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ANGLO-INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE NORTHERN THEATRE
OF THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR, 1748-1761

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

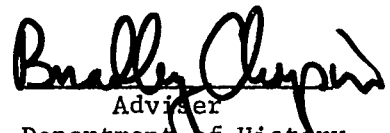
By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1972

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Throughout the era of the British-French rivalry for supremacy in North America the two European powers endeavored to win the friendship and aid of the various native Indian tribes. For economic, military, and territorial reasons, both sides considered it desirable and advantageous to establish a sphere of influence among the Indian nations.

The focus of this study is the period between the close of King George's War in 1748 and the end of hostilities in North America in the French and Indian War in 1761. In this period following the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, both sides realized the imperial importance of the Ohio Valley. Accordingly, competition for the amity of the Indians exercising control over this area became especially acute. Both sides believed that their diplomatic and military relations with the Indians would to a great extent determine the success or failure of their plans to expand their empires into the Ohio Valley.

The goal of this study is to examine the relations between the British and the Indians during this important period in order to determine how and why various Indian nations became attracted to the British interest. An attempt will be made to survey the diplomatic alliances

and ruptures between the British and the Indians and to explain the reasons for their occurrence.

Various historians have touched on the subject of Indian relations, but most have done so only in a superficial manner. Some writers have tried to explain Indian actions in certain isolated instances, but little attempt has been made to develop a theory that would adequately explain Indian behavior throughout this era.

Even when examining specific cases, historians have disagreed sharply over the causes of Indian behavior. The literature of the period is marked by a lack of consensus as to what factors were most influential in motivating the Indians. This absence of unanimity is illustrated in the literature review that follows. Many explanations of Indian behavior are offered, but no single thesis emerges that will consistently and completely account for the conduct of the Indians during the 1748-1761 period.

Gifts. The giving of gifts has been cited as an important factor in influencing Indians to join the British interest. This position has been well stated by Wilbur R. Jacobs in his valuable work, Diplomacy and Indian Gifts. The giving and receiving of gifts was "a decisive factor in the story of Indian diplomacy along the Ohio and Northwest frontiers during the years 1748-1763."¹ Specifically, in regard to the rivalry for the Ohio Valley, Jacobs contends that the Indians of that area "had to be bought with presents" in order to secure their services as warriors, scouts, or merely neutrals. Jacobs sees the critical 1748-1751 period as "essentially the story of competition for Indian allegiance by means of presents."² Jacobs finds

evidence that in 1754 British military leaders (including young Colonel George Washington) were convinced that "Indian service could only be obtained through the use of presents."³ While the giving of sizeable gifts was an expensive practice, Jacobs holds that it was far less costly than maintaining the large armies that would be needed to protect the frontier against the raids of hostile Indians.⁴

Lawrence Henry Gipson mentions the use of gifts "as a positive means of preserving the good will of the tribes" and points out that the withholding of gifts was practiced as a means of "restraining and punishing those who from time to time acted in a reprehensible manner. . . ."⁵ Gipson cites several instances in which presents were given by Europeans in an attempt to win over certain Indian groups. He points out that Canada's Governor Jonquiere had concluded in 1750 that the best way to establish good relations with the Ohio Indians was through the giving of gifts which would demonstrate French "generosity, goodwill, and pardon for past misdeeds."⁶ Herbert L. Osgood also cites the importance of gifts, indicating that for both sides throughout the period in question "the expenditures for presents to Indians was steadily on the increase."⁷

Closely allied to the "gifts theory" is the position taken by some historians that Indians often fought as paid mercenaries available to whichever European power would pay the higher price for their services. Jacobs, foremost advocate of the importance of gifts, finds several instances in which the giving of gifts became formalized into a payment for services rendered. After a relatively peaceful

period of competition for Indian amity from 1748 to 1751, Jacobs holds that in the more openly warlike era that followed, "gifts were used for securing warriors in preparation for the eventual conflict."⁸ By 1754, the Miami Indians, once willing to fight for the English for other reasons, informed Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia that they would fight "only if paid as auxillaries."⁹

Religion. A number of historians have theorized that religious loyalties may have been a factor in influencing Indian-white alliances. It is generally conceded that the French were more successful than the British and Dutch in attracting Indian converts to their faith. Allen W. Trelease has summarized some of the reasons for Catholicism's greater attraction. Trelease contends that "Roman Catholicism, with its ritual ceremony and visible symbols of faith" was more similar to the Indians own religious practices and therefore more appealing. The number of red converts who "penetrated beyond the outer symbolism of the Catholic faith is another matter," this historian observes. He expresses doubt, however, that many were attracted to the drab, introspective, unexciting Protestant services of the era. Trelease warns that conversion statistics showing an overwhelming preference for Catholicism may be somewhat deceptive, as French missionaries were often indiscriminant in choosing candidates for baptism. While the Jesuits worked to baptize "those who requested it -- and many who did not," Protestant missionaries were more selective, usually confining their activities to adults who professed to have a genuine desire for church membership.¹⁰

The activities of the Jesuits in gaining adherents to the Catholic faith and thus hopefully friends for the French, were actively assisted by the government in New France. The priests were often made the agents for the distribution of the gifts periodically given to the Indians by the Governor. Thus the clergy could use the presentation of the gifts as the occasion for their attempts to convert the Indians to Catholicism.

Parkman attributes part of the success the French experienced in dealing with the Indians to the religious factor. "The Romish zealots of Canada burned for the conversion of the heathen; their heretic rivals were fired with no such ardor," Parkman observes in comparing the religious energy of the two sides. The efforts of the priests to spread Catholicism are credited with influencing various Indian nations to adopt a friendly relationship with the government of New France.¹¹

Lewis H. Morgan makes a similar comment on the religious lethargy of the English. While zealous Jesuits underwent hardship and peril in an attempt to spread the Catholic faith, "the English entirely neglected the spiritual welfare of the Indians."¹²

John Fiske comments that the Quakers of Pennsylvania, by treating the Indians with justice and kindness, followed the correct path in Indian relations. This enlightened policy was not a contributing factor to peaceful relations with the Indians, however. The cause of the long era of peace enjoyed by Pennsylvania "was not Quaker justice so much as Indian politics." As Fiske explains, Pennsylvania maintained a pact of friendship with the Iroquois. The

Delawares on Pennsylvania's frontier, therefore, could not strike the English unless they were willing to incur the wrath of Pennsylvania's ally, the Iroquois. Thus, the Pennsylvanians had little to fear from the Indians on their borders (until the 1750's), but religion was not a critical factor in this desirable condition.¹³

Economic Considerations. Many historians have cited economic considerations and trade relations as the key to understanding Indian alliances with either the French or the British. The general consensus of these writers is that the British were able to offer the Indians a better rate of exchange. Therefore, the British held a significant economic advantage over the French. In a recent study of the fur trade, Lewis O. Saum discusses the degree to which the fur trade determined Indian behavior. To obtain the goods he needed, the Indian had to have furs. Indians not having furs were ignored by the traders, a circumstance which caused these "have nots" to become either a "nuisance" or an enemy, doing "even more to alienate the traders' affections."¹⁴

Osgood emphasizes the importance of the fur trade by stating that "the most valuable support of British interest among the savages lay in the advantages of their trade. They could undersell the French and furnish a better class of goods in exchange for the furs which the Indians brought than could the French." Osgood holds that the existence of the British post at Oswego on the southern shore of Lake Ontario permitted continued trade between the British and the friendly Iroquois and therefore "insured the permanence of the alliance."¹⁵

Gipson places much emphasis on economic considerations as a dominant influence on Indian attitudes toward the Europeans. Due to their sea supremacy, the British were able to offer a greater stock of goods at lower prices than the French. In the Ohio Valley in the late 1740's, the continuing hostility reduced the ability of the French to provide merchandise at competitive prices. Dependent on manufactured goods, the Indians turned to the British. Gipson maintains that friendly relations with the British assured "an uninterrupted intercourse with traders who . . . were in a position to supply to the Indians those things that they craved much more continuously and much more cheaply than could the French. . . ."16 Gipson suggests that throughout the period, French efforts to gain the allegiance of Indian groups were impeded by the tendency of these Indians to align themselves with the British "doubtless as a result of the superior attraction of trafficking with the English traders, who were always in a position to pay more for whatever the natives had to sell and who therefore left the impression in the minds of the latter that the French were not fair bargainers."17

Randolph C. Downes finds that due to the British trading advantage, the fur trader George Croghan was able to influence many Ohio Valley Indians to fight against the French in the closing years of King George's War and to remain friendly with the British in the peace that followed.¹⁸ Downes also shows that whenever the French were successful in driving British traders out of the Ohio Valley, the Indians went over to the French.¹⁹ Downes observes that in the 1740's, when the British fur traders began moving into the Ohio

Valley, groups of Indians began to drift into the British interest. The advantages of British trade soon brought the Wyandottes over to the English. Then, in quick succession, the Miamis and Shawnees also went over to the British.²⁰ Bert Anson, historian of the Miamis, explains how that group of Indians was drawn away from the French and into the British sphere by trade. Favorable trading conditions drew the Miamis eastward, away from the proximity of the French at Detroit and were instrumental in their agreeing to become formal allies of the English at the Lancaster Conference in 1748.²¹ Only the destruction by the French of the important British-Miami trading town of Pickawillany (modern Piqua, Ohio) in 1752 could bring the Miamis back into the French orbit by denying them further access to British goods.²² William T. Hagan also emphasizes trade as a principal factor in Indian diplomacy. Throughout the period of the colonial wars, "tribal allegiances were frequently dictated by the trade situation," Hagan concludes. An Indian group might prefer its English or French "father," "but if he could not put traders in their villages and his rival could, it had no alternative but to support the rival."²³

Parkman was also sensitive to the vast impact of European civilization on the Indian way of life. He cites the economic dependence of the Indian groups on their white neighbors and stresses the importance of the need for European manufactured goods as a critical factor in red-white relationships. The material benefits of white civilization caused the Indian to "depend on the white man for ease, happiness and life itself. . . ."²⁴

Balance of Power. Another viewpoint on red-white relations in the colonial period is that the Indians were conscious that they held the balance of power in the French-British context for supremacy in North America. According to this school of thought, the Indians realized that their friendship was eagerly sought by both sides and therefore resolved to exploit their position to the fullest extent.

Jacobs' study of Indian gifts mentioned above is based on the premise that the military power of the Indians was sufficiently strong as to be actively coveted by both sides. Jacobs estimates that the more powerful Indian confederacies, "even as late as 1750, . . . held the balance of power in North America."²⁵

Howard H. Peckham suggests that the Indians, keenly aware of their own desirability as allies, followed the strategy of playing one side off against the other for their own economic and military benefit.²⁶ Peckham goes on to add that in the short run at least, it may have been advantageous for the Indians to keep armed conflict between the French and the British continuing. While war went on the Iroquois especially could "count on being courted or placated as allies." If peace came, with one nation as the victor, it would be inevitable that white expansion would take over Indian lands. For this reason it would be in the interests of the Indians to prevent either side from gaining a total victory.²⁷

The end of the war did indeed have "catastrophic results" for the Indians. Their bargaining power destroyed, they were no longer needed by the British and consequently no longer received the preferential treatment to which they had become accustomed.²⁸

Survival. The theory has also been put forward that the Indians were aware that their very existence could be affected by the progress and outcome of the colonial wars. Thus, they placed their own physical survival ahead of economic or any other considerations. Tribes opted for a position of neutrality or alliance with one side or the other on the basis of which policy would best insure their continued existence.

Anthropologist Clark Wissler is one of those who expounds the idea that the guiding principle of Indian behavior was self preservation. Wissler argues that Indian groups were alienated from the English and driven into the embrace of the French by the English desire for the Indians' lands. The Indians and the French shared a common goal, the limiting of the English frontier. Wissler comments that since the French and Indians were resisting the same enemy, many Indians were attracted to French efforts to instigate the Indians "to join hands in raiding the English" in order to impede British expansion.²⁹

John Collier, author of Indians of the Americas, makes a similar conclusion that various Indian groups were forced to ally themselves with one side or the other. Unable to resist the pressures put on them by the intense British-French rivalry, "nearly all of the tribes found that they had no choice except to take sides." For their own survival, Indian groups were compelled to join with one of the European imperialist nations.³⁰

Osgood contrasts the long range expansion policies of the British and the French. The land hunger of the British caused the Indians to

view them as "their most dangerous enemies." The spread of the British agricultural lifestyle would bring on the "certain annihilation" of those nations in their path, while the Indians were able to live alongside the less numerous French in a relationship of mutually beneficial peaceful coexistence. Thus, Osgood indicates that the basic characteristics of British and French settlement significantly influenced the patterns of Indian-European alliance.³¹

Traditional Ties. A significant number of writers have found evidence that Indian participation in colonial warfare was determined by traditional considerations, rather than contemporary circumstances. According to this theory, a given tribe's position was often dictated by its former relationships with the two European powers and the other Indian groups. A good case can be made that enmity existant between the Iroquois and various other tribes in the seventeenth century was still present in 1750. The Algonkians of the St. Lawrence Valley and the Six Nations of New York had been bitter enemies since long before white contact, and continued as such throughout the French-British wars. Similarly, Hurons fighting for New France against the Iroquois throughout the colonial wars were embittered remnants of that once powerful nation that had been defeated and dispersed by the Iroquois in the late 1640's. Other Indian tribes that had been conquered by the powerful Iroquois chafed at their subject status and waited for the chance to retaliate against their masters. Downes notes that there was "a certain amount of inter-tribal conflict" before the coming of the Europeans.³² Peckham suggests that the Indians were using the British-French clash to carry out their tribal rivalries.³³

Robert A. Goldstein mentions the theory that the French permanently won the allegiance of the Algonkins by aiding them against the Iroquois, their ancient enemy.³⁴ In addition, Goldstein contends that competition for fur rich areas intensified the earlier inter-tribal warfare. A long-standing struggle between the Iroquois and various pro-French Indian groups for control of the Great Lakes fur business threw the Iroquois into the arms of the English. "French-Iroquois enmity wedded the Five Nations Iroquois to a continuing alliance with the English."³⁵ This long-standing ill will between the Iroquois and the French dated from 1609 when Champlain first used firearms against the Iroquois in behalf of the Algonkins in order to gain the friendship of the latter group. While it is probably an oversimplification to ascribe decades of Iroquois-French animosity to this one incident, some writers point out that the Iroquois never did assume an overly friendly stance toward New France throughout the colonial period. Conversely, the Iroquois established a "Covenant Chain" of friendship with the English. Although this figurative chain (in the colorful language of the Iroquois) "rusted" from time to time, it did not entirely break, enduring through the American Revolution. Lewis H. Morgan has emphasized the existence of this Covenant Chain agreement as a decisive factor in British-Iroquois relations.³⁶ Morgan writes that "from the commencement of English intercourse with the Iroquois," the "covenant of friendship . . . remained unbroken." As each new British colonial governor arrived to take his post, he arranged a conference with the Iroquois chiefs for the purpose of renewing the covenant chain. Thus every few years the chain was reaffirmed and the traditional

Anglo-Iroquois tie was maintained. When the French attempted to expand into Ohio around 1750, the British had already built up a long-standing friendly relationship with the Iroquois Confederacy which they now used to block French expansion.³⁷

Francis Jennings states that the "Covenant Chain" was a firm bond between the Indians and the British. It was a "unique institution created by contract for eliminating violence and reducing conflict between Indians and English. . . ." By establishing good will with the Indians, the agreement functioned as a means for adjusting boundary disputes between the British and the Indians and for "facilitating English expansion." Jennings holds that the covenant chain "brought stability" to Indian relations in the New York-New Jersey-Delaware-Pennsylvania area.³⁸

Allying with the Victor. Some writers have discerned that one factor that helps explain red-white diplomatic and military relations concerns the tendency of the Indians to ally themselves with that European power that they perceived to be winning the struggle for North America. A considerable amount of evidence can be gathered to support this concept that the Indian tribes, not wishing to place themselves in such a position as to be treated as a vanquished foe, consistently joined forces with whichever side seemed most likely to emerge as the victor. While no writer has traced this tendency throughout the entire 1748-1761 period, several writers have pointed out various cases in which a military defeat or victory caused a large scale restructuring of the alliance system.

Nicholas B. Wainwright notes that in 1753, when the French made a powerful show of force by building a chain of forts from Lake Erie to the forks of the Allegheny, many Ohio Indians (including the formerly pro-English Miamis) were so impressed that they went over to the French interest.³⁹ Osgood agrees that this French build-up along the upper Ohio induced groups of Ohio Indians "to make submission or offer aid" to the French. This firm action caused "the Miamis to abandon their English allies" and a widespread movement threatened to develop that would bring about "a general defection" of Indians from the British interest.⁴⁰

Gipson mentions that the French advance into the Allegheny area in 1753 cowed the local Indians. Overawed by the size of the French force advancing inland in the vicinity of Lake Chautauqua, Gipson reports that the Indians "presented themselves trembling" before the expedition's commander, assured him that they were well aware of the power of the French, and "begged him to have pity on their wives and children."⁴¹

The Indians were appalled and distressed when a European ally failed to demonstrate a willingness to fight. Always concerned with their own survival, the Indians were willing to cast their lot with the European power that seemed most likely to emerge victorious. Gipson points out how the militarily inactive British were in danger of losing the allegiance of the Iroquois at the end of King George's War. The Iroquois were disgusted with their unenergetic, timid English allies for not prosecuting the war effort more vigorously.

"How come it to pass that the English who brought us into the War, will not fight themselves?" queried the disgruntled Iroquois.⁴²

The French were well aware of the Indian tendency to side with the apparent victor. Immediately after the victory over Braddock, the French sent messengers to the Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes -- all allies of the British -- informing them of the result of the battle and urging them to go to war against the British.⁴³ Parkman and Thwaites find evidence that the British were also aware of the Indians' inclination to rush to the winning side. Near the end of the war Wolfe wrote to Amherst urging "an offensive, daring kind of war" be prosecuted which would "awe the Indians and ruin the French."⁴⁴

Randolph C. Downes states that Braddock's defeat gave the French the opportunity they sought to convince the Indians to fight against the British.⁴⁵ Earlier, in 1752 when a French-led raid destroyed the important Anglo-Miami trading center at Pickawillany, the Miamis had perceived that the French were the strongest force in the Ohio Valley and moved westward to join the French.⁴⁶ By 1758, however, when the tide of war began to swing back in favor of the English, the Indians of Ohio were preparing to switch to the British interest.⁴⁷

Washington's defeat at the hands of the French at Fort Necessity in the summer of 1754 is also cited as an example of military setback that had repercussions on the Indian alliance system. James T. Flexner notes that contemporary forest diplomat William Johnson regretted that the "unlucky defeat . . . would 'animate' the pro-French Indians and 'stagger the resolution' of the pro-English."⁴⁸

John Fiske has observed that successful Indian relations were best attained by keeping the Indians "impressed with the superior power of the white man," while dealing with them with "absolute justice and truthfulness."⁴⁹ Parkman observes that the French learned early that the good will of the Indian was best gained through a demonstration of strength. "While on the one hand it was necessary to avoid giving offense, it was not less necessary on the other to assume a bold demeanor and show of power." In the picturesque language of Parkman, the French endeavored "to caress with one hand, and grasp a drawn sword with the other."⁵⁰

By mid-eighteenth century, Peckham sees good relations between whites and Indians as dependent on a combination of ingredients. In speaking of French attempts to gain the amity of the Ohio Indians, Peckham writes that the French must provide "fair treatment" from French traders, presents from the government of New France, protection from raids of enemy Indians, "and above all a victory or two by the French to demonstrate their superiority."⁵¹

Key Men. The role played by certain important individuals has been emphasized by some writers as the key to understanding the Indian affairs of the period. Frequently singled out for special attention are William Johnson, Conrad Weiser, George Croghan, and other woodsman-soldier-diplomats who functioned as the middlemen in the relations between the British and the Indians. Many historians including, expectedly, their biographers, contend that these men, skilled in Indian language, rituals, and customs, performed invaluable service in conducting the actual negotiations between the two sides.

Their expertise in the ways of the red man, combined with the Indians' trust and respect they had gained through years spent on the frontier, enabled them to significantly influence Indian behavior for the benefit of the British interest.

Nicholas B. Wainwright, biographer of the western Pennsylvania-based fur trader George Croghan, finds countless instances in which Croghan used his skill and influence with the Indians to bring them into the British interest. Wainwright traces Croghan's career of public service, in which he spent long dangerous months traveling forest paths endeavoring to attract and hold Indians to the English. Croghan arranged conferences, delivered supplies and gifts, placated Indian grievances, negotiated treaties, recruited warriors for military service, and, in Wainwright's view, maintained a continuing and potent influence on the conduct of Indian affairs.⁵² Downes substantiates Wainwright's views on the importance of Croghan. Croghan's activities in Ohio are credited with bringing the Wyandottes, Miamis, and Shawnees into the British sphere.⁵³

James T. Flexner, biographer of William Johnson, recounts how the New York fur trader-diplomat worked dilligently to gain the amity of the Iroquois for the British. Johnson held numerous conferences with the Indians of the British-French frontier, using his knowledge of the Indian customs to win their trust and allegiance. Often meeting the cost of hosting Indian delegations and providing the tribes with supplies and gifts out of his own funds, Johnson, according to Flexner, was often in debt as a result of his selfless committment to improving Anglo-Iroquois relations. Flexner contends

that Johnson was the pivotal figure in holding together the important Iroquois-British detente. Johnson's skillful and courageous diplomatic efforts and his outstanding leadership in combat were major factors in England's successful struggle against France. Flexner asserts that Johnson "made a determining contribution to winning the French and Indian War, to making North America an English speaking continent."⁵⁴

Paul A. W. Wallace and Joseph A. Walton have emphasized Conrad Weiser's role in the British-Indian affairs of the mid-eighteenth century. Walton sees the experienced linguist as "the champion of the English among the Indians." Walton concludes that Weiser's skillful diplomacy with the Iroquois and other nations secured their friendship, improved the fur trade, and protected the English colonies from French attack until they could become sufficiently powerful so as to win a protracted war. Weiser is credited with having "a strong sense of justice" in his handling of the Indians and is seen by Walton as "a powerful factor" in keeping the Iroquois from joining the French interest.⁵⁵

Wallace also covers Weiser's long and distinguished career as a forest diplomat. Through his rapport with the Indians, his wise counsel to civil and military leaders, and his tireless energy, Weiser is seen as having made a significant contribution to red-white relations. Time and time again Weiser met with the Indians of Pennsylvania and Ohio, arranging equitable land transactions, delivering goods and presents, giving assurances of continued British

support and fidelity, and in short, doing everything possible to keep the Indians firmly entrenched in the British interest and away from the influence of the French.⁵⁶

Nationality Traits. The personality traits of the British and the French peoples are seen by some writers as instrumental in shaping European-Indian relations. The general conclusion is usually that the more staid, businesslike, unimaginative personality of the British was less appealing to the Indians than the more colorful, adaptable, flamboyant, romantic personality of the French. Examples of this somewhat dated approach are most prevalent in the works of nineteenth and early twentieth century writers.

Reuben Gold Thwaites asserts that "Frenchmen were generally superior in the art of tactful handling of the tribesmen and playing them against each other in the white man's interest."⁵⁷ Parkman contends that there was a definite set of French national personality traits and another set of English characteristics and points out that the differences significantly influenced their treatment of the Indians. The French Canadian is pictured as springing from "a brave and active race," a romantic at home in the lakes and forests of the interior, "a skillful woodsman, a bold and adroit canoe-man, a willing fighter in time of need. . . ."⁵⁸ The Frenchman possessed an "eager love for wandering and adventure" that made him well suited for carrying on the fur trade and getting along well with the Indians he would meet in the forest. These French fur traders became "more akin to Indians than to white men," adopting the Indians' dress and customs and often being adopted into their tribes.⁵⁹ Parkman

observes of the British fur traders, however, that "though they became barbarians, they did not become Indians." Similarly, Parkman pictures frontier farmers as "rude, fierce, and contemptuous" encroaching on Indian lands in such a rapacious manner that "the native populations shrank back from before the English, as from before an advancing pestilence." In contrast, "in the very heart of Canada, Indian communities sprang up, cherished by the government, and favored by the easy-tempered people."⁶⁰ Parkman characterizes the French as being of a more "pliant and plastic temper" as compared to the "stubborn spirit of the Englishman." This greater flexibility enabled the Frenchman to accept the customs, usages, morals, and manners of the Indian. Frenchmen frequently married into the various Indian nations, spreading French influence as they took their place in the tribal societies. Conversely, "the borders of the English colonies displayed no such phenomena of mingling races; for a thorny and implacable barrier divided the white man from the red." On the English frontier in the mid-eighteenth century, "scorn on the one side and hatred on the other still marked the intercourse of the hostile races." New France, however, worked to establish understanding and friendship with the Indians, and "labored with eager diligence to conciliate the Indians and win them to espouse her cause."⁶¹

Hagan mentions the characteristics of the two nations, noting that the "Indian found the Frenchmen less race-conscious and less covetous of Indian lands."⁶² Weiser's biographer Walton also finds an ethnic difference in Indian relations as he comments, "The eagerness which characterized the men of New France as they explored the

water-courses for new scenes and new lands, was in marked contrast with the conservative British who clustered near the coast and despised Indian affiliations."⁶³

From the foregoing survey it is apparent that little agreement exists concerning which factors were most important in determining Indian behavior. A convincing case can be made that any of the above elements was the most significant influence on Indian affairs. While all of these potential explanations have some merit, two seem to be of greatest consequence in interpreting the Indian attraction to the English interest. An examination of the primary sources relative to the period indicates that Indian behavior was governed by a discernible pattern of influences.

This researcher has come to a series of conclusions regarding the understanding of Indian conduct during the period under study. First, it should be kept in mind that the various Indian groups were sufficiently sophisticated to realize their position in the political-military structure of the British-French conflict for North America. Therefore, they did not act as mere agents or pawns of the European powers, but consistently followed a course of action best suited to their own interests. Specifically, the Indian nations were guided primarily by economic considerations during times of peace. Unable to produce the manufactured goods that were so important to their forest subsistence, the Indians quite naturally formed a firm attachment with the nation that could supply these vital items for the lowest price.

In time of military tension, however, economic considerations faded in importance. The immediate threat of war or the actual existence of hostilities caused the Indians to reorder their priorities. Self preservation became the predominant concern as the Indians thoughtfully analyzed what role they should play during the war and what position they hoped to occupy when the war was over.

The Indians, often portrayed as barbarous and bellicose, actually were very cautious about committing their warriors to active participation in the French-British conflict. Indians would actually go to war against one side or the other only when they judged it to be in their own best interests. While individuals or small bands could be induced to fight by means of gifts, religious affiliation, or the urging of some influential individual, Indian nations entered combat as units only when they saw a chance of affecting the outcome and of enhancing their own status in the inevitable peace that would follow the war.

In order to evaluate the validity of this thesis and the other arguments suggested by previous students of the period, this study will now turn to an analysis of the events and personalities of the 1748-1761 period. Hopefully, an examination of the primary sources will provide a satisfactory understanding of why the course of British-Indian relations proceeded as it did.

Before beginning an analysis of the military and diplomatic events of the era of the fourth inter-colonial war, however, some consideration should be given to the participants in the struggle for

North America. The following chapter will briefly summarize the goals, aspirations, and position of the European contenders and also offer a concise description of the Indian nations that played a major role in the conflict.

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9. Jacobs, Indian Gifts, P. 120.
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22. Anson, Miami Indians, pp. 51-52.
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25. Jacobs, Indian Gifts, p. 5.
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28. Hagan, American Indians, p. 23.
29. Clark Wissler, Indians of the United States (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, rev. ed., 1966), p. 81.
30. John Collier, Indians of the Americas: The Long Hope (New York: Mentor, The New American Library, 1947), p. 116.
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32. Downes, Council Fires, p. 8.
33. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 18-21.
34. Robert A. Goldstein, French-Iroquois Diplomatic and Military Relations 1609-1701 (Paris: Moulton, 1969), p. 42.
35. Goldstein, French-Iroquois Relations, p. 204.
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CHAPTER II

THE BRITISH, THE FRENCH, AND THE INDIANS

At the time of its signing, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1749 was regarded by both the British and the French as a cease-fire and not a true peace. The hostility between the two powers remained, ready to explode again into open conflict once they regained their capacity for war. Each eyed the frontiers of the other, searching for some advantage in their struggle for domination of the continent.

The European Contenders

At least four areas loomed as possible locales for future conflict.¹ Nova Scotia's boundaries were unsettled by the treaty. Both sides saw the region as economically desirable due to its valuable fishing waters and its strategic location. Similarly, the Great Lakes area was the source of another precious commodity -- furs. To control the eastward flow of the furs, the French had constructed forts at Niagara and Frontenac, hoping to channel the furs to Montreal. The British had countered by establishing Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario's southern shore to attract the fur trade to Albany via the Mohawk valley. The Lake George-Lake Champlain water route remained a trouble spot. With one terminus at Montreal and the

other near Albany, each side knew that its enemy could use the natural highway to make a powerful thrust at the heartland of the other.

The Ohio Valley was absolutely vital to the imperial aspirations of the British and the French. The valley was rich in furs, and for this reason alone would have been worth winning, but its long range strategic value was much greater. Had not a single fur-bearing animal inhabited the area it would still have been of paramount importance to both nations.

French settlement in Canada had now spread up the St. Lawrence from Quebec and Montreal to the shores of Lake Erie. From the Gulf of Mexico, the French had penetrated up the Mississippi to the mouth of the Ohio and even beyond. The area of Ohio remained to be controlled as the link between the French northern and southern colonial efforts, centered at Montreal and New Orleans. With Ohio firmly in the French sphere, New France would stretch in a powerful arc from the mouth of the St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi and the potential wealth of the interior of North America would belong to the French.

Ohio was equally important to the British. Spreading from the original tiny coastal settlements of the early seventeenth century, the tide of Anglo westward expansion was now at the crest of the Appalachian chain. Without the capability of future expansion into the Ohio Valley, the British colonial effort would be destined to be confined to the comparatively narrow strip of level land between the mountains and the Atlantic.

Ohio was the target of future expansion for both the British and the French, but it was not an uninhabited land open for an easy conquest. The area was controlled by several important Indian groups who regarded the Ohio Valley as their homeland or hunting preserve and were, for the most part, determined to resist European penetration into the area.

Both the English and the French realized that the good will and assistance of the more powerful Indian groups of northeastern North America who had interests in Ohio was the key to imperial success. The manner in which the two European powers conducted their affairs with the Indians differed significantly.

The royal governor in Montreal autocratically controlled most of the affairs of New France, and Indian relations were no exception. The peasant-farmer of Canada, unlike the English colonists, had no voice in the government, and New France was not politically subdivided so as to allow for the inter-colonial jealousies and rivalries that plagued efforts to unify English Indian policy. The governor, of course, received some instructions from the home government, but was basically free to control the Indian relations of the province. The authoritarian nature of the government of New France permitted Indian affairs to be formulated and administered in a firm and decisive manner.

The English system of Indian relations, in comparison, was disorganized and decentralized. Throughout most of the colonial era, each colony, claiming authority over those Indians living within its boundaries, developed and administered its own Indian policy. Only

in a few scattered instances where it was of obvious military or economic necessity to cooperate, would colonies unite in their dealings with the Indian nations. Even in time of declared war there was little unanimity toward the Indians among the English colonies. For example, in time of stress, New England would work for the active assistance of the Iroquois and other groups against the enemy, while mercantile-minded Albany urged the Iroquois to stay neutral, fearful that a war-torn frontier would have an effect on the fur trade.² The idea of a united plan of Indian relations was promoted throughout King George's War by New York Governor George Clinton, but intercolonial rivalry, jealousy, and apathy blocked the way. Massachusetts Governor William Shirley also worked actively for a unified Indian policy, as did South Carolina Governor James Glen, but little progress was made. Centralized control of Indian affairs was a prime reason for the calling of the Albany Conference of 1754, but not until 1755 was the conduct of Indian affairs concentrated. The Crown entrusted William Johnson with Indian management in the north and Edmond Atkin was given control in the south. Johnson's authority was outside the control of any of the colonial governors, the New Yorker being answerable only to the newly arrived General Braddock. The funds for Johnson's office came from the royal treasury rather than colonial coffers, a circumstance which made him theoretically independent of colonial interference.³

The Indians

The most numerous and powerful Indian group in northeastern North America in the mid-eighteenth century was the Iroquois Confederation. Originally known as the Five Nations, the Iroquois traditionally occupied what is now the state of New York from the Hudson to the Niagara. From east to west the five member tribes were the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas.⁴ Anthropological estimates vary as to the exact time that the confederacy was formed. One Iroquois legend puts the date of the founding of the confederacy at one man's lifetime before the appearance of the first white men in their area, or about the middle of the sixteenth century.⁵ Paul A. W. Wallace, noted scholar of Iroquois history, places the founding date at about one hundred years earlier.⁶ In any case, the league was firmly established when the English and French began their long struggle for control of the continent.

About 1710-1715, the Tuscaroras, a tribe migrating northward from the Carolinas who may possibly have been allied with the Iroquois in ancient times, joined the league and thereafter it was known as the Six Nations. Through military alliances, diplomacy, commerce, colonization, and conquest the Iroquois exerted some degree of control over an area far larger than their New York homeland. "From New England to the Illinois and from the Ottawa River to Chesapeake Bay" the Iroquois maintained a sphere of influence. Wallace contends that this domination of most neighboring tribes

was of a benign, peaceful nature, a "pax iroquoia" which gave order and stability to the whole vast area.⁷

The Iroquois Confederation was regulated by a central council composed of fifty representatives from the six member nations which met annually (or more frequently in case of emergency) at the confederacy's central "capital city" of Onondaga (modern Syracuse, New York). The central council had no real power to enforce its decisions. The high esteem in which the council was held, however, forced dissidents to conform to the council's decisions under pain of intense public disapproval. Group pressure was a strong and effective sanction in Iroquois society.

The Iroquois' system of clans or totems had a profound effect on their participation in the intercolonial wars. Each of the Six Nations was divided into three to eight clans, represented by some animal (deer, bear, turtle, falcon, etc.). Clan membership transcended tribal boundaries within the Six Nations. That is, the Iroquois regarded those members of the same clan who belonged to any of the Six Nations as "brothers" with the intendent connotations of familial love. Members of the bear clan, for example, who were Senecas thought of Oneida or Mohawk bear clan members as brothers. Therefore, Senecas would be extremely reluctant to quarrel seriously with Oneidas or Mohawks lest they might inflict injury on a brother. Since the clans were believed to be of divine origin, strife and conflict were viewed as repugnant if not unthinkable. In this way the clan system performed the highly significant function of cementing the Iroquois into one unit in matters of foreign policy and warfare. The existence

of clans influenced the leaders of the member nations to work for consensus and unanimity on important issues. The representatives to the central council consistently strove to solve their differences short of armed conflict, so as to avoid fratricidal war.⁸

The Iroquois legend of the creation of the confederacy also had a significant influence on the political-military behavior of the league. According to sacred doctrine, the Iroquois believed that the confederacy had been formed by the combined efforts of two heroic, semi-godlike men, Deganawidah and Hiawatha,⁹ who overcame great obstacles and personal tragedies with the help of the creator to establish the union for the benefit of mankind. These two superhuman personalities brought together the original five nations to form the league and established its institutions, such as the central council.¹⁰

Since the league traced its origin to supernatural beginnings, any act that might cause discord among the league members was seen as blasphemous and morally evil. Universal respect for the work of the two founders caused the Iroquois to view the league as an entity bestowed upon them through divine benevolence. Therefore, the confederation should be forever safeguarded from disruption and disunion. Iroquois reverence for the concept of the league thus caused the central council members, and indeed all Iroquois, to seek peace and harmony among league members and to try to avoid diplomatic and military actions that could lead to the destruction of the holy alliance.¹¹

On the question of allying themselves with the European powers fighting each other, the Iroquois always put the issue before the central council. If a pro-English or pro-French course of action could not unanimously be agreed upon, the official policy of the confederacy was neutrality. Individuals or small bands sometimes were wooed into the service of one European power or the other, but these warriors were the objects of the scorn of the league. The most frequent test of the drive for consensus occurred when Mohawks living beside the British along the Hudson tried to pull the confederation into the British interest, while Senecas residing near the French fortress at Niagara worked for an alliance with their European neighbors. The central council consistently strove to insure unity of action (if not always of thought) by the league members and worked strenuously to avoid a situation whereby pro-British Mohawks might be pitted against pro-French Senecas on the field of battle.¹²

The Iroquois way of life contributed significantly to their diplomatic and military behavior. It is important for the historian as well as the anthropologist to know that the Iroquois were an agricultural people who lived in semi-permanent stockaded villages known as castles. Hunting, of course, was an important component of Iroquois subsistence, but contrary to the nomadic buffalo-hunting tribes of the western plains, the Six Nations were a sedentary people with a highly developed sense of land ownership and property boundaries.¹³ Therefore the prime consideration of their military policy was defense of their towns. Even when solidly within the British interest, the Iroquois warriors consistently refused to go on long expeditions

against the French in Canada unless the English colonial governments could guarantee the safety of their homes and families while they were absent. The Iroquois, though a great and powerful people, knew that their wilderness villages were vulnerable to the hit-and-run tactics of Indians allied to the French. Throughout the period of the colonial wars, the Iroquois were extremely reluctant to allow the Englishmen or Frenchmen to build any type of permanent dwellings in their country. Fearful that any structure could evolve into the military post, the Iroquois were slow to give even traders permission to build so much as a storehouse for trade goods. However, at various times when the Iroquois did agree to fight along side the British against the French, they insisted that the British provide a fort and a garrison to protect their towns from enemy attack. A military alliance was clearly a two-way street to the Iroquois. If the British wanted them to furnish manpower for expeditions and serve as a barrier against French-instigated raids on English frontier settlements, the Iroquois expected the British to contribute to the defense of the Indian towns.

The Iroquois, like the British and French of that day, were an imperialistic nation intent on increasing their wealth and power through expansion and colonization. The principal area of Iroquois colonization was the Ohio Valley. Especially after their own home area had been depleted of its valuable fur resources, the Iroquois attempted to extend their dominance over the unexploited territory to the west.

In the seventeenth century, when fur bearing animals became scarce in their homelands, the Iroquois were forced to take steps to maintain their position of power and prosperity. The Iroquois embarked upon a program that would enable them to become the middlemen in the fur trade between the Great Lakes Indians and the Europeans of the Atlantic coast and to expand territorially into the western areas and take physical possession of the best beaver grounds. From the desire of the Iroquois to extend their hegemony westward a series of wars broke out which would have significant repercussions a century later when the Seven Years War began.¹⁴

At first the Iroquois tried to negotiate agreements with the western tribes which would give the confederacy a share in the fur trade. When negotiations failed the Iroquois turned to large scale warfare to gain their objectives. Beginning in 1649 the Hurons, Neutrals, and Eries who lived to the west, north, and south of Lake Erie respectively, were attacked and conquered. The Huron tribe was scattered and dispersed and was never again a viable nation. The other two groups were annihilated, what few survivors there were being adopted and absorbed into the Iroquois nations. The Susquehannocks of Pennsylvania soon met a similar fate, as did the Tobacco or Petun tribe, neighbors of the Hurons. The Iroquois even became so bold as to attack the Montreal area, demonstrating that their control over the fur trade routes extended right to the French Governor's doorstep.¹⁵ These wars, and the fierce reputation the Iroquois gained from them, caused Indian migrations that would still be unsettled decades later. In the last quarter of the seventeenth

century, the Iroquois, largely through military conquest, became the masters of the tribes living in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and even parts of Virginia and Maryland.¹⁶

Groups of New York Iroquois moved into these newly acquired territories, lived in the villages of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Indians, and functioned as a bond between the central council and subject nations. These migrant Iroquois were usually mixed bands composed of representatives from several of the Six Nations and were known as Mingoes. One of the more highly respected Mingo chieftains was designated as the "Half King" or viceroy, and operated in a manner roughly analagous to a royal governor of an English colony of that period.

While the Iroquois Confederation was "the strongest military power on the continent"¹⁷ at the end of the seventeenth century, the Six Nations were never able completely to control the political-military behavior of the subdued tribes of the Ohio Valley. Especially by the middle of the eighteenth century when the increased pressures of the English-French rivalry forced the Six Nations to keep their warriors close to home for the protection of their own towns, the tribes of the Ohio Valley sometimes pursued courses of action contrary to the policies of the central council. The Mingoes might exert their influence on behalf of the league but were not completely dependable in this respect. Many of the Mingoes, having lived in the west for perhaps two or three generations, had lost some of their loyalty to the New York league and had come to identify more closely with the Ohio Valley peoples with whom they shared their homes.

In the last decade of the seventeenth century another distinct Iroquois group came into existence. French Jesuit priests, usually most influential among the Senecas and Cayugas of the west, were able to convert a sizeable group of Mohawks to Catholicism. These converted Mohawks were induced to move northward to the Montreal area and became known as the "Praying Indians" or Caughnawagas.¹⁸ The Caughnawagas played a curious and erratic role in the history of Iroquois-English-French relations in the colonial period. The Caughnawagas were often troublesome to the English in that when they came to Albany to trade they often took back to Montreal valuable military intelligence about English fortifications, manpower, and future plans. The Caughnawagas' presence at Albany was difficult to prevent. Albany merchants (who were usually of Dutch rather than of English extraction) welcomed them as paying customers and put profit above other considerations. There was always the hope that through trade the Caughnawagas might be won back to the British side. British government officials did not want to forbid the Caughnawagas from coming to Albany lest they be totally alienated from the British interest and lost forever to the French. The price of this lenient policy (even a strict policy would have been difficult to enforce) was a security leak that kept Montreal well aware of British operations and strengths and weaknesses.

The Caughnawagas also posed a potential problem in that since they were related by close kinship ties to the Mohawks, the two Indian groups were loath to be out in a position that might force them to fight each other. The Mohawks were the most pro-British of the Six

Nations, but even they could not always be counted upon to go into a combat situation if it was thought that the French force contained some Caughnawagas.

The Caughnawagas-Mohawk relationship did not always work to the detriment of the British interest. On some occasions, intelligence about the French was transmitted to the British via conversations between related Caughnawagas and Mohawks.

The French attempts to win the Iroquois to their interest did not end with their conversion of the Caughnawagas. The Jesuits frequently tried to penetrate the interior of the Iroquois country but usually failed to make any lasting inroads. The most significant of these attempts came in 1749 when Abbe Piquet established a mission on an island in the St. Lawrence which he called La Presentation. This mission near the Iroquois town of Oswegatchie (modern Ogdensburg, New York) was an attempt to draw off some Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas to the French interest. These three tribes, being the farthest removed from the English settlements were traditionally more favorably disposed toward the French than the Oneidas and Mohawks. Piquet succeeded in establishing another group of "Praying Indians" but the little mission failed to attract large numbers of Iroquois and remained more an irritant than a threat to the British.

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As this brief review suggests, the Iroquois possessed a sophisticated political system that enabled them to act with considerable unity in their relations with the British and the French. Their strategic location and widespread influence among other tribes made

their amity crucial to the success of any designs of the competing European powers.

In the area of Pennsylvania, the Six Nations empire included the Delawares, Shawnees, and other lesser tribes. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, at the time the Iroquois were finishing their wars of extermination against the Great Lakes tribes, the Delaware nation, centered around the river of that name, dominated the area that is now New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania.²⁰ The Delawares, or Lenni Lenape, as they were also known, like the Iroquois and most other tribes of the eastern woodlands, were a sedentary, agricultural people who lived in towns, their largest one being their capital at modern Germantown, Pennsylvania near Philadelphia. By the turn of the eighteenth century white civilization was putting enormous pressure on their traditional territorial boundaries. Pressed on the south and east by white encroachments, they were pushed north westward into the Susquehanna Valley, a region claimed by the Iroquois. Squeezed between two numerically superior forces, the Delawares gradually declined until they were subdued by the Iroquois around 1720.

The delicate job of administering the Delaware and other subject nations was entrusted to a regent or viceroy named by the Iroquois central government. At the close of King George's War, this sensitive and critical office was held by an older Oneida sachem, Shickellamy, who had filled this post since 1728. Mixing firmness, tact, and integrity, Shickellamy was respected by Indians and whites and was a pivotal figure in frontier diplomacy.²¹

One of Shickellamy's most difficult tasks was to keep the subject nations a contented yet subordinate part of the Iroquois Confederation. This problem was especially difficult in regard to the Delawares. Conquered, humiliated, and embittered, the Delawares swore a nominal allegiance to the Six Nations but silently yearned for the day when they would be able to shake off the Iroquois yoke and once again take their traditional place as a proud and free nation.

To compound the normal inner enmity that might be expected from subject to master, the Iroquois had further degraded the once mighty Delawares by designating them as "women." The use of the term "women" connoted a status lower than that of a conquered but worthy foe. Honor was extremely important to the eastern woodland tribes and the stripping away of the Delawares' manhood was a devastating insult that could not go unchallenged forever. The Delawares were divested of the privilege of going to war (the honorable occupation of Indian men) and were forbidden to make land transactions with the whites except through the Iroquois.

An example of the humiliation suffered by the Delawares is found in their treatment by the Iroquois at a Philadelphia conference in 1742. The issue under discussion was a land sale by a group of Delawares to Pennsylvania. Canassatego, the principal spokesman of the Six Nations severely chastized the Delawares for first having made the deal, and then for refusing to admit to having made the sale. "We conquered You we made Women of you you know you are Women and can no more sell lands than women" the Iroquois railed at the Delawares. Canassatego upheld the English claim to the lands and ordered the

Delawares to "remove instantly" to either Wyoming or Shamokin.

According to one account Canassatego concluded his humiliating speech by siezing a Delaware chief by his hair and pushing him out of the council room.²² That the Delawares endured such debasing treatment demonstrates their acceptance of the mastery of the Iroquois.

More important, the incident added to the inward resentment of the Delawares toward their conquerors. The haughty attitude of the Iroquois bred a deep resentment in the Delaware "women" that would cause them to give an open ear to the future overtures of the French.²³

The Shawnees were the first major Indian group to migrate into the area of the lower Ohio. About 1720 one group of Shawnees, pressured by attacks from the Cherokees and Chickasaws to the south, moved from their traditional home on the Cumberland River northward to the Ohio. Another group of Shawnees, separated from the Cumberland faction in prehistoric times and later conquered by the Iroquois, was at that time living in Pennsylvania. In the 1720s, Canada's Governor Marquis de Vaudreuil made overtures to both groups of Shawnees, encouraging them to unite and settle on the Ohio. The plan of Montreal was to have the entire Shawnee nation become allied to the French interest and settle in Ohio between Lake Erie and the Ohio River. Thus positioned, the Shawnees would help hold this strategic area for the French and form a barrier between the French and the British-leaning Iroquois. The Shawnees considered themselves to have descended from the Delawares, and especially in Pennsylvania, the two nations often lived in the same or nearby villages. Throughout the

colonial period, the bond between the Delaware and the Shawnee remained strong and usually the two groups pursued a common politico-military policy.²⁴ Sharing the Delaware resentment toward the Iroquois, the Shawnee were frequently receptive to the propositions of the French.

As the term is used by anthropologists, Algonkin (or Algonquin) refers to a huge family of over one hundred tribes that inhabited an area stretching from the Atlantic coast of New England and Canada to the Dakota Plains. In the mid eighteenth century the term denoted such tribes as the Abnaki, Penobscot, Massachuset, Pequot, Narraganset, Mohican, and Mohegan that occupied Quebec, the maritime provinces, northern New England, and eastern Ontario. Thus, in eighteenth century literature the Algonkins were those Indians living in and around New France who were firmly entrenched in the French interest.

The Algonkins and Iroquois possessed an implacable animosity for each other. Algonkins had originally held the area of modern New York state, but had been driven out when the Iroquois migrated into this region two or three centuries before white contact. Like the Iroquois, the Algonkins were fierce warriors but lacked the political and military cohesion to successfully resist an invasion by a comparatively well organized confederacy of powerful nations. Embroiled in internal feuding, the disunified Algonkins traditionally wasted much of their military energy on each other and consequently were pushed northward into the valley of the St. Lawrence by the Iroquois intruders. In addition, other Algonkin groups were pushed out of their Atlantic coast homelands by the Dutch and the British.

Bitter over the loss of their lands, the Algonkins regarded the Iroquois and the British with hatred and resentment. They were well received by the French to the north who were also trying to stem the tide of English penetration into the interior of the continent. United by opposition to a common enemy, Algonkin groups became solidly committed to the French interest. The French viewed the Algonkins as a shield between New France and the British and therefore supplied and encouraged the Algonkins so that they would raid the British frontier. The French also promoted unity among the often warring Algonkin factions so that they would do more damage to the British. Driven by long-standing resentment of the invasions of the Iroquois and the British, the Algonkins fought as allies of the French throughout the colonial period.²⁵

In the mid-eighteenth century, the British and the French recognized the importance of the Indian as a major factor in their contest for empire. Both sides hoped to win over to their interest as many Indian groups as possible. New France armed and supplied its staunch Algonkin allies and employed all manner of inducements to bring uncommitted and English-leaning Indians into the French sphere. The English struggled to keep the Iroquois a dependable buffer between their frontier settlements and the hostile forces of the French, and to add other groups to their interest. The uneasy peace of Aix-la-Chapelle opened an era of intense competition by the British and the French for the amity of the various Indian nations, especially those with command over parts of the Ohio Valley. Both

sides, eying the strategic and economic value of Ohio, began an active campaign to increase their influence among the Indians. A successful expansion program required favorable relationships with those Indians occupying or controlling the area of the trans-Allegheny west.

NOTES: Chapter II

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2. Harry M. Ward, Unite or Die: Intercolony Relations 1690-1763 (Port Washington, N.Y.: National University Publications, Kennikat Press, 1971), pp. 131-132.
3. Ward, Unite or Die, pp. 139, 143, 144; and James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 125. Johnson's appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs is found in William Johnson Papers (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), vol. I, pp. 465-466.
4. Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1960), pp. 14-16.
5. Harry R. Schoolcraft, Notes on the Iroquois (Albany: Erastus Pease, 1847), pp. 117-118.
6. Paul A. W. Wallace, The White Roots of Peace (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946), pp. 3, 29-30.
7. Wallace, White Roots of Peace, p. 3. Other writers have emphasized the aggressive, imperialistic nature of the Six Nations Confederacy and see the league's expansion and operation as something other than a "pax iroquoia."
8. Wendell H. Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs (New York: John Wiley, 1966), pp. 417-418; Trelease, Indian Affairs, p. 21; Ruth Underhill, Red Man's America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 91; William M. Beauchamp, A History of the New York Iroquois (New York State Museum Bulletin 78), pp. 144-147; Schoolcraft, Notes on the Iroquois, pp. 126-132.
9. Not to be confused with the fictional Hiawatha of the Longfellow poem.
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11. Paul A. W. Wallace, "The Iroquois: A Brief Outline of Their History," Pennsylvania History 23 (1956): 15-28, pp. 16-17.

12. Underhill, Red Man's America, pp. 92-94; Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs, pp. 420-421; Schoolcraft, Notes on the Iroquois, p. 124.
13. Underhill, Red Man's America, pp. 86-87, 90; Beauchamp, History of Iroquois, p. 139.
14. Robert A. Goldstein, French-Iroquois Diplomatic and Military Relations 1609-1701 (Paris: Moulton, 1969), pp. 59-61; Trelease, Indian Affairs, pp. 118-120; Charles H. McIlwain (ed.) in Peter Wraxall, An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915), pp. xliii-xliv.
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16. Wallace, "The Iroquois: A Brief Outline of Their History," p. 22.
17. Wallace, "The Iroquois: A Brief Outline of Their History," p. 21.
18. Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs, p. 406 reports that over 25 percent of the Mohawks became Catholic Caughnawagas. Flexner states that nearly 50 percent of the Mohawks became Caughnawagas. See Mohawk Baronet, p. 64.
19. Oswalt, This Land Was Theirs, p. 406; Osgood, Colonies in 18th Century, IV, pp. 292-293.
20. Wissler, Indians of the United States, p. 83.
21. Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 39-40.
22. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 129-131.
23. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 131-132.
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CHAPTER III

THE TRANSITION FROM WAR TO PEACE

In the spring of 1748, King George's War showed definite signs of drawing to a close. There had been no major military action on the northern frontier since the fall of the French fortress at Louisbourg in 1745. Since that stunning (if somewhat lucky) victory by the British colonials, guerilla-type Indian raids characterized the state of war that existed in North America between the British and the French. These raids kept the borders in a state of turmoil, but accomplished little in the way of bringing about a settlement. While actual military activity tapered off, the basic hostility between the French and the British remained. Each side realized that even if peace came, the underlying causes of war would remain, since the issue of supremacy in North America would remain unresolved. Both nations worked to strengthen their defenses against future attacks by the other.

The British colonies' first (and at times only) line of defense against the French was the Six Nation Confederacy which occupied the wilderness lying between the settlements of the two European groups. The Six Nations had been neutral throughout the first two inter-colonial wars (King William's War 1689-1697, Queen Anne's War 1701-1714) and part of the third (King George's War 1744-1748). While

this policy of neutrality would appear to be non-partisan, it actually worked to the great advantage of the British. The neutral Iroquois would not permit either side to dispatch an invasion force through Six Nations territory. Their interior frontier thus protected by Iroquois neutrality, the British could concentrate their military energies on French Atlantic coast positions where British sea supremacy gave them a distinct advantage.

In the earlier stages of King George's War (October 1745) a conference was held at Albany between the Six Nations and the British, represented by New York Governor George Clinton and commissioners from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. Before the talks began, the British negotiators experienced some discord in planning their strategy for the talks. New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut believed that the British colonies should speak with one voice to the Indians, presenting a united front that would convey an impression of strength through unanimity and solidarity. Believing the Iroquois would be impressed by potential Anglo military strength, the delegates hoped that "if the Indians should be wavering in their inclinations with regard to what part they should take in the war at this time between the British and the French, they may from apprehension of such a Union, be determined to join with us as the strongest side."¹ The pacifist delegation from Pennsylvania (two of the three were Quakers) refused to commit themselves to joint action with the other colonies. While professing a desire not to "clash or interfere" with "the main intention" of the conference, the

Pennsylvanians insisted on dealing with the Indians separately. The British effort at unity was thus undermined and the attempt to impress the Indians with British solidarity failed.²

In these preliminary talks held by the British colonies for the purpose of framing their speech to the Indians, the bellicose Massachusetts delegation proposed that the Iroquois be asked to go to war immediately against the French. Their position was that the Iroquois had promised in previous treaties to act as firm allies of the British, ready to go to war against the French or pro-French Indians should they attack the British. Since hostilities had occurred between French Indians and settlers on the British frontier, Massachusetts urged that the Iroquois be reminded of their past pledges and strongly encouraged to go to war if the French Indians could give them no assurances that no future raids would occur. New York and Connecticut agreed to support this position.³

The conference opened on an unsettled note. A rumor had spread through the Iroquois castles the previous winter that the British were preparing to strike the Iroquois in an attempt to annihilate them. While the British had previously given assurances that they harbored no such intentions, some suspicion still remained in the minds of the Iroquois as they went to Albany for the conference. Apparently the rumor had been started by Chabert Joncaire, a French man living in the Niagara area who had considerable influence with the Senecas. Joncaire had reported to the Iroquois that the British had written to the Governor of Canada proposing a joint effort to exterminate the Six Nations and divide their lands. This ruse was

used several times throughout the period of the colonial wars by the French and was apparently effective enough in this case to create a coolness in Iroquois-British relations.⁵ The Mohawks, traditionally the most pro-British of the Six Nations, were also upset over the alleged intentions of some Albanians to acquire certain Mohawk lands. The sachem Hendrick, spokesman for the Mohawks, expressed the fear that, in the light of previous British expansion into Iroquois territories in New York and New England, the British were planning to push the Mohawks out of their lands.⁶

The second day's session of the conference opened with Governor Clinton symbolically "brightening and strengthening the Covenant Chain" that had traditionally linked the two peoples. Clinton denied the rumor that the British planned to attack the Iroquois and scolded his listeners for having given credence to "such idle tales." Clinton then rebuked the Iroquois on the basis of reports that they had gone to Montreal for a conference with the French and while there, agreed to consider going to war against the British. The Governor, sensing that the Iroquois were wavering in their usual friendly predisposition toward the British, next introduced the subject of the recent British military success at Louisbourg, no doubt hoping to convince the Indians of the wisdom of casting their lot with the stronger of the two European powers. Believing Indian behavior would be influenced by their perception of the relative military strength of Britain and France, Clinton recounted the story of the Louisbourg victory. He reminded the Iroquois of their former promise to go to war against the French and their Indians if they should

attack the British frontiers, and called upon the Iroquois to join in the war against the French.⁷

The Iroquois responded to Clinton's remarks by admitting that they had gone to Montreal for talks, but denied that they had ever considered "taking up the hatchet" against their "brethren" the British. The Six Nations agreed to take up the hatchet on behalf of the British, but declined to use it immediately, pleading that they must first inform all the tribes allied with them before actively entering the war. Meanwhile the Iroquois asked for two months time in which to confer with the Indians of Canada in an effort to get them to promise to make no future raids on the New York frontiers. The Six Nations did agree to go to war immediately if these French Indians should attack New York again.⁸ The British agreed to these conditions.⁹

The Iroquois actions at the Albany Conference of 1745 seem to have been aimed at a policy of promoting their own long range interests. First, they had succeeded in repairing the strained relations that existed between themselves and the British. They had been able to visit Montreal and maintain relations with the French without losing the good will of the British. Second, they were able to make a firm protestation of friendship and alliance with the British without committing themselves to immediately go to war against the French. By asking for time in which to contact allied Indians to notify them of their intentions of going to war and to meet with French Indians in an attempt to iron out their differences, the Six Nations were able to appear to be firmly committed to the

British interest without actually risking any of their own blood. Third, the Iroquois took this occasion of British uneasiness over their fidelity to request lower prices for the trade goods sold to them by the British. The Six Nations argued that they lacked the powder, shot, and clothing necessary to equip their men for warfare against the French unless the British could arrange for these goods to be sold to them more cheaply.¹⁰ Reestablishing good relations with the British had the advantage also of attaching the Iroquois to the side which was currently winning the war. By placing themselves in alliance with the conquerors of Louisbourg, the Iroquois were on the side of the eventual victor should the war continue to go in favor of the British.

