

Selected Papers
From The 1983 And 1984
George Rogers Clark
Trans-Appalachian Frontier
History Conference



SELECTED PAPERS
FROM THE 1983 AND 1984
GEORGE ROGERS CLARK
TRANS-APPALACHIAN FRONTIER
HISTORY CONFERENCES

Edited by
Robert J. Holden

Vincennes, Indiana
1985

The 1983 and 1984 George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences were sponsored by the National Park Service and Vincennes University. This publication was printed by Vincennes University Printing Center with a donation from the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. It was manufactured in the United States of America.

The illustrations and cover drawing were done by Richard Day.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 85 - 80989

ISBN: 0 - 915992 - 32 - 9

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



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

July 23, 1985

Dear Reader:

Parks are collections of resources that contain our nation's most valued treasures. The richness and diversity of these resources are the tangible evidence of our national heritage. They represent the physical, the intellectual and, in the broad sense of the word, the spiritual basis from which this nation's strength, pride and continuity of purpose have been fashioned.

Instilling an understanding and appreciation of these resources, and through this process achieving the motivation and support for preserving them and the heritage they represent, is the critical responsibility of the National Park Service.

For the National Park Service, interpretation can be defined as the process of translating the meanings and values of the park resources into "language" understandable by visitors. At George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, the process of interpretation serves to commemorate the accomplishments of George Rogers Clark and the history of the Trans-Appalachian region and to communicate this story with its significance to the American people.

Thus, it is appropriate that we join with Vincennes University in this important historic city on the Wabash River to hold the George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences and to publish these papers. Hopefully, the papers will help bring to life the many aspects of frontier history. With them, we hope you will gain a better understanding of our national heritage and the forces, places, and people that helped forge its purpose and direction.

Johnny D. Neal
Superintendent



VINCENNES UNIVERSITY JUNIOR COLLEGE

Vincennes, Indiana 47591

PHILLIP M. SUMMERS, *President*

July 19, 1985

Dear Reader:

Vincennes University is proud to host the George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference in cooperation with the George Rogers Clark National Historical Park. The conference is an attempt to bring together people interested in history and to provide a forum for the presentation of papers about the history of the frontier period. Much professional effort has been expended in preparing the papers and they deserve to be circulated widely through this publication.

Vincennes University has a tradition of supporting research and the interpretation of history. V.U. was founded in 1801, chartered in 1806, and has the reputation of being the "oldest college west of the Alleghenies and north of the Ohio." It is because of the historical nature of this college (which was founded on the American frontier) that a strong dedication to activities such as the George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference has been maintained. As an active participant, the University personnel have assisted with the conference and the subsequent publishing of the papers which were presented.

It is our hope that this annual meeting will continue to grow in importance and attract a substantial number of participants. The papers which are in this publication are representative of the work of scholars who have studied and presented information and theories of historical events. It is through the study of the past that an understanding of the present . . . and preparation for the future . . . are achieved.

History is revered at Vincennes University, and the tradition of scholarly research is being continued through the publication of the conference papers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Phillip M. Summers".

Phillip M. Summers
President

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PREFACE

Robert J. Holden

The annual George Rogers Clark Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conference was inaugurated in October 1983 to encourage research into this absorbing and fascinating field of study and to serve as a focal point for its presentation. Although papers on the subject are often presented at other meetings, no regularly scheduled conference had existed which was devoted solely to this theme. It was felt that the great importance of both George Rogers Clark and the settlement of Vincennes in the early history of this region made this historic city on the Wabash River, the site of George Rogers Clark National Historical Park, a perfect setting for such a gathering.

To a far greater extent than on the later Trans-Mississippi frontier, the events that transpired in the Trans-Appalachian region in its early recorded years were of critical importance in the subsequent shaping of world history. It was in this vast area lying between the Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, Great Lakes and the Gulf Coast, that a direct confrontation took place among the Indians, French, British, Spanish and Americans during the formative period of North American history.

The saga of this area is an extremely complex one, filled with great adventure, incredible bravery, tremendous hardship, and continuous intrigue. The remarkable personalities that have played their roles here are legion including DeSoto, LaSalle, Radisson, Groseilliers, Jolliet, Marquette, Iberville, Langlade, Croghan, Pontiac, Boone, Kenton, Sevier, Clark, Girty, Drag-

ging Canoe, Little Turtle, Wayne, McGillivray, Bowles, Wilkinson, Harrison, Tecumseh, and Jackson. If, as Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage," the players in this drama could not have asked for a better setting, a more colorful backdrop, or a stronger plot.

These selected papers from the 1983 and 1984 conferences cover a wide variety of topics. Linda Carlson Sharp's "Unjust Encroachments: British and French Territorial Claims in North America to 1763" examines the early maps of the continent with emphasis on the conflicting claims in the Trans-Appalachian area. D. R. Farrell's "Mobilizing for War: Logistics and the British War Effort in the West, 1775 - 1783" looks at the many problems involved in waging war on a remote frontier. William L. Potter's "Redcoats on the Frontier: The King's Regiment in the Revolutionary War" illuminates the activities of these soldiers in an often shadowy border conflict. William Collins' "The Spanish Attack on Fort St. Joseph" looks at the underlying factors in this seemingly minor military operation. David A. Simmons' "Military Architecture on the American Frontier" discusses various types of fortifications and their role in the region. Patrick J. Furlong's "Problems of Frontier Logistics in St. Clair's 1791 Campaign" explores the many difficulties the United States had with military operations in the late 18th century wilderness. Richard Day's "Michel Brouillet, 1774 - 1838: A Vincennes Fur Trader, Interpreter, and Scout" provides an example of an engaging frontier figure. Robert W. McCluggage's "Pioneer Stereotypes" gives a colorful, and often humorous, insight into the early population of the region.

Initiating and carrying out an annual conference such as this always brings challenges, both those expected and those un-

foreseen. For their great assistance, support and effort, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to former Superintendent Roy F. Beasley, Jr., Superintendent John Neal, Terri Utt, and Pat Wilkerson, of the National Park Service, and to President Phillip M. Summers, Robert R. Stevens, and Chelsea M. Lawlis of Vincennes University. In addition, I want to thank the Eastern National Park and Monument Association and the Vincennes University Printing Center for making this publication possible.

Robert J. Holden
Historian, National Park Service
and Conference Coordinator

Vincennes, Indiana
July 23, 1985



“Unjust Encroachments:”

British and French Territorial Claims in North America to 1763¹

Linda Carlson Sharp

Head, Technical Services

Indiana Historical Society Library

In 1650 and 1651, Nicolas Sanson, Geographer to the King of France, published maps of North America and the world, respectively.² Sanson, a prolific publisher, may have attached little notice to these maps, but they have acquired great importance in the cartographic history of North America, as they show the five Great Lakes for the first time on a general-purpose map.

It is no surprise that the maps are of French origin. The earliest accounts of the Great Lakes are by French explorers, and Samuel de Champlain's account of 1632 included a map³ which served as the authority for Jean Boisseau's *Description de la Nouvelle France*.⁴ French interests in the area were strengthened by the presence of the Jesuit Indian missions.⁵ Annual accounts of the missions, the Jesuit *Relations*, provided more detailed information on the region than that reported by the first explorers; Coronelli's strikingly accurate depiction of the five Great Lakes from 1689 draws heavily upon Jesuit narratives and mapping.⁶ Sanson's inclusion of the Great Lakes on his maps reflects both his reputation for constant revision to incorporate new information and the enormous popular interest in France in the Jesuits' Canadian missions.⁷

The French also established trading networks into the continent's interior. Contracts between independent traders and voyageurs and the seigneurial companies provided strict controls over territorial areas for exploitation.⁸ Voyageurs' knowledge of the area was incorporated into Chatelain's *Carte*

particuliere du fleuve St. Louis, which combined reasonably accurate mapping with a textual outline of the region's natural resources and a breakdown of trade good values and equivalencies.⁹

Jesuit proselytizing, trade relations, and physical penetration into the interior, along with established French settlements in the lower Mississippi River Valley, served to assure the French of their domination over the entire valley in the early eighteenth century.¹⁰ Widespread confidence in this assumption prompted Guillaume de L'Isle to produce his map, *L'Amerique septentrionale*, in 1700. De L'Isle's graphic representation of extensive French claims to the Mississippi River Valley (Illustration 1) was the first in a series of similar maps to appear.¹¹

At the same time, English colonial policy dictated the establishment of contiguous colonies along the eastern seaboard. Concern rested with building colonies which were lucrative, well-settled, and easily defended.¹² Whatever official opinion may have been, however, expeditions were undertaken beyond what British policymakers viewed as the natural settlement boundary, the Appalachian Mountains. Robert Beverley's *History and present state of Virginia* described briefly the explorations of Henry Batts in 1671, across the mountains and over to the Wood River in the Ohio River watershed. Batts proceeded to claim all land between the Wood River and the Mississippi River in the name of the British Crown. The expedition did not receive official notice or backing, and no attempts were made to solidify Batts' claims.¹³

A number of British authors began openly to question the official strategem of colonization. One anonymous writer in 1713 decried the lack of parliamentary response to the French assignment of a trading monopoly in the lower



A New and Accurate Map of the English Empire in North America, 1755
(Courtesy the Indiana Historical Society.)



De L' Isle Amerique Septentrionale, 1700
(Courtesy the Indiana Historical Society.)

Mississippi Valley to Antoine Crozat. The loss of potential Indian trade and the exclusion of British subjects from the rich available lands, he argued, certainly would prove detrimental to the interests of England's existing colonies.¹⁴ Another writer, in 1720, discussed the danger to colonial defenses should no attempt be made to prevent France from uniting her holdings in the lower Mississippi Valley with those in the Great Lakes area. The establishment of settlements along the Ohio River, he felt, would further British claims to the area and provide some barrier to French domination over the region, which was certain to occur should the British authorities continue to ignore the situation.¹⁵

Daniel Coxe gave a fuller treatment to these arguments in his *Description of the English province of Carolana*. He outlined, in some detail, the natural history and resources of the Mississippi Valley and reviewed the various treaties and purchases through which British title to the region might be legally established. He reiterated the importance of the Batts expedition of 1671: if Batts' claims were pursued, the British authorities could legitimately argue precedence over French claims to the area, as French claims were based upon the LaSalle explorations of 1680.¹⁶ A fourth writer, in 1744, discussed the detrimental effects of French occupation on the Indians in "Louisiana," suggesting at the same time that the debilitation brought on by the French might make a takeover relatively simple for a united force of stable, sober British soldiers and colonials.¹⁷

Whether appeals to popular opinion or French imperialism began to have its effects, British official policy gradually shifted to encourage explorations and to advocate documentation of British claims to the Mississippi Valley and beyond. John Senex's *New map of the English empire in America* was one of the first English maps to respond to

French territorial claims. In it, he extended British colonial boundaries beyond the Appalachians and inset a general view of European colonial holdings in the western hemisphere which limited French holdings to roughly present-day Canada; most of the remainder of North America was allocated to the British.¹⁸ The first large-scale English map of North America, by Henry Popple, followed the same logic.¹⁹

The British also set up trade relations with the Indians, though in a less structured and less official fashion than those of the French. While French colonies in Canada were set up on a proprietary basis, with trade monopolies granted by and to the colonial authorities, British trade with the Indians was established by independent merchants. For each nation, favorable trade relations with Indian allies was an important part of attempts to check the advances of the other into contested territories. As British interest in the interior grew, trading posts and forts were built further and further from the Alleghenies. The presence of British traders in what the French had come to regard exclusively as their territory was one of the irritants leading to the French and Indian War, the one conflict between France and England which had its origin on the North American continent.²⁰

While generalized hostility between the two nations was nothing new, and popular sentiment in each nation in general terms ran high against the other, that sentiment in England found a new outlet with the advent of popular magazines. The first of these, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was founded in London in 1731. An eclectic gathering of political and social commentary, scientific and medical reports, and general news, the magazine was widely circulated and quickly imitated.²¹ All followed the same general format and were heavily illustrated. News of battles or general articles on a location were often illustrated with maps and fort plans; these were

generally specially commissioned and engraved for the magazine in question. Occasionally the maps were inserted without reference to a specific article, but they were more often than not engraved to accompany text.²²

Some of the best known British cartographers of the eighteenth century got their start by engraving maps for these popular press productions. It is not uncommon to find maps by Thomas Kitchin, Thomas Jefferys, William Seale, and John Gibson in a random search through these publications. News items concerning the colonies might feature natural history, battle plans and fortifications, or epic poetry; a generally heightened awareness of the colonies and the conflicting territorial claims resulted from the wide circulation of these monthly magazines. During periods of open conflict between France and England, intensive descriptions of the separate colonies were published which outlined the strategic military questions for each, as well as its agricultural and mercantilistic importance.²³ An almost-nationalistic fervor was interjected into the magazines, with poetry, prints, and music appearing, all referring to the virtues of British subjects, or the vile nature of the French, and the like.²⁴

Following the opening hostilities of the French and Indian War, numerous maps of North America were produced, supporting one side's claim to the disputed territories over the other. Indeed, 1755 is regarded as one of the landmark years in the cartographic history of North America.²⁵ French cartographers, such as Gilles Robert de Vaugondy and the Sieur Longchamps, conceded the established eastern seaboard colonies to the English.²⁶ Some English mapmakers were reasonable in their claims as well; Thomas Jefferys, for instance, laid claim to areas for which there were treaties, purchases, and charters. His map, openly based upon the French cartographer D'Anville's large-scale map of eastern North

America, also was published in 1755. Jefferys, however, altered the basic boundaries of D'Anville's map in favor of the British claims.²⁷

Other English cartographers were less modest in their claims. William Herbert's *New and accurate map of the English empire* is one of the most graphic representations of a common theme in England (Illustration 2). Openly attributed to a "Society of Anti-Gallicans," Herbert's map allocates only the area around Quebec, Montreal, and Trois Rivières to the French. The remainder of the North American continent, even without regard to the Mississippi River, was assigned to the British colonies' various jurisdictions.²⁸ Numerous printed works supported this view, most notably John Huske's *The present state of North America*. Only Part I of this work, outlining "The discoveries, rights and possessions of Great Britain," was ever published, but that went through two editions within the year 1755. The work was principally extracted and translated from a French text, *Histoire et commerce des colonies Angloises* by Dumont; it was accompanied by a map engraved by Thomas Kitchin, a virtual duplicate of Herbert's map.²⁹

Publishers were not above practicing deception as well. Jean Palairé's *Carte des possessions anglaises et françaises du continent de l'Amérique*, published in 1755 with an explanatory text, is on first impression an argument in favor of French claims. A careful reading of the text, however, reveals it to be a translation of British ministerial opinion; rendered into French, it was intended for distribution in France with hopes, one suspects, that some few citizens might be dissuaded from French claims.³⁰

By far the best-known map from this period is John Mitchell's *Map of the British and French dominions in North America*.³¹ Mitchell, a botanist and physician from Virginia,

settled in London and counted numerous influential British nobles as his friends. He had also established friendships in North America with the leading colonial scientists and politicians. His acquaintance with George Dunk, Earl of Halifax, provided him access to the Board of Trade; his familiarity with the colonies ensured the Board's trust in him; and his friendships and continual correspondence with some of the leading citizens of the American colonies made him privy to detailed information concerning the colonies. He became especially interested in some of the intra-colonial boundary squabbles and used his influence with the Board of Trade to gain access to the official surveys, exploration diaries, and cartography associated with the numerous Board-sponsored ventures in the colonies. What resulted from his interest was his great map, published under the auspices of the Board of Trade, which assimilated the most detailed and precise accounts of colonial America, most of which were unpublished, from the Board of Trade archives.³² While his initial intention was to shed light on the question of accurate boundaries for the individual colonies, the map was quickly seized upon as an authoritative document of all colonial boundaries, including those between the various colonies and the French possessions. Mitchell's map was used as an authority by numerous other cartographers, few of whom acknowledge their debt to him. It was published in four English, two Dutch, three French, and two Italian editions between 1755 and 1791, and remains one of the most impressive cartographical achievements ever. The minute attention to detail, paid to the official surveys, has rendered it useful in this century in inter-state boundary disputes.³³

Numerous attempts were made at negotiating a settlement to the conflict, which by now had expanded into the Seven Years' War on the European front. Initial negotiations

in 1756 failed, and various accounts of the negotiations were published, both in France and in England.³⁴ There followed public controversies, particularly in England where the points espoused by the ministry were taken up and defended, and just as vigorously denounced. Partisan attacks and defenses were published for popular consumption, in the weekly and monthly papers as well as in pamphlet form. John Shebbeare, a particularly vociferous supporter of the ministerial positions, published a number of pamphlets defending his views and answering others who attacked the ministry. His views were in turn refuted by others. The publishing activity associated with the negotiations verifies the enormous popular interest in the question of equitable settlements to the conflict.³⁵

At the same time, a number of authors addressed themselves particularly to the colonies. John Mitchell published, anonymously, a compilation of materials which can be viewed as narrative arguments following from research for his map. His *Contest in America between Great Britain and France* outlined the importance of maintaining the established colonies, conceded some difficulty in dislodging the French from Canada, and proposed the formation of a "buffer zone" between the two nations' territories, which would have encompassed the Great Lakes region.³⁶

Another unidentified anonymous writer proposed methods for uniting the colonies under one or two regional governments dedicated to their common defense. Like Mitchell before him, he was concerned with the almost-intractable colonial governments, some of which refused to defend other colonies for fear that their own commercial or territorial interests might be jeopardized in the process.³⁷

Arthur Young reiterated the classic mercantilist colonial view and emphasized the need for defending the colonies to the utmost in order to preserve the basic relationship between

them and the Crown. The expense, in his view, would be outweighed by the continued economic benefits derived in England from the continued mercantilist relationship.³⁸ And, in a final example of the debate, William Smith centered his interest on the pivotal colony of Pennsylvania. Exposed to French depredations and locked into territorial squabbles with New York colony, the colony's ability to survive without aid was called into question; he also cast doubt on the loyalty of the numerous German settlers, characterizing them as Catholic, prone to support the French out of religious sympathy.³⁹

Negotiations resumed and failed again in 1761, with similar public debate on all aspects of the negotiations. The French ministerial views presented during the negotiations were translated into English for consumption in Great Britain,⁴⁰ while the attendant *Remarks upon the Historical memorial published by the court of France* explained why the French proposals were clearly unacceptable from the English point of view.⁴¹ One anonymous *Letter to a great Minister, on the prospect of a peace* disputed the importance of the proposed acquisition of Canada, advocating instead the English possession of the French West Indies, as products grown there could not be successfully raised in the present colonies and the benefits to Great Britain derived from the islands could not be duplicated in Canada.⁴²

When at last the Treaty of Paris of 1763 was signed,⁴³ the French were excluded from the North American mainland east of the Mississippi River and north of the Great Lakes, to the benefit of Great Britain; Louisiana west of the Mississippi was ceded to England's ally Spain. While the question of French influence and incursions from the north was settled once and for all, there still remained the problem of a foreign power holding contiguous possessions on the continent. British

policymakers, and the British public, had been successfully convinced of the importance of the Mississippi Valley to the colonial enterprise. Almost immediately, concerns over the safety and defensibility of the newly acquired western reaches of British holdings were raised, as was the question of the wisdom of the Canadian acquisition, as a potential drain upon limited resources.⁴⁴ People and policymakers were at last cognizant of the vast potential of the North American interior and, correspondingly, aware of the problems in administering such a large area. In the end, British resources did prove inadequate to protect the region from molestation. Final allocation of it to the fledgling United States in the Treaty of 1783 was an acknowledgement of the burden placed on the British Crown by attempts to possess it and protect it at the same time.

NOTES

¹ This paper, with slides, was presented at the first annual George Rogers Clark conference on Trans-Appalachian Frontier History, 1982. Research for this paper was undertaken in part at the Newberry Library, during an NEH-sponsored institute in the history of cartography. Both slides and narrative are based on the collections of the Indiana Historical Society; this is not intended to represent a comprehensive survey of the maps and literature of the period.

² Sanson, Nicolas. *Amerique septentrionale* (Paris : Sanson, 1650); *Mappe-monde* (Paris : Sanson, 1651). Cf. R. V. Tooley, *Mapping of America* (London : Holland Press Cartographica, 1980), *passim*., for a discussion of Sanson's contributions to seventeenth-century French cartography, and his impact on later cartographers.

³ Tooley, R. V. "The mapping of the Great Lakes: a personal view," in Tooley, *Mapping of America* *op. cit.*, p.p. 305-319, provides an overview of the cartographic evolution of the Great Lakes. Champlain's augmented 1632 version of his Great Lakes map, originally published in 1613, was the first to present the concept of a chain of lakes.

⁴ Boisseau, Jean. *Description de la nouvelle France* (Paris : Boisseau, 1643).

⁵ A good discussion of Jesuit activity in the Great Lakes region can be found in: Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America in the seventeenth century* (Boston : Little, Brown, 1883). W. I. Kip's *The early Jesuit missions in North America* (New York : Wiley and Putnam, 1846) compiles unofficial correspondence of the Jesuits. Jesuits first visited the North American continent in 1611; the official *Relations* began publication in 1632. Cf. James Comly McCoy, *Jesuit Relations of Canada, 1632-1673 : a bibliography* (Paris : A. Rau, 1937).

