

Selected Papers  
From The 1985 And 1986  
George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier  
History Conferences



SELECTED PAPERS  
FROM THE 1985 AND 1986  
GEORGE ROGERS CLARK  
TRANS-APPALACHIAN  
HISTORY CONFERENCES

Edited by

Robert J. Holden

Vincennes, Indiana  
1988

The 1985 and 1986 George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History conferences were sponsored by the National Park Service and Vincennes University. This publication was printed by Vincennes University Printing Center with donations from the Eastern National Park and Monument Association and Vincennes University. It was manufactured in the United States of America.

The illustrations and cover drawing were done by Richard Day.

Copyright © 1988 by the Eastern National Park & Monument Association and Vincennes University.

Copies of this publication are for sale by the Eastern National Park & Monument Association, George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, 401 South Second Street, Vincennes, Indiana 47591 or by the Lewis Historical Collections Library, Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana 47591.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK  
401 SOUTH SECOND STREET  
VINCENNES, INDIANA 47591

Dear Reader:

The purpose of George Rogers Clark National Historical Park is to commemorate the accomplishments of George Rogers Clark and the expansion of the United States into the Northwest Territory, and to communicate this story and its significance to the American people. We usually do this through our exhibits, audio-visual programs, publications and ranger guided activities at the park.

There is another way though that we tell the story of Clark and the Northwest Territory. It is the annual George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference. This conference was established to encourage research into this period and to provide a forum historians could use to share their findings with park visitors and scholars alike. Co-sponsored by Vincennes University, it is now in its sixth year, and is recognized as the primary conference for the study of the region between the Appalachian Mountains and Mississippi River.

This is the second volume of Selected Papers from the George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences to be produced by Vincennes University and the National Park Service. It contains the best papers presented at the 1985 and 1986 conferences. We are proud to be able to make it available to you and others interested in this period of American history.

We hope you enjoy reading this book and when you are finished have a better understanding and appreciation of the people and events that shaped the history of this region.

Sincerely,

Terry M. DiMattio  
Superintendent





**VINCENNES UNIVERSITY**  
Vincennes, Indiana 47591  
PHILLIP M. SUMMERS, *President*

Dear Reader:

Vincennes University is proud to be the site of the George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference. For a number of years, the National Park Service and Vincennes University have cooperated in presenting the conference, which focuses on the American frontier that existed in Vincennes in the early years of our country. Many distinguished historians and educators have participated in the conference and prepared papers for presentation.

This volume includes the 1985-1986 presentations at the annual George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference. These selected papers represent the research and indepth study of the presenters. Readers are invited to study the articles and learn about the American frontier in this region.

An open invitation is extended to all interested people to attend the annual conference, and information can be obtained about the conference by contacting the George Rogers Clark National Historical Park at (812) 882-1776 or the Vincennes University Lewis Historical Library at (812) 885-4173. This cooperative endeavor is an important effort to preserve and learn about the history of the American frontier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phillip M. Summers".

Phillip M. Summers  
President



## Table of Contents

Letter by Terry M. DiMattio .....	i
Letter by Dr. Phillip M. Summers .....	ii
Preface by Robert J. Holden .....	vii
Oliver Pollock and George Rogers Clark's Service of Supply: A Case Study in Financial Disaster by Light Townsend Cummins .....	1
Regularity: Military Policy in the Old Northwest 1789-1794 by George M. Waller .....	19
Expansion in Western Pennsylvania and the Upper Ohio Valley 1754 to 1800 by Louis M. Waddell .....	45
"Their Rules of War": James Smith's Summary of Indian Woodland War by Leroy V. Eid .....	63
Black Robes and Blackened Faces: A History of Miami-Jesuit Relations by Peter Peregrine .....	81
"National Retaliation": Thomas Jefferson's Brief for the Imprisonment of Henry Hamilton by James H. O'Donnell, III	93



## PREFACE

Robert J. Holden

The events that took place on the Trans-Appalachian frontier had a lasting effect on the shaping of world history. In this vast area lying between the Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, Great Lakes and the Gulf Coast, a direct confrontation took place among the Indians, French, British, Spanish and Americans. The ultimate success of the Americans in this region made possible the expansion of the United States to the Pacific Ocean.

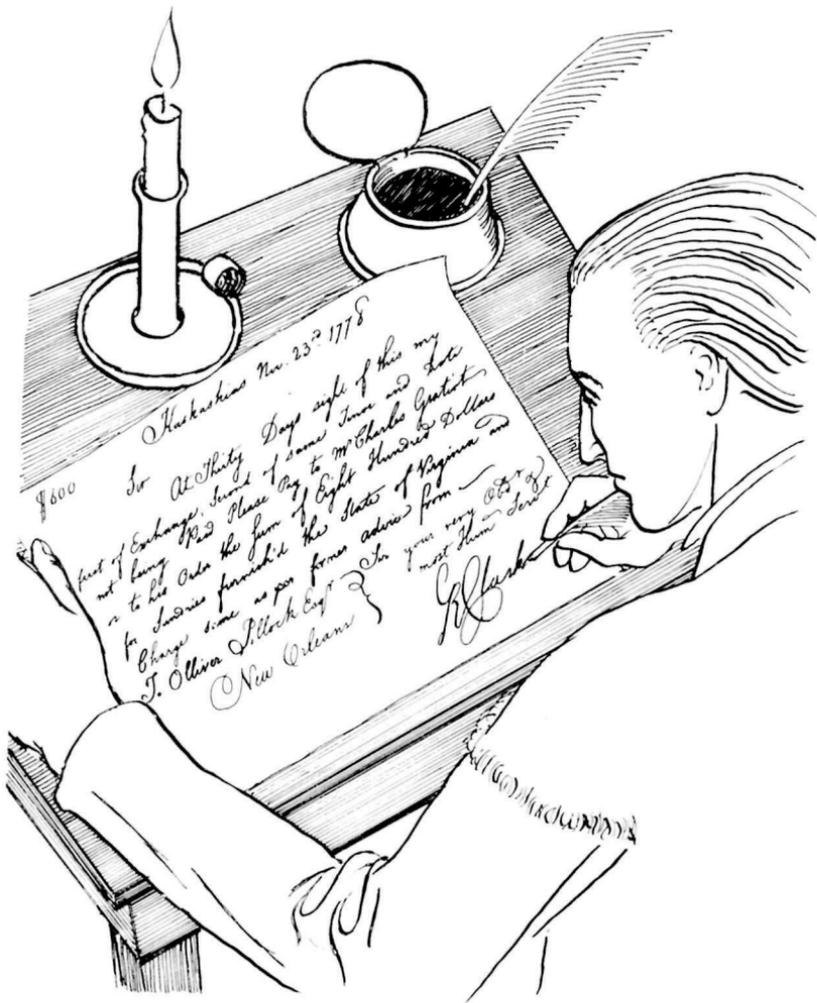
The annual George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference was inaugurated in October 1983 to encourage research into this important field of study and to serve as a focal point for its presentation. Although papers on the subject are often presented at other meetings, no regularly scheduled conference had existed which was devoted solely to this theme. The importance of both George Rogers Clark and the settlement of Vincennes in the early history of this region make this historic city on the Wabash River, the site of George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, a perfect setting for such a gathering. These selected papers from the 1985 and 1986 conferences cover a wide variety of topics. Light T. Cummins' "Oliver Pollock and George Rogers Clark's Service of Supply: A Case Study in Financial Disaster" provides an insight into the often overlooked field of financing military operations. George M. Waller's "Regularity: Military Policy in the Old Northwest 1789-1794" looks at American efforts against the Indians during a particularly crucial time. Louis M. Waddell's "Expansion in Western Pennsylvania and the Upper Ohio Valley, 1754-1800" compares certain parallels

in events during this period. Leroy V. Eid's " 'Their Rules of War': James Smith's Summary of Indian Woodland War" explores the tactics of Indian warfare. Peter Peregrine's "Black Robes and Blackened Faces: A History of Miami-Jesuit Relations" discusses the role of two early missionaries. James H. O'Donnell's " 'National Retaliation': Thomas Jefferson's Brief for the Imprisonment of Henry Hamilton" examines the rationale for the unusual treatment accorded this British frontier official.

For their great assistance and efforts in the 1985 and 1986 conferences, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to former Superintendent John Neal, Terri Utt and Pat Wilkerson of the National Park Service, and to President Phillip M. Summers, Robert R. Stevens and David A. Bathe of Vincennes University.

Robert J. Holden  
Historian and Conference Coordinator  
George Rogers Clark National Historical Park

Vincennes, Indiana  
August 1988



\$600

Huskasheen Nov. 23<sup>d</sup> 1778

For At Thirty Days sight of this my first of Exchange, Second of same Tenor and date is to his Order the sum of Eight Hundred Dollars for London payable to the Order of Virginia and J. Oliver Sillock Esq. New Orleans. For your very Obedt. Servt. J. H. Clarke

**OLIVER POLLOCK AND GEORGE ROGERS CLARK'S  
SERVICE OF SUPPLY: A CASE STUDY  
IN FINANCIAL DISASTER**

by

*Light Townsend Cummins*  
*Austin College*

Oliver Pollock's activities during the American Revolution are well known to students of history. His role as the congressional agent at New Orleans has earned him a deserved reputation as "The Financier of the Revolution in the West."<sup>1</sup> He arranged shipments of gun powder from Spain and Cuba to George Washington's army in 1776 and 1777. He is best known, however, for his supply efforts which provisioned the military expedition of James Willing down the Mississippi River and his substantial financial support of George Rogers Clark, this latter in large measure enabling that American commander to hold the Illinois country.

Pollock's financial contributions to the Revolution have been the subject of investigations by two historians in particular: James A. James and J. G. Randall.<sup>2</sup> These scholars, making extensive use of the ledger books of George Rogers Clark and the records of the Continental Congress, have provided an accurate account of the tremendous amount of money and supplies which Pollock advanced for the American cause. This is only part of the story. It does not explain how Pollock raised the money to support Willing and Clark. This paper will address that issue.

The documents and financial records upon which James and Randall based their studies of Pollock were not the contemporary accounts kept by the merchant. Pollock's personal papers, including his financial records, were destroyed by fire when a Federal gunboat shelled his family's plantation at

Bayou Sarah, Louisiana during the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> Lacking these, all historical investigations of Pollock until this date have been based upon a variety of legal records, claims papers, and memorials which were presented after the fact to various authorities either by Pollock or his creditors during the 1790's or early 1800's. These documents provide general information about the money owed to the New Orleans merchant by the United States or the State of Virginia, but they do not permit the historian to reconstruct Pollock's personal finances on a transaction-by-transaction basis during the American Revolution.

My investigations in the archives of Spain and the notarial records of the City of New Orleans, however, have located a relatively large holding of previously unused materials directly related to Pollock's personal finances during the 1770's and 1780's. Research in these documents supports the basic conclusions offered by historians such as James and Randall regarding the total amount of support which Pollock advanced for the American cause. It also sheds new light on the merchant's personal financial situation during the revolt. Their studies characterized Pollock as a wealthy merchant of substantial fortune with ample cash reserves, but my review of the methods which he employed to finance the American expeditions in the West suggests otherwise. An overview of the strategies by which he raised money highlights a previously unconsidered side of Pollock. What emerges is a portrait of an under-capitalized, middle class merchant of limited means struggling with short term, deficit financing in order to support the American cause.

An understanding of Pollock's activities as a general merchant specializing in the Latin American trade is important in assessing the nature of his personal wealth. Born in Ireland, Pollock moved to the Pennsylvania frontier as a young man.

By the late 1750's he had become a resident of Philadelphia, where he forged lasting bonds with successful merchants including Robert Morris. After a short time, Pollock moved to Havana where he represented the firm of William and Morris in Cuba. There he joined in the activities of Havana's Irish and Italian Roman Catholic merchant communities, which included Alexander Munro, Geronimo Enrile and Geronimo LaChiapelli. These individuals, including Pollock, were heavily involved in the slave trade, a commerce permitted foreign merchants by the laws of Spain.<sup>4</sup>

In 1769, Pollock went to New Orleans, following on the heels of the military expedition sent from Cuba to assert Spain's control of Louisiana. General Alejandro O'Reilly, its commander, awarded Pollock a contract to supply New Orleans with flour. This contract provided Pollock with the firm base upon which he established a successful merchant house in Louisiana.<sup>5</sup> Pollock quickly opened a profitable trade between Spanish New Orleans and Philadelphia by way of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic. Still acting as agent for William and Morris, he invested in plantation lands along the Mississippi for his backers. Between 1772 and 1776, Pollock bought four large plantations along the Mississippi and Amite Rivers in British West Florida. Most of the capital for these land investments came from profits which he earned in the slave trade. One parcel thirteen miles above Manchak on the Mississippi, for example, was bought from Phillip Comyn in direct exchange for slaves.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, much of Pollock's operating capital seems to have been generated by trading in slaves, both in Spanish Louisiana and British West Florida. His first major sale came in March 1773, when he imported eighty blacks. All of them were apparently recent arrivals in the New World since the bills of sale described them as "brutish males, females, and

children who were not baptized." In 1774, Pollock undertook a trip to the Atlantic coast, returning with "a good number of Negroes." News of this shipment caused considerable interest along the Mississippi Valley as planters in West Florida and Louisiana contacted Pollock about selling slaves.

Pollock also brokered slaves already in the region. Members of the Spanish government in Louisiana and their families seemed to favor Pollock as a supplier of slaves. Bernardo de Otero, the colonial treasurer, bought three house servants from Pollock. Don Joseph de Peña, commander of Natchitoches post, traded Pollock a slave originally brought from the Red River. Although Pollock showed a profit in most of these transactions, there was always an element of risk. In February 1776, for example, he purchased a thirty-two year old mulatto woman named Teresa from Doña Luisa Gromel for 500 *pesos*. After almost eighteen months, Pollock finally sold Teresa to Andreas Reynaud for the amount originally paid.

Pollock's other commercial transactions rested on a wide variety of commodities besides slaves, although these did not produce as much income for him. As a merchant, he traded in goods imported into the Mississippi Valley from the Atlantic Coast or England. During 1772, Pollock took Thomas Willing's brother James as a partner in the operation of trading posts at Natchez and Manchac. The Willings were one of Pennsylvania's best established mercantile families. Pollock operated as a correspondent all along the river for the parent firm of Willing and Morris. He seems to have specialized in the importation of flour and manufactured goods to the Mississippi Valley. Exports of wood, peltry and some tobacco insured profits for him in return.<sup>8</sup>

As well, Pollock engaged in private banking, especially dealing in Bills of Exchange. As part of these services, he loan-

ed money at interest. A typical transaction was his loan to one Franciso Mainard of the Arkansas post for over a thousand *pesos*. In return Pollock required of Mainard collateral of a farm, the house on it, five horses, twenty-six cows and the maize crop produced during 1773. Pollock also traded in real estate. He bought a house on Royal Street in New Orleans at public auction in December 1777, reselling it to James Harris less than three months later. Pollock as well increased his personal land holdings in West Florida, buying land along the Mississippi.<sup>9</sup> By 1776, Oliver Pollock had emerged a prosperous merchant in New Orleans. He was able to invest in lucrative ventures and had capital for various business transactions. Much of his wealth, however, existed in the form of land investments, thereby limiting its liquidity. Other than the regular sale of slaves, he engaged in no commercial activity which generated large amounts of specie.

The American Revolution had an immediate impact on the lower Mississippi Valley because of the proximity of British West Florida to Spanish Louisiana.<sup>10</sup> Oliver Pollock quickly became a partisan of the American cause. Largely through his efforts, envoys of the Continental Congress and the Virginia state militia were welcomed in New Orleans by the Spanish Government. By 1776, Pollock had become the unofficial agent and spokesman in lower Mississippi Valley for the American rebels. In early 1778, he received an official appointment from the Continental Congress as its agent in Louisiana. He also received a similar commission from the Governor of Virginia on behalf of that state. For the next four years, he steadfastly supported the American cause by arranging for supplies and money to meet rebel needs.<sup>11</sup>

Pollock's first major opportunity to fulfill his commission came with his efforts to supply the American force led by James Willing.<sup>12</sup> These activities, although not related

directly to the George Rogers Clark expedition, assume some importance for understanding later events. The methods of generating cash (especially the sale of slaves and the issuing of Bills of Exchange) which Pollock later employed for Clark in the Illinois country were first used by the New Orleans merchant to underwrite Willing. Unlike in the later case of George Rogers Clark, these efforts on behalf of Willing were successful.

James Willing had been a personal associate of Pollock prior to the Revolution. Unable to prosper in Spanish Louisiana, he returned to Philadelphia at the start of the revolt. Willing thereupon petitioned Congress for permission to lead a military expedition against West Florida. By the early spring of 1778, he was commanding a small force of Americans as they floated down the river plundering the holdings of West Florida planters.<sup>13</sup> Willing and his men took valuable prizes, including a large number of slaves. Upon arriving at New Orleans, Pollock interceded with the Spanish Governor to have Willing granted freedom of the city and the right to sell the expedition's prizes. Governor Bernardo de Gálvez, primarily because of Pollock's support, permitted the Americans to dispose of their plunder, but only after an investigation insuring that the prizes had been obtained according to the customs of war. In some cases, Willing could not establish such. For example, the governor ordered the return of a slave belonging to George Ross, the boat *Neptune*, the goods of Stephen Shakespear, slaves belonging to Pansset and Marshall and a batteaux belonging to a Mr. Rapicault. Willing, however, was permitted to sell most of the seized goods including the majority of the slaves.<sup>14</sup>

On April 6 and 8, 1778, Pollock sponsored a public auction at which the Americans disposed of the majority of the slaves taken during the Willing raid. In all, seventy-four slaves

crossed the block, raising a total of 16,518 *pesos* for Pollock and Willing. Leading citizens of Spanish Louisiana, including Antonio de Marigny, Philippe de Mandeville, Gilbert Antonio St. Maxent and Carlos Oliver, all purchased slaves, although in many cases cash money was not on hand to complete the sales. Pollock met this lack of specie by financing most of the transactions on promissory notes due the following January first.<sup>15</sup>

It was only a few months after this auction that Pollock received his first requests for financial support from Lieutenant-Colonel George Rogers Clark. The Committee of Commerce of the Continental Congress had earlier instructed Pollock to support Clark's expedition and purchase in New Orleans any supplies which it required. Aware of this, Clark wrote to the Louisiana merchant on July 18, 1778, informing him that "I have succeeded agreeable to my wishes and am necessitated to draw bills on the state and have reason to believe that they will be accepted by you, the answering of which will be acknowledged by his Excellency, the Governor of Virginia."<sup>16</sup> The support provided by Pollock came in two forms: the Bills of Exchange which Clark gave to Illinois area merchants drawn on Pollock and actual materials purchased in New Orleans for shipment north up the river system. Pollock kept careful record of these amounts, noting both the Bills which he received and the supplies which he purchased.

The successful slave sales which financed the Willing raid impressed Pollock with the additional profits which could come to the American cause by raiding British slave holders in West Florida. Pollock's men thus captured British sympathizer David Ross's schooner, the *Dispatch*, in the late summer of 1778. It had aboard some fifty slaves and one hundred barrels of flour. Although Ross requested restoration

of his property from the Spanish government, his solicitations were in vain. Pollock sold the captured slaves and used the money to purchase goods and supplies for Clark.<sup>17</sup>

These profits convinced Pollock to regularize this source of income. Willing's men had earlier captured a small British vessel on the Mississippi. Pollock outfitted this vessel as an American privateer, naming it the *Morris* in honor of his Philadelphia associate. He commissioned William Pickles as her captain. The *Morris* immediately began raiding English plantations along Lake Ponchartrain and Mississippi Sound. The taking of slaves to finance the American cause seems to be one of its primary motivations. In October 1779, Pickles arrived in New Orleans with a prize of thirteen blacks whom he had taken from a British subject living on the coast near Mobile. Pickles petitioned Martin Navarro, the acting governor in Bernardo de Gálvez's absence, for permission to sell the slaves at public auction. After examining the cargo, Navarro approved the sale. Two government appraisers fixed the value of the slaves at 1,260 *pesos*. At noon on October 12, the slaves captured by the *Morris* were offered at public auction under the direction of Navarro. Eight of the slaves were purchased, but the remaining went unsold. It took two additional sales before the remainder of the slaves found buyers. Even with the paucity of purchasers on the first day, the total sale netted the Americans almost 600 *pesos* over the pre-sale appraisal.<sup>18</sup>

These slave sales provided an initial fund of money which could be diverted easily to the American cause. Pollock was thus able to meet fully Clark's initial requests for assistance and, in so doing, perhaps unintentionally gave the American commander and his subordinates the impression that ample support was to be had on his behalf. The following year witnessed the arrival in New Orleans of a continuing series

of Bills drawn on Pollock by American commanders in the Illinois region.<sup>19</sup>

In many cases, Pollock had no prior knowledge of these Bills until the time at which creditors presented them to him for payment. By the end of 1779, his ability to pay these Bills had been outstripped both by the lack of cash on hand and his inability to raise funds. His chances to sell slaves had been seriously curtailed by several factors: the Revolution had reduced routine slave-trading in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean; his earlier successes in capturing slaves from neighboring English subjects had diminished the supply; and the military victories of Louisiana Governor Gálvez in British West Florida during 1779 and 1780 brought the region, including its residents, under the protection of Spain, an informal ally of the Americans.