Shortly after the conference, the French violated Iroquois neutrality by sending a force of three hundred Canadians and two hundred Canada-based Indians against Saratoga in November 1745. Sixty British settlers were killed in the surprise attack and two or three times that number (mostly Negro slaves) were carried off as prisoners. More French inspired raids occurred in 1746 in the Albany-Schenectady area and on the western Massachusetts frontier.¹¹

In August of 1746 Clinton and a New York delegation along with commissioners from Massachusetts, held another conference at Albany with the Six Nations. Cadwallader Colden,¹² speaking for Clinton, mentioned the recent French raids on Saratoga and other settlements and reproached the Iroquois for not striking the French as they had promised to do if such French instigated hostilities occurred. Colden then informed them of the overall British plan to send an intercolonial

invasion force¹³ against the French "to subdue the Country of Canada."¹⁴ Colden emphasized the size and strength of the British force that would be thrown against the French and urged the Iroquois to join the British expedition. Colden mentioned the 1745 Louisbourg victory as an example of the strength of British arms and as proof that this year's expedition would be equally successful. The New York spokesman also made a strong appeal to Iroquois-Algonkin enmity, citing the coming expedition as an excellent opportunity for them to strike their "Inveterate Enemies" and thereby obtain "Revenge of the Injuries your Fathers received" at the hands of pro-French Indians. Colden promised to furnish the Iroquois warriors with the arms and equipment they would need and vowed to provide for the defense and subsistence of their families during their absence.¹⁵

The Six Nations responded that they would "from this day" take up the British hatchet against the French and their Indians. This gesture was the equivalent of a formal declaration of war. The Six Nations stated that they would join the British and it was their "Intention to Conquer or to Dye Together in the Common Cause."¹⁶

Several factors seem to have influenced the Indians to take a stronger stand against the French than they had at the Albany Conference the previous year. In 1745 they had promised to go to war against the French if more French raids on the British frontiers occurred. Such attacks had taken place and the Six Nations were put in the position of honoring their previous pledges or losing their credibility with the British. Joining with the British would also seem to be a prudent move in view of the huge expeditionary force

the British were reportedly preparing to send against the French. The proposed expedition was impressive and seemed to have a real chance at success. It would obviously be better for the Six Nations to have supported it if it achieved its goal of conquering Canada. It is entirely possible that the Six Nations were at least partially motivated by considerations of honor and pride. The recent French raids through the territory of the neutral Iroquois were in flagrant disregard of the Six Nations position. In order to regain the respect of the French, the Six Nations may well have felt that the French must be shown that they could not violate their territorial integrity without penalty.

Also influencing the Six Nations decision to enter the war was the activity of William Johnson. Skilled in the language and rituals of the Iroquois, Johnson worked to bring the powerful Indian confederacy into active partnership with the British in the war against the French. When the news came from England that the Six Nations were to be asked to join the proposed expedition against Canada, Johnson was given the task of delivering the invitation to the Iroquois for the July 1746 Albany Conference. Johnson did everything possible to insure that the Six Nations would arrive in Albany in a militant frame of mind, eager to accept the British hatchet against the French. Johnson, an adopted Mohawk, went to one of the major Mohawk castles, painted himself for war in the Indian fashion and arranged an emotional ceremony at which he called on the Mohawks to go to war. The elders of the tribe, not wishing to challenge the neutrality policy of the Onondaga Central Council, disapproved of his actions, but the younger

warriors, eager to prove themselves, listened eagerly. Johnson began a war dance. The young warriors and then eventually the elder sachems, swept up in the emotion of the spectacle, joined in. Johnson's overall plan was to bring the Mohawks into the British camp, hoping the remainder of the Six Nations would follow. As the Senecas were especially favorably disposed toward the French at Niagara at this time, Johnson was risking splitting the league into two camps but was gambling that the pro-British Mohawks could influence the entire confederacy to support the British interest at Albany.¹⁷

In spite of their firm declarations, the Six Nations were still not risking their own lives at this point. From decades of association with colonial military operations, they undoubtedly knew that it would be a matter of weeks or even months before the expedition would be ready to move northward. Perhaps in the intervening time some peaceful solution could still be worked out that would eliminate the need for their participation in the campaign.

The energetic governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, architect of the successful Louisbourg campaign, was the principal organizer of the new expedition against Canada. After the crown approved of his plan and ordered the other colonies to cooperate in the venture, the surprising total of 7,800 troops was raised from eight colonies. The plan fell through, however, when the British troops promised for the expedition failed to appear. Most of the colonial troops had to be dismissed, but Shirley tried to salvage something from the effort by planning to send some Massachusetts and New York troops against the French fort at Crown Point on Lake

Champlain. This strike also had to be aborted, however, when a rumor spread that a powerful French fleet was headed for Boston. The troops preparing to march against Crown Point were quickly sent to Boston for the defense of the city.¹⁸

French raids against the British frontiers were renewed in the winter and spring of 1747. The Iroquois finally entered the war in April. Two small parties of Mohawks fought minor engagements against French troops near Crown Point and on an island in the St. Lawrence.¹⁹ Johnson was approached by several Seneca sachems who asked him not to send any more raiding parties against Canada until an effort could be made to contact the Caughnawagas and attempt to get them to come over to the British interest. Johnson saw this as a French-inspired trick to stop the raids against Canada and refused to comply.²⁰

While Johnson worked to excite the Mohawks and the other Iroquois to go to war, Clinton and Shirley labored to organize another expedition against the French. The parsimonious New York Assembly failed to support the plan to the extent Clinton desired. Clinton's sharp criticism of the Assembly's lack of martial spirit and the Assembly's intransigence caused a complete break between the Governor and the legislators.²¹

An attempt was made to gather an army at Saratoga for an attack on Crown Point but it collapsed in a pay dispute. When only some of the troops were paid on schedule, those who did not receive their money nearly mutinied. In addition, the Shirley-Clinton plan failed to win the approval of the British government so no support was

forthcoming from that source. In August 1747, Clinton asked the New York Assembly for £14,000 for the purpose of financing the proposed Crown Point expedition, but the Assembly refused on the grounds that New York had already borne more than its share of such military expenses.²²

As chances for a 1747 expedition declined, Johnson was put in an embarrassing position in his relations with the Six Nations. The Iroquois were beginning to sense that the British were not going to make good on their promises to send a powerful force against the French and were growing resentful at being dragged into a war which their British allies were not prosecuting with enthusiasm.

A group of Mohawks held an impromptu meeting with Clinton at Albany in July 1747. Reminding Clinton of their recent raids against the French, they expressed their disappointment at the inaction of the British. "We are affraid that you are not in earnest for no other reason than we don't see you do anything with your army as we expected, & wished for." Clinton encouraged the Mohawks to continue their harrassment of the French, and assured them that he was "now bringing my people to join yours and act as one body."²³ Clinton may still have honestly believed that he could put an army in the field. His attempts to do so, however, were unsuccessful and the promised intercolonial expeditionary force never materialized.

Johnson relaised that irreparable damage would be done the British interest if once again no offensive was mounted against the French. Taking matters into his own hands, Johnson organized an army of 331 of his Mohawk Valley neighbors and added 318 Indian warriors

representing each of the Six Nations. Johnson's scouts had brought back word of a force of approximately 500 to 600 French and Indians who, camped on an island on Lake George, had been sending out raiding parties against the British frontier. Johnson led his army north-eastward from his home base on the Mohawk River, but found the French island camp deserted. Failing to make contact with the enemy, Johnson withdrew but the expedition had the important effect of showing the Six Nations that at least some of the British were deeply committed to the war against the French. Returning from the expedition, Johnson went to New York City to impress upon the colonial government the necessity for decisive military action if the alliance with the Six Nations was to be maintained. Only an expedition the following spring would convince the Iroquois that their survival would not be endangered by an alliance with the British and would retain the allegiance of the Indians, argued Johnson. Already the French were spreading the rumor among the Iroquois that the land-hungry British had tricked the Six Nations into taking up the hatchet so that they might be weakened by warfare and be less able to resist the planned expansion of the British.²⁴

The French were busy over the winter of 1747-1748 trying to take advantage of the current lack of trust which the Iroquois felt for the British. Conciliatory messages were sent to the Six Nations towns offering to release all Iroquois prisoners if the Iroquois would only come to Montreal to reclaim them. The objective of the French invitation was to lure the Six Nations representatives to

Canada in order to reestablish relations with them and further alienate them from the British.²⁵

William Johnson was distressed to learn that there was a growing conviction among the Iroquois that they had been exploited by the British. According to Six Nation belief, the British "brought them into the War, See them murdered in the most barbarous Manner, and do not assist them." To counteract this line of thinking and to prevent the Iroquois from sending delegates to Montreal to discuss the release of prisoners, Johnson resolved to set out on a journey to the major Six Nation towns.²⁶

Johnson was surprised and relieved when he received warm hospitality on his trek through the Iroquois country. The lack of military action by the English during the past seasons had been damaging but apparently not fatal. As he travelled to the Iroquois national capital at Onondaga for a conference in April 1748, Johnson reported that the English flag was prominently displayed and his party received an enthusiastic and noisy welcome at every village along the way.²⁷

The Onondaga conference opened with Ganughsadeagah, an Onondaga sachem, welcoming Johnson, but complaining of English inaction against the French. The Six Nations warriors had confined themselves to the comparatively unproductive hunting of their own territory for the past two years (rather than go to Canada) as Johnson had asked. They had found the past months frustrating since they could "see no sign of your doing anything with your army as we expected."²⁸

Giving evidence of the importance of trade as a determinant of Indian

behavior, the Six Nations speaker further indicated that the Iroquois were distressed and impoverished due to the high prices for trade goods at Oswego. Despite these hardships the Six Nations had obeyed Johnson's request to stay in their own territory but indicated their patience was wearing thin.

After providing the Onondagas with a feast on the evening of the opening of the conference, Johnson responded to Ganughsadeagah's opening address the following morning. Johnson began his speech by recounting the cherished tale of the first Iroquois-English contacts and the establishment of the Covenant Chain between the two peoples. Alluding to this long friendship, Johnson cautioned the Six Nations against the machinations of the French who were trying to destroy the pact of amity. Johnson, speaking also for the governors of New York and Massachusetts, then renewed his request that the Six Nations not go to Canada for any conferences with the French. Governor Clinton, Johnson promised, would work dilligently to secure the release of all Six Nations captives being held in Canada, thereby eliminating any need for direct diplomatic contact between the Iroquois sachems and the French. Johnson expressed his doubt that recent Iroquois visits to Canada were for the sole purpose of gaining the exchange of prisoners, accused the Six Nations of conferring with French officials contrary to his instructions. The New York Superintendent of Indian Affairs then expressed his belief that these surreptitious visits to Canada had even resulted in some raids by French-inspired Six Nations warriors against British settlers. Johnson tried to stir up Iroquois

resentment toward the French allied Caughnawagas who, he said, were responsible for the deaths of countless Six Nations warriors, and the destruction of their castles. In this context, Johnson skillfully hinted at the apparent lack of pride and bravery in the Six Nations warriors. The treatment received from the Caughnawagas would have stirred up "an everlasting Resentment" if there still existed "the least Spark of that great Spirit in you which your brave Ancestors were noted through the World for." Johnson then openly called upon them to fight the French and their Indian allies, exhorting them to "use the ax against them which you have so long held in your Hands." Johnson declared that the time had come for the Indians to choose between the French and the British interest. "It is impossible to be true to both wherefore I desire you to drop the one intirely and stand by your own Brethren." Johnson promised that the English would help defend the Iroquois' families and castles from attack if they would fight for the English King.²⁹

The Iroquois response to Johnson's remarks demonstrated a surprisingly firm attachment to the British interest. The Six Nations speaker began by assuring Johnson that "all the arts of Cunning Ways of the French shall never get us to drop our Friendship to you our Brethren." The Iroquois were disturbed that Johnson had asked them to refrain from going to Canada to seek the release of Iroquois warriors held captive in Montreal. They agreed not to go, however, if Johnson would use his skill and influence with the British authorities to arrange a prisoner exchange that would bring about the release of the Iroquois captives.

The Iroquois contended that any recent visits to Canada had been for the sole purpose of securing the release of these prisoners and denied Johnson's charge that they had carried on any other type of negotiation with the French. Answering Johnson's charge that they had not been opposing the French with sufficient vigor, the Iroquois attributed their military inaction to two factors. First, the French Governor had warned them that if they committed any hostilities against the French he would have the prisoners executed. If they remained quiet, he would have them released. Second, the Iroquois cited the military lethargy of the British as a cause of their own passivity. The Six Nations speaker stated that the warriors of the confederacy had been waiting two years to join an English expedition against Montreal but none had been forthcoming. The Iroquois were highly critical of the British for failing to send a powerful army against Canada and instead sending out "small Parties, several of whom were . . . cut to pieces." A full scale operation against the enemy "should have been able with the loss of a few Men to have drove the French and his Allies into the Great Lakes and drown them." The British inability to mount a concerted offensive against the French had cost them dearly in terms of Indian allies reported the Iroquois. "We used what Interest we could . . . and a Considerable Number of the Foreign Indians . . . were ready to join you & us" the sachem reported. "But as there is no sign of an Army," he sadly concluded, "we cannot pretend now to say what they will do." Obviously the Iroquois felt that the absence of visible English military force had undermined Iroquois diplomatic relations

with certain wavering tribes. The Six Nations, apparently concerned for their own survival, demanded that they not be forced to assume a disproportionate amount of the actual combat. The tone of the Iroquois speech implies that the Six Nations would begin offensive operations only when the English demonstrated their commitment to the defeat of the French. Thinking first of their own safety, the Iroquois were in no hurry to antagonize the French and thus invite French sponsored attacks on the Six Nations towns until and unless the English have more firm guarantees of their intentions to give first priority to the defense of the Six Nations and the reduction of the French.³¹

That the Iroquois were vitally concerned about the defense of their towns is evidenced by their ready acceptance of Johnson's offer to construct forts near their castles. Usually reluctant to permit whites to build structures on their lands, the Iroquois welcomed the proposed forts. The Iroquois agreed to consolidate their settlements nearer the forts and expressed their thanks that New York had decided to build the bastions. The British proposal to erect these forts was taken by the Iroquois as a sign that the British were genuinely interested in the safety and welfare of their Indian allies. Without such forts the Iroquois would hardly be eager to go on a long expedition against Canada, leaving their homes and families vulnerable to the depredations of the enemy.

Johnson's promises at the Onondaga Conference had put him in a difficult position. In order to keep the Iroquois from going to Montreal he had vowed that Governor Clinton would soon secure the

release of the Six Nations prisoners held in Canada. To keep the Iroquois from joining the French he had given the impression that the British were eager to fight the French and that recent British military inactivity should not be interpreted as a sign of cowardice or lack of support for the Six Nations. Johnson judged that the Iroquois would be best retained in the British interest if a full scale conference with Clinton could be arranged. At such a meeting the New York Governor could reaffirm the assurances Johnson had given the Iroquois at Onondaga.³² Accordingly, an Anglo-Iroquois conference was arranged for Albany in July.

The professions of friendship made by the Iroquois to their British "brethren" at the Onondaga conference would seem to indicate that the New York frontier could expect a respite from the border warfare of recent years. But such was not the case. Johnson had no more returned to his home when a letter from his business associate John L. Lydius arrived which gave cause for serious concern. Enclosed in Lydius's dispatch was a letter from Major Israel Williams, an officer stationed in western Massachusetts. Williams reported that one Mr. Hawks, ambassador to Canada to negotiate the release of prisoners, had sent bad news from Montreal. First, although he expected the French soon to release their British prisoners, it was apparent the French were going to retain their Iroquois prisoners, obviously holding the hostages to lure the Iroquois emissaries to Montreal where the French could try to win them away from the British interest. Second, Hawks reported a recent rapprochement between the French and the Senecas. The westernmost

of the Six Nations were reported to have sent twelve large wampum belts³³ to the French. This extraordinarily large token of Seneca amity toward the French was of course well received by the French who reciprocated by sending "five hundred Crowns and other things, a Valuable Present to engage them their Interest." Major Williams said he hoped the amity of the Senecas would not be lost but feared the recent unenergetic conduct of the British had "discouraged" the Indians.³⁴

On July 23, 1748, the Six Nations and the governments of New York and Massachusetts began a conference at Albany. Clinton opened the talks by presenting the Iroquois delegates with a large gift in appreciation of their having joined the British war effort against the French and their Indian allies. As was customary at all such conferences between the British and the Six Nations, Clinton referred reverently to the historical "Covenant Chain" that had united the two peoples since the early days of white contact.³⁵ Clinton was aware that the Indian assessment of the comparative military strength of the French and the British was possibly an important factor in determining Iroquois behavior. He called upon the Six Nations to continue in their friendship with the British, assuring the Indians that they "need have no reason to fear anything the French dare to attempt." Clinton warned the Indians to avoid being lured to Canada for a conference, calling upon them to resist the "smooth tongue and artfull promises" of the French governor. Clinton also demanded that the Indians admit no Frenchmen to their castles. In accordance with William Johnson's earlier promise that the British would work

diligently to secure the release of Iroquois captives held in Montreal, Clinton announced that he and Shirley had sent a number of French prisoners to Canada to be exchanged for the incarcerated Iroquois.³⁶ Concerning the possibility of actual combat against the French, Clinton urged the Iroquois to remain ready to strike the enemy "jointly with us whenever you are called upon." Clinton called for no immediate attacks on the French, however, and indicated that any Iroquois thrusts against the enemy should be made in cooperation and conjunction with the British.³⁷

When Clinton had concluded his address, Shirley spoke to the Six Nation representatives. Shirley expressed the same sentiments Clinton had in regard to the maintenance of the Covenant Chain between the Iroquois and the British and the readiness of the Six Nations to attack the French.³⁸

Onnasadago, an Onondaga sachem, gave the Iroquois reply on July 26. In terms that must have been extremely gratifying to the British, the chief reaffirmed the existence of the covenant chain and promised not to listen to any overtures from the French. The Iroquois agreed to expel all Frenchmen from their territories. Onnasadago stated the "Jean Couer Joncaire has been given up already by the Sinekes." Joncaire was the most respected and popular of all Frenchmen and the Senecas were the Iroquois tribe most inclined toward the French interest. Thus the fact that the Senecas had broken contact with Joncaire signified the magnitude of the Six Nations swing toward the British.

The Iroquois speaker declared that the Six Nations were prepared to strike the French whenever the British desired. The warriors would be kept concentrated at the castles, prepared to move quickly against the enemy. Onnasadago closed his answer to Clinton by thanking the British for their efforts to obtain the release of the Iroquois captives in Canada.³⁹

In their reply to Shirley's address, the Iroquois reasserted their ability and willingness to take up the hatchet against the French. As they had assured Clinton, the Six Nations pledged not to permit Frenchmen to penetrate their territory and vowed not to be "deluded & deceiv'd" by the French.⁴⁰

The Albany Conference of 1748 was a distinct diplomatic success for the British and seems to represent an abrupt turnabout in the position of the Iroquois. Reportedly disgusted with the British military inaction and on the verge of reopening relations with the French, the Six Nations now declared themselves to be firmly in the British interest. This sudden switch back to the British is best explained by the fact that the Iroquois knew the war was drawing to a close. Shirley, Clinton, and the other British officials knew before the conference began that preliminary articles had been signed between Britain and France.⁴¹ It is probable that the Iroquois were aware of this development. Knowing that with the coming of peace they would no longer have to give first priority to military considerations, the Iroquois were apparently reestablishing better relations with the British in order to lay the ground work for good trade relations in the post-war period. Freed from the fear of French

reprisals for their recent raids on Canada, the Six Nations could now serve their own interests best by joining the British economic sphere where prices were usually low. In addition, since peace was coming, the Iroquois could afford to make firm statements of their willingness to fight the French, knowing they would probably not be called upon to fulfill their pledges.

In the spring of 1748 as William Johnson journeyed to Onondaga to hold the New York Iroquois in the British interest, Pennsylvania, interested in westward expansion, acted to win the amity of the Indians of Ohio. In April, George Croghan was dispatched to the Six Nations on the Ohio with £200 worth of gifts. While distributing his presents, Croghan was to arrange for a conference between the Indians and Pennsylvania's Indian negotiator, Conrad Weiser, to be held in Ohio later in the summer. Croghan was well received by the Indians who especially approved of a recent Pennsylvania proclamation against the selling of alcohol in their territory. The Ohio Indians gave their hearty approval to Weiser's impending visit and informed Croghan that the powerful Miami Confederation also desired to enter into the British interest.⁴²

Upon hearing Croghan's report of his friendly reception by the Ohio Indians, the Pennsylvania Assembly gave Weiser formal instructions for his mission to Ohio. Weiser, accompanied by Croghan, was ordered to leave immediately for Ohio. Weiser was to gain intelligence as to the "Number, Situation, Disposition, and strength of all the Indians in or near those parts, whether they be Friends, Neutrals, or Enemies."⁴³ The Assembly reminded Weiser to emphasize

in his conference "the Inability of the French to protect the Indians or to supply them with such Necessaries as they stand in need of for their Subsistence."⁴⁴ He was further instructed to stress past instances of French perfidy and cruelty toward the Indians as well as former occasions of British kindness and generosity. The Indians were to be reminded of the treaties currently existing between themselves and the government of Pennsylvania. Weiser was cautioned against going too far and inciting the Indians into a state of war with the French. Owing to the heavy Quaker pacifist influence in the colony's government, the Assembly warned "it wou'd be wrong to urge the Indians to War, since no dependence could be had on the Assembly to support them in such an undertaking."⁴⁵ Pennsylvania was thus trying to avoid a future situation in which the Ohio Indians would feel that they had been exploited by the British and would turn to the French.

Pennsylvania had had earlier contacts with the Indians of Ohio. In October 1747, at Lancaster, Conrad Weiser had met with a group of ten Ohio Iroquois who were on their way to Philadelphia. Scarrouady, leader of the delegation, confided to Weiser that the purpose of this journey was to bring the Indians of Ohio directly into the war in the British interest. At Philadelphia, the Indians expressed their fervant desire to fight against the French but requested that Pennsylvania provide them with the weapons and supplies with which to wage war. This request caused Pennsylvania to face a difficult dilemma. Since the position of the Onondaga Central Council was at this time neutrality, Pennsylvania ran the risk of

alienating the entire Six Nations Confederacy by supporting the request of these Ohio Iroquois. If Pennsylvania rejected Scarrouady's proposal, a valuable ally to the British cause could be lost. On Weiser's advice, the Pennsylvania government agreed to support the Ohio Indians in their desire to take up the hatchet against the French. Weiser then volunteered to go to Ohio the following year to assess the Indian situation in that area. It was for the purpose of arranging for Weiser's visit to Ohio that Croghan had been dispatched westward by the Pennsylvania government. Now in June 1748, Weiser was preparing to depart for Ohio.⁴⁶

Weiser and Croghan began assembling the men, wagons, supplies, and presents for the proposed journey to the Ohio River. In mid-July, however, these preparations were interrupted when it was learned that a sizeable group of western Indians was heading eastward through Pennsylvania, intent on holding a conference with the Pennsylvania government. The Pennsylvania Assembly was caught off guard by this news. Andrew Montour, a half-breed fur trader-interpreter, had been sent to Ohio several months earlier to arrange for a conference with the Miamis through the Iroquois that would hopefully lead to a rapproachment. The Miamis jumped at the opportunity to establish relations with Pennsylvania and accompanied by the Iroquois, began a trek eastward in order to hold discussions. The Pennsylvania Assembly quickly designated Lancaster as the site for the meeting. Weiser was ordered to proceed at once to that city to serve as negotiator-interpreter for the Pennsylvania delegation.⁴⁷

In late July, Pennsylvania sent four commissioners to Lancaster for the conference with the Ohio Indians. Present were fifty five representatives of the Six Nations, Delawares, Shawnees, Nanticokes, and Miamis. Andrew Montour, originally slated to be an interpreter, became the principal speaker for the Ohio Iroquois when the intended spokesman, Scarrouady, incapacitated by injuries sustained in a fall, could not deliver his own remarks. Montour reported that the Six Nations had called the conference to present the Miamis as candidates for admission to the Iroquois-British covenant chain. Montour declared that the Miamis, described as "a large and powerful Tribe living on the Ouebach Wabash"⁴⁸ had approached the Six Nations the previous autumn with a request that the Ohio Iroquois sponsor them for inclusion in their amity agreement with the British. The Six Nations then reportedly told the Miamis to consider this decision more thoroughly so as to be absolutely certain they could resist the future overtures of the French. The following spring the Miamis renewed their request, assuring the Six Nations of their genuine desire to join the English interest. Montour said that the Six Nations were firmly convinced of the sincerity of the Miamis and heartily recommended British acceptance of the Miamis into friendship.

Montour then took up the case of the Shawnees, who due to their recent adherence to the French interest, had given the British "just cause of Complaint."⁴⁹ The Shawnees were also desirous of being admitted to a condition of friendship with the British. Montour stated that the Shawnees repented their past behavior and, admitting "they had acted wrong," hoped that they might "be received again

into favour" and promised "to become good & faithful Allies for the future."⁵⁰

The Pennsylvania commissioners met privately to consider the requests for friendship from the Miamis and Shawnees. The commissioners were not satisfied with the latter tribe's pronouncements of amity and sent Weiser to the injured Scarrouady to ascertain the sincerity of the Shawnees. Scarrouady related how the Shawnees had approached the Six Nations to intercede with the British in their behalf. The Shawnees had expressed a deep regret at having been "misled" and "deceived" by the French promises. Scarrouady seemed satisfied that the Shawnees were truly repentent.

The following day (July 22, 1748) the commissioners gave their reply. They began by thanking the Six Nations for endeavoring to bring additional tribes into the British interest. Concerning the Miamis, the Pennsylvanians stated that they were convinced of their sincerity in desiring to enter into friendship with the British and admitted them to membership in the covenant chain. The commissioners then reminded the Miamis that their new relationship meant that the British were now obliged to provide "assistance on all occasions" and that the Miamis must cease all relations with Canada and pro-French Indians and must consider "His Majesty's Friends are your Friends; and his Majesty's Enemies are your Enemies."⁵¹ The commissioners then requested the Miamis to formally sign a written treaty to seal the alliance.

Turning to the application of the Shawnees, the commissioners expressed displeasure that the Shawnees had waited so long to seek

the good will of the British. Not wishing to miss a chance at adding the Shawnees to the British interest, the commissioners asked the Six Nation intermediaries to chastize the Shawnees for their past actions and then inform the offending tribe that the British would admit them to a friendship agreement but would expect more loyal behavior from them in the future.⁵²

The Shawnees accepted this rebuke for their French leanings and apologized further the following day. Humiliating themselves before the Pennsylvania commissioners they admitted "we have been a foolish People & acted wrong. . . . We are sorry for what we have done and promise better behavior for the future." They then asked that a previous friendship agreement of 1739 be officially reaffirmed to demonstrate "all former Crimes are buried & entirely forgot."⁵³ The commissionres refused to sign the document, stating that the renewal of friendly relations depended "on the condition of better behavior for the future," placing them on probation until their actions proved they could again be trusted.

The official treaty with the Miami Confederation was publicly read and signed the next day. The terms of the agreement called on the Miamis "to become true and faithful Friends and Allies to the English." The Miamis promised not to "hurt, injure, or defraud . . . the Subjects of the King of Great Britain." The Miamis were required not to give any aid or assistance to "any other Nation whether of Indians or others that shall not . . . be in Amity with the Crown of England and this Government." Nothing in the treaty seems to have required the Miamis to contribute manpower or any other

direct assistance to any British war effort. The Indians were obliged only not to do any harm to the British and to not help the French and their allies.⁵⁴

The formal proceedings of the treaty concluded, the Miamis asked that more British traders be sent to their country (but requested the Pennsylvania government to "order the Traders to put less Stones in their Scales that their Skins may weigh more"). The commissioners agreed to the request for increased trade.⁵⁵

As the conference concluded, the Pennsylvania commissioners informed the Indians that a cease fire between England and France had been signed and a formal peace treaty was a likely possibility. Apparently the Pennsylvania delegation thought that withholding this news until the conference was over was to their advantage. Perhaps they believed that the Indians would not be so eager to commit themselves to the British interest unless they felt the need for British military protection against the French. It seems likely, however, that the Indians either knew or had guessed that peace between the two European rivals was imminent. Living close to the French forts in the west, the Ohio Indians could ill afford to seek out an alliance with the distant British in time of war. Rather, it seems more likely that the pro-English behavior of the Ohio Indians at Lancaster stems from their desire to establish better trade relations with the nation most able to supply their needs at the lowest prices. Trade with the British could not be safely carried out in Ohio if a state of war existed between the British and the French.

In August 1748, following the Lancaster Conference, Weiser set out for Ohio. By mid-August, Weiser and his party had reached Logstown, an Indian village near the forks of the Ohio. Weiser's party met with a genuinely friendly reception. Weiser was welcomed to Logstown by Tanacharison, a Seneca who was the "Half King" or viceroy of the Six Nations in the Ohio Valley. The Half King recounted the long history of good relations between the Iroquois and the British and thanked Weiser for Journeying so far to visit them.⁵⁶

While at Logstown, waiting for all the neighboring tribes to arrive for the scheduled conference, Weiser received a message from South Carolina Governor James Glen that a party of "northern Indians" had recently raided the frontiers of that southern colony abducting a Mr. Haig, a prominent and popular local citizen. Weiser learned through informers that a group of Senecas were responsible for the kidnapping. Weiser approached this crisis carefully, knowing that the Senecas were the most pro-French of the Iroquois Confederacy. Not wishing to alienate the Senecas, Weiser nonetheless resolved to take a firm stand regarding the abduction of Haig. Weiser confronted the Seneca chiefs present with the report he had received of the raid and demanded Haig's release. The Senecas deliberated several days then apologized for the abduction. Mr. Haig had been killed but they delivered another prisoner (Haig's servant, a man named Brown) to Weiser's custody. The Seneca chiefs disowned the action as the work of the "evil Spirit" who had influenced some Seneca warriors to commit such a wicked act and expressed their

regret over the incident. The Senecas appeared thoroughly contrite in their remarks to Weiser, constantly emphasizing the traditional friendship between the English and the Six Nations and asked that the matter be forgiven and forgotten.⁵⁷

At the start of the conference, Weiser informed the Indians that a cease fire had been signed between England and France. For this reason, Pennsylvania could not supply the Ohio Indians with arms with which to fight the French as had been promised at the Philadelphia meeting of the previous autumn. Nevertheless, the governments of Pennsylvania and Virginia did want to show their appreciation for the eagerness of the Ohio Indians to strike the French. At this point, Weiser distributed the wagon loads of gifts he and Croghan had brought. The Half King thanked Weiser for the gifts and agreed to keep the government of Pennsylvania informed if the Ohio Indians should be approached by the French. The conference ended on the mutual promise that both sides would keep open the lines of trade and communication between the two peoples.⁵⁸

The Logstown Conference was an unqualified success for both the Indians and the British. Weiser had been able to gather a great deal of information regarding the geography of Ohio and the number and disposition of its Indian inhabitants. He had reaffirmed the commitment of the Ohio Indians under the Half King to the British interest. He had laid the ground work for increased trade between Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley Indians. The Indians had also benefitted from the meeting. They had received a great amount of gifts from the British. Since Weiser brought news of the cessation

of hostilities, they had been able to gain the advantages of joining the British interest without being called upon to risk their lives in combat against the French. Most important, they had opened the way for their own prosperity in the coming post-war period by establishing trade relations with the English.

As King George's War faded in the summer of 1748, the overall British position in regard to the Indians improved. For economic and military reasons groups of Indians that had been neutral or hostile came over to the British interest. Militarily, although the war was ending in a nominal stalemate, the British had the upper hand in the northern sector of operations in North America. Although the British had been unable to deliver a knock out blow to the French, the French were in poor condition to continue the fighting. From emissaries sent to Canada to arrange for the exchange of prisoners, Governor Clinton learned that had the British been able to mount a powerful offensive against Canada it would probably have been successful. "The French in Canada were in no condition to have made any resistance" to a British expedition reported the emissaries. Clinton now learned that the French lacked munitions and "had resolved to capitulate upon the appearance of His Majesty's forces." These reports of the utter weakness of the French were even confirmed by French officers currently in Albany to arrange for the return of the French captives held by the British.⁵⁹

If the French were in such a poor condition at the close of the war, the Indians should have been aware of it. Able to pass through the lines of the French and British, individual Indians of

neutral, wavering, or even committed tribes were able to come and go at both Montreal and Albany pretty much at will. Thus, the military impotence of the French would have become known throughout the Indian towns of the frontier and may well have caused many groups to swing over to the British in the summer of 1748.

Trade was undoubtedly also a factor in prompting many Indians to come into the British interest. Either from the knowledge that the French were militarily weak or from the rumors that the two European nations were on the verge of signing peace terms, the Indians were beginning to look ahead to a post-war period. Because the British traders in Ohio were selling goods at half the price demanded by the French, many western Indians, Clinton reported, had become "exceedingly dissatisfied with the French."⁶⁰ It seems apparent that while the war was in progress, the Indians of the Ohio, living in close proximity to the French military posts, found it expedient to maintain good relations with their French neighbors. If the war was to end, however, and the French were no longer to be feared, the Indians would naturally wish to establish closer relations with nations offering the better trading conditions. For reasons of survival, during war time it might be best to be allied with the nearby French, but in peacetime it was wisest to be tied to the British for economic reasons.

NOTES: Chapter III

1. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weeds, Parsons and Company, 1855), vol. VI, p. 290.
2. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 291.
3. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 291.
4. The Iroquois Confederation was represented at the October 1745 Albany Conference by representatives of only five of the six nations. The Senecas sent no emissaries, claiming that an epidemic was currently striking the tribe, a circumstance which prohibited their participation in the conference. Since the Senecas were traditionally the most pro-French of the Six Nations, and since the noted French agent Joncaire was reported to be living in their midst, it is a strong possibility that the Senecas were avoiding this conference with the English for reasons of politics rather than health.
5. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 292-293.
6. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 294-295.
7. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 296-299.
8. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 200.
9. Clinton's decision not to press the Iroquois for action was no doubt influenced by the internal political structure of New York colonial politics. The unenergetic Clinton was, at this time, leaving the running of the government to his trusted friend and adviser, James DeLancey. DeLancey was closely allied with the fur trading interests centered at Albany. The Albany group gave DeLancey assurances that the Six Nations would never allow the French to invade New York. DeLancey, acting on the Albany fur faction's assessment of the military situation then shaped official policy toward a course of non-incitement of the Iroquois so as to maintain "business as usual" for the Albany merchants. See James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 46-47.
10. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 301.
11. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 49; Howard Peckham, The Colonial Wars: 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago History of American Civilization, Daniel Boorstin, ed., 1964), p. 108.

12. In the winter of 1745-1746, the easy-going Clinton and his chief advisor DeLancey fell into a violent argument while discussing the political-military affairs of the colony. DeLancey, who had little respect for the undynamic Clinton, broke with his superior and the two became "irreconcilable foes." Clinton replaced DeLancey with Cadwallader Colden, veteran New York colonial politician unallied with any of the powerful interest groups as was DeLancey. Colden, author of a book on the history of the Iroquois, favored an aggressive military policy against New France. Colden's influence on Clinton acted to pull the governor away from the pro-Albany non-aggressive policy that he had pursued when guided by DeLancey. See Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 49-50.
13. The governors of New York, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey had been ordered by the British government to mount a joint land attack against Canada's interior. Simultaneously, forces from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire were to go by sea to Cape Breton to join with the British fleet and British regulars for an attack on eastern Canada.
14. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 318-19.
15. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 319-320.
16. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 321-322.
17. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 53-55.
18. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 109-110; Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 384-385.
19. Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 113; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 69-70.
20. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 71-72.
21. Herbert Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, pp. 182-184.
22. Osgood, Colonies in 18th Century, IV, pp. 184-186.
23. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 383-384.
24. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 80-84.
25. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 85-86.
26. The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), vol. I, pp. 149-150; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 86.

27. Johnson Papers, I, p. 155.
28. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 156.
29. Johnson Papers, I, p. 161.
30. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 162-163.
31. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 163-165.
32. Allan W. Eckert, Wilderness Empire (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), p. 113.
33. Wampum belts were used in Indian diplomacy to emphasize and solemnize treaties. Made of strings of small sea shells woven into symbolis designs, wampum belts were exchanged at diplomatic megotiations to affirm the statements made by the speakers. Highly significant talks demanded the presentation of many large belts. Thus, the report that the Senecas had given a dozen sizeable belts would have been alarming to the English since it meant that the Senecas had probably made important committments to the French. See Wendell Oswalt, The Land Was Theirs: A Study of the North American Indian (New York: John Wiley, 1966), p. 421.
34. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 167-168.
35. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 441.
36. As soon as the Albany Conference of July 23-26 was concluded, Shirley moved to try to bring about the return of those Iroquois prisoners being held by the French. In a letter to Governor Galissoniere, Shirley wrote that according to unofficial sources a truce had been signed at Aix-la-Chappelle and suggested that the British and French in North America also observe a cease fire so that further bloodshed might be averted. Shirley then brought up the prisoner issue urging immediate repatriation of all captives. Shirley explicitly called for the return of any Iroquois being held by the French on the grounds that all Iroquois were subjects of Great Britain and should be treated accordingly. Shirley opposed Galissoniere's position that the Six Nations representatives must come to Canada to negotiate for the release of their followers, arguing that since the Iroquois' were acknowledged by the Treaty of Utrecht to be vassals of George II "under His Majesty's Protection," it was the right of the British King to conduct the diplomatic talks pursuant to their release. Shirley wrote that he and Clinton had arranged for fourteen Frenchmen who had been held captive by the British to be sent to Montreal in exchange for the Iroquois and urged Galissoniere to make the exchange promptly, recognizing the British position

regarding the status of the Iroquois as British subjects.
See Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 452-454, Shirley to Galissoniere,
July 29, 1748.

37. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 442-443.
38. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 447-449.
39. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 444-445.
40. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 450-452.
41. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 115-116.
42. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg, 1851), V, pp. 288-289.
43. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 291.
44. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 291.
45. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 292.
46. Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 259-261.
47. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 298.
48. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 308.
49. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 310.
50. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 310.
51. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 312-313.
52. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 314-315.
53. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 315-316.
54. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 316-317.
55. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 318-319.
56. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 352-353.
57. Joseph S. Walton, Conrad Weiser and the Indian Policy of Colonial Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: George Jacobs, 1900), pp. 189-190;
Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 267-268.
58. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 356-358.

59. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 455.

60. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 455.

CHAPTER IV

BRITISH-FRENCH EXPANSION INTO OHIO AND COMPETITION FOR INDIAN AMITY, 1748-1751

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, signed in Europe in October 1748, brought about the cessation of hostilities of King George's War, but did not remove the causes of friction between the British and the French. The most surprising clause in the treaty called for the return of the strategically located fortress of Louisbourg to the French in exchange for the restoration of Madras in India to the British. A commission was appointed to settle the boundary dispute between France and Britain in the area of Nova Scotia. Aside from this, the treaty did nothing to settle the long-standing rivalry between the French and the British for North America. The treaty suspended, rather than ended, the hostility between the two powers and each continued to view the other with suspicion and malevolence.¹

The Ohio Valley was claimed by both the British and the French. The title of France was based on the explorations of Cavelier de LaSalle who allegedly discovered the Ohio River in 1679, and claimed for France all the lands drained by the Mississippi. The claims of France were strengthened by the Baron de Longueuil's expedition down the Ohio in 1739.² England's claims to Ohio rested on the "sea to sea" provisions of the original colonial charters. By the terms

of these early grants, Virginia and Pennsylvania both claimed the Ohio Valley as part of the western domain of their colonies.³

Britain's best claim to Ohio, however, depended upon the control of that area by the Iroquois. By right of conquest the Six Nations claimed mastery over the Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, and other smaller bands that inhabited the valley. The Iroquois maintained their rule over the valley through the migrant Mingo and the Half King who served as the link between the Onondaga Central Council and the Indian inhabitants of Ohio. By the Treaty of Utrecht that ended Queen Anne's War in 1713, the Iroquois were designated as British subjects. Therefore, subsequent to the treaty, the British began to claim all lands under the dominion of the Iroquois.

The British interpretation of the treaty was not accepted by either the French or the Iroquois. The French refused to recognize all lands controlled by the Iroquois as the property of the British.

The Six Nations never considered themselves "subjects" in the European sense of the term, defining their relationship with the British as one of equal associates rather than as subordinates.⁴ To strengthen its claim to the Ohio Valley, Virginia had negotiated a western land purchase from the Six Nations as a provision of the Lancaster Treaty of 1744. The western limit of this purchase, however, was not clearly defined. Virginia interpreted the agreement as giving the colony rights to land extending westward indefinitely to the "sun-setting." The Six Nations refused to recognize this definition of the purchase, contending that the transaction included only those lands to the east of a specific line of hills in the Allegheny chain.⁵

The British and French found the Ohio Valley area highly desirable but neither's claims were recognized by the other. Both lacked any pretension to actual physical possession of the area and realized that the quickest way to achieve control over the vital territory was to gain the amity of those Indians who inhabited the region.

1748: The Formation of the Ohio Company

Britain's desire to gain possession of the Ohio Valley coincided with the desire of the Ohio Company of Virginia to expand into the Ohio Valley. As Conrad Weiser negotiated with the Indians at Logstown in 1748, a group of prominent and influential Virginians began to establish the Ohio Company, an organization designed to promote and solidify Virginia's claims to Ohio while returning a handsome profit to its stockholders.⁶ The formation of the Ohio Company was welcomed by the British government as "a weapon to be used by the British against the French." Hopefully, the company could control the fur trade and promote English settlement in the area, denying these advantages to the French.⁷

In the post-war period, the principal agent of British penetration into the vast wilderness of the Ohio Valley became the Ohio Company of Virginia. This corporation was formed in 1748 and included representatives from the leading families of the Virginia aristocracy. The Old Dominion's most illustrious family names are found among those listed as the company's 35 founding shareholders:

Lee, Washington, Mercer, Fairfax, Mason, Carter were among them. Another influential member was soon-to-be Governor Robert Dinwiddie.⁸

As the British government searched for a way to try to take possession of the Ohio Valley, the founders of the Ohio Company petitioned for a land grant in the area. The historian of the company, Kenneth Bailey, has observed: "Such a move coincided with England's need for an agent to develop for her the Ohio region. . . . Thus the ambitions of the members of the Ohio Company were in agreement with the objectives of the British ministry, since both were to further colonial trade and to prevent French occupation of the Ohio."⁹

Other rival companies also tried to obtain land grants in the Ohio Valley. As Gipson had observed, however, the Ohio Company with its well placed connections in London and its membership which included representatives from the leading families of Virginia's socio-political-economic elite, had the wealth, influence, and authority to undertake such a gigantic task as the exploration and development of the Ohio Valley.¹⁰ The company began to formulate its plans for the exploration of Ohio more than a year in advance of receiving its charter on July 13, 1749.¹¹

French Penetration into Ohio:
The Expedition of Celeron de Blainville

The French government in Montreal was aware that British expansionists, currently pushing through the mountain passes of the

Appalachians, would soon threaten the Ohio Valley. Improved relations between the Ohio Indians and the British following King George's War had resulted in increased numbers of Pennsylvania and Virginia traders in Ohio, a circumstance the French found alarming. The French realized that the first step toward securing Ohio would be to regain the Indians of the area for the French interest. The French stepped up their own Detroit-based trading activities in an effort to win back those recently disaffected Ohio Indians who were now trading heavily with the British. The economic advantages in trade held by the British were difficult to overcome and the French sought other measures short of war to reestablish their hegemony in Ohio. Learning that the Ohio Company was planning to establish a trading post on the Ohio in 1749, Governor Marquis de la Galissoniere decided firm action would have to be taken to bring the Indians into the French interest and thus impede British expansion.¹²

Accordingly, Galissoniere decided to send an armed force into the heart of the region to restate officially the French claim to the area and awe the Ohio Indians with a demonstration of French military strength. Captain Celeron de Blainville, a tough Canadian-born officer, experienced and knowledgeable in commanding troops in the wilderness and in dealing with Indians, was chosen by Galissoniere as leader of the expedition. Celeron's army consisted of 215 French officers and men and 30 Indians. These Indians, who were from the Montreal area, belonged to the Micmac and Abnaki tribes, two groups with old and firm ties with the French.¹³

The expedition left LaChine near Montreal in mid-June 1749. It passed the Abbe Piquet's newly constructed mission-fortress "La Presentation" near the "Praying Indians" town of Oswegatchie ten days later.¹⁴ Continuing up the St. Lawrence, Celeron reached Fort Frontenac (built in 1692) near the east end of Lake Ontario two days later, stopping for rest and canoe repairs. After crossing the open waters of Lake Ontario, the expedition reached Ft. Niagara on the sixth of July. After portaging around the falls, the expedition entered Lake Erie, followed its southern shore, and landed directly north of Lake Chautauqua.

Celeron made the difficult portage to Lake Chautauqua and crossed the lake to its outlet at the southern end, Connewango Creek, which connects the lake with the Allegheny River. As the expedition struggled the arduous miles down the shallow, rock-strewn Connewango, Celeron's Indian scouts found evidence that their progress was being closely monitored by the local Indians. Abandoned villages were found from which the inhabitants had fled, leaving behind "their canoes, provisions, and other utensils."¹⁵ It was apparent that the Indians of the area were frightened at the approach of the French force.

In order to prevent the Indians from fleeing and to assure them that the French came in peace, Celeron sent one of the woodsmen-interpreter Joncaire brothers with five of the Indians ahead of the main body of the expedition. Celeron hoped Joncaire, whose name was well known among the Ohio Indians, would be able to make contact with them and arrange a conference. The emissary Joncaire was

successful in his mission. Joncaire reported to Celeron that the Indians had been thrown into "consternation" by the presence of the French force and were fearful of the expedition's penetration into their homeland.¹⁶

A conference was held on July 30, 1749 at the small Mingo town of Kachinodiagon or Cut Straw¹⁷ on the Allegheny. The local Indians were very apprehensive, but behaved amicably during the conference, referring to the French commander as "our Father" and stressing their past friendship with the French. Celeron delivered a message from Galissoniere requesting the Indians to cease all trade with the English and eject all Englishmen from their territories. The Indians promised to comply with these demands and agreed to go to Montreal the following spring for further discussions. In addition, the Indians at Cut Straw pledged to deny the British traders use of a trading storehouse currently under construction at the village. The existence of this storehouse would indicate that the Indians of the area had been on friendly terms with the British traders entering their domain, but were now reversing their stand in the face of the military might of the French.

On August 1, Celeron resumed his journey, passing more deserted villages along the way. Even the sizeable town of Attique (near modern Kittanning, Pa.) was empty. The military power of New France, personified by Celeron's force, was having a profound effect on the Indians of the area. The French captain had only to transfer the fright and panic of the Indians to respect and awe that would lead to a detente.

Although frustrated by his inability to make more contact with the Indians he had come to see, Celeron was making progress toward another of the objectives of his journey, claiming the Ohio River Valley for France. At a half a dozen locations along his entire route, Celeron performed the formal ceremonial duty of affixing the French King's coat of arms to prominent trees and burying appropriately inscribed lead plates at the mouths of the larger tributaries. The declaration on the lead plates read:¹⁸

In the year 1749, in the reign of Louis the XV, King of France, we, Celeron, commander of the detachment sent by M. the Marquis de la Galissoniere, Governor-General of New France, to reestablish peace in some villages of these Cantons, have buried this plate at the confluence of the Ohio and the Kanaaiagon, the 29th of July, for a monument of the renewal of possession which we have taken of the said river Ohio, and of all those which fall into it, and of all the territories on both sides as far as the source of the said rivers, as the preceding Kings of France have possessed or should possess them, and as they are maintained therein by arms and by treaties, and especially by those of Riswick, Utrecht, and of Aix la Chapelle.

The lead plates reaffirmed the alleged claims of LaSalle made more than a century before. British claims, based on sovereignty over any lands belonging to the Iroquois, were obviously being ignored. The idea that the area belonged to the Indians who actually lived there was also being rejected. The formal claiming of the region for France was not totally understood by the Ohio Indians, unversed as they were in the European diplomatic protocol of the day. The presence of the large uninvited French party was resented; but the small, surprised groups of Indians living along the river chose flight or compliance, rather than resistance as the wisest course of action for the present.

A short distance past Attique, Celeron encountered a party of six Pennsylvania traders leading a string of fifty fur-laden pack horses. Celeron ordered the Englishmen to withdraw from the region and never return. "They assured me, either through fear or otherwise, that they would not come back anymore. They assured me that they had no right to trade," Celeron wrote in his journal. The French commander took this occasion to send a letter with the traders to the Governor of Pennsylvania. In courteous but firm language Celeron said he was "very much surprized to find some merchants of your government in this country, to which England has never had any pretensions. I have treated them with all possible mildness, though I had a right to look upon them as intruders and mere vagrants, their traffic being contrary to the preliminaries of peace, signed more than fifteen months ago." Celeron called on the Governor to "forbid this trade for the future," threatening "violent measures" by the French should the British continue to enter the area.¹⁹

The French force continued past two small deserted villages at the forks of the Ohio and landed at the Iroquois town of Queen Aliquippa. All of the Indians had withdrawn but six British traders remained. As he had done before, Celeron ordered the traders to vacate the area and never return. The British promised to withdraw, acknowledging "they had no right to trade" and vowed not to return.²⁰

Celeron had his men "brush themselves up as well as possible, so as to give them a better appearance" as they approached Chenango,

or Logstown, a larger town Celeron considered "one of the most considerable villages" on the Ohio. Logstown was a mixed village of Mingoes, Shawnees, Delawares, and small groups from a few Canadian tribes. As the French party landed, the Indians fired a friendly volley in salute of their visitors. The French were hospitably received by the village chief. Celeron spotted a British flag flying in the town (along with three French flags) and when he ordered it removed, the Indians acquiesced without complaint.

The village leaders welcomed Celeron, declaring "our heart is entirely French." The French leader chastized them for flying the British flag with the French colors, remarking that it "would seem to indicate their hearts are divided."²¹ Celeron called for the conference to be continued the next day.

Camped at Logstown that night, Celeron learned through the alert Joncaire brothers that some of the anti-French Logstown Indians were considering an attack on the French. Amply warned, Celeron posted heavy sentries and ordered his men to sleep clothed and armed for battle. Comprehending the alert state of the French, the Indians did not follow through with any attack plans. Father Bonnecamps, the expedition's chaplain, commented in his journal that the Indian decision not to strike the French camp was probably due to their fear of the fire power of the French. At least some of the Indians apparently resented the French intrusion, but, outnumbered, declined to endanger the lives of their families.

On August 10, Celeron delivered the official message that he carried from "Onontio,"²² Governor Galissoniere. The message warned of alleged British plans to invade the area and to expel the Indians from their homeland. Calling on the Indians to remain neutral and not be drawn into the interest of the land-hungry British, the Governor invited the Indians to Montreal to receive gifts from their "Father." The Indians replied, "You have expelled the British from this territory, and to this we heartily agree; but you ought to bring with you traders to furnish us with what we need."²³ Clearly, the Indians were dependent on British goods and were strongly hinting that the French must fulfill this need if they expected the Indians to remain firmly in the French interest. The Indians further tempered their commitment to the French by requesting that trade with the British be permitted to continue until the French were prepared to fill the void created by the expulsion of the British. "If you have pity for us, let us have the English so that they may render us the assistance which is necessary until spring-time," the Indians pleaded. Celeron made no reply to this request.²⁴ After the conference, Celeron ordered the British traders presently at Longstown to be brought to him. Following his familiar procedure, Celeron called on them to withdraw permanently from the area. The British, apparently Carolinians, agreed to depart.

The French expedition left Chenango and headed for another major Indian town, Sinioto or Old Shawnee Town at the mouth of the Scioto River (near modern Portsmouth, Ohio). Pausing to bury more lead plates along the way, Celeron sent Joncaire ahead with a delegation

of several Indians for preliminary talks with the Indians at the village. On approaching Sinioto, the Joncaire party was first fired upon, then allowed to enter the village, then seized. Joncaire might have been burned at the stake had not one of the local Indian leaders intervened in his behalf and agreed to accompany Joncaire back to the main body of the expedition for a conference. A few days later Celeron's party was allowed to approach the village and camp on the opposite bank. This was the most tense situation yet faced by the French. Celeron was worried. Two-thirds of his men were the greenest of recruits, who had never experienced battle. The Indians at Sinioto, apparently readying themselves for a fight, had thrown up a stone fort at their town.²⁵ Both sides spent an uneasy night in a state of alert, each suspicious that the cordiality shown by the other group was only superficial. It was clear that the Indians feared the French company, thinking Celeron had come to attack them. Celeron felt outnumbered and vulnerable, but could not turn back.

Mutual distrust was sufficiently overcome so that a conference was begun the following day, August 23. Celeron worked hard during the talks to assure the Indians that he had come with peaceful intentions. The French commander called upon the Indians to give up their commercial contacts with the English. He warned his listeners that the English long-range plan was to take over the Ohio Valley, driving out the Indians. "They conceal from you their idea, which is to build on your territories forts sufficiently strong to destroy you," he cautioned. Celeron admonished them to resist the "seduction"

of the British and to enter into a state of friendlier relations with the French.

The Indians' response to Celeron's speech was completely in accord with the views of the French. The Indians stated "we have listened to the speech of our father Onontio with great pleasure" and agreed that "all he had told to us is true and intended for our own good." They promised to conform to the wishes of the French and encouraged Celeron to take the message of Onontio to the other Indians he should meet on his journey.²⁶

The conference was followed by a generous distribution of presents by the French. Once again, a few English traders currently at the village were summoned before Celeron and ordered to permanently withdraw from the area. The French captain insisted that these Carolina traders had no right to enter the Ohio Valley. The next day the French resumed their journey, departing Sinioto more amicably than they entered.

The expedition moved on downstream to the mouth of the Little Miami River. There the French encountered a small Miami village and were favorably received by Chief LeBaril and his people. Five English traders who were present at the village were ordered to withdraw from the area by Celeron and agreed to do so. This group of friendly Miamis offered to guide and accompany the French to the larger Miami town of Pickawillany (modern Piqua, Ohio) on the Great Miami River. The chief at Pickawillany was LaDemoiselle, a powerful and widely known and respected leader whose nickname "Old Britain" connoted his long-standing friendship with the British. Celeron's party was

received with a degree of courtesy. The French captain made his customary demand that the two English traders then present in the town be expelled and forbidden to return. The Miamis agreed, but since LaDemoiselle had only forty or fifty men in camp with him at the moment, this act probably stemmed more from fear of the French troops than from a genuine rejection of the British. The formal conference began with Celeron asking the Miamis to move from the Miami River westward to their former homes on the Wabash and Maumee.²⁷ Celeron desired to get the Miamis to locate farther from British traders from Pennsylvania and Virginia and closer to the French sphere of influence radiating from Detroit, Michilimackinac, and the Illinois country. At first LaDemoiselle seemed to agree to the French demand that the Miamis "break off all trade with the English" and remove to their traditional homeland.²⁸ The chief then abruptly reconsidered and refused to comply with Celeron's wishes. Reverting to his traditional anti-French position that his "Old Britain" sobriquet would indicate, the Miami leader broke off the talks and refused to discuss the matter further. The conference thus dissolved on an unfriendly note and the French left hurriedly for the French fort on the Maumee, some one hundred miles to the north. Celeron reached his destination without incident on September 27 and by early November was back in Montreal.

Celeron had received many assurances from the Ohio Indians that they were favorably disposed toward the French. Yet the French commander was not at all satisfied with the results of his expedition.

Despite their formal statements to the contrary, Celeron was able to discern a deep rooted pro-British sentiment among the Ohio Indians. Summarizing the expedition, Celeron painfully observed "the nations of these localities are very badly disposed toward the French, and are entirely devoted to the English. I do not know in what way they could be brought back."²⁹ Discarding the idea that force could be used physically to coerce the Indians over to the side of the French, the veteran soldier went on to state the perpetual problem that confronted the French in their efforts to win Indian adherents throughout the colonial period: "If our traders were sent there for traffic, they could not sell their merchandise at the same price as the English sell theirs, on account of the many expenses they would be obliged to incur." Government subsidization of French traders was not the answer to gaining the allegiance of the Ohio Indians, Celeron argued. Artificially lowering the prices paid by the Ohio Indians would only lead to resentment from those other pro-French Indians who would continue to pay the higher prices.

Establishing a French settlement in the Ohio Valley would be valuable but the "great many inconveniences in being able to sustain it" made it nearly impossible.³⁰ Thus Celeron's assessment of the French situation in Ohio in 1749 was not encouraging. His armed force had made a great impression and caused the Indians to make protestations of their affection for the French. But once the expedition had passed, Celeron feared, the Indians would revert to their previous trade-based attachment with the British.

The French attempt to bring Ohio into the orbit of New France was bold but possibly ill advised and somewhat tardy. The traders from Virginia and Pennsylvania had already become an integral part of the Indian economic well-being. The lower prices they offered caused the Indians to view these traders with regard and affection. The French show of force had cowed some the Indians met along the way but had left an aftertaste of bitterness and resentment. Many Indians of the area now more actively than ever sought out the amity and protection of the British who they believed could help them prevent future intrusions. The British traders who had promised to withdraw returned when the French had gone and were welcomed by the Indians. Galissoniere's successor, Governor LaJonquiere, commented on the results of Celeron's foray, that the Indian nations of the Ohio area "have gathered together . . . in greater numbers and more angry than ever against the French."³¹ Thus the expedition had had the opposite effect than the one expected by Galissoniere and Celeron.