⁶ Coronelli, Vincenza Maria. *Partie occidentale du Canada ou de la nouvelle France* (Paris : J.-B. Nolin, 1689); this map is based upon "Lac Superieur et autres lieux ou sont les Missions des pères," which appeared in the *Jesuit Relations* of 1672, compiled by Fr. Claude Dablon. Cf. Tooley, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

⁷ Cf. Parkman, *op. cit.*

⁸ Biggar, Henry Percival. *The early trading companies of New France : a contribution to the history of commerce and discovery in North America* (Toronto : University of Toronto Library, 1901). Examples of early trading contracts can be found in manuscript form in many collections; in the Indiana Historical Society, the earliest example of this type of document dates from 1694.

⁹ Chatelain, Henry Abraham. *Carte particulière du fleuve St. Louis* (Amsterdam : Chatelain, 1719?). For discussion of trade good values and distribution, see George I. Quimby, *Indian culture and European trade goods* (Madison, WI : University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), and Arthur Woodward, *The denominators of the fur trade : an anthology of writings on the material culture of the fur trade* (Pasadena, CA : Socio-Technical Pub., 1970).

¹⁰ Winsor, Justin. *French explorations and settlements in North America, and those of the Portuguese, Dutch, and Swedes* (Boston : Houghton, Mifflin, 1884) provides a useful overview of French settlement patterns.

¹¹ L'Isle, Guillaume de. *L'Amerique septentrionale dressée sur les observations de Mrs. de l'Academie des Sciences . . .* (Paris : de L'Isle, sur Rue des Canettes, 1700). The Indiana Historical Society's copy is one of two known examples of the first state, first edition, of this important North American map. Cf. *The Map Collector* 26:2-6 (March 1984) and 28:49 (Sept. 1984) concerning this state's unique identifying features.

¹² Burton, Robert. *English empire in North America* (London : Nicolas Crouch, 1728). First published in 1685 and updated regularly, this work discussed the English colonial system, with a description of each colony.

¹³ Beverley, Robert. *The history and present state of Virginia : in four parts* (London : printed for R. Parker, 1705); cited in Edmund and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, *Dr. John Mitchell : the man who made the map of North America* (Chapel Hill, N.C. : University of North Carolina Press, 1974).

¹⁴ *Letter to a member of the P-----t of G----t B-----n, occasion'd by the privilege granted by the French king to Mr. Crozat* (London : printed for J. Baker, 1713).

¹⁵ *Some considerations on the consequences of the French settling colonies on the Mississippi* . . . (London : printed for J. Roberts, 1720).

¹⁶ Coxe, Daniel. *Description of the English province of Carolana* (London : printed for B. Cowse, 1722).

¹⁷ *The present state of the country and inhabitants, Europeans, and Indians, of Louisiana* . . . (London : printed for J. Millan, 1744).

¹⁸ Senex, John. A new map of the English empire in America (London : Senex, 1719).

¹⁹ Popple, Henry. Map of the British empire in America with the French and Spanish settlements adjacent thereto (London : W. H. Toms, engr., 1733).

²⁰ Peckham, Howard H. *The colonial wars, 1689-1762* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1964).

²¹ Carlson, C. Lennart. *The first magazine : a history of the Gentleman's Magazine, with an account of Dr. Johnson's editorial activity and of the notice given America in the Magazine* (Providence, R.I. : Brown University, 1938).

²² Reitan, Earl. "Expanding horizons : maps in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1731-54" (in *Imago Mundi*, 1984). I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Reitan for his further review of the topic, "Popular cartography and British imperialism : the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1739-1763" (Illinois State University, 1984), which was delivered at the 1984 meetings of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

²³ Carlson, *First magazine*, op. cit.

²⁴ One need only peruse copies of the various popular magazines for illustrations of this attitude. An example, included in the January 1755 issue of the *London Magazine*, is entitled "The British Bucks," with "words and music by a True Briton"; it features a florid musical line, and four stanzas of lyric intended to incite a properly martial feeling in all loyal British subjects.

²⁵ For an overview of cartographic activity during this time, see Tooley, *Mapping of America*, op. cit.; an illustrated overview can be found in Seymour I. Schwartz and Ralph E. Ehrenberg, *The mapping of America* (New York : H. N. Abrams, 1980).

²⁶ Robert de Vaugondy, Gilles. *Partie de l'Amerique septentrionale* (Paris? : s.n., 1755); Sieur Longchamps, *Carte des possessions Françaises et Angloises dans le Canada* (Paris : Longchamps, 1756).

²⁷ Jefferys, Thomas. *North America from the French of Mr. D'Anville improved with the back settlements of Virginia and Course of Ohio* (London : Jefferys, 1755).

²⁸ Herbert, William. *New and accurate map of the English empire in North America* (London : Herbert & Sayer, 1755).

²⁹ Huske, John. *The present state of North America, &c. —Part I* (London : printed for and sold by R. and J. Dodsley, 1755).

³⁰ Palairer, Jean. *Carte des possessions angloises et françoises du continent de l'Amerique septentrionale* (London : s.n., 1755). The map is accompanied by a 62-p. text, *Description abrégée des possessions angloises et françoises du continent septentrional de l'Amerique, pour servir d'explication à la carte publiée sous ce même titre* (London : J. Nourse et al., 1755).

³¹ Mitchell, John. *Map of the British and French dominions in North America with the roads, distances, limits and extent of the settlements; humbly inscribed to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Halifax . . .* (London : A. Millar, 1755).

³² What concrete evidence there is for Mitchell's early life, and for his later acquaintances and friendships, has been painstakingly gathered and published in Berkeley, *Dr. John Mitchell*, op. cit.

³³ A full discussion of the bibliographic history of the Mitchell map, and a summary of its importance to North American cartography, can be found in Walter W. Ristow, ed., *A la Carte : selected papers on maps and atlases* (Washington, D.C. : Library of Congress, 1972). Schwartz and Ehrenberg, *Mapping of America*, op. cit., also provide a useful discussion of the Mitchell map's place in North American cartographic history.

³⁴ *Mémoire contenant les précis des faits, avec leurs pièces justificatives* (Paris : suivie la copie de l'Imprimerie Royale, 1756) was published by the French government as a justification of the war, and included various documents supporting its contentions; it was published in translation in England under the title *A memorial, containing a summary view of facts, with their authorities . . .* (London : W. Bizet, 1757; also Philadelphia : printed by James Chatten, 1757).

³⁵ For instance, *The conduct of the ministry impartially examined : in a letter to the merchants of London* (London : printed for S. Bladon, 1756) attacked the British ministry's settlement attempts as particularly injurious to the merchant class of London. This work was soon responded to by Shebbeare's *Answer to a pamphlet called, The conduct of the ministry impartially examined* (London : printed for M. Cooper, 1756). Shebbeare's series of pamphlets known as "letters to the people of England" defended his views and attacked those with whom he disagreed; these were generally answered by other, unidentified authors, in a lively running interchange.

³⁶ Mitchell, John. *The contest in America between Great Britain and France, with its consequences and importance . . .* (London : printed for A. Millar, 1757). I wish to thank Dr. Bernard Friedman, Department of History, Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis, for his useful summary of Mitchell's publishing activities, "John Mitchell, map-maker and imperial strategist : looking ahead to our northern boundary" (address delivered at the Indiana Historical Society, 6 November 1983).

³⁷ *Proposals for uniting the English colonies on the continent of America, so as to enable them to act with force and vigour against their enemies* (London : printed for J. Wilkie, 1757).

³⁸ Young, Arthur. *The theatre of the present war in North America, with candid reflections on the great importance of the war in that part of the world* (London : printed for J. Coote, 1758).

³⁹ Smith, William. *A brief state of the province of Pennsylvania . . .* (London : R. Griffiths, 1755).

⁴⁰ *An historical memorial of the negotiation of France and England . . .* (London : D. Wilson, T. Becket and P.A. DeHondt, 1761); translation of Etienne Francois, duc de Choiseul-Stainville, *Memoire historique sur la negociation de la France & de l'Angleterre . . .* (Paris : Imprimerie royale, 1761).

⁴¹ *Remarks upon the Historical memorial published by the court of France, in a letter to the Earl of Temple* (London : printed for G. Woodfall and G. Kearsly, 1761).

⁴² Unprejudiced observer. *Letter to a great m---r, on the prospect of a peace : wherein the demolition of the fortifications of Louisbourg is shewn to be absurd, the importance of Canada fully refuted, the proper*

barrier pointed out in North America, and the reasonableness and necessity of retaining the French sugar islands . . . (London : printed for G. Kearsly, 1761).

⁴³ Treaty of Paris (1763). *Definitive treaty of peace and friendship between His Britanick Majesty, the most Christian king, and the king of Spain, concluded at Paris, the 10th day of February, 1763 . . .* (London : printed by E. Owen and T. Harrison, 1763).

⁴⁴ Whether the Mississippi Valley justified increased settlement activities, as discussed in *The expedience of securing our American colonies by settling the country adjoining the River Mississippi, and the country upon the Ohio, considered* (Edinburgh : s.n., 1763), or whether such a vast area could be adequately defended, as discussed in *Some hints to people in power, on the present melancholy situation of our colonies in North America* (London : printed for J. Hinxman, 1763), were questions that were quickly raised. The real costs of defending and administering the newly acquired western reaches of the English empire in North America could hardly be assessed, though some observers predicted that these costs would be enormous. *Reflexions sur une question importante proposee au public . . .* (London : s.n., 1768) continued in this vein, with the wisdom of the Canadian acquisition at the heart of the discussion.



Mobilizing for War: Logistics and the British War Effort in the West, 1775-1783

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In the spring of 1777, Lord George Germain directed Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton at Detroit "to assemble as many of the Indians of his district as he conveniently can."¹ It was Germain's intention "to divide the attention of the Rebels and oblige them to collect a considerable force" to defend their western settlements. Germain assumed that attacks on the frontier "cannot fail of weakening their main army,"² and might even roll the Westerners back onto the already limited resources of the East. After two years of hesitation, the British and their Indian allies were going on the offensive in the West.

As Arthur Bowler states, "in none of these intended roles was the northern force notably successful."³ The West would not be depopulated nor would refugee frontiersmen become a serious drain on the eastern war effort. In fact just the reverse would take place. American frontier population actually increased during the war, and it was Imperial resources which were strained virtually to the breaking point. Indian warriors, who formed the bulk of fighting strength in the interior, created seemingly endless demands on the British commissary. The government would never be able to overcome either the extreme difficulty or the enormous cost of fulfilling these demands.

A natural antipathy to the American agricultural frontier and the steady flow of manufactured goods from England

assured that most of the western tribes would support the Crown. Utilization of Indian allies, however, was a mixed blessing. Military commanders in North America and political leaders in England deplored the moral implications of 'unleashing' these "Hell Hounds of War," as Pitt called them. Little organized fighting had occurred in the West for two years largely because Canadian Governor Guy Carleton and many of his officers were reluctant to employ Indian raiders. Henry Hamilton was a more vocal advocate of using the Indians but, despite his reputation as the "Hair Buyer General," he continually encouraged them to spare civilians and prisoners by offering substantial rewards for "live meat." There was also common agreement among British officials everywhere that war parties should be led by "proper persons" (e.g. white officers) to help curb "barbarities."⁴

Eighteenth century European concepts of restrained and humane warfare were jarred in the wilderness. The very presence of whites with Indian war parties, whatever their justification, was sufficient to condemn the participants and those who sanctioned them. So too was Hamilton's practice of accepting scalps as evidence of the Indians' successes, and then supplying them with provisions and war material. Nor could the more pragmatic factors of cost be ignored. For a decade Whitehall had struggled to curtail expenses for frontier defense, and had finally done so in the early 1770's only by evacuating much of the interior. Expenditures still remained higher than desired, but on the eve of the Revolution annual costs for Indian supplies at Detroit were reduced to an average £150.⁵ Before the fighting ended both the financial and the moral costs of the western war would increase dramatically.

Immense quantities of ammunition, weapons, clothing, food and assorted "sundries" (the accepted euphemism for

liquor) were essential if the Indians were to participate actively in the fighting. The abundance of these items in turn served as a magnet drawing ever larger numbers of warriors to the British posts. At Detroit, Hamilton was cautioned to keep a close eye on expenses; but this was "not intended to limit you with regard to such as are absolutely necessary for putting your post in a proper state of defense, and for keeping the Indians in readiness."⁶ Such latitude released a veritable flood of expenditures which soon reached epidemic proportions.

The very nature of wilderness warfare dictated that its objectives must be limited. British forts at Oswego, Niagara, Detroit and Mackinack were intended primarily to protect the western flank of Canada. Unable or unwilling to commit significant forces of Regulars to this struggle, British strategy was restricted to harrassing raids which burnt crops and attacked isolated settlements. Large scale assaults against the admittedly vulnerable American frontier would only create additional expense and accumulate more prisoners to feed, with little result in return. As an estimated 5,000 persons (including Indian warriors and their dependents, prisoners, refugees, soldiers, Indian Department officers, and other government officials) were already being supplied at Detroit alone, the government insisted that every effort must be made to "lessen it as much as possible."⁷

Mounting costs and the increasing difficulty of supplying their military forces would plague the British throughout the war. Despite optimistic hopes that provisions could be acquired in North America, this "proved from the beginning to be impossible."⁸ A hostile or at best apathetic populace, inadequate transportation, and the prevailing acceptance of limited war meant that the army would neither purchase sufficient supplies nor confiscate them by force. It consequently

became impossible to avoid the "enormous expense of shipping food from Europe."

This was even more true for the interior. Long and tenuous communications which stretched through the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence were closed from November to April. Bottlenecks at the St. Lawrence rapids and Niagara, and poorly constructed storage depots at Carleton Island, Niagara and at the posts themselves caused inordinate delays and considerable damage to merchandise. Even when shipments could get through, provisions from Quebec alone were of inadequate quantity and quality to provide for both the Canadian and western military establishments. Nor could the small settlements of subsistence farmers clustered around the western forts provide immediate support. Every difficulty encountered in supplying the armies in the East was compounded by the particular circumstances of a wilderness environment.⁹

One obvious method to cut costs and increase available food-stuffs would be to stimulate local production. But the western outposts were ill-prepared for the increased demands of a rapidly escalating military effort. For a century observers had noted the advantageous climate and fertile soil of the lower Lakes region. Following the British occupation in 1760, western farmers and merchants provided corn, locally milled flour and other home-grown necessities for the fur brigades travelling further west. During Pontiac's siege in 1763 provisions from Niagara kept Detroit well stocked, while shipments from the Straits on more than one occasion saved the settlement at Mackinack from virtual starvation. But any potential for agricultural expansion in the West was nullified by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and by prohibitions on private purchase of Indian lands.¹⁰ Throughout the period of British control, Detroit and the other posts in the Lakes coun-

try remained populated by Canadian Habitants and a thin veneer of British merchants wedded to the fur trade.

Western productivity was also limited by the government's decision to avoid local purchases whenever possible. This attitude dated from the Indian uprising of 1763 when the British suspected (but never proved) widespread complicity by the Canadian population. Reluctant to trust the supply of vital foodstuffs to a potentially hostile populace, and unwilling to overwhelm the resident Canadians with an influx of British settlers, the military government simply ignored western farmers. For a decade prior to 1775, provisions for the West were imported from Canada, New York, or England. Merchants continued to buy the small surpluses accumulated by individual farmers to supply the fur brigades or in time of crisis provide emergency rations for the garrison. These purchases, however, were always ad hoc arrangements and post commandants invariably were criticized by commanding officers for making them.

Local purchases continued to be discouraged even after fighting began, but demand was such that the erratic supply system simply could not cope. Commandants never knew when a war party might suddenly appear. When they did come the Indians demanded instant gratification, otherwise, as Haldimand was warned, "we must give them up to the enemy."¹¹ Indian warriors could either hunt game or raid American settlements, but not both. If they were to fight they must be supplied with virtually every necessity from arms and ammunition, to clothing and food; and the British must find some way to stockpile these and many other items at the western forts.

Contracts for provisions were made in England on the basis of a stipulated number of rations for a specific cost. These estimates were made a full year in advance to allow

for acquisition and transport to North America. Along with normal requirements for the garrison, commandants must predict the potential number of Indians to be supplied and anticipate unexpected calamities (as when Detroit's storehouse collapsed). The potential for miscalculation of such estimates, added to allowances for spoilage, loss and delay (a flat 25% was considered normal for wastage) ensured occasional shortages would almost certainly occur. In fact, both Bowler and Curtis suggest that even in the Eastern command conditions of adequate supply were unusual, and each notes numerous campaigns which were frustrated by logistical failure.¹² In the West, shortages were less noticeable only because of the nature of wilderness warfare. When supplies were not available the Indians merely returned to their villages and no raids were launched.

Although local herds were small, mills for grinding grain scarce, yields poor and farming techniques lax, the government had no recourse but to rely on whatever sources might be available. The same was true for needed services and skills. Carpentry work, blacksmithing, a supply of firewood or picketing for stockades, and a multitude of other small items were required, particularly when it was decided to construct new forts at Mackinack and Detroit. Officials might lament the enormous expense of local materials, but nonetheless some means must be found to marshal whatever resources might be available.

In most instances it was the local mercantile community which accumulated material and expertise, coordinated the allocation of supplies, or imported manufactured goods for the Indians. Much of this was accomplished by adapting the practices already established with the fur trade. For a decade and a half, western merchants had relied on firms in Montreal, Quebec and England to handle the packaging, ship-

ping, insurance, storage, sale of furs and purchase of manufactured goods on a commission basis. As this procedure was almost entirely a credit operation, it was essential for merchants to maintain a secure business reputation.¹³ Long-standing accounts of substantial amounts were often secured by little more than the individual contacts and friendship of the debtor. This was a difficult enterprise for newcomers to penetrate once such a pattern of personal relationships was established.

A switch from the fur trade to requirements of the war-time government proved to be a simple transition. In fact, much of the merchandise utilized in each instance was identical as it was meant for the same purpose: to supply the Indians with the material benefits of the Industrial Revolution. Steel knives and hatchets, rifles and shot, wampum, clothing, food and trinkets were highly adaptable. They could be provided to the Indians for the acquisition of furs or for hunting Americans.

For the merchants, the only difference after 1775 was that payment was received in the form of drafts drawn on the government rather than in furs to be sold on the international market. To some extent this proved to be a safer and more secure trade. At least the value of the government's drafts did not vary from one season to another as did the highly volatile fur markets. But the hazards of trade with the government were also quite real. Political disputes or changes in official policy could mean a delay of months or even years before drafts would be honored. In particular dispute during the early years of the war were the "enormous" expenditures of Lieutenant Governors Edward Abbott at Vincennes and Patrick Sinclair at Mackinack,¹⁴ and the merchants were caught in the middle.

In May 1777, insiders in Montreal were advising "our

upper country friends that no future drafts of the Governor's (Abbott) will be paid."¹⁵ Several years later, Sinclair's decision to construct a new fort, at a cost in excess of \$100,000 was disputed. Many of the drafts he drew on the local community were also disallowed. Eventually both Abbott and Sinclair were recalled for an investigation of their accounts, many of which were never paid, and a number of merchants were ruined. Fortunately for those engaged in the trade at Detroit, such was not the case there. While some of Henry Hamilton's accounts were questioned, his capture by George Rogers Clark and the apparent danger this posed to Detroit outweighed any hesitation to honor bills presented by subsequent commanding officers.

In an effort to regularize the method of financing the wilderness war, in 1778 Governor Haldimand printed bills of exchange to be used in payment for supplies and services at the western posts. Drawn at 60 days and payable in New York Currency (the prevailing medium in the interior), bills were to be sent by commandants to Paymaster Dunn at Quebec for approval and payment. Although administrative departments and even individual officers could contract with local merchants, farmers and workmen when required, final responsibility for all expenses remained with post commanders.¹⁶

It was impractical for subsistence farmers, workmen or traders with few financial contacts outside the community to exchange government drafts. Bills of exchange might act as a type of local currency, but more often small-scale producers preferred to sell directly to the larger mercantile houses at the posts which acted as the government's agents. These firms, in turn, sent bills honored by the paymaster to London. These were applied against further purchases in much the same way as furs were sent and trade goods ordered.

Despite a constant irritation with the merchant's desire for profits, it was more efficient for the military to deal with a few middlemen than with a multitude of individual suppliers. This tendency invariably led to charges of favoritism and collusion between officers and favored merchants. Certainly some fraud did exist, but the domination of a few firms was endemic to the system of procurement. The decision to utilize bills of exchange in lieu of specie, and continued reluctance to encourage local purchases (which would bring more producers and middlemen into service) contributed directly to the concentration of public accounts with a select number of merchants at each post. Just as the fur trade became focused on those with close personal contacts in North America and England, so too did the government supply business tend to flow in the same direction.

Western merchants were caught in a classic dilemma. Criticized by their neighbors and competitors for gaining special favors from the government, they were in turn condemned by the military for greed and avarice in raising prices and monopolizing trade. The war already had disrupted normal economic activity to the point where "the (Indian) trade of the country in its present bounded state is scarce worth continuing."¹⁷ Yet anyone who abandoned his wilderness commerce endangered losing his contacts, employees and above all the sums owed by his current customers. With capital tied up in the form of debts owed by the Indians, or sunk into the purchase of more trade goods in England, the fur merchants were trapped in a spiralling pattern of debt.

Private interest, however, might be of public benefit. A continuation of their fur trading would keep the Indians dependent on England, and private suppliers could help fulfill the warrior's demands which otherwise must come from the government. But Haldimand insisted that "great caution be

observed as to what merchants' effects, particularly ammunition, be permitted to pass" into the Indian country.¹⁸ Wilderness trade depots might invite American attack, and there was always the prospect of unscrupulous traders "sliding" goods to the Rebels for a tidy profit.

