Council issued new guidance concerning the disposal of his Majesty’s land on April 7, 1773, which Dunmore received in early October. The king and his ministers realized that the authority to grant Crown lands conveyed by each governor’s commission and instructions needed to be further regulated and restrained. Additionally, those receiving grants of Crown land should also be subjected to other conditions than previously enumerated. Therefore, the king ordered all governors, lieutenant governors, and other persons “in Command of his Majesty’s Colonies in North America” to cease issuing any warrants of survey or to pass any patents for lands, or grant any license for the private purchase of any lands from the Indians without especial direction from his majesty until further notice. The new regulation only exempted veterans of the regular service, not

¹²³ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, September 22, 1773, DAR 1770-1783, 6: 224-225.

provincials, entitled to the military grants as prescribed in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, however.¹²⁴

Three weeks had elapsed following McKee's warning about Shawnee restlessness before a party of nineteen braves made their way through the Kentucky hunting grounds on their way home from Chota in Cherokee country. Having just attended a congress where representatives from several nations discussed the continued white encroachment on those very hunting grounds, the warriors' blood was up and they were spoiling for a fight. When they crossed paths with eight men leading cattle and packhorses, the Indians seized the opportunity to strike. After a quick and violent attack on the morning of October 10, 1773, that left six of the eight dead, fear of a new war spread along the frontier.

¹²⁴ Council dated October 11, 1773, Council Executive Journals 6: 541-543.

Chapter 2: Trained to Martial Exercise

– The Colonial Virginia Militia

War and Virginia

The threat of war was ever-present in the colony of Virginia. As the largest, most populous and prosperous colony in North America, it both tempted the enemies of the Mother Country, and supported her with blood and treasure against rival European powers. The series of conflicts that began in 1689 and lasted well into the eighteenth century, later called “The Second Hundred Years War” by some historians, gave the colony a role in the defense as well as the expansion of the British Empire. Although involvement in the wars for empire always were a concern, the militia served to defend the colony from the more immediate threats posed by potentially hostile native peoples on its frontiers or a disaffected population, including slaves, from within. Although these dangers waxed and waned over years, the militia provided an institution that could respond when needed. Such a time came as friction between settlers and Indians turned to increasing violence in late 1773 and early 1774.

The Virginia colonial militia was as old as the Old Dominion itself. Like other European institutions transplanted in the New World, the militia reflected a well-established tradition that dated to the twelfth century. The 1181 decree by King Henry II known as the *Assize of Arms* obligated all adult male subjects to render military service in defense of the realm, and required that they possess certain arms and equipment according to their social class. By the sixteenth century, during the Tudor monarchies, men of property formed into volunteer *train-bands* (or *trained*

bands), and received military instruction from professional officers under the authority of their shire's lord-lieutenant. Less expensive than maintaining a permanent standing force, the trained bands provided a source from which the nation state formed its armies in time of war. The militia remained England's principal land force until the establishment of the national standing army during the reign of King Charles II in the seventeenth century.

In the fifth (1773) edition of his Dictionary of the English Language, Samuel Johnson defined "militia" as "that part of the community trained to martial exercise."¹²⁵ Earlier editions also included definitions such as "the standing force of a nation" and "The Trainbands," with the latter further explained as "a name formerly given to the militia."¹²⁶ Johnson's notes explained that he deduced the meanings principally from their usage in The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England by Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon. Johnson specifically cited the passage, "the militia ... was so settled by law, that a sudden force, or army, could be drawn together, for the defense of the kingdom, if it should be invaded, to suppress an insurrections or rebellion, if it should be attempted."¹²⁷ When the English settlers of the several colonies established their respective militias, they all based them on this common tradition. Over time, each of the militia forces of the several English colonies in America adapted to local requirements and established new and unique traditions.

¹²⁵ Samuel Johnson A Dictionary of the English Language in which the words are deduced from their originals; explained in the different meanings and authorized by the names of writers in whose works they are found, Third Edition, two volumes (London: 1773), Volume 2, 412.

¹²⁶ Johnson's Dictionary (1773) Volume 2, 465, 749.

¹²⁷ Lord Edward Hyde Clarendon, first earl, The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, two volumes (London: 1696; reprinted Oxford: The University Press, 1843), Volume 1, 132.

The authorizing legislation in effect during Lord Dunmore's administration, originally enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1757, as well as the pertinent clauses in his commission as governor and letter instructions from the Crown, reflected Johnson's definitions of *Militia* and accurately described the force at Dunmore's command. As commander in chief, Governor Dunmore assumed responsibility for defending his Majesty's colony and dominion of Virginia from invasions, suppressing rebellions, and pursuing enemies to the borders and out of the province. Delegation of the king's authority empowered the former British army captain "at all times to arm, levy, muster and command" all persons living within the boundaries of Virginia. Dunmore could call out, or issue the order to raise, as many regiments and march them anywhere within the province's boundaries as he deemed necessary. In addition to enlisting volunteers, the governor could order the levy – or drafting – of men for active service as soldiers and artificers.¹²⁸ This latter group, artificers, included skilled technicians, mechanics and artisans, such as wheelwrights, carpenters, and smiths, along with wagon and packhorse drivers, woodsmen, and cattle drovers. These men provided the auxiliaries who performed the necessary administrative and logistical functions that supported the militia's fighting force during actual service. The governor could order the construction of fortifications, and impress or commandeer private property such as sloops, boats, draft animals, wagons, supplies, and provisions for military use. Finally, he held the authority to proclaim

¹²⁸ King George III to Lord Dunmore, Royal Commission and Letter Instructions as Governor of Virginia, dated Court of St. James, 7 February 1771 (hereafter Dunmore's Commission), Aspinwall Papers, Massachusetts Historical Collection, Fourth Series, Volume 10 (Boston, Mass.: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871), 659-60; Greene, Evarts Boutell, The Provincial Governor in the English Colonies of North America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1898), 99.

martial law and issue letters of marque and reprisal to privateers in the king's name during wartime.¹²⁹

The governor's commission, however, did not grant him absolute military power. Virginia's General Assembly, which mirrored the British Parliament in both constitution and power, established the institutional structure of the colony's forces in *An Act for the better regulating and disciplining the militia*, commonly called the *Militia Law*.¹³⁰ The act defined the obligations of those who had to serve, specified their related responsibilities, and qualified the exemptions of those excused from performing service or attending training. The Militia Law also defined the colonial government's role in supporting its military establishment, enforcing the act's provisions, and maintaining order and discipline when its soldiers were not serving on active duty. Additional statutes, collectively known as *The several Acts of Assembly for making provision against invasions and insurrections*, defined to the colonial government's responsibilities for defense and internal security and the operational employment of the militia. Among others, the acts included provisions and procedures for raising and supporting militia forces called into "actual service" – or active duty – and enhanced military measures, such as organizing provincial standing forces, "in times of danger." They also contained regulations that corresponded to the

¹²⁹ Dunmore's Commission; Greene, 99.

¹³⁰ William Waller Hening, ed., *Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619* (hereafter Hening, Statutes), Volume 5 (Richmond, VA: Franklin Press, 1819), 16-24; Volume 6 (1819), 530-564; Volume 7 (1820), 93-106; Volume 8 (1821), 241-245, 503.

British *Articles of War* for maintaining order and discipline of colonial soldiers when serving on active duty, but not with or under command of regular British officers.¹³¹

Because the House of Burgesses controlled provincial revenue, the General Assembly's acts for defending the colony against invasions and insurrections constrained the governor's military power, not unlike the *Mutiny Act* constrained the king's. The latter, enacted after passage of the English Bill of Rights in 1689, the Mutiny Act recognized royal control of the army but required the consent of Parliament, specifically the House of Commons, to maintain a standing army in peacetime. The act provided the constitutional monarchy a safeguard against the king using the army as an instrument of tyranny at home by administratively disbanding the force every year when the law expired. Parliament reestablished the army by passing a new act to authorize the force for the next twelve months. The Mutiny Act also gave the British army legal standing in courts of law, provided for the administration of order and discipline of troops stationed at home, and appropriated the funds necessary to cover military expenditures, including soldier pay, by consent of the governed through their representatives in the House of Commons.

By the eighteenth century, the Virginia militia differed in many respects from its counterpart in England. The law governing the English militia required all able bodied males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to enroll, but few actually served. The anonymous author of the Preface to The Militia-Man, a handbook published in London circa 1740 for use by its members, wrote "All men of property should serve in the militia," because they "each have something to lose," and

¹³¹ Hening, Statutes, 5: 99-100; 6: 112-118, 350; 7: 106-116, 536-7; 8: 9-12.

“consequently... are fit persons to consider of the means of preserving it.”¹³² While individuals could volunteer, parishes selected men by ballot to fill the quotas apportioned to them by the county. After they completed a three-month period of training, militia members served the rest of their three-year terms in a unit that mustered to train periodically and responded to local alarms or augmented the regular army anywhere in England, but not overseas, in national emergencies. While Parliament recognized the king as the commander in chief of the militia, it also performed an important role as an armed safeguard against royal excesses. Reflecting the English fear of standing armies in peacetime, the militia first protected the rights and property of the citizenry from the army if the king chose to use the regulars as an instrument of domestic oppression.

Like its English counterpart, the Virginia militia looked on the king as its royal commander, but stood ready to protect the rights and property of Virginians if the monarch, or his ministers, violated the constitution and used the regular army to oppress them. The Virginia acts similarly checked the ability of the governor to use military force without the consent of the governed. As with the Mutiny Act, the colony’s military laws expired after a specific time, and required the legislature to either pass new or continue the existing legislation. Dunmore’s commission may have delegated to him the power of the sword, with authority to call out and command the militia, but only the General Assembly, specifically the House of Burgesses, held the power of the provincial purse. Like the House of Commons in Parliament, only the elected lower house could initiate bills to raise revenues,

¹³² The Militia-Man (London: circa 1740; facsimile reprint Schenectady, NY: United States Historical Research Service, 1995), 4.

appropriate funds and approve payment from the treasury.¹³³ Before doing so, however, the house appointed several of its members to serve as commissioners “to examine and state accounts of the militia ordered into actual service” and report on the validity of the claims. Only after the committee of the whole voted to accept and approve the commissioners’ findings did the House of Burgesses authorize the colonial treasurer to pay the troops and other military expenses.¹³⁴

The terminating provisions provided the General Assembly with the opportunity to evaluate laws and incorporate amendments or changes. The process did not always prove easy. For example, when Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie addressed the General Assembly in November 1753, he reported that he found the militia “deficient in some Points.” He urged the House of Burgesses to revise the Militia Law that had been in effect without substantive changes since 1738.¹³⁵ It took them another four years to pass an effective bill that addressed the problems, but not before the opening campaigns of the French and Indian War proved Dinwiddie’s observations correct.

Although the General Assembly had amended it twice and continued it four times to keep it current, the Militia Law enacted in 1757 remained in effect when Dunmore assumed office in 1771. Thomas Nelson, president of the Council, signed the most recent continuance as acting governor only two months before the earl’s arrival.¹³⁶

During the February 1772 session, the first over which Dunmore presided, the

¹³³ Greene, 101; Lucille Griffith The Virginia House of Burgesses 1750-1774 (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1968), 6.

¹³⁴ Hening, Statutes 8: 9.

¹³⁵ Henry Reed McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia (hereafter McIlwaine, JHB), 1752-1755 and 1756-1758 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1909), p. xv, 99-100.

¹³⁶ Hening, Statutes, 7: 93; 8: 241, 503; McIlwaine, JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1909), p. xv, 99-100.

Assembly “continued and amended” both of the military-related laws. The Militia Law would next expire after the 1774 session. Not due to expire until June of the following year, the Burgesses viewed it “expedient” to extend the *Act for making provision against invasions and insurrections* early, for two additional years, or until 1775.¹³⁷

Virginia’s Militia Establishment

In contrast to the regular British army or other standing forces, an individual did not join, or enlist, in the Virginia colonial militia. It differed from the English militia of the period in that Virginia’s militia principally constituted a pool of manpower available for military service in an emergency rather than an organized reserve of the army. The 1757 law required every free adult white male Virginia inhabitant between eighteen and sixty years of age to enroll, which gave the militia a nominal strength – on paper – of nearly 50,000 men during Dunmore’s tenure as governor. To fulfill his obligation, unless otherwise specified, the law required each man to furnish himself with “a firelock well fixed, a bayonet fitted to the same, a double cartouche-box, and three charges of powder,” and attend all musters and training exercises so equipped. Many of the 11,000 men enrolled in the militia of the counties west of the Blue Ridge, particularly those in the frontier districts, armed themselves with rifles. Colonel William Preston, the county lieutenant of Fincastle County in 1774, described the militia of his own and neighboring Botetourt and Augusta Counties as “being mostly armed with rifle guns” instead of muskets, and therefore substituted a powder horn and shot pouch for the cartridge box, and a tomahawk in lieu of the

¹³⁷ Hening, Statutes, 8: 503.

bayonet to satisfy the requirements of the militia act. The law required every soldier to keep one pound of gun powder and four pounds of lead, enough for about seventy rounds of ball ammunition, at his home. And to keep it well maintained and ready to bring whenever directed by his officers in the event of an actual alarm or when ordered into the field for active duty.¹³⁸

The Militia Law did not exempt individuals if they could not afford to purchase the required items. Each county and the corporate boroughs of Williamsburg and Norfolk maintained public magazines with modest supplies of weapons and equipment marked as public property. If a court inquiry verified a member's economic need, the county issued him the necessary arms, accoutrements and ammunition from its magazine. Once such a man had the ability to do so, he made payments until he covered the weapon's cost. Otherwise, as soon as the poor soldier who required such public assistance could afford to purchase his own arms and ammunition, or had been removed from the muster roles due to age, death, or other reasons, the captain in command of his company retrieved the county's property and returned it to the magazine so it could be issued to another man of limited means.¹³⁹

In 1712, during the War of the Spanish Succession, known in North America as Queen Anne's War, the British government bestowed "a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition for the service of this colony," in order to better equip the militia. Two years later, 1714, the General Assembly appropriated funds to erect a

¹³⁸ Hening, Statutes 7: 93-94; Col. William Preston [extract] letter dated Fincastle, September 28, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* # 1 (Purdie and Dixon) October 13, 1774; and, J.F.D. Smyth *A Tour in the United States of America... Sometime in 1773 or 1774*, Vol. 1, (Dublin: G. Perrin, 1784), Vol. 2, 115-.

¹³⁹ Hening, Statutes 7: 93-94.

magazine at Williamsburg where “all arms, gun-powder, and ammunition now in the colony, belonging to the king . . . may be lodged and kept.” The weapons stored there were then available “to arm part of the militia, not otherwise sufficiently provided.” The Assembly also voted to appropriate funds to employ a staff of two artificers, a “keeper of the magazine” to receive, issue, and account for the weapons and ammunition, and an armorer to maintain and repair them.¹⁴⁰ The arsenal eventually housed other classes of munitions, such as pole and edged weapons, swivel and wall guns, cannon barrels, field carriages and artillery implements, as well as equipment ranging from tents, camp kettles and entrenching tools to drums. The Assembly made it clear that the arsenal did not replace the several local facilities. The munitions and supplies available at “his majesty’s magazine and other stores within the colony” improved the province’s ability to arm either standing forces or militia ordered out on campaign by the government in Williamsburg.¹⁴¹

The militia act required all free men – white, black and red – to enroll, but not everyone performed the duties of a soldier. The law traditionally exempted the clergy of the Church of England, as well as the “president, masters or professors, and students” of the College of William and Mary, from their military obligations. It exempted “Seamen and Sailors” from militia activities during periods when they served “in actual pay” on board or “belonging” to a ship or vessel. The law formally excused keepers of public jails, overseers of four or more slaves, millers, and men who worked at iron, copper, or lead mines from attending scheduled training assemblies, but still required them to possess the necessary arms, accouterments,

¹⁴⁰ Hening, Statutes Volume 4 (Richmond, VA: Franklin Press, 1820), 55-6.

¹⁴¹ Hening Statutes, 6: 118.

powder, and lead, and muster during alarms. If not actively participating as commissioned officers, those otherwise eligible men who held civil office in the provincial, county, or borough governments did not have to attend regular musters, lest they find themselves serving subordinate to someone over whom they presided in performance of their civil offices. Unless they had previously held at least a captain's commission, the law required such excused officials to not only have their own, but "provide compleat sets of arms" for a given number of soldiers, depending on the level of their civil offices. This helped to defray the public's expense for equipping the poorer men of their communities, in return for being excused from muster. Because other laws prohibited them from owning firearms, the Militia Act required "all such free Mulattoes, Negroes, and Indians as are or shall be inlisted" to participate and assemble without weapons. Not permitted to train as soldiers of the line, these members served as drummers, trumpeters, artificers, pioneers or "in such other servile labor as they shall be directed to perform."¹⁴²

The 1766 amendments to the militia law increased the number of men "free and exempt from mustering," but still required them to enroll and possess the necessary arms and ammunition. The newly exempted classes included physicians and surgeons, and if not holding concurrent military commissions, civil officers such as tobacco inspectors employed at public warehouses, and "all his majesty's justices of the peace who are really and *bona fide* acting as justices" by regularly hearing cases. The new amendments accommodated matters of conscience and excused members of pacifist religious sects. The courts excused professed Quakers from attending

¹⁴² Hening, Statutes, 7: 95; 5: 81-82; 8: 244.

military training and owning weapons if their meetings attested to their membership in good standing in the Society of Friends. In return, the law required excused Quakers to contribute to a public fund for equipping the poorer men of the community, and still muster for alarms. If selected for active service by a draft, the government tolerated the sect's strictures against its members rendering military service, but required them to provide or pay for substitutes to serve in their places at their own expense.¹⁴³

The General Assembly delegated to the militia the means of enforcing order and discipline in its ranks. Officers and enlisted men received no pay for attending, but faced fines of up to £5 or confinement in the county jail, plus payment of prison fees to the sheriff, for missing training assemblies without excuse, or failing to pass muster by not having the required arms and equipment.¹⁴⁴ Soldiers who committed acts of misconduct, refused to obey the commands of their officers, or behaved "prefactorily or mutinously" during training assemblies or courts martial became subject to stiffer disciplinary action. The Militia Act allowed "the chief commanding officer then present" to summarily impose punishment that included fines of as much as "forty shillings current money" and having an offender "tied neck and heels, for any time not exceeding five minutes," but no other corporal punishment, such as

¹⁴³ Hening Statutes, 8: 242-244.

¹⁴⁴ George Webb The office and authority of a justice of peace. And also the duty of sheriffs, coroners, church-wardens, surveiors of highways, constables, and officers of militia. Together with precedents of warrants, judgments, executions, and other legal process, issuable by magistrates within their respective jurisdictions, in cases civil or criminal. And the method of judicial proceedings, before justices of peace, in matters within their cognizance out of sessions. Collected from the common and statute laws of England, and acts of Assembly, now in force; and adapted to the constitution and practice of Virginia (Williamsburg, VA: Printed by William Parks, 1736), 222-223; and, Henning, Statutes, 8: 243-244.

flogging on the bare back, in peace time.¹⁴⁵ Courts Martial ordinarily convened the day immediately following a county's general muster, provided the local inferior court had adjourned for the month, or as approved by the General Assembly. Before hearing cases, the empanelled officers swore to "do equal right and justice to all men according to the act of Assembly for the better governing and regulating of the militia."¹⁴⁶

The General Assembly established rates of pay for militia soldiers when they were called to perform active service or in response to an alarm that lasted more than six days. The same per diem rates applied to provincial regulars when the Assembly authorized the raising of standing forces. In 1774, the act still reflected the following compensation:

the county lieutenant or commander in chief ten shillings per day; a colonel, lieutenant colonel each ten shillings per day; major eight shillings per day; captain six shillings per day; lieutenant three shillings per day; ensign two shillings per day; serjeant and corporal each one shilling and four-pence per day; drummer one shilling and two pence per day; [private] soldier one shilling per day."¹⁴⁷

In addition, except for criminal charges, the law "privileged and exempted" militia members from arrest while going to, attending, or returning from musters, and protected them "from being served with any other process in any civil action or suit" while on duty. At no time could the military items the law required them to possess be "distressed" – or seized – to satisfy creditors in any judgments. When ordered to active service in the colony's pay, the law exempted the men from paying province, county, and parish levies, including any new taxes enacted by the General Assembly

¹⁴⁵ Hening, Statutes 8: 244.

¹⁴⁶ Hening, Statutes 7: 102.

¹⁴⁷ Hening, Statutes, 7: 112.

during their absence on military duty, as well as “privileged” soldiers’ private estates from civil court action for indebtedness.¹⁴⁸

Although the law mandated compulsory service for all, the militia from time to time suffered a lack of citizen interest or governmental neglect, especially when no apparent or perceived threats to peace and colonial security existed. Understandably, inhabitants on the frontier took more interest in their militia participation than those in more secure regions, such as the Tidewater, “on account of the frequency of Indian atrocities.” Drummer Joseph Tennant of Captain James Parson’s company of Hampshire County militia in 1774, explained that in backcountry communities, “Every man learned the use of fire arms from necessity... and were taught a certain amount of military discipline.”¹⁴⁹

For whatever reasons, some men preferred paying the fine, or hoped that indifferent county courts would neglect to enforce the law, rather than attend training assemblies. Others refused to turn out when summoned for active service. In contrast, other Virginians viewed militia participation as an avocation. Such officers and members of the rank and file took training and service seriously and developed military skills and prowess that exceeded that of most of their peers. More importantly, their county and colony counted on such men who volunteered at the first alarm and often served repeated tours of duty. In a land devoid of native hereditary aristocracy, most militia officers valued their commissions. Many preferred to be identified and addressed by

¹⁴⁸ Hening, Statutes 6: 530; 7: 100.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Tennant, quoted in Peter Haught Pension Application S6981 dated August 7, 1832, Roll 1224, National Archives (hereafter NARA).

their titles of rank in public discourse as well as correspondence for the rest of their lives, and took them to the grave by having them carved on their headstones.

While many of the colonies were similar in their militia establishments, differences could be found. Where some other colonies elected their leaders, members of Virginia's forces did not. Commanders at various levels appointed subordinate officers and noncommissioned officers. Justices of the inferior courts could suggest candidates for consideration and members of the Council offered their advice and consent on the appointment of field officers, but only the governor had authority to sign and issue commissions.¹⁵⁰ The governor, "reposing special Trust and Confidence ... in the Loyalty, Courage, and Conduct" of a deserving gentleman, extended the status as an officer, with all the inherent responsibilities as well as privileges involved, in the name of his Majesty.¹⁵¹

Each major political sub-division had a "Chief Commander of all his Majesty's Militia, Horse and Foot" who answered to the governor. Given the title of county lieutenant in each of the sixty-one counties, or chief commanding officer in the two boroughs of Williamsburg and Norfolk, this officer held "Full power and Authority to command, levy, arm, and muster," all those available for military service residing within the limits of his respective jurisdiction. In case of an emergency, such as a "sudden Disturbance or Invasion," the county lieutenant could "raise, order, and

¹⁵⁰ Dunmore's Commission; Greene, 99.

¹⁵¹ Lord Norborne Berkeley Botetourt to Thomas Jefferson, Certificate of Commission dated Williamsburg, June 10, 1770, as Commander of the Albemarle County, Virginia, Militia (hereafter Jefferson's Commission), The Thomas Jefferson Papers, Series 1, General Correspondence, 1651-1827, Library of Congress (hereafter LOC), Washington, D.C.; John Earl of Dunmore to George Rogers Clark, Certificate of Commission dated Williamsburg 2 May 1774 as Captain in the Augusta County, Virginia, Militia (hereafter Clark's Commission), Draper Manuscripts (Microfilm edition), Historical Society of Wisconsin, 48J1; and, Hening, Statutes, 7: 106-7.

march all or such part of the said Militia,” as he deemed necessary to resist and subdue the enemy.¹⁵²

Each chief commanding officer held the rank of colonel. According to the Militia Law, the county lieutenant’s commission took precedence before that of any other officer holding equal rank, such as a regimental commander, in the county.

Otherwise, he observed and followed the orders and directions of the royal governor and “any other ... superior officer” appointed over him in accordance with the “Rules and Discipline of War.”¹⁵³ If the county had a second colonel, the latter often functioned as a deputy to the first. In reality, some county lieutenants treated their positions more like a civil office, and personally attended only to its administrative requirements and left purely military matters to a subordinate field officer.¹⁵⁴

To organize Virginia forces, the Militia Act required the county lieutenants and chief commanding officers to “list all male persons within this colony (imported servants excepted)” between eighteen and sixty years of age. The county lieutenant divided the county into nine geographical catchments based on the distribution of the military-age free white male population. Each catchment constituted one company of foot, with possibly one troop of horse organized from the county at large. The county lieutenant placed the soldiers thus organized “under the command of such captains as he shall think fit” to appoint and receive a commission from the governor.¹⁵⁵ After he consulted the subordinate field officers and captains commanding the companies, the

¹⁵² Jefferson’s Commission; Clark’s Commission; and, Hening, Statutes, 7: 106-7.

¹⁵³ Hening, Statutes, 6: 541.

¹⁵⁴ Hening, Statutes, 6: 541.

¹⁵⁵ Hening, Statutes, 7: 93-94.

county lieutenants appointed the necessary subaltern officers, or the lieutenants and ensigns in companies of infantry, or lieutenants and coronets in troops of cavalry.¹⁵⁶ After an officer received his commission bearing the signature of the royal governor, he swore the necessary oaths required to affirm his loyalty and pledged his service “for the security of his majesty’s person and government.”¹⁵⁷ Each captain appointed the noncommissioned officers and musicians in his company, as well as a clerk who kept the muster rolls and maintained the records. Soldiers could not decline an appointment to a position of increased authority or responsibility without consequence. One who refused to serve as a sergeant, corporal, drummer or trumpeter “as required by his captain” became subject to a monetary fine imposed by the county court for every muster that he continued to refuse the appointment.¹⁵⁸

Although designated a *company* and commanded by a captain, the local unit primarily functioned for administrative and training purposes only. These administrative companies were often larger than the fifty rank and file established for a company of the line in active service, and rarely took the field except when called out for alarms. For example, on being notified of an invasion or insurrection, the law required every officer to “raise the militia under his command.” dispatch express messengers to inform his immediate superior commanding officer of his actions, and “immediately proceed to oppose the enemy” until he received orders directing him to do otherwise. Similarly, on receiving word of an alarm in an adjacent county, the law obliged the chief commander of militia to “immediately raise the militia of his county,” and

¹⁵⁶ Jefferson’s Commission; Webb, 221.

¹⁵⁷ Hening, Statutes, 6: 540; and 7: 102-3.

¹⁵⁸ Hening, Statutes, 6: 536.

detach as many as two thirds of his men to engage the invaders or insurgents. The county lieutenant then organized the remaining third to remain in arms for the “defense and protection of the county,” and waited on orders from the governor.¹⁵⁹

To make the force “more serviceable,” the Militia Act held officers responsible for their men’s readiness and compliance with the law. A captain, for example, ensured that all the soldiers in his company were properly armed, equipped, and trained. In peacetime, the statute required him to conduct a “private muster” in the local neighborhood at least once every three months, or more often if he or the county lieutenant deemed it necessary. After the captain inspected his men, and took “particular Care” to see that they all possessed the necessary arms and ammunition, he trained his company according to the Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764.¹⁶⁰ The manual reflected the British army’s experience on European battlefields during the Seven Years War and concentrated on the essential elements of individual and platoon drill, evolutions and maneuvers, and firings.

“POISE YOUR FIRELOCKS!”¹⁶¹

When they heard the first word of command echo across the muster field at their first assembly, all the company’s new members began their “material” training, or basic

¹⁵⁹ McIlwaine, JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1909), xxiii-iv; 297-8, 321; Hening, Statutes, 6: 527, 529-541, 530-544-5, 559-65; and, 7: 106-7.

¹⁶⁰ Clark’s Commission; and, Hening Statutes, 6: 113-4; 7 (1820): 95-96, 106-7; 8: 244, 514; 9 (1821), 23-4. Reference to the 1764 manual is found in a resolution of the March 1775 extra-legal Virginia Convention that called for raising volunteer independent companies as agreed to in the Continental Association. One can safely assume the 1764 manual was most familiar to and also used by the colonial militia following the French and Indian War.

¹⁶¹ The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764, Including the Fundamentals of Marching and Maneuvering, hereafter Manual Exercise of 1764, (London: J. Millan, 1770), 3; Special Collections, the Society of the Cincinnati Library, Washington, D.C.; Emphasis in pronunciation of commands is from Tully, Mark, ed., The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764 (Baraboo, Wis.: Ballindalloch Press, 2001), 2.

individual instruction, under the tutelage of an experienced soldier. They first learned the basic drill and rudiments of marching, individually at first, then in small groups without arms. They then progressed to how to properly stand with, handle, load, prime, cock and fire a musket – the army way; charge, or fix, their bayonets to their muskets; assume the various positions of a soldier under arms; and again added marching while armed. Once proficient in these basics, the new troops progressed to platoon exercise. At that stage, they trained at firing their muskets in volleys by platoons, or half-companies, arrayed in lines three ranks deep. Graduating to the “mechanical phase” of evolutions and maneuvers, the company practiced the methods and patterns for cohesive movement, changing formations and advancing and retiring across the muster field as if in battle. In the final element, “firings,” the company drilled the elaborate and precise order by which platoons delivered the volleys of musketry that characterized eighteenth-century combat.¹⁶²

“MAKE-READY. PRESENT. FIRE!”¹⁶³

In addition to observing the several private musters throughout the year, the militia law required the county lieutenant to train all the companies under his command once a year at an annual “general muster and exercise,” usually in March or April. When wartime necessitated enhanced readiness, the General Assembly often increased the frequency of company musters to once every month, or every other month, and added

¹⁶² Hening, *Statutes*, 6: 113-4; 7: 95-96; 8: 244, 514; 9 (1821), 23-4; Edward Harvey *A New Manual and Platoon Exercise: with an Explanation*, hereafter *Platoon Exercise of 1764*, (London, 1764, facsimile reprint, Hinesville, GA: The Nova Anglia Company Historical Reproductions, not dated), 9-12; J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 257; Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and With Bayonets Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775-1783* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 118.

¹⁶³ *Manual Exercise of 1764*, 1-14.

a second general muster for all counties in September or October as well.¹⁶⁴ It is arguable that British regulars posted in widely dispersed garrisons in peacetime did not receive substantially more, if not less, training in regimental-sized formations than Virginia militiamen.¹⁶⁵

General musters also began with the ubiquitous inspections to ensure all officers and men had the proper arms and ammunition as the law required. The companies then trained collectively and practiced the elements of the manual that applied to battalion formations. Ideally, two platoons operated in a tactical company-sized unit called a sub-division. Two sub-divisions combined to form one grand division. An entire tactical battalion organized on the regular British model consisted of four grand divisions of four platoons each, arrayed in three ranks, and trained to execute the appropriate evolutions and maneuvers with some degree of proficiency. Finally, given the limited time available, a battalion strove to master the most critical elements of all, “firings,” either by “ranks entire,” or by platoons, sub-divisions and grand divisions in the elaborate sequence and precise order of rolling volleys that enabled it to deliver a near continuous volume of musketry. Victory on the eighteenth century battlefield often went to the side that could put the most lead at its opponent in the quickest time.¹⁶⁶ Such exercises would have been the norm in the more settled regions, as reflected in the law enacted in 1740, to “establish our Militia on such a

¹⁶⁴ Hening, Statutes, 6: 113-4; 7: 95-96; 8: 244, 514; 9 (1821):23-4; Spring, 118; The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in One thousand seven-hundred sixty-four, Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practiced at Reviews and Field Days, &c., hereafter Manual Exercise of 1764 B (Newburyport: E. Lunt and H. W. Tinges, 1774), Special Collections, the Society of the Cincinnati Library, Washington, D.C., 19-21.

¹⁶⁵ Houlding, 55-56.

¹⁶⁶ Hening, Statutes, 6: 113-4; 7: 95-96; 8: 244, 514; 9 (1821):23-4; Spring, 118; Manual Exercise of 1764 B, 19-21.

Footing, that in case of Invasion or Attack, they may be enabled to contend with regular Troops.”¹⁶⁷ Given the threat they would more likely face, the militia of the frontier counties spent more time practicing light infantry-style tactics adapted to the probability of fighting Indians in the woods.

As part of the plan to further enhance readiness and ensure compliance with the Militia Act, Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie eliminated the office of a single colonial adjutant general on the eve of the French and Indian War. He divided the colony into the Northern, Southern, Middle and Frontier Military Districts, and assigned an adjutant general to each. Receiving an annual stipend of £100, and usually holding the rank of major, each adjutant general reported to the governor on compliance with the Militia Law in the counties that comprised his district.¹⁶⁸

In performing their duties, these officers attended all the battalion general musters in their districts. To perform their duties, the adjutants general were instructed to “exercise the Officers first” in order “to qualify them to exercise each separate Company” and prepare them for their respective general musters.¹⁶⁹ During an inspection, they ensured that all company officers had their men “properly trained up in the use of Arms,” and “more perfect and regular in the Exercise thereof.”¹⁷⁰

Finally, performing a role similar to a brigade major or adjutant in the British army on regimental field days, they inspected “all detachments before they be sent to parade,”

¹⁶⁷ McIlwaine, JHB 1727-1734 and 1736-1740 (Richmond, Va.: Library of Virginia, 1910), xxxi-xxxiii, 437-8; Hening, Statutes 5: 23, 121-3.

¹⁶⁸ McIlwaine, JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758 (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia, 1909), p. xv, 99-100, 104-105; H.R. McIlwaine, Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (hereafter Council Executive Journals), Volume 6, June 20, 1754 – May 3, 1775 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), 316, 317.

¹⁶⁹ McIlwaine JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758, p. xv, 99-100, 104-105.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid p. xv, 99-100, 104-105.

and saw that all “their arms be clean, their ammunition, accouterments, &c. in good order.”¹⁷¹

With all sixty-one counties and two independent boroughs in the colony required to conduct their general musters in March and April, the adjutants general faced challenging spring schedules. The county lieutenants therefore had to plan their annual training assemblies based on the date they expected the district officer’s presence. The counties involved in Dunmore’s War were among the fourteen that comprised the Frontier Military District, where Captain Thomas Bullitt served as adjutant general. The veteran officer had served in the 1st Virginia Regiment throughout the French and Indian War, remained active in the militia, and had actively sought the assignment before Governor Botetourt appointed him on May 10, 1769.¹⁷²

Due to the remoteness and difficulty reaching some of the locations in his district, the newly appointed adjutant general used public notices, called “advertisements,” in the March 22, 1770 edition of Rind’s *Virginia Gazette* to notify the thirteen county lieutenants of his schedule – the law that erected Fincastle County was enacted in 1772. The next year, because the General Assembly had not yet voted to continue the Militia Act due to expire, Bullitt acted on his “former appointment” to announce his itinerary in the February 5, 1771, edition of Purdie and Dixon’s *Virginia Gazette*.

Unless prevented by “high water” or other unforeseen circumstances, Bullitt expected

¹⁷¹ Brig. Gen. James Wolfe General Wolfe’s Instructions to Young Officers, hereafter, Wolfe’s Instructions, Second Edition (London: J. Millan, 1780; reprinted facsimile, Cranbury, NJ: Scholar’s Bookshelf, 2005), v.

¹⁷² Journal of May 10, 1769, Benjamin Hillman, ed., Council of Colonial Virginia, hereafter Council Journal, Volume 6 (June 20, 1754-May 3, 1775), 316; *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind) Supplement, March 22, 1770.

to be present at their county courthouses on the dates indicated. Since they all outranked him, and considering the schedule he had to maintain, he requested that the county lieutenants “oblige him” by assembling their militia “in good Order, and accoutered as the Law directs” at that time.¹⁷³

Bullitt’s responsibilities as a surveyor, which took him on an expedition to the Falls of the Ohio and the site of present Louisville Kentucky, prevented him from inspecting the district’s general musters in 1773. Fortunately, the counties of the Frontier District benefited from having a number of field officers and senior captains, as well as non-commissioned officers, who had combat experience in the French and Indian War while serving with the provincial standing forces. Colonels Adam Stephen and Andrew Lewis, the county lieutenants of Frederick and Botetourt Counties, respectively, had served as officers under Colonel Washington’s command in the Virginia Regiment, and commanded volunteer battalions in Pontiac’s War. Colonels Charles Lewis and William Preston, the respective county lieutenants of Augusta and Fincastle Counties, had served as officers in provincial ranging companies.

Mobilization and Actual Service

When the colony needed soldiers, such as for offensive expeditions or the garrisons of frontier forts, the governor issued a call for troops drawn from the militia to perform active service in the colony’s pay. Addressed to one or more county lieutenants, the call either stated a given number of soldiers, or proportion of his total, such as “one

¹⁷³ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), Supplement, March 22, 1770; and *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie & Dixon) February 21, 1771.

for every twentieth man,” to be detached for “immediate service.”¹⁷⁴ During the French and Indian War the House of Burgesses appropriated funds for “Encouragement of militia to go out freely for the defence of the country in all times of danger; with a certain assurance of being paid for their services.” Voluntary enlistments were always preferred and sought first. If enough men did not volunteer, the General Assembly could pass laws for drafting levies to make up any shortfall. In addition to pay, both volunteers and drafted men were promised medical care for illnesses and injuries incurred while on duty, pensions for disabilities that prevented them from earning a living wage after their terms of service expired, as well as relief for their widows and orphans if they died as a result of service.¹⁷⁵ Ordinarily, the governor sought the Assembly’s support in appropriating money for soldier pay before issuing the call for men, but he could act without it, albeit temporarily, in emergencies.

Although written for obtaining recruits to fill the ranks of the standing forces during the French and Indian War, the March 1756 Act for frontier defense outlined a method for conducting a draft.¹⁷⁶ The law authorized and the chief militia officer to summon the field officers and captains commanding companies of the county or borough and hold a council of war to implement the draft procedure. The captains brought and delivered lists, derived from court records, of all single free white men living in the precincts that comprised their respective company catchments, as well as the company muster rolls showing the names of all those enrolled and participating in

¹⁷⁴ Hening Statutes, 7: 31.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid 7: 20

¹⁷⁶ Ibid 7: 31.

the militia. After comparing the documents, the officers added the names of any non-exempted able-bodied men residing in their companies' areas who had not been duly "inlisted and enrolled, according to the militia laws." The county lieutenant then selected a day and time and called a general muster at the courthouse. Militia and civil officers spread the word by giving public notice, advertising in the *Virginia Gazette*, and posted broadside announcements "at all places of public resort."¹⁷⁷

The men assembled in their companies outside the courthouse on the appointed day. After roll call, the captains asked volunteers to step forward, and took their names. The county lieutenant then reconvened the council of war inside, where the officers prepared a number of blank pieces of paper, one for each available man in the county. The officers then wrote the words, "This obliges me immediately to enter his majesty's service," on the quantity of sheets that reflected the county's quota. After withdrawing one marked paper for each man who volunteered, those who were absent from the muster became the "first pricked down" and "declared to be soldiers duly inlisted in his majesty's service," unless later excused. The remaining sheets were put in a box, "well shaken and the papers therein mixed," and placed in view of all the members of the council of war.¹⁷⁸

The officers then instructed the assembled men, minus the volunteers, to come forward one at a time to draw one piece of paper from out of the box. As he did so, each man held his paper to "public view." Anyone who displayed a sheet with the writing was "deemed and taken to be an enlisted soldier." The officers could excuse

¹⁷⁷ Ibid 7: 14.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid 7: 14-15.

a drafted man if someone present who had not drawn a marked paper chose to take his place. A drafted man could also find an able-bodied man who was not drafted, but willing to serve in his stead in return for a payment of money.¹⁷⁹ .

Officers received commissions of rank based on the required strength of the units they were to command, and expected to exert their leadership skills and powers of persuasion to recruit a sufficient numbers of volunteers. They took care not to create organizations that proved too top-heavy and therefore inordinately costlier by having individuals serve in higher rank positions than commensurate with the size of the force actually recruited. The law specified that- the county lieutenants could “not depute any greater number of inferior officers ... than one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, three sergeants or corporals, and one drummer for every fifty soldiers,” and in like proportions for greater numbers, in a company of foot.¹⁸⁰

If the full establishment strength of fifty men for an infantry company could not be reached, the number and ranks of the leaders decreased proportionally. A company of foot that consisted of thirty men could not have more than one lieutenant, one ensign, and two sergeants, while a company of fifteen or fewer men required not more than one ensign, and one sergeant. Before being taken into pay, the names and numbers on the muster rolls had to be certified by every commanding officer and “attested upon oath” before a justice of the peace of the county where the company had been raised. While they may have been addressed by the titles of higher ranks held in the militia, officers only received the pay granted for the ranks approved by

¹⁷⁹ Ibid 7: 15-16.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid 7: 17.

the Assembly for the command of units on campaign. Commanders who claimed greater numbers of men in order to receive higher rank with corresponding pay, or appointed more subordinate officers than the actual strength of the unit allowed, faced fines of an amount equal to the pay of such “supernumerary officers.”¹⁸¹

When the colony called the militia to active duty in wartime or other emergency, the county lieutenants often established a rendezvous camps for the units drawn from their jurisdictions. Drawn from one or more local administrative companies, the companies were composed of men who had voluntarily enlisted or who were drafted, and organized into ad hoc units. Similarly, the adjutants general established rendezvous camps where the units from the several counties of the district assembled. Before Dinwiddie expanded the numbers and roles of the adjutants general, this function had been performed by the colony’s single adjutant general for the province at large. During the French and Indian War, the rendezvous camp represented an important step in the process of preparing militia for active service and campaigning, as well as raising provincial regulars when the General Assembly authorized the establishment of standing forces. Where a soldier received a modicum of training through the quarterly local company and annual general county-wide musters, what he received in at the rendezvous camp improved upon that base and helped transform the ad hoc companies into more cohesive tactical units better prepared for the sustained operations in which they would participate.

As the Frontier Department’s adjutant general, twenty-one-year-old Major George Washington conducted the rendezvous camp at Winchester for the first militia

¹⁸¹ Ibid 7: 114; and 3: 17.

companies embodied for provincial service in 1754. The training received at the rendezvous camp may have resembled that which then Colonel Washington directed the officers of 1st Virginia Regiment to institute when he assumed command. It included drilling the men in the manual exercise and conventional linear tactics as well as in the “Indian Method of fighting,” and practice “Shooting at Targets.”¹⁸² Not neglecting officer training, Washington noted that “there ought to be a time appropriated to attain this knowledge,” and insisted that they read and apply the lessons found in “Bland’s and other treatises which will give the wished for information.”¹⁸³

As the men trained in the school of the soldier according to the 1764 drill manual, officers studied A Treatise on Military Discipline, in which is laid down and explained the duty of the officer and soldier, by Lieutenant General Humphrey Bland. First published in 1727, its nine editions became – arguably – the most widely read and authoritative work on British army tactical operations and unit leadership for much of the eighteenth century. Based on experience gained on European battlefields, but adaptable to those in North America, the treatise provided a valuable instructional text for regular and militia officers alike. Its pages contained valuable maxims and explanations for officers learning or practicing tactics in chapters with such descriptive titles as “General rules for Battalions of Foot, when they engage in

¹⁸² Lt. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie to Col. George Washington, letter dated Williamsburg, 14 December 1755, Brock, R. A., ed., The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758, hereafter Dinwiddie Papers, (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1884), 291; and, Col. George Washington to Capt. Andrew Lewis, letter dated Winchester, September 6, 1755, W.W. Abbot, ed., The Papers of George Washington, hereafter GWP, Colonial Series, Vol. 2: August 1755 – April 1756, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 23-24.

¹⁸³ Col. George Washington to the Officers of the Virginia Regiment, Orders dated Winchester, dated January 8, 1756, GWP, Colonial Series 2: 257; Appleton P.C. Griffin, comp., A Catalogue of the Washington Collection in the Boston Athenaeum (Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1997) 537.

the line,” and “for the marching of a Battalion, or a Detachment of men, where there is a possibility of meeting the enemy.” Lessons conveyed in the latter were particularly suited to the fluid environment of *petite guerre*, or guerrilla war, and fighting partisans in “enclosed or woody country.”¹⁸⁴ Although developed based on experience gained observing operations against the kind of skulking irregulars found in Europe, such as Pandour and Croat infantry, the methods it described were adaptable to fighting Indians in the forests of North America.

For example, Bland admonished commanders not to advance into territory controlled by the enemy without taking the proper precautions. He reminded each to “consider that the lives of those under his command depend in a great measure on his prudence.” He also cautioned that the most damaging event that could befall an officer, and tarnish his reputation, was not losing an engagement, but “in suffering himself to be surprised, either upon his post, or in marching ... without being prepared to make a proper defence, and ... not having taken the necessary precautions to prevent it.”¹⁸⁵

Indian warriors learned to avoid the firepower of massed musketry and artillery on which European armies relied. To achieve victory, the Indians avoided their opponent’s strength and lured them into fights on terms of their own choosing, and in which they possessed all the tactical advantages. Indian forces maximized their skill of fighting in the woods at close quarters to weaken the cohesion and disrupt the

¹⁸⁴ Humphrey Bland A Treatise on Military Discipline, in which is laid down and explained the duty of the officer and soldier, hereafter Bland’s Treatise, Ninth Edition (London: W. Johnson, B. Law, and T. Caslon, 1762), Contents, 6, 8, 143.

¹⁸⁵ Bland’s Treatise, 132.

command and control of the opposing force units. The warriors then attacked from positions of advantage to inflict heavy losses, if not destroy, on their opponent. To counter the Indians' advantage, British and colonial forces learned to maximize their own strength by combining the strategic offense with the tactical defense. Whether on a large or small scale, they advanced in strength and used light forces to develop the situation by skirmishing until they maneuvered the enemy into having no choice but to attack against the superior firepower of cohesive and well-controlled units. In adapting European tactics to fighting in the American woods, formations opened with greater intervals than called for in the manuals, with men taking cover behind trees or logs when necessary and firing aimed shots. Maintaining control and cohesion remained important. An officer had to take particular care to see that an orderly advance did not become a disorganized pursuit of an enemy that feigned retreat in order to lead his men into an ambush.¹⁸⁶

The tactics in which they trained and rehearsed demonstrated an adaptation of Bland's Treatise for fighting in the woods. Chaplain Thomas Barton described such an exercise conducted by the provincial regiment in which he served during the French and Indian War that may have likely resembled the training Washington prescribed for Virginia troops or conducted at a rendezvous camp for militia preparing for campaign:

“... the Troops are led to the Field as usual, & exercis'd in this Manner – Viz. – They [the columns] are to, and distant from, each other about 50 Yards: After marching some distance in this Position, they fall into one Rank entire forming a Line of Battle with great Ease & Expedition. The 2 Front-Men of each Column stand fast, & the 2 Next split equally to Right & Left, & so continue alternately till the whole Line is

¹⁸⁶ Guy Chet Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 138-9.

form'd. They are then divided into Platoons, each Platoon consisting of 20 Men, & fire 3 Rounds; the right-Hand Man of each Platoon beginning the Fire, and then the left-Hand Man: & so on Right and Left alternately till the Fire ends in the Center: Before it reaches this Place, the Right & Left are ready again. And by this Means an incessant Fire kept up. When they fir'd six Rounds in this manner they make a [sham] Pursuit with Shrieks & Halloos in the Indian Way, but falling into much Confusion; they are again drawn up into Line of Battle, & fire 3 Rounds as before; After this each Battalion marches in order to Camp."¹⁸⁷

In wartime, and periods of increased tensions between settlers and Indians, county lieutenants engaged individuals as “spies.” When the General Assembly provided the authorization and means, they also raised detachments or companies of rangers to better defend the colonial frontier. While both services sought to accomplish related objectives, and the skills and techniques required of individuals engaged in each may in some cases have appeared the same or similar, rangers and spies differed in many ways.

The Virginia militia also had its unique units and individual specialists. In the counties of the Frontier Military District, these included rangers, scouts and Indian spies. Drawn from the ranks of the militia, these men volunteered for special missions that were mostly only needed during periods of actual emergency.

During Queen Anne’s War, for example, the government at Williamsburg authorized county lieutenants responsible for frontier defense to raise detachments to “range” – or patrol – the “large vast uninhabited grounds and woods” between settlements.¹⁸⁸

Once posted, they ranged on horseback between forts and fortified houses – known as stations – to “observe, perform and keep such orders and in their several rangings and

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Barton "Journal of an Expedition to the Ohio, commanded by His Excellency Brigadier General Forbes; in the Year of our Lord 1758," printed in William A. Hunter, ed., "Thomas Barton and the Forbes Expedition," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Volume 95, Number 4 (October 1971), 449--450.

¹⁸⁸ Hening, Statutes, 4: 9-10, McIlwaine, Council Executive Journals, 3: 1558-9.

marchings” to detect approaching war parties, or to pursue those who attacked homes, and killed or captured inhabitants.¹⁸⁹ Rangers routinely rode in pairs, or “two together,” along a chain of four posts. Two two-man patrols met at appointed times and places to exchange information, “report their observations, and when necessary to carry information on the appearance of the enemy to the nearest stations.”¹⁹⁰

When organizing rangers during Queen Anne’s and King George’s Wars, a county’s chief militia officer appointed a lieutenant to command the detachment. The lieutenant would “choose out and list” eleven able-bodied men with horses and accoutrements, as well as arms and ammunition, who resided conveniently near the frontier station where they were posted. If the commander could not enlist a sufficient number of volunteers for his detachment, the county lieutenant could draft the rest from the militia. Once formed, rangers only operated in their home counties. The commander and every ranger received compensation that included pay, as well as a stipend for using his personal horse, accoutrements, arms and ammunition, based one year’s service, from the public levy collected in the county. To provide “greater encouragement” to the rangers, the law declared officers and men “free and exempted” from having to pay county and parish levies, and excused them from attending scheduled training musters during the time they remained in active service.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Hening, Statutes, 4: 9-10.

¹⁹⁰ Benjamin Wilson, quoted in Leeth, David W., Pension Application S6111, dated 7 August 1832, NARA.

¹⁹¹ Hening, Statutes, 4: 11; 6: 465.

During the French and Indian War, Virginia again called on the services of rangers for defense of the frontier. In May 1755, the Assembly appropriated funds and authorized the county lieutenants of Frederick, Hampshire and Augusta Counties to each raise a ranger company of fifty men, plus the proper number of officers.¹⁹² Raised and paid from the provincial treasury instead of county levies, the three ranger companies could be deployed anywhere in the colony as the governor directed from time to time. While on duty, they answered the immediate orders of the county lieutenant in whose jurisdiction they operated, and cooperated with local militia and companies of the Virginia Regiment, when the latter were posted nearby.¹⁹³ Like soldiers in the common militia, rangers remained subject to the militia law for discipline, and could neither be sent out of the colony, nor operate more than five miles beyond the most distant settlements on the frontier. Furthermore, they could not be incorporated with British regulars or made subject to martial law.¹⁹⁴ Over the course of the war, the numbers of ranging companies increased to six, and were posted to include defense of the southwestern frontier. Legislation eventually increased the authorized establishment strength of each company to 100 men plus officers. Even with the draft, the rangers never achieved full strength.¹⁹⁵

If he thought necessary for the defense of the jurisdiction, a county lieutenant could raise and deploy rangers in the county's pay for limited periods on his own authority. Private Arthur served in one such company during Dunmore's War. His detachment of fifteen to twenty men scouted between the Ohio and Monongahela to give the

¹⁹² Ibid 6: 465-466.

¹⁹³ Ibid 6: 465-466; McIlwaine JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758, xxii, 292, 292, 294.

¹⁹⁴ Hening, Statutes, 7: 76, 173

¹⁹⁵ Ibid 7: 76, 173

settlements early warning. Posted in a fort, they also guarded the settlements against invasion by the Indians.”¹⁹⁶

Scouts performed missions intended to inform the inhabitants of enemy activity in their area. Working in small independent detachments of two or three men, the scouts conducted area reconnaissance, paying close attention to trails and other avenues of approach to backcountry communities. Whereas a unit of rangers would seek to intercept and engage an enemy war party, scouts searched for signs of their presence or activity, and returned to a post to report what they found to an officer of the militia to provide early warning. Alexander Scott Withers, an early chronicler of frontier warfare, described scouts as typically men who “made their abode in the dense forest,” and spent most of their time hunting, an occupation he described as “mimicry of war.” Such men were adept at fighting in the wilderness, with well adept at how to resist Indian attacks and retaliate in kind. Withers believed the same skills that enabled the hunter to approach the “watchful deer in his lair” allowed the scout to avoid an Indian ambush, and frequently defeat those who waited in the ambushade. The chronicler believed the long hunters’ knowledge and ease with which they moved about woods to any location among the settlements to warn the inhabitants of danger made them invaluable to the defense of the frontier districts.¹⁹⁷

Certain men, such as William Smith of Augusta County, volunteered to serve as Indian spies. Despite the hazards, Smith explained that he preferred “this

¹⁹⁶ Arthur Trader Pension Application S30169 dated 5 December 1833, Roll 2408, NARA.

¹⁹⁶ Hening, Statues, 4: 9-10; 6: 465.

¹⁹⁷ Alexander Scott Withers Chronicles of Border Warfare: Or, a History of the Settlement by the Whites of Northwestern Virginia and of the Indian Wars and Massacres in the Section of the State (Clarksburg, WV: Joseph Israel, 1831), 102.

employment” to service in the militia.¹⁹⁸ More accurately described as a long-range scout in this context, Samuel Johnson’s dictionary defined “spy” as “one who watches another’s motions,” by attempting to “search” or “discover at a distance.”¹⁹⁹ Spies did not operate in companies or detachments under the command of commissioned officers, but individually or in pairs. Men employed in this service were not considered to be on active duty, but were excused from attending training musters without suffering fines. Traveling beyond the line of settlements, they ventured through trackless forests to observe the enemy’s activity in their own country, often in the vicinity of Indian towns.

The Virginia militia provided the colony with a force capable of defending its borders as well as taking the fight to an enemy’s home territory. It was organized and trained to fight by degrees. At the lowest level, the local companies responded to alarms that effected the immediate or neighboring communities. As the danger increased, the county lieutenant activated the county’s force, for both its own defense and to assist an adjacent county. Finally, the provincial government could call the militia into actual service to repel invasions by external enemies or suppress insurrections and other internal threats. As the likelihood of an Indian war along the Ohio increased during late 1773 and early 1774, the militia became more active at each of its levels.

¹⁹⁸ William Smith Pension Application W6094, dated 17 December 1832, NARA.

¹⁹⁹ Johnson’s Dictionary (1773) Volume 2: 321.

Chapter 3: Very Extraordinary Occurrences

– Inter-Colonial Boundaries and Indian Relations

Williamsburg

Once back in the capital, Dunmore met with the Council of Virginia to review the government business that had transpired during his absence. The Council, composed of twelve prominent residents appointed to life terms by the monarch, performed all three functions of government. As a legislative body, it constituted the upper house of the General Assembly. With the governor acting as chief justice, Council members served as associate justices on the General Court, the supreme judicial body of the colony. While a number of members held appointive office, collectively they served as a Council of State, an executive board that advised the governor on colonial administration and policy.²⁰⁰

After Dunmore weighed his options and developed the first elements of a plan on how to best counter Pennsylvania's annexation of western Augusta County, he convened a private session of the Council. When the board met on Monday, October 11, 1773 – by coincidence the day after the bloodshed in Powell's Valley – the governor and Councilors took up the matter of the king's recent order on the disposal of land, and ordered commissions to fill vacated seats on a county court.²⁰¹

Dunmore then turned to the situation at the Forks of the Ohio and laid "the Petition of Sundry Inhabitants in the Neighborhood of Fort Pitt" before the board. The signatories complained that the government of the Pennsylvania had encroached on Virginia territory

²⁰⁰ Dunmore's Commission; Webb, 18; McIlwaine, JHB 1727-1734 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1910), 241.

²⁰¹ Council of October 11, 1773, Hillman, Benjamin, ed., Council Executive Journals, Volume 6 (June 20-1754-May 3, 1775) (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), 541-543.

and oppressed several landowners when it established a court with jurisdiction over Virginia citizens residing in a Virginia county, and thus caused them great hardship. The petitioners requested Dunmore redress their grievances by taking them under the protection of the Virginia government, to “which they conceived themselves to properly belong.”²⁰² With the advice and consent of the Council, Lord Dunmore issued a new “Commission of the Peace” for Augusta County, which ordered seven gentlemen residing in or near Pittsburgh to be added to the slate of justices already seated at Staunton. The new justices of the peace included George Croghan, his cousin Thomas Smallman, John Connolly, Dorsey Pentecost, John Gibson, John Campbell, and Edward Ward. The board further recommended that the governor formally complain to Lord Dartmouth and Governor Penn about the Pennsylvania government’s actions in establishing a court with jurisdiction within what they considered the boundary of Virginia.²⁰³

Connolly arrived in Williamsburg in early December to keep his appointment with the governor. He noticed that the “seat of government, and metropolis of Virginia,” in which its five hundred buildings covered an area of more than one mile in length and half a mile in width, differed from the more familiar Philadelphia. Instead of hard compact roads lined in some neighborhoods with densely-packed structures with adjoining walls, he saw what a contemporary British visitor described, “All the public buildings are built of brick, all the streets of sand, and the houses mostly constructed of wood painted white, every one detached from the other.”²⁰⁴ Once settled into his lodging, he walked west on the city’s main thoroughfare, Duke of Gloucester Street, then turned right to follow the main north-

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Council of October 11, 1773, Council Executive Journals, 6: 541-543.

²⁰⁴ Smyth, 13.

south axis to the Governor's Palace at the end of the long green. A British army officer who also visited at about the same time described the governor's residence as "a commodious building, tho not elegant, with a cupilloe on top."²⁰⁵

A servant dressed in Dunmore's livery met Connolly at the Palace door, and ushered him through the formal entrance hall, where an impressive display regimental colors, bladed weapons and functional firearms that represented Britain's military power adorned the walls. When the servant announced Connolly's arrival at the entrance to the governor's office, Dunmore greeted him warmly and began the meeting. Getting to the business at hand, his Excellency told Connolly that it appeared the "new Government" of Vandalia had "fallen through." Although the project had become increasingly unpopular in England, the Grand Ohio Company continued its plan to establish an interim capital at Pittsburgh until the permanent seat of government could be erected at Point Pleasant, located at the mouth of the Great Kanawha River. Dunmore, trusting the veracity of the rumors, planned to "take charge" of – or secure – the area that "falls out Pennsylvania" for Virginia.²⁰⁶

The governor had his eyes on the strategic Forks of the Ohio, convinced it lay within the boundary of his colony. The king, after all, had ordered one of his predecessors, Robert Dinwiddie, to establish a fort there in 1754 to block French penetration into his Majesty's dominion. Virginia troops had participated in both Braddock's and Forbes' campaigns to wrest control of the Forks from the French by taking Fort Duquesne, and later joined Bouquet's expedition to pacify the Ohio Indians in Pontiac's War. Although from the

²⁰⁵ Capt. Augustine Prevost, diary entry dated Williamsburg, July 2, 1774, Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed., "Turmoil at Pittsburgh: Diary of Augustine Prevost, 1774," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 85, Number 2 (April 1961), p.123.

²⁰⁶ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, December 29, 1773, PGW Colonial Series, Volume 9, January 1772-March 1774, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 444-445, 445n.

proprietary colony, Connolly had become convinced that Pittsburgh, Redstone, and all the other “Western Settlements” could “not properly” be considered within the limits of Pennsylvania. He accepted his lordship’s directions to organize the region as a district of Augusta until a new county could be erected to contain Pennsylvania’s expansion in that quarter. Resolute and timely action by the governor and General Assembly, he later wrote in a letter to George Washington, might have brought the Pennsylvanians to some “equitable determination” concerning their colony’s western boundary.²⁰⁷ Any discussions on the new district’s boundaries would remain academic until the Crown resolved the colonial border issue. When asked, Connolly recommended that the district’s boundary cover “Pittsburgh, & at least two miles to the East, & up the Monongahela to the entrance of Buffaloe Creek,” and that “perhaps Grave Creek, below Whealon [Wheeling] ... might be a good west Boundary.” An estimated 2,000 people already resided within the limits Connolly recommended.²⁰⁸

To perform his duties, the governor issued Connolly two commissions, one civil and one military. The civil commission appointed him a justice of the peace for Augusta County. It would officially take effect as soon as he could swear the necessary oaths before the chief magistrate of the county court in Staunton. A justice of the peace, or magistrate, exercised both “Ministerial” and “Judicial” authority at the county- level in colonial Virginia. In the former, he executed orders, administered policies, collected taxes, and enforced the laws. In the latter, he served as a judge of record to hear both criminal and

²⁰⁷ John Connolly to George Washington, letter dated Westmoreland Gaol, Pennsylvania, February 1, 1774, PGW Colonial, 9: 464-466. Redstone is present Brownsville, Pennsylvania.

²⁰⁸ John Connolly to George Washington, letter dated Fredericksburg, December 23, 1773, PGW Colonial, 9: 414.

chancery cases.²⁰⁹ In addition, Connolly also carried commissions for the six other justices added to the Augusta County court on October 11.

With orders to establish a militia “expressly for Pittsburgh and its dependencies,” Dunmore commissioned Connolly as a captain and appointed him commandant of the district’s militia.²¹⁰ The little-used, but not uncommon, title of captain commandant in the British army signified the commander of an independent military organization of several companies with no field officer assigned. Appropriate for the chief commanding officer of the district, it placed him above most captains but below the major in the Augusta County militia and subordinate to the County Lieutenant. With an estimated military-age white male population large enough to support several companies, and located at such a distance that made attendance at annual general musters in Staunton difficult, the Pittsburgh area’s militia would function semi-independent of Augusta’s until the General Assembly formally created a new county.²¹¹

Dunmore’s orders gave Connolly the authority to implement and enforce the militia in the western district of Augusta County. Connolly had the mission and authority to enroll men and organize them into as many as four companies. With twelve blank commissions bearing the governor’s signature, he also had discretion to appoint as many company

²⁰⁹ Webb, 203.

²¹⁰ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., Pennsylvania Archives, Series I, Volume 4 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1953), 476-478.

²¹¹ In the period being discussed, the region is always referred to by Virginia authorities as “Pittsburgh and its Dependencies.” The General Assembly established the West Augusta District, divided it into three counties, and separated it from the rest of Augusta County in October 1776, see: Hening, Statutes 9: 262-266.

officers.²¹² With his business at Williamsburg completed, Connolly started back towards Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh

Meanwhile, three days before New Year's Day, William Crawford wrote to George Washington from his Spring Garden home. Crawford, who now acted as Washington's land agent in the Ohio country, had served in the Virginia Regiment under his now-client's command during the French and Indian War. Crawford informed Washington that the yet unconfirmed news about the end of the Vandalia project had reached Pittsburgh. Both men held military grants for Virginia land that would have been located within the proposed new colony. Having the area "remain in the hands of Lord Dunmore," Crawford told Washington, would prove more beneficial to them than if Pennsylvania maintained control of the Forks of the Ohio region.²¹³ Two weeks later, Connolly visited Crawford and told him about what had transpired during his recent visit to Williamsburg. In the course of their conversation, Connolly stated that the Vandalia plan had been cancelled "without a doubt." Crawford immediately relayed the news to Washington.²¹⁴ Although premature, individuals who held patents issued in Williamsburg no longer feared how the loss of Virginia's territorial integrity would affect their holdings, and engaged surveyors to mark off their claims. Those with eyes fixed westward believed that the Virginia government was again free to manage expansion and settlement, and under which they could reap the

²¹² Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, 2 February 1774; and, Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 476-478, and 484-486, respectively.

²¹³ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, January 10, 1774, PGW Colonial 9: 418-420.

²¹⁴ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, January 10, 1774, C.W. Butterfield, ed., Washington-Crawford Letters, from 1767 to 1781, Concerning Western Lands (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1877), 40-41.

associated financial benefits. The process also benefitted Dunmore's personal interests in land acquisition and speculation by gaining the support of influential men like Connolly and Croghan.

Lord Dunmore, as contemporary John J. Jacob later described, acted "With becoming zeal for the honor of the Ancient Dominion."²¹⁵ Connolly may have learned of a proposal by Pennsylvania's Westmoreland County trustees to move their county seat from Hanna's Town to Pittsburgh, which added to his sense of urgency.²¹⁶ On New Year's Day 1774, following Dunmore's orders, Connolly walked through town to the gate of the abandoned military post. To the assembled inhabitants he announced that the royal governor intended to "maintain the possession of Fort Pitt and its dependencies" as part of Augusta County, where Virginia's militia act and other laws were now in force.²¹⁷ By the governor's authority, the captain commandant summoned all eligible white males to assemble at the fort to enroll in the militia on Tuesday, January 25. Connolly then added that the jurisdiction of Westmoreland County did not extend to, and neither its justices of the peace nor any other civil officers appointed by Pennsylvania's proprietary government, had legal standing in the district. Instead, Connolly informed the residents that although the Court of Augusta County met in Staunton, about 270 miles away, he planned to hold an additional court under its jurisdiction in Pittsburgh on the twentieth day of each month.²¹⁸ After he dismissed the crowd, Connolly posted advertisements notifying the public at large of the

²¹⁵ Jacob, John J., A Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Late Captain Michael Cresap (Cumberland, Md.: J. M. Buchanan, 1826), 57, in the rare book collection, New York Historical Society Library.

²¹⁶ Arthur St. Clair to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Ligonier, January 15, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 471-472.

²¹⁷ Aeneas MacKay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, Force, Peter, ed., American Archives, 1: 269-270.

²¹⁸ Aeneas MacKay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, American Archives 1, 4: 269-270; PGW Colonial 9: 466n.

forthcoming muster throughout the area.²¹⁹ The captain commandant appointed three subaltern officers to assist him in organizing the militia. He presented commissions and administered the necessary oaths to John Stephenson and William Harrison, William Crawford's half-brother and son-in-law respectively, and Dorsey Pentecost, a Westmoreland County justice of the peace living in the Redstone area.²²⁰

Captain Connolly's actions may have pleased Dunmore, but they alarmed local officials and the Pennsylvania colonial government. On receiving the first reports from Pittsburgh, Governor John Penn directed the clerk of the Westmoreland County court, Arthur St. Clair, to stop Connolly's activities. Although the letter did not reach him in time, St. Clair had already travelled to Pittsburgh and took action in the absence of orders. St. Clair had Sheriff John Proctor place Connolly under arrest on January 24 for "requiring the People to meet as a Militia" without legal authority. When Connolly defiantly refused to post bond to insure his good behavior until scheduled to appear at the next court day, the sheriff conveyed him to the jail at Hanna's Town. St. Clair believed that he had put the matter to rest, but Connolly's subalterns conducted the scheduled muster without him. "About eighty persons in arms assembled themselves" the next day. Identifying the strongholds of Virginia partisans, St. Clair noted they came "chiefly from Mr. Croghan's neighborhood," three miles up the Allegheny River from town, and the communities west of and below the Monongahela. Casting aspersions on the training exercise, he reported the armed men, "after parading through town and making a kind of *feu de joy*" to celebrate and salute the return of Virginia sovereignty, the company proceeded to the fort where someone produced

²¹⁹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#) I, 4: 476-478.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 476-478.

a cask of rum and knocked the head of it out on the parade. St. Clair, a former British officer, derisively commented, “This was a very effectual way of recruiting.”²²¹

Anticipating trouble, St. Clair assembled six Westmoreland magistrates from in and around Pittsburgh, plus the Crown’s Deputy Indian Superintendent, Alexander McKee, to a meeting where they would be in position to take action. St. Clair specifically invited McKee because he learned that the Indian agent also held a commission from Lord Dunmore as justice of the peace for Virginia’s Fincastle County, which raised suspicion he might side with Connolly if left on his own. The suspicion proved unfounded, and McKee “behaved very well” on the occasion.²²² Recognizing the task of maintaining Pennsylvania authority would be difficult, St. Clair assured the magistrates of Governor Penn’s support and felt confident they would faithfully discharge their duties. As clerk of the court, he instructed them on how to behave. He then distributed a paper he had prepared for all to sign, and which he would read to the crowd if events got out of control before announcing “the necessary cautions with regard to the Riot Act.”²²³ When read to a group of twelve or more people, the Riot Act declared that all persons participating in an unlawful assembly to be guilty of a felony offense and subject to the consequences, including the use of deadly force.

Addressed to their “friends and fellow Country men,” St. Clair informed Connolly’s followers of the validity of the Pennsylvania government’s claim to the country

²²¹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 9, 1774, and Aeneas Mackay to Gov John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, American Archives, 1: 266-267, and 269-271, respectively; Council of 28 February 1774, Hillman, Benjamin, ed., Council Executive Journals Volume 6 (June 20-1754-May 3, 1775) (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), 554-555.

²²² Enclosure to St. Clair’s letter to Gov. Penn, February 2, 1774, Force, Peter, ed., American Archives 1: 267-268.

²²³ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 9, 1774, American Archives, 1: 266-267.

surrounding Pittsburgh. He reminded them that the settlers already living there had “quietly acquiesced in that Claim,” and all who subsequently arrived had also acknowledged the fact when they applied for their lands. The matter of fixing a formal boundary line between the colonies, St. Clair continued, awaited only the king’s assent to Pennsylvania’s petition to conduct the necessary survey. He concluded by telling them, “it must be evident” that the governor of Virginia had no more right to determine the matter than anyone else, “for this plain Reason.”²²⁴

St. Clair then addressed the grievances that Dunmore cited to justify his action and their assembling. He first emphasized that no inhabitant would suffer a lack of protection under the law from Pennsylvania. He warned that a state of anarchy and confusion would likely ensue throughout the region if both Pennsylvania and Virginia maintained “contending jurisdictions in one and the same country.” The magistrate further assured the Virginians that they could depend on the Pennsylvania Assembly to establish a military force at Pittsburgh for their defense when and if warranted. Since the withdrawal of British regulars from Fort Pitt in 1772, the Pennsylvania government primarily trusted the efforts of the Crown’s Indian Department, especially the Pittsburgh-based deputy superintendent McKee, and the Six Nations to keep peace with and between the Indians of the Ohio country, who the Iroquois considered dependent or living under their dominion. Conversely, they saw having a militia as counter-productive, and warned, as McKee told the colonial Assembly when Governor Penn sought an appropriation to raise a small garrison there, “an Indian War would certainly follow establishing a Military force at Pittsburgh.” The announcement concluded with “his Majesty’s Justices and Protectors of

²²⁴ Paper referred to in St. Clair’s letter to Penn, dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives I](#), 4: 478-480.

the Public Peace of Pennsylvania,” informing the newly-raised militia company that their muster constituted an unlawful meeting, and ordered them “in his Majesty’s Name” to “disperse, and retire ... peaceably” to their “respective Habitations.”²²⁵

Fearing the worse, St. Clair returned to the fort to read his prepared announcement and order to disperse. The militia officers answered that they had been invited to a lawful assembly, their intentions were peaceable, and they would eventually go home without molesting anyone. St. Clair let the matter rest, but as twilight faded into darkness he reported “their peaceable disposition forsook them.” He then noted that the militia became increasingly rowdy and turned the abandoned fort into a “scene of drunkenness and confusion.” Without the means to enforce it, St. Clair admitted that the carefully worded warning followed by a reading of the Riot Act would have had little or no effect on an armed and intoxicated mob, and “thought it most prudent to keep out of their way.”²²⁶ Despite being arrested, Connolly had won the first skirmish in the political battle for control of the Forks.

On the last day of January, after meeting with his province’s Council, Governor Penn wrote to Dunmore explaining that Connolly had been arrested for “acting without Authority, as that District [Pittsburgh and Redstone] was within Pennsylvania, & was raising great Disturbances.” He also informed his Virginia counterpart that local magistrates had only confined Connolly for refusing to post bond. In an attempt to curtail any further challenges to Pennsylvania authority in the region, Penn asked Dunmore to revoke Connolly’s orders,

²²⁵ Ibid, 478-480.

²²⁶ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#), I, 4: 476-478.

as well as his and the other commissions, to act in Virginia's favor.²²⁷ The next day, Connolly wrote to Washington from the Westmoreland County "Gaol" at Hanna's Town to explain he had been arrested for being an "Officer appointed by ... [and] attempting to act under a Commission from Virginia," and denying that the colony of Pennsylvania had any jurisdiction at Pittsburgh. He took Virginia's side, he said, because Pennsylvania had "usurped Jurisdiction, as well as Territory," and took action as an affront to a royal colony. At the same time, he expressed his surprise that Virginia had neglected its claim, allowing it to "lie dormant," which invited Pennsylvania's action. He ultimately justified his actions based on the orders he received from Governor Dunmore.²²⁸

When it arrived in Williamsburg, Dunmore convened his colony's Council to discuss and draft a response to Penn's letter. Penn's request that Dunmore at least temporarily revoke the commissions until his Majesty resolved the inter-colonial boundary dispute received a cool reception. The board advised Dunmore to inform Penn there was good reason to believe that Pittsburgh lay considerably within the boundaries of the Virginia colony. The governor therefore wrote to inform Penn that he could not think of allowing the Pennsylvania's claim to the region to stand until the matter had been determined by "his Majesty in Council." Dunmore insisted that Connolly be immediately released and the charges dismissed, and that Penn punish the Westmoreland County clerk and sheriff for their harsh treatment of a Virginia officer.²²⁹

²²⁷ Gov. John Penn to Earl of Dunmore, letter dated Philadelphia, January 31, 1774, as mentioned in Dunmore's March 3, reply, American Archives 1: 252-255.

²²⁸ John Connolly to George Washington, letter dated Westmoreland Gaol, February 1, 1774, PGW Colonial 9: 464-4 554-556.

²²⁹ Council of 28 February 1774, Council Executive Journals 6: 554-555.

Dunmore summarily rejected Penn's request that he rescind the orders and commissions issued to the newly appointed civil and military officers in an area he considered part of Virginia. Maintaining the right of his colony to that country, Dunmore cited not only the royal charter, but challenged Penn with his own previous arguments to Lord Dartmouth representing Pennsylvania's dominion over the Wyoming Valley against Connecticut's encroachment. To further strengthen Virginia's position that its jurisdiction preceded the establishment of Westmoreland County in 1772, Dunmore drew Penn's attention to the "transactions of the late war," which gave sufficient proof that the government of Virginia had always considered the Forks of the Ohio within its boundaries. In view of the evidence, he expressed his dismay that Penn would find his actions surprising or unexpected. Finally, Dunmore pledged to do everything necessary within his power for the "good of the government of that part of the country, which cannot but be considered to be within the dominion of Virginia," until the king should declare to the contrary.²³⁰

The Pennsylvania governor replied with a lengthy letter that stated his government's position, and admonished Dunmore not to grant lands or exercise jurisdiction in the disputed area until they received a royal resolution. On the advice of his Council, the Virginia governor did "not condescend to answer."²³¹ The written debate continued on the merits of each colony's case, citing not only charters, but legal opinions issued by the king's attorneys general.

With the backing of the Virginia Council, Dunmore addressed his concerns about the situation in the colony's backcountry to Lord Dartmouth, the Secretary of State for the

²³⁰ Earl of Dunmore to Gov John Penn, letter dated Williamsburg, March 3, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 252-255.

²³¹ Gov. John Penn to Earl of Dunmore, letter dated Philadelphia, March 31, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 255-260; and, Council of 20 April 1774, Council Executive Journals 6: 556-557.

Colonies. In it, he communicated the “Remonstrance” he had received from backcountry inhabitants against the establishment of Vandalia. Contrary to the conventional wisdom prevalent at Whitehall, influenced no doubt by some of the project’s high placed and influential investors, the inhabitants of the area did not consider themselves as removed from the reach or protection of Virginia’s government as had been portrayed. The people living there, said Dunmore, pleaded that they not be separated from the government to which they had always belonged, and with which they felt pleased and satisfied. Dunmore concluded by drawing Dartmouth’s attention to the people’s fear that becoming part of Vandalia would cause them “*grievous inconvenience*” from the legal complications and property disputes between them and the new colony’s proprietors.²³²

Actual partisan activity increased as the war of letters ensued. Dorsey Pentecost resigned his Pennsylvania peace commission and threatened his fellow Westmoreland County magistrate Van Sweringen to follow suit, or continue to serve Pennsylvania “at his Peril.”²³³ St. Clair countered by warning anyone who attempted to “molest or oppose” Swearingin in the performance of his duties faced immediate arrest. Soon, every magistrate complained of laboring under increased difficulty and the “avowed determination” of the people living in the area not to submit to their jurisdiction. Some members of the proprietary government suggested running a temporary boundary line between Virginia and Pennsylvania interests might serve to quiet the people for a while, but St. Clair expressed his pessimism to Joseph Shippen, secretary of the Provincial Council.

²³² Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth (extract), letter dated Williamsburg, April 2, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 423-424; emphasis from text; Petition of Inhabitants of Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle Counties in Virginia to Earl of Dunmore, Davies, K. G., ed., Documents of the American Revolution 1770 – 1783, hereafter DAR, (Colonial Office Series), Volume 8, Transcripts 1774 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1975), 85-86.

²³³ Joseph Spear to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Pittsburgh, February 23, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 481.

Similar to its Virginia counterpart in its executive and advisory roles, the Pennsylvania Council differed in that it did not constitute an upper legislative house of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, Croghan and his “Emissaries” busied themselves by “irritating” the local population against Pennsylvania authority, and assuring them they did not reside within the limits of that province. St. Clair charged that the majority of the inhabitants who resided near the proposed line had originally migrated from Virginia, and remained unexplainably loyal to and fond of anything that came from that colony. The clerk of the Westmoreland court expressed his concern that if Dunmore did retreat from the action he had taken, his fellow magistrates would find it nearly impossible to maintain Pennsylvania’s civil authority in the region.²³⁴

Croghan began to openly question the proprietary government’s authority. Due to his debts that the earnings from the sale of his considerable land holdings would satisfy, the financially-strapped Croghan stood to gain much if Vandalia had become reality. Because he still commanded great respect and influence with the Ohio area Indians, the defection of the retired Crown deputy superintendent and one-time provincial Indian agent represented a significant loss to Pennsylvania interests. On April 5, Croghan told David Sample, the deputy king’s attorney for Westmoreland County, that he long understood that Fort Pitt and its surrounding communities were beyond the limits of Pennsylvania, and had therefore never paid the taxes levied by its Assembly. In view of the new political situation, Croghan informed Sample he would no longer plead cases in Pennsylvania courts. He argued that he neither had had standing in them, nor did that colony’s courts and laws have any jurisdiction outside its boundaries. He explained that he had submitted to them

²³⁴ Arthur St. Clair to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Ligonier, February 25, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 269.

previously only because he believed “any law better than no law.” Since Dunmore extended Virginia authority by raising the militia and appointing civil officers, Croghan said he would no longer “Countenance the Laws of your Province,” and any cases brought against him had to be heard in a Virginia court.²³⁵

Five days later, Croghan wrote to Governor Dunmore to inform him that he would comply with the Virginia colony’s terms and have his property submit to the quit rent the same as the rest of his Majesty’s subjects. He then applied to the governor and Council to direct Thomas Lewis, the surveyor for Augusta County, to survey all his property for the purpose of assessing the tax. Croghan explained that he had often thought of applying to the Virginia government for redress, but believed he could not legally do so until Virginia had its laws in force and stopped the encroachments of Pennsylvania in the area.²³⁶

While Connolly remained in custody, Captain Pentecost took possession of the abandoned Redstone Old Fort, and began to enroll eligible inhabitants in the militia.²³⁷ Originally named Fort Burd during the French and Indian War, the post sat on the right bank atop of an ancient Indian mound near the mouth of Dunlap’s Creek, and effectively controlled an important ford across the Monongahela River. When Lieutenant John Stephenson took command of the unit forming at the nearby settlement, Pentecost organized another company at the community on the opposite bank. By the third week of February, resident Joseph Spear reported to St. Clair that the Virginians up the Monongahela from Pittsburgh

²³⁵ George Croghan to David Sample, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 483-483.

²³⁶ George Croghan to the Earl Dunmore, letter dated Fort Pitt, April 9, 1774, Wainwright, Nicholas, B., ed., “Turmoil at Pittsburgh, Diary of Augustine Prevost, 1774,” Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 85, Number 2 (April 1961), 144-146.

²³⁷ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 476-478. Redstone is now called Brownsville, in Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

had conducted three musters of their militia. One unit met at the Redstone Old Fort, one at Paul Frohman's property on the opposite side of the Monongahela, and one at "Mr. Pentecost's own House."²³⁸ Dunmore's plan continued to unfold.

After several days' confinement at Hanna's Town, Connolly convinced Sheriff Proctor to release him on his parole that he would return to appear in court for trial. Connolly returned to Pittsburgh, but only stayed a few days. Spear informed St. Clair that he saw Connolly going in the direction of Redstone, instead of returning directly to the courthouse at Hanna's Town, on Wednesday, February 23, but was unaware of the purpose of his excursion.²³⁹ At Redstone, Pentecost and Stephenson had a detachment of twenty men from the militia ready to escort Connolly along the road toward Staunton until he passed safely beyond the reach of Westmoreland County authorities.²⁴⁰ After reaching the Virginia county town, Connolly swore the oaths required of a justice of the peace for Augusta County, met with the county lieutenant, Colonel Charles Lewis, and Sheriff, Daniel Smith to discuss the next move in the contest to secure the Forks of the Ohio for Virginia. Governor Dunmore had previously alerted Lewis to have his militia stand ready to march on Pittsburgh at short notice to support Connolly in a future confrontation with the Pennsylvanians.²⁴¹

²³⁸ Arthur St. Clair to Gov John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, February 2, 1774, and Joseph Spear to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Pittsburgh, February 23, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#) I, 4: 476-478 and 481, respectively.

²³⁹ Joseph Spear to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Pittsburgh, February 23, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#) I, 4: 481.

²⁴⁰ Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#) I, 4: 484-486.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 484-486; William Crawford to Gov John Penn, letter dated Westmoreland County, April 8, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 262-3; and, Council of April 20, 1774, Council Executive Journals 6: 554-555.

Connolly, now fully vested with both civil and military authority by Virginia, made the 270-mile return trip to Pittsburgh on Monday, March 28, accompanied by Francis Brown, an Augusta County undersheriff. A party of pro-Virginia militia from the Chartier Creek settlement joined him at Fort Pitt two days later. Believing they were up to no good and fearing Pittsburgh would soon become a place of “anarchy and Confusion,” Westmoreland County Justices Aeneas Mackay, Andrew McFarlane, and Deveraux Smith accompanied Sheriff Proctor to the fort to determine Connolly’s intentions. Prepared to read the Riot Act if the assembly became disorderly, they discovered Connolly addressing a gathering of little more than twenty men, not all of whom had arms. They watched as he read them the contents of two letters he had recently received from Governor Dunmore. In the first, Dunmore commended Connolly for his actions to date, and for not giving bond in January when Proctor arrested him while engaged in the plan to secure the district for Virginia. He next read a copy of Dunmore’s response to Governor Penn’s demands. After he dismissed his troops, Connolly met the sheriff and his party in a room of the barracks. He assured them he would be present at the court in Hanna’s Town as promised, and had no intention of violating “the Established Rules of law” then in effect – until “after the Court.”²⁴²

On Thursday, March 31, Sheriff Proctor attempted to serve a writ on Lieutenant William Christy, one of the subalterns in the Virginia militia company of Pittsburgh. Connolly immediately retaliated by issuing a King’s Warrant, or a writ giving the peace officer authority to capture and hold an offender on criminal charges, with which Undersheriff Brown took Proctor into custody and detained him for a good part of the day. Parties of armed men went in pursuit of Proctor’s deputy, Ephraim Hunter, and the township’s two

²⁴² Aeneas Mackay to Gov. Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, [Pennsylvania Archives](#) I, 4: 484-486.

constables, which rendered it impossible for the Pennsylvania justices to conduct any business. Before long, the two sworn constables renounced their oaths and defected to the Virginia side. With Fort Pitt occupied, and what Mackay called “a Body Guard of Militia about him,” Connolly advanced Dunmore’s plans to secure the region. After he admitted that a sizable faction of area inhabitants stood ready to join the Virginians, Mackay alleged Connolly “used every artifice” to “seduce the people” with promises of civil and military employment, as well as offering them easy terms for land grants. Mackay lamented that the “giddy headed mobs” had become so infatuated with Connolly’s promises that they allowed themselves to be persuaded. He and his fellow magistrates anticipated another muster before their captain commandant stood trial, after which they expected to see a strong body militia at the courthouse to rescue Connolly and perhaps attempt something else.²⁴³

Although originally from Virginia, William Crawford remained outwardly loyal to Pennsylvania for the time being, and continued to faithfully perform his duties as a justice of the peace and president of the Westmoreland County court. The recent extraordinary events that occurred in the area prompted him to submit a detailed report to Governor Penn, based on the collective observations of all the magistrates concerning Connolly’s activities. As the situation continued to deteriorate, Crawford blamed the confusion and resulting disturbances largely on Connolly’s militia, which he described as “composed of men without character and without fortune” who were “equally averse” to any regular administration of justice under either colony.²⁴⁴ Crawford said Connolly’s men obstructed

²⁴³ Ibid, 484-486.

²⁴⁴ William Crawford to Gov John Penn, letter dated Westmoreland County, April 8, 1774, with Enclosure 1: John Connolly to Magistrates of Westmoreland County, [American Archives](#) 1: 262-263.

the “execution of the legal process” by using force to intimidate the Westmoreland County court as a body, as well as harassed individual magistrates. Connolly’s partisans, for example, insulted Justice Mackay, but paid him cruel special attention when they invaded his home and injured him in the arm with a cutlass blow. To make matters worse, the magistrates collectively feared that Connolly sought to avenge his arrest and confinement in kind by issuing writs for Proctor’s and St. Clair’s arrest.²⁴⁵

Several days before Connolly’s scheduled court appearance, rumors circulated that Virginia officers planned to march their several companies to Hanna’s Town and “use the Court ill” as they interrupted its proceedings. To prevent any insult to Pennsylvania authority, the court ordered Sheriff Proctor to raise a posse of armed men for its protection. On Wednesday, April 6, the justices learned that Connolly was on his way at the head of around 180 well-armed men, advancing in what Magistrate George Wilson described as a “hostile manner.” In comparison, the few ill-armed and unorganized men who responded to the sheriff’s call did not present a deterrent. At about mid-day the justices heard the sound of drums and fifes approaching from the direction of Pittsburgh. Knowing Connolly to be at hand, they decided it prudent to adjourn early for dinner and vacated the building. Magistrate Thomas Smith said the Virginians marched along the road “with colours flying and their Captains” and subaltern officers “had their swords drawn.” As the column of troops arrived and turned off the road, the companies wheeled into line and paraded before the courthouse. On Connolly’s command, they surrounded the building and posted

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 262-263.

sentinels at the doors to prevent anyone from entering without their commander's permission.²⁴⁶

Connolly notified the magistrates that he wished to meet with them. The justices agreed, and received him in a "private room" where he presented them copies of Lord Dunmore's March 3 rejection of Governor Penn's demands, and his own address to the court. In the latter, Connolly accused "some of the Justices of this Bench," as the cause for his appearance. He only obeyed their summons to satisfy his parole and avoid another illegal arrest, and possibly getting taken to confinement in Philadelphia. Once more, he challenged the right of justices of the peace for Pennsylvania to retain jurisdiction in what he maintained was Virginia territory. To prevent confusion, and satisfy his stated desire not to instigate a disturbance but prevent one, he offered a temporary solution. Connolly agreed that the Pennsylvania magistrates could continue functioning in all matters submitted to them for a determination by the people who recognized their authority until he received contrary orders from Williamsburg, or the king's decision on the matter became known.²⁴⁷

This time, Pennsylvania's Westmoreland magistrates turned obstinate. They drafted a written reply, which one of them read aloud. They maintained that they only exercised their authority within the boundaries of Westmoreland County, which, Virginia's claims notwithstanding, included Pittsburgh and Redstone. Consistent with their desire to do all within their power to preserve the public tranquility, they intended to exercise jurisdiction

²⁴⁶ Ibid; and, Thomas Smith to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Westmoreland, April 7, 1774, American Archives 1: 262-263, and 271-273, respectively; George Wilson to William Fisher, deposition dated Philadelphia, April 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 491-492.