Indian Grievances in Pennsylvania: 1749

European encroachment was greatly distressing to the Indians of the Allegheny-Ohio area. British or French traders who came in small numbers and brought valuable goods at fair prices were welcome but uniformed military expeditions and hordes of farmers were not. While Indians on the Allegheny and Ohio grew fearful over French penetration in the form of Celeron's expedition, representatives of these Indians were traveling eastward to complain of British expansion into Indian territories.

On July 1, 1749, a delegation of Six Nations sachems appeared suddenly in Philadelphia desiring to speak with the officials of Pennsylvania. Through interpreter Conrad Weiser, the mixed group of Senecas, Onondagas, Tutelos, Nanticokes, and Conoys, opened the conference with a complaint concerning the westward spread of British settlement. Word had reached the Onondaga council that whites "had begun to settle on their the Indians' side of the Blue Mountains." The Indians said that at first they did not believe the report, but on investigation "to our Surprize found the Story confirm'd." The Iroquois delegation was incensed at the presence of these new settlements on lands clearly belonging to them. The Indians could not believe that these white settlements could have been made by mistake, "as our Boundaries are so well known, & so remarkably distinguish'd by a range of high Mountains," and consequently demanded to know if the Pennsylvania government was aware of and approved of these settlements. If these settlements had been made without the consent of the government of Pennsylvania, the Indians demanded that the government force the illegal settlers "to remove instantly with all their Effects, to prevent the sad consequences which will otherwise follow."³²

By July 4, Governor James Hamilton had drafted his reply to the speech of the Six Nations. Hamilton cordially welcomed the Indian delegates to Philadelphia and quickly assured them that the settlements west of the Blue Mountains had been made contrary to the desires of the government of Pennsylvania. Persons so "audacious" as to settle west of the mountains would be subject to the "highest

Penalties" pledged the governor. Hamilton reminded the Indian delegates that in the past similar illegal settlers "have been forcibly removed & their plantations broke up & destroy'd." In the future Hamilton promised to try to prevent such "unwarrantable Settlements" from being made "as all such are against the Public Faith given the Six Nations, and have a tendency to disturb the peace between us and you, & create differences."³³ Hamilton promised the Six Nations he would "on all occasions study & promote your true Interest" and declared there was no one "who has heartier Inclinations to do you Service than I have."³⁴

True to his word, Governor Hamilton issued a proclamation on July 18 which strictly prohibited white settlement west of the Blue Hills. Such illegal settlements, which could lead to "dangerous Quarrels" and "bloodshed" with the Six Nations, were declared "contrary to the Tenor of a former Treaty" between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations. Hamilton's proclamation ordered all settlers west of the mountains to remove themselves and their effects from these lands by November first. Should the squatters fail to depart, Pennsylvania government officials would be instructed to compel their removal.³⁵

Firm action by Governor Hamilton thus averted a crisis in Anglo-Iroquois relations. The Indian delegates could be satisfied that the government of Pennsylvania would work to prevent the expansion of British settlers into their lands. The assurances of Hamilton were comforting but the underlying cause of the Indians' fear remained. It was clear to them that English settlers coveted their lands and

would attempt to seize Indian lands in the west at every opportunity. Hamilton's handling of the case eased red-white tension on the Pennsylvania frontier, but he would soon be confronted with more Indian problems.

On August 16, 1749, another delegation of Six Nations warriors arrived in Philadelphia. This group was originally scheduled to take part in the earlier Pennsylvania-Six Nations conference of July 1-4. Failing to make a rendezvous with the first group, this second delegation had waited several weeks for the arrival of their fellow Iroquois then decided to go on to Philadelphia. The July conference long since over, Conrad Weiser tried to discourage the Indians from going to Philadelphia, but could not prevail upon them to return to their homes.

Canassatego, the principal sachem and spokesman for the tardy band, opened the conference by complaining of encroachments in the area to the west of the Susquehanna River by white settlers. Canassatego offered to sell some of these lands to Pennsylvania but demanded the complete removal of all settlers from the Juniata area. This region was a hunting ground for the Six Nations and their "cousins" the Nanticokes and, as such, Canassatego insisted that "this Country may be entirely Left vacant."³⁶ Canassatego also asked the government of Pennsylvania to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of a young Iroquois whom the Six Nations delegation believed had been recently killed by white men. The Iroquois believed that the victim, a nephew of Canassatego, had been murdered but they had been unable to determine who was responsible for the

crime. Demonstrating faith in the Pennsylvania government to conduct an impartial investigation, Canassatego promised that his people would acquiesce to whatever judgement the governor would make regarding the cause of death.

The Iroquois then made a request on behalf of the Nanticokes, one of their satellite nations. Canassatego stated that it had been reported that one group of Nanticokes, who continued to live in the tribe's traditional homeland in Maryland, were being forcibly detained and even enslaved in that colony. Canassatego called upon Governor Hamilton to use his influence with the Governor of Maryland to secure the release of those Nanticokes who wished to join the rest of the tribe in central Pennsylvania.

The Iroquois closed their remarks by expressing a willingness to hold a conference with the Catawbas, a strong nation residing in Virginia and the Carolinas. The Catawbas, like the Six Nations, were a nation friendly to the British interest. The two Indian groups, however, had traditionally maintained an inimical relationship toward each other. The British had long endeavored to establish friendlier relations between the two Indian nations so that they could cease expending their military energy on each other and instead concentrate their hostile impulses on the French. The Iroquois made it clear they were still suspicious of the Catawbas, telling Hamilton to warn the Virginia governor to be wary in his dealings with these "false people," but agreed to come to a conference with the Catawbas if one could be arranged.

Governor Hamilton's reply came five days later on August 21. Hamilton thanked the Six Nations for their "firm adherence to the Interest of His Majesty during the War," reaffirmed the covenant chain between the English and the Iroquois and presented the Indians with a gift of various goods and supplies. The Governor expressed the colony's interest in making the land purchase offered by the Iroquois and agreed to make the purchase if it were enlarged.

Hamilton reassured the Iroquois that all illegal settlers would be removed from the area west of the Susquehanna. He gave his condolences on the death of Canassatego's nephew, informing the Iroquois that the colony had already conducted a coroner's inquest into his death. The verdict of the investigation was that the young warrior had been killed by the Indians who were traveling with him. When George Croghan attempted to question these Indians about the incident, they refused to answer and fled. Hamilton promised that if the suspect Indians were apprehended in the future they would be brought to trial "in the same manner as if they had killed a white man."³⁷ Governor Hamilton, aware of the sensitive nature of this incident, was obviously endeavoring to prevent the death of Canassatego's nephew from becoming a cause of friction between the British and the Iroquois.

Hamilton went on to the next point in the Iroquois speech of August 16. The governor agreed to speak to the Governor of Maryland regarding the alleged detention of the Nanticokes, but informed the Indians that there was probably no truth in the rumor that these Indians were being held against their will. Hamilton assured his

listeners that such reports were false and that the Nanticokes had misrepresented the truth in their accusations against the government of Maryland. Hamilton was receptive to the idea of a Six Nation-Catawba rapprochement but recognized that existence of a feeling of mistrust toward the Catawbias on the part of the Iroquois. "We observe a great shyness on both sides," declared the governor, who somewhat unenthusiastically agreed to write to the Governor of Virginia concerning the establishment of a conference in which the differences between the two Indian groups could be settled.

Hoping he had favorably answered every issue raised by Canassatego, the governor concluded on an unpleasant note. Hamilton warned the Indians to be on their best behavior when traveling in the neighborhood of the white settlements. He recounted several instances of "bad skirmishes" in which Indians had threatened the lives and property of certain settlers. Hamilton cautioned against recurrences of such "rude behavior" and "mischiefs" on the part of the Indians, admonishing the sachems to "Chastise your unruly Indians" so that no serious disruptions in Anglo-Iroquois relations might occur as a result of such an incident.³⁸ While Hamilton's speech closed on this unpleasant note it is significant that he felt sufficiently confident of the continued loyalty of the Iroquois to make these remarks. In this conference of August 1749, the governor had once again been able to make a satisfactory answer to Indian grievances against the British. Potentially explosive issues had been settled and the Indian delegation departed Philadelphia in a state of more cordial relations with the British.

The Pennsylvania-Virginia Rivalry

The fear of westward expansion was not the only reason for Indian suspicion of the British interest in 1749. Following the cessation of hostilities, British traders rushed into the Ohio Valley, eager to make a profit by exchanging manufactured goods for the furs of the area. These traders were subject to little supervision, however, and due to the lack of a coordinated policy among the separate British colonies, there was no centralized plan for the expansion of the British economic sphere. Concerned with making quick profits, the traders engaged in a fierce competition that was detrimental to the general welfare of the English. Groups of traders from Virginia and Pennsylvania each hoped to capture the bulk of the Indian trade. Toward this goal, representatives of the two colonies worked to discredit the rival traders in the eyes of the Indians.

By the autumn of 1749 the rivalry between the two British colonies for control of the Ohio Valley was clearly a problem. Thomas Lee, the President of the Virginia Council,³⁹ wrote to Governor Hamilton to complain of the actions of Pennsylvania traders in Ohio. Lee stated that the Ohio Company had received a royal grant for a large quantity of land in Ohio, plus permission to build a fort in the area to protect British traders from the French. Lee's complaint was that Pennsylvania traders had told the Ohio Indians that the fort was being built as a means to control them and that the roads constructed by the Virginians were intended to allow their traditional enemies, the Catawbias, to attack them. Lee called upon

Hamilton to compel the Pennsylvania traders to cease their "mischievous Practices," claiming Virginia's right to this territory by the agreement made with the Six Nations at the Lancaster Conference of 1744; and urged that the British colonies unite against the French.⁴⁰

Hamilton responded to Lee's letter, assuring the Virginian that any Pennsylvania traders who were inciting the Indians against Virginia were doing so without his knowledge or approval. Hamilton promised to use his utmost efforts to "detect the Authors of the dangerous Insinuations" of which Lee has complained. Hamilton vowed to examine Indian traders returning from Ohio in an attempt to discover which ones had been engaged in "so vile a Practice."⁴¹ Cooperative on the issue of maintaining a united front against the French in the matter of Indian relations on the Ohio, Hamilton was clearly not so favorably disposed toward the vast land claims made by the Ohio Company of Virginia. Hamilton suggested that a joint commission be established to run the southern boundary of Pennsylvania farther westward. Fearing some of the land claimed by the Ohio Company might possibly be within the western domains of Pennsylvania, Hamilton moved quickly to protect the territorial claims of his colony.⁴²

Virginia and Pennsylvania would continue to be competitors for the ownership and trading rights of the Ohio Valley. While the Six Nations and the Ohio Indians would have been greatly alarmed to know how intensely the two colonies desired the area, the main problem

for the present was the conduct of the traders. By trying to arouse the suspicions of the Indians against the rival colony, the traders of Virginia and Pennsylvania were doing a great disservice to the British interest. Fearing the future plans of one or the other of the colonies called for the seizing of their lands, the Indians of Ohio became suspicious of all Englishmen. At the very time when the Indians, repelled by Celeron's expedition and attracted to English lower prices, seemed most likely to attach themselves firmly to the British interest, the maneuverings of the short-sighted traders damaged the British cause. Believing they could not completely trust the British, many groups of Ohio Indians maintained some ties with the French.

Diplomacy on the New York Frontier

As Celeron journeyed through the Ohio Valley trying to win Indians over to the French interest, William Johnson was attempting to improve Anglo-Indian relations on the New York frontier. Johnson's main problem was to secure the release of the Iroquois warriors who had been taken prisoner by the French during King George's War. The release of the Six Nations captives had been a major problem throughout the post-war year of 1749. The French held these prisoners for the purpose of luring the Six Nations sachems to Canada for a conference to negotiate their release. Once the sachems came to Montreal for talks, the French planned magnanimously to release the prisoners and try to engage the Iroquois in substantive discussions concerning possible trade and military alliances. This strategy

of the French put William Johnson in a difficult spot. To maintain Iroquois trust in the British he had somehow to obtain the release of the captives, yet he could not allow the Iroquois themselves to go to Canada for fear they might strike up a friendship agreement with the French.

Early in 1749, Johnson wrote to Governor Clinton explaining his predicament and urged the governor to do his utmost to secure the release of the prisoners in order to keep the Six Nations firmly in the British interest.⁴³ The prisoner exchange still had not been effected by June, prompting Johnson to write another letter to Clinton stressing the absolute necessity of gaining the release of the captives. Johnson reported that only by a supreme effort had he been able to dissuade the sachems from going to Canada themselves to obtain the release of their fellow tribesmen. Johnson was adamant in his insistence that Clinton put first priority on the matter of the prisoners if he hoped to keep the Iroquois from beginning their own talks with the French. Johnson had bought or coaxed nineteen French prisoners from the Six Nations for Clinton to use in a trade for the captive Iroquois. Johnson warned that if Clinton now failed again to obtain the release of the incarcerated Iroquois "it will intirely overset all that I have done hitherto, & make the Indians very ill Tempered, to say no more, as they have so long left it to us."⁴⁴

Johnson's associates at Oswego were also alarmed that the prisoner exchange negotiations were dragging on too long, and that the Iroquois were becoming impatient. Arndt Stevens wrote to Johnson

on July 2 from Oswego that the Cayugas had "resolved to go to Canada . . . to get the Indians out of Prison." Stevens was able to persuade them to delay their journey to Canada until Johnson could be informed of their intention. The Cayugas had reluctantly agreed to wait but were clearly growing increasingly anxious concerning the prisoners.⁴⁵ The same day, John Lindsay also wrote from Oswego urging Johnson to bring about a speedy release of the prisoners. Lindsay warned that time was running out and that if allowed to go to Canada, the Iroquois would bring about the release of the captives even if it meant submitting to "hard terms" from the French. By "hard terms" Lindsay was implying that the Iroquois would probably agree to some type of friendship or non-aggression pact if such were necessary to effect the release.⁴⁶

In August, Clinton moved to bring about the prisoner exchange. Apparently realizing Johnson's difficult position in regard to the Six Nations, the N.Y. Governor authorized Johnson to appoint and send a delegation of six British emissaries to take a half a dozen French hostages to Canada to arrange for an exchange of captives.⁴⁷ Johnson names Robert Saunders to head this embassy and urged him to do everything possible to gain the release of at least a portion of the French held Iroquois. Even if Galissoniere proved a difficult bargainer and refused to release all of his captives, Johnson felt it would be disastrous for relations with the Iroquois if Saunders returned empty handed. Johnson knew that his credibility with the Iroquois rested on the Saunders mission and that if it failed, the "Consequences might be worse than I can tell."⁴⁸

Clinton's plan met the approval of the Iroquois. A party of Oneidas and Mohawks who had come to Mt. Johnson to once again urge Johnson to work harder on the matter of the prisoner exchange was satisfied with the action Clinton had ordered and promised not to respond to Galissoniere's invitation to come to Montreal for talks. Johnson wrote Clinton that while agreeing to follow the British wishes that they stay away from Canada, the Iroquois were "begging most earnestly at the Same time, that Your Excellcy may use Your Utmost Endeavors to get their Brethren home now." Johnson assured the Iroquois that everything possible was being done, but he knew that they would not be satisfied with such promises indefinitely.⁴⁹

Johnson held a separate conference with the Oneidas at this time at which several other issues were discussed. The Oneidas had come to Johnson's house on behalf of the entire Six Nations to respond to a message he had sent to the Onondaga Council the previous spring. Johnson, learning there had been some communications between the Iroquois and Montreal, had asked the Six Nations to cease listening to the overtures of the French and urged them to "Unite Strongly together as Brethren" of the British. Accordingly, the Oneidas now promised that the Six Nations would do so and reaffirmed the ancient Anglo-Iroquois friendship agreement. Johnson also requested the Iroquois to expel a French priest whom Johnson had learned had settled a scant dozen miles from Oswego. Once again the Iroquois agreed to Johnson's demand, pledging not to permit French priests within one hundred miles of Oswego.⁵⁰

While anxiously awaiting word from Montreal regarding the proposed prisoner exchange, Johnson was suddenly faced with a new problem. In the autumn of 1749, rumors began to spread through the Iroquois castles to the effect that the French were planning an invasion of the Six Nations homeland. These rumors had probably grown out of Celeron's reconnaissance in force through the Ohio country and Galissoniere's displeasure with the Iroquois for not responding to his invitations for a conference. The Mohawks were so upset over the rumors that individual families were abandoning the central castles and scattering throughout the woods to avoid being exterminated by the supposed French invasion force.

Johnson felt the situation was sufficiently serious to merit a visit to the Mohawk castles to convince them that the rumors were without foundation. In October he arrived at the castle nearest his home and found the Mohawk residents in a state of near panic. Johnson assured the Indians that the French lacked the military power to execute such a bold stroke and calmed their fears by pointing out that he was making no plans to remove his family and belongings from the area. Johnson's most effective argument was the promise that the governor would send armed men to help them defend their castles. The Mohawks were pleased at the promise of such aid but pleaded that the men be sent immediately as they feared their castles might soon be cut off from the British settlements. No sooner had Johnson restored some degree of confidence to the frightened Mohawks than a scouting party returned from the north to report a large force of French-led Indians was approaching from Crown Point.

Johnson began again to settle the anxiety of the Mohawks but wrote to Clinton that "the only Best Way to Ease their fears is to Send a good officer and a party of Men to each of the two Castles" and urged the governor to send such military assistance at once.⁵¹

The Mohawks were further alarmed to learn that several Ottawa villages had recently participated in a French inspired war dance and had gone on the warpath against the Iroquois. Johnson supervised the mending of the Mohawk castles' stockaded walls and promised the use of his stone house as a refuge in case of attack. Governor Clinton, currently embroiled in a struggle with an obstinate Assembly, could not provide the troops for the defense of the Mohawk towns. Johnson did not believe that a French attack was imminent but could not convince the Iroquois of this and thought the Iroquois were on the verge of sending representatives to Montreal for peace negotiations.⁵²

At this critical juncture in late 1749, Johnson was elated to learn that the French had agreed to release the Six Nations captives. Johnson did not know if the cause for the release was the Saunders mission or some other reason but was overjoyed at the news. For two years he had been promising the Six Nations that the British would gain the release of the prisoners. His lack of success had been damaging to his prestige and credibility but at last the desired goal had been achieved.

In the spring of 1750 the long held captives were finally returned to the Mohawk castles. Chief Hendrick led a party to meet the recently released prisoners and escort them home while Johnson

prepared a celebration in their honor. Johnson greeted Hendrick and Nichus (a chief who was among the captives) when they returned only to be snubbed and insulted by the two sachems. Shocked and worried, Johnson inquired as to why the two refused to even shake hands with him. After much coaxing, he discovered the reason for the behavior of the Indians, and simultaneously the reason why the Governor of Canada had unexpectedly released his prisoners.⁵³

Nichus reported that he had learned from the French that Johnson and Governor Clinton were part of a conspiracy to destroy the Six Nations. While imprisoned, Nichus had been shown a message allegedly from Clinton to Galissoniere which suggested that the English and French join forces to exterminate the Indians. Playing upon the Iroquois's concern for their own safety, the French governor told Nichus that he would have no part of such a plot aimed at the annihilation of the Iroquois and had convinced his captives of the treachery planned by his supposed friends, the British. On the journey home from Montreal, Nichus had related this information to his escort Hendrick, and had convinced him of the evil scheme of Clinton and Johnson.⁵⁴

Johnson vehemently denied the accusations but had considerable difficulty convincing the Mohawks that the story given by the French governor was a fabrication to drive a wedge between the British and the Iroquois. Clinton's recent failure to send troops to defend their towns against the rumored attack of the Ottawas had given credibility to the French charge that the New York Governor wished to see the Iroquois destroyed. The French had also been successful in

convincing the Indians that it was Johnson's fault that the captives had been held so long. Galissoniere told the Indians that he would have released the prisoners as soon as even one representative of the Six Nations would have come for them. Johnson had to work for three days to convince the Mohawks that they had been the victims of a French plot. At last, he was able to persuade the Indians that the maneuverings of Onontio were "a French Policy . . . to stir up the Indians against us and make a division among the five Nations."⁵⁵ Through his skill and experience in dealing with the Indians, Johnson was able to overcome the mistrust the Iroquois held for the British.

In the spring of 1750, no British aid had come to the vulnerable Mohawk villages. The Indians' fears, ignited by Celeron's bold penetration into Ohio the previous summer was aroused again in May when a report came to the Mohawk castles that fifteen Ottawa towns had gone over to the French with the intention of striking the Iroquois. The Mohawks again appealed to Johnson for aid and protection. Johnson encouraged and supervised the strengthening of the stockade walls of the Mohawk castles. Johnson urgently requested Clinton to send two militia companies to reinforce the Mohawks, but the governor, embroiled in a dispute with the legislature, and having no troops at his disposal, could not comply. By failing to come to the aid of the Mohawks, who were at that moment fearful for the safety of their very homes, the British committed an inexcusable blunder. Johnson, cognizant of the Indians' concern for their own welfare, felt certain that the Iroquois would now go to the French for a conference in order to preserve their towns from attack.

As the war ended, colonial legislatures and governors, released from the urgent necessity of providing for defense against the French, once again fell into squabbling over control of the purse. Hand-cuffed by such disputes and complacent in matters involving defense, New York began to cut back on expenditures for Indian affairs. Johnson was forced by the parsimony of the colonial government to meet the expenses of his diplomatic relations with the Iroquois out of his own pocket. Johnson and Clinton hoped that Johnson's diplomacy could be funded from the royal treasury but for the time being Johnson was forced to rely on the New York legislature to provide the money he needed.⁵⁶

While Johnson had been working to preserve good relations between the British and the Mohawks (traditionally the most pro-British of the Six Nations), the French were making inroads with the Onondagas. Johnson learned that the French were arranging the purchase of a tract of land near the Six Nations capital of Onondaga. The transaction was being made through Red Head, an Onondaga sachem long known to be disposed toward the French. The French had promised the Six Nations that they desired the land for the establishment of a store house from which they would supply the Indians with "powder, Lead, Clothing &c in plenty." Johnson moved quickly to block the proposed land sale. Supported by Hendrick, he prevailed upon the Onondagas to reconsider the deal with the French and offered to buy the small tract himself for the generous sum of £350. The Onondagas, apparently influenced by the British-leaning Mohawks who traveled to the capital city in Johnson's behalf, changed their plan to sell

to the French and transferred the land to Johnson.⁵⁷ Johnson was able to thwart the designs of the French and prevent the Six Nations from falling into the sphere of Montreal. Johnson's action in this instance exemplifies his ability to meet repeated crises in relations between the British colonies and the Six Nations. His perception of the danger inherent in the proposed land sale to the French and his willingness to block the purchase by outbidding the French with his private funds illustrates his key role in Anglo-Indian relations. Despite Johnson's patriotic action, the fundamental reason for the land sale to the British rather than the French may well have been the Iroquois perception of the effects of the sale on their own interests. Finding both European groups interested in the tract, the Six Nations were able to use the sale to cement their relations with the side whose economic connection they coveted most. Free, during peacetime, from the physical dangers posed by a hostile New France, the Iroquois were able to direct their diplomatic efforts toward reaffirming their ties with the British, since the British were able to supply goods at far better prices than the French.

British Penetration into Ohio:
The Expedition of Christopher Gist

In the region of the trans-Allegheny west, the Ohio Company had begun to mobilize for its attempts to gain control of the Ohio Valley. In 1749, the company employed George Washington to survey some western Virginia lands. In the same year, the company sent out several other explorers to locate a suitable site for the proposed

settlement called for in the charter. These men, who were by occupation fur traders, were unsuccessful in finding a satisfactory location so the company hired Christopher Gist, an experienced woodsman and surveyor, to conduct further explorations.

On September 11, 1750 Christopher Gist was instructed by the Ohio Company to "search out and discover lands upon the River Ohio." Gist was to thoroughly explore the area, mark out the best land, and map various watercourses, mountains, and other prominent geographic landmarks of the area. In addition, Gist was to "observe what Nations of Indians inhabit there, their strength & Numbers, who they trade with & in what Comodities they deal."⁵⁸

Gist began his journey on the last day of October, 1750. Departing from Old Town, Maryland, Gist reached the Juniata River in Pennsylvania within a week, and proceeded westward via Loyal Hannan to Shannopin Town (near the future site of Fort Duquesne). Gist's party was well received by the Indians that they passed along the way and were hospitably treated by the Delawares of Shannopin Town. There the group rested, took shelter from the weather, and received corn for their horses. Gist does not mention encountering the slightest hostility from the Indians up to this point but does mention setting his surveying compass "privately" as it was considered "dangerous to let a Compass be seen among these Indians."⁵⁹ Apparently Gist felt the Indians would be quick to realize that the presence of such an instrument would signify Gist's party had come for the purpose of seeking land for future white settlement.

In late November, Gist moved from Shannopin Town down river to Logstown. Few Indians were in the village, most of the warriors being out hunting for winter sustenance. Gist did learn that George Croghan and Andrew Montour had been at Logstown just a week before on a diplomatic mission to the Indians.⁶⁰ Gist reported that the Indians of the area were somewhat suspicious of his motives, fearing he had come to survey their lands. In general, however, the Indians were favorably disposed toward the British and treated Gist's party quite well when he told them he brought a message to the Indians of the region from the English King.⁶¹

Continuing down the Ohio River from Logstown, Gist reached the Muskingum River and at that point left the Ohio. While he seems to have encountered few Indians on the journey, he was treated amicably by the ones he did meet and mentions no instances of any fear of the Indians. As the Gist party crossed Ohio they came upon a small town of Ottawa Indians. Although Gist describes them as "a Nation of French Indians," there was no trouble.⁶² December 14 found Gist at the Wyandot town of Muskingum on the river of the same name. Gist observed that the sizeable town of one hundred families was "divided between the French and English, one half of them adhere to the first, and the other half are firmly attached to the latter." This division was apparently not of a hostile nature, however, as Gist found the British flag displayed prominently in the town. Croghan and Montour were staying at Muskingum and had ordered all Englishmen in the area to assemble there as the French had recently

seized several British traders. Gist was extremely well treated by the pro-British Indians of Muskingum. They showed him every courtesy, gave him an honored Indian name, and invited him to live with them. In addition, they requested that the British build a fort at their town, stating they had severed relations with the French and promising to bar the French "or their Priests" from their town.⁶³

As Gist enjoyed the hospitality of the Wyandots at Muskingum, a British trader came to the town with intelligence from the north. Friendly Wyandots near Lake Erie had warned him to keep clear of the Ottawas of the area, "a nation firmly attached to the French." The Wyandots cautioned him against traveling in the vicinity of Lakes Erie and Huron as that land was claimed by the French, but told him he would be safe if he stayed in the vicinity of the branches of the Ohio as this area belonged to them and the French "had no business there." The Wyandots predicted that soon even those Wyandots who were currently pro-French would come over to the British interest.⁶⁴

On January 14, 1751, Croghan and Gist held a conference with the Wyandot leaders of Muskingum. Croghan invited the chiefs to come to Virginia in the spring to receive a gift from their father, the King of England. The Wyandots were slightly evasive in their response to this invitation. They replied that the invitation would have to be considered by a general council of all the nations of Indians that resided in the area. This meeting could not be held until the spring. After the conference, Gist departed Muskingum, taking his leave on the friendliest of terms with the village leaders.⁶⁵

The Gist party next traveled to White Woman's Town and from there to the Delaware towns of Hockhockin, Maguck, and Harricktown. The Gist group passed through these small villages without a hint of tension or trouble. A conference was held with a band of Delawares living on the Scioto near its confluence with the Ohio. Gist reports that these Delawares were strongly inclined toward the British interest as evidenced by their chief's statement that "We will not hear the Voice of any other Nation for We are to be directed by You our Brothers the English & by none else." These Delawares readily agreed to meet with the British at a conference at Logstown in the spring and assured Gist of their "Good Will & Love" toward the British.⁶⁶

Gist noted in his journal that, by his best estimates the Delawares could field about five hundred warriors. He was of the opinion that all the Delawares were "firmly attached to the English interest."⁶⁷

Gist's next stop was at Lower Shawnee Town at the mouth of the Scioto, a village of significant size containing about forty dwellings and 300 men. British traders were already present in the village and Gist noted that these Shawnees were "great friends to the English." A council with these Indians was held in which Montour invited them to the conference at Logstown scheduled for the coming summer. The Shawnees expressed their willingness to attend the conference and pledged that their friendship for the British would endure "as Long as the Sun shines, or the Moon gives Light."⁶⁸

The Gist party, now accompanied by Croghan and Montour, enjoyed the hospitality of Lower Shawnee Town for almost two weeks then set out February 11 for the Miami town of Pickawillany. Gist knew this would be a long and arduous trek but felt it was necessary if he were to follow his instructions "to discover the Strength & Numbers of some Indian Nations to the Westward of Ohio who had lately revolted from the French."⁶⁹ The Miamis of Pickawillany were the branch of that tribe who had been admitted to the chain of friendship with the British at the Lancaster Conference of 1748. Although the Miamis had wavered between allégiance to the French or the British throughout most of the first half of the eighteenth century, the Pickawillany band was steadfast in their adherence to the British following the 1748 Lancaster Treaty. Gist, with Croghan and Montour, traveled the 100 miles from Lower Shawnee Town to Pickawillany in just six days and received a warm welcome from the chief of the Pickawillany Miamis, LaDemoiselle, or "Old Britain," and the British traders there. Gist reported that the Miamis formerly lived on the Wabash but were driven eastward into increased contact with the British traders when French traders charged them "a most exorbitant Price" for needed goods. Since they had only been in contact with the British for a relatively short time, Gist commented in his journal that he knew few facts about the Miamis but judged them to be "a very numerous people" who were "the most powerful People to the Westward of the English Settlements." Gist even judged them to be "much superior to the six Nations with whom they are now in Amity," and observed that

Pickawillany was "at present very well affected to the English and seem fond of an alliance with them."⁷⁰

As Gist's group was holding talks with Old Britain and the other leaders of Pickawillany, four Ottawa Indians bearing a French flag entered the town with a message from the French. These French Indian emissaries brought an invitation to the Miamis to come to a conference with the French. The offer was quickly rejected by the Pickawillany spokesman. The French Indians withdrew from the conference and unsuccessfully tried to persuade certain individuals of the town to come over to the French interest. The following day the talks between the British and the Miamis resumed with the Indians offering presents to demonstrate "that our Hearts are good and true towards You our Brothers." They expressed the hope that "We shall all continue in the Love and Friendship with one another, as People with one head and one Heart ought to do." The Miamis assured their British guests "you may depend upon sincere and true Friendship towards you as long as we have Strength."⁷¹ The pro-French Ottawas rejoined the conference the next day, and the Miamis again made their intentions clear regarding their attitude toward the French. In "a Fierce Tone and very warlike air," the Miami speaker said of the French: "We will not hear any Thing they say to Us, nor do any Thing they bid Us." Although the French might threaten war against them if they refused the French invitation for a conference, the Miamis were firm in their declaration of friendship for the British.⁷² "We have been taken by the Hand by our Brother the English, and the six Nations," the Miami spokesman proclaimed. Rather than return

to the French interest the Miamis told the French they would "die here before We will go to You." The four Ottawas were then dismissed to take the Miami message to the fort of the pro-French Miami faction at Kiskakon on the Maumee River.⁷³

Before leaving Pickawillany, Croghan and Montour signed a written treaty with the Miamis of the town. The Miamis were declared by the treaty to be "good friends and Allies of the English Nation." The treaty did not obligate either the Miamis or the British to go to war if the other were attacked by the French, but it did call for them to "live in true friendship as one people" and to otherwise behave in such a manner as to avoid any breach between the two sides.⁷⁴ This treaty exemplifies the Indians' ability to score an impressive diplomatic coup without compromising their own safety. The Miamis were able to make a declaration of friendship that would insure continued British trade without committing themselves to war on behalf of the British.

After the visit to Pickawillany, Gist began the long journey back to Pennsylvania. He stopped at Lower Shawnee Town and was again welcomed by the leaders of that village who were pleased to learn of the highly successful conference with the Miamis. It was now early March as Gist departed from the Scioto, warned by the Shawnees that a party of sixty French Indians had been sighted in the vicinity of the Falls of the Ohio. To avoid meeting this group, Gist took a long and difficult detour via what is now central Kentucky and western Virginia. By May 19 Gist was able to reach the settlements of Virginia.

Gist's mission was a huge success. He had fulfilled all the provisions of his instructions. He brought back much valuable data concerning the topography of the Ohio Valley. He had made contact with the Indians of Ohio and found them, for the most part, friendly toward the British. In the peacetime period following King George's War, the Indians of the Ohio area were generally disposed toward the British interest. This accord seems to be the result of the low prices offered by British traders in the area. Free from fear for their own physical survival, the Ohio Indians could establish close ties with the European group able to provide manufactured goods at the best prices.

Comparisons of Indian Response to Celeron and Gist

To gain an understanding of the disposition of the Ohio Indians in the post-war period it is enlightening to compare the journeys of Celeron de Blainville in the summer of 1749 and of Christopher Gist in the autumn and winter of 1750-1751. Neither party was involved in a skirmish or serious altercation with the Ohio Indians, but Celeron experienced several tense moments while Gist was received with hospitality and friendship. The two groups visited several common Indian towns: Logstown (Chenango); Lower Shawnee Town (Sinioto), and Pickawillany but met with contrasting receptions.

At Logstown, Celeron's troops were apparently in some danger of being attacked by the local Indians while they slept. Evidently the considerable military strength and the alertness of the French prevented an assault. The Logstown Indians made it clear that the

French would have to fill their need for trade goods if the French seriously expected them to abandon the British. Gist was suspected of surveying Indian lands for white settlement while at Logstown, but was treated well and was in no peril.

Celeron was received with hostility at Lower Shawnee Town and feared that actual combat might be imminent. The French commander was able to pacify the Indians with a conciliatory speech and the distribution of presents. The Indians gave a cooperative answer to Celeron's speech but responded with some reluctance and were possibly influenced by current reports that French Indians from Detroit were preparing to strike the villages of pro-British Indians in Ohio.⁷⁵ These protestations of friendship toward the French were apparently insincere and made under duress since Gist was warmly received upon his arrival. Although Celeron had ordered British traders away from Lower Shawnee Town, several were again present by the time of Gist's visit. The Indians of this town could easily have overcome Gist's party if they had been so inclined. Free from any fear of the British group, the Indians nevertheless tendered a pledge of friendship.

At the Miami town of Pickawillany, Old Britain at first agreed to comply with some of Celeron's demands, but then suddenly changed his mind and ended the conference. The French hastily departed in an atmosphere of enmity. As was the case at all of his Ohio stops, Gist was welcomed at Pickawillany. Old Britain repeatedly avowed the attachment of his people to the British. Even under the threat of French attack, the Miami chief refused to break with the British.

The treatment accorded Gist at the several Indian towns demonstrates the pro-British sentiment present among the Ohio Indians in the winter of 1750-1751. Celeron extracted some promises of affection but these statements were gained through the threat posed by the size and strength of the French military force. Gist's ability to lead a small party through Ohio without fear or molestation would indicate that a genuine affinity existed between the Indians and the British.

In the post-war period of 1749-1750, the British had a clear advantage over the French in their relations with the Indians. In peacetime, the economic superiority of the former seems to have been the deciding factor in drawing and retaining large numbers of Indians into the British interest. The successes achieved by the French were the result of their use of the threat of force to cow the Indians into temporary promises of friendship. Faced with immediate peril to their villages, groups of Indians on both the New York and Ohio frontiers either considered improving their relations with the French or made actual statements of friendship to the French. When free from physical danger, however, the Indians usually demonstrated a preference for British friendship and British trade goods. The Indian commitments gained by the French were extracted under pressure and were therefore repudiated when the Indians felt secure enough to do so. Promises and agreements made with the British were more voluntary and permanent and grew out of a sincere, if self-centered, desire to establish good relations with the European nations that could best provide essential goods at the lowest price.

NOTES: Chapter IV

1. Howard Peckham, The Colonial Wars 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago History of American Civilization, Daniel Boorstin, editor, 1964), pp. 116-117; Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, pp. 284-285.
2. Lawrence Henry Gipson, Zones of International Friction, IV of "The British Empire Before the American Revolution" (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 189; Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 122. Peckham notes that "modern scholarship has concluded that LaSalle never saw the Ohio."
3. Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 122.
4. Gipson, British Empire, IV, p. 5; Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 122.
5. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 253-254.
6. Kenneth P. Bailey, The Ohio Company of Virginia and Westward Movement 1748-1792 (Glendale, Cal.: Arthur Clark, 1939), p. 17; Joseph S. Walton, Conrad Weiser and the Indian Policy of Colonial Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: George Jacobs, 1900), p. 194.
7. Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 18.
8. Bailey, Ohio Company, pp. 35-36.
9. Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 22.
10. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 228-229.
11. The original grant gave the Ohio Company "two hundred thousand acres of land lying betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo's creek on the south side of the river Alligane otherwise the Ohio, and betwixt the two creeks and the Yellow creek on the north side of the rives. . . ." Kenneth Bailey has commented, "In general terms this region lay in the vicinity of the forks of the Ohio and extended a considerable distance north, south, and west. It was specifically stated that this grant was within the colony of Virginia. It was further stipulated that as soon as the company erected a fort and settled their grant with two hundred families, an additional grant of three hundred thousand acres was to be given adjoining the earlier grant, and on similar terms." See Bailey, Ohio Company, pp. 30-31.
12. G.A. Wood, "Celeron de Blainville and French Expansion in the Ohio Valley," Mississippi Valley Historical Review IX: 302-319, pp. 308-310.

13. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 191-192.
14. La Presentation was founded in 1749 but was burned by a party of pro-British Mohawks a few months later. Piquet rebuilt the mission and remained until 1759 when British military successes forced it to be abandoned. See Celeron de Blainville, "Celeron's Journal" edited by Rev. A. A. Lambing, in Expedition of Celeron to the Ohio Country in 1749, C. B. Galbreath, editor (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Heer, 1921), pp. 59-60.
15. Celeron Journal, p. 17.
16. "Journal of Father Bonnecamps: Account of the Voyages on the Beautiful River Made in 1749 Under the Direction of Monsieur de Celeron" in Expedition of Celeron to the Ohio Country in 1749, C. B. Galbreath, editor (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Heer, 1921), p. 83.
17. Also known as Broken Straw.
18. Celeron Journal, p. 18.
19. Celeron Journal, pp. 27-28.
20. Celeron Journal, p. 28.
21. Celeron Journal, pp. 30-31.
22. "Onontio" was the name by which the Indians referred to the Governor of Canada.
23. Celeron Journal, p. 35.
24. Celeron Journal, pp. 35-36.
25. The Indians at Sinioto were primarily a group of Shawnees, plus a few Algonkins and Mingoos.
26. Celeron Journal, pp. 48-49.
27. The traditional Miami "capital" was at Quiskakon or Kiskakon, probably at the site of modern Fort Wayne, Indiana. See Celeron Journal, fn 77, p. 72.
28. Bonnecamps Journal, p. 91.
29. Celeron Journal, p. 57.
30. Celeron Journal, pp. 57-58.
31. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 202-203.

32. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg, 1851), V, p. 389.
33. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 391-392.
34. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 391-392.
35. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 394-395.
36. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 398-401.
37. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 405-408.
38. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 409-410.
39. As President of the Council, Lee was Acting Governor following the departure of Governor Gooch. Lee was the principal founder in the Ohio Company.
40. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 422-423.
41. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 424.
42. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 424-425.
43. The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), IX, pp. 36-38.
44. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 39-40.
45. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 41-42.
46. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 42-43.
47. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 45-46.
48. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 48-49.
49. Johnson Papers, IX, p. 47.
50. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 47-48.
51. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 54-56.
52. James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 103-104; Johnson Papers, I, pp. 276-279.
53. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 104.

54. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 103-104; E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weeds, Parsons and Company, 1855), pp. 589-590.
55. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 104; Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 590.
56. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 100-101.
57. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 105; Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 590-591; VII, p. 840. Johnson after purchasing the strategic tract from the Onondagas, offered to sell it to the colony of New York in order to recover his expenses of 350. The government of New York refused to buy the land or reimburse Johnson for his expenses, telling him to keep the land. Knowing he was always vulnerable to charges from his political and business enemies that he used his influence with the Indians for his own pecuniary gain, Johnson felt he could not personally develop the land for any commercial enterprise and allowed it to remain vacant.
58. William M. Darlington, ed., Christopher Gist's Journals (Pittsburgh: J. R. Weldin, 1893), pp. 31-32.
59. Gist Journal, p. 34.
60. Croghan and Montour were in Ohio as agents of Pennsylvania. Their task was to invite all the Indians of Ohio to a conference with representatives of Pennsylvania to be held the following spring and to work to improve relations between the Indians and Pennsylvania traders.
61. Gist Journal, pp. 34-35.
62. Gist Journal, p. 36.
63. Gist Journal, pp. 37-38.
64. Gist Journal, p. 40.
65. Gist Journal, p. 41.
66. Gist Journal, pp. 41-43.
67. Gist Journal, pp. 43-44.
68. Gist Journal, pp. 44-45.
69. Gist Journal, p. 46.
70. Gist Journal, pp. 46-48. The continuing Miami loyalty to the British seems to have been the product of an active commerce with Anglo traders and the pro-British inclination of their leader "Old Britain."

71. Gist Journal, pp. 50-53.
72. Apparently the Miamis were aware that the Canadian Governor Jonquiere was planning a spring offensive against them if they did not leave the British interest. See Lois Mulkhearn, editor, George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), notes 141, p. 502 and 98, p. 491.
73. Gist Journal, p. 53; Mulkhearn, Mercer Papers, note 142m, p. 502.
74. The text of the treaty can be found in Mercer Papers, pp. 138-139.
75. Celeron Journal, p. 48.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS IN ANGLO-INDIAN DIPLOMACY 1750-1752

In the two years following the close of the war, the British had successfully handled several crises in their relations with the Indians. Wise and decisive action by William Johnson in New York and Governor James Hamilton in Pennsylvania had helped to retain the good will of the eastern tribes. The presence of British traders on the Ohio had drawn the Indians of that area to the British interest.

The French, however, continued their aggressive policies on the Ohio and New York frontiers. Because of their trading disadvantage, the French so far had had little success in attracting Indian groups to their interest. They did not cease their efforts, however, to win Indian support away from the British.

Governor Hamilton and the Conduct of Indian Affairs

In the late summer of 1749, Pennsylvania Governor James Hamilton had just finished settling the grievances of the Indians of his colony when he received the news of the Celeron expedition. The governor reacted immediately by dispatching the experienced woodsman-trader George Croghan to the Ohio. Croghan was officially

to inform the Ohio Indians of the peace that had been signed between Britain and France and to gather intelligence on the Celeron expedition. Croghan was further authorized to deploy trusted British traders to scout in the region of the Ohio and the Great Lakes to ascertain the intentions and operations of the French. On reaching those Ohio River villages recently visited by Celeron, Croghan inquired of the Indians at Logstown what had transpired when the French expedition had passed through. The Logstown Indians reported that the French had asked them to "turn away all the English traders from amongst them" and had promised to send Frenchmen "who would trade with them on reasonabler terms than the English."¹ The Logstown Indians also informed Croghan that while they realized the French wanted to expel the British traders from Ohio they also knew that another purpose of the expedition had been to bury the inscribed lead plates "to steal our country from us." The Ohio Indians planned to place the matter of the lead plates before the Onondaga Council in order to discover what course of action they should take to "prevent them from defrauding us of our lands."²

Croghan returned to eastern Pennsylvania just as Governor Hamilton was completing the purchase of all Indian lands east of the Susquehanna. Hamilton was endeavoring to make a fair deal for the territory and at the same time dispossess illegal settlers on the west bank of the Susquehanna so as to avoid friction between the Indians and the whites of the frontier areas. Hamilton's efforts met with some opposition when a group of Ohio Indians complained that they were entitled to a share of the money paid for the lands east

of the Susquehanna. Angry at not receiving what they thought was their share of the purchase money, the Indians were marching to Philadelphia to protest to the governor about making such a land transaction without their consent or the consent of the Onondaga Central Council.³

Hamilton's concern over maintaining the allegiance and good will of the Indians was compounded when he received a letter from New York Governor Clinton in late May 1750. Clinton wrote he had recently learned from Johnson that the Indians of Ohio feared that they would soon be attacked by the French. The Ohio Indians, afraid that the French would strike during the coming summer, were asking through Johnson for military help from the colony of New York. Clinton was forwarding the news to Hamilton in the hopes that Pennsylvania might be induced to share some of the responsibility of protecting the pro-British Ohio Indians from the French.⁴

Governor Hamilton laid Clinton's letter before the Pennsylvania Council and sought their advice on the question of aid to the British-leaning Indians of Ohio. The Council refused to cooperate with New York in the matter of protecting the Indians against possible French attack. The Council was of the unanimous opinion that since Pennsylvania "is as strictly united with the Indians of the Six Nations and those of the Ohio, as any other Government on the Continent," it was probable that the Indians would directly notify Pennsylvania if they believed themselves to be in any danger. In addition, Pennsylvania Indian traders had expressed doubt that a French attack on the Ohio was imminent. The Council also declined

to furnish aid on the grounds that assistance to the Indians would involve too great an expense without "stronger Evidence . . . being advanc'd than Colo. Johnson's Letter to the Governor of Another Province." The Council advised the governor to withhold sending any aid until he received "a more authentick Application from the Indians themselves than has hitherto been made to him."⁵ This refusal by Pennsylvania showed the Indians exactly what they could expect in times of distress from the Quaker colony. Dominated by men who were both too pacifistic to send fighting men and too parsimonious to send munitions, Pennsylvania was demonstrating itself to be an undependable and weak ally.

Governor Hamilton received another letter at the end of July 1750, which added to his anxiety over Indian affairs. The authors of the message were the Miami Indians, the powerful confederacy of Ohio that had recently joined the British interest at the Lancaster Conference of 1748. Through the fur trader Hugh Crawford, the Miamis told of Celeron's visit to their homeland the previous autumn. The Miamis proudly emphasized how they had rejected the attempts of the French to win them back to their interest and had refused the attempts of the French to win them back to their interest and had refused gifts of powder, lead, paint, and other supplies. The Miamis reported the French had chided them "for joining the English and moreso for continuing in their interest who had never sent them any presents," clearly hoping to draw gifts from the government of Pennsylvania. The Miamis closed by pledging their eternal friendship to the British but requesting the governor to

send more traders to them.⁶ The Indians were letting the governor know that while they were intending to remain in the British interest, they were alarmed that the French had sent a military force through their homeland, they were desirous of more presents, and they were in need of more traders to supply them with essential goods.

Hamilton answered the Miami message, thanking for their rejection of Celeron's overtures and assuring them that the British "have a grateful sense of your Attachment to us." The governor blamed the regrettable paucity of British traders in the Miami territory on the fact that the Miami towns were so far distant from the British settlements. The long distance and the fact that some Miamis were still in league with the French had caused the British traders to have "apprehensions of the great danger their is in being intercepted either in their passage to or return from your country." Hamilton cautioned that unless the route could be made safer, "it will not be possible to extend . . . Trade into countrys so remote to any great degree." Hamilton wrote that "There is a hearty inclination in the English Governments toward the Twightwee Miami Nations . . .," but could offer no promise to defend the Miamis from attack, give them gifts, or send more traders.⁷

Alarming news came from Governor Clinton in September 1750. According to reports received from William Johnson, the clever Joncaire brothers were active among the Indians of the Ohio. The Frenchmen were said to have "a large Quantity of very valuable Goods to distribute among" the Indians of the area. Johnson saw their presence as potentially disastrous for the British cause in that "if

the French should prevail on those Indians by their Presents the Five Nations must certainly submit." Evidently Johnson believed that if the Ohio Indians were won over to the French the entire Anglo-Indian alliance system might fall.⁸

In early October, more discouraging news came from the Iroquois capital of Onondaga. Conrad Weiser, recently returned from a journey to the Six Nations (August 15-October 1, 1750) on behalf of the government of Virginia, found a definite shift of Indian sentiment away from the British. Weiser lamented that two pro-British Iroquois sachems, Canassatego and Solconwanaghly, had recently died leaving the Onondagas in the hands of a chief reputed to be a "professed Roman Catholick." Weiser was so discouraged as to relate "the English interest among the Six Nations can be of no consideration any more."¹⁰ While this was apparently somewhat of an exaggeration, there was an increase of French influence among the Iroquois at this time. While in the domain of the Oneidas, on his way to Onondaga, Weiser had learned that "a great part of the Onondagers had gone over to the French and accepted of the French Religion." The Oneidas informed Weiser that this disaffection from the British was due to the "neglect" and "ill-management" practiced by the British in their dealings with the Indians since the end of the war. The Oneidas complained that while "the Governor of New York never spoke to them or gave them anything . . . the French gave large Presents . . . in order to bring them over to the French." The Oneidas also mentioned that the Six Nations warriors who had joined with the British in King George's War "were not well used" and were critical of the

British for taking so long to effect the return of the captive Iroquois held at Montreal. The Oneidas were distressed at the disagreement existing between the Governor and the Assembly of New York. Apparently the colony's internal political strife had also had an unsettling effect on Iroquois-British relations.¹¹

Proceeding to Onondaga, Weiser learned that the recent activities of Father Piquet at Oswegatchie had contributed to the growing pro-French sentiment among the Iroquois. Piquet's efforts at conversion had been so successful that, according to the intelligence gathered by Weiser, half of the Onondagas had migrated to the area of the La Presentation mission.¹²

Weiser tried to hold a conference with the members of the Six Nations but the Cayugas and Senecas declined to send any representatives. Weiser invited the Iroquois to the conference to be held at Fredricksburg for the purpose of making a treaty and receiving presents from the government of Virginia. The Iroquois agreed to attend such a conference, but only if it were held in nearby Albany. Weiser replied that the governor of Virginia would probably not wish to come to Albany and would instead distribute his gifts to the Ohio Iroquois. The Six Nations speaker argued that the Mingoes had no right to the presents but would not consent to travel to Virginia.¹³

Weiser's disturbing Onondaga Journal moved Pennsylvania to action. Governor Hamilton issued a message on October 16, 1750 to the Assembly which reviewed the recent attempts of the French to win the various Indian groups away from the British and restated Weiser's pessimistic assessment of the current sentiment of the Six

Nations. Hamilton suggested that Pennsylvania should act quickly to counter the activities of the French, calling upon the Assembly to "furnish the necessary Means of frustrating the mischevous Designs of our Rivals, the French, and enable me to preserve the Fidelity and Friendship of our Indians and their Allies."¹⁴

The Assembly responded favorably to Hamilton's request. Recognizing the value of preserving the alliance of the Indians, and citing the "Necessity of Speedy Measures being immediately taken" to combat the "Industry of the French," the Assembly approved the sending of presents to the Indians of Ohio. These Indians were judged by the Assembly "to merit and stand in need of our Assistance," and were to receive a present larger than the one recently voted to the Miamis.¹⁵

The Mismanagement of Indian Affairs in New York

New York had done an inadequate job of handling Iroquois relations since the close of King George's War. William Johnson worked to maintain the good will of the Six Nations but his efforts had not been supported by the colonial government. Johnson warned in January 1750 that more should be done so as to fight the growth of French influence among the Indians and prevent the Indians from believing they were being "neglected or rather slighted by us."¹⁶

Johnson was irate over the practice of New York traders holding Indian children hostage as security against the debts of the parents. Failure to have the children returned immediately, Johnson warned Governor Clinton, "will confirm what the French told the Six Nations

(viz) that we looked upon them as our Slaver. . . ." Johnson found the retention of "children of our Friends & Allies" by the guilty New Yorkers very damaging to his diplomatic work.¹⁷

The harsh treatment that the Iroquois had been receiving from the New York traders, combined with lack of consideration for their welfare displayed by the colonial government, was adversely affecting relations between the Six Nations and the British. The attitude and conduct of New Yorkers toward the Iroquois was causing the Indians to become "suspicious of almost everything that emanated from the English provinces."¹⁸

Johnson was growing increasingly impatient over the failure of the New York government to give sufficient attention to the matter of Indian relations. In his efforts to maintain the Six Nations firmly in the British interest he had been forced to make enormous expenditures out of his own private funds for which he had never been reimbursed. Johnson suggested that he might be forced to resign his post as Indian agent for New York if the Assembly did not move to provide the financial support for the conduct of Indian affairs.¹⁹

Johnson strongly urged that the management of Indian relations be taken out of the jurisdiction of the several colonial governments and be placed under royal control. As early as November 1749, Johnson told Clinton he found it unsatisfactory that "the narrow minds of an American Assembly prescribe methods of managing a people of the greatest importance of our Lives and properties in War in this part of the world."²⁰ Johnson did not feel that he could

continue in his present office if he had to remain financially dependent on the New York Assembly. Only if he were to receive a royal commission and economic backing from the home government could he continue to perform the delicate and costly business of managing Indian affairs.²¹ "The Assembly of this Province have injured my fortune much by delaying my just dues, and it is impossible for me to proceed, unless there be some appointment from home independent of the Assembly to defray from time to time the expenses I am dayly obliged to be at in treating with all sorts of Indians. . . ."²²

In May 1750, Johnson was still dissatisfied with the conditions underwhich he had to try to successfully manage Indian affairs. Prevented by the parsimony of the New York Assembly from fulfilling promises he had made to the Iroquois, Johnson grew increasingly resentful. Unable effectively to perform his duties and still unrepaid for past expense, Johnson told Governor Clinton that he would "Choose with your Excy's Consent to resign everything" if the situation did not soon improve.²³

By December 1750, Johnson had made his decision. No royal commission appeared to be forthcoming. Clinton supported him but the governor was opposed by an Assembly made antagonistic to his leadership by the animosity of the feuds of political factions, an ongoing legislative-executive power struggle, and a miserly disinclination to spend more money on Indians during peacetime. Johnson characterized his letter to Clinton of December 20, 1750 as "the last Piece of Indians News I shall ever have occasion to trouble

your Excellency with" and resigned as the Indian Commissioner for New York.²⁴

Johnson's resignation had a profound effect on both British and Indian constituencies. Cadwallader Colden, Clinton's principal adviser, found Johnson's departure unfortunate. In a review of New York's relations that he submitted to Clinton in the summer of 1751, Colden was highly complimentary of Johnson's service as commissioner. "He made a greater figure and gained more influence among the Indians than any person before him," judged Colden. Colden was sympathetic with Johnson's plight of being forced to carry on his diplomacy only at "great prejudice to his private fortune."²⁵ Johnson sent a message to the Six Nations castles that he would no longer handle Indian affairs of the colony of New York. The Indians were greatly distressed to learn of the loss of their trusted spokesman to the British.²⁶ Hendrick, the leading Mohawk sachem, expressed his regret over the loss of Johnson as Indian Commissioner. Johnson's resignation was "the more Terrible, because he was well acquainted with our Publick Affairs." The chieftain stated that "his knowledge of our affairs made us think him one of us" and urged Clinton to reappoint Johnson to the vital post.²⁷ Clinton and Colden tried to get Johnson to reassume his office. Clinton was unwilling, however, to press the home government to elevate Johnson to a position independent of the governor's office.²⁸

In order to try to recusatate New York's deteriorating relations with the Six Nations, Clinton called upon other British colonies to

join in a conference with the Iroquois to be held at Albany in the early summer of 1751. The governor thought that such a conference would draw the wavering Six Nations firmly back into the British interest. In addition, Clinton hoped that a more coordinated Indian policy could be developed by the participating British colonies. William Johnson, although no longer employed by the colony in any official capacity, carried the news of the conference to the Iroquois and urged them to attend.²⁹

The Logstown Conference of 1751

While Clinton laid plans for the proposed Albany Conference, George Croghan was active on the Ohio. In the autumn of 1750, Croghan was sent by Pennsylvania to invite the Indians of Ohio to a conference at Logstown the following spring. At this meeting, the presents Croghan carried to the Indians from Pennsylvania would be distributed. Having made the rounds of the prominent Ohio Indian towns during the winter of 1750-1751, Croghan returned to Philadelphia in the early spring. Conrad Weiser had been originally scheduled to conduct the Logstown Conference, but asked to be relieved of the responsibility of handling the negotiations and suggested Croghan for the job.³⁰

Croghan accepted the position, met with Weiser to plan the conference, and accompanied by Andrew Montour, departed for the Ohio. By May 18, 1751, Croghan's party was once again at Logstown and received an enthusiastic reception from the assembled Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes. Croghan's visit to Logstown coincided with

that of one of the French Joncaire brothers who had come as an emissary from Montreal. Joncaire was given an opportunity to address the Indians and used the occasion to ask them if they had complied with Celeron's demand in 1749 that they refuse to trade with the British. Joncaire reminded that Onontio desired that the Ohio Indians should "turn away the English Traders from amongst them, and discharge them from ever coming to trade there again. . . ." ³¹

The Indians' response was direct and unequivocal. Concerning the French demands that the British traders be expelled, the Indian spokesman declared, "I now tell you from our Hearts we will not, for we ourselves brought them here to trade with us, and they shall live amongst us as long as there is one of us alive." Croghan was pleased to hear the Six Nations speaker continue, defiantly, "Our Brothers are the People we will trade with, and not you. Go and tell your Governor to ask the Onondaga Council If I don't speak the minds of all the Six Nations." ³²

On May 27, 1751, Croghan and Montour distributed the gifts they had brought and concluded a treaty between the government of Pennsylvania and the Indians of Ohio. Croghan delivered separate speeches to the Six Nations, Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandots, and Miamis, presenting each tribe with their share of the gifts he had brought and calling upon them to maintain a firm attachment to the British. Croghan reminded the Indians that since the French knew that ". . . the English sell their goods cheaper than they can afford . . . , Onontio will never rest while English traders come to

Ohio." He called upon his listeners to resist the attempts of the French to establish their influence on the Ohio.³³

Before responding to Croghan's address, the Indians directed a harangue at Joncaire, who had remained in Logstown to observe the conference. The Iroquois spokesman accused the French of breaking the peace concluded in 1748 by their recent aggressive actions. The speaker was extremely critical of the French for taking certain British traders prisoner while trading on the Ohio. Pointing his finger in Joncaire's face, the Iroquois demanded to know ". . . how comes it that you have taken our Brothers as your Prisoners on our Lands? Is it not our Land? What right has Onontio to our Lands?"³⁴

The Indians then gave their answer to Croghan's speech, thanking the British for their expressions of good will and friendship. The Ohio Indians asked Croghan to take the message to the Governor of Pennsylvania that they believed the French ". . . want to cheat us out of our Country . . ." and consequently they had ". . . discharged the French from amongst us."³⁵

The Indians went beyond the matters mentioned in Croghan's speech. A Six Nations orator called on the British to construct a fortified building on their territory. "We expect that you our Brother will build a strong House on River Ohio," suggested the Iroquois. Such a structure would serve as "a Place to secure our Wives and Children . . . should we be obliged to engage in a War. . . ." The fort would also function as a place "to secure our Brothers that come to trade with us, for without our Brothers supply us with Goods we cannot live." The Indians said they would let the

British know within two months what location they had selected for
the fortress-trading house.