Pollock therefore resorted to four additional measures which he hoped would generate cash for Clark and the Illinois posts. First, he borrowed money from the Spanish Government. In all, Governor Bernardo de Gálvez lent the American agent more than 74,000 *pesos*. Second, Pollock borrowed freely from individual merchants in New Orleans, creating an almost thirty thousand dollar debt guaranteed by his personal assets.<sup>20</sup> Third, he enlisted the assistance of other merchants who sold him supplies on credit against eventual repayment by the American government. He received, for example, numerous supplies from the New Orleans merchant Daniel Clark, an anglo trader not related to Colonel Clark. The merchant Clark kept a detailed accounting of the various materials furnished. Fourth, Pollock began transferring the Bills of Exchange to other investors who were willing to purchase them at discount against future repayment at face value. Some of the investors in this latter funding-raising attempt were Louisiana residents Martin Navarro, Narciso Alba,

Mario Olivares and Santiago Beauregard.<sup>21</sup>

New Orleans investors were willing to purchase these Bills as speculative ventures largely because of the public support given Pollock by Thomas Jefferson, who then served as Governor of Virginia. Jefferson had earlier written the Governor of Louisiana, noting that the State of Virginia had created a trust account with the French firm of Penet, Da Costa and Feres to cover Bills of Exchange written by George Rogers Clark and his subordinates. Virginia, through the congressional agents in Europe, would be selling tobacco and other products to maintain these accounts. Jefferson subsequently instructed Pollock to present Bills from the Illinois country for payment to the French firm. Based upon this information, Pollock instead transferred the Bills to local New Orleans investors in an effort to increase his short-term cash reserves. Santiago Monlon, the Creole planter and merchant, became the heaviest investor in these Bills.<sup>22</sup>

In early 1781, Pollock's ability to finance the American debt without sufficient cash on hand or collateral came to an end. In January of that year, Lieutenant Robert George, the American commander at Fort Jefferson, drew a Bill of Exchange on Pollock in the total amount of \$237,320, a sum greater than all of Pollock's personal assets.<sup>23</sup> As well, the debt which the New Orleans merchant had already created in the name of the State of Virginia and the Continental Congress was considerable. He owed the government of Louisiana some 74,087 *pesos* which had been borrowed in the name of the Continental Congress. In addition, he was a debtor in the additional amount of 29,440 *pesos* to various New Orleans residents including Bernardo de Otero, Joseph Foucher, Narciso Alba, Luís Toutant Beauregard, Juan Prieto and others.<sup>24</sup> Pollock's ability to maintain solvency ended when the French merchant firm of Penet, Da Costa and Feres refus-

ed to honor the Bills of Exchange supported by the State of Virginia. That state had failed to make deposits to its trust account. Since Pollock had already renegotiated these French Bills of Exchange with local residents in Louisiana, he rather than Virginia became personally liable for them with the creditors. The refusal of the French Bills left him penniless. Bankruptcy was his only recourse.

Pollock embarked on a full-scale selling of his personal possessions in an effort to reconcile with his creditors. In January and February 1782, Pollock liquidated his holdings. On January 29, he began to sell his slaves at auction. He owned half interest in four slaves with William Henderson, who purchased Pollock's half interest. Francisco Bouligny, Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana, bought a slave couple for 602 *pesos*. Joseph Porell, Julian Vienna, Patrick Conway and Maurice Conway were among the other buyers. In all, Pollock sold a full interest in fifteen slaves for a total price of 5,846 *pesos*.<sup>25</sup>

Pollock sold his residential property in New Orleans along with some of his upriver lands. These transactions were not without their legal difficulties. In one case, Pollock sought to sell two estates which he had been managing for Willing and Morris. The plantation manager, Alexander Henderson, brought suit against him in New Orleans courts in an effort to stop the sale proceedings. Henderson contended that Pollock owed him unpaid salary, had failed to reimburse for expenses incurred in buying supplies, and that Pollock's accounts were in error. In return, Pollock charged Henderson with improperly paying carpenters and jobbers on the plantation, not accounting for two year's worth of rice crops, squandering a year's hire of thirty-four slaves who were supposedly kept in idleness, and incurring unnecessary medical expenses for the slaves. This dispute was submitted to a board

of arbitration following Spanish legal custom. The court appointed two arbitrators who examined the claims. They were unable to reach a decision and recommended that the matter be referred to Willing and Morris in Philadelphia.<sup>26</sup>

Pollock, however, did not wait for a complete resolution of his failing business matters in New Orleans. In late April 1782, he requested a passport from Governor Esteban Miró in order to leave Louisiana and return to the Atlantic coast. Pollock saw this as the only successful way to convince Congress to pay the loans he had negotiated in New Orleans on its behalf. He thus left for Philadelphia and what he hoped would be an end to his financial troubles. His absence from Louisiana would last six years, take him to a Cuban prison, and see both Congress and the State of Virginia question his claims for reimbursement.<sup>27</sup> He did not receive full compensation for his debts from the State of Virginia until 1813.

The story of Pollock's subsequent career is well-known to the readers of studies by James A. James and J. G. Randall. It needs little elaboration here. What does emerge from a study of Pollock's personal finances of the Revolutionary era, however, indicates that he was not the person of considerable financial substance as portrayed by his biographers. Although a person of comfortable means, Pollock was still building his fortune when the American Revolution came to the Mississippi Valley. A review of his liquidated assets indicates that he was not wealthy, especially when his holdings are compared to those of New Orleans residents Luís Toutant Beauregard and Santiago Monlon who enjoyed such reputations. Aside from land-holding and slaves amounting to approximately thirty thousand dollars, his prosperity instead rested on profits from trade and commerce. As long as he was able to engage in these mercantile activities, especially slave-trading, Pollock could generate the capital necessary to

support the American cause. When the fortunes of the revolt diminished this trade, Pollock resorted to various means of short term financing in order to maintain cash on hand. All of these measures proved inadequate and his efforts resulted in a financial disaster which would take him the rest of his life to rectify.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The best biographical treatment of Pollock is James A. James, *Oliver Pollock: The Life and Time of an Unknown Patriot* (Indianapolis, 1937). See also: John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkeley, California, 1934); William F. Mulloney, "Oliver Pollock: Catholic Patriot and Financier of the American Revolution," *Historical Records and Studies of the U. S. Catholic Historical Society*, (1937), 164-236.

<sup>2</sup>The classic study of Pollock's supply efforts on behalf of the military forces in the Illinois country is: J. G. Randall, "George Rogers Clark's Service of Supply, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, (1921), 250-263. See as well an earlier study on this subject: Margaret B. Downing, "Oliver Pollock: Patriot and Financier," *Illinois Catholic Historical Review* 2 (October 1919), 196-207.

<sup>3</sup>Horace E. Hayden, *A Biographical Sketch of Oliver Pollock* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1883), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>James, *Oliver Pollock*, pp. 4-6; Horace E. Hayden, *A Biographical Sketch of Oliver Pollock* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1883), pp. 6-19; William Henry Egle, *Notes and Queries, Historical and Genealogical, Chiefly Relating to Interior Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1894), I, pp. 475-481.

<sup>5</sup>Oliver Pollock to the Captain General of Cuba, June 22, 1796, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain (hereafter referred to as AGI), Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 1469; Pollock to Luís de las Casas, July 14, 1796, *Ibid.*; Pollock's contract was for the supply of flour. For the Cabildo deliberations on the scarcity of this commodity, see *Actas del Cabildo*, New Orleans, October 5, 1770, August 2, 1771 and August 16, 1771, Vol. I, p. 20, 32, 33, WPA Transcripts in Spanish on Microfilm, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>6</sup>For Pollock's land purchases, see: State Land Office, Baton Rouge, *Greensburg Land Claims*, Book II, Part II, pp. 69, 94, 109-110; *American State Papers, Public Lands*, Vol. III, p. 46, and Vol. IV, p. 313; Orleans Parish Notary Archives, Civil District Courts, New Orleans, Louisiana (hereafter referred to as Orleans Notary Archives), Acts of Andres Almonaster y Rojas, Vol. 9, March 5, 1778, f. 176. The Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress contains several maps by British cartographers which note lands owned by Pollock: "Map of the Mississippi River from the Mount of the Yazoo River to the Southern Part of Loui-

siana, 1774:" and "Plan of the Rivers Mississippi, Iberville, Mobile and Bay of Pensacola in the Province of West Florida, September 1772; Phillip Comyns to Oliver Pollock, January 21, 1774, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress (hereafter referred to as Force, LC).

<sup>7</sup>Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Juan Baptista Garic, Vol. 4, March 10, 1773, f. 73; David Hodge to Oliver Pollock, February 14, 1775, Force, LC; Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Andres Almonaster y Rojas, Vol. 3, September 1, 1773, f. 225 and Vol. 6, February 6, 1776; Acts of Juan Baptista Garic, Vol. 7, February 1, 1776, f. 32 and Vol. 8, November 25, 1777, f. 437.

<sup>8</sup>"Partido de Nueva Orleans," June 15, 1778, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Lagajo 191; John Blommart to Oliver Pollock, January 29, 1775, Force, LC; Oliver Pollock to General Frederick Haldimand, December 1, 1772, Haldimand Papers, British Museum Additional Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

<sup>9</sup>Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Andres Almonaster y Rojas, Vol. 23, March 4, 1773, f. 45, Vol. 4, March 7, 1774, f. 68, Vol. 8, February 15, 1777, f. 130; Acts of Juan Baptista Garic, Vol. 5, July 30, 1774, f. 143, Vol. 8, July 8, 1777, f. 280.

<sup>10</sup>J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida*, (Gainesville, Florida, 1976), pp. 87-88; Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>11</sup>James, *Oliver Pollock*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>12</sup>Robert V. Haynes, *The Natchez District and the American Revolution*, (Jackson, Mississippi, 1976), pp. 62-66, 73.

<sup>13</sup>John W. Caughey, "Willing's Expedition Down the Mississippi, 1778" *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* 15 (January 1932), pp. 5-36.

<sup>14</sup>Bernardo de Gálvez to José de Gálvez, March 11, 1778, nos. 130 and 131, AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Legajo, 2547, folios 445-457, 461-462. For a list of prizes returned, see *Ibid.*, f. 546.

<sup>15</sup>Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Juan Baptista Garic, Vol. 9, April 6-8, 1778, ff. 202-224.

<sup>16</sup>James. *Oliver Pollock*, p. 140; James A. James, *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781* Vol. 3 (Springfield, Illinois, 1912), p. 55.

<sup>17</sup>David Ross to Bernardo de Gálvez, April 11, 1778, Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office (PRO/CO) 5, p. 631.

<sup>18</sup>Presencia hecha por el Corsario la Corbetta de la Fragta. la *Moreis* de los Estados Unidos de America Capn. Guillermo Pickles," no. 116, 1779, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 701.

<sup>19</sup>For examples of these Bills, see: Orleans notary Archives, Acts of Leonard Mazange, Vol. 5, February 5, 1781, f. 72.

<sup>20</sup>“Lista de los creditos que contra si tiene en la Luisiana Don Olivero Pollock,” February 19, 1789, AGI, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, Legajo 253, f. 627.

<sup>21</sup>Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Rafael Perdomo, Vol. 13, May 5, 1789, ff. 230-250.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Bernardo de Gálvez, November 8, 1779, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2370; *Santiago Monlon v. Oliver Pollock*, April 20, 1782 (I), Spanish Judicial Records, Louisiana Historical Center, Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans.

<sup>23</sup>Robert George to Oliver Pollock, January 1, 1781, in James, *George Rogers Clark Papers*, Vol. 3, p. 496.

<sup>24</sup>“Resolution Setting Forth the Value of Oliver Pollock’s Services as U. S. Commercial Agent at New Orleans during the Revolution and Urging a Settlement of his Accounts,” October 22, 1782. Parsons Collection, Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin; Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Rafael Perdomo, Vol. 13, January 16, 1789, f. 19, and Acts of Leonard Mazange, Vol. 3, February 1781, f. 66.

<sup>25</sup>For representative liquidations see: Orleans Notary Archives, Acts of Andres Almonaster y Rojas, Vol. 13, February 5, 1782, f. 99; Acts of Leonard Mazange, Vol. 2, August 7, 1780, f. 621, Vol. 3, March 3 and April 11, 1781, ff. 171, 248, Vol. 4, November 6, 1781, f. 495, Vol. 5, January 28 and February 4, 1782, f. 102, 136.

<sup>26</sup>“Proceedings instituted by Don Olivero Pollock for the purpose of settling certain accounts with his principals through an arbitration board,” April 27, 1782 (I), Spanish Judicial Records, Louisiana Historical Center.

<sup>27</sup>Oliver Pollock to Esteban Miró, April 27, 1782, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, Legajo 2370.

*Oliver Pollock and George Rogers Clark's Service of Supply:  
A Case Study In Financial Disaster*

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences



Josiah Harmar



Arthur St. Clair



Anthony Wayne



Little Turtle

## REGULARITY: MILITARY POLICY IN THE OLD NORTHWEST

1789-1794

*George M. Waller*  
*Butler University*

“We are involved in actual war!” Washington declared.<sup>1</sup>

1793: ten years after the end of the American Revolution the front still lay along the same line of the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to the Falls. The same outposts still clung precariously in advance of the front at Vincennes and along the Mississippi. Indian war, still supported by the British, continued to take its toll of settlers in Kentucky, the upper Ohio, western Pennsylvania and even aroused fear for upstate New York. In territory granted to the United States by the peace of 1783 the British still held strong points from Lake Champlain to Detroit, Mackinac and the foot of Lake Michigan, as well as trading posts below the Lakes.

To the south, Spain refused to accept the terms of the Treaty of 1783. The Mississippi was closed to navigation by western frontiersmen. Spanish officials sought to detach Indians from United States interests — and even to lure settlers to Spanish territory.

George Rogers Clark had warned, as the Revolutionary War drew to a close, “A peace between us and brittain may not have the Impression on them [the Indians] as is generally supposed . . .” He foresaw continuing conflict with the tribes of the Northwest. He counselled against a suppliant posture, urging negotiation from strength. Treaties won with bribery led chieftains to believe, “they can make war or peace with us at pleasure,” and, “in short Every kind of lenity Shewn them by us is Imputed to timidity . . . a war will be the consequence.” Clark recommended an immediate showdown —

an army of two thousand marched into the heart of their country. Such a convincing threat would bring either, “a final End to the thoughts of a war . . .,” or would provide a victory ensuring a lasting treaty.<sup>2</sup>

Governor Benjamin Harrison agreed with Clark’s conviction that the United States must deal from strength, “It has ever been my opinion that attacking them in their own country was the only way to keep them quiet and save expense . . . Indians must themselves ask for peace,” he continued, otherwise, “Indians will construe our solicitations as proceeding from fear, and become less tractable than heretofore.”<sup>3</sup>

It is axiomatic that nations seek to negotiate from a position of strength. Those at the head of the new government understood that as well as the “men of the western waters” as eastern leaders often called them. But the government of the Articles of Confederation had lacked strength to settle problems with Great Britain and Spain or with the western tribes. If this was a critical era for the United States, the following years of President Washington’s first administration were an even more genuinely critical period. Western problems were a large part of it — for the West was a national problem. Henry Knox, Secretary at War under the outgoing government of the Articles, reported to Congress the tribes’ rejection of United States’ rights to the western lands, established by the Treaty of 1783 were an idea for which they, “Expressed the highest disgust . . .” Yet for the United States to enforce its rights by war rather than by purchase or treaty, Knox admitted, “would not be highly estimated in the opinion of the world.” More to the point, he confessed, “an extensive Indian war in the present political crisis and with an exhausted treasury, would be an event pregnant with unlimited evil . . .”<sup>4</sup>

Arthur St. Clair, taking office as governor of the Northwest Territory initiated new efforts at a treaty. To Knox he expressed his belief that, “even a hollow peace, if better cannot be secured . . .” was preferable to war at this critical time. He admitted that expanding pressure of settlement held little probability, “of there ever being any cordiality between us- . . .”<sup>5</sup> To tribal leaders loath to parley St. Clair asserted himself more firmly, “Brothers, the United States are sincerely desirous of Peace, but if you will have War why you shall have War.”<sup>6</sup> Knox hoped for peace, too, but concluded, “if war, make it vigorous and quick . . .,” for a protracted war would be destructive to the Republic.<sup>7</sup>

Expressions like these reflected not only the weakness of the nation but divisions between eastern leaders and western settlers. Both agreed, as Knox later put it, “The present partial Indian war is a remnant of the late general war . . .”<sup>8</sup>

A bloody and prolonged struggle ensued — unnamed, unnoticed in general histories and unknown to most Americans now. Yet no single period in frontier history was more decisive in the course of westward expansion according to Ray Allen Billington. These were crisis years. Western issues played a larger part in national policy than has been conceded.<sup>9</sup>

Debate flowed between leading figures — President Washington and his cabinet officers, members of Congress, civil and military authorities in the Old Northwest, and the men of the western waters themselves. The western problem subsumed not only Indian relations but a wide range of other issues: political administration by Congress and territorial government; survey and sale of the new lands; activities of speculators, involving conflicts of interest, and effect on military and diplomatic matters; diplomacy with Great Bri-

tain, Spain and France touching on possible alliances, commercial treaties and the threat of national war — linked to problems of the British retention of posts, Spanish control of the Mississippi, and French conspiracies. Western problems also included concern with rash western separationists; plans to inculcate unity through internal improvement projects; and, insistent, military policy.

This last will concern us here. The question of how best to defend the new lands, eliminate the danger besetting existing settlement, and open regions demanded by the land hungry westerners. For some, punishment of the hostiles for past savagery was a strong motive.

Peace between white men and red was highly desirable in the eyes of responsible leaders; it appealed to their sense of humanity and, realistically, recommended itself in light of the country's weakness and lack of funds. But if the tribes would not treat or accept offers to purchase and forego hostilities, how should they be fought — by a regular army, or by volunteer frontier militia, or an army of short term recruits, or by some combination of these?