²⁴⁷ William Crawford to Gov John Penn, letter dated Westmoreland County, April 8, 1774, American Archives 1: 262-263.

granted them under the authority of Pennsylvania's government. They agreed, however, to accommodate any differences between the two colonies' respective adherents "by fixing a temporary line between them."²⁴⁸

When justices Mackay, Smith, and Macfarlane returned to their Pittsburgh homes late that night they learned Connolly intended to issue King's Warrants for their arrest.

Undersheriff Brown served the order at McFarlane's home the next morning at about 9:30.

"Connolly's Sheriff" and Philip Reilly, who McFarlane called "an infamous missworn Constable" for having recently renounced his oath to Pennsylvania, grasped their prisoner by the shoulder and led him before Connolly, holding court at the fort, to receive his sentence. For their intransigent challenge to his compromise solution the day before, the Virginia magistrate insisted his Pennsylvania counterparts either post bail until required to appear in court, or go immediately to jail in Staunton for performing their duty – just as they had done to him in January. The three stood firm, and before leaving for jail in the afternoon, they wrote letters explaining their predicament to Penn.²⁴⁹

Thomas Smith sought the provincial government's assistance on behalf of himself and his fellow justices while on their way to jail, exposed to what he described as "the insults of the rabble who are sent as their Guard." Learning of the incident, Governor Penn instructed the remaining officers of Westmoreland County to remain steadfast in their exercise of Pennsylvania jurisdiction, but to avoid any confrontation with the Virginians so

²⁴⁸ Ibid; with Enclosure 2: Magistrates of Westmoreland County to John Connolly's Address, American Archives 1: 262-263.

²⁴⁹ Andrew McFarlane to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 9, 1774, Pennsylvania Archives I, 4: 487-488; Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 9, 1774, and Devereux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 9, 1774, American Archives 1: 264-265. The text version reads "Minsworn Constable," but is corrected here to read "Missworn Constable."

as to not “widen the unhappy breach” between the two colonies. Recognizing that Virginia had a well-developed militia establishment and Pennsylvania had none, Penn advised that any attempt to contend with force would be in vain, and ordered them not to press any criminal charges against the Virginians for exercising that colony’s laws. In the meantime, Penn replied to the three jailed magistrates, telling them he had no objection to their posting bond as he continued working to secure their release. In order to minimize further confrontations, Penn instructed the justices residing in the Pittsburgh area that if Connolly arrested them they should to immediately post bail rather than suffer incarceration “so great a distance from your homes” in Staunton. If that came to pass, he promised that he would pledge responsibility for their surety. Finally, after meeting with the provincial Council, the governor decided to dispatch James Tilghman and Andrew Allen as commissioners to Williamsburg to speak directly with Lord Dunmore in an effort to restore peace and quiet.²⁵⁰

Williamsburg

Although many Pennsylvanians like Thomas Smith blamed Connolly’s behavior, as well as all the civil commotion and anything else “absurd and unwarrantable” at Pittsburgh on Lord Dunmore, Mackay initially found the Virginia governor to be reasonable when confronted face to face. Shortly after he arrived in Staunton, Augusta County’s Sheriff Daniel Smith granted him leave and assisted him in obtaining the means to make the six-

²⁵⁰ Thomas Smith to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Bedford, April 13, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., Pennsylvania Archives, Volume 4 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1953), 488-489; Gov. John Penn to William Crawford, Esq., and Associates of Westmoreland County, letter dated Philadelphia, April 22, 1774; and, Gov. John Penn to Aeneas Mackay, Devereux Smith, and Andrew McFarlane, letter dated Philadelphia, April 22, 1774; and, Gov. John Penn to James Tilghman and Andrew Allen, Instructions as Commissioners Appointed to Treat with the Governor of Virginia, dated Philadelphia, May 7, 1774, Force, Peter, ed., American Archives, Volume 1, 1774-1775 (Washington: M. St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force, 1837), 265-266, and 279-280, respectively.

day ride to Williamsburg for an audience with the governor. On or about Monday, April 25, according to Mackay, he and Dunmore “spoke our minds very free to each other.” The magistrate complained of his and other Pittsburgh inhabitants’ treatment at Connolly’s hands, and what he perceived as unruly conduct by the militia he had organized and commanded. Dunmore listened, and replied by explaining the validity of Virginia’s claim to the region, under which he had authorized Connolly to prosecute his plans. His lordship offered a somewhat tepid defense of his captain’s practice of taking prisoners by saying that in so doing, he “only imitated the Pennsylvania officers’” actions. The governor then excused himself to prepare for a Council meeting, and asked Mackay to return to the Palace the next day to continue their discussion.²⁵¹

Dunmore asked the Council for their advice and consent for a letter he drafted in which he formally reprimanded Connolly for his arrest and imprisonment of the three Pennsylvania officers “in Revenge” for St. Clair having committed him to jail. Dunmore included his guidance for Connolly and his subordinates to mind their future conduct, and admonished his captain “that the more illegal the Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Magistrates have been against him, the more cautious ought we to be on our Part, to refrain from imitating such unjustifiable Acts as we have complain’d of on theirs.” The Council then ordered a Proclamation prepared for the governor’s signature requiring the inhabitants of “Pittsburgh and its Dependencies ... to pay Quitrents and other public Dues” to the appropriate officers appointed, or to be appointed, by “this Government.” The governor’s Proclamation also directed officers of the militia in the district “to embody a sufficient Force for repelling any

²⁵¹ Thomas Smith to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Westmoreland County, April 7, 1774; and, Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Staunton, May 5, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 271-273, and 282-283, respectively.

Invasion of the Indians,” or “any Attempt ... by the Government of Pennsylvania, to disturb the Exercise of Government of this Colony over that Territory.”²⁵² As soon as it had been signed, an express rider carried a copy to Pittsburgh.

Meanwhile, Mackay followed the Virginia governor’s instructions to return, and his one-day visit lasted into three. Dunmore finally met him long enough to give him two documents, a letter addressed to Sheriff Smith and another copy of the proclamation to be forwarded to Connolly, and then dismissed him. A disappointed Mackay rode back to Staunton, unaware that the visit resulted in a reprimand of Connolly for having arrested and sent him to jail. To his surprise, the other letter instructed the sheriff to permit the three detained magistrates to “return to their homes and occupations” in Pennsylvania. Waiving the requirement to post a peace bond, the governor relieved the sheriff of his responsibility for their appearances in court!²⁵³

Pittsburgh

When it arrived by express rider at Pittsburgh, Connolly had Dunmore’s April 25 Proclamation read before public gatherings and posted the broadsides at various places throughout the district, along with his own previously published circular letter warning district residents to be on their guard. The governor’s announcement explained the necessary actions taken by the Virginia government “to support the dignity of his Majesty’s Government, and protect his subjects in the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their rights.” It also explained their obligations to Virginia with regard to militia service and the payment of taxes. The news spread quickly. Before the end of April, Reverend David Zeisberger

²⁵² Council of April 25, 1774, Council Executive Journals 6: 558.

²⁵³ Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Staunton, May 5, 1774; and, Earl of Dunmore to Daniel Smith, letter dated Williamsburg, April 26, 1774, [American Archives](#) 1: 282-283.

recorded in the journal of Schönbrunn, the United Brethren's mission on the Muskingum River, two Moravian Indians returned from Pittsburgh and said that the government there had changed, "and the place now belonged to Virginia." It appeared that Connolly had accomplished his mission.²⁵⁴

The coming of spring brought not only the annual freshets that swelled the Ohio and its tributaries, but worrisome news from the frontier. While the inter-colonial border dispute played out in courthouses and capitols, violence between settlers and Indians in the Virginia backcountry increased and reports of growing native unrest reached Pittsburgh. Alexander McKee reported to Sir William Johnson that traders returning from native towns told of warriors displaying fresh scalps. Others told him that several families along the Great Kanawha River and the Ohio were "cut off" – or killed – over the winter, and that one party of warriors returned from a raid boasting having killed six whites, "with some Negroes and a Number of Horses taken." The Shawnee appeared to be preparing for war, as many young warriors traded their pelts for more than the usual amounts of powder and lead, but less for commodities.²⁵⁵ The Indian Department planned for negotiations to check the violence and calm the concerns of the Shawnees, whose resentment of the recent cession of their hunting ground had grown more intense. Croghan had even invited a number of Shawnee elders to Pittsburgh, who spent the winter – from the end of December

²⁵⁴ John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, Governor of (Colony) Virginia 1771-1775, Proclamation dated Williamsburg, April 25, 1774, An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of BroadSides and Other Printed Ephemera, Portfolio 178, Folder 12c, U.S. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and, Extract of a Journal of the United Brethren's Mission on Muskingum from February 21 to 20 May 20, 1774, American Archives 1: 288-289. The Muskingum is a tributary of the Ohio that flows through the east central area of present Ohio.

²⁵⁵ Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, letter dated Pittsburgh, March 3, 1774, PSWJ 8 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1933): 1057-1058; Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8, Transcripts 1774 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1975), 257.

to the beginning of April – at his home seeking a solution to the violence. McKee urged the chiefs to “use their Utmost Strength and Influence” to control their young men. He warned that they “must not expect That the White People wou’d long lett their Conduct in this manner pass with Impunity,” but cause a reaction that would bring destruction upon them and embroil their people in a hopeless fight.²⁵⁶

The Frontier

John J. Jacob later wrote that “a kind of doubtful, precarious and suspicious peace” had existed between Indians and whites since the end of Pontiac’s War, although occasional violent incidents had occurred.²⁵⁷ Violence began to increase again following the signing of the boundary line treaties. In 1771, the year after the Treaty of Lochaber, Colonel Andrew Lewis, the County Lieutenant of the newly erected Botetourt County, reported to the government at Williamsburg the murder of seven people at a settlement on the Elk River. The prevailing opinion of the local inhabitants held unspecified Ohio Indians responsible for the atrocity, and who allegedly sought to bring on a general war. In response, Lewis ordered out scouts to guard the frontier against further irruptions, and ordered the captains commanding local companies to tell their men “to hold themselves in readiness” to defend their communities if attacked, or march detachments to the relief of their neighbors. Fortunately, calm returned without further incident, and families who fled the settlements at the first alarm returned home.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, letter dated Pittsburgh, March 3, 1774, Hamilton, Milton W., ed., The Papers of Sir William Johnson, Volume 12 (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1957), 1082.

²⁵⁷ Jacob, 53.

²⁵⁸ Council of July 17, 1771, Council Executive Journals 6: 428.

In the summer of the following year, Adam Stroud returned to his home on the Elk River after being away some length of time, and found that hostile warriors had murdered his entire family, plundered his house, and drove off his livestock. The trail of cattle carcasses headed in the direction of a small Delaware village on the banks of the Little Kanawha River a few miles to the north, which local settlers called Bulltown. A Delaware chief who many whites knew as Captain Bull had sided with Pontiac in the uprising of 1763, but since establishing the settlement, he and the five families of his relatives who resided there enjoyed friendly relations with their white neighbors.²⁵⁹

Although the other settlers attempted to dissuade them, five of Stroud's neighbors concluded that Bull and his relatives were guilty of the massacre and demanded summary justice. Without fanfare, the five, including one who had a reputation as an ardent Indian hater, went to the town and murdered every man, woman, and child, then threw the corpses into the river. They later admitted going to Bull town, but found it apparently abandoned by its inhabitants before they arrived. When questioned separately, some of the men gave conflicting answers, saying they either saw no Indians or that they had and engaged in fisticuffs, but denied having killed anyone. The men were only consistent in claiming they had observed some of the Strouds' clothing and other property in the Indians' possession, which they insisted confirmed their suspicions. When the more moderate neighbors went to visit, they found an abandoned village with neither any sign of life nor evidence of foul play. No one ever saw or heard from Bulltown's residents again, although the five

²⁵⁹ Withers, 136 – 137; Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 257.

instigators were always suspected of having done something terrible to their innocent Indian inhabitants.²⁶⁰

Such incidents served to remind Indians and settlers alike of the distrust that remained even when communities of the two groups lived in close proximity, and began to increase in 1773 before the incident in Powell Valley. Earlier that year, fellow traders suspected that hostile Indians had murdered John Martin and Guy Meek on Hockhocking Creek, a western tributary of the Ohio, and stealing their canoe and its cargo valued at an estimated £200.²⁶¹ As at Bulltown, peaceful Indians were also among the victims of similar foul play. A settler named John Collins committed “a most malicious and unprovoked Murder of two Cherokee Indians” as the men refreshed themselves with a meal of victuals in his father’s house, for which they had begged.²⁶² Neither the commander in chief of British forces nor the colonial governments condoned violence against unoffending or friendly Indians, but the fugitive evaded apprehension despite generous rewards authorized by General Haldimand and the Virginia Council. Although the most noteworthy incident, the ambush of the Russell-Boone party in October represented but another in a series of encounters that led to war. Such incidents prompted Jacob to conclude “it is certain that our quarrel with the Indians, or their quarrel with us, is nearly coeval.”²⁶³

Jacob attributed much of the violence equally to, “The restless, roving disposition of the Indians, whose only business is hunting and war, together with the frequent encroachments

²⁶⁰ Withers, 137 – 138. One of the five, John Cutright, revealed the truth in a deathbed confession in 1852, per 137n.

²⁶¹ Jacob, 53; and Samuel Kercheval *A History of the Valley of Virginia* (1909; reprinted Baltimore: Clearfield, 2002), 109.

²⁶² Council of October 14, 1773, Council Executive Journals 6: 544. Although the incident happened in South Carolina, Virginia officials took measures to apprehend Collins if the fugitive traveled to the colony.

²⁶³ Jacob, 53.

of the white people on their lands and hunting grounds.”²⁶⁴ As the numbers of whites moving into the backcountry increased, so did the potential for conflict. While tribal elders professed peace, young Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo warriors occasionally crossed the river to cause mischief. Many settlers remembered the bloody raids committed during the French and Indian War and Pontiac’s War. They still harbored a deep hatred of all Indians, mourned for murdered loved ones, and prayed those taken captive who survived, but still not released according to war-ending peace treaties, would escape and return home. Some backcountry whites summarily killed native traders or hunters caught or suspected of stealing horses, killing cattle, or hunting in the woods near their farms without considering whether they were friendly or hostile. Jacob described the attitudes of many backcountry Virginians when he wrote “whoever saw an Indian saw an enemy.”²⁶⁵

Farther south, Georgia faced similar threats on its frontier. On Christmas Day 1773, Creek warriors attacked the farm of a man named White, and murdered his entire family of five, including his wife and two children. John Stuart, the Southern Indian superintendent, at first blamed the farmer for provoking the incident when he either killed or wounded an Indian earlier. White maintained that he had fired as he pursued the marauders who had just stolen some of his horses. The Creeks, said Stuart, had only returned to exact revenge, not start a war. However, two weeks later, on January 14, 1774, a war party struck at the homestead of a family named Shirrol [or Sherrill] in the same neighborhood. This time, they killed four of the six whites, including the mother and daughter, and two of the family’s three blacks. Two sons and one black man “defended themselves bravely” to survive. The local commander mustered about one hundred of his militia in response.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 53.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 53.

Although reinforced with twenty-five provincial rangers, the expedition faltered when the Indians ambushed them on January 23. Frontier inhabitants soon heard the rumor that the Choctaws were attempting to reconcile and form an alliance with the Creeks, their traditional enemy, and parties of Cherokees were also joining them on the warpath to attack more settlements. In the ensuing panic, many settlers fled the backcountry for the safety of the fort at Augusta, while Georgia's governor, William Wright, called one third of the colony's militia to active service. Stuart and his deputy superintendents, including David Taitt for the Upper Creeks and Alexander Cameron for the Cherokees, met with tribal leaders to resolve the growing conflict without further bloodshed.²⁶⁶

By late February traders and other travelers passing through the Virginia settlements told the inhabitants the Creeks, Cherokees and Choctaws had joined in a war against the southern provinces. Virginians also heard that since the Indians first struck, they had murdered a number of families and fought several battles in which they had beaten the militia. At first, Colonel Lewis paid little regard to what he considered to only be rumor. Arguably one of the most knowledgeable Virginia officials on matters concerning Indian and military affairs on the frontier, the county lieutenant of Botetourt County became convinced of the "Melancoly truth" by several persons who claimed to have witnessed the "dreadful effects of Savage Cruelty." When they heard that 500 Cherokees planned to attack, "but where no person can tell," the settlers on the Holston and other river

²⁶⁶ John Stuart to Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Charles Town, February 3, 1774, DAR 8: 34 - 37.

communities in that quarter began “Forting up,” while militia officers sent scouts to watch for and detect an approaching enemy.²⁶⁷

When frontier people “forted,” it meant they had left their homes and gathered in a nearby military garrison or neighbor’s home that had been hardened with a stockade fence or blockhouse. The temporary living arrangement sheltered the women and children, while the men served as sentinels to provide local security, went on patrol to gather intelligence, and manned the walls to repel an assault. If fortified for any length of time during the spring or summer, “it was our practice and custom,” wrote militiaman John Patton, “to work our fields as well as we could adjacent to the fort.” Therefore, they would “turn out in a body and work our respective places by turns.” Once the men arrived, they posted two men to watch and stand guard while the rest labored in the field or tended the cattle that had not been corralled in or closer to the fort. They continued working and watching, so “all of us participated in both employments,” until the alarm ended and it became safe to return to their individual homes.²⁶⁸

A typical frontier fort often consisted of a stockade enclosure within four walls of sharpened logs called pickets, with the lower five feet buried in the ground, and the curtain wall rising twelve to fifteen feet in height above the plain. Defenders could fire over the wall or through loopholes cut into it to provide the shooter with a degree of protection from enemy fire. Defenders could improve the defense by adding bastions or blockhouses on one or more corners to create salient angles. A blockhouse was a fortified building of two or more stories. The larger second story created an overhang provided with additional

²⁶⁷ Andrew Lewis to George Washington, letter dated Richfield, March 9, 1774, PGW Colonial 9: 512-515.

²⁶⁸ John Patton Pension Application R8012, dated February 11, 1835, M805, Roll 1889, NARA.

loopholes in the floor so that the garrison could fire at ground-level targets, and thereby deny attackers an opportunity to secure a lodgment where defenders firing from the curtain walls could not engage them. Inside, the stockade held barracks to house the garrison, cabins to accommodate families, and magazines for the storage of ammunition, supplies and provisions. In lieu of a stockade, some forts consisted of a single, or two or more mutually supporting blockhouses. To differentiate military posts built at government expense from fortified private homes, “Fort” followed by the name designated the former, while the owner’s name followed by “fort” represented the latter.²⁶⁹

The perennial fear of Crown officials had been the union of all the Indian nations along the frontier in a single confederacy, and the general war that would likely follow. Lewis added his concern that the Ohio Indians were already “in the Plot” and well acquainted with “the designs of the Southern Indians.” He realized nothing could deter the Shawnee, Mingo and Delaware from joining the others on the warpath, except their “being so Near Neighbors to Our Settlements below Fort Pitt.” He recommended that the Ohio Indians “ought to be strictly watched. If they appeared to be preparing or starting to move their families away, one could expect they were about to become what he describes as “Open Enemies.”²⁷⁰

Colonel William Preston, the county lieutenant of Fincastle County, had Captain William Russell travel to his Smithfield Plantation home on the New River for a meeting. They discussed the situation on the frontier in general, and Russell spoke “in behalf of Our Holston Settlements” in particular. The colonel instructed the captain that if upon his return to Clinch River he deemed it necessary, he should send out scouts to determine the

²⁶⁹ Joseph Doddridge *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars* (Wellsburgh, VA: Office of the Gazette, 1824; reprinted Pittsburgh, PA: John S. Ritenour and William T. Lindsey, 1912), 94.

²⁷⁰ Andrew Lewis to George Washington, letter dated Richfield, March 9, 1774, PGW Colonial 9, January 1772 – March 1774 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 512-515.

Indians' intentions, as well as to verify the exact location on the ground of the boundary between Cherokee territory and Virginia. For his part, Preston would request the General Assembly to have the colony pay for their service. After completing his report on the situation in Fincastle County, Preston sent Russell to Colonel Andrew Lewis' Richfield home so that he could carry the report for Botetourt County to Williamsburg as well. By March 9, Russell headed on his way to the capital to deliver the two county lieutenants' reports and personally inform Lord Dunmore of the critical situation developing in the backcountry.²⁷¹

Lewis had served under Colonel George Washington in the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War. After completing his report so Russell could carry it to the capital, he also wrote to inform his former commanding officer of the military situation and how it might affect the status of the veterans' land grants as well as the ongoing land surveys. Depending on the outcome, he cautioned that an Indian war could "put a stop to Our designs On the Ohio."²⁷²

In mid-March, Daniel Smith, a militia captain and deputy surveyor, as well as the sheriff of Augusta County found himself in Castle's Woods conducting land surveys for Fincastle County. He reported to Colonel Preston, who served as Fincastle County's chief surveyor as well as its chief militia commander, that the people in the Clinch River settlements appeared "more fearful of the Indians than I expected to find them." Recent reports of hostile Cherokees incursions had caused such an alarm among them that four families had

²⁷¹ Ibid, 9: 512-515; and, William Preston to Samuel McDowell, letter dated Fincastle, May 27, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ27. Lewis' Richfield was on the Roanoke River in present Salem, Va. Preston's Smithfield Plantation is near present Blacksburg, Va.

²⁷² Andrew Lewis to George Washington, letter dated Richfield Botetourt County, March 9, 1774, PGW Colonial 9: 512-515.

fled to the relative safety of the Holston River settlements in such haste that they left most of their household furniture and livestock behind them. When they realized the cause for alarm was not as dire as they expected, the families ventured back again to secure the rest of their property, which presented Smith the opportunity he needed, and he convinced them to stay.²⁷³

While the inhabitants of Virginia's frontier counties had the most cause for concern, the "most alarming nature" of the escalating violence on the frontier did not escape the notice of those in the rest of the colony. An open letter to the governor appeared in the March 24, 1774, edition of Rind's *Virginia Gazette* on the subject. Under the pseudonym "Virginius," one colonist wrote the situation had become "so truly critical" that the frontier counties required the immediate and "instant assistance of both the Legislative and Executive powers" for their defense. Virginius accused "Our treacherous and clandestine foes, the Indians," for having "ever greedily embraced all opportunities of manifesting their inimical affections toward us." He concluded with an appeal to the governor, writing "Ten thousand incidents conspire to render a war at this time necessary, ney inevitable; and the innocent lives of numbers might be saved by the timely proclamation of it."²⁷⁴ Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* edition for same day carried a notice that also effected the situation on the Ohio. It directed all "Gentlemen, Officers and Soldiers," entitled to land as authorized by the Royal Proclamation of October 7, 1763, and possessing the necessary warrants from Lord Dunmore, to apply to the chief surveyor of Fincastle County, William

²⁷³ Capt. Daniel Smith to Col. William Preston, letter dated Castle's Wood, March 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ15.

²⁷⁴ *Virginia Gazette* # 2, Rind, Clementina, March 24, 1774.

Preston. Preston had engaged survey parties to work under his supervision “to locate their lands near the Ohio, below the Great Kanawha.”²⁷⁵

Captain Russell returned from Williamsburg in April to find that many Clinch River settlers had evacuated their plantations. He knew something had to be done to convince the inhabitants who had not abandoned their homes and farms to desist from so “Ruinous an undertaking.” He knew that providing timely and accurate information on the location, strength, and intentions of invading Indians thought to be heading their way provided the best antidote for panic. “Agreeable to Instruction” from the county lieutenant, the captain of the local company turned to his men, and asked for four volunteers to perform a special mission “in the service of the Country [Virginia].” From among those who stepped forward, he appointed Richard Stanton, Edward Sharpe, Ephraim Drake, and William Harrel “as Runners to scout, and Reconnoiter, to the Westward of this settlement.”²⁷⁶

Certain that he had the right men, Russell assembled the scouts. He outlined their mission and what he expected them to accomplish. After entering the head of Powell’s Valley just beyond the Clinch River settlements of southwestern Virginia, they would follow on or near the Warriors’ Path to possibly intercept the likely Indian route of march and look for signs of activity. If the scouts discovered any warriors, Russell instructed them to determine their numbers, direction, and most important, “as nearly as possible, their Intentions.” If the runners observed that the Indians intended to make war by attacking the Clinch or Holston River settlements, he ordered them to immediately bring such information back to him or, in his absence, “the next Officer convenient,” in order to pass it

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Castle’s Woods, May 7, 1774; and, Capt. William Russell to Scouts, instructions, n.d., William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ23 and 3QQ18, respectively.

on to the county lieutenant. Second, if they discovered no signs of approaching warriors, Russell told the runners to continue down Powell's Valley and identify the actual boundary line "between us and the Cherokees" that Donelson had surveyed as part of the Great Grant of 1772. Therefore, after locating a head, they would have to follow the water's course to confirm that it terminated on the Louisa and not the Cumberland. On their return, the scouts would give sworn depositions stating what they discovered for submission to the General Assembly. Knowing the exact boundary would not only prove important for issuing the military land warrants to deserving veterans, but contribute to maintaining good relations with the Cherokees. With the boundary verified, hunters, surveyors, and settlers would have no excuse or recourse to "Plead Ignorance in going over or Infringing on the Indians Claim."²⁷⁷

Finally, Russell cautioned the men that while Virginians remained apprehensive that the Cherokees and certain "northward Indians [the Shawnees] intend War," he ordered them to avoid any provocation, and all contact if possible, with Indian parties. If unavoidable, or they happened to encounter any warriors by accident, the scouts had to refrain from initiating any action that might be perceived as warlike. Since the Indians appeared "ripe for War," he explained, any untoward behavior at that critical time would "not only blast our fairest hopes of Settling the Ohio Country; and be Attended with a train of Concomitant Evils," but would be sure to involve the Virginia government in a "Bloody War." After Russell concluded his instructions, the scouts headed for Powell's Valley.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Castle's Woods, May 7, 1774; and Col. William Preston to Capt. Samuel McDowell, letter dated Richfield, May 27, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ23 and 3QQ27, respectively.

²⁷⁸ Capt. William Russell to Scouts, instructions, n.d., William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ18.

Chapter 4: A War Is Every Moment Expected – Increasing Frontier Violence

Pittsburgh

By early April, backcountry inhabitants and work parties spread the word that “the Indians had placed themselves on both sides of the Ohio, and that they intend war.” Virginians were not alone in believing that a conflict seemed imminent. The area’s Pennsylvanians blamed the Virginians, not the Indians, for instigating the potential hostilities. Before Connolly arrested and sent him and two fellow Pennsylvania men the magistrates to jail, Magistrate Aeneas Mackay had expressed his concern to Governor Penn. Connolly’s militia, he said, had “parties of armed men patrolling through our streets daily.” Their activities had so alarmed the Indians living across the river from Pittsburgh that they anticipated “hostility ... against them and their country.”²⁷⁹

While both parties feared the likelihood of attack, the growing belligerence of some tribes concerned the Pennsylvanians most, for which they accordingly held the Virginians responsible. For their part, the Virginians feared they would not only have to fight the Shawnees in the north, possibly in confederation with other Ohio Indians, but the Cherokees in the south as well - either separately or in an alliance. Connolly and his associates continued to cite Virginia’s ability to defend the community from invasion, and contrasted it to Pennsylvania’s lack of a permanent military

²⁷⁹ Thomas Hanson’s Journal, extract, April 7 – August 9, 1774, George Rogers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscripts 14J58-84 (114-115); and, Aeneas McKay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1774, [American Archives](#), 1: 269-271.

establishment, whenever news of violence reached Pittsburgh. Just such an incident then occurred downriver.

The Shawnee chiefs that George Croghan and Alexander McKee invited to Pittsburgh at the end of 1773 grew increasingly impatient and concerned. Staying as guests at Croghan Hall to ensure their safety had not prevented irate settlers from firing an occasional angry shot in their direction. Acts of hostility caused some of the chiefs “disagreeable Dreams,” and heightened the feeling of foreboding. On March 8, after hearing “bad News from our Town” about the increasing violence between whites and Indians, the chiefs told their host that they were anxious to leave. When the final meeting of the council, also attended by several Six Nations and Delaware chiefs, and officials from both colonies, McKee made a final attempt to defuse the causes of conflict. He urged the Shawnee headmen to do their best “to preserve the peace and Tranquility of this Country” when they returned home.²⁸⁰

The Shawnees replied that “your wise Men” should also be acquainted with the “very great” numbers of white people who were migrating beyond the boundaries established for their settlements. The settlers, as well as the activities of surveyors and land jobbers, were “overspreading the Hunting Country of our Young Men.” When the Shawnees’ young men found the woods covered with “white people & their Horses” where game had once been plentiful, the chiefs could do little to prevent the “evil Resolutions” that resulted. When young warriors became disappointed in their hunting, maintaining peace would prove impossible.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated March 8, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1083-1086.

²⁸¹ Ibid, 1083-1086.

The expressed desires of the white people to prevent war had so far not impressed the Shawnee headmen. What they had seen and witnessed since their arrival only confirmed their fears. Distant musket shots had harassed them all winter. They had observed the militia “constantly assembling ... with red Flaggs [sic]” – meaning the red colonial ensigns used as regimental standards – and learned that the “Long Knife [Virginia] people” proposed to build a large fort lower down the river that summer. If the Virginians truly desired peace, they challenged, such warlike preparations would have been “laid aside,” but instead the actions convinced the Shawnees that war remained uppermost in most white people’s minds.²⁸²

In concluding the council, McKee told the Shawnee leaders that bad news from their towns concerned whites and Indians alike. He urged them to use their “utmost Abilities in restraining evil dispos’d people & promoting every good thing,” and discourage the warlike intentions of their “foolish young men.” For his part, McKee promised that he would endeavor to do the same among the white people. The Crown’s deputy Indian superintendent promised to make their concerns known to the “Uprightness & Wisdom” of the “Great-men” of British America. He assured the chiefs that they would find them receptive and a ready to redress their complaints with the utmost candor. The headmen could expect British and colonial leaders to afford them every justice for the transgressions of unfriendly white people, so that they would have no need to resort to arms. Finally, McKee promised to communicate

²⁸² Ibid, 1083-1086.

their concerns to Sir William Johnson, his superior and the British official Indians trusted most.²⁸³

Throughout the early weeks of spring numerous parties of white men looked for land on the south bank for a variety of purposes. Settlers sought acreage on which to build new homes and lives, while others went to ply a variety of trades. Surveyors measured patents and recorded plats for private owners and county land offices. Parties of craftsmen and laborers under contract with the owners built new or repaired existing structures on previously acquired property. Land jobbers acted as speculators and brokers, seeking available property that they could buy and sell for others at a profit. The combined efforts of these and other groups contributed to the common goal of improving what they saw as a vast uninhabited country, or desert. Amid the activity, news of unfriendly encounters and reports of warlike acts continued, as the frontier kindling began to smolder.

On Thursday, April 14, three white employees of the trader William Butler departed Pittsburgh in a canoe loaded with goods to exchange with the Shawnee for pelts. After travelling about forty-five miles down the Ohio, they stopped for the night near the mouth of Beaver Creek. Along the way they encountered four Cherokees, three men and a woman, to whom they showed some silver items. The next morning, before they could resume their journey, the Cherokees “waylaid” them on the river bank and opened fire. After they plundered the cargo and took the most valuable merchandise, the robbers escaped leaving a trader named Murphy dead, and another, named Stephens, wounded – conflicting versions reported the third man had either

²⁸³ Ibid, 1083-1086.

died, went missing, or escaped. A group of land jobbers arrived on the scene and offered their assistance. Benjamin Tomlinson, a settler who lived nearby, dug Murphy's grave, while Dr. William Wood dressed Stephens' wounds.²⁸⁴

As soon as news of the incident reached Fort Pitt, Connolly embodied a detachment of militia to pursue the Cherokees, and instructed the commanding officer to apprehend and bring them back to stand trial for murder, if possible, or otherwise treat them as declared enemies. The militiamen recovered the traders' canoe and a considerable share of the property, but could not locate the offending Indians. Connolly followed the next day with another detachment, and transported the wounded man back to town. The captain remarked, "This incident occasion'd a great deal of confusion and as I imagin'd it woud be improper to allow an act so insolent to pass over unnotic'd." When the evidence suggested the Cherokees had headed toward the Shawnee towns, Connolly recommended that McKee send that nation's headmen a demand that they apprehend the outlaws.²⁸⁵ *Guyasuta*, who had just returned from an Indian congress at Johnson Hall with messages for restoring "good order to the Southward," warned the other tribes not to join the Shawnees in starting any fights with the Virginians. *Guyasuta* then sent a message to Mingo Town, the "small Village of Six Nations [Mingo] Indians living below Logs Town," encouraging them to have some warriors join with the militia in attempting to

²⁸⁴ Deveraux Smith to Dr. William Smith, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 10, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives I, 4: 511-513; Rev. David Zeisburger letter [extract] dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives 1: 285-286; Jacob, 56, 134; John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated Little Giandot, April 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ19 (7-9).

²⁸⁵ John Connolly "Journal of My Proceedings & etc. Commencing from the late Disturbances with the Cherokees on the Ohio," hereafter Connolly Journal, handwritten manuscript, p. 1, Chalmers Collection, Indians, 1750-1775, New York Public Library.

apprehend the renegade Cherokees.²⁸⁶ Perhaps indicative of the contrasting views held by those who learned of the incident, Virginian John Floyd described it in military terms as a skirmish, while Deveraux Smith of Pennsylvania wrote since they were Cherokees, he believed the incident was a simple robbery, not an act of war.²⁸⁷

McKee followed Connolly's instruction and sent messengers informing Shawnee and Mingo leaders of the Beaver Creek incident, and alerted them his belief that the offending Cherokees might go in their direction. Imploring them to capture and send "those Murderers" back to Pittsburgh for trial, the deputy Indian superintendent explained how such action served their best interest. Not only did he remind them of their promises to do everything in order to preserve the Chain of Friendship and do justice, but that they bore some responsibility for rectifying the situation since the bandits had stayed with them as their guests before committing the crimes. The Shawnee, he said, "must be looked upon in some degree accountable" for the Cherokees' behavior. McKee also appealed for the Shawnees leaders to view the attack as an outrage committed against their own people, since the traders furnished them with "Necessaries."²⁸⁸

On April 20, after receiving a complaint from the Delaware chief *Coquethagechton*, or Captain White Eyes, that some Virginians had insulted and abused him. Connolly

²⁸⁶ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1090-1091. Mingo Town was the location of present Steubenville, Ohio.

²⁸⁷ Deveraux Smith to Dr. William Smith, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 10, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 511-513; Rev. David Zeisburger [extract] letter dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives, I: 285-286; John J. Jacob A Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Late Captain Michael Cresap (Cumberland, Md.: J. M. Buchanan, 1826), 56, 134; John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated Little Giandot, April 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ19 (7-9).

²⁸⁸ Alexander McKee, journal entries dated Pittsburgh, April 17-25 and 27, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1090-1091, 1095.

composed a public notice and had it printed as a broadside and posted. He also instructed some traders to take copies with them downriver and post the announcements in the “most public Settlements” along the Ohio. The posters informed the people that “certain imprudent people” inhabiting Virginia settlements had “unbecomingly ill-treated” and threatened the lives of some friendly and well-disposed Indians. He cautioned everyone to avoid such conduct in the future, and urged them to act friendly towards any “Natives as may appear peaceable” since the “Tranquility of this country” depended on it. The same day, Croghan informed the captain commandant that the Shawnees had become generally “ill disposed and might possibly do mischief.” In response, Connolly composed a “Circulatory Letter” to the inhabitants of the district that advised them of the situation and recommended that they “be on their guard against any Hostile attempts” from unfriendly Indians.²⁸⁹ Many took Connolly’s letter as either a warning that hostile Indians would likely strike, or a de facto declaration of war.

Meanwhile, two days after the attack on the traders, the last few of the Shawnee chiefs who had spent the winter at Croghan’s departed Pittsburgh. Before long they passed Little Beaver Creek on their way to Muskingum. Over the course of the next week, McKee learned that “Eighteen Canoes of the Six Nations [Mingoes]” and others who lived near Logtown and Big Beaver Creek had also passed Little Beaver Creek. Many of them had apparently abandoned their villages, and followed the Shawnees downriver.²⁹⁰ Arthur St. Clair observed that “a small party of these

²⁸⁹ Connolly Journal.

²⁹⁰ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1095.

[Mingoes],” much to the consternation of the Six Nations council at Onondaga, lived near the Shawnees, and were “in a manner incorporated with them.”²⁹¹

A few days later, John Floyd wrote to Colonel Preston about an incident in Fincastle County where he previously reported “3 or 4 Indians down the River were thought to be killed” in a skirmish with thirteen settlers, but which proved an unfounded rumor. When he discovered the facts, he wrote, that according to one of the men that should have been in the engagement, the Indians had only robbed them.²⁹² Reports from elsewhere in the Ohio valley brought additional news and rumors. Reverend David Zeisberger at Schönbrunn, the Moravian mission village near the Delaware towns on the Muskingum River, wrote that he had learned from John Bull, also known as *Cosh*, and John Jungman that a party of Mingoes had stolen fifteen horses from settlers below Logstown, and “The white people began to be much afraid of an Indian war.”²⁹³ They had good reason, as several violent incidents occurred almost simultaneously at different points along the Ohio.

Despite the danger, Butler still needed to move the peltry from the Shawnee towns to Pittsburgh. He engaged a Delaware and a Shawnee to help the recently injured Stephens take trade goods to the Indians and bring the pelts to his factory. On Sunday, April 24, a week after the affair near Beaver Creek, Stephens and his

²⁹¹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated May 29, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 502.

²⁹² John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated Little Giandot, April 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ19 (7-9); and, Hanson’s Journal, extract, April 7 – 9 August 9, 1774, George Rogers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscripts 14J58-84 (114-115).

²⁹³ Rev. David Zeisburger letter [extract] dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-286.

companions paddled their canoe into the channel and headed down river toward the Scioto.²⁹⁴

The next day in Pittsburgh, *Guyasuta* and McKee met to discuss the great deal of confusion and discontent amongst many of the Indian tribes with Connolly. They cautioned the captain commandant that it could prove very detrimental to the public interest to allow spirituous liquors to be sold or carried into the Indian towns at this critical time. Until then, the traders had either disregarded or not taken the deputy Indian superintendent's earlier requests to limit the amount of alcohol they shipped to the natives seriously. As the reports of violent incidents increased, so did the demand for liquor. However, "the Addition of Rum," McKee and *Guyasuta* tried to impress on Connolly, would only serve to greatly increase the Indians' disorderly conduct.²⁹⁵ They therefore sought governmental action that would limit the availability of alcohol to the Indians. Meanwhile in Williamsburg, on April 25, Dunmore signed the proclamation obliging residents of the district to embody as militia to repel an expected Indian invasion, and sent it by express to Connolly at Pittsburgh.²⁹⁶

The Frontier

Below the Great Kanawha, at the same time that the incident at Beaver Creek occurred, a group of Shawnee warriors observed from across the Ohio River as Lawrence Darnell and the six members of his survey party landed their canoes on the

²⁹⁴ Deveraux Smith to Dir. William Smith, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 10, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives*, I: 4: 511-513.

²⁹⁵ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 25, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1094-1095.

²⁹⁶ John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, Governor of (Colony) Virginia 1771-1775, Proclamation dated Williamsburg, April 25, 1774, *An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broad-sides and Other Printed Ephemera*, Portfolio 178, Folder 12c, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Council of April 25, 1774, *Council Executive Journals* 6: 558.

south bank. The men, whether unaware, or aware but not alarmed, that Indians had watched them and crossed to their side of the river, casually unloaded their instruments and supplies, and made camp. Suddenly, the warriors surprised and captured the men, robbed them of everything they had, and took them back across the river to a Shawnee town for tribal judgment. Their captors discussed what they should do with the trespassers for three days. Much to their surprise and relief, the Indians told their captives in English that although Croghan had allegedly directed them to “kill all the Virginians they could find,” but only “rob & whip the Pennsylvanians,” they could go free. The Indians also ordered them to get off the river immediately.²⁹⁷

After several days making their way on foot, the men reached the camp of the main body of Floyd’s survey party – for which they had been an advanced detachment – about thirty miles below the Great Kanawha near the mouth of the Little Guyandotte River. Darnell told Floyd what had happened. Floyd, a deputy surveyor and undersheriff for Fincastle County, relayed the news of the attack in a message to Colonel Preston on April 26. The deputy surveyor also requested his superior let him know soon as possible after the four runners dispatched by Russell returned with confirmation on the actual location of the border with the Cherokee so none of his men would inadvertently cross it and further provoke the ire of that nation. Although several survey parties had gone out that spring, tensions with the Indians had

²⁹⁷ John Floyd to William Preston, letter dated Little Giandot, April 26, 1774, The William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ19.

increased so much by the last week of April that Floyd observed “our Men are almost daily Retreating.”²⁹⁸

Alexander Spottswood Dandridge, one of those who left the survey camp “under great apprehension of danger” from the Indians, carried Floyd’s message to Preston. Dandridge added that three other men from the survey party had left with the completed plats of George Washington’s two thousand acre claim on the Great Kanawha, but no one had heard from them since. Dandridge further communicated Floyd’s request for Preston to send someone to bring the surveyors’ horses, then stabled at the Greenbrier settlements, to facilitate their withdrawal.²⁹⁹

While Darnell’s party underwent their capture and walk back to Floyd’s camp, a group of about eighty or ninety men encamped up the river near the mouth of the Little Kanawha had an encounter with hostile Indians. One of the men, a twenty-one-year old named George Rogers Clark, had established a farm on Grave Creek, a short distance from the settlements on Wheeling Creek. A trained surveyor, Clark had thoroughly explored the area of the longest straight-line segment of the Ohio, known as the Long Reach, the previous year. He had since joined with others to establish a new settlement in Kentucky. Clark and his associates had agreed to meet at a rendezvous to assemble the necessary supplies and equipment, and descend the river in a single body in the spring.³⁰⁰ While waiting to embark, they learned that Indians

²⁹⁸ John Floyd to William Preston, letter dated Little Giandot, April 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ19 (7-9).

²⁹⁹ Alexander Spottswood Dandridge to Col. William Preston, letter dated May 15, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ26 (22).

³⁰⁰ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9; also published in Jacob, 154. Although Ebenezer Zane first settled there in 1769, Virginia did not incorporate Wheeling until 1787.

had fired on a small party of hunters from their group out looking for game about ten miles farther down the river. Fortunately, the hunters managed to fend off the attackers and returned to camp unhurt. “This and other circumstances,” Clark later recalled, “led us to believe the Indians were determined on war” in the spring of 1774.³⁰¹

The settlers decided to attack the Indian town of Horsehead Bottom, which lay on their way to Kentucky on the north bank near the mouth of the Scioto. The men planned to descend the river, land above their objective, move across country, and assault the town by from behind on the land side. Having all the equipment and men necessary, they only lacked a competent leader. Michael Cresap happened to be in the area, about fifteen miles upriver from their camp. Cresap had some hands that included a group of eight to ten carpenters and laborers who were busy clearing and improving property claimed by George Washington, and settling a plantation on which to settle his family. In an earlier meeting, Cresap indicated that after he established his land, he intended to follow Clark’s party to Kentucky. Remembering the conversation during the discussion, one of the settlers in Clark’s party proposed that they ask Cresap to become their leader, to which all unanimously agreed.³⁰²

Born in Frederick County on Maryland’s colonial frontier in 1742, the son of the famous pioneer Colonel Thomas Cresap, Michael received a formal education at the school of a Rev. Mr. Craddock in Baltimore County. A veteran soldier, although too

³⁰¹ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9.

³⁰² George Rogers Clark Ibid.

young for regular or provincial service in the French and Indian War, he grew up in the militia and fighting Indians in the skirmishes that punctuated the tenuous peace that followed 1765. Michael had initially followed his father's lead as an Indian trader, operating from his home at Old Town on the Potomac River, east of the Wills Creek site of Fort Cumberland. He relocated to Redstone in 1772, where he established a new store and became a land developer, as well as a recognized leader of the Virginia faction in the border dispute with Pennsylvania.³⁰³

The recent news of Indian depredations had alarmed Cresap and his men, and they combined with other work parties in the area for mutual support until they numbered about thirty. Somewhere between the two camps, hunters from both groups encountered each another. In the usual exchange of information that ensued, the men from Clark's informed their counterparts that their companions intended to ask Cresap to serve as their captain. They hurried to tell him the news before the messenger from the southern group arrived. Cresap soon departed, and headed down the river to meet the members of his new command.³⁰⁴

After he arrived, the settlers held a council to hear Cresap. Clark remembered "to our astonishment our commander-in-chief . . . dissuaded us from the enterprise." Cresap told them that they had all heard of Indian depredations committed on the south bank lately. He cautioned them that "the appearances were very suspicious," and although

³⁰³ Jacob, 47-50, 140; Thwaites, Reuben Gold, and Kellogg, Louise Phelps, Documentary History of Dunmore's War 1774 (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1905; reprinted Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1989), 12n; Kercheval, 125; Withers, 134n. Old Town is near present Cumberland, now within Allegany County, Maryland.

³⁰⁴ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9.

alarming, there was no certainty that a war had yet started. He had no doubt that they could carry a successful attack on the Indian village as had been proposed. Whether they attacked at that time or waited, he believed a war would erupt before much longer. The only difference in choosing to attack sooner rather than later would cause them to justly receive the blame for starting the war. If they insisted on voting to attack now, Cresap offered to disregard his own reservations and call the men from his camp to join forces with theirs, and lead them into battle. He then proposed an alternative. Cresap asked them to take post with his men near Wheeling Creek and wait to hear the news if a war had actually begun. If there were to be no Indian war that season, he would join them as they proceeded to Kentucky. After a short deliberation, they all agreed with Cresap.³⁰⁵

On the way to Wheeling Creek, the group met a group of Indians led by the Delaware chief *Bemino*, known to whites as John Killbuck Sr. Now in his sixties, Killbuck had become well acquainted with white people along the frontier. Although he proved a ruthless enemy in past wars, many frontier inhabitants believed the chief had become a reliable friend. While Clark and other group leaders went to meet with Killbuck across the river, Cresap remained on the south bank for fear he might be tempted to kill the Indian out of revenge. According to Cresap, the Delaware chief had waylaid his father many times as he travelled the area as a trader.³⁰⁶

On reaching Wheeling, Clark noticed, “the country being well settled thereabouts,” but “the whole of the inhabitants appeared to be alarmed.” Many families from the

³⁰⁵ Clark, *ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Clark, *ibid.*

surrounding countryside had abandoned their homes, and sought refuge in the settlement. To prevent panic and offer protection, Cresap organized the men into an ad hoc military unit, which Clark described as a “formidable party,” since all the hunters and men without families living in the area also joined. Although Cresap offered to send out scouts for early warning and security, nothing he said convinced the inhabitants to return to their homes. It did not take long for Captain Commandant Connolly in Pittsburgh to learn of the presence of Captain Cresap’s company at Wheeling. Connolly sent a message letting Cresap know that war with the Indians could break out at any time. He requested that Cresap keep his men stationed in the area for at least a few days, until the question of whether there would be peace or war had been answered. Connolly was at that time waiting for runners returning from the Indian towns to bring the latest intelligence. Cresap and his men resolved to stay and comply with Connolly’s orders to “be careful that the enemy should not harass the neighborhood.”³⁰⁷

Meanwhile, back at Fort Pitt, Connolly received Lord Dunmore’s April 25 proclamation calling on the district “to embody a sufficient Force for repelling any Invasion of the Indians.” He had it copied, along with his own circular letter for the people of West Augusta to be on their guard, and posted them throughout the district. Although it may have had the effect to steel the officers and men of the militia for the fight, Connolly primarily issued his letter to encourage families to not abandon their homes. While it is unlikely Dunmore’s proclamation reached the frontier settlements before the end of the month, Connolly’s earlier letter carried downstream by the

³⁰⁷ George, *ibid.*

traders most likely appeared at the Wheeling Creek settlements by Monday, April 25. People all along the Ohio had already learned that the Indians had effectively closed river traffic, and threatened parties of surveyors, land jobbers and laborers on the south bank. Some perceived the Connolly letter as a declaration of war, while others took it as confirmation that war had already begun. Many settlers greeted the news with dread and prepared to leave their homesteads for less vulnerable locations. The letter also inspired some local commanders, as well as emergent leaders and their paramilitary bands, to take direct action against any Indian invaders without waiting for orders if they perceived a threat to their communities.³⁰⁸

Clark later maintained that Cresap received a message, begging him to use his influence to have the men of his party protect the country about the settlements by aggressive scouting until the inhabitants fortified themselves by building blockhouses or stockades at their homes. Taking Connolly's letter as official notification that hostilities had commenced, Cresap called his men together for a council of war and read it to them. They planted a war post, and in the manner that Indians declared war, struck it with heir hatchets. He then summoned all the traders in the area to inform them of the situation as he knew it. Later in the evening, they heard reports that marauding warriors had killed two local residents. The news prompted some of the men under Cresap's command to want to go hunting for Indians with revenge on their minds; and someone brought in two scalps that night. As happened too often, emotions overruled reason. Some cared little for determining whether or not the

³⁰⁸ Dunmore Proclamation dated Williamsburg, April 25, 1774; George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9; and, Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1095-1096.

provocative incident had actually occurred, to what tribe the alleged assailants belonged, or the nature of their disposition toward whites. To some settlers, all Indians were enemies. Many Virginians also believed the Pennsylvania traders were just as bad as if not worse than hostile Indians since they profited from supplying muskets, powder, and lead to the warriors who used them against backcountry settlers.³⁰⁹

On Tuesday, April 26, Cresap's men learned that a canoe piloted by three men had been seen approaching from upriver. Believing they could be Indians intending to cause trouble, Cresap voiced his intention to "way lay and kill" them. A minority of the company, led by the founder of Wheeling and land developer Ebenezer Zane, opposed taking offensive action for fear of provoking a wider conflict. The majority sided with Cresap. Two men, named Brothers and Chenoweth, joined the captain, launched a canoe, and paddled upriver to meet the supposed threat. As it drew closer, Cresap and companions moved to intercept the boat.³¹⁰

The three in the southward bound canoe were William Butler's employees, a Shawnee, Delaware, and the previously wounded Stephens, who had left Pittsburgh a few days before making the second attempt to reach the Scioto towns. When he saw Cresap's canoe paddling upstream, Stephens feared it might be hostile Indians like those who had attacked him at Beaver Creek, and so paddled toward the south bank to avoid confrontation. As the traders headed for the riverbank, someone concealed in the weeds on shore fired a shot which struck and killed the Shawnee. A second shot

³⁰⁹ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Alton, James, J., ed., George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-81, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1912), 3-9.

³¹⁰ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, *ibid*; and, Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1095-1096.

killed the Delaware. Stephens threw himself into the water. When he noticed three white men paddling the canoe toward him, he swam toward them. After they helped him aboard, he learned that one of the men was Cresap, who denied knowing anything of what happened to the traders in the canoe when asked. Later, after he returned to Pittsburgh, Stephens told McKee that he was “well Convinced” the men who shot and killed his Indian companions were Cresap’s “Associates.”³¹¹ As Cresap and his men drew alongside the abandoned canoe, Brothers and Chenoweth scalped the lifeless Indians and pushed their bodies into the river. Taking the trader’s canoe in tow, they paddled back toward the landing near camp. When Zane inquired on the fate of the Indians, Brothers and Chenoweth answered they had fallen overboard. Zane later recalled that he “saw much fresh blood and some bullet holes in the canoe.”³¹²

The next day, Wednesday April 27, a settler named McMahan came to tell Cresap that five canoes carrying fourteen Indians went down the river earlier in the day; most likely some of the Shawnee chiefs returning from Pittsburgh. They had stopped at his home asking for provisions, which he refused to give. He warned them that some whites, alarmed by the recent depredations hostile warriors had recently committed in the area, had killed two Indians in the neighborhood the day before, and urged them

³¹¹ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9; and, Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1095-1096.

³¹² Ebenezer Zane to Hon. John Brown, letter dated Wheeling, February 4, 1800; John Anderson, certificate dated Fredericksburg, June 30, 1798; printed in Appendix, Thomas Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia (France: 1785), Shuffelton, Frank, ed. (reprinted 1787, 1800; and New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 242-243 and 248-249, respectively; Kercheval, 125.

to be cautious. Using the large island off Wheeling to mask their movement from observation, they passed down the western channel unnoticed.³¹³

Soon thereafter, someone brought word that several canoes full of Indians were sighted on the north bank between the mouths of Pipe and Captina creeks; or from eight to fourteen miles below Wheeling, opposite Grave Creek. Stephens later claimed hearing Cresap “use Threatening Language against the Indians,” saying, “That he wou’d put every Indian he met with on the River to Death.”³¹⁴ The captain gathered fifteen volunteers and pursued the Indians to the mouth of Pipe Creek. Having landed and hidden their canoes until hardly visible from the river, suspecting they would be followed after leaving McMahan’s, the warriors took position in the bushes on the shore and “prepared themselves to receive the white people.” Cresap’s men headed toward shore, landed, and advanced against their foe. In the ensuing skirmish the Indians stubbornly disputed every inch of ground. Clark recalled that a few were wounded on both sides, while others said that the volunteers took one Indian scalp, but suffered one casualty when “Big Tarrence” Morrison sustained a serious hip wound. The Indians finally broke contact and retired into the woods, leaving their loaded canoes for Cresap’s men to capture. Clark observed that the plunder included “a considerable quantity of ammunition and other warlike stores,” in addition to trade goods, which Stephens enumerated as sixteen kegs of rum, two saddles and some bridles in the deserted canoes.³¹⁵

³¹³ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9; and, Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1095-1096.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, *ibid.*; Alexander McKee, *ibid.*; and, William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated May 8, 1774, Butterfield, Consul W.,

Once back at Wheeling, Doctor Wood treated and dressed Morrison's wound as the rest of the company discussed their next move, and Cresap sent Connolly a report on what his men accomplished. When he heard of it, McKee requested Connolly to send an express to Cresap asking what provocation caused him to take his actions, and to desist from any further hostilities until he investigated and settled matters, if possible. The Indian agent also dispatched messages to the Indian chiefs inviting them to attend another council at Pittsburgh as soon as possible in hopes of averting a war.³¹⁶

Stephens later claimed hearing Cresap remark, "if he cou'd raise Men sufficient to cross the River, he wou'd attack a small Village of Indians living on Yellow Creek." Clark recalled that the men decided to march the next day, Thursday, April 28, and attack that Mingo camp. After they had advanced about five miles in the direction of Yellow Creek, Cresap halted the men for rest and refreshment. Again surprising his followers, he began to question the others "on the impropriety of executing the projected enterprise." After some reflection, the men agreed with their leader that the Mingoes they intended to attack, unlike the Shawnees who constantly caused trouble, had indicated no hostile intentions against the settlements. A number of those in the group, including Clark, had visited the intended target earlier in the year. They realized, or assumed, the collections of dwellings represented a camp for a hunting party, not a town. Essentially a temporary village, the camp had shelters and baggage to adequately sustain women and children, as well as hunters, for an extended period away from their permanent town. War parties, in contrast, travelled light and

ed., *The Washington-Crawford Letters, 1761-81, Concerning Western Lands* (Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Co., 1877), 46-50.

³¹⁶ Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1096.

unencumbered to permit the warriors to move and strike quickly, and without exposing their families to danger. “In short,” Clark said, “every person seemed to detest the resolution we had set out with,” and returned to Wheeling that evening.³¹⁷

When he arrived back at Wheeling, Cresap found Angus McDonald waiting for him. Educated in Glasgow, the forty-six-year-old Highlander had left his native Scotland following the defeat of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion and settled near Winchester. A competent soldier, his military career since arriving in the colonies included service as a captain in the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War, and, in 1769, he received the appointment as major of the Frederick County militia. Returning from a trip downriver to survey the 2,000 acres of his military land grant, McDonald paid Cresap a visit to discuss the military situation on the frontier; before continuing homeward. When they finished, McDonald prepared to re-embarked, while Cresap, Clark, and a number of the others made ready to decamp and head toward Redstone.

Before McDonald shoved off, several men gathered on the bank saw traders John Gibson, Mathew Elliott, and Alexander Blaine descending the Ohio with a cargo of provisions and goods bound for the Shawnee towns on the Scioto. Those on the river bank hailed the traders, and requested that they put ashore because they had “disagreeable news to inform them of.” On landing, Gibson recalled they encountered approximately 150 men, including Major McDonald and Doctor Wood.³¹⁸ The men cautioned the traders about the dangers of heading farther

³¹⁷ George Rogers Clark to Samuel Brown, Esq., letter dated June 17, 1798, Clark Papers, 3-9; Alexander McKee, journal entry dated Pittsburgh, April 27, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1095-1096; and Henry Jolly, Reminiscence, Draper Manuscripts 6NN-24 (9-13, 11n-12n).

³¹⁸ John Gibson to Judge Jeramia Baker, deposition dated Pittsburgh, April 4, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia. 239-241.

downriver at that time, and recounted the series of violent incidents between whites and Indians that occurred in the preceding weeks. Then they added the most recent news, which they had just learned. A work party improving land near the Great Kanawha had encountered a Shawnee hunting party and killed them all. Believing an Indian war imminent, the men took the thirty horses loaded with pelts and other plunder from the Indians, and fled cross-country toward the relative safety of the Cheat River settlements to escape retribution.³¹⁹

Gibson did not believe the story. He had left the Scioto for Pittsburgh earlier that month, after all the Shawnee hunting parties had returned. None of them lost any men or reported any violent incidents. To verify, Gibson invited some of the men at Wheeling to accompany him to a place called Canoe Bottom on Hockhocking Creek, where a few members of his company worked pressing skins and building canoes. If these workers were no longer present, they could conclude that the rumor of war was verified, and that everything was not right on the frontier. Although Doctor Wood and one other man agreed to accompany him, the rest sent someone to consult Cresap. While waiting, some of Gibson's hosts "behaved in a most disorderly manner," and even threatened to kill him and his companions saying "the damned traders were worse than the Indians and ought to be killed."³²⁰

When Cresap arrived early on Friday morning, Gibson informed him what he had proposed, and what some of the men said in reply. Cresap spoke with them for about an hour, but could not convince any of the men to accept Gibson's proposal. Cresap

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

then personally advised Gibson not to proceed down the river. He confided that he believed the men in the camp “would fall on and kill every Indian they met on the river.” Although they had chosen him as their commander and attacked the Indians at Pipe Creek, Cresap said he would no longer serve as their leader, or even continue to stay with them. Instead, he revealed to Gibson his intention to lead his work party, with Clark and some of his associates, “across the country to Red Stone to avoid the consequences.”³²¹

Despite the warning, Gibson and his companions proceeded by water to the Hockhocking. When they reached men working on canoes and found everything peaceful as expected, they continued to the Scioto towns by going over land. When they arrived, Gibson, Elliott and Blaine heard the Shawnees talking of several recent murders committed against the Indians on the river.³²² At the same time, although Cresap had dissuaded his followers from attacking the camp at the mouth of Yellow Creek, someone else prepared for an engagement there. The smoldering situation on the frontier was about to ignite.

Those Mingoës living at the mouth of Yellow Creek included relatives of a Cayuga leading warrior named *Talgayeeta*, who whites knew as Logan, or James Logan. His many white acquaintances remarked on the friendship and hospitality he had always showed them. Logan grew up in Shamokin, an Indian town near the Forks of the Susquehanna, where his father, the Oneida chief *Shikellamy*, represented Six Nations authority to the tributary and dependent tribes, such as the Delaware and Shawnee,

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

living in the area.³²³ He was also a diplomat who represented the Iroquois Confederacy's interests with the Pennsylvania colonial government. In that position, *Shikellamy* developed such high esteem for the Pennsylvania colonial secretary James Logan that he chose him as his son's English namesake.³²⁴

Directly across the Ohio from the Mingo camp stood a white settlement called Baker's Bottom. It took its name from Joshua Baker, who established a home and farm where he lived with his wife Elizabeth, or "Lucy," and his brother-in-law, Nathaniel Tomlinson. Baker also kept a tavern and store, which became the meeting place for neighbors and a source of refreshment, entertainment, sundries, and rum for river travelers, as well as friendly Indians; the latter despite McKee's urging. A pregnant Indian woman, Logan's sister *Koonay*, regularly crossed the river to visit Mrs. Baker, who kindly gave her milk for her young children. After receiving Connolly's circular letter warning settlers to be on their guard, Baker and other residents decided to evacuate their families from the vulnerable location to Catfish Camp until the situation became less volatile.³²⁵ According to some accounts, their sense of urgency increased on Friday, April 29, when *Koonay* warned Lucy that some Mingo, angered by the recent killings of Shawnees by Cresap's band, planned to

³²³ Shamokin was near present Sunbury, Pennsylvania. Variations of *Shikellamy* include *Shikkellemus*, and *Swatana*.

³²⁴ Variations of Logan's Indian name include *Talgayeeta*, *Tah-gah-jute*, *Tachnehdorus*, *Tachnedorus*, *Tacaniodoragon*, and *Soyechtowa*. Although some histories identify him as Seneca, he was born of an Oneida father and Cayuga mother, and therefore a member of the latter in the matrilineal Iroquoian society.

³²⁵ Catfish Camp is present Washington, Pennsylvania.

cross the river to kill all the white people. When Lucy informed Joshua, he called on his neighbors and friends for assistance.³²⁶

Upward of twenty or thirty men, mostly from the neighboring Cross Creek area, responded and arrived before morning. Among others, they included the Greathouse brothers, Daniel and Jacob, John Sappington, George Cox, Edward King, Michael Myers, and Lucy's brothers Nathaniel, Joseph, and Benjamin Tomlinson. The latter Tomlinson had buried Murphy, the trader murdered by Indians at Beaver Creek earlier in the month. The boisterous Indian-hating Daniel Greathouse took charge, and devised a plan. Most of the men would remain hidden in the "back apartment" of the Bakers' house until they determined the Indians' intentions. If the Mingoes "behaved themselves peaceably," the men agreed, "they should not be molested." If they proved hostile, the whites would "shew themselves and act accordingly."³²⁷

On Saturday, April 30, the same day that Cresap and his followers left Wheeling for Redstone, five Indian men and two women, crossed the Ohio to Baker's Bottom. Some accounts attributed their arrival to the Mingoes' daily routine. Others maintained that Daniel Greathouse invited the Indians when he went over earlier in the morning to reconnoiter the warriors' strength. The visitors included Logan's sister *Koonay*, brother *Taylayne*, called John Petty by the English, as well as *Taylayne's* son, *Molnah*. As soon as the unarmed Indians got out of their canoes, all

³²⁶ John Sappington, to Samuel McKee Jr., declaration dated Madison County, February 13, 1800; and, James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 261-263, and 245-247, respectively; Michael Cresap Jr. to Lyman C. Draper, 1845, Draper Manuscripts, 2SS, book 5, pp. 33-35, as noted in Thwaites and Kellogg, ed., Documentary History of Dunmore's War, 15. Baker's Bottom was near present Newell, West Virginia.

³²⁷ John Sappington, to Samuel McKee Jr., declaration dated Madison County, February 13, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 1999), 261-263.

but Logan's brother went into Baker's tavern for rum. They were all soon intoxicated. Baker, Cox and Nathaniel Tomlinson stayed outside with *Taylayne* as the rest remained concealed. At one point, *Taylayne* entered the Bakers' house uninvited, and took a military coat and a hat belonging to Nathaniel Tomlinson down from where they hung on the wall. After donning the clothes, the Indian "setting his arms akimbo began to strut about," shouting "look at me, I am a white man!" When Tomlinson demanded that he return the coat, *Taylayne* allegedly attempted to strike him while saying "white man, son of a bitch." When Tomlinson threatened the Indian, Cox advised against taking rash action saying it would cause a war. Wanting no part of what was about to transpire, Cox left the group and hid in the woods. Although Tomlinson tried to avoid further confrontation, the Mingo's behavior increasingly irritated Sappington. Not able to stand it anymore, he "jumped to his gun" and shot *Taylayne* as he left the house still wearing the hat and coat.³²⁸

The rest of the white men emerged from their hiding place. King rushed to the wounded *Taylayne* as he lay writhing in agony, drew his knife and said, "Many a deer have I served this way." He ended the man's life and took his scalp.³²⁹ Others rushed and overpowered the drunken Indians in the building, and shot every one – male and female alike. Daniel Greathouse proceeded to remove scalps from the warriors he killed, and attached the bloody trophies to his belt. As she bled to death, *Koonay* pleaded with Jacob Greathouse to spare the life of the baby girl strapped to the

³²⁸ John Sappington, to Samuel McKee Jr., declaration dated Madison County, 13 February 1800, William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, and James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 261-263, 249-251, and 245-247, respectively; and, Michael Cresap Jr. and Bazaleel Wells, to Lyman C. Draper, 1845, DHDW, 15 and 16, respectively.

³²⁹ James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 245-247.

cradleboard on her back. When the murder spree ended, every Indian except one had been killed. Only the two-month-old daughter of Logan's sister and the trader John Gibson survived.³³⁰

As they surveyed their handiwork, the men then noticed two canoes, one with two and the other with five Indians aboard, paddling across the river. Either coming to investigate the fate of their friends after hearing the gunfire or confirming *Koonay's* warning, Sappington described the braves as "stripped naked, painted, and armed completely for war." The whites took position behind trees and logs along the river bank, and waited for the approaching warriors. As the lead canoe came within a few rods of shore, shots rang out and killed both occupants at close range. Sappington later claimed he killed and scalped one of them himself. The Mingoes in the second canoe turned about and paddled back for the north shore. Shortly thereafter, according to the memories of some participants, two more canoes appeared carrying eleven and seven armed and painted warriors, respectively. They attempted to land below the whites' position, but the settlers engaged them with "a well-directed fire." In the ensuing skirmish, some participants claimed they killed one warrior who fell dead on shore, and recalled that they killed two and wounded two in the canoes before the Mingoes broke off the engagement and retired – fighting as they went. Baker later remembered that Greathouse and company killed twelve Indians, including two women, and wounded either six or eight others. In contrast, Indian

³³⁰ *Alexander McKee, Journal entry May 3, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1097-1098; George Edgington to Lyman C. Draper, 1845, Draper Manuscripts, 2S book 3, p 341, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW 16-17; James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 245-247; Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR, 8: 259.*

runners told Moravian missionary Heckewelder that nine had been killed and two wounded.³³¹ Regardless of the correct butcher's bill, Greathouse and his ruffians brutally murdered innocent people, including at least two – if not three – of Logan's relatives.

News of the massacre spread quickly on both sides of the Ohio, through white settlements and Indian towns alike, with some variations already added to the gruesome details. Some of them recounted that that the self-appointed leader, Daniel Greathouse, had at first wanted to attack the Indian camp. After crossing the river on a reconnaissance, he found too many warriors to overcome with the numbers of volunteers he had assembled.³³² Instead, he decided on a stratagem. Purporting to be their friend, Greathouse invited the Indians to cross over the river and share some rum. He told Baker to give the Indians all they could drink, and that he and the others would assail them after they were intoxicated.³³³ In another version, while five of the Indians drank to intoxication, Daniel and Jacob Greathouse challenged the two sober warriors to a contest of shooting at marks – or targets. When they heard the reports of firearms indicating the men had shot the drunken Mingoos at the tavern, the Greathouse brothers took aim at their marksmanship competitors. Because the Indians had already fired, they stood holding empty weapons in their hands, and fell

³³¹ Alexander McKee Journal entry May 3, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1097-1098; John Sappington to Samuel McKee Jr., declaration dated Madison County, February 13, 1800, William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, and Harry Innes to Thomas Jefferson, declaration dated Kentucky near Frankfort, November 14, 1799, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 261-263, 249-251, 245-247, and 248-249, respectively; Rev. David Zeisberger letter [extract] dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-286.

³³² James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 245-247.

³³³ James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 245-247.

easy victims to the ambush.³³⁴ In the most disturbing and enduring of the variations, as the dying mother pleaded with the men to spare her little girl, Jacob Greathouse aborted *Koonay*'s unborn baby from her womb with his hunting knife, then killed and scalped the infant. In a final act of cruelty, he hung the child's lifeless body on a tree. Whether any of these are accurate, embellished, or exaggerated accounts does not change the heinousness of the acts. What is ironic, however, is that most reports accused Michael Cresap of responsibility, and named Daniel Greathouse only as an accomplice.³³⁵ The man who had convinced his followers not to attack the Indian camp only three days before probably arrived at Catfish Camp at the same time the murders for which he became blamed and forever associated were committed.

Greathouse and those joined his enterprise knew they had little time to spare. Indians most often went on the warpath to avenge real or perceived injury or insult. They repaid murder with murder, regardless of whether those they killed in reprisal were the actual guilty party or not. Greathouse's men gathered their families, maybe collected as many head of cattle they might reasonably drive, and loaded what few possessions as would fit on any wagons, carts, or the backs of draft animals they had. Then, in the words of Reverend Zeisberger, the murderers "soon fled and left the [other] poor settlers as victims to the Indians," as they struck the road toward Catfish Camp and Redstone with their two-month-old captive. Others sought refuge in the more settled areas as well. According to Baker's neighbor, James Chambers, "the

³³⁴ Henry Jolly, *Reminiscences*, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers 6NN-24, Draper Manuscripts, and DHDW, 9-13, 11n-12n.

³³⁵ Alexander McKee Journal entry May 3, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1097-1098; James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798; and, William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, printed in the Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 249-251, and 245-247, respectively; Henry Jolly *Reminiscences*, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers 6NN-24 (9-13, 11n-12n); and Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia 67.

settlements near the river broke up,” and the inhabitants took the road toward Catfish Camp.³³⁶ Reverend Zeisberger reported that “many are fled and left all their effects behind.”³³⁷

Cresap arrived at Catfish Camp at the head of a party of armed men on Saturday, April 30. The men first carried the wounded Morrison on his litter to the home of Doctor William Wheeler for much needed medical attention. Thus unburdened, they all “lay some time” and rested at the cabin of William Huston. In the conversations that ensued, Cresap’s followers learned that the news they had killed three Indians on the Ohio near Wheeling and at Pipe Creek had preceded them. When their host inquired on the stories’ veracity, they “acknowledged they had fired first on the Indians,” and boasted they had killed some warriors. Cresap’s men believed they had complied with legal orders issued by competent authority, and therefore felt no need to defend their actions. After they had rested sufficiently, the men continued “on the path from Wheeling to Redstone,” leaving Morrison in Doctor Wheeler’s care.³³⁸

On Sunday, the day after the bloody incident, the people “who ... killed some women and other Indians at Baker’s Bottom” arrived at Catfish Camp. As the members of Cresap’s group had the day prior, some of the party “tarried” at Mr. Huston’s.

Although they had no wounded, they did have a captive “whose life had been spared by the interference of some more humane than the rest,” according to their host. One

³³⁶ James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 245-247.

³³⁷ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum dated Schönbrunn, May 24, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-6.

³³⁸ Henry Jolly Reminiscences, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers 6NN-24 (9-13, 11n-12n); William Huston to David Riddick, certificate dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 18, 1798, and James Chambers to Samuel Shannon, deposition dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 20, 1798, printed in the Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 243-4, and 245-7, respectively.

of Huston's neighbors, the widow Martha Jolly, started feeding and dressing the baby, "Chirping to the little innocent." Her then-sixteen-year-old son, Henry, remembered the baby smiling at his mother and him. The next morning, when Greathouse and his followers prepared to continue "on their march to the interior parts of the country," one of their women took the child from Mrs. Jolly, and explained her intent to send the little girl to her "supposed" father, John Gibson. William Crawford arrived at Catfish Camp on his way from Staunton back to Pittsburgh just before Greathouse's people departed. Being acquainted with Gibson, he took the child into his care, and headed toward his Spring Garden home."³³⁹

Crawford had spent much of the early spring surveying land in Augusta County for several clients, including his friend George Washington. The volatile situation and escalating violence caused him difficulty in completing his work on two of Washington's claims. The delay prevented Crawford from submitting the surveys to Thomas Lewis, the county surveyor, before the latter departed for Williamsburg to file the latest claims on behalf of their owners. The visit, however, proved beneficial, and Crawford "was very friendly treated" during his stay. Colonel Charles Lewis, the county lieutenant, administered Crawford the oaths necessary to be sworn by officers of the Virginia militia and presented him with a captain's commission.³⁴⁰

Pittsburgh

³³⁹ William Huston to David Riddick, certificate dated Washington County, Pennsylvania, April 18, 1798, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 243-24; Henry Jolly, Reminiscences, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers 6NN-24 (9-13, 11n-12n); William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated May 8, 1774, The Washington-Crawford Letters, 1761-81, Concerning Western Lands, 46-50; Alexander McKee Journal entry May 3, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1097-1098.

³⁴⁰ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, May 8, 1774; and Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob's Creek, April 27, 1774, Butterfield, Consul W., ed., The Washington-Crawford Letters, 46-50, 84-85, respectively, and 84n.

Meanwhile at Pittsburgh, Captain Commandant Connolly faced a serious crisis on Sunday, the first day of May. As the alarm spread, it became impossible to convince many frontier inhabitants not to abandon their homes. Refugees flooded into town and swelled the population. As panic spread across the countryside, he resolved “to make every provision necessary for the defense that this place and opportunity afforded.” As authorized by the colony’s militia law and the acts for making provisions against invasions and insurrections, Connolly ordered out the militia companies of Pittsburgh, which totaled about one hundred men. While conducting musters and inspecting the troops, he found many of the townsmen had no weapons. To remedy the situation, he saw it as his duty and within his authority to seize all privately-owned firearms and ammunition that could be obtained for military use. With “no arms but rifle guns intended for Indian trade & of considerable value” available, he impressed the weapons, and then “appraised & distributed to such men” he thought proper.³⁴¹

As Dunmore had noted on his tour of the district in 1773, Fort Pitt needed extensive work to restore it to a state where it could provide a garrison for the militia as well as a shelter for the inhabitants of the surrounding area in an emergency. When Connolly proclaimed Virginia’s sovereignty over Pittsburgh and its dependencies only five months before, the blockhouse, which stood as an outwork, represented the only usable military feature at the post. Since the British army evacuated the garrison and sold the property to a private interest in 1772, the masonry and wooden structures had been largely disassembled, with the bricks and timbers sold as salvage to local

³⁴¹ Connolly Journal; and, Hening, Statutes, 7: 93-94, 106-107, and 110-111.

inhabitants for building material. With the crisis providing the catalyst, Connolly began the process of making the much-needed repairs and improvements, which the post required to meet the colony's new military contingencies.

Looking beyond the immediate neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Connolly issued orders to raise the militia of the district to defend the several dependent communities. He issued orders "to draught one third to this place ... in order to ... repair this heap of ruins [Fort Pitt] and to impress provisions, horses, tools &etc."³⁴² Throughout the first week of May, he reported that militiamen under his command attempted to bring inhabitants into the fort, and stopped every man capable of bearing arms who attempted to flee and armed them for service. On Wednesday, May 4, he conceded in his journal that "many of them however deserted." Despite the desertions, Connolly succeeded in amassing a sizeable force, and reported that he had every available person employed in "fortifying the fort." The next day he added the note, "all the inhabitants of the town at work." By Friday they had made enough progress for him to note that the two western bastions were being strengthened with pickets and "ordered teams to haul in all their ... timber for that purpose." At the same time, masons repaired the breaches in the angles of the brickwork, while carpenters worked on the gates of the sally ports.³⁴³

Reverend Heckwelder explained the protocol followed at an Indian council to prevent war when one nation had insulted or injured another. "If the supposed enemy is peaceably inclined, he will ... send a deputation to the aggrieved nation, with a

³⁴² Connolly Journal.

³⁴³ Connolly and McKee Journals; and McKee, Journal entry May 2, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1096.

suitable apology.” The deputies would tell the leaders of the injured party that the act they complained about had been committed without their chief’s knowledge by some of their “foolish young men.” After describing that the offending actions were “altogether unauthorized and unwarranted,” the offender’s nation offered suitable apologies and condolence presents to cover the dead.³⁴⁴

On Thursday, Croghan and McKee, with Connolly and others in attendance, met with leaders, including *Guyasuta*, the deputy for the Six Nations, and the chiefs of several Iroquois and Delaware bands at Croghan Hall. Following the established protocol of Indian diplomacy, they opened with a “Condolence” for the Six Nations, Shawnees, and Delawares “on the late unhappy death” of some of their friends. In an effort to “wipe the tears” from their eyes, and symbolically bury the bones of the dead by covering them with gifts, the colonial representatives distributed presents and strings of wampum to each nation on behalf of their people. The two Indian commissioners then requested the assembled chiefs to use their influence with the “distant chiefs” to prevent war between their peoples. Each Indian leader in his turn spoke in a “most friendly and reasonable manner,” and pledged to honor their treaty obligations and remain loyal to their British allies.³⁴⁵

Knowing the importance of diplomacy as well as military preparedness for security on the frontier, Connolly, McKee and Croghan met with *Guyasuta*, who assured them of the Iroquois Confederacy’s determination to “take no part with the Shawanese,” and the certainty the Delawares would do likewise. Going further, *Guyasuta* said that

³⁴⁴ Heckewelder, John, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (Philadelphia: Abraham Small, 1819; reprinted, Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876; reprinted, Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007), 176.

³⁴⁵ Connolly Journal and McKee Journals.

the Six Nations and Delawares would “never quarrel with their Brethren the English, but would “live & die” with them in a fight against the Shawnees. He further recommended that Lord Dunmore build a fort on the Ohio at the mouth of the Great Kanawha to keep the Shawnees “in awe” and prevent their war parties “from making Inroads amongst the Inhabitants” of Virginia from the Ohio River to “Redstone and Everywhere.” He believed people living there, although exposed to depredations, should plant their crops, and be guarded by some of the Militia until the Shawnee made their intentions known. It was no secret that the Shawnees had displeased the Iroquois Confederacy and its dependent nations. *Guyasuta* assured British officials at Pittsburgh that any attempt by the Shawnees to cause any “Mischief” would result in their being resented for it by the Delawares. He added that their conduct over the previous twelve months made it clear that no other nations would join them in a war against British interests. If the Shawnees rejected the message calling for them to remain peaceful, and did “not listen to Reason,” *Guyasuta* believed “they ought to be chastised.”³⁴⁶

The Crown and Virginia officials and *Guyasuta* agreed to join in sending the Shawnees one message, carried by two respected Delaware chiefs, to articulate the British position. They also decided to share its contents with the assembled tribal representatives, as well as any others who could make it to Croghan Hall. Simon Girty, the Indian Department’s interpreter, delivered the message and invitation to *Koquethagechton*, or Captain White Eyes, and *Konieschquanoheel*, also known as *Hopocan*, or Captain Pipe, to the English, and escorted them to Pittsburgh on his

³⁴⁶ George Croghan to Capt. John Connolly and Alexander McKee, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 4, 1774, PSWJ, 12: 1099.

return trip.³⁴⁷ Having tirelessly sought to resolve disputes between Indians and whites in the past, many regarded White Eyes as the most influential Delaware chief in the Ohio Country. Pipe enjoyed a reputation in which his influence among the Delawares, as well as his friendship with the English, were equal to those of White Eyes.

Connolly wanted the Delaware chiefs, “to hear what we had to say on the differences which had arisen between us [the Virginians] and them [the Shawnees].” While he busied himself managing the myriad tasks involved with defending the district and making Fort Pitt a respectable defensive installation again, another Indian chief arrived. Connolly presented him with a string of wampum and a speech that expressed a desire to remain at peace. The militia commander also wrote two announcements to be printed on broadsides, as well as read and posted throughout the district. One informed the people that the situation appeared to give reason to apprehend “immediate danger from the Indians and particularly the Shawanese.” Heeding *Guyasota*’s advice, the other ordered all traders to refrain from importing liquor into Indian country, and reminded them that Virginia law strictly prohibited conducting any trade with an enemy, with the promise that anyone caught conveying liquor to “suspected enemies” would “answer ... at their peril.”³⁴⁸

Amid all the bustling activity, the Indian council re-convened on Friday, May 6. Connolly observed as Croghan and McKee actually conducted the conference, with *Guyasuta*, and some other Six Nations chiefs, and Pipe, White Eyes and other

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Connolly Journal.

Delaware leaders attending. The Indian agents, as the protocol of Indian diplomacy required, distributed presents to the chiefs in condolence for the Delawares that had lately been killed on the river. The Indians, according to Croghan, spoke in a “most friendly and reasonable manner” while discussing the recent violence. All repeated their promises to continue adhering to their professions of peace. Speaking as a representative of the Virginia colonial government, Connolly delivered the speech, and distributed copies that the chiefs could carry for the interpreters to read to their people on the north bank.³⁴⁹

After expressing his sorrow at the disputes and resultant events, which had had bad consequences to both parties, Connolly assured the Indian representatives that Virginia officials “had no act or part” in what happened, and that he had certainly not issued orders to kill any Indians without cause. He laid the blame entirely on “the folly and indiscretion of our young people,” which like their own young men, were “unwilling to listen to good advice.” Connolly promised to investigate, and determine exactly what had happened. He had hoped the dispute could remain limited to the “young and foolish people” of both sides without engaging our “wise men” in a quarrel in which none of them had a part. He told the Indian leaders the incidents could not have happened at a worse time, since “the Great Head Man of Virginia,” Lord Dunmore, and “all his wise people” were about to meet together in their own council to discuss settling the country bought from the Six Nations. The captain commandant assured the chiefs that Virginia settlers would “come to be your neighbors ... [and] to be kind and friendly towards you.” He further expected that

³⁴⁹ Connolly Journal.

“they will buy goods to cloath your old people and children to brighten the chain of friendship” between them.³⁵⁰

The officer pledged that the Indians would find Virginians as friendly toward them as their “late neighbors” from Pennsylvania. He concluded by asking them “not to listen to what some lying people that may tell you to the contrary,” that although Virginians were always ready to fight an enemy, they would show their “true & steady friendship” on every occasion when warranted. After asking Pipe and White Eyes to carry his words home to their people and the Shawnees, he reassured them he would do all in his power to bring those guilty of committing the murders at Baker’s Bottom to justice, and invited them to a general peace conference at Pittsburgh. The council adjourned on May 6, and the Indian leaders headed home.³⁵¹

Connolly maintained the stated position that the matters in dispute between the Indian nations and the colony could still be resolved amicably: notwithstanding the “violent and barbarous treatment” many native people suffered at the hands of “unthinking and lawless people.” When notified that thirty armed men, not embodied as militia, had gone down the Ohio in pursuit of Indians, he took quick action to officially disapprove of their actions and prevent a tragedy. Knowing that White Eyes’ family and other peaceful Indians lived just across the river, Connolly sent the sheriff and a small unit of militia to compel the thirty disorderly people back to Pittsburgh. He also sent an interpreter to locate White Eyes’ family and escort them to Croghan’s plantation, where they could remain under the colony’s protection until the chief

³⁵⁰ Connolly and McKee Journals.

³⁵¹ Connolly Journal.

returned from his diplomatic mission to the Shawnees.³⁵² In order to forbid so unwarrantable a procedure in the future, Connolly posted advertisements reading that any “attempt to behave so contrary to peace and good order of this country” would be punished by all means available within his power as a magistrate and military commander.³⁵³

To facilitate the safe assembly of the various Indian chiefs at the next council, Connolly published yet another public notice. He informed the inhabitants of West Augusta that they would join him in welcoming some of the most influential chiefs of the Ohio area nations. The captain commandant, “in His Majesty’s Name,” commanded all British subjects of the colony and Dominion of Virginia to “desist from further acts of Hostility against any Indians whatever, especially those expected to come to the fort for “business in their usual manner.”³⁵⁴

Connolly continued to concern himself with defending his district. He presented an ensign’s commission to a man who brought in eighteen volunteers, and sent twenty bushels of corn to feed the Indians assembled at Colonel Croghan’s. On Saturday, May 7, a trader arrived from the Newcomers Town. He told Connolly that he had barely escaped with his life, leaving his property behind. The headman of the village told him to flee when a wounded Shawnee warrior arrived, and brought news that hostilities had commenced. With several of their people purportedly “killed by the

³⁵² Connolly Journal.

³⁵³ Connolly Journal.

³⁵⁴ Connolly Journal.

English,” the chief expected a Shawnee war party to arrive there at any minute, and put the trader’s life in danger.³⁵⁵

The same day, Connolly held a conference with some “country people” who had retired to a place about twelve miles south of Pittsburgh, where they requested permission to build a stockade fort. The captain cautioned them that at best, their stockade would only afford them “imaginary safety.” Dividing the available strength of the country’s militia, he explained, might make them feel more secure in their separate communities, but it actually tended to only “lull people into supineness and neglect,” and render their defenses ineffective in opposing the enemy. Such a decision would ultimately result in them choosing between having to abandon the country or “fall sacrifices to the vindictive rage of the savages.” If they thought Pittsburgh was too crowded with women and children, Connolly agreed to permit them to build a fort upriver on the Monongahela to keep water communication open with Redstone settlement, provided they would send one third of their active young men to assist in repairing and defending Fort Pitt, which if taken by the enemy would certainly result in the whole country west of the Allegheny being abandoned. Although they said they agreed at the meeting, Connolly did not expect them to actually comply with his request.³⁵⁶

Back in Indian country, the Moravian missionaries at Schönbrunn learned that the Virginians had officially taken control of Pittsburgh and the surrounding country on April 30, the same day as the massacre. That and other news prompted Reverend

³⁵⁵ Connolly Journal.

³⁵⁶ Connolly Journal.