In anticipation of just such an eventuality, stringent restrictions were placed on wilderness travel. Passes were required, for which an oath of allegiance must be given; only boatmen were allowed to accompany traders westward; passes must be produced at each military post before the party could continue; all trade regulations (which covered weights and measures, prices and quantities of liquor and weapons) must be observed; a bond must be posted guaranteeing good behavior. Individual passes were limited to a six-month duration and traders were strictly forbidden to enter Indian councils or deliver belts. Goods sent into the wilderness without authorization were confiscated.¹⁹

Prospects of illicit trade also prompted a severe limitation of private shipping. As early as 1778, Haldimand remarked that,

at a time when the natural trade must necessarily diminish from the Indians being employed in war, it created suspicions that means were found to convey supplies wanted by the Rebels into their country. The inconsiderable number of troops . . . rendered it imprudent to risk the large quantities of goods which the clamor of the merchants obliged me to send up.²⁰

Haldimand's response was to ban all private vessels from the Lakes "so that there might not be the smallest temptation to carry them into alien states"; as all transport was limited to the King's vessels or those appropriated from private owners, shipping available on the Lakes was reduced to 350 tons.²¹ Military requirements naturally took precedence and

the already weakened fur trade was further curtailed for lack of merchandise.

But for the moment the war could provide a temporary boost to the western economy. After 1779, Hamilton's capture by Clark, the recall of Abbott from Vincennes, and Carleton's departure as Governor helped relax political tensions. Within the year the appointment of Major Arent de Peyster at Detroit as de facto military commander west of Niagara, and the arrival of Frederick Haldimand as Governor of Canada helped revitalize British leadership.

It was imperative that the British act if they were to nullify the losses suffered by Sullivan's campaign against the Iroquois or by Clark's success along the lower Wabash and in Illinois. In response, Haldimand and de Peyster planned a two-pronged assault for 1780. One wing would operate from Mackinack against Illinois and Spanish St. Louis to cut Clark from his western supply lines, while a second attack launched from Detroit against the major settlements in Kentucky would isolate Clark from the east. Haldimand was optimistic that the new offensive would revive British prestige among the Indians, as "we are much dependent on their steadiness at this 'interesting period.'" ²²

He was to be greatly disappointed. The raid from Mackinack was halted outside St. Louis and degenerated into an assault on the surrounding countryside. This was carried out with "most unheard of barbarity," intensified as the Spanish charged, by "the fury of these barbarians animated by the English."²³ Nor was the move against Kentucky much more successful. In an effort to compel the Indians to forage for supplies, the expedition was given no provisions. Almost 900 Indians and whites, armed with cannon and accompanied by Regulars, crossed the Ohio where they destroyed Ruddle's and Martin's Stations. At this point the Indians promptly kill-

ed all the cattle captured at the two stations, leaving the force without a food supply. Laden with booty and captives, the group buried its cannon and retreated to Detroit.

Haldimand was furious. Already the huge sums spent on the Indians were causing him to ponder "their fatal consequences to the nation," and he wondered how much longer Parliament would agree to sanction such expense.²⁴ It was time to return to "an alert defense," and he urged an "unremitting economy of provisions" which were so difficult to acquire and transport; "the frequency of these amazing demands is a matter of very serious concern to me knowing how ill they are received at home and how trifling the services that can be urged in support of them."²⁵ It was not only the public treasury which suffered. Troops stationed in the West were also caught in the price squeeze and could no longer afford the "little things of comfort they would otherwise enjoy."²⁶

No matter how great the disillusionment, it would be diplomatically unwise and militarily dangerous to renounce Britain's alliance with the tribes, whose wrath might instead be turned against the British if supplies or assistance were curtailed too sharply. De Peyster agreed that "cruelties alone would be the result" of renewed attacks, and he accepted that any advantages gained from them probably cost more than they were worth. But some raiding was necessary, if only to keep the Indians occupied and the Americans on the defensive. He too was exasperated, however, with the Indians who so quickly forgot "past favors."²⁷ In an effort to limit the expense of provisions, de Peyster off-handedly noted that "the worst has mostly been reserved for them."

As the wilderness war bogged down in stalemate, the Indians were told that the war had been long and the King had many children to support; they must therefore be content with only basic necessities in the future. Officers in the

Indian Department were instructed to keep the warriors in the field, and away from the Storehouses at the forts.²⁸ Supplies would be forwarded to wilderness depots for distribution.

Already committed to sending provisions for the West from Canada or England to avoid local purchases, Haldimand now decided that "the exorbitant charges of the merchants at the posts have determined me to send up supplies for the Indians from hence."²⁹ This policy was to be all-inclusive: "I hope you will have no occasion or will be able to avoid purchasing any more goods, particularly rum . . . even if supply runs out." If that happened, officers should explain that the British merely were agreeing to the oft-requested prohibition of liquor made by the chiefs themselves. Western commanders were not told what to say when shipments of rum once more began arriving and the flow was suddenly turned on again.

If Haldimand assumed that his new program would eliminate charges from the West, he was sadly mistaken. Reacting to a sheaf of bills amounting to £17,000 sent from Detroit in May 1782, he dryly noted that his orders must not have reached de Peyster in time. It must be recognized, he lectured, that both the traders and the Indians "Will not fail to meet with every difficulty they can mutually throw" into the way of embargo's implementation.³⁰ Haldimand's irritation was not soothed by the subsequent arrival of bills amounting to £65,000 in July, nor by the £25,300 in drafts payable to Detroit merchants alone presented in mid-1783, a full two years after such expenditures presumably had been prohibited.

The Canadian Governor had taken the conventional way out by blaming the mercantile community for what was essentially a military and political decision to supply the Indians with whatever they demanded. But his view also reflected a persistent disdain held by officers for traders.³¹ The military

might agree in public that it was fighting to retain the interior for economic advantage (that is the fur trade), however much that argument was political rhetoric. Parliament had to be convinced that the tremendous expenses lavished on the Western Theatre were for some tangible benefit, and there was a general consensus that commerce should be protected. To the military government in North America, fear of Indian retaliation and a desire to keep the Americans away from Canada and the Great Lakes communications network were far more immediate considerations. Moreover, the long term economic advantage to the Mother Country of the wilderness trade conflicted with the daily necessity of having to deal with individual merchants — trade might be fine if it were not for the traders.

An end to the fighting in 1783 suggested a release from the government's financial burden and a return to normal economic activity in the interior. In fact neither occurred. The fur trade continued to be disrupted by British retention of the western posts in defiance of the peace treaty, and by renewed Indian warfare along the American frontier. Indian warriors were still supplied at British posts along the Lakes, while western farmers and merchants were still used, albeit reluctantly, to provide for the government's immediate needs. In short, little had changed: nor would it until yet another western war was concluded in 1815.

The war years were a curious blend of success, stalemate, and disappointment for the British in the Lakes Country. At the outbreak of hostilities, offers of land at the western posts were made to anyone supporting the Crown. Refugee loyalists and captives taken in raids against the American frontier readily accepted — but the offer was quickly rescinded.³² Neither the military government in Canada nor the North Ministry were willing to risk alienating the Indians by pro-

moting even such limited settlement; nor was anyone anxious to underwrite the considerable costs involved. Prisoners and Loyalists alike were shipped to Canada for repatriation or resettlement in the East.

Unwilling to trust either the loyalty of the Canadian Habitant or the honesty of the resident British merchants, the government also refused to encourage, or even utilize, local resources on a regular basis. As a result the western economy remained tied to the narrow-based fur trade and subsistence agriculture, and the military was never able to establish a reasonably priced or consistent source of supply.

At first reluctant to 'unleash' the unrestrained ferocity of their Indian allies, the British eventually became equally disenchanted with the military effectiveness of the warriors. By 1781, Haldimand was convinced that they were actually trying to prolong the war so they could "live in indolence" at British expense, an attitude he felt was encouraged by the "grasping traders."³³ Trapped in a wilderness war they hoped to avoid, the British allocated too few resources to achieve a decisive result and they expended too many to justify the meager advantages gained. The costs, in treasure and in spirit, had become excessive.

NOTES

¹ Carleton to Germain, March 28, 1777, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (MHC), IX, 347; see R. Arthur Bowler, *Logistics and the Failure of the British Army in America* (Princeton, 1975), 29.

² Quoted in Bowler, *Logistics*, 230.

³ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁴ Germain to Carleton, March 28, 1777, MHC, IX, 347; see also John D. Barnhard (ed.) *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the Revolution* (Crawfordsville, 1951), 21, 27-28, 30; N.V. Russell, "Indian Policy of Henry Hamilton; A Reappraisal," *Canadian Historical Review*, XI, 20-37.

⁵ Estimate of Expenses at the Western Posts, June 16, 1775, Otto Fisher Papers, Burton Historical Collections, Detroit Public Library (BHC); Hamilton to Carleton, September 4, 1776, *Ibid.* For concepts of eighteenth-century warfare see John Neff, *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (New York, 1963); Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism; Civilian and Military* (New York, 1967).

⁶ Carleton to Hamilton, October 6, 1776, MHC, IX, 344; Hamilton to Carleton, September 4, 1776, Fisher Papers, BHC; Lieutenant Brehm to Haldimand, July 8, 1779, MHC, IX, 416; Haldimand to Captain Lernoult, July 23, 1779, MHC, X, 345. Supplies of rum issued at Detroit for 1778 totaled 17,500 gallons (60 gallons per day), compared to total issues of 10,000 gallons at Niagara. Curtis says rum was dispensed without "ration or reason," E.E. Curtis, *Organization of the British Army in the American Revolution*, (New Haven, 1926), 92.

⁷ The Niagara situation is covered by Bruce Wilson, "The Struggle for Wealth and Power at Fort Niagara, *Ontario History*," (Dec. 1976), 137-55.

⁸ Bowler, *Logistics*, 231, 48, 92; Curtis refers to the "clumsy and antiquated machinery" of army administration, *Organization*, 50; see Ch. IV, "Provisioning the Army."

⁹ Bowler, *Logistics*, 232; Memorial concerning the Inland Trade, nd, MHC, X, 272; see also James Andrew to William Edgar June 22, 1775, and James Bannerman to Edgar, May 20, 1777, William Edgar Papers, BHC.

¹⁰ For British policy see Jack Sosin, *Whitehall and Wilderness*, (Lincoln, 1961) Hilda Neatby, Quebec, *The Revolutionary Age, 1760-91* (Toronto, 1966).

¹¹ Haldimand to Hamilton, October 7, 1778, *MHC*, IX, 405; Haldimand to Germain, September 25, 1779, *Ibid.*, X, 361; De Peyster to Haldimand, November 3, 1781, *Ibid.*, X, 536.

¹² Curtis, *Organization*, 85, 93, 103; Bowler, *Logistics*, 218; Haldimand to Upper Country Commandants, May 6, 1782, *MHC*, X, 573; Lt. Brehm to Haldimand, July 27, 1779, *Ibid.*, X, 420.

¹³ For general studies of the western fur trade see Murray Lawson *Fur; A Study in Mercantilism* (Toronto, 1942); Harold Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto, 1930).

¹⁴ Haldimand to De Peyster, February 12, 1780, *MHC*, X, 377: Following the Quebec Act of 1774, Lieutenant Governors were appointed for Detroit, Mackinack and Vincennes to establish civil government. These functions were negated by the declaration of martial law in 1775 and the role of these officials remained ambiguous. See Jack Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier* (New York, 1967); N. V. Russell, "Governmental Organization in Michigan, 1760-1787," *Michigan History*, XXIII, 99-100.

¹⁵ Todd and McGill to Edgar, May 15, 1777, Edgar Papers, *BHC*; see Hamilton to Edgar, September 5, 1777, and Edward Abbott to Edgar, August, 6, 1777, *Ibid.*; For Sinclair see Haldimand to Sinclair, November 2, 1782, *MHC*, X, 672; N. V. Russell, *British Regime in Michigan and the Northwest* (Northfield, Minn., 1939).

¹⁶ For charges of favoritism see Todd and McGill to Edgar, November 6, 1777, Edgar Papers, *BHC*; Hamilton's order to Macomb and Lyons, September 14, 1776, Fischer Papers, *BHC*; De Peyster to Haldimand, *MHC*, X, 375; Hamilton to Haldimand, April 26, 1777, *Ibid.*, 467.

¹⁷ Macomb, Edgar and Macomb to A. Ellice, June 5, 1781, Macomb, Edgar and Macomb Letterbooks, *BHC*; for patterns of the western trade see Macomb, Edgar and Macomb to Ellice, September 6, 1781, *Ibid.*; A. F. Tyler, "British Fur Trade from Lake Michigan West Between 1775-1780," *MSS in Minnesota Historical Society*; I. Johnson, *Michigan Fur Trade* (Ann Arbor, 1919); Donald Creighton, *Empire of the St. Lawrence* (Toronto, 1956).

¹⁸ Sinclair to Haldimand, February 15, 1779, *Canadian Archives Report* (1890), 142; De Peyster to Carleton, June 29, 1778, *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, XI, 3; Haldimand to General Clinton, January 31, 1780, *MHC* XXI, 496-99.

¹⁹ Trade Regulations for 1782, *MHC*, X, 622; Haldimand to De Peyster May 6, 1774, *Ibid.*, 357; Haldimand to De Peyster, June 14, 1779, *Ibid.*, 360.

²⁰ Quoted in Innis, *Fur Trade*, 181; see E. Foy to Hamilton, nd, *MHC*, IX, 395; Carleton to Haldimand, May 27, 1777 and July 2, 1777, *Ibid.*, 348.

²¹ Innis, *Fur Trade*, 183, 220; see Johnson, *Michigan Fur Trade*, 75; Creighton, *Empire*, 71; Memorial Concerning In and Navigation, nd, *MHC*, X, 272.

²² Haldimand to De Peyster, February 12, 1780, *MHC*, X, 377; Haldimand to Secretary Robinson, July 28, 1776, *Ibid.*, 290.

²³ De Leyba to Governor de Cabe 3, June 8, 1780 and June 20, 1780 in George Hammond (ed.), *New Spain and the Anglo-American West*, (Los Angeles, 1932), 243, 252.

²⁴ Haldimand to De Peyster, August 10, 1780, *MHC*, X, 416; Haldimand to De Peyster, May 8, 1780, *Ibid.*, IX, 635.

²⁵ Haldimand to De Peyster, April 10, 1781, *MHC*, X, 465; Sosin, *Revolutionary Frontier*, 105.

²⁶ Haldimand to Germain, October 25, 1780, *MHC*, -X, 440; Haldimand to De Peyster, July 3, 1779, *Ibid.*, 261; Haldimand to De Peyster January 1, 1781, *Ibid.*, 534.

²⁷ De Peyster to Haldimand, June 14, 1779, *Ibid.*, IX, 541; and January 26, 1782, *Ibid.*, X, 546. See also Bernard Sheehan, "The Famous Hair Buyer General: Henry Hamilton, George Rogers Clark and the American Indian," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXIX, (March, 1983), 1-29.

²⁸ Indian Council at Detroit, November 9, 1711, *MHC*, X, 541; De Peyster to McKee, October 4, 1781, *Ibid.*, 522.

²⁹ Haldimand to De Peyster, April 20, 1781, *Ibid.*, X, 471; Haldimand to Upper Country Commandants, May 5, 1782, *Ibid.*, X, 572; Haldimand to De Peyster, June 24, 1781, *Ibid.*, 491.

³⁰ Haldimand to De Peyster, May 19, 1782, *Ibid.*, X, 578; De Peyster to Haldimand, September 12, 1781, *Ibid.*, 508; see Macomb, Edgar and Macomb to Ellice, January 10, 1783, MEM Letterbook, BHC. De Peyster disagreed with Haldimand's decision to curtail all local purchases. He was an exception to the general hostility of the military toward commerce, noting that "I have ever made it my study to promote the trade of this post" (referring at that time to Mackinack), De Peyster, *Miscellanies of an Officer*, (Dumfries, 1813), 2-6.

³¹ Bowler, *Logistics*, 27; see Charles Grant report on Trade, April 24, 1780, *MHC*, XIX, 508; Haldimand to Germain, October 25, 1780, Canadian Archives Relating to Detroit, BHC; Mr. Foy to Carleton, March 10, 1778, *MHC*, X, 281.

³² Germain to Carleton, March 28, 1777, *MHC*, IX, 347.

³³ Haldimand to De Peyster, May 8, 1780, *Ibid.*, 634; see also Jack Sosin, "The Use of Indians in the American Revolution: A Re-Assessment," *Canadian Historical Review*, XLIV (June, 1965), 101-21; S. F. Wise, "The American Revolution and Indian History," in John Moir (ed.), *Character and Circumstance*, (Toronto, 1970), 182-201.



Redcoats on the Frontier:

The King's Regiment in the Revolutionary War

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Lurking in the shadows behind some of the bloodiest conflicts — and atrocities — of the western frontier during the American Revolution, one could often find members of the King's/or 8th/Regiment of Foot. Although primarily on garrison duty in Canada, detachments of the 8th frequently served with Indians and Loyalists on raids against various rebel positions in the hinterlands. For anyone familiar with the traditional, stereotyped image of the polished 18th century British soldier crisply marching shoulder to shoulder with his resplendent comrades as they lined up in European battle fashion to face their foes, the question arises: what were those men of the 8th Regiment — members of one of the oldest regiments in the British army¹ — doing running around the wilderness in the company of "Savages" and "Tories" engaged in the often distasteful business of frontier warfare?

The fact is the stereotyped Redcoat of the Revolutionary War was just that, a stereotype. Although there were units of the British army that fit the image, the true nature of a regiment depended largely on the circumstances its men, women, and officers found themselves under. Operating under circumstances perhaps more alien to this stereotype than any other unit of British regulars was the King's/or 8th/Regiment of Foot.

Generally, in the 18th century, British army units stationed at home or on the continent could anticipate rotation every year or two, while units stationed overseas could look forward to being neglected or forgotten at their distant posts

(one regiment, the 38th, ended up rotting in the West Indies for 50 years before relief!).² Such was to be the case of the 8th. In 1767, the King's Regiment was gathered at Dover Castle, where they were probably employed in anti-smuggling duty while awaiting transport to Canada as replacement for the 15th of Foot (which had been withering in North America for ten years). In 1768, the awaited rotation occurred; the 32 officers, 27 sergeants, 407 rank and file (not including 15 sick who may not have left at that point), and an unknown number of wives (probably the relatively standard 6 per company, or 60 total³ sailed for Canada, 19 men short of their Establishment figure of 500.⁴ The Regiment would not set foot on homeground again for 17 years.

For six years, the soldiers of the King's Regiment settled in to garrisoning various posts in and around Quebec and Montreal. Then, in 1774, the 8th was reassigned, but not to the hoped-for homeland; the Regiment was moved deep into the wilderness to garrison the forts of the "Upper Country" of Canada, occupying posts along the upper St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes (largely in rotation of the 10th Regiment).

Each regiment of the British army consisted of somewhere around 500 men and officers (though the number varied considerably according to circumstances) who were divided into ten companies: eight Center (or "Battalion") companies, a Light company (usually consisting of the smaller, more agile men), and a Grenadier company (often composed of the larger men in a unit; in previous times, they had been issued hand grenades, although the practice had been largely abandoned by the Revolution). When the King's Regiment took its posts along the Canadian frontier, the companies were dispersed according to the traditional order of battle: Light Company on the left, Grenadiers on the right, and Battalion

companies between.

On the left of the "line," the 8th's Light Company manned the eastern-most of the Upper Canada (or Lakes) posts: *Oswegatchie* on the southern bank of the St. Lawrence River (near the present town of Massena, N.Y.). Capt. George Forster commanded.⁵ At the western end of Lake Ontario (at the mouth of the Niagara River) lay exceedingly large *Fort Niagara*, the key to all trade in the western Great Lakes. This post became home for four Battalion companies of the 8th — less than 200 men — under the command of Lt. Col. John Caldwell.⁶ Further west, the fort at the French settlement of *Detroit* was manned by three Battalion companies of the King's Regiment, Capt. Richard B. Lernoult commanding.⁷ While Niagara may have been the key to western trade, Detroit was the weak link. Controlling access to the lakes beyond, Detroit formed the neck through which all trade goods and supplies — the lifeblood of commerce — flowed. Stopping British trade in the west (thus undermining British influence in the area) by cutting this neck was on the minds of many Americans, including the famous George Rogers Clark. Detroit — a spot seemingly far removed from the War and all its dangers — was in the hot seat. The westernmost British garrison — the far right of the line — was *Fort Michilimackinac*, the dropping off place for British civilization in the west. One Battalion company and the Grenadier company of the 8th occupied this post where lakes Michigan and Huron met. The Michilimackinac garrison found itself at the very end of a tenuous supply line stretching (thinly) eastward all the way back to England. Watching over this post — and several ungarrisoned centers of trade beyond his back door — was Capt. Arent Schuyler DePeyster of the King's Regiment.⁸

For years, the English had maintained the Upper posts

to keep the fur trade running smoothly, while at the same time keeping the territory's Indian and French populations within the British sphere of influence. With the start of the American Revolution in 1775 came the additional function for these posts to serve as hubs of warfare amidst thousands of square miles of wilderness. In effect, fewer than 500 regulars — the King's Regiment — were to defend the entire area north of the Ohio from the Mississippi River eastward to the Adirondack Mountains. Fortunately for the men of the King's Regiment, they were not the entire fighting force available to conduct the war on the frontier.