"The opinion I have ever entertained [is] . . . that no dependence could be in a militia or other troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period . . .," stated General Washington early in the Revolution. "Our liberties must of necessity be greatly hazarded if not entirely lost," he went on, "if their defence is left to any but a permanent, standing army . . ." <sup>10</sup> Of short-term militia, an exasperated Washington grumbled, "You may as well attempt to stop the winds from blowing or the sun in its diurnal, as the Regiments from going when their term is expired," a mixed, motley crew, "here today, gone tomorrow." <sup>11</sup>

Of opposing view was Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State. He scorned the conventional wisdom of Federalist

veterans of the Revolution. They have, "yet to learn by experience what experience has long ago taught us . . . that rank and file fighting will not do against Indians." With his friends, Tench Coxe and Madison, he feared that the eastern "Phalanx" would adopt measures that prior experience had proved inadequate to realities of Indian fighting.<sup>12</sup>

But it was a matter of principle with Jefferson to observe the separation of powers, to leave military responsibilities to Congress and the Secretary of War. Rather than creating disharmony in the Cabinet he contented himself with plans to promote peace on the frontier by diplomacy.<sup>13</sup>

Henry Knox was closest to Washington personally, his military advice highly regarded. The Secretary of War was a firm proponent of "Regularity." To Knox the use of militia advocated by westerners was, "uncertain, opposed to the principles of regularity and to be adopted only in cases of exigence and to cease the moment the . . . exigencies shall cease."<sup>14</sup>

At the outset of his territorial governorship, Arthur St. Clair outlined the problems of the western country to the President. Kentucky volunteers operating north of the Ohio River in retaliation against savage terror disrupted government of the territory and jeopardized already shaky treaties with the Indians. Admitting that the army was too weak to satisfy the west's need for protection, he nonetheless urged that he be given authority to control all local militia actions.<sup>15</sup>

In reply, Knox told St. Clair that the President was against the harmful effects of desultory militia raids — westerners were to act only by permission of the governor and his military commander, Brigadier General Josiah Har-mar.<sup>16</sup> Winthrop Sargent, Territorial Secretary, added his advice, "if Indians stand and fight," he said, "the Kentucky militia . . . will absolutely take themselves off . . . little dependence can be placed in them."<sup>17</sup>

As it turned out, sufficient regular army forces could neither be recruited nor afforded in the frontier war of Washington's first administration. Commanders were forced to rely on volunteers and short-term recruits to supplement the Regulars. Nor did militia acting alone on the few occasions when they attempted it achieve any lasting success.

Regulars were thought of as trained, disciplined forces, properly equipped and supplied, preferably experienced, and enlisted for extended periods of years. The implication was that they would employ tactics defined in military manuals — a “regular” way of fighting.

Militia were at best irregulars with some training and experience; at worst undisciplined and inexperienced. They provided their own arms and equipment and against Indians were prone to use unconventional, uncoordinated attacks. If ably led they were capable of respectable performance.

Another, third kind of soldiery were units made up of recruits on short term enlistments.

The question of the size and character of a peacetime military establishment was a major problem following the Revolutionary War. Congress and public opinion favored a, “well-regulated and disciplined militia, sufficiently armed and accoutured.” They feared a standing army — a threat to government and a danger, “to the liberties of a country,” as Washington expressed it. Additionally, he believed the nation was “too poor to maintain a standing army adequate to our defense.”<sup>18</sup>

In 1783 the Confederation Congress appointed a committee chaired by Alexander Hamilton to study the problem. Washington and other army veterans advocated a compulsory militia enlisting all males between eighteen and fifty, subject to United States government, not state, control. A small regular force would serve to guard arsenals and, as

Washington said, “awe the Indians.”

A scaled down version provided only for the regular force. Enacted in 1784 it provided for an army of seven hundred, most of that to be employed in guarding the upper Ohio, protecting surveyors running the first range lines, and providing security for agents attempting to conclude Indian treaties.<sup>19</sup>

With inauguration of the new government in 1789 Hamilton was again called on to draw a militia bill. Despite passage of such an act after a delay of three years, the states could not or would not carry out their responsibilities. Although Washington, Knox and Hamilton all agreed that the expense of a large standing army was beyond the means of the new Republic, the alternative, an effective militia, proved elusive. Washington’s stipulations, an effective militia, disciplined and well-trained, were not often realized. Under state control with restrictions on when it could be called and where it could be used and for how long, the forces were not in accordance with the President’s wishes, nor would Congress reform the system.<sup>20</sup>

Under these circumstances, Washington privately modified his attitude about a standing army. “No man wishes less . . . to see a standing army established,” he stated, “but if Congress will not exact (sic) a proper militia law (not such a milk and water thing (sic) as I expect to see if I ever see any) Defense and Garrisons will always require some troops. It has ever been my opinion that a select militia properly trained might supercede the necessity for [regulars] but I despair on that head.”<sup>21</sup>

Washington and his administration were sincere in their desires for peace. They aspired to deal justly and humanely, recognizing the tribes as a nation or nations, not as subjects. To do otherwise, “would not be highly estimated in the opin-

ion of the world," Knox informed Congress, nor would it comport with national honor or dignity.<sup>22</sup>

Such protestations of peaceful intent were futile. The native Americans did not consider that loss of their lands just under any circumstances. A Wea spokesman defiantly declared, "We have killed white men, we have stolen their horses, we are now going to steal their cows, and after that we will go and get their women to milk them."<sup>23</sup>

Some government leaders had proposed that western development be delayed — John Jay had suggested as much as thirty years. President Washington's administration could entertain no such solution: "A wall of public opinion," supported the west, noted the Spanish envoy, Gardoqui.<sup>24</sup> The country had to move to protect the western people or they would take matters into their own hands. The President agreed with Knox that sporadic retaliatory raids on the tribes only led to "ultimate consequences" that were unsatisfactory. Regulars devoted specifically to the task would be more economical and more efficient than mere militia and more likely to succeed.<sup>25</sup> The figures made action imperative. An estimated fifteen hundred whites and been killed, wounded or captured in the seven years since the end of the Revolution, shocking barbarities perpetrated along with great loss of property.<sup>26</sup>

Jefferson concluded that war was necessary, telling the President, "As to myself, I hope we shall give the Indians a thorough drubbing." Harking back to George Rogers Clark's advice, he saw such a course, "much the cheapest in the end and would save all the blood which is now spilt . . ." producing "a spirit of peace and friendship between us."<sup>27</sup>

From the Wabash, Major Hamtramck opined, "we will have a good deal of trouble with those villains until they were destroyed. The best treaty," in his opinion, "would be a good

flogging.”<sup>28</sup> His superior, General Harmar, stated flatly, “All proposals for peace are at an end.” The waterways were swarming with Indians — his sources warned of large forces moving to the attack.<sup>29</sup>

Frontier advance was too swift for peaceful accommodation — no amount of talking could convince the Indians to accept American expansion, cede their lands, or adopt civil government and settled, agricultural pursuits. Lacking treaty agreements, the easterners would support war, favoring their own frontiersmen over Indians. They realized, as one hardened veteran put it to James Madison, “the western country is daily growing into greater importance . . . in time it will give law to America . . .”<sup>30</sup> The infant Republic had to find a way to protect the lands to the westward where the strength and vigor of the United States lay.

Would Regulars or militia be more effective in actions with the Indians? During the period of the Confederation the small regular army was spread thin in posts along the Ohio River. Lacking means to carry the war to the Indians, the Army could hardly deny initiatives of the westerners themselves. Major John Hardin in the Virginia militia responded to the plight of sorely tried Kentuckians in July 1786, leading a force of Kentucky militia against the Shawnee along the lower Wabash. It only increased that tension, although the Confederation Congress viewed it as, “authorized by self preservation,” and the inadequacy of the Regulars.<sup>31</sup> It was the first of several expeditions mounted by irate Kentuckians before the new Federal government stepped in.

Better known but equally unproductive was the effort of George Rogers Clark that same year. Responding to an appeal from Vincennes and continued fears of Kentucky, Clark marched with twelve hundred militia. He had wanted

a nucleus of Regulars to bolster his untrained men. Governor Patrick Henry asked Congress to authorize it and Harmar directed two companies to aid Clark. The orders came too late and Secretary of War Knox, countermanded the orders anyway. Clark, moving up the Wabash from Vincennes, reached the mouth of the Vermilion River. There half the force mutinied, crying, "Who's for home?" Some two hundred men deserted, straggling back to the Falls in vile disorder, as the commander of Regulars there put it.<sup>32</sup>

These men were not the same breed as Clark had commanded in the Revolution. As Madison pointed out to Washington, farmers were now the ones called to militia duty, men less able to defend themselves — neither woodsmen or fighters. Nor would tactics that had earlier protected Kentucky stations from relatively small bands of roving Indians work in protecting now scattered homesteads or standing up to much larger forces embodied by confederated tribes in the territory, whose fighting ability the United States seriously underrated.<sup>33</sup>

Major Hardin led another Kentucky effort up the Wabash in August 1789, an action, "very mortifying," to the newly established Federal commander at Fort Knox, Major Hamtramck. It was humiliating, "to see the authority of the United States so much insulted." Hardin's advance guard made a premature attack on an Indian encampment that only scattered the enemy. Two hundred men killed just twelve Indians but this provocation jeopardized Vincennes and set back what progress Hamtramck was making in establishing peaceful relations.<sup>34</sup>

General Harmar, commander of the western army, did not lack sympathy for the suffering whites nor did he hold a brief for Indians. He hoped the new government would soon begin to function — to provide the army strength so, "we

shall not tamely suffer the subjects of the United States to be murdered by these perfidious savages . . . .”<sup>35</sup>

Harmar’s opportunity came in the summer of 1790. An inconclusive treaty negotiated by territorial governor Arthur St. Clair was repudiated by the tribes. The next step was force. Harmar marched September 20 with three hundred twenty federal troops augmented by over eleven hundred Virginia and Pennsylvania militia. Farther west, a second thrust led by doughty five foot five Major Hamtramck was supposed to precede Harmar’s departure but was delayed by late arriving Kentucky auxiliaries. This force, about fifty Regulars — all that were fit for duty — and less than three hundred militia, were expected to pin down the Wabash tribes and perhaps draw the Miamis away from Harmar. Hamtramck knew before Harmar marched that the Miamis would not be distracted. They knew of Harmar’s march and were massing to oppose him. Hamtramck’s feint came to nothing. At the Vermilion he found the villages deserted. Short of food, to march farther meant half-rations. The militia refused despite the exertions of its commander. The force returned to Fort Knox without accomplishment.<sup>36</sup>

Harmar’s main force found villages at the Wabash-Maumee portage-near present Fort Wayne-deserted. Abandoning standard tactics, Harmar allowed Colonel Hardin to take three hundred of his men and thirty Regulars to scout for warriors. One hundred tribesmen materialized before troops that were in bad order, admittedly untrained, who fled without firing a shot, leaving the Regulars to be cut to pieces. Only seven men and one officer survived. Seventy of the militia’s three hundred were killed.<sup>37</sup>

The main force began its return to Fort Washington on October 21, but Hardin again proposed a diversion. Taking four hundred militia, plus sixty Regulars under Major Wyllys,

Hardin returned to the Indian villages. The militia hared off after a few fleeing tribesmen. The main hostile force under Little Turtle then attacked the remaining Regulars, killing almost all of them, including the popular Major Wyllys. Returning militia fought with valor, losing an additional fifty men.<sup>38</sup>

In all, a force of over fourteen hundred had been bested by a mere three or four hundred Indians and had lost a total estimated at one hundred eighty to only one hundred Indians killed. It had burned some villages and fields, had cost over \$100,000 in extra appropriations, and retreated to the Ohio without gain.

Harmar reported it as a success to the Secretary of War. St. Clair was satisfied it was a successful campaign, although he was highly critical of the militia. A court of inquiry ordered by Congress found Harmar's conduct "irreproachable," and laid blame, as Harmar did, on militia, "which will ever be the case as they are totally unaccustomed to discipline . . ." Nevertheless, Harmar resigned from the army a year later.<sup>39</sup>

Before another major army offensive could be mounted, the Secretary of War reluctantly authorized interim raids by Kentucky's mounted volunteers. Since, as he said, "every appearance indicates an extensive Indian war," the frontier could hardly be left on the defensive; Harmar's forces were depleted and the Indians showed mounting arrogance following their success.<sup>40</sup>

Jefferson, distressed over the "unfortunate issue" of Harmar's campaign, welcomed the idea of, "this year's experiment," to unleash frontiersmen to fight Indians "in the old way."<sup>41</sup> Without waiting for Knox's authorization, Brigadier General Scott descended in May on the Wea villages. Eight hundred mounted Kentuckians killed a score and captured fifty-eight. Westerners jubilantly claimed greater

success at less cost in blood and money for this irregular action than from Harmar's effort. Although Washington praised Scott's action in a report to Congress, he and other government leaders ruefully noted in private, "how little confidence the people of [the west] place," in Regular Army plans for another assault.<sup>42</sup>

Later that same summer, Brigadier General James Wilkinson led five hundred mounted men even farther north to the Eel River encampments of the Miami Indians, meeting with even greater success. Anticipating his own forthcoming campaign, St. Clair then ended these desultory raids. Their success would stand in shocking contrast to the outcome of the approaching campaign. The dashing Kentucky generals did not participate in the disaster of that autumn.<sup>43</sup>

Although the Army's weakness after Harmar's defeat had forced the government to turn to the militia, neither the regular officers nor the government leaders saw it as the answer. As Hamtramck warned, burning villages, destroying crops and slaying a few Indians only stiffened Indian resistance. They could live off the land, he pointed out and rebuild their houses, "as a bird does his nest." He thought the Indians' thirst for war and the Kentuckians' preoccupation with vengeance led to, "endless hostility which must then be the result on both sides."<sup>44</sup>

In March 1791, St. Clair, commissioned major general, began preparations. The affair was bungled from start to finish. The general was in poor health throughout the summer and during the campaign. Secretary of War Knox and Treasury Secretary Hamilton had a share in the failure. Their administrative mismanagement resulted in a near total breakdown of supply and transport. The story of their dereliction of official responsibility is too tangled to pursue. Trusting their friend and associate, William Duer, as army contrac-

tor, they put their faith in a man whose grave malfeasance is a story that may never be fully unraveled.<sup>45</sup> Further, Washington and Knox later blamed St. Clair for advancing before his force was in readiness, yet they had chafed at the summer's delays—occasioned by slow recruiting and inadequate performance of the contractors — and had themselves ordered St. Clair to march.<sup>47</sup>

It took over a month for the army to go a hundred miles north of Fort Washington. St. Clair started with six hundred Regulars, the same number of militia, and eight hundred “levies” — men enlisted for six months. Desertions were frequent and the enlistments of the short-term men began to run out. St. Clair himself could hardly keep up with his army, “so very ill,” said Major Denny, of his staff, “it was supposed he would not be able to proceed.”<sup>47</sup>

On November 3 the army camped in unsuitably cramped space on the bank of a tributary of the Wabash. Officers and men were too fatigued to throw up defense works — they planned to strengthen the position in the morning. St. Clair retired hardly able to stand. During the night the presence of Indians was detected but General Butler, second in command, sour and disgusted with his commander from the beginning, failed to alert St. Clair.

The force was up before daybreak. It had just broken ranks after morning parade when the warriors struck. The Army lacked one regiment that had been sent to the rear to protect an expected supply convoy from some sixty to a hundred deserters who had left camp vowing to plunder it. St. Clair had considerably fewer than his original force of two thousand. He estimated the Indian warriors at between five hundred and twelve hundred — it was just over a thousand according to one of the chieftains who fought.<sup>48</sup>

Warriors struck the militia encamped across the stream

from the main body first. The troops threw away their guns and fled through the main camp, creating disorder. The army was surrounded and cut to pieces. St. Clair found the strength to rally his men and, with the other officers, directed several charges but they were all thrown back. Realizing, “delay was death,” St. Clair and the remnants broke out and fled. Indians broke off pursuit in order to loot.<sup>49</sup>

St. Clair left the field, “the ground literally covered with the dead.” In four hours over six hundred Americans had been killed, the worst loss ever inflicted by the Indians — perhaps even greater losses than in battles of the Revolution.

George Washington, enraged, said that he had personally and emphatically warned St. Clair face to face, “beware of surprise, leave not your arms for the moment, and when you halt for the night, be sure to fortify your camp — again and again, General, beware of surprise.”<sup>50</sup>

Knox, without acknowledging his own shortcoming, blandly but candidly reported logistic failure and inadequate training of the militia to Congress. Jefferson disagreed with a draft letter Knox prepared assuring St. Clair that he saw no evidence that the general’s exertions were lacking. He counseled Washington that reports he had received indicated that an overconfident St. Clair had made no effort to obtain knowledge of Indian movements. Jefferson had also been told that criticism of the general’s conduct of the action were being made.<sup>51</sup>

St. Clair insisted to the President that he was not aware that he had neglected anything in his power, maintaining that his health did not affect the campaign. In his *Narrative* he attributed the “unfortunate outcome” as he put it, with some understatement, to failure of the contractors. He confessed ignorance of disloyalty among his officers, but condemned Congress and recruiters for delays stemming from slow

enlistments. While not excusing the behavior of militia and short — term troops — it was nothing more than he expected — he claimed he had not had time to train new recruits.<sup>52</sup>

An alarmed Congress finally moved to enlarge and restructure the army. In March 1792, the army was designated Legion of the United States. Four regiments of infantry, called sub-legions, would be backed by artillery and cavalry units. Staffs were assigned to the Legion, to each regiment, to battalions of which there were three to a regiment, and to companies, four to a battalion. Major General Anthony Wayne became the commander. St. Clair neither wished to continue on active service nor was he desired. He remained territorial governor.<sup>53</sup>

Washington, canvassing his veterans for a new commander, assessed Wayne's capabilities. He was, he noted, "more active and enterprising than judicious and cautious," unlikely to be "economical," vain and too indulgent to officers and men.<sup>54</sup> But he was the Chief Executive's choice although Washington resolved to keep in close touch with him. Through Knox he poured out continual advice. He hoped Wayne's sense of the trust being reposed in him and constant good advice bestowed on him would bring out the best.<sup>55</sup>

Though not hesitating in preparation for war, the President determined to attempt again to conclude a peace. "Our Indian war is very unpopular," wrote St. Clair. The President was not optimistic, he saw, "but a gloomy prospect for peace . . ." On the other hand he refused to be intimidated by the British. Lord Greenville, British foreign minister, in a thinly veiled threat had said, "England could not, with perfect indifference, see a tribe of Indians extirpated . . . without endeavoring in some degree to shelter them . . ." But Washington declared, "If [Indians] won't listen to the

voice of peace, the sword must decide the dispute. Peace and war are now in the balance,” he told Knox, urging utmost efforts to support both the peace commissioners and the new Army.<sup>56</sup>

The safety of the peace commissioners and a successful treaty depended on avoiding anything that might arouse tribal suspicion — incursions of whites against the Indians were strictly forbidden and Wayne was ordered to delay construction of any new posts north of Fort Jefferson.<sup>57</sup>

As for the army, it was to be concentrated, not scattered among the various posts. Training as a body was important. Wayne requested a supply of Steuben’s *Blue Book*, which had to be specially printed. Wayne judged the officers in need of this famous tactical manual — older officers were rusty, not to mention conceited and refractory.<sup>58</sup> Washington urged more selective recruiting — enlisting “boys,” “improper men,” and the “worst miscreants” would only lead to high desertion rates. Adequate supply must be assured. Improved arms and high quality powder were matters of concern. The President ordered improved intelligence gathering.<sup>59</sup>

Washington, Knox and Wayne himself took all the lessons of Harmar’s and St. Clair’s failures to heart. Wayne moved with deliberation to train his troops, build supply bases and work out tactics. “Another conflict with the savages with raw recruits is to be avoided by all means,” Knox wrote.

Peace was not in sight; Indians, “hold us in the utmost contempt for offering to treat . . . with a people who neither want or wish for it . . . .” Wayne heard.<sup>60</sup>

By the end of the next summer 1793, the negotiators at lower Sandusky finally admitted failure. General Benjamin Lincoln heading a commission which also included Colonel Timothy Pickering and former Virginia governor, Beverley Randolph, found a strong Indian confederacy unwilling to

make a treaty. Backed by the British, tribal leaders took a firm position against any white advance beyond the Ohio River.<sup>61</sup>

The administration unleashed Wayne. He began his advance in September. At Fort Jefferson he had to halt for another winter. Five hundred Kentuckians deserted from General Scott's volunteers. Contractors admitted their inability to deliver supplies. Smallpox and widespread influenza, "pervaded the whole line in a most alarming and rapid degree . . ." Wayne recorded. In what he knew was a "critical situation of our Infant nation," Wayne could not afford risk.<sup>62</sup>

That winter the army seemed to be dissolving — enlistments expired, the Kentucky mounted men returned home, and discontented officers resigned.<sup>63</sup>

But by the end of July 1794, Wayne began his careful advance anew, building Fort Adams, Fort Defiance, and just before the battle, Fort Deposit.