Zeisberger to note in his journal that he believed the Virginians feared that the Shawnees had begun preparations for war against them. The runners also informed the missionaries about the recent Indian council at Croghan Hall, during which *Guyasuta* relayed Sir William Johnson's warning to other Ohio Indians not to join the Shawnees in attacking whites on the south bank.³⁵⁷ By the end of the first week in May, several Munsee Delawares arrived to inform the missionaries and their congregation that one Shawnee chief had been killed and another wounded on the Ohio – a reference to the skirmish at Pipe Creek. Zeisberger lamented, "It seems Indian war will break out," and feared the Virginians would attack and destroy Shawnee towns.³⁵⁸ While the clergymen optimistically prayed that both sides would resolve their differences without war, worse news followed. An express from nearby Gekelemuckepuck brought the news of the murders of nine Mingo at Yellow Creek, and attributed them, as well as the other recent killings, to Cresap.³⁵⁹

Gekelemuckepuck sat on the north bank of the Tuscarawas River, a tributary of the Muskingum. A thriving community, Zeisberger described it as having more than one hundred log houses in 1770. The principal town of the Unami Delaware in the region, it also served the function of a political capital for of the Lenape people living in the Ohio country. As the home of *Netawatwes*, a respected Turtle clan Delaware

³⁵⁷ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, April 30, 1774 American Archives, 1: 283.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ Rev. David Zeisberger, letter [extract] dated Schönbrunn, May 24, 1774, American Archives, 1: 284-5. Called Newcomer by the English, variations of Netawatwees' name, meaning "skilled advisor," include Netawatwes, Netahutquemaled, Netodwehement, and Netautwhalemund; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 36n.

chief who the English called Newcomer, most whites therefore called Gekelemuckepuck, Newcomer's Town.³⁶⁰

In the aftermath of the massacre, the Mingoes evacuated their camp on Yellow Creek and headed toward Gekelemuckepuck.” When the members of the injured community found refuge, they told their hosts, and anyone else present, of the treachery of the Big Knife and their barbarity to even those who are their friends. They then gave a description of the assailants. They alleged that Cresap had not only led the murderers at Baker's Bottom, but attributed the actual, as well as the contrived, actions committed by Daniel Greathouse to him.³⁶¹ Throughout Indian country, as it had in white communities, facts became intertwined with fiction with each retelling so that the tragedy sounded even more horrifying. By the time Sir William Johnson received it, the report said that “a certain Mr. Cressop, an inhabitant of Virginia,” was responsible, and that he had murdered forty Indians on Ohio.³⁶² Even the Pennsylvania partisan Arthur St. Clair stated in a letter to Governor Penn his belief that, “The mischief done by Cressap and Great House had been much exaggerated.” Before long, messengers reached the Delaware towns and Moravian communities telling that the Virginians had attacked the Mingoe settlement on the Ohio, and butchered even the women and the children in their arms, and that Logan's family were among the slain.³⁶³

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Rev. John Heckewelder, declaration, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia: 253; Rev. David Zeisburger, letter dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-286.

³⁶² Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, June 20, 1774, DAR, 8: 133-134.

³⁶³ Rev. John Heckewelder, declaration, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia: 253; Rev. David Zeisburger, letter dated Schönbrunn, May 27, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-286;

As soon as the aggrieved Mingoes settled in at Newcomer's Town they began hunting, but not for game. Zeisberger learned they were out "to catch some traders," travelling between towns in order to kill whites – any whites. Many Shawnees, a number of whom already held some animosity toward the Virginians, joined the Mingoes in the endeavor. These hunting parties took no time to determine whether their prey was Virginian or Pennsylvanian. Whoever saw a white man saw an enemy. Seeking allies, the Mingoes sent runners to the towns at Wakatomica on the Muskingum, inviting the Shawnees to join them for a council of war at Newcomer's Town.³⁶⁴

Being more peaceful, as soon as they discovered this, the Delawares kept all traders from using the road.³⁶⁵ Knowing that the Mingoes were likely to take revenge on any white persons prompted the missionaries to "shut themselves up" in their communities. The friends and relatives of the murdered Yellow Creek victims, said Heckewelder, "passed and re-passed through the villages of the quiet Delaware towns, in search of white people." As soon as they became aware of what they were doing, Mingoes also aimed their anger and most abusive language imaginable at the Delawares who shielded the white devils from their vengeance.³⁶⁶ The situation caused the white Moravians such great distress that they did not know what action to

Arthur St. Clair to Gov. Penn, letter dated Ligonier, May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 502.

³⁶⁴ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, April 30 – May 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-6. Wakatomica, a Shawnee town of four villages on the Muskingum River stood near present Dresden, Ohio: Wapatomica, Waketomika, Woakatameka, and Waketameki are variations of the name.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Rev. John Heckewelder, declaration, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 253.

take. “Our Indians,” Heckewelder said, “keep watch about us every night, and will not let us go out of town, even not into our corn fields.”³⁶⁷

Trying to maintain calm, some of the more moderate Shawnee chiefs sent a message asking “their grandfather, the Delaware nation,” to remain peaceful, “easy and quiet.” The headmen encouraged all Ohio Indians not to molest or hurt the traders or any other white people in that quarter, and for the women to continue their spring planting until they determined what would happen. Zeisberger concluded the Shawnee chiefs desired “to keep the road to Pittsburgh clear, and not hurt the Pennsylvanians,” as they were the source of diplomatic contact and the trade goods on which they depended, as well as ammunition and firearms, but to only contend with the Virginians as potential enemies.³⁶⁸

Many on both sides of the Ohio expressed their concern for the safety of many traders in Indian country, a number of those finding themselves hunted by people with whom they had conducted business. At the end of the first week of May, one trader who made it to Pittsburgh from the Newcomer’s Town related that a Delaware headman had warned him to flee following the arrival of a wounded Shawnee warrior. The injured man reported that hostilities had commenced, and the English had killed several of his people. Because he expected a Shawnee war party to arrive there and threaten his life, and those of the Delawares who would try to shelter him, the white

³⁶⁷ Rev. David Zeisberger, letter dated Schönbrunn, May 24, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-6.

³⁶⁸ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, April 30 – May 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 283-284.

man departed in such haste that he left all his property behind him. Many like him, however, still remained.³⁶⁹

The four men Captain Russell had sent out to reconnoiter returned to Castle's Woods on the Friday of the first week of May. They had, according to the captain, "faithfully performed the Service, both as Scouts, and in regard to the boundary Line." After making their report under oath before a justice of the peace, Russell sent a written copy to Colonel Preston for him to convey to Williamsburg and the General Assembly. The report left no room for any future doubt that the Louisa River defined the line on which the border between Virginia and the Cherokees terminated.

Arriving when it did, the report also helped to determine the legality of any claims still in dispute, and afforded the claimants the time and opportunity to adjust their entries at the extraordinary surveyors' expense. Furthermore, having it in possession enabled the General Assembly to appropriate the necessary funds to pay the scouts for their service without making them suffer a lengthy delay.³⁷⁰

When he returned home with his new ward, *Koonay* and John Gibson's daughter, William Crawford sent George Washington copies of the surveys for his Augusta County property and a letter acquainting him with the "truth of matters" on the frontier. Despite having some remaining doubts, Crawford gave Washington the most accurate account – from his perspective – possible on the recent violence.

Anticipating retaliation for the massacre of the Yellow Creek Mingo, he wrote, "Our inhabitants are much alarmed, many hundreds having gone over the mountain,

³⁶⁹ Connolly Journal entry May 26, 1774.

³⁷⁰ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Castle's Woods, May 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ23 (19-23).

and the whole country evacuated as far as the Monongahela; and many on this side of the river are gone over the mountain.” He had mustered one hundred men who he would lead to Fort Pitt, and with those at Wheeling, “shall wait the motions of the Indians” and act accordingly. Although an Indian council had convened to avert war, he confessed, “What will be the event I do not know,” and concluded, “In short, a war is every moment expected.”³⁷¹

³⁷¹ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, May 8, 1774; and Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob’s Creek, April 27, 1774, The Washington-Crawford Letters, 46-50, 84-85, respectively, and 84n.

Chapter 5: The Present Exigence – Escalating Violence and Military Action

Pittsburgh

Pushing himself to exhaustion, Captain Commandant John Connolly continued his efforts to rehabilitate Fort Pitt, prepare the local militia for action, prevent the flight of fearful inhabitants, and maintain civil order. On Saturday, May 7, 1774, through the authority vested in Governor Dunmore's orders appointing him as the district's commanding officer, he started offering militia commissions to reliable people who would recruit volunteers, preferably men without families, and march them to the fort "to enter in the pay of government" to perform active service. Captains William Crawford and John Neville visited the fort, and recommended that if Connolly issued them "Blank Warrants," they "would ride about the country and use their utmost endeavors to encourage young men to enter into the service."³⁷²

Two days later, twenty-four militiamen from Peters Creek arrived to reinforce the garrison, together with "four Negro men ... with proper working implements" to help repair the defenses, courtesy of Neville. Connolly remarked that Neville's action had rendered "infinite service to me and the country in general," and hoped it would inspire others to exert themselves during that critical time.³⁷³ On Tuesday, Crawford led a welcome reinforcement of about one hundred men into Pittsburgh, and expected to meet others there and at Wheeling where they would wait to see what the enemy

³⁷² Connolly's Journal, May 8-11, 1774.

³⁷³ Ibid.

would do and take appropriate action. The added strength allowed Connolly to send a forty-man detachment under Captain John Stephenson, Crawford's half-brother, to protect frontier settlements and prevent any small Indian war parties from attempting to "disturb the tranquility" of any inhabitants, although their chiefs tried to restrain them and remain peaceful.³⁷⁴

Amid all the activity and confusion, Connolly heard, and possibly believed, some of the distorted second-hand accounts of Cresap's alleged culpability in the Yellow Creek massacre. Although many frontier inhabitants had already suffered from the retaliatory raids against their neighbors, it astonished Connolly that they viewed the men who provoked them with the murder of the Yellow Creek Mingoes meritorious.³⁷⁵ As if he did not face enough challenges, some obstinate people from the frontiers of Pennsylvania arrived on Wednesday, May 11, behaving in a very disorderly and riotous manner, and threatened to kill the Indians staying at Croghan's plantation. After the captain commandant had the leaders confined, their followers threatened to break them out of jail. In response, Connolly doubled the guard and ordered the officers to fire upon any of the armed militia who mutinied and attempted to rescue the prisoners. He also took the precaution of posting two guards and his interpreter at Croghan's home in the event the troublemakers appeared there. By Thursday, the mutineers had apparently come to what Connolly described as better

³⁷⁴ William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, May 8, 1774, Butterfield, C. W., ed., Washington-Crawford Letters, 46-50; Connolly's Journal.

³⁷⁵ Connolly's Journal, May 8-11, 1774.

sense of how they could serve their country, and dismissed them after they, or someone on their behalf, posted a bond as security for their good behavior.³⁷⁶

By week's end, provisions began to arrive at Fort Pitt from the surrounding communities with more regularity, which helped to ease the sense of crisis somewhat, until Connolly received more alarming news. A large body of armed men – not embodied as militia – had gathered at Catfish Camp intent on attacking Shawnee towns in retribution for recent Indian incursions. Unaware that Michael Cresap had called them together, Connolly wrote the men a letter requesting – and ordering – them to return home. He also alerted Captain Stephenson and ordered him to use his company to dissuade any disorderly people from committing any acts of violence against Indians “without the countenance of government.”³⁷⁷

Connolly needed no more such problems when on May 19, an Onondaga Indian delivered an insolent message from Daniel Greathouse, Joseph Swearingen, Nathaniel Tomlinson, Joshua Baker, J. Brown, and Gavin Watkins. After identifying themselves as the six people who had killed the Mingo opposite Yellow Creek, they demanded that Connolly order the Indians to remain on their own side of the river or they would kill more of them. The district commandant dispatched an officer and six men to find and present the ruffians with his reply. He redressed them for their demands, and condemned them for committing barbarous and evil actions for which they deserved the severest punishment the government he represented could impose. After sarcastically observing they had not also murdered their messenger for being an

³⁷⁶ Connolly's Journal, May 10-12, 1774.

³⁷⁷ Connolly's Journal, May 16, 1774 Library.

Indian, he concluded with an admonition that if he ever again heard that they had killed, or attempted to kill any friendly or unoffending Indians, he would order a party of militia to apprehend them as well as all those who aided and abetted them, and bring them to justice for “exemplary punishment.”³⁷⁸

The same day, Connolly alerted commanders of the different corps of militia in the country that recent intelligence warranted a heightened state of readiness. In accordance with the militia law, he ordered each captain to immediately call a muster of all the militia in his neighborhood to inspect and examine their arms and accoutrements, and equip those deficient in the best manner possible. Issuing warrants, he authorized militia commanders to impress all necessary provisions, salt, entrenching tools, other items they needed to perform their duties in accordance with the law for opposing Invasions and Insurrections. After accomplishing these tasks, he ordered them to detach one third of their respective companies under the command of their lieutenants, and send them with the impressed items to his immediate assistance. Keeping the rest of their men under arms for the defense of their communities until they received further orders, Connolly directed his subordinates to take the necessary measures to stop any people fleeing the district, and escort them to Pittsburgh with their belongings. Finally, he cautioned that it may prove necessary to send detachments to assist neighboring communities, or concentrate all their forces at Fort Pitt if hostile Indians wanted that town “to feel the first effects of their resentment.”³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ Connolly’s Journal, May 19, 1774.

³⁷⁹ Capt. John Connolly to Commanders of Companies, circular letter dated Fort Pitt, May 19, 1774, Connolly’s Journal.

Such language appeared to contradict Connolly's public insistence that negotiations could settle the disputes without further bloodshed. On May 20 he received a reply from the "disorderly people" at Catfish Camp in which Enoch Innis and Michael Cresap explained that they had assembled in response to recent Indian attacks, and challenged the district commandant's assurances of peaceful accommodation. If so confident of the certainty that diplomacy would prevent war, the spokesmen invited Connolly, Croghan and McKee to meet them at Catfish Camp on Monday, May 30, to provide "surety" – essentially agreeing to become hostages – against any Indian depredations for six months. Otherwise, the armed band would unilaterally attack the Shawnees. Connolly replied with what he described as a friendly letter requesting Cresap to discharge the people he had imprudently assembled without any authority because their presence threatened to render all efforts to prevent conflict meaningless. After waiting two days, Connolly alerted Captain Paul Froman to assemble his militia company, properly armed and equipped, at Redstone to wait for orders. If by noon on Wednesday, May 25, Connolly learned that Cresap and his associates had listened to reason and dispersed, he would order Froman to dismiss the men. Otherwise, Froman's company would march to Catfish Camp and force those gathered "to desist from their destructive scheme."³⁸⁰

Newcomer's Town

White Eyes had arrived at Schönbrunn three days after leaving Pittsburgh on his mission toward the Muskingum to seek an accommodation of concerns with the Shawnees. At McKee's suggestion, two Pennsylvania traders, John Anderson [or

³⁸⁰ Connolly's Journal, May 20-23, 1774.

Saunderson] and David Duncan, accompanied him as “public messengers” to deliver the appeal for the Shawnees to desist from all hostilities. Concerned for their safety, Zeisberger warned that Indian country had become very dangerous for white people – even those accompanying a respected Delaware chief. Failing to deter the trio, the missionary cautioned them to avoid the more heavily-travelled road.³⁸¹

On reaching Newcomer’s Town, the three men noticed the number of traders who had taken refuge there. The town’s headmen also warned them of the perils, and advised that only one messenger continue to Wakatomica while the other waited with them. Following a brief discussion, Anderson accepted the invitation to stay. The others had barely departed the town when an angry musket shot narrowly missed Duncan. White Eyes shouted for the trader to hurry back to the shelter of the village. The chief then “got betwixt” his companion and the assailant, a Shawnee warrior, and disarmed him as he attempted to reload. On his return, the chief personally made the town’s Delaware inhabitants responsible for his messengers’ safety. The friendly Indians immediately locked all the traders in a “strong house” and had guard kept on them day and night to protect them from any attempt that might be made on the safety by the Shawnees or Mingo. Their hosts brought them provisions, and anything else they might need, to make their guests as comfortable as possible.³⁸²

³⁸¹ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, April 30 – May 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 284; Letter [Extract] dated Bedford, May 30, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* #1, (Purdie and Dixon), June 23, 1774. Some sources render John Anderson’s surname as “Saunderson.”

³⁸² Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated May 29, 1774; Rev. David Zeisberger, Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, February 21 – May 20, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 502; and 495-497, respectively; Connolly’s Journal, May 24, 1774.

Hokoleskwa, the chief whose name translated to Cornstalk – also known to Indians by a name translated as Hard Man – and the other Shawnee headmen politely received White Eyes. They sat around the council fire and listened to the words of apology and condolence for the recently killed Shawnees, and the messages delivered on behalf of the colonial commissioners at Pittsburgh. After White Eyes had finished, Cornstalk rose to his feet and responded. He expressed regret that people on both sides had suffered “much ill.” The Shawnee held the Virginians responsible for the series of warlike incidents, “All which Mischiefs so close to each other Aggravated our People very much.” As a remedy, Cornstalk demanded that Governors Dunmore and Penn more forcefully exert their authority over the backcountry settlers to stop such aggressive actions in the future. He specifically urged that Connolly, as Dunmore’s surrogate in the area where most of the violence occurred, “endeavor to stop such foolish [white] People,” as Cornstalk had with great pain and trouble prevailed on the Shawnees to “to sit still” and refrain from violence until their headmen settled the disputes.³⁸³

The gathering war clouds had deterred many young Shawnee men from going on the spring hunt. Cornstalk offered to have his nation’s warriors escort groups of traders to protect them from the vengeance of friends and relatives of the recently slain who might be waiting along the road to attack them as they travelled home. At the end of the meeting, Cornstalk addressed White Eyes as his brother, and charged him to deliver his reply to Croghan, McKee, and Connolly, and entrusted him with the string

³⁸³ Cornstalk to Alexander McKee, letter (speech) dated May 20, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 497-498. Variations of Cornstalk’s name include Hokoleskwa, Colesqua, Keigh-tughqua, and Wynepuechsika.

of wampum to testify the Indians' documentary record, as well as a mnemonic aid for translating the speech.³⁸⁴

Pipe joined White Eyes when the grand council convened at Newcomer's Town on Sunday, May 15. Although the envoys urged the leaders representing the Ohio area Indians to maintain peace, a group of twenty boisterous Mingo kept "stirring up the Shawnees." Despite the interruptions, Pipe and White Eyes assured those assembled in council that the gang of lawless villains responsible for the recent murders had not acted on Dunmore's orders. While most Delawares seemed amenable, no argument assuaged the anger of the Mingo and an increasing numbers of Shawnees. When they threatened to kill all white people they met, the town's residents only became even more protective of those they harbored, and determined not to allow the hostiles to take them by surprise.³⁸⁵

A few days later, runners brought news from Pittsburgh and a message from Croghan. The retired but still influential Indian agent advised all Ohio Indians to "be quiet, and not think of war," and prevent any harm to the traders while Virginia authorities did their utmost to apprehend and bring the murderers to justice. Croghan added that authorities had already taken one of the villains into custody. After the council had concluded, runners delivered the "agreeable news" to Heckewelder that the Shawnees had decided to remain at peace.³⁸⁶ No sooner had this raised his hopes than conflicting rumors that the Shawnees had declared war dashed them again.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Rev. David Zeisburger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, February 21-May 20, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 495-497.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

At places like the Mingo enclave near Gekelemuckepuck and the Upper Shawnee towns of Wakatomica, inhabitants heard the drums beating as groups of young men, eager for martial glory, gathered in front of council houses. They listened to Logan and other captains call on those willing to follow to join them on the warpath to avenge the recent murders of their people at Yellow Creek and on the Ohio. As onlookers watched, the warriors participated in a spectacle, as described in James Smith's captivity narrative, that combined military drill, religious ceremony, and social gathering. Those who had already committed to the enterprise formed into lines and began moving in concert with the beating of the drum, not altogether unlike European soldiers on parade. The braves advanced across the open space to certain a point, and halted. In unison they gave, what one white observer described as, a "hideous shout or yell" and stretched their weapons menacingly in the direction of the enemy's homeland, then "wheeled quick about" and danced back in the direction from which they came. After they all returned to the starting point, the leading warrior sang his war song and moved to the painted war post where he declared his reasons for going to war. After he boasted of his exploits in past battles, he affirmed to what he intended to do to any enemies encountered in the next one and struck the post with his tomahawk to demonstrate.³⁸⁷

As his comrades and the spectators applauded in approval and shouted encouragement, the next warrior advanced to the post and repeated the ritual.

Whether they sought adulation for performing bravely in battle, or just wished to not

³⁸⁷ James Smith An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life of Col. James Smith, During His Captivity with the Indians, in the Years 1755, '56, '57, '58, & '59, Written by Himself (Lexington, KY: John Bradford, 1799, reprinted Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Historical Society, 1996), 33.

be left behind by their peers, other young men took up the hatchet as the members of the war party cheered and welcomed them. The ceremony concluded after the last man struck the post. The next morning, warriors bade farewell to friends and loved ones and marched to battle.³⁸⁸ The news spread quickly through Indian country. Shawnee and Mingo warriors, as well as those of other nations who volunteered to join them – even though their tribal councils decided to remain neutral – repeated the scene in numerous towns north of the Ohio in the months that followed.³⁸⁹

Shortly afterward, a group of mission Indians told Heckewelder that while visiting Mochwesung they had witnessed Munsees perform a similar war dance after a party of Mingoes paraded a white man's scalp through the town.³⁹⁰ Zeisberger's prayers that "the dark cloud" of war would soon pass over and peace be restored went unanswered as he learned that the Shawnees had only agreed to remain peaceful at the council to mollify the Delaware faction. Newcomer arrived at Schönbrunn and broke the news that Shawnee and Mingo leaders had met in a separate council at Wakatomica. Although he had addressed them in a fatherly manner about the "blessings of Peace and Folly of War," the Delaware chief told them the Shawnees and Mingoes had decided to fight. According to Newcomer, Logan had announced that he sought immediate vengeance for the murders of his relatives, and took the warpath with nineteen followers to kill the traders who were pressing their peltry at the Canoe Bottom on Hockhocking Creek, and make an incursion against Virginia settlements opposite the mouth of Yellow Creek. Newcomer then asked several

³⁸⁸ Smith, *Ibid.* p. 33.

³⁸⁹ Smith, *Ibid.* p. 33.

³⁹⁰ Rev. David Zeisburger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, February 21-May 20, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 495-497.

mission Indians to run ahead to inform Killbuck, who had passed through while escorting a group of traders fleeing toward Pittsburgh.³⁹¹

The missionaries pondered how their flock would meet the crisis. An invasion of the Ohio country would present the greatest threat, as it would put their community in danger from both sides according to Zeisberger. He feared that the conflict might escalate into a general Indian war in which the Pennsylvanians joined the Virginians, and possibly targeted the Delawares as well as the Shawnees and Mingo. Should the community's white brethren feel compelled to flee, Zeisberger believed most of the converted Indians would follow them eastward and reestablish the towns they had abandoned on the Susquehanna. Such a migration involved great risk, and he questioned their ability to gather and carry sufficient quantities of provisions to sustain their entire population while on the move. The missionaries and leaders of the praying Indians joined the headmen of neighboring towns in appealing to Newcomer to assist them in the good work of preserving peace. Although it seemed time would run out, the venerable chief urged all Indians "not to stop the road to Philadelphia, but to let it be free and open," by their maintaining friendly relations and trade with the Pennsylvanians.³⁹²

Pittsburgh

³⁹¹ Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum, dated Schönbrunn, February 21-May 20, and May 28, 1774; and, Deveraux Smith to Dr. Smith, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 10, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 495-497, 498-500, and 511-513, respectively; John Campbell to L. Andrew Levy, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 30, 1774, William Vincent Byars, ed., B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798: Papers of Interest to Their Posterity and the Posterity of Their Associates, hereafter Gratz Papers (Jefferson City, Mo.: Hugh Stephens Printing Co., 1916), 142-143.

³⁹² Rev. David Zeisberger Journal [extract] of the United Brethren Mission on Muskingum dated Schönbrunn, May 24, 1774, American Archives, 1: 285-6. Variations of Newcomer's Indian name are Netawatwees and Netawatenees.

White Eyes returned from his embassy on Tuesday, May 24, and met with Connolly, Croghan and McKee to inform them of the results of his mission and deliver a letter from Duncan and Anderson. The two men said that they and nine other traders, including one George Wilson, had left their shelter at Newcomer's Town, and headed toward Pittsburgh with an escort of armed Delawares.³⁹³ Meanwhile, the suspense of waiting at Ligonier had proved too much for St. Clair, and he decided to risk whatever the consequences might be of an encounter with Connolly. His gamble paid off when Pipe and White Eyes returned the very day he arrived.³⁹⁴

The same day, Connolly received the news that Cresap had disbanded his men and sent them home. The district captain-commandant dispatched expresses to inform Froman and the other captains that the danger had passed, and to dismiss their men with his thanks. Relief once again turned to tension that evening. As Croghan and McKee prepared for the next day's council, Connolly received intelligence that some Indians had fired on laborers working in some fields down on the Old Pennsylvania Road, just outside of Pittsburgh. A man working in a field had suffered a chest wound, while three laborers last seen in an adjoining field were reportedly missing and presumed taken captive. Connolly dispatched Captain Abraham Teagarten with fifteen men to investigate and reconnoiter the area for tracks or other signs that indicated the presence of marauding Indians.³⁹⁵

A few weeks after he returned home from Catfish Camp, Michael Cresap received a commission with the rank of captain in the Hampshire County militia signed by Lord

³⁹³ Connolly's Journal, May 24, 1774.

³⁹⁴ Connolly's Journal, May 24, 1774, 16-17; Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 501-502.

³⁹⁵ Connolly's Journal, May 24, 1774.

Dunmore on June 10. Cresap and Connolly extinguished any personal resentment each held against the other as a result of the accusations that followed the Yellow Creek massacre. The two men would now have to work together for the good of their adopted country of Virginia.³⁹⁶

On Wednesday afternoon, White Eyes delivered messages from the Delawares at Newcomer's Town as well as Cornstalk's reply on behalf of the Shawnees, to an assembly that included McKee, Connolly, several Delaware sachems, *Guyasuta*, the official deputy, plus eight other chiefs from the Iroquois Confederacy, and St. Clair, who represented Pennsylvania at Croghan's suggestion. Listening intently, no one doubted the Delawares' sincere desire to remain at peace. The "most insolent nature" of the Shawnees' reply stunned Connolly. Speaking through White Eyes, Cornstalk condemned as lies all that Croghan, McKee and Connolly told the Shawnees. In consequence, the Hard Man admitted that twenty warriors had gone out to get revenge for the recent deaths of their people at the same time he acknowledged the Virginians' attempt to accommodate their complaints! Cornstalk further infuriated Connolly when he answered the captain's request for the Shawnees "not take amiss the Act of a few desperate young men" by declaring that Virginians should therefore "not be displeased at what our Young Men are now doing, or shall do against your People." Furthermore, the chief ridiculed the Virginians for building forts on their side of the Ohio, and made it clear that the Shawnees would only talk peace with Governor Dunmore after they "got satisfaction," or exacted revenge, by killing some white people, "but not before." Shawnee warriors, he said, were "all upon their Feet"

³⁹⁶ Jacob, 68.

ready for war. St. Clair also characterized the reply as “insolent,” but believed they meant no harm toward Pennsylvania, and wrote Penn that they “lay all to the charge of the big Knife, as they call the Virginians.”³⁹⁷

St. Clair then stood and addressed the assembled Iroquois Six Nations and Delaware representatives on behalf of Governor Penn, and thanked them for their good speeches promoting peace. Pennsylvanians, he said, remained determined to maintain the friendship that existed between the Six Nations and Delawares and them. However, since the threatening actions of the Shawnees had alarmed Pennsylvanians, he urged the chiefs to prevent their people from hunting on the south side of the Ohio because some settlers will not be able to distinguish between them and those who may be enemies. St. Clair pledged that his colony’s government would endeavor to keep the “Path” of communications and commerce, open, and “keep bright the chain of Friendship so long held fast by their and our Forefathers.”³⁹⁸

As the Indian council convened at the fort, Anderson, Duncan, and company arrived in Pittsburgh with their nine Delaware escorts. Anderson and Wilson admitted that it took some hard work to get back. The Delawares, added the latter, who seemed friendly at present, had enough to do to save their lives from hostile Shawnees and Mingoes. Duncan praised the people of Newcomer’s Town for treating them with a great deal of kindness, and demonstrated nothing but peace and friendship from all their actions. Wilson remarked that while he had escaped with his life, he had to

³⁹⁷ Connolly’s Journal, May 25, 1774, 17; and, McKee’s Journal from the 1st May 1774; Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 501-502; Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 4, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1114-1116.

³⁹⁸ Arthur St. Clair to the Six Nations and Delawares, letter (speech) dated May, 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 500.

leave about fifty horse-loads of deer skins in the Lower Shawnee Towns. More ominously, the three traders confirmed that before they departed, Logan had set off with about twenty Mingo and other warriors to strike Virginia settlements near Wheeling. They also worried that hostile Shawnees or Mingo had gathered for the purpose of finding and killing their fellow traders still in Indian country. Wilson said no one could tell whether they were dead or alive at that time.³⁹⁹ About a week later, two messengers came in from Newcomer's Town who said the Shawnee towns had become quiet again. They said a white man named Connor, living at Snake Town on the Muskingum, told them that some moderate Shawnees had taken great pains, together with a group of Delawares, to escort twenty-five or thirty traders, along with their pelts, up the Ohio to Pittsburgh.⁴⁰⁰

While Croghan disagreed, Anderson feared a frontier war would soon erupt. Rumors ran rampant as settlers reported sighting hostile Indians everywhere, and Connolly received messages of new depredations almost daily, although many proved unfounded. Captain Teagarten's patrol returned with the three missing laborers in custody after finding no evidence that they had been attacked by Indians. He determined that they had shot and wounded the other man during a heated dispute over land he was improving, and blamed it on Indians.⁴⁰¹ Connolly, however, could not dismiss any reports without an investigation. A friendly Indian delivered a letter from "an unfortunate trader in the woods" hiding under the protection of one of the

³⁹⁹ William Wilson to Benjamin and Michael Gratz, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 31, 1774, Gratz Papers, 144; Capt. Dorsey Pentecost – for Capt. John Connolly – to Capt. Joel Reece, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 27, 1774, reprinted in Kercheval, 131; Letter [Extract], dated Pittsburgh, May 30, *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), June 23, 1774; and Letter [Extract] dated Bedford, May 30, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), June 23, 1774.

⁴⁰⁰ Unknown addressees, letter dated June 5, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 508-509.

⁴⁰¹ Connolly's Journal, May 27, 1774.

interpreter John Montour's sons. He informed Connolly that hostile Mingoes had killed and scalped some white people not far from where he took shelter. He added that a party of Mingoes had waited in ambush on the Traders' Path for two days waiting to kill any whites they found approaching or leaving New Comer's Town. Disappointed at their lack of prey, he believed the warriors had crossed the Ohio attack the homestead of "some distressed family."⁴⁰²

Reacting to the intelligence, on May 26, Connolly sent Captain Henry Hoagland's company to Wheeling to intercept and treat any Indians he discovered on "our side of the river" carrying arms or whose tracks led into the settlements as enemies. Erring on the side of caution, he ordered Ensign Richard Johnston and Sergeant George Cox to follow with reinforcements.⁴⁰³ The next day he ordered Captain Joel Reece to immediately march with all the men he could raise and "join any of the companies already out under the pay of the government" to search for, interdict, attack and pursue any war parties that endangered the frontier communities. Never missing an opportunity to criticize him or the Virginians, St. Clair told Penn that Connolly had sent the troops with orders to fall on every Indian they met, regardless of whether friend or foe. Undeterred, Connolly was constantly improving Fort Pitt's defenses as refugees fled to its protection from the western-most settlements. Under the provisions of the Invasions and Insurrections law, he ordered "some indifferent

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Connolly's Journal, May 26, 1774, 17

cabins” appraised and demolished in order to use the salvaged wood as pickets for the fort.⁴⁰⁴

The news that the “Shawanese were for war” spread quickly from the frontier to Williamsburg and Philadelphia. The traders who returned from Indian country provided militia officers intelligence that about forty enemy warriors – twenty Shawnees and twenty Mingoes – had crossed the Ohio intent on striking somewhere in Virginia. One witness found it “lamentable” that “multitudes of poor people” fled the country to seek refuge in less vulnerable areas, while others resolved to stay and defend their homes. Neighbors built and manned stockades and blockhouses in which they could better withstand the expected onslaught.⁴⁰⁵ Valentine Crawford commented that erecting such private defenses, such as his own Crawford’s Fort, provided “a very great means for the people standing their ground.” Some of those who fled from the exposed took refuge at these fortified homes instead of heading for the safer areas of the colony and added their numbers to the local militia. Similarly, men who had come to the area to work, such as the hired carpenters and servants George Washington had sent to erect a mill on the bottom land he had acquired near the Little Kanawha River, suspended their projects and volunteered for active militia service and assisted the inhabitants build fortifications.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 12, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 514-515; Connolly’s Journal, May 26, 1774, 17; Capt. Dorsey Pentecost – for Capt. John Connolly – to Capt. Joel Reece, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 27, 1774, reprinted in Kercheval, 131.

⁴⁰⁵ Letter [Extract] dated Bedford, May 30, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), June 23, 1774.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*; and, Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob’s Creek, June 8, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 90-91.

By themselves, the private forts only provided a place of refuge unless the militia units of the area took an active role in defending their communities. The several captains called on their companies' members to muster. Arthur Trader recalled that in his "15th or 16th year of age" during Dunmore's War, he served in an Augusta County ranging detachment of fifteen to twenty men commanded by Captain Zackquill Morgan. Posted at the fortified home of fellow company member, Jacob Prickett, he traversed the country between the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers on patrols that frequently provided the frontier settlers timely warning of approaching danger. Trader said that he "remained in this service for four months," during which time his unit engaged in operations "scouting and guarding the settlement against invasion by the Indians."⁴⁰⁷

Although St. Clair maintained that the Shawnees had nothing against the Pennsylvanians, many of that colony's inhabitants from as far away as Bedford took the precaution of forting themselves. Although they had heard of the Delawares' pledge to remain peaceful, many backcountry inhabitants in both colonies expected that nation's warriors to strike before long as well.⁴⁰⁸ Calling the reports from the frontier alarming enough, St. Clair informed Governor Penn that the actual incidents

⁴⁰⁷ Arthur Trader pension application S30169, December 5, 1833, Roll 2408, NARA; and, Warren Skidmore and Donna Kaminsky, Lord Dunmore's Little War of 1774: His Captains and Their Men Who Opened Kentucky & the West to American Settlement (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2002), 34-35.

⁴⁰⁸ Letter [Extract] dated Bedford, May 30, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), June 23, 1774.

of violence had yet to become “equal to the Panic” that had “seized the Country.”⁴⁰⁹
Events eventually proved St. Clair wrong.

The summary killing of non-offending Indians in reaction to depredations committed by hostile warriors was not a crime committed only by Virginians. At the end of May, St. Clair informed Governor Penn and Connolly that some disorderly Pennsylvania people had brutally murdered a peaceful Delaware Indian named Joseph Wipey, and concealed his body under some stones at the bottom of a small stream. According to St. Clair, Wipey had lived in the Ligonier area for a long time and had always been friendly with his neighbors. The principal suspect, John Hinkson, was described as “actuated by the most savage cruelty,” who St. Clair alleged had incited James Cooper and others with some kind of religious enthusiasm to join him in the heinous slaying. Before the coroner had completed his inquiry, however, Wipey’s remains mysteriously disappeared at the hands of some unknown accomplices. Lacking sufficient evidence to make an arrest, Hinkson and Cooper remained at large.⁴¹⁰

After the chiefs had returned home from Fort Pitt, McKee had time to review the records of the latest council in an effort to determine whether the two sides faced a further rupture or possible accommodation. He confided to Sir William Johnson that while most Ohio area Indians acted with moderation, the situation remained critical as the tenuous peace ensued. McKee believed some “wise interposition of Government”

⁴⁰⁹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 501-502.

⁴¹⁰ Connolly’s Journal, May 26, 1774, 17; Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 503-504.

was necessary for the restoration of a more lasting peace, but knew that Generals Gage and Haldimand had focused their attention on Boston. He recommended finding an effective means of punishing the hostile bands of Shawnees and Mingoes for their “Insolence & Perfidy” without risking a wider and more destructive conflict for no gain. If a war erupted, he lamented that the backcountry inhabitants would find themselves “involved in misery and distress” in such an event.⁴¹¹

Indian fury fell hard on the Virginia side of the Ohio during the first week of June. The vengeance-driven Logan led a war party that hit settlements on Ten-Mile, Dunkard, Whitely, and Muddy creeks. All western tributaries of the Monongahela, their selection seemed to validate St. Clair’s belief that the Indians directed their hostility toward Virginia, not Pennsylvania. After arriving in the area, the war party divided into smaller groups to select their targets. Alerted to the raiders’ presence, the authorities warned local inhabitants to seek shelter at a nearby fort or a neighbor’s fortified home. Some, like William Spicer [sometime written “Spier” or “Spear”], who had intended to move his wife and seven children to the safety of the nearby Jenkin’s Fort on Muddy Creek, had delayed doing so.⁴¹² The hesitation proved fatal.

According to their traditional way of war in such revenge raids, the warriors struck the most vulnerable. Reflecting the attitude of many settlers, John Jacob described them as not an invading army “but a straggling banditti.” Isolated farms presented a favorite target, which they usually assaulted in the dark of night or at daybreak. They

⁴¹¹ Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, letter [extract] dated Fort Pitt, June 10, 1774, American Archives, 1: 466.

⁴¹² As the dates and many details found in newspaper articles and other sources agree, despite the different spellings of the surname, William Spicer and Spier (as well as Benjamin Spear in Valentine Crawford’s June 8, 1774, letter to Washington) appear to be the same individual. Sources differ on whether the Spicers had five or seven children.

sometimes killed all of the family, at other times “only a part.” The attackers most often killed and scalped adult and adolescent males outright, as they considered them warriors, as well as small children. While other family members frequently suffered the same cruelty, Indians sometimes – though not always – took women and older children, as well as some men, prisoner, after which they burned the houses and took all the horses. Captives not killed in the journey to Indian country still faced an uncertain reception in Indian country.⁴¹³ After scouting the area between Dunkard and Big Whitely creeks, Logan noticed that the Spicer family still occupied its farmstead.⁴¹⁴

On the morning of Saturday, June 4, William Spicer chopped wood in the yard near the family cabin. Inside, his wife, Lydia, tended to the two youngest children, and twelve-year old Elizabeth, or “Betsy,” ironed clothes. Sixteen-year-old Job worked in the field, eleven-year-old William Jr. set traps for squirrels attempting to feed on the young corn, and two younger siblings mixed their daily chores with play in the meadow. On seeing the Indians approaching from out of the woods, William stuck the axe into a log and headed for the cabin, possibly to retrieve refreshments to offer

⁴¹³ Rev. David Jones *A Journal of Two Visits Made to Some Nations of Indians on the West Side of the River Ohio, in the Years 1772 and 1773*, hereafter Jones’ Narrative (Burlington: Isaac Collins, 1774), 76-7; Smith, 22-23, 29-31; James E. Seaver *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*, hereafter Jemison Narrative (Canandaigua, NY: J. D. Bemis, 1824; reprinted Namias, June, ed., Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 67-71, 75-78.

⁴¹⁴ Letters [Extract] dated Fort Pitt, June 7, June 16, and 23, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon; and, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 12, 1774, Eighteenth Century American Newspapers, Volume 1294, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, June 8, 1774, and Augustine Crawford to George Washington, two letters dated Jacob’s Creek, June 8, 1774, *Washington-Crawford Letters*, 50-52, and 90-94, respectively; Devereux Smith to Dr. Smith, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 1774, and Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 14, 1774, *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives*, I: 4: 511-513, and 517, respectively; Jacob, 27; Samuel Bates *History of Greene County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: Nelson Ruchforth & Co., 1888), 511-513; E.K. Evans *Pioneer History of Greene County, Pennsylvania* (Waynesburg, Pa.: Greene County Historical Society, 1969), 29-31; Sipe, 495.

the visitors as a sign of friendship and peaceful intent. As the warriors followed him, one of them had grabbed the axe and drove it into the farmer's skull from behind.

Bursting into the house, he did the same to Lydia and the two little children. As the intruder scalped her parents and siblings, Betsy, still clutching the iron, ran out of the rear door.⁴¹⁵

In her flight, she grabbed little William by the hand, and attempted to lead him to safety while Indians followed in pursuit. They did not get far before the warriors took them prisoner and forced them back to the house. As they drew closer to the family cabin, a very tall Indian, named Snake, came outside holding the wounded – but still living – youngest Spicer child upside down by the ankles. Betsy and William watched in horror as the brave bashed the infant's skull against the wall. They then saw a warrior draw his knife while bending over Job's lifeless body. After using his knife to break attachment with one hand, and gathering a handful of the boy's locks in the other, the Indian violently tore hair and skin from the crown of Job's head to the nape of his neck. The warrior rose to his feet, held the scalp high with an outstretched arm, and gave the horrific "scalp-yell" to signal his victory. As the raiders prepared to leave, they plundered the Spicers' food supply and possessions. Logan warned the two surviving children that he would kill them too if they attempted an escape or called out to alert would-be rescuers for help, as the war party retreated to the concealment of the woods.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁵ Bates, 511-513; Evans, 29-31; Eleanor Musick A History of Bobtown, Carmichaels, Pa.: Flemmiken Memorial Library, 1998.

⁴¹⁶ Bates, 239; Musick; James Axtell and William C. Sturtevant, "The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalping," William and Mary Quarterly, Series 3, Volume 37, Number 3 (July 1980), 456, 458, 461.

Some people who passed by the house later in the day reported that they had found Spicer, his wife and five children murdered and scalped. They described the husband “with a broad-axe sticking in his Breast, his wife lying on her back, entirely naked,” the lifeless corpses of the children, and all of the family’s cattle dead. When neighbors could not locate Betsy and little William, they surmised the Indians took them captive. The same day, Dunkard Creek residents reported three other neighbors missing and presumed taken captive.⁴¹⁷

Remaining in the area several more days, the warriors evaded militia patrols and attacked settlers. One group, including Logan and Snake, crept up on Jenkins’ Fort. Hiding behind a fence when the party of armed militiamen who had buried the Spicer family returned, the Indians continued to lay in wait for an unsuspecting victim to come out and “fall into their hands.” Suddenly, they heard a female voice inside the fort ask, “Who will turn out and guard the women as they milk the cows?” Tensely, they watched a squad of armed men emerge. As the women went about their chore, the militiamen scanned their surroundings, alert for any sign of hostile intruders. Occasionally, one of the sentries pointed a musket in the warriors’ direction. More than once Logan feared that a militiaman had discovered him, and contemplated making a run for it, but waited until the guards turned their attention elsewhere. Finding no further opportunity to take another scalp or prisoner, the marauders re-joined their war party.

⁴¹⁷ Capt. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, June 8, 1774, and Augustine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob’s Creek, June 8, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 50-52, and 92-94, respectively; Letters [Extracts] dated Fort Pitt, June 16, and 23, 1774 *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), and June 9 and 16, and July 20, 1774 *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind); and, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 12, 1774; Evans, 29-31; Sipe, 495.

The day after the Spicer massacre, and in the same neighborhood, a man imprudently took leave of his companions to go hunting. A short while later, they heard five shots off in the distance. When their friend's horse returned with an empty saddle, the others went in search. They reported discovering the missing hunter's coat riddled with a number of bullet holes and surrounded by footprints. On Tuesday, within sight of the people who had taken shelter in Jenkins' Fort, waiting Indians killed and scalped Henry Wall and a companion named Keener. Connolly received news of these depredations, as well as reports from Wheeling that Indians had killed a man named Proctor at Grave Creek, and thus confirmed fears that at least one more war party – most likely Shawnees – remained at large south of the Ohio.⁴¹⁸

To counter the raiders “about to annoy our Settlements,” Connolly detached one hundred active militia soldiers under the command of good officers to find and engage them, if possible. After warriors killed and scalped another settler just outside the fort at Redstone on the Monongahela, a thirty-man patrol met two individuals who swore that they saw thirty Indians about five miles away. The militiamen immediately marched in the direction the informants had indicated, but failed to find the enemy. Another thirty-man detachment went in pursuit of those that had murdered the Spicer family and others near Dunkard Creek. The lieutenant in command reported that his men managed to overtake the raiders, who chose to scatter and evade rather than engage an armed enemy. Although they killed none of the Indians, the militiamen rescued several captives, as well as recovered some horses

⁴¹⁸ Capt. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, June 8, 1774, and Augustine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob's Creek, June 8, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 50-52, and 92-94, respectively.

and other property plundered in the attacks. The raids had caused such panic that many people avoided travel on the main roads if they could. Like other well-to-do area families, brothers William and Augustine Crawford convinced about a dozen families to join them in building forts adjacent to their houses, where their neighbors could take shelter instead of abandoning their homes. Furthermore, the Crawford brothers notified Washington that due to the emergency, William had enlisted the craftsmen and laborers employed at his western property into his company of militia.⁴¹⁹

On Saturday, June 11, Captain Francis McClure and his second-in-command, Lieutenant Samuel Kinkade, led their forty-man company in pursuit of Logan's warriors in the neighborhood of Ten-Mile Creek above Redstone. Kinkade may have told his company commander how his father, St. Clair and other Pennsylvania officials reacted to the news that he had resigned his recent appointment as a Westmoreland County magistrate to accept a Virginia militia commission. Most of their conversation probably concerned the raids of the previous week in which Logan and his men killed and scalped an estimated sixteen settlers, and took several others captive. After receiving intelligence that someone saw some Indians, they hastened toward the scene.

As the troops struggled up a steep ascent, the officers pushed ahead "rashly, with insufficient caution," anxious to bring on an engagement and avenge the recent murders. A group of Indians waited in ambush, concealed in the thick foliage at the

⁴¹⁹ *Virginia Gazette #1* (Purdie and Dixon), June 27, 1774; Capt. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, June 8, 1774, and Augustine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob's Creek, June 8, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 50-52, and 92-94, respectively.

top of the hill.⁴²⁰ The warriors fired as the two officers came within range. One bullet struck the captain in the chest and killed him. Another tore into the lieutenant's arm and caused a serious but not mortal wound. As the soldiers advanced to their fallen officers, they saw four warriors running from their concealed positions. Part of the men remained with the wounded Kinkade as the rest went in pursuit. The soldiers believed that they wounded one, but the Indians otherwise escaped without injury. After they buried McClure's remains, the company marched home. Kinkade's report confirmed that the war party remained at large in the Monongahela region.⁴²¹

The Frontier

Few expected an Indian war to remain confined to the Pittsburgh region. Colonel Abraham Hite, the county lieutenant, notified Governor Dunmore that hostile Indians had invaded Hampshire County. Warriors had attacked several farms on Cheat River in the first week of June. They killed inhabitants in their homes and cattle the fields, which prompted the colonel to report "that a scarce day happens that but some cruelty is committed." Opinions between Virginians and Pennsylvanians continued to differ. When he reported "some Mischief" on the Cheat River in which the Indians killed "eight or nine [Virginia] People" to Penn, St. Clair still questioned whether it signaled revenge for the massacre of the Yellow Creek Mingo, or the beginning of a war. In contrast, Hite wrote to Dunmore "that the many accounts of barbarity" made

⁴²⁰ Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 14, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 517; Boyd Crumrine, Franklin Ellis, and Austin N. Hungerford History of Washington County, Pennsylvania: With Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Company, 1882), 70-71.

⁴²¹ Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 14, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 517; Crumrine, Ellis, and Hungerford, 70-71. The engagement took place near present Waynesburg, Pa. While some sources have recorded the lieutenant's name as "Kinkaid," it is recorded as "Kinkade" in the militia muster rolls.

“sufficiently it obvious to anyone” that the Shawnees had resolved to declare war on Virginia. In consequence, he reported that people in the backcountry had either resorted to forting or moved away from the settlements.⁴²²

Farther south, warriors, suspected to be Shawnees, attacked a party of Floyd’s surveyors on one of the branches of the New River – a tributary of the Great Kanawha – in Fincastle County. The surveyors drove the Indians off killing eight in a smart skirmish, but suffered the loss of eight men and a boy of their own party.⁴²³

Reverend John Brown wrote to his brother-in-law, Colonel William Preston, that without a doubt, war would probably come. Observing that “a great number under your Care whose dependence for protection (under God) is upon you,” the preacher urged the county lieutenant to be on his watch and to take every prudent method to prevent a surprize attack.⁴²⁴ As the county lieutenant, Preston needed no one to remind him where his duty lay. While he also held the posts of county surveyor and sheriff, and had represented his county in the House of Burgesses, he had a wealth of military experience. In addition to a life of service in the militia, he had commanded a ranger company defending the frontier during the French and Indian War.

Preston alerted and directed the captains commanding the Fincastle County militia companies to muster their troops and exert themselves “in keeping the people from abandoning their settlements” and “make them punctually obey orders.” Although the Militia Law had expired in February, everyone expected it would be renewed and

⁴²² *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), June 16, 1774; Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 8, 1774, *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives*, I: 6: 510.

⁴²³ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), June 2, 1774.

⁴²⁴ Rev. John Brown to Col. William Preston, letter dated Mr. Howard’s, May 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ29, (26-27).

continued in the current session of the General Assembly. Captain Daniel Smith agreed that the *Act for Making Provisions against Invasions and Insurrections* gave military officers sufficient authority over civilians and to employ the militia during dangerous times, and considered the recent amendment very helpful. The law gave the governor, county lieutenants and other commanders of militia full power and authority to levy, raise, arm, and muster such forces of militia necessary to repel invasions, including Indian attacks, suppress insurrections, or contend with other danger.⁴²⁵

To comply with the intent of the militia laws and the colonel's orders, Smith scheduled a private muster of his company on June 12, or "as soon as the men could get notice as they live much dispers'd." The captain expressed his concern over the scarcity of gunpowder and lead in his part of the county, a situation he described as "a Circumstance as alarming as any that occurs to me now." Although the militia law required each man to keep one pound of powder and four pounds of lead at his home, Smith estimated that if called out to defend the community against an immediate invasion, his company only had an average of five charges of powder per man. Expecting a shipment from Colonel Andrew Lewis of Botetourt County, Smith learned that Major Arthur Campbell, the county battalion's third ranking field officer, had a large quantity reserved for such emergencies. In consequence, Smith sent

⁴²⁵ Capt. Daniel Smith to Col. William Preston, letter dated Indian Creek, May 30, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ149 (30-31); Act for Reducing Several Acts for Making Provisions Against Invasions and Insurrections into One Act, Hening, Statutes, 7: 106-107.

Lieutenant James Watson to enquire of its suitability and availability, and obtain a quantity for the company.⁴²⁶

Williamsburg

As crucial events transpired at Pittsburgh, New Comer's Town, and on the frontier, members of the Virginia General Assembly converged on the colonial capital at Williamsburg. Andrew Lewis of Botetourt, his brother Charles of Augusta, and William Christian of Fincastle County, all field officers in the militia responsible for the defense of the colony's frontier, also held elected offices as in the lower house. They took their seats with the other members of the House of Burgesses when the General Assembly convened to address the "necessary business of this Colony," on Thursday, May 5. In his speech that formally opened the session, Governor Dunmore welcomed the councilors and burgesses, and charged them to "proceed with dispatch which the Publick convenience requires." After making and passing the necessary pro forma resolutions of thanks to the governor for his opening speech, and congratulating him on the recent safe arrival of his wife, Charlotte, the Countess Dunmore, and their children, the Assembly turned its attention to matters of government.⁴²⁷

On Wednesday, Speaker of the House of Burgesses Peyton Randolph read Lord Dunmore's address concerning the boundary dispute with Pennsylvania and the

⁴²⁶ Capt. Daniel Smith to Col. William Preston, letter dated Indian Creek, May 30, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ149 (30-31); Act for the Better Regulating and Disciplining of the Militia, Hening, Statutes, 7:94.

⁴²⁷ Council and House of Burgesses to Governor Dunmore, broadside dated Williamsburg, May 5, 1774, Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 178, Folders 12a and 12e, respectively, Broad-sides, Leaflets, and Pamphlets from America and Europe, U.S. Library of Congress; May 6, 1774, entry, JHB, 1773-1774, 73-74.

military situation on the frontier. His lordship explained and justified his decisions to establish jurisdiction and protect the district in order to correct the “defenseless state of a considerable Body of his Majesty’s Subjects settled in that part of the Country.” The next day, the governor requested the speaker read Connolly’s recent report that contained an account of “some Hostility commenced by the Indians” to the lower house.⁴²⁸ After discussing the matters in the days that followed, the burgesses concurred with the governor’s actions and voted to draft an address to present how they desired the continuing friendship “with our Sister Colony Pennsylvania” and to resolve the boundary dispute. As a committee of the whole, the representatives concurred with the governor on establishing a temporary boundary line until the king directed the “true and proper” permanent border.⁴²⁹ As the House of Burgesses met, two Pennsylvania commissioners arrived from Philadelphia. Andrew Allen and James Tilghman had come to Williamsburg, intent on discussing and settling the boundary dispute with Governor Dunmore.⁴³⁰

On Friday, the thirteenth, regarding the Indian threat, the House of Burgesses authorized Dunmore to exert the powers which were “fully invested” in the governor under the existing *Provisions against Invasions and Insurrections*. The burgesses determined that law was sufficient to deal with “hostile and perfidious Attempts of the savage and barbarous Enemies,” those Indians who had already commenced hostilities against his Majesty’s subjects.⁴³¹ Dunmore replied the next day that while aware of their desire to “advance the Prosperity” of the colony, he believed the act

⁴²⁸ May 11 and 12, 1774, entries, JHB 1773-1774, 90-91, 92.

⁴²⁹ May 12, 13, and 14, 1774, entries, JHB 1773-1774, 93, 97, 99-100.

⁴³⁰ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), May 26, 1774.

⁴³¹ May 12, 13, and 14, 1774, JHB 1773-1774, 93, 97, 99-100.

they had cited did not enable him to most economically “raise a sufficient force for repelling the Attempts of the Indians.” He recognized that they saw the situation in a different light, and disagreed on the basis that their resolution would produce the exact opposite result than what they intended. Dunmore told the burgesses that he did not consider the militia equal to the occasion, and therefore sought authority to raise a force of regular full-time soldiers. Subject to discipline and raised at the very beginning of the disturbance, he believed regulars would demonstrate the colony’s determination to severely punish the Indians for any incursion. He argued that in the end, such a force would cost the colony and their constituents less money while affording more effective protection of their “dearest interests.”⁴³²

Meanwhile, in the course of conducting its business, the laws pertaining to colonial defense made their way through the legislative process. On Thursday, May 19, the representatives resolved to continue the Acts against Invasions and Insurrections, with an amendment, and passed it on to the Council for approval. The bill to renew the Militia Law remained in the Committee of Propositions and Grievances. In addition to routine legislative matters, the lower house’s Select Committee of Correspondence read, informed the committee of the whole, and replied to the legislatures of the other colonies of British America on the status of constitutional grievances with the government of Great Britain. Virginians, like most other American colonists, saw the Tea Tax as an unconstitutional attempt to raise revenue without their consent, but disapproved of the destruction of private property that the Boston Sons of Liberty committed by dumping East India Company tea into the

⁴³² Ibid.

harbor the previous December. However, they deplored the heavy-handed British government's reaction even more.⁴³³

On Thursday, May 24, the House of Burgesses, "being deeply impressed with apprehension" on learning the provisions of the Boston Port Bill that would go into effect on June 1, issued a special order. They regarded the "hostile Invasion of the City of Boston, in our Sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay" as a threat to the liberty of all colonists. To protest the British government's intention to use armed force to close Boston harbor and halt its commerce, the House of Burgesses resolved to observe the following Wednesday, the day the act went into effect, as a day of "Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer." The committee of the whole accordingly ordered that on June 1, at ten o'clock in the morning, the Speaker and Mace would lead the assembled representatives in a solemn procession from the lower house chamber of the capitol down Duke of Gloucester Street to the Bruton Parish Church. Once inside, they would devoutly implore God's "divine interposition for averting the heavy Calamity that threatens destruction to our Civil Rights and the evils of civil War." The burgesses wanted to show their solidarity with the citizens of Boston, and join their fellow colonists as loyal subjects of the king to speak with "one heart and one Mind" to firmly oppose "by all just and proper means, every injury to our American Rights." Not merely a protest, they would offer prayers asking God to inspire the king and "his Parliament" with the "Wisdom, Moderation, and Justice" to remove any threats to the rights of loyal Americans. The House directed its order

⁴³³ May 19 and 24, 1774, entries, JHB 1773-1774, 1905), 110 and 124, respectively.

published in the House Journal, newspapers, and on broadsides, then resumed to address routine matters for the next two days.⁴³⁴

On Thursday, May 31, John Blair, clerk of the Council, entered the House chamber during a discussion about the salary for the minister of Shelburne Parish in Loudon County. Addressing Randolph, he announced that the governor commanded the House to attend his excellency immediately in the Council Chamber. They went upstairs and across to the wing of the capital where the upper house convened. After Randolph assured the governor that all had arrived, Dunmore addressed the speaker and the gentlemen of the House of Burgesses, and explained, “I have in my hand a Paper published by Order of your House, conceived in such Terms as reflect highly upon his Majesty and the Parliament of Great Britain; which makes it necessary for me to dissolve you.” He then announced, “You are dissolved accordingly.”⁴³⁵ In a letter to General Gage, Dunmore explained that his “good friends the Virginians” showed themselves a “little too High spirited,” but he took them by surprise. Satisfied with his action, Dunmore told Gage that he believed his actions had caused most of the burgesses to “repent sincerely for what they did.”⁴³⁶

The dissolution did not abolish the House of Burgesses, but called on the voting freeholders to reconstitute it. A legal formality that previous governors had used on occasion, many burgesses knew they would return to their seats in the capitol before long. In the meantime, the governor had to issue writs for new elections, at which time their constituents would vote to reinstate or replace them. Once accomplished,

⁴³⁴ May 24, 1774, entry, JHB 1773-1774, 124.

⁴³⁵ May 31, 1774, entry, JHB1773-1774, 132.

⁴³⁶ Earl of Dunmore to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Williamsburg, June 11, 1774, Gage Papers.

his Excellency would call the General Assembly to convene and resume the process of enacting laws. Unfortunately, the dissolution halted progress on some important legislation. Although the current law remained in effect, the amended bill against Invasions and Insurrections had only made it to the Council for consideration. The overdue continuation of the expired Militia Law had yet to clear the Committee for Propositions and Grievances for its third and final reading, and vote by the House. But, the old act remained in effect until the General Assembly reconvened to continue, amend or replace it – contrary to what some had thought. Despite their dissolution by his lordship, the burgesses still hosted “A grand ball and entertainment” at the capitol that evening to celebrate the arrival of the Countess of Dunmore.⁴³⁷

During the fourth week of May, Dunmore received the Pennsylvania commissioners to negotiate a temporary boundary to ease tensions between the two colonies. Allen and Tilghman called at the Governor’s Palace for their first meeting on Saturday, May 21, seeking to reach an agreement with his Lordship on some line of jurisdiction to remedy the “clashing jurisdictions” until the king settled the matter permanently. When the Pennsylvania commissioners put the justification for their colony’s proposed temporary line in writing, Dunmore rejected it. He claimed that their calculations, which put Pittsburgh within the Pennsylvania boundary by five miles, were in error. The Virginia governor replied with what he considered a “true construction.” Based on his understanding of Pennsylvania’s royal grant, the line “running eastwardly” resulted in Pittsburgh falling fifty miles outside of that colony’s

⁴³⁷ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), and *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), May 26, 1774.

limits. After further discussion, Dunmore concluded, “Your proposals amount in reality to nothing and could not possibly be complied with.” He told them to inform Governor Penn that his government would not relinquish its jurisdiction of the area without orders from the king. On Friday, May 27, Allen and Tilghman thanked the governor for the polite attention and “dispatch” he gave their business, and departed Williamsburg the next day.⁴³⁸

In addition to the latest articles and opinions on the continuing constitutional crises between colonies and mother country, the *Virginia Gazette* of May 26 carried news of the simmering hostilities on the Ohio. One article warned readers, “We believe with much certainty that an INDIAN WAR is inevitable, as many outrages have lately happened on the frontier.” The causes still seemed unclear to many who did not live in the backcountry. The article accurately concluded, “... whether the Indians or whites are most to blame, we cannot determine, the accounts being so extremely complicated.”⁴³⁹

Pittsburgh

As the effort to repair Fort Pitt neared completion, Connolly ordered four hundred weight – or 4 cwt., 448 pounds – of gunpowder for the militia from the B. and M. Gratz merchant house of Philadelphia to ease the shortage of ammunition. In addition, he ordered a “[British] union flag of five yards to hoist at the Fort – also to be made of the woolen stuff called bunting.” In a letter to Michael Gratz, John

⁴³⁸ The Report of James Tilghman and Andrew Allen, Commissioners Appointed by the Hon. John Penn, Governor of Pennsylvania, to Treat with the Right Honourable the Earl of Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, to the Council held at Philadelphia, June 27, 1774, *American Archives*, 1: 454, 462.

⁴³⁹ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), and *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), May 26, 1774. Emphasis found in the original.

Campbell, the company's agent in Pittsburgh, wrote that Connolly's efforts had put Fort Pitt "more in a better posture of defense than I ever saw before."⁴⁴⁰

As leader of the Pennsylvania faction in the border dispute, St. Clair had become an outspoken critic of Governor Dunmore and Captain Connolly. Even Croghan had apparently begun to hint at a renewed allegiance to Pennsylvania. St. Clair and his fellow Westmoreland County magistrates charged that Connolly's Virginia militia had run roughshod over those inhabitants who remained loyal to Pennsylvania. He complained they had "harassed and oppressed the people," and "lay their hands on every thing they" wanted without asking, and "killed people's cattle at their pleasure." Connolly replied that as the Invasions and Insurrections law required, his officers appraised all the property they impressed for military purposes and presented the citizens thus deprived with "a bill on Lord Dunmore" for payment. St. Clair described the practice as a "downright mockery."⁴⁴¹ It may have surprised Connolly, but many Virginians did not hold a high opinion of him either. Although never insubordinate, even William Crawford confided to George Washington that Connolly had "incurred the displeasure of the people."⁴⁴²

In a report to Governor Penn, the magistrate expressed his hope that the crisis would reveal "some of the devilish schemes" carried out by Connolly and other Virginia partisans, or possibly Dunmore himself. He even maintained a belief that an Indian

⁴⁴⁰ John Campbell to Andrew Levy, and forwarded to Michael Gratz, letter dated Pittsburgh, May 30, 1774, Gratz Papers, 142-143. In Britain and Colonial America, "one hundredweight (cwt.)" represented a unit of measure equal to 112 lbs.

⁴⁴¹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 501-503; and, Hening, Statutes, 7: 108, 111-112.

⁴⁴² Capt. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Spring Garden, May 8, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 48.

War, provoked either on Dunmore's orders or Connolly's own volition, was part of the Virginia Plan, and which morally strengthened Pennsylvania's position in the boundary dispute. The substantial expenses incurred by repairing Fort Pitt and calling out the militia required an appropriation from the colonial treasury to satisfy, or it would fall to Connolly's personal responsibility. St. Clair knew that the Virginia General Assembly would only levy taxes to cover the expenditure if they appeared sufficiently necessary to justify the debt. St. Clair therefore believed the governor had planned, while Connolly executed, the incidents that had provoked the Shawnees and Mingoes to hostility – if he could only prove it.⁴⁴³

It seemed St. Clair and the rest of the Pennsylvania faction did not have to prove anything. At the beginning of June, Major General Frederick Haldimand reported to the secretary of state for the colonies, Lord Dartmouth, that he had received information about Yellow Creek, “though not from any of the governors or any persons in the Indian department, that one Colonel Cressop from Virginia ... has of late been on a scout against Indians inhabiting about the Ohio and killed several of them.”⁴⁴⁴ Later in the month, Sir William Johnson similarly notified Dartmouth that he “received the very disagreeable and unexpected intelligence that a certain Mr. Cressop, an inhabitant of Virginia, had trepanned and murdered forty Indians on Ohio.”⁴⁴⁵ Johnson further explained to Haldimand that the Indians had considered the

⁴⁴³ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated May 29, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 501-503.

⁴⁴⁴ Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated New York, June 1, 1774, DAR 8: 124-125.

⁴⁴⁵ Sir William Johnson to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Johnson Hall, June 20, 1774, DAR 8: 133-136.

attack on their people and scalping of their dead, attributed to Cresap, as a declaration of war.⁴⁴⁶

The roving war parties spread such chaos that it presented the Pennsylvania government an opportunity for recovering the part of Westmoreland County lost to Virginia. Under the threat of attack, but holding to his belief the Shawnees and Mingoes bore no hostility toward Pennsylvania, St. Clair made two recommendations. With no colonial militia on which to call, St. Clair, Croghan, McKee, Butler, Mackay, and Smith, along with other pro-Pennsylvania residents of Pittsburg, entered into a private “Association” to raise, provision and pay for a one hundred-man ranging company for one month. Optimistic that the company would recruit its volunteers in a short period of time, he asked the governor to request that the Pennsylvania Assembly assume the expense of keeping the men in service for a longer duration. St. Clair justified the cost by adding that under such protection, Pennsylvania colonists would less likely desert their homes and farms in the panic. Furthermore, he informed the governor that some Pittsburgh inhabitants had proposed to erect a stockade to fortify the town. Should negotiations with Dunmore’s government not satisfactorily resolve the boundary dispute, St. Clair suggested that having them under arms afforded Pennsylvania the ability of “throwing a few men into that place,” to lead the effort which “would recover the Country the Virginians had usurped.”⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ Sir William Johnson to Maj. Gen. Frederick Haldimand, letter dated Johnson Hall, June 9, 1774, PSWJ 8: 1164.

⁴⁴⁷ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letters dated Ligonier, May 29, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 501-503, and 504-505, respectively.

Carlisle merchant John Montgomery noticed the people of Westmoreland County in “great Confusion and Distress,” with many fleeing eastward and some building forts. He appealed to the governor and Assembly to provide a sufficient supply of arms and ammunition for the defense of the frontier settlements. Montgomery believed that any Indian war that involved Virginia would eventually also include Pennsylvania. Despite the Assembly’s aversion to military spending, Penn had to convince the house of its obligation and the necessity of raising and paying soldiers. At the very least, he argued that Westmoreland County needed a militia organization. Montgomery further recommended a unit of full-time soldiers, like St. Clair’s rangers, should be enlisted to patrol the settlements, intercept Indian war parties, and build or improve forts at Pittsburgh, Hanna’s Town, and Ligonier for the duration of the emergency to encourage Pennsylvanians to make a stand.⁴⁴⁸

If St. Clair and his associates hoped the news of a ranging company forming at Hanna’s Town would alarm Connolly and the Virginians, they succeeded. Croghan, however, explained to the Virginians that they would only operate between the Kiskiminetas River and Ligonier to help stem the flight of Pennsylvania inhabitants. He envisioned that if circumstances necessitated, they would act in concert with Virginia forces for the general defense of the country against a common foe, and not at cross-purposes. Croghan therefore urged St. Clair to exercise prudence and caution, and not employ his rangers to “Invade ye Rights of Virginia,” and thereby rekindle the war of words between the two governors, which would do nothing resolve

⁴⁴⁸ John Montgomery to Gov. John Penn, letters dated Carlisle, June 3 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 505-506, 506-507, respectively.

the boundary dispute.⁴⁴⁹ St. Clair therefore assured Penn, “In a very particular manner, our Soldiers are directed to avoid every occasion of dispute with the People in the Service of Virginia.”⁴⁵⁰

Newcomer’s Town

Concern for the fate of the traders still in Indian country continued to increase despite Cornstalk’s pledge to provide escorts and safe passage. The day after the eleven traders from New Comer’s Town arrived in Pittsburgh, Connolly learned that a number of warriors went to the Canoe Place on the Hockhocking bent on killing some of the whites who frequently gathered there.⁴⁵¹ Word reached Pittsburgh on June 12 that hostile Mingoes had killed and scalped a trader named Campbell at Newcomer’s Town, where Duncan and Anderson had found sanctuary the previous month.⁴⁵² According to Reverend Heckewelder, other traders found “true friends” among the Delawares, who put themselves in danger as a reward for their kindness. The Delawares who escorted many to safety in Pittsburgh not only had to avoid hostile Shawnees and Mingoes, but risked the likelihood that jittery militiamen might mistake them for an invading war party and open fire.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ George Croghan to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated June 4, 1774, *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives I*: 6: 507-508.

⁴⁵⁰ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Laurel Hill, June 7, 1774, *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives I*: 6: 509-510.

⁴⁵¹ Connolly Journal, May 26, 1774, 17.

⁴⁵² Letter [Extract], dated Fort Pitt, June 12, 1774, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 22, 1774, Eighteenth Century American Newspapers, Volume 1294, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and, John Montgomery to Gov. John Penn letter dated Carlisle, June 3 1774, *Pennsylvania Colonial Archives I*: 6: 506-507.

⁴⁵³ Rev. John Heckewelder, declaration, printed in Appendix, Jefferson *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 254.

A number of friendly Indians guided groups of traders to places of refuge on their side of the Ohio. One Delaware woman, for example, “espied” the Baptist clergyman David Jones and two traders as they travelled together on the Muskingum. After warning of the danger awaiting them if they continued in the direction they were heading, she led them along a route that allowed the men to “escape the vengeance of the strolling parties.” Although safer, the terrain proved extremely difficult, and so fatigued one of the traders that he admitted he preferred death to exhaustion. When the group finally struck a path, he decided to follow wherever it led and bade the others farewell.⁴⁵⁴ After he had walked only a few hundred yards, fifteen Mingoes took him captive within sight of White Eyes’ Town – about ten miles upstream from New Comer’s Town. He would have reached safety if he had remained with the woman, but as Jones later told Heckewelder, the Mingoes ritually tortured, scalped, and executed him. The warriors dismembered the man’s corpse, hung his limbs and flesh on bushes, and celebrated their triumph by yelling the scalp halloo. Hearing the noise, White Eyes led some Delaware warriors to investigate, but by the time they arrived, they could only collect and bury the remains. The next day, angry Mingoes exhumed and re-scattered the victim’s body parts. Once again, the Delawares recovered and re-buried them. The infuriated Mingoes entered the town and condemned the Delawares’ conduct, and pledged to “serve every white man they should meet in the same manner.”⁴⁵⁵ Undeterred by their threats, White Eyes kept most of the Delaware neutral.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 254.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 254.

A trader's store was located in the Delaware town of the Standing Stone on the Hockhocking River. The men who operated such franchises acquired pelts from Indian hunters in exchange for manufactured wares such as cloth, ammunition, firearms, ornaments, and other goods. During the period the trouble began to happen, the principal trader left on the two-week journey to the company factory at Pittsburgh where he would exchange pelts for merchandise to bring back to the Indian town. He left John Leith, his seventeen-year-old employee, to mind the store in his absence. John was resting on some skins one morning when an Indian boy entered the store. The boy told John that his father, a local chief, wanted to see him immediately.⁴⁵⁶

On entering the dwelling, the chief motioned for John to sit as a white woman, who Leith assumed to be his wife, translated the Indian's words into English. After they exchanged greetings, the older man asked John if he had heard that war had broken out between the whites and Indians. The boy listened with wonder and surprise as the chief told him that Shawnee warriors had recently killed seven white men and captured four others in the area. Recounting the causes of the current hostilities, the elder told the youth that "the Virginians had taken Mingo Town" and massacred Logan's relatives. John answered honestly that he had "heard nothing about it." Believing that he stood accused, John stated, "I had never done any of them harm," and swore he had, "no hand in the matter."⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁶ COUNSEL W. BUTTERFIELD A Short Biography of John Leith: With a Brief Account of His Life among the Indians; A Reprint with Illustrative Notes (Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Company, 1883), 10-13. Some sources record John Leith's surname as "Leeth." The Indian town at Standing Stone, also called Free Stone on some period maps, was near present Lancaster, Ohio.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

The chief then gestured for John to rise to his feet, and with a “fearful expectation” that the chief intended to kill him, he tried to steel himself for the blow of a war club that would surely follow. Instead, the chief put him at ease, pointed to his wife’s breasts, and said, “Your mother has risen from the dead to give you suck.” He then continued, “Your father has also risen to take care of you, and you need not be afraid, for I will be a father to you.” With those words the older man embraced John about the neck to signify that he had formally adopted him. The chief then called on all the town’s headmen to meet at the store. After making a brief announcement in their language, “they proceeded to divide the store-goods, spirits, and all that I had care of among themselves.”⁴⁵⁸

Williamsburg

With hostile Indians attacking “the back parts of this Country” to commit “outrages and devastations,” Dunmore issued a circular letter to the county lieutenants listing their responsibilities for meeting the crisis. As they could no longer entertain any hopes of pacification with the hostile bands of Indians, he took the opportunity to criticize the General Assembly for not having thought proper to pay more attention to the situation on the frontier, “though they were Sufficiently apprised of it.” He then alluded to the burgesses passing the irresponsible resolution to hold the day of fasting and prayer to protest the Boston Port Bill before voting on the more pressing necessity of renewing the colony’s expired Militia Law. He then outlined the only

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, 14.

means left to “extricate ourselves out of so Calamitous a Situation,” and explained, how the militia would continue function while faced with an Indian invasion.⁴⁵⁹

By virtue of his royal commission as governor of the colony and commander in chief of the militia, the king had delegated the power of the sword to Lord Dunmore. However, only the General Assembly, and specifically the House of Burgesses, held the power of the provincial purse. Dunmore might call out the militia and raise forces by accepting volunteers or drafting men, but only the lower house had the authority to levy taxes to raise revenue to pay the soldiers for performing active service and acquire the provisions, supplies, and services necessary to conduct operations. The colonial treasurer disbursed such money only after a clearly defined legislative process was concluded. Commissioners appointed by the House of Burgesses examined all the relevant accounts and made their reports to the committee of the whole house at the next session of the General Assembly. Payment of authorized expenses was then made after the house voted to accept the commissioners’ findings by majority vote.⁴⁶⁰ While the expiration of the Militia Law neither disbanded the militia nor nullified the obligations and responsibilities of those who served, it did suspend the process by which the General Assembly appropriated the funds and authorized the colonial treasurer to pay the troops for active service and other related military expenses. Dunmore’s letter therefore instructed the county lieutenants on how they would perform their duties until the General Assembly renewed the act.

⁴⁵⁹ Earl of Dunmore to County Lieutenants, circular letter dated Williamsburg, June 10, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ39 (33-35).

⁴⁶⁰ Hening, Statutes, 8: 9; Everts Boutell Greene The Provincial Governor in the English Colonies of North America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1898), 101; Griffith, 6.

The governor informed General Gage that the Indians had “most certainly broke out and murdered a good number of our people,” consequently, “all our thoughts must now be turned that way.”⁴⁶¹ Under the authority of his royal commission, and the letter of instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Dunmore was responsible for Virginia’s defense. He therefore ordered the county lieutenants to embody – or activate – their militia to stand in readiness to respond to alarms, although not yet called to actual service. In the absence of a current militia law, he left it to them to exert the powers authorized by the Act of Assembly pertaining to the situation, according to their abilities “that may answer the present exigence.”⁴⁶²

Dunmore directed the county lieutenants to take the routine precautions found in the Militia Law and every officer’s commission. He emphasized the importance of their captains holding private musters to ensure the men had the required arms and ammunition, and practiced the drill prescribed in the Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764. Of equal importance, he urged the county lieutenants to “keep up a constant Correspondence” with their counterparts in adjoining counties and assist one another, and if necessary, combine their “respective Corps of Militia into one body.” Aware of the shortage of ammunition, Dunmore promised to provide them with powder and ball on his own credit, should the General Assembly not vote to appropriate the necessary funds in the next session after reinstating and continuing the Militia Law. He left it to their judgment as to where and how many, but

⁴⁶¹ Earl of Dunmore to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Williamsburg, June 11, 1774, Thomas Gage Papers.

⁴⁶² King George III to Lord Dunmore, Royal Commission and Letter Instructions as Governor of Virginia, dated Court of St. James, 7 February 1771; Earl of Dunmore to the County Lieutenants, circular letter dated Williamsburg, June 10, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts, 3QQ39 (33-35); Greene, 99.

recommended that they have their men erect small forts where the inhabitants could find protection, the county to secure its important documents, and, if compelled to give ground by a large invasion, cover the retreat of the militia. The governor believed that the construction of a fort at the confluence of the Great Kanawha and Ohio rivers would answer several good purposes. While he encouraged them to do so, he left it to their judgment based on their knowledge of the country if they deemed it expedient. Dunmore added that erecting the new fort, and maintaining communications between it and Fort Pitt, now called Fort Dunmore, would offer better protection to area settlers and “awe the Indians.”⁴⁶³

Finally, Dunmore relied on the “Zeal and discretion” of the county lieutenants to provide the extraordinary means for any extraordinary occasions that might arise. Ordinarily these officers could not order their men into active service on their own authority except to repel an invasion, or order them – particularly drafted men – to march out of the colony, or more than five miles past the most distant settlements on the frontier. However, Dunmore indicated that if the military circumstances justified doing so, and they could enlist a sufficient number of volunteers, militia officers could conduct operations beyond the limits allowed by law. If they could pursue invading war parties out of Virginia or attack their camps in Indian country, for example, Dunmore encouraged them to take the opportunity of delivering such a stroke. If it proved decisive in stopping Indian depredations, he reasoned, it would

⁴⁶³ Earl of Dunmore to the County Lieutenants, circular letter dated Williamsburg, June 10, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ39 (33-35); Earl of Dunmore to George Rogers Clark, Certificate of Commission as Captain in the Augusta County, Virginia, Militia, dated Williamsburg, 2 May 1774, Clark Papers, Draper manuscripts 48J1; Hening, Statutes, 9: 23-24. Found in Ordinance for Raising and Embodying a Sufficient Force for the Defense and Protection of the Colony passed by the Virginia Convention in July 1775, it indicates the manual in use by the Virginia colonial militia before the Revolutionary War.

certainly justify their actions with the government and “oblige the Assembly to indemnify,” or pay them for their service.⁴⁶⁴

After issuing his instructions to the county lieutenant, Dunmore wrote to the commander-in-chief of his Majesty’s force in North America, General Gage, who had just arrived in Boston from home leave in England. The reports from Governor Penn notwithstanding, Dunmore took the opportunity to apprise the general of the situation from the Virginia perspective. His forces had rebuilt Fort Pitt to protect the settlers in the region, “and put it in better condition than it ever was,” at least as a defense against small arms. When those responsible had completed the task, Dunmore said, “They have done me the Honor of calling it by my name.” With all the nations and tribes to the south and west potentially joined in an alliance against Virginia, Dunmore assured Gage that he had the least doubt his colony’s soldiers would soon give a good account of themselves. If the few skirmishes that they already had gave any indication of the ultimate outcome, even where the Indians had at least twice the number of men on the field, Dunmore proudly stated, “our people have always kept their ground.”⁴⁶⁵

Virginia prepared for war on the frontier even as its citizens in the more protected counties and those in sister colonies discussed the deepening constitutional crisis triggered by the recent acts of the British ministry and Parliament. While the expiration of the Militia Law did not disband the militia, it complicated the means by which the colony paid for military expenses until the General Assembly reconvened.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. it indicates the manual in use by the Virginia colonial militia before the Revolutionary War.

⁴⁶⁵ Earl of Dunmore to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Williamsburg, June 11, 1774, Thomas Gage Papers.

The next several months would determine whether or not the militia of Virginia's frontier counties proved equal to the challenge they faced.

Chapter 6: The Warlike Nation of the Cherokee – One War Avoided

Wakatomika

A scalp halloo, the sound of which Reverend John Heckewelder described as a “mixture of triumph and terror, or glory and fear,” was heard from the woods beyond the cornfields.⁴⁶⁶ Messengers ran ahead to the cluster of villages that comprised the town of Wakatomika to announce the approach of a war party returning from the south bank of the Ohio. Men and women, elders and children, all put aside daily chores, ceased play, interrupted routines, and gathered to welcome them home. The returning braves had drawn the first blood on behalf of their people against the enemy *Shemanthe* or *Assaragoa*, meaning Big Knife, as the Shawnees and Iroquois, respectively, called the Virginians.

Although not entirely unlike that of a victorious army returning from campaign with captured battle flags and prisoners of war, Reverend Heckewelder wrote that the Indian celebration was “far more frightful and terrific.” The missionary continued, “It is an awful spectacle to see the Indians return home in triumph from a successful expedition with their prisoners and scalps taken in battle.” The different perspective reflected the wide cultural divide between European and native peoples. The weary but excited warriors quickened the pace to cover the last few hundred yards as they shouted the “dreadful scalp-yell.” The people of the town gathered around them as

⁴⁶⁶ Heckewelder, 217.

the braves proudly displayed their trophies, dressed scalps hung from long poles, and recounted the exploits of their victory.⁴⁶⁷ Meanwhile, the captives contemplated the fate that awaited them. They had already endured much hardship since their capture, and were grief-stricken. They reflected on the scalps their captors displayed nearby. Some of them had belonged to family members, friends and fellow prisoners just a few days before.⁴⁶⁸

Like their counterparts in many Indian societies, Shawnee and Mingo warriors measured victory by the numbers of “heads” taken in individual combat. Each head represented an enemy conquered, whether killed, wounded, or captured. It mattered little if he had lifted the scalp from the corpse of a slain enemy or a maimed one who still lived. A prisoner, whether eventually executed, sold, or adopted, counted toward a warrior’s tally as much as a scalp. According to Heckewelder, both scalps and prisoners provided “visible proofs” of their valor and prowess, and each warrior heralded his arrival in triumph with a separate scalp yell for each head.⁴⁶⁹

Embattled Indian nations found the practices particularly effective for terrorizing the inhabitants who settled in the frontier districts of British America, or those individuals who encroached on tribal homelands or exclusive hunting grounds. The taking of scalps and prisoners constituted an important component of national policy and the supporting military strategy when at war against any enemies, regardless of race or culture. Since an Indian nation often went to war to avenge insult of injury committed against it, the taking of heads was an integral part of the condolence

⁴⁶⁷ Jemison Narrative, 75.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Heckewelder, 192, 217.

process for families who lost a young warrior in battle, as well as for those who lost any young people to disease or other non-war-related cause. Grieving families satisfied their need for revenge by accepting an enemy scalp taken on their behalf, or by torturing and executing a prisoner. The family could also adopt a captive to take the place of the deceased loved one, or redeem the prisoner in exchange for weapons, ammunition, or goods.⁴⁷⁰

Prisoners usually endured tremendous cruelty on the march. Mary Jemison vividly recalled the horrific treatment she received as a prisoner of the Shawnees during the French and Indian War.⁴⁷¹ One of ten captured in the attack on her family's farm, only fifteen-year-old Mary and a neighbor's young son arrived in Indian country alive.⁴⁷² Mary's captors deprived their "Extremely fatigued" prisoners of food and water the first day and night, and when the little ones cried for water, the braves made them "drink urine or go thirsty." One Indian followed the party to lash the slower children with a whip in order to maintain the pace needed to evade the militia attempting to rescue the captives. During the first night's rest halt, the warriors "watched [the prisoners] with the greatest vigilance," and permitted them neither shelters nor warming and cooking fires.⁴⁷³ In contrast, Betsy Spicer and her brother experienced less severe treatment. While Logan threatened to kill them if they

⁴⁷⁰ Jemison Narrative, 9.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, 63.

⁴⁷² Ibid, 67. The Jemison farm was located near present day Cashtown, near Gettysburg, in Adams County, Pennsylvania.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 66-69.

attempted to escape or alert rescuers, he also had his men carry the children on their backs when they became too tired to maintain the pace.⁴⁷⁴

After they had travelled a sufficient distance, and any likelihood of an attempted rescue sufficiently diminished, the captors finally permitted hungry prisoners to build fires and offered them food, often plundered from their own pantries. Whereas Logan's Mingoes had already slain all of Betsy and William's relatives in their presence, the Shawnees separated Mary and one other child from the rest, never to see their families and friends again alive. In both cases, the captors separated the surviving children from each other and their previous lives. Mary and Betsy also experienced similar acts of mental cruelty by those who took them prisoner. Both girls recalled that they had to watch as their captors scraped their parents' and siblings' blood, brain matter and other tissue from their "yet wet and bloody" scalps. The skins were then stretched over hoops fashioned from green wood, then dried and tanned like parchment. After the Indians painted the tanned skin and combed the hair, they hung the dressed scalps on the ends of long poles.⁴⁷⁵

On their arrival, amid the "peculiar shoutings, demonstrations of joy, and the exhibition of some trophies of victory, the mourners come forward to make their claims."⁴⁷⁶ The distribution of plundered property satisfied some, while revenge and condolence provided the two major factors in determining the fate of captives. In the absence of a prisoner, returning braves might present the mourning family an enemy

⁴⁷⁴ Bates, 239; Musick.

⁴⁷⁵ Jemison Narrative, 68; Axtell and Sturtevant, 456, 458, 461. Mary Jemison's two older brothers actually escaped and avoided being captured with the rest of the family. The warrior who killed William Spicer Sr. actually lost the scalp before he could dress it.

⁴⁷⁶ Jemison Narrative, 78.

scalp to satisfy their vengeance.⁴⁷⁷ Some captives, primarily women and children – as well as some men – who survived the journey to Indian country, like the Spicer orphans, found themselves “adopted by the families of their conquerors in the place of lost or deceased relations or friends.” The Indians separated Betsy and William, and offered them to families from different tribal bands which lived a great distance apart. The two siblings did not see each other again for many years. Repatriated under the terms of the war-ending treaty, Betsy eagerly returned to her Dunkard Creek community. Like more than a few prisoners captured and adopted at a young age, William became domesticated and eventually identified more with his new family. When presented an opportunity to return home, adopted captives like William “never wish themselves away again.”⁴⁷⁸ Captivity narratives attest to the relative good fortune and happiness of some, as well as the cruel suffering and death, of many who fell into Indian hands.

An adult male captive’s ordeal usually began when his conquerors ordered him to run the gauntlet to a painted post from twenty to forty yards away. Reaching the goal required him to pass between two lines of men, women, and children who stood “ready to strike him” with axes, sticks, and other offensive weapons. Warriors stood on the sides to throw sand in his eyes to temporarily blind him as those on the gauntlet continued to beat the victim “most intolerably.” Beatings became so severe that one survivor recalled having wished for his tormentors “to strike the fatal blow” and end his misery, and “apprehended they were too long about it.” Willing to accommodate such desires, “some person, longing to avenge the death of some

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, 78; Bates, 239; Musick.