With the Revolution coming to what is now upstate New York, hundreds of displaced Loyalists and Indians fled before the storm to Ft. Niagara. Many of these white and red refugees were more than willing to fight to preserve their way of life. At the western post of Detroit, the British were able to call on the local French militias (which were a legacy from the days of French rule) for support. In addition, a great many Indians within the Detroit post's scope could be called on to fight, for they were more than a little disturbed by the floodgate of American expansion that the War had opened some distance to the south in Kentucky. Until the outbreak of rebellion, the Proclamation Line of 1763 had placated the Indians by prohibiting further white settlement west of the Appalachian mountains. But for many land-hungry Americans from the east, the advent of war erased the Proclamation Line, thereby making the Indian lands of Kentucky fair game for them, much to the anger of the Indians. At westernmost Michilimackinac, a growing number of Indians, who had become increasingly dependent on British subsidies of food and supplies, could be called on to help the English Father, as could a number of civilian whites whose interests lay in the continuation of British trade.

It is of note that the further west from the stronghold of Niagara a British post was, the less the reliance that could be placed on the support of the non-British inhabitants. The French-speaking frontier population still held resentment for English rule, and their support of the British cause was lackadaisical at best, an attitude that grew increasingly worse the further they were from the English centers of authority. Although the French of the Lakes area remained at least nominally pro-British, the French of the lower Illinois Territory (the "River" French) — some 600 miles from the British posts supposedly tending their needs — could be (and were) easily swayed when some more attractive alternative came along. Similarly, the Indians of the Illinois Territory lacked the enthusiasm of their eastern brothers. Although they could — and did — fight for the British, their support wasn't always there when it was most needed, just when most convenient.

As may be readily apparent, the key to British survival in the west was the cooperation of the non-British inhabitants, or at very least their neutrality. This cooperation was insured only through favorable trade and bountiful handouts at the western posts, which required an adequate yearly stockpile of goods and supplies be on hand at each post. Since local sources accounted for only some of the needed supplies, large quantities of provisions had to be shipped in. Not just food for the garrisons and the locals was necessary, but supplies for the Loyalist volunteers, their dependents, the refugees, and the Indians — thousands of Indians — that now flocked to the posts, enough to last through the harsh winters.^{9, 10, 11, 12} The situation required the continued free flow of trade goods from England to the remotest locations and back, despite the war, and that an adequate supply of presents be available to influence the Indians. Considering the shipping season of the Upper Posts was only six months long (followed by months

of devastating winter), it was a formidable task in good conditions. In wartime conditions, it was nearly impossible.

With the Revolution, shipping on the Lakes came under martial law. The men of the 8th Regiment found themselves heavily involved in the shipping industry, not just accounting for and guarding goods, but actually loading, unloading, packaging, and portaging all supplies many times before the goods arrived at their destinations. At times, even barracks space had to be pressed into service to store goods when the warehouses were filled.¹³ Most of the soldiers became adept at handling small craft and rowing bateaus, and many had the opportunity to learn sailing first-hand aboard the various sloops now serving His Majesty on the Lakes. Fortunately, their years in Canada had given them some exposure to such activities, and all was well as long as nothing upset the applecart.

The applecart was upset in the fall of 1775 when, in a bold move, General Richard Montgomery and a rebel army captured Montreal and, in doing so, severed the Upper Posts from the rest of Canada. This action, as well as Benedict Arnold's move on Quebec, sent shockwaves through the posts.^{14, 15, 16} The King's Regiment saw its first action of the Revolutionary War when Capt. Forster led the Light company of the 8th, many Loyalist volunteers, and 200 Indians towards an enemy position at The Cedars (just west of Montreal) in May 1776. The 400 Americans surrendered after token resistance, and a rebel relief column of 140 was destroyed the next day. With the spring came the arrival of new British forces into eastern Canada; the death of Montgomery and the wounding of Arnold at Quebec, coupled with a large English force sweeping up the St. Lawrence, prompted the American forces to return home. Although commerce with the Upper Posts was restored in July 1776, some of the

shipping season was lost, and the residual effects resulting from the closure of the route had long-lasting effects, not the least of which was the erosion of confidence in the British ability to serve and protect commerce — and subjects — on the frontier.¹⁷

One effect was of particular importance. Until the Cedars expedition, the Canadian military government refused to employ Indians in anything other than defensive operations and attempted to keep them peaceful. Even after this offensive, many leaders, including Loyalist John Butler, hoped to avoid unnecessary violence on the frontier by keeping the savages in check. However, orders received in Canada in May 1777 — the “Bloody Sevens” — served to cry “Havoc,” and let slip the dogs of war; Indians were to be employed offensively.¹⁸ Although it was expected that the Indians be led by persons who would restrain them from performing acts of barbarity, that was a near impossibility once the warriors worked themselves into battle frenzy! The reality of the situation was that the whites were along more to influence the Indians than to control them, since — once the fighting was at hand — the Indians did more or less as they pleased, and that was often very bloody business indeed.¹⁹

Throughout the remainder of the War, composition of major British raiding parties and expeditions against the frontier remained alike (with a few exceptions): a couple companies of Loyalists (usually the infamous Butler’s Rangers or Johnson’s Greens), a large contingent of Indian warriors, and a party from the 8th Regiment. In spite of being stuck at posts seemingly far removed from the conflict, detachments of the 8th somehow found themselves present in significant numbers at several large frontier actions, including:

The Cedars campaign, May 1776, as discussed earlier.
St. Leger’s expedition of August 1777. Intended to link

up with Burgoyne's ill-fated expedition down the Hudson, St. Leger's sizable army laid siege (unsuccessfully) to American-held Ft. Stanwix (at modern Rome, N.Y.) to clear his way down the Mohawk Valley. Along with one hundred soldiers of the 34th Regiment, one hundred men of the 8th from Niagara took part, a portion of which formed an advanced party under Lt. Bird. There is circumstantial evidence to indicate the latter was present in some capacity at the related Battle of Oriskany, either from the start or as relief later in the battle. Oriskany was perhaps the bloodiest American loss of the War, with some 400 rebels killed out of a force of 1000. After Oriskany, the Indian forces became disenchanted and went home. The siege of Ft. Stanwix had to be lifted as a result, and the troops returned to post.^{20, 21}

The Cherry Valley Massacre of November 1778. Fifty of Niagara's 8th Regiment, 150 Loyalists of Butler's Rangers, and over 300 Indians attacked a post garrisoned by Americans at Cherry Valley, New York. When the rebels in the small fort refused to surrender, the surrounding settlement was laid to waste in attempts to force their hand. Despite attempts of the white leaders to intervene, the Indians got out of hand, slaughtering and taking prisoner many women and children.²²

The Hamilton Expedition, Fall 1778, and the Battle of Vincennes, February 1779. In the fall of 1778, Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton, accompanied by a Detroit King's Regiment detachment of 35 rank and file and 2 sergeants, 2 Royal Artillery men, a force of Detroit French militia and volunteers, and a large body of Indians, moved on the French town of Vincennes (Vincennes, Indiana) to retake Ft. Sackville (the ungarrisoned post seized earlier that year by the American troops of George Rogers Clark) from what turned out to be two or three rebels holding it at the moment. In a bold move later that winter, Clark and some 170 rebels and French

habitants crossed the flooded Illinois Territory from their positions on the Mississippi and invested the fort. With the French townsfolk outside taking up arms against the fort, with the loyalties of the French “allies” inside becoming dangerously questionable, with ammo running low, and with a sizable number of the 8th Regiment wounded, Hamilton reluctantly had to surrender the post and its garrison, effectively ending this episode.²³

Raids on Fort Laurens, January-February 1779. Capt. Bird and 10 of the Detroit King's Regiment took up temporary residence among the Indians at Sandusky (Ohio) to organize raids against Fort Laurens (a rebel intrusion on the Tuscarawas River near the present town of Bolivar, Ohio). Although no record exists, it is possible at least some of the white force took part on the actual raid. The fort was surrounded by Indians for some time, and at least one party of some 19 rebels was caught and scalped in full view of the fort's garrison. The siege was lifted following Hamilton's capture at Vincennes.^{24, 25, 26}

Battle of Newtown, August 1779. Joining a force of some 600 Rangers and Indians marching towards the Susquehanna (near modern Elmira, N.Y.) were 14 enlisted men of the Niagara 8th. The force was seeking out — and found — a possible American column there that could (and did) pose a threat to allied Indian lands and even Niagara. After some successful but minor engagements, the British force found the main rebel force of General Sullivan which, unfortunately, numbered nearly 6000. After some spirited engagement, the British force was able to slip away in the face of total annihilation.²⁷

Attacks on Kentucky, June 1780. Capt. Bird and some 50 of the Detroit 8th garrison, a body of Detroit French militia, and some 600 Indians captured two of the principal

rebel settlements in Kentucky: Martin's Station and Ruddle's Station. Some 470 people were captured, many of whom were taken as prisoner to Detroit.^{28, 29}

Mohawk, and Schoharie Valley expedition, October 1780. Several hundred Indians, 150 Johnson's Greens, 200 Butler's Rangers, 80 of the 34th Regiment, and 150 troops of the 8th set out to destroy all rebel grain supplies and mills along the Mohawk and Schoharie Rivers of New York, and destroyed most of the rebel settlements in the area while they were at it. A hot pursuit of these raiders developed, and several engagements took place, with those at Stone Arabia (where the 8th lost what may well have been its only man killed in action during the war) and at Klock's Field (near Johnsville, N.Y.) being particularly intense. Losses were most severe on the American side, allowing the British forces to escape the region.³⁰

Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys, October 1781. A near repeat of the previous year, this expedition intended to hit rebel mills and sources of provisions missed in 1780. The force consisted of 36 men of the 8th from Ft. Niagara, 207 men of four regiments — most certainly including more 8th troops — from Carleton Island (a post in the St. Lawrence River at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, the King's Regiment garrison formerly at Oswagatchie having been moved to this post earlier), 169 Butler's Rangers, and 109 Indians. American forces in the area had been increased and were ready for the raiders. Although the raid deep into rebel territory succeeded, the retreat was precarious. Again, American losses exceeded British, but the raiders suffered heavier losses than usual, including Capt. Walter Butler (son of the Rangers founder and formerly an 8th Regiment officer).³¹

As may be noted, the expeditions listed above were launched out of the eastern Lakes posts, particularly Detroit

and Niagara. At Michilimackinac, the war years passed somewhat differently. Early in the war there were no direct threats to the post other than the weather (which in itself could be life threatening) and the interruptions in commerce caused by rebel activities on the St. Lawrence and on the ocean. When lulls in the hectic shipping season allowed, the King's Regiment garrison was kept busy repairing the Fort, tending the gardens, and moving sand dunes that built up outside.³² Orders from Canada in 1778 sent a work party consisting of Lt. Thomas Bennett and five others of the 8th, as well as seven French canoemen, to the Grand Portage on the northwest shore of Lake Superior, where they built a small fort, which was to be used by the Northwest Company for trade purposes. While there, the small force was also to conduct public relations work with the Indians. This party has the honor of having held the western-most outpost of the British army during the American Revolution.^{33, 34}

The sudden appearance of George Rogers Clark and his little army in the Illinois Country, their rapid power gains among the once British-aligned "River" French, and the capture of Lt. Gov. Hamilton were major traumas to both Ft. Michilimackinac and Ft. Lernoult (as the Detroit post had come to be known). At Michilimackinac, it was realized their post could fall without any shots being fired if Detroit — Clark's obvious goal — should fall.

Keeping track of an enemy that could pop up anywhere within a 700-mile radius posed a major problem. With Clark deliberately spreading false information amongst the French and the Indians (who were dubious reporters of the truth to begin with), separating fact from fiction was difficult, indeed, for the British commandants. In an intelligence gathering move, as well as an attempt to find a possible rebel advance, Lt. Bennett and twenty of the Michilimackinac 8th, with a

force of 60 French traders and some 200 Indians, took up position near the tiny community of French traders at St. Joseph (Niles, Michigan) in July 1779, where they threw up a defensive earthwork. No enemy ever showed. The Indians of the party (many of whom had been sent on reconnaissance to several distant villages) returned with no useful information, and they cooled considerably to the British cause when their rum supply had to be cut because of drunkenness. Completing the party's run of luck, an additional detachment from Michilimackinac, carrying needed supplies on their ship, failed to link up with them. The only goal really accomplished was the arrest of Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, the black trader now considered to have been the first citizen of Chicago. At the time, he was living at the south tip of Lake Michigan and was suspected of having rebel sympathies. He was taken as prisoner to Michilimackinac.^{35 36}

Mounting any sort of offensive against Clark from Michilimackinac was difficult because of the massive distances involved. Situations could change drastically by the time a force arrived at its destination. This fact was pointed out by attempts to gather Indians from around Lake Michigan to aid Hamilton in autumn 1778 and spring 1779. In both instances, the parties gelled too late to have been of assistance, the last group having traveled several hundred miles before learning of Hamilton's capture.

However, one grand offensive was mounted from Michilimackinac, although the 8th played a very minor role. In loose conjunction with Bird's 1780 Kentucky attack (from Detroit), a very large two-pronged assault was launched that spring from Michilimackinac against the Illinois Country French settlement of Cahokia and the Spanish town of Pain Court (St. Louis, Missouri) across the Mississippi (by this point, Spanish neutrality was defunct). The British forces were com-

posed almost entirely of British and French traders (and other pro-British civilian inhabitants), and large parties of Indians. The recently appointed Lt. Governor of Michilimackinac, Patrick Sinclair (a man strongly disliked by the rank and file of the 8th, and vice-versa) reluctantly sent two men of the 8th along. One, a sergeant, was involved in the government's Indian Department and probably pulled strings in order to go along; the other was a private who spoke Gaelic and was included so he could send out open messages — in Scottish. Both were to have served with some authority. The force was divided into two large parties. One (led by Emmanuel Hesse, a Loyalist) proceeded down the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers; the other party (led by Frenchman Charles Langlade, a British agent) traveled down Lake Michigan to Chicago and then to the Illinois River. All were to gather Indian strength en route, somewhere between 600 and 1000 total. However, there is considerable doubt as to whether the force coming by way of Chicago ever arrived at the battle, or if it was even supposed to.

The attack was no surprise; the residents of both the Pain Court and Cahokia settlements were well prepared. Militias from nearby towns added to the defense and, at the last minute, George Rogers Clark himself showed up at Cahokia with a large force. The pro-British forces attacked but, upon finding stiff resistance, the Indians fled, and the attackers soon broke off and retreated. A force of some 200 to 300 mounted Americans formed to give chase to the attackers, most of whom were headed for Chicago in two large groups, perhaps hoping to meet the unarrived Langlade party. The pursuers were apparently in no hurry, for they arrived in Chicago several days after the British forces boarded ships for Michilimackinac. Another group of pursuers seems to have followed a third retreating party up the Mississippi to the Rock.

River where, abandoning the chase, the Americans burned a deserted Indian village (that, ironically, may have belonged to friendly Indians). The results of the ambitious British raid are still disputed, but 43 scalps were taken by the Indians, most of the losses appear to have been people caught in the fields between the armies at Pain Court.^{37, 38, 39}

The King's Regiment Michilimackinac garrison, heavily involved in building a new fort on Mackinac Island, was not involved in any more fighting, except for some bitter internal disputes with Lt. Governor Sinclair.⁴⁰

The exact role played by King's Regiment personnel on the above expeditions is uncertain. Compared to the Loyalist and Indian contingents, the 8th's detachments on most of these raids were always smaller, sometimes well under company strength — hardly enough to have been an effective force by themselves. It is these smaller detachments that pose the biggest questions. If the 8th Regiment personnel weren't there solely in a combat role, why *were* they present? One reason may have been to show a token Redcoat presence to please the Indians and Loyalists, who undoubtedly would have wondered why *they* should fight George III's battles for him if he wouldn't risk his own troops. Perhaps the regulars were along to help keep the "Savages" under control, a real concern, but one that may have been served best by the various Tory leaders skilled in Indian ways.⁴¹ Another possibility is that obliging officers let certain volunteers go along to escape the boredom of garrison life.^{42, 43} One image that seems to emerge is of a role similar to that of the American "advisors" or "observers" of the early Viet-Nam war: shadowy, low-profile figures there to influence the outcome without a major commitment of their own troops. This is a debatable view, but does offer an explanation for the somewhat less-than-obvious presence of small detachments

of regulars on some frontier raids. The fact remains that at least one member of the 8th Regiment was, with few exceptions, present on almost every major raid — and many minor ones — launched against the western frontier. Whatever the reasoning, it must have been important to someone, somewhere, that an 8th Regiment contingent accompany these raids, or the men of the King's Regiment would have stayed back at the garrisons with their comrades.

CONCLUSION

The character of a regiment was shaped largely by its circumstances. The nature of the actions in which members of the King's Regiment, 8th of Foot, were engaged was not in keeping with the stereotyped image of a British regiment.

Although the King's Regiment spent the bulk of the Revolutionary War on garrison duty, it was a far cry from the garrison duties served by the regiments stationed amidst population centers such as New York City, Philadelphia, London, et al. Whereas garrison life in the cities was shaped by parades, drill, and inspections, other factors created a different sort of life for troops serving beyond civilization's back door. The King's Regiment operated in an environment where the weather could kill, where distances stretched supply lines to the limits, where friendly inhabitants could become foes overnight, and where — in case of trouble — there was little hope of receiving help in time. The farther into the wilderness the post, the more time devoted to survival, and the less time available for military primping and drill.

For many of the men of the 8th, garrison life was occasionally punctuated by forays into the vast wilderness surrounding them. Whether it be the excitement of accompanying a raiding party, the mundane duties of escorting prisoners, running errands to Canada, hauling cargo, building forts, or serving detached duty with other units, if it was on the fron-

tier, there was a good chance someone from the King's Regiment was there. Some became adept to life in the wilderness; a handful excelled.

When the Regiment returned to England in 1785, the American wilderness was more of a home for most of them than was Britain. Many had started families here, or had holdings and business interests. The majority chose to stay. Only 150 "very old Men" returned to the place of their birth.⁴⁴

FOOTNOTES

¹ The Regiment was formed in 1685 under the name "The Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment" in honor of the future Queen of England. It became known as "The King's Regiment of Foot" ("of Foot" meaning an infantry unit) in 1716, and the numerical designation "8th" was added in the mid-18th century. Refer to: *The Historical Record of the King's Liverpool Regiment of Foot*, Harrison and Sons, London, 1883.

² An excellent overview of conditions in the British Army can be found in *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795*, by J. A. Houlding, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981. Although a secondary source, it is exhaustively researched.

³ Blumenthal, Walter H., *Camp Followers of the American Revolution*, Arno Press, NY, 1974, pp. 37, 49.

⁴ *Historical Record* . . . , *op cit.*, p. 60, footnote. The source for these figures is listed there as "MS Records, Royal United Services Institute."

⁵ In the course of the War, the King's Regiment garrison at Oswegatchie was eventually switched westward to Carleton Island, a post established at the eastern end of Lake Ontario at the St. Lawrence.

⁶ The Niagara post was hard on commanding officers. Lt. Col. Caldwell apparently died there on October 31, 1776. (*Quebec Gazette*, May 1, 1777; some discrepancies exist in other sources). A successor, Lt. Col. Bolton, sailed off on Lake Ontario (remarkably) on October 31, 1780; he, his ship, and 130 other souls on board never returned (Durham, J. H., *Carleton Island in the Revolution*, Syracuse, C. W. Bardeen, 1889, p. 87-88 (an extract of a letter from Francis Goring to his uncle, August 1, 1781).

⁷ The fort at Detroit was soon renamed Ft. Lernoult in honor of the Captain.

⁸ With Lt. Gov. Patrick Sinclair taking his post as governor at Michilimackinac, DePeyster replaced Lernoult as Commandant at Detroit late in 1779.

⁹ *Michigan Pioneer Historical Collections* (MPHC), Vol. IX, p. 423. Many of Canadian Governor General Frederick Haldimand's wartime papers are transcribed in this series.

¹⁰ M. M. Quaife, Ed., *John Askin Papers*, Volume I, Detroit, Detroit Public Library Commission, 1928, p. 104.

¹¹ "Papers and Accounts of the Receiver General's Department, Quebec" (microfilm in the Public Archives of Canada), reel 2 (1779-1783), letters #39 and #41.

¹² "William Edgar Papers," Canadian Archives MG 19 A1, Volume II, pages 615-616. (Copies: original letters in New York Public Library).

¹³ "Receiver General . . .," *op cit.*, reel 1777-1778, letter #16.

¹⁴ "Edgar Papers . . .," *op cit.*, Vol. II, pages 478-496.

¹⁵ "Caldwell Family Papers," Bagshawe Muniments collection, Rylands University Library of Manchester, England. Letter B 3/29/110 (Ensign Caldwell to mother, August 12, 1776).

¹⁶ Cruikshank, E., *Butler's Rangers*, Niagara Falls, Ontario, 1982 (originally published in 1893), p. 25-26. Please note that, although a secondary source, the work is highly regarded by historians, and was undoubtedly based on original sources, some of which are now believed to be lost.

¹⁷ "Edgar Papers . . .," *op cit.*, pages 687, 779.

¹⁸ Cruikshank, *op cit.*, pp. 27, 33, 34.

¹⁹ Graphic descriptions of the brutality of Indian warfare are not as common as one might expect, with period writers often stating that the violence done to the victims was too foul to put in words. Fortunately, at least one writer was not that considerate of his reader's sensibilities, and left this description of savagery encountered on the Sullivan Expedition of 1779: ". . . we found the body of Lt. Boyd and another rifle man in a most terrible mangled condition. They was both stripped naked and their heads cut off, and the flesh of Lt. Boyd's head was intirely taken off(f) and his eyes punched out. The other mans head was not there. They was stabbed, I suppose, in 40 different places in the body . . . Lt. Boyds privates was nearly cut off(f) and hanging down, his finger and toe nails was bruised off(f), and the dogs had eat part of their shoulders away." Journal entry, Lt. Erkuries Beatty. Reprinted in: Commager, H. S., and R. B. Morris, Editors; *Spirit of Seventy-Six*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975. Page 1020. It should be noted that the Indians who did this act were part of a large Loyalist and Indian force out of Ft. Niagara and were accompanied by 14 men of the King's Regiment.