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On May 30, Croghan departed Logstown, having conducted a highly successful meeting with the Indians of the Ohio. The atmosphere of the conference had been one of friendship and accord. The Indians had demonstrated a definite preference for the British over the French. The French envoy Joncaire was insulted and his demands were firmly rejected. Croghan, Montour, and their party were, in contrast, treated with cordiality and affection.

The abundance of good will that was exhibited toward the British by the Logstown Indians had a logical explanation. It will be recalled that this village received Christopher Gist much more warmly than it had Celeron in 1749. Logstown had in the past a stronger inclination toward the British than the French. This pro-British predisposition was based on the economic fact that the British could provide needed trade goods at the lowest prices. Since Britain and France were at peace, and since they were some distance from the nearest French military installations, the Indians of Logstown could afford to demonstrate their preference for the British without fearing a retaliatory attack from the French. Evidently hoping to draw more traders to their area, the Indians of Logstown seem to have gone out of their way to let the British know that they were firmly committed to the British interest. The confrontation between Croghan and Joncaire could have easily been avoided. Since the Indians knew Croghan was coming to their town, Joncaire could have been taken to another village until the conference with the British was over.

Instead, the Indians seem deliberately to have set up the dramatic meeting in order to demonstrate their adherence to the British.

Secure in the belief that a French attack was unlikely, they could sacrifice the friendship of Joncaire in order to stimulate the flow of British goods to Logstown.

On returning to Philadelphia, Croghan gave Hamilton the report of his mission to the Ohio. Hamilton was highly encouraged by the defiant manner in which the Indians had treated Joncaire. He informed the Assembly that they were "so apprehensive of the Consequences of their refusing to comply with the French demands, that they have earnestly requested this Government to erect a "strong Trading House" for their protection. Hamilton recommended that the Assembly appropriate the necessary funds for the fortified building.³⁷

The Assembly of Pennsylvania reviewed Croghan's report and was apparently on the brink of giving their reluctant consent to the expenditure of funds for the construction of the proposed trading house. Before voting, however, Andrew Montour was called to testify on the Logstown Conference. Montour, to the surprise of all, gave a different account of the proceedings than Croghan had submitted. Montour reported that the issue of the fort had been initiated and proposed by Croghan. The Indians had agreed to the suggestion but Montour doubted if they would ever actually consent to the fort's construction. Croghan was discredited. Montour later made a statement supporting Croghan and retracting his original testimony but the damage had been done. Croghan insisted that he had not misrepresented the events of the conference but the Assembly

refused to listen. Croghan's active, aggressive policy toward the Ohio Valley was rejected.³⁸

The refusal of the Pennsylvania Assembly to pursue the Ohio policy suggested by Croghan has been viewed as a turning point in the history of English expansion into the Ohio Valley. By choosing to rely on a less aggressive policy based on gift giving and general good will toward the Ohio Indians, Pennsylvania surrendered the initiative in controlling the events of the future. Henceforth, the leadership of British penetration into Ohio passed to the Ohio Company of Virginia.³⁹

The Albany Conference of 1751

In the spring of 1751, as Croghan was holding the Logstown Conference with the Ohio Indians, New York Governor Clinton was making final preparations for organizing the conference with the Six Nations at Albany. Clinton had invited all the governors from New Hampshire to South Carolina to participate in the conference, urging that the meeting was necessary "to prevent the encroachments of the French are dayly making on the Indian Territory subject to the Crown of Great Britain. . . ." Not all the colonies agreed to attend, but in early July 1751, delegates from the Six Nations arrived at Albany for talks with representatives from the governments of New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.⁴⁰

Before the formal sessions of the conference began, the Six Nations asked for a private meeting with Governor Clinton. In this

interview of July 2, the sachem Hendrick expressed the Indians' regret that Johnson was no longer Indian commissioner and had not been invited to the conference. "We desire . . . that Coll. Johnson be reinstated," declared Hendrick. Clinton replied that Johnson's resignation was "against my Inclination" and said that he hoped to persuade Johnson to come to Albany to assist him at the conference, but that the former commissioner had refused. Hendrick countered that if Johnson would not attend as an official of New York, perhaps he would participate as a Mohawk.⁴¹ Clinton agreed; swift Indian messengers were dispatched and Johnson was located at nearby Schenectady. Johnson arrived at Albany on July 5 but once again refused to assume the position as commissioner of Indian affairs for New York. Johnson complained that the holding of this position in the past had resulted in ". . . a very great detriment, if not ruin, to him in his private Fortune as well as a very great fatigue to his person." Clinton promised that upon his impending return to England he would seek the appropriate compensation from the home government for Johnson's past expenses and services. At this pledge, Johnson consented to take part in the conference but refused officially to reassume his former office.⁴²

The regular conference opened on July 6, 1751 with Clinton reaffirming the traditional covenant chain that had joined the British and the Iroquois. Clinton protested the building of the French fort at Niagara. The existence of this fortress, he charged, was designed to enable the French to control the flow of trade between the British and the Six Nations and would make the Iroquois appear " . . . weak

and mean, in the eyes of all the Neighboring Nations. . . ." Clinton contrasted this attempt by the French to control Iroquois commerce with the behavior of the British who "make no attempts on you to restrain your Liberty. . . ." The governor insisted that the Six Nations send a force of warriors to Niagara "to Oblige the French to forbear their Erecting any Forts, or other Buildings there, or at Ohio, or any where else on your lands, and to Demolish what is already Built."⁴³

Clinton next moved to the long standing problem of the hostility that existed between the Six Nations and the Catawbas, both friendly to the British. The governor cited the "folly" of the two Indian groups playing into the hands of the French by fighting each other. Clinton expressed the British hope that the two Indian nations could reconcile their past differences, and informed the Iroquois that six Catawba chiefs had accompanied the South Carolina representative to Albany and were "ready to make peace with you and become your fast friends, and to unite with You in our Common Cause."⁴⁴

The Six Nations began their reply to Clinton's speech by noting "It is a Long Time Since we have had the pleasure of seeing Your Excellency at this place . . .," an obvious reference to their feeling of having been neglected by the government of New York. The Iroquois heartily reaffirmed the covenant chain, pledging to remain "Inseparable" from the British. The Indian speaker reported that they had been working to extend their influence over other Indian peoples to the west and had been successful in causing several groups to acknowledge that they were British subjects. Concerning the

building of the French fortress at Niagara, the spokesman stated that a delegation of Onondagas had recently gone to Canada to demand that the French desist building on the lands belonging to the Six Nations. If the French refused to comply with their request, the Iroquois said they would organize an expedition to forcibly prevent the construction of the unwanted forts. The Six Nations speaker further pleased Clinton by stating that the Iroquois would talk to the Catawbas about a possible accord. Concerning such an understanding, the Iroquois declared ". . . we are willing to See and talk with them" since they realized that the French were, in truth, enjoying the spectacle of the two Indian nations making war upon each other. The Iroquois closed with a final plea that Johnson be reappointed as Indian commissioner. When Clinton returned to Britain, the Indians asked that he request "that the King our Father would reinstate Coll. Johnson amongst us."⁴⁵

For several days the various parties continued to meet in council, expressing a general desire that the traditional friendship between the British and the Six Nations be strengthened and continued. By July 10, the Iroquois and Catawbas had reached an understanding in their relations with each other. The two Indian nations agreed to exchange prisoners and cease fighting.⁴⁶

The Albany Conference of 1751 was at least a moderate success. By calling the conference Governor Clinton had taken a significant step toward improving relations with the Iroquois. The covenant chain was reaffirmed by both sides, signifying that the British and the Six Nations desired to establish better relations with one another.

The conference served the purpose of easing the Six Nation's anxiety over being neglected by New York during the years since Aix-la-Chappelle. Anglo-Indian relations had been steadily declining since the end of King George's War and the Albany meeting acted to bring the two peoples closer together.

The conference did have some negative aspects. The Iroquois were clearly upset over the loss of the trusted William Johnson as Indian commissioner. Although Johnson was persuaded to attend the conference he refused to again assume the duties he had once performed. At the close of the conference, the Six Nations were still troubled over how, in the absence of Johnson, relations between themselves and the British were to be conducted in the future.⁴⁷

The Indian response to Clinton's demands concerning the French at Niagara was less than the governor had hoped for. Before taking action, the Iroquois were in the process of conferring with the French. The British were always eager to prevent the Iroquois from any negotiations with the French for fear that some type of amicable settlement of their differences might be reached.⁴⁸

The Iroquois-Catawba agreement was probably the most substantive result of the conference but was not as cordial as it appeared on the surface. A genuine and open animosity had existed between the two tribes. So deep was this hatred that the Catawba delegates had to be hidden for their own protection until it was ascertained that the Iroquois would treat with them.⁴⁹ The Catawbas had agreed to come to Albany only if it were clear that they were doing so as equals of the Six Nations, and not as inferiors asking

for peace. The principal Catawba chieftain had told Conrad Weiser before the conference that "his people would rather spend the last drop of blood in the Warr than to Sue for peace." Despite this enmity and suspicion, the two nations did agree to at least a one year truce in their war. Some mistrust was still present after the talks, but the Albany Conference succeeded in establishing a less inimical relationship between the two long estranged tribes.⁵⁰

The most serious fault of the Albany Conference was that it did little to bring about a unified system of handling Indian affairs. Not all of the colonies who had been invited bothered to send delegates. Clinton did nothing to help coordinate the Indians policies of New York and Pennsylvania by his treatment of Pennsylvania's representative, Conrad Weiser. Weiser was not permitted to speak to the Indians until he received Clinton's approval of the text of his remarks. Johnson and Weiser had never been firm friends and did little to cooperate with each other at the conference. Clinton was due to leave for England soon which meant the Six Nations would have to establish a new understanding and working relationship with his successor. Johnson still refused to conduct New York's Indian affairs which further added to the continued instability of the relationship between that colony and the Six Nations.⁵¹

The Six Nations did show a friendlier attitude toward the British at the Albany Conference than they had demonstrated in recent months. This improvement in New York-Indian relations was probably caused, in part, by the fact that the colony seemed to be paying more attention to Indian affairs. Rumors of possible French attacks on

their castles had caused them to regard their allegiance to the apathetic British as a liability. The conference indicated that the British had not forgotten the Indians, and that it was possible for several British colonies to take concerted action in conducting Indian business.

In addition, the Indians had increased reason to be more suspicious and hostile toward the French. One of Celeron's lead plates had been unearthed by the Indians and brought to Johnson for translation. Johnson explained the inscription on the tablet, emphasizing the fact that the French were claiming lands for themselves that belonged to the Six Nations and their satellites living on the Ohio. The Indians seem to have been greatly irritated by Celeron's claims and alienated from the French when the true meaning of the lead plates became known.

As was the case with the Ohio Indians at the Logstown Conference, the Six Nations of New York also relied on commerce with the British, and therefore were receptive to the British suggestion that the covenant chain be renewed at Albany. British trade was too valuable to the Iroquois for them to permit their relations with New York to continue to decline.

Pressure from the French in the Summer of 1752

Following the Albany Conference of July 1751, the British continued to worry about the activities of the French on the New York and Ohio frontiers. Reports and rumors abounded of proposed French strikes against the British and pro-British Indians. One of Johnson's

business associates, John Lindsay reported that the French were active in soliciting the friendship of the Missasaugas, a small tribe usually allied to the Iroquois. In addition, the French were said to be constructing a three-masted, heavily armed ship at Fort Frontenac. The vessel was reportedly being built to sail against and destroy the vital British port at Oswego on Lake Ontario.⁵² On July 19, Johnson received a letter from Lieutenant Stoddard at Oswego to the effect that the French had sent a large army against the British allied Miamis at Pickawillany. The French were said to be planning to destroy the village and then build a fortress there with a three hundred man garrison.⁵³ In late July, Johnson passed the news on to Clinton that the French had organized a force of twelve hundred soldiers and two hundred Adirondack Indians at Fort Frontenac. The expedition had been sighted passing Oswego and was thought to be headed against the Indians of Ohio who were in the British interest.⁵⁴

Governor Jonquiere in Montreal added to Clinton's concern over the aggressiveness of the French by his letter to the New York Governor August 10, 1751. On June 12, Clinton had written to Jonquiere protesting the building of the French fortress at Niagara. Jonquiere refused to recognize the Six Nations as subjects of the Crown of Great Britain and therefore could find no grounds for a British complaint that the French were building a fort on Iroquois land. Jonquiere argued that only the Six Nations had any right to object to the fort and "They did not oppose it; they consented to it, and have acknowledged that it would contribute as much to their

advantage as to that of the French." Briefly reviewing the long history of French-Iroquois relations, Jonquiere concluded that the French were "the first to penetrate into the territories of the Iroquois" and the first to form "an alliance of friendship" with the Six Nations. Accordingly, the lands of the Iroquois belonged to France, the possession he contended being reaffirmed by the Treaties of Utrecht and Aix-la-Chapelle. The French governor added that the Iroquois lands had been conquered by New France and then restored to the Indians by treaties. By this action, and the recent voyage of Celeron, he argued, the French claim was far superior to the British. Jonquiere reaffirmed the right of the French to expel or capture Englishmen found trading on the Ohio.⁵⁵ The governor's letter was a clear indication that the French would continue to work to confine the British to their present boundaries and to incorporate the Ohio Valley into the French interest.

Virginia, The Ohio Company, and Westward Expansion

As Pennsylvania and New York reacted lethargically and defensively, Virginia and the Ohio Company attempted to seize the initiative in meeting the French challenge on the Ohio. The activities of the colony and the company were hampered, however, by the unsettled condition of the Virginia government from 1749 to 1752. No less than five different men held the executive office of the colony during this period. Robert Gooch left the governor's chair in August 1749. A political enemy of many of the founders of the Ohio

Company, Gooch supported the rival Loyal Company and did not lend assistance to the expansion efforts of the Ohio Company. Gooch was succeeded on an interim basis by John Robinson, a political ally of Gooch, and therefore not an enthusiastic supporter of the Ohio Company's plan to develop the Ohio area. Robinson served only a brief term before being replaced by Thomas Lee. Since Lee was one of the original founders of the Ohio Company, his election to the Presidency of the Council (which made him the chief executive of the colony in the absence of a royal governor) gave every indication that the Ohio Company would be able to pursue an active expansionist policy. However, Lee died in November 1750, after only a few months in office and was succeeded by Lewis Burwell, who was not an Ohio Company stockholder. Burwell held office until Robert Dinwiddie, the royal appointee and member of the Company, arrived in November 1751.⁵⁶

Although somewhat disorganized by the frequent changes in leadership experienced by the company and the colony, the Ohio Company had not been idle. A strategically located store house had been constructed on the upper Potomac at Wills' Creek.⁵⁷ This structure was positioned to serve as the base for trading operations in the Ohio Valley. Future plans called for the construction of a road from this base to the area of the forks of the Ohio where another trading house would be built. The company had already sent Christopher Gist to the Ohio on an exploratory trip that lasted several months. Large quantities of items to be used as Indians presented and trade goods were ordered from Britain.⁵⁸ The company

also laid plans to hold a conference with the Ohio Indians at Logstown in the spring of 1752. Such a conference was deemed necessary in order to solidify Virginia's claim to the area around the forks of the Ohio and to reestablish good relations with the Indians of the area.⁵⁹

On July 16, 1751, the Ohio Company issued instructions to Gist for a second mission to the Ohio. Gist's orders called on him to "observe the nearest & most convenient Road you can find from the Company's store at Wills' Creek to a Landing at Mohongeyla." Having found the best route to the west, Gist was to proceed down the Ohio River to the "Big Conhaway" /Kanahwa/ to find level fertile lands suitable for white settlement. In addition, Gist was to look for a place on which the company could build "Store Houses & other Houses for the better carrying on a Trade and Correspondence down the River."⁶⁰

On November 4, 1751, Gist began his second journey into the wilderness of the Ohio Valley, departing from Wills' Creek. After three weeks of exploring various gaps and passages through the mountains, Gist and his party reached the south fork of the Youghiogheny River. A small group of Delawares living nearby sold Gist some corn and "treated Me very civilly." Gist invited these Delawares to the forthcoming conference to be held at Logstown in May. Gist thought this meeting with these Delawares had been cordial but later learned from one of his companions that the Indians had considered "taking away our Guns and not let us travel."⁶¹

On December 7, Gist came upon another Delaware village, the town of chief Nemacolin, located on the Monongehela.⁶² Nemacolin complained to Gist that a tract of land given his family by the proprietors of Pennsylvania had now been settled by whites who refused to either pay Nemacolin for the land or vacate the tract. Nemacolin hoped Gist might be able to intercede on his behalf so that he might receive some compensation for his land. Despite his disappointment concerning the seizure of his property, Nemacolin was very friendly toward Gist's party and was firmly in the British interest. Gist invoted Nemacolin's group to the Logstown Conference and pushed on.⁶³

Ten days later, on December 17, Gist met a Delaware hunting party camped about fifteen miles southeast of the forks of the Ohio.⁶⁴ Gist invited them to the Logstown Conference scheduled for the coming spring and received a genuinely warm reception from the group's leaders, Oppaymolleah and Joshua. The latter even offered to carry the news of the conference to other Delaware groups in the area.⁶⁵

From late December 1751 to early February 1752, the Gist party, slowed by bad weather and frostbite, made little progress. The last two weeks of February were spent exploring the area around the Kanahwa. Gist reported no encounters with any Indians until March 12 when his party was traveling homeward along the Monongehela. Gist was met by a messenger sent from the Delaware chiefs The Beaver and Oppaymolleah. The Delaware emmissary posed a perplexing question to Gist. If the French claimed all the land north of the Ohio River and the British claimed everything to the south, what land belonged

to the Indians? Gist confessed that when Oppaymolleah had asked him this same question at their meeting in mid-December on the Monongehela, he had been at a loss for an answer. Now Gist was able to make a reply. Gist stated that the Indians would be considered as British subjects and be entitled to inhabit large tracts of the British claimed lands. The messenger departed, reported Gist's answer to his chiefs, and returned to Gist's camp in two days. The Delaware courier announced that Gist's reply was acceptable to his superiors. These Delawares agreed that they as well as the British could be considered "all one King's People" and invited Gist to come and live with them whenever he pleased.⁶⁶ Gist's party continued eastward without incident, arriving safely at Wills' Creek at the end of March 1752.

Gist's journey had been a success. He had accomplished his mission of scouting the terrain and the resources of the Ohio Valley for the Ohio Company and had done so without antagonizing any of the local Indians. At each Indian encampment he had been well treated. At no time was he accused of scouting for lands for future white settlement. The Indians met on the journey (with the possible exception of the first band of Delawares encountered at Youghiogheny) were all favorably disposed toward his group in particular and the British interest in general. The contacts with the Indians on Gist's second journey indicate that there was a growing concern among the Indians of Ohio regarding the land question. While Gist was able to successfully explain the purpose of his trip as inviting the Indians to the Logstown Conference in May, the Indians

of Ohio seemed to have a growing awareness that the Europeans were coveting their land. On his journey of the previous year, no Indian mentioned the matter of British mass penetration into the Ohio Valley. The issue now seemed to dominate their thoughts.

The Logstown Conference of 1752

As Gist concluded his second journey to the Ohio, preparations for the Logstown Conference were being made. Dinwiddie and the officers of the Ohio Company viewed the meeting as a vital part of their overall plan to gain control of the Ohio area. At the Lancaster Conference of 1744, the Six Nations had allegedly sold to the British all the land between the Alleghenies and the east bank of the Ohio River. The price had been the inordinately small sum of £ 400.⁶⁷ Later, the Six Nations had refused to recognize the large size of the purchase that was claimed by the British. According to their interpretation of the terms of the Lancaster Treaty, the British acquisition was bounded by a line far to the eastward of the Ohio. The Indians continued to occupy the disputed area, generally refusing to permit any British settlements west of the Susquehanna. As long as the Indians held to their definition of the treaty terms, the British, not wishing to alienate the Indians, were effectively restricted from moving into the Ohio region. The Ohio Company realized that to be able to fulfill their plans to place a settlement on the Ohio, they must renegotiate the disputed purchase and acquire the rights to the lands around the strategic forks of the Ohio.⁶⁸

The British delegation to Logstown was composed primarily, but not exclusively, of Virginians. Governor Dinwiddie seems to have been actively seeking the support and cooperation of potential rival Pennsylvania by asking several men of that colony to act as delegates to the conference. Virginians Joshua Fry⁶⁹ and James Patton⁷⁰ were selected as the principal negotiators for the conference, but Pennsylvanian Conrad Weiser was asked by Dinwiddie to attend as an interpreter.⁷¹ Another Pennsylvanian, Captain William Trent, George Croghan's business partner, was invited to join the delegation as a special agent.⁷² Other members of the British delegation were Christopher Gist and Andrew Montour. Gist was originally appointed as an alternate commissioner, to handle the negotiations along with Patton should Fry be unable to attend. Fry did accept the assignment, but Gist still participated in the conference as a representative of the Ohio Company.⁷³ Montour, initially sent to assist Gist, eventually became the chief interpreter of the conference when Weiser declined to attend.⁷⁴

The Logstown Conference began on June 1, 1752. The commissioners were welcomed and informed the Indians that they had brought a large present as evidence of the affection held by the English King for his Indian subjects. After these opening ceremonies, the conference was delayed for several days pending the arrival of the Half King and a representative from the Onondaga Central Council. On June 9, the conference resumed with the two important sachems now in attendance. The gifts were distributed and then the serious negotiations began.⁷⁵

The commissioners opened the formal sessions by reminding the Indians of the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 by which (according to the British interpretation) the Iroquois had traded a huge amount of land to the British in exchange for a quantity of goods. As these goods had been delivered by Conrad Weiser in 1748, the commissioners contended that the King was now entitled to the possession of the land designated by the treaty. The commissioners now asked the Indians to reaffirm the Lancaster land purchase.⁷⁶

The British openly stated that "It is the design of the King your father at present to make a settlement of British subjects on the south East of Ohio." The commissioners reasoned that such a settlement would be beneficial to the Indians in that it would enable the British "to supply you with goods much cheaper than can at this time be afforded," and would serve as a protective fortress in case of attack. The settlement would further help the British and Indians to "be united as one people by the strongest ties of neighborhood as well as friendship. . . ."²⁷

The peaceful intentions of the English King were then contrasted with the bellicose actions of the French Monarch. The Indians were reminded that the French King had recently sent "an armed force to take possession of your country by setting up inscriptions on trees and at the mouths of creeks" The commissioners called upon the Indians to form "a strict union . . . which will make us strong and formidable" and to resist the overtures of the French.⁷⁸

The Half King responded to the commissioners on behalf of the assembled Indians.⁷⁹ While he did not expressly recognize the land claims of the British, the Half King promised to consider further the British interpretation of the Lancaster Treaty. On the matter of a British settlement on the Ohio, he gave his consent. Realizing the designs of the French to take over the Indians' land, the Half King stated: "We therefore desire our brothers of Virginia may build a stronghouse at the fork of the Monongehela." The commissioners then drew up a written agreement, which the Half King and the other sachems signed, which gave the British the right to establish settlements on the south and east sides of the Ohio.⁸⁰ The conference ended with this highly successful accomplishment by the British. The British interpretation of the Lancaster land purchase had been tacitly approved. The way was open for British settlement all the way to the eastern bank of the Ohio.

The French Attack Pickawillany

The Miami nation did not send any representatives to Logstown. The Miamis living in the vicinity of Pickawillany were strongly committed to the British interest, however, and the Virginia commissioners had brought a quantity of gifts for them along with the presents they carried to the tribes participating in the conference. The day the Logstown meeting concluded, the three Virginia commissioners, accompanied by Captain William Trent and Andrew Montour, departed for Pickawillany to deliver these presents to the loyal

Miamis. On that same day, Pickawillany was struck by a French surprise attack.

Pickawillany had long been an irritant to the French at Detroit. The Miamis had formerly been in the French interest, but as King George's War closed a sizeable portion of that tribe went over to the British. Celeron had made an unsuccessful stop at Pickawillany in 1749 and had been rudely treated by its pro-British chieftain, Old Britain. The village was clearly a stronghold of British influence in the Ohio country.

Celeron, the current commander at Detroit, had been planning for some time to make an attempt against the Miami capital. In the spring of 1752, Charles Langlade, a competent young frontiersman of mixed French and Ottawa blood, volunteered to lead a striking force against Pickawillany. Celeron enthusiastically agreed, providing powder, lead, and other supplies along with a dozen French soldiers for the mission. Langlade, a popular figure among the pro-French Indians of the Great Lakes area, raised a force of over two hundred Ottawas and Chippewas.

Langlade led his party south from Detroit and stealthily surrounded Pickawillany on the morning of June 21, 1752. The Miami town was completely unprepared for an attack. Most of the able-bodied men were away from the village hunting. Suddenly, as the Miamis tilled their cornfields, totally unaware of the impending emergency, Langlade's men struck. The Miamis and the few British traders who were present in the village ran for the fortified storehouse for protection. The French party captured some of the Miamis

and three of the traders before they could reach the safety of the fort.⁸¹ Langlade's men besieged the structure, offering not to molest the Miamis if they would surrender the British traders who were in the stockade. Reluctantly, the Miamis complied, since they were outnumbered and had no other chance of survival. One of the British traders who was turned over to the French Indians had been severely wounded and was killed and scalped immediately. Six others were taken prisoner and were marched off to Detroit. A total of five pro-British Indians had fallen in the skirmish. One of the dead was the principal chieftain Old Britain, who had been killed in the opening volley of the attack. As a sign of their contempt for his defiant pro-British sentiment, the French Indians boiled his body, tore out his heart and ate it. Langlade's party having successfully completed their mission, then returned to Detroit.⁸²

Traveling westward across Ohio from Logstown, the Virginians began to hear reports of the Pickawillany disaster. Detouring to Sinioto (Lower Shawnee Town) the Virginia party met two British traders who had been present at the attack but had been hidden by the Miamis and not surrendered to Langlade. The pair related the details of the assault and confirmed the news that Pickawillany had been struck a devastating blow.⁸³

The Virginia contingent, at the suggestion of Scarrouady, a prominent sachem of the Six Nations of Ohio, moved toward Pickawillany in an attempt to locate the Miamis who had survived the French attack. They reached the embattled Miami village and found it deserted. Tracks showed that some of the Miamis had gone westward

to the other Miami villages closer to the French while another segment had gone in the direction of Sinioto. Returning to that Shawnee village on the Ohio, the Virginians found the now homeless Miami band. The British offered their condolences and distributed the gifts they had brought from Logstown. The Miamis and the British together with the Delawares, Shawnees, and Mingoes all reaffirmed the covenant chain and pledged to support each other against the French.⁸⁴

The destruction of Pickawillany was a great loss to the British interest. Economically it was the most important trading village in Ohio and served as the principal center for the distribution of British goods. The death of the steadfast Old Britain was damaging to the English cause. The chieftain had been a dependable ally. No new leader emerged among the Miamis who could continue Old Britain's policies of firm opposition to the French. Pickawillany had had a great symbolic value as a center of British strength and influence near to the sphere of the French. Its fall would cause the Indians of Ohio to reassess their thinking regarding the French and the British. Langlade's victory demonstrated that the British were not able to maintain their trading centers in Ohio and could not adequately protect those Indians who joined with them. For reasons of economic necessity and self preservations, an increasing number of Ohio Indians now began to drift into the French orbit. Until June 1752, the British had been able to counter the active policies of the French and block their attempts to make significant gains

among the Indians. The Pickawillany defeat, however, provided the Indians with tangible evidence of British weakness and French power, and opened a new era of successes by the French.⁸⁵

NOTES: Chapter V

1. "A Copy of Mr. George Croghan's Account of Indian Affairs from 1748/9 to General Braddock's defeat," Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 1: 1687-1753 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania); and Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg, 1851), V, p. 387.
2. Penn Manuscripts, "Croghan's Account."
3. Penn Manuscripts, "Croghan's Account."
4. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 431.
5. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 436.
6. "Message of the Twightwees to the Governor of Pennsylvania," Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 1 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania); and Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 437-438.
7. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 450-451. Governor Hamilton was able to prevail upon the Pennsylvania Assembly to authorize £ 100 for a "small present" for the Miamis to reward them for their steadfastness. See Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 455, 460; and Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, edited by Gertrude MacKinney (Harrisburg, 1931), IV, pp. 3337-3340.
8. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 462. The pressure of English settlement had been forcing many Eastern Indians to relocate on the Ohio. These recent migrations had increased the Indian population of Ohio to the extent that it was becoming comparable to the size of the Six Nation Confederacy. See Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 463.
9. Thomas Lee, interim head of the government of Virginia, and active promoter of better relations with the Indians, was working in 1750 to unite the English colonies and the Six Nations into one unit to oppose the French. Toward this goal, Lee requested Weiser to go to Onondaga to invite the Six Nations to attend a conference at Fredricksburg, Virginia set for the spring of 1751. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the issues of trade and settlement and reaffirm British-Iroquois friendship ties. Weiser consulted with Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton concerning Lee's request. Hamilton was apparently somewhat suspicious and jealous of Virginia's action and did not want to promote the interests of Virginia traders at the expense of those from his own colony. Hamilton did not feel he was in a position to refuse to allow Weiser to go, however, and Weiser agreed to make the trip. See Paul Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 298-303.

10. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 467. The new principal sachem of the Onondagas was Tohashwuchdioony or "The Belt of Wampum." Although courteous to Weiser, he was a convert to Catholicism and was politically pro-French. See Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p.311.
11. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 474.
12. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 475. Weiser did learn that Piquet was not held in universal esteem by all Onondagas. Many Indians had gone to Oswegatchie only to return disillusioned, believing that the French priest "was not good and endeavored to make slaves of the Indians." Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 475.
13. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 476-478.
14. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 484-486.
15. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 486-487. George Croghan and Andrew Montour who had been designated to deliver the Miami gifts were now contacted to also transport this present to the other Ohio Indians.
16. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weeds, Parsons and Company, 1855), VI, p. 546.
17. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 546-547.
18. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 317.
19. The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), I, pp. 342-344; James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 101.
20. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 541.
21. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 101.
22. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 541.
23. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 276-279.
24. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 313-314.
25. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 739.
26. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 739; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 107.
27. Johnson Papers, I, p. 340.
28. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 109.

29. William L. Stone, The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson, Bart. (Albany: J. Munsell, 1865), pp. 390-392.
30. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 517-518; Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. 39-40. Weiser was planning to represent Pennsylvania at the Albany Conference scheduled for July 1751, and did not believe he would have time to reach Albany if he went to Logstown in May.
31. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 530; Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 40-42.
32. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 530-531.
33. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 532-535.
34. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 535-536.
35. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 536-538.
36. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 538-539. The Indians' request for a British "stronghouse" to be built in their territory was possibly not so unsolicited as it might appear. Croghan had long been in favor of the construction of such a building. Governor Hamilton agreed, but the Pennsylvania Assembly had earlier rejected the proposal. In order not to offend the Assembly, Hamilton asked Croghan to inquire privately into the Indians' feelings toward such a structure, but not to make the matter public. Hence, it seems likely that Croghan first brought up the issue of the fort privately and then had the Indians mention it first publically so that it would appear to the Assembly to have been the Indians' original idea. See Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 41-42.
37. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 529.
38. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 547. Montour's curious behavior was probably the result of his being pressured, bribed, or otherwise influenced by certain prominent Philadelphians. These men held a deep animosity toward Croghan based on personal and financial considerations and were eager to see him lose his influence with the government of Pennsylvania.
39. Wainwright, George Croghan, p. 44.
40. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 717.
41. Johnson was an adopted Mohawk and held the position of sachem among the Six Nations.
42. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 339-344.

43. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 717-719.
44. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 718.
45. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 719-720.
46. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 725.
47. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 726.
48. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 110. The Iroquois' handling of the controversy over the construction of a fort at Niagara by the French is another example of their ability to devise a diplomatic policy aimed at protecting their own interests. In this case they were able to reaffirm their good relationship with the British by threatening to take military action against the French, while avoiding a direct confrontation that could lead to French reprisals against their towns.
49. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 326.
50. "A Journal of the proceedings of Conrad Weiser in his Journey to Albany with a Message from the Governor of Pennsylvania to the Six Nations of Indians, annod: 1751." This journal is from the DuSimitiere Collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia and is printed in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 323-331. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 109-110 emphasizes the continuing animosity between the Iroquois and the Catawbas. Both Flexner and Wallace (p. 331-332) view the conference as basically ineffective and unsuccessful.
51. Pa. Col. Rec., V, p. 541; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 332.
52. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 729-730.
53. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 730.
54. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 729.
55. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 731-734.
56. Louis Knott Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie: His Career in American Colonial Government and Westward Expansion (Glendale, Cal.: Arthus Clark, 1941), p. 169.
57. Modern Cumberland, Maryland.
58. Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, p. 289.

59. Some Ohio Indians had been made suspicious of Virginians due to rumors spread by rival Pennsylvania traders. See Kenneth Bailey, The Ohio Company of Virginia and Westward Movement 1748-1792 (Glendale, Cal.: Arthur Clark, 1939), pp. 113-114.
60. William M. Darlington, ed., Christopher Gist's Journals (Pittsburgh: J. R. Weldin, 1893), pp. 67-68.
61. Gist Journal, p. 69.
62. Modern Brownsville, Pennsylvania.
63. Gist Journal, pp. 69-70.
64. Modern Jefferson, Pennsylvania.
65. Gist Journal, pp. 71-78.
66. Gist Journal, p. 78.
67. Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie, p. 135. The English delegation at the Lancaster Conference of 1744 included representatives of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.
68. Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 127; Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie, p. 135.
69. Joshua Fry was a professor of mathematics at the College of William and Mary who had been employed by the government of Virginia as a surveyor. His work in this capacity resulted in the noted Fry and Jefferson Map of Virginia. Fry had experience in participating on several commissions to settle boundary disputes over the borders of Virginia. See Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie, pp. 136-137; Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 132.
70. Colonel James Patton was a proponent of western expansion. Patton was an experienced frontiersman but was interested in his own plans for the acquisition of lands in Ohio and was not a supporter of the Ohio Company. It is somewhat puzzling why Dinwiddie chose Patton for this task. See Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie, pp. 137-138; Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 132; and Lawrence Henry Gipson, Zones of International Friction, IV of "The British Empire Before the American Revolution" (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 251.
71. Gipson, British Empire, IV, p. 249. Excerpts from Dinwiddie's letters to Weiser, Fry, and Patton appear in Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie, pp. 134-138.
72. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 249-250.

73. As neither Fry nor Patton were members of the Ohio Company, Gist's role at the conference was to function as the watchdog for the company should its interests not be protected. Gist received private instructions from the company to "endeavor to make purchase of Lands to the Eastward of the Ohio River and Allegheny, and procure the Friendship and protection of the Indians in settling the said lands upon the best terms you can for a quantity of Goods" in the event that Fry and Patton attempted to conclude an agreement "prejudicial" to the Ohio Company. See Gipson, British Empire, IV, p. 250 and Gist Journal, p. 234.
74. Lunsford Lomax, a member of the House of Burgesses, was also later authorized to serve as a third Virginia commissioner at the conference.
75. Lois Mulkhearn (ed.), The George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), pp. 54-57.
76. Mercer Papers, p. 57. The commissioners stated that the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 had given the British title to "all the land in Virginia that had been peopled or should thereafter be peopled or bounded by the King. . . ." See Mercer Papers, p. 57.
77. Mercer Papers, p. 57.
78. Mercer Papers, pp. 57-60.
79. The Indian groups present at Logstown included the Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, and Mingo. See Mercer Papers, pp. 59-60.
80. Mercer Papers, pp. 63-65.
81. Alfred T. Goodman (ed.), Journal of Captain Willian Trent from Logstown to Pickawillany (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1871), pp. 86-87.
82. Trent Journal, pp. 87-88.
83. Trent Journal, pp. 86-88.
84. Trent Journal, pp. 89-102.
85. Gipson, British Empire, IV, pp. 255-256.

CHAPTER VI

THE DECLINE OF THE BRITISH INTEREST 1752-1754

The destruction of Pickawillany was a significant victory but by no means gave the French firm possession of the Ohio area. Virginia and the Ohio Company continued an active, aggressive policy in an effort to win the vital region for the British.

Virginia's Advance into Ohio

The Ohio Company persisted in its efforts to penetrate into the Ohio Valley with the construction of a road from the company's base at Wills' Creek to the Monongehela. The company needed a route for the transportation of trade goods to the Ohio. Thomas Cresap, an experienced frontiersman-surveyor, was given the task of building the road. Christopher Gist, who had made earlier explorations to the Ohio was hired by the company to serve as adviser to Cresap. Nemacolin, the Delaware chieftain who lived in the area, helped the Virginians discover the best route through the mountains to the region of the forks of the Ohio. By arduous effort a road wide enough for pack horses was cut through the forest in 1752.¹

The Ohio Company also successfully completed another fortified storehouse. The structure, built through the efforts of William Trent

was located at the confluence of Redstone Creek and the Monongehela. The outpost was to serve as a warehouse for goods transported westward from Wills' Creek and as a base for the British traders in the Ohio country.²

As the Redstone storehouse was being constructed, Christopher Gist led a group of eleven families into the wilderness for the purpose of establishing a townsite in the name of the Ohio Company. The embryonic hamlet was located on the newly constructed "Nemacolin's Trail" 70 miles west of Wills' Creek within 10 miles of the Redstone fort, and was known as "New Settlement" or simply "Gist's."³

As Virginia took the initiative in the westward fur trade and expansion, the influence of Pennsylvania continued to decline. The Pennsylvania Assembly had made it clear that, for a combination of moral and economic reasons it would not appropriate the funds necessary for the colony to carry on an aggressive western policy. Adding to Pennsylvania's retirement from active participation in Indian affairs was the absence of George Croghan. Due to a series of reversals, Croghan's own personal trading interests had not fared well. Heavily in debt, Croghan could not return to eastern Pennsylvania for fear of his creditors having him arrested. Consequently he remained on the Ohio, out of touch with the policy makers of Pennsylvania. In addition, Croghan's report on the Logstown Conference of 1752, which had been labeled false by Andrew Montour, had lowered Croghan's prestige in Philadelphia. Consequently, Pennsylvania's leading advocate of an active Ohio policy remained isolated on the frontier, unable to exert any significant influence on the

colony's policies. The unpredictable Montour was Pennsylvania's liaison with the Ohio Indians during this time of Croghan's absence from public affairs.⁴

William Johnson, like Croghan, was far less active in the shaping of New York's Indian policy after 1751 than he had been previously. Johnson spent his energies in land speculation in order to recoup the monetary losses he had experienced as Indian commissioner. While Croghan struggled to get his fur trading business on the Ohio frontier out of debt, Johnson executed strategic land purchases to improve his financial state. It is significant that while the services of Croghan and Johnson went unused and unappreciated by colonial leaders, both maintained and even increased their esteem and influence among the Indian nations of their respective areas.⁵

The French Invasion of the Ohio Valley

Stimulated by their brilliant success at Pickawillany, the French became even more bold in their attempt to wrest control of Ohio away from the British. Governor DuQuesne wrote to his home government of the Pickawillany victory: "I trust that this blow, added to the complete pillage suffered by the English on this occasion, will discourage them from trading on our lands."⁶ In an effort to further influence Ohio Indians to come over to the French interest, prevent the British from trading in the region, and strengthen French claims to the area, DuQuesne began to formulate aggressive plans for 1753.

The forks of the Ohio were seen by both the French and the British as the key strategic location in the Ohio area. Accordingly, DuQuesne moved to secure this vital point. The governor organized an expedition of 1500 men and named Captain Henri Marin as its commander. Marin's force crossed Lake Ontario to Niagara, portaged the falls, and proceeded along the southern shore of Lake Erie. According to DuQuesne's instructions, the army landed and built a fort at Presque Isle in May and June 1753. The expedition then moved inland to French Creek and constructed a second bastion, Fort LeBoeuf in July. In late August, one of the Joncaire brothers captured the British trading post known as Venango, located at the junction of French Creek and the Allegheny River. This later became the location of the third French stockade, Fort Venango. The French now controlled the route between Lake Erie and the Allegheny. The erection of a similar fort at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongehela was the next objective of DuQuesne's plan.⁷

The Indians of Ohio were profoundly disturbed by the belligerent actions of the French. The Half King, Six Nations viceroy of the Mingoes of Ohio, approached Marin's army in September 1753, and objected to the French invasion. The sachem warned the French commander to proceed no further down the Allegheny and Ohio. Marin responded that the Ohio River was the property of the King of France. The French captain denied any intention of harming the local Indians, stating that the purpose of his expedition was to open the way for French traders who would soon come to supply their material needs.⁸

The Six Nations Seek British Support

The Six Nations had been the first to notify and warn the British of the presence of the huge Marin expedition on the Ohio. The Mohawks had reported to William Johnson in April that a large French expedition was advancing toward the Allegheny. Johnson informed Governor Clinton and arranged a conference between the Iroquois and the governor to be held at New York City.

The Six Nations were clearly frightened by the size of the French army that was proceeding through their territory. Hendrick exhibited this fear when he opened the conference by immediately reminding Clinton of past Anglo-Iroquois promises to give mutual support in time of trouble.

Hendrick reminded Clinton of the support the Iroquois had given the British during King George's War, but warned that the ancient covenant chain might be broken if New York continued to show "indifference and neglect" toward the Six Nations. The sachem expressed his disgust with the New York government for allowing Albany to become "naked and defenseless," and criticized the colony for leaving the Six Nations "exposed to the enemy." Marin's recent invasion prompted Hendrick to protest: "It is by your means that we stand every hour in danger, for it was at your request that we fought against the French, and they now dayly stand with a knife over our heads to destroy us. . . ."9

Hendrick called upon the governor to reestablish good relations between New York and the Six Nations and called for immediate action to redress the Indians' grievances. Hendrick closed his remarks by

telling the governor that a message had recently come to him from Onondaga informing the Mohawks that the French had invited all the Six Nations to participate in a conference at Fort Frontenac. Hendrick's meaning was clear; if Clinton's response was unsatisfactory, the Mohawks would attend.¹⁰

Clinton's reply was woefully inadequate. The governor pledged to give more attention to Indian affairs, and suggested a conference be held at Albany to reaffirm the covenant chain. Clinton expressed his concern over the French presence on the Ohio but gave little indication that New York would do anything about it. Clinton would only promise to promptly warn the Six Nations if he should ever receive "any intelligence of any attacks intended to be made on you or your Allies. . . ." Hendrick was deeply disappointed to learn that the only pledge he could extract from Clinton was the governor's promise to give the Iroquois "the earliest notice" of an impending French attack "that you may be on your guard and as much as possible prevent their Designs."¹¹

Clinton ended his response by cautioning the Iroquois against going to Frontenac for the proposed conference with the French. The governor reminded the Six Nations "The French you know have ever been treacherous to you and can not be too much on your Guard against them," apparently insensitive to the fact that he was creating in the Indians a similar opinion of New York and the British.¹²

Hendrick was clearly dissatisfied with Clinton's speech. "All what we have desired to be done for our Good is not granted which makes our hearts ache very much," the sachem warned. Hendrick was

disgusted at Clinton's suggestion that Indian grievances could be settled at a conference at Albany. The new commissioners (who had been appointed to replace Johnson) that would be present at Albany were totally unsatisfactory to the Iroquois. "We know them so well, we will not trust them, for they are no people but Devils," railed Hendrick. Rather than refer Indian complaints to such men, Hendrick preferred that Clinton would simply admit that nothing would be done about the grievances.¹³

Hendrick then delivered a stunning blow to Anglo-Iroquois relations. "As soon as we come home we will send up a Belt of Wampum to our Brothers the 5 Nations to acquaint them the Covenant Chain is broken between you and us." The Mohawk chieftain concluded coldly, the governor should "not to expect to hear of me any more, and . . . we desire to hear no more of you." With that solemn statement, the Iroquois departed.

The French invasion force on the Ohio was clearly responsible for the rupture in British-Iroquois relations. The Six Nations had come to New York hoping to receive a firm commitment of assistance in repulsing the French advance. Clinton's weak response gave them no reason for maintaining further ties with the British. Disappointed by Clinton's address, and frightened and impressed by the French army in the west, the Iroquois saw their best hope for self preservation lay in conciliation with the invader and disassociation from their long-time ally. The failure of the British to provide for the defense of the Iroquois had resulted in the breaking of the covenant chain.

The Onondaga Conference of 1753

The New York government had been startled and frightened by the outcome of the New York City Conference of 1753. The council and assembly realized that the loss of the Mohawks would mean that the entire Six Nations would go over to the French. If this happened, New York would be open to French attack. To prevent such a turn of events, the government asked Johnson to undertake a mission to Onondaga to keep the Six Nations from joining the French interest. That the Assembly was genuinely concerned over the current situation is evidenced by the fact that Johnson was voted £450 to cover his expenses.¹⁴

The news of the French advance on the Ohio also stimulated inert Pennsylvania to action. Reports had reached Philadelphia that the Onondaga Council had asked that Pennsylvania and Virginia refrain from sending traders to Ohio. Englishmen, the Six Nations cautioned, were in great peril on the Ohio. Pennsylvania responded to this alarming news by sending Conrad Weiser to Onondaga. Weiser's instructions called on him to find out if the French were, in truth, building forts on the Ohio and if the Six Nations had given their approval to this construction. Weiser was further instructed to inquire if the Six Nations were in fear for their safety due to the French invasion and if the Iroquois truly desired that the British remove their traders from the Ohio. The Pennsylvania diplomat was also instructed to inquire into the current status of the British-Iroquois covenant chain, and ascertain if the Six Nations intended to forcibly oppose the

French invasion. Weiser was authorized to assure the Iroquois that "Pennsylvania will do all that can be in Reason expected, as to furnish Cloathing and so forth, if the French should attack Them, the Six Nations."¹⁵ The sending of Weiser to Onondaga indicates that Pennsylvania was concerned about the French invasion of the Ohio country. However, the non-committal instructions to Weiser demonstrate that the colony was still unwilling to take any positive action. The expressed willingness to send spare clothing in case of emergency can hardly be interpreted as a strong commitment to Iroquois safety and the maintenance of the covenant chain.

Weiser departed for Onondaga in late July 1753. On August 11, Weiser arrived at William Johnson's home and was "kindly received" by the New Yorker. Johnson was making preparations for his mission to Onondaga. Johnson explained the delicacy of his upcoming negotiations and courteously let Weiser know that he would rather go alone. Weiser was not offended and agreed to let Johnson conduct his own conference with the Onondaga Council. Johnson and Weiser got along very well on this occasion and parted as friends, pledging to exchange information and cooperate in the future.

While in the country of the Mohawks, Weiser had a frank and enlightening conversation with an old and trusted acquaintance, the sachem Abraham. The Mohawk leader told Weiser that the Six Nations feared the recent invasion by the French. So many Iroquois were now leaning toward the French that "the Six Nations could not prevent the French in their Undertakings." Abraham also reported that the Six Nations "could not resist the French without a numerous Body of

English men that would and could fight." Supplies of ammunition and clothing would not be enough to halt the French. Abraham reported the French advance on the Ohio was against the will of the Six Nations, but the Iroquois were not strong enough to stop them. The Iroquois feared that when the French had taken possession of the Ohio Valley, they would send their Indian allies against the Indians allied with the British.¹⁶ The chieftain's observations on the current crisis provided Weiser with an understanding of the Six Nations' assessment of the present situation.

The French advance on the Ohio was making a significant impact on the European-Indian alliance system. Although preferring a close association with the British for economic reasons, the Six Nations were forced by the French invasion to reassess their position. The French show of force had convinced some of the Iroquois to seriously consider a closer association with the French as beneficial to their interests. The neglect, indifference, and military inactivity displayed by the British had caused some Indians to question the sagacity of the pro-British diplomatic policy. The French were giving every indication that they would emerge victorious from a future war. The Indians, concerned for the safety of their towns and families, did not want to become the victims of the military power of New France.

As Weiser departed for Philadelphia, Johnson made preparations for his journey to Onondaga. Shortly before Weiser had come to New York, Johnson had met with Hendrick and other Mohawks who lived near his wilderness home. Johnson informed them that he had been

empowered by the governor to hold a conference with the Six Nations. The Mohawks were highly pleased to learn that their trusted friend had once again agreed to conduct Indian affairs for New York. Johnson scolded the Mohawks for their actions at the recent conference with Clinton. Their antipathy toward New York placated temporarily by the reappointment of Johnson, the Indians agreed to renew the covenant chain and to assist Johnson in his conference with the Onondaga Central Council.

Having regained the support of the Mohawks, Johnson left on his mission. He arrived at Onondaga on September 8, 1753 and was cordially welcomed by Red Head, the pro-French principal sachem of the Iroquois capital. Johnson informed the Iroquois that a new governor was scheduled to arrive in New York. The new governor would soon call a conference with the Six Nations and would bring presents for them. Johnson stated that the Iroquois could lay their grievances before the new governor and could expect redress "without any unnecessary delay."¹⁷

Johnson called for Iroquois-British relations to be restored to their former state and asked that the Iroquois that had been drawn to Oswegatchie be recalled to their original homes. The New Yorkers warned the Iroquois against going to Canada to speak with the French, whom he characterized as "a delusive people, always endeavoring to divide you as much as they can. . . ." Johnson then mentioned the principal reason for his journey. He declared that it was "formidable news we hear that the French & some Indians are making a descent upon the Ohio," and asked the Six Nations, "Is

it with your consent or leave that they proceed in this extraordinary manner, endeavoring by force of arms to dispossess your own native allies as well as your brethren the English, and establishing themselves?"¹⁸

After a two-day private conference, the Six Nations responded to Johnson's address. Red Head, speaking for the Central Council, expressed the Iroquois' regret over the recent deterioration of relations between his people and the British. The sachem even agreed that the Iroquois would do "all we can to recall our brothers" from the areas of the French mission-fortress at Oswegatchie. Turning to Johnson's central concern, Red Head stated "It is not with our consent that the French have committed any hostilities at Ohio; we don't know what you Christians, English and French together, intend: we are so hemm'd in by both that we hardly know what to say or think."¹⁹ Red Head closed the conference on a friendly note, telling Johnson "we are pleased with everything you have said" and asking him to continue handling Indian affairs for the British.²⁰

The remarks of the Six Nations at the Onondaga conference signified an improvement in Anglo-Iroquois relations but the meeting did not mean that all the problems existing between the two peoples had been solved. Since Johnson carried no promise of English military assistance against the French advance on the Ohio area, the Iroquois could not be expected to make any firm commitments to expel the invaders themselves from the territory of the Six Nations. The reemergence of the respected William Johnson as spokesman for New York did have the effect of bringing the Iroquois closer to the British

interest. The covenant chain was renewed and the Iroquois gave at least vague promise of continued good will toward the British. Although Red Head was known to be a French partisan, his reply was surprisingly compatible with the ideas expressed in Johnson's speech. The French strength on the Ohio made it unwise for the Iroquois to make protestations of enmity toward them. The economic prowess and numerical superiority of the British caused the Onondaga Council to take the occasion of the conference to repair strained relations with the British. For the present, the Six Nations were following a policy of attempting to maintain friendly relations with both the British and the French.

The Winchester Conference of 1753

During the spring of 1753, Virginia's Governor Dinwiddie saw the need for an Indian conference. He hoped to bring about a peace between the various tribes who were friendly to the British yet hostile toward each other. Some progress had been made in smoothing relations between the Iroquois and the Catawbas at the Albany Conference of 1751, but several recent incidents had reignited the old enmity between the two groups. Since such warfare was detrimental to the overall British effort against the French, Dinwiddie hoped to bring about a reconciliation. In addition, Dinwiddie thought that by ending the hostilities between the pro-British tribes, the British rights to western lands gained at Logstown would be strengthened. Andrew Montour was sent to invite representatives of the Six Nations to a conference at Winchester and Dinwiddie wrote to the Catawbas and

Cherokees, urging them to remember their former promises of friendship for the British and the Iroquois. Dinwiddie's efforts to organize the conference were quickened by the news that the French had begun an invasion of the Ohio.²¹

The conference opened on September 11, 1753. The Virginia delegation was headed by Colonel William Fairfax (father of one of the Ohio Company's founders) and included Trent, Croghan, Gist, and several other Virginians, most of whom were associated with the Ohio Company. The Half King headed a mixed deputation of Ohio Indians composed of representatives of the Iroquois, Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, and Miamis.

After the usual preliminaries and greetings, the Half King moved to the issue of the French invasion on the Ohio. The Six Nation viceroy of Ohio reminded Virginia of its past promises to give military support to its Indian allies. The Ohio Indians were prepared to resist the French advance but only if the British joined in the effort. The Half King was aware of the British desire to reaffirm the territorial and trading rights on the Ohio that had been discussed at Logstown. With this in mind, he emphasized that the Indians would consider the location of the proposed land grants and storehouses only after the British had assisted in expelling the French from the Ohio.²²

The Half King had long been a firm ally of the British. Nevertheless, he acted at the Winchester Conference to assure the continued well being of his people on the Ohio. If the British would participate in a concerted military effort to drive the French from Ohio, the

Half King stood ready to throw his support to the British. As an inducement, he implicitly offered continued cooperation with the Ohio Company's expansion plans. But the Ohio Indians would not fight alone. Rather than see the strength of the Ohio Indians dwindle in a protracted war against the French, the Half King was prepared to cooperate with the invader and thus preserve the existence of his people.

The Carlisle Conference of 1753

As Weiser returned from his abbreviated visit to New York, a delegation of Ohio Indians, having just participated in the Winchester Conference, was nearing the village of Carlisle. On learning of the approach of the Indians, Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton hurriedly appointed three commissioners to meet the Indians at Carlisle for a conference. The governor then requested Weiser to proceed to the meeting site immediately to assist with the talks.²³

The Indian delegation, headed by the Oneida sachem Scarrouady and accompanied by George Croghan and Andrew Montour, reached Carlisle on September 26, 1753, the same day the Pennsylvania deputation arrived from Philadelphia. The Indian contingent consisted of representatives from the Six Nations, Delawares, Shawnees, Miamis, and Wyandots. Formal discussions could not begin until a wagon load of gifts for the Indians arrived from Philadelphia. While the conference was thus delayed for several days, the commissioners engaged Scarrouady and several other chiefs in private talks concerning the current state of affairs on Ohio. The Indian leaders reported that

they had tried to block the recent French penetration into the Ohio Valley. The Ohio Indians had given the French invaders official notification of their opposition to the presence of such a large military force coming into their area. The French had replied that while they came in peace and intended the Indians no harm, they were determined to establish four forts in the Allegheny-Ohio area. The French captain further declared that all the land west of the Alleghenies belonged to them and that the British had been warned to stay in their territory on the east side of the mountains. Scarrouady informed the Pennsylvania commissioners that, having been rebuffed by the French, the Ohio Indians had decided to send out two diplomatic delegations in the late summer of 1753. The first group, headed by the Half King, was to go to the commander of the French invasion force and demand one last time that the French withdraw from the area. The other group under Scarrouady was to go to the colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania to inform them of the French action and to seek their advice and aid against the French intruders.

Following the preliminary discussions with Scarrouady and the other sachems, the Carlisle Conference opened on October 1, 1753. The Pennsylvania commissioners began talks by offering their condolences for those chiefs who had passed away since the last conference and calling upon the Indians to maintain the covenant chain with the British. The commissioners then gave the Indians the gifts that had been brought for them from Philadelphia. While exhorting the Indians not to "break Faith with one another or with this Government," the

Pennsylvanians offered no promise of military assistance against the current French threat.²⁴

Scarrouady began the Indian reply by thanking the commissioners for their presents. A Miami representative reminded Pennsylvania of the recent strike by the French Indians that had destroyed Pickawillany. Despite the disaster, the Miami spokesman promised his people would "ever retain the same ardent Affection" for the British that they had always exhibited. Turning to the recent French invasion of the Ohio, Scarrouady stated that the news of Virginia's plan to build a fortified storehouse on the Ohio had reached the governor of Canada had had "caused him to invade our country." Thus citing British westward expansion as contributing to the French presence on the Ohio, Scarrouady requested that Pennsylvania and Virginia would at present "forbear settling on our Lands over the Allegheny Hills." The sachem asked that George Croghan be recognized as the liaison between the Ohio Indians and Pennsylvania. He wanted British frontier settlements withdrawn eastward. As there were so many British traders "that we cannot see them or protect them" scarrouady requested that the British "call back the great number of your Traders." The chieftain suggested that the British traders confine themselves to three places on the Ohio: Logstown, the mouth of the Kanawha, and the mouth of the Monongehela. When in need of supplies, the Indians could come to one of these three centers and purchase the goods they desired.²⁵

The noncommittal speech of the Pennsylvania commissioners at Carlisle had a damaging effect on British trade and prestige on the Ohio. Given no assurances of support by Pennsylvania against the

invasion of the French, the Ohio Indians moved to decrease their ties with the British. Under the guise of desiring to protect British traders from harm, the Ohio Indians were taking steps to remove Englishmen from their villages so that more towns would not meet the same fate as Pickawillany. If the British accepted their plan of maintaining three trading centers on the Ohio, the Indians could still avail themselves of the lower prices offered by the British while avoiding the risk of having British traders residing in their towns.