⁴⁷⁸ Heckewelder, 218.

relation or friend slain in battle” always stood ready for the captive to fall and “immediately dispatched” him.⁴⁷⁹

Surviving the gauntlet only guaranteed a captive that he would live until female elders or a grieving family determined his fate. If given as a condolence, mourners could elect to receive and adopt him into the family, or exact their revenge with merciless treatment in long protracted tortures, which included burning and other “dreadful executions.”⁴⁸⁰ The same applied to the community at large. A display of courage while running the gauntlet significantly increased, but did not ensure, one’s chances of survival. According to the travelling Baptist preacher David Jones, “if any in the town fancy the person for a wife, husband, son, or daughter, then the person purchases the captive, and keeps him as his own.” If the elders decided on revenge, the level of pain inflicted significantly increased if the nation had suffered heavy losses in battle, or the enemy had committed murders or other atrocities against their innocent women and children.⁴⁸¹

According to Jones, among the customs of the Shawnee nation, he “reckoned” the cruelty they inflicted on the captives who they did not adopt was “singularly bad.” He observed one method of torture in which the captors ran a knife between the victims’ “wrist bones,” then drew deer sinews through their wounds, and bound them “naked to a post in the long house.” The Indians, he claimed, then amused themselves by making “all imaginable diversion” of the helpless and agonizing

⁴⁷⁹ Smith, 22-24; “Two or three rods” is a distance between 33 and almost 50 feet – one “rod” being a unit of linear measure, sometime also called a “perch” or a “pole,” of 16½ feet, or 1/320 of a statute mile.

⁴⁸⁰ Heckewelder, 217 - 218.

⁴⁸¹ Jemison Narrative, 78.

captives. Some suffered having their noses cut off while their captors made fun at their disfigured appearance. When the sport no longer amused them, the warriors led the prisoners outside, scalped them while still alive, and killed them with tomahawk blows. Finally, they left their victims' bodies where the "fowls of the air" consumed their mangled bodies.⁴⁸² James Smith, captured by Ohio Indians during the French and Indian War, watched his captors prepare "about a dozen men, stripped naked, with their hands tied behind their backs," for burning to death. They tied each victim to a stake, and then kept touching him with fire brands and red-hot irons as the he screamed "in a most doleful manner," while spectators yelled "like infernal spirits."⁴⁸³ Mary Jemison recalled that she saw a number of heads, arms, legs, and other fragments of the bodies of some white people who had just been burned at the stake at Shawnee towns in the Ohio country. The Indians fastened the remaining parts and whole bodies to a spit supported at each end by a crotch from a tree branch stuck in the ground, and "were roasted or burnt black as coal" while the "fire was yet burning."⁴⁸⁴ Once the celebrations ended, Logan and other leading warriors went about the process of exhorting the young men to join new war parties to go against the Long Knife enemy.

Pittsburgh

Thus far, Mingo and Shawnee raids had fallen hardest on the west district of Augusta County. In early June, Connolly developed a plan of "prudent steps" designed to "put a stop to further cruelties ... [and] murders committed by the Indians." Outlined in a

⁴⁸² Jones, 76-7.

⁴⁸³ Smith, 26.

⁴⁸⁴ Jemison Narrative, 75.

letter sent to Governor Dunmore on June 7, Connolly proposed to raise and lead a force of three to four hundred men “towards the Enemy’s Country.” On the way, he planned to halt and build a small fort on the high ground near the settlement at the mouth of Wheeling Creek for the protection of the frontier. Continuing downstream, Connolly planned to build another post at the mouth of Hockhocking Creek, on the opposite side of the Ohio, for use as a magazine, or “repository of Stores,” from which small detachments from Wheeling would continually operate on the north bank to alarm the Indians, and “if possible keep the Enemy engaged in their own Country.” Executing his plan, Connolly believed, would “chastise” and “overawe the Indians” with Virginia’s military might.⁴⁸⁵

While waiting for the governor’s response and expected approval, the captain-commandant began assembling the forces and gathering the supplies needed to execute his planned course of action. Despite their previous differences, continued animosity, and allegiance to opposite sides in the ongoing boundary dispute, Connolly approached the leader of the Westmoreland County magistrates about the possibility of combining their forces “to act in concert.” Although Croghan had previously predicted that such cooperation would result if the Indians attacked, St. Clair declined the invitation for the recently organized ranger company, or any other forces the county might raise, to participate in a Virginia expedition. He assured Governor Penn that he remained cautious of taking any step that would potentially

⁴⁸⁵ Earl of Dunmore to Capt. John Connolly, letter dated Williamsburg, June 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 473; and Earl of Dunmore to Col. William Preston, letter dated Williamsburg, July 3, 1774, 3QQ53, William Preston Papers (61-63).

“draw this Province into an active share in the War,” which Pennsylvania “had no hand in kindling.”⁴⁸⁶

Although he sent Captain William Crawford with a company to begin the work of erecting the fort at Wheeling Creek, which they would name Fort Fincastle in honor of another of Dunmore’s hereditary titles, Connolly delayed the start of the offensive operation pending the governor’s concurrence. He remained at Fort Dunmore to coordinate the militia response to the attacks, such as Logan’s raids, against the district. When Aeneas Mackay learned about the Muddy Creek incident, he incorrectly assumed that Logan’s warriors had ambushed McClure’s company as it marched to join the forces assembling at Wheeling. The magistrate caustically charged that without suffering any casualties of their own, four Indians had defeated an entire company of Virginians and “knocked” Connolly’s scheme “in the head.” St. Clair unleashed his own volley of sarcasm, adding that Connolly had “instantly changed the plan” when news of McClure’s death convinced him to remain safely in garrison while others fought the war he had started. Neither St. Clair nor Mackay knew that Connolly had ordered McClure’s company toward Redstone, and did not receive the governor’s approval to execute the plan for offensive action that they derided until more than a week after the ambush.⁴⁸⁷

Because it complemented his instructions for the county lieutenants, specifically the recommendation to build a fort at the mouth of the Great Kanawha and conduct

⁴⁸⁶ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 16, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 519-520.

⁴⁸⁷ Aeneas Mackay to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, June 14, 1774, and Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 16, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 517, 519-520; *Virginia Gazette #1* (Purdie and Dixon), June 27, 1774; Crumrine, Ellis and Hungerford, 70-71.

limited offensive operations on the north bank of the Ohio, the governor gave his endorsement on June 20. His lordship directed Connolly to keep a constant correspondence with Colonel Andrew Lewis, the officer he designated to coordinate the efforts of all the frontier counties.⁴⁸⁸ Dunmore also expanded on Connolly's original concept, and urged that he either "co-operate with Colonel Lewis, or strike the stroke himself," provided he could do so with minimal risk, and urged "the sooner it is done, the better."⁴⁸⁹

Notwithstanding any confidence he had earlier expressed in his abilities, the governor told Connolly that he considered it most necessary for him to remain at Fort Dunmore rather than command in the field. He therefore directed the district captain-commandant to select a competent subordinate to lead the proposed expedition into Shawnee country, and said that he "could not do better" than appoint Captain William Crawford to command what men he could spare for the mission.⁴⁹⁰ Crawford had impressed the governor the year before when, on George Washington's recommendation, he acted as Dunmore's guide during his visit to the frontier district. The governor described the long-time militia member and French and Indian War veteran as a "prudent, active, and resolute" officer, "very fit to go on such an expedition."⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Earl of Dunmore to Capt. John Connolly, letter dated Williamsburg, June 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 473; Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 16, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 519-520.

⁴⁸⁹ Earl of Dunmore to Capt. John Connolly, letter dated Williamsburg, June 20, 1774, American Archives, 1: 473.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

In executing the plan, the governor said that Connolly should order all officers commanding the detachments going out on missions from Wheeling “to make as many prisoners they can of women and children.” The Virginians could use such captives for leverage in bringing hostile nations to a council that could negotiate a peace treaty, as well as for arranging an exchange of prisoners.⁴⁹² As with Logan’s capture of the Spicer orphans, Indian nations had employed and accepted the practice of taking captives when waging war long before European contact. In the division of labor in their societies, women and children usually provided the principal agricultural work force, and their loss or capture could have an adverse effect on an Indian community’s economy. Since war parties often took women and children prisoners, it would seem rational to reply in kind to facilitate a reciprocal exchange and repatriation of captives – provided the officers could maintain order and discipline over their men in order to prevent atrocities like those Greathouse and his followers had committed against the Yellow Creek Mingo at Baker’s Bottom.

Lord Dunmore further instructed Connolly to exert what diplomatic influence he could to “prevail on the Delawares, and the well affected part of the Mingo” to separate themselves and “move off from the Shawanese.” Simultaneously, the Six Nations central council wielded its leadership to isolate the dissident and troublesome Shawnees, and keep the Mingo, Delawares, and other dependents neutral. The governor pledged to all militia commanders on the frontier that after Virginia ultimately prevailed and compelled the Shawnees to “sue for peace,” he would not end hostilities until they had effectively punished the enemy Indians for their

⁴⁹² Ibid.

“insolence.” He further pledged to grant neither peace terms nor ratify a war ending treaty until the Shawnees delivered six chiefs as hostages in order to guarantee their nation’s future “good behavior.” Every year, on the anniversary of signing the peace treaty, the governor would expect the Shawnee to replace them with different hostage chiefs for the ensuing twelve months. And last, the victors would require the vanquished Shawnees “to trade with us only,” not the rival Pennsylvanians, “for what they may want.”⁴⁹³

Fincastle County

As relations between the Virginia colony and the Shawnees and the hostile faction of Mingoes deteriorated, the likelihood of a war with the Cherokees persisted. The tensions that had gripped the Holston and Clinch settlements in the spring had eased, but had not abated. Virginians, as well as officials of the British Crown, feared the specter of “a Combination of all the Northern Indians together with the Cherokees; the Murders they will be capable to perpetuate, attended with a general Devastation of the Frontiers.” Captain William Russell probably spoke for many when he wrote, “I am too much afraid such a Confederacy will be form’d.”⁴⁹⁴

Other settlers, primarily from North Carolina, had moved into the Watauga and Nolichucky river valleys on the mistaken premise that the Treaty of Lochaber and subsequent Cherokee cession had opened them for settlement. After negotiating a ten-year lease with the Cherokees in 1772, settlers formed the Watauga Association established a five-man court at Sycamore Shoals to perform many local government

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Clinch, June 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ46, (49-51).

functions despite the absence of a royal charter. Although outside of the jurisdiction of any colonial government, the inhabitants self-identified as British subjects, and informally associated with Virginia. Conversely, the Cherokees generally referred to the Watauga inhabitants, as well as all encroaching whites, as Virginians. Although mistrust ran deep, Colonial government and Indian Department officials made efforts resolve potential grievances before they flared into conflict, such as Captain Russell's measures to curtail the inadvertent crossing of the Cherokee boundary. As a result, relations remained generally good.⁴⁹⁵

In early June, a number of peaceful Cherokees joined settlers in watching horse races and other sporting events during a fair in the Watauga Valley settlement. Without provocation, Isaac Crabtree brutally shot and killed an Indian man who local residents knew as Cherokee Billy. As the other Indians left to go home, the victim's two companions, a man and woman, angrily intimated that the whites could expect reprisals from their people for the murder. Knowing that when warriors took the warpath to avenge such an injury, they did not only target the guilty party but his entire community. Major Arthur Campbell notified Colonel Preston that the news of the threat had greatly alarmed the inhabitants of the Clinch and Holston valleys. While some braced for the expected onslaught and others prepared to flee, Campbell requested reinforcements and ammunition to defend that part of the county. He also

⁴⁹⁵ John Richard Alden John Stewart and the Southern Colonial Frontier: A Study of Indian Relations, War, Trade, and Land Problems in the Southern Wilderness, 1754 – 1775 (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), 263-265, 290-291. Sycamore Shoals is near present Elizabethton, Tennessee.

sought diplomatic assistance, possibly with an appeal to the respected chief *Oconastota*, to exert his influence in calming the agitated Cherokees.⁴⁹⁶

Campbell feared that Crabtree and “a few misled followers” would frustrate any efforts to prevent the calamity of a war. The major had learned that the frontier ruffian had recently travelled to Nolichucky, intent on crossing into Cherokee territory to rob or kill some Indians. To his surprise, he found not the two or three “defenseless wretches” that he expected, but thirty-seven warriors acquainted with his reputation and intentions, who would not fail to examine the encroaching trouble maker. Crabtree immediately retreated “with precipitation” to the relative safety of the Fincastle settlements, but soon made plans for another attempt. Campbell considered the well-known Indian-hater as the principal suspect in Billy’s murder, but doubted the likelihood of bringing him to justice. Although “sober minded” frontier inhabitants detested his act and disapproved of his conduct, they also, however inconsistently, had sympathy for him. They knew that he had survived the ambush in Powell’s Valley the previous October, which claimed the lives of six companions, including the son of their neighbor John Drake.⁴⁹⁷

A rumor soon circulated that the Cherokee had initiated their reprisals with an attack that killed a family on Copper Creek – a tributary of the Clinch. As the alarm following the alleged depredations spread, militia companies mustered, and residents became even less inclined to punish a neighbor for killing a single Indian. Campbell

⁴⁹⁶ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter undated Royal Oak (estimated June 20, 1774) and June 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ40, (38-39) and 3QQ41 (40-42), respectively. The Watauga and Nolichucky valleys now encompass present Washington and Carter Counties, Tennessee, with the murder believed committed near present Jonesborough.

⁴⁹⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, June 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ41 (40-42).

turned to the county lieutenant seeking guidance on how to proceed. Colonel William Christian – Preston’s deputy and highest ranking subordinate – noted that some settlers were “so desirous” of an Indian war that they “were sorry, exceedingly so,” to learn that the rumors concerning the massacre at Copper Creek were unfounded. Christian lamented that such sentiment had prompted only “the most worthless” and least dependable men in the county to turn out for military service.⁴⁹⁸

Along with his reply to Campbell, Preston enclosed a personal communication for *Oconastota*. The county lieutenant explained that Virginia authorities considered Crabtree a fugitive who would receive justice in court, and appealed for the chief to dissuade Cherokee braves from taking the warpath. Campbell forwarded the missive to Watauga Association officials at Sycamore Shoals, who had planned a similar mission of peace, for “speedy conveyance” to the middle Cherokee towns. The major added his own letter to his acquaintance, Alexander Cameron of the Indian Department, to use his good offices in resolving the matter. Campbell condemned Crabtree’s act with the highest “detestation,” but also blamed southern district deputy superintendent’s “Orders ... to perhaps the profligate part of the nation” when encountering any Virginians on Cherokee Indian lands, to summarily act as both their “Judges and executioners ... for robberies [committed].”⁴⁹⁹

Before composing and forwarding his and Preston’s letters to Watauga, Major Campbell ordered Captain John Campbell, his younger brother, to go down river to

⁴⁹⁸ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, June 22, 1774; Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Dunkard Bottom, (Morning) June 22, and Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Clinch, June 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ41 (40-42), 3QQ42 (42-43), and 3QQ46 (49-51), respectively.

⁴⁹⁹ Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated Royal Oak, June 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ41 (40-42).

the settlement closest to the Indian Line, or boundary with the Cherokees, for a special task. The captain personally engaged a man familiar with Cherokee country, especially the area on the Holston near its confluence with the French Broad River, to act as a “Spy,” or a scout who could watch the adversary’s activities to obtain intelligence.⁵⁰⁰

The captain instructed the volunteer to select a concealed position where he could observe the nearby ford and watch traffic on the path for most of the day. He would also break twice each day to range some distance up and down the river looking for evidence that a large party of warriors had passed through the area. If he discovered any indication of an enemy advance toward the Virginia settlements, the spy had orders to return and report his findings so as to alert the militia. After informing Preston of the preparations, Major Campbell confided his opinion that the Cherokees would willingly avoid a war unless Crabtree, or someone like him, committed an “affront” that provoked them to it. The major assured the colonel that he would transmit “an account of any true alarm that may happen,” as his duty required, and requested the county lieutenant to inform him when and “if the War has actually broke out to the Northward.”⁵⁰¹

While those at Pittsburgh had concerns for traders still in Indian country, the people of Fincastle County worried about the safety of the surveyors with Captain Floyd.

⁵⁰⁰ Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated Royal Oak, June 23, 1774; and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter, undated Royal Oak (estimated June 20, 1774), William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ44 (47-49) and 3QQ40 (38-39), respectively; and Samuel Johnson A Dictionary of the English Language, (London: 1766, Special Collections, Harvard University Library, Cambridge, MA), Volume 2: 321.

⁵⁰¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letters dated Royal Oak, June 23 and (undated) estimated June 20, 1774, Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ44 (47-49) and 3QQ40 (38-39), respectively.

Christian remarked to Preston that he believed they remained safe, and “would not all be killed if fallen on” by the enemy before returning. He proposed that Preston should write to Crabtree’s company commander – either Captain James Thompson or William Campbell. The major suggested that the company commander should encourage Crabtree to volunteer to go search for the surveyors and warn them to come home lest they encounter hostile Indians. Christian suggested that if Crabtree accepted the assignment and performed his mission well, it might serve to atone for his guilt.⁵⁰²

The orders Preston had sent to the captains the previous month remained in effect. With an experience similar to that of Daniel Smith at Indian Creek, Captain Russell reported that at his company’s muster on June 25, the men voted to immediately build two forts in the Clinch River area “in as convenient Places as we can get.” Russell advised his superior that the shortage of gunpowder continued to hamper his company’s ability to defend the settlement, and trusted that the colonel’s efforts to obtain some would meet success. Russell, like Smith, found that invoking the Invasions and Insurrections Act helped him to effectively halt the flight of nervous inhabitants. He was optimistic that in a future emergency he could “call for any Number of Men from Holston” as reinforcements whenever the service required.⁵⁰³ He added that since his unit covered a large regional catchment with men settled in very remote locations, he requested that Colonel Preston allow his company one additional subaltern. If approved, the colonel could either appoint a new lieutenant or

⁵⁰² Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Dunkard Bottom, (Morning) June 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ42, (42-46).

⁵⁰³ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Clinch, June 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ46, (49-51).

ensign, or provide a blank commission, pre-signed by Governor Dunmore, so that Russell could select a deserving and qualified man.⁵⁰⁴

Both sensible and sympathetic to the county lieutenant's "Uncommon concern for the Security of Capt. Floyd and the Gentlemen with him," the Fincastle County militia officers turned their attention to the problem of finding and notifying the surveyors of the danger they faced with the looming Indian war. Russell arguably understood their predicament better than the others, and expressed his fervent desire to locate and guide the men to safety before "they should fall a Prey, to such Inhuman, Bloodthirsty Devils, as I have so lately suffered." He knew that sending out scouts offered the best chance for securing their survival and safe return, and prayed for God to shield them from physical harm until they could be found. Russell engaged Daniel Boone and Michael Stoner, "two of the best Hands" in his company, and instructed them "to search the Country, as low as the falls" of the Ohio, and return by way of Mansco's Lick on the Cumberland, and through Cumberland Gap. With no time to spare, he sent them out to warn Floyd's party of the danger and urge them to hasten their return home.⁵⁰⁵

Despite the increased tensions, Preston expressed reservations about his legal authority to order the county's militia into active service before the enemy actually invaded the colony. Christian opined that he could legally "encourage men to rise up and go without expressly ordering them," and bring their own horses and enough provisions to last four or five weeks. Christian believed Preston could easily

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid. Mansco's Lick is in present Davidson County, Tenn.; the "falls" at present Louisville, Ky.

assemble at least 100 volunteers willing to go and take their chance at pay for themselves and stipends for the use of their horses and other private property until the General Assembly resolved the issue by enacting a new, or continuing the recently expired Militia Law.⁵⁰⁶

Christian recommended that the county lieutenant seek the volunteers from four companies and embody them under the command of a capable and energetic officer. In accordance with Dunmore's instructions, they would march down the Warriors' Path on the left bank of the Great Kanawha, intercept any invaders coming from the other direction, and build a fort at its mouth. Even if they did not fight them, any Indians who noticed signs of the militia presence would most likely retreat. With the number of volunteers proposed, they could erect a small fort in about one week. The completed post would then serve to defend the frontier, and provide a base from which patrols could continuously operate to best "serve the Inhabitants, & perhaps cover the retreat of the Surveyors." Christian knew that when the first volunteers' time expired, the recruitment of replacements might prove difficult. He argued that if a war ensued as anticipated, the General Assembly would no doubt approve the expense, and Preston could order a draft for the necessary men to relieve the garrison.⁵⁰⁷

After considering the recommendation, Preston received intelligence of a "large party of Cherokees" led by a warrior called The Raven headed either to or from the Shawnee towns in order to cooperate with them against the Virginians. Realizing the

⁵⁰⁶ Col. William Preston to Col. William Preston, letter dated Dunkard Bottom, (Morning) June 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ42 (42-46).

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

implications, Preston developed his plan. He reasoned that, “The present defenseless Situation of the Frontier Inhabitants of the County of Fincastle make it absolutely necessary [to] Raise & keep on foot a Number of Men, to Protect the Frontiers & annoy the Enemy.” He noted that neighboring counties, although no more exposed than Fincastle, had already raised men on the understanding that Lord Dunmore’s orders justified the measure. Under his authority as county lieutenant, Preston decided to raise a force of rangers.⁵⁰⁸

Virginia had used such units in its colonial standing forces since the late seventeenth century. The rangers provided local militia commanders early warning of an enemy attack, as well as the means to react quickly. Operating either mounted or dismounted depending on the situation to better accomplish their missions to “observe, perform and keep such orders and in their several rangings and marchings” so as to detect and intercept war parties approaching the settlements, or to pursue and punish those who had attacked and killed or captured Virginia inhabitants.⁵⁰⁹

Preston selected his deputy, Colonel William Christian, to command the ranging force. He could not have chosen better.⁵¹⁰ First commissioned as an ensign in the militia at the age of fifteen, he had served as an officer in the 2d Virginia Regiment in provincial service during the French and Indian War, and rose to the rank of captain at eighteen years of age. A brave and efficient officer, he participated in the

⁵⁰⁸ Col. William Preston to Col. William Christian, Fort Chiswell, June 27, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ47, (52-56).

⁵⁰⁹ Hening, *Statutes*, 4 (Richmond: Franklin Press, 1820), 9-11, Volume 6: 465; and, McIlwaine *Council Executive Journals*, 3: 1558-9. During the French and Indian War, the General Assembly authorized Lt. Gov. Dinwiddie to deploy ranging companies from three counties anywhere on the frontier he saw fit.

⁵¹⁰ Col. William Preston to Col. William Christian, Fort Chiswell, June 27, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ47, (52-56).

Cherokee Expedition of 1760, and commanded rangers for frontier defense through Pontiac's War. At thirty-one, he now held the rank of colonel. As his deputy, Christian served as county lieutenant in Preston's absence, and commanded Fincastle County militia troops in the field. He was married to Anne Henry and studied law with her brother, Patrick Henry. When the General Assembly established Fincastle County, he received an appointment as a deputy clerk of the court, and won election as one of the county's two representatives in the House of Burgesses, where he served in the 1773 and 1774 sessions.

Colonel Preston held a council of war at the county seat, located at Fort Chiswell in the New River community called the Lead Mines. There, he informed Christian of the plans he wanted him to execute, and the captains commanding companies what he needed from them. He ordered six captains to muster all the men of their companies and raise twenty good men, "either as Volunteers or by Draught," from each, plus thirty additional volunteers from other companies, for a total force of 150 men, not counting the necessary officers. All the detachments assembled at an ordinary called the Town House on Holston, on the property of Captain James Thompson located on the high ground between the Middle Fork and Sulphur Spring Creek, where Christian organized them into a corps of three companies. Preston selected Captains Walter Crockett and William Campbell to each command one of the fifty-man companies, assisted by a lieutenant and an ensign. Christian exercised overall command, as well

as that of the remaining fifty men and two officers embodied as a company, with an additional subaltern, Ensign William Buchanan.⁵¹¹

The rangers served on foot, but the county lieutenant wanted the captains to encourage as many of them as possible to bring their own horses to carry the required baggage. Trusting that the General Assembly would authorize paying the troops the necessary stipends, Christian preferred it to impressing pack animals from third parties. In addition to the supplies and provisions the quartermasters could procure, Preston wanted each of the men to bring enough from home so they could “Endeavour to Stay out a month or Six weeks.”⁵¹² In accordance with the current Invasion and Insurrection law, Preston appointed “two honest men on Oath” to appraise the private property used for public service at the rendezvous, and present the owners with the certificates necessary to file their claims for the government to pay.⁵¹³

According to the original plan, after they assembled and organized at the Town House, Christian would lead the three companies to the Clinch and cross Cumberland Mountain by one of the gaps. After arriving at the “head branches of the Kentucky” River, they would “Range together or in separate parties & at such places” as Christian judged most likely to discover, intercept, and repulse the enemy as they approached the Fincastle settlements.⁵¹⁴ With seventy Cherokees reported on the move to “Join our Enemies,” many still hoped they would refrain from hostilities and

⁵¹¹ Ibid. The Middle Fork on Holston is near the present Smyth-Wythe County line in Southwest Virginia. The Town House on Holston site is near present Chilhowie, Smyth County, Virginia

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

remain neutral. The uncertainty prompted Preston to recommend that Christian exercise the utmost caution and discretion, but left it to his field commander's "Prudence" on how to treat them if encountered, and "Judge by the Manner of their approach" before opposing their advance.⁵¹⁵ If the Cherokees came on in a hostile manner, the rangers could anticipate that a number of Shawnees or other enemy Indians accompanied them, which "may render them formidable to your party."⁵¹⁶ Should the rangers encounter Floyd and the surveyors, Preston wanted Christian to warn them – if they were not already aware – of the danger that attended them and return to the settlements.

In "Rules for Marching" found in his Treatise on Military Discipline, the basic doctrinal manual for officers of the British army, Humphrey Bland wrote, "There is not any thing in which an Officer shews his want of conduct so much, as in suffering himself to be surprised ... and by not having taken the necessary precautions to prevent it."⁵¹⁷ Familiar with its precepts and armed with his previous experience, Preston reminded Christian to keep "some active Men" out on the right and left flanks of his main body, and a mile to his front and rear, "to the distance of a mile" while on the march, and post sentinels when in camp. Such measures prevented surprise attack, "which is too often attended with fatal Consequences," and "above all things ought ever to be Guarded against." Preston further emphasized, "Nor should this part of the duty be Neglected or even Relaxed on any occasion whatever."⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Bland's *Treatise*, 132.

⁵¹⁸ Col. William Preston to Col. William Christian, letter dated Fort Chiswell, June 27, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ47 (52-55).

Although he probably did not have to tell Christian, Preston added a reminder to “keep up good order & Discipline ... according to the Militia Law now in force.” He stressed the importance of consulting regularly with his subordinate officers, all of whom “will not only be very alert & obedient in their Duty; but they will keep Good order & Discipline in their companies,” and remain cooperative and friendly among themselves so that “every Intention of Sending out the Party may be fully answered.” By saving the surveyors and performing the duty of rangers, Preston told Christian and his men that they would “render an Essential Service to the Country, as many lives thereby may be sav’d.”⁵¹⁹ Preston concluded by telling Christian that he had instructed the captains commanding the companies providing the soldiers to select “none but choice officers & men on this little Expedition,” and therefore “the Eyes of the Country” were all on them. He harbored no doubt that every soldier would exert himself to “answer the wishes & expectations of his Country,” and serve it as much as was in his power.⁵²⁰

After receiving his orders on Monday, June 27, Christian notified Preston that he wanted to leave for the rendezvous the following Monday, July 4. Meanwhile, he sought to locate wagons and “a parcel” of seven or eight men willing to volunteer for the expedition who Captain Daniel Trigg could spare from his company.⁵²¹ While the captains mustered their companies, the colonels anxiously waited to learn the latest intelligence before putting the rangers into motion.⁵²²

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Sawyers, June 27 (evening), 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ48 (55-56).

⁵²² Ibid.

Wakatomika

As the Shawnees and their Mingo allies prepared for war, runners travelled to neighboring tribes and implored other native peoples, especially the Cherokees, Miamis, Wyandots, the various tribes of Unami and Munsee Delawares, as well as any others who would listen, to join or ally with their confederation against the Long Knife. They even appealed to the Six Nations, hoping they would join them and bring their dependents and allies into a Pan-Indian military alliance – the worst fear of British America. War fever raged through the towns and villages of the five septs of the Shawnee nation, and the bands of Mingoes they had taken under their influence and protection. Moderate voices failed to persuade young men, eager to display their martial prowess, to stay home. Talk of war was on everyone’s lips.

The missionary John Heckewelder described the “Shawanos” as “good warriors and hunters.” From personal observation, he saw them as “courageous, high spirited and manly, and more careful in providing a supply of ammunition to keep in reserve for an emergency, than any other nation” of the Ohio valley.⁵²³ Every warrior, he said, possessed the essential and indispensable qualifications of “Courage, art, and circumspection.”⁵²⁴ In contrast, David Jones did not have such a high opinion of their military prowess or respect for Shawnee warriors as his Moravian counterpart. The travelling Baptist preacher described them as having “more timorous spirits, far from possessing anything heroick.” He wrote that they “seek all advantages” and never engaged in battle “without a manifest prospect of victory.” Jones concluded that an

⁵²³ Heckewelder, 89-90.

⁵²⁴ Heckewelder, 177-8.

opponent need not fear Shawnee warriors “being saucy” unless they had the advantage of “more than a double number [over their enemy].” While he admitted that they killed many in the last war, Jones hastened to add that most of their victims “were timorous women scared more than half dead at their sight, or else persons devoid of arms to defend themselves.”⁵²⁵ Regardless of what a contemporary may have thought about their motivation or skill, the mere rumor of Shawnee warrior moving at large caused alarm and inspired panic along the frontier.

Indians rarely gave quarter to enemy combatants, and often killed non-combatants as well. The practice of taking captives and assimilating them into their tribal families was intended to diminish an opponent’s community as well as offering condolence and replacing their own losses. Unlike Europeans, they did not look for, but avoided pitched battles whenever possible, and were at their best in individual combat. Unless surrounded with no chance of escape, Indian warriors would sooner retire from an engagement once they no longer held a tactical advantage rather than accept the cost of achieving an objective in the European sense. They preferred conducting raids and ambushes in order to inflict casualties as well as terrorize enemy combatants and non-combatants alike. Regardless of the operation, warriors sought to only fight on their own terms, according to Heckewelder, by “stealing upon the enemy unawares, and deceiving and surprising him in various ways.”⁵²⁶ The bloody and devastating raids of the French and Indian War and Pontiac’s War, such as those that Cornstalk had led against the Greenbrier Valley settlements in 1763, remained vivid in the memories of many backcountry inhabitants.

⁵²⁵ Jones, 72.

⁵²⁶ Heckewelder, 177.

A number of chiefs and leading warriors had recruited new war parties in some Shawnee and Mingo towns. The day after the customary war dance, the warriors assembled early in the morning. With their heads and faces painted and packs upon their backs, they marched away. As each departed its village, the group proceeded in silence, except for the chief. Leading from the front, he sang the band's traveling song until the last warrior passed the edge of town, at which time they all discharged their firearms, and those who remained behind shouted encouragement and war whoops.⁵²⁷

Augusta County

War parties crossed the Ohio seeking to strike settlements in Augusta County. To reach their objectives and achieve complete surprise, the braves took great pains to conceal their tracks or any other evidence that gave their presence away. Large war parties divided into smaller ones, marched at some distance from each other for a full day at a time. The Shawnees had a well-known ability to deceive enemies by imitating the cries or calls of some animals, such as a fawn or turkey during the appropriate season, to decoy or lure them into an ambush, or "gain the opportunity to surround them."⁵²⁸ Similarly, when scattered in the woods, they could easily locate one another by imitating the calls of different birds at appropriate times of the day, repeated from time to time, until they reassembled into one body to camp for the night, or to attack.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ Jones, 76-7.

⁵²⁷ Smith, 34.

⁵²⁸ Heckewelder, 177-8.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

On some occasions they marched in “Indian file” – one man behind the other – “treading carefully in each other’s steps, so that their number may not be ascertained by the prints of their feet.”⁵³⁰ Mary Jemison explained, “It is the custom of Indians when scouting, or on private expeditions, to step carefully and where no impression of their feet can be left.” Whenever possible, they walked on hard, stony and rocky ground, and avoided soft surfaces, to make it more difficult for an enemy to track them. “They seldom take hold of a bush or limb, and never break one,” she continued, “and by ... setting up the weeds and grass which they necessarily lop, they completely elude the sagacity” of any pursuers.⁵³¹ Furthermore, the last man followed the file with a “long staff,” and picked up all the grass and weeds that were matted down by others walking over them. On that occasion, the amazed Jemison said that he performed the task so well that he made a pursuit impossible, “for each weed was so nicely placed in its natural position that no one would have suspected that we had passed that way.”⁵³²

As the warriors approached nearer to the enemy, they became more attentive. Jones remarked that Shawnees possessed an astonishing sharpness and quickness of sight. The training and experience that allowed them to notice down-trodden grass or the least impression left on grass or weeds where someone had walked provided another remarkable ability. Watching them in action convinced Jones that a Shawnee warrior

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Jemison Narrative, 70-1.

⁵³² Ibid, 70.

could determine the sex and nationality of a person simply by looking at the footprints.⁵³³

Early in the morning on Wednesday, June 29, the sound of gunfire and war whoops shattered the stillness, and reawakened nightmares of 1763, as Shawnee warrior struck the Greenbrier Valley settlements in Augusta County. In an engagement with a unit of local militia, the Indians killed one soldier and wounded the lieutenant in command before compelling them to retreat to Captain John Dickinson's fortified house. Although their action had delayed the attackers long enough for more troops to assemble and non-combatants to find refuge, the Indians soon had Dickinson's Fort under siege. The captain sent runners to inform his counterparts commanding the companies in neighboring communities, and requested their urgent assistance.⁵³⁴

Chota

As the Shawnees and Mingoës spoke of war at Wakatomika and Chillicothe, sent raiding parties across the Ohio, and sought allies, *Oconastota* called all the principal chiefs of the Overhill Cherokees to Chota, their principal town – or capital – on the Little Tennessee River. One day as they met in council, the chiefs heard a serious disturbance that disrupted their discussions. James Robertson and William Falling – or Faulin – arrived carrying the conciliatory letters from Watauga Association and the

⁵³³ Heckewelder, 177.

⁵³⁴ Col. William Christian to Capt. Joseph Cloyd, letter dated Sawyers, June 29, 1774, and Col. Charles Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ49 (56-57) and 3QQ59 (73-74), respectively; and *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), July 14, 1774. The location is in present Greenbrier County, W.Va.

Virginia officials on “behalf of the People to endeavor to Compromise the affair of killing the Cherokee at the Races.”⁵³⁵

When they saw Robertson and Falling, many of the warriors joined the relatives and friends of the murdered Billy calling for immediate reprisal starting with the two emissaries, despite the messages of peace they carried. Falling said they would have succeeded, if not for the “interposition of some of their chiefs” who dissuaded them taking such a “rash step.” A number of the traders present in the town saw the commotion, grew timid, and fled for their lives before knowing the outcome. Some “set out for Carolina” or the Holston and Clinch settlements of Fincastle County, where they spread the rumors that caused such alarm that resulted in panic and the calling out of additional militia.⁵³⁶

The chiefs had discussed and debated the issues surrounding the increased tensions and the potential of war with Virginia. Speaking for all, *Oconastota* told Robertson and Falling that the discussions covered their people’s involvement with the murders of young Russell and Boone, and their party, in Powell’s Valley, the recent robberies of Virginia hunters, and Crabtree killing Billy at the races in Watauga. They denied that those guilty of the Boone-Russell murders acted with their approval. Although they admitted to robbing the hunters, they maintain that the Cherokees did so with “Mr. Cameron’s authority.” *Oconastota* told them that the leading warrior known as The Raven had earlier gone to the Shawnees, but without the nation’s approbation. None of them had heard from him since, and suspected they had killed him. They

⁵³⁵ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Andrew Colvill’s, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ60 (75-78). In some sources, William Faulin appears as William Falling or Fallen.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

had rejected Shawnee appeals to join them in fighting the common enemy Virginians, and as a result, said that some Shawnees had recently killed one of their people within sight of a Cherokee town.⁵³⁷ They accepted the messages the two men delivered, and promised to give them a reply to carry with them when they returned to Watauga and Virginia.

Fincastle County

After reading the express from Greenbrier in Augusta County, Colonel Christian had to assume that more war parties roamed at large, including in Fincastle County, and alerted the vulnerable settlements to the danger. He directed Captain Joseph Cloyd to alert the companies at Walker's Creek, Blue Stone River, and along the New to be on their guard and move their families to shelter until they determined the enemy's strength and intentions. Swollen rivers in the area fortuitously hindered the Indians' ability to make more attacks on the south bank of New River, but militia leaders knew the short-lived relief would end as soon as the water receded.⁵³⁸

Colonel Christian told Cloyd to have the men he previously ordered to muster for ranger service at Captain James Thompson's Town House the next day as planned to receive further orders. All of them, he said, should bring a horse and all the ammunition and provisions they possibly could, for he could not predict how long they might have to remain in the field before the emergency subsided, or others came

⁵³⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Holston, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ58 (72-73). The site of Chota is in present Monroe County, Tenn.

⁵³⁸ Col. William Christian to Capt. Joseph Cloyd, letter dated Sawyers, June 29, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ49 (56-57); and *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), July 14, 1774. Walker's Creek and Blue Stone are located in present Giles County, Va., and Mercer County, W. Va., respectively.

relieved them. Besides those being called out for actual service, he also directed the captain to determine the best places where the men of his company who remained behind should immediately erect forts. Christian believed that seeing the activity would encourage the timid local inhabitants to take heart and not consider fleeing.⁵³⁹

“The hour that I so much dreaded (as to the peace of this Country) is now I am apprehensive near at hand,” wrote Major Arthur Campbell to Colonel Preston on Friday, July 1. Fear spread through the countryside as fleeing traders spread the bad tidings throughout the frontier. Some of the refugees told Campbell that the Cherokees had murdered the two messengers who carried the Watauga and Virginia leaders’ conciliatory messages to their chiefs, as well as all the traders who remained in their towns when the rampage began. Based on this information, the major reported that the Cherokees had “at length commenced hostilities.” Some of the refugee traders also said they saw at least forty Shawnee warriors arrive in the Cherokee towns, causing Campbell to expect attacks against the Holston and Clinch settlements in a short while. As soon as the bad news spread, the officer suspected that a number of residents would flee from their homes. As the situation further deteriorated, the captains commanding companies complained that the scarcity of ammunition compromised their ability to defend their communities. As the senior officer in the district, Major Campbell requested reinforcements, and expressed his hope that Bedford and Pittsylvania – the next adjacent counties to the east of the Blue Ridge – would recognize the emergency and call out their militias to help. If the three counties joined forces to “to face them [the Indians] about the lower settlements

⁵³⁹ Col. William Christian to Capt. Joseph Cloyd, letter dated Sawyers, June 29, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ49 (56-57).

on this River,” he believed “the War might not be so calamitous.” He took the precaution to instruct some of the district’s captains to muster half of men in their respective companies at the Town House on Holston in four days – starting on Tuesday – if not sooner.⁵⁴⁰

Necessity dictated that Preston take every measure in his power to defend the country. In addition to the three ranging companies, he instructed Christian to call on the commanding officers of seven companies to draft 280 men to defend the Clinch River settlements. That force included fifty men each from the companies of Captains William Herbert and Thomas Madison, thirty each from those of Captains Walter Crockett and Robert Doack, and forty each from the companies commanded by Captains James Thompson and William Campbell, and Major Arthur Campbell. Once they completed the drafts, the men were to assemble at the Town House as quickly as possible. Should they need additional reinforcement, Preston directed the captains commanding the three companies on the Lower Holston River to keep eighty of their men ready to march on the shortest notice.⁵⁴¹

Meanwhile, Preston directed Christian to use the available forces – drafted militia and rangers – at his command to defend the various frontier communities as best he could. Because the Indians could strike anywhere, Christian would send a thirty-man patrol under a lieutenant and ensign to “range at the heads of Sandy Creek & Clinch” to gather intelligence and provide early warning, and a seventy-five-man detachment, with the necessary complement of officers, from the first draft to reinforce the local

⁵⁴⁰ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ50 (57-58).

⁵⁴¹ Col. William Preston to Col. William Christian, letter (estimated) July 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ51 (59-81).

militia on the Clinch. Preston wanted his deputy to personally march the rest of his command down the Holston to either the lower road to the Clinch, or the road through Moccasin Gap to the Holston. From there, Preston trusted Christian's judgment, based on the latest intelligence, whether he would continue to the Clinch or proceed down the Holston. If choosing the latter course, Christian would combine his unit with the drafted militia under his command. If the situation dictated him to use the drafted men as a separate detachment, Preston authorized Christian to place them under the command of such officers he thought proper to appoint. Furthermore, if protection of the frontier necessitated the employment of additional scouts, Christian had the authority to select "not only good Woodsmen but Men of Property and Veracity" for the service. His recommendation reflected a principle articulated in the *Preface* to The Militia-Man – a handbook published in London circa 1740 – that "All men of property should serve in the militia" since "each have something to lose," and "consequently... are fit persons to consider of the means of preserving it."⁵⁴²

As express riders hurried to deliver messages between superior and subordinate officers, Preston knew he could rely on Christian to determine the proper course in any situation. To demonstrate the high level of confidence he placed in his field commander, Preston allowed Christian to "to take any Measures for the Defense of the Frontiers" not specified in his written instructions. With an eye toward economy, the county lieutenant urged his deputy "not to Incur any Expense to the Country" except those "absolutely Necessary for the Protection of the People." Otherwise, Preston only cautioned Christian not to commit forces far down the Holston unless

⁵⁴² Ibid.; and anonymous, The Militia-Man (London: circa 1740; facsimile reprint Schenectady, NY: United States Historical Research Service, 1995), 4.

acting on “well attested” intelligence. He only asked Christian to send reports often as possible, and immediately if “anything Extraordinary” happened.⁵⁴³

Panic followed close behind the news that an Indian war had started. Many inhabitants deserted the settlements and fled east, but others resolved to meet the danger after seeing to the safety of their families. A number of people settled on the New River as far up as the mouth of Reed Creek moved to the safety of the Fort at Bell’s Meadows, where Christian knew some of his officers had also taken their wives and children before returning to their units. Others stayed closer to their farms, but sheltered their families at neighbors’ fortified homes. Christian placed Captain Daniel Trigg in temporary command of the activated militia so he could remove his own family to safety at Colonel William Fleming’s Belmont estate in Botetourt County. Before leaving, he confided to Preston his belief that the panic would soon wane as militia officers exerted their authority. “I can’t think the people on the [New] river in the least danger if they would stay home,” he continued, “but I am afraid to over persuade them, as they will return of their own accord in some days.” Fifty pounds of much-needed gunpowder arrived, but Christian told his superior that in order to keep enough to supply the pending expedition, he would not “undertake to touch it” for distribution to local commanders unless the county lieutenant so ordered, or “the neighborhood is really attacked.”⁵⁴⁴

Elsewhere, panic spread. At the end of the first week of July, Captain Daniel Smith informed Preston that the constant rumor of pending Indian attacks had frightened

⁵⁴³ Col. William Preston to Col. William Christian, letter (estimated) July 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ51 (59-61).

⁵⁴⁴ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated New Dublin, July 4 (Thursday), 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ54 (63-66).

inhabitants from almost the entire settlement at the head of the north fork of Clinch to the Bluestone. The people at Indian Creek had become so frightened from listening to and believing so many “propagators of false reports in the country,” that he had difficulty restraining them from panic. Smith had no doubt that hostilities had commenced, but lamented that “by passing thro’ the mouths of imprudent people” reports which ought to have stirred up the inhabitants to a common defense and cause neighbors to rely on each other for strength had exact opposite effect. These rumor mongers exacerbated the actual damage because they incited “timorous people to run away” instead of making a stand.⁵⁴⁵

Captain Smith trusted the many men who said they would return after carrying their wives and children to safety. He not only remained optimistic, but planned accordingly. Before Lieutenant James Maxwell departed to visit his family in Botetourt County, Smith developed a plan to temporarily reorganize the men into two “separate companies, for the convenience of the inhabitants.” Each “company,” consisting of about half of the men, would take primary responsibility for defending half of the community, but would support or reinforce the other in case of invasion. Such a disposition, they reasoned, provided the entire settlement more protection, and would therefore convince more settlers to stay instead of evacuating.⁵⁴⁶

Some of those who had considered or actually evacuated Indian Creek blamed their timidity on a perception that Smith had not sent out patrols to provide early warning. Without it, they felt the settlement offered Indian raiders a tempting and vulnerable

⁵⁴⁵ Capt. Daniel Smith to Col. William Preston, letter dated Indian Creek, July 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ57 (69-71).

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

target. However, Smith had actually sent two scouts to reconnoiter down Sandy Creek, but they had “brought no account of Indians” on their return. A short while later, Smith sent out two more patrols. This time, he sent one two-man patrol to the head of streams falling to the Louisa, and Thomas Maxwell – James’ brother – and Israel Harmon to scout down Sandy Creek. Instead of looking for evidence of enemy activity down river, Maxwell and Harmon went in the opposite direction, to the head of the Sandy. They imprudently told the people living there that remaining in their homes only invited great danger. The two scouts then assisted Jacob Harmon move his family and baggage to New River. When he learned that no one had gone down the Sandy, Smith immediately sent two reliable men to do the reconnaissance. As he waited two days for their return, the captain convinced some of the inhabitants who had considered leaving to stay. Smith wanted Thomas Maxwell called to account for his “Highly unworthy” behavior before a court martial under the still subsisting Militia Law.⁵⁴⁷

In spite of Smith’s efforts, company’s strength had dwindled. Poor attendance at the most recent muster convinced him that the men who remained suffered low morale, and that he would have difficulty providing the drafts Preston had ordered. He advised the county lieutenant that keeping a company of fewer than twenty unmotivated men in active service would serve no good purpose if they did nothing but assist to build forts in this busy time of laying by corn. The captain requested that the colonel permit him to keep his men at home but ready to march against any enemy the scouts discovered, or join any company that required reinforcement,

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

instead. He knew that allowing them to work their fields between alarms gave purpose to their remaining on their farms and improved their spirits, which also kept them available for militia service.⁵⁴⁸

As Preston managed the defense of Fincastle County, an express rider arrived from Williamsburg and delivered Governor Dunmore's reply to his last report. The governor expressed his approval of the measures he and the other county lieutenants had taken, and believed they would effectively prevent the "Savages" from inflicting much damage on the frontier districts. Should the Indians attempt to strike, the governor expected that the joint forces of the frontier counties would prove sufficient to not only repel, but effectively "Chastise those restless and inveterate Enemies of Virginia." Dunmore remained convinced of the necessity of building a fort for security at the mouth of the Great Kanawha as well as taking offensive action. He reasoned that marching "a Body of Men ... into the Enemy's Country," would certainly "put a Speedy and effectual end to the War, and Secure you a lasting peace." In response to Preston's request, his lordship had also enclosed two majors' commissions, and authorized Preston to appoint the additional field officers.⁵⁴⁹

Despite rumors to the contrary, Robertson and Falling returned from Chota safe. Major Campbell wrote to Colonel Preston with guarded optimism that after hearing their reports, he "would willingly believe that peace may yet be preserved with the Cherokees." That depended on preventing that "very insolent person" from committing some new provocation, but the major believed that Crabtree's "timidity

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Earl of Dunmore to Col. William Preston, letter dated Williamsburg, July 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ53 (61-63).

... will get the better of his ferocity.”⁵⁵⁰ While making his way to Reed Creek on July 5, Colonel Christian also met Falling, and promptly informed Preston that the report had satisfied him that they feared nothing from the Cherokees, and recommended it best to stop all the last ordered drafts.⁵⁵¹

About a week later, Colonel Preston received a letter, addressed to both Colonel Andrew Lewis and him, which William Kennedy certified as a “true Copy as Delivered to me from the Interpreters,” from *Oconastota*. The chief acknowledged having received the condolence messages the colonels sent Robertson and Falling to read them, and replied, “All out Towns are met here [at Chota], and have heard this talk and think it a very good one.” The sachem expressed his pleasure and the satisfaction of his people with the Virginians’ renunciation of Crabtree’s heinous act and pledge to bring the murderer to justice, which made retribution unnecessary. *Oconastota* said that he shared the Virginians’ desire for their peoples to “keep the path clean” on both sides of the boundary, and remain at peace. He promised that he would personally urge his nation’s young men to refrain from taking the warpath. In return, *Oconastota* requested that Preston and Lewis exhort Virginians to keep from encroaching on Cherokee country – and respect the boundary line surveyed in 1772.

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⁵⁵⁰ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Holston, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ58 (72-73).

⁵⁵¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Holston, July 9, 1774; Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Andrew Colvill’s, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ58 (72-73) and 3QQ60 (75-78), respectively.

⁵⁵² *Oconastota* to Col. Andrew Lewis and Col. William Preston, letter dated Town House in Chota, July 16, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ142.

After he forwarded *Oconastota* 's letter to Lewis, Preston composed his reply to “the Chief of the Warlike Nation of the Cherokees, Friends & Brethren.” The colonel stated that he shared the desire for both sides to maintain peaceful relations to their mutual benefit. Preston then revealed that he knew some Cherokees had already gone out to join with the Shawnees, and informed the sachem that Lord Dunmore would soon lead a punitive expedition against Virginia’s enemies. The colonel asked *Oconastota* to admonish his people against letting any French traders in their towns sway them to join with the hostile Shawnees. He warned that those who renounced neutrality would suffer the same consequences in store for the Shawnees. Given the diminished possibility of war with the Cherokees, the need to maintain all the drafted militia in active service now represented an unnecessary expense. Major Campbell therefore discharged and sent them home to await the next alarm.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ Col. William Preston to Oconastota, letter estimated July 19, 1774; and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Holston, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ142, and 3QQ58 (72-73), respectively.

Chapter 7: The Drums Beat Up Again – Partial Mobilization Becomes General

Augusta and Botetourt Counties

Although the Cherokee chiefs had promised not to go to war against Virginia, Shawnee and Mingo war parties roamed about the settlements in search of targets. Messengers brought the news of alarms, whether reporting actual depredations or rumors that someone had merely sighted some Indians, spread fear and panic in communities throughout the region. The county lieutenants reported to Governor Dunmore that “skulking parties of Indians (believed to be Shawanese and Delawares) had been discovered lately among the Settlements” in Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle Counties, with some of them venturing within twenty-five miles of Botetourt Courthouse.⁵⁵⁴ In one attack, Colonel Andrew Lewis of Botetourt County reported that Shawnees had attacked “a Body of men” near his Richfield plantation home, not far from the courthouse town of Fincastle, and killed one man, and wounded another.⁵⁵⁵

More people continued to shelter in forts throughout Augusta County after the Indian attacks became more “troublesome.” On entering active service, Benjamin Cleaver was appointed as a sergeant and detailed with others to guard the “forts of and Frontiers of Tigers [Tygert] Valley,” a branch of the Monongahela, for a term of four

⁵⁵⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), July 14, 1774.

⁵⁵⁵ Capt. John Connolly to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Fort Dunmore, July 19, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 548.

or five months.⁵⁵⁶ Exercising such caution was not misplaced. Indian warriors operating about the neighborhood of Warm Springs shot and slightly wounded one William McFarlon (or McFarland) during the first week of July. The otherwise minor incident nonetheless sent local inhabitants rushing “in ye Greatest Confusion,” for the protection of nearby forts. In an attempt to counter the threat and put a stop to their intended hostilities, Colonel Charles Lewis ordered out several companies of the Augusta County militia. One of them engaged a group of Indian warriors near the head waters of the Monongahela. Captain John Wilson was wounded by “a Shot in his Body,” which everyone hoped would not prove mortal, but the soldiers he commanded killed three warriors in the encounter?⁵⁵⁷

The county lieutenants ordered the captains commanding companies to send out scouts to watch the warrior paths and rangers to rigorously patrol the approaches to their settlements in order to detect and provide early warning of enemy raiders. Due to their vulnerability to attack along the frontier, the colonels also instructed the captains to send messengers to isolated settlements to warn the inhabitants that a war had begun, and advise them to remove their families to more secure areas.⁵⁵⁸

After dispatching scouts and patrols from his company, Captain John Stuart of Botetourt County sent an express to warn the settlers living in the farthest settlements

⁵⁵⁶ Benjamin Cleaver pension application R2039, dated September 24, 1831, Roll 575.

⁵⁵⁷ Col. Charles Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ59 (73-74). Warm Springs is in present Bath County, Va.; and, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), July 14, 1774.

⁵⁵⁸ Col. William Preston, letter dated Fincastle, August 13, 1774, *American Archives*, 1: 707-708; John Stuart “Narrative by Captain John Stuart of Andrew Lewis’ Expedition Against the Indians in 1774,” John Austen Stevens, ed., *The Magazine of American History with Notes and Queries*, Volume 1, Number 1 (November – December 1877), 674-675; and, J. H. Newton, G. G. Nichols, and A. G. Sprankle, eds., *History of the Pan-Handle: Being Historical Collections of Ohio, Brooke, Marshall, and Hancock Counties, West Virginia* (Wheeling: J. A. Q. Caldwell, 1889), 80.

along the Great Kanawha River. Most of them heeded the warning. John Jones, for example, felt “compelled by the incessant incursions of the Indians to take refuge among the inhabitants” of the Greenbrier area. He then volunteered to serve in the company under the command of Captain Matthew Arbuckle to build and garrison a fort on Muddy Creek “to guard the inhabitants against the incursions of the Indians.”⁵⁵⁹

Walter Kelly had a different response. Stuart described Kelly as having a “bold and intrepid disposition,” but suspected he “might be a fugitive from the back parts of South Carolina,” who had established his habitation about twelve miles below the great Falls of the Kanawha near the mouth of Kelly Creek. When Stuart’s messenger arrived at Kelly’s cabin, he also found fifty-year-old John Field, the colonel of the militia from neighboring Culpeper County. Accompanied by “several neighbors and one or two Negroes,” Field had come to survey the claim on the military grant he received for his service as a captain in the Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War.⁵⁶⁰

Kelly “received the intelligence with caution,” and immediately decided to send his wife and daughter, along with his livestock, to Greenbrier in the care of his younger brother. Stuart described William Kelly as a young man of equally suspicious character. While the others prepared to evacuate, Field expressed different ideas. “Trusting his own Consequence and better knowledge of publick Facts,” he persuaded the older Kelly brother to stay. He argued, “Nothing of the kind before

⁵⁵⁹ Stuart, 674-675; John Jones pension application W7920 dated January 15, 1833, Roll 1441; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 112n.

⁵⁶⁰ Col. William Preston, letter dated Fincastle, August 13, 1774, American Archives, 1: 707-708; Stuart, 674-675; and Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 112n.

being heard,” and evaluated the new intelligence as “not worth noticing.” Although Walter sent his family to safety, he decided to remain on his farm with Field, an unidentified male described only as a “young Scotchman,” and a young slave woman.⁵⁶¹

Later in the day, while Kelly and Field worked at the tanning trough, a party of Indians closed in on the cluster of buildings. As the two men carried some leather toward the cabin, the raiders opened fire and yelled their war whoops. As they ran toward the house to get the muskets kept inside so they could fight back, Field noticed that Kelly had fallen to the ground dead. When he approached closer to the house, Field remembered that they had “not charged,” or loaded, either musket, rendering them useless. Meanwhile, the warriors neared the cabin with “the Negro girl and Scotch boy crying at the door.” Realizing the futility of keeping on that course, the unarmed colonel ran out into the adjacent cornfield. He used the concealment provided by the tall stalks to evade any pursuers, and avoided capture or death, to make his escape. When Field paused to catch his breath, he looked back toward the house and watched helplessly as the warriors killed the boy, scalped both him and Walter Kelly, and carried the girl off as their captive.⁵⁶²

When they arrived safely in Greenbrier, William Kelly told Stuart that their party had gone some miles from the farm when they heard gunfire. Kelly confided to Stuart that he “expected his brother and Field had been killed.” Stuart gathered ten or fifteen volunteers to go and see “what was the consequence,” and possibly rescue any

⁵⁶¹ Col. William Preston, letter dated Fincastle, August 13, 1774, American Archives, 1: 707-708; Stuart, 674-675.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*

survivors. When the patrol met Field coming from the opposite direction, Stuart described him as naked except for his shirt, with his limbs grievously lacerated from passing through “briars and brush,” and worn down with fatigue and cold. The exhausted veteran informed the soldiers of the raid, his escape, and the fate of his late companions. Stuart led his men back to Greenbrier to defend the settlement if the Indian raiders chose to penetrate further into Botetourt County.⁵⁶³

Writing to Colonel William Preston, his Fincastle County counterpart, Colonel Charles Lewis expressed his hope that when the General Assembly convened in August with the newly elected Burgesses, it would find some means of ending the war. He did not know that by the time his report on the incident near Warm Springs reached Williamsburg the governor had already prorogued the Assembly until November. Nor did Lewis know that his lordship had also departed the capital on Sunday, July 10, to see the situation on the frontier firsthand. If possible, Dunmore sought to determine the cause of the recent disturbance, and if possible, find a means to settle matters amicably at a conference with the different nations of Indians involved.⁵⁶⁴

Pittsburgh

Despite the events that transpired elsewhere on the frontier, Pennsylvania officials in the area surrounding Pittsburgh continued to view the looming Indian war as a crisis instigated by Virginia for its own benefit. In their correspondence with Governor

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Col. Charles Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ59 (73-74); *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon) July 14, 1774; and, *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), July 14, 1774.

Penn, magistrates Arthur St. Clair, Aeneas Mackay, Devereux Smith and Joseph Spear asserted their conclusions that “the Crew about Fort Pitt (now Fort Dunmore) are intent on a war.” They charged that Connolly had express riders constantly on the road between Pittsburgh and Williamsburg with reports that gave the Virginia royal governor “a flagrant Misrepresentation of Indian Affairs,” designed to influence his decisions in that direction.⁵⁶⁵ In an attempt to curry favor so the Ohio area Indians would not view Pennsylvania in the same light as Virginia, St. Clair had Croghan “collect a small present of goods.” St. Clair then told the retired Indian deputy superintendent to distribute the gifts as a condolence to the three nations most affected by the recent violence: Delawares, Shawnees, and Six Nations – the latter referring to the Mingoes. He instructed Croghan to attribute the gifts to the orders of the generous Pennsylvania governor. St. Clair confided that “Whatever may be Mr. Croghan’s real views” on the border controversy, “he is hearty in promoting the general tranquility of the Country [and] ... indefatigable in endeavoring to make up the breaches” to prevent an Indian war.⁵⁶⁶

In order to quiet the inter-colonial dispute so they could focus attention on the troubles with the Indians, Lord Dunmore ordered Connolly to discuss settling a temporary boundary with St. Clair and the Westmoreland magistrates. Although the governor still described the Pennsylvania government’s demands as “so extravagant he could do nothing with them,” he authorized Connolly to propose a line of

⁵⁶⁵ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 22, 1774; and, Aeneas Mackay, Joseph Spear, and Devereux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 523-525, and 540-542, respectively.

⁵⁶⁶ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 22, 1774; and, Aeneas Mackay, Joseph Spear, and Devereux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 523-525, and 540-542, respectively.

jurisdiction ten or twelve miles east of Pittsburgh. Knowing the captain's abrasive demeanor often proved counterproductive, the governor further admonished Connolly to give those acting under Pennsylvania authority no just reason to take offense.⁵⁶⁷

Connolly's nature would not allow him to evade controversy. On June 25, twenty-seven individuals signed a petition that protested the "arbitrary proceedings" of Connolly's "Tyrannical Government," and sent it to Philadelphia "On behalf of themselves and the remaining few inhabitants of Pittsburgh who have adhered to the Government of Pennsylvania." The petitioners listed their complaints about the treatment their colony's partisans received, and urged Governor Penn to take some action to relieve their distress. In addition, they blamed the "present Calamity & Dread" of frontier war entirely on Connolly's "unprecedented Conduct." Despite the efforts of Pennsylvania authorities to maintain good relations with "our friendly Indians," the petitioners stood convinced of the Virginians' intent to force a war on them.⁵⁶⁸

The subscribers attached a litany of Connolly's lawless acts to their petition. The list recounted examples of Connolly's disdain for Pennsylvania law and authority, such as his surrounding the Westmoreland County courthouse at Hanna's Town with an armed force of 200 men. They drew the governor's attention to Connolly's attempted interference with the proprietary colony's dominance of commerce with the Ohio tribes, and cited Cresap's attack on the Indians employed by the trader William Butler. Finally, they had had enough of Connolly using the Virginia civil and

⁵⁶⁷ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 22, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 523-525.

⁵⁶⁸ Subscribers to Gov. John Penn, Memorial dated Pittsburgh, June 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 526-527.

military force at his command to run roughshod over those who remained loyal to Pennsylvania's government. To reinforce these complaints, the petitioners reminded the governor of the several incidents of assault and resulting physical injuries, as well as the destruction of livestock, and vandalism or arson of homes and other property directed against them and their families. Many of these incidents also exemplified Connolly's vindictiveness, as they followed the reprimand he received from Dunmore for the unjustified arrest and incarceration of Westmoreland magistrates Mackay, Smith, and McFarlane.⁵⁶⁹

The question of trade as another point of contention between the two colonies went beyond the interference mentioned in the petition. St. Clair expressed his concern to Penn that the Virginians had "determined to put a stop to the Indian Trade with this Province." He learned that Connolly and some associates had received an exclusive privilege to conduct business with the tribes, and had imposed a duty of four pence per skin, payable to Virginia, on all traders shipping pelts from Pittsburgh.

Furthermore, Connolly had previously sent Captain Henry Hoagland with a company of militiamen across to the north bank of the Ohio to intercept any Pennsylvania traders returning from Indian country. Although they had orders only to stop and examine them, Mackay alleged the soldiers had orders to treat "as Savages & Enemies, every Trader" they found in the woods about Pittsburgh, and kill them.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ Remarks on the Proceedings of Doctor Connolly, dated Pittsburgh, June 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 528-529.

⁵⁷⁰ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letters dated Ligonier, July 4, 17 and 22, 1774; and, Aeneas Mackay, Joseph Spear, and Devereux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 539, 545, 550-551, and 540-542, respectively.

While patrolling “about four miles Beyond Big Beaver Creek” on July 5, Sergeant Alexander Steele’s twenty-man detachment encountered William Wilson with his party of traders and Indian escorts “bringing up a quantity of skins” from the direction of New Comer’s Town. The sergeant halted them, and asked Wilson if he employed any Shawnees. The trader replied that he did not, and identified his escorts as Delawares. Steele explained that he had orders to conduct the entire party, whites as well as Indians, with their packhorses and skins, to the mouth of the Little Beaver for his commander to examine. Although Wilson later told St. Clair that Hoagland threatened to kill the Indians regardless of nation, the captain released them in the morning after the trader gave his bond for five hundred pounds to satisfy Connolly.⁵⁷¹

The recent petition indicated that the interests between the partisans of the colonies continued to widen, with those in Virginia’s interest apparently gaining an advantage. According to Mackay, “the Friends of Pennsylvania” had determined to abandon Pittsburgh and erect a stockade “somewhere lower down the Road” to secure their cattle and other property until they could better determine the direction future events would take. Some Pennsylvanians even proposed erecting a new traders’ town at Kittanning to replace Pittsburgh as the center of their colony’s influence in the region.⁵⁷² St. Clair and his fellow magistrates also decided to maintain the Westmoreland County ranging company in service for at least another month, and if possible, until after harvest time, in order to assist and protect the people of

⁵⁷¹ Aeneas Mackay, Joseph Spear, and Devereux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774; William Wilson to Arthur St. Clair, deposition dated Pittsburgh, July 1, 1774; and, Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 22, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 540-542, 543-544, and 550-551, respectively.

⁵⁷² Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 22, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 550-551.

Pennsylvania. Although they had pledged to raise the money themselves, they applied to the governor seeking relief from the financial burden.⁵⁷³

Alexander McKee, the Indian Department deputy superintendent, called representatives from both colonies to meet on June 29, to hear the latest news from Indian country. Captain White Eyes had just returned from the most recent gathering of Ohio Indian leaders at New Comer's Town. As the colonial leaders had requested, the Delaware chief dutifully delivered their message to the several nations assembled "to hold fast the Chain of Friendship subsisting between the English and them," despite the disturbances that had happened "between your foolish People and theirs." He reported that the Shawnee head men had met in a council of their own at Wakatomika, and said that they intended to send their "King" to Fort Pitt to hear what the British had to say. According to Aeneas Mackay, White Eyes gave the Pennsylvanians the strongest assurances of their friendship from not only the Delawares, Wyandots, and Cherokees, but the Shawnees as well.⁵⁷⁴ At the conclusion of the meeting, the Delaware emissary returned to New Comer's Town with the speeches the colonial leaders wanted him to deliver in an attempt to end the killing.

Following the council's adjournment, St. Clair expressed optimism that "Affairs have so peaceable an Aspect." When he heard that a large body of Virginian troops was in motion, he feared that it would jeopardize the chances for peace. The Westmoreland

⁵⁷³ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 4, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 539.

⁵⁷⁴ Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, Report dated Pittsburgh, June 29, 1774; and Aeneas Mackay to Joseph Shippen, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 531-533, and 540-542, respectively.

magistrates soon expressed concern from the Pennsylvania perspective when they heard that Dunmore had lately commissioned three new captains, including Michael Cresap, to raise and lead companies of rangers for frontier defense. Even the president of the Westmoreland County court, Captain William Crawford, “seems to be the most active” among the Virginia officers since he had accepted a commission. After noting that he had recently marched down the Ohio toward Wheeling in command of a body of troops on his second expedition, the judgmental St. Clair added, “I don’t know how Gentlemen account these things to themselves.”⁵⁷⁵ Privates Evan Morgan and David Gamble, both area residents, could have answered him. Morgan enlisted in Captain Zackquill Morgan’s company for the expedition when he “arrived at age, animated with a desire to repel their [the Indians’] inroads – avenge his murdered neighbors – and prevent further invasions.” Similarly, Gamble “volunteered at Redstone Old Fort” to serve in Captain Michael Cresap’s company to go on the expedition “to fight against the Indians.”⁵⁷⁶

When St. Clair received reports of “four Companies on the march to Pittsburgh,” he expressed his usual skepticism. He knew that Connolly had received Dunmore’s approval to conduct an offensive operation against the hostile Indians at the end of the previous month, but St. Clair doubted his ability to execute it. Assuming that the expiration of Virginia’s Militia Law had restricted that colony’s ability to marshal the

⁵⁷⁵ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letters dated Ligonier, July 4 and 22, 1774; and, Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 22, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 539 and 550-551, respectively.

⁵⁷⁶ Evan Morgan pension application S11098, dated March 7, 1833, Roll 1784; and, David Gamble pension application S32264, September 10, 1833, Roll 1044.

necessary resources, he told Governor Penn, “it is not an easy Matter to conduct so large a Body thro’ an uninhabited Country where no Magazines are established.”⁵⁷⁷

The Virginians had approximately 800 men in motion for the long-awaited operation, and relied on their existing Militia and Invasion laws to obtain the necessary provisions and supplies. Connolly appointed an able officer, Captain Dorsey Pentecost, as the conductor of stores and contractor for the army. As such, it fell to him to furnish all the militia soldiers on active service with supplies and provisions. Connolly also appointed officers to serve as commissaries, like Captain William Harrod. The commissary appropriated the livestock, flour, or other foodstuff from private owners, who he then furnished with receipts for the appraised value. The commissary then delivered the provisions to the destination designated by the conductor of stores, such as the fort at Wheeling. After delivery, and obtaining the necessary documentation, the commissary settled the accounts for all the associated expenses, including the active duty pay for the militia soldiers who drove and escorted the cattle, packhorses and wagons, with the conductor of stores. When the House of Burgesses convened and appointed the required commission to examine and approve the documentation, those holding receipts could submit their claims for reimbursement from the colonial treasury.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, June 26, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 530.

⁵⁷⁸ Capt. William Harrod to Abraham Van Meter, receipt dated July 4, 1774, Capt. John Connolly to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated Fort Dunmore, July 16, 1774, Capt. Dorsey Pentecost to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated July 20, 1774, and Capt. William Harrod, receipt dated Fort Fincastle, August 2, 1774, Draper Manuscripts, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers, 4NN7 (68), 4NN8, (101-2), 4NN9 (102), and 4NN9 (103), respectively.

While the documents may not follow the chain of one single requisition, the following series illustrates an example of the process. On July 4, Captain Harrod presented a receipt to Abraham Van Meter for “Three Steers & one Cow,” with a complete description of each animal, appraised for “Sixteen Pounds Ten Shillings” by Jacob Vanmeeter and Edmund Polke “for the Use of the Government of Virginia.” On July 16, Connolly directed Harrod to let Captain Pentecost “have the cattle you bought for Whalin [Wheeling] to be sent down there with all expedition.” Pentecost then, on July 20, instructed Harrod to “Convey them to the mouth of Wheeling as Quick as Possible & Take an acct. of our Expences, what you gave for them,” and after delivering them, “have them appraised and Take care of all the accts. I may be able to Settle with you.” Finally, Captain William Crawford, commanding at Wheeling, acknowledged receiving “Twenty Fives Beeves for use of the militia at Fort Fincastle” from Harrod on August 2.⁵⁷⁹ .

John Montgomery, the Carlisle merchant who procured and sold the powder to St. Clair’s rangers, expressed his optimism that “the storm will blow over, and yet peace and Tranquility will be Restored to the Back Inhabitants.” In a letter, he told the governor that White Eyes’ speech in Pittsburgh at the end of June proved the Delawares were all for peace, and expected the Shawnees to follow their lead. Incredibly, Montgomery expected no further trouble from them or the Mingoes. Without citing any evidence to support his claim, the merchant declared that Logan, “now satisfied for the loss of his Relations” with the “Thirteen Scalps and one

⁵⁷⁹ Capt. William Harrod to Abraham Van Meter, receipt dated July 4, 1774, Capt. John Connolly to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated Fort Dunmore, July 16, 1774, Capt. Dorsey Pentecost to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated July 20, 1774, and Capt. William Harrod, receipt dated Fort Fincastle, August 2, 1774, Draper Manuscripts, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers, 4NN7 (68), 4NN8, (101-2), 4NN9 (102), and 4NN9 (103), respectively.

prisoner” he had taken in June, assuredly “will sit Still until he hears what the Long Knife [Virginians] will say.”⁵⁸⁰

Montgomery had no sooner expressed this optimism than a war party again terrorized the West Augusta area. Apparently not yet as satisfied for his loss, as Montgomery naively believed, Logan and seven followers scouted for their next victims near the mouth of Simpson’s Creek on the West Fork of the Monongahela. After observing William Robinson, Thomas Hellen and Coleman Brown pulling flax in a field on July 12, the Indians crept up on the unsuspecting farmers as if on a group of deer. They opened fire and charged out from the woods. One warrior pounced on Brown as he lay dead and bleeding from multiple gunshot wounds, and removed his scalp. Others overwhelmed and subdued Hellen, while the rest ran after Robinson as he attempted to escape. After a short chase, Logan and others caught and restrained him, and took him back to where their comrades held Hellen.⁵⁸¹

The search of the home and surroundings for additional victims proved fruitless. When area inhabitants “forted up” during the recent alarm, Robinson had secured his wife and four children at Prickett’s Fort, the fortified home of Jacob Prickett, a sergeant and fellow member of Captain Zackquill Morgan’s militia company, near the mouth of the creek with the same name. Resigned to taking only one scalp and two captives for their effort, the braves headed back toward Indian country. As they

⁵⁸⁰ John Montgomery to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Carlisle, June 30, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 533-534.

⁵⁸¹ William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson, Thomas, Notes on the State of Virginia (France: 1785), Shuffelton, ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 249-251; Henry Haymond, History of Harrison County, West Virginia (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Co., 1910; reprinted Morgantown: Acme Printing Co., 1973). 58. Prickett’s fort was located near present Fairmont, W. Va. The West Fork of the Monongahela is now called the West Fork River.

secured the prisoners, the English-speaking Logan became friendly and treated Robinson kindly. He assured his captive that if he went back to his town “with a good heart” and did not attempt an escape, he would spare his life and have him adopted into an Indian family. Not a simple act of mercy, Logan had plans for his prisoner that exceeded the immediate satisfaction of his vengeance. Throughout the journey to Wakatomika, Logan maintained a diatribe against Cresap in which he vented his intense hatred for the man who had allegedly murdered his family.⁵⁸²

Three days after the incident on the West Fork, John Pollock, David Shelvey, and George Shervor reported that a war party of thirty-five Indians had attacked them and six others as they worked in a corn field on Dunkard Creek. In their deposition to Westmoreland justice of the peace George Wilson, the trio testified that although they had escaped, the warriors had killed and “sadly mangled” four of their friends, while two were missing and their fates remained unknown. The men explained that Captain Cresap’s company of rangers gave chase, but the Indians raiders had the insurmountable advantage of a full one-day head-start.⁵⁸³

Between giving his approval in June and reaching Winchester a month later, Governor Dunmore expanded the size and scope of the mission to Wheeling that Connolly had proposed. The governor called on the county lieutenants of Frederick,

⁵⁸² William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson, Thomas, Notes on the State of Virginia (France: 1785), Shuffelton, ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 249-251; Henry Haymond, History of Harrison County, West Virginia (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Co., 1910; reprinted Morgantown: Acme Printing Co., 1973), 58. Prickett’s fort was located near present Fairmont, W. Va. The West Fork of the Monongahela is now called the West Fork River. Roll of Capt. Zackquill Morgan’s Company, Skidmore, Warren and Donna Kaminsky, Lord Dunmore’s Little War of 1774 (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 2002), 34-35.

⁵⁸³ John Pollock, David Shelvey, and George Shervor to George Wilson, deposition dated July 15, 1774; and Capt. John Connolly to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Fort Dunmore, July 19, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 544-545, and 548, respectively.

Dunmore and Berkeley Counties for additional troops, and appointed Major Angus McDonald to command an expedition to raid Wakatomika or other Upper Shawnee towns. With a rank more commensurate to the size of the force assembling, the Frederick County field officer superseded Captain Crawford as commander, but the latter continued to play a vital role supporting the campaign at Fort Fincastle.⁵⁸⁴

Crawford had already marched on his second expedition to the mouth of Wheeling Creek, where his men continued to work on Fort Fincastle. Meanwhile, McDonald departed Winchester with troops raised in Frederick, Berkeley and Hampshire Counties. Cresap's and other companies joined the battalion as it marched to Pittsburgh by way of Redstone, and continued down the Ohio toward Wheeling to build forts and station men at different places. As the Virginia governor had ordered, Colonel Andrew Lewis also began raising another 1,500 men for active service to defend their settlements and build a fort at the mouth of the Kanawha.⁵⁸⁵

With troops in motion, war appeared more likely than ever. When the Westmoreland County magistrates heard that Connolly had sent the Indians an inflammatory "Speech," it confirmed their suspicions. Acting on Dunmore's orders, the captain commandant demanded that the Shawnees apprehend Logan, his war party, and any warriors of their nation who had "committed murder last winter," and deliver them, as well as all the prisoners they had taken, to Virginia authorities. If they refused,

⁵⁸⁴ Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob's Creek, July 27, 1774, The Washington-Crawford Letters, 94-97, 96n; Earl of Dunmore to Col. Andrew Lewis, letter dated Rosegill, July 12, 1774, George Rodgers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscripts 46J7 (86-87).

⁵⁸⁵ Aeneas Mackay, Joseph Spear, and Devereaux Smith to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 8, 1774; and, Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 4, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 540-42, and 539, respectively.

Connolly threatened that the Virginians would “proceed against them with Vigour & will show them no Mercy.”⁵⁸⁶

On July 19, in the wake of the recent attacks, Connolly and St. Clair entered another debate by writing letters that contrasted their respective colonies’ approaches to the frontier crisis. In his opening volley, Connolly charged that the Pennsylvanians’ naïve reliance on the “pacific dispositions” of the Indians had lulled them “into supineness & neglect” of their own defenses. Such a policy, he continued, had tragic consequences, such as the attack of a few days before in which “six unfortunate People were murdered by a Party of thirty-five Indians” at Dunkard Creek.⁵⁸⁷ He further warned that, “The Country will be sacrificed to their Revenge,” if Pennsylvania did not take immediate steps to check the hostile Indians’ “insolent impetuosity.” He asserted that the people of the frontier wanted nothing more than their government’s protection. Connolly concluded that Pennsylvania therefore appeared reluctant, stubborn and “highly displeasing to all Western Settlers,” while Virginia at least took action to protect its inhabitants. As head of Virginia’s civil and military government on the Pittsburgh region, Connolly had “determined no longer to be a Dupe to their amicable professions,” but had decided to “pursue every measure to offend” the Indians, with or without assistance from the “Neighboring Country” – Pennsylvania.⁵⁸⁸

Three days later, St. Clair countered Connolly by writing that “Such an Effect could never follow from such a Cause.” The Pennsylvanian said that believing “the great

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Capt. John Connolly to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Fort Dunmore, July 19, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 548.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

armed force” sent down the Ohio on the pretense that it could effectively protect them had actually created the false sense of security into which Virginia’s people had fallen.⁵⁸⁹ St. Clair agreed that their respective governments had to act to prevent depredations by hostile Indians, but argued that Pennsylvania’s solution of “ample Reparations . . . for the injuries they had already sustained” would ultimately prove more effective. Only “an honest open intercourse,” he continued, could immediately establish and maintain peace in the future.⁵⁹⁰ St. Clair then stated his hope that Pennsylvania’s government would “continue to be founded in Justice, whether that be displeasing to the Western Settlers or not.” St. Clair did not see the least probability of a war unless Virginia’s maneuvers up, down, and across the Ohio brought such an event to reality.⁵⁹¹

Although fellow Pennsylvania magistrate Wilson had sent him the deposition, St. Clair gave the reported recent Indian attack no credibility. On the same day that he countered Connolly’s assertions, he informed Penn of the latest occurrences in Westmoreland County. Routinely skeptical of any news about Indian hostility, especially when it originated from or supported the Virginia side, he doubted that “some People were killed upon Dunkard Creek on the 15th instant.” He explained to the governor that because such news spread as quickly as the alarm, and this one had not, he questioned its veracity. He believed the deponents started the rumor in order to allow Cresap an excuse for circumventing Connolly’s orders to “not to annoy the Indians.” And, although still optimistic that Pennsylvania would escape the

⁵⁸⁹ Arthur St. Clair to Capt. John Connolly, letter dated Ligonier, July 22, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 549-550.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

“mischiefs of a War,” St. Clair noted that so far, the Indians had evidently aimed all their operations at the Virginians.⁵⁹² Nevertheless, he took no chances, and distributed “Arms all over the Country in as equal proportions as possible” to better enable Pennsylvania inhabitants to defend themselves.⁵⁹³ The very next day, as if to underscore Connolly’s argument, David Griffey reported that he saw five Indians on the ridge dividing Brush and Sewickley creeks, only four miles west of the courthouse. Armed, with “Guns over their Shoulders” and obviously not traders, Griffey described them as ready for battle, “Quite Naked all but their Breechclouts, Marching Towards Hanna’s Town.”⁵⁹⁴

St. Clair confided a growing uneasiness concerning the Westmoreland rangers. With their second month expiring at a time when the “Country is in such Commotion, and the Harvest not yet in, they cannot be dismiss’d.” Consequently, the Westmoreland gentlemen who pledged their financial support stood to assume the expense when the provincial funding terminated. St. Clair sought the governor’s assurance of seeking yet another means of relieving them of the burden.⁵⁹⁵ On July 20, the Pennsylvania Assembly appropriated the money and granted the governor authority to “draw Orders on the Provincial Treasurer for any Sum not exceeding Two Thousand Pounds,” for “Paying & Victualing” the rangers until August 10. The Assembly agreed to extend the appropriation for the same amount until September 20, if it proved necessary, provided that the strength of the force did not exceed two hundred

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ David Griffey to Andrew McFarlane, Examination dated Hanna’s Town, July 24, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 555-556.

⁵⁹⁵ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 26, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 557-558.

men. Financed by the excise tax imposed on the sale of wine, rum, brandy and other spirits, and the fines collected for violations of the act, the Assembly justified the expenditure as the means for “removing the Panic” caused by the “late Indian Disturbances” on the frontier, and to subsidize the costs associated with efforts to maintain the peace and friendship that subsisted between “this Province and the Indians.”⁵⁹⁶

In contrast to St. Clair’s skepticism about reports of Indian depredations, Valentine Crawford needed no convincing. He wrote to George Washington that marauding warriors had recently “killed and taken [captive] ... thirteen people up about the forks of Cheat River,” only about twenty-five miles from his farm on Jacob’s Creek. He expressed his deep concern that local inhabitants had seen “savages prowling” about the Monongahela region, and expected them to strike somewhere at any time. With “all the men, except some old ones,” gone “down to the Indian towns” on the expedition, “all their families are flown to the forts.” Two hundred people, mostly women and children from the surrounding area, had taken refuge in Crawford’s fort. To further underscore the differences in attitude between Virginians and Pennsylvanians, Valentine Crawford took the position that “standing our ground here depends a good deal on the success of our men who have gone against the savages.”

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New Comer’s Town

⁵⁹⁶Resolution of Assembly, July 20, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 518-519.

⁵⁹⁷ Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Jacob’s Creek, July 27, 1774, The Washington-Crawford Letters, 1877, 94-97.

After the late June meeting in Pittsburgh, Captain White Eyes returned to New Comer's Town carrying the speeches colonial leaders had given him to deliver to the assembled Indians. On his arrival he learned that, "Contrary to their promise before the Chiefs of the Delawares" at the last council, several Shawnee war parties had set out to attack the Virginia settlers. Those same chiefs now instructed White Eyes to tell the Virginians "it would be to no purpose to Treat further with them [the Shawnees] upon Friendly terms." The assembled sachems also informed White Eyes that the Shawnees, and their Mingo allies, had evacuated their Wakatomika towns and relocated to the area of the lower Shawnee towns near the mouth of the Scioto. The neutral Delawares may have said this to keep the Virginians from attacking so close to their own villages in the area, and assured them saying, "if there is yet one Remaining we would Tell you." They wanted White Eyes to have the Virginians consider crossing the Ohio from the mouth of the Great Kanawha in order to attack their enemies. Otherwise, they feared that Virginia soldiers approaching near the Delaware towns in the area would frighten the women and children and find the "Shawanese are all gone."⁵⁹⁸

Before leaving the last council at New Comer's Town, the leader of one of the Shawnee war parties boasted that after he struck the Virginians, he would "Blaze a Road" to New Comer's Town and "do Mischief," just to see if an actual or only a "Pretended" peace existed between the whites and the Delawares.⁵⁹⁹ Another Shawnee chief, *Keesmauteta*, said that since "his Grand father's, the Delawares, had thrown his people away," they expected that according to ancient custom, such hosts

⁵⁹⁸ Indian Speeches, dated Pittsburgh, July 23, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 553.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

had “Always Turn’d about and Struck them” in the back as they departed. The Delaware envoy had also discovered that another Shawnee war party intended to go to Fort Pitt to kill Croghan, McKee and *Guyasuta*, and intercept and kill White Eyes and his companions, so that they could carry “no more news ... between the White People and the Indians.” Before leaving to return to Pittsburgh, White Eyes sent a message to the Wabash, or Miami, Indians “not to Listen to the Shawanese,” for they only sought “to draw them into Troubles,” and fighting a war they did not want.⁶⁰⁰

As White Eyes headed back to Pittsburgh from New Comer’s Town, Logan gave the “scalp haloo” outside of Wakatomika on July 18. All the warriors in the town came out to greet the returning party, and escorted them and their captives to the council house for trial. In accordance with the ritual, the Indians forced Robinson and Hellen to run the gauntlet. Although they received merciless beatings every time they fell, both men survived the ordeal. With each captive tied to a stake before them, the Mingo debated whether or not to kill and burn them, or present one or both as a condolence to a grieving family. Keeping his promise, Logan convinced the assembled warriors and elders to spare Robinson’s life. The conquering warrior untied the captive from the post and fastened a wampum belt around him to signify his adoption as another family adopted Hellen. Logan took his new ward to a cabin and presented him to his aunt. Logan explained to Robinson that the old woman had lost a son in the massacre at Yellow Creek, and he now took his place in the family to

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

make it whole once more. As Robinson looked around, Logan introduced him to some cousins as his new brothers by adoption.⁶⁰¹

Three days later, Logan brought Robinson a piece of paper, and told him he had to write a letter for him – the purpose for which Logan had taken him prisoner and insured his survival. After he mixed gunpowder and water to make ink, the warrior dictated his words. Addressed to Captain Michael Cresap, he asked “What did you kill my people on Yellow Creek for?” Although white People had killed other relatives at Conestoga “a great while ago [in 1763],” Logan said that he “thought nothing of that.” But when Cresap – allegedly – killed his kin on Yellow Creek and took his niece prisoner, the warrior vowed, “I must kill too; and I have been three time[s] to war since.” He then added, “the Indians is not Angry only myself.” Robinson signed it “Captain John Logan” with the date July 21, 1774. The warrior took the note and set out to war again, telling his scribe that he intended to tie it to a war club and leave it in the house of a family he would murder. Throughout his captivity, Robinson vainly assumed Logan would offer to exchange him for the young girl.⁶⁰²

Leaving such a notice by a corpse represented another war ritual common to many Indian nations. Reverend Heckewelder explained that when Indians had decided to take revenge for a murder committed against their people by another nation, they

⁶⁰¹ William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 249-251; and, Henry Harrison, History of Harrison County, West Virginia (Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Co., 1910; reprinted Morgantown: Acme Printing Co., 1973) 58.