²⁰ Commager, H. S., and R. B. Morris, Editors; *Spirit of Seventy-Six*, New York, Harper & Row, 1975. Pages 464-465 (letter, St. Leger to Burgoyne, Aug. 27, 1777).

²¹ Stone, Wm. L., *The Campaign of Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne, and the Expedition of Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger*, Albany, J. Munsell, 1877, p. 154.

²² Cruikshank, *op cit.*, pp. 54-58.

²³ Barnhart, J. D., Ed.; *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution*, Crawfordsville (IN), R. E. Banta, 1951, pages 102-192. (Includes Hamilton's diary of the Vincennes Expedition). Please note: troop numbers listed in various contemporary sources differ slightly for this and other expeditions. In this paper, I have used figures I believe are correct when such situations occur.

²⁴ *MPHC*, *op cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 413-414.

²⁵ Commager, *op cit.*, p. 1022 (Gen. McIntosh to Gen. Washington, March 12, 1779).

²⁶ Van Every, D; *A Company of Heroes*, New York, Arno Press, 1977. p. 200.

²⁷ Cruikshank, *op cit.*, pp. 68-75.

²⁸ Commager, *op cit.*, p. 1054.

²⁹ Van Every, D.; *A Company of Heroes*, New York, Arno Press, 1977, pp. 241-242, 247-250.

³⁰ Cruikshank, *op cit.*, pp. 82-87.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-103.

³² *MPHC*, *op cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 387.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 370-71.

³⁴ *Askin Papers*, *op cit.*, Vol. I, p. 98.

³⁵ *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 398-401.

³⁶ *MPHC*, *op cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 392-393.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 546-559.

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³⁸ Commager, *op cit.*, pp. 1053-1054. (Spanish account of battle, August 18, 1780).

³⁹ McDermott, John F., "The Battle of St. Louis," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, April, 1980, pp. 131-151.

⁴⁰ *MPHC*, *op cit.*, pp. 587-610.

⁴¹ Cruikshank, *op cit.*, p. 33.

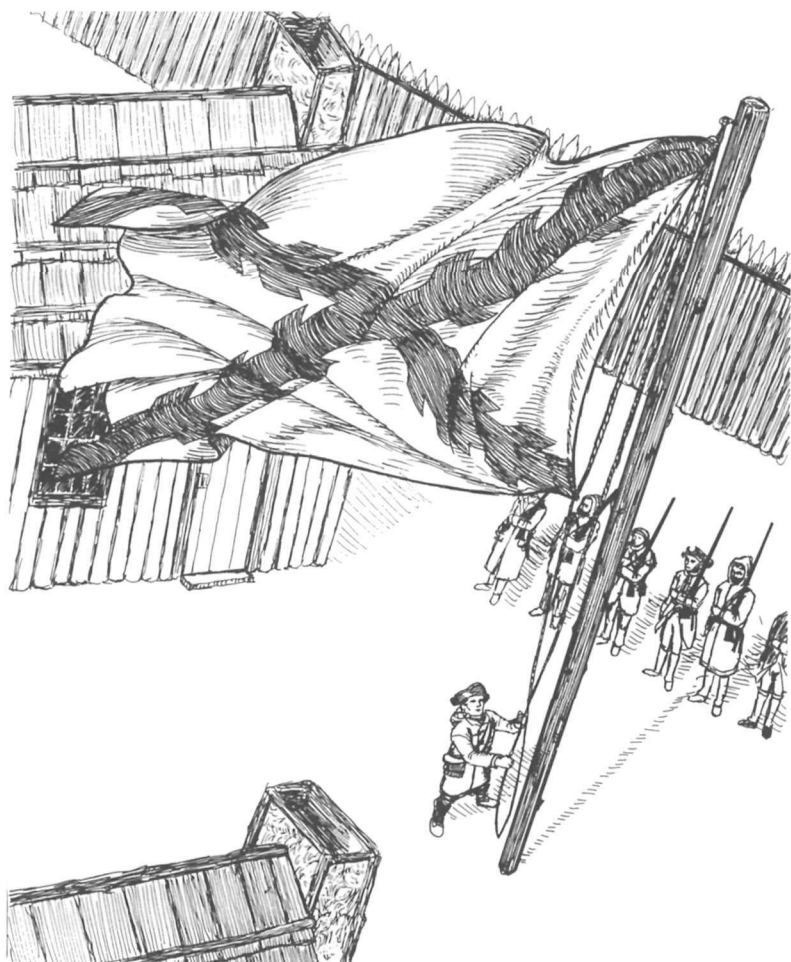
⁴² "Receiver General . . .," *op cit.*, #17 (dateline Niagara, Sept. 22, 1778).

⁴³ "Caldwell Papers," *op cit.*, B 3/29/110.

⁴⁴ Houlding, *Fit For Service*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

I would like to thank Dr. Paul Stevens, who provided me with numerous research leads. Dr. Stevens' doctoral thesis was entitled *His Majesty's "Savage" Allies: British Policies and the Northern Indians During the Revolutionary War — The Carleton Years, 1774-1778*. The thesis was accepted by S.U.N.Y., Buffalo, in February 1984.

**Selected Papers from the First and Second George Rogers Clark
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The Spanish Attack On Fort St. Joseph

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A Spanish expedition led by Captain Eugene Pouré captured Fort St. Joseph on February 12, 1781, and with the traditional ceremony claimed possession of the fort and the surrounding territory. What was the purpose of this attack? What was the historical significance of this event? Before considering these questions, we must examine the geographical and political situation in the Mississippi Valley.

After November 1762, the Mississippi Valley situation changed significantly. The French who had controlled the huge territory of Louisiana were decisively beaten by the British in the French and Indian war. France, in an effort to retain a foothold on the continent, turned over New Orleans and their lands west of the Mississippi to Spain in November 1762 before going to the Paris Peace Conference of February 1763 where they would lose the rest of their North American territory. Spain accepted this "left-handed gift" from their Bourbon cousins with some reluctance. After all, the defenses of Spain were already stretched out and additional land to defend meant higher economic and manpower demands on the strained Spanish treasury. A move to the western bank of the Mississippi would put them "eyeball to eyeball" with the British on the other side of the river. Spain had lost Cuba during the war which they had entered as allies of France with some reservations. While Great Britain had exchanged Cuba, vital to Spain's control of the Caribbean, for Florida, Spain still felt shortchanged. On the other hand,

Spanish Louisiana would present a formidable barrier to British westward expansion.

The transfer of Louisiana from French to Spanish rule was slow and painful and accompanied by confusion, indifference, and even outright rebellion. Only Spain's ability to recruit and retain the services of capable and knowledgeable Frenchmen made the transition possible. The French had controlled the Indians through trade and presents, a policy the Spanish tried to follow with the assistance of French administrators.¹

Spanish commanders, burdened by government regulations and lacking in manpower and financial resources, had to maintain friendly relations with the Indians while competing with vigorous British traders. These aggressive hordes of British and French-Canadians, many employees of the North West Fur Company, backed by cheap trade goods and relatively free of government regulations had the advantage. The Spanish understood the mission system, mining, agriculture, and ranching which they controlled by their "legal" and long-tested institutions. Now they were playing a game which the British understood — as did the British colonials.

Tensions increased as the British colonists revolted for their independence, and when George Rogers Clark's Virginians moved into the Mississippi Valley the war was brought to the doorsteps of the Spanish.

Spanish governors had been instructed to cooperate with the American belligerents, and relations between the Spanish commander at St. Louis, Fernando De Leyba, and Colonel Clark were cordial.² Despite repeated British warnings, the Spanish had been supplying the American colonists with arms and ammunition, food, and money from New Orleans.³ One of these British threats was delivered by General Henry

Hamilton when he retook Vincennes in December 1778. However, this threat was removed when Clark recaptured the town on February 25, 1779. Nevertheless, St. Louis was now vulnerable to British attack. The Spanish had not been neutral in supplying England's enemies. De Leyba's position became truly hazardous in June 1779 when Spain broke off diplomatic relations with England. The formal declaration of war was made in July 1779 but this news didn't reach St. Louis until February 1780. De Leyba hastened to prepare the defenses of his city. A combined British and Indian assault on St. Louis was repulsed in May 1780 with the assistance of George Rogers Clark.⁴ It was in response to this British action that Spain made its greatest offensive move in the Upper Mississippi Valley throughout the Revolutionary war — the attack on Fort St. Joseph.

Lieutenant Governor Francisco Cruzart sponsored the Spanish attack on St. Joseph. Fernando De Leyba had died shortly after his successful defense of St. Louis and was replaced by Cruzart. It was the second term for this popular commander who promised aggressive action against the British as well as continued friendly relations with the Indians and Americans.

Cruzart placed the St. Joseph expedition under the command of Captain Eugene Pouré. Ensign Charles Tyson was second-in-command, and Louis Chevalier, who was familiar with St. Joseph, was chief interpreter. The entire party consisted of 65 militia soldiers and 60 Indians. The great chiefs Herturno and Naguiqueñ led the Indians.⁵

Cruzart sent the Pouré expedition on the way to St. Joseph on January 2, 1781.⁶ Spirits were high as the main body of Spaniards, Frenchmen, and Indians left St. Louis. Several of the French-Canadian *voyageurs* broke out in jovial singing as they began paddling up the Mississippi. However,

the going became more difficult as they progressed slowly against the current. As they moved into the Illinois River the weather became extreme. Wet snow blew into their faces and the ice floating on the river called for dexterous use of pole and paddle. With great relief they delayed in the vicinity of present Peoria. Here, on January 9th, they were joined by Jean Baptiste Malliet and 12 militiamen whom Cruzart had stationed in a small outpost along the Illinois River. The party pushed on up the river to a small settlement called Los Pes close to a point where their route along the river turned sharply to the east. It was now January 20th, and they had traveled 80 leagues from St. Louis. Thus far they had kept to the water, but from this point, as the river was frozen over, it was necessary to continue on foot.

Poure distributed to each man sufficient quantity of food for his own subsistence, ammunition, and all the trade goods he could reasonably carry. The boats and leftover food needed for the return were concealed near the river. The remainder of the merchandise was loaded on a few horses, presumably obtained from the settlement. Trade goods were necessary because the party expected and did meet several groups of Indians who normally owed their allegiance to the British. It was fortunate that Louis Chevalier was well versed in Indian languages. By reasonable negotiations and timely gifts he prevented these hostile bands from impeding their progress, for otherwise it would have been difficult to complete the mission.

The arduous overland trek covered over a 130 leagues of difficult terrain. Poure followed the Illinois east to a point south of present-day Joliet. Near Goose Lake Prairie he turned southeast to follow the Kankakee River. He could not take a direct route across the frozen prairies to his objective in winter and expect to survive. For shelter and fuel as well as

water he was compelled to follow the course of rivers and the woods which border them. At today's Kankakee, Illinois, the party followed the river northeast then east crossing into what is now Indiana, though they knew the entire region as "the Illinois."

The Spaniards entered Indiana along the snowy banks of the frozen Kankakee and pushed patiently to the northeast in the teeth of wintery blasts. As Cruzart reported, "They suffered in so extensive a march and so rigorous a season, the greatest inconvenience from cold and hunger." Poure' followed the river as it turned southeast through frozen fields and dense undergrowth. Several small Indian bands met in this part of the journey were readily persuaded by presents to regard the situation from an impartial point of view. Near today's Dunns and Dunns Bridge the party turned northeast and continued over snow-covered prairies, those with heavier loads broke through the crust but only ankle deep. The horses slipped and fell several times along the icy river banks and several bags of goods were lost or broken. Near present South Bend they crossed at the usual portage route from the Kankakee to the St. Joseph River. After 20 days of forced marching in enemy territory the party at last arrived two leagues from their objective where they encamped at nightfall. The commander sent a young Potawatomie, named Lajes, to persuade the 200 Potawatomies who resided in St. Joseph to remain neutral during the attack. Poure' promised them half of the booty taken from the fort. Lajes reported the success of his negotiations to the commander who prudently took precautions in case the Potawatomies failed to keep their promise.

Early the next morning, the 12th of February, the detachment hurried across the ice opposite Fort St. Joseph, and in a spirited assault captured the post before the startled

enemy could take up arms. They captured a merchant named Duquier and several of his employees, apparently the only persons there other than the Indians. With great effort the Spaniards prevented their Indian allies from killing the English prisoners. Having made precautions to secure the post, Poure' distributed the goods found at the post to the Indians of his party and those who lived in St. Joseph in order to fulfill his promise. The commander did not permit his soldiers to share in the booty. Cruzart reported that Poure' then scattered, destroyed, and wasted 300 sacks of corn, a quantity of tallow, and other food supplies that the enemy had there in storage, "without doubt for some expedition that they had planned against us."⁸

During that occupation which lasted 24 hours, the Spanish flag was kept flying, and Poure' and his officers prepared and signed the document formally taking possession of the post. This accomplished, they took their departure. The following day British Lieutenant Dagneau de Quindre arrived at St. Joseph, but was unable to induce the Indians to go in pursuit. The Indians insisted on going in the opposite direction — to Detroit where according to a British report they went to exculpate themselves "for having suffered the enemy to carry off their traders."⁹

The return trip of the expedition, while difficult, was without incident. The detachment reached St. Louis on the 6th of March without the loss of a single man.

The capture of Fort St. Joseph was but a minor incident in the Spanish actions during the American Revolution. St. Joseph was an insignificant post and the British regarded the attack as a mere nuisance. They reported, "The attack on St. Joseph was nothing more than an outrage committed by a band of marauders and of little consequence."¹⁰ Then why the fuss? Many historians have written about this episode

and there is a noticeable divergence of opinion as to the object with which the expedition was undertaken.

Edward G. Mason stressed the diplomatic importance of this event on the Peace of Paris, 1783. Clarence W. Alvord contended that the expedition was based on revenge and plunder. Frederick J. Teggart stated that the purpose was a "spoiling attack" to prevent a possible British attack on St. Louis. And, Lawrence Kinnaird, while finding some merit in each account, felt that the attack was part of Spanish Indian policy.¹¹

Mason, basing his premise on an account found in the *Gaceta de Madrid*, March 12, 1782, stated that the expedition was inspired and directed from Madrid. He explained that, as the war progressed, Spain became more and more unfriendly to the United States "until it was apparent that nothing less than the entire valley of the Mississippi would satisfy the ambition of the Spaniards. Their conquests of Baton Rouge and Natchez were made to serve as a basis for title to the whole eastern side of the Lower Mississippi, as far as the Ohio. They needed something more, in order that they might include in their demands that which was afterwards known as the North-west Territory."¹² Mason was more emphatic than any other historian in his insistence that the expedition could be explained only as a result of diplomatic and political motives. He pointed out, correctly, that Spain was at war with Great Britain for her own interests and that the idea of American independence was extremely unwelcome. Recognition of American colonies in revolt was *per se* a dangerous precedent with respect to Spain's own reckless colonies.¹³

Mason noted that Benjamin Franklin, our minister to Versailles, was quick to see the meaning of the Spanish action. Franklin wrote to Robert Livingston in April 1782, "I

see by the newspapers that the Spaniards having taken a little post called St. Joseph pretend to have made a conquest of the Illinois country. In what light does this proceeding appear to Congress? While they (the Spaniards) decline our proffered friendship, are they to be suffered to encroach on our bounds and shut us up within the Appalachian mountains? I begin to fear they have some such project.”¹⁴ John Jay, our representative in Madrid, supported Franklin’s opinion by calling attention to the care with which the Spanish commander of the expedition had taken possession of the territory for Spain.¹⁵ According to Mason the policy and aims of Spain during the Revolution, and the use which was made of the expedition to St. Joseph in support of the same, make it reasonably certain that the attack originated in Spain. He wrote, “How little did those light-hearted soldiers and their red allies know that they were but pawns in the great game whereof the players were at Paris and Madrid.”¹⁶

The diplomatic interpretation was bitterly attacked by Clarence W. Alvord who directed his criticism chiefly against Mason and historians who accepted his version.¹⁷ Alvord indicated that there was a connection between the attack on St. Joseph in 1781 and the ill-fated Hamelin expedition sent out by Augustin de la Balme in 1780. He stated that the purpose of the Spanish expedition was to retaliate against the British for the attack on St. Louis and for the defeat of Hamelin. He belittled Mason’s version as being based on no more information on the subject than a brief description in the *Madrid Gazette*.¹⁸

His account of the affair is essentially as follows: A French officer named Augustin de la Balme came to Illinois to raise a force of Frenchmen to attack Detroit and invade Canada.¹⁹ One detachment reached and captured a small post at Miami only to be attacked by Indians who killed De la

Balme and 30 of his men.²⁰ In the meanwhile his other detachment composed of men from Cahokia under Hamelin plundered St. Joseph. They, too, were overtaken with four killed, two wounded, and seven taken as prisoners.²¹ The survivors returned to Cahokia where they incited their countrymen to avenge the death of their fellow citizens. Appeals were made to the people of St. Louis who were also French. An expedition of 20 Cahokians and 30 men of St. Louis and 200 friendly Indians set out 28 days after the first Cahokian party met its defeat. They were accompanied by Louis Chevalier, who was on friendly terms with the Potawatomes. Chevalier induced these Indians to remain neutral, and St. Joseph was easily surprised and plundered. The British officers were unable to convince the Potawatomes to pursue the invaders as they had done before.²²

This version was based largely on a letter written to Colonel Slaughter by Captain McCarty whom Alvord believed to have been living in Cahokia during the winter of 1780 and 1781. Alvord stated that the leader of the expedition was John Baptiste Malliet of Peoria rather than Eugene Poure. He believed that the Spaniards had little or nothing to do with the affair and asserted that "there is no evidence that the taking of St. Joseph was in accordance with the instructions from the home government or even from the governor of Louisiana."²³

Professor Frederick Teggart of the University of California challenged the accuracy of Alvord's conclusion. Continuing the acrid controversy Teggart asserted that Alvord's "explanation of the event must be noticed, not because of it having any merit or probability, but because the author speaks with the prestige of a professor in the University of Illinois."²⁴ He then proceeded to discredit the evidence used by Alvord in much the same way that Alvord had discredited Mason's

article. He criticized Alvord's sources and his selective use of other sources particularly his failure to point out that Malliet was in the service of Spain. Using Spanish manuscripts Teggart claimed that Mason's interpretation was essentially correct. From the documents Teggart showed that the Madrid *Gazette* account used by Mason was a complete although shorter version of Cruzart's official report of the incident. He supported Mason's contention that the affair was a shrewd diplomatic move ordered from Madrid, and discussed the reaction of Franklin and Jay to the news of the attack. In addition Teggart felt that Cruzart also intended the expedition as a "spoiling attack" to prevent a possible British move to St. Louis.

Teggart concluded his thesis by pointing out that if anything was needed to complete the evidence, it was supplied by the fact that Cruzart had before him the example of George Rogers Clark who, in 1779, had undertaken a similar march for a similar purpose. On December 17, 1778, Hamilton retook Vincennes from the Virginians. He then set about making preparations for a spring attack on the Illinois settlements. To ward off this blow Clark resorted to the bold expedient of leading his men 200 miles across country in mid-winter. He took Vincennes again on February 25. It seems probable that this example had an important influence on Cruzart's determination.

Professor Lawrence Kinnaid, also of the University of California and again using documentation from Spanish sources, attempted to reconcile the conflicting accounts of the previous writers. While finding merit in each account, he felt something was missing. Kinnaid agreed with the Mason and Teggart version of the march to St. Joseph while agreeing that the Cahokians and some of the Indians desired revenge and plunder as advocated by Alvord. He made a

careful check of the documentary material used by the others in order to determine whether any fact had been overlooked or misinterpreted. Although he concluded that their research had been well done, the search did result in the finding of one important clue.

Cruzart's report of the expedition written to Miro', August 6, 1781, and used by Teggart in his account, began with the following sentence, "On January 2nd of the present year, as I have written to the governor on the 10th of the same month and year Don Eugene Poure', . . . left this city of San Luis with a detachment of sixty-five militia and about sixty Indians."²⁵ Apparently Cruzart had written a letter to the governor of Louisiana on January 10, 1781, a letter written while the raid was in progress. After a long and exhaustive search the letter was found in the Louisiana papers deposited in the Bancroft Library, University of California. In his letter Cruzart said the attack was requested by Milwaukee chiefs, Heturno and Naquiguen, and that not to have consented would have demonstrated Spanish weakness and may have caused them to change sides. He pointed out that it was the custom of Indians to side with the strongest force. Secondly, he continued, to go to St. Joseph, seize the fort, English commissioners, the merchandise, and the provisions would have the effect of terrorizing the surrounding nations.²⁶ Kinnaird stated that among the motives which induced Cruzart to yield to the urgings of the Indians was the hope that the destruction of supplies at St. Joseph would make an attack on St. Louis in the spring much more difficult. However, concludes Kinnaird, this was not sufficient cause to warrant the undertaking. He felt the whole affair was a manifestation of Spain's Indian policy. Further, Kinnaird points out that the very existence of the settlements in Spanish Illinois depended upon maintaining friendly relations with neighboring Indian tribes.