The commissioners' response to the Indians' remarks was characteristically evasive. The Pennsylvanians would not immediately agree to restrict their traders to the three designated locations but said they would refer this request to the government of the colony. After an exchange of comments on several minor points the conference ended. Throughout the talks, Pennsylvania had given the Ohio Indians little reason to believe their British "brethren" would provide military assistance in the present crisis. Through an Indian associate, Conrad Weiser learned the Indians were unimpressed with the sizeable gift presented to them at the conference, hoping to have received a firm commitment in fighting men and the munitions of war.²⁶

While New York and Pennsylvania worked cautiously to maintain and restore good relations with the Six Nations and other Indian groups, neither colony embarked on an aggressive program designed to meet the challenge of the French presence on the Ohio. It remained for Virginia to seize the initiative in behalf of the entire British

interest and actively contest the French for control of the Ohio Valley. Governor Dinwiddie, an active proponent of westward expansion, determined to take the offensive in 1753 and attempt to force the French out of Ohio.

Dinwiddie had received instructions from London authorizing him to oppose the construction of forts by a foreign power on lands belonging to the King of England. While the orders were imprecise as to the actual boundaries of the territory claimed by the British, Dinwiddie decided that the recent advance by the French constituted an invasion of the King's domains and resolved to take action. This first step would be a notice of warning to be delivered to the French commander of the troops on the Ohio. George Washington, a twenty-one year old major in the Virginia militia, volunteered for the task of carrying the important message. Known to Dinwiddie through his family ties with the Ohio Company, Washington was entrusted with the mission.²⁷

Washington's Mission to Ohio

On October 31, 1753, Washington received a commission from Governor Dinwiddie to deliver a message from Virginia to the commander of the French forces on the Ohio. Washington began his journey that same day, proceeding from Williamsburg via Fredricksburg, Alexandria, and Winchester. Washington was accompanied from the start by Jacob Van Braam, who was to serve as French interpreter. At Winchester, Washington added four trader-frontiersmen who were familiar with the

the geography of the Ohio area.²⁸ The four were Barney Curren, John MacQuire, Henry Steward, and William Jenkins.

On November 14, 1753, Washington's party proceeded to Wills' Creek and was joined by Christopher Gist. Washington showed Gist the letter from the Virginia Council requesting the experienced woodsman to accompany him on the mission to the Ohio. The Virginia party spent more than a week crossing the western part of Pennsylvania, arriving at the forks of the Ohio on November 23. Traveling to nearby Logstown, the group met with the Indians of the area.

At the conference at Logstown, Washington informed the Indians of his mission to "deliver a Letter to the French Commandant, of very great Importance to your Brothers, the English; and . . . to you their Friends and Allies." The young major requested that the Ohio Indians provide assistance in the form of "some of your young Men, to conduct and provide Provisions for us on our Way; and be a safeguard against those French Indians who have taken up the hatchet against us." The Half King voiced his support for the mission, offered to accompany Washington's party on their journey to the French, and promised to provide an armed escort of Mingo, Delaware, and Shawnee.²⁹

The situation on the Ohio made it difficult for the Half King to fulfill his pledge, however. The recent French invasion of the region had caused many Ohio Indians to doubt the wisdom of a close association with the British. Concern for their physical survival was becoming a more important consideration than lower prices for trade goods. The French had recently warned the Indians of Ohio not to interfere with the French advance "unless they had a Mind to

draw all their Force upon them." In a speech at Venango, Joncaire had predicted that a war with the British was approaching and cautioned the Indians against joining with the British since the French had the military power to make themselves "masters of the Ohio." Word had already reached the Logstown area that three Indian nations, the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Adirondacks had declared war on the British.³⁰ The French threat caused most of the Shawnees and their chief Shingas to absent themselves from the Logstown meeting with Washington and Gist. Few of the Delaware and Mingo warriors were eager to accompany the Virginia party to the new forts of the French. When Washington's entourage departed Logstown on December 1, 1753, only three Indians in addition to the Half King were in the group.³¹ The Half King and the other Indian leaders explained that they had deliberately decided to keep the Indian escort small so as not to "give the French Suspensions of some bad Design, and cause them to be treated rudely." Washington guessed that the real reason for the small number of Indians was the difficulty the chiefs faced in recalling warriors on short notice from extended winter hunting trips. While this may have been a contributing factor, the true cause seems to have been the growing fear and awe of the French. Commander Marin's expedition into Ohio had forced many Indians to desire to disassociate themselves from the British interest.³²

Washington's company reached Venango on December 4 where they were greeted by Captain Joncaire. The French were courteous and hospitable to their guests, but informed Washington "that it was their absolute Design to take Possession of the Ohio." The French recognized

the numerical superiority of the population of the British colonies but were confident that the British would react "too slow and dilatory to prevent any Undertakings of theirs."³³ After reasserting the French claims to the Ohio, Joncaire directed Washington to his commanding officer, Le Gardier St. Pierre at Fort Le Boeuf.

Arriving at Le Boeuf, Washington showed his letter from the Governor of Virginia to St. Pierre. The French commander rejected the British claims to Ohio, declared the area belonged to France, and threatened to seize any British traders caught in the region. While Washington conferred with St. Pierre, the French made a concerted effort to lure away the Virginian's Indian guides. Offering the Half King "many fair Promises of Love and Friendship," the French caused Washington much anxiety with their attempts to win over the Indians of his party.³⁴

His message to the French having been rejected, Washington withdrew from Le Boeuf on December 16, 1753. The British party, hampered by ice and snow, reached Venango after a week of difficult travel. Washington was dissatisfied with the slow pace of the expedition³⁵ and desired to deliver the report of his mission as fast as possible to the Virginia government. Accordingly, Washington entrusted the horses and supplies to the interpreter Van Braam and set out through the wilderness on foot with Gist. Enduring the hardships of mid-winter travel and narrowly escaping an ambush by pro-French Indians, Gist and Washington arrived at Wills' Creek in early January 1754. On the sixteenth, Washington arrived at Williamsburg and made his report to Governor Dinwiddie.

The situation in Ohio was clearly growing worse. Washington's report demonstrated conclusively that the French were determined to seize and occupy the Ohio. The French had flatly refused to comply with Virginia's request that they withdraw from the area. Instead of agreeing to vacate their forts on the Allegheny, the French had served notice that they would not permit the presence of Englishmen in the area. The Indians of Ohio were falling away from the British interest. The construction of the French forts and the presence of the large French army on the Ohio was having a damaging effect on Anglo-Indian relations. In the years since the end of King George's War, the Indians had exhibited a preference for the power priced trade goods provided by the British and French influence on the Ohio had declined. With the advance of the French army on the Ohio, however, the structure of the Indian alliance system began to change. Fearful for their very survival, the Indian groups of Ohio began to seek conciliation with the powerful French. Only if the French threat were removed could the Ohio Indians afford to attach themselves to the British.

Virginia and the Campaign of 1754

The deteriorating situation on the Ohio motivated Dinwiddie to take immediate action. The governor ordered Captain William Trent and a detachment of Virginia recruits to the forks of the Ohio to protect a group of men under Christopher Gist who were building a fort for the Ohio Company at that strategic location. On January 21, 1754 Dinwiddie gave Washington a new assignment. Only five days after his

return to Williamsburg, the young major was dispatched westward with orders to raise and train one hundred men. As soon as this troop was organized, Washington was to proceed to the forks of the Ohio and complete the fort now under construction.³⁶

The governor called a special session of the House of Burgesses in mid-February 1754 and informed them of the results of Washington's recent westward journey. Dinwiddie related Washington's intelligence that the French were planning to build a fort at the forks of the Ohio, currently had an army of over fifteen hundred men including "their Indians in Friendship with them," and proposed to capture Logstown and use it for their center of operations in the area. The governor repeated the French intention "not to permit any English subjects to trade on the waters of the Ohio, but to seize their Goods and send them Prisoners to Quebec."³⁷ Recounting stories of several recent barbarous massacres allegedly committed by pro-French Indians, Dinwiddie called on the Assembly "to exert the most Vigorous Efforts" against the French and their Indian allies. The governor informed the Burgesses that he had already sent a party to build a fort at the forks of the Ohio and beseeched them to lend their support to his plans.³⁸

The Burgesses responded with "Resentment and Indignation at the unjustifiable Proceedings and Encroachments of the French, and French Indians" and expressed their "utmost Abhorrence of their late barbarous Cruelties and Depradations." Previously unwilling to finance Dinwiddie's aggressive policy on the Ohio, the Assembly voted

a new tax on the colony to provide the £10,000 for meeting the French invasion. The governor congratulated the formerly lethargic Assembly on its "Zeal for his Majesty's Service" and continued to mobilize Virginia's resources for a confrontation with the French.³⁹

Washington experienced considerable difficulty in raising the men intended to reinforce the British on the Ohio. Recent raids by French Indians were the cause of Washington's difficulty. Unwilling to leave unprotected families in isolated settlements, men living on Virginia's frontier declined to join the proposed army. Washington then transferred his recruitment efforts to the Alexandria region. In March 1754, Dinwiddie reorganized the composition of Virginia's expeditionary force, calling for three hundred volunteers, naming Joshua Fry colonel of the force and designating Washington lieutenant colonel and second-in-command.⁴⁰

In April 1754, Washington led one hundred and fifty of the Virginia volunteers westward from Alexandria in an attempt to reinforce Trent's company against the expected advance of the French. Fry and the remainder of the army, following at a slower pace, were to bring artillery and supplies into Ohio in the spring of 1754.

Before Washington and his troops could make their way through the wilderness to the fort, the French struck. On April 17, a French force of approximately one thousand men, under the command of Pierre Claude de Contrecoeur, reached the unfinished fort at the forks of the Ohio. Contrecoeur sent Captain le Mercier to the British with a demand that they surrender immediately. Ensign Edward Ward, acting commander of the fort in the absence of Captain Trent, had little

choice but to surrender the forty-one man garrison. Ward, on the advice of the loyal Half King who had been at the fort site since Trent's party arrived in February, tried to stall for time, asking the French to take no action until Trent returned. Contrecoeur rejected Ward's request, threatening to take the fort by force if the British failed to surrender immediately. Ward turned the fort over to the French and was permitted to evacuate his men in safety. The Half King accompanied the retreating British but refused to go quietly. The sachem insisted that the British had built the fort with his approval and that the French invasion was totally contrary to the wishes of the Indians of Ohio. Ignoring the Half King's protest, Contrecoeur's army took possession of the fort, began to finish and enlarge it, and named it Fort DuQuesne.⁴¹

On April 20, near Wills' Creek, the retreating British party under Ensign Ward met Washington's advancing force and reported the loss of the forks to the French. Ward carried with him a message from the Half King to the Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania calling for immediate military action against the French. The Half King asked that troops be sent from the two colonies to fight the French and promised the Indians of Ohio were "now ready to fall upon them, waiting only for your assistance." In a highly meaningful statement profoundly indicative of the Indians' position, the Half King urged "Have good courage and come as soon as possible; you will find us as ready to fight them as you are yourselves." Failure to respond to this plea for aid would be disastrous for Anglo-Indian relations, proclaimed the Half King, who predicted "If you do not come to our

assistance now, we are entirely undone, and I think we shall never meet together again."⁴²

Washington, Ward, and the other officers of the British troops held a council of war on April 23. They realized that it would be foolhardy to advance against the large French force at the forks of the Ohio, but "being strongly invited by the Indians, and particularly by the speeches of the Half King," they decided to proceed to the Ohio Company's stronghouse at Redstone Creek. Washington believed this plan was wise in that it would enable the British to establish a base for a future siege of Fort DuQuesne and would "preserve our men from the ill consequences of inaction, and encourage the Indians our Allies to remain in our interests."⁴³

Washington's army began pushing toward Redstone, cutting a road wide enough for artillery and supply wagons. In mid-May 1754, the young colonel had every reason to believe his efforts would lead to success when reports arrived from the east that his force would soon be joined by Fry's half of the Virginia volunteers, another company of one hundred Virginians under Captain MacKaye, a detachment of three hundred and fifty Carolinians under Colonel Innes, and two hundred men from Maryland. These optimistic reports were tempered by intelligence received from two of the Half King's scouts who informed Washington that the construction of Fort DuQuesne was proceeding rapidly and that the 800-man garrison momentarily expected a reinforcement of 1600 additional French troops.⁴⁴

His advance slowed by swollen streams, Washington wrote to the Half King assuring him of the British commitment to the Indians of Ohio. Washington informed the sachem of the reinforcements coming from the east and promised that the British would "protect you against your treacherous enemy the French." The Half King replied several days later that he was on his way to join the British expedition and warned Washington to be on guard against a French force which was known to be in the area. Throughout the month of May 1754, Washington continued his slow march toward Redstone, constantly sending out scouting parties to locate the French.⁴⁵

On May 27, Christopher Gist brought news to Washington that a group of fifty Frenchmen under Captain LaForce had passed by his cabin at nearby New Settlement the previous day. Gist informed Washington that the French party was looking for the Half King. Washington passed this news along to "several young Indians who were in our camp." Washington was pleased that these warriors, fearful that the enemy would kill the Half King if they found him, "offered to accompany our people to go after the French," and stood ready, should the Half King be harmed by the French, to go to the Indian towns of the area "in order to incite their warriors to fall upon them."⁴⁶

The Half King sent Washington a message on the evening of May 27 that he had discovered a party of French soldiers hiding in "a low obscure place" only a few miles from the present British camp. Washington set out immediately with a detachment of forty men for a rendezvous with the Half King. Impeded by rain and darkness,

Washington reached the Half King's camp at sunrise. Washington and the Half King held a council of war and decided to attack the nearby French encampment. Guided by the Half King's scouts, the joint force of Washington's volunteers and the Half King's pro-British Ohio Indians struck the French by surprise. The British and their Indian allies surrounded the camp undetected, and opened fire. The French party was caught completely off guard. In the short skirmish that followed, ten Frenchmen, including Jumonville, the commander of the party, were killed. The remaining twenty-two members of the French troop were taken as prisoners. The first armed conflict between the two European powers in Ohio quickly ended in a victory for the British.⁴⁷

The Half King reacted enthusiastically to the military success. Washington wanted him to go to Winchester to meet with Governor Dinwiddie, but the sachem preferred to stay on the Ohio as he perceived his people "were in too imminent danger from the French whom they had attacked." The chieftain departed the British camp briefly to spread the news of the battle to neighboring towns and recruit more Indians to fight for Washington. He sent messengers to all the Indian villages under his jurisdiction "in order to invite them to take up the hatchet." As the Half King worked to arouse and organize the Ohio Indians, Washington sent his prisoners to Winchester. Expecting the French at DuQuesne to retaliate for the attack on Jumonville, Washington began to build a small fort at Great Meadows.⁴⁸

On June 1, the Half King rejoined Washington's army at Great Meadows, accompanied by "twenty-five or thirty families" totalling

approximately "eighty to one hundred persons, including women and children." The sachem reported he had sent his trusted aide Scarrouady to Logstown to enlist the support of the Indians of that large village. Other messengers were sent to the Wyandots in Ohio and the Six Nations Central Council, informing them of the recent encounter with the Jumonville party and requesting their assistance against the French.⁴⁹

The presence of a large British force on the Ohio and the recent victory over the French had significant influence on the Ohio Indians. Small groups drifted into Washington's camp. A delegation of Mingoes from Logstown arrived, expressed their pleasure at seeing a British army in the field, and asked Washington "not to take it amiss" that they had been reported to be recently in the French interest. The Half King, responding for Washington, called upon these Mingoes to support the British army that had come "to dispossess the French" from Indian lands and "to take care of your wives and children." The sachem urged the Logstown Indians to "set your young men and your warriors to sharpening their hatchets, to join and unite with us vigorously in our battles."⁵⁰ A group of Delawares, who had been suspected of going over to the French, came to Washington's camp and made firm protestations of their friendship for the British. The Delawares promised to ignore anti-British rumors spread by the French and to be "guided by you, our brethren, and by our uncles the Six Nations: and will do on all occasions what is just and right, taking advice from you alone." Washington accepted this declaration of friendship and persuaded the Delaware chieftain

King Shingas to employ some of his warriors to scout in the vicinity of the French forts on the Allegheny. Shingas brought his Delaware people into the encampment of the British army and he gave assurances of their assistance in the future, pledging to work toward bringing more Ohio Indians into the British interest.⁵¹

The Ohio Indians did not have complete confidence, however, in the British expeditionary force. Aware of the relative strength of the two European armies, the Indians were waiting to see if the rumors were true that both sides would be soon reinforced. The Indians of Ohio did not want totally to commit themselves to either side until they could ascertain which would be able to place an army on the Ohio that would dominate the area. Although declaring their allegiance to the British, the Indians were most concerned with their own safety. The Half King's band and Shingas' Delaware group preferred to stay behind at the new fort at Great Meadows rather than accompany Washington's army as it once again began building the supply road westward to Redstone.⁵²

By June 27, 1754, Washington's army had constructed the proposed road between Wills' Creek and Redstone as far as Gist's New Settlement. News came that evening that a large assemblage of French and enemy Indians was marching from Fort Duquesne to strike Washington's advancing army. Washington held a conference with his officers and decided to retreat toward Wills' Creek rather than face a numerically superior French army. As the British troops withdrew, the French forces struck and destroyed the Ohio Company storehouse at Redstone. The French then moved toward the new British fort at

Great Meadows, hoping to intercept Washington's retreating army at
that point.⁵³

Washington's troops, exhausted by the work of road construction and the retreat, arrived at Fort Necessity on July 2, 1754. Depleted by desertions and illness, and weakened by lack of food, Washington's army no longer presented an imposing appearance. Washington and his officers elected to make defensive stand at the fort at Great Meadows rather than try to continue the retreat. Perceiving the poor condition of Washington's army, and aware through their scouts of the size of the approaching French force, the pro-British Indians at Fort Necessity chose self-preservation over continued participation in the campaign against the enemy. The day following the arrival of the British army at Fort Necessity, the Indians vanished without even informing Washington of their departure. The Indians saw no need of becoming part of the doomed garrison in a besieged fortress.⁵⁴

Washington's conduct toward his Indian allies was also a contributing factor in their disappearance. The Half King was later quoted as saying that Washington "had no Experience; he took it upon him to command the Indians as his Slaves, and would have them every Day upon the Scout and to attack the Enemy by themselves, but would by no means take Advice from the Indians." The Half King was also critical of Washington for not building a stronger fort at Great Meadows as the sachem had counseled.⁵⁵

On July 3, 1754, the French force arrived in the vicinity of Great Meadows and began firing on Fort Necessity. Washington's troops endured the fire for the rest of the day, but had no real chance of

of holding out. Around midnight the French commander, Captain de Villiers met with Washington to discuss terms for the surrender of the fort. The proposal made by Villiers was surprisingly lenient, especially in view of the fact that the French commander was the half brother of Jumonville, slain five weeks earlier by the British. Villiers offered to allow the British troops to withdraw unharmed in return for the release of the French prisoners taken at the Jumonville encounter. Washington accepted the terms and returned to Virginia.⁵⁶

The defeat at Fort Necessity was a devastating blow to British prestige among the Indians of Ohio. Washington's surrender had removed the only viable British force from the vicinity of the Ohio Valley. The Indians of the area were now left entirely to their own resources in their relations with the French. For their own survival, many naturally chose to establish closer ties with the French rather than to remain identified as friends of the defeated British. The French had proved themselves superior on the field of battle and the lesson was not lost on the Indians. The British would have to work very hard to convince the Indians of Ohio of their ability to best the French in armed combat. British traders and British troops having been driven out of the Ohio Valley by the French advance of 1753-1754, the Indians were left with little choice but to attach themselves to the military power of New France.

The Albany Conference 1754

As George Washington exchanged shots with the French at Jumonville Glen and Fort Necessity, delegates from the northern colonies met in New York for the Albany Congress. This conference had been ordered by the Board of Trade following Governor Clinton's report of the New York City conference of 1753 in which Hendrick had broken the ancient covenant chain. Although William Johnson had been able to placate the Mohawks and reestablish the traditional bond between the British and the Iroquois, Hendrick's dramatic words had had a profound effect on the home government in London. Fearful that the friendship of the Six Nations was in danger of being forever lost, the Board of Trade summoned all the colonies "whose security and interest depends upon and is connected with them" to send delegates to a conference with the Iroquois for the purpose of reaffirming the League's allegiance to the British interest.⁵⁷

The Board of Trade was "greatly concern'd and surprized" that New York had been "so inattentive to the general interest of His Majesty's Subjects in America" as to have allowed relations with the Iroquois to reach such an abyss. In view of "how great the consequences the friendship and alliance of the Six Nations is to all His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America," the Board recommended that the new governor of New York, Sir Danvers Osborne, arrange a conference with the Iroquois to renew the covenant chain.⁵⁸

The Board of Trade hoped that the proposed conference would result in a treaty of alliance between the British colonies and all

the Indian nations living to the south of the Great Lakes. It was desired that the damaging tribal warfare between groups of pro-British Indians could be ended and that a common front could be organized against French expansion. Hopefully, the economic advantage to be gained through trade with the British would cause all of the Indians to unite against New France. French expansion thus blocked, the British colonies would be able to extend themselves into the trans-Appalachian west, establishing forts and trading centers.⁵⁹

Governor Osborne committed suicide on the second day of his administration, but the Board of Trade's orders to call an inter-colonial conference with the Six Nations were followed by his successor, Lieutenant Governor James DeLancey. The Albany Conference opened on June 19, 1754 with representatives from New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Pennsylvania in attendance. A commission of seven men, one from each participating colony, was appointed to draft the text of the speech to be delivered to the Indian delegates in the name of all the colonies.

In an effort to reestablish the traditional Anglo-Iroquois alliance currently threatened by the French advance on the Allegheny and Ohio, DeLancey called upon the Six Nations to remember the treaties of the past by which they had acknowledged the British King and their ally and protector. The Albany address reminded the Iroquois that the French penetration of the Ohio threatened to "interrupt and destroy all Trade and intercourse between the British

and the several Indian nations on the continent. . . ." The governor concluded the speech by asking if the new French forts in the west had been constructed with the consent and approval of the Six Nations.⁶⁰

After more than a week of debate, the address was approved and delivered by Governor DeLancey. The speech of the British colonies began in the customary manner by condoling the Indians on the death of those who had passed away since the last conference, presenting the Indians with gifts from the British and reaffirming the long standing covenant chain of friendship. The British recommended that the Six Nations consolidate their settlements for purposes of defense and insisted that the Onondagas recall those members of their tribe that had gone to live with the French at Oswegatchie on the St. Lawrence.⁶¹

The Six Nations reply opened with a firm reassertion of their desire to honor and preserve the covenant chain of friendship with the British. Hendrick, speaking for the Six Nations, scolded the British for ignoring the needs of the Iroquois in recent years and attributed any difficulties between the two peoples to this negligence on the part of the British. The Mohawk sachem declared that the French forts had been built "without our consent or approbation." He cited the governments of Pennsylvania and Virginia, however, for the similar offense of having "made paths thro' our Country to Trade and build Houses without acquainting us with it." Hendrick and the Iroquois were also critical of the behavior of both the French and the British in regard to their land claims in Ohio. Hendrick expressed the Indians' concern that the governors of Virginia and

of Canada "are both quarrelling about lands that belong to us, and such a quarrel as this may end in our destruction." Continuing his censure of the British, Hendrick rebuked them for their lack of military ardor during and since King George's War. The failure of the British to capture Crown Point and to maintain a fort at Saratoga was seen by the Six Nations as "a shame & a scandal to you." Not even Albany was fortified against a French attack. "Look at the French," admonished Hendrick, "they are Men, they are fortifying everywhere -- but we are ashamed to say it, you are like women bare and open without any fortifications." Abraham, the brother of Hendrick, concluded the address of the Six Nations by asking for the return of William Johnson as New York's official agent for the management of Indian affairs. The sachem referred to Johnson as the Indians "good and trusty Friend," and pleaded for Johnson's reinstatement, predicting such a move would have a positive influence on Anglo-Iroquois relations.⁶²

Caught somewhat off-guard by the stinging reproach of the Iroquois, the British commissioners composed a response aimed at answering the Indians' remonstrance. DeLancey delivered the address which opened with an apology for past neglect shown by the colony of New York. On the issue of expansion into the west, the governor declared that while the French marched armies into Ohio for the purpose of seizing Indian lands, the British penetration was intended to preserve the lands for the Indians and extend the benefits of British trade to the tribes of Ohio. DeLancey then introduced Conrad Weiser, who affirmed DeLancey's contentions that the British were

interested in the protection and welfare of the Indians while the French thought only of territorial gain at the expense of the Indians. Concerning the Iroquois charge of the British colonies' lack of military preparation, DeLancey informed the Iroquois that the Albany Conference had been called to rectify that disorder. While the British worked to fortify their frontiers, the governor informed the Six Nations that he expected them to "take care to keep your people from going over to the French."⁶³ After delivering the address in behalf of all the colonies present at the Albany Conference, DeLancey concluded with a few remarks spoken in his capacity as governor of New York. DeLancey answered the Iroquois request for the reinstatement of Johnson by informing the Indians that Johnson continued to decline to serve as the colony's agent for Indian affairs. The governor called on the Iroquois to once again recognize Albany (not Mount Johnson) as the appropriate site for conferences with the British and requested that they give the commissioners who had been appointed to succeed Johnson another year's trial.

On July 5, 1754 the Iroquois gave their response to DeLancey's second speech. Reluctantly the Six Nations agreed to give the Indian commissioners of New York a one year trial, but made it clear that they would much prefer Johnson as their liaison with the government of the colony. The Iroquois expressed their appreciation for DeLancey's statements concerning the desire of the British to protect the interests of the Indians and the acknowledgment by the British that the lands in the west belonged to the Indians. The Iroquois warned the British again to take immediate steps to correct "the

defenceless state of your Frontiers . . . and of the Country of the Six Nations."

Discussions pertaining to Indian affairs ended at Albany on July 8, 1754. In a final meeting with the Iroquis, Governor DeLancey expressed the hope that he had given satisfactory answers to all their grievances. Hendrick replied that the Six Nations were pleased "that all things have been so amicably settled." Thus, the Indians departed Albany on a note of friendship and accord. Both sides had renewed the covenant chain and pledged to keep the agreements made between the two peoples.

The official statements made by DeLancey and Hendrick at the Albany Conference would seem to indicate that all issues between the British and the Indians had been solved. In truth, however, the problem of British expansion into Indian lands was made worse by events at the conference. While the official discussions were going on, the representatives of Pennsylvania used the occasion of the conference to work out a huge land purchase that would have significant repercussions in the future.

Working through interpreter Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvania commissioners sought to purchase all land west of the Susquehanna River south of the west branch of that river. The western boundary of the purchase was the major point of contention. While some of the Indians agreed to permit the purchase to extend westward into Ohio and even beyond, a faction led by Hendrick insisted that the western limit of the tract should be the Allegheny mountains. Weiser refused to accept Hendrick's position and hinted that perhaps

the Six Nations were planning to sell Ohio to the French. Weiser also insulted Hendrick, challenging the jurisdiction of the Mohawk sachem over lands lying so far to the west. Eventually Weiser was successful in winning over Hendrick and was able to make the large purchase desired by Pennsylvania. At the private conference on July 6, the Pennsylvania delegation met with representatives of the Six Nations to finalize the transaction. The Indians agreed that the tract could "reach beyond the Ohio and to Lake Erie wherever it will." the purchase price was £400 with another £400 to be paid when settlement of the land actually occurred.⁶⁴

The land purchase by Pennsylvania at the Albany Conference was controversial when it was made and continued to raise questions as time passed. Weiser defended his actions in arranging the purchase by stating that the transaction had been made fairly and openly. Hendrick, Abraham, Shickellamy, and other sachems representing all the Six Nations signed the deed. Weiser claimed that William Johnson and Governor DeLancey were aware of the deal and made no objections to it. Weiser further defended his action by pointing out that commissioners from Connecticut were negotiating for the purchase of the same tract of land and would have made the deal for their colony if Pennsylvania did not.⁶⁵

Other observers have cited the Pennsylvania land purchase at Albany as a contributing factor to the subsequent decline of Anglo-Indian relations. Writing an account in 1759 of Pennsylvania's Indian affairs, Charles Thomson noted that the transaction "ruined our Interest with the Indians and threw those of them, especially to the westward

of us entirely into the Hands of the French." The land purchase was damaging, argued Thomson, in that it gave credence to French protestations "that they did not come to deprive the Indians of their land, but to hinder the English from settling westward of the Allegheny Hills." Thomson reports that the Albany sale was disagreeable to the Six Nations Central Council and to the tribes of Ohio and was highly detrimental to the attempts of the British to win the allegiance and trust of the Indians.⁶⁶

Even more damaging to the British interest was a land transaction made by Joseph Lydius in behalf of a group of Connecticut land speculators desirous of buying a tract in northern Pennsylvania. Lydius was an experienced but unscrupulous fur trader who had used his connections and influence with various Indian groups to try to build his private fortune. He had been an associate of William Johnson in the Mohawk Valley fur trade until his corrupt practices and lack of ethics caused Johnson to break off all association with him. Lydius had gone to Albany in the employ of the Connecticut land speculators and had set up a saloon near the conference site. As the Indian delegation was leaving Albany, Lydius invited Hendrick and several other sachems to enjoy a drink before they departed from the city. Lydius succeeded in getting the Indian leaders inebriated and tricked them into signing away the rights to the Wyoming Valley.⁶⁷ Hendrick later tried to retract his actions but Lydius and his Connecticut partners had their deed. The Six Nations refused to recognize the transaction but Connecticut settlers began to pour into the valley.

The fraudulent Wyoming land acquisition proved to be extremely injurious to British-Indian relations and was a constant source of friction for years to come.⁶⁸

Post-Conference Indian Affairs: New York

Soon after the Albany Conference closed the news came of the defeat at Fort Necessity. Johnson was highly critical of Washington's conduct during the campaign. Johnson was acutely aware of the effect of the defeat on the Indians of New York and Ohio.⁶⁹ Concerned with the vulnerable state of the colony, Johnson wrote to his business associates at Schenectady and Oswego regarding the ability of those two settlements to defend themselves against a French attack.⁷⁰ Though not employed by New York in an official capacity, Johnson worked to maintain the British interest among the Indians and was consulted by Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts and others concerning the present disposition of the Six Nations. Shirley wrote Johnson late in 1754 that as there was no other Englishman who had gained the respect and affection of the Six Nations more than Johnson, he would be pleased to recommend Johnson for a royal appointment as the Crown's representative for Indian affairs.⁷¹ Johnson had repeatedly refused to reassume the office of New York's commissioner to the Six Nations but gave serious consideration to Shirley's suggestion. Writing to the Massachusetts governor in December 1754, Johnson let it be known that he would accept a direct commission from the Crown. Noting that the British stood in danger of losing the Six Nations and that such a blow "might be fatal to the British interest

upon this Continent," Johnson was aware that "the fluctuating disposition of the Six Nations and their Allies" was largely due to the mistrust and contempt they held for the commissioners appointed by New York. The task of "reclaiming" those Indians who had already gone over to the French and "securing" those who were still in the British interest would be extremely difficult, but Johnson pronounced himself "willing to serve your Excellency and my Country." Shirley was pleased to learn of Johnson's availability for the position of superintendent of Indian affairs and conveyed Johnson's acceptance to London. The Lords of Trade, deeply concerned over the decline of Indian relations and the growing threat of war with France, had already recommended to the Crown that Johnson be entrusted with the vital task of conducting Indian affairs in behalf of all the King's northern colonies.⁷²

Post-Conference Indian Affairs: Virginia

The disaster at Fort Necessity had been a grievous setback for Virginia but Governor Dinwiddie was not daunted in his efforts to secure the Ohio Valley for his colony and his King. The governor summoned the Assembly and requested more funds for further military action against the French. The Assembly agreed to appropriate £20,000 but attached certain riders that were so odious to Dinwiddie that he could not sign the bill. Unable to reach a compromise, the appropriation was lost and the governor prorogued the Assembly.⁷³

The failure to gain a new appropriation was a frustrating experience for the energetic Dinwiddie. Even before submitting the

the bill to the Assembly, the governor had laid plans for an autumn strike against the French at Fort DuQuesne. He was convinced by recent intelligence reports that the garrison had been reduced and the fort stood vulnerable to attack. Dinwiddie had written a surprised Colonel Washington on July 31 to recruit his regiment to full strength and prepare to rendezvous at Wills' Creek with Colonel Innes for another march against the French on the Ohio. Given the outcome of the encounter at Fort Necessity, the governor's plan to send out another expedition was somewhat overzealous and impractical but it does demonstrate his total commitment to dislodging the French from the forks of the Ohio. His proposal blocked by his impasse with the legislature, Dinwiddie was forced to abandon his plan for another expedition for 1754 and turned to the home government for military aid for a campaign the following year.⁷⁴

Post-Conference Indian Affairs: Pennsylvania

Following the Albany Conference the focal point of Pennsylvania's diplomatic relations became George Croghan's small settlement at Aughwick.⁷⁵ After the British defeat at Fort Necessity the Half King and Scarrouady brought their band of Mingoes to Croghan's trading center. As the summer of 1754 passed, other groups of pro-British Indians drifted out of Ohio and settled at Aughwick to be near the trusted Croghan in this time of stress. This behavior of the Indians elevated Croghan once again to a place of importance in the conduct of Indian affairs.⁷⁶

The Indians who had congregated at Aughwick demanded to know if the British planned to make an attack on Fort Duquesne in the autumn. Croghan was worried that if the British did nothing, the Indians would abandon the British interest completely and concede Ohio to the French. Croghan informed Governor Hamilton of the situation at Aughwick and urged that a conference be held at once. Hamilton agreed and dispatched Conrad Weiser to meet with the wavering Indians.⁷⁷

Weiser arrived on September 3, 1754 to find over two hundred Ohio Indians living at Aughwick. At the conference which opened the following day, Weiser commended them on their faith and dependence on the government of Pennsylvania and urged them to remain in the British interest. The Ohio Indians were displeased to learn of the large land sale that had been made by the Six Nations to Pennsylvania at the Albany Conference. Weiser was able to placate their fears, however, by explaining that Pennsylvania had the interests of the Indians in mind and was acting to prevent the seizure of Ohio by the French.⁷⁸

Weiser learned in private conference with the Half King and Scarrouady that the situation on the Ohio was steadily deteriorating. The Miamis were reportedly still in the British interest but other nations were in danger of swinging over to the French. The Delawares and Shawnees had refused to join with the Miamis in taking up the hatchet against the French. The French had given a large present to the Delawares and Shawnees and, although the two nations had not committed themselves to the French, they were known to be vacillating.

The Half King and Scarrouady told Weiser that part of the Six Nations stood ready to assist the British but would not commit themselves until "the English gave Proof of their being in earnest" in their desire to block the French advance into the Ohio.⁷⁹

Weiser delivered a message from Governor Hamilton explaining the reasons for Pennsylvania's military inactivity. Hamilton informed the Indians that procedural disputes between himself and the Assembly had crippled Pennsylvania's war effort in the past. The governor indicated that when his replacement arrived the colony would be freed from the feuding that had prevented decisive action in the past, and Pennsylvania would pursue a more aggressive policy. Hamilton requested the Indians to remain at Aughwick and wait for further word from Philadelphia. Weiser thus made no specific promises to the Indians, but left the impression that Pennsylvania would soon take action to repel the French invaders from Ohio.⁸⁰

The Indians at Aughwick accepted Weiser's message and began a period of waiting for word from the Pennsylvania government that an expedition was coming to drive the French out of Ohio. As the months passed and no word came, the Indians grew increasingly uneasy over the intention and ability of the British to strike the French. Croghan was painfully aware that continued inaction on the part of the British would lead to the desertion of the Indians presently at Aughwick. The British interest received a damaging blow on October 4, 1754 when the loyal Half King died of alcoholism. Scarrouady succeeded to the title of the Half King and worked diligently with Croghan to keep the Aughwick Indians from going over to the French.

Governor Hamilton's replacement, Robert Morris, arrived in Philadelphia on October 3, 1754 and immediately turned his attention to the problems of Indian affairs. He met with little cooperation from the Assembly, however, and Pennsylvania took no decisive military action in the autumn of 1754. Croghan, by providing food for the original band that had come to Aughwick in July, managed to keep their allegiance. Pennsylvania's unwillingness to send troops against the French, however, resulted in the loss of the Delawares. When the Ohio Delawares learned that Pennsylvania was planning no action against the French, they left Aughwick after a brief stay and defected to the French.⁸¹

In the late autumn of 1754, Scarrouady set out with a delegation of Six Nations sachems on a diplomatic mission from Aughwick to Ohio by way of Onondaga and Philadelphia. Arriving at the Pennsylvania capital in December, Scarrouady met with Governor Morris and assured him of his continued devotion to the British interest. The chieftain told Morris he would urge Indians of New York and Ohio to go to war against the French. Asserting his undying hatred for the French, Scarrouady called on the Pennsylvania government to demonstrate its loyalty to its Indian allies by participating in the Winchester Conference Virginia had called for the spring of 1755. The new Half King pointed out that a strong, unified front on the part of the British colonies would demonstrate their enthusiasm for war and their commitment to their Indian allies.⁸²

Governor Morris gave his approval to Scarrouady's mission and informed the sachem the Pennsylvania Assembly had authorized the

colony's participation in the upcoming meeting at Winchester.

Morris then told Scarrouady and his party of the British military plans for the campaign season of 1755. The King of England would send ship loads of soldiers to America, promised the governor. The Six Nations could be assured that a large British force would march into the interior of the continent and drive the French from Ohio.⁸³

Pleased at the news of the British plan to go on the offensive in 1755, the Indians were still deeply distressed over the recent land purchases at Albany and cited these transactions as a possible cause for future Anglo-Iroquois ill will. Morris had already received a letter from Shickallamy, the Iroquois viceroy for the Pennsylvania area, complaining of the Wyoming sale. Shickallamy reported that unauthorized "Foreigners and strangers" from Connecticut had suddenly begun to invade his territory "like flocks of birds" and appealed to the governor of Pennsylvania to remove the unwelcome settlers. Morris now inquired of Scarrouady concerning the land sale. The sachem denounced the transaction as fraudulent and attributed it to the corrupt Lydius, "a vile man" who had taken advantage of the Indians. Scarrouady asserted that the Onondaga Central Council would never recognize the illegal purchase.⁸⁴

The Philadelphia Conference of December 1754 had mixed results. Pennsylvania was pleased to learn of the Scarrouady faction's continued allegiance to the British and the Indians were gratified to know that the British planned strong military action for the coming year. The land question, however, remained as a highly volatile issue that threatened to drive the Indians away from the British

interest. As Scarrouady's delegation departed for New York and Ohio, Morris could only hope that William Johnson would be successful in using his influence and diplomatic skill to remove the land fraud issue as an obstacle to Anglo-Iroquois military cooperation.

Conclusion

The year 1754 had been disastrous for the British in their relations with the Indians. Due to a multitude of setbacks and blunders, thousands of Indians had been lost to the French and more were defecting every day. The loss of Indian allies had begun when the French advanced into the Ohio Valley in 1753. Some Indians who were impressed with the French show of force or who were directly in the path of the French army attached themselves to the French interest immediately. Other Indians who were favorably disposed toward the British could not hold out for long. Since the presence of the French army made it impossible for British traders to enter Ohio, the economic advantage that the British enjoyed was negated. Unable to trade with the British, the Indians of Ohio had no alternative but to drift into the military-economic sphere of the French.

The French presence on Ohio was resented as an invasion and was not universally welcomed by the Indians of the area, but the British also did great harm to their own interest by concluding the land purchases made during the Albany Conference of 1754. The Indians had been growing increasingly uneasy over British territorial expansion and the Albany land deals seemed to confirm their worst fears. While the experienced and honest Weiser probably acted in good faith in

arranging the Pennsylvania purchase, he seems to have suffered a lapse in his usual good judgment. The purchase price was absurdly low and the transaction stirred a deep resentment in the minds of the Six Nations and Ohio Indians who were beginning to believe that British land hunger was unsatiable. A good bargain for Pennsylvania in a purely business sense, it was a mistake in the long run in that it broke down the good will and trust of the Indians that would be needed as war with New France approached. The Lydius-Connecticut deal was a swindle from its inception. The long-suffering Delawares had been given the Wyoming Valley as their homeland by the Six Nations. Suddenly British settlers began invading their lands. The result was that the Delawares became completely disaffected from their Six Nations "uncles" and their British "brethren." Dispossessed from their supposedly inviolable land, the Delawares became easy prey for the overtures of the French, who successfully played upon their resentments and drew them away from the British interest.

The military defeat of the British army at Fort Necessity was also highly damaging to the British. Those Indians who had resisted the French invasion of the Ohio had put their faith in the ability of the British to remove the French army and once again open up the trading routes to Ohio. Washington's defeat shattered their hopes. The French were, in fact, the "masters of the Ohio" that they had boasted they would become. For their own survival, it was incumbent upon the Indians of Ohio to seek a rapprochement with the French. The French victory at Great Meadows would have a lasting effect on British attempts to recruit Indians into their interest. The

British had suffered a total and humiliating defeat and after the 1754 debacle, only an active, aggressive, and militarily successful policy in the future could hope to restore British prestige to its former high level.

NOTES: Chapter VI

1. The road was subsequently known as "Nemacolin's Trail" in recognition of the services rendered by the Delaware. See Kenneth P. Bailey, The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement 1748-1792 (Glendale, Cal.: Arthur Clark, 1939), pp. 152-154; and Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), II, p. 636.
2. Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 154.
3. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 636; Bailey, Ohio Company, pp. 155-157.
4. Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. 47-49.
5. James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959) and Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 48-50.
6. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1908), XVIII, pp. 128-129.
7. Presque Isle is modern Erie, Pennsylvania. Fort Le Boeuf is now Waterford, Pennsylvania. Venango is Franklin, Pennsylvania. Howard Peckham, The Colonial Wars: 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago History of American Civilization, Daniel Boorstin, editor, 1964), p. 128; and John Fiske, New France and New England (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), o. 243.
8. Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 128.
9. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1855), VI, pp. 781-782.
10. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 782-784.
11. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, oo. 785-786.
12. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 787.
13. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 788.
14. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 115.
15. Italics mine. "Memorandum for Conrad Weiser Esquire (July 28, 1753) as reprinted in Paul A.W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend

- of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), p. 341.
16. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg: 1851-1852), V, pp. 645-646.
 17. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 810.
 18. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 810-812.
 19. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 813.
 20. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 815.
 21. Bailey, Ohio Company, pp. 138-139.
 22. Bailey, Ohio Company, p. 141.
 23. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 344-345; and Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 657-659. The Pennsylvania Commissioners to the Carlisle Conference of 1753 were Isaac Norris, Benjamin Franklin, and Richard Peters.
 24. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 670-673.
 25. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 674-677.
 26. Pa. Col. Rec., V, pp. 677-684; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 348.
 27. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, pp. 637-638.
 28. George Washington, The Diaries of George Washington 1748-1799, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925), I, p. 43.
 29. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 50-51.
 30. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 51-52.
 31. Gist describes the three accompanying Indians as "two old men and one young warrior." See Christopher Gist, Christopher Gist's Journals, edited by William M. Darlington (Pittsburgh: J. R. Weldin, 1893), p. 81.
 32. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 53-54.
 33. St. Pierre had succeeded to the command of the French force on the Ohio following the death of Marin in October. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 54-55.
 34. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 58-62.

35. Washington reported: "Our horses were now so weak and feeble, and the Baggage so heavy . . . that we doubted much their performing it." Washington, Diaries, I, p. 63.
36. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 642.
37. H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1909), 1754, p. 175.
38. McIlwaine, House of Burgesses, 1754, pp. 176-177.
39. McIlwaine, House of Burgesses, 1754, pp. 179-180; Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 642; William W. Hening, ed., Statutes at Large: A Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619 (Richmond, Va.: Franklin Press, 1819-1823), VI, pp. 417-418.
40. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 645.
41. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, pp. 646-647; Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, p. 338; Lawrence Henry Gipson, Zones of International Friction, IV of "The British Empire Before the American Revolution" (New York: Knopf, 1961), pp. 308-309.
42. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 75-76.
43. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 76-77.
44. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 81-82.
45. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 82-85.
46. Washington, Diaries, I, p. 86.
47. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 87-88.
48. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 88-90. Great Meadows is approximately 10 miles south of modern Uniontown, Pennsylvania.
49. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 90-91.
50. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 94-95.
51. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 96-100.
52. Washington, Diaries, I, pp. 100-101.
53. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 654.
54. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, p. 654.

55. Charles Thomson, "Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delawares and Shawnees" (London: Printed for J. Wilkie, 1759), pp. 80-81.
56. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 134-135.
57. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 799-802; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 119.
58. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 800-802.
59. Osgood, Colonies in 18th Century, IV, p. 309.
60. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 862-863.
61. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 861-862.
62. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 869-871.
63. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, pp. 872-873.
64. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, p. 119; Doc. Rel. N.Y., VI, p. 877; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 358-359.
65. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 358-360.
66. Thomson, "Causes of Alienation," pp. 77-79.
67. The Wyoming Valley is located in the northeast section of the state of Pennsylvania, centered around the city of Wilkes-Barre.
68. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 361-363; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 120-121. A copy of the Lydius deed is in The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), I, p. 405.
69. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 409-410.
70. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 413-414.
71. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 425-427.
72. Johnson Papers, I, p. 433.
73. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, pp. 658-659; McIlwaine, House of Burgesses, 1752-1758, pp. 191-192, 198.
74. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, pp. 658-659.
75. Aughwick is modern Shirleyville, between Harrisburg and Altoona, Pennsylvania. Croghan established headquarters for his fur trading at Aughwick when French presence on the Ohio forced him to leave that area.

76. Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 70-71.
77. Wainwright, George Croghan, p. 72.
78. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 150-160. Extracts from Weiser's Journal are reprinted in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 366-371.
79. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, p. 159; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 370-371.
80. Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 73-74.
81. Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 74-78.
82. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 194-198.
83. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 204-205.
84. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 216-217.

CHAPTER VII

THE BEGINNING OF MAJOR MILITARY OPERATIONS

The reverses of 1754, detrimental as they were to the British interest, did have the beneficial effect of motivating the British home government to action. The Newcastle ministry was especially alarmed over Washington's defeat at Fort Necessity and acted immediately to provide for the defense of the colonies. Two battalions of British regulars were dispatched to North America. General Edward Braddock, a veteran of forty-three years of service, was chosen to command the troops. The battalions contained only five hundred men each but it was planned that they could be brought up to full strength of seven hundred through the recruitment of colonials when the army reached America. Two additional battalions, to be raised in America and commanded by William Shirley and William Pepperrell, were also authorized.¹

Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia acted vigorously to assist and implement the British war effort. His feud with the Assembly resolved, Dinwiddie worked through the winter of 1754-1755 to organize men and supplies for the coming year's campaign. The governor authorized the construction of Fort Cumberland at Wills' Creek and ordered the building of a better supply road to that vital point. Plans were made to raise eight hundred volunteers for two Virginia companies.²

The Alexandria Conference, 1755

In late February 1755, Braddock arrived in Williamsburg and began active preparations for the coming campaign season. British civil and military leaders gathered at Alexandria, Virginia in mid-April to meet with the general for the purpose of planning the overall strategy and coordinating operations. From Braddock's orders and the discussions at the Alexandria meeting, the British plan emerged. William Johnson was given a general's commission and would lead one British force up the Lake George-Lake Champlain route against the French fortifications at Crown Point. Massachusetts Governor Shirley, the architect of the surprising British victory at Louisbourg a decade earlier, would attempt to break French power on Lake Ontario by attacking Fort Niagara. Braddock would lead a force built around the two British regiments against Fort DuQuesne. Hopefully the fall of that fortress would end New France's control of the Ohio. After conquering the French at DuQuesne, the plan called for Braddock to move northward and assist Shirley's army in its advance upon Niagara.³

At the Alexandria Conference of April 1755, Johnson also received the long awaited royal commission as Superintendent of Indian Affairs on the northern frontier. By the authority given him to designate "a person or Persons to have sole Management & direction of the Affairs of the Six Nations of Indians & their Allies," Braddock named Johnson to this vital post. He authorized him to use "full Power & Authority to treat and confer with them [the Indians] as often and upon such matters as you shall judge necessary for his Majesty's

Service. . . ."⁴ Johnson's orders placed him in command of the troops being raised in the northern colonies of New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. He was instructed to engage as many Six Nations Indians as possible for his Lake Champlain expedition and for the other two British armies. When his newly raised colonial troops had rendezvoused in Albany, Johnson was to lead them northward and (since Britain and France were technically not at war) construct a fortress on the high ground commanding Crown Point. If the French should resist the attempt to erect the British fort, Johnson was to attack the enemy "using his utmost efforts to dislodge the French and to take possession" of the Crown Point fortress. In the event that the French did not contest the building of the British fort, Johnson was to wait until his artillery was in place and then order the enemy to withdraw from their bastion. If the French refused to depart immediately, Johnson was authorized to compel the French evacuation "by force of Arms and to break up all the French settlement" on the lake.⁵

Following the Alexandria Conference, Johnson returned to his home on the Mohawk to plan and organize his expedition. He was troubled most by financial questions, especially in regard to the recruitment of Indian allies for the three British assault forces. Johnson knew that he would have to provide guns, powder, blankets, and provisions for the Indians in order to get them to leave their homes and participate in the hazardous expedition. Johnson had difficulty estimating the eventual total expense of securing an adequate number of Indian allies, but knew that the cost would be

great. No definite provision had been made for recruitment of the Indians and Johnson was uncertain as to how to meet this great expense. Johnson judged that the task of winning the Indians back to their "former Attachments" would be "difficult" and "hazardous." So strong had the influence of the French become among the castles of the Six Nations that Johnson's personal safety might be in danger if he should venture unguarded into the forest.⁶

Even if able by "the whole Force of my Influence & Abilities" to regain the allegiance of the Iroquois, Johnson warned that the project would "unavoidably demand a considerable sum of money." Johnson knew that if his recruitment efforts were successful, the Indians would "immediately throw themselves & their Families upon me for their maintenance for all their necessary wants."⁷ Johnson knew that should he gain a commitment from the Indians, they would no longer feel safe in their vulnerable towns and would seek the protection of the British. Concerned for the safety of their own towns, the Iroquois warriors would not enlist in the service of the British and leave their families exposed to raids from Canada. The Indians believed that if they joined the British it was up to the British to support and defend them. Johnson knew that failure to supply these needs of pro-British Indians would be a grave mistake. The Indians would conclude that the British were either unconcerned over their welfare, or too weak to furnish them aid and would be lost to the French. Aware that the lack of British support could fatally undermine his recruitment efforts, Johnson pleaded with the governors of

the colonies furnishing troops for the Crown Point expedition to establish a fund to subsidize his Indian diplomacy.⁸

Johnson's financial worries were at least partially alleviated by assurances from Shirley that Massachusetts would meet its share of the expenses incurred in his dealings with the Indians. Shirley recognized the fact that Johnson could make "no Estimate of what it will cost to engage the Indians." The governor informed the New Yorker that the Massachusetts Assembly had voted to leave the matter of expenditures to Johnson's discretion and to pay the colony's proportionate share of the expense. Shirley even expressed the hope that an advance could be made to Johnson so that he would not have to take funds out of his own pocket for the conduct of Indian affairs. Shirley further promised to use his influence to get the other colonies to contribute their share to the cost of Johnson's recruitment program.

The Mohawk Conference, May 1755

Johnson held a conference with the Mohawks in mid-May 1755 for the purpose of enlisting their aid in the British campaigns scheduled for the coming summer. Johnson knew that he would first have to gain the allegiance of the Mohawks if he were to have any hope of winning the support of the Six Nations Confederacy. In order to gain Mohawk assistance against the French, Johnson emphasized the military prowess of the British and their commitment to the war effort. Johnson, who was cognizant of those matters that were most important to the Indians, assured them that the King had sent "His

Excellency General Braddock a great warrior . . . with a large Number of armed Men Great Guns & other Implements of War to protect You & all his other Subjects on this Continent from the Incroachments and Insults of the French." The existence of Braddock's large, powerful army would hopefully convince the Mohawks that their future lay in an alliance with the British.⁹

Johnson further sought to gain the Mohawk's aid by notifying them of his appointment to "the sole Management & Superintendency of all Affairs relating to You and your Allies." Johnson was aware that he was held in great regard by the Iroquois and that his reappointment would cause the Indians to be much more trusting of the British. In his endeavor to draw the Mohawks into his service, Johnson also emphasized the traditional Iroquois-British good will and Iroquois-French enmity to reinforce his arguments.¹⁰

The Mohawks responded favorably to Johnson's address. The news that Johnson would once again be in charge of Indian affairs was extremely pleasing to them. Abraham, the sachem delivering the Mohawk reply, expressed the hope that the declining British-Iroquois relationship would be rejuvenated through Johnson's reappointment. Abraham pledged that the Mohawks would not go to Canada and echoed Johnson's sentiments on the French by stating: "We know the French to be False & treacherous . . . while their Lips were smooth, their Hearts were full of Poison against us." The sachem promised that the Mohawks would not go to Canada for talks with the French but immediately requested a gift of powder and lead from the British.

Realizing Johnson was in no position to refuse such a legitimate request, the Mohawks seized the opportunity to obtain needed supplies.

The Mohawks made another more serious request at the conference of May 1755, that demonstrated their preoccupation with the issue of their own survival. Aware that their pledge of alliance with the British would make them susceptible to French attack, the Mohawks requested that two forts be constructed in their territory. "As we apprehend troublesome times are approaching We must renew our Request . . . that we may have some Place of Security built for our Wives & Children & we hope you will now comply with it." Concern for the safety of their families was clearly a major influence in the shaping of Mohawk policy.¹¹

Johnson, familiar with the defense requirements of the Indians, had foreseen the Mohawk request for the construction of forts at their two major towns. Accordingly he had sought permission to arrange for the erection of the forts and, several days before the conference began, had received Governor DeLancey's authorization for the building of the bastions. Able to predict that the Mohawks would ask for protection, Johnson was in a position to give a prompt affirmative reply. "Before I left New York I urged Your Brother the Govr. the necessity of building a Secure Retreat for your Families. . . . He as empowered me to do it & I shall set about it with all possible Dispatch," reported the Superintendent.¹²

Johnson's conference with the Mohawks represented a significant improvement in Anglo-Indian relations. The proposed forts were

important not only for the measure of defense they provided for the Mohawk villages, but also for their symbolic value as a sign of the British commitment to the safety of their allies and to the war effort against the French. The Mohawks had not promised to participate in offensive action against the French (such a pledge would require the concurrence of the Six Nations Central Council) but they had vowed not to go to Canada and were reestablishing better relations with the British. The cooperation and support of the Mohawks that Johnson received at the conference was vital to his plans to bring the entire Six Nations into the British interest.