⁶⁰² William Robinson, declaration dated Philadelphia, February 28, 1800, printed in Appendix, Jefferson Notes on the State of Virginia, 249-251; Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Christian, enclosure to letter dated Royal Oak, October 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ118 (246-247).

generally tried to make a bold attack to strike terror in their enemies. Sending a war party to penetrate deep, “as far as they can without being discovered,” into the enemy’s country, they would attack and leave a war club near the body of a person they murdered, and “make off as quick as possible.”⁶⁰³ Leaving the war club “purposefully” let the enemy may know what nation committed the act so they did not wreak their own vengeance on an innocent tribe. The war club also signified the aggrieved nation’s demand that unless the offending nation took action to discover and punish the “author of the original aggression,” the club represented the means of further avenging the injury and served as a formal declaration of war.⁶⁰⁴ “If the supposed enemy is peaceably inclined,” Heckwelder continued, they would send a deputation to the aggrieved nation to offer a suitable apology, which typically blamed “foolish young men” who acted “altogether unauthorized and unwarranted” without the chief’s knowledge. Some suitable condolence presents also accompanied the apology in order to “cover,” or symbolically bury, the dead.⁶⁰⁵

Johnson Hall

As sachems of the Ohio nations met at New Comer’s Town, Sir William Johnson convened a “Critical Congress” of Six Nations chiefs and leading warriors at his Mohawk Valley manor, Johnson Hall. The Indian Superintendent promised General Gage to do everything in his power of persuasion to “divert the Storm” gathering on the Ohio. He therefore planned to discuss the violence committed on the frontier, and seek the assistance of the Six Nations to “bring the troublesome Tribes about the

⁶⁰³ Heckwelder, 176.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

Ohio, Ouabach [Wabash], & ca. to make amends.” The Iroquois realized that the Shawnees’ own actions had largely led to the disorders and caused trouble among their confederacy’s members, especially by alienating many Mingoes. But, as both they and Johnson knew, although not an excuse, a “lawless Banditti” of white settlers had “surprised, & Murdered near 30 Indians, partly Shawanese, but principally of the Six Nations [Mingoes],” bore some of the blame as well.⁶⁰⁶

Sir William first had to convince the Iroquois Confederacy’s leaders to help “preserve the peace & cooperate” with the Indian Department. Together, they could also stop the “irregularities & Murders” and “remedy the abuses” of which the Indians often complained. Simultaneously, they had to curtail the “Artifices of the Shawanese and others” who sought to forge alliances and engage the rest of the Indians of the area, as well as draw the Iroquois themselves, into the smoldering war on the Ohio. After much negotiation, Johnson managed to “withdraw the 6 Nations from among them,” and concluded a treaty that kept the Iroquois, including the dependents of their Confederacy, from assisting the Shawnees.⁶⁰⁷

On the verge of one of his greatest accomplishments as his Majesty’s Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, Sir William Johnson became “seized of a suffocation” after a particular strenuous day of negotiating, and succumbed to a stroke at 8:00 in the evening of July 11. The next day, Colonel Guy Johnson, Sir William’s nephew as well as son-in-law, sent an express to inform General Gage of his uncle’s passing,

⁶⁰⁶ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 4, 1774; and, Col. Guy Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 12, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1113-1116, and 1121-1124, respectively.

⁶⁰⁷ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 4, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1113-1116.

but even to his last breath, his final efforts had kept the war on the Ohio from spreading. The conference observed a recess for the funeral. Two thousand mourners, including a number of Crown and colonial officials, and an impressive array of Indian leaders attended. The latter, representing many nations and tribes, paid their last respects to the white man they arguably trusted most. Colonel Johnson assumed the interim superintendence until the Crown appointed a permanent successor. Since Indian leaders already recognized him as such, he took over the conference. Five days after Sir William's death, July 16, Guy Johnson brought the congress to an "agreeable Termination."⁶⁰⁸

The representative sachems who constituted the central council of the Six Nations – which usually met at Onondaga – agreed to help “defeat the projects of the Shawanese and their Adherents” by exercising its dominion or influence over other nations. If necessary, they would “proceed to Extremities” against any that considered an alliance with, or supported “the measures and designs, of the Shawanese” and their allies. Cognizant that the Shawnees would attempt to convince others that the appeal to unite all of them in a general alliance against the British had originated in Onondaga, the council dispatched several deputies to articulate the confederacy's actual position. Armed with wampum that affirmed the message, the deputies warned that any nation or tribe that joined with the Shawnees would face severe consequences. The deputies assured them that all who “acted with Fidelity during the present Troubles” would receive the confederacy's support reward.

⁶⁰⁸ Col. Guy Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 12, 1774, PSWJ 12: 1121-1124; and, Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage to Guy Johnson, letter dated Boston, July 17, 1774; and, Col. Guy Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 26, 1774, Milton W. Hamilton, ed., PSWJ Volume 13 (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1962), 637, and 640-643, respectively.

Guyasota, the Six Nations viceroy in the Ohio area, received “private instructions” to “divert other Tribes” and isolate the Shawnees from any potential allies.⁶⁰⁹

In his earlier correspondence requesting Sir William to use his “Interposition with the 6 Nations as Moderators” to prevent a general Indian war, Governor Penn had succeeded giving both the old and new Indian superintendents his view of the situation, albeit from his colony’s perspective. The Pennsylvania governor’s one-sided account of the “distress” on the frontier stated that “Tho in so many Instances aggressors,” the Virginians “chuse to consider themselves as the persons injured.” The resulting war, he continued, would only provide them the pretext to take the opportunity to cross the Ohio and take possession of the “Country even beyond the Limits of purchase” negotiated with the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix in 1768. That made preventing a general war more complicated, since the Indians who were not a party to the treaty could find common cause and join an alliance with the Shawnees against the British. Because he knew it had long been the plan of some Ohio Indians, including some of their Mingo emigrants, to challenge Six Nations suzerainty, Johnson believed it imperative for the Crown to immediately address the Indians’ grievances.⁶¹⁰

Seeking to exercise the leverage that had long benefited the Crown because of their alliance, Johnson urged the Six Nations to immediately express their vehement disapproval of the Shawnees’ actions and demand they cease committing all such cruelties against the settlers. Otherwise, he warned, their “Reputation as a powerful

⁶⁰⁹ Col. Guy Johnson to Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, letter dated Johnson Hall, July 26, 1774, PSWJ 13: 640-643.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Confederacy will greatly suffer in the Eyes of the English.” The Six Nations agreed to “check the incursions by their dependents who run about like drunken men and ought to be disarmed by those who are sober.” If the Iroquois could not control their people on the Ohio, Colonel Johnson warned, “the English should be obliged to raise their powerful arm against them, which might have dreadful consequences.”⁶¹¹

Fincastle County

Despite the reduced tensions with the Cherokees, rumors of and actual Indian sightings still ran rampant, and Captain William Russell reminded Colonel Preston that Fincastle County inhabitants remained vulnerable to “a Stroke from the Northward [Shawnee] Indians.” Captain James Robertson (not the emissary to Chota of the same name) reported that the men of his company had discovered an Indian camp on Paint Creek, and he and Captain Joseph Cloyd had stopped at the Culbertson’s Bottom settlement waiting for more men before proceeding. When Colonel Christian learned that local militia had reported seeing “Indian signs” indicating the presence of from 50 to 300 warriors near their communities, Major Arthur Campbell recommended the rangers not attempt a “long March” beyond the settlements into Indian country until supplied with additional ammunition. Although he had recently received twenty-five pounds of gun powder, Christian knew that he needed more for the ranger and local militia companies to meet likely contingencies. Christian further recommended that if the county needed additional men, Preston should have the captains of the three “lower Companies” detach them. He knew that

⁶¹¹ Journal for July 14 and 15, Proceedings of a Congress with All the Chiefs and Warriors of the Six Nations at Johnson Hall in June and July 1774, DRCHNY 8: 480-483.

between the companies under the command of Captains William Cocke and Evan Shelby, they could easily detach fifty men without putting the security of their own communities at risk. In addition, Christian decided not to order the rangers to advance through Moccasin Gap in the Clinch Mountains as planned. Under the new circumstances, such a move would leave an avenue of approach open by which an Indian war party could advance along Sandy Creek without being detected.⁶¹²

Instead, he assigned a different sector to each company in order to cover the approaches to the settlements, provide mutual support, and reinforce the local militia defending their communities. Remaining active and vigilant, each company could detect a war party moving through its assigned area, and either move to “way lay [intercept] or follow the enemy,” and engage them from front or rear. If the Indians managed to strike a settlement before the company could disrupt their scheme, the rangers could pursue them.⁶¹³ Christian posted Captain Crockett’s company at the head of Sandy Creek with orders to range from there “about the head of the Clinch & Blue Stone,” and stand ready to assist the militia guarding the Reed Creek and “head of Holston people” from attack. He further instructed Crockett to keep his men “ready at an hours warning,” should it prove necessary for them to go to the aid of the New River communities. Captain William Campbell’s company marched to cover the settlements on the lower Clinch and near Long Island on Holston, and return through Moccasin Gap and back up the Clinch to rendezvous with Christian at Castle’s Woods. Christian positioned the company under his personal command

⁶¹² Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Preston, July 13, 1774, and Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Andrew Colvill’s, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ64 (88-91) and 3QQ60 (75-78), respectively.

⁶¹³ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Andrew Colvill’s, July 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ60 (75-78).

between the other two so that he could “hurry down” to assist the communities on Blue Stone or Walker’s creeks, cover the Clinch settlements, or march wherever Preston might need him to go.⁶¹⁴

Despite the troops’ presence, a number of Moccasin and Copper Creek families evacuated their farms after hearing someone had sighted Indians – or tracks they perceived as left by Indians – near Sandy Creek. Obeying Preston’s order, Captain Robert Doack drafted some men from his company and marched to the heads of Sandy Creek and Clinch River. Upon hearing that Doack had mustered a force of no more than ten, the colonel diverted Crockett’s company to relieve the drafted men. On arriving, the ranger captain relayed Christian’s instructions that Doack “might as well disband or range a few days” with Crockett until events or orders dictated otherwise. Shortly thereafter, the two captains received an unconfirmed report of sixteen Indians on Walker’s Creek. Doack led his men to investigate and take appropriate action, but “not finding any Signs & hearing the News Contradicted,” he discharged his drafted men as ordered.⁶¹⁵

After hearing that residents had fled the Rich Valley and Walker’s Creek area “in great Confusion,” Christian ordered Doack to send scouts to investigate. The captain noted that although they had left their farms, “The People are all in Garrisons from Fort Chiswell to the Head of Holston.” He observed that in the event of an attack, the community only had enough militiamen to adequately man two, but not all three, of the forts they had built. Doack recommended posting a “Sergeants Command” of

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Andrew Colvill’s, July 9, 1774, and Capt. Robert Doack to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ60 (75-78) and 3QQ61 (78-80), respectively.

seven or eight men in actual service – not taken from the rangers – at each fort would increase the “protection & encouragement” of the community. The additional full-time soldiers provided the area’s farmers extra security, which also encouraged them to save their crops and not abandon their homes. Furthermore, the next time the Indians attacked, the guards provided a force “Ready to follow the Enemy” immediately, whereas militiamen would first make sure their families took shelter in the fort before they would be available.⁶¹⁶ “Let the party be ever so small,” Doack offered to command one such detachment regardless of size, even if not commensurate to his rank. In seeking any assignment during the crisis, he volunteered to go wherever Preston commanded, and wished rather “to be Serviceable than to look for high pay” at that critical time.⁶¹⁷

The Virginia militia law allowed such grade inversions in which Doack offered to serve. Whether they relied on recruited volunteers or drafted men to fill the ranks, a unit in actual service had to have the proper number of officers by rank assigned. Those officers received pay based on the ranks required for the strength of the units they commanded, not necessarily the rank they actually held in the militia.⁶¹⁸

When Colonel Christian and his company arrived in Castle’s Woods on Sunday, July 10, he found Captain Russell well in control of the situation there. Despite the diminished threat of war with the Cherokees, the competent Russell considered the

⁶¹⁶ Capt. Robert Doack to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ61 (78-80). Rich Valley lies between Walker’s Mountain and the North Fork of the Holston River in present Washington County, Va. Hening, Statutes, 7: 114; and, 3: 17 – a fifteen-man detachment requiring one ensign and one sergeant.

⁶¹⁷ Capt. Robert Doack to Col. William Preston, letter dated July 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ61 (78-80).

⁶¹⁸ Hening, Statutes, 7: 114; and 3: 17.

inhabitants along the Clinch more vulnerable to attack from the Shawnees than their neighbors on the Holston. Two weeks had passed since he had sent Boone and Stoner in search of Floyd and the other surveyors. Although he had yet heard nothing, he remained confident they would find them safe, and expected their return any day. The captain had other scouts “out continually on Duty” at the heads of the Louisa and Big Sandy rivers, about Cumberland Gap, and down the Clinch, looking for any signs either of the surveyors or approaching enemy raiding parties. Patrols regularly went to “reconnoiter the very Warriours Paths most convenient” to the Clinch River settlement, and which the rangers under Christian’s command had not yet become familiar. With no little amount of pride, Russell described those he commanded as “Men that may be depended on,” and expressed confidence that any enemy raiders “cannot come upon us, without being discovered, before they make a stroak.” Even if they evaded the patrols, Russell knew that his company would meet them with the “probability of Rewarding them well for their trouble.”⁶¹⁹

Although Russell’s company originally voted to build two forts for the government, they had altered the plan to add a third. When Colonel Christian arrived, he noticed four forts “erecting on Clinch” to guard the frontier from invasion, and shelter the local inhabitants. Russell had named the post at Castle’s Woods, which also served as his headquarters, Fort Preston. Twelve miles upriver, on Daniel Smith’s property, the men neared completion of Fort Christian. Fort Byrd stood on the property of William Moore, four miles down the Clinch at the mouth of the creek that also bore

⁶¹⁹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Russell’s Fort, July 12, 1774; and, Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Preston, July 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ63 (80-85), and 3QQ64 (88-91), respectively.

the family's name. At Stony Creek, another sixteen miles down, four families had joined to fortify the home of their neighbor, John Blackmore. Although not intended as a military post like the other three, Blackmore's Fort provided shelter for travelers and nearby residents. Because of its isolated location and dispersed number of inhabitants, Russell worried for their safety and the adequacy of their defenses.⁶²⁰

Despite the measures he had taken, Russell saw room for improvement, and requested the county lieutenant's assistance. He described his unit's ammunition supply as "so bad" that he had little usable powder and only "fifty wt. (56 lbs.) of Lead." He had dutifully requisitioned more, but a week had passed since Major Campbell assured him that he could expect delivery, with no sign of the powder. The captain also requested that Colonel Preston order some of his men into actual service, or full-time duty, to better defend that part of the county. "Tho' the pay of the Country as soldiers cannot be thought Adequate to such risques," Russell explained that in a small measure it could at least encourage the people to "stand their Ground." Even if the anticipated war never started, the pay would at least offer the men some compensation for their labor in building three fortifications to defend the province's border. They could have easily avoided the drudgery, as Russell reminded the colonel, by deserting the frontier until the danger subsided. The very presence of soldiers encouraged others to refrain from abandoning the Clinch settlements, and thereby expose the Holston communities to attack.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ Ibid, and Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW 85n. Fort Blackmore is in present Scott County, Va.

⁶²¹ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Preston, July 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ64 (88-91).

Captain Campbell's company arrived in Castle's Woods the next day, Monday, after marching thirty miles up Clinch River from Moccasin Gap. Noting the two ranger companies in his community, Russell no longer concealed his disappointment that Colonel Preston and the council of war had not selected him to command one of them. Although "satisfied the gentlemen Officers appointed to the present Detachment, are worthy men ... as Zealous to serve their Country" as the officers of his own company, "they might Destroy some of the Enemy in a Week or two." Russell possessed military experience, leadership abilities, and an extensive knowledge of the frontier that few could match.⁶²² Furthermore, the memory of finding his murdered son's mutilated body just ten months before still haunted him and kindled his desire for revenge. Although the events in Powell's Valley had made this fight personal, ever the good soldier, Russell placed the country's interests above his own.

In all, Christian now had the one hundred men of the two ranging companies, plus Russell's militia company, within his immediate command, with Crockett's forty men not far away in case of trouble.⁶²³ Before he continued his primary mission, Christian first had to gather provisions for his rangers. He sent parties with packhorses to collect and carry 1,500 pounds of flour and corn back to Fort Preston. Although in need of beef cattle, he hesitated in sending parties to Holston to drive forty head back until he knew Preston's instructions for the next phase of the operation.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Russell's Fort, July 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ63 (80-85).

Christian concurred with Russell in believing that Boone and Stoner would find the surveyors alive and soon return, although unaware by which route. Christian therefore delayed marching to the heads of the Louisa River to meet them as Preston had originally instructed. Instead, he convened a two-day council of war with the officers present at Castle's Woods to develop a course of action that would satisfy the governor's instruction for the county lieutenant to take offensive action, and seek Colonel Preston's approval to execute it. Christian proposed that a force of between 150 and 200 men, with five packhorses allowed for each fifty-man company to carry their "Baggage & Blankets & such like" equipage, could march the estimated 120 miles from Castle's Woods to the Ohio opposite the mouth of Scioto. There, he would leave "the tired & lame Men" incapable of going farther to erect a small blockhouse to support the best men, who would cross the river, and cover their retreat in case of defeat. Once on the north bank, the main force of 150 men would move toward the enemy town. With a "good Pilot," or guide, familiar with the trails of the area to "lead us thro' the Woods either by Night or Day," they could advance the last forty-five miles through terrain "where an Enemy would not be expected," to reach the town undetected and conduct a surprise attack.⁶²⁴

Christian counted the forces he had available. Russell indicated he could enlist thirty volunteers from the Clinch. The three lower companies on Holston could detach seventy-five. With the 140 rangers and militia already on duty in the area, Christian had the 200 "choice" men he needed without having to call Captain Crocket's company, which he could leave to protect the frontier. To preserve the element of

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

surprise, the officers agreed to say nothing publicly concerning an attack on the Indian town, but only disclosed that they proposed going “to the Ohio & returning up New [Kanawha] River.” Although some questioned if they could rely on having a sufficient number of troops willing to cross into Indian country not knowing the plan beforehand, they had confidence that “after going so near the Enemy’s Country,” enough would certainly do so. In the unlikely event that a sufficient number of volunteers did not step forward to effect the expedition, they agreed that executing the alternate plan of marching up the Kanawha “might be of considerable Service” in providing security for the settlements.⁶²⁵ If the enemy attacked a settlement on the south bank during his foray, Christian would ask Preston to send him “speedy notification” so that his force could move to intercept the enemy raiders on the banks of the Ohio as they returned.⁶²⁶

While he waited for Preston’s decision, Christian thought it “better to keep the Men moving slowly than have them remain in camp.” He therefore distributed the 115 militia men in actual service to the various forts to strengthen the garrisons guarding the Fincastle County frontier. As Russell had recommended, he posted thirty men each at Blackmore’s Fort and at the head of Sandy Creek, and ten at Fort Preston in Castle’s Woods. He sent Captain James Thompson with ten to Fort Byrd on the Moore farm, and another ten men each to J[ames] Smith’s fortified home and Captain Daniel Smith’s, and fifteen to Cove and Walker’s Creek.⁶²⁷

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

⁶²⁷ Ibid, and Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW 85n.

While Cristian and his subordinate commanders waited for Preston's decision, Colonel Andrew Lewis received new instructions from Governor Dunmore. The governor, making his way west from Williamsburg, had now fully digested the county lieutenants' descriptions of the situation on the frontier, and recognized that "so great a probability" of an Indian war required immediate action by the colony. His lordship repeated his advice to wait no longer for the Indians to continue their attacks, but to "raise all the Men ... willing & Able to go," and immediately march to the mouth of the Kanawha. After building a fort, if he had sufficient forces available, the governor instructed Lewis to advance against the Shawnees, and "if possible destroy their Towns & Magazines and distress them in every other way that is possible." He told Lewis that a "large body of Men" had already marched from the Shenandoah Valley under Major McDonald's command, and could join him there. By keeping communication open with Fort Fincastle at Wheeling and Fort Dunmore at Pittsburgh, the governor believed the militia would prevent any more war parties from crossing the Ohio to attack Virginia inhabitants.⁶²⁸

Somewhat taken aback by the governor's apparent lack of understanding about the frontier counties' situation, Lewis immediately wrote to Preston that his lordship had taken for granted their ability to "fit out an Expedition" and ordered one. Although their "backwardness" – meaning reluctance – might have surprised Dunmore, Lewis feared the consequences of mounting an offense while preoccupied with defense elsewhere. He resolved to do something, telling Preston he would rather accept great risk doing something than to allow an unsuccessful outcome by doing nothing. He

⁶²⁸ Earl of Dunmore to Col. Andrew Lewis, letter dated Rosegill, July 12, 1774, George Rodgers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscripts 46J7 (86-87).

therefore ordered the county lieutenant of Fincastle to embody a force of at least 250 men to take the field under his personal command.⁶²⁹

After he received Lewis' instructions, Preston sent a circular letter to the field officers and captains commanding companies to raise the county's "reasonable" quota of volunteers. Preston believed the men "should turn out cheerfully" to defend their 'Lives and Properties,' which had "been so long exposed to the Savages," who had enjoyed "too great success in taking away." Moreover, if they neglected to act on this one, they may never have "so Fair an Opportunity of reducing our old Inveterate Enemies to reason." He assured them of Governor Dunmore's commitment to the project's success, and confidence that the House of Burgesses would vote the necessary expenditures that would "enable his Lordship to reward every Volunteer in a handsome manner over and above his Pay." With that, Preston added the enticement of a time-honored bonus. "The plunder of the Country," he continued, "will be valuable, & it is said the Shawanese have a great Stock of Horses." Taking items with intrinsic military value as spoils of war from the enemy, whether strictly martial and purchased by the government or sold on the market with the proceeds distributed to the soldiers, or converted to private use by individual recipients, plunder it represented an added inducement for enlisting. The practice also served as a means of forcing one's enemy to bear the economic burden for supporting military operations in his country.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter [fragment, presumably] dated Richfield, July 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ62 (87-88).

⁶³⁰ Col. William Preston circular letter dated Smithfield, July 20, 1774, William Preston Papers, 3QQ139 (91-93).

The invasion of Shawnee territory was intended as a reprisal, or payment in kind, for the series of attacks in the backcountry, and not a war of conquest. A successful campaign offered two immediate benefits. First, it would be the only way of “Settling a lasting Peace with all the Indian Tribes” who the Shawnees had urged to engage in war against Virginia. Second, if the Shawnees suffered the same manner of destruction as they had inflicted, with their towns plundered and burned, cornfields destroyed, and the people “destressed,” the punitive expedition could render them incapable of attacking Virginia again in the future, and possibly oblige them to “abandon Their Country.” Therefore, Preston hoped the men would “Readily & cheerfully engage in the Expedition.” He told the men he and other county lieutenants expected “a great Number of Officers & Soldiers raised behind the Mountains,” to join the expedition for the same motive of home defense. Preston assured the Fincastle County men that they would serve in their own units commanded by their own officers, and not reorganized into units other than those in which they enlisted. He then informed potential volunteers that fifty-four-year-old Colonel Andrew Lewis would command the expedition. Despite his advanced age, the country called on him again for his “Experience, Steadiness & Conduct on former Occasions.” Respected and admired throughout the frontier districts, the knowledge that Lewis was in command enhanced the effort to attract volunteers.⁶³¹

Preston concluded with an appeal to their pride, as he called every man to give his utmost exertion because so much depended on the expedition’s success. With “the Eyes of this & the Neighboring Colonies” on them, he challenged Fincastle County to

⁶³¹ Ibid.

not to leave it to their neighbors to provide the men, provisions and any of the other necessities that they could spare. Their governor had called them. Their country stood ready to pay and support them. Other counties would join and assist them. They fought in a good cause, and had “the greatest Reason to hope & expect” heaven would bless them with success, and defend them and their families against” a parcel of Murdering Savages.” The opportunity for which they had waited and wished for so long had arrived. “Interest, Duty, Honor, Self-preservation, and every thing, which a man ought to hold Dear or Valuable in Life,” he said, “ought to Rouze us up at present; and Induce us to Join unanimously as one man to go [on] the Expedition.” Preston reminded them of the hardship that awaited them, but assured them of the rewards victory would bring.⁶³²

Virginians in the frontier counties began to hear the strains of the song known as *The Recruiting Officer* with increased frequency in 1774. They heard it played and sung in taverns and ordinaries, at social gatherings, and by soldiers on the march.

Although it was an old song that dated from the first decade of the eighteenth century, it remained a popular air, and a most appropriate one for the time and place.

The song originated in 1707 during Queen Anne’s War – or the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) – and the Acts of Union which united England and Scotland as the kingdom of Great Britain. From that time onward, like other colonists, Virginians proudly identified themselves as British subjects. European conflicts increasingly included operations in the New World and American Britons sacrificed blood and treasure for the Empire. *The Recruiting Officer*, George Farquhar’s

⁶³² Ibid.

acclaimed musical comedy from the London stage, made its way across the Atlantic and remained in America as a legacy of Queen Anne's War. A professional theatrical company toured the colonies, and as in Britain, the play became an immediate hit and perennial favorite. The first edition of the of William Parks' *Virginia Gazette* advertised that "The Gentlemen and Ladies of this Country" staged *The Recruiting Officer* in Williamsburg in September of 1736.⁶³³

For the title song, Farquhar adapted the melody of Thomas D'Urfey's familiar ballad *Over the Hills and Far Away*, added the accompaniment of a single drum beating the army's *Recruiting Call*, and penned new lyrics. Also known as *The Merry Volunteers*, the song became popular in its own right, especially among veterans and members of the militia. After Governor Dunmore instructed the frontier county lieutenants to raise troops to fight the Indians, recruiting officers, some accompanied by drummers beating the familiar call, appeared at muster fields, courthouse squares and wherever military-age men gathered. During the summer of 1774, Virginians heard *The Recruiting Officer* almost everywhere:

Hark! Now the drums beat up again,
For all true Soldiers, Gentlemen,
Then let us 'list, and march, I say
Over the hills and far away.⁶³⁴

Pittsburgh

⁶³³ George Farquhar, S. Trussler, ed, *The Recruiting Officer*, London: Nick Hern Books, 1997; *Virginia Gazette* (Parks), September 10, 1736; and, Arthur Hornblow *A History of the Theater in America from Its Beginnings to the Present Time*, Volume 1, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1919), 42.

⁶³⁴ Thomas D'Urfey *Wit and Mirth, or Pills to Purge the Melancholy*, Volume 5 (London: J. Tonson, 1719-1720), 319-321.

When White Eyes returned to Pittsburgh on July 23, McKee immediately convened a council for the colonial officials to learn the latest news from the Indian side of the Ohio. The message the Delaware chief delivered to “our Brethren of Pennsylvania ... and Virginia” laid to rest all doubt as to the Shawnees’ intentions. He told them that Sir William Johnson, “with our Uncles the Five Nations, the Wyandots, and all the Several Tribes of Cherokees and Southern Indians” had spoken. They all told the Delaware to “hold Fast the Chain of Friendship,” and be strong in refraining from taking the warpath. To that end, he said, the various bands of Western Delawares, including the Munsees, “will sit still at our Towns ... upon the Muskingum,” and maintain the peace and friendship “between You and us.”⁶³⁵

Since the Pennsylvanians desired to keep the road between them “clear and open” so the traders could pass safely, the Indians asked that the white people not allow their “Foolish young People to Lie on the Road to watch and frighten our People by pointing their Guns at them when they Come to trade with you.” Such behavior scared “our People” and “Alarmed all our Towns, as if the White People would kill all the Indians” regardless of whether they were friends or enemies. White Eyes turned to the Virginians and told them that the Delawares “now see you and the Shawanese in Grips with each other, ready to strike.” At a loss, they said they could do or say nothing that would reconcile the two sides. He relayed the message that the Delawares only asked that after the Virginians defeated the Shawnees that they neither turned their attention against the other tribes, nor start settlements on the north bank of the Ohio. Instead, they urged the Virginians to return to the Kanawha and

⁶³⁵ Indian Speeches, dated Pittsburgh, July 23, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 6: 552.

south side of the Ohio after they had “Concluded this Dispute” with the Shawnees and renew the old friendship with all other nations.⁶³⁶

Croghan replied that the Shawnees had exhibited evident proof they did not mean to be friends with either the Delawares or the Virginians. He therefore asked White Eyes to approach the Delawares to ask if they would not think it prudent that some of their warriors accompany the Virginia troops when they go to “Chastise the Shawanese.” Such a service would not only shield them from their common enemy, but they could help the Virginia soldiers make a “proper Distinction between our [Indian] Friends and our Enemies.” White Eyes replied that he would take that message to the Delaware chiefs at Kuskusky and return their answer.⁶³⁷

Alexander McKee provided Aeneas Mackay a copy the speeches White Eyes had brought back from New Comers Town in order to transmit them to Governor Penn. Before forwarding the packet to St. Clair, he met with Devereux Smith, Joseph Spear and Richard Butler to discuss a plan they wished to recommend to the provincial government in Philadelphia. They felt it absolutely necessary for Pennsylvania to reward the fidelity of the Delawares, especially “such of them as will undertake to Reconnoiter and Guard the frontiers of this Province ... from the hostile Designs of the Shawanese.” Since performing military service on behalf of Pennsylvania would prevent them from following their own occupations of trapping and hunting, the committee thought it “no more than right to supply all their necessary wants while they continue to Deserve it so well at our hands.” In the absence of a Pennsylvania

⁶³⁶ Ibid, 553.

⁶³⁷ Ibid, 554.

armed force, instead of subsidizing a colonial militia, these men of means in Pittsburgh favored a defense policy in which their provincial government hired Delaware warriors as mercenaries to defend them.⁶³⁸

St. Clair, in turn, forwarded the speeches along with the latest intelligence concerning the crisis on the frontier to Governor Penn. He said that any prospect of an accommodation between the Shawnees and Virginians was certainly over, and had been for some time. He then added his unwavering insistence that it did not appear that the Shawnees had any hostile intentions against Pennsylvania. He then endorsed the recommendation for “engaging the services of the Delawares to protect our Frontier,” and believed that it would undoubtedly be a good policy if it did not cost them too much. Although the magistrate anticipated the Indians would be “very craving” of any rewards, he did not think the provincial Assembly should overlook the proposal. He recognized a single consistent truth: “These Indian disturbances will occasion a very heavy Expence to this Province.”⁶³⁹ Therefore, regardless of whether or not they engaged the services of their warriors, St. Clair urged that the province secure the Delawares’ friendship “on the easiest terms possible.” He neither trusted Croghan with a free authorization to spend the province’s money, nor wanted to insult the Indians with too parsimonious a gesture. If the governor thought it was proper to reward the Delawares with presents, St. Clair recommended that he specify what items he wanted Croghan to obtain and give them.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁸ Aeneas Mackay to Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Pittsburgh, July 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 556.

⁶³⁹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, July 26, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 557-558.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

Captain White Eyes and John Montour assembled and began preparing a party of warriors, including Delaware and Six Nations, who planned to accompany Virginia militia troops if they crossed the Ohio River to attack the lower Shawnee towns. Connolly once again approached St. Clair and requested that he order some of the Westmoreland Rangers to cooperate and join the expedition as well. The Pennsylvania magistrate again refused, and sent specific orders that they were not to cross the rivers that defined their area of operation, much less join the Virginians “who have taken such Pains to involve the Country in War.” Instead, St. Clair still insisted that he wanted the Shawnees to know “this Government [Pennsylvania] is at Peace with them,” and would so remain so as long as the Indians did not invade the east side of the Monongahela and cause “mischief.” Such action, he warned, would result in an immediate declaration of war and swift reprisal by the Pennsylvanians.⁶⁴¹

Winchester

In mid-July, Governor Dunmore established his temporary headquarters at Greenway Court, near Winchester, the estate of the County Lieutenant of Frederick County, as well as his fellow peer of the realm, Thomas Fairfax, Sixth Lord Fairfax and Baron of Cameron. Toward the end of the month, Lord Dunmore ordered some weapons and ammunition from the provincial magazine at Williamsburg brought westward to supply some of the units he called out for service. On Wednesday, July 27, a convoy of wagons loaded with “300 stand of arms, with the proper accoutrements,” including muskets, bayonets, and cartouche boxes, as well as eight casks of sifted gunpowder,

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

left the capital for Winchester.⁶⁴² Dunmore, the former British army captain, now commanded a field army preparing for war.

⁶⁴² *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), August 4, 1774; and, McIlwaine, Henry Reed, and John Pendleton Kennedy, eds., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 6, 223-4.

Chapter 8: On His Majesty's Service

– The Militia Prepares

Wakatomika

Seven hundred Virginia militiamen concentrated at Wheeling during the latter part of July. Those under the command of Major Angus McDonald would conduct an operation as the others finished construction of Fort Fincastle under the supervision of Captain William Crawford. Located on high ground that dominated the south bank of the Ohio River at the mouth of Wheeling Creek, the fort guarded the colony's frontier from invasion and offered shelter to area inhabitants in time of danger. The substantial post also served as a base from which patrols ranged the surrounding area to detect approaching enemy war parties, and could serve as a forward supply magazine to support offensive operations on the north bank.

As the companies performed routine duties and trained for upcoming missions, McDonald and his subordinate officers completed plans for their pending operation. Before Dunmore expanded the mission originally proposed by Connolly, he had designated Captain Crawford to lead the foray into Indian country. After the governor assigned McDonald to lead the raid instead, Crawford remained in command of a battalion of between 200 and 300 men to continue improving the post and its functions as a fortification, logistical base, and to facilitate communications between Fort Pitt and the post planned for construction at the mouth of the Great

Kanawha. Their mission went far beyond construction. Crawford's companies also supported local militia units and conducted rigorous local patrols. Most important, Crawford and his men would lend McDonald's expeditionary battalion any assistance it needed, especially to cover its retreat to Fort Fincastle if the mission went badly.

McDonald commanded the larger contingent that had assembled at the fort for the expedition. The county lieutenants and Connolly had detached eight companies, or about 400 men, commanded by Captains Michael Cresap, [and his nephew] Michael Cresap Jr., Hancock Lee, Zackquill Morgan *, William Linn, Daniel Morgan, Henry Hoagland, James Wood, and Abraham Teagarden. Just before departing on their mission, McDonald held a council of war at which the officers "unanimously determined" to cross the Ohio and march to and destroy the "Shawanese Town called Wagetomica, situated on the river Muskingum."⁶⁴³

Loaded into a flotilla of canoes, the battalion departed Fort Fincastle on Tuesday morning, July 26. After moving the twenty miles down the Ohio to the mouth of Fish Creek – on the Virginia side – the battalion crossed to the opposite bank and landed just below the mouth of Captina Creek. After leaving the canoes, the battalion would travel light. The expedition had neither packhorses, nor wagons and artillery. Each soldier carried enough ammunition and rations on his person to last seven days. The rest of the food would remain in the canoes for the trip back to Fort Fincastle.

Officers and sergeants quickly reformed and accounted for their men, checked weapons and ammunition one last time, and reported to their captains. Satisfied

⁶⁴³ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774; * The inclusion of Capts. Zackquill Morgan and Abraham Teagarden is based on an educated guess in the absence of specific documentary evidence.

company commanders informed McDonald and stood ready for the major's command.

To advance along the ninety miles by traders' paths, crisscrossed by other Indian trails, that defined the route to the Upper Shawnee Towns, the battalion relied on three experienced woodsmen and their familiarity with the area to serve as "pilots," or guides. Jonathan Zane, Thomas Nicholson and Tady Kelly, all members of the Wheeling settlement's militia company, took their places with the lead element of the vanguard.⁶⁴⁴ McDonald gave the march order and the vanguard moved out. The main body followed after waiting the proper interval as prescribed in the chapter on detached operations against irregulars in *petite guerre* operations from Bland's Treatise on Military Discipline.

As the battalion advanced, the vanguard reconnoitered any "woods, copses, ditches, hollow ways" through or close to which the column had to march, and paid particular attention to "every place where any number of men can lie concealed." Bland's Treatise and his own experience told McDonald that the interval between the vanguard and main body must depend on the nature of the country. In such "an enclosed country," that interval at times could "hardly exceed two hundred yards." The main body therefore followed close enough to support the vanguard and come to

⁶⁴⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774; C. W. Butterfield, ed. The Washington-Crawford Letters (Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Company, 1877), 96n; Withers, 153-155; Thwaites and Kellogg, DHLDW, 156n. The mouth of Fish Creek is in present Marshall County, W.Va.; Captina Creek enters the Ohio in present Belmont County, Oh., approximately 120 miles downstream from Pittsburgh.

its relief if ambushed, but not so close that both “should be attacked and cut off by a superior party” at one stroke.⁶⁴⁵

They had gone only a short distance when a violent storm drenched the soldiers and ruined many of the cartridges in their loaded weapons. As soon as the rain stopped and the sky cleared, Major McDonald ordered a halt so the men could reload with dry powder. Each soldier first attempted to fire his weapon in a hollow log to muffle the sound, and thus limited the chance of inadvertently revealing their presence to any enemy warriors lurking nearby. After extracting misfired charges, every soldier reloaded his weapon with a fresh cartridge.⁶⁴⁶

As the column advanced on Sunday, July 31, the men in the van-guard saw three Indians approaching on horseback, at the same time the warriors noticed them. After a brief mutual hesitation, the Indians wheeled their horses about as one soldier raised his weapon and fired. He missed, but before another man could fire, the warriors rode back in the direction from which they had come.⁶⁴⁷ With sunset approaching McDonald ordered the battalion to halt and form a hasty defensive position for the night. With sentinels posted, the men prepared rations for both the evening meal and the next morning’s breakfast. Except when they stood a tour as sentry, the men slept on their arms until the early morning reveille.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁵ Bland, 136-137.

⁶⁴⁶ Lyman Draper, McDonald’s Expedition, handwritten Mss., Border Forays 2D5-11, Draper Manuscripts Collection, Wisconsin Historical Society; and, June 14, 1775 entry, JHB 1773-1774, xx, 218, 225, 249, 265, 274.

⁶⁴⁷ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

⁶⁴⁸ Draper, Lyman, McDonald’s Expedition; and, June 14, 1775 entry, JHB 1773-1774, xx, 218, 225, 249, 265, 274.

On the assumption that the previous day's encounter had alerted the enemy to the battalion's presence, the officer commanding the vanguard ordered "a Serjeant, and six to twelve men, to advance before him ... to reconnoiter all suspected places."⁶⁴⁹ When the pilots heard what sounded like a man cough in the distance, it confirmed everyone's suspicion. Suddenly, members of the advanced party immediately took cover when they saw three warriors walking on the trail toward them. They remained silent and poised for action until the Indians came within musket range when Private Martin Owens fired, but missed. The three braves gave their war whoops and quickly withdrew.⁶⁵⁰

McDonald and other experienced Indian fighters did not believe that the warriors had simply happened upon them by chance. Even the greenest ensign had read Bland's warning of "the usual decoy, by which people are drawn into an ambuscade." The manual admonished its reader, "by laying of small parties at some distance from the place where the [enemy's main] body lies concealed, which, at your approach, shew as if they were frightened, and retire with precipitation before you." Therefore, McDonald suspected that their war chief had sent the braves forward as scouts and to lure them into a position where he waited with war party to ambush them.⁶⁵¹

To counter, McDonald deployed the battalion into three mutually-supporting columns. The center column, which he accompanied, had four companies, while the flanking columns each had two. In the event of trouble, the formation permitted the battalion to quickly deploy into a "Hollow Square" to defend against an attack from

⁶⁴⁹ Bland, 137.

⁶⁵⁰ Draper, McDonald's Expedition.

⁶⁵¹ Bland, 144-5; and, *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

any direction, form into line to meet the enemy head-on, or conduct hasty a single- or double-envelopment with the left and right columns maneuvering against the enemy's flanks while the middle column fixed their attention in front.⁶⁵²

About a half mile from where the pilots spotted the three Indian scouts the path entered a swampy area. The soft ground, cut by streams and thickets, slowed the battalion, constricted its intervals, and reduced the room in which it had to maneuver. Adapting the movement to the terrain, the battalion's three columns contracted into a single column and pressed cautiously forward. Up ahead, concealed behind trees, logs, and man-made "blinds" on the side of the path, about fifty warriors waited quietly and patiently in ambush. When the Virginians came within range, the Indians opened fire. McDonald ordered the companies of the center column to form on line and the right and left columns to "file off" in an attempt to surround the enemy. Maneuvering on the right, Captains James Wood's and Daniel Morgan's companies advanced through the woods, came on line, and attacked the left side of the ambushade in what Private Evan Morgan described as "some severe fighting." The warriors gave way to the superior numbers, but conducted a fighting withdrawal as they fired "from every rising Ground." In order to slow the advance and determine their opponents' strength and intent, the Indians continued the shoot and run tactic for about thirty minutes, "when at last they ran" and broke off the engagement.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵² Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-188); and, Draper, McDonald's Expedition.

⁶⁵³ Evan Morgan pension application S11098, March 7, 1833, Roll 1784; *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774; and, Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-188).

At one point during the fight Captain William Lynn led his company across a ravine, fording the stream at the bottom, while under enemy fire. Both he and Private Dudley Martin fell wounded as they climbed the far bank and tried to reach the cover that a large tree at the top provided. Two bullets struck Linn, one in the breast and the other in a shoulder, while Martin took one in his left shoulder – which possibly also hit Linn. As he stood to reload behind a tree, a soldier named Wilson saw the Indian who shot his comrades using the same tree that they had tried to reach. Wilson shot and killed the warrior when he emerged from his cover to finish off and scalp Lynn and Martin. Tradition holds that Wilson had not completed his reloading when he saw his target, and in his haste to even the score, fired both the bullet and his ramrod at the enemy.⁶⁵⁴

In such circumstances, Bland's manual instructed a commander to keep his men in one body where they can mutually assist one another. It also cautioned that "if they should separate in pursuing those they beat, the enemy may destroy them one after another, with such an inconsiderable number of troops."⁶⁵⁵ With the battalion "much scattered in the woods," McDonald halted the advance to permit company commanders to rally and re-form their units. While the troops reloaded their weapons, redistributed ammunition, and gathered the wounded, the captains reported that the battalion had suffered two dead and five wounded in the half-hour skirmish. The soldiers had taken no prisoners, and a search of the battlefield found only one dead – presumably a Delaware – warrior. Considering the well-known enemy practice of hiding or carrying away their casualties, the Virginians claimed, or

⁶⁵⁴ Draper, McDonald's Expedition.

⁶⁵⁵ Bland, 159.

believed, they had killed four “and wounded many more” Indians. Major McDonald called his subordinates together to assess and discuss the situation and plan their next move.⁶⁵⁶

Leaving a detachment of twenty-five men to guard and tend to the wounded and bury the dead, the battalion resumed its advance toward the Upper Shawnee Towns, now only five miles away. As they approached, members of the vanguard observed a lone Indian heading up the bank of the nearby creek. Suspecting that the warrior had been in the recent skirmish, one of the soldiers shot and wounded him, but he managed to escape.⁶⁵⁷ When they reached the Muskingum River on the opposite side from the town, Virginia scouts observed Indians “posted on the bank, intending to dispute our passage.” Both sides commenced a desultory exchange of musketry as men endeavored “to conceal themselves behind trees, logs, &c., watching an Opportunity to fire on each other.” The militiamen killed one Indian without suffering any losses of their own in the exchange.⁶⁵⁸ When the main body of troops arrived, they deployed along the river facing the Indian town.

Between shots, Joseph Nicholson, one of the battalion’s interpreters, called out to the Indians in the Lenape language and told them that he belonged to the Six Nations. A Delaware replied and asked if he was Simon Girty, one of Alexander McKee’s Indian Department interpreters. Nicholson answered in the negative and said Girty had remained back at Fort Pitt. The Delaware then asked him to give his name, and when

⁶⁵⁶ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

⁶⁵⁷ Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, enclosed with Thomas Walpole to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Lincoln’s Inn Field, October 27, 1774, Hewlett, W. O. ed., Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth, Volume 2 (London, Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1887), 359, (151-153).

⁶⁵⁸ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

Nicholson identified himself, the two recognized each other as long-time acquaintances. In the conversation the Delaware said his people wanted peace, and Nicholson invited him over to talk with the promise that no harm would come to him. Trusting the Virginian at his word, the Indian crossed the river to the side held by the soldiers. Recognizing the opportunity thus presented, Major McDonald issued orders to insure the man's safe passage and forbade anyone to approach or "molest" the Indian while they talked.⁶⁵⁹

After he entered the position, the Indian informed McDonald "of the good Disposition of the Delawares to the white people." The envoy told the major that John Gibson and William Wilson, two well-known Indian traders, "had been sent from Pittsburgh," implying on behalf of Pennsylvania interests, to warn them that a party of Virginians had marched against some of their towns to destroy them, but they did not know which ones. McDonald assured the envoy that the Virginians came to only fight the Shawnees and hostile Mingoos. He emphasized that Virginia's governor had given him "particular instructions not to molest any Indians at peace with us, and particularly the Delawares." He added that Governor Dunmore, as well as Virginians in general, remained well aware that throughout the recent troubles, the pacific motives of the Delawares, who had on many occasions behave "friendly to the white people," by not only rescuing several from the Shawnees and Mingoos, but had "taken great pains" to persuade them against attacking the white people.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁹ Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, 359, (151-153); Draper, *McDonald's Expedition*.

⁶⁶⁰ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

Hearing that his people were respected by the Virginians brought the envoy great satisfaction. He admitted that when the Pennsylvania traders characterized the Virginians “as cruel, barbarous people, that would spare none of the Indians,” his people initially believed them. Because the Delawares wished to remain neutral, what the Pennsylvanians had said left them “in great suspense” in deciding “what course to take” as war in the Ohio Valley became more likely. He therefore requested that the Virginians not press the attack against their towns until after he brought the chief named *Winganum* to meet and talk with McDonald.

A short time after he departed on this diplomatic mission and re-crossed the river, the envoy encountered two other Delawares. Believing that their meeting presented another opportunity to avert catastrophe, he convinced his new companions to accompany him back to the Virginians. They fortuitously met a Mingo warrior before crossing the Muskingum, and the three Delawares succeeded in convincing him to join them in their effort. The four-man peace delegation then crossed with a guarantee of safe passage to meet with Major McDonald, even though the Mingo had fought against their hosts earlier that day.⁶⁶¹

While Major McDonald busied himself “commencing a council” with the new Indian delegates, a precarious quiet settled over that portion of the river. Private John Hargiss of Captain Michael Cresap’s company watched an Indian “occasionally popping up his head in the fork of a low tree” to observe the Virginians and resolved to shoot the man. After loading his rifle with a double charge of powder and an additional ball, he fixed his point of aim on the space just above the fork and waited

⁶⁶¹ Ibid.

for the warrior to raise his head once more. When he saw the brave's painted face appear above his rifle's front sight post, Hargiss squeezed the trigger. The lock released the hammer holding the flint, which struck the frizzen, causing a shower of sparks to ignite the primer in the pan with a flash. Following a discernable split-second delay, the propellant in the chamber exploded. The resulting charge of gas seeking an escape from the bore sent the projectiles spinning toward and then out of the muzzle at the target, while a cloud of dense acrid smoke engulfed the rifleman. Both bullets struck the warrior in the neck and killed him instantly. Although his companions later dragged the body away from the river bank and buried it, Hargiss located and scalped the remains the next day.⁶⁶²

Back at the council fire, the Mingo and new Delaware arrivals, like their companion before them, said that they "were exceedingly pleased" with the friendly reception they received "in that bloody Path ... where" earlier the same day "the Shawanese and Mingoes had passed to murder" their current hosts. The Indians marveled at the contrast between what they had experienced first-hand and what they had expected from listening to the Pennsylvanians' "terrible accounts of the Virginians intending to cut them off," or destroy them, "for the sake of their lands." Quite to the contrary, these Delawares found the *Chanschican*, or Long Knife. "a good people." The "three among so many warriors" could have easily fallen prey to the Virginians to "cut us in pieces" had what the Pennsylvanians told them proved true. Instead, Virginia soldiers

⁶⁶² Draper, McDonald's Expedition; Jacob, 70.

welcomed the Delawares as friends, “which will make the hearts” of their “great men and Nation glad when we tell them this good news.”⁶⁶³

The envoys recounted their nation’s effort to remain neutral, and explained that the Delaware chiefs had “called our people from among the Shawanese and Mingo” so that the Virginians would not treat them as enemies as well. In attempting to avert war, Delaware leaders had advised the Shawnees not to attack the whites, and warned them of the consequences they could expect if they did. They had told the Shawnees and Mingo that they would gain nothing from a war, but only provoke the whites to retaliate with overwhelming force to destroy them.⁶⁶⁴

With McDonald’s battalion poised on the outskirts of Wakatomika, the Pennsylvanians’ prediction appeared on the verge of fulfillment. However, the major developed a plan to spare the Shawnee and Mingo towns, including Snake’s Town. The soldiers from the Dunkard and Muddy Creek settlements knew that Captain Snake had accompanied Logan in June when he raided their communities and killed and captured some of their neighbors, including the Spicer family. McDonald therefore sent the Mingo warrior, who agreed to act as an ambassador, back to the Indian side of the river with his proposal. The major offered to spare their towns if by the next morning the hostile Mingo and Shawnees first delivered two of the white women they held captive – possibly including Betsy Spicer – as a sign of good faith. Second, the ambassador and two other warriors had to submit themselves to serve as hostages “until their great Men and ours could talk together.” The ambassador then

⁶⁶³ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

left the camp on his mission to spare the Mingo and Shawnee towns. The three Delawares left in the “most friendly manner,” and as neutrals, they sought to warn their Shawnee and Mingo neighbors to evacuate their women, children, and effects before the Virginians attacked.⁶⁶⁵

During a lull in the fighting, the Virginia officers held a council of war to discuss plans for winning the battle. Differences of opinion arose concerning the feasibility and advisability of crossing the river and conducting a frontal assault against an enemy who seemed determined to defend Wakatomika. In addition to the officers, some of the men occasionally “entered warmly” into the discussion and expressed their opinions. Private Patrick Haggerty of Wood’s company supposedly exclaimed, “Captain, wherever you’ll lead us, even to the hot regions below, I’ll follow you!” The officers agreed on a plan in which the main body remained in place “to amuse the Indians” and hold their attention that night while a detachment found a place to cross lower down the river at first light.⁶⁶⁶ McDonald therefore ordered Captains Michael Cresap Sr. and Hoagland to lead their companies “some considerable distance” downstream below Wakatomika and cross the river at day break. Once in position, they would cover the crossing of the other companies in the morning, and the entire battalion would attack the enemy’s flank.⁶⁶⁷

The two companies spent a restless night preparing for the mission. Cresap repeatedly cautioned his men to keep themselves and their weapons ready, concerned

⁶⁶⁵ Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, 359, (151-153); *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774; and, Draper, McDonald’s Expedition.

⁶⁶⁶ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.* and, Draper, McDonald’s Expedition.

that the enemy could launch an attack or ambush them as they crossed the river. In spite of his concerns, he remained confident that his men would perform well. Two hours before dawn on August 2, he silently formed his company, inspected their weapons one last time, and led them forward. As he had anticipated, his and Hoagland's companies encountered some opposition, and became engaged in a light skirmish as soon as they crossed the river. They drove the enemy back, established their position on the far bank, and waited for the rest of the battalion to follow. Meanwhile, McDonald remained in position with the six remaining companies, and waited for the Mingo envoy to return with the hostages and redeemed captives. When they did not appear, he gave the order to march. After everyone had crossed the river, Major McDonald gave the order for the battalion to advance along the river toward Wakatomika.⁶⁶⁸

About two miles short of the objective the battalion's scouts encountered the Mingo ambassador walking toward them from Wakatomika. They immediately escorted him to McDonald and the interpreter for interrogation as the battalion continued its advance. The lead units had not gone another 200 yards when the men of Cresap's company, deployed on the right flank, discovered a party of Indians waiting in ambush under the cover of the river bank. When the Virginians outflanked the ambushade, the Indians abandoned their position and fled. The pursuing soldiers engaged the retreating warriors in a running skirmish. Cresap killed one straggling brave with a tomahawk in hand to hand combat. Although they counted no other

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

Indian bodies, blood trails indicated that his men had killed or wounded several more.⁶⁶⁹

Meanwhile, the ambassador told McDonald he had returned to inform him that the other Indians would not agree to deliver any hostages. Although the soldiers respected the fact that he had kept his word and returned to inform the major of the results of his negotiation, they suspected that he had known about the ambush and had deliberately not apprised or warned them of it. To recognize his friendly offices, the troops spared his life, but secured and retained him as a prisoner of war.⁶⁷⁰ Had the ambush inflicted many casualties among their comrades, the Virginians might not have proved so forgiving.

The Virginians reached Wakatomika and found “men’s scalps hung up like Colours” but all the towns evacuated. By this eighth day of the expedition, the troops had consumed most – if not all – of the provisions they had carried from Fort Fincastle. They therefore helped themselves to prepared food they found at the dwellings and all the provisions they could carry from the enemy’s storehouses to supplement their reduced rations. The troops proceeded to burn all the buildings in the one Mingo and five Shawnee villages, and cut down seventy acres of standing corn in the surrounding fields. In contrast, the soldiers respected the Delawares’ neutrality and peaceful disposition. Except for taking some corn, “of which the men were much in

⁶⁶⁹ Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, 359, (151-153); and, Draper, McDonald’s Expedition.

⁶⁷⁰ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), October 13, 1774; and, Draper, McDonald’s Expedition.

want,” the troops spared the Delaware villages and left their dwellings and possessions unmolested.”⁶⁷¹

After gathering the plunder they had taken from the enemy, the battalion returned to the location where the wounded had remained since the August 1 engagement. After allowing the men a short rest, McDonald gave the order to march cross country toward Wheeling. Subsisting on one ear of corn each day, plus what edible plants they could gather and a “scanty supply of game,” the men became increasingly famished. Fortunately, no Shawnee or Mingo war parties interfered with the movement.⁶⁷²

After encountering what Private Evan Morgan described as “hardships and perils that cannot here be detailed,” McDonald’s exhausted and hungry battalion completed its dreary return trek to the banks of the Ohio. At Captina, they loaded onto their canoes and paddled back to Wheeling and marched into Fort Fincastle on August 9. The major prepared his report as the men rested and regained their strength before marching home. During those few days, they learned that Governor Dunmore had planned to end the war by invading Shawnee country with two large divisions converging on the principal towns on the Upper Scioto. While some men, like Private William Greenway of Captain Daniel Morgan’s company, remained as a frontier guard at Fort Fincastle, the major sent most of the others home for a well-

⁶⁷¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-188); and, Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, 359, (151-153).

⁶⁷² Maj. Angus McDonald to Maj. John Connolly [extract] letter dated Fort Fincastle, August 9, 1774, 359, (151-153); Draper, McDonald’s Expedition; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 156n.

earned leave and to prepare for the next campaign. Meanwhile, he went to Winchester to personally brief Lord Dunmore on the results of his operation.⁶⁷³

McDonald's expedition had achieved its stated objective. The battalion had penetrated deep into Indian country and destroyed "Wahatomakie, a Shawanese town on the Muskingum ... with all the plantations round it." The Virginians had successfully executed the mission with little loss of life: friend and foe. When taken to market, the plunder sold for only £35, s11, d3, which they divided among the men. McDonald's force had "taken three scalps, killed several Indians, and made one prisoner," suffered "the loss of only two of his people & six wounded," but offered little in the way of significant results. All factors considered, the operation achieved little more than a minor tactical success.⁶⁷⁴

While the expedition demonstrated to the Shawnees that Virginia could respond in kind with reprisals of its own, but failed to gain security for Virginia's frontier settlements. The Indian raids against Virginia's frontier settlements continued, and possibly increased in both numbers and severity. Considered strategically, the raid on Wakatomika did little to change the course of the war or hasten its conclusion. If it accomplished anything, the expedition convinced Lord Dunmore that only an invasion by overwhelming force directed against the heart of the enemy's country could achieve peace and secure the frontier from continued depredations at an affordable cost. Such an expedition would also force the hostile Indians to accept the

⁶⁷³ Draper, McDonald's Expedition; William Greenway pension application S1907, September 12, 1832, Roll 1784; Evan Morgan pension application S11098, March 7, 1833, Roll 1784; and, Brantz Mayer Tay-gah-jute or Logan and Captain Michael Cresap (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1851), 58.

⁶⁷⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), August 18, 1774; Journal House of Delegates Dec. 9, 1776.

terms of the treaties that established the Ohio River as the boundary between Virginia and Indian country.

Botetourt County

As McDonald's battalion fought its way to Wakatomika at the beginning of August, an Indian war party roamed Botetourt County in the neighborhood of the Greenbrier settlements. Just a few weeks after hostile warriors had murdered Walter Kelly in a raid on his farm, tragedy struck his family again. William Kelly and his niece heard musket shots coming from the direction of Arbuckle's Fort as they walked along the road. They did not know that some Indians had fired at a sentry at the post, located just one half mile away at the confluence of Mill and Muddy Creeks, but immediately realized that it meant trouble. Unfortunately, some warriors had already observed them and moved in for the kill.⁶⁷⁵

The pair quickened their pace in an attempt to reach safety. A shot rang out, and William Kelly fell to the ground. Wounded but still alive, he told the girl to leave him and run. She tried to escape, but another brave quickly caught and subdued her. The captor then forced his prisoner to watch as one of his companions "Tomhak'd" her uncle and "Cut him Vastly." The warrior then scalped his victim as he bled to death. Captain Arbuckle's men heard the noise, and knew that unless they did something immediately, the settlers would never reach the shelter of the fort. The soldiers raced toward the sound of the firing with the knowledge that they represented

⁶⁷⁵ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culbertson's Bottom, August 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ69 (103-106); Stuart, 674-675.

the victims' only hope. Sadly, by the time they arrived the warriors had already escaped with two trophies, a dead man's scalp and a young female captive.⁶⁷⁶

Fincastle County

The Fincastle County militia officers met in a council of war on August 2 to develop a plan for “the Defense of the Frontiers, in the absence of the Troops.” Preston ordered Captain Thompson to “guard the lower settlements on Clinch” with a company of sixty men, but as late as August 25, the “upper settlements” remained “uncovered.” The colonel therefore instructed Major Campbell to appoint Captain Daniel Smith, assisted by as many subaltern officers the major deemed appropriate, to command a similar company to guard that sector. The colonel further instructed the major to form a new sixty-man company, with thirty of them drafted from the administrative companies of Captains Herbert and the late Captain Doack, with the subalterns appointed from the companies that produced the most men. The county lieutenant then instructed Campbell to “examine carefully into the number of Scouts on that Quarter,” in order to retain the most active and trustworthy, but reduce the overall number.⁶⁷⁷

Even at this late date in the preparations, senior officers still spent good amounts of time appointing officers to raise and command companies for the expedition. As militia leaders recruited volunteers and readied their units for the expedition into

⁶⁷⁶ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culbertson's Bottom, August 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ69 (103-106); Col. William Preston, letter dated Fincastle, August 13, 1774, American Archives, 1: 707-708; Stuart, 674-675, and Newton, Nichols, and Sprinkle, 80.

⁶⁷⁷ Col. William Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated August 25, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ82 (161-162).

Shawnee country, the mission of defending the frontier counties against Indian attacks remained an equally essential concern. By the third week of July, Fincastle County's county lieutenant, Colonel Preston, had to make sure that Majors Arthur Campbell and James Robertson, of the Lower and Upper Holston districts, respectively, took nothing for granted. The complications resulting from having to conduct concurrent offensive and defensive operations against a resourceful and elusive enemy left no room for error. The enormous responsibility rested heavily upon their shoulders. Both field officers had to maintain the credible defense of their respective districts while raising additional units for offensive operations by relying largely on volunteers. In many cases this also required adequately compensating for the detachment of – arguably – the best units and most competent officers going on the expedition. That both majors also intended to go on the operation complicated their tasks that much more.

With August 25, the date the county's expeditionary companies expected to assemble at the rendezvous fast approaching, Major Arthur Campbell did his best to prepare the operational contingents and provide for the defense of the Lower Holston district. Finding officers for and filling the necessary numbers of companies, and settling disputes between captains that arose while they recruited volunteers from outside their company catchments, occupied much of his time. Someone had recommended that the county lieutenant consider Evan Shelby Jr., who had relocated to Fincastle County from Maryland in 1773. A veteran of the French and Indian War, Shelby had served in both Maryland and Pennsylvania units, where he had risen to the rank of lieutenant. With the need for additional competent officers, Colonel Preston wrote to

Shelby offering and “begging acceptance” of a commission as captain “in our Militia.”⁶⁷⁸ Shelby accepted.

In the midst of the turmoil of military preparations, Captain Anthony Bledsoe unexpectedly resigned his commission. The French and Indian War veteran ended his active participation in the militia to express his displeasure at not receiving a promotion to major that he expected and believed he deserved. Although the militia would miss his leadership and experience, the county lieutenant took the opportunity to divide and reorganize Bledsoe’s former command into two companies. On August 2, Preston appointed Captain William Cocke and Lieutenant Benjamin Logan to form a company with a catchment that encompassed the residents of the “upper part” of Bledsoe’s former command. Similarly, the colonel appointed the newly commissioned Captain Evan Shelby and Lieutenant Isaac Shelby, his younger brother, to form a company composed of members from the “lower part” of the old unit’s catchment, plus any volunteers recruited from Watauga. Preston then instructed Captains Cocke and Shelby to complete the “Division.”⁶⁷⁹

Having divided into smaller working groups to complete their measurements of land patents along the Louisa River, Captain John Floyd and three other surveyors headed toward safer areas. The group that remained with Floyd returned by way of Cumberland Mountain. They found and followed a “blazed road ... through the gap of a large mountain” to the head of Powell’s River. After the men “lost the Blazes,” they moved south east over the mountains to “Guess’s [Guest’s] River.” Using the

⁶⁷⁸ Col. William Preston to Capt. Evan Shelby, letter dated August 2, 1774, Tennessee Papers, Draper Manuscripts 5XX4 (106-108).

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

tributary to guide their movement, the surveyors finally reached its confluence with the Clinch. Surveyor Thomas Hanson noted in his journal that on Tuesday Afternoon, August 9, he and his companions arrived at “Mr. Blackburns near Rye Cove,” where they found the local inhabitants fortified and prepared for war. When Floyd visited Smithfield four days later to make his report, Preston noted that although other survey parties had not yet returned, there remained “Reason to hope they are safe.”⁶⁸⁰

Out on the Louisa [Kentucky] River, as Stoner and Boone searched for the survey parties they warned the inhabitants at Harrod’s Cabin – or Harrods Town – about the danger that the commencement of hostilities posed to isolated frontier settlements. James Harrod and his followers, who had established their settlement at the far reaches of Fincastle County earlier that year, immediately decided to abandon their homes and ripening cornfields and move to the relative safety of the Lower Holston settlements until the danger passed. When Harrod learned about Dunmore’s proposed expedition and Colonel Preston’s call for volunteers, he asked his followers if they would join him on it. After Harrod met with Major Arthur Campbell, the field officer responsible for Fincastle County’s Lower Holston district, he offered to raise a company of volunteers. Most of the men had agreed to enlist on the condition that they would serve together as a single company under their own officers, and not simply be assigned to complete another captain’s unit. Campbell assured him that the county would honor their proposed arrangement. Harrod received a captain’s

⁶⁸⁰ Thomas Hanson Journal entries dated August 6 – 9, 1774, George Rodgers Clark Papers, Draper Manuscripts 14J58-84 (DHDW 133); Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152.

commission to “Command his own Men ... and [be] consulted as their Chief officer, on future occasions.” Although Harrod’s would constitute a separate company, the major explained that it would “be joined [or attached] to Capt. Russell only in making Returns, to the General officer” in order to account for their rations, allowances, and their payroll. The association not only eased Harrod’s administrative burden, but greatly enhanced his effectiveness as a military officer.⁶⁸¹

With that resolved Major Campbell met with Russell and explained the command relationship between the two units. Harrod had favorably impressed the major, who then sent him to meet Colonel Preston. In his letter of introduction, Campbell told the county lieutenant that the new captain “seems very forward to go against the Enemy.” Campbell further recommended that Preston “encourage such a Man as Capt. Harrod, with his party, on the present occasion: as far as consistent with the discipline that may be necessary on the Expedition.”⁶⁸² Meanwhile, left under the charge of his lieutenant, John Cowan, Harrod’s men billeted at places that pleased them. To prevent potential friction with the local inhabitants, Campbell instructed Cowan to have the company camp on the grounds of his own Royal Oak estate until the Holston troops could march with them to the place of rendezvous.⁶⁸³

Colonel Preston ordered Major James Robertson, the officer responsible for the Upper Holston district, to recruit a company, and march immediately down the New River to Culbertson’s Bottom. On his arrival, he would also take command of the

⁶⁸¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated McCauls, August 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ70 (108-109), DHLDW 108n.

⁶⁸² Ibid.

⁶⁸³ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 9, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ79 (135-136).

officers and men who had recently assembled there to perform active service in the colony's pay. Robertson expected to go on the expedition, but he knew the importance of local defense. He threw himself into the assignment with the aim of accomplishing all the necessary tasks before he had to leave for the Fincastle County contingent's rendezvous.

Robertson first addressed the assignment of officers to the district's defense. If he found that the numbers of those present exceeded the proportion that the law allowed, Preston had delegated to him the authority to discharge those who became supernumerary. However, the county lieutenant also gave Robertson the discretion to retain any officers willing to stay as volunteers, as long as they acknowledged the risk that the House of Burgesses had no obligation, and might not approve a claim, to pay them for their active duty. Since the county lieutenant did not assign a commissary officer or purchase agent, it fell to Roberts to acquire provisions and other necessities "on the cheapest and easiest Terms."⁶⁸⁴ As specified in his instructions, Major Robertson first supervised the construction of a small stockade fort to protect the local inhabitants and accommodate the posting of a company-size garrison. The county lieutenant instructed him to keep "a just account of the Labour" so that when the colonial government paid them for their military service, Preston could make the case for granting the soldiers extra money for their work as well.⁶⁸⁵

The unit posted at the Culbertson's Bottom stockade under Robertson's command did more than erect and garrison the post they named Fort Byrd (not to be confused with

⁶⁸⁴ Col. William Preston to Maj. James Robertson, letter [undated], William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ138 (95-97).

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

the one of the same name built on the Clinch River). When completed, the stockade encompassed a magazine for storing supplies and served as a base for conducting an active defense of the district. Robertson therefore followed Preston's instruction to use his "utmost Endeavours to prevent the Enemy from comeing [sic] by that important Pass, & to Protect the Settlers" inhabiting Culberson's Bottom and Rich Creek. His men conducted continuous operations in which part of them rested from their last missions and prepared for the next ones, while other detachments ranged the area on patrols to detect roaming war parties seeking targets and alert the inhabitants and militia of pending attacks. Robertson's authority and responsibility also encompassed the "Care of any Scouts on that Quarter," which Preston described as "a most important duty & must be carefully looked into."⁶⁸⁶

Robertson knew that the lives of local residents, including the families of militia comrades on duty elsewhere, depended on him and his men. Although he did not have to, Preston reminded the major that not only his own and his men's lives, but the company's reputation as soldiers rested on how well they attended their duty. Therefore, Preston told Robertson "to be constantly on your Guard to prevent a surprise." Given the scarcity of gunpowder, Preston particularly emphasized the imperative for Robertson to insure the men did not engage in that "detestable practice of wantonly firing Guns without any cause." Those who did not only wasted precious ammunition, but unwittingly provided the enemy intelligence he could use to advantage. Since it alerted the Indians to their presence, war parties could then either avoid militia patrols while on their way "to ravage the Country," catch them in an

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

ambuscade, or hit them with a surprise attack, and thereby leave the settlements more vulnerable and defenseless⁶⁸⁷

Wasting or conserving ammunition was one indicator of a military unit's morale, and, by extension, its fighting ability. In addition, Robertson had to enforce strict discipline among the men, and see that the officers punctually and faithfully executed orders. Preston therefore instructed all of his subordinate field officers, including Robertson, to keep "an Account & Return of any men that proved disobedient, negligent, or mutinous." Just as their officers read the Articles of War and the potential consequences a court martial could impose for violations to British regulars, Virginia officers informed militia soldiers that acts of misconduct "would result in the forfeiture of pay" and other punishment prescribed by the Invasion Law, and could result in "not being called upon active duty for the future."⁶⁸⁸

Although "continually on Horse Back among the People," Robertson reported that recruiting volunteers proceeded at a disappointingly slow pace. With "A Great Deal of Both Good words and Bad ones," by Tuesday, July 19, he had convinced nineteen men to march two days later. With some optimism, he said that four more men had promised to report for duty at Culbertson's Bottom in another week, with an additional three or four to follow after they harvested and put away their grain.⁶⁸⁹

While making his rounds one week later, Tuesday (July 26 – the same day McDonald began his expedition against Wakatomika), Major Robertson visited the New River

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letters dated July 19 and 20, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ66 (94-95).

blockhouse that local residents had named Fort Dunmore. In his inspection, the major found “Six or Seven men” who had previously left the settlement at Culbertson’s Bottom, but persuaded all except one to return the next day. He also encountered another seven from Blue Stone who had abandoned their homes and crops. Although they lived at some distance from the blockhouse, Robertson promptly engaged them to be ready for the call to service at any time with the local company. That call came immediately.

With their tour of duty at Fort Dunmore expiring, and their obligations fulfilled, the men of Lieutenant Henry Thompson’s militia detachment intended to leave for their homes in the morning. Unfortunately, the unit expected to relieve them had not arrived. To complicate matters, a returning detachment reported “fresh Signs of Indians Seen Every Morning” while on patrol to the nearby Forbes plantation. To garrison the blockhouse until relief arrived, Robertson stationed the men he had just engaged with a few of Thompson’s willing to remain on duty. The ten soldiers proved enough to satisfy the local settlers’ security concerns and not feel the necessity to abandon the frontier. Short of both men and ammunition, Robertson expected “a Large Body of Indians” to invade the district at any time. He closed his report to the county lieutenant with uncharacteristic pessimism, and pledged to “Stand by the Place” in accordance with his orders, even “if Death Should be my Fate.”⁶⁹⁰

After he returned to Culbertson’s Bottom on Thursday, Major Robertson reported that Fort Byrd neared completion. He added that he then had twenty-five privates

⁶⁹⁰ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Dunmore (Fincastle County) July 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ67-68 (99-100).

stationed there, with another ten at “old Billy Wood’s” fortified home, and repeated his request for reinforcements and more ammunition. This time, his request came with an increased sense of urgency. Under normal circumstances, scouts usually spent three days looking around outside the fort before returning, unless they saw fresh signs of Indian activity. In such cases, they returned and reported immediately. The frequency of sightings had dramatically increased to where scouts reported new intelligence every morning. Telling Preston that he expected the enemy to “give us a Salute when they Assemble their party altogether,” Robertson added that could face the enemy threat with more confidence if reinforced and resupplied with ammunition.⁶⁹¹

The Fincastle County militia officers met in a council of war on August 2 to develop a plan for “the Defense of the Frontiers, in the absence of the Troops.”⁶⁹² If the requirement to support offensive and defensive efforts simultaneously had not challenged them enough, the competition among officers trying to recruit volunteers to fill their companies with volunteers resulted in additional complications. Men who had readily volunteered for active service to defend their communities at the first alarm sought service in companies going on the expedition. If allowed to go, others had to take their places, and officers would need to cross-level the companies. Captains commanding companies did not want to release men from their obligations to serve in their units if other captains would benefit without some kind of compensation. Robertson, for example, reported to Preston that many of the men in

⁶⁹¹Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Byrd (Culbertson’s) July 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ67-68 (100-101).

⁶⁹² Col. William Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated August 25, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper manuscripts 3QQ82 (161-162).

the Fort Byrd garrison said they would volunteer to serve under his command in the expedition against the Shawnee towns if they could get released from their previous commitments. In contrast, some men wanted nothing more than to fulfil the obligation which the law required of them. Lieutenant Thompson, whose detachment that marched from Fort Dunmore for home as soon as the men's active service term expired, now claimed that "his Business was So Urgent at Court" that Major Robertson could not prevail on him to extend his own tour of duty.⁶⁹³

Major Robertson began to suffer with a severe toothache complicated by an upper respiratory infection. Swollen eyes, fever, headache, and difficulty eating and sleeping caused him the "Greatest misery Ever any fellow was in," but he soldiered on and remained on duty. Although in extreme discomfort, he only complained that his responsibilities for coordinating the Upper Holston's defenses allowed him no chance to raise a company for the expedition. Therefore, the dedicated officer offered to remain at Culbertson's Bottom to command the defenses of that part of the county and, if Preston concurred, requested the county lieutenant transfer the men he had thus far recruited for the expedition to the company commanded by Captain William Ingles.⁶⁹⁴

Still hampered by shortages of almost every kind of supply, the major pleaded with the county lieutenant to send him some flour, gun powder and lead before the units going on the expedition began to assemble at the district rendezvous. On August 6,

⁶⁹³Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Fort Byrd (Culbertson's) July 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ67-68 (100-101).

⁶⁹⁴Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letters dated Fort Byrd and Culbertson's Bottom July 28, August 1, and August 12, 1774, William Presto Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ67-68, -69, 74 (100-101, 103-106, 140-142), respectively.

the soldiers who had served at Culbertson's Bottom since Robertson assumed command asked when they could expect the men who would free them to join the expedition. He could not answer since he had also requested the officer who would replace him to arrive in sufficient time to allow him to recruit men for his own expeditionary company and prepare to go.⁶⁹⁵

Lieutenant John Draper arrived at Culbertson's Bottom with a detachment of thirteen men on the last day of July, which raised the number gathered at Fort Byrd for the expedition to thirty-three. Although Robertson kept scouts out continuously, they had not found any recent signs of Indian near the fort. When Draper reported his men saw the fresh tracks of an estimated five or six warriors near Wolf Creek, Robertson immediately sent an express warning area inhabitants to be on their guard. Such alerts had become frequent, and with many of the military-age male members of area households performing militia duty, local families had already gathered their livestock and a few possessions and took shelter either at a nearby military post or a neighbor's fortified home.⁶⁹⁶

In the ensuing week enemy warriors moved discreetly about the New River settlements seeking targets. When scouts reported that "three or four Indians Visiting the Waste plantations above us on the River" had set John Chapman's vacant home and outbuildings on fire, it prompted Robertson to postpone his leave home. Instead, he remained at his post to coordinate the militia effort to counter the enemy before they could harm any inhabitants or cause more destruction in the neighborhood.

⁶⁹⁵ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culbertson's Bottom, August 6, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ71 (109-110).

⁶⁹⁶ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culbertson's Bottom, August 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ69 (103-106).

Lieutenant Draper marched from Fort Byrd in command of a twenty-man detachment on Sunday morning, August 7. Major Robertson had ordered him to march to Clover Bottom on the Blue Stone to find and destroy the war party. The men seemed eager to take a scalp or two, and before they marched, he offered £5 to any man in the company who brought the first Indian prisoner into the fort.⁶⁹⁷ If they found no signs of the enemy there, Robertson instructed Draper to patrol near the Glades before going back into the garrison at Fort Byrd by way of the mouth of the Blue Stone.⁶⁹⁸ During the march, Draper's men came across and followed tracks left by a party of four or five warriors. While they had headed in the direction of the New River settlements for some distance, the warriors had apparently scattered and foiled the attempts of the soldiers to track them. They did stop to investigate one of the ruined plantations for Indian signs. At a house the Indians had burned one of the warriors "Left a War Club ... well made and mark'd with two Letters I G."⁶⁹⁹

Four warriors had scouted the area of the east bank of New River about of the mouth of Sinking Creek, and observed the farm belonging to Balthazar [also known as Balzer or Palser] and Catherine Lybrook, and their children. Due to the emergency, the blockhouse on the property also sheltered the neighbor families of John Chapman, John McGriff, "Widow" Elizabeth Snidow, and [unknown first name] Scott. Despite the fortification, the farm offered the raiders a tempting and lucrative target. They knew that they only had to wait until some of the occupants came out to work in the

⁶⁹⁷ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 11, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ73 (138-140).

⁶⁹⁸ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 6, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ71 (109-110).

⁶⁹⁹ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 11, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ73 (138-140).

fields, tend livestock, do other chores or just enjoy the fresh air and thus become vulnerable.⁷⁰⁰

On Sunday, August 7, the marauders watched as the host family's patriarch, "Old [Balzer] Lybrook," walked toward the mill located on the creek near the river bank. Seven boys, ranging in age from a "suckling babe" of a few months to two adolescents of thirteen years, soon appeared from out of the blockhouse. The boys first headed for the spring, about one hundred yards away, but then followed the creek another one hundred yards or so to their swimming hole, where the bank dropped nearly ten feet below the plain to the New River.⁷⁰¹

The mid-summer water-level provided a six-foot wide stretch of sand where the children played. Standing a few yards away in the river, a large rock created a pool where little boys could splash around and wade in shallow water without wandering into water over their heads. On the other side of the rock, the older boys could swim in the deeper water of the river channel while they took turns keeping an eye on the little ones. To reach their swimming hole, the boys descended the steep banks using gullies that erosion had cut and the traffic of thirsty animals had worn into narrow trails over the decades. Shortly after the boys arrived, the two teenaged Lybrook

⁷⁰⁰ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152; John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433; Jacob Sidnow pension application R9903 Roll 2241; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 134n. Sinking Creek is in present Giles County, West Virginia.

⁷⁰¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433.

sisters arrived with three younger girls. After loading them into a canoe, the big girls paddled the little ones around the water above the mouth of the creek.⁷⁰²

As the children enjoyed an idyllic summer day, three Indian warriors stealthily moved into position to take them by surprise. The children suddenly looked up in horror to see one of the warriors standing at the top of the bank after he gave his blood-chilling war whoop. Although the Indian stood between him and home, eleven-year-old John Lybrook immediately looked for ways to climb the bank and run for safety and warn the others. He managed to evade his assailant and sounded the alarm as he ran to the blockhouse. The two Snidow brothers, thirteen-year-old Theophilus and eleven-year-old Jacob, along with thirteen-year-old Thomas McGriff, attempted to swim to the opposite bank. If they made it, they could run to a neighboring fort to summon help. However, two warriors charged down the bank and splashed into the water in hot pursuit as ten-year-old John Snidow Jr. sat on the rock gripped by fear. Not knowing what else to do, he held the two youngest Lybrook brothers, one-year-old Daniel and the few-months-old and not yet christened – therefore un-named – infant. The two braves paused, struck and killed all three innocents with their war clubs, and after scalping them, continued the pursuit of Thomas, Jacob and Theo. After they caught and restrained the boys on the far bank,

⁷⁰² Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433; David E. Johnson A History of the Middle New River Settlements and Contiguous Territory (Huntington, W. Va.: Standard Printing & Publishing Co., 1906), by), 42-44.

the warriors led their prisoners back to the rock where they forced them to watch the next act of the drama on the river unfold.⁷⁰³

When they realized the evil about to befall them, fourteen-year-old Elizabeth and thirteen-year-old Catherine Lybrook turned the canoe full of little girls about, and paddled against the current. In the vain hope that they had reached a safe distance from the danger, the older girls turned the vessel toward the bank. Not knowing that he had shadowed their movement, the third warrior sprang from out of the brush as the canoe glided onto shore. With a ferocious war whoop he charged directly into the canoe. Furiously swinging his war club, he murdered Elizabeth Snidow, both of her little sisters and the Scott family's daughter as he made his way aft toward where Catherine Lybrook sat. From where they watched on the rock, the three captive boys saw the Indian brave "Sculping the Children in the Canoe."⁷⁰⁴ Meanwhile, Catherine jumped out of the vessel and ran toward the blockhouse screaming for help. The warrior then stood erect amid the welter, held his blood-stained scalp knife at his side in one hand while he raised the other, clutching the three newly won trophies high over his head, and gave his triumphant scalp haloo. Enraged that she had escaped his grasp, the warrior chased and nearly caught the fleeing Catherine when the family dog came to her rescue. The protective canine repeatedly charged and bit his

⁷⁰³ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152; John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433; Johnson, 42-44..

⁷⁰⁴ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152; and, John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433.

mistress' assailant on the legs and ankles. By the time the warrior shook off and struck the dog with his war club, Catherine had reached the safety of the blockhouse. John McGriff – Thomas' father – now had a clear shot and fired his musket at – and believed he wounded – the Indian, who then retreated to the river bank.⁷⁰⁵

While his three companions terrorized the children a fourth raider crept up on the mill. Hard at work, Balzer remained unaware of the events that transpired outside when a musket shot rang out and wounded him in the arm. Despite the injury, he avoided capture and took refuge in a nearby cave. His attacker eventually gave up searching and rejoined the others, while Lybrook remained in hiding until certain that the raid had ended. Even without the senior Lybrook's scalp, the war party had enjoyed a good day of hunting. The warriors had killed seven of their enemies, mangling their bodies, and taken three prisoners – a total of ten heads. Two warriors and a "white Indian" led the three prisoners away "with the greatest Caution... Walking on Stoney Hills the worst way Imaginable" to make it more difficult for would-be rescuers to track and follow.⁷⁰⁶

Draper's patrol had returned to Fort Byrd without having found and engaged the four-man enemy war party before it struck. By then, word of the attack on Sinking Creek had spread throughout the county, and on Monday Major Robertson led another

⁷⁰⁵ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134); Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152; John Lybrook to Draper, Lyman Draper Notebook, 31S433; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 134n; Johnson, 42-44. Tradition holds that remains found nearby years later confirmed that McGriff's shot mortally wounded the warrior.

⁷⁰⁶ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142).

detachment that went “Constantly in Search of them” for the next two days. After the patrol returned empty-handed on Tuesday night the major reported to Preston his belief that with so few men the war party had “made not the Least sign we Could follow.” Robertson sent the detachment out again on Thursday to “Watch About the Old Plantations,” and catch any warriors who came “Skulking About” in an ambush before they did more mischief. The enemy, however, had other plans.⁷⁰⁷

During the two days that followed the raid on Sinking Creek, the warriors maintained a close watch of their three captives and allowed them little to eat. The war party avoided militia patrols as they moved about the area “away up toward Clover Bottoms on Blue Stone, or Between that and the lower war Road on Blue Stone.” Curiously, since that bloody Sunday the braves neither fell on other defenseless prey nor set a course back toward Indian country. When the captors finally halted to allow their captives eat and rest on Tuesday evening, their other actions seemed to answer any questions the boys had about Indians’ plans for them. Jacob, Thomas and Theophilus watched the warriors dividing their powder with each other, and saw less than ten loads in all. Avoiding any combat – even attacking a farmer working alone in his field – conserved ammunition. The boys watched the warriors dress the scalps of the murdered children and realized that their captors could reduce their burden without diminishing the glory of their victory by simply substituting three scalps for three live prisoners. They had also noticed that the warriors had ominously relaxed

⁷⁰⁷ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 11, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ73 (138-140).

their guard somewhat. After considering all that they knew, or thought they knew, about their captors' intentions they decided to attempt an escape.⁷⁰⁸

Jacob and Thomas remained awake until about midnight. Certain that all of their captors had drifted sound asleep, the boys made their move. Repeated and increasingly desperate attempts to awaken Theophilus, at the risk of also alerting the Indians, failed. The pair bade their fellow prisoner a sorrowful farewell, and walked into the forest. They had not gone far when the two boys discovered a hollow log and hid inside. Although only a short distance from camp, their choice represented a careful, albeit quick but not hasty, decision. Jacob and Thomas decided not to flee farther that night because it would have increased the likelihood of their recapture. The short head start they enjoyed would have quickly evaporated had they gotten lost in unfamiliar woods at night, or when they grew more fatigued as fleet-footed, well-rested braves tracked them like prey in the daylight. On the other hand, the boys knew that warriors deep in enemy territory and short on ammunition would not spend much time searching for escaped prisoners before they resumed their search for other targets or returned to Indian country. After the evidence suggested the warriors had moved on, Jacob Snidow and Thomas McGriff, "Intirely naked without Either Blankets or match Coats," eating only what fruit and vegetables they found growing wild, walked along the road until they met some militia scouts from Fort Byrd.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁸ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Draper's Notes 31S433; Johnson, 42-44.

⁷⁰⁹ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson's Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Draper's Notes 31S433; and, Johnson, 45-46. The location is believed the vicinity of Pipestem Knob in present Summers County, West

On Thursday morning Robertson and Ensign Thomas Masdin led eight or ten men on patrol, and sent other scouts as far as the Glades. None of them reported any signs of Indian activity, leaving the major to surmise that the war party that caused so much damage had advanced along Sandy River and approached the settlements by the head of the Blue Stone. He therefore ordered scouts to look “High on Blue Stone and Watch the Roads that way.”⁷¹⁰

On Thursday, August 11, Robertson reported thirty-six men present for duty at Culberson’s Bottom and another fifteen posted at [William or “Billy”] Woods’ Fort. The major expected that number to decrease in four days when the expedition volunteers departed, but he assured Colonel Preston that Lieutenant Draper and Ensign Henry Patton commanded enough men to garrison the forts and “Likewise have a Smart Party to Range with” for the district’s continued defense.⁷¹¹

The late reports of war parties encroaching near the settled areas had the soldiers, both new and old hands, “All Distracted Already for Home” and the safety of their families.⁷¹² To address their concerns, Robertson sent a sergeant with eight men to patrol up New River as far as Rich Creek, East River and Wolf Creek early on Friday morning to see what evidence they could find about recent enemy activity.

Meanwhile, some of the scouts met with Jacob Snidow and Thomas McGriff to obtain all the intelligence “a Couple of Poor Little Boys” could provide about the war party that had held them prisoner. Based on that information, the major sent a

Virginia. Theophilus Snidow was eventually adopted by and lived with the Indians for fourteen years following his capture.

⁷¹⁰ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 11, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ73 (138-140).

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² Ibid.

detachment to scout the place where the boys had escaped their captors. The patrol had not gone more than three miles from Fort Byrd on the north side of the New when they discovered tracks left by eight or ten Indians who had moved through the area since Tuesday, August 9.⁷¹³

When Major Robertson submitted his next report to the Colonel Preston, he cautioned the county lieutenant to keep his side of the mountains well-guarded,⁷¹⁴ The Upper Holston district had recently contended with numerous “Straggling little party’s” of Indians who demonstrated that they could do an abundance of damage. Because of their small size, he warned, the marauders could avoid or get around the scouts and companies without possibly being discovered. In addition to the units that deployed to give the vulnerable settlements early warning or intercept the raiders before they could attack, the communities and local units had to stand better prepared to defend themselves. The major suggested that when inhabitants gathered in the protection forts, local commanders should have the authority to enlist as many men as possible in the colony’s pay for full-time duty in order to keep them “Ready on any Occasion.”⁷¹⁵

Botetourt and Augusta Counties

Colonel Andrew Lewis, the county lieutenant of Botetourt County as well as Governor Dunmore’s principal subordinate and commander of the Southern Division

⁷¹³ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Draper’s Notes 31S433; and, Johnson, 45-46.

⁷¹⁴ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ74 (140-142).

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

of militia defending the frontier, convened a council of war at his Richfield estate. The command included the militia of Botetourt, Fincastle and Augusta Counties – minus the West Augusta District. Meeting on August 12, those in attendance included his Botetourt deputy and field commander, Colonel William Fleming, and their respective counterparts from Fincastle County, Colonels William Preston and William Christian. The council clarified the chain of command. The governor had already ordered Lewis to command the Southern Division, or Left Wing, of the army on the expedition to the Ohio, and – more recently – instructed Preston to stay on the frontiers to command the defenses. Fleming therefore assumed command of the Botetourt troops on the expedition, while Christian did the same for the Fincastle County contingent.⁷¹⁶ The Left Wing would assemble about seven miles from White Sulphur Springs at a savannah of flat ground called the Great Levels on the Greenbrier River, and march on the expedition on August 30. Because it represented the point where units of three counties would join together, they called the general rendezvous Camp Union.⁷¹⁷

After defining the command relationships, the officers discussed the progress of recruitment of volunteers for the expedition and providing for the effective defense of their two counties when the units going on the operation departed. They realized that the “frequent murders committed by the Indians, & their daily appearance amongst the inhabitants” caused the people living in the two counties to be reluctant to volunteer for companies in the intended expedition. The colonels understood that the

⁷¹⁶ Council of War, report dated Richfield, Botetourt, August 12, 1774, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Ky; and, Col. Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated Smithfield, August 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ76 (145-146).