The tribesmen struck the first blow. Before Wayne began his summer march from Fort Recovery they attacked, on June 30. An estimated fifteen hundred to two thousand warriors struck a cavalry and rifleman escort group and then besieged the fort itself. They were driven off after two days — a more serious set-back than the subsequent battle at Fallen Timbers.<sup>64</sup>

Fifteen hundred mounted men under their Kentucky leaders rejoined Wayne before he marched at the end of July. On the twentieth of August the Battle of Fallen Timbers marked the culmination of almost three years of careful preparation. Advancing toward a brushy area along the Maumee River, Wayne disposed his Legion in two lines with his own cavalry on his right along the river and the mounted Kentuckians on the left flank. Firing as they moved, the first line advanced with fixed bayonets, driving the warriors out of the fallen trees. So impetuous was their charge that the

second line never got into action and Scott's cavalry couldn't catch up to cut off the Indian retreat. Nine hundred of the Legion's first line drove an estimated two thousand enemy two miles in an hour. Wayne's force halted only when it came within range of the British fort. Wayne lauded the, "true spirit and anxiety for action" of the mounted troops even though they had not caught up with the action.

A year later in the Treaty of Greenville the Indians ceded more land than earlier treaty efforts had tried for. Concluded with influential chiefs of eleven tribes of the northwest, the treaty's success was underwritten by the strong military presence Wayne had established after his battle.<sup>65</sup>

After five years of failures born of groping measures by Congress and government leaders — to assess the problem, first, and then find means to deal with it — the new Republic was finally strong enough in 1794 and 1795 to achieve military success. And, of course, to conclude diplomatic efforts. Together they crippled Indian resistance and opened the door to western advance.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*. U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939. XXXI, 491.

<sup>2</sup>James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers 1781-1784*, Illinois State Historical Library *Collections*, series IV, vol. 19, Springfield, 1926. II, 236-237, Clark to Governor Benjamin Harrison, Virginia, May 22, 1783.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* II, 182, to Clark, January 13, 1783.

<sup>4</sup>Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1934. II, 103-4, May 2, 1788.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* II, 119, July 5, 1788.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* II, 128. letter to Tawà River and Detroit, July 13, 1788.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.* II, 165-66. Knox to St. Clair, December 8, 1788.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* II, 365, Statement on Causes of the Indian War, January 26, 1792.

<sup>9</sup>Reginald Horsman, *The Frontier in the Formative Years 1783-1815*. Holt Rinehart Winston, New York, 1970. VII, XI.

<sup>10</sup>*Washington Writings*, VI, 4-5.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, VI, 411, 420; VII, 53, 319.

<sup>12</sup>Julian P. Boyd, ed. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Princeton University Press, 1971, XIX, 521; 438.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, XX, 118.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, XIX, 439.

<sup>15</sup>Carter, ed. *Territorial Papers* II, 204-212, August 1789.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 224-225, December 19, 1789.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.* II, 300 ff., August 17, 1790.

<sup>18</sup>Maurice Matlock, genl. ed., *American Military History*. U.S. Army, Washington D.C., 1969, rev. 1973. 101-102.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 107-108.

<sup>21</sup>*Washington's Writings*, XXXI, 494, February 1792.

<sup>22</sup>Carter, *Territorial Papers* II, 103-104, May 1788.

<sup>23</sup>Gayle Thornbrough, ed. *Outpost on the Wabash 1787-1791*. Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis. 1957. 166.

<sup>30</sup>*T J Papers*, XIX, 431. Adam Stephien, September 12, 1789.

<sup>31</sup>*Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXXI, 916-918; *Outpost*, 14.

<sup>32</sup>L. C. Halderman, "The Northwest Expedition of George Rogers Clark 1786-1787" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXV, 3, December 1938. 325-328.

<sup>33</sup>*T J Papers*, XIX, 437, 440, note 32.

<sup>34</sup>*Outpost*, 182, 182, note 5, 183.

<sup>35</sup>*Outpost*, 137, October 13, 1788.

<sup>36</sup>*Outpost*, 236-237, 246, 258-250.

<sup>37</sup>Smith, ed., *St. Clair Papers*, I, 168-169.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>*Outpost*, 269; Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers* II, 313; Knox Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, XXVII, 120.

<sup>40</sup>*T J Papers*, XX, 108.

<sup>41</sup>*T J Papers*, XIX, 521; 465 note 107.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 466, 455, note 111; *American State Papers, Indian Affairs*, I, 129-135.

<sup>43</sup>Smith, ed., *St. Clair Papers*, II, 233-239; *T J Papers*, 467.

<sup>44</sup>Smith, ed., *St. Clair Papers*, II 197-198.

<sup>45</sup>Joseph S. Davis, "William Duer Entrepreneur," in *Harvard Economic Studies*, XVI. Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1917; *T J Papers* XIX, 443ff, editorial note.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*, 464, 468; Syrett, ed., *Hamilton Papers*, VIII, 127.

<sup>47</sup>Smith, ed., *St. Clair Papers*, II 252ff, Major Denny's Diary.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 258-261; Arthur St. Clair, *Narrative of the Campaign Against the Indians*, Philadelphia. 1812.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 45-71; Smith, ed., *St. Clair Papers*, II, 258-261.

<sup>50</sup>North Callahan, *Knox*, citing report in *Alexandria Gazette*.

<sup>51</sup>Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, II, 371ff.

<sup>52</sup>Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, II, 376; *Narrative*, 71-78; 54, 184.

<sup>53</sup>Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers*, 398. Richard C. Knopf, ed., *Anthony Wayne . . . The Wayne-Knox . . . Correspondence*, University Pittsburgh Press. 1960. 13.

<sup>54</sup>Fitzpatrick, *Writings*, XXXI, 510.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, XXXII, 77-78.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, XXXII, 114; *T J Papers*, XX, 114.

<sup>57</sup>Fitzpatrick, *Writings*, 102; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, II, 435; 452-454.

<sup>58</sup>Knopf, 89.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 63; Carter, *Territorial Papers*, II, 411; Fitzpatrick *Writings*, XXXII, 126-127.

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences

<sup>60</sup>Knopf, 61, 73.

<sup>61</sup>Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 3rd series, V, 109-167,  
General Lincoln's Journal.

<sup>62</sup>Knopf, 276-282.

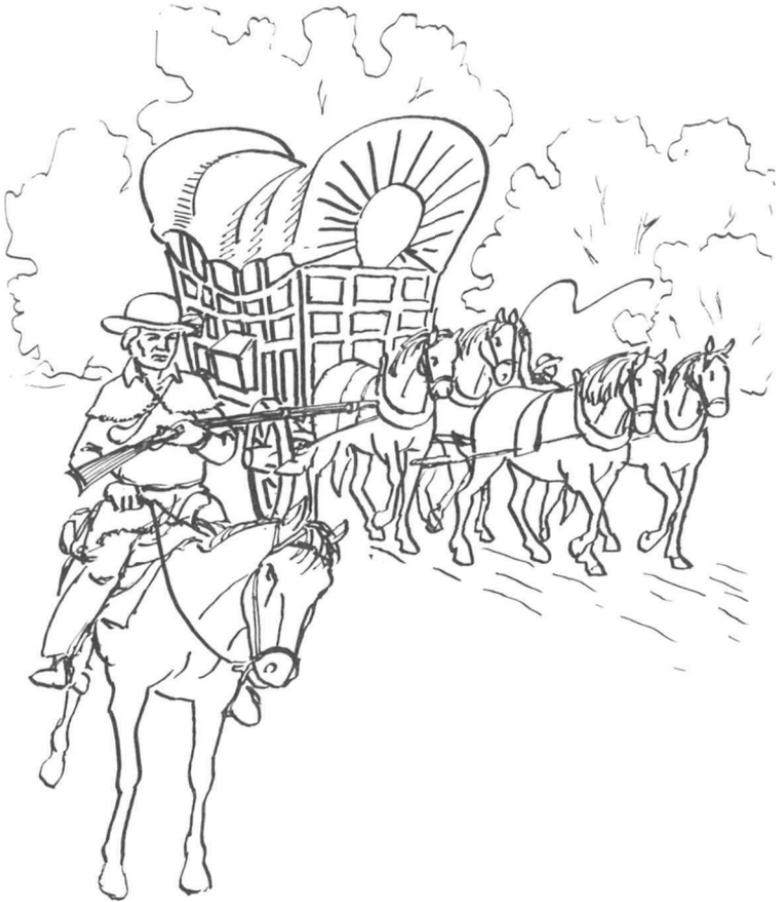
<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 312, 335.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 345-348.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 349-352; Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers II*, 525.



Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences



**EXPANSION IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA AND  
THE UPPER OHIO VALLEY  
1754 TO 1800**

by

*Louis M. Waddell*

Pennsylvania Historical and  
Museum Commission

Between 1754 and 1800 the military frontier did not correspond with the settlement frontier because the military population was sometimes in front and occasionally to the rear of the most western civilian settlements.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the forty years from 1755 to 1794 strategists presumed that offensive operations were more effective against Indians than defensive operations, although frontier settlers often disagreed. The defensive alternative — the use of forts in a series forming a perimeter parallel to the enemy's front — was only practical if soldiers could range back and forth between the posts to intercept the enemy. There were never enough troops for that type of patrolling.<sup>2</sup>

Some strategists held that a series of forts roughly forming a column which led — like a series of stepping-stones — into enemy territory was the most desirable system even though the forts might be in the wilderness or in areas inhabited by subdued or hostile civilians. The stepping-stones arrangement was an application of the "Protected advance," a theory presented to the military world in the 1750s by the French soldier Count Turpin de Crissé.<sup>3</sup> Thus, such campaigns as Bouquet's 1764 Ohio expedition and Wayne's Fallen Timbers campaign were related to the systems of forts constructed by Duquesne at the beginning of the French and Indian War and by Forbes in 1758 and 1759 across Pennsylvania. Duquesne's and Forbes' forts were intended to be

permanent strongholds, whereas Bouquet's protected camp sites and most of Wayne's forts were not. However, all four were inspired by the strategy of advancing toward the enemy along a series of protected stations.

The contrasting theories about arranging forts, the stepping-stones and the perimeter, were just theories, of course. Forts tending to lie in a perimeter pattern might have been built primarily to shelter civilians; a line of posts pointing toward the enemy's center-of-concentration might have been intended merely to control adjacent areas.<sup>4</sup> The defeat in 1763-1764 of the Indian nations who acted in concert with the Ottawa Chief Pontiac was a triumph for the stepping-stones arrangement of forts because the Indians spent their fury in sieges and assaults on British strongholds far west of the settlement lines.<sup>5</sup>

This paper examines the recurrence of events during two periods, 1754 to 1774, and 1784 to 1800. The British imperial system, including the governments of its colonies, is placed in the same relationship to the frontier community during the first period as the United States' government is in the second. Also, French support of the Indians in the first period is equated to British support after the Revolution. The recurrences fall under eleven headings, in chronological sequence. Thus, it is argued that a cycle occurring in the late colonial period repeated itself after the Revolution. The first occurrence of the cycle determined the fate of lands situated between one hundred and two hundred miles to the east of the area in dispute during the second occurrence. These are the eleven points in the cycle:

1. Initially Indian groups were provoked by land cessions made by unauthorized and irresponsible Indians to the governments that were politically responsible for the white settlers. Thus the Iroquois sale to Pennsylvania, in July 1754, of land

stretching from the western edge of the previously purchased area to the unsurveyed western limit of William Penn's charter grant, and their sale of the Wyoming Valley to the Susquehanna Company angered many Indians, throwing them onto the French side in the French and Indian War.<sup>6</sup> The post-Revolutionary cycle began with the treaties of forts McIntosh, Stanwix and Finney. These were based on the false assumptions that the Indians recognized that they had been defeated in the Revolution, and that they would willingly yield land to compensate the frontier settlers for atrocities perpetrated during the Revolution.<sup>7</sup>

2. Major military expeditions against the Indians were defeated in wilderness areas into which the society sought to expand. Thus, Braddock's Defeat was an event similar to the defeats of Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair in 1790 and 1791.<sup>8</sup>

3. A "play off" system — the traditional Iroquois diplomatic technique defined by Professor A. F. C. Wallace — was practiced by *many* Indian nations, although during both periods the Indians did not have as much to bargain with as they thought they had. By "play off" Wallace meant that until 1761 the Iroquois bargained with the French and British by playing off one against the other.<sup>9</sup> Each European power tried to please them to prevent them from falling under the influence of the other. "Play off" may be used to describe the policy of Indians other than the Iroquois, and it was at work after the defeat of the French in the French and Indian War and after the British defeat in the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> During the Revolution various tribes were again in a position to choose between two national armies. Following both the peace settlements with the French — from the surrender of Quebec to the Peace of Paris — and the Definitive Treaty with Britain in 1783, many Indians were unwilling to believe

that they had lost their ally.<sup>11</sup>

4. Either because “play off” was not reliable, or simply because the Indians wanted to strengthen themselves against advancing white settlement, steps toward intertribal unification occurred during both periods. There are contrasting explanations of these unification efforts.<sup>12</sup>

5. Despite the desperation of the Pennsylvania frontier society to meet the Indian menace after both Braddock’s and St. Clair’s defeats, popular internal upheavals occurred in frontier communities located immediately to the rear of the most western settlements. How curious that a society apparently strained to the limit to defend itself could afford the luxury of internal discord. Should not the desperation to save itself from the common enemy have quelled discord and fostered solidarity?

Thus, four crises on the Pennsylvania frontier in the 1760s are equated to the Whiskey Insurrection of 1794. In the 1760s the British and provincial governments faced opposition from the Paxton Boys movement, the Black Boys movement, the Stump murder-indictment protest, and the resistance of the Redstone area squatters.<sup>13</sup> Although a protest against a whiskey excise has no obvious association with the movements of the 1760s, two recent studies make it possible to see points of similarity.<sup>14</sup>

6. Frustrated with the shortcomings of perimeter defense, the governments committed resources for new expeditions into the Indian heartland which were decisive. In the late colonial cycle this involved Bouquet’s Ohio expedition of 1764 and, arguably, Forbes’ 1758 campaign.<sup>15</sup> In the post-Revolutionary cycle Wayne’s 1794 campaign was such an expedition.

7. In addition to virtually uninterrupted conflict with the Indians, and the popular rebellious movements, both

Pennsylvania and the higher government to which it owed allegiance (the British Empire in the first period and the United States in the second) were faced with exogenous crises. Thus, the Stamp Act crisis and the gradual deterioration of imperial relationships overshadowed frontier problems in the late colonial period.<sup>16</sup> The movement to alter Pennsylvania's status from a proprietary to a royal colony was the most conspicuous of several reactions to external pressures.<sup>17</sup> In the 1790s the quasi-war with France and crises with Britain and Spain brought problems comparable in their impact to those of the 1760s.

8. Following the victorious expeditions in both 1764 and 1794, peace terms were dictated to the Indians. Both peace settlements left dangerous loose ends which led to subsequent discord.<sup>18</sup>

9. During both periods the policies concerning Indians generated at the highest government levels (Board of Trade, Secretaries of State, War Department and the Parliament in England in the 1760s; the President, Congress and the Secretary of War during the 1790s) were ambiguous and contradictory.<sup>19</sup>

10. In addition, the policy of whichever of the two imperial powers that was supporting Indian political autonomy and opposing expansion in western Pennsylvania and the upper Ohio Valley (France in the 1760s; Britain in the 1790s) involved duplicity and contradictions.<sup>20</sup>

11. Unresolved legal points concerning rights of big land companies, and of squatters and low-income individual farmers, held back the expansion of settlement during both periods.<sup>21</sup>

The American Revolution west of the Allegheny Mountains clearly did not follow the eleven-point cycle, but tendencies to repeat the same pattern existed. The treaty following

the defeat of the Shawnees to Dunmore's War was the initial land acquisition, and the rivalry between perimeter defense and the protected-advance expedition was illustrated in both Kentucky and Western Pennsylvania. For two reasons the Revolution in the west provides an historical parallel to the French and Indian War: (1) in both periods the Indians had a true bargaining position between two rival civilized governments; (2) during both periods white population pressure to expand westward increased, and expansion was held back by the military and political situation.

The American Revolution in the west needs to be reinterpreted in view of the urban emphasis in both Gary Nash's *The Urban Crucible* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979) and R. Arthur Bowler's *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America, 1775-1783* (Princeton, 1975). Nash presents a thesis that Revolutionary ideology arose primarily in the three major seaports of the north — Boston, Philadelphia and New York. He emphasized the point that the rural areas of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and the New York colony were essential to the economies of the seaports, and that the economic impact of pre-Revolutionary wars was the major determinant of growth in Boston, Philadelphia and New York. My conclusion derived from Bowler's work is that the war in the east inevitably had to come down to a contest for the major seaports because the British army could not continue without supplies brought in by sea. Whenever British army perimeters expanded too far from the ports the economy of the hinterland ceased to produce for it. Therefore, the army inevitably had to reduce the size of the area it occupied.<sup>22</sup>

It must be emphasized that the areas west of the mountains were not yet the economic or ideological hinterlands of the eastern cities.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Bowler's logistical limitation theory did not apply to the western war. Therefore, western

campaigns, although much dependent on logistics, oscillated to a greater degree than the events in the east. In the long run, of course, the war had to be won or lost in the east. As for being an intellectual hinterland, it is clear that the west only slowly developed the patriotic ideology that had been spawned in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. Although that statement may anger many current historians, transmontane westerners chose sides after guessing who would win the war, and many of them would have liked to have avoided the choice entirely. The coincidental deaths of two potential frontier leaders, John Bradstreet and Sir William Johnson, and the eclipse of George Croghan's influence left gaps in leadership; the initial ambivalence of potential leaders such as George Morgan, Simon Girty, Alexander McKee and Matthew Elliott, was in line with the attitude of much of the western population.

The western Revolutionary operations were not tied to the eastern seaports, but they were much influenced by sites that became major inland cities. The war appropriately linked the predictable economic *potential* of Pittsburgh, Louisville, Detroit and Niagara with the *established* economic power of Boston, Philadelphia and New York.

## CITATIONS

1. Geographer John Florin describes expansion in Pennsylvania with the military sector, as he delineates it, factored out. Florin, "The Advance of Frontier Settlement in Pennsylvania, 1690-1870." Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1966.

2. Preference for offensives was often expressed. Robert Dinwiddie to Washington, 26 July 1755, W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington, Col. Series* (Charlottesville, 1983 — ), 1: 344; William Pitt to colonial governors, 30 December 1757, Gertrude S. Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt* (2 vols., London, 1906), 1: 141; Daniel Brodhead to Washington, 21 March 1779, Louise P. Kellogg, ed., *Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio* (Madison, 1916), *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, 23: 262-263; Thomas Gage to Henry Bouquet, 4 April 1764, British Library Add. Mss. 21638, f. 293; Henry Bouquet to James Livingston, 11 June 1764, *ibid.*, f. 256.

To have made Virginia's perimeter of forts impenetrable in 1755-1756 the Virginia Regiment would have had to have had more men than the government provided, or have been supplemented by more militia. See Douglas Southall Freeman *et. al.*, *George Washington* (7 vols., New York, 1948-1957), 2: 212-220.

3. Lancelot, Count Turpin de Crissé's *Essai sur l'Art de lad Guerre* published in Paris in 1754, its German translation published in 1756, and Joseph Otway's 1761 English translation were the basis for spreading the tactical doctrine known as the "Protected Advance." I have read the Otway translation at the U.S. Army Military History Collection, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. It may be said to be the model for both Bouquet's and Wayne's expedition. J. A. Houlding concludes that the work was read by Forbes, Bouquet, Wolfe and (as early as 1761) Washington. Turpin was a colonel of French hussars from 1747 to 1761, and by 1792 a lieutenant general. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford, United Kingdom, 1781), 201-202n. It is my conclusion that "protected advance" was basically a form of the "stepping-stones" pattern. The original purpose of Forbes' series of forts leading to Pittsburgh was a single campaign, and the British were undecided until January 1759 whether to continue to maintain them. For more on Turpin see King Lawrence Parker, "Anglo-American Wilderness Campaigning 1754-1764: Logistical and Tactical

Developments” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1970), Chapter VII.

4. The perimeter of forts built in Pennsylvania following Braddock’s Defeat was too far east by the time it was completed to be tested in combat. There had been plans for a ranging system, but the shelter the forts provided to settlers was their only practical application. See William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1960), Chapters 7 and 8; Robert Hunter Morris to William Shirley, 9 February 1756, Charles H. Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley* (2 vols., New York, 1912), 2: 388-390. The French forts in the Great Lakes region and the west were arranged neither as perimeters nor as stepping-stones pointed at an enemy center. When the English decided in 1760 to occupy them, however, they may be said to have formed a line directed into areas where French influence was still strong.