Indian alliances for frontier defense had already been used by the Spaniards in Texas and lower Louisiana against both the Apaches and the English. It would appear that unless Cruzart had concealed information from his superiors the expedition did not originate with Cruzart, but was proposed by Indian chiefs. It was not planned by diplomats in Madrid, nor by irate Frenchmen from Cahokia bent on revenge. It was not sent out to establish Spanish claims to territory east of the Mississippi, nor did Cruzart dispatch it primarily to prevent an expected attack on St. Louis.

A careful examination of these historical interpretations shows that it is not "begging the question" to find merit in each article. However, with the exception of Kinnaird, the confidence each writer placed on his own explanation, the bitterness with which he defends his point of view, and his presumption of infallibility, almost bordering on arrogance, leads one to consider this point. History is a question of time. With determined research a historian can find documents to show why the Spanish soldiers were sent to St. Joseph, but that is not enough. What did the statesmen and diplomats of 1782 believe was the reason for the attack? What Franklin and Jay believed 200 years ago is more important than what we know now. There is no question that the American negotiators believed the expedition had been undertaken in accordance to directions from Madrid, and, of course, the Spanish diplomats took advantage of this situation. The King of Spain sent a message expressing satisfaction with the capture of St. Joseph and instructions that the officers in charge be rewarded.²⁷ Vergennes, the French Prime Minister, saw the possibility of giving the land west of the Appalachians to Spain instead of Gibraltar which they could not capture from the British.²⁸ During the peace negotiations of 1782 Spain opposed the efforts of the United States to secure the

Mississippi as her western boundary and was supported by France. The American diplomats finally overcame this opposition by making a separate treaty with Great Britain. Spain, however, refused to acknowledge officially the western claims of the United States until the signing of Pinckney's treaty in 1795.²⁹ In this light we can consider the importance of the attack on St. Joseph. It did not change history, but it had historical importance. As John W. Caughey pointed out, the conquest of the Baton Rouge-Natchez region and the temporary occupation of St. Joseph were factors in the Anglo-Spanish struggle for control of the Mississippi and dominant influence over the Indians of the area. He wrote that "in 1781, after the St. Joseph expedition, it appeared that the duel had been settled in favor of Spain."³⁰ Spain controlled the western bank of the Mississippi and the eastern bank south of the Ohio. Above the Ohio the Spaniards and Americans were in an informal joint control. Only the clever diplomacy of Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams, and their making of a separate peace with Great Britain thwarted the Spanish ambitions to control the entire Mississippi Valley.³¹

NOTES

¹ Details and expansion of these interpretations may be found in John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (New York, 1970). General treatments of this period include Lawrence Kinnaid, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1946-1949) and John Francis McDermott, ed., *The Spanish in the Mississippi 1762-1804* (Urbana, 1974).

² See Clark-Leyba correspondence, Archivo General de Indias, papeles de Cuba, Seville, Spain. Most of these papers are contained in *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1781-1783* (Springfield, IL., 1926).

³ Spanish contributions to the American Revolution are found in James G. Randall, "The George Rogers Clark's Service of Supply," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, VIII, 256-263; James Alton James, "Oliver Pollock, Financier of the Revolution in the West," *ibid*, XVI, 70-71; Oliver Pollock, "Deposition, June 8, 1808," in James M. Wilkinson, *Memoirs of My Own Times*, II, Appendix I. 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1816); as well as the Spanish work by Juan F. Yela, *Espana ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos*, 2 vols. (Lerida, Graficas Academia Mariana, 1925).

⁴ For information concerning the British Attack upon St. Louis in May 1780, consult John Francis McDermott, "The Myth of the 'Imbecile Governor': Captain Fernando de Leyba and the Defense of St. Louis in 1780," in his *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804* (Urbana, 1974), 314-412; Abraham P. Nasitir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier during the American Revolution, 1778-1783," in *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* (Springfield 1908-), XXI (1928), 311-321; and James A. James, "The Significance of the Attack on St. Louis, 1780," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Society, Proceedings* II (1908-1909) 199-217.

⁵ "El Herturno" is the Spanish version of the French "Le Tourneau." Both Milwaukee chiefs were well known for their hostility to the British and aided the Spanish in their defense of St. Louis. See Cruzart to Gálvez, November 13, 1780, Louisiana Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California (hereinafter cited BL); DePeyster to Haldimand, May 2, 1779, Michigan Historical Society, *Collections*, IX, 380; and Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., "British Régime in Wisconsin," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections* (Madison, 1854-), XVIII, 384 n. 53.

⁶ This account of Pouré's expedition is based on the official Spanish report. See Cruzart to Miro', August 6, 1781, BL.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Indian Council at Detroit, March 11, 1781, reported by DePeyster, Michigan Historical Society, *Collections*, X, 453-455.

¹⁰ State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Collections*, XI, 163.

¹¹ Edward G. Mason, "The March of the Spaniards Across Illinois," *The Magazine of American History*, IV, 457-469; Clarence W. Alford, "The Conquest of St. Joseph, Michigan by the Spaniards in 1781," *The Missouri Historical Review*, II, 195-211; Frederick J. Teggart, "The Capture of St. Joseph, Michigan by the Spaniards in 1781," *The Missouri Historical Review*, V, 214-228; and Lawrence Kinnaird, "The Spanish Expedition against Fort St. Joseph in 1781, A New Interpretation," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIX, 173-191.

¹² Mason, 464.

¹³ Several French officials also saw the danger of involvement in revolution. Baron Turgot, Comptroller General of Finances, and his successor Jacques Necker vehemently opposed the war. Turgot insisted that war with Great Britain would drive the nation into bankruptcy, and that the revolutionary virus would lead to the weakening and collapse of the Ancient Régime. See John Richard Alden, *The American Revolution 1775-1783* (New York, 1954), 182, quoting *Oeuvres de Mr. Turgot* . . . 9 vols. (Paris 1808-1811), VIII, 534-604; and David Schoenbrun, *Triumph in Paris: The Exploits of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1976), 102. The diplomacy of the American Revolution and the eventual peace treaty is covered in Samuel F. Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution* (New York, 1935).

¹⁴ Benjamin Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, April 12, 1782, in Francis Wharton, ed., *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States* (Washington, 1889), V, 300. See also Jared Sparks, ed., *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1829-1830), VIII, 76-78.

¹⁵ John Jay to Livingston, April 28, 1782, Wharton, V, 364.

¹⁶ Mason, 469.

¹⁷ Among Historians who accepted Mason's version were William Poole, Justin Winsor, Claude Van Tyne, Reuben G. Thwaites, and Daniel McCoy.

¹⁸ Alvord, 197.

¹⁹ De la Balme chose Fort Quiatanon (a replica of which can be found in West Lafayette, Indiana) as his place of rendezvous "and here the little band assembled on the eighteenth of October, and the white flag of France unfurled." Alvord, 203, who gives as his source *Report of Canadian Archives*, 1887, 184. Also see Cruzart to Gálvez, November 12, 1780, BL.

²⁰ Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Collections*, XIX, 581; and Cruzart to Gálvez, November 21, 1780, BL.

²¹ Account of Lieutenant Governor DePeyster in Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, *Collections*, XIX, 367.

²² Alvord, 205-206.

²³ Alvord, 210.

²⁴ Teggart, 224-225.

²⁵ Cruzart to Miro', August 6, 1781, BL.

²⁶ Cruzart to Gálvez, January 10, 1781, BL.

²⁷ José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, January 15, 1782, in Thwaites, *British Régime*, XVIII, 430-432.

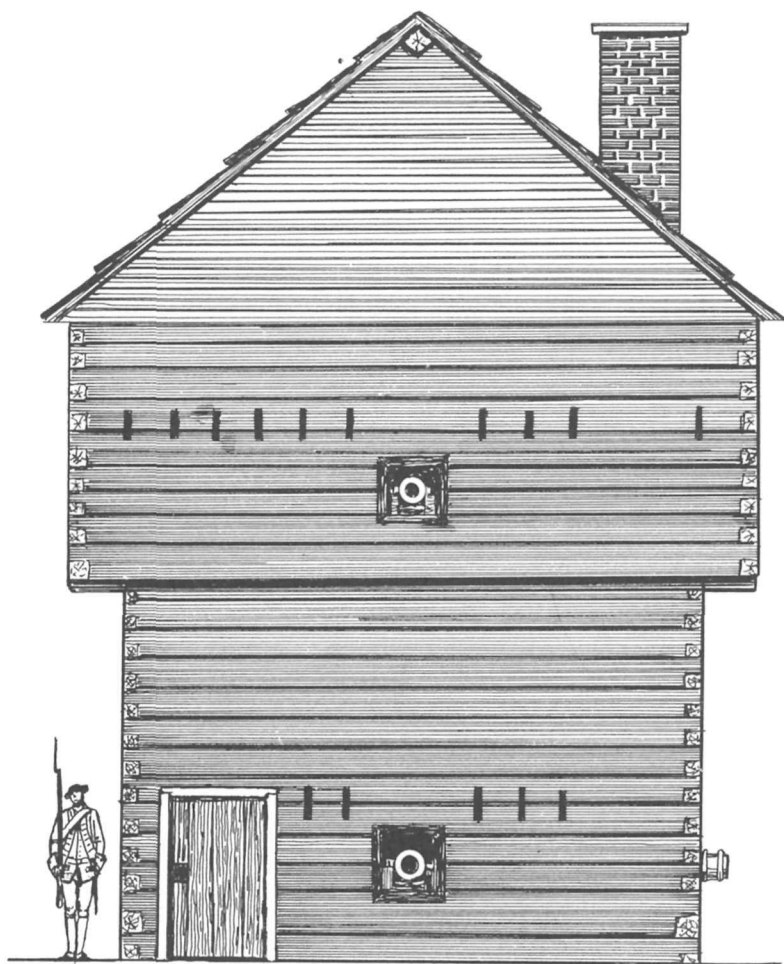
²⁸ Teggart, 174; Alden, 253. The entire diplomatic maneuvering of Vergennes is discussed in Bemis, *Diplomacy* and the Spanish attitude in Yela, *Espana ante la Independencia*.

²⁹ Samuel F. Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty* (Baltimore, 1926), 38-41. American historians once claimed that Clark's conquest of the Illinois country gave the United States a claim to the "Old Northwest." However this is not valid since there were no American posts north of the Ohio in 1782. Some insisted that forts on the south bank of the Ohio particularly those built and defended by Clark constituted a claim to strategic control. John Richard Alden stated both positions are assailable. Franklin,

Jay, and John Adams apparently never used either argument. See Alden, *The American Revolution*, fn. 24, p. 259.

³⁰ John W. Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Gretna, Louisiana, 1972) 169-170.

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Military Architecture on the American Frontier

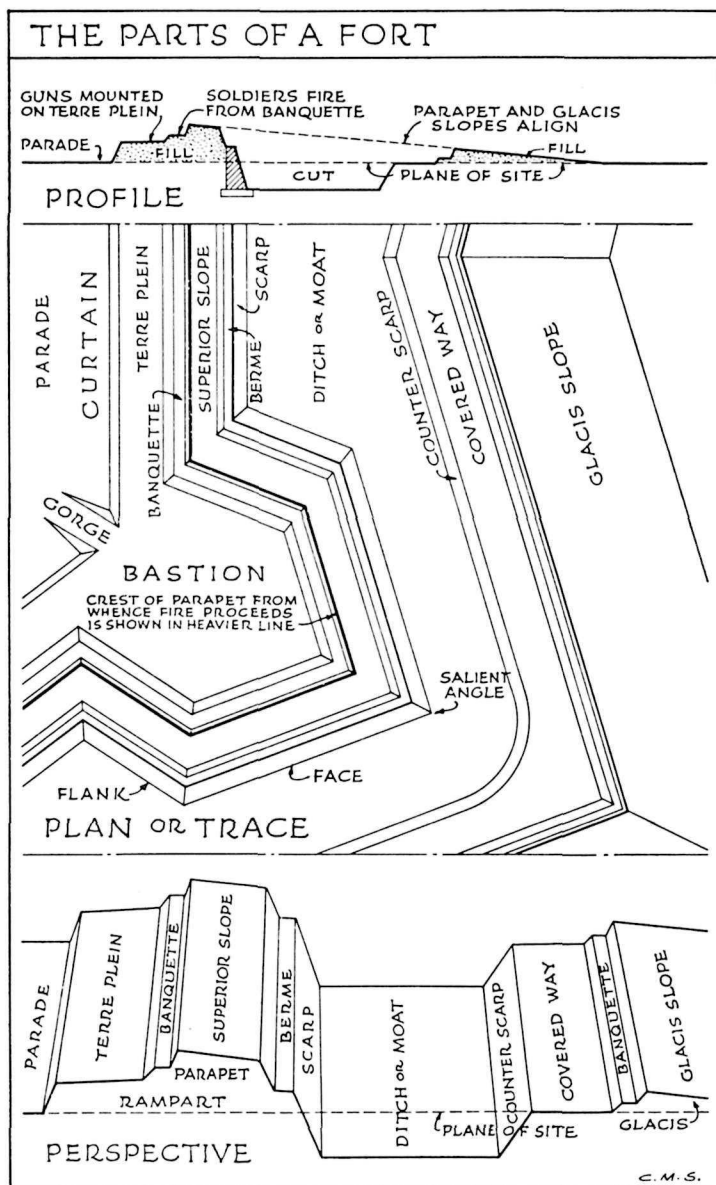
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Fortifications on the Eastern American frontier have long been a subject of interest to historians — but until recently the study of forts has primarily been the domain of antiquarians whose knowledge and understanding of military architecture was limited to whatever local sources and traditions were apparent for a particular fort site. For the serious student of military architecture there is a wealth of resources on frontier fortifications: documentary resources for specific structures, including the correspondence of fort commandants and travelers' observations; information on contemporary fortifications built by the same individuals; and general eighteenth century fortification theory.

This paper proposes to examine these sources to reveal the large variety of options available to the military engineer on the eastern North American frontier during the 18th and early 19th centuries. What principles for example, applied to the construction of frontier forts? How were these principles employed in the actual construction of a primary fort element such as the walls? How did the background of various fort builders influence the design of specific forts?

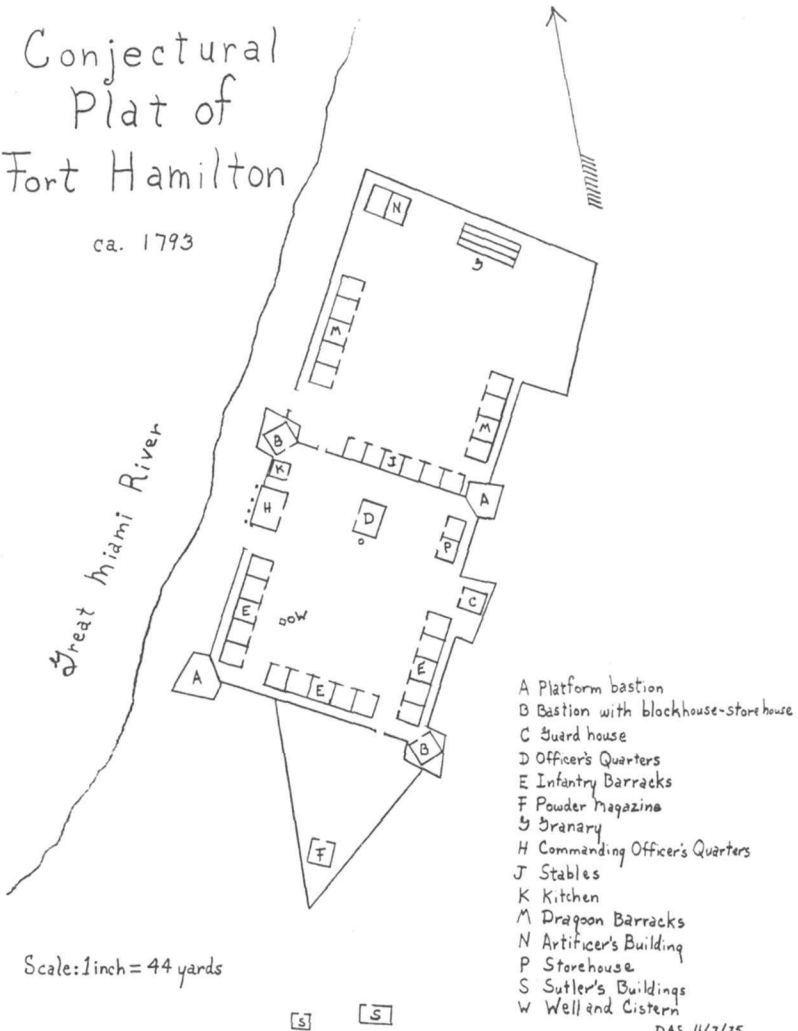
A starting point for the study of any frontier fortification is with an understanding of the general architectural and theoretical background of European military thought. While it is true that these tenets were modified in America, this was



From Alfred Procter James and Charles Morse Stotz, *Drum in the Forest*,
©Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1958.

Conjectural Plat of Fort Hamilton

ca. 1793



the intellectual baggage brought into the frontier by practically every officer.

European architects and engineers of the 15th century were faced with the introduction of gunpowder into the warfare of the western hemisphere. This technological advance altered forever the character of fortification design. Most immediately it made the traditional stone castle fortification obsolete. Tall stone walls were too easily reduced to rubble by an attacker's artillery. The bastioned system of fortification was developed in Italy in the 15th century in response to this new armament.¹ When viewed with historical perspective, the fortification developed by the Italians to solve this problem was striking in its simplicity: they lowered the whole complex down into the ground. To prevent an enemy from simply walking into the lowered fort, the old moat was retained and developed into an elaborate ditch system. A portion of the dirt from the ditch was thrown to the front to create an earthen slope called a glacis. This aided in hiding the fortification and supposedly provided an absorbing cushion for cannon balls fired by an attacker's artillery or at least harmlessly deflected them. The new fortifications became a "defense in depth" in place of the former emphasis on height. In conjunction with this passive defensive system, a more aggressive method of defense focused around the corner projections known as bastions. From these corner emplacements the troops and artillery of the defenders could bring cross fires upon the attackers outside the fort walls. The round towers common to medieval castles were problematic because they resulted in an undefensible area at their base. The simplest solution was to point the structure and various arrangements on the corners and walls were designed to cover the entire exterior ground of the fort within a certain distance. As a result European fortifications of the 16th, 17th and 18th cen-

turies consisted of remarkably complex series of angles and planes, and an understanding of geometry and adeptness at drawing were the tools of the military engineer's trade.² The term bastion came from the French word for fortress, and very quickly the bastion became the prime characteristic of virtually all European fortifications.

Originally the Italians were the leading practitioners of this new bastioned system, but by the 17th century the French had acquired a continental reputation for their impressive fortifications. Most prominent among the French military men was Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban who served as an engineer in Louis XIV's court. Vauban had a reputation of never surrendering a fort and never having failed to take one attacked. In fact it was through his offensive prowess that he made his major accomplishments. Volumes written by him and published in the early 18th century became the standard reference works in the field consulted by military leaders of all nationalities. Subsequent authors borrowed heavily from Vauban's concepts in a sizable array of books on fortification theory and practice.³ Most included elaborate illustrations that reflected the high development of the bastioned system in Europe. These publications were carried to North America by military officers assigned to the colonies and were translated and adopted by the new United States.

On the American frontier few fortifications reached the sophistication of these European models. William Smith's volume on the Henry Bouquet expedition into Ohio in 1764 contained an outline of the basic principles for forts on the American frontier entitled "Construction of Forts against Indians." The appearance of the outline in manuscript form accompanying some Ohio Valley fort plats in the collections of the Indiana Historical Society attest to its use in the Midwest. It reads in part⁴:

“As we have not to guard here against Cannon, the system of European Fortifications may be laid aside, as expensive, and not answering the purpose. Forts against Indians, being commonly remote from our settlements, require a great deal of room to lodge a sufficient quantity of Stores and provisions, and at the same time ought to be defensible with one half of their compleat Garrisons, in case of detachments or Convoys.”

In this statement we can see three basic considerations that should be kept in mind when studying frontier fortifications. First was the public concern, whether it was French, British, or American, for limiting the expense of frontier forts. The claims of frugality made in the correspondence of fort commandants were surpassed only by their superiors' demands for the same. Secondly, these frontier forts were designed principally to house and provide for the movement of stores and supplies. Finally, they had to be defensible by a small quantity of troops.

Another vital concept for what the 18th century military officer termed as “field works” a contemporary term for what we today would call frontier fortifications, was put forward by a French engineer named Clairac who wrote a volume entitled the *Field Engineer* which was translated and published in Philadelphia in 1776.⁵ George Washington had a copy of this work in his own personal library. The concept stated that any soldier defending a fortification generally fires mechanically straight ahead rather than to the right or left.