⁷¹⁷ Ibid. Camp Union was located at present Lewisburg, West Virginia.

apprehensive inhabitants of the frontier districts would want protection in the absence of such sizable contingents of militia. This, among other challenges, contributed to the uncertainty that the recruiting officers could raise the required numbers of men from their districts. The need to call on assistance from the neighboring Bedford and Pittsylvania Counties, as provided in the law for repelling invasions and suppressing insurrections, had become readily apparent.⁷¹⁸

The two county lieutenants therefore asked their respective counterparts to each provide two companies, or 100 men plus the proper officers, so that both counties' frontiers may be protected during the expedition, and the defenders' numbers increased. Lewis requested the commanding officer of Bedford to have his detachment march to Botetourt. Preston wanted his opposite number for Pittsylvania's detachment to cover the frontiers of Fincastle County from the head of the Clinch to Culberson's Bottom. Since Bedford County had already started raising a company of volunteers to go on the expedition, the council of officers decided to request the county lieutenant of Pittsylvania also raise a company for the same service. If these measures failed and the numbers of troops remained insufficient to carry on the expedition, the four colonels held the opinion that Lord Dunmore's instructions and the Invasion Law in force provided them the authority for the drafting of the militia, and "they ought accordingly to be draughted."⁷¹⁹

By discussing a resort to a draft, the field officers had proposed nothing new in the conflict. In Augusta County, for example, Privates Jacob Gillespie and Samuel

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

Gwinn entered service when drafted by their administrative companies in June. Posted to Clover Lick, they helped to build and garrison a fort to guard the frontier settlements on the headwaters of the Greenbrier River against Indian raiders, and had engaged in “some skirmishing.” Both men then volunteered to go against the Indians on the expedition when Gillespie joined the company of Captain John Dickenson and Gwinn that of Captain Andrew Lockridge. Before the end of August, they marched to the county and general rendezvous by way of Warm Springs.⁷²⁰

Although the General Assembly had failed to continue the old or pass a new militia law, the colony’s Council, House of Burgesses and senior militia officers agreed and advised the governor that the old one remained in force. The matter of continuing the present or enacting a new militia law would get addressed after the next election – for which Lord Dunmore had already issued the necessary writ – and the General Assembly convened with the newly elected or re-elected representatives. Those who used the expiration of the act to shirk their military obligation stood vulnerable to prosecution.

As one might expect in a country that relied solely on a militia for defense, the burden of service fell disproportionately on those willing to volunteer at the first alarm. When Virginia’s conflict on the frontier became more protracted, others had to assume some responsibility and fulfil their obligations and contribute to their own protection. The colony needed men to enlist for active service in order to relieve those already on duty who had also volunteered to serve on the

⁷²⁰ Jacob Gillespie pension application S3398 dated October 4, 1832, and Samuel Gwinn pension application S17992, dated March 12, 1834, Roll 1149. Clover Lick is in present Pocahontas County, West Virginia.

expedition. The recent news of war parties striking the frontier showed that the threat remained high. Therefore, in a letter to Colonel Preston, Robertson recommended, “You[‘l] Please to make the Officers Draft Some of their Company that has not yet been on Duty and Send them out” to Fort Byrd by Monday, August 15. On that day, he intended to allow the men on duty a chance to visit home before marching to the county’s rendezvous. The major told Preston he would delay visiting his own family – again – “until I See if we Can Rub up [“awaken”] these Yalow Dogs A Little,” and excite some of the shirkers to volunteer.⁷²¹

Nonetheless Robertson conceded that like all of his men’s, his own “helpless family is in Great fear and Indeed not without Reason.” Major Robertson told Colonel Preston to expect that the settlements closer to his own Smithfield Plantation home – only ten to fifteen miles from the site of the Sinking Creek massacre – “to be in A Dangerouser Station” there than the settlements on the Holston. Thinking of the colonel’s safety, the major recommended that each of the companies “keep a party Constantly on their Watch, since there is white men amongst them, they [the Indian war parties] Undoubtedly know men of the Best Circumstances,” and “they Generally Aim at” their homes in the raids.⁷²²

Fincastle County

⁷²¹ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142); Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary (1773), Vol. 2, page ROU-RUB. Johnson defined “rub up” as meaning “to excite; to awaken.”

⁷²² Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated Culberson’s Bottom, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ74 (140-142).

Preston wasted no time in seeking volunteers from beyond Fincastle County. Hours after returning home from the council of war he wrote to accept Captain John Litton Jones' "kind offer" to raise a fifty-man company for the expedition, with a commission in the commensurate rank for the number of men he could "engage for that necessary service." The colonel urged him waste no time preparing his men to march to the county's rendezvous at the property of William Thompson "within Ten Miles of New River" by August 24 or 25 – so they could reach the general rendezvous at the Levels of Greenbrier before August 30. Once they arrived, he assured the captain, the men would receive the same pay, as well as come under the same regulations and discipline "in the same manner as the militia from Fincastle" and all the "other Counties," and perform the same duties" as the nature of the service will admit." Preston also encouraged Jones to engage ten to additional fifteen men "to stay on the Frontier," who would "be well used" under his personal direction.⁷²³

The next day Preston asked Captain Long to raise a company capable of service to join those already on duty. With no limit to the number who could serve "for the Honour & Interest of the Country [Virginia]" it had become imperative "to send out a large Body of Men on the Occasion." Preston said that Robert Lucas would serve as a lieutenant if he recruited twenty-five or thirty additional men from Watauga. Preston also allowed for the appointment of either John Anderson or Abraham Bledsoe as an ensign in Long's company, provided they refrained from recruiting anyone who had agreed to serve in those commanded by Captains Shelby and Campbell, or any of their subalterns, set to march to Thompson's. Such practices, he explained, would "breed endless confusion," adversely effecting unit cohesion, and "perhaps retard if not ruin the expedition."⁷²⁴

⁷²³ Col. William Preston to Capt. John L. Joanes, letter dated Smithfield, August 13, 1773, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ147 (146-147).

⁷²⁴ Col. William Preston to Capt. David Long, letter dated Smithfield, August 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ140 (147-148).

As soon as news of the attacks on the New River and Sinking Creek reached the Lower Holston district, Major Arthur Campbell alerted his subordinates. In particular, he notified Captains William Russell and Daniel Smith that “we should be strictly on our guard least some straggling party should visit us.” He ordered the two commanders to immediately “endeavor . . . to get the Inhabitants” in their company catchments “collected into 2 or 3 convenient places for forts, and let them keep up strict and regular Duty” until he could send them reinforcements consisting of soldiers on full-time paid duty from elsewhere in the district.⁷²⁵ The major then ordered the captains in less threatened areas on this side of the district to draft forty men to reinforce Russell’s and Smith’s companies – as he had assured the latter he would do.

Concerned that the ongoing operations against the war parties in the area would cause at least a one-week delay to the start of the expedition, Campbell told the captains that all young men who volunteered to perform regular duty would be able to receive colony pay for performing service at the forts.⁷²⁶ He then requested Colonel Preston to order another thirty men drafted from Captain Herbert’s and “the late Capt. Doack’s” companies to join Smith’s at his station near the Head of Clinch. Campbell presented his rationale that by doing so he could form two companies for defense of the Clinch River settlements without interfering with recruitment for expedition, provided the additional men served in the colony’s pay. Recruiting for the expedition elsewhere in the district continued to proceed. Although tragic, Campbell confessed that the recent Indian raids had caused sufficient outrage to “Spirit up our people to

⁷²⁵ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4X43 (134).

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

go on the expedition.” Captain Shelby, he wrote, had enjoyed some success in recruiting for his company, including twenty volunteers from Watauga.⁷²⁷

On Thursday August 11, Major Campbell met with inhabitants of the three “upper Company’s” on the Holston at the Town House to resolve a problem with the recruitment and fielding of companies. Regrettably, he had found too many officers raising parties, which inhibited the building of cohesion and the fielding of the required numbers of companies. The problem reached a head when Ensign Alexander Vance of Captain William Campbell’s company “put a stop” to the practice when he discovered men enrolled in Captain Daniel Smith’s administrative company going on the expedition under Captain Russell, and Lieutenant Joseph Drake of Captain John Floyd’s company had actively recruited soldiers living in catchment of Captain William Campbell’s. When brought to light, the major did all he could to “divert them from such irregular proceedings.”⁷²⁸

According to Major Campbell, Drake “persisted and became very noisy” at the meeting. In the detachment Drake had enlisted, Campbell recognized nine men as “late adherents” of Isaac Crabtree, and therefore potential discipline problems. A tenth man, a Private Benjamin Richardson from Captain William Campbell’s administrative company, refused to go on the expedition under any but Drake’s command. To further complicate matters, some of the men recruited from outside of the catchment refused to serve alongside of Crabtree’s friends, and insisted that subaltern officers from their parent companies receive appointments to serve over them in Floyd’s company as well. Campbell considered assigning Drake to one of the forts instead of going on the expedition, but that would not resolve all the problems that threatened to disrupt that company. Knowing that he could not resolve all the problems the

⁷²⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith and Col. William Preston, letters dated Royal Oak, August 9, 1774, William Henry Harrison Papers 4X43 (134) and William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ79 (135-136), respectively.

⁷²⁸ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ75 (142-144).

units faced before they had to report to the rendezvous camp, he decided on another approach.⁷²⁹

As if Campbell did not already have enough problems to solve, he learned from Captain Floyd that Russell now seemed inclined to decline going on the expedition and, if offered, would accept command of the forces that stayed behind to defend the frontier along Clinch River. No one could serve better in such a position. With Floyd now “fond of going” on the military expedition, Campbell knew that Colonel Preston would grant him almost anything he requested – in consideration for having led the successful and extensive survey expedition. To facilitate the substitution, Russell had purportedly offered Floyd the company of men he had raised. Although Preston could appoint Floyd to a company command on the expedition with a minimum of disruption, Campbell recommended that both Russell and Harrod go, while Captain William Herbert remained at home.⁷³⁰ Preston sought another solution, reluctant to ask Herbert to “drop the Expedition a Second Time” after he willingly agreed to stay back once already.⁷³¹

In his approach to addressing the several problems facing the companies from his district, Major Campbell described each controversy in detail in a letter to Colonel Preston, leaving their resolution to his superior. Meanwhile, the major used his utmost influence to get as many of the companies as possible on the march to the county’s rendezvous camp, where “matters can be more precisely regulated.” Isolated from most outside distractions and amid the activities of a highly structured of a military environment, Preston could more effectively bring his rank and influence to bear in solving the problems. Campbell anticipated that several supernumerary officers would arrive at camp. Although lacking specific assignments,

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ Col. William Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated Smithfield, August 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ76 (145-146).

and therefore ineligible for pay, Campbell told Preston that he expected they would elect to go on the expedition as individual volunteers rather than return home.⁷³² Captain Robert Doack, who commanded the company at the Head of Clinch River, unexpectedly passed away in early August. Until Colonel Preston appointed a captain to fill the position permanently, Campbell ordered Lieutenant John Stephens to assume command of the company in the interim.⁷³³

Major Campbell waited for orders that either assigned him to a position with the expedition or to stay behind to command the Lower Holston district's defenses. Meanwhile, he increased his attention to logistics, a task as daunting as recruiting. The companies of his district going on the expedition, as well as those remaining behind to garrison the forts, lacked sufficient supplies, especially of gunpowder and flour. While the former needed to come through the colony's resources, Campbell offered to purchase flour at the going market price at his "own risqué" – or personal credit – and receive reimbursement when the General Assembly settled accounts.⁷³⁴ Colonel Preston directed Major William Ingles, the county's commissary officer, to deliver some flour to the district.⁷³⁵ In forming units for the defense of the district, Colonel Preston commissioned Captain David Looney and instructed him to raise a company without encroaching on the catchments of the captains already appointed. In response to Campbell's concern over the number of officers raising parties, Preston confided his apprehension that "there will be Occasion for as many as can be raised."⁷³⁶

In describing the situation on the frontier in a letter to George Washington, Preston wrote that "We are greatly harassed in this Country by the Enemy." He went on by

⁷³² Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, August 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ75 (142-144).

⁷³³ Ibid.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Col. William Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated Smithfield, August 13, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ76 (145-146).

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

describing that, “In the course of this summer a number of our people have been killed or captivated by the Northern Indian.”⁷³⁷ Feeling “greatly Exposed” – and possibly prompted by Robertson’s recommendation – Preston had decided “to build a Fort about my House for the Defense of my Family.”⁷³⁸

Winchester

In mid-July, as militia commanders recruited companies for the expedition and after the convoy of munitions had rumbled into town after creaking over the Blue Ridge, Dunmore composed a letter to Secretary of State Lord Dartmouth that informed the British government that he expected a war with the Indians. To justify his actions, he explained that Shawnees, Mingoës and some of the Delawares had attacked the Virginia frontier, and killed, scalped and “most cruelly murdered, a great many men, women and children.” In response, he had ordered out many parties of militia, and in a retaliatory raid, one of them had attacked and destroyed one of the enemy towns, Wakatomika on the Muskingham. The governor reported that although the soldiers killed several Indians, made one prisoner, and destroyed their town and plantations, the raid failed to force the Indians to recall any of the raiding parties they had on “this side of the mountain.”⁷³⁹

To underscore the urgency of the situation, Dunmore added that while at dinner the evening before composing his letter, a lone had survivor escaped with news and spread the alarm that Indian raiders had struck a farm and murdered a family no more than fourteen miles from where he lodged. He then informed the secretary that in

⁷³⁷ Col. William Preston, letter dated Fincastle, August 13, 1774, American Archives, 1: 707-708.

⁷³⁸ Col. William Preston to George Washington, letter dated Smithfield, August 15, 1774, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series 10: 151-152.

⁷³⁹ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, letter dated Frederick County August 14, 1774, DAR 8: 160.

about eight to ten days he proposed to march with a body of men “over the Alleghany Mountains, and then down the Ohio to the mouth of the Scioto.” If he could take the Shawnees’ lower towns by surprise, he believed he could “put an end to this most cruel war in which there is neither honor, pleasure, nor profit.”⁷⁴⁰

Events came to a head in the last week of July. From his headquarters at Greenway Court near Winchester, the governor sent Colonel Andrew Lewis a letter in which he enumerated the warlike transgressions that “the general Confederacy of Different Indian Nations” had committed. Dunmore charged that their repeated “Hostilities,” directed against Virginians and their settlements had caused “universal Alarm throughout the frontiers of the Colony.” The “Discovery of Indians & the unhappy situation of the Divided People settled over the Mountains” left him no other choice not only to defend his people, but to retaliate. His lordship explained that he would first travel to Fort Dunmore in person to “put Matters under the best Regulation to Support that Country for a Barrier [and] give the Enemies a Blow that will Breake the Confederacy & render their plans abortive.”⁷⁴¹

For the defensive phase, he planned to have two strong divisions shield the backcountry as they converged from opposite directions. Once the two divisions met, they would join to advance west like a dagger thrust deep into Shawnee country. To execute the plan, Dunmore proposed to take as many men as he could muster from between Winchester and Pittsburgh in a short time, and move down the Ohio. Meanwhile, he expected Colonel Andrew Lewis, along with his brother Colonel

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Earl of Dunmore to Col. Andrew Lewis, letter dated Winchester, July 24, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ141 (97-98).

Charles Lewis and Colonel William Preston, the county lieutenants, respectively, of Botetourt, Augusta and Fincastle Counties – the three westernmost – to raise a “respectable Body of Men” that would then join forces with him at either Wheeling or the mouth of the Kanawha, “as is most convenient.” Their movements would shield the backcountry from attack, and upon joining forces, conduct an offensive like a dagger thrust into Shawnee country. The governor cautioned Lewis in executing his part of the operation that since the Indians had spies watching their movements on the frontier, they had the ability and might attempt to “Bring all the Force of the Shawnees” to bear against his division as he marched to the mouth of the Kanawha – before he could combine with Dunmore’s.⁷⁴²

The governor supported his adoption of an offensive strategy with two points. First, over time, the expense of the numerous scouting parties and ranger detachments in the different counties would establish a costly but porous barrier that would not effectively prevent the enemy from penetrating it any time or place he chose to do so. An offensive expedition against their towns, in contrast, would not only cost less, but prove “more effectual” in achieving the desired result of halting enemy depredations in a shorter period of time by imposing such terms on them following a decisive victory. Given the alternative, the governor expressed his sincere belief that they “may well depend on the House of Burgesses providing [the funds] for the Expedition,” if it represented an alternative to the “greater Expence of Acting on the Defensive at any rate.” Since the “Old [Militia] Law” remained in force, and thus ensured that the men would get paid and associated expenses reimbursed, their

⁷⁴² Ibid.

officers could recruit a sufficient number of volunteers.⁷⁴³ Despite the continuing constitutional crisis, militia officers serving on active duty continued expressing their loyalty and started to address one another in correspondence with the phrase, “On His Majesty’s Service.”⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie and Dixon), August 4 and 11, 1774, and *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind), August 11, 1774. Among the earliest examples of officers adding “On his Majesty’s Service” to the addresses in their correspondence appears in Maj. Arthur Campbell to Capt. Daniel Smith, letter dated August 9, 1774, William Preston Papers 4X43 (134).

Chapter 9: Equal to Any Troops

– The Militia Confidently Accepts the Challenge

Pittsburgh

By mid-August, the Westmoreland County magistrates learned that when Pennsylvania's Provincial Council met with Governor Penn in Philadelphia earlier in the month, they had taken up a number of matters concerning Pittsburgh and its surrounding areas in light of the hostilities between the Shawnees and Virginia, and the continuing inter-colonial boundary dispute. It first acted favorably on St. Clair's advice to remove the colony's trading concerns away from Pittsburgh due to the "oppressive proceedings of Virginia." The council concurred, and recommended that Governor Penn order a town to be immediately laid out "in the Proprietary Manor at Kittanning" to accommodate the traders and other inhabitants of Pittsburgh. Along with the order to lay out the town, the governor cautioned St. Clair that the order to erect a "stockade, or any other work, for the security of the place" that might involve the expenditure of provincial funds had to wait for concurrence of the Provincial Assembly.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴⁵ Provincial Council at Philadelphia, Minutes dated August 4, 1774, and Gov. John Penn to Capt. Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Philadelphia, August 6, 1774, Hazard, Samuel ed., Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, Minutes of the Colonial Council of Pennsylvania, hereafter Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, Volume 10 (Harrisburg: Theodore Penn and Co., 1852), 201 and 202-3, respectively.

Reports from Pittsburgh suggested that the Shawnees and Delawares remained “entirely pacific” toward Pennsylvania, but the two Indian nations had experienced a rift. The Delawares remained on amicable terms with the Virginians as the Shawnees continued to prepare for war, since the Virginians “seemed determined to pursue hostile measures against those Indians.” As a result, the Shawnees living closest to the Delawares removed their communities to their nation’s Lower Towns on the Scioto River. In response, the Pennsylvania Council recommended that the governor send messages to both tribes expressing concern over the recent disturbances and reassure them both of Pennsylvania’s continued friendship, and another message to Governor Dunmore urging him to seek accommodation with the Shawnees without resorting to war.⁷⁴⁶

In the messages, Penn would declare the province’s resolve to preserve the treaties of peace and friendship with both of the tribes. To the Shawnees, after expressing the great concern of Pennsylvania’s proprietary government at “the unfortunate disturbances” that occurred between them and “some of his Majesty’s subjects belonging to the Colony of Virginia,” he requested them not to strike the Virginians. Penn admonished them that harming any of his subjects would offend the king. He then instructed St. Clair to engage an agent the Indians trusted, suggesting the trader Matthew Elliott who had done such work for the government in the past, to convey and interpret the written messages and accompanying wampum.⁷⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Penn rejected the suggestion to hire Delaware warriors to defend the province’s

⁷⁴⁶ Provincial Council at Philadelphia, dated August 4, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 10: 201.

⁷⁴⁷ Gov. John Penn to Capt. Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Philadelphia, August 6, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 10: 202-3.

frontier as “too delicate to “intermeddle with,” but also deemed it improper to discharge the Westmoreland County rangers when their terms expired on August 10. He decided to “keep them on foot” at least until September 19, when the Assembly next convened, and place the matter before its members.⁷⁴⁸

The governor’s correspondence reached Pittsburgh just before a number of Shawnee and Delaware chiefs gathered for a conference at Croghan’s on August 21. In order to not offend the Six Nations, St. Clair had a “fair copy” of the original message addressed to the Delawares made for the visiting Iroquois deputies, and presented it with some wampum at the meeting.⁷⁴⁹ He then rose to address “the Chiefs and Warriors of the Delaware Indians,” on behalf of the governor. Reading Penn’s letter aloud, St. Clair apologized for “some of our foolish young men” who had murdered John Weepy, and for the Virginians who had killed some of their people below Fort Pitt. He then commended them for their having “a good heart” and did not take it as a cause to go to war, but viewed the events in a “proper light” had not sought revenge. St. Clair continued to tell the assembled Delaware and Iroquois deputies that Governor Penn intended to write the governor of Virginia to help restore friendship

⁷⁴⁸ Gov. John Penn to Capt. Arthur St. Clair, letter dated Philadelphia, August 6, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 10: 202-3; and, Capt. Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, August 25, 1774, Hazard, Samuel, ed., Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 573-6.

⁷⁴⁹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, August 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4:573-6.

with the Shawnees, and asked their assistance to persuade the Shawnees to likewise “make up their differences with the Virginians.”⁷⁵⁰

After the conference, the Delawares learned that Governor Penn had ordered “a trading place” erected at Kittanning. St. Clair relayed to the governor that the Indians expressed their gratitude. “They are in want of many things already, and cannot come to Pittsburgh” he told the governor, owing to the boundary dispute between the two colonies and the looming Indian war.⁷⁵¹

Always critical of the Virginians, when St. Clair wrote the governor at the end of the month, he said that he believed it “Impossible to tell what will be the Consequences of the Virginia Operation” into Shawnee country. He continued to believe that “they will not be able to bring on a war,” and with the campaign season drawing to an end, he hoped that Dunmore realized the “Necessity of Peace.”⁷⁵² In his view, the Virginians’ “last Exploit” – the expedition against Wakatomika – did not give them “much stomach for another.” St. Clair perceived “such Confusion amongst the Troops, and Dysention amongst the Officers,” that had they attempted another foray, he believed, “they most certainly must have been cut off.” Furthermore, St. Clair had learned some disturbing intelligence from reading a letter from a trader in Detroit to a merchant in Pittsburgh. The letter revealed that the “Indians in that Country” will all

⁷⁵⁰ Gov. John. Penn to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Delaware Indians, message dated Philadelphia, August 6, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 204-5.

⁷⁵¹ Arthur St. Clair to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Ligonier, August 25, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 4: 573-6.

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*

join the Shawanees” to fight the Virginians. Braves returning from the Virginia frontier had brought enough scalps to encourage others, and leading warriors, eager to help the Shawnees fight the Long Knife, had a “general Rendezvous appointed on the Oubach [or Wabash].”⁷⁵³

Instead of engaging a trader like Elliott, St. Clair entrusted the Delaware called Captain Pipe to deliver Penn’s message to “the Chiefs and Warriors of the Shawanese Indians.” On his arrival at their principal town of Chillicothe, Pipe expressed Penn’s gratitude for their ensuring the safety of Pennsylvania traders and “kept fast hold of the chain of friendship” with his colony. He read the Pennsylvania governor’s urgent request that they resolve their differences with the Virginians, and asked that when “any of the wicked people of Virginia” murdered their people, that the Shawnees not “take revenge upon innocent people,” but complain to that colony’s governor to punish the guilty.⁷⁵⁴

Pipe relayed Penn’s admonishment that if the Shawnees killed innocent people on account of the actions of some of their countrymen “the Virginians must do the same thing by you, and then there will be nothing but war between you.” As he continued for Penn, he warned the chiefs to “Consider ... that the people of Virginia are like the leaves of the trees, very numerous,” and the Shawnee people “but few.” Their warriors might kill “ten thousand of their people for one that they kill of yours,” he said, but “they will at last wear you out and destroy you.” Any hostile action, Pipe relayed, would only provoke the Virginians to “send a great army in your country and

⁷⁵³ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁴ Gov. John Penn to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Shawanese Indians, message dated Philadelphia, August 6, 1774, [Pennsylvania Colonial Archives](#), I: 4: 203-4.

destroy your towns and your corn, and either kill your wives and children or drive them away.” After all, Penn, through Pipe, reminded them that Pennsylvanians, Virginians, and Shawnees – “were all children of the great King who lives beyond the great water.” They could therefore expect that the king would take his anger on those at fault and punish them accordingly. Urging that they “forgive what is past and offer to make peace,” the governor offered to write Dunmore and persuade him to “join in mending the chain of friendship” that had been broken.⁷⁵⁵

Fincastle County

Throughout Fincastle County, units of marching men, convoys of wagons and packhorses, and herds of cattle began to move. In some units’ officers still had more men to recruit, organize, and train. Quartermaster and commissary officers still shuttled about their districts in the effort engage packhorse and cattle drivers, and to gather what the expeditionary army needed as well as for the companies that garrisoned the forts and patrolled the frontier to protect the backcountry communities from Indian irruption. In return, those farmers, herders, millers, smiths, merchants and other who, in addition to enlisting for military service in many cases, gave the army what it needed, and received vouchers that acknowledged the colony’s debt. After the House of Burgesses convened and appointed the required commissioners to evaluate the muster rolls and public service claims, the colonial treasurer would redeem the receipts for payment.

⁷⁵⁵Ibid.

From local company catchments, the men marched to their respective district's rendezvous camps for inspection by the district major. Those in the Lower Holston district reported to Major Arthur Campbell at the Town House on Holston, located on Captain James Thompson's property. The companies of the Upper Holston district marched to Fort Byrd at Culberson's Bottom, and reported to Major James Robertson. The majors inspected and accepted them into the county's service, issued rations and camp equipment needed for the march, and sent them on their way. Some marched in company with packhorse trains laden with supplies and provisions, or herds of cattle that the quartermasters and commissaries had acquired and forwarded to the general rendezvous for use on the expedition.

Colonel Andrew Lewis informed Colonel Preston that in addition to what came for Botetourt County, packhorse driver John Criner had carried "1 ½ barrels" of much needed gunpowder for the Fincastle troops to the rendezvous. He reminded the Fincastle county lieutenant to have Colonel Christian give the agent a certificate for the powder and whatever else he delivered for his men. Because it still remained in short supply, Colonel Lewis asked Preston to ensure the Fincastle contingent brought "all ye powder that you can possibly spare" to the Great Levels. With the start of the expedition fast approaching, Lewis turned once more to the matter of recruiting and asked Preston to inform him of his success as soon as possible lest they have to resort to a draft.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁵⁶ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Richfield, August 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ77 (149).

A detachment of eighty men from the companies of Captains William Campbell, Herbert and Shelby marched “in high Spirits” from Royal Oak for the Lower Holston District’s rendezvous at the Town House on August 16, according to Major Campbell. However, the practices by which Captain Looney and Lieutenant Drake had attempted to recruit men in the catchment areas reserved for Campbell’s and Shelby’s companies, and Ensign Vance had similarly tried to recruit for Smith’s Company in the area reserved for Russell’s, had hindered the ability of the units assigned to those sectors from achieving their required numbers in a timelier manner. Major Campbell still sought “to humour all parties” until they arrived at the district rendezvous. There, he hoped such contention would become a “matter of indifference” and the men all decided to “go on the Expedition cheerfully” with the officers to whom they first committed as volunteers. Most of all, he had sought to have all of the Lower Holston volunteers at the district rendezvous for Preston’s inspection by August 22.⁷⁵⁷

Captain Russell wrote to Coronel Preston to express his disappointment and cause for the delay of his company’s departure for the rendezvous. The troops expected to replace his men at the forts so the “Volunteers might March to the appointed place of Rendezvous for the expedition” had yet to arrive. Such “relief,” he reminded the colonel, “was promised the Men when they Engaged [enlisted]” and agreed to serve in the garrisons in the interim. Likewise, supplier John Brander had not yet delivered the “brown Linen” for their hunting shirts as Russell had promised the men for joining. His company otherwise stood ready to depart Castle’s Woods, and given the

⁷⁵⁷ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 16, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ78 (156-158).

distance they had to travel, Russell requested the “same Indulgence” for an increased proportion of packhorses to men as the colonel had granted to Shelby.⁷⁵⁸

Captain Russell then made an additional request. One of his men, “a very good Hand,” did not have a weapon. He recalled that when he “was in the service before, there was near twenty press’d Guns which the County freely pay’d for,” and requested his man be issued one for the expedition.⁷⁵⁹ Russell alluded to a provision in the Militia Act. While the law required all eligible military-age men to possess his own firearm, it also provided for those who did not have the financial means to comply. Each county and corporate borough had to acquire, and mark as public property, a modest supply of arms and equipment, and maintain them in an armory. Under normal circumstances, a court inquiry verified the man’s economic need and provided him with the required equipment. As soon as the poor soldier could afford his own, or had been removed from the muster roles due to age, death, or other reasons, the captain in command of his company retrieved the county’s property so it could be issued to another man of limited means. Given the circumstances, Russell requested the county to issue his recruit a weapon for the expedition without the court procedure.⁷⁶⁰

Although Colonel Preston had ordered Captain Thompson to “guard the lower settlements on Clinch” with a company of sixty men, the “upper settlements” remained “uncovered” as late as the twenty-fifth. Preston therefore instructed Major Campbell to appoint Captain Daniel Smith, assisted by as many subalterns he deemed appropriate, to command a similar company to guard that sector. The colonel also

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ84 (172-173).

⁷⁶⁰ Hening, Statutes, 7: 93-94.

instructed the major to form a new sixty-man company, drafting thirty members from the administrative companies of Captains Herbert and the late Doack, with the subalterns appointed from the companies that produced the most men. The county lieutenant further instructed Campbell to “examine carefully into the number of Scouts on that Quarter,” in order to retain the most active and trustworthy while reducing the overall number.⁷⁶¹

A number of “Inhabitants on Clinch” submitted a petition for the county lieutenant to “enlarge the Number on Duty” and employ more of them “in the Service.” Campbell forwarded it with his recommendations to Colonel Preston. In the interim, he informed the petitioners that all who performed “regular duty might be continued on the [active duty] Lists until a sufficient Number of Draughts” arrived to complete the companies defending their settlements. If more than the required numbers arrived, he pledged to recommend that in organizing their units, officers “keep the best Woodsmen” from among the locals in pay to serve as rangers before accepting volunteers from Holston or New River. Campbell endorsed the request by warning that a weak defense would cause more settlers to flee the frontier.⁷⁶²

Finally, on the march, Captain Russell expected to arrive at the district rendezvous on Monday, August 29. With thirty-one rank and file “fit for the business,” and more to follow and join him at camp, he planned to have a full company before marching to the general rendezvous. John Brander had still not delivered the brown linen before

⁷⁶¹ Col. William Preston to Maj. Arthur Campbell, letter dated August 25, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ82 (161-162).

⁷⁶² Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, August 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ83 (162-163).

they left Castle's Woods. With his company "badly fix'd, for the want of Hunting shirts, and Blankets," Russell took a "handful of men" to the supplier's home while the rest continued their march to the Town House. Russell arrived only to discover Brander away with his wagon "on this side of New River," but he was determined to get his men the supplies they lacked before they joined the rest of the army.⁷⁶³

Russell never asked Preston to relieve him, as Major Campbell had suggested, but he knew that the county lieutenant wanted John Floyd to command a company on the expedition. Aware that little time remained for his fellow captain to recruit the required number of men, Russell offered to resign his "Interest ... of the Volunteers" to Captain Floyd and assist him in recruiting the men still needed (if Preston so desired). In return, Russell requested that he command a company defending the Clinch River inhabitants for as long as the colony needed "to keep Men under pay, in this Quarter." Knowing that Preston had appointed Captain James Thompson to command a company posted at Blackmore's Fort, Russell recommended a shared responsibility. Thompson, he said, could command toward the head of the river while he had the lower settlements. Regardless, Russell urged Thompson to use troops "that ought to be Ranging, besides those in the Forts, as Constant Guards" for the settlement. Finally, Russell assured the colonel of his preference to serve on the expedition.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶³ Capt. William Russell to Colonel William Preston, letters dated Town House, August 28, and Fort Preston, August 16, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ84 (172-174) and 3QQ78 (157), respectively.

⁷⁶⁴ Capt. William Russell to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 16, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ78 (156-158).

To no one's surprise, Preston wanted the experienced Russell to go on the expedition. Although the county lieutenant accommodated Captain Floyd's request to raise and command his own company, the colonel had no intention of having his friend replace Russell. By August 26, however, Floyd had "engaged only 3 men," but Sergeant Ephraim and Lieutenant Joseph Drake claimed they could enlist another eight. The lieutenant, who wished to command a company of his own, then added that forty more waited to join at the Town House, but insisted they would only serve under him.⁷⁶⁵

The practices of officers such as Drake raised questions and threatened the cohesion of several units. Not only did he lead Floyd to believe he acted on his behalf, Drake had designs on commanding his own company. Furthermore, he had recruited men who resided in catchments reserved for other commanders, and thus added needless competition that increased the difficulty of raising units for the expedition. When Major Campbell informed some men that Drake had improperly recruited them, he explained such "former faults or breaches of their Words would now be overlook'd, provided they marched to the Camp" as Colonel Preston had ordered. Most of them agreed and seemed anxious to get started on the expedition without further delay.

Drake, however, became quite "incensed" at Campbell's actions, and accused him of

⁷⁶⁵ Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letters dated or estimated Royal Oak and Town House, August 26 – 28, 1774, Draper's Notes 33S35-49 (163-168); and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Town House, August 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ85 (170-172).

further interference when he learned that Floyd released six men he had recruited to re-join their original captains' companies upon his arrival at the Town House.⁷⁶⁶

When Captain Floyd conveyed Preston's order to Lieutenant Drake and Ensign Vance to serve as the subalterns, both agreed to march as part of his company. An hour later, after having spoken with some of the men, Vance had a change of mind and refused. Major Campbell "publicly" gave him a direct order, but the recalcitrant ensign once more refused. When the major ordered someone else to take charge, Drake objected in a "Clamorous manner" and said he would march them himself. Campbell did not wish to cause a further delay in getting the men to the rendezvous. He issued provisions and sent the men with Vance and recommended that Preston consider Lieutenant Drake's behavior grounds for dismissal from the service.⁷⁶⁷

Once he learned the truth about Drake's duplicity in recruiting, Floyd doubted the ability to raise his company. Counting those Drake had recruited, several of whom either lived within catchment of Captain Campbell – from which his officers could not recruit – or had enlisted from outside of the colony, he had fifteen men on hand. Since Major Campbell sent them all to the rendezvous, and Captain Campbell's had a full complement, Floyd anticipated no further cause for resentment if the men recruited remained in his. As a possible means of completing Floyd's company, Major Campbell suggested that Preston appoint Daniel Boone, a lieutenant in Russell's administrative company, to recruit the balance of Floyd's unit. According

⁷⁶⁶ Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letters dated or estimated Royal Oak and Town House, August 26 – 28, 1774, Draper's Notes 33S35-49 (163-168); and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Town House, August 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ85 (170-172).

⁷⁶⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Town House, August 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ85 (170-172).

to Russell, Boone had applied to go on the expedition as soon as he returned from his search for the surveyors. A “very popular Officer where he is known,” Campbell believed Boone could raise and march enough men to the Town House in time to complete Floyd’s company.⁷⁶⁸

Floyd finally thought “everything in order” and the company ready to march when Ensign Vance refused to go. Most of the men then “revolted” and refused to serve on the expedition with “nobody but Capt. Drake.” In Drake’s absence those men blamed Floyd, and accused him of only wanting them to march under Vance’s command to “get some of my own ends answered.” Floyd now regretted having “undertaken any such thing as raising a company,” which if given the choice, would not do again “for a £100.”⁷⁶⁹

By the last day of August, Colonel William Christian had a battalion composed of the better part of six Lower Holston district companies, plus one chaplain, one armorer, and two butchers, prepared to march. After taking roll, Captains Walter Crockett, William Herbert, William Russell, Evan Shelby, William Campbell, and James Harrod reported having a total of 15 company officers, 16 sergeants, 2 musicians, and 222 “rank and file” – corporals and privates – ready to proceed. A packhorse train loaded with baggage, supplies, and equipment, plus a herd of cattle completed the unit. Crockett assigned six of his soldiers to the train, one as the officers’ batman and five as packhorse drivers. In addition to the grown men, fourteen-year-old John

⁷⁶⁸ Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letters dated or estimated Royal Oak and Town House, August 26 – 28, 1774, Draper’s Notes 33S35-49 (163-168); and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Town House, August 28, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ85 (170-172).

⁷⁶⁹ Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letters dated or estimated Royal Oak and Town House, August 26 – 28, 1774, Draper’s Notes 33S35-49 (163-168).

Canterbury volunteered “to assist in driving Cattle for the supply of the Army. As the battalion marched, the train and herd increased as Christian accepted additional horses, beeves and supplies at various points along the seventy-five-mile route to the Great Levels.⁷⁷⁰

Three men, who had not answered the roll call before their units departed remained unaccounted for, and Christian notified Colonel Preston to “Advertise them as Deserters.” Major Arthur Campbell remained at the Town House to command the district’s defenses and forward late-arriving individuals, units, parts of companies and supplies to the general rendezvous. Campbell also assumed responsibility sorting out recruiting controversies, dealing with disciplinary problems, and the three men left behind as too ill to march with their companies, and sending them along with the follow-on units as they departed for Camp Union.⁷⁷¹

At Fort Byrd, Major James Robertson dealt with a number of problems, some of them similar to what Campbell experienced, as he prepared the Upper Holston District companies to march. Although he had “picked up Some,” he and other commanders experienced “poor Success” in recruitment. To bring their units to strength, they had to “Stir up Some Backward Scoundrels . . . to turn Out or Else force them for neither Honour nor Intreatys will move them [to serve their county].” The time had come to

⁷⁷⁰ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Head of Rich Creek, September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ89 (176-179); and, (enclosure) Return of Militia from Fincastle County, dated Camp Union, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (189). John Canterbury pension application R1667 dated February 3, 1834, Roll 465.

⁷⁷¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Head of Rich Creek, September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ89 (176-179).

– reluctantly – implement impressment.⁷⁷² Announcing the likelihood of a draft, he thought, might motivate a few fence-sitting potential recruits to enlist, as a verse of

The Recruiting Officer suggested:

Hear that brave Boys, and let us go,
Or else we shall be ‘prest you know,
Then list and enter into Pay,
And o’er the Hills and far away.⁷⁷³

Recommending that other commanders follow his example, Robertson called a muster of his administrative company for Saturday, September 3. In accordance with Colonel Preston’s instructions, he planned to draft only “Hulking young dogs [who had thus far avoided honoring their obligations] that Can well be Spar’d,” but no men who had families. Once accomplished, he planned to march to “Overtake take the Army” at the Great Levels a week later. Unfortunately, a disappointed Robertson lamented that “not one of the younger fellows Appeared [at the muster] that could go.”⁷⁷⁴

In the equally critical task of gathering equipment, supplies and provisions, Major Robertson’s report reflected similar frustrations. On September 4, for example, he waited at Culberson’s Bottom for delivery of two beeves and a load of flour, which he would forward wherever the county needed it. One farmer brought “200 bushels” of corn, which he already had ground into flour at a local mill, and would “fondly spare” for the expedition. Such contributions of the civic-minded stood in stark contrast to

⁷⁷² Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letter dated September 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ88 (174-175).

⁷⁷³ D’Urfey, 5: 319-321.

⁷⁷⁴ Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letters dated September 1 and 4, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ88 (174-175) and 3QQ91 (179-180), respectively.

the likes of “Two Cursed Scoundrels,” a father and son, who looked on the emergency as an opportunity to reap a financial harvest while they enjoyed the protection provided by the men who shouldered muskets. They had “Corn, Beef and Old Bacon Plenty to Spare,” but refusing to accept the receipt to redeem for a public service claim later, would “by no means Let it go with out the Ready Cash.”

Robertson paid them the money, but suspected they “would do all they Can to Hurt the Expedition.”⁷⁷⁵

Captain Michael Woods also commanded a company unable to reach its required strength. Although someone told he could expect some volunteers from Pittsylvania County, Woods held no illusions he could raise a full company in the time that remained. A few of those who the captain engaged “some time ago” had since changed their attitudes and refused to march. He asked Colonel Preston for advice on how to best “proceed with such persons.” In a more optimistic vein, Woods reported that his unit had fourteen soldiers “willing to go to the Shawanese towns.” He therefore requested to “Join Companies with Major Robertson” and go on the expedition, realizing he would serve in the capacity of a lieutenant.⁷⁷⁶

After going thirty-two miles. Colonel Christian and the lead element of Fincastle troops reached the head of Rich Creek on September 2, with another forty-two miles to go. The march had taken longer than expected since the troops spent so much time finding the horses and gathering cattle every morning before they could start. As planned, they had acquired more beeves as they went so that he now counted two

⁷⁷⁵ Maj. James Robertson to Colonel William Preston, letter dated September 4, 17774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ91 (179-180).

⁷⁷⁶ Capt. Michael Woods to Col. William Preston, letter dated September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ88 (175-176).

hundred head in the herd. Christian recommended that if Robertson had trouble getting enough cattle in his area he could collect the difference at Rich Creek. The colonel estimated it would take Robertson two days to reach Rich Creek, plus two more to drive the cattle to the Great Levels.⁷⁷⁷

Because it would take them too far off his route to get the “between 7 and eight hundred pounds of Flour” stored at Woods’ fort, Christian told the captain to move it. He instructed Woods to send four of his active duty men to obtain or exchange some poor horses and pack saddles at Smithfield for more serviceable ones, and once “better fixed,” return to move the flour to the Great Levels. After checking with Colonel Preston, Christian also told Woods to march his men to Culberson’s Bottom and join Major Robertson for the expedition.⁷⁷⁸

Augusta County

Colonel Charles Lewis, the county lieutenant, called the units of Augusta County to assemble in Staunton at the ordinary kept by Sampson Matthews, a major in the militia. He established his headquarters at the rendezvous and, except for taking time to execute his last will and testament at the courthouse on Wednesday, August 10, Lewis devoted his time to preparing the battalion for the expedition. Units soon began to arrive. Captains George Matthews (Sampson’s younger brother) and Alexander McClanahan, “Marched with noble Companies all cheerfully willing to go to the Shawnee towns,” according to Rev. John Brown of the New Providence

⁷⁷⁷ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Head of Rich Creek, September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ89 (176-179).

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

Presbyterian congregation.⁷⁷⁹ When Captain Samuel McDowell marched into town on August 18, however, his company did not have “the number of men allotted to him.”⁷⁸⁰

Like their counterparts in Fincastle County, the company commanders in Augusta worked diligently to bring their units to full-strength before they marched to the rendezvous in Staunton. Those militia soldiers already on duty represented a source of men predisposed to military service that they could recruit, although they had to replace them at the forts. While serving at a post defending the Tygert Valley settlements, Sergeant Benjamin Cleaver “was called on & volunteered to go.”⁷⁸¹

Other captains resorted to a draft if they could not recruit enough privates. A drafted man, such as one named Cox enrolled in the company of Captain John Dickenson, had to either serve or face legal consequences, unless he could furnish a substitute. John Cox, although still “quite a youth, volunteered as a substitute” to go in his father’s place.⁷⁸² The draft proved less successful in other companies. Rev. Brown heard “25 that were drafted refuse to go” with Captain McDowell “& design to run the hazard of the fine.” The clergyman expressed sorrow “that both parents & those that have refused speak & act so unreasonably relative to the present expedition.”⁷⁸³

Major Matthews, the Augusta County quartermaster, had served as a commissary officer in the French and Indian War. He knew his business well. He and his

⁷⁷⁹ Rev. John Brown to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ81 (159-161),

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid

⁷⁸¹ Benjamin Cleaver pension application R2039, dated September 24, 1831, Roll 575; and John Cox pension application R2404, dated October 16, 1834, Roll 671.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Rev. John Brown to Col. William Preston, letter dated August 22, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ81 (159-161),

assistants worked tirelessly to gather the packhorses, cattle, provisions and supplies that Augusta units needed. Although “several Companies were at the Warm Springs,” about six hundred troops had assembled at Matthews’ inn. With Colonel Lewis at their head, Augusta “Men & provisions” began marching for the Great Levels on August 30.⁷⁸⁴

Winchester

Dunmore had designated Winchester, seat of Frederick County, as the place of rendezvous for most units of the expedition’s Right Wing. Located in the lower Shenandoah Valley, Winchester had become “one of the largest towns . . . in this Colony” by 1774. The gentleman-traveler Nicholas Cresswell, after observing the surveyed half-acre plots aligned on parallel streets, described it as “Regularly laid out in squares the buildings are of limestone” [with] the courthouse and “Two Churches, one English and one Dutch.”⁷⁸⁵

As August drew to a close, the pace of militia mobilization quickened. Once the companies from Frederick, Hampshire, Berkeley, and Dunmore Counties had assembled, including those who went on McDonald’s expedition, they would begin the march to Pittsburgh, the first leg of the expedition. Now Major-Commandant John Connolly waited at Fort Dunmore to add the companies raised and supplies gathered in the West Augusta District to the expedition.

⁷⁸⁴ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Head of Rich Creek, September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ89 (176-179); DHDW 223n.

⁷⁸⁵ Hening, Statutes, 6: 268-70; and Cresswell, Nicholas, The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777 (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1925), 49.

Stephen wrote from Berkeley Courthouse on August 27 to inform Richard Henry Lee that Lord Dunmore had ordered him to the Ohio to “put matters on a footing to establish a lasting peace with the brave natives.” Stephen expressed his opinion that the Indians “would behave well, were they not poisoned by the blackguard traders allowed to go among them, to their different towns.”⁷⁸⁶ Colonel Stephen’s military duty therefore precluded his attendance at the General Congress, where he “would expect to see the spirit of the Amphycions shine, as that illustrious council did in their purest times, before debauched with the Persian gold.”⁷⁸⁷

In the letter, Stephen outlined some of the grievances British Americans wanted redressed, and hoped the Congress could facilitate that resolution. “The fate of America depends upon your meeting,” he told Lee, “and the eyes of the European world hang upon you, waiting the event.” Speaking of the unpopular Quebec Act, Stephen warned that “Despotism, and the Roman Catholic religion is established in Canada. Likewise, with regard to the Administration of Justice Act, the colonel questioned if British Americans could “enjoy liberty, if the villain who ravishes our wives, deflowers our daughters, or murders our sons, can evade punishment, by being tried in Britain, where no evidence can pursue him?” Oat the same time, if “A governor to suppose me of a crime,” Stephen could not expect a “fair trial in America,”⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ Col. Adam Stephen to Richard Henry Lee, letter dated Berkeley Courthouse, August 27, 1774, Lee, Richard H., ed., *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee and His Correspondence*, Volume 1 (Philadelphia: M. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1825), 207.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

Stephen's explanation that the governor had written mainly to inform Lee that due to military service, he could not attend the General Congress in Philadelphia. In doing so, however, he had modestly understated the role he would fill. The governor had designated Colonel Stephen, the county lieutenant of Berkeley County, to command the Right Wing of the expedition. When Lieutenant Augustine Prevost of the British 60th Regiment of Foot met Stephen in Pittsburgh a few weeks later, he described the Virginian as "a gentleman ... who had seen some service during the last war who bears a worthy good character."⁷⁸⁹ Stephen had actually served throughout the French and Indian War. Starting as a captain in command of a company in 1754, he rose to the rank of colonel and command of the 1st Virginia Regiment before the conflict ended, and commanded a provincial rifle battalion that guarded the frontier and accompanied Bouquet's expedition against the Shawnees in Pontiac's War. In addition to wartime contributions, Stephen served as an officer of both the court and militia of Frederick County until a 1772 act of the General Assembly created Berkeley County, at which time Governor Dunmore appointed him its sheriff and county lieutenant.

Although Stephen held the title, his lordship exercised actual direct command of the wing himself. Stephen therefore functioned as his second-in-command and assumed responsibility for executing all of the associated administrative and logistical functions. When the two wings met and combined, Governor Dunmore would become commander in chief while Colonel Stephen assume actual command of the

⁷⁸⁹ Augustine Prevost, diary entry dated Pittsburgh, September 12, 1774, Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., "Turmoil at Pittsburgh: Diary of Augustine Prevost, 1774," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 85, Number 2 (April 1961), 133.

Right Wing. The unpleasant duty of contending with Lieutenant Colonel Horatio Gates therefore fell to the de facto second-in-command. Gates, a former major in the British army, had retired on half-pay to Berkeley County and redeemed the land bounty he received for his service during the Seven Years War to acquire the property he named Traveler's Rest. In 1773, Dunmore commissioned Gates "as a lieutenant colonel of militia of Berkeley County, whereof Adam Stephen, Esq., is Lieutenant and Chief Commander."⁷⁹⁰ With hope and confidence in the abilities and experience of the former regular officer, the governor appointed Gates to command the Berkley County contingent on the expedition.

In a shocking and ill-advised August 22 reply, Gates not only declined the appointment but questioned the governor's authority to call him to actual service under the now-expired Militia Law. Two days later, Colonel Stephen informed his subordinate that "his Lordship Testifyd his Surprise that you should Suppose he would act under a Law that had no Existence." Not yet done, Stephen continued on the governor's behalf, "His Lordship therefore Commands me to acquaint you that he expects you will join him directly, & take the Command of the Detachment of Berkley Militia, now marching under Orders by Virtue of that Law."⁷⁹¹ Gates remained unconvinced, but his reply lacked the courage of conviction as he wrote, "I am at present confin'd to my House by a Violent Intestinal Fever." Attempting a

⁷⁹⁰ Gov. Dunmore to Maj. Horatio Gates, Commission dated Williamsburg, 6 April 1773, Horatio Gates Papers, 1769-1804, Microfilm Publication, Manuscripts and Archives Division, Special Collections, New York Public Library, New York, N.Y.; Microfilm Collection M2135, Reel 2, 1769-1776, (NYHS viHi 1719) 0458-60; copy in the John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

⁷⁹¹ Col. Adam Stephen to Lt. Col. Horatio Gates, letter dated Winchester, 24 August 1774, Horatio Gates Papers.

graceful withdrawal, Gates replied to Stephen, “as soon as I am able to ride, I shall wait on Lord Dunmore.”⁷⁹²

The rendezvous camps represented an important step in the process of preparing militia for combat in colonial Virginia. Although not perfect, they provided commanders the opportunity to transform collections of ad hoc companies composed of recruited and drafted men into cohesive tactical units. The system of quarterly company, or “private,” musters and annual county battalion “general” musters only provided militia soldiers with very rudimentary training. While additional training in the home companies might enable them to perform adequately in response to alarms, the rendezvous camp better prepared them for sustained operations. To help improve the performance of the militia just prior to the start of the French and Indian War, Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie had divided the colony into the Northern, Southern, Middle and Frontier Military Districts. The governor appointed an officer – preferably holding the rank of major – to serve as the adjutant general in each regional division and report on the compliance with the Militia Law in the counties comprising his district.⁷⁹³

In return for £100 in annual pay, a district adjutant performed duties at general musters somewhat comparable to those of a British army brigade major or adjutant at regimental field days. He inspected “all detachments before they be sent to parade,” and saw that all “their arms be clean, their ammunition, accouterments, &c. in good

⁷⁹² Lt. Col. Horatio Gates to Col. Adam Stephen, letter dated Traveler’s Rest, 26 August 1774, Horatio Gates Papers.

⁷⁹³ JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758, xv, 99-100, 104-105; Council Executive Journals, 6: 316, 317.

order.”⁷⁹⁴ The district adjutants ensured that all company officers had “the Militia properly trained up in the use of Arms,” and “more perfect and regular in the Exercise thereof.”⁷⁹⁵ One of the adjutant’s most important responsibilities required him to “exercise the Officers first” in order “to qualify them to exercise each separate Company, so as to be properly prepared for their respective General Musters.”⁷⁹⁶ During times of danger when the colony embodied large bodies of men for active service, the adjutant general established the rendezvous for the units of his district and conducted the school of the soldier to prepare them for the campaign.

In 1774, all the counties alerted to embody troops in the war against the Indians belonged to the Frontier District. Governor Botetourt had appointed Captain Thomas Bullitt, another Virginia Regiment veteran who saw service during the French and Indian War as well as Pontiac’s War, as the district’s adjutant general in 1770.⁷⁹⁷ Unfortunately, Bullitt had not made the rounds to observe training in the district since 1771. Governor Dunmore had also commissioned him to survey western lands, and those duties precluded his attendance in 1772 and 1773, and the alarms since the beginning of the year had preempted the counties’ annual general musters.⁷⁹⁸

Responsibility for conducting the rendezvous therefore fell to the respective wing commanders. Fortunately, Virginia’s frontier counties could rely on a number of veteran field officers, senior captains and non-commissioned officers who had served

⁷⁹⁴ Brig. Gen. Wolfe, James, General Wolfe’s Instructions to Young Officers, Second Edition (London: J. Millan, 1780; reprinted facsimile, Cranbury, N.J.: Scholar’s Bookshelf, 2005), v.

⁷⁹⁵ JHB 1752-1755 and 1756-1758, xv, 99-100, 104-105.

⁷⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁷ Journal of May 10, 1769, Hillman, Benjamin ed., Council of Colonial Virginia, 6: 316; *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Rind) Supplement, March 22, 1770.

⁷⁹⁸ *Virginia Gazette* #1 (Purdie & Dixon) February 21, 1771.

with the standing forces, either a provincial regiment or ranger company, in the last two wars. For example, Colonels William Fleming and Charles Lewis had previously commanded companies of rangers, and Colonels Stephen and Andrew Lewis had both served as officers in the provincial foot regiments under the command of Colonel George Washington. When he served as a district adjutant general, twenty-one-year-old Major Washington conducted the rendezvous camp of the first militia companies embodied for provincial service in 1754. After he assumed command of the Virginia Regiment in 1755, Washington instructed his company officers to train their men in the manual exercise and linear tactics as well as in the “Indian Method of fighting,” and to practice “Shooting at Targets.”⁷⁹⁹ Not neglecting their own professional development, Colonel Washington told them that “there ought to be a time appropriated to attain this knowledge,” and insisted that they follow his example and read “Bland’s and other treatises which will give the wished for information.”⁸⁰⁰

The tactics in which they trained and rehearsed demonstrated an adaptation of those found in Bland’s Treatise for fighting in the woods. Chaplain Thomas Barton described such an exercise conducted by the provincial regiment in which he served during the French and Indian War that would likely have resembled training conducted at the Winchester Camp Union rendezvous camps:

⁷⁹⁹ Lt. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie to Col. George Washington, letter dated Williamsburg, 14 December 1755, Brock, R. A., ed., The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758 (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1884), 291; and, Col. George Washington to Capt. Andrew Lewis, letter dated Winchester, September 6, 1755, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, 2: 23-24.

⁸⁰⁰ Col. George Washington to the Officers of the Virginia Regiment, Orders dated Winchester, dated 8 January 1756, Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, 2: 257; Appleton P. Griffin, comp., A Catalogue of the Washington Collection in the Boston Athenaeum (Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1997) 537.

“... the Troops are led to the Field as usual, & exercis’d in this Manner – Viz. – They [the columns] are to, and distant from, each other about 50 Yards: After marching some distance in this Position, they fall into one Rank entire forming a Line of Battle with great Ease & Expedition. The 2 Front-Men of each Column stand fast, & the 2 Next split equally to Right & Left, & so continue alternately till the whole Line is form’d. They are then divided into Platoons, each Platoon consisting of 20 Men, & fire 3 Rounds; the right-Hand Man of each Platoon beginning the Fire, and then the left-Hand Man: & so on Right and Left alternately till the Fire ends in the Center: Before it reaches this Place, the Right & Left are ready again. And by this Means an incessant Fire kept up. When they fir’d six Rounds in this manner they make a [sham] Pursuit with Shrieks & Halloos in the Indian Way, but falling into much Confusion; they are again drawn up into Line of Battle, & fire 3 Rounds as before; After this each Battalion marches in order to Camp.”⁸⁰¹

The Right Wing broke camp and began the march along Braddock’s Military Road to Pittsburgh in the last week of August. Lord Dunmore then had a force of “upwards of Seven hundred with him,” which included the “400 that march’d with Maj. McDonald & three hundred with himself.”⁸⁰² On August 30, Dunmore halted at Old Town, Maryland, on the Potomac River “about 80 miles from Winchester.” After he

⁸⁰¹ Thomas Barton "Journal of an Expedition to the Ohio, commanded by His Excellency Brigadier General Forbes; in the Year of our Lord 1758," printed in Hunter, William A., ed., "Thomas Barton and the Forbes Expedition," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Volume 95, Number 4 (October 1971), 449--450.

⁸⁰² Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp on the Levels of Green Brier, September 7, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ2 (183-184); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189); and Capt. Dorsey Pentecost to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated September 16, 1774, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4NN12 (201-202).

visited the Cresap family home to pay his respects to Colonel Thomas Cresap, Michael's father, the governor took the opportunity, with Colonel Stephen and Major Connolly "at his elbow," to send a letter informing Colonel Andrew Lewis at Camp Union of a change in plan. Dunmore now instructed Lewis march the Left Wing to the mouth of the Little Kanawha to meet the rest of the army.⁸⁰³

The army resumed its march, and halted at Redstone, where additional companies joined the expedition and the column split. Lord Dunmore continued on the road toward Pittsburgh at the head of between three and four hundred men and twelve wagons. On September 20, the recently-promoted Major William Crawford led a five hundred-man detachment with the packhorse train of fifty and a two hundred head herd of cattle to Fort Fincastle at Wheeling. Major-Commandant Connolly rode on ahead to Pittsburgh when the slower moving column stopped at the Great Meadows. He would join Major McDonald, who had previously led a supply convoy to Fort Dunmore, to help direct the efforts of the West Augusta District's officers as they continued recruiting men and Captain William Herrod, the quartermaster general, and his commissary officers acquired cattle, provisions and other supplies for the Right Wing.⁸⁰⁴

Camp Union

⁸⁰³ Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp on the Levels of Green Brier, September 7, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ2 (183-184); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, and Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189) and 3QQ93 (190-192), respectively; Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 97-100; and Capt. Augustine Prevost, diary entry dated Pittsburgh, September 6, 1774, 128; and, Capt. Dorsey Pentecost to Capt. William Harrod, letter dated September 16, 1774, Pittsburgh and Northwest Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 4NN12 (201-202).

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

Colonel Andrew Lewis had designated the Great Levels, a savannah situated on the Greenbrier River about eight miles from White Sulphur Springs, as the location for the general rendezvous of the Left Wing, or Southern Division. Because it represented the place where troops from Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle Counties assembled, Lewis named it Camp Union. Due to the close proximity of their home communities to the rendezvous, the Botetourt County companies of Captain John Stuart and Matthew Arbuckle arrived first and established their bivouacs by August 27, but no other units arrived for another five days.

The sound of drums and fifes heralded the arrival of Colonel Charles Lewis and most of the Augusta County contingent on September 1, prompting Colonel Fleming - who arrived shortly behind them – to remark that “Companies have been coming in every day since.” Camp Union quickly became a very busy place. *Reveille* beat every morning before daybreak in the respective lines’ camps and captains commanding companies formed their men, called the rolls, and examined arms. Officers met in councils of war to discuss plans. Martial music filled the air as fifers and drummers practiced, and beat the required calls at the appropriate times for guard mount and other camp duties. Soldiers drilled, melted their lead into molds to make bullets, performed work details and guard duty, and on Sunday attended divine services. Convoys of supply wagons and packhorses, and herds of cattle delivered the sinews of war. Every day ended in the evening with the beating of *Retreat*.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰⁵ Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp on the Levels of Green Brier, September 4, 1774, and Col. William Fleming Journal, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ1 (181-182) and 2ZZ71 (231), respectively; and Bland, 296.

Despite militia troops posted at the various forts, on the march, and now encamped at the Great Levels, the backcountry remained dangerous. Indian war parties roamed near the settlements and looked for easy targets to attack, which caused the prudent settlers to remain vigilant and cautious. Colonel Fleming had left his Belmont estate for Camp Union on Monday, August 21, but did not arrive until more than a week later. He had “delayed a day or two on purpose” waiting to “fall in with some provision escorts” rather than travel alone. Although he did not find a unit to accompany, his caution proved well-founded when he learned that the assembling army had “some Indian Spies attending us,” who occasionally fired on “a straggling person” who they could catch at a disadvantage when “not too near the camp.”⁸⁰⁶

Colonel Andrew Lewis, the commander in chief, also arrived on September 1. Before he left for camp he ordered three men to guard Fleming’s Belmont plantation in his subordinate’s absence. Captain Stephen Trigg, who remained behind to command the defenses in the area, would increase, replace or dismiss them if Mrs. Fleming desired.⁸⁰⁷

First Sergeant William Kennerly, who had volunteered for service in Captain George Matthews’ Augusta County company, recalled receiving orders for a detached mission. After they had marched from county rendezvous at Staunton to Camp Union, Colonel Lewis sent Matthews’ and Captain George Moffett’s companies to Tygart River Valley, where they built a small post. Named Warwick’s Fort, for Jacob Warwick, the owner of the property and member of Captain John Dickinson’s

⁸⁰⁶ Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp on the Levels of Green Brier, September 4, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ1 (181-182).

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

company, to shelter the region's inhabitants. When the two companies returned to Camp Union to participate in the expedition, Kennerly remained to command the sixteen-man detachment left as the garrison.⁸⁰⁸

On September 2, Fleming's first full day at the Great Levels, a messenger brought word that Indians had attacked "Stewart's fort," about four miles away. The detachment of soldiers dispatched to the scene found that Indians had fired on and "slightly wounded" one man who managed to escape. The next day, a patrol brought "a Countryman from another Quarter," named McGuire, into camp. The "much wounded" McGuire, suffered from a "Shot through the Jaw" and had to have "a bullet cut out of his Cheek." Although the braves preferred to target the "country People" who lived "near little Forts about 3 miles" distant, they had otherwise caused little damage. Fleming believed that the frontier would become "altogether safe" after the army marched, since its motions would "fully employ" the warriors in defending their own country and thereby draw their attention away from the settlements.⁸⁰⁹

The troops estimated two enemy war parties of four or five men each prowled the area. The officers therefore took measures to keep the encampment secure while the companies trained and made ready, and quartermaster and commissary officers had their men unload, inventory and prepare supplies for the campaign. Following the procedure prescribed in General Bland's A Treatise on Military Discipline, each

⁸⁰⁸ William Kennerly pension application S8781 dated July 22, 1833, Roll 1473. The location of Warwick's Fort is near present Huttonsville, West Virginia.

⁸⁰⁹ Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp on the Levels of Green Brier, September 4, 1774, to William Bowyer, undated Point Pleasant, and Journal, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ1 (181-182), 2ZZ7, (254-7), and 2ZZ71 (232), respectively.

battalion in camp detailed troops that contributed to a variety of camp guards every day, with the Main Guard and Piquet Guards arguably considered the most important.

The “main guard” provided the camp’s external security. It usually consisted of a company commanded by its captain, with its men posted as sentinels around the camp’s perimeter and at special installations such as the baggage train, boats, cattle, packhorses, and if it had one, the artillery park. Each of the camp’s tenant battalions also provided a daily “piquet guard.” Under the command of a captain, the picket guard consisted of one lieutenant, one ensign, three sergeants, and fifty rank and file soldiers for a twenty-four-hour period.⁸¹⁰

After standing the daily guard mount, each company-sized body of men maintained themselves “always ready to march at a moment’s warning,” either to sustain outposts, escort foraging parties, or “in case the enemy should endeavor to surprise ... [the] camp, to march out and attack them, in order to give the army time to draw up” in line of battle. If an alarm sounded, each captain would form his men and lead them to a designated point of rendezvous with the other battalion’ guards. The field officer of the day would then assume command and lead the temporary battalion to meet the enemy while the rest of the army assembled.⁸¹¹

The Indians, according to their custom of warfare, approached the camp to cause as much “mischief” as possible while they gathered and seized all the horses they could take. After the Captain of the September 4 picket guard from Botetourt County, for example, detailed a sergeant and twelve men to march to the ford on Greenbrier River

⁸¹⁰ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 4, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (313); and Bland, 245, 254.

⁸¹¹ Ibid, and Bland, 254, 256-258, 260.

to escort any baggage trains or packhorse brigades to camp, he assigned the rest of his men to another mission. Dividing them “in such small parties... thought most likely to discover & Annoy” any warriors prowling around the camp, the captain sent them beyond the line of picket posts “in quest of the Enemy.”⁸¹²

After spending much of the day in fruitless searches one patrol came encountered some men “in the Woods on Horseback.” The intruders, “Wearing blankets over their heads to deceive the sentries,” dismounted and approached a number of grazing packhorses. After each of the strangers had mounted one and prepared to steal more animals, a sentinel detected the ruse. The picket guards reacted to his shouted alarm, “Here they are boys!”, but the Indians had “time to slip off the Horses without being fired at,” and fled into the woods, but knew their disguises had not fooled the troops. Although they “had no Opportunity of firing,” the picket guards recovered the stolen horses and found “several Buffalo hide halters, a tomahawk” and other items the intruders had dropped nearby. As darkness approached, the captain of the guard recalled his men back to camp.⁸¹³

The next day, in addition to the usual guards, Colonel Charles Lewis, acting as field officer of the day, ordered twenty men “paraded immediately” and provided each with a packhorse. Thus mounted, the guards scoured the woods for two miles all around the camp to “dislodge any Scouting Indians & make it safe for the Pack horse men to gather up their horses.” Simultaneously, the captains led that day’s picket guards “in quest of the Indians that were discovered” the previous day. Again

⁸¹² Col. William Fleming Journal, and Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 4, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (232) and 2ZZ72 (313), respectively.

⁸¹³ Ibid, and Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189).

operating in small units, they had orders to patrol until evening, unless they could overtake and engage the enemy.⁸¹⁴

Even with the distraction of the daily guard mount, the rendezvous camp provided the captains commanding companies the best opportunity to train their men and develop a degree of unit cohesion not possible by the attendance of a one-day muster every three months. Although it did not make them as attentive as regulars, the military environment also proved conducive to instilling a degree of discipline, a characteristic often lacking in militia organizations. Captains and orderly sergeants read to the men of their companies the punitive articles of the Militia Act, the applicable provisions in the Acts for Repelling Invasions and Insurrections, and “every order by which their conduct is regulated.” The leaders let the members know, in no uncertain terms, the consequences for disobeying orders, and the punishment that a trial by court martial could impose on a refractory militiaman. Certain militia members never adjusted well to regimentation, whether on the expedition or in the garrisons. Although cases of insubordination, desertion and other offenses occurred, the companies generally conducted themselves well. Finally, owing largely to the continuing shortage of gunpowder, the field officers urged captains and subalterns to “exert themselves” in preventing their respective unit’s men from the “infamous practice of shooting away their Ammunition for no good purpose,” and demand that they only fire with their officers’ permission.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹⁴ Col. William Fleming, Journal and Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 5, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (232) and 2ZZ72 (314), respectively.

⁸¹⁵ Col. William Fleming Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 4, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (313).

Although educated as physicians, Captains Thomas Buford, Robert McClennahan and Colonel Fleming served as line officers. They, along with the Augusta line's surgeon, Doctor John Watkins, provided the army's Left Wing with the nucleus of a competent medical staff. As more staff officers arrived in camp, they saw to their respective duties in earnest. Major Thomas Posey, as the quartermaster and commissary general, coordinated the expedition's logistical support. Captains Thomas Ingles and Anthony Bledsoe, quartermaster of Botetourt and commissary of Fincastle Counties, respectively, became his as principal deputies. Major Sampson Mathews, quartermaster of Augusta, assumed the role of "master driver of cattle," assisted by deputies, or chief drivers of cattle, Captains John Lyle and William McClure. Captains John Hughes and John Taylor became chief packhorse masters. John Warwick served as the chief butcher. Largely through the efforts of this staff, supplies and provisions for the expedition steadily arrived. Although shortages continued to plague the force, the subordinate agents in the counties continued to acquire and forward the necessary items to the Great Levels.

Major Posey reported on the number of packhorses, bullocks and other cattle to the commander in chief every evening. The commissaries had their men gather all the cattle lost on the march or wandering around camp into an established "bullock pen" with guards posted. Warwick and the army's butchers had a "Slaughtering pen made" so they could "kill the Cattle otherwise than by Shooting them."⁸¹⁶

⁸¹⁶ Col. William Fleming Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 7, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (315-316).

For transport, by the time the Left Wing marched, Posey expected to have eight hundred horses “employed” in carrying supplies.⁸¹⁷ Armies of the day usually organized their packhorses into “brigades,” each under the control of a packhorse master who held authority over those assigned to the train and staff responsibilities roughly equivalent to a captain of the line. A brigade typically had about forty horses, with one driver controlling a team of three or four horses, plus additional packhorse men. The last named, often augmented by soldiers detailed from line companies, assisted the drivers, helped to load, unload, feed and care for the animals. Furnished with a packsaddle, a horse could carry about two hundred pounds of cargo.⁸¹⁸ John Criner, for example, drove his team into camp and delivered “1 ½ barrels” of powder for the Fincastle companies, and “1 [whole] & 2 half barrels of gun Powder,” plus “16 galls Spirits & Sundry other Articles,” which – excluding the liquor and powder – came to about “150 lbs.” for the Botetourt County contingent.⁸¹⁹

Posey informed the battalion commanders that they could expect kettles “to be distributed amongst the whole in equal proportion to the Number [of soldiers] in of each line.”⁸²⁰ By the time the army marched, the quartermasters expected to issue each company entrenching tools and “four falling and one broad ax.” While still on the way to Camp Union, Colonel Christian received word that they would find,

⁸¹⁷ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189).

⁸¹⁸ Samuel Lightfoot to Joseph Wright, John Mickle Jr., James Hammond, Patrick Quinn, and Christian Miller, Agreement dated York, March 1, 1759, Samuel Parrish, ed., Several Chapters in the History of the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving the Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures (Philadelphia: Friends Historical Association, 1877), 109; Erna Risch, Supplying Washington's Army (Washington): U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1981), 66-71, 75.

⁸¹⁹ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Richfield, August 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ77 (149).

⁸²⁰ Col. William Fleming Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (314).

“There is Tents plenty and all goods necessary for the men such as Shirts, Blankets [and] Leggings” when his unit arrived.⁸²¹

John F. D. Smyth, a British traveler who witnessed the Left Wing assemble, recorded his impressions about the frontier soldiers’ appearance. He described “Their whole dress” as “also very singular, and not very materially different from that of the Indians.” Each man wore “a hunting shirt,” a functional garment that resembled a “wagonner’s frock, ornamented with a great many fringes” that he fastened about the middle with a “broad belt.” Smyth elaborated on the belt, calling it “much decorated” but utilitarian. Into his belt, a soldier usually secured his tomahawk, “an instrument that serves every purpose of defense and convenience,” a tool that functioned as a hammer on one side and a hatchet on the other. The soldier’s kit included accouterments that he would “hang from their necks on one shoulder,” such as a “shot bag and powder-horn.” On the latter, many men often carved a “variety of whimsical figures and devices.” The preferred headgear most often consisted of a “flapped hat, of a reddish hue, proceeding from the intensely hot beams of the sun.”⁸²²

On their legs below the frocks the men often wore “leather britches, made of Indian dressed elk, or deer skins, but more frequently thin trousers” with the addition of the very practical “Indian boots, or leggings.” Made from coarse woolen cloth, and either wrapped loosely and tied with garters or laced on the outside, the leggings “always come better than half way up the thigh” to offer the wearer “great defense and preservative” against poisonous insect and snake bites, as well as the scratches of

⁸²¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Head of Rich Creek, September 3, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ89 (176-179).

⁸²² Smyth, J. F. D., A Tour in the United States of America... Sometime in 1773 or 1774, Vol. 1, (Dublin: G. Perrin, 1784), Vol. 2, 115-116.

“thorns, briars, scrubby bushes, and underwood, with which this whole country is infested and overspread.” For footwear, Smyth wrote that frontiersmen “sometimes wear pumps of their own manufacture,” but more often wore “Indian moccasins ... of their own construction also.” Made “of strong elk’s or buck’s skin,” which they “dress thence round the fore part of the middle ankle, without a seam” the moccasins fit the wearer “close to the feet, and are perfectly easy and pliant.”⁸²³

As for the hue of their “hunting, or rifle shirts,” Smyth said that although some men dyed them in a variety of colors, including yellow, red, or brown, “many wear them quite white.” Smyth concluded that, “Thus habited and accoutered, with his rifle upon his shoulder, or in his hand,” the well-appointed “backwoods’ man is completely equipped for visiting, courtship, travel, hunting, or war.” Smyth added, with a touch of irony, “And according to the number and variety of fringes on his hunting shirt, and the decorations on his powder horn, belt, and rifle,” such a man “estimates his finery.” Smyth then observed that a Virginian “absolutely conceives himself of equal consequence, more civilized, polite and more elegantly dressed than the most brilliant peer at St. James’s in a splendid and expensive birth-day suit, of the first fashion and taste, and most costly materials.” For the benefit of his European reading audience, he conceded, “Such sentiments as those I have just exposed to notice are neither so ridiculous nor surprising,” when one considered the circumstances “with due attention, that prompt the backwoods’ American to such a

⁸²³ Ibid.

train of thinking, and in which light it is, that he feels his own consequence, for he finds all his resources himself.”⁸²⁴

Although all of the troops, provisions and supplies had not yet arrived at Camp Union, the time for the Left Wing to begin its campaign had come. Such expeditions in the past could usually rely on their accompanying packhorse trains and cattle herds, supplemented by carrying some of the bulk material by canoe, to provide enough supplies and provisions needed to sustain them during the entire operation. This one proved different. Despite the problems some officers had experienced in raising their units, the assembled force had “a much Larger Number than was Expected.”

Although the officers had already expended a great deal of effort to raise and assemble their half of the expeditionary army, it paled in comparison to the task of getting it where it could do the work for which it existed. While the increased number of troops that had turned out represented an advantage, Lewis realized that the logistics requirements had commensurately increased as well. The estimated distances involved – 140 miles from Camp Union to the mouth of the Kanawha and another 70 to the objective Shawnee Indian towns – further magnified the difficulty of the enterprise. The army had more before it than a walk in the woods.⁸²⁵

Colonel Andrew Lewis called the field officers and senior captains together for a council of war and discussed the march to join Lord Dunmore and the Right Wing on the banks of the Ohio. The enhanced size of the force necessitated a phased march

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, and Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ93 (190-192) and 3QQ92 (185-189), respectively.

order of subordinate units and “an Equal addition of Provisions than originally ordered, & Brought out, & carried from this Camp by ye Last Marching Party to ye Mouth of Elk.” Instead of simply forwarding some supplies down the Kanawha by canoe, the troops would have to build a magazine “where it must be stored, & taken down by water as we shall have occasion for it.”⁸²⁶ The phased movement of multiple marching units and the more robust and responsive flow of supplies required a well-developed plan executed with a professional level of competence consistent with the best practices of European armies.

Colonel Andrew Lewis therefore proposed the “building Canoes, and a Fort at the mouth of Elk,” about eighty-five miles away, “and a Fort at the mouth of Kanawha” on the Ohio, another sixty miles distant as the army marched deeper into enemy territory. The fort on the Elk would include a magazine, or “a small store house, for the provisions.” From there, the commissary officers would use the “Canoes . . . to transport the Flour &c., from that Place down the New River to the Ohio.” The logistical system would ultimately consist of a rear support base at Camp Union, the intermediate magazine at Elk Creek and a forward base on the Ohio, from which the army planned to enter Indian country. The Advanced Party, as the first march division, would halt at the mouth of Elk Creek on the Kanawha to establish a camp. Once the Main Body arrived on the Elk, the men would build a fortification, magazine and canoes. As soon as the packhorse men unloaded their cargo, most of the unburdened pack animals would return to Camp Union for another load, and accompany the Rear Body on its march. Once completed, the quartermaster and

⁸²⁶ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ93 (190-192).

commissary officers could send most of the flour forward by canoe, taking maximum advantage of water carriage that not only facilitated movement, but made the best use of the limited number of available pack animals. The arrangement also facilitated a continuous flow of provisions, ammunition and other material forward, as well as evacuation of ambulatory wounded back, as the army moved farther from its base of supply.⁸²⁷

The wing's commander in chief designated that his brother, Colonel Charles Lewis, would lead the Advanced Body. Because Captain Matthew Arbuckle of Botetourt County knew the way to Point Pleasant along a branch of the Warriors' Path known as the Kanawha Trail, Colonel Andrew Lewis appointed him as the chief guide and assigned his company to the division. Consisting of the entire Augusta County contingent in camp, nine companies or "595 officers and men," with Arbuckle's Botetourt company attached, they would march on Tuesday, September 6, accompanied by a commissary officer, a train of loaded packhorses and a herd of cattle. The Main Body, or second division, commanded by Colonel Fleming and which Colonel Andrew Lewis would accompany, consisted mostly of Botetourt County troops, plus packhorses and cattle, would leave Camp Union six days later. The Fincastle County contingent, under the command of Colonel Christian, which Lewis expected to reach Camp Union any day, would follow with the remaining

⁸²⁷ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ146 (196-199); and, Col. William Fleming Journal and Orderly Book entries dated Camp Union, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (282) and 2ZZ72 (314), respectively.

supplies and provisions, pack animals, and beeves as the Rear Body, as it brought up the rear as the final division to march.⁸²⁸

On Sunday, September 4, while the picket guards engaged Indian marauders moving around the camp's perimeter and just two days before the first units marched, a messenger arrived with the letter from Governor Dunmore. Written from Old Town five days before, Dunmore expressed his "warmest wishes" for Lewis to march his wing to join the rest of the army at the mouth of the Little Kanawha. Given such short notice, Lewis replied that "it is not in my Power to alter our route," and explained the circumstances which prevented his compliance with the commander in chief's instruction. In a private letter to Colonel Preston, Lewis said that he wished the governor had explained his reasons for the sudden change in plan.⁸²⁹

On Monday, Colonel Fleming's Botetourt troops took over routine camp duties and the daily guard mount, which allowed Lewis' companies to work without distraction. The men of the first division devoted their energies to preparations for the march. Meanwhile, the packhorse men fixed a quantity of salt, 54,000 pounds of flour and all tools not issued to companies for loading on the packhorses. The cattle drovers gathered their herds to have them ready. Colonel Andrew Lewis issued an order that forbade the sutlers from "distributing Liquors in such Quantities as will make any of the Troops drunk – otherwise," he threatened, "a total stop will be put to the

⁸²⁸ Col. William Fleming Journal and Orderly Book dated September 6, and to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp September 7, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (283-4), 2ZZ72 (313), and 2ZZ2 (183-184), respectively.

⁸²⁹ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ93 (190-192).

Retailing of Liquors” in camp.⁸³⁰ On the same day, delegates from twelve colonies convened in the General Congress in Philadelphia.

After the fifes and drums of the Augusta line beat the *General*, used in lieu of *Reveille*, at daybreak on September 6 as the signal to begin the day and preparations to break camp and march, while the other lines observed the normal camp routine. The men dressed and ate breakfast, each captain inspected his men and their weapons. In those companies preparing to depart, the officers ordered any soldiers deemed not healthy enough to go on the expedition to remain in camp and rejoin their units by marching with one of the following divisions or as convoy escorts after they regained their strength. The quartermasters finally arrived with and distributed camp kettles, axes and other tools to the companies, and issued enough ammunition so that each soldier in Lewis’ division had “¼ pound of powder and ½ pound of ball” to begin the campaign. The men checked and packed personal gear and unit equipment. When the drums beat Assembly, the Augusta soldiers, and those of the attached company, struck their tents, packed and loaded their baggage, drew up in their respective companies, and stood ready for the next signal. On hearing the musicians beat a March, the companies took their places in the formation and marched out of Camp Union, followed by four hundred packhorses and 108 head of cattle. Captain John Taylor, although from Fincastle, prepared to march in command of the “Brigade of

⁸³⁰ Ibid, and Col. William Fleming Journal and Orderly Book entries dated Camp Union, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (282) and 02ZZ72 (314-315).

horses,” and would “return as fast as they can” to Camp Union after they unloaded the packsaddles at Elk Creek.⁸³¹

Not long after Colonel Charles Lewis and the Advanced Body marched away, most of the Fincastle County contingent for the expedition arrived at Camp Union. Colonel William Fleming greeted him, and the next day wrote a letter to tell his wife, Nancy, that her “brother & the Companies from Fincastle reach’d this place Yesterday.”⁸³²

When the Fincastle County officer reported to the wing’s commander in chief, Colonel Andrew Lewis, told him that he believed that “the number of men [present or expected to arrive] greatly exceeds his expectations. The next day, Christian wrote to inform Preston that Lewis had ordered the county lieutenant of Fincastle County to “let but 100 more men follow me.” Lewis personally wrote Preston to tell him to only send enough additional men bring Fincastle County’s contingent to about three hundred rank and file, and that he “could employ Any others that are raised to protect your Frontiers.” Colonel Lewis then added that if Preston sent any more troops to Camp Union, to please “furnish them with Powder,” otherwise there would “not have more than ¼ lb pr Man.” Lewis concluded by telling Preston, “It is with pleasure I can inform you that I have had but little Trouble with ye Troops to what I expected and I hope they will continue to do their duty with the same cheerfulness.”⁸³³

⁸³¹ Col. William Fleming Journal and Orderly Book dated Camp Union, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 (283-4) and 2ZZ72 (315-316), respectively; Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189); and Bland, 296.

⁸³² Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Union Camp, September 7, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ2 (183-184).

⁸³³ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, and Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letters dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 7 and 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189) and 3QQ93 (190-192), respectively.

Colonel John Field of Culpepper County also marched in to Camp Union with one company of thirty-five men soon after the Advanced Party had departed. When he reported to Colonel Lewis, he informed the commander that he expected another one hundred men to arrive in camp the next day. Field then presented orders which required Lewis to accept the Culpepper County companies for service in the colony's pay as a single corp. Although everyone continued to address him by the title of his permanent rank, Colonel Lewis referred to Field in correspondence as holding the grade of major. According to the Militia Law, given the number of men under his command, major reflected the compensation Field could expect to receive after the House of Burgesses voted to settle the colony's military expenses. Without waiting for the rest of the battalion, Field and the single Culpepper company left the following evening to join Colonel Charles Lewis' division on the way to the Elk.⁸³⁴

With the army starting to move, many people in the backcountry hoped that the offensive would succeed in bringing enemy depredations against their settlements to an end. Three weeks after the Left Wing began its campaign, Colonel Preston described the frontier situation in an open letter to Misters Purdie and Dixon of the *Virginia Gazette*. Reflecting his pride for the soldiers of colonial Virginia, especially his own Fincastle and the neighboring Augusta and Botetourt Counties, he wrote, "This body of militia being mostly armed with rifle guns, and a great part of them good woodsmen, are looked upon to be at least equal to any troops for the number that have been raised in America." As they marched to face the enemy, he continued,

⁸³⁴ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, and Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189) and 3QQ93 (190-192), respectively. Hening, Statutes 7: 114; and 3 (1823): 17.

“It is earnestly hoped that they will, in conjunction with the other party [the Right Wing], be able to chastise the Ohio Indians for the many murders and robberies they have committed on our frontiers for many years past.⁸³⁵

⁸³⁵ Col. William Preston [extract] letter dated Fincastle, September 28, 1774, *Virginia Gazette* # 1 (Purdie and Dixon) October 13, 1774; also printed in [American Archives](#), 1: 808.

Chapter 10: To Hold Themselves in Readiness – The Militia Marches

Pittsburgh

Lieutenant Augustine Prevost, adjutant of the British army's 60th "Royal American" Regiment of Foot, arrived in Pittsburgh on September 3, 1774, at the same time "My Lord Dunmore was expected hourly." The officer had come in his official capacity to recruit men for his unit, then posted in Jamaica, but took time from his duties to visit and conduct personal business with George Croghan, the father of his wife, Susannah, as well as his partner in some land interests. Before heading west, Prevost stopped at Williamsburg on July 2 and paid his respects to the royal governor. He remarked that his Lordship not only received him "very politely," but invited the visitor to dine with him and Lady Dunmore at the Palace on July 4.⁸³⁶

Except for the few days in Virginia's capital, Lieutenant Prevost spent most of the next two months in the company of Pennsylvanians while visiting relatives in Lancaster and stopping at Bedford, Ligonier and Hannastown on the road to Pittsburgh. He exclusively engaged in conversation with individuals whose positions unabashedly favored their colony in its on-going boundary dispute with Virginia. This influenced his opinions. By the time Prevost reached Pittsburgh, the views of William Saunderson, who represented Cumberland County in the provincial assembly, William Thompson, a Westmoreland County magistrate, and Alexander McKee of the Indian Department had darkened his views of anything Virginian.

⁸³⁶ Prevost, 123.

With their own financial as well as political interests at stake, Indian traders McKee and Thompson, along with Matthew Elliott, Alexander Ross, and Thomas Small man, added to the Pennsylvania influence reflected in Prevost's actions and diary entries.⁸³⁷

Prevost reached Croghan Hall to find his father-in-law "laid up with the gout & rheumatism." The Delaware chief White Eyes waited for Dunmore's arrival with Croghan since, as local members of the Pennsylvania faction claimed, "two or three Virginia militia" had attacked three unarmed Delawares walking along the road from town to Croghan's plantation on September 1. The assailants killed two, but one of the Indians "got off" and swam across the Allegheny to safety. Major McDonald, "happening to be there" in town immediately issued a reward of £50 to anyone who apprehended the attackers. Prevost did not expect much would come of the gesture, and blamed the violence on the "want of discipline among such a set of lawless vagabonds."⁸³⁸

When the British officer met Connolly and his wife for dinner at a local tavern two days later, the major impressed the lieutenant as "sincere and friendly" despite "the many accounts ... heard to his prejudice." The rest of the meeting, however, did nothing to change Prevost's opinion, although when their fellow diners McKee and Ross informed him that someone had threatened White Eyes and his companion, Connolly immediately ordered a party of militiamen to scout the road between the fort Croghan's to arrest anyone seeking to harm the two Indians. The general situation led Prevost to understand that the crisis had reached the point that "the

⁸³⁷ Ibid, 128.

⁸³⁸ Ibid, 127.