5. This assumes that if the forts had not been there Indian destructiveness in Virginia and Pennsylvania would have been much greater. Of course, it could be argued that the number of forts that fell was the measure of British defeat. See James T. Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet, Sir William Johnson of New York* (New York, 1959), 256-274. But the British returned to most of the same forts after the war. They made certain, however, that garrison strengths did not drop as low as in 1763. The futuristic military recommendations in [William Smith], *Historical Account of Bouquet’s Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in 1764* (Philadelphia, 1765), Appendix I, proposed that forts be deliberately maintained in Indian areas as shock absorbers.

6. Not only were the non-Iroquois angry because those non-resident masters had sold without their consent, but the individual Iroquois who made the two sales were dishonest by the standards of either Indian or European culture. C. Hales Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1929), 172-178; Roger B. Trask, “Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress, 1754,” *Pennsylvania History*, 38 (1960), 281-283. A. F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763* (Philadelphia, 1949), 59-62; William R. Shepherd, *History of Proprietary Government in Pennsylvania* (New York, 1896), 112-113.

7. Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812* (Lansing, Michigan, 1967), 12.

8. When Chief Shingas asked Braddock on 27-28 May 1755 what he meant to do with the land after the French were driven out of the Ohio Valley, he replied “the English should inhabit and inherit the land.”

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences

Quoted in Francis P. Jennings, "Miquon's Passing: Indian-European Relations in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1674 to 1755," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965), 450. In July 1753 Iroquois from Logstown were convinced that the English intended to settle in the area, unlike the French who merely wanted to trade. *Ibid.*, 439. Harmar's and St. Clair's expeditions, of course, were intended to make settlement practical under the terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

9. Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970), 111-114.

10. The French factor in Indian relations after the fall of New France is implicit in the concern General Thomas Gage, Sir William Johnson and others expressed on the subject. E.g., Gage to Johnson, 25 April 1773, James Sullivan *et al.*, ed., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (13 vols. and Index, Albany, 1921-1965), 8: 778-779; Johnson to John Blackburn, 11 December 1771, *ibid.*, 8: 341; same to same, 20 January 1774, *ibid.*, 8: 1007-1008. French collusion contributed to Pontiac's movement. Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Princeton, 1947), 97-107 *passim*.

Many Indian groups relied on British support for many years after the Revolution. The United States government was sufficiently convinced that the British were willing to increase the amount of support they gave the Indians. Thus, the Indians were able to exploit the polarization that existed between the United States and Britain.

11. Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio* (Pittsburgh, 1969), 119-120, 277-278.

12. Anthony F. C. Wallace assumes that the Iroquois' control over nations other than the Six Nations was more than a traditional formality. He states that when the Shawnees were dispossessed by Iroquois bargaining at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (1768) they secretly joined with the western Indians in a confederation which rivaled the Iroquois system. Wallace, *Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*, 122.

Randolph C. Downes traced an attempt by the Iroquois to ally with the Cherokee to make war on the western Indians in 1769. This was thwarted by Sir William Johnson's intercession. Then, a secret Shawnee joint effort with the Seneca war faction led by Gaustarax sent war belts to the western nations calling for a surprise attack on the English colonies. Johnson learned of it and again intervened, but the western Indians would neither parley nor surrender the belts. Therefore, Downes

relates that Johnson isolated the real troublemakers, the Shawnees, by allowing the western Indians (Wabash and Illinois) to fall back under the influence of the French while pampering the Delawares and Iroquois with presents in the east. This set the stage for Dunmore's War. Downes, *Council Fires*, 145-151. The Indian confederation after the Revolution was spontaneous, founded at a conference held at Sandusky in September 1783. Its strength rose and fell, but it was the central force defending the Ohio River boundary until 1795. *Ibid.*, 282 *et seq.*

J. Leitch Wright, while not denying that an organization of western Indians arose from the Sandusky conference, states that the Shawnees and Cherokees were catalysts for tendencies to unite all Indians, north and south as well as east and west. In the Old Northwest the Indians' confidence in their ability to defend the Ohio River line grew after St. Clair's defeat, but the prompting of John Graves Simcoe and other British officials who wanted an independent trans-Ohio River Indian buffer state lay behind much of the effort for a real Indian confederation. This effort arose when the Nootka Sound crisis broke, and subsided after Fallen Timbers and other world events of 1794-1795. More than any of the other historians discussing confederation efforts, Wright emphasizes that the Cherokees and often the Creeks thought in concert with the northeastern and western nations. The next confederation movement, the one that fully materialized, was, of course, the powerful system developed by Tecumseh. J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Britain and the American Frontier, 1783-1815*, (Athens, Georgia, 1975), 49, 61-63, 74, 79-83, 88-90, 95, 97.

Isabel Thompson Kelsay's biography of Joseph Brant gives much detail about Indian confederation activities. She especially emphasized Brant's metaphor "the dish with one spoon," the principle that all Indian nations should hold as one people and share equally the vast areas west of United States' control. He made this principle the basis for his type of confederation and stood against divisiveness among the Indians. His willingness to accept a boundary line at the Muskingum River, yielding the Ohio River line, placed his position between those Indians afraid to go to war again and the extremists, mostly from the western nations, who insisted on the Ohio. Kelsay, *Joseph Brant, 1743-1807; Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse, 1984), 410, 415-439, 502.

Dr. Greg Dowd takes a different approach to the origins of pan-Indian movements in "Sacred Power: American Indian Nativism, 1745-1775," a paper presented at the Philadelphia Center for Early

American Studies Seminar, 10 January 1986, and cite here with his permission. ( I have not read Dr. Dowd's dissertation.) Feeling powerless because white culture overshadowed their own in so many ways, Indian thought came to look upon sacred power as their salvation. A group of influential religious prophets flourished from 1745 to 1775, and emphasized united Indian efforts against white culture as the road to spiritual salvation. The Shawnees led this pan-Indian movement because (as Wright also said), they had so many kinship ties to other nations by virtue of having fled so often and often having been fragmented. Thus, for Dowd, it was not *merely* military defeat or resentment against white farmers embracing what had been Indian hunting grounds that pulled the Indians together; it was a deeper, more complicated process.

13. For the Paxton Boys movement see Brooke Hindle, "The March of the Paxton Boys," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 3 (1946), 461-486; James Kirby Martin, "The Return of the Paxton Boys and the Historical State of the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1764-1774," *Pennsylvania History*, 38 (1971), 117-133; and Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *The Paxton Riots and the Frontier Theory* (Chicago, 1967). For the Black Boys movement see Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives* [First Service], (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1852-1856), 4: 218-248; Neil H. Swanson, *The First Rebel* (Rahway, New Jersey, 1937); and Eleanor M. Webster, "Insurrection at Fort Loudoun in 1765: Rebellion or Preservation of the Peace?," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 47 (1964), 124-139. For the Stump protests see Gail S. Howe, "The Frederick Stump Affair, 1768, and its Challenge to Legal Historians of Early Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History*, 49 (1982), 259-280; and Linda Ries, "'The Rage of Opposing Government': The Stump Affair of 1768," *Cumberland County History*, 1 (1984), 21-45. For the Redstone squatters see Downes, *Council Fires*, 136-138; Franklin Ellis, ed., *History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1882), 57-63; and Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of Thomas Gage* (2 vols., New Haven, 1933), 1: 139, 2: 45.

14. Dorothy E. Fennell, "From Rebelliousness to Insurrection, 1765-1802," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981); Thomas P. Slaughter, "Liberty, Order and the Excise: The Origins of the Whiskey Rebellion and the Context of Frontier Unrest in Early America," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1983). Fennell finds a continuing theme of symbolism in colonial violence beginning with the Black Boys' practice of blacking their faces. She also includes incidents of objection to

the state whiskey excise which predated the federal excise, and she establishes that the big western Pennsylvania distillers favored the excise because it eliminated their smaller competitors. Slaughter views the rebellion as a point of crisis in the development of two opposing attitudes in colonial America, liberty and order. He argues that the average westerner lived in grinding poverty. After the settlers had been left unprotected to Indian violence since Harmar's defeat, the federal excise was a last straw touching off open insurrection. His historiographical essay is very important for understanding the period. Slaughter's *The Whiskey Rebellion; Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (Oxford, United Kingdom, 1986) has just reached our library.

It is remarkable that so many surveys of the events of 1794 fail to look for associations between the Indian war and the Whiskey Insurrection. Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword* (New York and London, 1975), however, places them side by side in Chapter 8, "Two Uses of Force." In 1792 Hugh H. Brackenridge linked the two events when he argued against the excise tax on the frontier. He pointed out that that area had many other problems, the threat of Indian conflict among them. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection* (reprint, New Haven, 1972), 48. This suggests Slaughter's explanation.

15. Fort Duquesne, Forbes' objective, was a center for supporting Indian war parties that devastated the Pennsylvania and Virginia settlements. It may be said that the expedition of 1758 was primarily against the French and was not the type of operation that would have been launched against the Indians alone. The fort was abandoned by the French because the logistical passage from Lake Erie was too cumbersome and because Christian Frederick Post's diplomacy caused many Indians in western Pennsylvania to defect from the French before Forbes reached Fort Duquesne. See Alfred P. James, ed., *Writings of General John Forbes* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1938), and S. K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet, 2, The Forbes Expedition* (Harrisburg, 1951).

For Bouquet's expedition see S. K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Leo J. Roland, eds., *The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet; Northwest Pennsylvania Colonial Series* (19 vols., Harrisburg, 1940-1943), Series 21651, Series 21653, Series 21654 and Series 21655; Edward G. Williams, ed., *The Orderly Book of Colonel Henry Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, 1764* (Pittsburgh, 1960); Williams, ed., *Bouquet's March*

to the Ohio; *The Forbes Road* (Pittsburgh, 1975); and [Smith], *Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in 1764*.

16. The repeal of the Stamp Act deprived the British of the revenue necessary for the "Plan of 1764," the most comprehensive arrangement for controlling Indian trade in the colonies. Therefore, the Plan was never made official. Efforts of administrators to follow the principles involved in the Plan also failed. Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in the Formative Years* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962), 23-24.

17. See James H. Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1746-1770* (Princeton, 1972).

18. Peace terms following Pontiac's defeat were not fully settled until 1786. Most glaring of the loose ends left by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of that year was the unenforceable exclusion of the Shawnees from their Kentucky hunting grounds. See Downes, *Council Fires*, 140-159. The lingering problems following the Treaty of Fort Greenville are best presented in Reginald Horseman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812*, Chapter 7.

19. The shifting policies of the British government are explained in greatest detail in Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961). Glaring inconsistencies in Indian policies of the early United States included the use of war guilt rationale in the first treaties negotiated after the Revolution, and the false diplomatic peace profile maintained from January 1793 until the Battle of Fallen Timbers. For the latter see Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 149.

20. The French, having surrendered New France and then ended the Seven Years War, gave clandestine support to Pontiac's movement. British inconsistencies following the American Revolution include the various arguments given for continuing to hold the forts in the Old Northwest, the off-and-on support of the idea of an independent Indian buffer state, and deceiving the Indians into believing that they would provide them military support against Wayne. The inner workings of British policy in the post-Revolutionary period are lucidly explained in Wright, *Britain and the Americans Frontier, 1783-1815*.

21. For the big land companies that existed before the Revolution see Thomas P. Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution* (New York, 1937); Max Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder* (New York, 1932); and Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961). Problems of the small frontier land holder before

the Revolution included the cost of the land and preemption rights. In the same year that the Pennsylvania Assembly enacted a death penalty for squatters its courts finally recognized preemption rights. The subject is lightly covered in Solon J. Buck and Mary Hawthorn Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1939).

For the period following the Revolution see Elizabeth K. Henderson, "The North West Lands of Pennsylvania, 1790-1812," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 40 (1936), 131-160; and Norman B. Wilkinson, *Land Policy and Speculation in Pennsylvania, 1779-1800* (New York, 1979).

22. Louis M. Waddell, Review of *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America, 1775-1783*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 33 (1976), 540-542. It is possible that I have drawn conclusions from statements in this book which go beyond the author's intentions.

23. In the process of correcting the agrarian myth upon which Richard Hofstadter and others based interpretations of Jeffersonianism, Joyce O. Appleby has questioned whether subsistence farming ever existed in America between 1788 and 1820, years when the European market for grain made farming in America very profitable. Appleby, "Commercial Farming and the 'Agrarian Myth' in the Early American Republic," *Journal of American History*, 68 (1982-1983), 839-840, 842, 847. Perhaps the farming economic hinterland serving Philadelphia gave economic motivation to even the smallest farmer tilling the soil within its area, and only those farmers beyond the hinterland, i.e. at distance so great from the city that transportation costs forbid profits, were truly subsistence farmers. It would be interesting to trace the geographic limits of the hinterland of Philadelphia's economy in the Western Pennsylvania-Ohio Valley region. Such a study would help to explain behavior in the western area during the period with which we are concerned. The works of James T. Lemon — *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1972) and "Household Consumption in Early Colonial America And Its Relationship to Production and Trade: The Situation Among Farmers in Southeastern Pennsylvania," *Agricultural History*, 41 (1967), 59-70, and Bettye Hobbs Pruitt, "Self-Sufficiency and the Agricultural Economy of Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 41 (1984), 335-364, provide models of how statistical data may be brought to bear on the topic of agricultural self-sufficiency, though they do not consider features of the frontier environment or the impact of distance from the big city markets.

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences



**“THEIR RULES OF WAR”:  
JAMES SMITH’S SUMMARY OF  
INDIAN WOODLAND WAR**

*Leroy V. Eid*  
*University of Dayton*

In the decade before the American Civil War, U. J. Jones wrote a local history of the Juniata Valley of Pennsylvania in which he detailed the various Indian-White confrontations of that valley during the eighteenth century. At one point he almost apologetically introduced a quotation from Col. James Smith’s published narrative of his capture by Indians during the Braddock campaign by saying: “Notwithstanding Smith’s narrative may have been read by a majority of our readers, [I’ll quote him anyway].”<sup>1</sup> Today’s reader would probably need to be told just who this James Smith was and why (from among the 500 or so narratives by ex-captives) his account was so particularly popular. This will be the first (and shortest) part of this paper. Then will follow an abbreviated analysis of the central thrust of the least quoted part of that immensely popular *Narrative*, his analysis of Indian war. Finally, and provocatively, there will be an attempt to begin to prove that James Smith was one of less than a handful of writers who had a rather complete awareness of the tactical sophistication of late eighteenth century Indian-style fighting in the Ohio Valley.

**JAMES SMITH’S VITA**

James Smith’s *Narrative* gives a number of details of his life. He was captured in 1755 while part of a party building roads for Braddock’s forces. In 1759, in the fifth year of cap-

tivity, the Indians permitted him to return to colonial society. His captivity experiences quite obviously prepared him for military service. In 1764, he was a Lieutenant in Bouquet's expedition into Ohio. He then led his group of Indian fighters (formed originally in 1763 and called the Black Boys) against those trading whiskey and arms to the Indians. This frontier method of handling a local problem led the Black Boys to make several attacks on Fort Loudon, until it was finally evacuated. Later they captured Ft. Bedford. Finally, Smith was arrested, escaped from prison, tried for murder, acquitted, and elected then to the Pennsylvania Assembly. In Lord Dunmore's War, he was a Captain of a ranging company. In 1775, he was a Major in a unit from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. In 1777, he was a Colonel on the Pennsylvania frontier.

More than a soldier, his neighbors pushed him into the political sphere. In 1776, he participated in the Pennsylvania Convention. In the late 1780s, he moved to Bourbon County, Kentucky, a state he had explored in 1766, before Daniel Boone's more remembered exploits. There, in the words of the Kentucky historian, Mann Butler, he was "long distinguished in the councils of Kentucky," including a number of years in the General Assembly.<sup>2</sup> His literary side became public, when in 1799 he published his *Narrative*. In 1812, he published his *Treatise*, his last statement on Indian war. Fervently religious, he was for awhile a Stoneite. Generally, though, he was a Presbyterian, and spent time as a missionary among the Indians. In 1810, a brace of pamphlets, *Remarkable Occurrences* and *Shakerism Detected*, challenged a strong local religious group which his son had joined. Besides these writings on practical military and religious issues, the *Narrative* gives an example of a poem he composed in 1766. That this was not an unusual expres-

sion for such a practical man, might be inferred from the prefatory notes in the 1870 Clark edition that mentions that his second wife began to write poetry mostly *after* she married Smith.

Smith's *Narrative* enjoyed the complete confidence of those who knew of him. Contemporaries evidently agreed with John M'Clung's opinion that "his adventures will be found particularly interesting, as affording more ample specimens of savage manners and character, than almost any other account now in existence."<sup>3</sup> Two decades earlier, another Kentucky historian, Samuel L. Metcalf, in his collection of *Interesting Narratives of Indian War*, showed his high opinion of Smith by giving Smith's *Narrative* forty percent of the book. Neville Craig in his *Olden Times* felt that Smith's account was "unimpeachable" and had been "never contradicted."<sup>4</sup> Smith himself, took pains to answer a charge he must have heard: How can you remember so clearly, things that happened so long before? Smith, he emphasized, possessed the habit of keeping a journal, and this habit is the source of much of his factual assurance. One of the most emotional series of anecdotes of his *Narrative* deals with the Indian distrust of this captive who placed too much confidence in books. In short, Smith seems — in M'Clung's words — to be "justly entitled to the distinctions which we give him."

## SMITH'S ANALYSIS OF INDIAN WAR

Although the preface of Smith's *Narrative* emphasized the goal of learning the Indian mode of warfare, most authors prized Smith, however, for the fascinating anecdotal material found in the main text of the *Narrative*. In 1812 however, Smith made it very clear again that he considered the significant part of his *Narrative* to be its eleven page appendix en-

titled "On their discipline and methods of war." In 1812, Smith repeated the points of this appendix and extensively added material in a 59 page book that bore the following exact but longish title:

A treatise, on the mode and manner of Indian war, their tactics, discipline and encampments, the various methods they practice, in order to obtain the advantage, by ambush, surprise, surrounding, etc., ways and means proposed to prevent the Indians from obtaining the advantage. A chart, or plan of marching, and encamping, laid down, whereby we may undoubtedly surround them, if we have men sufficient. Also — a brief account of twenty-three campaigns, carried on against the Indians with the Events, since the year 1755; Gov. Harrison's included. Likewise — some abstracts selected from his Journal, while in captivity with the Indians, relative to the Wars: which was published many year ago, but few of them now to be found.

Smith ends this short book with the oratorical question: "And is it not high time that we should improve in the Indian art of war?" The earlier part of the *Treatise* (often quoting verbatim the appendix of the *Narrative*) gives Smith's final description and estimation of that "art." He insists that Indians exhibit both discipline and method in their fighting. He emphatically denies that Indians lack military expertise. Rather, he concludes that "war is their principal study," and "in this they have arrived at considerable perfection."<sup>6</sup>

Making these claims more explicit, Smith informs us that the individual Indian soldier regularly exhibits an important number of skills. They are punctual in obeying orders, they act in concert, they cheerfully and immediately carry out directions. While in a formation, that may be a mile long, they are able to move forward without disorder, and when necessary form circles, or semi-circles, or large hollow squares. Once the battle begins, each soldier fights as though he were

to gain the battle himself.

Their officers, Smith continues, plan, order and conduct matters both before and during the action. Officer commands orchestrate the soldiers into retreating or advancing "in concert." In the *Narrative* there is further anecdotal information on the superior officer's duties. Here Smith's Indian mentor, Tecaughretanego, laid down the principle that "the art of war consists in ambushing and surprising our enemies, and in preventing them from ambushing and surprising us."<sup>7</sup> In the *Treatise* he summarizes it thus:

They say . . . that it is the business of the officers to lay plans to take every advantage of the enemy — to ambush and surprise them, and to prevent being ambushed and surprised themselves; it is the duty of officers to prepare & deliver speeches to the men, in order to animate and encourage them & on the march to prevent the men at any time from getting into a huddle, because if the enemy should surround them in this position they would be exposed to the enemy's fire on every quarter. It is likewise their business at all times to endeavour to annoy their enemy; and save their own men, and ought therefore never to bring on an attack without considerable advantage, or without what appeared to them the sure prospect of victory, & that with the loss of few men: and if at any time they should be mistaken in this, and are like to lose many men by gaining the victory, it is their duty to retreat, and wait for a better opportunity of defeating their enemy, without the danger of losing too many men.