How was this concept manifested in a specific frontier fort? Lines of musket fire can be projected at right angles from the walls on the plat of Fort Duquesne, built in the middle of the 18th century at present-day Pittsburgh. A cross fire is brought on the area directly in front of the main walls of the fort from firing steps on these walls and from the flanks

of the bastions. A larger area is covered from the faces of the bastions. But what of the ground opposite the points or salient angles of the bastions? Since the area was uncovered, ravelins or simple pointed projections were erected in the centers of each wall. Lines of fire from the faces of the ravelins covered the ground before the bastion angles. At Duquesne this was necessary on only two sides, since the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers protected the other sides of the fort and made assault from these directions unlikely.⁶

Following the tenets of Smith's book, Clairac's concept of "lines of fire" and the components of the bastioned system itself did not dictate a single form for frontier fortifications. The outline of the French Fort Duquesne which we examined earlier can be viewed as the "typical" bastioned fort in the frontier. A variation on that trace was the "half-bastion" or demi-bastion shown in the plat of Fort Lernoult built by the British at Detroit in 1778. Henry Bird, the engineer for this fort, acknowledged that this trace was less perfect than full bastions, since more area was uncovered on the exterior of the walls. But the open configuration of half-bastions allowed for increased storage space on the interior. More importantly the reduced number of faces and flanks on the bastions made them simpler and quicker to construct and thus less expensive.⁷

The star trace used by the British to build Fort Bull in western New York in 1755 departed even more from the bastioned system by omitting corner emplacements entirely and utilizing "redan" or triangular type structures in the center of each wall. As in the previous example the reduced number of walls lowered the cost and also resulted in a need for fewer garrison troops. In this case it did not work to the advantage of the defenders for French forces captured and destroyed the fort a few months after it was built.⁸ The star shape left

many areas outside the fort uncovered, but according to one British military writer in the 1780s it was a popular form with Americans at the start of the Revolution, especially since it supposedly was invented by and remained a favorite of the French who assumed the role of military tutors for the new nation.⁹

Military engineers considered the triangular form even less desirable, since it left uncovered with any field of fire significant segments of the area outside the fort. Still it was useful in situations where there were very small garrisons and a shortage of time or money to build a more sophisticated structure. Such was the case at the Pickaway Indian towns near the modern city of Springfield, Ohio, in 1780. Henry Bird, builder of Fort Lernoult, reportedly directed the construction of a triangular stockade and blockhouse at these settlements. A structure with a minimum of walls was optimal in a situation where the discipline and capabilities of the defending troops was limited.¹⁰

Civilian fortifications, particularly blockhouses, became the norm on the Old Northwest frontier during the War of 1812, because by this time there were a number of substantial areas of settlement. While European military treatises were noticeably silent on the subject, there are many contemporary accounts and drawings of blockhouses, both military and civilian, which describe two-story wooden structures, often but not always, with the second story projecting over the first.¹¹ A number of these early 19th century military structures are still standing in the northern United States and¹² even more remarkable is the preservation of a civilian blockhouse in Miami County, Ohio, several miles east of Troy. It has perhaps escaped notice in the past because its construction does not fall into the traditional images of a frontier blockhouse. It could perhaps be better classified as a fortified

house; it is a two-story residence built of two-foot-thick stone walls. A masonry first story for blockhouses was actually not rare on the frontier, and was, in fact, recommended by some British military officers to increase the durability of a blockhouse and again reduce its long term expense¹³. The Miami County blockhouse was built in 1813 and actually was much more residential in character than military in its overall design and finishes. One major element of the original design was unmistakably military: the inclusion of a kingpost truss in the attic which with wrought iron tie rods supported the load of the second-story floor joists and thus eliminated the need for load bearing walls on the first floor. The open lower story, uninterrupted by walls and with corner fireplaces, was ideal for defensive military activities.¹⁴

We have seen how the basic fortification concepts developed in Europe were adapted in the American frontier. Taking this a step further, a close examination of one particular structural element will build an appreciation of the design choices available to the military engineer in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in North America, and aid in understanding the exchange and interaction of military ideas on the frontier. The most basic architectural element of an eastern frontier fort was its wall, and there was, in fact, a great variety of construction techniques and devices, so it is perfect for this type of survey.

By far the most common fort wall was the stockade. Contemporary civilian accounts of frontier fort construction like that directed by Ben Franklin in 1756 are replete with descriptions of this type of fortification.¹⁵ It was, of course, ideally suited to the capabilities of a non-military force requiring no special skills beyond an adeptness with an axe and shovel.¹⁶ While it provided a certain sense of security, a single wall stockade was a flawed system. In the first place a single row

of logs with one end stuck in the ground produced a highly unstable structure, even with the standard ribband or strip of wood connecting each picket, so that it constantly required attention to provide any defense at all. Secondly, unless great care was taken in selecting the logs and placing them in the trench, there were frequently significant gaps between each log.

Military officers, therefore, insisted on either “lining” the walls with boards to cover the gaps or to add a second row of smaller pickets inside the first row and positioned between the outer row to cover the gaps. By the early 19th century this latter method had become the standard in the fortification classes taught by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.¹⁷

The French Fort Maurepas from the late 17th century in the lower Mississippi Valley was clearly built by an insecure colonial power to guard against the incursions of the British. The walls in this case were constructed by the French commandant as a double row of large logs supplemented by a smaller row to the rear. In other words, it was triple stockade intended to defend against light artillery.¹⁸

An interesting variation to increase the stability of the stockade was designed by British engineers at Fort George in 1799. Here every 14th picket was planted several feet further into the ground than the adjacent pickets and was strengthened with a brace of horizontal and diagonal members at its base.¹⁹

Another simpler variation on the “standard” stockade wall was used in Fort Necessity, Pennsylvania, constructed by Virginia militia under the direction of George Washington in 1754. The walls of Washington’s odd little circular fort were composed of oak logs split in half with smaller posts on the interior to serve as musket rests or to simply fill gaps

in the wall. The archaeologist who discovered this design for the National Park Service in the 1930s speculated that this wall may have been unique to Washington and a result of time and personnel shortages during its construction to reduce the quantity of trees that had to be felled. It should be noted, however, that this same wall design was still being used in the southern states 80 years later, so that this technique may, in fact, represent a regional characteristic.²⁰

Vertical stockade walls could also be combined with traditional horizontal log wall building construction to form the outer wall of the fortification. In other words the rear walls of the fort buildings also served as the outside wall of the fort and pickets were used to fill between the buildings. This was a common feature of civilian fortifications or "stations," but was also used in military forts where time constraints were a factor. Such was the case at Fort Jefferson built in 1791 during Arthur St. Clair's ill-fated campaign, only in this case a horizontal log wall construction was utilized for the corner bastions as well.²¹

Perhaps the simplest of all frontier fort walls were those erected by the U.S. Army and Kentucky militia in the Ohio Valley during the 1790s. These "temporary fortifications" were formed by cutting down trees to form a 5-foot high breastwork which one participant called a "brush fence." Occasionally where timber was scarce the walls were formed of earth, but it was done on a daily basis to protect the encamped army from surprise attack.²²

All of the wall systems were only a defense against the limited armament of Indians and not a European enemy equipped with artillery. To defend against the latter type of attack required a more sophisticated structure intended to absorb the shock of artillery.

Fort Defiance was originally built in modern-day De-

fiance, Ohio, by the U.S. Army in 1794. It initially had a stockade wall set in a 3-foot trench. Following the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the confrontation with the British fort at present-day Maumee (Fort Miamis), the Army returned to Defiance and began modifying it to account for a European enemy. Archaeological excavations done several summers ago show the distinctive profile of a ditch dug out around the perimeter of the fort and thrown against the wall.²³

Most horizontal log walls were actually composed of two parallel walls tied together with cross member to form a crib-work and then filled with earth. This system could be used by itself to form the walls of a fort, as at the British designed Fort Ligonier built in 1758; or it might be combined with heavy wooden buildings immediately to the interior which were themselves covered with earth as protection against artillery as at Fort Ontario also built by the British in the late 1750s.²⁴ Both techniques were intended as a defense against artillery, but since each relied predominately on wooden forms they were still susceptible to artillery. As a consequence when the enemy was primarily a European one, earthen fortification walls were preferred.

During the 18th century a clear distinction was made by military theorists between regular and irregular fortifications. Regular fortifications technically referred to a work whose defensive structures were all symmetrical and had equal components. there is evidence to suggest, however, that the term regular fortification had an additional meaning to military officers in America. Anthony Wayne, for example, referred to a regular fortification as one defensible against artillery.²⁵

To construct an earthen wall fort a wooden framework was prepared under the direction of the engineer. It served no structural function, but rather simply marked the limits

of the parapet as a guide for workmen. The dirt for the outer ditch was then dug out and thrown into the framework. As the U.S. Military Academy at West Point developed its programs, officers were trained to calculate the time involved in erecting such a structure by determining how far an individual could throw the earth, and at what rate, depending on the size of the final wall desired.²⁶

The earth was unstable by itself and required some physical support to maintain its shape. Sod, cut in slabs and laid like brick was one method of providing a cohesive revetment; in another method the earth was secured with fascines (bundles of sticks); or hurdles (a type of interwoven basketweave frame); or gabion (woven baskets filled with earth), or a scrap revetment formed of dovetailed planks or heavy timber or stone slabs like at Fort Wayne in Detroit. All were covered in detail for officers at the U.S. Military Academy in the early 19th century.²⁷

What then can we learn from the study of frontier forts? The first point to make is that too often the concept of frontier fortifications has been vastly oversimplified by historians and an assumption made that one fort was pretty much like another. Even the treatment of forts on the Cis-Mississippi frontier in Willard Robinson's recent book *American Forts* is relatively cursory and lightweight. As I have tried to indicate, military architecture holds the same potential for information as the study of building types and style distributions normally associated with folklorists and architectural historians. A whole host of various plans, materials, techniques and functions governed 18th and 19th century fort design decisions. Studying the interplay of these elements as displayed in frontier forts can shed light on the spread and adaptation of cultural characteristics between different peoples. What, if any, techniques for example, were unique

to the Dutch, French, Spanish, or British engineers who built forts in the American frontier?

Any purely architectural study of course runs the risk of treating structures in an abstract manner separate from their human environment and perspectives. In recognition of this, I have tried to focus on specific individuals when discussing particular forts to emphasize that each was designed through a series of personal decisions based on knowledge, training or experience. There are any number of individual engineers, superintendents of construction and master builder/carpenters who were recognized as “experts” in their field and whose assistance was frequently solicited on new fortifications.

One brief example will demonstrate the validity of this latter approach. William Ferguson was an Irish immigrant who settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th century and enlisted in the Continental Artillery during the Revolution. When the small federal army was created in the 1780s he obtained a captain’s commission in the artillery and served at a number of posts in the Ohio Valley. As an artillery officer, Ferguson was frequently called on to provide engineering services for the army, a typical practice of the period. After he was promoted to Major and assigned to Arthur St. Clair’s ill-fated army in 1791, he in effect, became chief field engineer on the expedition, responsible for directing the construction of all fortifications. One of the posts Ferguson served at prior to the expedition was Fort Finney at the falls of the Ohio River. One of its distinctive features was a guardhouse positioned in the center of the wall opposite the main gate which projected out from the wall. It should come as no surprise that when Fort Hamilton was built under Ferguson’s direction it included a guardhouse placed exactly as that at Fort Finney. An examination of groups of forts erected by and

under the guidance of individuals like Ferguson, much as architectural historians have looked at the work of a particular architect, is yet another useful area of study.²⁸

The field of military architecture is, therefore, a largely unexplored and promising area for future research.

NOTES

¹ Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban, *A Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification* (1740), translation and introduction by George Rothrock (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 3-4. The introduction written by Rothrock has a general discussion of the advent of the bastioned system. For a more in-depth discussion see John R. Hale, "The Early Development of the Bastion: An Italian Chronology, c.1450-c.1534," in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), pp. 466-494. See also Charles M. Stotz, "Defense in the Wilderness" in *Drums in the Forest* (Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1958), pp. 59-197.

² Americans who observed the French engineers operating during the Yorktown campaign in 1781 made note of their "geometrical operations." See James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington in the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1967), p. 435.

³ Vauban, *Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification*, pp. vi-xi.

⁴ William Smith, *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765); and "Construction of Forts against Indians," Northwest Territory Collection, Indiana Historical Society.

⁵ Chevalier de Clairac, *L'Ingenier De Campagne* or, *Field Engineers*, (translated by Major Lewis Nicola) (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1776); Richard Ketchum, *The World of George Washington* (New York: American Heritage, Inc., 1974).

⁶ Stotz, "Defense in the Wilderness," opposite p. 129.

⁷ Willard B. Robinson, *American Forts: Architectural Form and Function* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977), pp. 56-57.

⁸ Gilbert Hagerty, "Fort Bull: A Pre-Archaeological Study, *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 1972), pp. 20-21.

⁹ Lewis Lochee, *Elements of Field Fortification* (London: author, 1783), p. 61. An illustration of a star fort is in Captain George Smith, *An Universal Military Dictionary* (London: J. Millan, 1779), p. 95.

¹⁰ "Account of Henry Wilson" in J. Martin West, ed., *Clark's Shawnee Campaign of 1780* (Springfield: The Clark County Historical

Society, 1975), pp. 32-37; "British Account of Bird's Expedition," Draper Mss, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 29J19. Interestingly there are some indications that the Indians were more "disciplined" than might ordinarily have been the case. One participant reported their forming into a line of battle and advancing as a group against Clark's troops.

¹¹ Two European travelers' accounts which describe blockhouses are Francis Bailey, *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America in 1796 to 1797* (London: Bailey Bros., 1856), p. 145; and Isaac Weld, *Travels Through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, During the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797* (London: John Stockdale, 1807), Vol. II, pp. 178-179. Perhaps the best known drawing was in Thomas Anburey, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of America* (London, 1789). The blockhouses built by the U.S. Army at Fort Fayette at Pittsburgh in 1792 were built with the second story equal in size to the first story, since according to Isaac Craig projecting upper stories resulted in "very Insubstantial Buildings." See Craig to Henry Knox, January 15, 1792, Letterbook II-A, Isaac Craig Collection, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

¹² Two examples are the American blockhouses at Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island, Michigan, built between 1798 and 1800, and the West Point Blockhouse at St. Andrews in New Brunswick built in 1812. An especially useful description of British blockhouses in Canada is Richard J. Young, "Blockhouses in Canada, 1749-1841: A Comparative Report and Catalogue," *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, No. 23 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980), pp. 5-116.

¹³ See Patrick Sinclair correspondence in Brian L. Dunnigan, "The Post of Mackinac, 1779-1812" (M. A. thesis, Coopertown, N.Y., 1976), pp. 56-57.

¹⁴ This was similar to the old State Arsenal built in Columbus, Ohio, during the Civil War and the barracks at Fort Wayne in Detroit dating to 1848. See National Register of Historic Places Inventory and Nomination Form for the John Minor Dye Stonehouse, Troy Vicinity, Miami County, in the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Columbus. A "fortified house" in Pennsylvania was similar in design to the Dye blockhouse. See James W. Van Stone, "Fortified Houses in Western Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, Vol. XX, No. 1-2 (Jan.-June 1950), p. 23.

¹⁵ Thomas Lynch Montgomery, ed., *Report of the Commission to Locate the Site of the Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Wm. S. Ray, 1916), pp. 190-194; William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1960), pp. 236-7.

¹⁶ The concept of a palisade was, one fortification treatise indicated, "ancient even in ancient times" and thus had a long European precedent. See Lochee, *Field Fortification*, p. 25.

¹⁷ Montgomery C. Meigs, "Notes on Course of Field Fortification," Joseph M. Toner Collection, Box 267, Figure 18th, Library of Congress.

¹⁸ Robinson, *American Forts*, pp. 24, 26.

¹⁹ Robert S. Allen, "A History of Fort George, Upper Canada," *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, No. 11, pp. 65-66.

²⁰ J. C. Harrington, *New Light on Washington's Fort Necessity* (Richmond, Va.: Eastern National Park and Monument Assoc., 1957), pp. 38-42; James R. Hinds and Edmund Fitzgerald, "Fortifications in the Field and on the Frontier," *Periodical* Vol. IX, No. 1 (Spring 1977), pp. 48-49.

²¹ David A. Simmons, *The Forts of Anthony Wayne* (Fort Wayne, Ind: Historic Fort Wayne, 1977), pp. 10-11.

²² Anthony Wayne to David Strong, May 29, 1793, Wayne Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Vo. 26, p. 124; "General Orders for the Volunteers," September 4, 1794, Wayne Papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; Dwight L. Smith, ed., *From Greene Ville to Fallen Timbers: A Journal of the Wayne Campaign, July 28 - September 14, 1794*, Indiana Historical Society Publication, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1952), p. 250; Entry for September 18, 1794, Diary, Jonathon Taylor Papers, Filson Club, Louisville, Ky.

²³ Simmons, *Forts of Wayne*, pp. 15-18; Interview, Ronald Burdick, Defiance College, Defiance, Ohio.

²⁴ Charles M. Stotz, "The Reconstruction of Fort Ligonier: The Anatomy of a Frontier Fort," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, Vol. VI, No. 4 (1974), p. 63; Robinson, *American Forts*, p. 41.

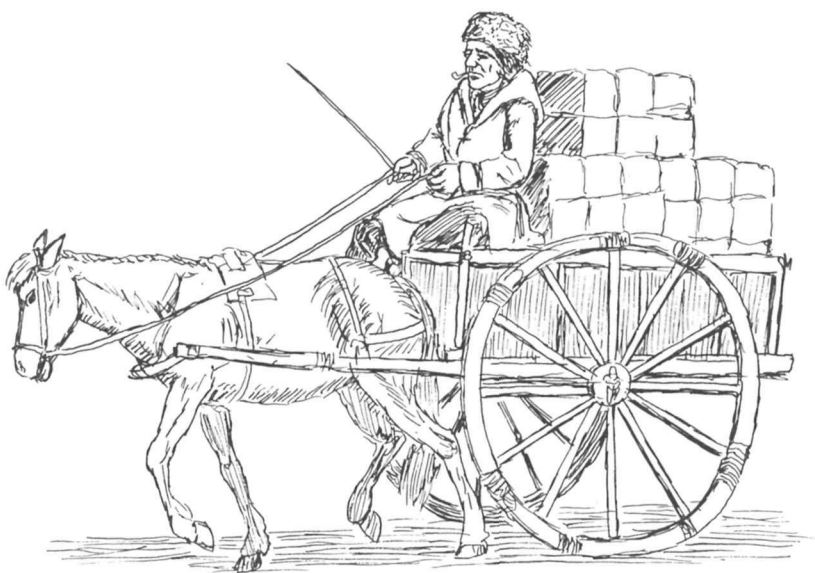
²⁵ Simmons, *Forts of Wayne*, pp. 19, 26.

²⁶ A Civil War era drawing is an excellent resource showing this type of activity. David H. Donald, ed., *Gone for a Soldier: The Civil War Memoirs of Private Alfred Bellard*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1975), p. 164; Meigs, "Notes on Field Fortification."

²⁷ Dennis H. Mahan, *A Complete Treatise on Field Fortification* (New York: Wiley and Long, 1836), pp. 53-60.

²⁸ Francis Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), Vol. 1, 417; David A. Simmons, "Fort Hamilton, 1791-1797; Its Life and Architecture" (M.A. Thesis, Miami University, 1975), pp. 3, 14.