The Mount Johnson Conference, June/July 1755

Following his successful meeting with the Mohawks in May 1755, Johnson sent invitations to various other Indian nations to come to a large conference at his home on the Mohawk River. Johnson dispatched his trusted associate Arndt Stevens through the country of the Six Nations to notify them of the coming conference. Stevens was also to assure them that the British army under Shirley that was scheduled to soon march toward Oswego did not constitute a threat to their safety but was intended to drive the French out of Niagara. Johnson instructed Stevens to cultivate Iroquois good will by emphasizing the historic Anglo-Iroquois chain of friendship and by informing them of his appointment to the superintendency of Indian affairs. Johnson also sent a delegation of two of his associates and four Mohawk guides southward to invite the Indians of the Susquehanna

area to attend the proposed conference and to urge them to attach themselves to the British interest.¹³

While making preparations for his coming major Indian conference, Johnson grew concerned that his recruitment attempts would be impeded by the lack of a visible English army in the field. The superintendent knew that the presence of such an army would be of great value to recruiting in that it would conclusively demonstrate the British commitment to the war and the ability of the British to mount an actual military expedition against the enemy. Johnson commented on the absence of an army: "were the Troops all ready to March now, while the Indians are down at Mount Johnson for the conference⁷ I could get as many as I wanted to join me, but as everything is so backward I must after I have done Speaking to them, discharge them for a while, as it would be too troublesome & expensive to keep them here Idle." Despite the lack of a visible army, Johnson predicted that he could recruit three to four hundred Iroquois for the summer campaign.¹⁴

Johnson, planning at the coming conference to obtain a significant number of Indians for his own expedition against Crown Point, was also being counted upon to use his skill and influence to procure additional warriors for Shirley's attack on Niagara. On the eve of the conference, Shirley informed Johnson that he was sending an advance party from his army through the Mohawk Valley and requested that Johnson provide this vanguard "with a sufficient number of Indians for Scouts and Guards." Shirley also asked that when his main army

marched westward Johnson would "engage a sufficient Number of Indians to attend me from Schnectady to Oswego."¹⁵

Shirley's request put pressure on Johnson to conduct a successful conference. The superintendent was increasingly confident that the Mohawks could be counted upon for assistance. The sachems of that nation had let Johnson know that the Mohawk support depended on the ability of the British to build and garrison the two promised forts near the major castles. Johnson was attuned to the Mohawk position, realizing that they expected to have British troops "protect their old Men and their Wives & Children at each of their Castles" and judged their concern was "so reasonable . . . that I made no Question care will be taken about it."¹⁶

Johnson was most worried about the lack of funds as a detriment to his recruiting activities. The colonial legislature and the British government had been delinquent in providing Johnson with the monetary support necessary for the conduct of his duties. Johnson lamented that even if he were successful in his attempts to draw the Six Nations into the British interest, the Indians would "throw themselves immediately upon me for their Maintenance wch will be daily a very Great Expense." If the necessary funds were not made available, the Crown Point expedition would have to be postponed. Should the British thus fail to mount a successful military thrust at Lake Champlain, the Iroquois would lose faith. Johnson warned that if his expedition failed to materialize, "depend upon it we shall lose them for ever."¹⁷

During the third week of June 1755, various Indian groups began arriving at Mount Johnson for the conference. Johnson was extremely uneasy over the financial arrangements for his campaign, especially for the maintenance of such Indians as might join his expedition. Johnson had written Shirley several times concerning the need for a greater appropriation for his army. Johnson continually warned that the expenses of the campaign were far in excess of the funds allotted to him by the colonial governments. In a letter to Shirley of June 19 he stated flatly that while he was honored to have been placed in command of the expedition, he could not meet its expenses out of his own pocket and desperately needed funds. Johnson seemed to have a clear idea of what a strong military expedition on the part of the British against the French would mean to the cause of Indian alliances. "I fear if we are not Successful, then Opinion of us will be very fatal to our Interest, if on the contrary we should chastize the Insolence of the French & drive them from their Encroachments & maintain our Conquests, I dare prophecy with common Prudence on our sides the French will not rule a Nation of Indians on the Continent, and the Inhabitants of these Colonies will reap a thousand fold for their present Expenses & enjoy their Possessions in uninterrupted Security."¹⁸

The important Indian conference at Mount Johnson opened the third week of June 1755. Over one thousand Indians from nine different nations attended.¹⁹ Johnson's announcement that he had been reappointed as superintendent of Indian affairs was greeted approvingly by the

Indians. This response gave some cause for optimism regarding the possibility of their joining the British interest. As the meeting began, Johnson did not know what to expect from the Indians he had gathered and could only speculate on what the outcome of the conference might be. He found the leaders of all the six Iroquois tribes (except the Mohawks) reluctant to go to war against the French due to the past negligence and inactivity of the British. This deep rooted hesitancy to make a firm declaration of adherence to the British caused Johnson to predict that the Indians' response to his overtures would "not equal our utmost Wishes." As the talks commenced, however, Johnson was able to detect enough pro-British sentiment to offer the hope that the Indian reply would be "more than I expected" before the conference began.²⁰

Johnson opened the nine nation conference with a general statement concerning the British plan to send a powerful army (Braddock's expedition) to the Ohio to regain those lands recently seized by the French. Johnson emphasized the long history of the covenant chain between the British and the Iroquois and the past "treacheries and deceits" of the French. Sensing the Indians' suspicion of the ability of the British to gain a military victory, the superintendent denied that the British were afraid of the French and stressed the British capacity to defend the Six Nations from enemy attack. Johnson announced he would soon lead an army northward against the French and asked the warriors of the Six Nations to accompany him. He stated that the British were sending another army to Oswego to protect the Six Nations land from further French encroachments and

delivered a message from General Braddock declaring the British intention to strike the French. Braddock's letter informed the Indians of the English King's resolve to punish the French for invading Ohio and the Indians who had gone over to the French for going to war against the British. Braddock concluded by letting it be known that he expected the Six Nations to take up the hatchet against the French.²¹

The Six Nations gave a generally affirmative reply. Hendrick spoke for the Indians and pledged to accompany Johnson to Crown Point. Although he could not give a firm commitment on behalf of the western tribes of the Six Nations, he indicated his belief that they too would join the British interest when they saw evidence of the British capability for victory. The Mohawk sachem made it clear that Iroquois aid would have its price. Hendrick asked Johnson to recover the fraudulent deed for the Wyoming Valley from Lydius, to prevent any land sales in the future, and to keep liquor from the Indian towns.²²

Johnson responded gratefully to the Iroquois agreement to "assist us in this present difference with our Enemies the French" and urged them to get their "friends and Allies" to make a similar commitment. Johnson recommended that some warriors join Scarrouady's band in Braddock's service and suggested that those pro-British warriors in the western parts of New York prepare to help Shirley's expedition against Niagara. Johnson encouraged others of the Six Nations to join his army for the advance on Crown Point.²³

Johnson was extremely gratified by the outcome of the nine nation conference and was convinced that the Iroquois would honor

their pledge to join with their "brethren" the British against the French. Johnson reported the results of the talks to Governor DeLancey on July 10, 1755. "Last Sunday my conferences with the Indians ended. I have only time at Present to Advise you that they made a Unanimous Declaration that they would stand by their Brethren the English & would in no shape assist the French. In this I have abundant reason to believe them sincere & that the whole confederacy are at present more warmly disposed toward our Interest than they have been for these 40 years past. I believe many more will join me than the Legislatures have made provision for. . . ." ²⁴

The Estrangement of Shirley and Johnson

Relations between Johnson and Shirley suffered a serious rupture in the early summer of 1755. As the Massachusetts Governor readied his expedition he became convinced that he needed more men and requested Braddock to transfer one thousand men from Johnson's army to his own Niagara expedition. Johnson did not feel that he could afford the loss of such a great number of his troops and ²⁵ fought to keep his army intact.

Shirley was also upset at Johnson for not providing an adequate number of Indians for the Niagara expedition. Johnson, currently arranging and conducting the delicate negotiations that he hoped would lead to an Iroquois-British alliance, was not in a position in June 1755 to furnish Shirley with a large Indian escort. Johnson had tried to assure Shirley that he would need no Indians until his army reached Oswego; the expedition would be in no danger as it marched

through Iroquois country to the east of that important British trading center. Shirley would not accept Johnson's assessment of the situation. "Your opinion that there is no Occassion for any Indians to join me till my arrival at Oswego is singular," the Massachusetts Governor wrote caustically. "All persons . . . I have consulted in the affair are of different Sentiments; I am so myself."²⁶

Unwilling to begin the long trek westward through the wilderness without Indian auxiliaries, Shirley sought to recruit Indians independently of Johnson. Headquartered at Albany while assembling the men and supplies for his Niagara expedition, Shirley sent his own agent to the nearby nine nation Mount Johnson conference of June/July 1755 to obtain a number of Indians. Shirley's action was understandable but extremely unwise. The governor astutely realized the importance of Indian allies to the success of forest warfare, but erred in his method of trying to acquire them. The sending of his own man to recruit warriors from the Indians gathered at Mount Johnson constituted interference with the delicate diplomacy being conducted by Johnson. The fact that Shirley, searching for a man experienced in dealing with Indians, chose Joseph Lydius as his agent was catastrophic.

Lydius arrived at the conference and at once began to undermine Johnson's work. On behalf of Shirley, Lydius began to approach individual Indians, attempting to enlist them for the Niagara expedition. Johnson learned of this activity and angrily ordered Lydius to cease tampering with the Indians, but the Massachusetts agent produced written authorization from Shirley to engage in the recruitment

of Indians for the Niagara campaign independent of Johnson's control.²⁷

The Indian leaders recognized Lydius as the perpetrator of the Wyoming Valley land fraud at the Albany Conference of 1754, and objected strongly to his presence at the conference. The sachems complained to Johnson that Lydius' appearance at the meeting was in violation of the New Yorker's promise that he "would keep the Place clean from all Filth." The Indians referred to Lydius as a "Snake" and a "Devil" who had engineered the land swindle of the previous year, and were extremely upset that this hated person was present at the talks.²⁸ As the conference progressed, the Indians further complained of Lydius' efforts to recruit small groups of warriors for the Niagara expedition. The Six Nations sachems, who were trying to preserve the unity of the league, were strongly opposed to Lydius' attempts to entice individual warriors to fight before the confederacy had made its formal declaration.

Knowing the continued presence of Lydius jeopardized his efforts to win the Six Nations over to the British, Johnson expelled him from the conference. Shirley was incensed at Johnson's treatment of his representative. When the conference was over, an account of the discussions, written by Johnson's secretary Peter Wraxall, and intended for Braddock, passed through Shirley's hands. The account was highly critical of Lydius' interference with the conference. Shirley took this direct attack on his agent as an indirect attack on himself, as he was accused of ordering Lydius to recruit Indians illegally. The governor charged that Wraxall's

rendering of the conference contained "false Facts" which were "an Abuse of his Trust" as the official recorder of the proceedings at Mount Johnson. Shirley criticized Johnson for impeding Lydius' recruitment endeavors and disputed the exclusivity of Johnson's commission to handle the Indian affairs of the British interest. "I can't think General Braddock intended to forbid me . . . to take steps for procuring Indians to go with me from Schenectady to Niagara," Shirley argued. Assailing Johnson as remiss in his responsibilities of providing Indians for the Niagara campaign, Shirley charged, "It was your Duty to comply with my Demand of the Number of Indians to go with me; and not to forbid all Persons to speak with any Indians for that Purpose." Shirley demanded that Johnson provide him at once with "a Party of sixty or seventy Indians to escort me from Schenectady." He also insisted that Johnson provide him with a full report of what he had already done and proposed doing to engage Indian allies, obviously implying that he considered the superintendent negligent in his recruitment duties and that Johnson was answerable to Shirley.

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The tenor of the messages passing between Shirley and Johnson was becoming hostile. Since the Niagara and Crown Point expeditions were being organized only a few miles apart, friction developed between supply officers for the two commanders who were competing for the same scarce goods. The two generals grew increasingly estranged. Johnson believed the Shirley-Lydius interference with the important Indian negotiations at Mount Johnson was extremely detrimental

to his attempt to bring a unified Six Nations confederacy into the British interest. Shirley felt that he and his agent, Lydius, had been personally insulted, and contended that Johnson was not doing enough to provide the Niagara expedition with appropriate Indian support. Relations between the commanders were becoming increasingly strained. Future cooperation would be exceedingly difficult.

Indian Recruitment and the Braddock Expedition

Immediately following the Alexandria Conference, Johnson wrote to George Croghan to enlist his aid in the recruitment of Indians for the coming campaigns. While he devoted his efforts to obtaining the support of the New York Iroquois for the Crown Point and Niagara expeditions, Johnson hoped that Croghan would be able to use his influence with the Indians of Pennsylvania and Ohio to gain auxiliaries for Braddock's thrust against Fort Duquesne. Johnson asked Croghan to speak with their mutual friend Scarrouady, the new Half King, concerning the procurement of Indian allies for Braddock. Croghan was to inform Scarrouady of Johnson's appointment as superintendent of Indian affairs, news which Johnson knew would be well received by the pro-British sachem. Johnson requested Croghan to urge the Half King to proceed "with as many Indians as he can procure & Join the general . . . and serve him in the best manner he can." Johnson assured the Pennsylvania trader that he would provide for the immediate financial support of Scarrouady's Indians and that Braddock would also "reward him & his Party generously."³⁰ Even before Johnson's letter arrived, George Croghan received a similar

message from Pennsylvania Governor Morris requesting him to obtain Indian auxiliaries for Braddock's expedition.³¹

Croghan was highly pleased that a British offensive was actually becoming a reality. He had held Scarrouady's band of Ohio Indians at Aughwick over the winter of 1754-1755 with the promise that a strike against the French would soon be made. Scarrouady, accompanied by Croghan, set off with his followers on May 2 to join Braddock at Fort Cumberland. Croghan dispatched messengers to the Ohio in an attempt to enlist the Delawares and Shawnees of that area in the British cause. Word was also sent to the Indians living on the Susquehanna to come to the new British fort at Wills' Creek. On May 20, Croghan and Scarrouady were with Braddock's army, having brought approximately forty to fifty Indians into the general's service. Twenty more warriors (a few who had temporarily remained at Aughwick and those who had been sent as messengers to the Susquehanna) were expected at Fort Cumberland momentarily. Croghan also had received word that some Shawnees, Wyandots, and Miamis were on their way from Ohio to join Braddock.³²

Upon their arrival at Fort Cumberland, Croghan's Indians performed a dramatic war dance for Braddock and the British soldiers, demonstrating their eternal hatred of the French. In a few days, however, Scarrouady's band was considering leaving the British encampment. The principal reason for their disenchantment with the British seems to have been the treatment they received from General Braddock and his staff. Richard Peters, Secretary of the colony of Pennsylvania, who was present at Fort Cumberland when Scarrouady's

party arrived, later reported that the Indians were "extremely dissatisfied at not being consulted with by the General"

William Johnson, currently negotiating with the Six Nations at his Mohawk Valley home learned of the ill treatment experienced by those Indians who had entered Braddock's camp. While promising to join the Crown Point expedition, the Iroquois refused to go to the aid of Braddock due to the "ill usage" several Iroquois messengers had received from Virginia's Colonel Innes when they visited Fort Cumberland as couriers from Johnson. From the reports he had received, Johnson concluded Indians affairs at Braddock's camp were "ill managed and much neglected."³³

Further friction between Braddock's force and its intended allies developed when the British officer grew "scandalously fond" of the squaws accompanying Scarrouady's warriors. Braddock attempted to solve this problem by ordering the wives and children of the Indians sent home. Complying with the general's order, the warriors departed from the fort to escort their families back to Aughwick and never returned. When Braddock marched for Fort DuQuesne only eight of Scarrouady's warriors remained in his service.³⁴

Braddock's army of twenty-five hundred men, including the two battalions of British regulars, departed Fort Cumberland on June 7, 1755. The expedition had gone approximately 20 miles when Scarrouady, scouting ahead, was captured by a small patrol of enemy Indians led by a French officer. The Indians of the party, recognizing their prisoner as the viceroy of the Six Nations and not wishing to incur the wrath of the powerful confederation, insisted that Scarrouady's

life be spared. Consequently, he was tied to a tree and left to be found by the advancing British. From this incident, it was known that the French were aware of the presence of the British expedition and would keep the army under surveillance as it slowly made its way through the wilderness of western Pennsylvania. As Braddock's force proceeded westward, several minor skirmishes occurred which indicated that their progress was being monitored by French Indians. The British army expected to be attacked as it reached the Great Meadows, but passed that spot without incident. On June 27, the army passed Gist's New Settlement and sent out two Indians to scout in the area of Fort DuQuesne. Continuing to advance, a flank of Braddock's army was attacked by small groups of Ottawas. In the exchange of fire that followed, Scarrouady's son fell dead, shot accidentally by a British soldier. Following the brief skirmish, the young warrior was buried with military honors. The army pressed on, coming within a few miles of Fort DuQuesne.³⁵

On July 9, as Braddock's army crossed the Monongehela, the French attacked. The lack of a sufficient number of Indians to serve as scouts proved costly. Deprived of adequate reconnaissance, Braddock's advance detachment of 450 men under Colonel Thomas Gage was surprised by a French force of 290 regulars and over 600 Indians.³⁶ Caught in a cross-fire, Gage's force retreated in confusion and became entangled in a contingent of 800 reinforcements Braddock had rushed to the front when the shooting started. The British troops clustered together providing excellent targets for the French and Indian force firing from the concealment of the dense undergrowth.

Of the 1450 British troops involved in the three hour battle, approximately 1000 became casualties. General Braddock was seriously wounded in the fray and died three days later. The army retreated 50 miles to the camp of the baggage train. Viewing the remnants of the expedition, Colonel Dunbar, who succeeded to the command of the army on the death of Braddock, declined to make a stand or a counter attack. Destroying the baggage and extra supplies, Dunbar retreated quickly to Fort Cumberland terminating the attempt to take Fort DuQuesne.³⁷

The absence of a sufficient number of Indian allies proved fatal to Braddock's expedition. Contemporary observers were quick to cite Braddock's conduct as the cause of the loss of his Indian support. In a 1759 review of the British Indian relationship, Charles Thomson found Braddock's "haughty manner . . . lost the Friendship of many who had hitherto remained steady in our Interest."³⁸

Scarrouady, the Iroquois Half King, when meeting with the governor and council of Pennsylvania in August 1755, attributed the defeat on the Monongehela to "the pride and ignorance of the great General who came from England." The sachem complained that Braddock lost vital Indian allies because "he looked upon us as dogs and would never hear anything what was said to him; we often endeavored to advise him and to tell him of the danger he was in with his soldiers; but he never appeared pleased with us and that was the reason that a great many of our warriors left him and would not be under his command."³⁹

George Croghan also placed the blame for the loss of Indian support on the poor judgment of the British officers. The Pennsylvania woodsman later reported that when Braddock ordered the Indian dependents to leave Fort Cumberland, Colonel Innes advised Braddock to allow most of the warriors to go with them. Innes counselled the general that a large party of Indian allies would be "very troublesome on the march" and that "the general need not take above 10 men out with him." Accordingly, Braddock unwisely instructed Croghan to have all the Indians return to Aughwick "except 8 or 10 which I should keep as scouts." Croghan judged that this decision was a fatal error. "I am yet of the opinion that had they had 50 Indians instead of 8 that we might in great measure have prevented the surprise that day of our unhappy defeat."⁴⁰

Braddock's defeat had a devastating effect on the British interest. The defeat of Braddock resulted in the loss of several wavering tribes to the French. "All our accounts agree in this that the French since the defeat of General Braddock have gained over to their interest the Delawares, Shawnees, and many other Indian nations formerly in our alliance." Reports were also current that the French "by intimidations and various artifices," had prevailed upon those Indians to take up arms against the British and to permit them to build forts on the Susquehanna.⁴¹ Charles Thomson observed that the disaster on the Monongehela "confirmed the Indians in the opinion they had conceived of our Want of Prudence and Skill in War."⁴²

A dispatch from Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, written in late 1755 also indicated that groups of Indians that had been pro-British

prior to Braddock's defeat had gone over to the French. Warriors of the Iroquois, Shawnees, and Delawares were reported to be conducting raids on the frontiers of the British colonies "in conjunction with the French on Ohio." The property-less Delawares and Shawnees were seen as taking the opportunity of the coming war to try to seize some of the territory disputed by the British and the French, offering their military aid as the price for the land. The Iroquois were judged to be planning to stay neutral, "until they see what success their allies have," and then committing themselves to the European power experiencing the greater degree of military success.⁴³

William Johnson feared the effect of the news of Braddock's defeat on the Six Nations, and all the Indians of northwestern North America. A Braddock victory at DuQuesne would have been a disastrous blow to French power in the Ohio Valley. The area would have been evacuated and the French would have retreated and retrenched along the St. Lawrence. The Indians of the region could then have been expected to join the British. When, however, Braddock's army met defeat, British prestige suffered a crippling blow. Johnson believed the Indians would predict an eventual French victory in the struggle for Ohio. They had been told numerous times that Braddock was an intelligent and courageous general and that his forces represented the best troops that the British could put in the field. The Braddock expedition had been described as the symbol of the British commitment to wresting control of Ohio from the French, a strong shield to protect pro-British Indians from the French, an invincible

instrument that would bring certain victory to the British and those Indians allied with them.

Johnson knew that his task of recruiting Indians for the British expeditions would be made infinitely more difficult if the news of Braddock's dramatic defeat proved to be true. He wrote in late July when conflicting reports concerning Braddock's fate were received, that if the news that Braddock had suffered defeat proved false, "I believe I shall have a great number of Indian join me over & above the 300 provided for or rather partly provided for the colonies, but if that News prove true I know not what we shall do in that respect as well as in all others."⁴⁴

Shirley's Niagara Campaign

Shirley was in Albany in the summer of 1755, mobilizing his army for the expedition against the French at Niagara. Shirley and Johnson continued their smouldering feud over the obtaining of Indian allies for the Massachusetts governor's army. The first rumors of Braddock's defeat began to filter back to Albany as Shirley moved his army westward to Schenectady on July 24, 1755. In early August, the expedition moved via the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, and Lake Oneida, to Oswego. En route, Shirley received confirmed reports of Braddock's annihilation near Fort DuQuesne. Braddock's defeat and death meant that Shirley was now commander-in-chief of all British forces in America.⁴⁵

Shirley also received discouraging news from Johnson that he would be unable to provide any Indians for the Niagara campaign.

Johnson's recruiting efforts had suffered from the effects of Braddock's defeat. As he moved northward from Albany toward Lake George, the superintendent was able to induce only about 50 to 60 Iroquois to accompany Shirley's long march toward Niagara. Troubled by the lack of Indian scouts, Shirley visited an Oneida village near the "Great Carrying Place" between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek. After several days of negotiations, Shirley was able to hire approximately 60 Indians for service with his army.⁴⁶

On the march to Oswego, Shirley became concerned that the progress of his army was being watched by parties of French and Indians. The news of Braddock's defeat also made Shirley cautious. Arriving at Oswego, Shirley found the post very weak defensively. Learning that the French had 1,200 troops just 50 miles away at Fort Frontenac, the governor undertook a program of construction to make the Lake Ontario post better able to withstand an enemy attack.

Realizing Oswego would have to serve as the base for any strike against the French to the west, Shirley judged it prudent to spend several weeks making extensive improvements in the fortifications at the lake front fort. Further progress toward Niagara was also impeded by illness among Shirley's troops and by the absence of several military units that had not yet arrived at Oswego. The governor reported that his troops were "so much reduc'd by Desertion and Sickness" and by the absence of certain detachments, that he would be able to gather only one thousand men for an attack on Niagara. The desertion of some of the boatmen recruited at Albany to transport

the army by water from Oswego to Niagara also hampered further operations, as did the desertion of some of the Oneidas Shirley had hired for the British service.⁴⁷

As the season grew late, the many recent reversals caused Shirley to reconsider the wisdom of pursuing the Niagara campaign during the current year. By September 9, 1755, the commander was expressing the hope that "a foundation will be lay'd this year for such a Campaign the next" that would dislodge the French from Niagara. Shirley believed that the proper course of action would be to call a conference of representatives from all the northern colonies at New York City on November 15, 1755 for the purpose of arranging more men and supplies for another attempt on Niagara in 1756. Shirley was extremely reluctant to abandon the attack on Niagara, however, and once again made plans for a strike against the French fortress in late September. An amphibious force was prepared to set sail on the twenty-sixth, but was postponed due to "the immoderate Rains, and tempestuous Weather upon the Lake." Thirteen consecutive days of rain and increasing sickness among the troops forced another reassessment of the situation. Shirley called his officers to a council of war and followed their advice to cancel further offensive operations for the year. Due to troop and supply shortages and the lateness of the season, Shirley decided to devote his efforts to "securing this Place [Oswego] against any sudden Attempt" and to making preparations for an assault on Forts Niagara and Frontenac in the early spring of 1756. Shirley left part of his army to garrison Oswego and placed the remainder of his troops in winter quarters

at Schenectady and Albany. In October, Shirley returned to the east coast to solicit support for his strategy for the coming year.⁴⁸

While Shirley had failed to fulfill his goal of taking Fort Niagara, he had succeeded in strengthening the British position on Lake Ontario.

Johnson's Lake George Expedition

Johnson labored through July and August to collect and organize his army at Albany. He sent a detachment of 2,000 militiamen northward to cut a road through the portage from the Hudson to Lake George. Johnson remained at Albany procuring supplies, wagons, and other equipment for the expedition and trying to coordinate the movements of an army that contained elements of five different colonies.

In late July, 1755, Johnson learned of Braddock's defeat at the hands of the French and their Indians. Johnson expressed the fear that the disaster would cause the defection of many potential Indian allies. "The Tragical Event puts it out . . . of our Powers by any means whatsoever to prevail on the Indians to join us," lamented Johnson. Aware of the Indians' desire to provide for their own survival, Johnson predicted: "I very much fear their self Preservation may influence the greatest part of them to join our Enemies against us." Johnson was so despondent that he wrote to acting governor James DeLancey recommending that consideration be given to the abandonment of the Crown Point expedition. Knowing that the French were already spreading the news of Braddock's defeat among the Iroquois castles, Johnson doubted that an adequate number of

Indians could be recruited at the present time for his expedition.

Johnson judged the Crown Point campaign a poor risk and stated:

"I think it would be madness to attempt it" without adequate Indian auxiliaries. The superintendent urged that the expedition be shelved until he could go to Onondaga and "use all the Arguments & Influence I am master of to prevent the Dissolution of our Indian Connexions." In the meantime, Johnson suggested that his forces be placed in a defensive alignment around Albany to protect that city from attack.⁴⁹

Johnson was pleased to learn that his initial assessment of the effect of the Braddock defeat was overly pessimistic. When meeting with sachems from three of six Iroquois nations in late July, Johnson was afraid that they would now refuse to honor their earlier commitments to the British. Johnson "communicated our Misfortune at the Ohio pretty nearly in its true Light." The surprisingly favorable response of the Iroquois convinced Johnson that "the Indians will for the most part stand by us." Johnson now recovered his zeal for the campaign and urged that the Crown Point expedition be "pushed on with Alacrity & supported in every shape."⁵⁰

On August 24, Johnson sent a rather gloomy report to the governors of the colonies whose troops made up his army. Johnson stated that his force would probably be outnumbered by the French. This fact plus the existence of so many natural obstacles would make the advance on Crown Point most difficult. An additional problem was the unique relationship between the pro-British Mohawks and the Caughnawagas who were reported to be with the French army at Crown Point. The Caughnawagas were composed mostly of Mohawks who had

some years before gone to live near Montreal. They were also referred to as the "Praying Indians" due to the fact that most had reportedly converted to Catholicism. The question that troubled Johnson was whether the Mohawks with him would fight against an army which contained a number of their relatives. Johnson reminded the governors that many of the Mohawks had "mothers, Sisters, Bros &c amongst them" and predicted "our Indians will in general be less willing to take part with us" since by fighting they might kill or be killed by a close relative. The lack of dependability of the Indians caused Johnson to once again plead for more reinforcements. In view of the current Indian situation, Johnson's officers meeting in a council of war could only conclude that "very strong & speedy Reinforcements are necessary to obtain the Acquisition of Crown Point."⁵¹

On August 26, 1755, Johnson began his march from his base camp at the Great Carrying Place northward to meet the French. His advance force consisted of 1,500 men plus a few Indians who served as scouts. He left several sachems and officers at the base camp to wait for the 200 Indians he hoped would join his force momentarily. He was expecting the Mohawk chieftain Hendrick to arrive with these 200 Indians but decided to wait no longer for them. Johnson was deeply troubled over the state of his relations with the Indians. Following his nine nation conference of June/July, he was optimistic that hundreds of Indians were ready to take up the hatchet against the French, his main problem being that he might not be able to support them all on his tight budget. Now, as the time had come to

actually march against the enemy only a handful actually went with him. Events since the conference at Mount Johnson had changed the picture considerably. Probably the most important factor in the alteration of Indian attitudes had been the defeat of Braddock on the Monongehela. The problems caused by the Shirley-Lydius attempts to recruit Indians for the Niagara campaign had also resulted in many Indians becoming suspicious of the British. The recent declaration by the Caughnawagas to take up the French hatchet against the British had also been damaging. Motivated by deep feelings of tribal and family loyalties, Indians who at one time could have been counted on to march with the British were now declining to fight in the impending battle.⁵² Discouraging as these developments had been, Johnson could postpone his march no longer. The lateness of the season demanded no more delay. Supported by what he considered to be an insufficient number of Indians but no longer able to remain bivouaced on the Hudson, Johnson set out for Lake George, reaching its southern shore the evening of August 28.

Shortly after reaching Lake George with his force of 1,500 soldiers and about 50 Indians, Johnson was joined by the Indians he had long been expecting -- Hendrick's 200 Mohawks. Immediately Johnson employed the Indian allies in reconnaissance duty. Braddock's defeat had been largely the result of being surprised and Johnson was determined to avoid this pitfall. He began clearing ground for a camp at the southern end of Lake George as small parties of his Indians went on scouting forays to locate the main French force. Johnson's plan was to move his army northward by water, hoping to

occupy next the rocky point known as Ticonderoga which guarded the narrow channel between Lake George and Lake Champlain.

While Johnson waited for small boats, supplies, and reinforcements to come from Albany, his Indian allies were not idle. In addition to their scouting they were busily undertaking some delicate diplomatic relations with their brother nation, the Caughnawagas. While the two great European armies operating in the area had not had any contact yet, the Indians allied to each were carrying on discussions deep in the forests that separated the British and French troops.

Johnson was aware of these clandestine negotiations, no doubt hoping that his Mohawks could work out some arrangements with the Caughnawagas that would allow the Mohawks to continue in the service of the British. Perhaps the two Indian groups could come to some understanding that would prevent them from being forced to shed each others blood. Perhaps the Caughnawagas could at the last moment be persuaded to join the British interest or, at least, stand neutral. In any case, something would have to be done quickly. The two armies were now in greater danger of colliding with each passing day. Johnson knew the Mohawk sachems were negotiating with their brother Caughnawagas but he also knew that the most recent conciliatory offer sent northward by them probably represented the final opportunity to reach some accord. Johnson reported to Shirley in a letter of September 1: "the Sachems . . . have dispatched another Message . . . wch is to be the last to the Canawagas."⁵³ Johnson, cognizant of the national and familial bonds that existed between these two Indian

groups, realized the importance that the Mohawk-Caughnawagas talks could have on the outcome of his expedition.⁵⁴

The campaign underway and the first objective reached, Johnson was still pessimistic about his chances for success, and was still unsure if the Indians would actually fight for him due to their close relationship with the Caughnawagas. In addition, liquor was a major problem. Johnson had forbidden the sale of rum to the Indians but this prohibition law had not worked and many of the Mohawks were in possession of alcohol. "The Indians are perpetually Drunk, their Insolence is scarce to be born at these times -- they give me not a moments rest or leisure."⁵⁵

Troublesome as the Indians were, Johnson also reported serious problems arising from his white soldiers. "The New York Companies are in a Mutinous Condition for want of Pay & threaten to go off" he reported to Governor DeLancey from Lake George on September 4. The lack of discipline among the troops and the ineffectiveness of the officers appalled Johnson. "There is not through out the Troops due Subordination kept up. The officers are most of them low weak people who have neither the ability nor Inclination to maintain a necessary Superiority, some of them I believe are sorry Fellows & rather join with than restrain their Men."⁵⁶ To Thomas Pownall he wrote, "There is no due Subordination among the Troops & the officers with very few exceptions a set of low lifted Ignorant People, the Men lazy, easily discouraged by Difficulties & . . . neither accustomed nor disposed to obedience."⁵⁷ From the tone of Johnson's correspondence it was evident that he did not hold out great hopes for the

success of his expedition. He was plagued with lack of supplies and manpower. The strain of managing the campaign in the face of so many serious difficulties was taking its toll on his health and morale.

While still determined to push on and attack the French wherever they might be in the Ticonderoga-Crown Point area, Johnson thought it prudent to construct a fort on the site of his present camp at the south end of Lake George. At a council of war held September 7, it was decided that the fort should be constructed to serve two purposes. Such a fort would "secure a Retreat to the present Forces in case of Necessity, but to maintain the possession of his Majesty's Title to this important pass for the time to come." The council of officers voted to begin construction at once.⁵⁸

On September 7, 1755, Johnson received intelligence from Hendrick's scouts that the French were in the immediate vicinity. The tracks of the main body of the army commanded by Baron Dieskau indicated that the French were marching toward the Great Carrying Place (Fort Edward). Johnson sent a dispatch at once to Fort Edward warning the garrison there of the approach of the French. Johnson expected the French would attack the British at Fort Edward that night or the next day. The general ordered his own sentries doubled and commanded his troops to sleep with their guns at their sides ready for battle on a moments notice.⁵⁹

As Johnson learned of the large French army in the area, Dieskau's scouts brought intelligence of the presence of the British

army camped at the south end of Lake George. Dieskau had begun his advance southward from Crown Point on September 1, advancing toward Fort Edward with an army of 3,099 including 659 Caughnawagas. On September 7, Dieskau was marching with an advance party which numbered about 1,500 men, with which he was hoping to eradicate the undermanned British fort at the Great Carrying Place. Learning that Johnson's inexperienced army was camped nearby without fortifications, Dieskau decided to alter his plan to assault Fort Edward and instead strike Johnson's vulnerable force.⁶⁰

Johnson, in consultation with the Indian sachems, decided to send 1,000 of his soldiers plus 200 Indians in search of Dieskau's army. Johnson believed Dieskau had probably attacked Fort Edward by now and would be returning to Crown Point with his guard down, thinking he had already encountered all British troops in the area. On the morning of September 8, the party of 1,200 led by Colonel Ephraim Williams and Hendrick marched out of the Lake George encampment hoping to strike a surprise blow at the unwary Dieskau's flank or rear. The detachment had proceeded only about three miles when disaster struck. Dieskau, aware of the presence and location of Johnson's army, had turned his line of march toward the British at Lake George and the detachment led by Colonel Williams. Dieskau set an ambush, deploying his soldiers and Indians on both sides of the road on which Williams was advancing. Williams, thinking he would be the one to surprise Dieskau, neglected to provide sufficient reconnaissance to prevent being taken off guard. Williams led his 1,200 unsuspecting men into the jaws of the trap. Suddenly the

French and their Indian allies opened fire. Williams and Hendrick, at the head of the troop, were among the first to fall. Fortunately for the British the trap was sprung slightly prematurely so the entire detachment was not annihilated. Casualties were severe, especially among the Mohawks, but most of the British and their Indians were able to extricate themselves from the trap. The survivors of the ambush scrambled headlong back toward Lake George, the French and their Indians in hot pursuit.

Johnson had heard the firing when it first broke out and ordered his men to the ready. As the firing grew nearer, Johnson perceived that the British detachment must be retreating toward the Lake George camp so he dispatched a party of 300 men under Lieutenant Colonel Cole to cover the retreat of the soldiers and Indians. Johnson had been at his present location but a few days and had had no time to construct a fort. But he had not been idle. Johnson had thrown up a crude semicircular fortification of overturned wagons and boats and horizontal logs. This makeshift breastwork guarded his right, center, and left, while his rear, or north side, was protected by Lake George.

At about 11:30 a.m. after most of the stragglers from Williams' ill fated foray had returned to the base camp, the pursuing enemy came into sight. Dieskau arranged his army in regular order with his French regulars deployed in rows opposite the center of Johnson's camp, and his Canadian militiamen and Indian allies placed to each side opposite Johnson's flanks. The French ranks advanced, firing ineffectively at Johnson's men who were crouched behind their hastily

built fortifications. As the French line neared, Johnson ordered his artillery pieces to commence firing. It had not been easy for Johnson to move his cannon over the rough terrain between the Hudson and Lake George, but now the effort began to pay huge dividends. Apparently Dieskau was unaware Johnson had artillery with him as he ordered his well disciplined regulars to make the frontal assault. The artillery fire began devastating the close order ranks of the French. A British gunner who manned one of the pieces during the battle wrote that the artillery fire "made Lanes, Streets, and Alleys thro' their army." Seeing the strength of the enemy, Dieskau's Caughnawagas refused to participate in the attack and withdrew from the battle. After two hours of unsuccessful assaults on Johnson's center, Dieskau switched to an attack on the British right flank. Repulsed by artillery fire there also, Dieskau turned back to the center but once again failed to crack the British defenses. Johnson's artillery was decisive. The French firing grew weaker and more disorganized as their ranks diminished. In the late afternoon, Johnson's men were able to go on the offensive. The British soldiers and their Indian allies sprang over their "fortress" and joined in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. Numbers of French were killed or captured as they tried to withdraw. Among the prisoners brought in to Johnson's tent was the Baron Dieskau, the French commanding general.

British success continued even after the principal engagement. As the retreating leaderless French army moved away from Johnson's camp it ran into another British force of 200 militiamen under Captain McGinnis marching from Fort Edward toward Johnson's camp. Caught

unaware, the French suffered more heavy casualties and lost their baggage train in another hasty retreat.

The battle on the shore of Lake George had been a victory but not a total one. A sizeable French force remained in the area. Johnson began to think in terms of fortifying his position and holding the spot he had won rather than immediately pushing on to Crown Point. At a council of war September 14, the main issue was not whether to build a fort or advance northward, but rather what type of a fort should be built. Apparently influenced by the narrowness of the victory, the principle concern of Johnson and his officers was for the safety of the British positions on the portage route between the Hudson and Lake George. Johnson's council of war was "apprehensive the Enemy may yet make an attempt" on the British positions in the area (including their own vulnerable encampment) and voted for defense rather than offense. A stockade-type fort was to be built immediately and the troops were to be dispersed to better guard the length of the Great Carrying Place rather than concentrated at Johnson's camp for a thrust northward. While the future of offensive action was not specifically decided at the council, due to the lateness of the season, a strike against Crown Point was postponed.

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Johnson's Indian allies served his army well as he assumed a defensive posture. His force was vulnerable due to the lack of a finished fortress and the increasing amount of sickness among the troops. While construction on the fort continued, Johnson sent out Indians as "spies to learn the posture of the Enemy" and "to observe

their Motions" and thereby provide security from attack. Personally eager to push on with the campaign, Johnson realized the physical and mental condition of his troops made this impossible for the present. He busied his army with constructing flat bottomed boats on which the artillery could be placed for defensive or offensive operations in the future and otherwise took steps to provide for the security of the camp.⁶²

As the British army dug in at the foot of Lake George, Johnson, who had been wounded in the battle, took time to give his written assessment of the present state of Indian affairs. In a letter to Captain Robert Orme at Oswego Johnson wrote that the Six Nations were "more favorably disposed" toward the British than at any time in the last 40 years. "The loss wch the Mohocks in particular have sustained by our late Engagements with the Enemy here, had more effectually wounded the French Interest among them" than could any other occurrence, judged Johnson. Further, the spilling of Mohawk blood by the French would have a profound effect on the rest of the Six Nations Confederacy.

The behavior of the Caughnawagas in the ambush of the Williams-Hendrick detachment also seemed to have an effect on the Mohawks that was desirable from the British standpoint. On the eve of the battle, Johnson could not be sure if his Mohawks would actually bear arms against an enemy force known to contain so many of their "brother" Caughnawagas. The trap set by the Caughnawagas for the British detachment had now changed this attitude. The Mohawks now viewed the Caughnawagas as having acted treacherously. The Caughnawagas had

"lost . . . the Friendship and Confidence of the 6 Nations, who have very warmly accused them . . . of a breach of Faith and Friendship," reported Johnson. The Mohawks were now urging that the Caughnawagas be absolutely forbidden from trading at Albany or Oswego. The Mohawks (and many British in the past) believed that the Caughnawagas used these "trading" visits to obtain military intelligence about the British for the French and strongly recommended that the practice cease despite any protests from the Albany merchants who profited from the trade. Johnson was also keenly aware that the holding of the Six Nations depended greatly on the military strength exhibited by the British. To Johnson's experienced eye, it was imperative for the British to maintain a visible, powerful military force and use this force in a committed courageous manner. Johnson believed that if the Anglo military posture were allowed to drop or if British military power was to prove unsuccessful "our Indians will dread as they have long done the power of the French." If they lost confidence in the ability of the British to defeat the French, the Indians would come to regard British military power as "too weak to be depended on and will therefore lean towards the French & tho not naturally inclined to it, pay Obedience to them." Clearly, the knowledgeable Johnson regarded the promise of military success as the prime determinant of Indian loyalty.⁶³

Conclusion

Due to the reversals of 1754, the Indians of northeastern North America were reluctant to attach themselves to the British interest in 1755. The setbacks of the previous year, especially Washington's defeat at Fort Necessity, had made it difficult for the British to gain Indian allies for the three-pronged offensive planned at the Alexandria Conference of April 1755. Concerned for their own welfare and survival, Indian groups were wary of an alliance with the British that could put them on the losing side in a war between the two European powers. Braddock's defeat greatly increased the Indians' suspicion of the effectiveness of British military power. The disaster on the Monongehela had caused most of the Indians of the Ohio region to go over to the French. Fortunately for the British, Shirley and especially Johnson had at least partially compensated for Braddock's failure. Shirley's expedition did not succeed in its objective of capturing Fort Niagara, but it did reinforce the strategic post at Oswego and demonstrated the ability of the British to put an effective army in the field to the Iroquois of central and western New York.

Johnson's appointment as superintendent of Indian affairs had a highly favorable effect on Anglo-Indian diplomacy. His knowledgeable and sensitive handling of Indian grievances and concerns contributed to a gradual improvement in Iroquois relations. Johnson's success at Lake George was a significant psychological victory. Coming as it did after several years of uninterrupted defeat, the triumph increased

the morale of the colonies and demonstrated to the Indians the ability of the British to defeat the French on the field of battle. The victory did have some negative aspects, however, Johnson had not achieved his desired goal of capturing Crown Point. Following the battle, Johnson's army built Fort William Henry on the site of the defeat of Dieskau, and went into winter quarters, declining to press the advance northward. Although the battle was considered to be a British victory, Johnson's force had suffered approximately as many casualties as the enemy, and was sufficiently weakened as to be unable to press its advantage. In addition, the pro-British sachem Hendrick, Johnson's friend and ally who could be counted upon to present the British interest in the councils of the Iroquois, had been killed in the engagement. The deaths of the Half King in late 1754 and Hendrick in 1755 deprived the British of two valuable supporters. Their loss would be felt as the British endeavored to gain the allegiance of Indian groups in the future. Johnson's expedition was a successful example of Anglo-Iroquois military cooperation and had the effect of breaking the pattern of British setbacks that had been established with the Pickawillany disaster of 1752. The military fortunes of the British were improving as 1755 drew to a close.

The events of the past year had also demonstrated to British leaders the advantage and necessity of attracting large numbers of Indian allies. Braddock's defeat had clearly shown the folly of attempting to fight in the wilderness without adequate Indian support. The fact that the victorious French force was composed primarily

of Indians added to the growing recognition of the importance of Indian allies. The valuable service performed by Hendrick and the Mohawks with Johnson at Lake George reinforced this conviction. In the future, British civil and military leaders would be increasingly active in their efforts to gain Indian support.

NOTES: Chapter VII

1. Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), II, pp. 662-664; and Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, pp. 340-342.
2. Morton, Colonial Virginia, II, pp. 661-664.
3. Howard Peckham, The Colonial Wars: 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago History of American Civilization, Daniel Boorstin, editor, 1964), p. 140; and James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 124.
4. The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), I, pp. 465-466.
5. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 468-471.
6. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 500-504.
7. Johnson Papers, I, p. 505.
8. Johnson Papers, I, p. 522.
9. Johnson Papers, I, p. 626.
10. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 625-627.
11. Johnson Papers, I, p. 630.
12. Johnson Papers, I, p. 631.
13. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 631-632.
14. Johnson Papers, I, p. 590.
15. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 598, 600.
16. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 603-604.
17. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 616-617.
18. Johnson Papers, I, p. 617.
19. Participants in the conference included representatives from the Six Nations of the Iroquois, the Delawares, and two small tribes -- Schanadarigroenes and Tiederigroenes. See Johnson Papers, IX, p. 189.

20. Johnson Papers, I, p. 644; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 129-130.
21. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg: 1851-1852), VI, pp. 468-472.
22. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 472-475.
23. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 472-475.
24. Johnson Papers, I, p. 707.
25. John A. Schutz, William Shirley: King's Governor of Massachusetts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), o. 201.
26. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 734-735.
27. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 130-131.
28. Johnson Papers, I, p. 733.
29. Johnson Papers, I, p. 735.
30. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 475-476. Croghan's affirmative reply is found in Johnson Papers, I, pp. 496-497. See also Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 125-126.
31. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 374-375.
32. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 398-399.
33. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, p. 397; Johnson Papers, I, p. 804.
34. Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 89; Pa. Col. Rec., VI, p. 397.
35. Charles Hamilton, Braddock's Defeat (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), "Journal of a British Officer," pp. 42-43, 46-47; "Journal of Capt. Robert Cholmey's Batman," pp. 23-24, 25-26.
36. The Indian force included Ottawas, Chippewas, and Potawatomes from the Great Lakes area and Mingoes and Shawnees from Ohio.
37. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 144-148; Hamilton, "Journal of Cholmey's Batman," pp. 28-31; Hamilton, "Journal of British Officer," p. 50.
38. Charles Thomson, "Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delawares and Shawnees (London: Printed for J. Wilkie, 1759), p. 81.

39. Scarrouady Speech to the Governor and Council, August 22, 1755, Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 2: 1754-1756 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
40. A Copy of Mr. George Croghan's Account of Indian Affairs from 1748/9 to General Braddock's Defeat, Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 1: 1687-1753 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
41. A Brief Narrative of the Incursions and Ravages of the French Indians in the Province of Pennsylvania, December 31, 1755, anonymous, Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 2: 1754-1756 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
42. Thomson, "Causes of Alienation," p. 81.
43. Extract of a letter from Shippensburg, Secret Intelligence Received from Shippensburg, November 1755, Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 2: 1754-1756 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania). Shippensburg is located approximately 30 miles southwest of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
44. Johnson Papers, I, p. 770.
45. Schutz, William Shirley, pp. 207-209. The governor also received word that his son, William Shirley, Jr. had been killed at the Monongehela.
46. Schutz, William Shirley, pp. 209-210; William Shirley, Correspondence of William Shirley, edited by Charles H. Lincoln (New York: Macmillan, 1912), II, pp. 249-250.
47. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 151-152; Shirley, Correspondence, II, pp. 248-249, 251.
48. Shirley, Correspondence, II, pp. 249-250, 289-301; Schutz, William Shirley, pp. 212-215.
49. Johnson Papers I, pp. 795-796.
50. Johnson Papers, I, p. 797.
51. Johnson Papers, I, p. 880.
52. Johnson Papers, I, p. 886.
53. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 892-894.
54. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 892-894.
55. Johnson Papers, II, p. 7.

56. Johnson Papers, II, p. 7.
57. Johnson Papers, II, p. 10.
58. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 15-16.
59. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 16-19.
60. Johnson Papers, II, p. 19; Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 148.
61. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 39-40.
62. Johnson Papers, II, p. 49.
63. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 51-52.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FURTHER DECLINE OF THE BRITISH INTEREST

Returning to New York City from his base at Oswego, William Shirley called together the governors of the northern colonies for a council of war in mid-December 1755, to formulate plans for 1756.¹ Shirley hoped to convince his colleagues of the need for raising 5,000 men for a second westward expedition and sought their financial aid in providing for this large army. Shirley recommended that Fort Frontenac, rather than Niagara, be the objective of this proposed Lake Ontario campaign. Shirley saw Frontenac, located at the western end of the St. Lawrence, as the key to victory. Reinforcements and supplies from Montreal could not reach the French garrisons at Niagara, Presque Isle, DuQuesne, and Detroit, if the British controlled this strategic point. The rest of Shirley's plan was similar to the 1755 strategy: a three thousand man expedition through western Pennsylvania against Fort DuQuesne and a six thousand man advance on Crown Point. The council of war endorsed Shirley's plan.²

As Shirley returned to Boston following the council of war, the British government made the decision to replace him as commander of British forces in North America with a more experienced military leader.³ The Newcastle ministry named John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun,

as Braddock's successor, appointed Colonel Daniel Webb temporary commander in America until Loudoun arrived, and recalled Shirley to London. Shirley's ambitious plans for offensive action in 1756 were destined to fail even if he had retained his command. Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania refused to support the proposed offensives against Fort DuQuesne and Crown Point, preferring instead to devote their military resources to the construction of a chain of defensive forts along their western frontier. The New England colonies were willing to support a Crown Point expedition, but declined to contribute to another offensive against the French positions on Lake Ontario. Unable to obtain an adequate number of volunteers to serve as replacements for the four under-strength regiments directly under his command, Shirley was forced to abandon a second Lake Ontario campaign.⁴

As Shirley fell from prominence, William Johnson gained honors and rewards for his recent service. He was awarded the title of Baronet and given a gift of £5000 for his valuable work in Indian diplomacy and the Lake George campaign. Johnson was appointed "Colonel of Our Faithfull Subjects, and Allies, the Six united Nations of Indians, & their Confederates in the Northern Parts of North America" and his commission as "Sole Agent and Superintendent" for Indian affairs was reaffirmed.⁵

As Shirley met with the governors at the council of war in New York City December 1755, Johnson resigned his commission as commander of the forces at Fort William Henry due to the continuing friction between himself and the Massachusetts governor. Johnson

returned to his home to meet with the sachems of the Iroquois concerning a new series of Indian problems. While he had been occupied with the Lake George campaign, relations with the Indians of Ohio had suffered a rapid decline. Reports had reached New York that the Delawares and Shawnees, supposedly vassals of the Six Nations, had gone over to the French and were raiding the frontiers of Pennsylvania. Johnson convened a council of representatives from four of the Six Nations and requested that the Iroquois intercede with these errant dependent nations on behalf of the British and compel them to cease these hostile actions. "I must desire you will, without loss of time, reprimand them for what they have already done, prevent their doing any more mischief, and insist on their turning their arms with us against the French and their Indians." Johnson reminded the Iroquois of their declarations of support for the British interest at the general meeting last June at Mount Johnson and made it clear that he expected immediate compliance with his orders.⁶

The Iroquois speaker opened his reply by congratulating Johnson on his recent "success over our common enemy." In a tone completely in accord with Johnson's request, the Iroquois expressed the "greatest concern, to hear of the barbarities of our Cousins the Delawares to our brethren the English." The Six Nations promised to communicate their displeasure immediately to the wayward tribes and to use "all arguments in our power" to cause the hostile nations to desist from their present behavior.⁷

Three weeks later Johnson held another meeting with several Six Nations sachems concerning the Delaware-Shawnee raids against Pennsylvania. The Iroquois speaker assured Johnson that messages had been sent to "our allies to the southward" commanding them to break off their associations with the French and to appear before the Iroquois to explain their recent behavior. The speaker pledged that the Six Nations would use their "utmost endeavors to put a stop to any more bloodshed" in Pennsylvania, but also urged Johnson to seek the support of the British governors in this effort "as we are sure there is nothing that draws them from us but the large presents which the French makes them."⁸

Alienation of the Delawares and Shawnees

The hostile behavior exhibited by the Delawares and other groups toward the British was a product of feelings far more deep rooted than in the giving of gifts by the French. Conquered by the Six Nations during a series of wars in the early years of the eighteenth century, the Delawares had never completely accepted the dominance of their Iroquois overlords. The Delawares had been especially resentful over the designation of "women" that the Iroquois had applied to them and were ripe for a rebellion. Two recent events had served as catalysts to precipitate this long held bitterness into overt action. The land fraud executed by Joseph Lydius at the Albany Conference and the subsequent influx of Connecticut settlers into their Wyoming Valley lands had been one important factor in this alienation. The Delawares had been placed in two settlements at

Wyoming and Shamokin as a result of a conference in 1742 and were promised permanent possession of these lands. At Albany in 1754, however, their lands were turned over to Lydius by the Iroquois and the Delawares became a propertyless people. Many had moved westward, finding homes among their fellow tribesmen who had settled earlier on the Ohio.

Braddock's defeat on the Monongehela in 1755 further contributed to the loss of the Delawares. The debacle erased for the near future the possibility of the return of British control of the Ohio Valley. For their own survival, the Indians of Ohio were left with no choice but to go over to the French. The Delawares (and their "cousins" the Shawnees who lived in the Delaware villages and consistently adopted an identical diplomatic-military policy) welcomed the opportunity to join the French and thus take revenge on the British and pro-British Iroquois who had subjected them to a long series of abuses.⁹

The emergence of Teedyuscung as chief of the Delawares solidified their opposition to the Six Nations and the British. Teedyuscung, a complex personality who was something of a mystic, claimed leadership of the Delawares by right of divine providence. He attracted a large following by appealing to the latent sense of nationalistic pride present in the subject Delawares and proclaimed himself "King" of that nation. Although not recognized as a chief by the Iroquois or even by all the Delawares, he rose to a position of power and influence in the conduct of red-white relations. Over the winter of 1755-1756, Teedyuscung formed a league of warriors from various groups of Delawares, Shawnees, and lesser tribes. The league

began to assert its independence from the Six Nations Confederation and the British interest by raiding the frontier settlements of Pennsylvania.¹⁰

In the late autumn and winter of 1755-1756, the government and inhabitants of Pennsylvania grew alarmed and terrified over the Indian raids on their borders. Governor Morris was able to push a new militia law and military appropriation of £2,000 through his usually uncooperative Assembly. Morris wrote to Shirley on October 31, 1755 reporting that a force of French, Delawares, and Shawnees were rumored to be preparing to "seize and fortify" Shamokin at the forks of the Susquehanna. Morris requested that Shirley send some of the British regulars under his command to the defense of Shamokin.¹¹

On November 7, 1755, Scarrouady, escorted by Conrad Weiser, met with the Pennsylvania government regarding the recent trouble on the frontier and the disaffection of the Delawares and Shawnees. The Half King reported that these alienated tribes were planning to strike several places along the frontier including Carlisle and Conrad Weiser's home at Tulpehocken. Following Scarrouady's warning Morris delivered a message to the Assembly calling upon the legislature to take immediate steps to provide for the defense of the outlying settlements. Scarrouady addressed the Pennsylvania government again on November 8, emphasizing the need for prompt action on the part of the British. The sachem warned ". . . if you will not fight with us we will go somewhere else. . . . If we cannot be safe where we are we will go somewhere else for protection and take care of ourselves." Morris reluctantly replied that due to "the nature of our

Government" he could not give an immediate statement of Pennsylvania's intentions, but expressed the hope that some action would be taken.¹²

The governor appealed to the Assembly to authorize military measures appropriate to the emergency. Describing his request for action as "one of the most important matters that ever came under your Consideration," Morris reminded the Assembly that the colony could not expect "these Indians will expose themselves for us to the fury of nations far more powerful than themselves unless we vigorously support and assist them." Grasping the concern of the Indians for their own survival, the governor predicted that if the colony continued to "refuse either to act in defense of ourselves or them, they must necessarily leave us and throw themselves for protection into the hands of the French. . . ." ¹³

The government of Pennsylvania had been locked in a procedural conflict between Governor Morris and the Assembly which carried over into this emergency situation and prevented the colony from making a satisfactory response to Scarrouady's address. The Assembly offered to make an appropriation of £60,000 for military expenditures, but seeking to establish its right to tax the property of the proprietors of the colony, attached a rider on the bill requiring a tax on the proprietary estate of £5,000. Morris was specifically forbidden by his commission as governor to give his assent to the taxation by the Assembly of the proprietors' land. The two branches of the government were thus at an impasse which made it impossible for the colony to meet the crisis. ¹⁴

Scarrouady was deeply disappointed at Pennsylvania's inaction but agreed to undertake a journey to the Delawares in behalf of the colony. Accompanied by Andrew Montour, Scarrouady left on a mission to the Indians living on the Susquehanna to ascertain their present disposition and attempt to regain them for the British interest if they had gone over to the French. Should his efforts be fruitless, the sachem was then to go to New York and solicit the aid of the Six Nations and William Johnson for the purpose of pressuring the Delawares and their allies to return to the British.¹⁵

After Scarrouady had departed for New York, the Assembly was finally sufficiently moved by the suffering experienced by the settlers on the frontier to appropriate funds for the defense of the colony. The Assembly dropped its insistence that the proprietors subject themselves to taxation on the condition that the proprietors would contribute a gift of £ 5,000 in lieu of the tax. Morris reluctantly signed the bill in order to prevent any further delay in providing for Pennsylvania's defense. The bill called for the building of a chain of forts along the frontier and for the support of Indians in alliance with the British interest. Upon the bill's passage in late 1755, a program of fortress construction was begun which included the erection of Fort Augusta at Shamokin.¹⁶

In February 1756 Johnson called a major conference with the Six Nations to discuss the hostile actions of the Delawares and their allies on the frontiers of Pennsylvania. A total of nearly six hundred warriors from the Iroquois and their allies were present at Mount Johnson for the talks. To Johnson's inquiries into the recent

alienation of the Delawares and their allies, the Six Nations speaker stated: "All we can say at present is, they are deluded by the craft and subtility of our old and perfidious enemy, the French; but we promise on our part, we will try all means to stop their proceeding further in their hostilities and beg you will do the same." The Iroquois indicated that they had not been inattentive to the recent depredations on the Pennsylvania border and had already sent emissaries "to take the hatchet out of the hands of our nephews the Delawares."¹⁷

Johnson appealed to the sense of pride of the Six Nations in the matter of the conduct of the Delawares, reminding the Iroquois sachems that unless they exerted themselves as they had always done to maintain "a superiority" over their subject nations, "you will not only lose that authority which they hitherto acknowledged, but will have them as your enemies." Johnson mentioned that Scarrouady had recently visited Mount Johnson and had left a message for the Six Nations leaders recommending that they take prompt action against the disobedient dependent nations.¹⁸

Red Head, an Onondaga chieftain who Johnson believed to be in the French interest, delivered the reply of the Iroquois. Despite Johnson's apprehensions, Red Head cordially renewed the covenant chain and congratulated Johnson on the recent victory over the French on Lake George. Turning to the issue of the disaffection of the Delawares, Red Head tended to place the blame for their loss on the government of Pennsylvania. Concerning their alienation, the Onondaga leader felt that the governor of Pennsylvania had "not taken

their friendly care of them as he ought to do, and therefore our common enemy had taken advantage of his neglect; for we can't but think, that if there had been proper measures taken, they would have still continued faithful friends to the English Interest."¹⁹

Other than this defense of the actions of the Delawares, Red Head's address contained only pro-British sentiments. The sachem thanked Johnson for the British attempts to win back for the Iroquois the lands recently "encroached upon by a common enemy." Red Head was also grateful for the British troops posted near some of the Iroquois castles holding themselves "in readiness to defend us upon any sudden emergency." The chieftain promised that the future actions of the Iroquois would be "a sufficient proof of our sincerity and fidelity to the great King our Father," asking only that if "our enemy should attack us," the British would demonstrate a "readiness to support and assist us."²⁰

Johnson again expressed his concern over the actions of the Delawares and Shawnees, stating his regret that the Iroquois leadership was "not so hearty in this affair, as I expected you would, or as . . . you ought to be." Despite the favorable statements made at the opening of the conference, Johnson had apparently detected in Red Head's remarks a disinclination to pursue the matter with enthusiasm. The superintendent urged the Iroquois to "settle this affair" before leaving the conference calling upon them to bring back into their alliance "those who are now ready to rebel against you."²¹

Following Johnson's insistent remarks, the Iroquois altered their earlier statements regarding their attitude toward the Delawares.