Only in the *Narrative* does one find Smith alluding directly to "strategic" (i.e. general over-all political control) questions. Even there, Smith seems more interested in what seems like a peripheral question, the role of "witchcraft" in mobilizing public opinion, rather than in the central question of unified organizational response. Nevertheless, he notices that

council decisions are arrived at by a process that seems so natural that Indians “are led by instinct to act in concert and to move off regularly after their leaders.”<sup>9</sup>

Smith presents us, then, with a model of an Indian military apparatus that builds on the disciplined soldiery, who are competently lead by knowledgeable and seasoned officers who have tactical battlefield experience in the use of tactical principles and which are used for strategical political purposes. Is this an idealized or romantic picture, a natural result of an impressionable young man’s experience? But Allen Nevins has pointed out that Smith’s tale is “one of the grimmest stories of Indian captivity handed down to us.”<sup>10</sup> Smith was never a romantic.

But if the model is true, how could Indians lose? Since the Ohio Valley Indians lost not only individual battles but the war, why believe this model is correct?

Smith seems to have been alert to both of these objections. He observed, for one thing, that historically Whites had often won because the immensely more numerous Colonials had learned how to imitate the Indians. In his introduction to the *Treatise*, Smith wrote that “if New England had only left on record what they had learned of the nature of the Indian war, then many lives would have been saved in Braddock’s time.” Although a native Pennsylvanian, Smith in both the *Treatise* and the *Narrative* singled out the Virginians of his time for having learned “the knowledge of this kind of war.” Indeed, Smith held in both his books that Kentucky could not have been settled except for the expertise of the Virginians who understood the Indian maneuvers.<sup>11</sup> According to Smith, the Indians, who unsuccessfully had attacked General Forbes’ army near Ft. Ligonier, blamed the Virginians for their lack of success. Smith also insisted that the only reason Col. Bouquet did not suffer Braddock’s fate

was the timely advice he accepted from his Virginia volunteers.

The second reason Indians could be defeated was rooted in Indian demographics. According to Smith, "nothing can be more unjustly represented" than the inflated figures given for the number of available Indian soldiers. For quite different reasons, Smith claims, both Indians and their enemies used inflated figures.<sup>12</sup>

Smith himself centered on a third reason why Indians could be defeated. Smith emphasizes the idea that if Indians are allowed to flee unmolested from a disadvantageous battle field situation, they are free to return to war whenever more opportune conditions exist. Engagements that simply chase Indians away, as Wayne did at Fallen Timbers, are dubious victories. Thus, there is a compelling reason for discussing ways of annihilating at least a portion of the enemy. Smith believes that he has devised a certain way of surrounding a large contingent of Indians so that a large number of them could be killed. Although Smith never says why he is so certain, it is apparent that he is promulgating a version of an idea that was widely discussed toward the end of the French and Indian War: that Indians must be forced into a position where they could not run. In Smith's plan, the light-horse and light-infantry are placed in the inside of the oblong square in which the soldiers march, and from which they will sally out and surround the enemy when attacked.

### "A CAPITAL MISTAKE"

Smith really believed that Indians were magnificently disciplined troops; indeed, he claimed that "Indians are the best disciplined troops for a wooden country in the known world."<sup>13</sup> Less and less of his contemporaries shared that view,

and today's historians generally reflect this contrary view of the overwhelming majority of the Ohio Valley soldiers, politicians and writers. When an order is given by an Indian leader, all the warriors jump up and do as they individually please — the common assumption of most historical works. Go to any library, and the authors you easily find will assure you that Indian battlefield discipline was minimal at best and Indian strategical sophistication was simply unthinkable.<sup>14</sup> In short, Smith's view that it is "a capital mistake" to "call the Indians undisciplined savages" seems incredibly wrong-headed for most (military) historians.<sup>15</sup> For example, a scholarly session of the Ohio Historical Association a couple of years ago ended with a well-known authority asserting that since Indians had no effective battlefield leaders then it made no difference who was or was not in charge of the Indians when they fought Gen. Arthur St. Clair.

So why believe that James Smith knew more than most of his contemporaries and today's professional historians? Because, Smith would undoubtedly say, the historical record proves his side. Take, for example, the 1791 St. Clair defeat. This battle (and Smith points this out) caused more US military casualties than any battle of the American Revolution. Smith seemed enraged at people who could read about Generals Edward Braddock or St. Clair and go away making "a capital mistake" of believing that Braddock or St. Clair must have been incredibly stupid to lose to undisciplined troops. Most American writers hold that leaders like Braddock or St. Clair almost inexplicably lost; Smith argues to the contrary that the Indians won for reasons based on their military expertise. In one sentence Smith said it all: "Could it be supposed that undisciplined troops could defeat Generals Braddock, Grant, Etc."<sup>16</sup>

Smith's basic argument will not easily convince people

who have been led to look at the various battles in the Ohio Valley from the traditional European military viewpoint. Smith, as his *Narrative* made quite clear, had been initiated into the entirely different woodland Indian world, and that expertise is almost impossible to imitate. His *Narrative* tells of his early tribal experience of having Indian women ducking him into the water in order to wash out his whiteness. However, one could start by accepting the validating epistemological principle of that Albany Highlander, Anne Grant, who believed that nobody should be accepted as an authority on Indian life who had not at least learned their language, perhaps by living as a trader among them, preferably by living among them as a captive.<sup>17</sup> Smith's views begin to be more credible, the more one reads accounts by those few who meet Anne Grant's Occam razor.

Exceptions, of course, are to be expected. For example, I believe I have seen no more concrete description of that basic Ohio Valley Indian tactical movement, the attempt to outflank one's enemies, than in the writings of the obscure Dayton, Ohio pioneer, Benjamin Van Cleve, who neither spoke an Indian language nor had resided among them.<sup>18</sup> Despite exceptions, Indian military insights are most confidently hoped for in the writings of soldiers like Robert Rogers who knew Indians first hand.

If the writer is part Indian, as was the case for Major John Norton, (Teyoninhokarawen) so much the better. Norton's long account of Iroquois military history must have a hundred anecdotes (often accompanied by instructive observations) describing the type of fighting done in the Ohio Valley in the 1750-1815 period. This Iroquoian warlore amply parallels and adds insights to Smith's summary of Algonquian experiences. For example, no concept appears more often in James Smith than his insistence that Indians acted "in con-

cert,” and no concept seems more dubious to most authors. Smith merely asserts it as a fact that Indians could move through woodland terrain and maintain order in a line a mile long. Norton alone in the literature that I’ve seen, shows how this late 18th century battlefield unanimity of movement, even under wretched physical conditions, was achieved. Battlefield maneuverability became a norm, even among tribes speaking quite different languages, because (Norton tells us) a habit of coordinating movements was learned in widely-practiced communal hunts.<sup>19</sup> This is part of the explanation for the otherwise unbelievable speed in which Braddock’s troops were outflanked by Indians who were themselves just as surprised at the exact meeting place. A generation later, in Northwestern Ohio, Indians enveloped St. Clair’s army so fast that Kentucky volunteers, who had just fled pell mell from an advance post, were not able to escape from the main camp.

In his day, Major Robert Rogers personified the professional soldier who was trying to imitate Indian military practices. His *Journals*, for example, are particularly valuable because he gives both a long analytical summary of woodland war in his 28 rules, and instructive examples of how difficult these rules were to apply to battlefield conditions.<sup>20</sup> Rogers quite correctly warned for example, that a commander must “prevent the enemy from pressing hard on either of your wings, or surrounding you, which is the usual method of the savages.” How little help this theoretical knowledge could be was seen in his extremely candid description of the difficulties his own command often got into. In one sequence of events his successful winter ambush by his forces of an enemy convoy of sleighs was followed by his own entrapment where his advance group and then in short order his main detachment were both outflanked. Fortunately for his command, as soon as nightfall came, he prudently imitated the standard

Indian practice for such disastrous situations, a practice that Smith’s account emphasized — dropping everything and running away as fast as one could.<sup>21</sup>

Major Rogers’ reputation was not universally held in high esteem in his own time, perhaps because professional soldiers judged such practices, as precipitate flight, as cowardice. Smith, however, insisted that this refusal to “stand cutting . . . proceeds from a compliance with their rules of war, rather than cowardice.”<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, James Grant showed in 1758 before Ft. Duquesne when faced with a similar situation, just how easily one’s command could be destroyed. Since Grant seemed to have no idea of how quickly Indians could outflank an enemy, he was quite stunned when (in his own words) he went from a prepared position “with nothing to fear” to a position where in “less than an hour” he was “fired upon from every quarter.”<sup>23</sup> Whereas Rogers before a battle would often have chosen with his officers up to three places to retreat to, Grant does not seem to have considered the possibility that Indians might outmaneuver him.

Rogers’ much surer grasp of the intricacies of the Indian military world was particularly shown in his understanding of the political environment that could on occasions strengthen Indian military resolve and alter drastically the battlefield code. Most writers follow a practice illustrated, for example, by U. J. Jones in portraying Indian war simply as a sickening account of various massacres and atrocities devoid of tactical and strategical significance. Of the dozens and dozens of Indian-White confrontations in Jones’ book, there is not a single anecdote that clearly illustrates large-scale Indian military sophistication. In contrast, Rogers states in his *A Concise Account* that Indians also carry on “national” war which is entered into only after great deliberation and solemn

nity; and “prosecuted with the utmost secrecy, diligence and attention, both in making preparations and in carrying their schemes into execution.”<sup>24</sup> Unless one really believes this significant distinction and sees that Indians in the generally described “petite” war are following rules of war which often are quite different from “national” war, the defeat of Braddock, Grant, St. Clair, etc. remains incomprehensible. The group of thirty Indians that George Washington saw exulting over a petite mission that had netted one scalp were most certainly under different military operational (and strategical) codes than, for example, those Indians fighting Bouquet.<sup>25</sup>

One major tactical difference was seen in Indian resolve in the presence of a determined enemy. Petite war participants did everything possible to avoid such situations. Even famous war chiefs found no humiliation in describing how on some such raiding party they had met a larger force and had fled so precipitously as to leave everything behind. But this common frontier experience often led to the view that Indians were cowardly and/or incompetent. Assuming some such premise, a number of theoreticians, for example, have felt that Braddock could have won in 1755 on the Monongahela simply by a firm bayonet charge. Bouquet’s clearing the Bushy Run battlefield by a charge of his Highlanders or Gen. Wayne’s straightforward charge at Fallen Timbers seem like later proofs of this analysis of Braddock’s incompetence. To the contrary, Smith asserts vigorously as we have seen, that on battlefields [in a ‘national’ war, I would add] Indians retreated and advanced according to plan. In Norton’s words, like “blackbirds,” the soldiers systematically advanced, fired, loaded, advanced past another who had just fired.<sup>26</sup> They retreated the same way. Only when the situation turned impossible, as it suddenly did at Bushy Run in 1763 or at Fallen

Timbers in 1794, did they exit in full flight. Fallen Timbers is a complicated story, and surely it is not simply a case of routing undisciplined Indians by showing cold steel. Stephen Riddle, the White-Indian from Kentucky who fought as a chief on the Indian side against Wayne at Fallen Timbers, summarized the battle in these terms: "we tried to out flank them and surround them, but to our astonishment the whites out flanked us and all of a sudden made a charge on us."<sup>27</sup> St. Clair, for example, tried two years earlier to bayonet his way to victory, but his professional forces found that the technique by itself was too simple to work. Indians retreated in good order before St. Clair's soldiers, and in fact, "pursued their pursuers" (in Norton's phrase)<sup>28</sup> by moving quickly toward surrounding and decimating the charging soldiers. That chastening experience, perhaps, explains why St. Clair surprisingly reported to the Secretary of War after his army's total rout, that if he had had more professional soldiers in his command that day on the tributary of the Wabash River, there just would have been more dead American soldiers.<sup>29</sup> Actually St. Clair's contemporaries should have not been so surprised at this Indian ability to neutralize bayonet charges since another Smith (William) in his *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764* emphasized the idea that Indians always gave way when pressed but returned as soon as possible so that an army always found itself "surrounded by a circle of fire," a description of Col. Henry Bouquet's Highlanders charging up and down hills to no advantage that first day of the Bushy Run battle.<sup>30</sup>

#### "UNDOUBTEDLY SURROUND"

The *Treatise* amplified the *Narrative's* description of the

Indian Art of War, and insisted on its reality in a large number of large-scale Indian-White encounters, only because Smith wanted to explain a way to entrap Indians. Everytime Ohio Valley Indians had been maneuvered in the past (except for Bushy Run) into a losing position, they simply evaporated. Grant's fear that the Indians would NOT fight, was the major reason he acted so strangely in his defeat opposite Ft. Duquesne that Indians later assumed that he had been drunk. Significantly, James Grant regained his prestige by outgeneral-ing Lee at Monmouth in 1778, and by serving with distinction on St. Lucia in 1778. He was, in fact, a fine officer, but only when he did not hold his foes in contempt. Grant worked closely with Bouquet, whose 1764 *Orderly Book* (complete with diagrams also seen in William Smith's work) would seem to show him to be the author<sup>31</sup> of the *Historical Account's* theoretical description of how the Indian could be forced to stand and be destroyed.

A couple of times, James Smith respectfully enshrines a Virginian, Lemuel Barrett, as the author of the battlefield scheme that had made Bouquet's reputation.<sup>32</sup> Barrett's insight that the way to get Indians to commit themselves on the battlefield is to appear to be disintegrating, is incorporated in James' schema in an incidental way. That is, James Smith says that even if there is a collapse of part of the square in which the soldiers are fighting and the Indians rush in, they will be rushing deeper into a trap.

But James Smith's thought is different from both the Barrett and William Smith plans in an important way. Large-scale formations of late Eighteenth Century Ohio Valley Indians regularly attacked in half-moon formation. Although Smith never mentions this practice, his plan assumes an attack in this formation. As the two enveloping movements of the Indian half moon formation were taking place, Smith

would have his cavalry move out of the part of the square not under direct attack and envelop as much of the two flanking parts of the Indian army as it reasonably could do. Perhaps the plan might have worked, perhaps not. But the plan's sure knowledge of how the Indians would fight, shows that among published authorities, James Smith almost uniquely knew Ohio Valley Indian battlefield tactics.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>U. J. Jones, *History of the Early Settlement of the Juniata Valley* (Harrisburg, 1889), 154. Smith's narrative has been republished recently as *Scoouwa: James Smith's Indian Captivity Narrative* (Columbus, 1978). Smith also published the quite unknown *A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War* (Chicago, 1948 reprint). Some early collections reprinted the *Narrative* in its entirety: for example, J. M. M'Clung or Joseph Pritts, *Border Life* (Abingdon, VA., 1849).

In 1937, Neil H. Swanson recast Smith's diary into the format of a novel entitled, *The First Rebel*, but which Henry S. Commanger clearly identified as "a carefully documented historical biography, based on sources, substantiated by footnote references, and bolstered with appendices." *Books* July 18, 1937, p. 1. Swanson's title comes from his emphasis on the conflict between the Black Boys and British authorities and which formed (according to Swanson) the first overt act of the American Revolution.

In addition, New York *Times* reviewer, R. L. Duffus, commented on this attempt to rescue Smith's name "from near oblivion." Nevertheless, a decade later a review of a bibliography of James Smith philosophized: "One is amazed that a man could occupy so great a part in the national and local life of the pioneer period, contributing so widely to its military, religious, and cultural phases and fall within a century into almost complete oblivion." Even a number of today's historians of Indian captive narratives, however, ignore James Smith. For example, the *Narrative* is not found in either Richard VanDerBeet's *Held Captive by Indians* (Knoxville, 1973) or James Levernier and Hennig Cohen's *The Indians and Their Captives*, (Westport, 1977). VanDerBeet's, *The Indian Captivity Narrative* (New York, 1984) does, however, refer to Smith's "admittedly didactic purpose," the "observations on the Indian mode of warfare."

<sup>2</sup>Mann Butler, *Valley of the Ohio*, ed. G.G. Clift & Hambleton Tapp (Frankfort, 1971), 43.

<sup>3</sup>John A. M'Clung *Sketches of Western Adventure* (Cincinnati, 1839), 10. See, for example, how more instructive of Indian life in general is Smith's account over the narrative of Robert Eastburn, who was also captured in the French and Indian War.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel L. Metcalf, *A Collection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives* (Lexington, 1821); Neville B. Craig, *The Olden Time* (New York, 1976 reprint), 72.

<sup>5</sup>J. M'Clung, 9.

<sup>6</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 171.

<sup>7</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 118-9; *Treatise*, 4.

<sup>8</sup>J. Smith, *Treatise*, 12; *Narrative*, 169-70. This is N. Swanson's one direct quote from the *Narrative*; Swanson uses it to summarize Smith's own command of the Black Boys. N. Swanson, *The First Rebel*, 299.

<sup>9</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 99. Two excellent sources for understanding how the stateless woodland Indian political structure worked are found in the works of two Jesuit priests, Antoine Silvy (thirty-six years among the Eskimos, Iroquois and Western Algonquians) and Joseph Lafitau (five years among the Iroquois and confidante of the Jesuit, Julian Garnier, who spent sixty years among Indians): Antoine Silvy, *Letters From North America*, trans. Ivy A. Dickson (Belleville, 1980) and Joseph Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians*, ed. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore (Toronto, 1977).

The authenticity of the linkage of war leadership and religious authority that Smith reported of the Indians has recently been argued at length by Lothar Drager, "Chieftainship and Religious Authority Among the Central Algonkin," in ed. Pieter Hovens, *North American Indian Studies* (Gottingen, 1981), 37-58. Young Alexander Henry was a captive for awhile during Pontiac's Rebellion, and his account of the consultation with the Great Turtle on the issue of peace with England shows exactly how religious leaders and public questions intertwined among the Algonquians. *Attack at Michilimackinac 1763*, ed. David A. Armour, (Mackinac Island, 1971), 105-108.

<sup>10</sup>*The Saturday Review*, 16, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup>J. Smith, *Treatise*, 3; *Narrative*, 168.

<sup>12</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 164-65.

<sup>13</sup>J. Smith, *Treatise*, 9.

<sup>14</sup>But see Thomas L. Connelly, "Indian Warfare on the Tennessee Frontier, 1776-1794: Strategy and Tactics," *East Tennessee Historical Society*, 36 (1964), 3-22 for another part of the Eastern woodlands, and see Keith F. Otterbein, *The Evolution of War* (Human Relations Area Files, 1970) for a study of fifty societies that buttresses the possibility that Smith knew what he was talking about. Wiley Sword's *President Washington's Indian War*, (Norman, 1985) incorporates the Indian tactical world in his descriptions, and at one place (p. 182) he quotes James Smith on the discipline possessed by Indians.

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences

<sup>15</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 161; *Treatise*, 4. This is a first sentence of the appendix of the *Narrative*, "On Their Discipline and Method of War."

<sup>16</sup>J. Smith, *Narrative*, 163.

<sup>17</sup>Anne Grant, *Memoirs of an American Lady* (Albany, 1876), 71.

<sup>18</sup>Benjamin Van Cleve, "Memoirs," in *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio.*, XVII (1922), 18.

<sup>19</sup>John Norton, *Journal* ed. Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman (Toronto, 1970), 182.

<sup>20</sup>Robert Rogers, *Journals* (Ann Arbor, 1966 reprint).

<sup>21</sup>R. Rogers, *Journals*, 62, 85-7.

<sup>22</sup>J. Smith, *Treatise*, 12; *Narrative*, 170.

<sup>23</sup>Hugh Cleland, *George Washington in the Ohio Valley* (Pittsburgh, 1955), 207.

<sup>24</sup>R. Rogers, *A Concise Account of North America* (New York, 1966), 220. See also J. Norton, 128-9.

<sup>25</sup>*The Diaries of George Washington*, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Boston, 1925), I, 7.