Indians were all exceedingly alarmed, that a party of Mingoës were out 14 days now in order to strike somewhere; but God only knows.”⁸³⁹

Governor Dunmore arrived on the evening of September 10, ahead of the rest of the army, after coming down the Monongahela with a small party “in three small canoes.” The governor landed and immediately went to the “apartments” that Connolly had prepared for his quarters in the fort. “Coming in this manner totally disappointed the poor commandant, who had with vast pain and labor,” Prevost noted, “introduced a new mode & system of discipline amongst his veterans.” Connolly had “intended to receive his Lordship with all the pomp &c. imaginable, but instead, “the sentry at the gate,” on seeing Dunmore approaching, “laid by his rifle, went up to his Lordship, & with hat off welcomed him heartily.” Perhaps the lieutenant added too much gravity in the ceremonial expectations since it “made my Lord laugh heartily.”⁸⁴⁰

McKee confided his belief to Prevost that Connolly had “succeeded with his Lordship as to lead him to adopt his measures & way of thinking with respect to the Shawnees, that that nation had a long time since maltreated the Virginians, and that the latter had never scourged them for it, & that now he was come with troops of that Province to chastise them.” McKee, as an officer of the Indian Department, informed Dunmore that some representative chiefs, or “deputies from the Delawares, Mingoës & Six Nations,” had arrived to intercede in behalf of the Shawnees. They had camped across the Allegheny from Pittsburgh, in Indian country, where they felt they could

⁸³⁹ Ibid, 128.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid, 131.

more safely conduct their deliberations without having such a “banditti” about them. Dunmore sent McKee to tell the Indians he desired to meet with them at the fort the next day.⁸⁴¹

As soon as Major McDonald informed him of the killings earlier in the week, the governor “issued a proclamation by beat of the drum” that offered £100 reward for the apprehension of those guilty of murdering the two Delawares, and for anyone with information to come forward and report it. As to the situation that brought him to Pittsburgh, the governor ordered McDonald to begin the construction of canoes for transporting troops down the Ohio.⁸⁴²

Prevost held a low opinion of Dunmore’s military competence, and describing his “schemes & plans of operations” as very much those typical of an amateur, novice, and man “ignorant of the matter he is upon.” The lieutenant may not have known that the man he criticized as a military amateur had served as an officer in the elite 3d Regiment of Foot Guards during the Seven Years War. As a relatively junior regimental staff officer, Lieutenant Prevost also may not have known about Dunmore’s tenure as royal governor of New York. When it appeared that Great Britain and Spain would go to war in 1770 after the Viceroy of “Buenos Ayres” invaded the British settlement at Port Egmont in the Falkland Islands, Dunmore had seen to the repair and improvement of that colony’s long-neglected and inadequately armed costal defenses. After “putting the province into a condition to resist a sudden

⁸⁴¹ Ibid, 131-132.

⁸⁴² Ibid, 132.

attack” by the enemy, he assured his superiors at Whitehall that he had taken all measures necessary for the safety of the colony.⁸⁴³

Prevost charged that the governor had no store of provisions, ammunition, or other supplies, but most all money, and incorrectly believed that the House of Burgesses was very unwilling to appropriate any to him. Fortunately for the governor, according to Prevost, a few individual traders offered to “pay off his soldiers and officers with goods out of their stores, provided they might charge a large, very large, advance such as 300 pr. ct.”⁸⁴⁴ In fact, Prevost only showed his ignorance of the Virginia government’s processes that paid for military activities, as prescribed in the Militia Law and Laws for Repelling Invasions and Suppressing Insurrections.

When Prevost paid his respects to Lord Dunmore at a dinner hosted by McKee, he remarked that “the people of the country seemed happy at his Lordship’s arrival as they hoped to see peace & tranquility restored in this part of the country.” The governor replied that the “Indian matters . . . would be easily accommodated,” but admitted the “troubles fomented by a parcel of bad people were not likely to be so soon adjusted.” Obviously a view diametrically opposed to the opinions Prevost had thus far heard, the governor stated that Pennsylvania partisans, not his colony’s militiamen, had murdered the two Delaware “as a stroke of policy in order to throw the odium upon the Virginians.”⁸⁴⁵

⁸⁴³ Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Hillsborough, letter dated New York, December 6, 1770, DRCHNY 8: 259.

⁸⁴⁴ Prevost, 132.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid, 132-133.

Meanwhile, Connolly had presided over a court of inquiry on the matter of Richard Butler, a trader who favored the Pennsylvania interests. Two weeks earlier, the major commandant ordered Butler arrested and confined for violating the ordinance against transporting goods (which were seized) from Pittsburgh by way of the new Pennsylvania trading town at Kittanning, to the enemy. The court determined that it could find nothing criminal after two days of testimony and remanded the accused back to jail while the magistrates turned to the governor for a determination. Showing what Prevost surprisingly described as “superior sagacity & profound knowledge,” Dunmore ordered Connolly to release Butler as soon as the trader posted a security bond and promised to “never prosecute his oppressors.”⁸⁴⁶

Led by White Eyes and *Custaloga*, the Indian deputies assembled at the fort on Wednesday, September 14, to begin the long-awaited conference. In the pre-council ritual that governed Indian negotiations, White Eyes first extended a string of wampum to symbolically “remove the fatigue” of Dunmore’s journey and open and clear his ears to what his Indian brothers had to say, and remove every concern from his heart he held about the Shawnees. Continuing with several affirmations of friendship at this troublesome time, accompanying each again with strings of wampum, the chief expressed that “their hearts, & their wives & children’s, were once more rejoiced to see the great man of Virginia & the other brothers of the other provinces” for the efforts at restoring peace on the Ohio. White Eyes concluded by presenting the governor with a belt of wampum to affirm that the gathered Indian deputies “hoped & wanted to assist him in healing up the breach that had been made

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid, 133, 137.

in the chain of friendship by some rash young people of both parties” and appealed that the Virginians not treat the Shawnees too harshly. With the formalities completed, both sides returned to their respective lodgings to wait to hear Dunmore’s reply to their speeches when the council reconvened the next day.⁸⁴⁷

When the council did not reconvene the next day, the Indians seemed very much dissatisfied that Dunmore had kept them waiting. Used to hearing replies to speeches on the following day of a council, but unaware of the governor’s practice of keeping those who even called on him in Williamsburg waiting, McKee informed Dunmore about the Indians’ displeasure. He warned the governor that the chiefs would only wait until noon on Friday for him to do so, “& then would be gone.” The Indian Department officer added that many Indians already did not hold a high opinion of him, and suspected that he only wanted to keep them near Pittsburgh until his army made ready to go down the river against the Shawnees. They further complained about Dunmore’s evasive answers about his intentions and not even providing them “an ounce of provision, powder, and other necessities,” which only made them “prodigiously uneasy.”⁸⁴⁸

Shortly after the council began on September 16, St. Clair arrived from Kittanning and requested an immediate meeting with the Virginia governor on behalf of the governor of Pennsylvania. He then demanded one of Dunmore’s officers, who had committed the murder of a Delaware Indian, and for which a proclamation had been issued that offered a £50 reward to apprehend. When they met on the fort’s parade,

⁸⁴⁷ *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Pinkney) Supplement, October 13, 1774. Also published *American Archives*, 1: 871-878; and Prevost, 135.

⁸⁴⁸ Prevost, 138.

St. Clair delivered a packet from Governor Penn, which Dunmore took, but did not open before the meeting ended.⁸⁴⁹

Although he seemed sympathetic to the Pennsylvania faction in the inter-colonial dispute, Prevost realized that his father-in-law could not afford to alienate Connolly or the governor while the matter of his land grants lay unresolved. The next day, he began an attempt to repair the apparent rift that had developed between Croghan and the Virginia faction in general and Connolly in particular, and asked the governor what he perceived to be the cause. Dunmore told Prevost that he heard on good authority, other than Connolly, that his father-in-law had “slandered” him by saying that the governor “had occasioned all this broil between the Indians & the colonies in order to secure a tool for the purpose of ministry.” He also told Prevost that Croghan had “strove to set the Shawnees upon the backs of the Virginians by his insidious and dangerous speeches,” and who could be blamed as the “author & sole cause” for the current disturbances. The governor continued that although appointed the chief or first magistrate of the West Augusta district, Croghan had “denied the jurisdiction of the Province of Virginia” and had “constantly acted a duplicate part throughout the tenor of his conduct.”⁸⁵⁰

Following Prevost’s intercession with both men, Croghan and Connolly met and repaired their misunderstandings. The next day, September 16, Dunmore also met Croghan and put their differences behind them. The mediation proved mutually beneficial, Croghan needed Governor Dunmore to validate his land claims in

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid, 135.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid, 136.

Virginia, while Dunmore needed Croghan's assistance in managing relations with the Indians, "upon which he frankly owned he believed the whole success of his expedition depended." Having the retired deputy superintendent again in his favor also made his Lordship's negotiations with the Indian deputies much easier and more effective.⁸⁵¹

After Dunmore received him civilly, Croghan notified the Indians that the governor would respond to their speeches on September 12. When the chiefs arrived the next morning, Dunmore reciprocated the Indian welcome by "condoling with them for the loss they had sustained through the rashness of some vagabonds" to open the discussions. He then answered White Eyes' opening speech by telling the assembled chiefs he appreciated the pains they had taken to "heal the sores made by the Shawanese," and would have preferred to give them a more favorable answer. Instead, he reminded them how little the Shawnees deserved the "treatment or appellation of brethren" from him, and charged that they had never complied with the terms of the peace treaty they had made with Colonel Bouquet at the end of Pontiac's War to give up and return their white prisoners, "nor have they ever truly buried the hatchet."⁸⁵²

The governor then recounted the numerous violations the Shawnees had committed with the encouragement of the Pennsylvania faction, "upon the frontiers of my Government" since 1764. The included, Dunmore charged, "the murder of a man the very next summer," and another "eight of my people upon Cumberland River" the

⁸⁵¹ Ibid, 138, 139.

⁸⁵² *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Pinkney) Supplement, October 13, 1774. Also in [American Archives](#), 1: 871-878; and, Prevost, 138-139.

very next year. He reminded them of numerous similar incidents, one by one, which included not only attacks, but the stealing of horses and goods from Virginia settlers and traders, and “disposed of them (together with a considerable quantity of peltry)” to the traders from Pennsylvania. He then reminded his audience that while the Shawnee “banditti” robbed, killed and injured several Virginia in their country, they allowed Pennsylvania traders to pass unharmed. The governor then drew particular attention to murders of nineteen men, women and children on the Virginia side of the Ohio from 1771 to 1773, including the family of Adam Stroud on the Elk River and young Boone and Russell in Powell’s Valley. In the latter incident, he continued, the guilty warriors “carried off their [victims’] horses and effects” to their towns where they sold them to Pennsylvania traders. “All these, with many other murders,” the Shawnees had committed against Virginians, Dunmore said, “before a drop of Shawanees blood was spilt” by Virginians.⁸⁵³

Since the beginning of 1774, the governor concluded, Shawnee warriors had “continually perpetrated robberies upon my defenseless Frontier inhabitants, which at length irritated them so far that they began to retaliate. While his Lordship assured them of his colony’s friendship and justice to the other nations represented, he posed them a question about how they thought the Virginians should treat the Shawnees. Having “stated the dispute between them and us,” Dunmore left it to the deputies “to judge what they merit.”⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵³ Ibid. *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Pinkney) Supplement, October 13, 1774. Also in American Archives, 1: 871-878.

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid.

Captain Pipe and his delegation, who the Indian deputies had sent to mediate with the Shawnees, returned on September 18. He informed Croghan that the Shawnees “were willing to come to terms” with Dunmore in order to avoid war. However, they desired to know what the Virginians expected and would willingly make restitution as soon as they are permitted to go hunting. The next morning, the governor’s party, which included Colonel Stephen, Major Connolly, two musicians playing French Horns and a “Scotch Piper,” arrived at Croghan Hall in two boats that displayed the British Union Flag. The deputies of the several nations waited on the opposite bank to meet with them, but requested to consult with Croghan before they answered the governor. Croghan recommended to Dunmore that Connolly and McKee, should also accompany him to the meeting.⁸⁵⁵

When the council reconvened at the fort on September 23, Pipe announced that the Shawnees stated their desire to restore friendship. In the council held in their towns on the Scioto, Pipe related that Cornstalk claimed that he had told the warriors to stay home and “be quiet” and not “molest” the Virginia backcountry inhabitants. Except for a few a few “rash young men” who went out on their own, he maintained that his nation’s people and their Mingo friends had complied. *Plukkemehnotee*, a Mingo chief who whites called Pluggy, blamed the recent disturbances on Wyandot, Miami, and Ottawa warriors who had disregarded their own nations’ chiefs to fight the Virginians. Because the Shawnees and Mingoes desired peace, Pluggy continued, when the war parties entered their towns to offer their aid, the Shawnees told their erstwhile allies to return to their homes. Big Apple Tree, a Mohawk deputy who

⁸⁵⁵ Prevost, 140; and, *Virginia Gazette* #2 (Pinkney) Supplement, October 13, 1774; also [American Archives](#), 1: 871-878.

accompanied Pipe told said, relayed to Dunmore that the Shawnee would “pursue proper measures to restore peace,” and meet with the Big Knife, his Lordship, wherever he built his council fire, which the Six Nations, Wyandots and Delawares would attend to restore a proper peace.⁸⁵⁶

Dunmore had heard enough. He thanked Pipe and the delegation for their intercession in attempting to broker a peace. He reminded all those present that the Shawnees had always shown hostility toward the Virginians. On the other hand, Dunmore said that the Big Knife remained ready to do even their greatest enemies justice. He asked Big Apple Tree to invite Cornstalk and the Shawnee chiefs to meet him either at Wheeling, the mouth of the Little Kanawha, or any other place further down the Ohio they chose. The governor assured them that if they came, he would listen to their good speeches and treat the Shawnees fairly. He then presented wampum as he told the several deputies that if his brethren of the Six Nations, Wyandots and Delawares led the Shawnees to the Council Fire, he could trust that the meeting would occur. As a further sign of their desire to see the dispute resolved without war, Pipe and a fellow Delaware chief, *Wanganam*, offered to accompany his Lordship on the expedition to help facilitate any negotiations.⁸⁵⁷

When Croghan returned home that evening, he told Prevost the Delaware, Wyandots and Six Nations deputies “seemed extremely pleased” with the outcome of the council. Dunmore waited on the canoes to arrive on the Monongahela. While the Indian council occupied much of the governor’s time, Colonel Stephen saw to it that

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid. Variations of Pluggy’s Mohawk name include *Plukkemehnotee* and *Tecanyaterighto*.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.

the Right Wing completed its preparations for the expedition. Three to four hundred militiamen, mostly from the West Augusta District, joined those who had marched from Winchester to raise the division's strength to about seven hundred men. After Majors McDonald and Connolly had the newly constructed or impressed vessels loaded with supplies and provisions, the soldiers climbed aboard and waited for Lord Dunmore. He came to the landing and "immediately set off with them & go to join Colo. Lewis" at the mouth of the Kanawha.⁸⁵⁸

Elk River

Colonel Andrew Lewis' Left Wing, or Southern Division had begun its march from Camp Union toward the mouth of the Kanawha. The Advanced Party, the first to leave the Great Levels, marched with scouts out in front, followed by a fatigue party of axe-wielding woodsmen, or pioneers, and their detail of guards. The pioneers cleared the path of obstructions and widened it enough for the packhorses and cattle to pass, and cut blazes on the trees to mark the way the divisions were to follow. A general order, whose execution had been drilled and practiced before leaving Camp Union, provided for the orderly defense of a camp without the need for posting it in the daily plan. In the case of an alarm, "each Company is to form on the Ground [where] they are encamp'd and face outwards, & stand fast until they receive orders." Each morning after the beating of the *General*, captains inspected their companies, as

⁸⁵⁸ Prevost, 142; and, Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 97-99.

bullock drivers gathered their herds and counted the beeves, the packhorse men loaded their animals with cargo, and all prepared to march.⁸⁵⁹

By the fifth day of marching the column had proceeded about thirty miles from Camp Union on its way to Elk River. Not far away, having taken a different trail and traveling faster, Colonel Field's detachment of Culpepper County men halted near Little Meadow River for the night of September 10, unaware of the location of Colonel Lewis' division. Early the next morning Privates John Clay and Francis Cowheard [or Coward] of Captain James Kirtley's company went out to gather the packhorses that had wandered away from camp in the night. At the same time, two Ottawa warriors approached Field's camp looking for grazing horses that they could easily bridle and lead out from under the very noses of the picket guards. From their hiding place they only saw Clay, but did not notice Cowheard, who walked about one hundred yards away. One Indian shot and killed Clay. Cowheard looked in the direction of the musket's report in time to see an Indian, scalping knife in hand, running toward the body of his dead companion. Reacting quickly, Cowheard evened the score with a shot that killed the warrior before he could take the scalp. The other Indian ran off and escaped, but left behind a number of rope bridles in the hiding place. After the soldiers had gathered and loaded the horses, they stood ready to resume the march. The Indians' appearance compelled Field to change course, and

⁸⁵⁹ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book September 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (320).

by the end of the day, the Culpepper detachment fell in with Colonel Lewis' division.⁸⁶⁰

The Advance Party reached Elk River on September 21, fifteen days and eighty-five miles after leaving Camp Union. The men established the camp upstream from its confluence with New River, and not far from the ruins of Walter Kelly's farm.

Colonel Charles Lewis posted guards and sent out patrols to look for signs of recent Indian activity. In accordance with his brother's plan of campaign, he determined the division's priority of work. The men established cattle and horse pens, and began working on the fortification, supply magazine and canoes while they waited for the Main Body.⁸⁶¹

Fincastle County

The Augusta County spies posted on Gauley Mountain, about fifty miles from Camp Union, watched as one war party returning from the direction of the settlements on September 6. Three days later, they saw three more warriors heading east toward the settlements. Except for Major Angus MacDonald's raid on Anatomical, the Virginians had fought a completely defensive and largely local war. Although Dunmore's had decided to take the fight to Shawnee country, the expedition had yet to cross the Ohio River. Virginia's militia forces remained on defense, with Indian war parties at large and active on the south bank, particularly in Fincastle County.

⁸⁶⁰ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book September 12, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (319), Col. William Fleming Journal, September 12, 1774, Virginia Papers Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (284); Col. William Christian to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Camp Union, September 18, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ10 (205); and Withers, 166.

⁸⁶¹ Letter (extract) from an (unnamed) Officer Late Under the Command of Lord Dunmore Against the Indians, dated Fort Augusta, November 21, 1774, [American Archives](#), 1: 1017-10718. Elk River Camp present Charleston, West Virginia.

The hard-pressed militia struggled to protect the lives and property of the backcountry inhabitants, although shortages of all classes of supply, especially ammunition, hampered effective reaction.⁸⁶² Fortunately, a convoy had just reached the Lower District headquarters carrying, among other stores, one and one-half pounds of much-needed gunpowder. In an effort to stretch the supply as far as possible, Campbell judiciously divided it and kept some in reserve for issue in an appropriate contingency.⁸⁶³

Like Augusta, Fincastle County recruited men as “Indian spies” to monitor the likely avenues of approach to the settled regions. Just as the militia companies found it difficult to muster adequate forces that could defend all the places that needed protection, the county had only a limited number of men for that service to observe or detect evidence of approaching war parties at the mountain passes, water gaps and trails. With no other option, some of the spies had two or more observation posts such a distance apart that it took several days for them to check them. Consequently, one pair of spies discovered footprints that revealed an enemy party had crossed the Sandy River heading toward Maiden Springs. The spies immediately headed for the settlement to alert the five soldiers of Captain Smith’s company who manned the small fort and sound the alarm to muster the local militia. With a two- or three-day head start over the spies, the Indians struck without warning.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶² Col. William Fleming Journal, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 (283-4); and, Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ146 (196-199).

⁸⁶³ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers Draper Manuscripts 3QQ109 (219-222).

⁸⁶⁴ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ98 (202-205).

Early in the morning on September 8, as his wife and three small children remained in bed, John Henry stood in the door of his home in the Clinch River area. Two Indians concealed in the nearby woods shot him. Although severely wounded, Henry ran into the woods hoping his assailants would pursue him instead of entering the house and harming his family. By chance, he met his neighbor “Old John Hamilton,” who concealed Henry in a thicket before running the four miles to Fort Christian to alert the militia. Stopping to check at the house on his way, Hamilton found no one present, and presumed the Indians had taken Henry’s family captive. Henry died of his wounds within a day without learning of their fate. Another neighbor, named Bradshaw, had meanwhile also fled from his farm after noticing some “Indian signs” in his cornfield. He met Hamilton, and the two men walked together toward Captain Smith’s Station. After going about three miles they came to a place where twelve to fifteen warriors – by their estimate – had evidently “Breakfasted” earlier in the day, and left some of their provisions behind when they departed. Hamilton and Bradshaw spread the alarm when they reached Rich Valley, at which several distressed inhabitants fled to Royal Oak or other defended communities.⁸⁶⁵ Indian raiders also struck on the North Fork of the Holston. About one mile from “the upper End of Campbell’s Choice” near the Clay Lick, warriors captured Samuel Lemmey, but the families of John and Archibald Buchanan narrowly escaped.⁸⁶⁶

In response Campbell ordered Captain Smith to send out patrols in the Clinch area, and for the three nearest companies on the Holston – Crockett’s, Herbert’s and the

⁸⁶⁵ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 9, 1774; and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ94 (192-195) and 3QQ98 (202-205).

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid.

“late Doack’s” – to muster all available men on September 10. He anticipated the raiders to follow their last blow by continuing to advance deeper into the settled areas, and striking all the homes, farms and other improvements in their path. The major also expected the warriors to stop and loot all the abandoned property in their path, which he viewed as a vulnerability that he intended to exploit. He therefore instructed the local commanders to have their men to turn out with their arms, and bring as much ammunition as possible and enough rations for an operation of several days’ duration. When the Holston men assembled, Campbell issued enough powder from the contingency stock he had set aside so that the soldiers – including those who brought none – had at least “3 loads apiece.”⁸⁶⁷ The major divided the Holston men into three units, and sent them by different routes to intercept Indian raiders.⁸⁶⁸

Three days later, about one half mile from Maiden Spring, three Indian warriors saw a lone white man approach. Unaware that their intended target was a member of one of Captain Smith’s patrols moving in extended order, they decided to kill and scalp him. The warriors opened fire from behind the cover of large trees, but missed. The soldier returned fire, hitting one of his assailants, then ran to rejoin his comrades. The wounded Indian fell to the ground a few steps from the tree. Although the brave bled profusely, which caused a “plug” to “burst out of the wound,” he somehow made his way about eighty yards to the refuge of a large pit or cave where he later died. The

⁸⁶⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ109 (219-222).

⁸⁶⁸ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 9, 1774, and, Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ94 (192-195) and 3QQ98 (202-205). List of Men in Captain Daniel Smith’s Company, muster rolls dated August 13 and 29, 1774, Tennessee Papers 5XX2, 5XX3 and 6XX16, respectively; also printed in Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck Virginia’s Colonial Soldiers (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1988), 154-155.

other two warriors fled while the soldiers, although spread out for about 300 yards, moved toward the sound of the gunfire and gave them “a good chase.” A few days later, a patrol went back to the area to find the dead man’s corpse. “Anxious to get his scalp,” the troops took ropes to lower one man down with “lights” to search the cave.⁸⁶⁹

Elsewhere, on the evening of September 13, some of Captain Smith’s scouts discovered the tracks of an enemy war party that had captured some prisoners and some horses from the settlements. Once informed, Smith led a twenty-one-man in pursuit. They moved quickly in an attempted to overtake warriors and rescue the captives. The Indians became aware they were being followed. Before the militiamen drew near, the raiders mounted the stolen horses and escaped with their prisoners.⁸⁷⁰

On September 17, Campbell reported to Preston on the action he had taken to counter the enemy attacks in that part of the county during the preceding week. He praised the conduct of the district’s militia in general. Most of them had willingly performed any service asked of them when called out, but a few men caused him concern. He therefore requested Colonel Preston’s guidance, as well as the authority to maintain good order and discipline among the soldiers guilty of misconduct. For example, he wanted to know how to best deal with “a few obstinate Wretches, that selfishly refuses Duty,” lest they set a bad example that others may follow at the next alarm.

⁸⁶⁹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ98 (202-205).

⁸⁷⁰ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ98 (202-205); Col. William Preston [extract] letter dated Fincastle, September 28, 1774, [American Archives](#), 1: 808.

Campbell also wanted to know how to proceed against those men who turned out, but were derelict in their duty or committed acts of misconduct while in service.⁸⁷¹

The latter category came to Campbell's attention after the members of one detachment behaved "indifferently" while on a mission. After they arrived at the scene where Indian raiders had wounded Henry, the men conducted only a cursory search for the invaders before they retired to Captain Smith's Station to get provisions from the magazine. They drew three days' rations, including bacon, on the pretense that they needed the food in order to sustain them on an extended patrol operation in which they would search for footprints and other signs of enemy activity in the surrounding country in order to prevent another raid. Instead of performing any service, much less this operation, they immediately started for home. As they made their way, they received the report that someone had discovered fresh signs of Indian activity nearby, but the homeward-bound troops refused to investigate. Although Campbell considered the men's "ill-Conduct" in forsaking their mission egregious enough, he viewed the deceptive acquisition of scarce provisions as having significantly added to the infraction. The misappropriation of the bacon vexed Campbell in particular, who explained that the magazine kept that item in reserve primarily to sustain the parties ordered out in the arduous pursuit of Indian raiders and for the spies who stayed at their posts for extended periods without the ability to acquire rations from local sources. Furthermore, with any meat – not only bacon – in short supply on the Clinch, the county had difficulty maintaining a sufficient ration

⁸⁷¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ98 (202-205).

for those who deserved them.⁸⁷² When rations constitute part of a soldier's pay, the offense equated to men receiving pay without having performed any service to earn it.

The insufficient supply of ammunition continued to threaten the effective defense of the settlements. The wasteful and reckless practice of shooting off ammunition without cause or to no useful purpose in which some incautious inhabitants indulged had exacerbated the problem. Campbell explained that although the garrisons had little on hand, if the county could spare one or two pounds more, he would divide it in the same sparing manner as he had before the alarm of September 10. The major assured the colonel that the soldiers of his command could then effectively respond to the next threat.⁸⁷³ If the shortage of gunpowder did not present enough of a problem, the major added that if not soon replenished, his district's magazine would soon run low on flour as well. Despite these challenges, the major confidently assured the county lieutenant that the soldiers of the district's militia would give a good account of themselves in action if the enemy dared to trouble the area's inhabitants again.⁸⁷⁴

As for the state of the garrisons, Major Campbell had recently inspected the defenses of settlements in his district. Ensign Hendly Moore and Sergeant John Duncan had fifteen men at Fort Christian, or Glade Hollow, twelve miles east of Fort Preston at Castle's Woods. Eighteen men served under Sergeant John Kingkead [or Kinkaid] at Elk Garden. Sergeant Robert Brown commanded five men at Maiden Spring. These numbers indicated that these forts all had their full complements. In contrast, Captain

⁸⁷² Ibid.

⁸⁷³ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ109 (219-222).

⁸⁷⁴ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 9, 1774, and Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 17, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ94 (192-195) and 3QQ98 (202-205).

Smith had chosen to fully garrison the station at Maxwell Mill last since no women and children took shelter there, and had expected the recent levies from New River and Reed Creek to arrive before long. Major Campbell therefore sent a patrol composed of some of the most reliable men to see how Captain Smith and the three men posted with himself and Ensign John Campbell fared at “Smith’s Upper Station” at Maxwell’s Mill. The place was sometimes also called Big Crab Orchard or Witten’s [Whitton’s] Fort, at the home of John Whitton.⁸⁷⁵

To help hurry the reinforcements, Campbell asked Preston to have Lieutenant Jeremiah Pierce, who commanded Captain Crockett’s administrative unit while the captain was away on the expedition, to send him fifteen men. He explained, “That Company that is covered by so thick a settlement as Reed Creek” could spare to detach them without significantly degrading the local defense. Likewise, he requested that the county lieutenant order the “upper settlements” on New River and Elk Creek, which had sent “few if any Men” on the expedition, to likewise muster detachments to aid those communities that were left less well-defended when their men answered the governor’s call to join the expedition. Doack’s company was likewise tasked to detach fifteen men. Before another week passed, twelve of them arrived, with two more expected a few days later, but the fifteenth, Campbell learned, “was an obstinate Gent that despises Authority,” and would therefore not turn out as ordered.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid. Thwaites and Kellogg DHDW 194n. The locations are in present Russell County, most in the vicinity of Castlewood, or in the case of Elk Garden, near Lebanon, Virginia.

Major Campbell explained to Colonel Preston that he frequently travelled about the district to distant localities in the county to acquire provisions for the soldiers on duty at the various stations and “stir up others” to honor their service obligations.

Campbell recommended that the county lieutenant consider increasing the numbers of men on active duty in the district for at least a few weeks, to help the “weakly guarded” lower settlements. Of these, Campbell also asked for additional men on full-time duty to also be posted at Royal Oak. When Captain John Wilson arrived with his and his company of levies from Pittsylvania County, Campbell urged Preston to immediately detach a “Subaltern’s Command” – fifteen to twenty-five men – to Maxwell Mill to reinforce Captain Smith’s weak garrison there. After he conceded that the additional men expected from several other Fincastle companies could probably not be raised, Campbell recommended that Preston deploy the rest of Wilson’s company of Pittsylvania County men on Reed Creek and in Rich Valley in order to protect and encourage the inhabitants to stay in their homes and save their crops.⁸⁷⁷

By Friday, September 23, reports from local militia officers indicated the situation in the Clinch and lower Holston settlements deteriorated when patrols and scouts discovered signs of a large enemy war party. Logan – the Mingo leader – and his raiders arrived in the vicinity of Fort Byrd, the fortified home of William Moore in Lower Castle’s Woods, where Lieutenant Daniel Boone commanded a twelve-man detachment. As they scouted for weaknesses in the settlement’s defenses, the marauders killed or seized and drove off several head of cattle and horses. Others

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.

surprised two black men working in the fields and took them prisoner before they could reach safety. The warriors then used the captives as bait by forcing them to run the gauntlet within sight of the fort in an attempt to draw the defenders into an ambush. Not strong enough to sally out to attempt a rescue with any prospect of success, the garrison stood helplessly by and watched the prisoners endure the ordeal.⁸⁷⁸

The John Roberts and his neighbors thought they had nothing to fear living near Kings Mill on Reedy Creek, a tributary of the Holston North Fork, and close to the Cherokee Line. No war parties from that nation had ever ventured or conducted raids there, and so the settlers believed that the very remoteness of the location afforded them enough security that they need not worry. The families therefore chose to not seek shelter in any of the nearby forts when they received the alarm. Focused on a possible incursion by Cherokee warriors, they had not counted on Logan and his war party coming across Moccasin Gap after they attacked William Moore's – Fort Byrd – on the Clinch River and approaching from a direction they did not expect. The folly of such a false sense of security became all too apparent when Logan's warriors attacked. Although his neighbors managed to escape, the Roberts family fell victim to a gruesome assault. The raiders took ten-year-old James captive, killed and scalped his parents and sisters, and left his younger brother "Scalped and Tomahawked," but alive. As they escaped with their trophies, the attackers most

⁸⁷⁸ Maj. Arthur Campbell to William Preston, letters dated September 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ104 and 3QQ105 (209-211); and Thwaites and Kellogg DHDW 85n, 209n. Kings Mill is located in present Sullivan County, Tennessee.

likely left the child behind because he appeared dead or dying, and therefore had no further value.⁸⁷⁹

The lad, however, had enough life in him to go for help. He started to run when he mistook an approaching militia patrol for another Indian raiding party, but stopped and rejoiced for his deliverance when he heard his uncle's voice calling his name. He ran to them and told the soldiers what had happened. Despite his young age and recent ordeal, boy spoke sensibly in response to questions, and led his uncle to the mutilated bodies of his murdered parents and sisters. The militiamen found a war club, with a message attached, near the corpses. The parchment bore a message dated July 24, 1774 from "Captain John Logan" to Captain Michael Cresap. In it, Logan asked, "What did you kill my people on Yellow Creek for [?]" It was the letter the Mingo leading warrior had dictated to William Robinson, the man he had taken prisoner near Prickett's Fort in June.⁸⁸⁰

In extending his revenge to the Roberts family, Logan and his war party had most recently killed and scalped the mother, father, and daughters, took one boy captive and left another for dead. It may be recalled that Carlisle merchant and Pennsylvania partisan John Montgomery had expressed his belief to Governor Penn that the Mingo leader had sated the vengeance for the murder of his relatives when he counted "Thirteen Scalps and one prisoner" in June. Now in September, Montgomery's prediction that Logan would then "sit Still" had not proven true. The commander of

⁸⁷⁹ Captain William Cocke to Inhabitants on the Frontier of Holston, circular letter dated September 25, 1774; Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letters dated Royal Oak, September 26 and October 3, 1774, William Preston Papers Draper Manuscripts 3QQ103 (208-209); 3QQ104 (209-211) and 3QQ111; Col. William Preston [extract] letter dated Fincastle, September 28, 1774, American Archives, 1: 808. Thwaites and Kellogg DHDW, 208n, 218n-219n.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

the patrol sent Logan's war club and message parchment up the chain of command to Major Campbell, who forwarded on to Colonel Preston on October 12.⁸⁸¹

In his report, Campbell described that the Roberts boy had received but one blow to the back of his head with a tomahawk. Although the weapon had cut through the child's skull, the major "believed his Brains is safe." With compassion and sympathy, the district commander sent for "an Old Man that has some Skill" to attend the young patient, and requested Preston to send a Doctor Lloyd, or at least some medicines, to treat the injury. Unfortunately, the boy did not survive long. Campbell reported that after "frequently lamenting 'he was not able to fight enough for to save his mammy'," the poor child passed away on October 6.⁸⁸²

Although local militia commander, Captain William Cocke, pledged to do his duty and everything in his power "to promote the Honour and Safety of this Frontier," he advised the inhabitants who had not yet fortified that they should not repeat the Roberts' error by placing their trust in the remote locations of their settlements to preserve them from harm. He urged them to erect a fort at a suitable place as near as possible to the line that separated the Virginia colony from Cherokee country so as to not yield "one foot of Ground" to the Indians. He warned that by abandoning and fleeing from their homes, they not only surrendered their property and means of support, but revealed their weakness and inability to resist to the invaders. The captain ordered his sergeant to deploy all available men in the company for the community's

⁸⁸¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, October 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ118 (244-245); and, John Montgomery to Gov. John Penn, letter dated Carlisle, June 30, 1774, Pennsylvania Colonial Archives, I: 6: 533-534.

⁸⁸² Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letters dated Royal Oak, October 3 and 6, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ111, and 3QQ116 (233); and, Thwaites and Kellogg DHDW, 218n-219n.

protection. In the meantime, he pledged to travel to South Carolina in order to recruit some volunteers to help them, and hoped Virginia's government would vote them recompense for their service.⁸⁸³

At the first sound of "hallooing, and the report of many guns were heard at several houses" at Kings Mill, an express rode off to Major Campbell's headquarters with the news of yet another attack. The series of frequent alarms and sightings of war parties had convinced many of Fincastle County's backcountry inhabitants that the Cherokees had indeed taken the warpath and committed the latest atrocities. Two traders, Archibald Taylor and a local man named Shoat, had recently returned from Cherokee county. Like other traders who frequently ventured into that nation's towns, Taylor and Shoat were greatly concerned when they saw that the Cherokees "appeared in a very bad temper." They testified to Major Campbell that during their stay they watched two war parties leave their towns, but confessed that they did not know whether the warriors intended to join forces with the Shawnee and their allies gathering on the Scioto or to attack Fincastle County settlements on their own.⁸⁸⁴

Bach in the settlements, since so many of the militia's best soldiers had gone on the expedition, the men who remained back for home defense responded to many alarms. To make matters worse, since the expedition required such a large quantity of what was available, the forces that remained had only a limited supply of gunpowder and lead. The settlers on Holston understandably experienced much anxiety because they

⁸⁸³ Captain William Cocke to Inhabitants on the Frontier of Holston, circular letter dated September 25, 1774, and Maj. Arthur Campbell to William Preston, letter dated September 26, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ103 (208-209) and 3QQ104 (209-211), respectively). Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW 208n.

⁸⁸⁴ Maj. Arthur Campbell to William Preston, letter dated September 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ104 (209-211).

knew that they had little to sustain them in a protracted fight. Major Campbell reflected their sentiment when he confided to Colonel Preston, “it would ruin us” if they had to engage the Cherokees in a war at that time. As the people of Kings Mill gathered to build a fort in which to make a stand, Campbell ordered Captain Cocke to take what men he could raise from his company to their support, and he would reinforce them as soon as Captain Wilson’s Pittsylvania County men arrived, as well as with whatever forces Colonel Preston could send their way.⁸⁸⁵

After he examined Taylor and Shoat more closely, Campbell determined that Shawnee and Mingo – not Cherokee – war parties were to blame for the recent attacks. The traders told the major that *Oconostota* had endeavored to remain peaceful with the English and most of his people wanted no part in the war. Furthermore, the chief pledged that while he had nothing to do with the decision of any of his nation’s warriors to fight against the Virginians, a strong faction among them favored the Shawnees. Campbell offered to forward a letter from Preston to *Oconostota*, which he suggested might help the chief “resume his authority” over some of the more impertinent warriors. Campbell also wrote to ask his friend Alexander Cameron, the Southern Indian Department’s deputy superintendent for that nation, to intercede. Even if the Cherokees decided to join the Shawnees on the warpath, negotiations might delay hostilities long enough to allow the Virginians time to better prepare their defenses.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸⁵ Ibid, and Col. William Preston [extract] letter dated Fincastle, September 28, 1774, [American Archives](#), 1: 808.

⁸⁸⁶ Maj. Arthur Campbell to William Preston, letter (addendum) dated September 26, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ104 (211-212). Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW 210n.

The defenders of the Clinch and Holston districts of Fincastle County began to experience frequent alarms and noticed increased signs of Indian activity even in “the very Heart of the Settlement.” Except for one man narrowly escaping capture on the South Fork, however, they had not actually seen warriors in force since the attacks on Reedy Creek earlier in the month. The reports led Major Campbell to believe most of the warriors seen moving about the settlements were only “Spies.” Despite the recent enemy activity, the major took some satisfaction that he had convinced the people not to flee from the settlements, and that the Cherokees had not perpetrated the attacks. He assured Preston that if the county lieutenant could send them more ammunition, they could defend the county even if they did have to fight the Cherokees and the Shawnees too.⁸⁸⁷

Lieutenant Boone sent Campbell a war club that differed markedly in appearance than the one left at Blackmore’s, and suggested “it is the Cherokees that is now annoying us.” Campbell preferred to believe that some of the Indians who had fled from Wakatomica in the wake of McDonald’s raid in August, including Logan, had “taken refuge” just beyond the settlements. He ventured that these refugees would willingly sew confusion and like nothing more than to see a misunderstanding arise between the Virginians and the old Cherokee chiefs who had thus far kept the peace. Campbell continued to believe the Cherokees had not committed the “mischief.” He not only had the war club and message that Logan left at the Roberts’ home, but

⁸⁸⁷ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 29, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ106-107 (216-219).

viewed the circumstances in which someone found Cherokee clubs and other signs as “suspicious.”⁸⁸⁸

Amid the turmoil, a gentleman from “Carolina” contacted Campbell with an interesting offer to bring fifty Catawba warriors who desired to be employed against the Shawnees. These warriors would be accompanied by “fifty prime white men” who wished to come and assist “their Neighbours” the Virginians. Before giving the Carolina gentleman an answer, Campbell consulted Preston. He recommended that the best way they could use such volunteers was to have them march through Cumberland Gap to the Ohio where they could act as scouts against the Shawnees during the coming winter. Campbell heard nothing more of the offer from the Carolina gentlemen. However, he then confided a thought to Preston. In the event that war with the Cherokees appeared likely, he proposed stationing one company at or near the Great Island on Holston. Control of that feature would offer the Virginians a decided advantage in the event of such a contingency.⁸⁸⁹

Defending the frontier had become more complicated since the recent series of attacks. The companies on the Holston felt that they faced as much danger as those on the Clinch, which made them reluctant to go to their neighbors’ aid at the expense of their own families’ protection. Meanwhile, the defenses at Blackmore’s and the Head of Clinch were stretched thin and with ammunition in such short supply that neither Captain Looney’s nor Captain Smith’s companies could effectively pursue an

⁸⁸⁸ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letters dated Royal Oak, September 29 and October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ106-107 (216-219) and 3QQ109 (219-222,), respectively.

⁸⁸⁹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, September 29, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ106-107 (216-219).

enemy force of a dozen or more warriors. With his men unhappy with their lodgings, Captain Wilson told Major Campbell that they would rather have had Colonel Preston station them in the woods. As a remedy, Campbell suggested the colonel might better employ them toward the Head of Blue Stone on the Clinch. There they could effectively defend the frontier as well the Reed Creek settlement as they presently did. The major reported that the middle stations on Clinch remained strong, but except when employed in small ranging operations, the inhabitants feared leaving the protection of the forts to tend the crops in their fields. And while Boone conducted an active defense of the Castle's Woods area for which he had responsibility, the spies who operated out of the post at Blackmore's had lately become remiss in reporting of signs of the enemy. Despite these concerns, Major Campbell remained confident that the district's ability to guard the inhabitants until the expedition returned.⁸⁹⁰

During the period between sunset and darkness on Thursday evening, September 29, Indian raiders fired at three men near Fort Christian on the Clinch, where Ensign Hendly Moore commanded. In the exchange, the warriors killed and scalped Sergeant John Duncan within 300 yards of the post. As soon they heard the gunfire, the men of the garrison mustered a small detachment that marched out to engage the invaders. The Indians immediately "ran off," and the soldiers pursued them until it became too dark. The ensign sent an express explaining the situation to Campbell early the next morning. As Lieutenant Boone prepared to lead a patrol from Fort Byrd – also called Moore's Fort – in search of any enemy in the area of his station

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid.

when he received an express from Blackmore's Fort. After reading its contents, the lieutenant relayed the report that detailed the increased enemy activity in the area around Stony Creek and lower Clinch River area during the preceding week. Captain Looney, able to muster only eleven men from his company at that time, reluctantly reported to Campbell that he could neither range in search of the warriors who had raided Fort Christian nor investigate the new enemy activity.⁸⁹¹

Wheeling

In late September the period of relative calm that had lasted along the Monongahela and its tributaries since July came to an end. War parties returned, and the inhabitants in that part of Augusta County once again experienced the ravages of Indian warfare. One group of warriors murdered a man and his wife and took several neighbors prisoner in the Ten Mile Creek area on the morning of September 28. Another raiding party moved in the vicinity of Prickett's Fort. When they heard cow bells, the Indians took position along the side of a trail and waited in ambush. When Josiah Prickett and Mrs. Susan Ox drove some cows in toward the post for milking, the braves killed and scalped him and took her captive.⁸⁹²

As Lord Dunmore conducted his diplomatic efforts at Pittsburgh, Major William Crawford ordered his men to break their camp near Redstone. On September 20 his 500-man division of the Right Wing marched overland to Wheeling with a train of 50 packhorses and herd of 200 head of cattle. When his men reached Fort Fincastle, Major Crawford allowed them only a short respite before they prepared for the next

⁸⁹¹ Maj. Arthur Campbell to Col. William Preston, letter dated Royal Oak, October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ109 (219-222).

⁸⁹² Withers, 161.

phase of the expedition. His brother, commissary Augustine Crawford, supervised the magazine established at Fort Fincastle. Those he supervised would remain to forward provisions and supplies as the division advanced.⁸⁹³

Lord Dunmore arrived on September 30 after travelling the ninety miles downstream from Pittsburgh. With the union of Crawford's division and the main body, the men who had been detached to garrison Fort Fincastle since August rejoined their companies. As it encamped about Wheeling, the strength of the Right Wing of Dunmore's army stood at about 1,200 men. The governor then learned about the recent raids on the Monongahela communities. The news could not have come at a worse time. Commissary officer Augustine Crawford noted that it "alarmed his Lordship, much as the Indians had been peaceable [in the area] for some time, and some of the defiant nations had met him at Fort Dunmore" for optimistic negotiations about avoiding war. The governor still expected Cornstalk and the Shawnee leaders to meet him near the mouth of the Hockhocking, but prospects for peace had dimmed in spite of the optimism expressed when the council concluded at Pittsburgh.

Crawford probably expressed the feelings of many when he wrote, "We were in hopes of a peace being concluded between his Lordship and the Indians," but in the wake of the recent raids on the Monongahela, he doubted it would happen. If the governor could effect a resolution of differences with the Indians, the commissary officer believed that the Virginians could then relieve "the poor distressed

⁸⁹³ Maj. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Stewart's Crossing, September 20, 1774, Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters 52-53 and 97-99, respectively.

Bostonians,” referring to a widely circulated but unfounded rumor that General Gage had attacked the city with artillery.⁸⁹⁴

Early on the morning of October 2, while the drums and fifes of most of the corps encamped around Wheeling sounded *Reveille*, the musicians of Major Crawford’s division beat the *General*. On hearing the signal, the men packed their individual loads and unit baggage, packhorse men loaded cargo on their charges, and the cattle drivers gathered the herd. When they heard *Assembly*, the captains formed their companies and took their places. When his subordinate notified him that they all were ready, Crawford saluted the governor and gave the order. The musicians sounded the *March*, and the column moved forward along the south bank of the Ohio. Following a plan similar to that of the Left Wing, Crawford’s division, like that of Colonel Charles Lewis, would establish a forward support base at the mouth of Hockhocking Creek, where it would await the main body before continuing its advance against the enemy.⁸⁹⁵ According to the change of plan the governor communicated to Colonel Andrew Lewis from Old Town, Maryland, on August 30, Crawford expected to meet the Left Wing marching up from the Great Kanawha when he arrived, or shortly thereafter.

When Crawford’s division arrived near the mouth of the Little Kanawha – on about September 4 – after a march of 107 miles, and prepared to cross the Ohio, which the

⁸⁹⁴ Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 97-99.

⁸⁹⁵ Maj. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Stewart’s Crossing, September 20, 1774, Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 52-53, and 97-99, respectively; and Withers, 179n. Present Parkersburg, West Virginia, is at the mouth of the Little Kanawha River. Present Hockingport, Ohio, is at the mouth of the Hocking River.

terms of the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix defined as the boundary between the Virginia colony and the land reserved to the Indians. When all was ready, Crawford gave the order. Boatmen ferried the soldiers across the river on rafts and canoes, as the horses and cattle swam alongside. Once they landed on the north bank, scouts went forward along the intended route, officers reformed their companies and posted security, and the cattle and packhorse drivers arranged their animals for the next leg of the march. When the captains indicated their units were ready, the division continued its advance, now moving along the north bank to the mouth of Hockhocking Creek “where the whole of the troops [the Left and Right Wings] are to rendezvous.”⁸⁹⁶ When they arrived, Crawford’s men did not encounter any troops from the left Wing, nor did his scouts report seeing any signs of them.

As the spearhead of an invading army, except for McDonald’s raid that summer, the Virginians found themselves in enemy country for the first time since the start of hostilities, and acted accordingly. They dutifully took the necessary precautions according to the doctrine contained in Humphrey Bland’s Treatise on Military Discipline and that experience had taught them. The division mounted the necessary guard force, with the concomitant picket posts and local patrols. Those soldiers not assigned to guard duty began clearing land and felling trees in order “to build a stockade fort, or large block-house” located – as Crawford noted from having surveyed the tract – just across the Ohio from some “bottom land” owned by George Washington. When completed, the post constituted the first fortified forward supply base on the north bank of the Ohio. Back at Wheeling, Sergeant Ebenezer Zane

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

assumed command of the detachment that remained to garrison Fort Fincastle and guard the magazine operated by commissary officer Augustine Crawford. That post therefore became important as the last link on the south bank in the logistical chain that conducted supplies and provisions to the Right Wing, and the entire army after the planned junction with Colonel Andrew Lewis' command, in its protected advance into hostile territory.⁸⁹⁷

With its 700 men embarked aboard a flotilla of canoes, pirogues and keelboats, Lord Dunmore gave Colonel Adam Stephen the command to advance – on about October 2. The main body of the Right Wing began its movement down the Ohio from Wheeling to the mouth of the Hockhocking. After the boatmen banked the watercraft and the troops disembarked, Dunmore had the entire wing present to wait on the arrival of Colonel Lewis' wing to join him, and Cornstalk's delegation to resume negotiations. As Colonel Stephen assumed command – on about October 5 – of the encampment, the newly arrived soldiers assumed their share of camp duties, including security, and assisted Crawford's men in building the storehouse and fortifications. Dunmore named the post Fort Gower in honor of the Lord President of the Privy Council, Granville Leveson-Gower, second Earl Gower – Lady Charlotte Dunmore's brother-in-law and the governor's political sponsor.⁸⁹⁸ He then sent three scouts – Sam Kenton, Simon Girty, and Peter Parchment – by canoe to Point Pleasant with orders for Lewis to march to the place of rendezvous without delay.⁸⁹⁹ When

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁹ Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters 97-99; Jacob, 72; and, Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261; and Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 285n.

they found the Left Wing had not yet reached the mouth of the Kanawha, the trio deposited the written orders in a hollow tree, along with an “advertisement,” or sign, posted nearby telling Lewis’ men of its presence, before they returned to Fort Gower.

Camp Union

As the events on the Ohio transpired, Colonel Andrew Lewis planned to march to the Elk River with the main body of the Left Wing, the Botetourt County and two companies from the Fincastle County lines, approximately 600 men, on Monday, September 12. In addition to the companies of Russell and Shelby, Colonel Lewis ordered Christian to detach some of his men – not drawn from the aforementioned companies – to Fleming’s command for driving horses and cattle and to “work at [building] Canoes” at Elk River. Private Joseph Duncan of Captain Crockett’s Fincastle County company, for example, was appointed as a driver of cattle “to guard the Beeves” during the march to the Ohio. Since the detail reduced the number of Fincastle County soldiers at Camp Union to just a few more than 100, Christian requested Preston to “send about 100 rank & file men if they can be got with Convenience,” and without detriment to those garrisons in the forts or units patrolling the frontier. While some officers believed the frontiers would be in less danger after the army marched, owing to the Indian war parties leaving to guard their own homes, most had confidence that Preston would not leave the people unguarded.⁹⁰⁰

⁹⁰⁰ Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, and Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ93 and 3QQ146 (196-199, 190-192), respectively; and, Joseph Duncan pension application S1809, dated September 14, 1832, Roll 864.

Although disappointed that he would lead the last element to march, and have responsibility to convoy the last major supply train, Colonel Christian nonetheless worked tirelessly to prepare the next, as well as his own, division for the march. He wrote to Colonel Preston and requested that he “hurry on Majr. Robertson & the men” to Camp Union. Although most of the county’s contingent would bring up the rear, he wanted to leave no one behind and urged that they go on together, and try to overtake the rest of the army at the mouth of the Elk, or at the mouth of the Kanawha by the latest. Christian wanted neither to cross the Ohio much behind the main body, nor “miss lending our Assistance” to the army in an engagement. Since Christian assumed any additional Fincastle men will have a good number of pack horses but only a little flour, he requested they come quick. Although no beeves remained at camp after the Advanced Body departed, Christian expected more to arrive soon through the efforts of Major Posey and his department. Major Matthews, for example, had to bring another 160,000 weight of beef on the hoof. Of the fifty-four head of cattle expected to go with Colonel Fleming’s division, only twenty-six were on hand in camp, and with the rest on the way.⁹⁰¹

More troops had mustered to join the expedition than was expected. Consequently, the quartermasters and commissary officers realized that they had not acquired sufficient stocks of supplies or enough provisions to support the force at hand. To remedy the situation, Colonel Lewis notified Colonel Preston and those who commanded the rear detachments in Augusta and Botetourt Counties of a plan for effectively employing the surplus manpower and reduce the rate of consuming rations

⁹⁰¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ92 (185-189).

that had been gathered for the expeditionary force. Expecting a total as many as 1,490 men, on September 10, Lewis ordered the captains of the units scheduled to march on September 12 to inspect and report on the physical condition and health of their men by the end of the day. After they identified them, the colonel proposed posting those “not fully fit to undergo the fatigue of the Expedition” to garrison the small forts. This measure ensured that the colony gainfully employed the men taken into pay, improved the defenses of the communities served by those forts, and issued the soldiers stationed there rations from the stores acquired for the subsistence of the garrisons.⁹⁰²

Later in the evening, according to Colonel Fleming, one of the spies came in from Gauley Mountain with some new intelligence. On Tuesday the sixth he had observed a war party of five Indians returning toward Indian country from the direction of the settlements with three horses. In the morning three days later, he saw another three warriors heading toward the settled areas. The officers expressed their concern that “Somebody would be killed,” since the inhabitants of the neighborhood tended to be travel carelessly about. Colonel Christian, however, suggested that the Indians the spies had observed had mainly come only to watch the motions of the army. Regardless of what motives brought the warriors through there, Fleming and his

⁹⁰² Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book / journal entry September 9, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (317-318); and, Col. Andrew Lewis to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union on the Great Levels, September 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ93 (190-192).

fellow officers agreed that the enemy closely watched the movements and activities of the army.⁹⁰³

On Sunday, the Fincastle contingent took over the remaining camp duties and the main guard in order to allow the Botetourt companies, and the others attached to them, to complete their preparations for marching. The order went to the troops from Botetourt, Captain Thomas Buford's company of riflemen from Bedford, and Captains Shelby's and Russell's companies from Fincastle Counties, to "hold themselves in Readiness to move on the Shortest Notice." Orders also directed each captain to inspect and examine and report the status of the ammunition distributed in their companies. The staff officers set to their tasks as well. Majors Posey and Ingles had to "have all the packhorses loaded as early as possible." Ingles therefore reported on the number of packhorses in camp, excluding those of the Fincastle line, and had "the brigade under his care" loaded with all the ammunition. The Main Body's commissary officer, Captain Charles Simms, inventoried and reported on the quantity of salt and other provisions, as his assistant conductors fixed all the tools not already issued to the companies to pack saddles for loading. Despite the flurry of activity in camp, officers and men made time for the "Divine Service to begin at 12 o'clock" noon.⁹⁰⁴

The *General*, the signal for the troops to prepare to march, beat for the Main Body at daybreak – in lieu of *Reveille* – on September 12. After the musicians beat the

⁹⁰³ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ146 (196-199); and Col. William Fleming, Journal, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (283-4).

⁹⁰⁴ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book, September 9-11, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (317-319).

March, Fleming, accompanied by Andrew Lewis, led his division out of Camp Union. The first day's march took the troops, packhorses and cattle seven miles to Camp Pleasant, its next stop on the way to Elk Creek. After the marching men had halted for the day, a man entered camp with a message for Colonel Andrew Lewis from his brother Charles. It informed him that the company from Culpepper County that left Camp Union with Colonel Field in command had caught up with the Advance Party on Sunday night after an encounter with the enemy that left one soldier and one Indian dead.⁹⁰⁵

When the division broke camp on Buffalo Creek on the fourth day of the march, Colonel thought it necessary to warn the men that they had entered onto "ground much frequented by the Enemy." He also found it necessary to have the captains repeat the order that forbade the unauthorized firing of weapons to their companies. Not only a matter of preventing the waste of ammunition, since the enemy could be present, it had also become a matter of life and death. Fleming told the captains, however disagreeable it may be to stigmatize a man, he instructed them to announce to their companies that any soldier who fired his gun without first obtaining permission would be considered disobedient and treated accordingly by his comrades. If the shooter fired against an enemy, however, the admonition did not apply since the sound of gunfire served as an alarm for the division that someone had sighted or engaged the enemy.⁹⁰⁶

⁹⁰⁵ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ146 (196-199); and Col. William Fleming, Journal, September 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (283-4).

⁹⁰⁶ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book September 15, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (321).

With Colonels Andrew Lewis and Fleming gone, Christian assumed command of Camp Union until his division marched to Elk River. The Rear Body included the last of the Fincastle County contingent and some Culpepper men, plus the Augusta men ordered to remain behind to wait for the county's packhorses that went with the Advance Body to return for new loads. Major Posey went to Staunton to "hurry out all the flour possible" before the end of the week, while several soldiers were employed to assist the drovers in gathering the beeves scattered around camp. The quartermaster had forwarded about "72,000wt" of flour with the first two march units, leaving about 8,000 in camp, with 130 horse-loads expected to arrive in camp by the next evening, another 96 loads at Warm Springs waiting for transport to the Great Levels, and an additional "between 20 and 30,000 wt beyond the Springs."⁹⁰⁷

Christian planned to march by the following Monday, September 19, with all the supplies that can be obtained in one or two days so that his division reach the mouth of the Kanawha and cross the Ohio with the rest of the army. He still waited for Major Robertson and the rest of the Fincastle contingent to arrive Sunday or Monday, in enough time to march, and hoped that he would endeavor to get some more beeves on the way, and perhaps provide thirty more. Although Colonel Lewis had mentioned Robertson as the best officer to leave with in command of a detachment to "take on what Provisions" he could not get ready by the time he marched, Christian wanted the major with him on the expedition.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁷ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ146 (196-199).

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid.

As the division prepared for the campaign, Christian complained that by the time the Fincastle companies had arrived at the rendezvous, the camp equipment in most need, kettles and tents, had mostly been distributed to the other contingents. This left only sixteen or seventeen battered tin kettles and only a few tents for all his county's units. The quartermaster assured him on Monday, September 12, that he had ordered the enough linen to make the necessary tents to be brought with packhorses expected to arrive the next day. By the end of the week, Captain Floyd expressed his confidence that his men would "make out pretty well" in receiving enough kettles and the allowed sixty yards of tent cloth for a company. Christian meanwhile wrote Preston for Robertson "to send over that whole Country and try to buy beg or borrow kettles" before he marched for the rendezvous – if he had not yet left. The lack of such a simple item threatened the health of the troops. He explained that to do without kettles "is very hard, almost impossible," because men would become ill if forced to subsist on roasted meat without broth.⁹⁰⁹

Back in Fincastle County, as he prepared to leave Woods' Fort for Camp Union, Major Robertson reported to Colonel Preston that he had collected some "Beeves and Cattles" at Rich Creek. He and Captain Michael Woods had combined their two understrength units into one company of fifty-five men. The number included some men of the Woods' Fort garrison willing to enlist again once discharged from their current terms, which Robertson gladly obliged. When six of Woods' drafted men refused to go, they appealed to Preston to try and get off and not face a court martial.

⁹⁰⁹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, September 12, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ146 (196-199); and, Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter (fragments) dated September 18, 1774, Draper's Notes 33S42, 43 (206-208).

Robertson and Woods requested that the county lieutenant “not Countenance any of them.” Since two of the men had previously served as scouts, Woods threatened to withhold their pay certificates, and told them their stopped pay would satisfy their fines for not marching. Despite the controversy, an elated Robertson expressed his gratitude to all of the good friends who assisted him in raising enough men to complete his company to full strength, a task he “thought merely Impossible to do” a short time ago.⁹¹⁰

With Robertson at last heading toward the Great Levels with additional men and cattle, Colonel Christian decided to remain at Camp Union until Monday or Tuesday, September 25 or 26, when he led a large convoy of provisions and about 220 men. On Friday, the colonel issued orders for the division to prepare to march on short notice, captains to recall all their men from out in the neighborhood back to camp by Saturday evening, and have their companies ready for marching. The army had no horses to spare, and Acting Ensign (Sergeant) James Newell of Captain James Herbert’s company noted that Christian allowed each captain to have three packhorses, and no more for himself and company, to carry all personal baggage and camp equipment. The orders directed the packhorse masters to have the road made completed if possible, their animals supplied with hobbles and breastplates for their saddles, and ready to start off by Sunday evening. The drivers of cattle received

⁹¹⁰ Maj. James Robertson, Captain Michael Woods and Maj. James Robertson to Col. William Preston, letters dated Rich Creek, September 15 and 16, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ96 and 3QQ97 (199-201), respectively.

similar instructions. Finally, the colonel forbade gambling in camp until further notice.⁹¹¹

The *General* beat at daybreak on Tuesday, September 26, for the men scheduled to march, and they completed their final preparations. After a late start, Colonel Christian led the Rear Party on the first three miles of its route in the direction of Elk Creek before it halted for the evening. According to Captain John Floyd, Christian expected that Dunmore would make peace with the Indians before any serious fighting occurred, or certainly before a significant proportion of the Fincastle County contingent reached the Ohio.⁹¹²

Captain Anthony Bledsoe, quartermaster of the Fincastle County expeditionary contingent, assumed command of Camp Union and the small stay-behind detachment. His command included the soldiers of his own company, plus a few stragglers and the sick from several units. Christian had instructed him to wait until the six brigades of packhorses that accompanied the Advance Party returned from Elk Creek, which he expected at any day, and follow. In the meantime, Bledsoe saw that the men prepared supplies for loading as soon as the pack animals returned and had sufficient rest. However, of “two hundred fifty Loads” that did not arrive at Camp Union as expected, 150 had yet to leave Staunton, with the last 100 still waiting at Warm Springs. To further complicate matters, Major Sampson Matthews sent word to inform Bledsoe that he had the supplies waiting in Staunton, but with no means of

⁹¹¹ Col. William Christian to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Camp Union, September 18, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ10 (205); and, Sergeant James Newell, Journal September 23, 1774, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 327n.

⁹¹² Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated September 28, 1774, Draper’s Notes 33S43, 44 (214-215).

transporting them to Camp Union, he was obliged to wait for the pack train to return and certainly cause further delay.⁹¹³

The packhorses returned to the Great Levels late on Friday, September 30. With the animals' condition "so much Worsted," however, they could not go to Staunton and Warm Springs for their next loads without first three days of rest. To add to his burden, Bledsoe complained that he needed a hospital and a doctor to care for all the sick from the whole regiment remaining at Camp Union. Finally, his departure for the Elk much delayed by having to collect the supplies at Warm Springs and Staunton, Bledsoe confessed to Preston, "I Judge every person finds the Expedition more tedious than it was generally expected."⁹¹⁴

Camp at Elk River

On Wednesday, September 21, after a march of 108 miles in 16 days, the troops of Colonel Charles Lewis' division arrived at Elk River, where the elder Colonel Lewis intended to build a fortified magazine. The troops established the encampment about one mile upstream from the mouth, where the Elk flows into New River. To get there, the route had taken them to the banks of New River just below the falls, and passed near the ruins of Walter Kelly's farm, the scene of Colonel Field's harrowing ordeal in July.⁹¹⁵

⁹¹³ Capt. Anthony Bledsoe to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union, October 1, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ108 (222-224).

⁹¹⁴ Ibid.

⁹¹⁵ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp Union at the Great Levels, September 7, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ92 (185-189); Col. William Fleming Journal and Orderly Book, September 23, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 and 2ZZ72 (284, 327), respectively. The site of the Camp at Elk Creek camp is near present Charleston, West Virginia.

Colonel Fleming's division, accompanied by Colonel Andrew Lewis, arrived two days later after marching the same distance in twelve days. Following roll call, the combined "returns," or strength reports, showed that the body of troops encamped on Elk River had 977 officers and men present, with 945 fit for duty. With the two divisions joined, Colonel Lewis planned to march for the mouth of the Kanawha on October 1. To execute the plan, the men of the Left Wing had much to, not the least of which was the necessity to secure the encampment from surprise attack from marauding Indians. The next day's order required fifty rank and file with the proper complement of officers and non-commissioned officers for the main guard, as well as the picket guards from each line. To accomplish some of the important tasks required to progress to the next phase of the campaign, commanders reported the number of artificers in the respective corps that are willing to work making canoes and other the other work necessary, and quartermasters put all the tools put in working order.⁹¹⁶

With the beating of *Reveille* on Saturday morning the army fell into a familiar routine of military activity in camp. The main and picket guards established local security for the encampment, and Colonel Andrew Lewis, the Southern Division, or Left Wing, commander, ordered out three different scouts, or small patrols, to determine the extent of enemy activity in the area. One ranged up Elk River, another scouted the right bank of New River and the other reconnoitered the left bank to the mouth of Coal [or Cole] River. Since Governor Dunmore's original campaign plan intended for both wings to rendezvous at the mouth of the Kanawha, Colonel Lewis instructed a scouting party to descend the river by canoe to Point Pleasant. On arriving, they were

⁹¹⁶ Col. William Fleming Journal, September 24-30, 1774; and Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book September 23-30, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (284-285) and 2ZZ72 (327-333).

to wait on his Lordship and the arrival of the “Troops from the Northward.” Because they first had to mend a split in the hull of their canoe, they did not get underway until Sunday.⁹¹⁷

Soldiers not posted to guard duty or sent on missions performed fatigue duties. Details helped the packhorse men unload cargo and had the flour and gunpowder lodged in the magazine built for that purpose. Major Ingles had three brigades of recently unburdened packhorses sent back to Camp Union for more flour, and had those kept for the main body, as well as the cattle, turned out to graze. Other fatigue parties chopped wood or erected breastworks to fortify the magazine for when the army marched. The artificers, such as carpenters, masons and shipwrights, went to work building the storehouse and canoes. One board of officers impaneled as a court martial convened to determine if a case of misconduct warranted a trial. Another board of officer met to set bill of prices, or rated each variety of liquor peddled in camp to ensure the sutlers did not gouge the soldiers.⁹¹⁸

The scouts who headed toward Coal River followed a trail on the left bank of the New for several hours until they left the path to encamp for the night. Early in the morning they discovered the hoof prints left by “3 horses, one of them shod, & two moccasin tracks” on the path about four miles from the Elk River encampment. The lead scout sent Private James Mooney – of Arbuckle’s company – back to report to Colonel Fleming as the rest of the patrol proceeded on toward the Coal. Before returning to camp, the scouts discovered a recently abandoned campsite. The signs

⁹¹⁷ Ibid. The mouth of the Coal River is near present St. Albans, West Virginia.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid.

indicated an estimated fifteen warriors headed upstream in the direction of the New. Fleming believed the first sighting to be a four or five-man party returning home from a raid with three captured horses, which did not present a threat. Believing the second report indicated the presence of a dangerous war party, Fleming sent Captain Arbuckle out with a fifty-man company in an effort to intercept them.⁹¹⁹

The army used the halt at Elk River to advantage. The men and packhorses got a much-needed rest and chance to recuperate from minor injuries sustained on the difficult march through rugged terrain. Officers and non-commissioned officers took remedial action for some minor acts of misconduct, as some stragglers and deserters who rethought their decisions rejoined their units. Despite the prohibition and consequences concerning the unauthorized discharging of their firearms already posted on September 15, Colonel Fleming ordered the captains to read their companies an even sterner warning. Immediately after *Reveille* at daybreak on the morning of September 27, each company commander assembled and stood at the head of his men and read the final warning. They announced that anyone who continued to disregard the order may rest assured that an officer with a party of men would be ordered out to apprehend and confine them. The captains then inspected arms and ammunition, identified those who are deficient in the amount of gunpowder issued at Camp Union, and added their names to the list of heavy fatigue duties. Due to recent rains, the colonel also ordered the officers to inspect their men's arms for wet cartridges, and if necessary, send them to the armorer in order to un-breech and

⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

clear their weapons. With several days in place, the armorer had the time to make mechanical repairs, giving priority to fixing defective gunlocks.⁹²⁰

Private James Fowler of Russell's company returned from the scout sent to the mouth of the Kanawha on Thursday, September 29. As he and two companions paddled down the river one night, they saw some suspected Indian fires on the right bank about fifteen miles upstream from its confluence with the Ohio. When they approached for a closer look the scouts made some noise, at which time whoever tended the fires extinguished them. They banked the canoe and disembarked. Later, two of the men proceed on foot to reconnoiter Point Pleasant. They sent Fowler back to Elk River in the canoe to report on what they had seen so far, and tell the colonel they would meet him on the march. On his return trip, Fowler paddled close to the left bank and "spied five Indians with three horses" going toward the Indian towns – likely the same party Mooney had reported.⁹²¹

With the army ready to march, the officers left nothing to chance. To prevent any confusion arising in camp by "the Sutlers retailing of Liquors in such Quantities & so frequently as to make many of the troops drunk," Colonel Lewis deemed it necessary to limit the sale of alcohol to that allowed by the orders of the respective captains in their own camps. The colonel further forbade the sutlers from bringing any more

⁹²⁰ Ibid.

⁹²¹ Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Mouth of Elk River, September 27, 1774; Col. William Fleming Journal, September 24-30, 1774; and Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book, September 23-30, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ5 (212-214) and 2ZZ71 (284-285) and 2ZZ72 (327-333).

liquor supplies into camp until further notice, which restricted sales to that which they already had on hand.⁹²²

With the date to march approaching, the pace of preparations quickened. Colonel Fleming noted that “Men have been employed in making canoes since we came here.” By Thursday evening the shipwrights had eighteen large ones ready to receive their cargo with all possible speed. They needed crews, and the next day the call went out to muster a sufficient number of troops most accustomed to working canoes. The packhorse masters had their men gather and drive their animals to camp, reported the number fit for service, and held them ready for the call to load. Similarly, the cattle drivers gathered their charges to graze and posted grass guards to prevent their wandering off again, and to have them ready in the morning as early as possible. Captains inspected their men, arms, and ammunition as they went through the familiar process of preparing their companies to march, and the commissary and his assistants issued each soldier provisions for two days.⁹²³

The *General* did not beat at daybreak as planned on September 30. A hard rain delayed the expedition and the amended order of the day directed the posted guard to continue as usual. The men, horses and beeves waited for a break in the weather to cross the one hundred-yard expanse of river. Another ford lay about one and a half miles above the camp, but the state of the river offered little advantage to crossing there. Although the rain continued, the order came for the infantry to cross, march down the opposite bank of the Elk toward its mouth, and encamp for the night. After

⁹²² Col. William Fleming Journal, September 24-30, 1774; and Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book September 23-30, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (284-285) and 2ZZ72 (327-333).

⁹²³ Ibid, and Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Mouth of Elk River, September 27, 1774; Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ5 (212-214).

they arrived, the commissary issued each soldier provisions for two more days. Back at the magazine, the boatman fixed their loads to the “best Advantage,” ready to embark in the morning.⁹²⁴

As September drew to a close and October began, despite it had experienced with recruiting men and acquiring supplies, Dunmore’s Virginia army was in motion. The Right Wing, or Northern Division, had established one magazine at Wheeling and descended the Ohio to the mouth of Hockhocking Creek where it built another. The Left Wing, or Southern Division, commanded by Colonel Andrew Lewis, had begun its march to the Ohio as well. After establishing a magazine at Elk River, two of Lewis’ three divisions began their march along the Kanawha to Point Pleasant. Kept under observation by Indian scouts, Cornstalk’s army of Shawnees and their allies prepared to meet the invaders.

⁹²⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 11: A Hard Fought Battle

– The Battle of Point Pleasant

In keeping open the offer he made at the end of the council held at Pittsburgh, Dunmore waited for Cornstalk and a delegation of Shawnee chiefs to meet for one last attempt to prevent war. As the calendar turned from September to October, winter would soon bring the campaign season to an end. Time therefore was of the essence for resolution, either diplomatic or military. The governor had yet to hear from Colonel Andrew Lewis, and therefore did not know when the two wings of the army would join to execute the planned invasion of Shawnee country if the final attempt for a negotiated settlement failed. The news of recent Indian raids on the settlements seemed to indicate the conflict would continue until the Virginians took decisive action. With time running out, Lord Dunmore faced a situation that offered little cause for optimism.

Chillicothe

On or about October 7, Cornstalk called a council of war with the Shawnee military chiefs, leading warriors, and the “captains” of the allied warrior bands. He had received accurate and timely intelligence from a variety of sources, which he could use in developing a plan of action. The scouts who had watched Colonel Lewis’ command ever since it assembled at Camp Union and hovered on the flanks of each marching division, now had the camp at Point Pleasant under observation. War parties returned from raids against the settlements along the Monongahela and elsewhere in Augusta County, as well Pennsylvania traders from Kittanning, brought information on the Right Wing’s movements and the camp established at the mouth of the Hockhocking.

All that he had heard made Cornstalk aware of the situation he now faced. He knew that Dunmore’s army would enjoy a three to one numerical advantage over his when the two divisions joined forces. As good their warriors were in individual combat, the armies of the various Indian nations suffered from a general strategic and logistical weakness in the ability and capacity to conduct lengthy campaigns or endure long battles of attrition. The *petite guerre*, or guerrilla war, offered the American Indian nations the best chance of martial success. They therefore used the same methods of warfare against European enemies that they had traditionally employed against other native opponents. American Indians had come to realize that they could prevail in conflicts of short duration if they achieved quick yet stunning victories. Indian forces therefore aggressively took the offensive and fought brutal battles of annihilation when presented with a reasonable chance of winning. Seizing

or holding ground did not figure in tactical planning or constitute a measure of success. Indian warriors therefore fought primarily to inflict heavy casualties on their opponents, and thereby demoralize their opponent.⁹²⁵

An astute commander, Cornstalk knew it would take the Virginians several days before they could unite their separated forces. He therefore proposed a bold plan, risky yet tactically sound, to attack with his concentrated strength while the Virginians' were still divided. Doing so allowed his forces to fight each enemy wing separately on nearly equal terms and defeat them in detail. It combined the advantages inherent in offensive action as well as what military planners call interior lines, with the element of surprise to multiply the combat power of his army beyond the number of its warriors. If the Shawnees and their allies destroyed one wing of the Virginia army at the mouth of the Great Kanawha, they could then move to attack the other as it advanced along the Hockhocking before it threatened the Shawnee and Mingo towns on the Muskingum. Given the native disdain for their enemy's fighting abilities and methods of warfare, Cornstalk believed the warriors could strike devastating blows before the Virginians advanced too far into his people's territory. Furthermore, he believed that inflicting heavy casualties would demoralize the militiamen and convince Lord Dunmore to halt the campaign before it cost more blood and treasure than the colony would willingly pay. Offering the best – if not only – hope, they could forestall strategic defeat even without achieving a decisive tactical victory.

⁹²⁵ Guy Chet Conquering the American Wilderness (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 139.

That night, the sound of drumming was heard about the several Shawnee and Mingo towns and villages as the captains of war parties gathered the men who had pledged to follow them. With each warrior holding a tomahawk, spear or war club, they chanted their war songs, and moved forward across a clearing at the town's center by the council house in the general direction they would march in the morning. After dancing a set distance, they all stopped, sounded off with "hideous" shouts or yells as every man raised and pointed his weapon in the direction of Point Pleasant. The warriors then faced about and danced back toward the starting point. After taking his place in line, each warrior advanced toward the war post in his turn while he sang his war song. He then struck the post as he proclaimed in a loud voice what he had accomplished in past battles and pledged to fight furiously in the coming one. When the last man finished, the warriors began to apply war paint.⁹²⁶ Some used ochre brown or vegetable green, but most preferred charcoal black and bright red vermilion. They reassembled the next morning. Stripped nearly naked for battle, they wore only breech-clouts, leggings and moccasins, and carried packs with a few provisions on their backs. The several groups marched away in single file. Every warrior in the party kept silent, except for the captain. He marched at the head of the file and sang the group's traveling song. When the last man in the file reached the edge of town, the warriors all discharged their firearms and shouted war whoops as their families watched them depart.⁹²⁷

Although Cornstalk's army consisted mostly of his own people and Mingoes, braves from the Delaware, Ottawa, Miami, Wyandot and "several Other Nations"

⁹²⁶ Smith, 22.

⁹²⁷ Smith, *Ibid.* p. 34.

increased the size of the force. Whether they were motivated by a desire to gain reputation and status or simply to fight a hated enemy, the opportunity to take some Big Knife scalps led them to ignore their chiefs' orders or defy the pronouncements of their Six Nations overlords to aid the Shawnees. While Cornstalk had some warriors remain behind to guard their families and towns, estimates of the total number of fighting men formed "the whole United Force of the Enemy Ohio Indians" took the warpath vary. Although one officer who arrived at Point Pleasant after the battle opined that Cornstalk led "not more than five hundred at most," others put their strength as high as about 1,000. Most Virginia participants, particularly those who took part in the engagement, estimated the strength of the Cornstalk's mobile force at between 700 and 800 fighters. Given the contemporary tribal populations with the traditional proportion of warriors as reported by the British Indian Department and colonial Indian agents, the most common estimate (700-800) appears to be the most accurate.⁹²⁸

White Eyes arrived at Chillicothe amid the preparations to deliver Dunmore's invitation for Cornstalk and other leaders to meet him on the banks of the Ohio for a final attempt at negotiation. John Montour, a widely-respected cultural mediator, or "go-between," and a trader named William McCulloch [or McCullough]

⁹²⁸ Col. Guy Johnson, "A List of Different Nations and Tribes of Indians in the Northern District of North America, with the Number of their Fighting Men &c., In the Year 1778," Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Ms. N-645, pp 454-457; Col. George Croghan Journal September 26, 1765, and Sir William Johnson, "A List of Different Nations and Tribes of Indians in the Northern District of North America, with the Number of their Fighting Men &c., In the Year 1765," Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Journals, 1748-1765, by Conrad Weiser, George Croghan, Frederick Post and Thomas Morris (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), 167-170; J. F. D. Smyth, A Tour in the United States of America... Sometime in 1773 or 1774, Vol. 1, (Dublin: G. Perrin, 1784), 229; and Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ6 (253-254).

accompanied the Delaware chief. If anyone had a reasonable chance of bringing Cornstalk and the others to a council with the Long Knife, the Delaware White Eyes and the French-Iroquoian-Algonquian métis Montour did. Traders like McCulloch, who often rankled the backcountry settlers for supplying weapons to the Indians, even in time of war, could have also helped White Eyes on his endeavor. Although possibly a Pennsylvania partisan in the border dispute with Virginia, the trader's friendly business relationship with the Shawnee could have maintained rapport in a continuous dialogue. Cornstalk, however, expressed no desire to negotiate further. He essentially informed White Eyes that "700 Warriors" had gone southward to "Speak with the Army there" – meaning Lewis' Left Wing – instead of to Fort Gower to talk with Dunmore. The Indian commander continued by saying that the warriors heading toward Lewis' force would "begin with them in the morning and their business would be Over by Breakfast time." After that, the Shawnees and their allies would return north and "speak with his Lordship."⁹²⁹

Camp Gower

White Eyes, Montour and McCulloch arrived at the mouth of the Hockhocking the day after Dunmore established his headquarters at Fort Gower. The governor recorded that he received "disagreeable information" conveyed by "our friends the Delaware." The mediators relayed the Shawnees' defiant reply that they would "listen to no terms" at that time. Instead of resuming negotiations, they had "resolved

⁹²⁹ Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261; Colonel William Fleming to William Bowyer, undated letter, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ7 (254-257); Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 256n, 302n; and, Kevin P. Kelly, "John Montour: The Life of a Cultural Go-Between," Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter, Winter 2000/2001, pp. 1, 4.

to prosecute their designs against the people of Virginia.⁹³⁰ Having received no recent correspondence from Colonel Andrew Lewis to gauge how long it would take his division to reach the rendezvous, the governor once more amended the campaign plan to the new requirements. “Unwilling to increase the expense of the Country by further delay,” he decided to press forward into Indian country from both Point Pleasant and Fort Gower, with the two wings converging on the Shawnee towns to join forces “about twenty miles on this side of Chillicossee [sic] at a large ridge.” The governor drafted the new orders and sent Kenton, Girty, and Parchment back to Point Pleasant, this time accompanied by McCulloch, to deliver them to Colonel Lewis.⁹³¹

White Eyes had offered to raise a force of Delaware warriors to accompany the army against the Shawnees. Keenly aware that backcountry Virginians generally harbored a “natural dislike” of all Indians, even those of the friendly nations, the governor declined the generous offer. As a practical matter, he wanted to avoid any threats to good order and discipline that could result from even a minor misunderstanding between people of different cultures. Dunmore, however, graciously thanked the chief and accepted the services of only a few Delaware scouts. From the intelligence he had received concerning the numbers of warriors the Shawnees and their Indian allies had gathered to fight against him, Dunmore believed that his army had sufficient strength “to defeat them and destroy their Towns” if the

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Valentine Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Fort Fincastle, October 1, 1774, *Washington-Crawford Letters* 97-99; Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261; Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp on Point Pleasant, October 15, 1774, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (63-263); Jacob, 72; and, Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 285n.

Shawnees still refused his last “offers of Peace” when they saw the Virginians approach.⁹³²

Point Pleasant

When the Left Wing marched from the Elk River on October 1, Colonel Andrew Lewis ordered the troops to form two columns, or “grand divisions,” with the Augusta County line constituting the left division and the Botetourt County line constituting most of the right column. Each line posted one company in both the advanced and rear guard detachments – on the left and right respectively – with four men from each also detached as flankers. The Botetourt County company of Captain John Lewis, Andrew’s oldest son, detached a sergeant and twelve soldiers to move with the guides ahead of the advance guard, while a company from the Augusta line detached a similar party to trail behind the rear guard. The main body – about 400 men – formed with front and rear divisions, or four sub-divisions, and with an ensign’s command of sixteen men acting as flankers to each side. The cattle herd and packhorse train with their guards “fell in betwixt the Front & Rear sub-divisions” of the main body. The march order reflected the doctrine found in Bland’s A Treatise of Military Discipline, albeit modified for use in the North American wilderness, much as Colonel Henry Bouquet had also done with the “marching square” formation he employed on his expedition against the Shawnees during Pontiac’s War.⁹³³ The convoy of eighteen supply canoes, plus those of the sutlers who accompanied the

⁹³² Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261.

⁹³³ Col. William Fleming Journal, and Orderly Book, October 1, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscript 2ZZ71 and 2ZZ72 (285, 334) respectively; Bland, 143-144; and, Thomas Hutchins, Thomas (Anonymously), An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, in the Year 1764 (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765), 8-9.

army, kept abreast of the marching columns during the day and banked near the latter's camp each night.

With the soldiers deployed in such a formation, Colonel Fleming explained how the column had a battle drill to respond to a threat from any direction. In a head-on meeting engagement, or if the enemy attacked the column in front, the Advanced Guard would "Free themselves & Stand the Charge" while the right and left columns moved to outflank the enemy and then "Close in &c." to finish them. Regardless of "whatever Quarter, Column or Van or Rear Guard" the enemy attacked, the colonel continued, those directly under attack would "Stand the Charge" while the unengaged "Distant Columns" attacked the enemy's own flanks.⁹³⁴ The Left Wing therefore moved while deployed in this formation, except where the terrain proved too restrictive and dictated otherwise. After it left the mouth of the Elk, the wing marched to a point on the Kanawha opposite the mouth of Cole Creek and halted. Repeated with little change every day of the march, the order for encamping prescribed the priority tasks that the force had to accomplish before dark. The responsible line held guard mount and posted the necessary main and picket guards for security. Cattle drovers and packhorse drivers turned their animals out to graze. Boatmen banked and secured their canoes. The butchers slaughtered the necessary number of beeves and issued the various messes their daily fresh meat ration. Officers inspected their companies and arms. The men cooked their rations for the

⁹³⁴ Ibid.

evening meal and next morning's breakfast. As the sun began to set, the secured camp settled in for the night.⁹³⁵

On October 2, the army marched through "rich Bottoms & muddy Swamp Creeks," encountering the latter obstacles about every mile or half mile so that the packhorses, according to Colonel Fleming, became "much Jaded." About two miles after leaving the previous night's encampment, some of the troops marched through the remnants of an "Indian fort" positioned along a branch of the warriors' path that also functioned as a trader's trail. Probably the remnant of an earlier conflict, the oval-shaped feature measured about one hundred feet in length with a "cellar full of water 8 feet broad," and "banks" that stood three feet high above the surface of the water. Meanwhile, out on the Kanawha, one of the sutler's canoes "overset," with the loss of "two guns ... & some baggage." Another watercraft, fashioned from two canoes fastened together, also "overset." Although two or three of them got "much wett," the twenty-seven bags of flour floated long enough for boatmen to recover the entire cargo. So the dampened flour did not spoil in transit, the commissary issued every soldier a two-day ration at the next halt. While morale generally remained high, Fleming noted that the army had experienced a few breaches in discipline since it marched from Camp Union. Since leaving the camp at the Elk, in addition to the theft of some provisions, the infractions included the desertion of a sergeant and three men – who left the army without being granted leave.⁹³⁶

⁹³⁵ Ibid.

⁹³⁶ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 2, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (334-335).

The column continued to move through rich bottom land until it reached the steep and “very Muddy” banks of Pocatlico Creek. The men trudged through the stream at a ford where the water measured some forty feet wide and three to three and a half feet deep before the column continued another mile passed the river’s mouth and halted to camp for the night. As the accompanying supply convoy paddled down the Kanawha parallel to the marching column, another sutler’s canoe capsized, and one more of the supply-laden “double canoes Split” and sank. The boatmen’s efforts again saved most of its cargo of flour.⁹³⁷

Major Ingles urged the cattle drivers keep the herd together as much as possible as the division continued to negotiate several defiles with high steep banks, and along hillsides with steep slopes that came so close to the water of the Kanawha at times that it forced the two columns to compress and march together on a single path. On October 5, the lead scouts found the camp that the advanced “spies” had used before they sent Private Fowler back to the Elk in the canoe and continued overland to accomplish their mission on foot. A squad of men who stayed behind at the previous night’s camp to gather straggling cattle caught up with the main body at the end of the day’s march. They reported having observed an Indian warrior, “suppos’d a spy,” investigate the now-abandoned bivouac site with great interest.⁹³⁸

Finally, on Thursday, October 6, after Colonel Andrew Lewis’ Southern Division, or Left Wing, of the army had marched through “many defiles, cross’d many Runs with Steep high & difficult banks” for about eight miles, the column entered a bottom that stretched along the Kanawha for another three and three quarters miles to its

⁹³⁷ Ibid, 2ZZ72 (335-336).

⁹³⁸ Ibid 2ZZ72 (337).

confluence with the Ohio. Colonel Fleming described the point of land as high and afforded “a most agreeable prospect” for establishing an encampment. He looked across the two rivers at the confluence to the opposite banks. He estimated the width of the Ohio as 700 yards, while the “deep still water of the Kanawha” extended 400 yards across at the mouth. The colonel estimated that the middle ground of the point stood ten feet above the water, and he observed that the elevation gave it “an extensive View up both rivers & down the Ohio.”⁹³⁹ After posting local security for what became the Camp on Point Pleasant, the officer of the guard assigned the now-routine force of an ensign’s guard of eighteen men on the canoes and ammunition. The commissary, Major Ingles, reported to Colonel Andrew Lewis on the exact number and condition of the beef cattle and ordered the canoe men to do their best to cover the flour supply in order to protect it from moisture, while the quartermaster, Major Posey, ordered his assistants take special care to secure and preserve the ammunition.⁹⁴⁰

The advanced scouts – Fowler’s companions – reported to Colonel Andrew Lewis that they had seen no war parties or signs of the enemy present since they first reached and subsequently ranged about Point Pleasant. The men had observed several Indian hunting parties tracking buffalo, but were careful to avoid detection as the hunters pursued their quarry. Of the most consequence, the scouts reported finding no indication that the Northern Division had reached Point Pleasant before them, but discovered the “Advertisement” Kenton, Girty and Parchment had posted.

⁹³⁹ Col. William Fleming Journal, and Orderly Book, October 6, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 and 2ZZ72 (285-286, 339), respectively.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid.