Red Head again spoke for the Iroquois but delivered an address far more critical of the Delawares than his first speech had been. The sachem informed Johnson that the Six Nations had sent two stern messages to the Delawares calling them to task for their anti-British behavior. Chastizing the Delawares for their base and treacherous treatment of the British, Red Head reported that the Iroquois had insisted that they cease their attacks on the Pennsylvania frontier. The Onondaga sachem promised that the Iroquois confederation would use its influence to "put speedy and effectual stop" to the "unhappy proceedings" of the Delawares. In a deft bit of responsibility shifting, however, the chieftain stated that "as the Mohawks are the head of our Confederacy, we leave the management of that affair up to them."²²

While the issue of the Delaware raids was the primary reason for the Mount Johnson Conference of February 1756, the Iroquois concern for their own self preservation also came under discussion. At smaller meetings before and after the main conference session, the Oneidas and Onondagas both requested that the British build forts in their territory to protect them from the French. The Mohawks expressed their gratitude for the fortification built at one of their castles the previous year "for the Security of our old people and children," and asked that more troops be sent there in the present emergency. Johnson heartily agreed to fulfill these requests knowing that providing for their defense was an important factor in gaining and holding their allegiance.²³

The Delaware raids continued through the winter of 1756. Conrad Weiser sent a small group of trusted Indians (including John Shickellamy, Six Nations viceroy for Pennsylvania) on an intelligence gathering mission among the Delawares. In late February, the reconnaissance party arrived in Philadelphia where they reported their findings to Weiser and the Pennsylvania government. Shickellamy related that he had received a cool reception from the Delawares and when he had asked them why they were attacking the British they refused to discuss the matter. The Iroquois sachem stated that the Delawares were firmly in the French interest, having abandoned the British soon after Braddock's defeat in July 1755.

Governor Morris thanked Shickellamy and his companions for their service and promised to build a fort that they urgently requested for Shamokin. Morris called on the Six Nations to punish the deviant behavior of the Delawares. As the frontier was becoming increasingly unsafe for pro-British Indians as well as Pennsylvania settlers, the governor concluded the conference by inviting Shickellamy's band to live with the Conestoga Indians near Philadelphia.²⁴

Pennsylvania's Declaration of War

In late March, Scarrouady and Montour arrived in Philadelphia following their long journey through the country of the Delawares of the Wyoming Valley and the Six Nations of New York. Scarrouady delivered the disheartening news that all the Indians of Pennsylvania except for a few small bands, had gone over to the French. Scarrouady had met with Teedyuscung, the new "King" of the Delawares, and had

found him sending scalps and wampum belts to the Senecas and Oneidas, urging them to take up arms against the British. Scarrouady reported seeing many groups of Indians on the trail who were migrating to join the pro-French Indians raiding the British.²⁵

Scarrouady further related that the Six Nations had taken a firm stand against the actions of the Delawares. While he was present at one of the major Wyoming Valley towns, messengers had come from the Iroquois capital of Onondaga ordering the Delawares to cease their attacks on the British and commanding them to appear before the Six Nations Central Council. The Delawares acknowledged their submission to the Iroquois and at the subsequent Onondaga meeting were "sharply reprehended" for their "cruel conduct" against the British. The Delawares defended their actions by reason of the alleged mistreatment they had suffered at the hands of the British but agreed to stop their raids and promised to spread the news of the cease-fire to all the Delaware villages.²⁶

While the action of the Six Nations promised relief for the frontiers of Pennsylvania, the raids had continued. Governor Morris indicated that since ample time had elapsed to allow for all the Delawares of Pennsylvania to have received the cease-fire order from the Iroquois, it was his judgment that they were firmly committed to the French and were trying to end their subservience to the Six Nations. Accordingly, Morris on the advice of his council, announced that Pennsylvania was declaring war on the Delawares. The failure of the Delawares to respond to the requests of Pennsylvania and the Six Nations had left the colony with no other alternative,

stated the governor. Morris then asked Scarrouady to go again to the Six Nations and seek a similar declaration of war from the Onondaga council. Scarrouady gave his approval to Pennsylvania's declaration, agreeing that the colony had done everything within reason to avoid such a conflict. The Half King accepted the hatchet offered by Morris as a symbol of his willingness to fight the Delawares and encouraged Pennsylvania not to settle for a "trifling peace."²⁷

The Pennsylvania declaration of war was not the decisive step it appeared to be. Weiser favored the declaration. He hoped that it would frighten the Delawares into rejoining the British interest and believed it would convince the Six Nations of Pennsylvania's commitment to resisting the encroachments of the French. The Quaker members of the Assembly, however, had been caught off guard by the governor's declaration and now vigorously opposed it. The pacifists demanded that the declaration be reconsidered by the governor and the council. The Assembly blocked the practical effect of the declaration by declining to authorize an offensive military campaign proposed by the governor. Scarrouady observed the lack of unanimity in the government of Pennsylvania and became disappointed at the colony's vacillation.²⁸

Further opposition to Pennsylvania's declaration came from New York governor Charles Hardy. William Johnson had recently informed Hardy that he had arranged a conference with the Six Nations and the Delawares at which he hoped to bring about an accommodation between the two Indian groups and an end to the frontier raids.

The superintendent had learned from reliable Indian sources that the Delawares had privately agreed to cease their hostilities against the British and to once again accept the authority of the Six Nations. Johnson saw Pennsylvania's declaration as detrimental to his efforts to reestablish peaceful relations with the Delawares. On April 29, 1756, Governor Hardy forwarded Johnson's request to Philadelphia that the Pennsylvania declaration be rescinded. At the council's suggestion, Governor Morris agreed to publish a proclamation announcing the cessation of hostilities pending the outcome of Johnson's conference.²⁹

Concurrent with Johnson's activities and the decision to suspend hostilities, leaders of the Assembly's Quaker faction (with the approval of Governor Morris) approached Scarrouady's Indians concerning a peace mission to the Delawares. While Scarrouady left for New York, three of his companions were sent to the Wyoming Valley with the offer that if the Delawares would heed the Six Nations advice and lay down their arms, Pennsylvania would forgive them for the recent raids and not prosecute the war.³⁰

The pro-British Indian delegation returned in early June from their three week mission to the Delawares at Wyoming. They reported that the Delawares, pressured by the Six Nations to end their attacks on the British, were willing to make peace with Pennsylvania. Teedyuscung, the Delaware leader, agreed to meet with officials of Pennsylvania and expressed his pleasure that the British were "willing to renew the old good Understanding." Teedyuscung pledged to commit

"no more mischief" and to comply with the instructions of the Six Nations.³¹

Governor Morris reacted cooperatively to Teedyuscung's response. Messengers were sent at once to the Delaware town, inviting Teedyuscung to a conference to discuss the terms for a peace between the people of Pennsylvania and the Delawares living in the vicinity of the Susquehanna. The governor called on the Indians to reaffirm their old treaties with the British and promised kind treatment for them when they visited the settlements. Morris also urged Teedyuscung's Delawares to attend Johnson's upcoming conference in New York in order that they might settle their difference with the Six Nations central council.³²

Teedyuscung's statements of good will were apparently sincere. For the first time since the autumn of the previous year, the frontier of Pennsylvania was free from raids by hostile Indians. In June 1756, the Delaware leader accepted Morris' invitation and plans were made for the coming conference to be held at Easton in late July.³³

Onondaga and Mount Johnson Conferences, June/July 1756

As Morris made preparations for his impending meeting with Teedyuscung and his Delaware band, William Johnson journeyed to Onondaga for a conference with the Six Nations and representatives from the Shawnees and Delawares of Pennsylvania. Envoys sent from the Iroquois to the Delawares following the Mount Johnson Conferences of late February returned to New York with the news that the

Pennsylvania Indians would rejoin the British interest if Johnson would meet with them at Onondaga and provide assurances of British forgiveness and friendship.³⁴

Johnson was quick to respond to this invitation. The recent action of Pennsylvania had put him in a difficult position. Pennsylvania's sudden declaration of war had damaged Johnson's credibility with the Indians as he had led them to believe that the problems with the Delawares could be settled through diplomatic channels. The passage of a scalp bounty law along with the declaration was also an impediment to good Indian relations. Pro-British Indians were in danger of being scalped by whites if they came too close to the settlements and killed by French Indians if they moved westward.³⁵

The French had also scored several minor military successes which were damaging to the British interest. Three hundred French troops from Montreal, joined by a group of "Praying Indians" from Piquet's mission-fortress at Oswegatchie on the St. Lawrence, struck central New York in the spring of 1756. A report that the French force was planning an attack at German Flats (an area a short distance west of Mount Johnson) in late March 1756, proved to be a false alarm. Johnson had raced to the area with "above 100 of the Militia," however, a response which "gave the Oneidas so great Satisfaction to find I was so ready to go to their Assistance." On April 3, the French did attack Fort Bull, a small outpost built the previous summer by Shirley to guard the portage between the Mohawk River and Oneida Lake. Johnson again set out with "about five hundred Militia & Indians of Both Mohawk Castles" plus "above 100 Oneidas and

Tuscaroras. " Johnson's force arrived too late, however, and the enemy had already withdrawn after killing the small garrison of twenty-three soldiers. Johnson sent some extra troops to augment the garrison at one of the Mohawk castles, as the raid had had an unsettling effect on his Indian allies. Other groups of pro-British Indians, fearing for their safety, requested forts garrisoned by British troops be established in their villages.³⁶

Seeking to overcome the growing French menace in the Iroquois country and restore good relations between the Delawares and the British interest, Johnson proceeded to Onondaga in early June 1756. The superintendent was distressed to find no Senecas and no Pennsylvania Indians at the meeting. Johnson had heard rumors throughout the spring and summer that the French had been gathering a force of soldiers and Indians at Niagara for an assault on Oswego, and now feared that the Senecas had possibly become a part of this expedition. The absence of the Delawares and Shawnees was even more worrisome since they were the principal reason for the calling of the conference.³⁷

Johnson spent two weeks at Onondaga strengthening the British position among the Six Nations. The Indians at first expressed some skepticism regarding the British interest in their lands. "We have often heard that our Land is the cause of Quarrel between you and the French and you both tell us the same story, that you mean only to secure it for us." The Iroquois agreed to trust the British regarding the question of their lands and promised to maintain the covenant chain, vowing to "adhere faithfully to all the obligations

which it includes." While declining to participate in offensive warfare on behalf of the British, the Iroquois promised to resist the overtures of the French. They further agreed to let the British build a fort to protect the road from Albany to Oswego.³⁸

As the meetings with the Six Nations were drawing to a close, the tardy Delawares and Shawnees led by Teedyuscung arrived at Onondaga. Having concluded his affairs with the Six Nations, Johnson invited the Pennsylvania Indians to accompany him to his home on the Mohawk River for discussions. Returning to Mount Johnson on July 7, 1756, the superintendent opened the conference by mentioning the "horrid murders, and barbarous Devastations" committed by "Some of Your people," but let it be known he was prepared to "renew strengthen and brighten the Covenant Chain of Peace Friendship and confidence between the Delawares and the English."³⁹

Teedyuscung surprised Johnson and the Six Nations sachems who were in attendance by declining to give any response to the superintendent's speech. The Delaware said Johnson's speech was "pleasing" but would only comment "I can not take upon me at this time to give a determinate answer to you." Teedyuscung agreed to carry Johnson's remarks to the Delaware people and promised to give a future reply but would make no further commitment. Following the day's meeting some of the Iroquois leaders present expressed their astonishment and regret at the Delaware King's evasive reply and paid a visit to his tent to convince him of the necessity of making a more satisfactory answer to Johnson's address.⁴⁰

The second day of the conference opened with Johnson reminding Teedyuscung that "the present state of affairs, between us and you people" demanded a prompt and complete explanation. Johnson warned that as some new raids had recently broken out again in Pennsylvania, the Delawares could not expect the settlers to "continue tamely to bear the Bloody Injuries which they have for some time past suffered." Teedyuscung asserted that his group of Delawares were not responsible for the recent raid, claiming his band had stopped hostilities immediately upon receiving the first admonition from the Six Nations to do so. The chieftain blamed the incidents on Ohio Delawares from Fort DuQuesne over whom he had no control. Teedyuscung attributed the past anti-British behavior of his Delawares to having been "deluded and seduced" by the French and promised that they would henceforth be guided by the advice of the Six Nations. Demonstrating an affinity for the British that was not evident in his curt statement of the previous day, Teedyuscung promised to return all prisoners in his possession, renewed the covenant chain, repudiated his former attachment to the French, and repented "all past offenses."⁴¹

Johnson expressed his satisfaction at Teedyuscung's pro-British statements and pledges and announced that he considered "all affairs to be happily settled between us." Eager to cement the renewed alliance with the Delawares, Johnson made a startling diplomatic maneuver aimed at removing the most important block to a sound relationship. In appreciation of the Delaware declaration of friendship, the superintendent announced: "I do in the name of the Great King of England, your Father, declare that henceforward you are to be

considered as Men . . . and no longer as women." The removal of the stigma of feminism was calculated by Johnson to be an essential maneuver at this time. By custom, it was up to the Iroquois to remove this insulting designation, so Johnson had exceeded his authority in making his bold pronouncement. The superintendent, long familiar with Indian usages, knew that his action might enrage the Iroquois but hoped that his proclamation would have the beneficial result of drawing the scattered bands of Delawares into the British interest.⁴²

Easton Conferences, July and November 1756

Following the Mount Johnson conference Teedyuscung and his Delawares traveled south to attend the meeting with the governor of Pennsylvania scheduled for Easton in late July 1756. The Delaware King announced that he should be recognized as the spokesman for ten Indian nations: The Six Nations of the Iroquois, the Delawares, Shawnees, Mohicans, and Munsees. In a further attempt to increase his status in the eyes of the Pennsylvania officials, Teedyuscung claimed that in an effort to better transact their affairs with the whites the Indians had empowered only two leaders to conduct negotiations and that he was one of the two designees.⁴³

Governor Morris reviewed the recent history of relations between his colony and the Delawares, reaffirming his offer to enter into a peaceful relationship with that nation if they were sincere in their alleged desire to rejoin the British interest. Morris called for the immediate release of all prisoners taken in the recent raids as

proof of the Delaware's good will. Presenting the Indians with a gift, the governor urged them to bring as many other Indians as possible into their friendship pact with Pennsylvania.⁴⁴

Teedyuscung avoided making any firm commitments to the British. He was cordial but evasive in his public and private discussions with the governor, being quick to blame any recent Indian border raids on Delawares from Ohio. Conrad Weiser was suspicious of his claim of being the representative of ten nations including the Iroquois. Weiser was aware that Johnson had removed the designation of "women" from the Delawares, but knew that the Six Nations had not done so as yet. Thus, when Teedyuscung announced during the conference that the Iroquois now recognized the Delawares as "men," Weiser knew he was being untruthful on that point. To discover the truth about Teedyuscung's claims to power and position, Newcastle, a trusted Iroquois who was an associate of Scarrouady, was sent on a fact finding mission to New York. Meanwhile, the Pennsylvania government, hoping that Teedyuscung did have the wide influence that he claimed so that he would end the raids on their frontiers, treated the Delaware King as if he were the powerful chieftain he claimed to be. Johnson was upset. Pennsylvania had held a major Indian conference without consulting him, the Crown's commissioner for Indian affairs. In addition, Pennsylvania's premature recognition of the Delawares status as "men" rather than "women" would make it extremely difficult for him to convince the Iroquois to ratify this change. The proud Iroquois, when they learned of Teedyuscung's false pronouncement

that the Delawares were not considered to be "men" by the Six Nations, would wish to punish the chieftain for his insolence. Therefore, this long standing source of friction between the Delawares and the Iroquois would continue to be a problem for Johnson in the future.⁴⁵

Pennsylvania held a second Easton conference with Teedyuscung and his Delawares in November 1756. Indian raids had resumed during the late summer and autumn and a large enemy force was rumored to be advancing on Shamokin. Newcastle returned from his mission to the Six Nations to report that Teedyuscung had been given no authority to speak for them as he had claimed at the Easton Conference in July. William Denny, who had replaced Morris as Governor of Pennsylvania in August, faced a dilemma when he received word from Teedyuscung in October that the Delaware chief desired a conference. Denny had been ordered by Loudoun not to interfere with Johnson's handling of Indian affairs and had now been advised that Teedyuscung's claims exceeded his actual authority. The Delaware chief did offer to return British prisoners at the proposed conference, however, and might be persuaded to use his influence to bring a halt to the renewed frontier raids. The governor decided to go to Easton for the conference. He was disappointed to find the Delawares had brought only five British prisoners to the talks. Another obstacle to good relations arose when Teedyuscung made an animated speech condemning the proprietors of Pennsylvania for past land purchases that he said were the underlying cause of the hostility of many Indian groups toward the British. The conference did have more agreeable moments. Teedyuscung reported that he had taken Pennsylvania's offer of peace

to many Indian groups and had been working toward bringing about the end of the raids on the frontier. The Delaware promised to continue his present efforts to secure the release of British captives. The conference concluded with a mutual pledge of friendship and cooperation. Superficially the conference was a success but Teedy-uscung remained a mystery. He still claimed to be spokesman for ten nations (including the Iroquois) and hinted that presents from Pennsylvania were necessary if he were to be expected to continue to try to bring various Indian bands in the British interest.⁴⁶

British Colonies on the Defensive

Following the military reversals of 1755 and the attendant loss of Indian support, the British colonies chose to adopt a defensive military policy aimed at protecting their western frontiers against the advances of the French and their Indian allies. Offensive operations had proved to be expensive and ineffective and recent Indian raids had shown the need for better fortifications close to home. Ambitious plans for the capture of the French fortress in the area of the Great Lakes and the Ohio were put aside as the British colonies elected to follow a policy of retrenchment.

Virginia also adopted a purely defensive policy in 1755-1756, choosing to build a line of forts along its western frontier for the protection of the settlements in that area. Washington, placed in command of Virginia's colonial forces following his heroic service with Braddock's army, worked to distribute his detachments of militiamen along the long frontier of the colony so as best to

provide for the defense of the more remote settlements. Virginia's determination to remain on the defensive was also influenced by Pennsylvania's decision to abandon offensive operations.

Following Braddock's defeat, Massachusetts also chose to concentrate all of its military efforts on defense rather than offense. The general populace as well as the government believed that British regulars should be provided to garrison exposed frontier outposts and to man expeditions into the more remote regions of North America. Massachusetts citizens contended that they had contributed enough already and were reluctant to continue fighting enemy forces composed in large part of French regulars.⁴⁸

In Pennsylvania, the news of Braddock's defeat caused great concern for the protection of the frontier. The offensive strike having proved unsuccessful, the government of Pennsylvania chose to put its own defense in order rather than try to send another expedition against the French at Fort Duquesne. Indian raids over the winter and spring of 1755-1756 had deepened the colony's determination to devote its military energies to the improvement of its defenses. For religious and financial reasons, the pacifist-dominated Pennsylvania Assembly refused to support any offensive measures. A chain of forts was erected along the frontier to provide protection for the inhabitants of the area but no aggressive actions would be approved by the Assembly. The refusal of the Quakers to support needed military measures in this time of emergency led to their fall from power in the Pennsylvania government. The home government in Britain

was greatly disappointed with the Quakers for blocking the governor's plans to more adequately protect the frontier settlers and to organize offensive measures against the enemy. To remove these obstructionists, a measure was proposed in London to the effect that all holders of public office should be required to take an oath. Since oath taking was contrary to Quaker religious principles, the pacifists would be purged from the Assembly. Quaker leaders in England proposed a compromise so that members of their church would not be permanently excluded from participation in public life. They promised to urge the Pennsylvania Quakers to voluntarily resign from office in the current emergency if the British government would table the proposed bill. The agreement was worked out, and after the Pennsylvania elections of 1756 only eight of thirty-six Assembly seats were held by pacifist Quakers. Still the colony was reluctant to bear the cost of another offensive.⁴⁹

Pennsylvania's policy of defense proved ineffective in the summer of 1756. There had been few attacks on the frontier in May and June as the Delawares and their allies were reported to be seeking a reconciliation with the British. In late July, however, as Governor Morris talked peace with Teedyuscung at Easton, a band of hostile Indians struck Fort Granville, one of the newly constructed defense establishments located in central Pennsylvania on the Juniata River. The fort was burned and all those within its walls were either killed or taken captive. The news of the disaster at Fort Granville caused the settlers of surrounding Cumberland county to abandon their homes and flee eastward.⁵⁰

The British interest did enjoy one military success during the summer of 1756. On July 30, the same day Fort Granville was destroyed, Colonel John Armstrong led a force of three hundred volunteers out of Fort Shirley, a new fort built at George Croghan's fur trading center, Aughwick. The small army's objective was Kittanning, a sizesble town on the Allegheny 30 miles northeast of Fort DuQuesne. Kittanning was known to be the home base for some of the Delawares and their allies that had been ravaging the Pennsylvania frontier. The village was also believed to contain a number of British prisoners. Armstrong's force advanced unnoticed and attacked the Indians of Kittanning as they slept. Armstrong did not have the village surrounded so many of the Indians escaped. The Pennsylvanians did kill thirty to forty of the enemy, burn the village to the ground, and free eleven British prisoners held in the town. Among the dead was Captain Jacobs, a Delaware chieftain notorious for his leadership of many of the recent raids on Pennsylvania's frontier. While the raid gained no territory or strategic point, it demonstrated the ability of the British to strike a French Indian stronghold thought to be safe from such an attack.⁵¹

The Fall of Oswego

The British victory at Kittanning would have had a much greater psychological value had it not been for the news of the fall of the strategic fort at Oswego to the French in early August 1756. The British garrison at the Lake Ontario fortress had been decimated by exposure, hunger, and disease over the winter following Shirley's

abortive attempt to take Fort Niagara in the summer and autumn of 1755. Some reinforcements were sent to Oswego in the spring of 1756 but as the colonies were concentrating on defense, few troops could be spared for the distant post. The Marquis de Montcalm led an amphibious force of 3,200 men from Fort Frontenac which made an undetected landing just two miles from the British fortress on the night of August 9-10, 1756. In a well executed siege operation, Montcalm compelled the surrender of the outnumbered and undersupplied garrison. The British suffered approximately 150 casualties (including the fort's commander Colonel Mercer) in the four day battle and had nearly 1,700 taken prisoner after the surrender. The British fortifications were totally destroyed.⁵²

The French were not unaware of the impact of Oswego's destruction on the Iroquois. Governor Vaudreuil in Montreal had predicted the detrimental effect Oswego's fall would have on Anglo-Iroquois relations. In July 1756, he had written to his home government: "From the destruction of Chouaguen [Oswego] will follow . . . the complete attachment of all the upper country Indians. . . ." Vaudreuil judged the Iroquois of the Oswego area to be currently neutral, but even if they were to go over to the British before the French attacked the fort, ". . . they would abandon them the moment Chouaguen was no more."⁵³ As Vaudreuil had hoped, the defeat at Oswego caused the British to suffer a great loss of prestige among the Six Nations. Even before the defeat, some castles of the Senecas and Cayugas, the westernmost of the Iroquois confederation tribes, were reported to be in league with the French. Now all these Iroquois were expected

to leave the British interest. Governor Hardy of New York reported to the Board of Trade on the fall of Oswego, "I fear a Defection of our Indian Interest must follow the loss of this Post. . . ." Johnson had notified Hardy that he feared "the loss of Oswego has struck Terror of the French upon the Six Nations at least upon the upper Nations as will alienate them from our Interest. . . ." ⁵⁴

Johnson saw the effect that Oswego's loss would have on the Iroquois concern for their own self preservation. He realized that the fort had functioned as "a curb to the Power of the French." "but by our losing Oswego . . . they were laid open to the Resentments of the French who might at any time . . . fall upon their Towns." Johnson lamented that "the spirit which they the Indians had recently shewn in our favour was sunk, and they were over awed by the success of the French and the accumulated Power which it gave them." In a letter to the Board of Trade in October 1756, Johnson confirmed the predicted ill effects of the British loss on the Indians. "The defeat of Genl. Braddock and the loss of Oswego have greatly contributed to confuse and weaken our Indian Interest." ⁵⁵

Immediately after the Oswego defeat, it became difficult to enlist Indians into the service of the British. Iroquois accompanying the British force marching to the aid of the fort suddenly found it "too late in the day" to proceed further when word came that Oswego had capitulated. Requested to perform scouting duties as the British force moved forward to try to secure the portage between the Mohawk River and Oneida Lake, the Iroquois asked for their pay before leaving

camp, obviously planning to leave the British if the French were moving inland.⁵⁶

After the annihilation of the British presence on Lake Ontario, the Iroquois were left vulnerable to the military power of the French. Their families and towns were exposed to the advance of the French from their bases on Lake Ontario. No British fortification now stood in the way of a French invasion of the territory of the Six Nations. Convinced by the fall of Oswego that the British were incapable of protecting their castles from the armies of the French, the Iroquois began to make plans to go to Montreal to work out an accommodation with the governor of Canada. The French threatened the Iroquois that if the Six Nations permitted the British to reestablish a fortress at Oswego, the French would destroy their castles.⁵⁷

British Inaction and a Change of Command

The British colonies were in no position to undertake offensive operations in the summer of 1756 that could compensate for the loss of Oswego. The tendency of the colonies in the interests of their own security to rely on defensive measures, negated the possibility of any large scale expedition emanating from provincial sources. The disorganization of the home government in dealing with military affairs in North America meant that no campaigns would be launched from that source. Governor Shirley had taken over command of all British forces in America upon the death of Braddock in 1755. Over the winter of 1755-1756 he was busy planning operations for the coming

campaign season but the failure of his own Niagara expedition had caused him to lose favor in London. The Earl of Loudoun was chosen to replace him but was not given his official commission until March 17. Since it would be some time before Loudoun would be able to reach America to assume his new post, General Daniel Webb was made temporary commander in America. This news did not cross the Atlantic until mid-April and the official orders to Shirley, relieving him of the command, did not arrive until June. Thus, throughout the spring of 1756, the leadership of the British war effort in America was in an unsettled state. As there was uncertainty as to who had the authority to plan to strategy and organize the troops for the coming season, few preparations were made for any offensive action against the French.

Webb, who was overly cautious and indecisive throughout his career, did little to further British military efforts during his short tenure. After less than a month as head of the forces in America he was succeeded by General James Abercromby who was also appointed to fill the post on an interim basis until Loudoun's arrival. Abercromby was a man of little energy whose military career had been built on his political connections and preferred not to take any decisive action.⁵⁹ This confusion and disorganization in the command of British forces in America did nothing to convince the Indians of Britain's probability of defeating the French. The ineptitude that would be displayed by these commanders was also detrimental to the British war effort.

Shirley had not been totally idle. Handicapped by lack of support from the various colonies for another expedition against Niagara or Frontenac, he had gathered an army for another thrust against Crown Point before learning of his demotion. When Webb and Abercromby reached America in June 1756, Shirley had already gathered an army of 7,000 provincials at Fort William Henry and Fort Edward near the southern end of Lake George. Shirley reported to Abercromby that Oswego was in danger and should be reinforced without delay. Realizing Oswego's importance, Shirley pointed out that "the gaining or losing of the Indians to the Interest of the English seems very much to depend upon the Activity and Success of the Operations this Year upon the Lake Ontario." Shirley also recommended that forts that had been earlier promised to the Iroquois who considered their villages to be vulnerable, should be constructed immediately.⁶⁰

Abercromby declined to take positive action in regard to either Oswego or Crown Point, deciding instead to wait on Loudoun. The new commander did not reach America until July 23, and did not meet with Abercromby and Webb in Albany until July 28. Upon his arrival, Loudoun ordered Webb to reinforce Oswego but apparently did not feel the sense of urgency in attending to the matter. Webb was proceeding at a slow pace toward Oswego in mid-August when his column received the news that the fort had fallen. The loss of Oswego caused Loudoun to cancel the Crown Point expedition prepared by Shirley before his arrival. Loudoun feared that should the British forces be defeated on Lake George, there would be nothing to stop

the enemy from invading New York. Troops at Fort William Henry were ordered to assume a defensive position and prepare to block a French invasion from the vicinity of Lake Oneida or Lake Champlain. Choosing to assume a defensive posture, Loudoun thus cancelled the proposed strike on Crown Point and due to the lateness of the season, ended any chance of offensive operations in 1756.⁶¹

Military Operations of 1757

Although he took no offensive action in the year of his arrival, Loudoun realized that defense would not win the war and spent the winter of 1756-1757 planning operations for the 1757 campaign season.⁶² Loudoun believed a strike with 5,500 regulars at the French capital of Quebec would be the most effective means of bringing about the defeat of the French. William Pitt, who had assumed the post of Secretary of State for the Southern Department, overruled Loudoun, choosing instead Louisbourg as the prime objective for the 1757 expedition.⁶³

Loudoun sailed from New York on May 21, 1757 for Halifax, Nova Scotia where he was to rendezvous his troops with ten regiments of British regulars coming from Ireland. By June 10, Loudoun's command and the British fleet under Admiral Holborne had joined forces at Halifax but the expedition was delayed as the troops were landed and given several weeks of further training. The expedition was finally preparing to sail for Louisbourg in early August when intelligence was received to the effect that the strength of the French fortress had been significantly increased over the summer. Three French

squadrons were anchored in Louisbourg's harbor and the garrison had been reinforced to a strength of 7,000 men. Loudoun and Holborne judged that Louisbourg was now too strong to be successfully assaulted and decided to abandon the entire project. The attempt to capture Louisbourg in 1757 accomplished nothing except to reduce the number of British troops available to resist the French offensive of that year.⁶⁴

Fort William Henry, originally built by William Johnson at the end of Lake George on the site of his victory over Dieskau in 1755, was a primary target for the French in 1757. In mid-March, before the ice on the lake had broken, Governor Vaudreuil sent a mixed force of French regulars, Canadians, and Indians under his brother Rigaud, against the British fortress. The French army of 1,600 surrounded William Henry and exchanged fire with its defenders during a week long siege. The garrison, backed by artillery, held out, and the French gave up the attempt, contenting themselves to burn several adjacent structures as they withdrew.⁶⁵

When the news came to Mount Johnson in March 1757 that a French force was besieging Fort William Henry, Johnson could only enlist sixty Mohawks to join with a force of 1,200 militia in an attempt to relieve the garrison at Lake George. The fall of Oswego had severely reduced Johnson's ability to attract the Iroquois to the British interest. Even those Mohawks who had been spending the winter clustered around Johnson's estate, had to be provided with arms and ammunition. The status of the British had fallen so low that not one

of the sixty would agree to take a message to the nearby Canajoharie Mohawk castle requesting that their warriors join the relief expedition.⁶⁶

Johnson's force had reached Fort Edward when word came that the French had given up the siege. Returning to Mount Johnson, the alarming news came that the French were preparing to descend on German Flats. The Mohawk Valley was open to French attack. Formerly, the British had been able to rely on the shield of the Six Nations Confederacy to shelter the area from a French invasion. Whether pro-British or neutral, the Iroquois "long house" had been powerful enough to stand between the military forces of New York and Canada. The confederation's position of relative strength had declined with the French military buildup on Lake Ontario. Awed by the ability of the French to easily destroy the important British post at Oswego, the Iroquois were no longer willing to risk their own survival to assist the British.

Johnson could find some solace in reports that the Iroquois still held sufficient mistrust and enmity for the French so as not to have become the firm allies of Montreal. The Iroquois, disappointed by the lack of support and weakness of the British, were also not favorably disposed toward the bellicose French. At a recent meeting in Montreal, representatives of the Six Nations let it be known that they did not appreciate expansion and warfare, whether it be initiated by the British or the French. The Iroquois had labeled both European peoples as "the common Disturbers of this Country." Attacking the practice of the British and the French of trying to recruit Iroquois

warriors for service on both sides during war time, the Six Nations speaker had said: "You want to put us Indians a quarreling, but we the Six Nations know better" Planning to avoid "an entire ruin of us," the Iroquois stated that they were determined "to keep Friends on both sides as long as possible & not meddle with the hatchet. . . ." ⁶⁷ From this report it was evident that the Iroquois were dedicated to the preservation of their confederacy and were resolved to avoid becoming casualties in the war between the whites. If Johnson was experiencing difficulty obtaining Indian allies he had reason to hope that the Iroquois would be equally reluctant to assist the French, and would not put their military power at the disposal of Montreal.

Immediately following the attack on Fort William Henry, another party of 362 French and Indians struck Fort Bull at the "Great Carrying Place," between Oneida Lake and the Mohawk River. On March 27, 1757, the small garrison was overwhelmed and the fort destroyed by a force commanded by Lieutenant de Lery. The French commander had first offered to spare the lives of the fort's inhabitants if the British would surrender. When the terms were refused, the French made a successful rush at the gate and "put everyone to the sword they could lay hands on." Lery reported "one woman and a few soldiers only" escaped death. After helping themselves to the fort's stores of food, clothing, and other supplies, the French blew up the stockade. The destruction of Fort Bull was yet another demonstration of the capability of the French to strike the Mohawk Valley and of the inability of the British to prevent it. ⁶⁸

British-Indian Diplomatic Relations:
The Conferences of Summer 1757

Governor Denny's two conferences at Easton in 1756 caused William Johnson to become extremely angry at Pennsylvania for encroaching upon his commission as the Crown's sole agent for the conduct of Indian affairs. To better coordinate the Indian negotiations of New York and Pennsylvania, Johnson, in November 1756 with the support of Loudoun, named George Croghan his deputy superintendent for Indian affairs and placed him in charge of the Pennsylvania area. On Johnson's orders, Croghan went to Pennsylvania to examine the causes of the current Indian raids on the colony's frontier. Croghan conducted an investigation, concluded that past land transactions were at least part of the cause of Indian alienation, and ordered Denny to call a conference for the spring of 1757 for the purpose of restoring some of the lands west of the Susquehanna to the Indians.⁶⁹

The conference met at Lancaster in April 1757. Croghan, accompanied by Scarrouady and approximately 150 Iroquois, reached Lancaster to await the arrival of Teedyuscung so that the transfer of the disputed lands back to the Indians could be consummated. Unpredictable Teedyuscung failed to appear on time and the Iroquois grew restless as they waited several weeks for his arrival. A smallpox epidemic spread from Philadelphia to Lancaster and struck the Iroquois encampment. Scarrouady, faithful adherent to the British interest, contracted the disease and died. Teedyuscung, possibly fearful of having his claims of authority over ten nations challenged by Scarrouady and the Iroquois delegation, never appeared at Lancaster.

After waiting as long as possible, Governor Denny held a short amicable conference with the Six Nations contingent and called for another conference after asking the Iroquois to make certain Teedyuscung attended. Despite Teedyuscung's absence, the conference gave rise to optimism concerning the future of Indian relations. Learning of Pennsylvania's intention to rescind earlier land purchases, a group of Delawares living on the Ohio had sent a note to Croghan expressing a tentative willingness to resume diplomatic relations with the British. This action seemed to indicate that the Indians of Ohio were not so firmly wedded to the French interest that they would pass up an opportunity to settle grievances without resorting to war.⁷⁰

As he worked to stop the raids on the Pennsylvania frontier in the summer of 1757, Croghan received word from Denny that Teedyuscung had been located and had agreed to come to a conference at Easton. Croghan hoped that the conference could result in the end of the raids and the settling of the old land disputes. The deputy agent was caught between the proprietary and Quaker factions of Pennsylvania and had great difficulty working out a successful arrangement with Teedyuscung and the Delawares. Croghan was upset that the two factions seemed "only to endeavor to carry their own private views and Interest and neglect the general Interest." The land question became a stumbling block to further progress when Delaware nationalist Teedyuscung went so far as to assert that the 1737 and 1754 deeds should be declared invalid because the Iroquois had no right to make any transactions involving territories allegedly belonging to the Delawares. Not wishing to challenge the sovereignty of the Six

Nations, Governor Denny guided the discussions away from the land issue and tried to bring about an immediate state of peace on the frontier. Teedyuscung was at first reluctant to set aside the land question. At the urging of his followers, however, the Delaware chief agreed to submit the land dispute to Johnson for arbitration and accepted the peace offer of Pennsylvania. Teedyuscung, Denny, and Croghan closed the conference on a conciliatory note, the Delaware promising to maintain the covenant chain and expressing the hope that "Friendship shall last to us and our posterity after us for ever." If the Easton Conference of July/ August 1757 had not settled the land grievances of the Indians, it at least had established a truce between Pennsylvania and the Delawares and gave hope that the border raids would come to an end.

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As George Croghan worked in Pennsylvania during the summer of 1757 to bring about an amicable relationship between the Delawares and that colony, William Johnson endeavored to hold the New York Iroquois in the British interest. A meeting of the Onondaga Central Council had been held in early June at which time Johnson learned that the Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas (the three western nations) had declared for neutrality in the British-French struggle. While Johnson's goal was to see the confederation firmly committed to the British, he was pleased that he had not lost them altogether to the French. Johnson knew that the Oneidas and Tuscaroras had been shaken by the recent Fort Bull attack but could not ascertain their disposition at this time. The superintendent knew the majority

of the Mohawks could be counted upon not to go over to the French.⁷²

At a conference with representatives of the Six Nations at Mount Johnson in June 1757, Johnson asked bluntly why the Iroquois had gone back on their ancient pledges to come to the assistance of the British in time of war. The Iroquois delegates expressed a desire to retain the friendship of the British and expressed their disapproval of the French for "trying all methods to confuse and divide us." Some Cayugas even admitted going to war briefly against the British but apologized for their actions. The Iroquois made it clear that while they desired the good will of the British, military considerations had caused them to be wary of such an association. Declaring their adherence to the covenant chain, the Iroquois told Johnson that they had not gone to the aid of the British because of concern for their own self preservation. Fearful of reprisals by pro-French Indians, they had felt "obliged to let our hatchet lay by us and take care of our own protection." The Six Nations representatives were frank in their admission that they "thought it most for our interest to set still and not intermeddle in the disputes between you and the French."⁷³ By their own testimony, their survival was the guiding force behind the shaping of Iroquois policy. Preferring the British but more in awe of the French, the Six Nations avoided a commitment at this time.

Military Reversals: Fort William Henry and German Flats

In the late summer of 1757, as Loudoun held the best of the British troops in Nova Scotia, hoping to capture the key French fortress of Louisbourg, the British suffered another crushing defeat in New York. Before leaving on the long amphibious campaign against the fort at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, Loudoun had ordered an army under General Webb to spend the summer guarding the portage between Lake George and the Hudson River. Webb placed 1,300 men under Colonel Munro at Fort William Henry at the end of Lake George and established his own command of 3,400 at nearby Fort Edward. General Montcalm and Governor Vaudreuil were aware of the current deployment of the British forces and realized New York was vulnerable to attack. Montcalm set off from Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) with a force of 6,000 troops and 1,800 pro-French Indians in July 1757.⁷⁴

Montcalm began the siege of William Henry on August 2, 1757, surrounding the fort with the units of his army. While Indian auxiliaries were not especially suited to protracted sieges, Montcalm's allies had been brought to "overwhelm small parties" that might attempt to traverse the distance between the two British forts and "to intercept all couriers and convoys not of great size and to warn us of major movements" of the troops at Fort Edward. Colonel Munro hoped Webb would send aid and was determined to hold his position until Montcalm showed him a British dispatch captured by the French. The message was from Webb informing Munro that no assistance would be forthcoming until a sufficient body of provincials and Indians

could be raised. Webb advised Munro to seek the best possible terms and surrender. Montcalm's offer called for the fort to be evacuated, the British troops bring escorted away in safety by the French. The British troops were not to fight again for eighteen months. At noon on August 9, 1757, the fort was surrendered. Despite promises to respect the terms given the British, the French Indian allies fell upon the British troops and their dependents as they departed from the fort. Two hundred of the British were killed in the post-surrender melee and another two hundred taken prisoner by the Indians, who carried them off from the French camp. Montcalm and his officers tried to prevent the slaughter but could not restore order until evening.⁷⁵ The fall of Fort William Henry represented another major disaster to the British war effort. Braddock's defeat in 1755, the fall of Oswego in 1756, and now the loss of William Henry in 1757 demonstrated to the Indian nations the superiority of French military power. While the British remained on the defensive during 1757, France was able to score another devastating strategic and psychological victory that would have a profound effect on the attitudes of the Indians.

William Johnson had learned of the French advance on Fort William Henry as it was taking place. Webb wrote to the superintendent on August 1, 1757 desiring him to raise all the available militia in the area and recruit "as many Indians as he could muster together" for the relief of Munro. Johnson asked a band of seventy to eighty Mohawks living near him to join the expedition and they replied, "As you desire our Assistance we promise it /to/ you

sincerely. . . ." Johnson sent messages to other nearby villages requesting their cooperation. One hundred Mohawks from the Canajoharie castle answered the summons. Johnson was able to raise 1,500 militia and a total of approximately 225 Iroquois and reached Fort Edward on the sixth of August. As a result of Johnson's call, another three hundred Iroquois joined the British at the fort. Johnson was impatient to march against the besiegers of William Henry but the timid Webb refused to grant permission. The British general feared that, even with Johnson's men, he could not mount a relief expedition that would have a chance of breaking Montcalm's hold on the fort. No attempt was thus made to rescue the garrison at Lake George. The Indians that Johnson had brought to Fort Edward thus witnessed another example of British military ineptitude and indecision.⁷⁶

The disaster at Fort William Henry put added pressure on Johnson as he tried to prevent the Six Nations from going over to the French. In September 1757, Johnson judged that while the Onondagas, Senecas, and Cayugas were still following a policy of neutrality, the Oneidas and Tuscaroras were divided, "and the Majority I fear, in Favour of the French." The Mohawks could still be characterized as "staunch" in the British interest. Johnson judged he could still raise nearly four hundred Iroquois allies in an emergency. His optimistic assessment of the Mohawks was a result of an August 28 meeting with that nation in which they had expressed their condolences for the loss suffered by the British at William Henry and promised their continued support.⁷⁷

In a letter to the Board of Trade of September 28, 1757, Johnson expressed the belief that the defeat of William Henry was exceedingly damaging to British-Iroquois relations. In his judgment, "the victory lately gained by the enemy at Lake George" coupled with the failure of Loudoun's expedition against Louisbourg "has very much cooled the ardor of those Indians who were disposed to be active & rendered us of less consequence in the eyes of others."⁷⁸

New York was still recovering from the catastrophe at Fort William Henry when a French raiding party struck German Flats in November 1757. A mixed force of three hundred French regulars, Canadians, and Indians commanded by Lieutenant Bellestre, fell upon the small Mohawk River community completely by surprise. The French killed fifty of the settlers and captured one hundred and fifty prisoners. Johnson had reason to believe that local Oneidas and Tuscaroras had contributed to the disaster by not furnishing adequate warning of the attack. The Iroquois replied however, that they had given the complacent German settlers prior warning but their alarm had been ignored. Johnson was undoubtedly pleased to learn that the Oneidas and Tuscaroras, recently suspected of swinging over to the French interest were still proclaiming their loyalty to the British. The attack on German Flats was yet another example of the strength and daring of the French, and another blow at British prestige among the Indians.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The years 1756 and 1757 witnessed the continued decline of the British military position and the state of Anglo-Indian relations. The Ohio Indians continued to be firmly in the interest of the French. The Delawares had made an attempt to break away from the British-Iroquois sphere and had been alienated to the point where they had waged a bloody series of raids on the western regions of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The British colonies had lost their taste for offensive operations that might have brought an end to the spread of French power. The home government had mismanaged the war effort so badly that a whole year's campaign season was lost.

Potentially important Indian conferences were held in New York and Pennsylvania but it had proved increasingly difficult to draw pro-British commitments out of the Indians. Concerned for their own survival, Indians formerly in the British interest had chosen neutrality or a French association in order not to become the victims of the military power of Montreal. The major defeats at Oswego and William Henry had severely diminished the value of an alliance with the British. French military power had been everywhere successful. Loudoun's attempt on Louisbourg was a failure and the French were masters of New York from Lake George to Lake Erie. No Englishman was safe west of the Susquehanna. The French were making bold plans for more offensives in 1758 as Johnson in New York and Croghan in Pennsylvania tried to hold at least a few Indians in the failing British interest.

NOTES: Chapter VIII

1. Present at the conference (in addition to General Shirley who was also Governor of Massachusetts) were Governors Hardy of New York, Sharpe of Maryland, Morris of Pennsylvania, and Fitch of Connecticut, and Colonels Dunbar and St. Clair of the British forces originally commanded by Braddock. See Lawrence Henry Gipson, Zones of International Friction, IV of "The British Empire Before the American Revolution" (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 177.
2. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg, 1851-1852), VII, pp. 23-29; Gipson, British Empire, VI, pp. 177-179. Shirley had already outlined his proposals for 1756 in a letter to the British Secretary of State for the Southern Department, Sir Thomas Robinson in a letter from Oswego of September 28, 1755. See William Shirley, Correspondence of William Shirley, edited by Charles Lincoln (New York: Macmillan, 1912), II, pp. 291-296.
3. Contributing to Shirley's downfall was the opposition of Governors Hardy and Dinwiddie who had written to London recommending Shirley be relieved. Dinwiddie was alienated when Shirley transferred the two regiments of British regulars from the Virginia-Pennsylvania area to New York. Hardy commended Shirley as an able civil administrator but criticized him for his action in the feud with Johnson over Indian support for his Niagara campaign. William Johnson had also written to the Board of Trade complaining of Shirley's interference with the negotiations with the Iroquois. See Gipson, British Empire, VI, pp. 180-182, 186-188; E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1855), VI, pp. 994-996; Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, p. 382.
4. Gipson, British Empire, VI, p. 185.
5. "Johnson's Patent of Hereditary Dignity" is in The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), II, pp. 343-350. His royal commission as Colonel and Superintendent is in the Johnson Papers, II, pp. 434-435.
6. Johnson Papers, IX, oo. 328-329. The nations represented at this conference were the Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, and Senecas.
7. Johnson Papers, IX, p. 329.
8. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 333-334.

9. Charles Thomson, "Enquiry into the Causes of Alienation of the Delawares and Shawnees" (London: Printed for J. Wilkie, 1759), pp. 45-47, 80-82.
10. Thomson, Causes of Alienation," pp. 82-84. Teedyuscung had recently been at Fort Niagara as the guest of the French. Apparently realizing the Delawares' trouble-making potential, the French had treated him well, promising him and his followers all the gifts "what their eyes could see or hearts desire." The French commander took Teedyuscung on a tour of the fort, seeking to impress him with its impregnability. He led the chieftain into a secret network of underground tunnels filled with barrels of gunpowder that surrounded the fort. The commander explained that if a British force tried to lay siege to the fort the French would blow up the ground beneath the enemy forces. The French commander also used the old story that the English King had written to the French King proposing that the two sovereigns should combine forces, annihilate the Indians, and seize their lands. See "Information from the Mouth of John Peeby, an Indian now in Bethlehem, a Delaware," Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs Section, Volume 2: 1754-1756. (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania).
11. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 665-666.
12. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 682-687.
13. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 687, 690.
14. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 691-696.
15. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, pp. 697-699.
16. Pa. Col. Rec., VI, p. 743; Gipson, British Empire, VI, p. 48.
17. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 355, 360.
18. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 364-365.
19. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 366-368; James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), p. 162.
20. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 368-369.
21. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 371-373.
22. Johnson Papers, I, pp. 373-374.
23. Johnson Papers, IX, 378, 384, 354, 355.

24. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 46-57.
25. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 64-67.
26. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 67-72.
27. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 76-82.
28. Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), pp. 434-436.
29. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 113-114, 115-117.
30. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 437.
31. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 140-141.
32. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 144-148.
33. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 442-445.
34. Johnson Papers, IX, p. 416; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 164.
35. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 75-76; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 434; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 164.
36. Doc. Rel. N.Y., IX, pp. 409-411, 414-416.
37. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 135.
38. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 142-143, 146-148.
39. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 150-154.
40. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 155.
41. Doc. Rel. N.Y., IX, pp. 155-158.
42. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 158-160; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 167-168.
43. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 204-208; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 446-448.
44. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 210-213.
45. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 215-220; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, pp. 450-452; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 169-170.

46. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 313-338.
47. Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), II, pp. 684-686; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 34-35.
48. Gipson, British Empire, VII, p. 70.
49. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 46-51; Robert L. D. Davidson, War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania 1682-1756 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 187-188.
50. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 232-234; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 456.
51. Pa. Col. Rec., VII, pp. 230, 231, 257-263.
52. Doc. Rel. N.Y., I, "Journal of the Siege of Chouaguen," pp. 488-495; Stanley Pargellis, Military Affairs in North America 1748-1765, (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), "Journal of the Transactions of Oswego from the 16 May to the 14 August 1756," by Patrick MacKellar. William Johnson attempted to go to the aid of Oswego. Upon learning the fort was under siege, he gathered a force of 500 British settlers and 300 Indians for a relief expedition but had only gotten as far as German Flats when word came of Oswego's capture by the French. See Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 172-173.
53. Documentary History of the State of New York, E. B. O'Callaghan, ed. (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1849), I, "Mde Vaudreuil to the Minister, Montreal, 24 July, 1755," pp. 474-475.
54. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 124.
55. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 128, 169.
56. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 553-554; Gipson, British Empire, VII, p. 53.
57. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 174-175.
58. Gipson, British Empire, VI, pp. 187-188.
59. Gipson, British Empire, VI, p. 192; Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 157.
60. Shirley, Correspondence, II, pp. 468-477; Gipson, British Empire, VI, pp. 192-193.
61. Gipson, British Empire, VI, pp. 193-195, 203-208; Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 157-158.
62. Great Britain declared war on France May 18, 1756. The corresponding French declaration was made on June 9.

63. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 160-161; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 12-15.
64. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 161-162; Francis Parkman, Wolfe and Montcalm (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1929), I, pp. 488-492.
65. Parkman, Wolfe and Montcalm, I, pp. 460-465.
66. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 665-667.
67. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 666-669; II, p. 705.
68. Johnson Papers, IX, p. 675; Doc. History N.Y., I, pp. 509-513. The composition of Lery's force was 93 French regulars, 166 Canadians, and 97 Indians. One third of the Indians were Iroquois, another third were Praying Indians from Oswegatchie, and the remainder were from miscellaneous Canadian tribes.
69. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 657-658, 658-659.
70. Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. 121-125.
71. The proprietors of Pennsylvania represented by Governor Denny, since they had concluded purchases of 1737 and 1754 which were being challenged, were cool to the idea of Croghan's investigation but were willing to support him and give up some of the land if it would bring peace to Pennsylvania. The anti-proprietary Quakers were eager to discredit the proprietors and urged Teedyuscung to attribute all Indian problems to the land deals. See Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 321-323, 285-321; Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 127-134.
72. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 227-229.
73. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 256-258.
74. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 161-162; Parkman, Wolfe and Montcalm, I, pp. 488-492. The 2,000 Indians were mostly from the Montreal-Quebec area but also included some warriors from the western Great Lakes. A list of the number of warriors provided by each of the tribes participating in the expedition is found in Edward P. Hamilton, ed., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 150-151.
75. Journals of Bougainville, pp. 163-170.

76. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 809-811, 819-820.
77. Johnson Papers, II, p. 736; IX, pp. 819-821; Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 278.
78. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 276-279.
79. Doc. History N.Y., I, "Summary of M de Belletre's Expedition," pp. 515-518; "Summary Narrative of the Conduct of the Oneida Indians . . .," pp. 520-522.

CHAPTER IX

THE IMPACT OF BRITISH MILITARY SUCCESS ON THE INDIAN ALLIANCE STRUCTURE

William Pitt was appalled by the lack of British military successes in North America in 1757. The loss of Fort William Henry and the failure of the Louisbourg campaign resulted in the recall of Loudoun from his post as commander of British forces and the elevation of Abercromby to that position. Pitt decided to make a concerted effort in 1758 to reverse the tide of the war in America and planned a series of offensive operations for the coming year. Joint expeditions of royal and provincial troops were organized to strike the French at Lake Champlain, Louisbourg, and Fort DuQuesne.¹

The French had won an impressive series of victories in America up to the beginning of 1758 but they were now beset by a critical lack of supplies that would undermine their war effort for the coming season. The troop reinforcements sent from France in 1756 and 1757 had contributed to the recent military successes but were a drain on the food supply of New France, already low due to two consecutive poor growing seasons and the British capture of a sixteen-ship convoy. Still Vaudreuil planned to send one army under Montcalm down Lakes Champlain and George to capture Fort Edward and another under Levis through the Mohawk Valley against Albany. Hopefully the Iroquois

would be so awed by the invasions that they would ally themselves with the French. These expeditions had to be delayed until June, however, in order to await the arrival of needed food from France.²

Indian Auxiliaries for Abercromby, 1758

On the New York frontier, William Johnson labored to prevent the Iroquois from going over to the French. Johnson's best ally in these efforts was the British navy which had so disrupted French shipping as to cause the critical shortage of supplies in Canada. Deprived of shipments of trade goods, the French were unable to buy furs from the Indians, forcing the tribes into the economic sphere of the British. Johnson realized this advantage that the British enjoyed and exploited it, taking steps to make sure that the Indians were treated fairly in their transactions with British traders. Writing to Croghan in January 1758, Johnson instructed his deputy to help him use the British trading superiority to attract Indians to the British. "As nothing can more effectually rivett or attach the Indians of the Six Nations to his Majesty's Interest," Croghan was to oversee trading activities at German Flats and "suffer no Injustice of any Kind" be done to the Indians. Reports of fair dealings by the British would "spread far & near & be a means of drawing more distant Nations into our Interest." Johnson clearly recognized the economic dependence of the Indian nations upon the material goods produced by white society. Over the winter of 1757-1758, he worked

to use the lure of reasonably priced vital goods as an inducement for the Indians to maintain good relations with the British.³

Using the British economic advantage to make inroads on the increased influence of the French among the Iroquois, Johnson knew that the Six Nations were primarily guided by considerations of their survival. The superintendent wrote to Abercromby in the spring of 1758 that the Iroquois were "alarmed at the present interesting Situation of Affairs upon this Continent." Johnson reported that at a current meeting of the Onondaga Central Council the Six Nations were trying to maintain the strained unity of their league. The Iroquois were endeavoring to consolidate their military power in order to provide for their own survival in the British-French struggle. Firmly united in a common policy, the confederacy hoped to make themselves sufficiently formidable as to be able to maintain neutrality in safety or to declare themselves partisans of one side without fearing reprisals by the other. Johnson wrote Abercromby that if the outcome of the Onondaga conference were favorable to the British, he was confident he could "send into the Field between 4 & 500 Indians" in support of the British. Even if the council voted to adhere to a policy of neutrality, Johnson believed he could count on "near 300 to join his Majesty's Arms towards Canada by Way of Lake George." A pro-French decision by the league would render any Indian assistance highly doubtful.⁴

Abercromby, who was making plans in the spring of 1758 for the campaign against the French on Lake Champlain, was somewhat

impatient with Johnson for not immediately providing a large Indian contingent for the proposed expedition. Johnson tried to explain that the defeat of Braddock and the loss of Oswego had caused the Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas to become "very backward" in coming to the assistance of the British. The Iroquois "manifested evident marks of their Dread of the French" and were reluctant to join the British fearful that "the French & their Indians would fall upon their Towns and destroy the remainder of their People." Johnson thus found it especially difficult to secure the support of the three western Iroquois tribes since "their proximity to the Enemy gave them all things to fear & their Distance from us little hopes of our timely assistance." Johnson reported that these nations had adopted a policy of neutrality having decided that "their Welfare & safety depended upon keeping all their Warriors together & ready at hand to defend themselves." Johnson related his judgment that the Oneidas and Tuscaroras had probably also adopted a policy of neutrality. Only the Mohawks could be counted upon for any military assistance.⁵

In late May, the Onondaga Central Council had still made no decision regarding a possible alliance with the British or the French. Johnson reported to the impatient Abercromby that the confederacy's deliberations were still continuing and their disposition "seems yet to be in Suspense." While waiting for a statement from Onondaga, Johnson wrote to Croghan urging his deputy to visit the Indian towns on the Susquehanna and attempt to recruit "as many as have Arms" for the upcoming British expeditions.⁶

As Abercromby's requests for Indian allies became more urgent, Johnson sent a message to Onondaga intended to persuade the Iroquois to declare in favor of the British. Boldly announcing that trade would be cutoff to those Indians who "remain idle Speculators whilst the blood of their Brethren is Spilling," Johnson threatened to deprive the Iroquois of vital British trade goods if they stayed neutral. The superintendent declared his intention to join Abercromby in three weeks and called on the Iroquois to join him in the expedition against the French on Lake Champlain.⁷ The Iroquois response was less than Johnson had hoped for. Johnson was informed that the Six Nations did not appreciate his "hurrying & peremptory" message and would not be driven into war. They believed their continued existence might hinge on their decision to enter the war or stay neutral. The reply criticized Johnson for disrupting Six Nations unity by trying to draw off the eastern Iroquois tribes into the service of the British. Although advised by some Iroquois leaders to withdraw his summons, Johnson would not retreat from his position. Predicting victory in the coming campaign, Johnson repeated his intention to lead as many Indians as would join him on the expedition against the French.⁸ The usually astute Johnson had overplayed his hand. Even the pro-British Mohawks were critical of his attempts to strong arm the confederacy into a British alliance. Realizing he had alienated the Iroquois, Johnson wrote Abercromby on June 22 that he was preparing to depart Mount Johnson with as many Iroquois as possible, but feared "few of them will be in a humour to

follow me." Although Abercromby's insistent letters had led Johnson into making his rash declaration to the Iroquois, the British commander was now deeply disappointed at Johnson's failure to provide a large number of Indians for the expedition. Citing Johnson's earlier conjectures that the Iroquois were seriously considering a British alliance, Abercromby expressed his "Concern at being deprived of your Aid & Assistance with the Indians at Your Back." Abercromby was pleased, however, when he later learned that Johnson had managed to recruit "about 200" Iroquois and was marching from his home to join the army gathering at the southern end of Lake George.⁹

The Fort Carillon Expedition

With an army of 6,300 regulars and 10,000 provincials, Abercromby arrived in the vicinity of the French Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) on July 6, 1758. Johnson's Indian detachment was employed in scouting and sniping activities as the British army prepared to invest the fort. Fearing the Carillon garrison was about to be reinforced from Montreal, Abercromby decided to attack the fort quickly with his infantry rather than take the time to place his artillery on a nearby hill that commanded the fort. Montcalm, the commander at Carillon, attempted to block the British assault before it reached the fort's walls by constructing a breastwork of hastily cut trees. The twigs and branches of the trees were sharpened and pointed toward the British attackers. On July 8, Abercromby ordered a series of frontal assaults on the impromptu fortification which were repulsed

by the outnumbered French firing from behind the impenetrable tangle of brush and logs. Having suffered heavy casualties in the day-long battle, but still holding a three to one manpower advantage over Montcalm, Abercromby irresolutely gave up the expedition and retired southward. Johnson's Iroquois covered Abercromby's retreat, preventing a French attack on the disorganized withdrawal. Lacking Indian allies of his own, Montcalm remained behind his fortifications, unwilling to send pursuit troops into the woods where they would be certain to encounter the Iroquois rearguard.¹⁰

The British had suffered another decisive defeat but one which was not as damaging to their Indian relations as previous military disasters had been. The British had at least demonstrated the ability to put a large force in the field and a willingness to fight the French. The Indians present at the battle had seen that the French were numerically inferior to the British and could have been beaten. In addition, after the expedition returned, Abercromby deployed his troops in defensive positions in the vicinity of Fort Edward, Albany, and the Mohawk Valley. Although the offensive had failed, the number of British troops stationed in New York was increased. The Iroquois of the area, concerned with their own self preservation, could feel increasingly secure from attacks by the French and could afford to consider a closer relationship with the British.¹¹

The Louisbourg Expedition

The French had only a short time to enjoy their victory over Abercromby. Successful at Fort Carillon on July 8, they were to

suffer a defeat at Louisbourg less than three weeks later that would end the long series of French triumphs and turn the tide of war in favor of the British. In the spring of 1758 Pitt had placed General Jeffrey Amherst in command of an amphibious expedition designed to capture the key French fortress on Cape Breton which guarded the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The British force of nine thousand regulars and five hundred colonials, supported by a British fleet, landed near the citadel on June 8 and began siege operations. Gradually the British artillery wore down the resolve of the defenders and pounded the fortress city into submission. On July 26, the French commander capitulated. Frustrated by a long line of defeats, the British had scored a strategic and psychological victory that opened the way for the conquest of Canada and demonstrated the ability of the British to defeat the French.¹² Although the British had no Indian auxiliaries on this expedition, the news of the fall of Louisbourg increased the respect of the Indians for British military might.