<sup>26</sup>J. Norton, *Journal*, 139, 185.

<sup>27</sup>*Westward into Kentucky: The Narrative of Daniel Trabue*, ed. Chester R. Young, (Lexington, 1981), 141.

<sup>28</sup>J. Norton, 178.

<sup>29</sup>The letter is found, for example, in S. Metcalf, *Collection*, 129.

<sup>30</sup>[William Smith], *A Historical Account of an Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in the Year 1764* (Ann Arbor, 1966), VIII, X, 44.

<sup>31</sup>*The Orderly Book*, ed. Edward G. Williams, (Pittsburg, 1960). For a contrary view, see Don Doudelin, "Numbers and Tactics at Bushy Run," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 68 (1985), 153-179.

<sup>32</sup>J. Smith, *Treatise*, 6-7, 21. While not perfectly clear, it seems likely that "Ensign" Smith was talking of Bouquet's command when he wrote: "they knew no more about fighting Indians, than Indians do about ship building." *Treatise*, 52.

*"Their Rules of War" James Smith's Summary of Indian Woodland War*

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences



## **BLACK ROBES AND BLACKENED FACES: A HISTORY OF MIAMI-JESUIT RELATIONS**

*Peter Peregrine  
Purdue University*

I had still further every reason to be surprised and delighted at the tokens of endearment which I had received from most of these people, instead of the hatchet-blows that I expected; and, more yet, at the simplicity of a good old man in whose cabin I publicly explained the holy Mysteries of the Incarnation and Death of JESUS CHRIST. As soon as I produced my Crucifix, to display it before the people's eyes, this good man, moved at the sight, wished to acknowledge it as his God, and to worship it by an offering of the incense of this country. It consisted of powdered tobacco, of which he took two or three handfuls, one by one, and, as if offering the censer an equal number of times, scattered it over the Crucifix and over me — which is the highest mark of honor that they can show toward those whom they regard as Spirits. I could hardly restrain my tears of joy at seeing the crucified JESUS CHRIST worshiped by a Savage at the very first time when he was told about him.<sup>1</sup>

This passage was written in March of 1671 by the Jesuit Claude Allouez from a newly founded mission southwest of Green Bay. It is a striking image — the Jesuit displaying his crucifix for the first time to a group of intrigued Amerinds, hoping to somehow keep their attention, hoping to somehow gain their trust, and on the other side the Amerind, sitting confused before this strange outsider who dressed completely in black and spoke his language with difficulty, obviously quite different from the French traders who had been

mistreating men from his village for years. And then the crucifix itself — shining in silver like nothing the Amerind had seen before, representing a strange story of death the man in black was telling, representing somehow a God. One can understand how the Amerind was moved by the experience, and approached the image to honor it in the only way he knew — offer it tobacco.

This offering is perhaps the most striking thing about the passage, though not because the Amerind made it, but because Allouez accepted it, not only accepting it, but crying from joy at the gesture. One has to remember that this was 1671. The Catholic Church was still reeling under the shock of Luther, Calvin, and others. The counter-reformation was in full swing. Altars in Catholic Churches were literally behind bars. Priests gave salvation through formal rites and duties, and offered advice on how parishioners could help the priesthood save them, but religion was in the hands of the clergy, not of the people. Yet here, in the remote wilds of North America, Allouez allowed an Amerind to sprinkle tobacco on a cross, a cross that in Europe might be locked behind an iron gate in a cathedral or the stone walls of a rectory. Why? What was in this relationship that left Allouez crying from joy at an act that might have been heresy in Europe? We cannot forget the Amerind in this situation either. His religious beliefs had at least 10,000 years of independent development behind them, yet were apparently so plastic that, as in the passage above, they could be modified in a moment. Why was this? What motivated the Amerind peoples to accept the Jesuits and their teachings?

These questions concerning the motivations of both the Amerinds and the Jesuits in this contact situation have been the focus of my recent research,<sup>2</sup> and I will offer some interesting, though tentative answers to them. I will concen-

trate on one Indian group, the Green Bay Miamis, and on the two missionaries, Claude Allouez and Louis Andre', who were with them during a short period of time, 1669-1679.

The Miami were a Central Algonquian Amerind group, closely related to the Illinois.<sup>3</sup> The first reference we have of them comes from the Jesuit Relations for 1658, where they are mentioned as living with a large group of displaced Amerind peoples around Green Bay.<sup>4</sup> These Miamis were obviously out of place in this setting, and when later asked where they came from they claimed to have been living with the Illinois west of the Mississippi.<sup>5</sup> Archaeological evidence suggests that both the Miami and Illinois are related to the prehistoric Fisher and Huber cultures, and therefore probably inhabited a large region around the southern end of Lake Michigan, extending southward into central Indiana and Illinois.<sup>6</sup> Charles Callender has suggested that the Miami and Illinois represent the descendants of the complex Ohio Valley Hopewell cultures, which would place their homelands further to the south in earlier prehistory, although this connection is tenuous.<sup>7</sup>

The reason for the Miami's migrations, both to the west of the Mississippi and (for the Green Bay Miamis) into Wisconsin, seem obvious enough — fear of the Iroquois. We know that the fall of Huronia in 1649 prompted many Amerind peoples of the western Great lakes to move to safer lands. The Miamis claimed to have suffered a number of attacks from the Iroquois, which probably spawned their movement west.<sup>8</sup> Attacks from the Sioux in that region drove them finally to Wisconsin, which had become a haven for many frightened groups. Sheltered by Lake Michigan — a significant obstacle for Iroquois raiders from New York and Ontario to traverse or circumnavigate, and far enough away from the Sioux, the area around Green Bay grew to contain a swar-

ming population of displaced peoples, not all of them well equipped for the environment of northern Wisconsin.

Among the peoples not prepared to meet the harshness of the Wisconsin climate were the Green Bay Miamis. Allouez put it simply: "they have greatly suffered in this quarter."<sup>9</sup> The change in environment, along with the great changes that must have already shaken their culture due to tensions and trials of the preceding years of warfare and flight, must have made these Miami people weak, scared, and unsatisfied with their culture and their way of life. This may have prepared them to accept cultural change, and perhaps new ideas such as those the Jesuits were introducing. Homer Barnett discusses situations like that being experienced by the Miamis at this time in his study of culture change, *Innovation*. He explains:

Land alienation and its equivalent, migration, force some cultural readjustments if the dispossessed group is to survive. At the very least adjustments must be made to accommodate for the absence of essentials that were relied upon in the old habitat...usually it also results in the utilization of the unfamiliar foods and materials of the new land, adaptations to the climate and the terrain, and, if the new land is inhabited [which, of course, the area of Wisconsin the Miamis had moved to was], the development of economic, social, and political arrangements with the indigenous population.<sup>10</sup>

In short, Barnett claims that "Migrants and dispossessed populations are characteristically receptive to new ideas."<sup>11</sup>

Let us, then, take a closer look at some of those forces that may have been acting on Green Bay Miamis to encourage change at this time. The Miamis came from a fairly temperate environment: oak hickory forest and prairie areas with rich resources to exploit. Moving into the harsher and colder pine

forest and riverine areas of Wisconsin, which required an entirely different pattern of subsistence to exploit efficiently, must have been a great strain on them. The Miami would no longer have had a sense of the potentials and limitations of their environment — they would not know how to use their environment wisely or to their greatest benefit. For example, riverine resources were a primary source of food in Wisconsin, yet the Miamis were fearful of water, and were not known to use canoes. The Jesuit Relations tell of huge villages of these refugees on the edge of starvation for months during the harsh Wisconsin winters.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the fur trade was changing the way the Miamis perceived their environment. Once unimportant resources came to be seen as important elements of the environment, and resources that were already of some importance, like beaver, grew to have a much greater place in the Miamis' perceived environmental inventory. These environmental forces must have been great in fostering change in Green Bay Miami culture.

Tied in with the growth of the fur trade were also changes in the Miamis' economy. The Miamis originally were simple horticulturalists, raising corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. Winter bison hunts supplied meat, as did sporadic hunting of deer and small mammals throughout the year.<sup>13</sup> With the growth of the fur trade this simple hand-to-mouth subsistence changed to production for sale. Beavers in particular, once sought after by the Amerinds for their abundant fat, began to be exploited for market trade rather than for sustenance, and this pattern was repeated for many fur-bearing species. Although trade with other groups must have been a part of Miami life for thousands of years, production specifically and exclusively for trade had probably never been a large part of the Miamis' economy. With the growth of the fur trade this pattern changed, and some of the Miamis

became specialists in production for exchange rather than for consumption. In short, the Miamis' economy was modified as a result of the fur trade.

Environment and economy have been said to be primary in both forming and maintaining a people's ideology or world view. The link between ideology and day to day existence has been explained by Maurice Cornforth in *The Theory of Knowledge*. He tells us that:

ideology is a reflection of the real, material world in the form of abstract ideas. Every ideology is an attempt made by people to understand and give an account of the real world in which they live, or some aspect of it and of their own lives, so that it may be of service to them in the definite conditions in which they live. Therefore they must always strive to develop their ideology as a coherent system of ideas which squares with the facts so far as they have experienced and ascertained them.<sup>14</sup>

Using this theoretical framework, then we must expect that changes in the basic material aspects of life — the environment, subsistence production and exchange — must lead the way for changes in ideology, and indeed in the entire culture of the peoples concerned.<sup>15</sup>

Needless to say, the upheavals that occurred to the Miami peoples prior to 1669 must have left them uniquely prepared, almost compelled, to accept new ideas and to make changes in their culture and ideology. The Jesuits were among the groups that influenced them. Other Amerind groups living around the Miamis certainly influenced them, as did the French traders, but both of these groups offered models for change more in the material realm than the ideological — they offered ideas on how to get along better in the wilds of Wisconsin, not how to alter their view of the world. The Jesuits, on the other hand, were advocates of change on the ideological level, and their model was one that was remarkably

well suited to the Green Bay Miamis.

Allouez and Andre', like all the Jesuit missionaries, had been trained in the spiritual doctrine of St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Ignatius was a mystic, that is, he was able to communicate directly with God. The Jesuit order, which St. Ignatius founded, was therefore a mystical organization, dedicated to the promotion of individual spiritual experience.<sup>16</sup> Prayer was of primary importance to the Jesuits, for it was seen by them to be the only way to communicate directly with God. Discovering, understanding, and carrying out God's will was the personal goal of every Jesuit. God's will, of course, was different for each human soul, so its discovery and commitment had to be a unique and personal venture. It was this message of individual spiritualism that the Jesuits attempted to impart on the Miamis — a personal spiritual experience in which each Miami could discover and carry out God's will for themselves.

For anyone with a knowledge of Algonquian religious belief the message the Jesuits were sending seems only slightly removed from the beliefs of the Miamis themselves. Miami religion was centered around an individual's attempts to communicate with supernatural power, known as manitou, through the act of blackening one's face with ashes, retreating to a secluded spot, and fasting. As explained by Allouez in 1671:

They pass four or five days without eating, in order that . . . they may see in their dreams some of those Divinities, on whom, they think, depends all their welfare; and, as they believe that they cannot be successful in hunting the Stag or the Bear, unless they have first seen these in a dream, their whole anxiety is, before going to seek these animals, to see in their sleep the animal upon which they have designs.<sup>17</sup>

Fasting was performed by the Miamis before hunting and war, in order to gain the favor of a manitou and therefore gain the power to be successful in their venture. A young man's first fast, however, was special. The manitou whom he contacted then would remain with him for life, becoming a sort of guardian spirit.<sup>18</sup>

These beliefs, focused on individual spiritual experience, do not seem so very different from those of the Jesuits, and it is not difficult to see how they might be quickly understood and adopted by the Miamis. Their ability to comprehend and accept these ideas, however, must have been greatly facilitated by the way the Jesuits presented them. Allouez and Andre' realized that they could not teach the Miamis how to have a personal spiritual experience in a setting that the Miamis did not understand — they knew that the Miamis could only come to understand God if they were allowed to interpret God through their own culture. Adapting themselves and their teachings to Miami culture, and letting the Miamis interpret those teachings in their own way was the basis of Allouez's and Andre's missionary practice.

Allouez and Andre', first of all, moved into the Miami culture. The Jesuit superior of New France, writing of Allouez in 1668 explained that "One must make himself...a Savage with these Savages, and lead a Savage's life with them."<sup>19</sup> This is precisely what Allouez and Andre' did with the Miami. They lived with the Green Bay Miamis, in their own cabins, sharing their food, indeed completely dependent on the Miamis for everything.

Allouez and Andre', as well, felt free to adapt aspects of native culture that could facilitate the Amerinds' understanding of God. Perhaps the most striking example of this adaptation comes from Andre' working among the Menominee. Upon entering a village Andre' found a decorated

pole from which hung a picture of the sun. The pole was meant as a sacrifice to the sun “to entreat it to have pity on them” and allow them to catch fish. Andre’ explained to the villagers that the sun could not help them, but that God could, and replaced the picture of the sun with his cricifix. Andre’ wrote that “On the following morning, sturgeon entered the river in such great abundance that these poor people were delighted, and all said to me . . . ‘teach us to pray, so that we may never feel hunger’.”<sup>20</sup> Andre’s success in this village would perhaps never have occurred if he were not willing to use the people’s own beliefs to promote Christianity — if he were not willing to adapt the native sacrificial pole to a Christian purpose.

The history of Miami and Jesuit relations, then, is not a history of conversion, but a history of accommodation. Allouez and Andre ’ were out to give the Miamis a personal knowledge of God, and realized that Christian principles could only be learned by the Miamis in a way that fit within Miami culture, and so they implored the Miamis to adapt Christianity to Miami culture and Miami experience. Indeed, the promotion of syncretism was a goal of the entire Jesuit mission in North America. Robert Burns, writing of Jesuit missionaries in the Oregon country during the 19th century, explains this concept clearly:

The Jesuits who came to the Oregon country brought something more than the organization, resources, experience, and distinctive spirit of their Order. They brought as well an unusual missionary tradition. It was rooted in the principle of accommodation, of assimilating one’s life to one’s immediate environment, so as to influence not only individuals but the environment itself. The Jesuit was to adopt the language and manner of life of the country to which he moved. His rule had built-in mechanisms for change and exception, for mobility and experimentation.<sup>21</sup>

In the case I have looked at, the relationship between the Green Bay Miamis and two Jesuit missionaries between 1669 and 1679, it appears that because of the environmental and economic forces acting upon them, the Miamis were placed in a unique position to accept cultural change. The changes that came about from their intercourse with Allouez and Andre', however, appear not to be simply the product of the Jesuits' missionization, but rather the product of both the forces acting upon them to promote change, and the message being presented by the Jesuits. Allouez and Andre' did not simply move in and convert the Green Bay Miamis, but fostered their process of cultural change, and I believe this is precisely what they wanted to do. I do not believe that Allouez and Andre' were out to manipulate Miami culture, but rather to accommodate Christianity to Miami culture and experience. The Miamis, in turn (and because of a unique series of events that shook the foundation of their ideology), seem to have been prepared to accommodate the Jesuits and their desire to convey Christian principles.

Regardless of my interpretation, it is clear to me that the history of Miami and Jesuit relations is not a simple, one-sided affair, and I believe that relationships between native peoples and their Jesuit missionaries were not as simple and directional as they are often made out to be. The idea that the Jesuits were actively seeking syncretism between their beliefs and those of the Amerinds rather than absolute conversion seems often to be left out of discussions of these relationships. I believe it is time to re-think and re-examine the relations between native Americans and the Jesuits who lived and worked among them. For years, research was done under the false belief that the Jesuits were out to make French Catholics of the Amerinds, and as I have tried to show here, I believe they were not. The relations between Jesuits and

Amerind groups need to be looked at in the light of Jesuit culture, Jesuit experience and training, and Jesuit missionary principles in order to gain a more enlightened picture of these first contacts on the American frontier.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Reuben Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 volumes, (Cleveland, 1896-1901), 55:223.

<sup>2</sup>This research was brought together in my Master's Thesis, *Miami-Jesuit Relations at Green Bay 1669-1679: A Study in Acculturation*, (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University, 1987).

<sup>3</sup>Charles Callender, "Miami," in B. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 15: Northeast*. (Washington, D.C., 1978).

<sup>4</sup>Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 44:247.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 55:207-209, 215.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Faulkner, "The late prehistoric occupation of northwestern Indiana," *Indiana Historical Society Prehistory Research Series 5*(1), (1972), 175-180.

<sup>7</sup>Charles Callender, "Hopewell archaeology and American ethnology." In D. Brose and N. Greber, eds., *Hopewell Archaeology*, (Kent. OH, 1972).

<sup>8</sup>Louise Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, (Madison, 1925), 99; see also Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 55:201.

<sup>9</sup>Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 58:63.

<sup>10</sup>Homer Barnett, *Innovation, the Basis of Cultural Change*, (New York, 1953), 87.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 87. Similar ideas are presented in Eric Wolf, *Peasants*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966), 77ff.; and in Melville Herskovits, *Man and His Works*, (New York, 1948), 448,539. See also Peregrine, *Miami-Jesuit Relations*, 9-11.

<sup>12</sup>For example, Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 58:63.

<sup>13</sup>A good discussion of Miami economy can be found in Vernon Kintetz, *Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615-1760*, (Ann Arbor, 1965), 170-179.

<sup>14</sup>Maurice Cornforth, *The Theory of Knowledge*, (New York, 1955), 70.

<sup>15</sup>This theoretical framework is obviously Marxist, and is somewhat simplistic. For the purpose this paper, however, it serves well, and brings to the forefront the idea that many diverse elements of society, economy, and environment were forces behind the Green Bay Miamis; acceptance of the Jesuits and their subsequent cultural change. It also highlights the fact, to be discussed later in this paper, that the Miamis' acceptance of

the Jesuits was a dialectical process, and was not at all a one-sided affair. For a fuller discussion of these ideas, and a more complete theoretical framework, see Peregrine, *Miami-Jesuit Relations*.

<sup>16</sup>For a discussion of Jesuit belief and practice see René Fulop-Miller, *The Jesuits*, (New York, 1963), 3-27.

<sup>17</sup>Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 56:129.

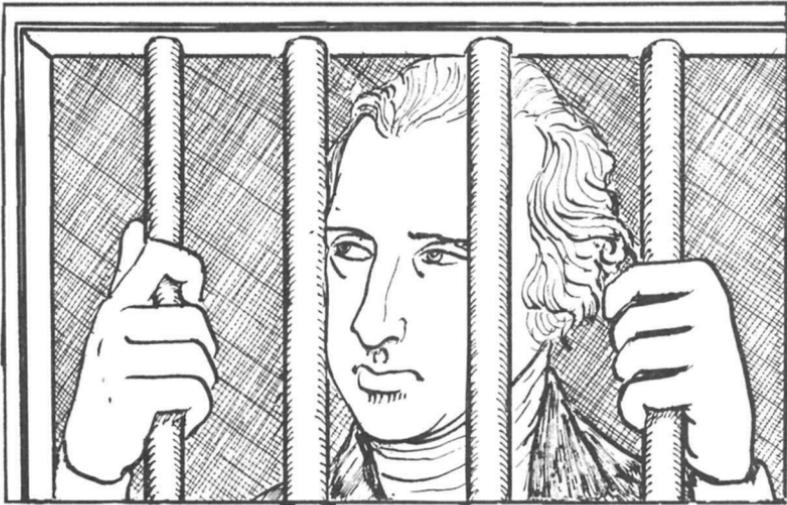
<sup>18</sup>For a fuller discussion of Miami religious beliefs see Kinitz, *Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, 211-214.

<sup>19</sup>Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, 51:259.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 58:273-75.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Burns, *The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest*, (New Haven, 1966), 38. See also James T. Moore, *Indian and Jesuit: A Seventeenth-Century Encounter*, (Chicago, 1982).

<sup>22</sup>See Bruce Trigger, *Native and Newcomers*, (Montreal, 1985, 168-169.