The messengers' notice advised members of the Southern Division they would find a letter from his Lordship "lodged in a hollow tree." That document contained Dunmore's order, that had since become overcome by more recent events, for Lewis to march his men upriver to join forces with the other division at the mouth of the Hockhocking.⁹⁴¹

Camp at Elk River

Colonel Christian and the Southern Division's Rear Party left Camp Union on September 26 and reached the mouth of Elk River in eight days. The men unloaded the supplies from the packhorses and placed them in the magazine. Christian put Captain Slaughter in command of the post, which included the magazine and its staff of assistant quartermasters, and a garrison comprised of "all the Lowlanders," or the men in the companies from Dunmore and Culpepper Counties. He instructed Slaughter to load 24,000 pounds of flour aboard the canoes when they returned from downstream in order to transport it forward to the Main Body. Christian sent Privates James Knox and James Smith of Robertson's company, along with two other men, to learn the latest news on the situation at Point Pleasant. The men also carried an express to inform Colonel Andrew Lewis that the Rear Body would march for Point Pleasant with a herd of 350 head of cattle on October 6. Christian added a summary of his orders to Slaughter, and that when the canoes returned, the Elk Creek garrison would keep a provision of fifty beeves and some flour.⁹⁴² Captain Bledsoe prepared to lead the last division of the Rear Body from Camp Union on October 16, and

⁹⁴¹ Ibid; William Sharp pension application R9429 dated September 4, 1832, Roll 2158; and Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 285n.

⁹⁴² Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated Mouth of the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Draper's Notes 33S44-49 (266-269).

hoped to reach Point Pleasant with 200 loaded packhorses and 80 additional head of cattle in 12 days.⁹⁴³

Point Pleasant

Before the *Reveille* sounded at Point Pleasant on Friday, October 7, the order went out to all the subordinate commanders to take a complete roll of their units, and follow the camp routine established at Camp Union and Elk River until the division marched again. In its V-shaped castrametation, the Southern Division headquarters occupied the vertex at the point, with the Botetourt County Line – including the attached companies – erecting its shelters for one half of a mile along the Ohio, while the Augusta Line’s tents stretched a similar distance along the Kanawha. Fleming described the area between the two lines of tents as “full of large trees & very brushy (288).” The routine of daily camp duties kept the men busy on numerous tasks. In addition to local patrols, picket duty and daily guard mount, fatigue details occupied much of the soldiers’ time. Preservation of the health and welfare of the troops dictated that building a “Necessary House,” or latrine, ranked among the first tasks accomplished, lest the camp become “fouled & sickly.” Similarly, general orders reminded company officers to encourage their troops to preserve their own “health & Satisfaction,” as well as avoid disciplinary action, and to use the latrines rather than “ease themselves” at various locations around the camp.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴³ Capt. Anthony Bledsoe to Colonel William Preston, letter dated October 15, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ122 (260-261).

⁹⁴⁴ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 7, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (339-340).

Getting the canoes unloaded as soon as possible also ranked high among the priority of tasks. Over the next few days, Lieutenants James and Hugh Allen of Captain George Matthews' Augusta County company mustered as many artificers as they deemed necessary to construct a magazine, or "Shelter for the Stores." Every day, Major Ingles had the horse and cattle drivers gather the animals that had wandered away from camp during the night, while Colonel Fleming sent an ensign in command of eighteen privates, six scouts, and some cattle drivers to return to the encampment of Wednesday night to search for and retrieve any beeves lost along the way, and drive them back to Point Pleasant.⁹⁴⁵ The next day, October 8, Ingles instructed the "Bullock drivers" to erect a pen large enough to accommodate the herd. The drivers let the animals range about the point and graze all day long, but had to gather and confine them in the pen every night before the beating of *Retreat*.⁹⁴⁶ After he learned that Colonel Christian's 200-man Rear Party had arrived at the Elk "with Bullocks and Gun Powder," Sergeant Obadiah Trent, the division's master boatman detailed from Captain Henry Pauling's Botetourt County company, led the flotilla of canoes back up-river to the magazine in order to transport the flour and other stores back to Point Pleasant.⁹⁴⁷

After he read Dunmore's message that directed him to march to join forces at the Hockhocking, Colonel Andrew Lewis turned his attention to drafting a reply. Having discussed the matter, Colonel Fleming shared the same concerns with his commander, and expressed them in a letter to Colonel Stephen – hoping that his long-time friend

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁶ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 8, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (340).

⁹⁴⁷ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 7, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (339-340), Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 340n.

and comrade would share them with his lordship as well. The strength returns showed that his division had “800 effective Rank & File” – not including officers, sergeants, musicians and staff – at Point Pleasant, plus an additional “200 & odd men” following – under Christian’s command – within a distance of 60 miles.⁹⁴⁸ The colonel informed the governor that they had already endured a “very fatiguing march,” when the Main Body reached the mouth of the Kanawha late on October 6, so that the Left Wing could not possibly leave Point Pleasant before Christian’s column, and the rest of the flour, packhorses and cattle, joined him and all the men and animals recovered their strength.⁹⁴⁹

Lewis and Fleming also addressed the tactical implications to the new plan Dunmore had proposed. Having reached Point Pleasant, the Left Wing stood as close – or perhaps closer – to the Shawnee towns as the Right Wing did at the mouth of the Hockhocking. Affecting a juncture at that time offered no operational advantage, but only further delayed the advance. Confident of victory, the colonel explained that his officers and men saw the enemy as “within their grasp.” Furthermore, the officers considered the mouth of the Kanawha as the “pass into the frontiers” of the Virginia colony, particularly the backcountry settlements of Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle Counties. Marching to the northward at that time, they argued, neglected or abandoned an important barrier and left the communities of their friends and families exposed and more vulnerable to invasion.

⁹⁴⁸ Col. William Fleming to Col. Adam Stephen, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 8, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 (236-238).

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid.

Colonel Fleming explained that the reasons that supported Dunmore's proposed plan had to "be Overbalanced" by showing their arguments held "more weight" in order to convince the governor to countermand his order to march to Fort Gower. Fleming then stated that if they complied with the governor's order as given, the resulting march away from the perceived critical point would only serve to "blunt the keen edge" of the Long Knife army pointed toward the enemy at the very time they needed to keep it honed sharp to deal with the Shawnees. Furthermore, he feared that it would only "raise a Spirit of Discontent not easily Quelled amongst the best regulated Troops," much less militiamen unused to the "Yoak [sic]" of strict military discipline who had primarily volunteered to defend their homes. When the division's field officers completed the response for their commander's signature, Privates William Sharp and William Mann, two drafted men serving in Captain Andrew Lockridge's company of Augusta County militia, carried it to Fort Gower for delivery to the governor.⁹⁵⁰

Lord Dunmore's four messengers – Kenton, Girty, Parchment, and now McCulloch – arrived at Point Pleasant from Fort Gower with messages from Fort Gower. They also brought personal letters for Colonels Andrew Lewis and Fleming from Colonel Stephen, but more importantly, they had the governor's latest orders. The commander in chief directed the Left Wing commander to disregard the previous instruction and march to meet the Right Wing at the place "appointed near the Indian Settlements" instead. Dunmore and Andrew Lewis apparently reached the same

⁹⁵⁰ Col. William Fleming to Col. Adam Stephen, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 8, 1774, Col. William Fleming Journal, and Orderly Book, October 6, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 (236-238, 285-286) and 2ZZ72 (339), respectively.

conclusion but their respective messages crossed in transiting the seventy-mile stretch of the Ohio River between the mouths of the Hockhocking and Kanawha. Sharp and Mann had left Point Pleasant carrying Lewis' recommendation on Saturday, while Kenton, Girty, Parchment and McCulloch arrived with the governor's new order on Sunday.⁹⁵¹

With "Guards Properly Posted at a Distance from the camp as usual," and as the masters and artificers neared completion of the storehouse, the soldiers went about their duties on Sunday. Men of the several units attended divine services at noon to hear "a Good Sermon" preached by Reverend Mr. Terrey. Some of the men discussed the "disagreeable news from Boston" that Stephen had conveyed in his letter to Lewis. Although the account that British regulars had fired on Massachusetts Bay militia proved to only be a rumor, it caused considerable angst among the soldiers who had been following the constitutional debate with interest. At the evening officers' call, Colonel Lewis reminded the adjutants to send their units' scouts for the next day to his headquarters early in the morning to receive their instructions for Monday's patrols.⁹⁵²

McCulloch, the Indian trader who had accompanied the messengers, sought out his former acquaintance Captain John Stuart, who was serving as officer of the guard. McCulloch found Stuart at his tent and they talked while the trader waited on his

⁹⁵¹ Col. William Fleming Journal, and Orderly Book, October 6, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 and 2ZZ72 (285-286, 339), respectively. Stuart, 675. William Sharp, pension; and, Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261.

⁹⁵² Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ121 (257-259); and, Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 8 and 9, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (340-341).

companions to start the return trip. In the conversation, McCulloch mentioned he had recently returned from the Shawnee towns. Intrigued, Stuart asked the trader if he thought the Shawnees were “presumptuous enough to offer to fight” considering the Virginians outnumbered them. McCulloch only answered, “Ah! They will give you grinders, and that before long.” McCulloch kept repeating his answer to Stuart until his companions summoned him back to their canoe.⁹⁵³ In contrast, Major Ingles later reflected that the soldiers felt that they occupied the “Safe Position of a fine Encampment.” Given their presumed numerical superiority, the Virginians felt their army to be “a terror” to all the Ohio area tribes. Perhaps “Lulled in safety” by overconfidence, after the drums beat *Retreat*, Ingles “went to Repose ... little Expecting to be attacked.”⁹⁵⁴

Despite the Virginians’ precautions and sense of security, Cornstalk’s forces were indeed close at hand. After arriving on the Ohio approximately six to eight miles upstream that day, the warriors built about eighty rafts and crossed the river. Once across, they advanced to the site of an abandoned Indian village and trading post known to many whites as the Old Shawnee Town. Located at the mouth of Old Town Creek, and about two miles from the Virginians’ camp, Cornstalk’s army halted to camp for the night and make their final preparation.⁹⁵⁵ Scouts had kept the enemy camp under observation, so that when Cornstalk and the other leaders met, they had

⁹⁵³ Stuart, John, 675-676.

⁹⁵⁴ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ121 (257-259).

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

the latest intelligence on their enemy's defenses as they developed the plan of attack.

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In keeping with their way of war, warriors only sought a battle when they enjoyed a clear advantage and sure prospect of victory with the loss of few men. They therefore always looked to surprise and strike an enemy hard during a moment or condition of weakness. Once they lost a crucial advantage and could not easily overcome their opponent, they would – more often than not – disengage to minimize their losses rather than fight to a decision in the face of mounting casualties. Likewise, if the tide of battle turned against them, warriors generally saw little reason to continue fighting. They did not consider breaking contact and quitting the field under such conditions as a sign of cowardice, but a practical means preserving their strength until they had the opportunity to defeat their enemy without losing many men. If surrounded, however, they would fight to the death rather than surrender, regardless of the odds.⁹⁵⁷

After a short night's rest, the Indian warriors were up for the fight. Their leaders told them they would advance in a large body toward the Virginia camp, staying on high ground as much as possible, initially marching in an "Indian file" and expanding as the terrain visibility dictated. Just short of the Virginians' camp they would silently eliminate the pickets and form into a line. If still undetected, they would attack at first light, advance quickly in a rush to catch the enemy troops by surprise,

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid.; Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp at Point Pleasant, October 15, 1774, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (265); and, Col. William Preston to Patrick Henry, letter dated Springfield, October 31, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ128 (292).

⁹⁵⁷ Smith, 161-162, 169-170.

either still asleep in their tents or awake but unprepared to form an effective line of defense against the assault. If all went well, the fury of the warriors' assault would create such terror and confusion that the Long Knife soldiers would have to choose between two equally undesirable options, but both of which the Indians planned to exploit. Warriors would pursue and hound those remnants of the broken army that scattered and fled in the direction from which they had marched from Elk River. Virginians who survived the onslaught and retreated to the Kanawha would either have to fight to the death on the bank or enter the water in a vain attempt to swim across the deep and wide river to safety. The fleeing soldiers would then find, to their dismay, the far banks lined with Indian warriors waiting to take them under fire and complete their destruction. Once he had ended the threat from the south, Cornstalk planned to return toward the Scioto in order to intercept the Dunmore's Northern Division, or Right Wing, as it advanced along the Hockhocking toward Chillicothe and the Upper Shawnee Towns.⁹⁵⁸

Stripped nearly naked and all encumbering clothing and equipment discarded, the warriors began "boldly marching to attack." On encountering their enemy, the Indians at Point Pleasant most likely employed the tactics James Smith described in his captivity narrative. After his capture and adoption, the band of Canawauaghs [or Kahnawakes] accepted him as a warrior and trained him in their well-developed and oft-practiced tactics and techniques during the French and Indian War. He therefore

⁹⁵⁸ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, 3QQ121 (257-259); Col. William Fleming to William Bowyer, undated letter, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ7 (254-257); and, Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp at Point Pleasant, October 15, 1774, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (264).

experienced combat from an Indian perspective.⁹⁵⁹ He wrote that warriors advanced “under good command,” and were “punctual” in obeying the shouted orders of their leaders. War parties executed a variety of maneuvers in which they changed from files into lines, and stood, advanced or retreated as quickly as necessary to fit the tactical situation. In the absence of spoken orders, each man guided his movement and motions by observing those of the companion to his right hand, and the man to his left guided on his. In doing so, according to the situation, they could “march abreast in concert” or in “scattered order.” When they sighted an enemy force, the leaders gave general orders with a “shout or yell.” In most engagements, they would advance to surrounded an enemy, or assail an exposed flank to pin him against a natural obstacle such as a river. When the battle was joined, bands often employed tactics in which part advanced or retreated as the other part kept firing. If their enemy surprised them, the warriors would “take trees” for cover and face outward to prevent from being surrounded. Individually, each warrior fought “as though he was to gain the battle himself,” and sought every opportunity to gain every advantage over his opponent.⁹⁶⁰

At their camp on the opposite end of the point, some Virginians had just started to rise. Because Colonel Andrew Lewis had directed the commissary to have the butchers slaughter the poor quality beeves first, some company commanders decided to supplement their men’s meat ration with game. Early on Monday morning before the *Reveille* beat, one pair of men from each of the two Fincastle County units attached to the Botetourt Line turned out to go hunting. Sergeants Valentine Sevier

⁹⁵⁹ Smith, 161-2.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid., 161-164, 169-170.

and James Robison of Shelby's company, and Privates Joseph Hughey and James Mooney from Russell's took two separate paths in the direction of Old Town Creek. They had gone nearly two miles from camp when Sevier and Robison "discovered a party of Indians" assembled near the abandoned town, and immediately ran back to camp. The other pair did not fare as well. A party of Indians saw them first and opened fire. Hughey fell dead and Mooney, pursued most of the way, ran back to camp to give his comrades the alarm.⁹⁶¹ Tradition holds that a Virginian who had been captured and adopted by the Shawnees as a child during the French and Indian War, named Tavenor Ross, fired the shot that killed Hughey.⁹⁶²

Although concerned that the chance for surprise may have been compromised, Cornstalk gave the order and warriors began "boldly marching to attack."⁹⁶³ The war parties initially moved in files along the trails that led through the woods. Despite heavy-growth timber, fallen tree trunks and dense thickets that covered areas of the bottom land along the Ohio River's south bank, the braves made their way forward as the predawn darkness gave way to increasing levels of light. With better visibility, the intervals between warriors expanded until the several files gave way to a large column that could take advantage of the terrain for ease of movement as well as have room to maneuver once it made contact with the enemy.⁹⁶⁴

The *Reveille* had already sounded by the time Mooney reached camp. Giving the password as he raced by a picket, Mooney ran directly to Captain Stuart's tent to

⁹⁶¹ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ121 (257-259); Col. William Fleming, Journal October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (286-287).

⁹⁶² Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 271-272n; and, Withers, 168n.

⁹⁶³ Smith, 161-2.

⁹⁶⁴ Ibid.

inform the officer of the guard. Although winded, Mooney reported that he “saw above five Acres of land covered with Indians as one could stand one beside another.” Men who had heard the shots gathered outside of Stuart’s tent, curious to learn the cause and listened intently. A few minutes later, as men continued to gather, Sevier and Robison arrived to confirm the intelligence that the enemy was close at hand. Colonel Andrew Lewis immediately ordered the drummers to beat the *To Arms* for men to retrieve their weapons, and then the *Alarm* to warn everyone in camp of “sudden danger, so that all may be in readiness for immediate duty.” Everyone knew the procedure as drummers throughout the camp took up the beat and the field officers met with Lewis.⁹⁶⁵

After he considered the descriptions provided by the hunters and the lack of intelligence provided by recent patrols, Colonel Andrew Lewis assessed the situation. Although the enemy was present in a “considerable body . . . who made a formidable appearance,” he felt that what his division faced was a scouting party, albeit a large one. For a situation in which a commander’s unit encountered a “skulking party” of enemy irregulars, Bland’s Treatise of Military Discipline recommended that a commander order a “proper detachment” to go out to attack them. However, the treatise cautioned the commander to exercise extreme caution in execution, and resist pursuing a retreating enemy too far for fear of an ambush or discovering the size of the enemy force “greater than what they apprehended” and “too advantageously

⁹⁶⁵ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277); Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 Draper Manuscripts (341). Stuart, 676; and, Capt. George Smith An Universal Military Dictionary (London: J. Millan, 1779), DRU-DUT (79).

posted to be easily dislodged.”⁹⁶⁶ Lewis adopted a course of action in keeping with that doctrine. He determined that an immediate reconnaissance in force to destroy, capture or drive the enemy away presented the most appropriate response. He ordered the two subordinate colonels, Fleming and his brother Charles Lewis, to each detach 150 men – giving little regard to company integrity – with the proper complement of officers from their respective lines “to go in Quest of them.”⁹⁶⁷

Colonel Charles Lewis formed his detachment from the Augusta Line with subordinate Captains John Dickinson, Benjamin Harrison, Samuel Wilson and John Skidmore. Colonel Fleming assembled his with Captains Shelby and Russell of Fincastle, Captain Thomas Buford of Bedford, and Captain Philip Love of the Botetourt Line. While the arrangement enabled the two lines to parade the most available soldiers quickly, the resulting loss of cohesion – and therefore combat efficiency – inherent in the ad hoc nature of the units soon negated any advantage. As Captain John Floyd later commented, “no one officer ... had his own men.” Once formed into columns of two files, the two detachments marched “briskly” from opposite ends of the camp and beyond the line of pickets just after sunrise. Fleming’s Botetourt Line detachment advanced about 100 yards in from the Ohio River’s bank. Acting as the guide, Mooney took his place with the scouts to pilot the detachment to where he and Hughey had their fateful encounter with the Indians earlier. Colonel Charles Lewis’ detachment of the Augusta Line advanced “near the foot of the hills”

⁹⁶⁶ Bland, 146.

⁹⁶⁷ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277); Col. William Fleming, Journal and Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Paper Draper Manuscripts s 2ZZ71 (286-287) and 2ZZ72 (341), respectively.

along Crooked Creek on a somewhat parallel course 150 to 200 yards to the east of and trailing Fleming by about 100 yards.⁹⁶⁸

Shawnee scouts detected and informed Cornstalk of the approaching Virginians. The chief realized the shots his warriors had fired at the hunters earlier had indeed alerted the enemy to his army's presence on Point Pleasant. Having lost the element of surprise, he therefore altered his plan of attack. The Shawnee chief gave orders to initiate the battle by ambushing the two columns, keeping them separated and unable to provide each other mutual support. After they defeated the immediate threat, the warriors would continue the attack by advancing on the Virginia Southern Division's main body to destroy it.

At about 6:30, as the Augusta detachment's column began to cross an open area about one half mile from the camp's line of pickets, the men heard three shots fired in quick succession, which killed the leading scout. The woods ahead of them then erupted with a blast of musketry from Indian warriors positioned "behind Bushes & Trees." Reloading quickly after the "first fire," the Indians all fired another, and then a third shot as the Virginians struggled to deploy into line. The first man of each file stood fast as the next two split respectively to the left and right sides in succession, extending to form a single-rank line while taking advantage of any cover the vegetation provided. Given the nature of the terrain, the shock of enemy fire, and the tendency of inexperienced troops to stay close to comrades rather than in extended interval, it is unlikely that Lewis' men occupied a line more than 200 or 300 yards

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

long. The Augusta detachment fought back “with much bravery & Courage,” but the volume of enemy fire forced them back with several casualties.⁹⁶⁹

After pulling back, Lewis stood in the open, disregarding the cover a nearby tree provided. As he directed his captains while they re-formed the line on some high ground along Crooked Creek and attempted to tie in with Fleming’s line, a musket ball struck Colonel Lewis. He immediately realized the severity of the injury. Satisfied he had done all he could, he handed his rifle to his attendant who then assisted him as he calmly walked back toward camp telling his men, “I am Wounded, but go on & be Brave.”⁹⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the Botetourt detachment had advanced about three quarters of a mile beyond the pickets when Colonel Fleming heard gunfire on his right. “In almost a second of a minute” his unit received fire from in front and also became heavily engaged. One of the first shots struck and killed Mooney, and the men deployed into line in the same manner as their Augusta comrades, except they did not initially also take cover. With their left flank on the bank of the Ohio, officers endeavored to get the men to extend the line so as to join their right flank to the left flank of Lewis’ Augusta line. Since Fleming’s detachment had moved farther up the point, they had to extend obliquely to the rear to join with that of Colonel Lewis. The men fought back with “with spirit & resolution,” but Fleming realized after several exchanges of

⁹⁶⁹ Stuart, 676.

⁹⁷⁰ Col. William Fleming, Journal and Orderly Book, October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (286-287) and 2ZZ72 (341-343), respectively.

fire his men's initial disposition "would never promise success." Under the conditions, they were "forced to quit their ranks & fly to trees."⁹⁷¹

It is difficult to determine the frontage both detachments would have actually occupied. In addition to the factors already noted, both detachments suffered the consequences of the decision to draw men from every company to form them. Although he was not present, Captain Floyd later wrote that officers had difficulty in getting men to advance when the engagement first started because some troops refused to recognize the authority of any but the officers of their own companies. He added that the Virginians never had more than 300 or 400 men in action at once since a number of men avoided combat by sheltering behind "trees & logs the whole way" between camp and the fighting, and "could not be prevailed upon to advance to where the fire was." If these statements are true, the detachment frontages could have been considerably less than 200 yards.⁹⁷²

The Shawnees, Mingo and their allies enjoyed a numerical superiority and tactical advantage over both Virginia detachments in the opening stage of the battle. They fought with great bravery as they "Disputed the Ground with the Greatest Obstinacy" and pressed attacks that forced both lines of Virginians to retreat from 100 to 200 yards from the points where they made initial contact. At that critical moment, enemy bullets hit Colonel Fleming in three places and caused dangerous wounds. Two balls went through his left arm and broke both bones below the elbow,

⁹⁷¹ Col. William Fleming, Journal October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (286-287).

⁹⁷² Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277)' Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

and one went through his left breast three inches below the nipple, which caused part of his lung to protrude. The colonel continued to encourage his men and remained on the field until he felt “effectually disabled” by the injuries. Assisted by one of his attendants, he returned to camp to seek medical care. Fleming later reflected that the Indians fought with such ferocity and skill that the battle “was attended with the death of some of our bravest officers & men, also the deaths of a great number of the enemy.”⁹⁷³

The Indians’ movements aimed to exploit the gap that separated the two Virginia detachments before they could join to form a continuous line. Feeling victory near at hand, some of the more impetuous warriors made rushes, “attended with dismal Yells & Screams,” against the Virginians, “often Running up to the Very Muzzles of our Guns where they as often fell Victims to their rage.” Fighting in pairs from natural cover, one member fired as the other loaded, the Virginians in both lines maintained a consistent level of fire. In this adaptation of conventional tactics to the woods, they took the tactical defense in which cohesive firepower eventually proved decisive. The surviving captains took charge. On the left, Captain Shelby assumed command from the wounded Colonel Fleming, and ably assisted by Russell and Love, succeeded in halting the Botetourt Line’s retreat. On the right, of all the captains, only Harrison remained uninjured to take command, but the situation remained desperate.⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁷³ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁴ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ121 (257-259); Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 7ZZ2 (269-277).

Back at camp, the men listened to the sound of the battle that unfolded in the distance. They noted that the first few individual shots had erupted into an exchange of musketry on the right and then extended to the left as it increased in intensity. Casualties soon began to return to camp. Of the wounded field officers, Colonel Fleming arrived at the surgeon's station where Doctor Watkins dressed his wounds. Although serious, the doctor believed the wounds would heal. Colonel Charles Lewis reached the station just as the surgeon finished with Fleming. Watkins confirmed Lewis' suspicion that his wound was mortal, and there was little a doctor could do except try to make his patient comfortable. Some men helped the dying colonel to his tent where he expired a few hours later.

By 7:00, the firing along the battle front had become "very warm" and the Virginia casualties mounted, particularly among the officers. With the initial detachments in trouble, giving ground and in danger of getting outflanked, everyone concluded that they faced more than scouting parties. It had proved fortunate that the ill-fated hunting parties discovered the enemy and compromised the element of surprise. What Colonel Andrew Lewis had intended as a reconnaissance in force mission against some scouts had become what is known in military parlance as a "spoiling attack," a minor offensive action that disrupts the opponent's major attack. In addition to the two injured colonels, walking-wounded and those who assisted other casualties, message runners informed Colonel Andrew Lewis of the gravity of the situation. Neither he, nor anyone else, had expected a general engagement at Point Pleasant, but he knew they now faced one with the two forward detachments driven back by the Indians' initial onslaught. Since the Augusta detachment on the

right had retreated farther, Colonel Andrew Lewis decided to send them an immediate and significant reinforcement first.⁹⁷⁵

The Augusta detachment had started the reconnaissance in force that morning trailing behind that of the Botetourt. The Indians had forced the Augusta detachment's line to retreat a total of about 400 yards since the first shots were fired, which put the critical fighting only a short distance from the camp: some participants said within sight of it. The Indians continued to press their attacks against the two detachments that had not yet joined to present a single continuous line of resistance. The gap between the two still represented a vulnerability the Indians might exploit if the Virginians could not close it.

With both of his subordinate colonels down, Lewis called on John Field. Although he had entered active service for this campaign in the grade of captain and commanding a three-company corps of volunteers, he held the permanent rank of colonel and the position of county lieutenant for Culpeper County. Lewis recognized Field in his permanent rank with the commensurate authority, and ordered him to lead a reinforcement of 200 men to stiffen and take command of the Augusta detachment's line on the right of the battlefield. Once in position, Lewis emphasized the need for him to extend the line to the left in an effort to join with that of the Botetourt detachment. Field went forward leading a composite battalion that included his own and Captain Kirtley's Culpeper County companies, the Augusta County companies of John Stuart, George Matthews and Samuel McDowell, complemented by the

⁹⁷⁵ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ121 (257-259); Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

remnants of the Augusta units whose captains deployed with Colonel Charles Lewis earlier in the day.⁹⁷⁶

Also on the right, Colonel Andrew Lewis anticipated that Cornstalk might send a force down the bed of Crooked Creek to its mouth on the Kanawha. If the Indians succeeded, they would not only get around the flank of the Augusta detachment's line and be in position to assail the Virginians' camp, but they could cut off the Virginians' retreat and seal the fate of the entire Southern Division.⁹⁷⁷ It became critical that Lewis get enough force along the creek on the right to stop such an enemy move. The colonel committed the last three Augusta County companies, about 120 men in all, to prevent the enemy from using the creek bed as an avenue of approach to the camp, and to gain control of the key terrain of the adjoining high ground on the east bank. The companies commanded by Captains William Nalle and Joseph Haynes were ready and marched without delay, while that of Captain George Moffat followed in short order. The two leading companies made contact with and engaged a party of the enemy in and astride the creek bed and forced the warriors to withdraw, while Moffet's company ascended and took control of the elevation, which prevented the enemy from using it to get around the militia's flank.⁹⁷⁸

While the engagement for the stream bed ensued, Field and his reinforcement reached the battle line just in time to stem the Indian advance. The colonel directed the newly arrived companies into position to strengthen and extend the line to the left

⁹⁷⁶ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277) Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

as the Virginians continued to fight on the tactical defensive. Summoning all the warriors they could, the Indian leaders made repeated brave and desperate attacks to break the Virginia line. All of their efforts proved futile, and according to Colonel Fleming, the “advantage of the place & the steadiness of the men defined their most furious Essays.”⁹⁷⁹

Meanwhile, although holding their positions on the left, the Botetourt men also needed help. Colonel Andrew Lewis sent a runner with a message directing Captain Evan Shelby to assume command of the detachment. He then ordered a reinforcement of about 200 men, consisting of the Botetourt County companies of Captains Matthew Arbuckle, Robert McClanahan, Henry Pauling, John Murray and John Lewis, the last being his and Charles’ nephew and cousin of his namesake in the Augusta Line, plus the units commanded by the lieutenants who had remained in camp when their captains marched with Fleming.

Despite the desperate situation, Fleming noted that Colonel Andrew Lewis “behaved with the greatest Conduct & prudence and by timely & Opportunely supporting the lines” as he directed the battle. His coolness under pressure and tactical competence ultimately saved the Southern Division of the army from destruction and achieved the victory. That does not excuse his errors. The ability of the Indian army to approach so close to the Camp at Point Pleasant without being detected nearly resulted in catastrophe. The plan for patrols and picket guards proved inadequate. The decision to muster some men out of each company and place them under command of the most experienced captains instead of committing entire companies to

⁹⁷⁹ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (341-343).

the two initial detachments had nearly led to defeat. It is therefore of great credit to the courageous officers still in the fight, and the brave men who followed them and acted like soldiers, that the Virginians were victorious.⁹⁸⁰

Despite the earlier error, Lewis focused on the task before him. Throughout the rest of the battle, Fleming described his commander as “fully employed in Camp” as he sent companies to reinforce parts of the line where they were most needed, and directed preparations for the defense of the camp in the event the Indians succeeded in pushing the army to the water’s edge. Until he committed their companies to the battle, the colonel instructed the captains who remained in camp to have their men working to clear the area between the two lines of tents and erect a breastwork using the trees and brush they removed. The sick, walking wounded, cattle and packhorse drivers, and all other men detailed “on command” from their companies took position behind the breastwork to defend the camp. Finally, Colonel Lewis held two companies in the rear. Captain Alexander McClanahan’s Augusta company, which provided that day’s camp guard and therefore constituted his final deployable reserve, and the Botetourt County company commanded by his eldest son, Captain John Lewis, which formed “a line round the Camp for its defense” behind which the other companies would rally to make a final stand at the breastwork.⁹⁸¹

Having “found their strength much increased” when Field arrived at the head of the reinforcements, the Augusta men on the right repulsed another attack and forced the Indians to retreat a short distance. Although the action remained “Extremely

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid.

Hot,” the Indian forces no longer held a numerical advantage along the line of battle, and the Virginians wrested the initiative from them and advanced. The militiamen began to regain some of the ground they had yielded earlier in the day. At about 9:00, the Augusta line had advanced far enough forward for its left-most unit to finally make contact with the Botetourt’s right-most. As Colonel Christian later wrote, “Our People at last formed a line” of battle that ran continuously for about 600 yards from the bank of the Ohio River on the west to Crooked Creek and the high ground on the east. The Ohio prevented the Indians from getting around the Virginians’ left flank, while the high steep – almost vertical in places – ridge on the right offered no ground on which they could traverse around the Virginia right flank. Given the number of men committed to the fight and the length of the line, the Virginia companies could easily have formed the line two ranks deep. Even with an extended interval and men taking cover behind rocks and trees, the files of two riflemen each would have been one yard or less apart. Such a density optimized both the rate and volume of the Virginians’ aimed defensive fire against an enemy that either stood fast or advanced. For the time from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, Point Pleasant became the kind of battle the Virginia troops had wanted to fight.⁹⁸²

The battle thus became static, but with no sign of slackening fire. In fact, the firing became even more intense as the opposing forces blasted away at each other at ranges of no more than twenty yards in some places. Along the line, some men fought individual combats, either with firearms, “tomahawking one another,” or hand

⁹⁸² Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277) Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

to hand. Colonel Field became engaged in such a close-quarters fight. While he stood behind a tree waiting to acquire a target, an Indian warrior hiding behind a tree to his left front began to talk, which distracted him. With his attention thus diverted, two warriors positioned among some logs on higher ground to his right shot and killed him. With Field dead, Captain Shelby assumed command of the entire line of battle.⁹⁸³

Amid the sounds of gunfire and screams of the wounded and dying, soldiers heard their officers and sergeants shouting orders and words of encouragement. Those soldiers who understood Indian languages translated for their comrades as they heard chiefs and leading warriors similarly exhorting their own men to “drive the white dogs in,” “lie close and shoot,” “shoot straight” and “be strong.” Those acquainted with Cornstalk heard his distinctive voice telling warriors to “fight and be strong!” All along the line, soldiers and warriors exchanged insults and epithets as well as bullets. Some recalled their comrades who spoke Shawnee translated, and English-speaking warriors “Damn’d our men for white Sons of Bitches.” Other warriors taunted, referring to the field musicians playing their fifes in battle, asking why they did not “Whistle now,” and instead of playing they should “learn to shoot!” Other Indians yelled to inform their opponents of expected reinforcements in the night, and with the additional warriors they would again outnumber the Virginians when they finished the battle on Tuesday.

⁹⁸³ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 27ZZ2 (269-277); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Camp at Point Pleasant, October 15, 1774, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (265); and, Pennsylvania Gazette, November 16, 1774, 18th Century American Newspapers, V1294, Library of Congress.

The engagement the Indians had initiated as a battle of annihilation, with a numerical superiority over Colonel Fleming's and Charles Lewis' detachments, had become a battle of attrition, in which the Virginia soldiers now outnumbered Cornstalk's warriors. The tide had turned slowly, beginning at about 7:00 am, as Colonel Andrew Lewis committed most of his companies to the engagement. When suffering heavy casualties, Indian warriors generally broke contact in order to renew the fight under more advantageous conditions. At Point Pleasant, however, the Shawnees and their allies faced an unusual circumstance in that withdrawing at this time in order to fight again would cause them to face the combined Virginia army at a location even closer to the towns and cornfields they sought to defend. Withdrawal from this battle gained them no advantage, and put them at greater disadvantage.⁹⁸⁴

Cornstalk therefore decided to remain engaged at Point Pleasant in order to inflict more casualties on the enemy. They would do so by allowing the Virginians to advance against a vigorous defense and pay dearly in blood for every foot gained. They would also feign retreat to lure into ambush or surprise small groups of advancing Virginians who they had deceived into thinking the Indians were on the run. When the opportunity presented itself, they would renew the attack and break the Virginians' line and destroy it.

Colonel Andrew Lewis gave Shelby the order to advance, and the troops pressed forward in a "fierce onset." Weight of numbers eventually began to tell, and the Indians fell back "by degrees" for about one mile. To counter Indian ploys that

⁹⁸⁴ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277)' Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

sought to draw them into small-scale ambushes, the Virginia officers endeavored to keep the men of their units in “one body,” according to Bland’s Treatise, so they provided mutual support to each other as they advanced. The leaders took care to prevent part of a unit from getting separated from the main body, lest a small number of enemy destroy a larger unit piecemeal. To counter the Indian tactic of feigning retreat to lure the Virginians into an ambush, the Virginian officers adhered to Bland’s advice to prevent men from leaving their places in the line to go after the foe individually, or even allowing a few to pursue faster than the rest of the line advanced. Instead, they had men deliver covering fire for others that maneuvered forward, which subjected the enemy to “many brisk fires,” which killed or wounded several of their chiefs and leading warriors.⁹⁸⁵

Although continuous, the volume of fire had decreased to the point that the officers considered it “not so heavy.” Despite the Virginians’ successful advance on the left side of the field, the terrain on the right, with its “Close underwood, many steep banks & Logs,” greatly favored the Indians in the defense as they disputed the ground “inch by inch” for about one mile. Between 1:00 and 2:00 pm, in the course of their long retreat, the Indians “met with an advantageous piece of ground,” a long ridge about one and one quarter mile east of the Ohio between a marsh and Crooked Creek, on which they could make a “resolute stand.” As a result, the Virginia line no longer ran straight across the point, but having advanced further along the Ohio on the left, it skirted southeastward then east along the base of the ridge to Crooked Creek. The Virginia officers made a reconnaissance of the Indian line and studied the

⁹⁸⁵ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343); and, Bland, 158-159.

terrain. They met in a council of war and determined it “imprudent” to attempt a frontal assault to “dislodge” the Indians.⁹⁸⁶

Between 3:00 and 4:00 o’Clock, the Virginians remarked on the decreased volume of the enemy’s fire and that the warriors began to appear “quite dispirited.” Officers speculated that the chiefs and leading warriors had vainly attempted to rally the braves and renew the fight. Throughout the battle, especially after the Indians began retreating, troops observed parties of warriors stopping to cut saplings to fashion into litters in order to remove the “dead, dying & wounded” from the battlefield. Although they recognized it as a common practice from previous battles, the militia officers were unaware of the details and extent of the evacuation until after the engagement. They had evidently carried wounded men back to the banked rafts and ferried them across. The Virginians found corpses hidden, buried or “slightly covered” with earth, dead leaves or foliage, and others had been “drag’d down and thrown into the Ohio.” The fallen warriors who could not be carried off by their friends were intentionally scalped, presumably to deny the Virginians the trophies.

As part of the Indian force carried out the grim task and prepared to cross the Ohio, the other maintained a level of fire to prevent interference by the Virginians, and according to Major Ingles, “Continued Shooting now & then until night put an End to the Tragical Scene and left many a brave fellow Weltering in his Gore.”⁹⁸⁷ Colonel Fleming’s orderly book noted that besides hearing a shot “now & then” to

⁹⁸⁶ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, and Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343), and 7ZZ2 (269-277), respectively.

⁹⁸⁷ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ121 (257-259).

discourage a pursuit, firing ceased at about one half hour before sunset. The Indians then left the Virginians “in full possession of the field of Battle.”⁹⁸⁸ Under the cover of darkness, the warriors skillfully withdrew to where the rafts were located five or six miles upstream, crossed the Ohio with their wounded, and retreated toward Chillicothe.⁹⁸⁹

“Victory having now declared in our favor,” Colonel Lewis ordered the men to return to camp, “in slow pace.” Along the way, they carefully searched for and recovered wounded to bring them into camp, and Fleming added, “as well as the Scalps of the Enemy.” Too late in the day to publish the usual written plan and order, Colonel Andrew Lewis verbally ordered that the guard mount a force double the usual size for the night, and designated “Victory” the “Parole,” or password.⁹⁹⁰

Colonel Christian and his Rear Body were still twelve to fifteen miles from the mouth of the Kanawha when the battle started. He had planned to reach the camp at the mouth of the Kanawha sometime on Tuesday until he received an urgent message from Colonel Andrew Lewis. Informed that the camp was under attack, Lewis ordered Christian to come as quickly as possible. Christian left a small guard detail to remain with the cattle and packhorses and to follow as best they could while he led most of the men forward to Point Pleasant. Privates Joseph Duncan and John W. Howe recalled, “We left the Cattle and marched on to join the battle,” but arrived too

⁹⁸⁸ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 and (286-287, 341-343).

⁹⁸⁹ Lieut. Isaac Shelby to John Shelby, letter dated Camp Opposite the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Virginia Papers 7ZZ2 (269-277) Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (341-343).

⁹⁹⁰ Col. William Fleming, Journal and Orderly Book October 10, 1774, and Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (286-287, 341-343), 2ZZ72, and 2ZZ6 (253-254), respectively.

late, after the battle had “terminated.” Captain Floyd recalled that Christian’s men marched into camp at about midnight, when they “were kindly received” and told that their arrival had been “much prayed for that day.” When the follow-on detachment with the cattle and pack train finally reached Point Pleasant on Wednesday, Private James Brown said they “helped to bury the dead, and attended the wounded & then stayed a considerable time on duty.”⁹⁹¹

When he saw the condition of the dead and wounded, Colonel Christian predicted that many more men would die. Not only did many have two or three gunshot wounds, the colonel added that the casualties were in a “deplorable situation,” with “bad doctors, few medicines, nothing to eat or dress with proper.” Even more horrifying, Christian remarked that the cries of the wounded prevented the uninjured but exhausted men from resting at all that night.⁹⁹²

Fleming described the engagement as “a hard fought Battle” that lasted from sunrise to sunset. While Lewis’ wing of the army retained the field, it had suffered 75 killed or mortally wounded, and 140 wounded of varying severity, with many shot in two places, and some in three. Having started the engagement with 1,000 effective men, the army sustained a casualty rate of about 20 percent, with an extraordinarily high proportion among the officers. These included the two colonels, four captains and four lieutenants dead. The wounded officers counted one colonel, three captains

⁹⁹¹ Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated October 15, 1774, Handwritten Mss, Bullitt Family Papers, Filson Historical Society (261-266); John W. Howe pension application W8938 dated June 3, 1833, Roll 1345; James Brown pension application S15347 dated March 25, 1834, Roll 367; Capt. John Floyd to Col. William Preston, letter dated Mouth of the Great Kanawha (Point Pleasant), October 16, 1774, Draper’s Notes 33S44-49 (266-269); Col. William Fleming, Journal October 10, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71 (288); and, Joseph Duncan pension application S1809, dated September 14, 1832, Roll 864.

⁹⁹² Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated October 15, 1774, Bullitt Papers (262).

and three lieutenants.⁹⁹³ The Virginians had the “satisfaction” of carrying all their wounded and dead off the battlefield “with Very little Loss of Scalps,” while taking about twenty scalps from the enemy.⁹⁹⁴

An exact number of Indian casualties cannot be determined due to their practice of carrying their wounded and dead off the battlefield, and disposing of the remains of the latter. Most Virginia participants believed the enemy had suffered an equal number of dead and wounded, but one can reasonably argue that they had fewer casualties. The only indication as to what the battle had cost the Shawnees and their allies rested in what the Virginians found on the battlefield. Major Ingles reported that the Virginia troops took twenty scalps. Two days after the engagement, Wednesday, October 12, Colonel Fleming enumerated the men having collected seventeen scalps “dressed hung upon a pole near the river.” The plunder taken on the field included “23 Guns, 80 Blankets, 27 Tomahawks,” plus assorted “Match coats, Skins, Shot pouches, powder horns, War clubs, &c.” Fleming recorded that the plunder “sold by Vendue accounted to near £100.”⁹⁹⁵

The battle may have ended but not the war. The men at Point Pleasant expected another engagement, if not there, then when they joined forces with Lord Dunmore. The day after the engagement, heavy patrols searched for Indians within several miles, and Colonel Christian’s men located the rafts where the warriors had ferried

⁹⁹³ Col. William Fleming, Journal and Orderly Book October 10, 1774, and Col. William Fleming to Mrs. Nancy Fleming, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (286-287, 341-343), 2ZZ72, and 2ZZ6 (253-254), respectively.

⁹⁹⁴ Capt. William Ingles to Col. William Preston, letter dated Point Pleasant, October 14, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ121 (257-259).

⁹⁹⁵ Col. William Fleming, Journal October, and Orderly Book October 11-12, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 292, 347).

across the river. Back in camp, with a double guard still mounted, the officers began the process of preparing the Southern Division, or Left Wing, to continue its mission. All company commanders inspected their men, arms and ammunition, and “completed” each soldier’s load to “¼ lb. Powder & ½ lb. Lead as early as possible,” held their units “in readiness” so that they could take the field and “well repulse” another enemy attack as they gathered the beaves and completed the post at Point Pleasant.⁹⁹⁶ Colonel Lewis composed a message to the governor that gave him details of the engagement. He also requested that in view of the recent battle, that Dunmore consider marching the Northern Division to Point Pleasant before he advanced against the Shawnee towns. If Lord Dunmore did not concur, Lewis requested that he send a surgeon to assist Doctor Watkins and medicine to help treat the Southern Division’s wounded.

Colonel Lewis took the time to commend his men. He asked his subordinate officers to pass on his “Hearty thanks ... to the brave officers & men who distinguished themselves” in the previous day’s battle, and commended their gallant behavior “a Victory... under God obtain’d.” The army took time to mourn its losses. Recognizing the high number of casualties, Colonel Lewis urged his men not to be dismayed by the deaths of so many brave officers and soldiers. Although they could not help regretting the casualties, the colonel urged that they use the memory of the fallen to inspire them “with a double degree of Courage and Earnest desire to give our perfidious Enemies one thorough Scourge.” The army buried the men who died in

⁹⁹⁶ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 11, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 345-346).

the battle in different places, and interred the “officers & Gentlemen in the Magazine.”⁹⁹⁷

In the aftermath of the fighting, Virginia officers and soldiers offered a grudging respect for their opponents. Colonel Christian, for example, recorded that the officers to whom he spoke after the battle described that “the Enemy behaved with inconceivable Bravery,” and “exceeded every man’s expectations.” Fleming said, “Never did Indians stick closer to it, nor behave bolder.” He also added that the warriors “came fully convinced they would beat us.”⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁸ Col. William Fleming, Journal October, and Orderly Book October 11-12, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 292, 347).

Chapter 12: Epilogue

– The Treaty of Camp Charlotte and Beyond

Fort Gower

On the day after the Battle of Point Pleasant, Tuesday, October 11, Lord Dunmore gave the order for his Northern Division, or Right Wing, to advance as planned. According to one tradition, he decided to do so the day after he heard the sounds of a small-arms infantry fire-fight in the distance – some thirty-five line-of-sight or seventy watercourse miles away. He had already sent Lewis orders to advance directly from Point Pleasant toward the nearest Shawnee towns on the upper Scioto as soon as the rest of his troops and supplies caught up to his main body. The intelligence received from White Eyes and Montour that the Shawnees would first go southward to engage Lewis before turning their attention on his wing presented Dunmore with the opportunity to steal the march on his opponent, and turn Cornstalk's plan against its designer. Before marching from Fort Gower, Dunmore dispatched messengers with orders for Colonel Andrew Lewis "to march soon to the [Shawnee] Towns & Join him on the way" near a region called the Pickaway Plains. With Cornstalk's battle-weary force retreating, and encumbered by wounded men, the Virginia army's Right Wing encountered little opposition as it advanced.⁹⁹⁹

On October 13, an express from Colonel Lewis arrived at Fort Gower with a message for Lord Dunmore. Members of the 100-man garrison posted to guard the supply magazines at the fort informed the messengers that the governor had marched with most of his wing of the army two days before they arrived. The messengers caught up to Dunmore the next day, and

⁹⁹⁹ Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261; Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 348). Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 307n.

delivered Colonel Lewis' report. When they heard the news of the Battle of Point Pleasant, presented Colonel Lewis' initial report of the engagement at the mouth of the Kanawha. When it was announced to them, the news of the battle at Point Pleasant "occasioned great joy among the troops." The outcome of the engagement proved "very different from what the Indians had promised themselves."

After a few more days of marching, the Right Wing of the Virginia army arrived at Pickaway Plains, not far from some important Indian towns. These included Grenadier Squaw's Town on Scippo Creek, about one half mile above its confluence with Congo Creek, and Cornstalk's Town, another half mile to the north. The most important, or principal town, of the Shawnees was Chillicothe, which had "good Houses & plenty of Ammunition & Provisions." White Eyes and John Montour had provided Dunmore with intelligence that the Shawnees had assembled between 500 and 700 warriors, plus their families and allies, to make a stand. Located on the west side of the Scioto where the high bank and only one ford below the site made the town a difficult place to attack. The Shawnees had "cleared the Woods to a great distance from the Place" to create fields of fire to improve on its inherent defensive qualities.¹⁰⁰⁰

As soon as Dunmore's men arrived, they went to work and erected Camp Charlotte. Named in honor of the British queen, it manifested the British-Colonial American doctrine for fighting Indians, that is by combining the strategic offense with the tactical defense. Dunmore's Right Wing had marched deep into Shawnee country, to very outskirts of the nation's principal towns. The fortified camp provided a secure base from which the

¹⁰⁰⁰ Col. William Preston to Patrick Henry, letter dated October 31, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ128 (292). Thwaites and Kellogg DHDW 302n. The site of this Chillicothe is near present Circleville, Ohio,

Virginians could conduct forays against centers of Shawnee population, commerce and food production. The Shawnees had to choose between abandoning their towns and retreating, or attacking. If they chose the latter, they would face 1,150 Virginia militiamen fighting on the tactical defense, entrenched behind sturdy earthen breastworks.¹⁰⁰¹ To make matters more urgent, the Shawnees could expect Colonel Lewis and the Left Wing of the Virginia army to begin its advance to join forces with Dunmore.

Dispirited, the India chiefs and leading warriors held a council. Cornstalk convinced them that seeking terms of peace presented the best option for their nation. The Indian leaders resolved to make no further attempts to challenge the Long Knife, or what Dunmore characterized in his report to Lord Dartmouth, “a Power they saw so far Superior to theirs.” Instead of continuing to fight, the Shawnee chiefs decided to “throw themselves upon our Mercy.” Knowing that Lord Dunmore had marched with the Northern Division, or Right Wing, the Indian headmen went to find and meet him the day he arrived near their towns. They sent the Pennsylvania trader, Matthew Elliott, with a flag of truce to arrange the meeting.¹⁰⁰²

Another Pennsylvania trader, John Gibson, the widower of Logan’s sister, Koonay, accompanied Dunmore’s expedition as an interpreter. Elliott informed Dunmore that the Shawnee chiefs had sent him to request for his Lordship to halt his army and send some person to their town who understood their language. Dunmore’s officers recommended Gibson. When he arrived, Gibson found Cornstalk and Logan. After Logan shed an

¹⁰⁰¹ Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 262. Draper’s Notes 3S517 (302n). Thwaites and Kellogg, DHDW, 301n.

¹⁰⁰² Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261; Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 348).

“abundance of tears,” he delivered his famous lament. He then agreed to bring in the prisoners he still held, which included the young Roberts boy from the Holston, the two black men captured at Blackmore’s, Betsy Spicer and William Robinson, the last being the man to whom he dictated the letter to Cresap left on the war club at the Roberts’ home.¹⁰⁰³

“Logan’s Lament” was later published in the *Virginia Gazette* to wide acclaim.

Thomas Jefferson included it in Notes on the State of Virginia:

“I appeal to any white man to say, if he entered Logan’s cabin hungry, and he gave him not meat; if ever he came cold and naked, and he clothed him not. During the course of that long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites, that my countrymen pointed as they passed, and said, ‘Logan is the friend of white men.’ I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Col. Cresap, the last spring, in cold blood, and unprovoked, murdered 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 living 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 on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? – Not one.”¹⁰⁰⁴

Point Pleasant

On October 12, only two days after the bloody battle at Point Pleasant, the Left Wing began preparing in earnest for continuing the expedition. Colonel Christian sent fifty men to get the cattle left behind when the Fincastle troops made the forced march to Point Pleasant on the day of the battle. Since many of the beeves and horses had wandered away and “dispersed in different quarters” in the fusion that day, Major Ingles sent the cattle and packhorse drivers out to gather and drive their charges back to camp. Lieutenant James Allen, his brother Hugh having been killed in action, resumed supervising the construction of the storehouse as

¹⁰⁰³ John Gibson, deposition sworn to Judge Jeremiah Baker, April 4, 1800 at Pittsburgh (233-234), published in Jefferson, Thomas, Notes on the State of Virginia, William Peden, ed., (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 234. Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Smithfield, November 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ130 (301-307).

¹⁰⁰⁴ Jefferson, 63.

Colonel Lewis urged the master and artificers to have it “finished as quick as possible.” The commanders of the several companies had their men clear away all the “underwood” near their unit’s tents. The captains then divided the proposed line according to their companies’ strength, and after the quartermaster sergeant issued them the necessary tools, the men began work on the defensive breastwork.¹⁰⁰⁵

Very early on the morning of October 13, Privates Sharp and Mann returned from Fort Gower with Governor Dunmore’s orders to march toward the Shawnee towns and meet his Lordship on the way.¹⁰⁰⁶ The next day Colonel Lewis issued the necessary commissions and appointments to replace those officers killed in the battle, and Captain Slaughter arrived with the soldiers and cattle that Christian had left at Elk Creek. Over the next few days, the fatigue details finished building the storehouse, bastion and “running up” a breastwork that measured “two logs high.” A detail, which consisted of three men drawn from each company, went out to search for all of the army’s horses still on the loose, and drive them back to camp, while the cattle drivers gathered and penned their animals.¹⁰⁰⁷

By Saturday, five days after the battle, the army had regained much of its strength and had the camp in a reasonably good state of defense. Colonel Lewis issued the order for company commanders to inspect their men to identify all the sick, lame and others “Judged unfit for Duty” that would remain at Camp Point Pleasant when the rest of the Southern Division, or Left Wing, marched.¹⁰⁰⁸ The captains issued each of the men going on the expedition one half pound of powder and one half pound of lead to cast into bullets. The commissary directed the

¹⁰⁰⁵ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 12-14, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288-289, 347-349).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 13, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (288, 348).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Col. William Fleming, Journal October 13 -16, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71 (288).

butchers to prepare a five-day ration of beef to issue the next day so they could prepare for its “carriage” as the companies completed the breastwork. Colonel Lewis called for the scouts to assemble for his instructions for the next phase of the campaign. By Sunday, Major Ingles, the commissary, had selected the sixty strongest packhorses to carry the flour, and one horse for each company to carry its tents.¹⁰⁰⁹

Colonel Fleming, still recovering from his wounds, assumed command of the camp and the 278 men who stayed behind. His command included a garrison of three company-size detachments, “properly officered,” with one composed of men from Augusta, one from the Botetourt and Fincastle, and the third from the contingents of the other counties represented, with a total strength of 7 officers, 15 sergeants, 2 musicians and 156 rank and file, plus a number of cattle and packhorse drivers and boatmen. He also had responsibility for 94 sick and wounded and 18 men who functioned as “waiters on the wounded.” While the rest of the army continued the expedition, those remaining served to secure the camp from an enemy attack, send out ranging patrols and perform the regular camp duties that included guard mount and work details to complete the fort. When finished, in addition to the storehouse, breastwork and bastions, Fort Blair would have four curtain walls and barracks constructed of hewn timber. The post would also serve as a magazine to guard, store and relay supplies and provisions to the expedition as it marched deeper into enemy territory. Private Joseph Hundly, originally of Captain William Leftwich’s Bedford County company who served in Captain Slaughter’s garrison company, recalled the men built the stockade to house the sick and wounded, and “there was men left sufficient to protect the garrison at that place.” On

¹⁰⁰⁹ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book, October 15-18, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ72 (349-50).

Monday, October 17, the Left Wing crossed the Ohio with 1,150 men, 118 beeves and a ten-day supply of flour. The next morning, it started its march for the Shawnee towns.¹⁰¹⁰

In spite of the number of casualties suffered in the recent engagement, the troops of the Left Wing were confident and eager to face the next challenge. As the main body prepared to cross the Ohio and enter Shawnee territory the next day, Ensign James Newell of Captain William Herbert's company of Fincastle County, which remained behind to garrison the Camp at Point Pleasant, felt inspired to express his thoughts in verse. On October 17, after he recorded the next day's orders and his company's strength report, or "return," Newell entered the poem he composed in his Orderly Book and Journal. It is remarkable not only as a statement of duty and resolve, but also for expressions of respect and loyalty to Lord Dunmore and King George III:

Bold Virginians all, each cheer up your heart.
We will see the Shawnees before we part,
We will never desert, nor will we retreat,
Until that our Victory be quite complete.

Ye offspring of Britain! Come stain not your name,
Nor forfeit your right to your father's fame,
If the Shawnees will fight, we never will fly,
We'll fight & we'll conquer, or else we will die.

Great Dunmore our General valiant & Bold,
Excels the great Heroes – the Heroes of old;
When he doth command we will always obey,
When he bids us fight we will not run away.

Good Lewis our Colonel, courageous & Brave,
We wish to command us – our wish let us have.
In Camp he is pleasant, in War he is bold

¹⁰¹⁰ Col. William Fleming, Orderly Book, October 17-18, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ72 (352-352); Ens. James Newell Orderly Book, October 27, 1774, Virginia Papers ZZ1-12 (367); Joseph Handly pension application S5581 dated September 4, 1832, Roll 1368.

Appears like great Caesar – great Caesar of old.

Our Colonels & Captains commands we'll obey,
If the Shawnees should run, we will bid them to stay.
Our Arms, they are Rifles, our men Volunteers,
We'll fight & we'll conquer; you need have no fears.

Come Gentlemen all, come strive to excel,
Strive not to shoot often, but strive to shoot well.
Each man like a Hero, can make the woods ring,
And extend the Dominion of George our Great King.

Then to it, let's go with might & with main,
Tho' some that set forward return not again.
Let us quite lay aside all cowardly fear,
In hopes of returning before the new year.

The land it is good, it is just to our mind,
Each will have his part if his Lordship be kind.
The Ohio once ours, we'll live at our ease,
With a Bottle & glass to drink when we please.

Here's a health to King George & Charlotte his mate,
Wishing our Victory may soon be complete,
And a fine female friend along by our Side,
In riches & in splendor till Death to abide.

Health to great Dunmore our general also,
Wishing he may conquer wherever he go.
Health to his Lady – may they long happy be

And a health, my good friends, to you & to me.¹⁰¹¹

Pickaway Plains

When the Shawnee leaders arrived at Camp Charlotte, Dunmore immediately welcomed them to a conference in which they settled the differences that existed between the two sides. Lord Dunmore proposed terms that surprised the Indians as more lenient than they could have hoped. In specifying the “Terms of our reconciliation,” the first article required the Shawnees to “Delver up all prisoners without reserve.” This included not only those captured in the

¹⁰¹¹ Lt. James Newell, Orderly Book and Journal, dated Camp on Point Pleasant, October 17, 1774, Draper Manuscripts, Virginia Papers 11ZZ1 (361-362).

course of this conflict, but those captives still held since the end of the French and Indian and Pontiac's Wars. The Indians also had to "Restore all horses and other valuable effects" which they carried off in the course of their raids on the backcountry settlements. In keeping with the Treaties of Stanwix, Hard Labor and Lochaber, the Shawnees recognized the cessions the Six Nations of Iroquois and the Cherokees made to British colonial officials. Accordingly, they promised to neither hunt on the Virginia side of the Ohio River, "nor molest any boats passing on it." In establishing peace with the Virginia colony, the Shawnees also had to "Promise to agree" to the regulations that governed their trade with that colony and its people "as hereafter dictated by the King's Instructions."¹⁰¹²

To provide guarantee that they would abide by the articles of the treaty, Lord Dunmore required the Shawnees to "Deliver ... certain hostage," chiefs or their sons, for security. The Virginians would keep them in custody at Williamsburg until convinced of the Shawnees' "sincere intention" to comply to the articles of the treaty. Pleased that Dunmore imposed no punishment, the Indian leaders agreed to the terms "with alacrity and solemn assurances of their quiet and peaceable deportment for the future." Dunmore reciprocated by promising their nation "protection and good treatment" by his government and the people of Virginia.¹⁰¹³ The Treaty of Camp Charlotte represented only an interim agreement or an armistice. The parties would meet again, in the spring of 1775, after the General Assembly reconvened and ratified the terms, at which time they would conclude the formal treaty at Fort Dunmore.

It looked as though the parties had agreed to peace and the war ended when Shawnee scouts reported to their headmen of another force of Virginians approaching, that had come as

¹⁰¹² Governor Earl of Dunmore to Earl of Dartmouth, Official Report dated Williamsburg, December 24, 1774, DAR 8: 261.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid.

close as fifteen miles from their towns. The headmen took their concern to Lord Dunmore, at which he immediately dispatched an express to order Colonel Lewis to halt and advance no further. He informed Lewis that he had “very near concluded a peace.” Finding no suitable place to encamp, and since someone had fired on his men earlier that day, Lewis ordered his men to continue marching.¹⁰¹⁴

The next morning, another express arrived from Governor to inform Colonel Lewis that a peace treaty “was in a manner concluded” and that the “Shawanese had agreed to his terms.” He repeated the order for Lewis to halt, approach no closer, and encamp. The governor also invited Lewis and any of his officers as he deemed proper, to come over to Camp Charlotte. Not thinking it “prudent” for a party of a few officers to travel in enemy territory, despite the pending treaty, Lewis led his entire division with the intention of joining his Lordship. His guide, however, led them on the wrong path, taking one that led between the Shawnee towns and Dunmore’s location instead of the one that led toward Camp Charlotte. The Indians feared that Lewis would attack their towns, and “left his Lordship, and run off.”¹⁰¹⁵

All of the Indians had left Camp Charlotte except White Fish, who had accompanied John Gibson. Lord Dunmore headed straight to Colonel Lewis division, and arrived at his camp at dusk. The governor asked Colonel Lewis why he had not stopped when he so ordered, and if he intended to march on the Indian towns. The colonel explained what had happened and the mistake that had transpired, and assured Dunmore that he had no intention of attacking the

¹⁰¹⁴ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 28-29, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (289-291-289, 355-356); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Smithfield, November 8, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ130 (301-307).

¹⁰¹⁵ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 28-29, 1774, Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (289-291-289, 355-356); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Smithfield, November 8, 1774, William Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts 3QQ130 (301-307).

Indian towns after he had received his Lordship's orders. The next morning, the governor addressed the assembled the captains and field officers of the Southern Division to explain that the Indians had agreed to terms. Believing the continued presence of Lewis' troops could hinder the conclusion of the peace treaty, Dunmore sent them home, except for fifty Fincastle men who went to the other wing's camp. Following beating of the *General* the following morning, Lewis' men broke camp and marched in the direction of the Ohio River. The Southern Division, or Left Wing, of the army reached Point Pleasant on October 28, and all had crossed over to the Virginia side the following day.¹⁰¹⁶

The Shawnees had complied with the terms, but the Mingoies had not. They objected to the conditions, and Major William Crawford believed that they intended to deceive the Virginians. John Montour informed Governor Dunmore that the Mingoies intended to "slip off" while the Virginians settled matters with the Shawnees. They planned to escape to the Great Lakes where the Virginians would not follow, taking their captives and stolen horses with them.¹⁰¹⁷ The governor ordered Major Crawford to lead 240 men to go after them. Private John W. Howe of Robertson's Fincastle company, volunteered to join them. He explained that when the Mingoies "defied or failed to come in," the governor ordered Crawford's unit "to go against their town."¹⁰¹⁸

In order to deceive the Mingoies of the true nature of their mission Crawford's men to set out at night under the pretense of going to Hockhocking for provisions. The soldiers changed course and marched swiftly to a Mingo town named Salt-Lick Town, forty miles up the Scioto

¹⁰¹⁶ Col. William Fleming, Journal, and Orderly Book, October 28-29, 1774, Virginia Papers 2ZZ71, 2ZZ72 (289-291-289, 355-356); Col. William Christian to Col. William Preston, letter dated Smithfield, November 8, 1774, William Preston Papers 3QQ130 (301-307).

¹⁰¹⁷ Maj. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Stewart's Crossing, November 14, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters. 54-57.

¹⁰¹⁸ John W. Howe pension application W8938 dated June 3, 1833, Roll 1345.

from Camp Charlotte. According to Montour's information, all of the Mingoies had planned to rendezvous there the next day before beginning their journey. Crawford and his men reached Salt-Lick Town that night. At daybreak he sent half of his force around Salt-Lick and the other half to another small village one half mile away.¹⁰¹⁹

As a Virginia scout crept toward the village, he encountered an Indian laying behind a log that blocked his path just outside of town. On being discovered, the Virginian had no choice but to kill the Indian. Crawford's men then attacked, and caused much damage, but because the noise alerted the Indians in the process, most of the band made its escape. The Virginians killed six and wounded several more of the enemy. The troops also took fourteen prisoners and captured ten guns, all of the Mingoies' baggage and horses, as well as rescued two white captives. The plunder later sold for £400. Lord Dunmore kept eleven of the prisoners and returned the rest to their people as a sign of good faith.¹⁰²⁰

Williamsburg

With peace concluded, Lord Dunmore ordered the discharge of the militia from colonial service. The companies of the Northern Division made their way back up the Ohio, while most of the Southern Division returned by way it come, along the Kanawha Trail to Elk River, some crossed the Kanawha at its mouth and headed for points in Fincastle County. The colony maintained garrisons at the mouth of the Kanawha, at what was named Fort Blair, and at Fort Dunmore in Pittsburgh. Fort Fincastle, at Wheeling, remained unoccupied, but ready for use by the local militia in a future alarm. Before Dunmore's expeditionary army dissolved in November, some of the Northern Division's officers met at the fortified magazine at the

¹⁰¹⁹ Maj. William Crawford to George Washington, letter dated Stewart's Crossing, November 14, 1774, Washington-Crawford Letters, 54-57.

¹⁰²⁰ Ibid.

mouth of the Hockhocking, where they drafted and signed a document they titled the “Fort Gower Resolves.” The document reflected their loyalty to the British Crown while also stating their commitment to liberty and rights as free born Englishmen. The officers affirmed, “That we will bear the most faithful allegiance to his Majesty King George the Third ... [and] at the expense of life, and everything dear and valuable, exert ourselves in support of the honor of his Crown and the dignity of the British Empire.” They closed by complimenting the governor. “We entertain the greatest respect for his Excellency, the Right Honorable Lord Dunmore, who commanded the expedition against the Shawanese ... from no other motive than the true interest of this country.”¹⁰²¹ While the officers acknowledged that political tensions between the government in London and the colonies had grown worse during their absence. They maintained that their fervent desire for a redress of colonial grievances had not kept them from faithfully performing their duties, but the officers made known to all their sympathies by stating, “We will exert every power within us for the defense of American liberty, and for support of her just rights and privileges; not in any precipitate, riotous, or tumultuous manner, but when regularly called forth by the unanimous voice of our countrymen.”¹⁰²²

Dunmore received a hero’s welcome when he triumphantly entered the capital of Williamsburg. Proclamations of thanks and gratitude abounded in print on the pages of the *Virginia Gazette* as well as oratory. They came from those “most dutiful and loyal subjects,” the mayor, recorder, aldermen and common council of both of Virginia’s major municipalities, the city of Williamsburg, Borough of Norfolk, and the president and professors of the College of William and Mary. Everyone, it seemed, congratulated and thanked him for

¹⁰²¹ Force, *American Archives*, 1: 962-963.

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*

performing “a dangerous and fatiguing service,” and achieving the “defeat of the designs of a cruel and insidious enemy.” The king’s Virginia subjects likewise congratulated their governor on the newest addition to his family, a daughter that he and Lady Dunmore appropriately named Virginia.¹⁰²³ The celebrations continued in the best traditions of British America with the illumination of the capitol and a ball.

Celebration, however, only delayed the impact, or masked the reality, of the bad news. In short order, his lordship would learn of the true severity of the worsening constitutional crisis that had developed in his absence. It was only a matter of time before Americans would learn that Parliament intended to impose more coercive legislation on the other colonies, including Virginia, similar to the laws it had passed to force Massachusetts Bay back to its proper sense of duty. Up to that time, except when he dissolved the General Assembly in June, Dunmore had not taken the visible elements of Virginia’s resistance seriously. He provided little or no information about the situation to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Dartmouth. While the rumor of bloodshed in Massachusetts in September proved to be fiction, the constitutional crisis inched a little closer to the possibility of rebellion with the First Continental Congress and the Virginia Convention. The colonial resistance to Parliamentary rule manifested itself when the former meeting passed the Continental Association, mirrored by the Virginia Association in his own colony. The reality of the political situation became painfully obvious in April 1775 when the “Quiet Time” came to an end. By this time Lord Dunmore found that his popularity had waned. Virginia colonists learned that British regulars had fired on colonial militiamen in Massachusetts, and the constitutional crisis erupted into

¹⁰²³ Ibid., 1019, 1020.

war. Lord Dunmore had only a few months to reside in the Governor's Palace at his capital of Williamsburg.

The colony's General Assembly convened in June, with the recently elected, or reelected, representatives taking their seats in House of Burgesses. The matter of continuing or replacing the expired Militia Act, ratification of the Treaty of Camp Charlotte and appointing commissioners to negotiate the formal treaty with the Shawnees at Pittsburgh, and paying for the recently concluded Indian war, led the list of issues that he would lay before the Assembly for action.

The Virginia General Assembly attempted to take up the public's business where the last session left off the previous year, when Dunmore dissolved the House of Burgesses. Being the first session convened following the end of hostilities with the Shawnees, the lower house followed the established procedures and appointed the required number of commissioners to examine the muster rolls to determine the pay to which soldiers earned for their service. They also examined commissary and quartermaster records to satisfy the claims for reimbursement of the citizens who contributed the goods, materials, services, and animals the army required, whether voluntary or impressed. Unfortunately for those entitled to the money, the General Assembly adjourned shortly after June 8, the day Lord Dunmore fled Williamsburg to seek refuge and send his family back to Great Britain. He reestablished his capital on board HMS *Fowey* anchored in the York River, which made it impossible to conduct the province's business with the legislature still in Williamsburg, despite the latter's guarantee of the governor's personal safety.

Richmond

The Third Virginia Convention assumed the duties of the colonial legislature when it convened in Richmond on July 17, 1775. The Revolutionary War having begun, in order to defend the colony, the Convention established a new armed force consisting of regulars, minutemen and militia, all of which were answerable to the Convention through its executive body, the Committee of Safety. The Convention also voted to disband the companies the old government had retained in active service for the garrisons of Forts Blair and Dunmore [Pitt] to defend the frontier, as well as the volunteer militia companies the Second Convention had resolved to raise in March in order to provide for the colony's defense after the old militia law expired without being continued by the General Assembly.¹⁰²⁴

The Convention then took up the matter of paying for the recent Indian war, both in its responsibility to pay the soldiers and to satisfy the public service claims. After the commissioners completed their examinations and reported their findings to the committee of the whole, the Convention voted to pay the veterans for their service to the colony. The new legislature also made provisions to award pensions for the relief of the wounded whose combat injuries prevented them from supporting themselves by their pre-war occupations, as well as to the surviving widows and orphans of the men who died while in service. When the legislature finally settled all accounts, Dunmore's War had cost Virginia approximately £350,000 in colonial currency.¹⁰²⁵ In order to raise the necessary revenue to meet these and other expenses, the Convention voted to impose new taxes.¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰²⁴ Henning, Statutes, 9: 61-65.

¹⁰²⁵ Virgil A. Lewis History of the Battle of Point Pleasant (Westminster, Md.: Willow Bend Books, 2000), 74, 128.

¹⁰²⁶ Henning, Statutes, 9: 61-65.

The Convention established the following per diem rate for each day of actual service Virginia soldiers performed: commanding officers, 1 pound, 5 shillings; county lieutenants, 1 pound; colonels, 15 shillings; lieutenant colonels, 13 shillings; majors, 12 shillings; captains, 10 shillings; lieutenants, 7 shillings, 6 pence; ensigns, 7 shillings; quartermasters and adjutants, 6 shillings; sergeants, 2 shillings, 6 pence; corporals, 2 shillings; drummers and fifers, 2 shillings; privates, 1 shilling, 6 pence; and scouts, 5 shillings.¹⁰²⁷ The Convention voted to pay the men called into service by their counties and those who served under Lord Dunmore, including volunteers recruited in Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania, according to the same scale. The veterans of Dunmore's War therefore received the same compensation as the soldiers who served as Virginia regulars, minutemen, and militiamen in actual service to fight the British or guard the frontier from Indian attack in the early stages of the Revolutionary War.¹⁰²⁸

Aftermath and Legacy

When the Revolutionary War came to Virginia, the legacy of Dunmore's War had a significant effect. The victory of the Virginia militia in Dunmore's War, and particularly at the Battle of Point Pleasant, effectively pacified the Ohio frontier with regard to the Shawnees and the faction of Mingo allied with them. The officers of the British Indian Department did not convince them and other Ohio area Indian nations to become full participants in the War for American Independence on the side of the British Crown until 1777.

The frontier along the Ohio River had remained peaceful during the two ensuing years, which coincided in part with an absence of British troops in the thirteen colonies, and allowed

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid. 9: 63-64.

¹⁰²⁸ Ibid.

the Patriot side a degree of security to adopt independence. Dunmore's mild terms in the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, probably influenced the Shawnees' and Mingo's decision to side with the British as a means of halting continued American expansion in the region. The unintended consequence of Ohio Indians' military alliance with and cooperating with Crown forces made the area between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers enemy-held territory. That situation prompted Governor Thomas Jefferson to order Brigadier General George Rogers Clark to lead Virginia forces in an invasion to reestablish the state's claim in defiance of the Quebec Act of 1774.

It is somewhat ironic that Andrew Lewis, as a brigadier general in the Continental Army, commanded the forces that drove his former governor's British and Loyalist forces out of Virginia in July of 1776. Dunmore's time in the colony thus came to an end.

Conclusion - Analysis

Lord Dunmore commanded Virginia forces and led them to victory in a war to defend the colony against attacks by a Shawnee-led Indian confederacy. To the casual observer achieving a defensive objective by pursuing an offensive strategy may seem a paradoxical, but it explains Virginia's actions in Dunmore's War. The colony's last royal governor planned and conducted an invasion of an opponent's homeland that achieved a victory not measured by the numbers of enemy combatants killed and non-combatants slain, areas of land ceded, reparations obtained, or the monetary value of a ruined economy, but the formal recognition of an established border, promise to cessation of cross-border incursions, return of captured property and repatriation of prisoners. The Virginia colony fought a limited war for limited defensive objectives, at the end of which, it offered the Indians generous peace terms. While such a view runs counter to those found in recent scholarship, it should not

come as a surprise. The character of the outcome reflected that of the limited wars fought in Europe during the same period.

Dunmore's War not only reflected eighteenth century concepts of limited conflict, but a more timeless reason the Virginians went to war in 1774. Among lists of governmental responsibilities, security of borders and protection of citizens and their property from foreign invaders have always ranked high. With confidence in the validity of the treaties that defined the Ohio River as the boundary between the area open to settlement and Indian country, the colonists considered the presence of hunting parties on the south bank as a treaty violation. Given the clash of cultures and frequency of such incidents, encounters turned violent until both sides resorted to armed conflict in order to settle their differences. Virginians justified their reaction as a response to an unjust aggressor.

From April to August 1774, Shawnee and Mingo military operations forced thousands of settlers to abandon their backcountry homes and farms and flee to the safety of less vulnerable areas. Those who remained risked all as they lived and worked in constant fear of attack. Defensive measures, such as conducting patrols and building forts in which settlers took refuge, afforded a degree of protection but did not stop depredations. As the situation grew more desperate, Governor Dunmore offered to lead an offensive against the Indians. He argued that doing so would achieve a more favorable military outcome, cost less blood and treasure, and take less time than staying on defense. Forcing the enemy to fight in his own country rather than in the colony provided the Virginians the motivation for invading Shawnee country, not the acquisition of territory.

Despite the prowess that Indian warriors exhibited in combat, Virginia militiamen went to war confident in their own abilities. Although the two combatant forces shared some apparent similarities in technique, such as men taking cover to return fire, the militiamen did not simply copy fighting methods of their Indian opponents. Warriors usually attacked only when they held such an advantage that guaranteed their success in a battle of annihilation. When they did not possess such an advantage at the outset of a battle, they created it as the fight developed in order to finish it on their terms. For example, Indian braves typically retreated before a numerically superior army, and traded ground for enemy lives until the opposing force was either lured to its destruction, or so weakened that it retreated.

The Virginia forces developed tactics of their own, known as skirmishing or bush-fighting, to counter their opponents' advantages. The soldiers of the backcountry combined techniques learned from native warriors with the British army's *petite guerre* – or guerrilla war – doctrine as adapted to the terrain and enemy found in North America, and integrated the use of the rifle. A uniquely European contribution to this style of warfare, the rifle provided an individual soldier with a weapon of greater range and accuracy than the standard musket. Originally developed for hunting, the military application of rifle technology caused a further revision in the tactics Virginia soldiers had honed in previous conflicts.

When on defense, the militiamen relied on aimed fire more than massed volleys, but employed both with effect. When on offense, the Virginians ideally sought to force opposing warriors to either yield ground and disperse, or left them no alternative but to attack at a disadvantage against the disciplined firepower of

cohesive units. When executed properly, some historians describe the militia tactic as essentially acting on the strategic offense but the tactical defense – albeit in a very basic sense. The differences in the styles of fighting employed by both combatants, as well as the similarities, were demonstrated at the Battle of Point Pleasant. That decisive tactical victories made the strategic victory reflected in the terms of the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, possible.

The doctrine of acting on the strategic offense is also evident in the final phase of Dunmore's War at Pickaway Plains. The Virginia army marched deep into Shawnee country, threatening the Shawnees' principal towns with destruction, thereby demonstrating the strategic offense. The soldiers then built Camp Charlotte, and prepared to fight from behind sturdy entrenchments on the tactical defense if the Shawnees chose to oppose them. Given two equally unacceptable options, either abandoning their towns or attacking the fortified camp, the Shawnees agreed to terms dictated by Dunmore.

The actual peace terms do not match those perceived in many accounts of Dunmore's War. What the Treaty of Camp Charlotte did not require of the Indians is of equal significance. Dunmore imposed neither harsh terms nor demanded punitive concessions from the defeated enemy. Instead, the governor required the Shawnees to accept the cessions negotiated by the Six Nations and Crown representatives in 1768. Although sounding harsh to present-day audiences, Dunmore's requirement for the Shawnees and Mingoes to surrender hostages while waiting for a formal treaty was a conventional practice in Indian diplomacy. The holding of hostages guaranteed

the Shawnee and Mingo representatives would attend the council to negotiate the formal peace treaty.

The popular perception that Dunmore's expedition enjoyed had great success in enlisting volunteers with the promise of generous land bounties is also incorrect. Of those who volunteered, when relating accounts of their own participation, the desire to acquire Indian land was conspicuously absent. In contrast, soldiers volunteered primarily to serve and defend their country of Virginia. Many also cited the desire to prevent or avenge the murder and abduction of loved ones and neighbors, as well as the destruction of their homes and loss of property, at the hands of Shawnee and Mingo raiders. Given such motivation, it is remarkable that Dunmore's army achieved success without the troops resorting to the indiscriminate killing of non-combatants or large-scale destruction of Shawnee and Mingo towns and cornfields.

A related fallacy about Dunmore's War that has appeared in some recent scholarship holds that recruitment for the expedition was not difficult, given the allure of acquiring land and plunder. The records indicate that some officers experienced difficulty in raising their units. In such cases, captains combined understrength companies to form one with sufficient numbers to enter service. In some communities, militia officials resorted to filling their vacant ranks by a draft. Others sent recruiting agents to communities in other colonies, primarily North Carolina and Maryland, to seek individual volunteers. Counties not included in the call-up also responded to the governor's call. Dunmore, Bedford, Culpepper and Pittsylvania all raised companies for the expedition as well to defend neighboring Fincastle and

Botetourt Counties. Clearly, recruiting troops to serve in Dunmore's War was more difficult often asserted.

Although the militia of the western Virginia counties performed reasonably well in general during Dunmore's War, and at the Battle of Point Pleasant in particular, it displayed weaknesses that cannot be ignored. Service in the militia on the frontier was markedly different from that in more secure areas of the colony. By necessity, the soldiers of the backcountry took their obligations to attend training assemblies and otherwise participate more seriously than their counterparts in the Tidewater, for example, due to the proximity of an actual threat. Living in communities vulnerable to attack, by necessity, they received more practical experience in being called out for alarms or ordered into active service for short, and sometimes frequent, periods of active service. Many of them volunteered to serve multiple tours of duty during the emergencies of 1774.

Although more proficient than the militia companies that mustered for one day every calendar quarter, the militia of the frontier counties remained citizen-soldiers and not professionals. Breaches of discipline among militiamen, such as desertion on the expedition, did not result in the same severe punishment inflicted on British regulars for similar offenses. Such weakness notwithstanding, the militia establishments of the western counties had a core of men who demonstrated at least a quasi-professional level of proficiency, and could be depended upon in emergencies. Throughout the Revolutionary War, many veterans of Dunmore's War volunteered for service in the Continental Army, defended their communities and responded to

countless local alarms, and served in expeditions against British forces and their Indian allies.

To the objective observer, the righteousness of each side's cause turns on the different perceptions of the provisions of the Treaties of Hard Labor, Fort Stanwix and Lochaber, negotiated between 1768 and 1770, as well as the Cherokee Grant of 1772. Negotiated in good faith by representatives of the British Crown and native peoples, ratified by King George III, and of benefit to the colony, Virginians generally accepted them as valid agreements. Although not a principal party, Virginia commissioners usually – but not always – succeeded in having the Crown's negotiators consider the colony's interests. In contrast, the Shawnees rejected the Ohio as the boundary and maintained that parties who spoke on their behalf at the treaty councils did not represent their interests. This distinction is often missing from recent studies of the conflict and its causes, which tend to focus on the Shawnee position.

Not unlike the Virginia colony's leaders, Shawnee and Mingo war chiefs took responsibility for the protection of their people and the safeguarding of their nations' territory, both homeland and hunting ground. Vacant land that Virginians may have legitimately viewed as open to settlement and improvement from their perspective and moved to occupy, Indians also rightly looked upon as an invasion of an area vital to their people's economy and survival. Crossing the Ohio to raid Virginia settlements, from the Shawnee point of view, may be likened to their Big Knife opponents conducting a defensive war with an offensive strategy, and not waging one of aggression. From their respective positions, both sides in Dunmore's War each

perceived its actions as right. The conditions that contribute to these divergent perceptions must be equally considered in order to more fully understand the conflict.

Deconstruction of the events to a struggle between the two primary combatant entities results in simplistic explanations. Dunmore's War involved more participating polities than the colony of Virginia on one side, and the Shawnees, with some Mingo allies, on the other. It is much more complex, and the complexity had important effects as has been shown.

Relations between the British Empire and its colonies on one side and Indians on the other were likewise intricate and transcend the events of 1774. For example, the sometimes contentious relationship that existed between the various native peoples of the Ohio region and the Six Nations of Iroquois, as well as the Cherokees, are too significant to ignore. Likewise, those that existed between Great Britain and its colonies in general, as well as between the colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania in particular, are important to the study of the causes, conduct, legacy and the memory of Dunmore's War.

The Iroquois Confederacy, or Six Nations, was an essential British ally, which influenced the situation on the frontier as it pursued its national interests. *Guyasota*, the confederacy's viceroy for the Ohio area, exercised direct leadership of the Six Nations immigrant community known as the Mingoes, and represented the confederacy's authority and suzerainty over other native peoples, including dependent nations such as the Delaware, and those under its dominion by right of conquest, like

the Shawnees. The viceroy worked closely with the Indian Department's Alexander McKee to further the mutual interests of both the Crown and the council.

The Iroquois Six Nations had benefitted from its cession of Shawnee hunting ground to the British in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Amid growing dissatisfaction with Virginia's settlement of the ceded area, the possibility of a Shawnee-led confederation of Ohio area Indians forming, and attempts to alienate the Mingoes from the authority of the central council at Onondaga, the Six Nations had little sympathy for the Shawnees in their dispute with Virginia. Through the efforts of *Guyasota* and representative deputies the council sent to support him, the Six Nations exerted its political, diplomatic and military power and influence to isolate the Shawnees from potential Indian allies, and resolve the situation in its own favor. The Iroquois ordered member and dependent nations not to join the fight against the Virginians. The Mingo faction that followed Logan to war arguably might have refrained from their alliance and remained neutral if not motivated to avenge the Yellow Creek massacre.

The Six Nations domination of the native peoples of the region meant that the Shawnees essentially fought without allies. Various bands of Delaware warriors not only declined to join with the Shawnees, but were ready to follow Chief White Eyes when he offered Dunmore their services as scouts and auxiliaries on the expedition. The Iroquois' action guaranteed the Shawnee defeat, kept Dunmore's War limited, and prevented a wider conflict from erupting between their British allies and a potential Pan-Indian confederacy.

As the Six Nations of Iroquois had assumed the mantle of the most powerful Indian polity in the north, the Cherokees represented its counterpart in the south. Like the Iroquois, Cherokee leaders had also acted in their nation's interest when they ceded land the Shawnees considered their hunting ground to Virginia. Notwithstanding any resentment the transaction caused, the Shawnees also sought Cherokee assistance for their fight against the Virginians. When some vocal leaders urged military action in reprisal for the murder of a tribal member by an unapologetic settler, the Shawnees stood to benefit by having numbers of Cherokee warriors joining them in the fight against the Virginians, whether as allies or co-belligerents made little difference.

Under the leadership of *Oconostota* and Colonel William Preston, respectively, Cherokee and Virginia representatives engaged in meaningful long-distance diplomacy that averted war. Assisted by Indian Department deputy superintendents and facilitated by well-intentioned traders acting as intermediaries, the two sides resolved their differences without armed force. By refraining from the fight against the Virginians, the Cherokees further isolated the Shawnees and protected their own interests. Like that of the Six Nations, although more benign, Cherokee involvement had a significant influence on the outcome of Dunmore's War. An important aspect of this conclusion is that other Indian polities – the Six Nations and the Cherokees – played a significant role in the Virginia victory, although not as combatants.

Lord Dunmore had assumed the royal governorship of Virginia in 1771, not long after repeal of the Townshend Acts, the second of what many colonists viewed as unconstitutional taxation imposed on the colonies. The period that followed repeal

began what historians describe as the “quiet time” before the Revolutionary War. Governor Dunmore took advantage of the political climate and pursued policies that at times conflicted with those of his superiors in the British government. He proposed policies and signed legislative acts that many Virginians viewed as beneficial to the colony. Although he also acted in his own self-interest, Dunmore lived in an era when using one’s public office for personal gain did not necessarily constitute corruption or wrong-doing. Like many of his prominent Virginia contemporaries, he sought the acquisition of land for his own and his family’s benefit. Accusing Dunmore of extending Virginia’s boundaries solely for personal gain is not only inaccurate, but judges his actions by the standards other than that of the time in which he lived. Virginians in general perceived many of *Governor* Dunmore’s policies, especially those that promoted settlement of western territories within the boundaries defined by Virginia’s royal charter and valid treaties, as in the best interest of the colony entrusted to his administration.

The boundary dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania is often only explored with regard to the Indian conflict of 1774 as an example of Dunmore’s aggression. Both colonies claimed the strategic Forks of the Ohio and surrounding area in the period preceding and during the Revolutionary War. Although Pennsylvania had moved more quickly to develop the area as part of its Westmoreland County, Lord Dunmore led a belated but effective effort to add it to Virginia’s Augusta County. The area not only had tracts of land for speculation and development, but was an important location for control of the lucrative trade with the Indians of the Ohio Country. The Grand Ohio Company’s plan to establish the inland province of Vandalia as the

fourteenth English colony further complicated the competing claims of the two older colonies. Much of the land the proposed new colony encompassed fell within the area granted by Virginia's royal charter. If any aspect of Dunmore's War may be characterized as a "land-grab" it is the establishment of Vandalia by the Grand Ohio Company for the benefit of its London and Philadelphia investors, not Lord Dunmore. The governor countered by establishing county court and militia apparatus in the area. The competing interests and biases of each colony's partisans are reflected in the primary source documents written by these participants.

Dunmore's War was more than an armed conflict between the colony of Virginia and the Shawnee nation of Indians. Virginia viewed the conflict as a defensive war to protect its people and borders, including legally-acquired land, against foreign invaders. The colony achieved victory with a limited offensive operation conducted to achieve limited objectives. The Six Nations of Iroquois, Cherokees and colony of Pennsylvania had all acted in their own respective interests, and each made significant contributions to the causes, course and outcome of Dunmore's War. The last conflict of the colonial era may have been limited, but was nonetheless complex and as such required careful consideration.

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