The Fall of Frontenac

The capture of Louisbourg was followed by another victory that had an even greater influence on the attitude of the Indians toward the British. Ironically this success grew out of Abercromby's debacle at Carillon. Having withdrawn to Albany following that defeat, the British commander searched for a way to recoup his reputation. At the urging of Colonel John Bradstreet, Abercromby

approved a thrust through the Mohawk Valley for the purpose of building a fort at the Oneida carrying place and reestablishing the British presence at Oswego. Should this objective be filled, Bradstreet was authorized to move against Fort Frontenac at the western end of the St. Lawrence. It was hoped that the expedition, led by General John Stanwix and Colonel Bradstreet, would prevent a French attack on the Iroquois and British towns on the Mohawk. Johnson worked to recruit Indian auxiliaries for the Stanwix-Bradstreet expedition. Calling the Iroquois to a council at Mount Johnson on July 22, 1758, the superintendent notified them of the British plan to build a fort near Oneida Lake. Johnson emphasized its value to the Iroquois as a means to "guard this part of the Country from any Attempts which the Enemy might make." The post would also be a center for carrying on an "Advantageous Trade" for the mutual benefit of the Six Nations and the British. Johnson urged the Iroquois to send out reconnaissance parties "to guard us against any surprises." Johnson further requested that the Six Nations provide some warriors to accompany Bradstreet on the expedition. Acquainting them that the British force was preparing to move westward, Johnson stated "I desire that your young Men will make themselves ready to join our Troops . . . and proceed with them to the Oneida Carrying Place where your Brother Col. Bradstreet will acquaint you with the Service you are wanted upon & have some Talk with you." Seventy Iroquois warriors responded to Johnson's request and joined the British expedition when it reached the Oneida portage.

From the Oneida fort site, the energetic Bradstreet led a force of approximately three thousand men (including the seventy Iroquois) northward toward the ruins of Oswego. As the expedition reached Lake Ontario it became apparent to the Iroquois that the real objective was to be the French stronghold of Frontenac. To insure the secrecy of the mission the Indians had not been told by Johnson or Bradstreet that Frontenac might be the eventual destination of the expedition. When they learned the truth, most of the seventy Iroquois left the British army, preferring not to violate the league's neutrality by participating in an offensive against a major French fortress. The Iroquois accompanying the expedition and the Indians of the Oswego area did assist Bradstreet by not informing the French of his presence and his intentions. The British force was able to approach the fort undetected and unopposed. Confident that Frontenac was beyond the reach of a British attack, the French had left the fort guarded by only one hundred and ten men. Bradstreet surrounded the bastion and opened fire with the cannon he had brought all the way from the Mohawk Valley and quickly caused the small garrison to surrender.¹⁴ The French troops were permitted to depart, but the fortress was completely destroyed. As Frontenac was the principal depot for supplies coming up the St. Lawrence bound for Niagara, Detroit, and other western posts, Bradstreet was able to carry off or destroy large quantities of French goods. New France had suffered a serious defeat. Fort Frontenac, the link between the eastern and western parts of the empire, had fallen to the British. Movements of troops and

supplies between the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence would now be almost impossible. The victory, reestablishing British supremacy on the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario, would also have significant impact on the attitude of the neutral Six Nations confederacy. The threat of a French invasion into the heart of the Iroquois country had been eliminated. The Iroquois, attracted to the reasonably priced and abundant trade goods of the British, would be free to move closer to the British sphere without fear of reprisals from the French. The French realized their loss would have a highly detrimental influence on the structure of their Indian alliances. Doreil, chief supply officer of the French army, commenting on the destruction of Frontenac, sagely observed: "It is no less to be feared, that the Indians, who usually side with the strongest or most fortunate, will all abandon us to range themselves along side the English."¹⁵

Montcalm was pessimistic concerning French-Iroquois relations following the fall of Fort Frontenac. Although the Six Nations were still sending embassies to Montreal due to the current military situation, they were reaffirming their traditional friendship with the British. "I believe them more disposed in favor of the latter whom they fear and who give them considerable; let us never expect anything of them beyond neutrality, that would be a great deal."¹⁶

Hughes Pean, a French official, stated in a report to Vaudreuil of November 15, 1758 that while the loss of Louisbourg was highly damaging, "the late misfortune experienced at Frontenac experienced by the Colony, is the most prejudicial of those it has been threatened with." Pean urged the recapture of the strategic location since

British possession of the site blocked the passage between the St. Lawrence cities and the forts of the west. The report to the Governor stated that "it is expected that the capture of Fort Frontenac will detach from the French interest several Indian nations who will side with the British, and that fear is founded on the small quantity of merchandise we have to give them whilst the British furnish them goods in profusion." Pean believed that the loss of such Indians would be more damaging to the French interest than the arrival of a like number of British reinforcements since the Indian still on the side of the French would be reluctant to fight those that had swung over to the British.¹⁷

Easton Conference 1758

Concurrent with the attacks on Forts Carillon and Louisbourg, the third part of the British military strategy for 1758 was to be an offensive against Fort DuQuesne. In March 1758, General John Forbes was placed in command of the expeditionary force which included a few companies of regulars but was primarily composed of provincial troops from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina. Forbes hoped to gain a large number of Indian auxiliaries for his army and possibly even win over some of the Indians that had fought against Braddock on the Monongehela. To this end, the general called an Indian conference to be held in Easton. The invitation to the Onondaga Council to attend the conference arrived in late June just as Johnson was trying to enlist Iroquois aid for Abercromby's campaign against Carillon. Johnson

urged the Iroquois to participate in the expedition rather than the conference but after the battle encouraged their sachems to attend the Easton meetings. The superintendent dispatched Croghan to easton to preside over the talks, ordering his deputy to "use your best endeavors to conciliate & fix the British Interest in all the several Nations and Tribes of Indians who may fall within the reach of your influence" and warning him not to become entangled in the factional politics of Pennsylvania.¹⁸ When Croghan arrived in Pennsylvania, he was not optimistic for the prospects of the conference. The various tribes that were represented among the five hundred Indians in attendance seemed "much Divided and Jelious of Ech other." Teedysucung, still claiming powers over vast numbers of Indians, was the subject of the contempt of the Iroquois and several other nations present.¹⁹ Adding to Croghan's problems was a delegation of Quakers who came to the conference intent on blocking the proceedings in order to discredit the governor and the proprietors he represented.

The Easton Conference finally opened in early October 1758 with Pennsylvania Governor Denny recounting the recent successes at Louisbourg and Frontenac in an obvious attempt to build the Indians' confidence in British military power. The friction between the Six Nations and Teedyuscung was evidenced immediately, as the Iroquois began chastizing the Delawares for their recent anti-British behavior and ordering them to acknowledge their subservience to the league. Teedyuscung, made bold by alcohol and the support of the Quakers, took the position that the Delawares had every right to make war or

peace independent of the Six Nations. He also continued to claim the Delawares had been deprived of their lands through fraudulent transactions and cited this as a major cause of Delaware-British friction. The Iroquois responded to Teedyuscung's stand by refusing to recognize his authority and by thereafter walking out of the conference sessions whenever the Delaware King tried to speak.²⁰

As the conference threatened to break up, Teedyuscung pressured by his constituency to take a more conciliatory position, suddenly began to back down on his earlier pronouncements. The trend of the conference was further reversed when Denny and Croghan, in the name of the proprietors offered to deed back to the Indians all lands gained by Pennsylvania at the Albany Conference of 1754. The basis for Teedyuscung's intransigence removed, a peace treaty was concluded with all the Indian nations present at the conference. Six Nations supremacy over the Delawares was reaffirmed as the troublesome Teedyuscung's prestige was sharply decreased. Previous conferences between Pennsylvania and the Delawares had been called to stop Indian raids on the colony's frontiers but they had had only a limited effect. The Easton Conference of October 1758, due to the reassertion of Iroquois authority over their subject nations in Pennsylvania, finally ended the Indian hostilities on the colony's border. In addition, the news of the transfer of the 1754 land purchase back to the Indians had a highly desirable effect on the tribes of the Ohio area. The proprietor's deed signed over to the Six Nations at the Easton Conference meant that the British were relinquishing their claims to western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley. The French presence in

this area now lost all pretense of having been made for the protection of the Indians. The tribes of the region began to give their support to the British since the French were now the only European power attempting to occupy their territory. A closer alliance with the British seemed to hold the best prospect of removing unwelcome whites from Indian lands.²¹

The Post Mission to Ohio

The Easton Conference was not Forbes' only attempt to win over the Ohio Indians before advancing on Fort Duquesne. In the late summer and autumn, a Moravian missionary, Christain Frederick Post, was sent on a mission to the Ohio Valley in an effort to draw the Indians of that area away from the French. Governor Denny of Pennsylvania had made overtures to the Ohio Indians in the summer of 1758 suggesting the reestablishment of closer relations. Probably due to the inability of the French to supply them with needed goods, the Ohio Indians had indicated a willingness to discuss a possible detente. It was decided to send Post to the Indians in an effort to convince them of Pennsylvania's peaceful intentions. Reaching the Ohio in August, Post was welcomed by the Delawares and Shawnees. In subsequent talks, Post called for the return to the peaceful relations that had traditionally existed between the British and the two Indian nations. While not ready to completely accept Post's protestations that the British were the true friends of the Indians, the Delawares did refuse to heed a French request that Post be turned over to them at Fort Duquesne. Post informed

the Indians of the coming of the Forbes expedition, assuring them that its goal was the expulsion of the French, not the seizing of the region for British territorial gain. The Indians were suspicious of this argument, saying that they had heard the same thing from the French. "Why don't you and the French fight in the old country and on the sea. Why do you come to fight on our land?" the Delawares inquired. Post countered that the British would not have come if the French were not already on the Ohio. The missionary worked to calm the fear expressed by the Indians that the British and French intended to "join together to kill all the Indians and divide the land among themselves."²² Whilst the Indians remained distrustful of the British they had at least listened to Post's message and seem to have developed a more pro-British attitude as the talks progressed. In addition, while retaining some suspicions of the British intentions, the Indians were also resentful of the French invasion of their territory. If Post's journey did not eradicate all ill will toward the British it demonstrated that the Ohio Indians were not so firmly allied to the French as had been thought.²³

The Decline of French Power in Ohio

Forbes led his army of sixty-seven hundred troops out of Fort Cumberland and spent the summer of 1758 retracing Braddock's route across western Pennsylvania toward Fort DuQuesne. Forbes desired Indian auxiliaries, but both the British and the French found it difficult to recruit a significant number of Indians in the autumn

of 1758. The French lost valuable support when the Indians suffered heavy casualties in a skirmish with an advance party of the Forbes army which made a rash and unsuccessful attack on DuQuesne in September. When additional Indian casualties occurred in a French-led attack on the British outpost of Loyal Hannon (Fort Ligonier) more Indians became disaffected from the French. The Indians of Pennsylvania were also not eager to join the British, preferring to see the results of the Forbes expedition before committing themselves.²⁴

If the Forbes expedition was handicapped by the lack of Indian auxiliaries, the French position on the Ohio was completely ruined by the defection of the Indians thought to be firmly entrenched in their interest. Forbes was nearing DuQuesne in late November when the French decided to abandon the fort and retire. On November 24, 1758, Captain de Ligneris, considering his position indefensible, evacuated the fortress, blew it up, and retreated toward Canada.²⁵

The French loss of DuQuesne was the result of several factors. In the immediate sense, the fall of the fort was due to the small size of the French garrison. Commander de Ligneris had had to reduce the number of his troops because of the critical food shortages experienced by New France's western posts following the British capture of Frontenac. Badly outnumbered by Forbes' army, de Ligneris had been ordered to retreat and destroy the fortress if the British approached in force.

The French might have been able to retain their stronghold at the forks of the Ohio had it not been for the defection of the Indians that had been their allies since 1754-1755. It was the absence of

Indian support that was the basic cause of the French collapse on the Ohio in the autumn of 1758. The Indians had deserted for a combination of reasons. The Post expedition in the early autumn had induced some Indians to leave the French. The Easton Conference of October had delighted the Indians of Ohio and reduced their enmity toward the British when the Albany purchase of 1754 was rescinded and the land was returned to the Six Nations. The British capture of Frontenac and Forbes' relentless advance on DuQuesne demonstrated the British ability to score military victories and gave indications that the British were now the most likely victors in the war. (The French supply shortages and the weakness of the garrison at DuQuesne gave concurrent evidence of French inability to be successful in the future.) Economic factors were also at work. The French were destitute of trade goods; only the British could supply the Indians' basic material needs at reasonable prices. The decline of French military strength in the region of Lake Ontario and the Ohio Valley made it possible for the Indians to once again enter into the advantageous economic sphere of the British without fear that their towns would be destroyed by the French.

The British Strategy for 1759

The year 1758 marked the turning point in the war between France and Great Britain for control of North America. After the initial setback at Fort Carillon in July, the British had enjoyed a string of decisive triumphs. Louisbourg had fallen in late July, opening the way for the invasion of Canada by way of the St. Lawrence. Fort

Frontenac, the link between the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes had been destroyed late in the summer. As the year drew to a close, Forbes marched into the deserted ruins of Fort DuQuesne. On this site the British army quickly began to build a temporary fortress (renamed Fort Pitt) and thereby reestablished their presence on the Ohio. Over the winter of 1758-1759, Pitt planned a strategy for the coming campaign season that would exploit the successes of the previous year and hopefully lead to the conquest of New France.²⁶

Pitt's first step (November 1758) was to remove the ineffective Abercromby from command of American troops and elevate General Amherst to that position. Amherst was given the responsibility of leading another expedition northward along the Lake George-Lake Champlain route against Fort Carillon, and possibly Montreal. James Wolfe, the young general who had been Amherst's lieutenant in the successful attempt against Louisbourg, was given command of an army and ordered to sail from Louisbourg up the St. Lawrence against the fortress-city of Quebec. General Stanwix was given command at Fort Pitt and ordered to hold the area against an expected counter attack from the French at Venango. Pitt ordered another British force to advance to Lake Ontario to rebuild the British fortress at Oswego. This task completed, the army was authorized to march against the French fort at Niagara.

The Establishment of Fort Pitt

Having captured the vital forks of the Ohio from the French, the British labored over the winter and spring of 1758-1759 to

strengthen their position in that area. Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Mercer, placed in charge of Fort Pitt when the critically ill General Forbes left the forks for Philadelphia in December 1758, endeavored to gain the amity of the Indians of the area. Due to the lateness of the season and the scarcity of food, Forbes' army had to be dispersed to other western Pennsylvania forts to avert a supply crisis at Fort Pitt. Units were stationed at Forts Ligonier, Bedford, Juniata, Lyttelton, and the towns of Shippensburg and Carlisle. Fort Pitt was left with a garrison of only two hundred to three hundred and fifty men over the winter of 1758-1759. Mercer was eager to establish good relations with the Ohio Indians for fear that when they discovered the small size of the Fort Pitt garrison they might unite with the French at Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle and assist the enemy in recapturing the forks.²⁷ Although plagued with the problem of obtaining enough provisions for his own troops at the fort, Mercer also tried to provide food for the Indians of the vicinity so as to win them over to the British interest. Christain Frederick Post was sent on another mission to the Indian towns of the surrounding area for the purpose of inviting them to Fort Pitt for talks with the British. Before he accompanied the dying General Forbes back to Philadelphia, George Croghan, who had led the few Iroquois that had been on the Forbes expedition, made some contact with the Indians of the area. Croghan had informed them of the Easton Conference of October 1758 at which the eastern Delawares had signed a treaty with the British. He urged the Ohio Delawares also to make peace and return British prisoners. After Croghan's departure, Post succeeded

in bringing a large group of Ohio Indians to the fort for a conference. Colonel Henry Boquet conducted the meeting with this Indian group and assured them that the British had not reentered the Ohio area for the purpose of territorial expansion, but only to reopen mutually beneficial trade. The Indians gave a favorable response to Boquet's declarations of good faith, promised to deliver any British prisoners that they held, and indicated that they would ask the French to vacate their three remaining posts between the Allegheny and Lake Erie.²⁸

Following these discussions, Colonel Mercer was confident that the British at Fort Pitt had "nothing to fear from the Delawares." He wrote to Philadelphia that the Delawares would "chuse to lye and wait the Event of this Summer's Campaign" before taking action. Mercer recognized that the Delawares, suspicious of both the British and the French, were following a policy of neutrality, delaying any commitments until they could determine what courses to follow for their own best interests. The Colonel observed of the Delawares in the spring of 1759, "they are desirous of fighting neither on the side of the English nor the French but would gladly see both dislodged from this Place. . . ."²⁹

In June and July 1759, Croghan, back at the forks in his role as Johnson's deputy agent for Indian affairs, met with the Ohio Indians in an effort to draw them into the British interest. Croghan's immediate goal at these meetings was to bring the Ohio Indians into the treaty made at the Easton Conference the previous October. The Deputy Superintendent, reminding his listeners of the land cession

made by the British at Easton, hoped that the Indians of the Fort Pitt area would formally declare themselves to be in a state of peace with the British. Appealing to their need to have more British trading goods brought into the area, Croghan was finally able to extract the desired peace pledge from the Ohio Indians. Stating that "while the enemy is in Possession of your Country we cannot trade safely with you," Croghan was able to bring about a renewal of the covenant chain that had formerly existed between the Ohio Indians and the British. While not committing themselves to an offensive alliance with the British, the Indians promised to adhere to "the mutual engagements" made at the Easton Conference and were effectively removed as a threat to the existence of Fort Pitt.³⁰

Stanwix was given command of Fort Pitt in the spring of 1759, but brought with him only 3,500 men (less than half of what he had been promised) with which to defend that strategic post from the French. However, he did not reach the fort until mid-summer due to a critical shortage of wagons to transport supplies westward from Fort Bedford. Not until September 1759 was he able to bring sufficient men and materials to the forks to begin construction of the large, permanent fortress that would replace the makeshift stockade, hurriedly built immediately after the French withdrawal in November 1758. Although Colonel Mercer was thus in an exposed position throughout the summer of 1759, he was not seriously threatened by the French. The Indians of the area, pleased at the reestablishment of a British trading center that provided them with badly needed goods, would not cooperate with the French in any attempts on Fort Pitt. Too weak to

make an assault on the fort without the support of the Ohio Indians, the French contented themselves with an unsuccessful assault on Fort Ligonier and a few raids on the British supply trains heading for Fort Pitt from the east. Although construction on Fort Pitt had fallen behind schedule, the efforts of Bouquet, Mercer, Stanwix, and Croghan had been successful in fulfilling one of the major military goals of the British in 1759: the consolidation of the British position on the Ohio.³¹

The establishment of the British fort on the Ohio had a highly favorable influence on the course of Indian relations in 1759. Free from fear of French attacks on their towns, the Ohio Indians supported the British presence at the forks due to the economic advantages provided by the fort. Once again there was a market for their furs and a source for necessary goods and supplies which the French had been unable to provide since the fall of Fort Frontenac. Although totally unwilling to go to war against the French on behalf of the British, the Indians of the Ohio Valley gave their hearty approval to the presence of Fort Pitt.

The Reversal of Six Nations Policy

The establishment of Fort Pitt was unacceptable to the French. Although the forces at Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle were insufficient in number to wrest the forks of the Ohio away from the British, plans were made by Vaudreuil to send reinforcements to the Allegheny area so that an effective attack on Fort Pitt could be made.

A large force of French and Indians from the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes areas were concentrated at Venango in June 1759 for the strike at Fort Pitt. On the eve of the attack, the plan was suddenly cancelled. A British army was reported to be advancing on Niagara; all available forces had to be dispatched to that strategic point immediately.³²

The restoration of the British post at Oswego and the reduction of the French fort at Niagara were an integral part of Pitt's overall strategy for 1759. Amherst, on learning of this part of Pitt's plan for the coming year, wrote to Johnson "to engage as many as you can of the Indians" to participate in the operations. Johnson gave a highly optimistic reply. The superintendent judged that if an expedition were planned against Niagara, "or elsewhere through the country of the Six Nations, I should be able to prevail upon the greater Part if not the whole of them to join His Majesty's Arms."³³

In April, Johnson held a conference with the Six Nations which confirmed his expectations that the Iroquois would eagerly cooperate in the campaigns of 1759. The Iroquois symbolically threw away the hatchet given them earlier by the French and indicated that "the whole confederacy are determined" to strike the French. Referring to rumors that they had heard concerning British expeditions for the coming year, the Six Nations expressed their approval that the French "will be brought so low as that they will not hereafter be able to disturb or hurt either you or us." Urging the British to be vigorous in their efforts against the French, the Iroquois pledged "we shall on our sides endeavor all we can to contribute" to the war effort.³⁴

Johnson eagerly accepted the Iroquois offer to go to war in conjunction with the British against the French. The superintendent presented them with a hatchet on behalf of the King of England. This traditional weapon, emblematic of a declaration of war, was immediately accepted by the Six Nations. Johnson thanked them for expressing the desire that Johnson personally lead them against Niagara. The Iroquois then delivered a message that demonstrated the depth of the commitment to the British interest currently existent in all the Iroquois people. Both the Oswegatchie and Caughnawaga groups of "Praying Indians" had informed their Iroquois brothers "that they had resolved to act no more in conjunction with the French or commit further hostilities with the English." This astounding news completed Johnson's great triumph. The Six Nations had declared their intention to engage in offensive operations against the French. The "Praying Indians," long allied with the French, were dropping their traditional attachments in order to seek a reconciliation with the Iroquois and the British. The results of the April 1759 conference permitted Johnson to write optimistically to the Board of Trade that he could join an expedition against Niagara with "the main body of the warriors" of the Six Nations. If the Niagara campaign were well conducted, Johnson stated that with the support of the Iroquois, "I think we cannot fail of success."

The position taken by the Six Nations at Johnson's conference in April 1759 represented a significant departure from their statements of cautious neutrality of the recent past. The Iroquois seem to have been brought to this firm declaration in favor of the British

by the military events of the previous year and by the outlook for the coming campaign season. Concern for their own survival caused them to seek an alliance with the British at this time.

The British victories at Louisbourg and Frontenac had demonstrated the strength of the British. The French evacuation of Fort DuQuesne also contributed to the growing belief that the British had become militarily superior to the French. The accomplishments of the British and the corresponding decline of the French had convinced the Iroquois that the British would emerge victorious from the current war. Reserved and reticent regarding the favor of their alliance while the outcome of the war was in doubt, the Six Nations now judged from the events of 1758 that the British were certain to win and therefore eagerly sought to bind themselves to the British cause.³⁶

The Niagara Campaign

Amherst was cool to the idea of a Niagara expedition when the venture was first suggested but gradually came to see the advantage in the capture of that strategic fort. Having been convinced by Johnson that a strike against Niagara had a good chance of success, Amherst elevated Colonel John Prideaux to the rank of general and gave him command of an army of approximately 5,000 men for the purpose of first rebuilding the British fort at Oswego, and then attacking Fort Niagara. Johnson was placed in command of the Indian auxiliaries for the expedition and was able to raise 900 Iroquois and their allies for the attack on the French fort.³⁷

The Prideaux expedition left Schenectady in late May and reached Oswego a month later. Colonel Frederick Haldimand was given the task of rebuilding the British fort on the site of the one destroyed by Montcalm in 1756. The British troops also built a fleet of small boats for an amphibious attack on the French fort Niagara. Prideaux then departed from Oswego with a force of 2,200 troops plus Johnson's 900 Iroquois. After six days of travel on Lake Ontario, the Prideaux-Johnson expedition made its desired surprise landing near Niagara. The French garrison under Captain Francois Pouchot numbered only 486 men as some troops had been sent to Venango for the proposed attack on Forts Pitt and Ligonier. Prideaux approached Fort Niagara, constructing a network of trenches to serve as cover for his siege artillery and his infantry. Pouchot requested help from the troops being massed for the strike against the British in the Ohio Valley. As the siege progressed, Prideaux was accidentally killed by careless fire from one of the British artillery pieces. Command of the expeditionary force fell to William Johnson.³⁸

The French realized that Johnson's Iroquois allies would be growing impatient with the slow progress of the siege. One of the Indians who had remained an ally of the French, a Seneca sachem named Kaendae, emerged from the fort for a council with the Six Nations warriors of Johnson's army. Wishing to avoid bloodshed among the Six Nations, the pro-British Iroquois tried to prevail on the French allies not to fight.³⁹ The pro-French chieftain urged his fellow Iroquois to abandon the British and had some influence on the

increasingly bored and restive Indian auxiliaries. Johnson, however, was able to persuade them to remain with the British force. A crisis occurred when reports reached the British camp that a large French relief force, including approximately one thousand Indians, was approaching from Lake Erie. Johnson's Iroquois allies grew increasingly uneasy at the prospect of facing a large force of Indians and seemed on the brink of desertion. The pro-French Indians, on learning of the presence of the Six Nations warriors in the British camp, were even more desirous of avoiding a confrontation, however, and deserted the French force. Johnson set a trap for the advancing Frenchmen in the relief force and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy column, smashing Pouchot's hopes for assistance. The survivors of the ambush advised Pouchot to surrender due to the severe losses they had suffered. Pouchot, seeing further resistance was futile, capitulated on July 25, 1759. The strategically located French fort, key to the Great Lakes and the posts to the west, was now in the hands of the British.

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The fall of Niagara was an important event in the course of the war. The western forts of New France were now completely cut off from Montreal and Quebec. The French, realizing their position in the Allegheny-Lake Erie area was now untenable, destroyed their forts at Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, and Venango, and withdrew. The British presence on the Ohio was not completely unchallenged. Colonel Mercer at Fort Pitt was now able to negotiate from a position of strength in his conferences with the local Indians as he no longer

had to fear a French attack on the forks of the Ohio. In August 1759, Mercer wrote to Pennsylvania Governor Denny, "We can now talk to our new Allies in a proper Stile, as their Services are not Necessary, tho' the Consistency of our Plan in bringing them entirely over to the British Interest, ought to be preserved by treating them with a great kindness, but suffering none of their insults."⁴¹ The British had once again shown themselves capable of defeating the French and gave every indication that they would win the war. Receiving the news of Johnson's capture of Niagara, Amherst comments on the significance of the victory: "This Signal Success . . . seems a happy Pressage of the intire Reduction of Canada." Combined with the other recent triumphs of the British, the fall of Niagara would sufficiently damage the French so as to "ever after deprive them of the Power of Exercising any more Encroachments. . . ."⁴²

While not directly involved in the siege warfare that marked the battle of Fort Niagara, the Iroquois who accompanied Johnson on the expedition played a vital role in the victory. Had not nearly a thousand Six Nations warriors been with the British army, the French relief column would not have lost its Indian allies. Deprived of its Indian contingent, the French rescue force fell victim to Johnson's ambush and was prevented from raising the siege. If Johnson had not had his Iroquois, the 1,200 man French force accompanied by its one thousand Indians could have joined with the fort's garrison to outnumber Johnson's army and possibly administer a defeat to the British.

The victory at Niagara encouraged the Iroquois to remain firmly attached to the British and would hopefully win over those Indians still in the French interest. After receiving a report from Johnson on the successful expedition, New York Governor DeLancey advised the Board of Trade, "Most of the Indians will begin to see that it is in their Interest to join us. The distresses of Canada, the disability of the French to supply them as usual, and the difficulties they must always find while we have Niagara, will induce the Indians to throw themselves under the protection of His Majesty."⁴³

The Campaigns of Amherst and Wolfe

As Prideaux and Johnson advanced on Fort Niagara, General Amherst, hoping to succeed where Abercromby had failed, was leading his expeditionary forces against the French fortress on Lake Champlain. Amherst's army of 11,500 reached Lake George in late June 1759. The failure of some of his troops to arrive on time cost Amherst another month before he could move up the lake toward Fort Carillon. Bourlemarque, the French commander at Carillon had only 2,500 troops with which to defend his position and had been ordered by Montcalm to blow up the fort and retreat northward should the British appear in force. As Amherst's army approached Carillon, Bourlemarque carried out his instructions and withdrew. Amherst occupied the ruins of the fort in late July and then learned from his scouts that the French had also destroyed and evacuated his next objective, Crown Point. Amherst decided to occupy the Crown Point site and rebuild the fort rather than continue toward Montreal. Thus, Amherst's advance was stopped

for the current campaign season as the general spent the remainder of the summer and autumn in fort building activities designed to strengthen the British position on the lake for an advance on Montreal in 1760. If the cautious Amherst had failed to strike Montreal, he had at least removed the French from Lake Champlain and had secured that waterway for the British.

While Amherst consolidated his position, General Wolfe was laying final plans for his assault on Quebec. Wolfe had spent the summer on the St. Lawrence, just below Quebec trying to figure out a way to successfully capture the city. As bad weather began to set in, Wolfe decided to take the chance that could bring victory to his 9,000 man force. Under cover of night, Wolfe landed a portion of his army above Quebec and advanced on the city the next morning. Montcalm led his troops out of Quebec to meet his adversary on the open Plains of Abraham outside the city walls. The superior fire power of the British proved decisive as the French army was routed and fell back to the city. Quebec surrendered in mid-September 1759. There was no longer any question as to the outcome of the war. Only Montreal remained.⁴⁴

Indian auxiliaries did not participate in great numbers in the Lake Champlain or Quebec expeditions. The Iroquois of New York had marched with Johnson against Niagara leaving Amherst with only a handful of scouts to accompany his army. Wolfe had no use for Indian allies in his long siege on the St. Lawrence. These two engagements, however, did have a favorable effect on the Indians as the British

again demonstrated their ability to defeat the French. Amherst was now master of the Lake Champlain water route to Canada having ousted the French from their bastions at Carillon and Crown Point. Wolfe's capture of Quebec resulted in the death of the brilliant Montcalm and the capture of his army and opened the way for the complete reduction of Canada. These British successes of 1759 confirmed the belief held by the Iroquois and the other Indian nations that the British would soon triumph over the French. The recent British victories had solidified their position on the Ohio. At a conference at Fort Pitt, a Wyandot sachem expressed the realization of the Ohio Indians that the British were now the dominant force in the area. Apologizing for the Wyandot's former attachment to the French, the sachem observed of the British: ". . . you have it now in your power to have all the Indian Nations in your Interest." Not wishing to be left out of the growing British power on the Ohio, the Wyandots were eager to insure their future survival by declaring their friendship for the present holders of the forks of the Ohio.⁴⁵ Wishing to establish themselves as part of a victorious coalition, the Indians remained steadfast to the British interest. Their continued prosperity and survival in the coming post-war period now depended on the treatment they would receive from the increasingly powerful British. Desiring to make their future secure, the Six Nations and other tribes, worked to strengthen their attachment to the British.

The Fall of Montreal and the End of the War

The British strategy for 1760 called for three separate expeditions to penetrate New France. In June, Amherst began his part of the operations by proceeding up the Mohawk to Oswego. From there, he moved to the St. Lawrence for an advance down the river against Montreal. Another British force under Colonel William Haviland, moved up the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River route toward Montreal. Meanwhile, General James Murray, Wolfe's successor as commander at Quebec, was to move up the St. Lawrence toward the capital city.

Amherst asked Johnson to recruit the Iroquois for participation in the coming campaign. Amherst urged the superintendent to "use all Your Influence with the Several Tribes and Nations of Indians, in Amity with Us" in order to obtain allies. A delegation of pro-French Indians from Canada had met with the Six Nations over the winter of 1759-1760 urging them to remain neutral in the coming campaign season. Johnson was confident, however, that he could obtain a sizeable number of Iroquois for the proposed expeditions if the British would provide "The Clothing Arms & other Necessarys" for their allies. Johnson was able to recruit "upwards of 600 warriors" for Amherst's expedition down the St. Lawrence. The presence of the sizeable contingent of Iroquois with Amherst caused a large group of eight hundred Indians to desert the French interest and declare neutrality after the British army took Fort Levi en route to Montreal. Although some of the Iroquois tired of the long expedition and returned to their homes, "a sufficient number to answer our purposes" remained

with the British army as it proceeded toward the Canadian capital against only light opposition.⁴⁶ As Amherst approached Montreal from the west, Haviland moved his force northward along the Richelieu. In late August, Haviland captured the French post at Isle-aux-Noix which had blocked his advance. The fall of this fort opened the way for the British army to continue moving toward Montreal. Murray's expedition up the St. Lawrence from Quebec was delayed due to a manpower shortage, but had begun to move westward in July. As Murray proceeded, most of the villages along the river offered no resistance and surrendered to the British.⁴⁷

In the first week of September 1759, the three British armies converged on Montreal. All the minor forts that guarded the water approaches to the capital city had been taken. Deserted by his Indian and Canadian auxiliaries, de Levis, the French Commander at Montreal, had only two thousand troops with which to defend the city. Governor Vaudreuil called a conference of the higher ranking officers to discuss the grave situation. The French recognized the hopelessness of their position and decided to surrender. On September 8, 1760, Vaudreuil signed the articles of capitulation, turning over all of Canada, including the western posts of Detroit and Michilimackinac, to the British. Although the European phase of the Seven Years War would not officially draw to a close until the Peace of Paris was signed in 1763, the war between Britain and France for control of North America had come to its end.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Following Abercromby's disaster at Fort Carillon in early July, 1758, the British enjoyed an unbroken series of victories throughout the remainder of the war. The triumphs of Bradstreet at Fort Frontenac and of Amherst at Louisbourg in 1758 demonstrated the ability of the British to defeat the French and were responsible for attracting great numbers of Indians to the British. With the French removed from the region south and east of Lake Ontario by the Frontenac defeat, the Six Nations no longer had to be concerned over the possibility of French attacks on their towns. Free from all fear of French reprisals, the Iroquois could afford to strengthen their attachments to the British without endangering the safety of their homes and families. The capture of Fort DuQuesne by Forbes in November 1758 had a similar effect on the Indians of Ohio. Eager for British trade goods, the Ohio Valley tribes supported the British presence at the newly constructed Fort Pitt.

Relations with the Iroquois were so improved by the military successes of 1758 that the Six Nations agreed to participate offensively in the British campaign against Fort Niagara in 1759. Confident of the security of their towns the Iroquois sent nearly one thousand warriors to join Johnson on the Oswego-Niagara expedition. Even the pro-French "Praying Indians" adopted a policy of neutrality. The subsequent fall of Niagara further accelerated the movement of the Indians toward the British interest. The Ohio tribes, who had maintained a non-committal stance while the French were still at

Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle, came over to the British en masse when the French evacuated these forts following the loss of Niagara. With the backing of the local Indians, the British now established their supremacy over the French in the coveted Ohio Valley. Other successes by the British in 1759 cemented the alliance between the British and the Indians. Amherst's capture of the Lake Champlain forts removed the French threat from that source. Wolfe's triumph at Quebec sealed the fate of New France and gave further indication of the inevitability of the British victory.

The Indians had carefully provided for their own security throughout the war. While the French were winning their impressive victories in the earlier years of the conflict, the Ohio Indians became attached to their interest due to their proximity to the concentrations of French troops in the region. To adopt any other course of action would have been suicidal. The Iroquois, not in the same immediate danger as the Ohio Indians, declared a policy of neutrality during these years while they waited to see which side would eventually prove the strongest. The Six Nations maintained friendly relations with the French during this period, but never totally broke off their ties with the British in case the French power might decline. Their policy proved wise as the British did indeed make a military comeback in 1758-1759. Having consistently reaffirmed their allegiance to the covenant chain during the era of the French successes, the Iroquois were able to quickly strengthen their alliance with the British as the tide of war shifted following the Frontenac defeat of 1758.

The Iroquois closed the war on the winning side, providing valuable assistance to the British in the campaigns of Prideaux in 1759 and Amherst in 1760. The diplomatic-military policy that they followed throughout the war had enabled the Iroquois to maintain the unity of their league, avoid heavy losses in battle, and protect their vulnerable towns from being decimated by either the British or the French. The Iroquois confederacy was now in a position to enter the post-war period as an ally of the victor without having suffered heavily during the war.

NOTES: Chapter IX

1. Lawrence Henry Gipson, The Victorious Years, VII of "The British Empire Before the American Revolution" (New York: Knopf, 1949), p. 174; Howard Peckham, The Colonial Wars: 1689-1762 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 165-166.
2. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 165-166.
3. The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921), II, p. 778; James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 187-188.
4. Johnson Papers, II, pp. 821-822. Johnson was optimistic that the decision of the Onondaga Council would not be in favor of the French. A group of Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Cayugas, Delawares, and Mohawks had come to Mount Johnson in mid-March 1758 to pledge "never more to listen to the French, but firmly keep up the covenant made by our forefathers with the English." This delegation promised Johnson they were "firmly resolved to do everything in their Power to bring the rest of the Nations to their way of thinking and doubted not of Succeeding." See Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 880-884.
5. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 900-905.
6. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 907-908.
7. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 910-911.
8. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 934-940.
9. Johnson Papers, II, p. 851, IX, p. 940, II, pp. 852-854. After Johnson's original group marched to join Abercromby, additional Iroquois decided to participate in the campaign, increasing the total of Abercromby's Indian auxiliaries to 395. See Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, p. 192.
10. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 167-169; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 192-194; Richard F. Snow, "The Debacle at Fort Carillon," American Heritage 23, no. 4 (June 1972): 80-89. A detailed account of the battle by the French Adjutant General Malartic appears in E. B. O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1853), X, pp. 721-725. Montcalm's account is in Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, pp. 737-741. Abercromby's report to Pitt is in Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, pp. 725-727.

11. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 193-194.
12. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 169-173.
13. Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 952-953, 965, 968; Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 173-174; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 238-239.
14. Peckham, Colonial Wars, p. 173; Gipson, British Empire, VII, p. 238.
15. Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, p. 821.
16. Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, p. 856.
17. Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, pp. 897-899.
18. Johnson Papers, II, p. 844; IX, pp. 951-952.
19. Johnson Papers, III, pp. 3-5.
20. "Diary of Benjamin Chew at Treaty at Easton 1758: A Copy of Mr. Chew's Private Diary during the Treaty at Easton in October 1758;" Indian Records Collection (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania); and Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 147.
21. "Chew Diary"; Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 149-151; Johnson Papers, X, pp. 43-48 contains the text of the deed.
22. "Christian Post Journal 1758" (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania). Post was chosen for the job because of his fluency in the Delaware language and the respect in which he was held by the Indians for his long service among them as a missionary. See Gipson, British Empire, VII, p. 275.
23. "Post Journal"; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 276-278.
24. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 175-177.
25. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 177-178.
26. Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 179-181.
27. Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 152-153; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 329-330.
28. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 330-332; Wainwright, George Croghan, pp. 153-154.
29. Pennsylvania Colonial Records (Harrisburg, 1851-1853), VIII, pp. 310, 305.

30. Pa. Col. Rec., VIII, pp. 382-389.
31. Pa. Col. Rec., VIII, pp. 378-379; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 333-335.
32. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 336-339.
33. Johnson Papers, III, pp. 12-13, 19-20.
34. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 375-387.
35. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 388-394, 376.
36. Gipson reaches a similar conclusion in British Empire, VII, p. 343. Gipson also mentions the prospect of capturing the furs stored at Niagara as a reason for the Iroquois joining the British and also cites the respect held by the Iroquois for General Amherst as another factor.
37. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 344-345; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 199-201; Herbert L. Osgood, The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958), IV, pp. 442-445.
38. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, pp. 977-990 contains Pouchot's report on the battle. Osgood, Colonies in 18th Century, IV, pp. 443-445; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 345-349; Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 202-205.
39. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 402.
40. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet, pp. 204-209; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 349-355. Johnson's report to Amherst on the battle is in Johnson Papers, III, p. 108. The Articles of Capitulation appear in Doc. Rel. N.Y., X, pp. 990-992.
41. Pa. Col. Rec., VIII, p. 394.
42. Pa. Col. Rec., VIII, pp. 380-381.
43. Doc. Rel. N.Y., VII, p. 401.
44. Three eyewitness accounts of the British operations at Quebec appear in Stanley Pargellis, ed., Military Affairs in North America 1748-1765 (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), pp. 433-439.
45. Pa. Col. Rec., VIII, p. 432.

46. Johnson Papers, III, pp. 192-193, 188-192, 272-273; Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 447-452. Fort Levi was the French bastion at Abbe Piquet's mission "La Presentation," also known as "La Gallette."
47. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 449-462; Francis Parkman, Wolfe and Montcalm (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1929), II, pp. 375-386.
48. Gipson, British Empire, VII, pp. 462-467; Osgood, Colonies in 18th Century, IV, p. 457; Parkman, Wolfe and Montcalm, II, pp. 386-391; Peckham, Colonial Wars, pp. 199-201.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION: THE DETERMINANTS OF INDIAN POLICY

The purpose of this study has been to analyze the nature of British-Indian relations from 1748 to 1761 in order to determine the causes of Indian diplomatic-military behavior. Several factors were suggested as explanations for the pattern of Anglo-Indian relations. From the preceding review of the events of the period, an evaluation can be made of the relative merits of each of these possible causes.

Religion. The religious factor does not seem to have been a significant influence on the actions of the various Indian nations. Missionary work was conducted by both the British and the French during the colonial period, but seems to have had a limited effect on Indian behavior in the realm of diplomatic and military affairs. There is scarce, if any, evidence in the primary sources that the Indians thought of themselves as Catholics or Protestants, or that they would adopt a military policy based on the religious persuasion of a potential ally or enemy. It is true that while the Six Nations confederacy as a unit usually wavered between a pro-British or neutral policy, some Iroquois groups migrated to French missions at Oswegatchie and Caughnawaga and became known as "Praying Indians." While these Iroquois participated in Catholic religious services, there is no evidence to suggest that they were attracted to Canada by the

tenets of Catholic theology. Their relocation seems to have been caused primarily by the good treatment and wise counsel they received from certain conscientious and able priests who felt a benevolent and genuine concern for the well-being of the Indians. The mission settlements offered the basic necessities of life, gifts of various types, the protection of French troops, and kind treatment by the priests. While it is understandable that some Indians would be drawn by the advantages offered by the missions, it does not appear that religion in itself was the prime attraction. Caughnawagas and Mohawks maintained amicable relations throughout most of the period. What differences did develop between the two groups were the result of being associated with competing imperialistic rivals rather than the theological differences that can divide Catholic from Protestant or Catholic from "pagan." Further evidence that the religious factor was of minimal importance comes from the fact that the Caughnawagas and Oswegatchies both broke away from the French interest in the closing years of the war, once the military power of the British began to assert itself. Any religious ties between the "Praying Indians" and the French were quickly broken when it became evident that the British were going to win the war.

Nationality Traits. The argument that the Indians were attracted to the adventurous, romantic French personality was not supported by evidence found in the primary sources. In examining their discussions and conferences with the British, this researcher found no mention by the Indians that personality differences in the two European nationality groups had any effect on their behavior. While a variety of

problems were covered in these talks, at no time do the Indians attribute their differences with the British to any specific set of British personality characteristics. Reference is often made in works dealing with the colonial period to the ready acceptance given by the Indians to the colorful coureur de bois or bush rangers who traversed the forests of North America. While these men were often well liked and highly respected by the Indians, British who followed that life style were also warmly received. Croghan, Weiser, Johnson, and others who learned Indian languages, adopted Indian dress and customs, took Indian wives, and, most of all, understood Indian problems and concerns, were very well thought of in Indian society. The myth of the superiority of French personality traits is in part a product of the differences in the economic orientation of the French and British colonies. Since New France was based primarily on the successful exploitation of the fur trade, greater numbers of the French entered the forests to make a living dealing with the Indians. Therefore, more Frenchmen became closely associated with Indian groups. The agricultural base of the British colonies discouraged men from embarking on long journeys into the wilderness, and thus there were fewer British coureur de bois. When British settlers did become closely associated with Indians through the fur trade or other means, there did not seem to be any British ethnic obstacles to establishing good relations. At times the Indians made unfavorable mention of certain characteristics such as dishonesty in business transactions, hunger for Indian land, and lack of respect for Indians.

These traits were found in both European nationality groups, however, and were not attributed to one people more than the other.

Balance of Power. Throughout the 1748-1761 period, the Indians of North America, especially the politically sophisticated Six Nations Confederacy, did have an understanding of the concept of "balance of power." They were aware that both the French and the British coveted their friendship and often used their position as a lever to extract goods and other concessions from the European powers. Whenever agreeing to join a British military expedition, the Indians would request to be armed, equipped, and fed at the expense of the British. When discussions concerning the renewal of the covenant chain were in progress, the Indians would often ask for better trading arrangements, the removal of illegal white settlers, or some other concession as a price for their continued amity. The Iroquois knew that their large confederacy did have the potential for deciding the outcome of the war and endeavored to maintain the unity of the league so that this capacity could be used wisely. Throughout the 1748-1761 period, the Six Nations struggled against the competing pressures of the French and British so as to retain the ability to influence the course of the war to their own advantage.

While the Indians enjoyed holding the balance of power there is little evidence that they ever tried to prolong the war between Britain and France in order to maintain or enhance their position. The type of war waged by the two European powers was odious to the Indians. Achievement in combat was an important factor in attaining status in the societies of the eastern woodland tribes, but warfare

between the two European powers provided little opportunity for the Indian warrior to distinguish himself. The European impersonal style of war, based on long expeditions and protracted sieges was not attractive to the Indian warrior who found honor only in individual exploits. The Six Nations Confederacy was strongly opposed to the continuation of the British-French war for two basic reasons. First, it threatened the unity of the league. If the two European powers were at war, in all likelihood some Mohawks would be drawn into the British service and some Senecas would join the French. This would mean that there was always the possibility that the two groups would clash in combat, beginning a fratricidal war that could destroy the league. Second, the expeditions mounted by the European powers often had to pass through the country of the Six Nations, endangering the towns of the confederacy. While the European powers maintained large armies the Six Nations felt vulnerable to attack. Only by skillful and clever diplomacy could they maintain good relations with both sides and insure that their towns would not be attacked.

Gifts. While the giving of gifts was an important part of Indian diplomacy, the practice has been misunderstood as a means of obtaining Indian allies. The primary materials contain much information concerning appropriations from colonial and royal sources for presents to the Indians. Gifts were given at every Indian conference. Yet for all the attention paid to gift giving, it does not appear that presents had any direct effect on the gaining of Indian allies for military service. This researcher could find no instance in which any Indian group gave military service in exchange for any type of

material compensation. There were undoubtedly countless occasions in which individuals or small bands may have accepted some type of payment for engaging in the service of one side or the other. The evidence shows, however, that no viable political-military unit (town, castle, tribe, or nation) ever based its military policy on the gaining of remuneration from one of the European powers. This is not to say that Indian groups did not accept and even solicit gifts. In need of material goods and realizing that whites were willing to give them presents in the hope that they would become more favorably disposed toward the givers, Indians exploited the situation and accepted presents from both the British and the French if they could obtain them.

Gifts were a sign of respect and friendship and were an expected part of any Indian conference. They showed the concern of the giver for the welfare of the recipient. To have neglected to give presents to the Indians attending such a meeting would be considered by them as rude and insulting. Failure to give gifts would have been a violation of protocol that could damage relations, but the giving and accepting of gifts was in no way a payment for military services rendered. Gifts were also important as an indication of the wealth and power of the giver. The Indians were constantly trying to evaluate the relative strength of the French and the British. Inability to provide satisfactory gifts could be taken as evidence of a similar inability to maintain an expensive, sustained military effort. Therefore, gifts could indirectly gain Indian allies by convincing them of the total strength of the giver.

Traditional Ties. Long-standing relationships had some effect on the military alliance structure of the period under investigation. Certainly this was true regarding the Indian groups. Enmity between the Delawares and their Iroquois overlords dating back to the early part of the eighteenth century was a determinant of Delaware behavior in the 1750s. Similarly, the ties between the Delawares and Shawnees caused the latter group to support the former when the Delawares embarked on an anti-British, anti-Iroquois military policy in Pennsylvania. Animosity between the Iroquois and Algonkins dating to the period before white contact continued through the mid-eighteenth century. Traditional enmity between the Six Nations and the Catawbas continued to exist even though both became British allies.

In the scope of Indian-white relations, the covenant chain between the British and the Iroquois is an example of a traditional relationship that influenced Indian behavior. Constant references to the covenant chain at the Indian conferences indicate that the concept of the chain had deep significance and was more than a rhetorical phrase.

While traditional ties were important, they were often overshadowed by the realities of the current situation. The Iroquois were masters of conciliation and assimilation in regard to other Indian groups. Relations with the Delawares were very strained at one point but were later restored. The covenant chain between the British and the Iroquois never broke, but was allowed to "rust" on occasion. The Iroquois never abandoned the chain of friendship, but did not actively cultivate the good will of the British when the

French were doing well militarily in the early years of the war. Had the French successes continued, it is unlikely that the Iroquois would have maintained the covenant chain.

Traditional ties were significant in that they caused a nation of Indians to be pro-British or pro-French at the beginning of hostilities or during a period of inaction. As the example of the Caughnawagas and Oswegatchies demonstrates, however, such bonds did not always hold up. If traditional ties were all-important, these two groups would never have migrated away from their Six Nations homeland and settled with the French. Later, if their long established bond with the French had been the guiding principal of their actions, they would not have abandoned New France when the British became the dominant military power on the continent.

Key Men. Several highly significant and influential individuals did much to shape the course of British-Indian behavior. William Johnson's contribution in gaining the amity of the Six Nations was especially important. On several occasions when British neglect and ineptitude nearly wrecked the covenant chain, Johnson was able to retain the Iroquois in the British interest by his skillful diplomacy and tireless energy. A good case can be made that without Johnson the Six Nations would have left the British interest. Croghan and Weiser deserve special recognition for their role in the conduct of British-Indian affairs. Like Johnson they often acted wisely and decisively to retain Indian amity while the colonial governments fumbled and dodged their responsibilities in this area. Throughout

the period, the northern colonies relied on these three able men to perform the indispensable liaison work with the Indians.

It would be incorrect to discount the work of these forest diplomats, but there were limitations on their influence over the Indians. When the royal and colonial governments failed to vigorously prosecute the war effort against the French, there was little they could do to prevent the Indians from working to improve their relations with the enemy. It was difficult if not impossible for them to gain and hold Indians in the British interest without the full financial and military cooperation of the various colonial governments. Although they were able to maintain a high degree of personal prestige among the Indians, they were unable to prevent the defections to the French at times when the British were militarily inactive. Without the services of Johnson, Croghan, and Weiser, more Indians would have been lost to the French, making the conduct of the war infinitely more difficult. However, despite the Herculean efforts of these three, the British still could have lost the amity of the Indians (and the war) had not other factors intervened.

Economic Considerations. In spite of frequent neglect and mismanagement of Indian affairs by the royal and colonial governments, the economic advantage enjoyed by the British served as a magnet to draw Indians to the British interest. Throughout the period British traders were able to significantly undersell their French counterparts. Indians living in the vicinity of the major French cities and forts such as Quebec, Montreal, Niagara, and Detroit consistently remained in the French interest. Those Indians

who lived at some distances from the trade and population centers of either side, however, exhibited a definite preference for British goods due to the lower prices offered by the British traders. In times of peace, when there was no direct threat to their villages for dealing with traders from one side or the other, the Indians of the Six Nations Confederacy chose to be part of the British economic sphere. For their own benefit these Indians encouraged British traders to come to their towns with their reasonably priced goods. Therefore, in matters of military significance, the basic inclination of these Indians was to hope for a British success so that the flow of low priced goods would continue uninterrupted.

The economic factor was highly significant, but not all-pervasive. When existing military conditions made trade relations with the British a liability, the Indians turned to the French for the goods they needed.

The Major Determinants of Indian Amity:
Survival/Allying with the Victor

In order to provide for their own self preservation, the Indians consistently followed a policy designed to place them on the side of the eventual winner in the struggle for supremacy in North America. Colonial leaders often failed to appreciate the situation of the Indian nations and viewed any unfavorable shift in their diplomatic position as treacherous and deceitful. The Indians did modify their policies toward the British and the French in order to serve their own considerations. The Iroquois consciously worked to

develop policies toward the two European powers that were sufficiently flexible as to permit them to draw themselves closer to one side without breaking relations completely with the other.

The military history of the 1748-1761 period demonstrates this ability of the Indians to assess the current situation and then follow a policy designed to insure their own survival as the two European powers duelled for control of America. Following King George's War, the Six Nations and their allies and the Indian nations of Ohio traded with both sides, but for their own economic and military advantage were more closely associated with the British, who offered the better prices and made the best showing in the recent conflict. The Indians of Ohio and New York avoided any alliances that might restrict their future action. The French military build-up on the Ohio in 1753 was distasteful to the Indians of the area as the subsequent expulsion of the British traders caused a rise in the price of trade goods. Left with no choice except to resort to an armed revolt against the French invaders, the Indians of Ohio chose to adapt to the higher prices rather than take the risk of being decimated in a war.

The defeats of Washington in 1754 and Braddock in 1755 further removed any thoughts of rebellion. Since it was clear that the military weakness of the British would prohibit their immediate return to the Ohio Valley, the Indians of the area accepted the presence of the French and their higher prices in order to insure their continued existence.

In New York, the French successes of 1756 at Oswego and 1757 at Fort William Henry convinced the Iroquois of the wisdom of

cultivating the good will of the French as well as the British. Formerly entrenched in the British interest as King George's War drew to a close with the British on the verge of invading Canada, the Six Nations attended conferences at Montreal as well as Mount Johnson and Albany in an attempt to keep French invasion forces away from their vulnerable towns. The Six Nations followed a policy of neutrality at this time, waiting for one side to demonstrate a clear superiority over the other. When that happened, the Onondaga Central Council was prepared to either pursue its renewed detente with the French or reaffirm its traditional covenant chain with the British.

The British victories of 1758-1759 caused another shift in the behavior of the Six Nations and the Ohio Indians. The triumphs at Frontenac, Louisbourg, and DuQuesne demonstrated the British capability to win the war. The Iroquois Confederation was no longer threatened by the possibility of a French invasion into their country. Perceiving the British to be the likely victors in 1759, the Six Nations dropped their policy of neutrality and actively volunteered to join Johnson in the reduction of Fort Niagara. The British expedition against Niagara was seen by the Iroquois as an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the British and thereby insure good treatment from the British following the war. The successful outcome of the expedition affirmed the Iroquois-British alliance at an extremely low cost in Iroquois casualties. The league was able to provide for its future security without decreasing its present strength.

The success of the Forbes expedition enabled the Indians of Ohio to modify their policies regarding the French. Pleased that low cost British goods were once again available, the Ohio Indians supported the British establishment at Fort Pitt without alienating the French should they return in force to seize the forks. By withholding their assistance from the French, the Indians of Ohio were able to enjoy the low prices offered at Fort Pitt without risking the loss of a single Indian life. If the French could muster enough strength to recapture the fort there would always be time to renew that alliance. If the British continued to increase their power on the Ohio while the French declined, the Indians would hopefully be remembered as having given protection to the newly-established Fort Pitt when it was still vulnerable.

By the time of the final victories at Quebec and Lake Champlain in 1759 and at Montreal in 1760, the Six Nations and the Indians of the Ohio were firmly attached to the British interest. By skillful diplomatic maneuvering throughout the war-time period they had managed to emerge on the side of the victor while avoiding heavy losses in battle and maintaining the security of their towns.

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