**“NATIONAL RETALIATION”:  
THOMAS JEFFERSON’S BRIEF FOR THE  
IMPRISONMENT OF HENRY HAMILTON**

*James H. O'Donnell, III*  
*Marietta College*

When the defeated Henry Hamilton was escorted eastward toward Virginia in 1779, the British official no doubt assumed that he would be treated as an officer and a gentleman. Nothing in the articles of capitulation, which he had signed, led him to believe otherwise. Upon his arrival in Williamsburg, however, he found himself clapped into the mephitic town jail, where, to his dismay, he was denied all human counsel.<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton complained mightily of this injustice, but Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia was equally unwavering in his belief that such treatment was justified. Quickly the incarceration of the British official became something of a minor cause celebre. For months Jefferson found himself forced onto the defensive, first by complaints from other imprisoned British officers and then by protests from American officials.

Ever equal to such a visceral controversy, Thomas Jefferson relied on his head to defend his actions. In his letters, he referred to justification for the imprisonment on the grounds of “National Retaliation” against Hamilton for his inhuman cruelties. Yet what his letters do not show, is the process of reasoning by which Jefferson reached his position regarding Hamilton’s imprisonment. It is my purpose in this paper to suggest the workings of Thomas Jefferson’s mind as he prepared a brief in defense of Henry Hamilton’s confinement. The source for this information is an unpublished

Jefferson document held by the Virginia State Library.<sup>2</sup>

During the American Revolution, Virginia's western frontiers sustained numerous attacks by Indian raiding parties from the Ohio country. From the state's viewpoint, these assaults were incited by the British, especially the officials at Detroit. Most culpable, according to the Virginians at least, was Henry Hamilton, despised by the Americans as an alleged "Hair-Buyer."

At the outbreak of the fighting in America, Hamilton had been an officer in the British army for twenty years, experience which had led to his commission as lieutenant governor at Detroit in April of 1775.<sup>3</sup> In his official capacities at Detroit, he dealt with the several Indian tribes in the Old Northwest who frequently came to the post for conferences. As part of his war-time effort to keep the area under British control, Lt. Governor Hamilton supplied the parties of Indians and partisans raiding the American frontier. Because the raiders who returned with either scalps or prisoners to Detroit had been supported by Hamilton, the Americans regarded the British official as having exchanged a quid pro quo, i.e., supplies offered for scalps or "flesh." Thus Henry Hamilton had come to be known as the "Hair-Buyer General."

So emotional and politically explosive was the issue of frontier death and destruction, that much legislative consideration was given to possible defensive or offensive measures which would eliminate this problem. Finally, Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia commissioned Lieutenant Colonel George Rogers Clark to organize and lead a picked force into the Ohio country.<sup>5</sup> Clark and his troops would attempt to stop the raiders, and thus, the loss of life among Virginia's citizens. Although by that point in the war, Virginia had little capital and few other resources, Henry and Clark found spirited sympathy with their efforts.

After overcoming numerous political and financial obstacles, Clark and his intrepid band had reached the lower Wabash by early 1779. Defying logic, nature, and physical endurance, Clark challenged his men to follow him through the icy waters of the Wabash bottomlands toward Vincennes.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately for the Americans, their arch-enemy Hamilton had left Detroit with some troops and Indian auxiliaries to oppose the American invasion. Detained for the winter at Vincennes, Hamilton little suspected that a band of fanatics would emerge from the forests to surround him. To his great chagrin, he was defeated and forced to capitulate. Little did he imagine what lay in store for him. As an officer in the British army, Hamilton assumed that he would be treated according to the protocols of war.

George Rogers Clark, on the other hand, decided to send his prize across the hundreds of miles to the capital of Virginia at Williamsburg. It was no small accomplishment that the American guard parties carried off, in escorting the hated "Hair-Buyer" safely through the western settlements. Hostile stares greeted the party at every turn.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Clark was extremely fortunate that Hamilton arrived in Williamsburg still in one piece.

When he reached the capital, Hamilton was informed that the governor and council of Virginia already had ordered him placed in irons and held in the solitary confinement of the town jail. Hamilton was outraged that a British officer should be "thrown into a dungeon among felons and malefactors."<sup>8</sup> In Hamilton's mind at least, the injury turned to insult when he was denied pen, ink, and all human counsel by the incensed Virginians.<sup>9</sup>

Once in the confines of the dark, smelly cell, Henry Hamilton turned his attention to persuading his jailer that the council's rules could be bent. His keeper was Peter

Pelham, who served in the rather unusual capacity (at least to modern ways of thinking) of keeper of the Williamsburg jail and organist at Bruton Parish Church. Whatever else he may have gained from all the years of listening to sermons, he still had his sense of humanity, for soon he closed his eyes to the council's orders and obtained pen and paper for Hamilton.

Although the British officer complained mightily of the injustice which he had suffered, Governor Thomas Jefferson was unmoved. He and his advisors had become outraged by written and oral testimony which they had received, relating to the western Indian raiding parties as well as to the alleged treatment of American prisoners at Detroit. As a result, Jefferson and the Council had prepared a twelve hundred word condemnation, which concluded with harsh sentence imposed on Hamilton. As the order explained the Council had considered:

The letters of Colonel Clarke, and other papers relating to Henry Hamilton, Esq; who has acted some years past as Lieutenant Governor of the settlement at and about Detroit, and commandant of the British garrison there, . . .

They find that Governor Hamilton has executed the task of inciting the Indians to perpetrate their accustomed cruelties on the citizens of these states, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, with an eagerness and activity which evince that the general nature of his charge harmonized with his particular disposition; they have been satisfied from the other testimony adduced that these enormities were committed by savages acting under his commission, but the number of proclamation, which, at different times were left in houses, the inhabitants of which were killed or carried away by the Indians, one of which proclamations, under the hand and Seal of Governour

Hamilton, is in possession of the Board, puts this fact beyond doubt. At the time of his captivity it appears, that he had sent considerable detachments of Indians against the frontier settlements of the states, and had actually appointed a great council of Indians to meet him at the mouth of the Tanissee, to concern the operations of this present campaign. They find that his treatment of our citizens and soldiers captivated and carried within the limits of his command, has been cruel and inhumane; . . .

They have seen [the Board] that the conduct of the British officers, civil and military, has in its general tenor, through the whole course of this war, been savage and unprecedented among civilized nations; that our officers and soldiers taken by them have been loaded with irons, consigned to loathsome and crowded jails, dungeons, and prison ships; supplied often with no food, generally with too little for the sustenance of nature, and that sometimes unsound and unwholesome, whereby so many of them have perished that captivity and miserable death have with them been almost synonymous; that they have been transported beyond seas where their fate is out of the reach of our inquiry, have been compelled to take arms against their country, and by a new refinement in cruelty to become murderers of their own brethren.

. . . this Board has resolved to advise the Governor that the said Henry Hamilton, Philip Dejean, and William Lamothe, prisoners of war to be put into irons, confined in the dungeon of the publick jail, debared the use of pen, ink, and paper, and excluded all converse except with their keeper.<sup>10</sup>

The Governor and the Council, moreover, had to know the conditions under which Hamilton would be incarcerated. Three years earlier they had received a report by a "Committee appointed to inquire into, and report the State of the Prisoners, in the Publick Gaol." The stifling, nauseating air

in the jail was apparent from the report.<sup>11</sup>

It appears to your Committee, that, the said Gaol being badly planned, and situated for the purpose of admitting a free Passage for Air, all the Prisoners are more or less distressed on that Account: that this Inconvenience is greatly aggravated, as well by a large number of Persons being under confinement in the same small Apartment, as the Heat of the Weather. That altho most of the Rooms seem to have been attended to with proper care and kept in passable[?] decency, an offensive smell; which we think would injurious to the most robust Health, prevails in them all, but which your Committee conceives might in a great measure be removed by Burning Tarr and frequently washing the Rooms with Vinegar, etc. That, however, in which the Negroes are confined abound with filth and nastiness, a circumstance, owing, as your Committee have been informed to the want of necessary Hands to assist in providing for so large and unusual a number of prisoners; that several Windows may, with safety, be cut in the Walls of the said Gaol. That Ventilators, if property fixed, would be of infinite service in the Opinion of your Committee: that some complaints were made by the Prisoners against the unwholesomeness of their Diet, which upon inquiry were found to be groundless: That John Goodrich the elder is at present and has been for three days past indisposed with a slight fever, proceeding, as your Committee imagines, in a great measure, from a restlessness and peevishness under heavy Chains; That two Gentlemen of the Faculty have advised his removal to some other place, lest that Disorder, which at present is but slight, might, in a short time for want of fresh air, terminate in a putrid malignant fever.

However convinced Jefferson may have been of Virginia's justification in imprisoning Hamilton, he could not refrain from mentioning the matter in the majority of his

public letters for a number of days. In the first three days after the Council's action, Governor Jefferson wrote to Richard Henry Lee, Theodorick Bland, the continental Board of War, John Jay, and George Washington.<sup>12</sup> Each message contained some pointed remark by Jefferson about the state's actions against Henry Hamilton.

Furthermore, lest the people of Virginia be ignorant of Hamilton's true character, Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* was provided a copy of Hamilton's "Address to the Inhabitants of Illinois," which was published on June 26, ten days after the Council's orders.<sup>13</sup> Certainly no patriotic Virginian of the day could read the address without denouncing Hamilton for his bloody plot to lay waste the frontiers. Hamilton wrote:

In order to make the inhabitants of the Illinois sensible of their dangerous situation, it is necessary to unfold to them, the means and preparations which will be made use of to expel the rebels, and reestablish that peace and tranquillity which have been disturbed by those who feel no attachment but to their interest.

The Chickasaws, Cherokee, and the other southern nations, inveterate enemies to the rebels, are ready to invade the Illinois on the first opening of the spring, they will be sustained by a regiment of the King's troops now on their way from Pensacola with their officers; the whole under the conduct of the superintendent of the southern department.

The Nations inhabiting the shores of the lakes will all be devoted to whatever service I shall recommend to them.

Those of the Wabash who come down this fall, have acted in concert with them, and have abandoned the flag of the rebels.

The Six Nations, The Chawanous, Ifonnontouans begirt the frontiers closely everywhere, the communication by the falls of the Ohio is intercepted, rivers blocked up.

This is the prospect which presents itself to the consideration of the inhabitants of the Illinois; and if they suffer themselves any longer to be so far blinded by the promises of the Americans (hitherto so badly fulfilled) as to range themselves under their standards; they must prepare to abide by the consequences.

The reinforcement of troops which I expect this spring, will enable me to support the good, and to punish bad subjects.

May honour, gratitude, and religion, many conjugal love and parental tenderness operate on their minds, they I may expouse with warmth the interests of the inhabitants of the Illinois. This shall be the object of my cares; this is what I wish with fervour and sincerity.

If Governor Thomas Jefferson never had cause to work out in systematic fashion his case for Virginia's treatment of the infamous "Hair-Buyer," he was given sufficient reason in a long questioning letter from General William Phillips, a British officer taken at Saratoga and sent to Virginia under the terms of the convention signed by General Burgoyne. During his residence in Virginia, Phillips had become acquainted with Jefferson and his family. On the basis of his friendship with the governor, Phillips wrote him on July 5, 1779, concerning the Hamilton affair. In this letter, the British general included what he termed "a public paper," which was a copy of the orders issued by the Council of Virginia placing Hamilton in jail.<sup>14</sup>

How far Thomas Jefferson had gone in mentally outlining a defense of Hamilton's imprisonment is not known, but in response to Phillips' questioning, he prepared what amounts to a brief defending Virginia's treatment of the British officer. The rough notes for his ideas are jotted on the back of a copy of the Council Order of June 16, 1779.<sup>15</sup> This glimpse into the Jeffersonian mind at work reveals how he defended the

incarceration on the grounds of both national and personal retaliation.

On the back of the printed copy of the order, perhaps even the one which Phillips had included, Thomas Jefferson made his notes. First, he asked whether or not retaliation was proper, and then proceeded to justify it in the initial phase of his argument on the basis of bad treatment of American prisoners. Lest that line of reasoning seem too narrow, Jefferson then proceeded to make a case for personal retaliation against Hamilton because of his behavior during his Detroit and Vincennes commands. If one compares these notes with the letter replying to Phillips of July 22, 1779, Jefferson's logic, supporting evidence, and completed statements are evident. The outline is given flesh in the letter.

In the first substantive paragraph of the letter of Phillips, Thomas Jefferson opens his argument with the first point from his outline, namely "National Retaliation." The governor's justification comes from what he believes to be the general practice of British cruelty toward American prisoners since the beginning of the war. Jefferson expands at length to illustrate this point about British harshness.

If one sets aside the issue of National Retaliation, continues Jefferson, then Hamilton's personal conduct certainly warrants personal retaliation; again the writer is moving directly from the notes to the letter. Jefferson's note on "the nature of his command" becomes "the general nature of the service he undertook." Further, the comment that the "commander is answerable for what /is/ done by his men" becomes the sentence: "Those who act together in war are answerable for each other." Henry Hamilton is damned in both the notes and the letter for sending out parties of Indian and whites, thereby becoming the "butcher of Men, Women, and Children."

In both notes and letter, the governor castigates Hamilton for official proclamations in which Americans are encouraged to desert their noble cause, and by which plans are announced for British soldiers and forest auxiliaries combining their attacks against the frontiers. Jefferson alleges to have other documents establishing Hamilton's guilt in sending out British officers at the head of scalping parties.

Turning from the idea of retaliation, Thomas Jefferson addresses the fine points of prisoners taken in war. He was prompted to do this by General Phillips' assertion that the treatment of Hamilton was a violation of a capitulation entered into by Henry Hamilton with George Rogers Clark.

In the outline notes, Jefferson wrote: "Whether exempted by capitulation." The letter follows strictly along at the point, developing Thomas Jefferson's ideas about prisoners as being either "prisoners at discretion" or "prisoners on convention, or capitulation." The governor notes a speech made in the House of Commons on November 27, 1778 about General Burgoyne's status as a prisoner. Despite the understanding concerning prisoners under capitulation, Jefferson believed there were circumstances which justified Hamilton's treatment. "I do not propose to rely at all on those instances which history furnishes, where it has been thought justifiable to disregard express articles of capitulation from certain causes antecedent thereto; tho' such instances might be produced from English history too, and in one case where the King himself commanded in person."

The English monarch in this instance was William the Third and the excepted individual to whom Jefferson referred was Marshall Boufflers, who was arrested after the fall of Namur in 1695.<sup>16</sup> This incident would have been familiar to Jefferson from his knowledge of Rapin's *History of England*, a copy of which he had inherited from his father. He might

have refreshed his memory by looking at Rapin, or by glancing at Smolet's less detailed treatment of the incident in his popular history of England. Nevertheless, argued Jefferson, "we waive reasoning on his head, because no article in the Capitulation of Governor Hamilton is violated by his confinement."

Also in the notes, but not in the letter to Phillip, Jefferson included a specific citation to Emeric de Vattel, *Les Droit des Gens*, book 3, paragraph 174, which concerns the treatment of enemies in war. Vattel's argument, interestingly, is a natural law one, which suggests that even in war men do not cease to be human and, therefore, should treat their enemies as such. By Jefferson's reasoning, Henry Hamilton had violated the law of nature by inciting the savages, and Jefferson was thus justified in an action sanctioned by Vattel:

Even he who carries on against us an unjust war is still a man and must be treated as such. But if a conflict arises between our duties to ourselves and those which bind us to other men, the right of self-protection warrants us in taking against that unjust enemy such steps as are necessary to check him or bring him to reason.<sup>17</sup>

Well might Governor Jefferson consult the authorities on his own reason, for he was soon questioned by General Phillips again, by Lt. Governor Hamilton when he managed to obtain paper, and finally by General George Washington. Repeating the argument of the Phillips letter of July 22, Jefferson paraphrases them in abbreviated form to Washington. Feeling somewhat less confident by the time he wrote to General Washington, Governor Jefferson asked the commander in chief if he might bring his military experience to bear on the matter.<sup>18</sup>

Happily for Virginia's governor, George Washington assumed the burden of responsibility. After discussing the mat-

ter with some of his aides, he informed Jefferson that Henry Hamilton should not be kept in close confinement.<sup>19</sup>

Thus armed, Jefferson obtained council approval for Hamilton's release from irons and isolation, though not from confinement. For a time, at least, Thomas Jefferson could concentrate on other exigencies of state leadership and let the case of Henry Hamilton rest.

What does this incident tell us about Jefferson? That he was an individual of monumental intellectual achievements we all know. Twenty-four years ago John Kennedy told an audience of the nation's most eminent musicians gathered in the White House's East Room that so much genius had not been assembled there since Thomas Jefferson dined alone. What we tend to overlook is the visceral Jefferson, the passionate, explosive, yes even spiteful human being, who often let his emotions control him. That dialectic between his head and his heart was a repeated and lifelong one, usually synthesized in the favor of his head to protect the fragility of his heart. What we have seen in this brief case study is how the impassioned Thomas Jefferson hastily condemned a man for his actions and then was forced to work out a rationale after the fact. We may never know all the many Jeffersons, but at least we know he was more than a man of marble.

## CITATIONS

1. For details of Hamilton's experiences see: John D. Barnhart, *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution with the Unpublished Journal of Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton* (Crawfordsville, Indiana: R. E. Banta 1951; Orville John Jaebker, "Henry Hamilton: British Soldier and Colonial Governor" (published Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1954); and Bernard Sheehan, "The Famous Hair Buyer General: Henry Hamilton, George Rogers Clark, and the American Indian," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 79(March, 1983): 1-28. For a recent review of the sources concerning Clark in the West, see Robert M. Sutton, "George Rogers Clark and the Campaign in the West,," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 76(December, 1980): 334-345.
2. Orders of the Virginia Council, June 16, 1779, printed copy by John Dixon and Thomas Nicolson, in *Convention Papers, 1779*, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.
3. Jaebker, Hamilton, *passim*.
4. George Rogers Clark to Governor Patrick Henry, February 3, 1779, in James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781*, in *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, VIII:97-99(Springfield, Ill., 1912).
5. Sheehan, "Famous Hair-Buyer General."
6. As Clark wrote to Henry, "Great things have been affected by a few Men well Conducted," in Clark to Henry, February 3, 1779, *Clark Papers*.
7. Barnhart, *Hamilton Journal*, *passim*.
8. Henry Hamilton's Reasons for not Accepting Parole, September 27, 1780, Hamilton Manuscripts, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
9. Orders of the Virginia Council, June 16, 1779, *Convention Papers*, Virginia State Library.
10. *Ibid*
11. "Report of the Committee to Report the State of Prisoners in the Public Gaol," *Convention Papers, 1776*, Virginia State Library.
12. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Julian P. Boyd (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1951-), 2:298-300; 3:4-6.
13. *The Virginia Gazette* (Dixon and Nicolson), June 26, 1779, page 1.
14. William Phillips to Thomas Jefferson, July 5, 1779, *Jefferson Papers*, 3:25-28.

Selected Papers from the Third and Fourth George Rogers Clark  
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences

15. Notes in Jefferson's Hand, reverse side of Orders of the Virginia Council, June 16, 1779, Convention Papers, 1779, Virginia State Library.

16. Concerning the books in Jefferson's library and his use of them, see: E. Millicent Sowerby, *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington: The Library of Congress, 1952); and William Harwood Peden, "Thomas Jefferson: Book-Collector" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 1942). For Rapin and Smollett see *The History of England by Mr. Rapin de Thoyras continued from the Revolution to the Accession of King George II* by N. Tindal, M.A. (London, 1745), III:298-99, and T. Smollett, *The History of England from the Revolution to the Death of George the Second* (London, 1793, 5 vols)1:259. Thanks to Cynthia M. Stiverson, Research Librarian, Colonial Williamsburg Research Foundation, for the use of Rapin housed in the Secretary's Office of the Capitol Building in Williamsburg. I am also indebted to Gregory Stiverson, Research Associate at colonial Williamsburg for an examination of the Virginia Gazette Daybook, 1764-66 indicating at least four sets of the early edition of Smollett were sold during that period.

17. Emeric de Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law Applied to the Conduct and to the Affairs of Nations and of Sovereigns*, translated by Charles G. Fenwick (Washington, 1916), Book III, p. 296.

18. Jefferson to Washington, July 17, 1779, *Jefferson Papers*, 3:40-41.

19. Washington to Jefferson, August 6, 1779, *ibid.*, p. 61.

Professor O'Donnell gratefully acknowledges the support of the American Philosophical Society and the Colonial Williamsburg Research Foundation for the research involved in this article.