**Selected Papers from the First and Second George Rogers Clark
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences**



Problems of Frontier Logistics in St. Clair's 1791 Campaign

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"An army marches on its stomach," so Napoleon is supposed to have remarked, and no commander would deny the accuracy of his observation. Commanding generals and their staff officers for centuries have expended more time and energy on supply problems — *logistics* in modern military terminology — than in worry about fighting the enemy.¹ Major General Arthur St. Clair had more than his share of supply troubles in his campaign against the Indians of the Northwest Territory during the summer and fall of 1791. There is no need to describe once again how St. Clair was delayed by shortages of food and equipment; rather it is time to consider what his troubles can reveal about the Ohio Valley frontier in the early 1790's and about the difficulties facing any commander who planned to march an army into the wilderness.²

The objective of St. Clair's expedition was simple enough in principle. He was to lead the largest military force the United States had ever assembled on the frontier, march northward from Cincinnati to the headwaters of the Maumee River (the modern city of Fort Wayne) and establish a strong fort there. With his army of 3,000 men, most of them newly recruited, he was to "persuade" the Indians of the region, about whom he was entirely without intelligence, to make peace and to surrender more of their lands. He was to accomplish this, if at all possible, without engaging in battle. Of course Brigadier General Josiah Harmar had failed with

heavy losses to accomplish a similar mission in 1790, but St. Clair was to have more than double his force.³

After the Revolutionary War the tiny United States Army relied entirely upon civilians for all of its supply functions. There was a quartermaster general in 1791, but he was a civilian, receiving the pay and allowances of a lieutenant colonel, but not the rank itself. In theory the chief responsibility of the quartermaster was the movement of supplies. Procurement was the joint responsibility of the War Department and the Treasury Department in Philadelphia, although the distinctions between purchasing and transporting goods were not clear in practice. The provisions contract was entirely separate from the other supply arrangements, and the contractor was responsible for the delivery of rations all the way to the army in the field.⁴

Arrangements for the campaign of 1791 were made in considerable haste. Congress did not authorize enlargement of the army until March. The regular army would be doubled to two regiments of infantry, and an additional 2,000 troops called "levies" would be recruited for six months of service. On March 4th, President George Washington appointed Arthur St. Clair to his old Continental rank of major general and placed him in command. St. Clair, 55 years old and in poor health, accepted this new assignment with his customary sense of duty, while at the same time continuing to serve as governor of the Northwest Territory.⁵

Secretary of War Henry Knox issued the formal orders for the campaign on March 21st. St. Clair was directed to advance from Fort Washington at Cincinnati to the Miami Indian villages on the Maumee River and there erect a strong and permanent fort. After accomplishing that objective he was to strike at the Indians if they had not yet agreed to submit. "Conflicts . . . may be expected," Knox warned, but he

also reminded St. Clair that "An Indian war, under any circumstances, is regarded by the great mass of the people of the United States as an event which ought, if possible, to be avoided." The enlarged army with all of its supplies was to be ready to leave Fort Washington by July 10th, although none of the new soldiers had yet been recruited.⁶

Samuel Hodgdon, late a colonel in the Continental Army, was appointed quartermaster general early in March. He was to act "entirely under (St. Clair's) orders, in all respects," but it does not appear that they worked together during the three weeks that they were both in Philadelphia. St. Clair left the capital on March 23rd, but delayed by illness in Pennsylvania and militia conferences in the Kentucky settlements he did not reach Fort Washington and assume command until May 15th. His "army" at the moment numbered just under one hundred men present and fit for duty. Quartermaster Hodgdon was to follow as soon as he completed the supply arrangements, but despite repeated orders to hurry he stayed on in Pennsylvania for six months. Until Hodgdon reached Fort Washington on September 7th, General St. Clair was in effect his own quartermaster.⁷

Everything about the expedition went wrong. Recruiting was slow and few of the new troops reached Cincinnati by the scheduled mid-July starting date. When they arrived in late August and early September they were poorly trained and badly disciplined, and the short-service levies in particular were inadequately equipped. Furthermore, there was great confusion as to when the six-month enlistment of the levies became effective, and by the time the expedition finally neared its objective they were beginning to demand their discharge.⁸

Throughout the summer St. Clair and his small force of regulars struggled to remedy some of their supply problems. There were only a handful of civilians living at Cincinnati,

and workmen of every sort had to be found among the troops — carpenters to make gun carriages for the artillery, harnessmakers, wheelwrights, coopers to make kegs for ammunition, gunsmiths to repair the fort's collection of damaged muskets, and so on almost without end. The field artillery carriages sent from Philadelphia were all unfit for service, and there were grave doubts about the quality of the gunpowder. Many officers claimed afterwards that their powder was defective, but it appears that it was originally of good quality and had been damaged by moisture from improper packing and then storage under leaky tents. All of the powder was in loose form, and soldiers had to be detailed for the dangerous and tiring task of filling howitzer shells and making up cartridges for both cannon and muskets. Iron for the camp kettles had been sent downriver from Pittsburgh in sheet form to prevent damage, and the army blacksmiths had to shape it into kettles. Knapsacks sent from Philadelphia split and leaked, and some were re-covered at Cincinnati with pieces of bearskin to make them fit for service.⁹

Hodgdon's agents purchased over 400 horses for the army in western Pennsylvania, although Kentuckians claimed later that better and less expensive horses were available in the area around Lexington. Horse breeding was a significant enterprise in the Bluegrass region only a few years after the initial settlement. The army's horses were badly cared for on the tedious trip downriver, delayed by the low water so common on the Ohio in late summer. When they reached Cincinnati they had to be turned out to feed, and most of them strayed into the woods because the quartermaster had provided neither hobbles nor horsebells. The hobbles were soon made from scraps of harness, and the smiths turned to making bells until their supply of brass was exhausted.¹⁰

Leather splints for the wounded were made on the spot,

"those that had been sent from Philadelphia being useless." As General St. Clair remembered it, "Fort Washington had as much the appearance of a large manufactory on the inside, as it had of a military post on the outside." The well-populated Kentucky settlements were not far away, but St. Clair looked across the Ohio only for militia support and for cattle to feed his soldiers. The army's official supply line ran by way of the Ohio River to Pittsburgh, and on eastward to Philadelphia, not to Lexington or Louisville where civilian merchants would have been able to supply a considerable part of the army's requirements.¹¹

The small frontier village of Cincinnati was unable to provide workmen or supplies in useful quantities, but it was able to furnish an ample supply of whiskey for the troops. A large proportion of the soldiers kept themselves drunk as long as their money or their credit would allow. On August 7th the troops not busy as workmen were ordered to march six miles north to Ludlow's Station, which St. Clair hoped would be far enough from Cincinnati to keep them reasonably sober. Equally pressing was the need to find fresh grazing for the cattle, for the only practical way to provide fresh meat was to move it along with the army.¹²

There was food enough for the soldiers while they were in camp, but when the army finally began its long-delayed advance at the end of September serious food shortages soon developed. By the terms of the provisions contract negotiated by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, it was the responsibility of the contractor to bring the rations forward as the army advanced. No arrangements had been made to use small boats on the Great Miami River, and so food was moved by land. This was easy enough for the beef which walked on its own power, but flour caused serious difficulties. Although the troops built a rough road through the forests

as they advanced, it was unsuited for wagons and only a few pieces of artillery moved on wheels. There were not enough packhorses to carry the flour and in any event many of them were too weak to carry full loads. There had been particular troubles with packsaddles, most of which were too large for the army's horses. Regulations called for one pound of flour a day for each soldier, and by mid-October the army was on half-rations. The immediate problem was inadequate transportation and incompetent contractor's agents, but even at the army's base in Cincinnati the food supply was no more than adequate. A village of only a few hundred civilian residents did not have enough food in reserve to feed an army of nearly 3,000 men, and only a few farms had been cleared in the immediate vicinity. Plenty of food was available in the Kentucky settlements around Lexington, some 75 miles to the south, and more could be found around Marietta, about 250 miles upstream from Cincinnati, but the contractor had his business connections in Pennsylvania and there was no effort to procure food locally even when supplies were short.

Every available horse had to be used to bring the flour forward to the troops, army horses and contractor's horses alike, and there was neither time nor money to purchase additional horses from Kentucky. Extra beef was issued to make up for the shortage of bread, but the militia in particular complained bitterly that they were not receiving the prescribed rations and desertions increased. On October 27th, the army was forced to halt and wait for a column of packhorses to catch up with the troops — every pound of flour had been issued. The next day 74 horses reached camp, carrying some 12,000 pounds of flour, a four-day supply for the army at full rations. The weakened horses carried only 162 pounds each, and because early frosts had killed the grass both horses and cattle were underfed. The army carried no forage, and

each evening as many as a thousand troops were sent outside the camp to cut grass and feed the livestock. All of the flour was issued to the troops immediately so that the horses could be used to carry the army's baggage. The horses usually assigned for baggage had been sent back to Fort Washington to bring up more flour.¹³

Late in the evening of October 31st, a large convoy of 212 horses arrived in camp, but they were so weakened that they carried an average load of only 150 pounds. That same day a party of 60 or 70 militia deserted in a body, threatening to seize the next supply column when they met it on the road, the only road linking the army to its base now some 80 miles away. Desperate in his worry about supplies, and determined also to discourage and punish desertion, St. Clair ordered his most trustworthy troops, the 300 regular infantry of the First Regiment, to pursue the deserters and to protect the supply convoy. The regulars never caught up with the fast-moving deserters, and because the contractor's agents were far behind schedule, they did not encounter the supply column where St. Clair had expected it.¹⁴

So it was that Arthur St. Clair faced the federation of northwestern tribes at dawn on Friday, November 4th, with his army for the moment properly fed, but with his best fighting men 30 miles down the road on a wild goose chase. The battle, known simply as St. Clair's defeat because he was as ignorant of the geography as of the Indian power, was the greatest loss ever suffered by the United States Army against Indians. Out of some 1,400 men actually engaged, St. Clair lost 647 killed and 280 wounded, and in addition some 30 of the women accompanying the army were killed and often mutilated as well. Three women and 470 surviving men covered the 29 miles to temporary safety at Fort Jefferson in less than ten hours, and the entire army returned to Cin-

cinnati within four days.¹⁵

So shocking a defeat, with such heavy loss of life, obviously engendered widespread outrage and demands for punishment of those responsible. The official investigation was conducted by a committee of the House of Representatives, the first Congressional investigation under the new federal Constitution. General St. Clair was soundly condemned by the newspapers, but the committee found that he had fought with great courage, despite a painful case of the gout. The committee looked very closely into the supply arrangements, for as St. Clair testified "the contractors had no system, and I had no quarter master." Some members of the committee were happy enough to make political attacks against Henry Knox and Alexander Hamilton.¹⁶

The provisions contract was impossible at best, and it was carried out in a manner both fraudulent and incompetent. Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton had years of service in both line and staff duties as a colonel during the Revolutionary War, and he must have realized the meaning of the contract he signed. But William Duer, the provisions contractor, was a political and business associate of both Hamilton and Knox, and he was in desperate need of government cash to satisfy the demands of his many creditors. Samuel Hodgdon, the quartermaster general, was also a close associate of Secretary Knox. Both Duer and Hodgdon were roundly condemned by the committee for their incompetence, but they escaped from the affair entirely unpunished.

The provisions contract had been signed on October 28th, 1790, by Theodosius Fowler, a New York merchant who claimed later that he had acted from the beginning as Duer's agent. Fowler supposedly transferred the contract to Duer on January 3rd, 1791, but his letter informing the War Department was dated April 7th and may well have been

written even later than that. For reasons he could never explain to the committee, Knox dealt with Duer as a principal long before he was officially notified of the transfer. But what was a piece of paper between good friends? Not only had Duer worked as Hamilton's assistant at the treasury, he and Knox were partners in a land speculation in Maine, and in fact they were together for weeks in New England trying to sell their land when they should have been attending to government business in Philadelphia. But even at best the contract was impossible, drawn up as it was months before the campaign was planned, obligating the contractor to deliver unspecified numbers of rations at unspecified locations throughout the country. The food making up a ration was carefully specified — a pound of flour or bread, a pound of beef or 12 ounces of pork, salt, and whiskey or rum. The prices were also very specific — 5.28 cents for each daily ration at Pittsburgh, for example, 6.83 cents at Cincinnati, but 15.28 cents as soon as St. Clair advanced his troops the six miles to Ludlow's Station. How even the most conscientious contractor was to transport tons of food through an area of active military operations was not explained. There is every reason to believe that the contract was intended more to aid Duer than to feed the army, for he was in desperate straits and in fact entered debtor's prison in March 1792.¹⁷

Colonel Samuel Hodgdon had extensive quartermaster experience while serving during the Revolutionary War, and then enjoyed a successful career as a merchant in Philadelphia. He found no existing organization when he assumed the position of quartermaster general in 1791, and he lacked the talent for rapid improvisation. Secretary of War Knox handled most of the clothing purchases himself, awarding contracts to the lowest and worst bidders. Hodgdon handled most other purchases, and had full responsibility for quality inspections

before the goods were sent west to the army. Many of St. Clair's officers came to curse Hodgdon for shabby clothes, leaky tents, shoes which wore through in less than a week, and even for sending a torn and undersized flag. Hodgdon's chief assistant was William Knox, the incompetent younger brother of the Secretary. Hodgdon was supposed to be three places at once — at Philadelphia dealing with contracts and inspection; at Pittsburgh buying boats and horses, arranging for the manufacture of howitzer shells, and sending everything down the Ohio River; and also at Cincinnati with the army headquarters. St. Clair complained for months and repeatedly ordered Hodgdon to hurry. Hodgdon's friend Henry Knox also prodded him to move westward: "I hope in God you have made other and more effectual arrangements or you will suffer excessively. . . ." Hodgdon remained at Philadelphia until June 4th, and then stayed on at Pittsburgh for nearly three months longer, reaching Cincinnati only on September 7th.¹⁸

When Representative Thomas Fitzsimons of Pennsylvania reported the findings of the investigating committee on May 8th, 1792, the blame was apportioned to the congressional delay in appropriating money for the campaign, to the lack of discipline and experience of the troops, to the lateness of the season, but particularly to "The delays consequent upon the gross and various mismanagements and neglects in the quarter master's and the contractor's departments."¹⁹

The report was widely published, and both Knox and Hodgdon petitioned for further hearings. They tried to shift the blame elsewhere, preferably to St. Clair. Duer published a letter from debtor's prison, but he was not released to present his defense. After Knox, Hodgdon, and St. Clair appeared to offer new evidence and to rebut previous testimony the committee considered the case once more. The final report

was presented by William Branch Giles of Virginia on February 13th, 1793. The committee, with substantially the same membership as before, corrected its findings in some minor details, but refused to alter its conclusions. The contractor and the quartermaster were chiefly to blame, and by implication their political masters, while the unfortunate general ended his military career defeated, but not dishonored.²⁰

In reality the logistical failures had not altered the outcome at all. The campaign was delayed, but not fatally. The troops ate less bread and more meat than they wished, but they were healthy enough to work at full strength. They wore out their shoes and some of their uniforms fell into rags, but they were always well enough dressed to keep marching. Their tents leaked, and they were indeed cold, wet, and miserable, but infantrymen are supposed to be able to endure cold, wet, and misery. On the fatal day the army had everything it needed to fight effectively except leadership, discipline and order, even the courage to fight a concealed enemy for two hours before retreat turned to panic. The frontier country lacked most of the necessities required to supply an army, but the army and the government made very little use of the food and livestock which the Kentucky settlements had in abundance.²¹ The supplies, so expensively, so painfully, and so slowly brought to Fort Washington were lost on the field of battle or abandoned along the road of panic-stricken retreat. Armies may march on their stomachs, but something more is required to make an effective fighting force. It was a painful and expensive lesson, but the army learned it well by 1794, as General "Mad Anthony" Wayne and his disciplined troops proved at Fallen Timbers.²²

NOTES

¹ The best introduction to the problems of military supply is Martin L. Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge, 1977). Eighteenth century European armies were expected to live off the countryside, usually at the expense of the peasants along the line of march. American supply problems and organization are well described by Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington, 1962).

² A good modern introduction to the Ohio Valley frontier is Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850* (New York, 1978), especially 64-87. There is no reliable full-length study of St. Clair's campaign, but there are good brief accounts in James R. Jacobs, *The Beginning of the U. S. Army, 1783-1812* (Princeton, 1947), 66-123; Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802* (New York, 1975), 107-16; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846* (New York, 1969) 20-29.

³ Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795* (Pittsburgh, 1940), 310-21; see also Jacobs, *Beginning of the U. S. Army*, 66-73, and Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, 22-24.

⁴ The provisions contract, which was the subject of dispute after the campaign ended, does not appear in any of the expected archival collections or published reports. St. Clair's manuscript copy was lost with his other headquarters papers in the battle, found by the Indians and sent on to the British authorities in Canada. Claus Family Papers, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. See also Jacobs, *Beginning of the U. S. Army*, 78-84 and Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 88-100.

⁵ Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington*, (New York, 1955). VI, 271-72; Arthur St. Clair, *A Narrative of the Manner in Which the Campaign against the Indians . . . Was Conducted* (Philadelphia, 1812), 1-26; William H. Smith, editor, *The St. Clair Papers*, (Cincinnati, 1882), II, 200-06.

⁶ *American State Papers: Indian Affairs*, (Washington, 1832-1861), I, 171-74; *St. Clair Papers*, II, 203-05.

⁷ *Amer. State Papers: Indian*, I, 188-95; St. Clair, *Narrative*, 89-91, 106-18, and *passim*; *St. Clair Papers*, II, 232-42.

⁸ Ebenezer Denny, *Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny* (Philadelphia, 1859); Winthrop Sargent, "Winthrop Sargent's Diary While with General Arthur St. Clair's Expedition against the Indians," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (1924), 237-73; John Stephenson, Orderly Book kept by Lieutenant John Stephenson while serving in the West, 1791-1794. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

⁹ *Amer. State Papers: Indian*, I, 139-62; Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1859* (N. p., n. d. [probably Cincinnati, 1859 or 1860]); "Winthrop Sargent Diary," 240-50; *St. Clair Papers*, II, 223-44. See also St. Clair, *Narrative*, 200-06.

¹⁰ St. Clair, *Narrative*, 41-44, 136-39.

¹¹ St. Clair, *Narrative*, 10-13, 195-200; "Winthrop Sargent Diary," 240-42; *St. Clair Papers*, II, 231-33.

¹² St. Clair, *Narrative*, 10-14, 84-86; Stephenson, Orderly Book.

¹³ Claus Family Papers; Denny, *Military Journal*; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 98-99; St. Clair, *Narrative*, 15-17, 31-32, 40-45, 270-271; Stephenson, Orderly Book.

¹⁴ *Amer. State Papers: Indian*, I, 137; *American State Papers: Military Affairs* (Washington, 1832-61), I, 37; Denny, *Military Journal*; St. Clair, *Narrative*, 26-28, 215-18; "Winthrop Sargent's Diary," 251-52.

¹⁵ St. Clair's official report of the battle is in *Amer. State Papers: Indian*, I, 137-38; Colonial Office Papers, Class C. O. 42, volumes 72-73, 82-83, 89, Public Record office, London, microfilm copy in Public Archives of Canada. Frequent dispatches from British officials in Canada, including intelligence reports about St. Clair's army and its Indian opponents, advised officials in London of conditions in the backwoods of North America. St. Clair's defeat is described in detail in his own *Narrative*, in Sargent's diary, as well as the sources cited in Note 2.

¹⁶ *Amer. State Papers: Military*, I, 36-39; Patrick J. Furlong, "The Investigation of General Arthur St. Clair, 1792-1793," *Capitol Studies*, V (1977), 65-86; [Philadelphia] *Gazette of the United States*, March 28, May 5, 9, 12, 1792; St. Clair, *Narrative*, *passim*.

¹⁷ *Amer. State Papers: Military*, I, 36-37; contract in Claus Family Papers; Furlong, "Investigation." For a somewhat hostile view of Henry Knox's and William Duer's tangled business affairs see the "Editorial Note" in Julian P. Boyd, editor, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, 1950-), XIX, 442-52.

¹⁸ *Amer. State Papers: Indian*, I, 139-62; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 93-100; St. Clair, *Narrative*, 10-14, 40-45, 84-142, 174-76, 193-229.

¹⁹ *Amer. State Papers: Military*, I, 38-39; [Philadelphia] *Gazette of the United States*, May 9, 12, 1792; St. Clair, *Narrative*, 59-79; *St. Clair Papers*, II, 269-99.

²⁰ [Philadelphia] *Gazette of the United States*, May 23, Nov. 17, 1792 and Feb. 16, 27, March 2, 1793; *Amer. State Papers: Military*, I, 36-44; Furlong, "Investigation."

²¹ Jacobs, *Beginning*, 105-21; Kohn, *Eagle and Sword*, 114-24; Risch, *Quartermaster Support*, 99-100.

²² Jacobs, *Beginning*, 124-88; Richard C. Knopf, editor, *Anthony Wayne: A Name in Arms* (Pittsburgh, 1960), 313-73; Prucha, *Sword of the Republic*, 29-40.

**Selected Papers from the First and Second George Rogers Clark
Trans-Appalachian Frontier History Conferences**



“Michel Brouillet, 1774-1838: A Vincennes Fur Trader, Interpreter, and Scout”

Richard Day

Curator, Old French House, Vincennes

In 1974 the only surviving example in Indiana of a French Creole style house was discovered at Vincennes. Unlike the familiar log cabin with its horizontal-log construction, the early French settlers in the Mississippi Valley brought with them from Canada a traditional style of architecture, consisting of vertical posts with a mud-and-straw daubing in between. The house at Vincennes was built about 1806 by a fur trader named Michel Brouillet. In 1975 the house was restored by the Old Northwest Corporation, a local historical society, and in 1976 the house was opened to visitors as “The Old French House — The Home of Michel Brouillet.”

Michel Brouillet was not a famous historical figure like George Rogers Clark or William Henry Harrison. If his house had not survived, it is doubtful that anyone — other than his descendants — would be aware that he even existed. However, this very fact of the original owner’s humble background is one of the principal charms of the Old French House. “This is the kind of house I probably would have lived in if I had been living back then,” is the comment frequently made by visitors to the house.

The Michel Brouillet who built the Old French House was the son of Michel Brouillet, Senior, who was born in Canada about 1742, and came to Vincennes in 1761.¹ The French commander at Vincennes, Louis Groston de St. Ange de Bellerive, granted Brouillet a verbal title to a farm near

Vincennes. Brouillet also seems to have had a trading post in the 1760's on the Wabash River north of Terre Haute, on a creek that still bears his name, Brouillett Creek.²

Vincennes prospered with the revival of the fur trade following the end of the French and Indian War. The population went from 75 inhabitants and their families in 1757, to 232 men, women, and children (and 168 "strangers") in 1767, to 621 inhabitants in 1778.³ Michel Brouillet, Senior, prospered as well. On May 1, 1773, Brouillet was able to pay 1,200 livres (about \$240) for a house of posts in the ground, with "a plank roof not yet completed," and many smaller buildings, on a lot 16 toises (about 102 feet) square, facing the main street of the town, St. Louis Street — modern-day First Street.⁴ The house stood on the south side of the street, halfway between modern Main and Busseron Streets, Brouillet bought the house from Charles Boneau, the father of Marie Elizabeth "Barbe" Boneau, the newly married Mrs. Brouillet. This was where Michel Brouillet, Junior, was born on 14 August 1774.⁵

On May 19, 1777, the new British Lieutenant-Governor of Vincennes, Edward Abbott, arrived and set out to make up for the previous 14 years of neglect by the Colonial administration. He trooped the inhabitants into the little log chapel of St. Francis Xavier, where they swore allegiance to King George and Abbott organized them into three militia companies of 50 men each. Then he built a fort, about 200 feet square, which he named in honor of Lord George Sackville, British secretary for the colonies.⁶ Michel Brouillet, Senior, was given a commission as a lieutenant in the militia.⁷ It was at this time that Brouillet was granted a farm on the "Chemin de Glaize" ("Lick Road") three miles northeast of town.⁸

Abbott, however, lacked money to purchase the gifts which visiting Indians expected to receive, and so, in February

1778, he was obliged to leave.⁹ The power vacuum did not long remain. In July of 1778, Col. George Rogers Clark's army captured the posts of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, and on July 20, 1778, influenced by representatives sent by Clark, 184 citizens of Vincennes, including Michel Brouillet, trooped into the chapel, renounced their allegiance to King George and swore to be true subjects of Virginia.¹⁰ Michel Brouillet was given a commission as a lieutenant in the militia from the Americans.¹¹

However, Henry Hamilton, the Lieutenant-Governor of Detroit, was determined not to let these posts remain in the hands of the rebels. Assembling a combined force of royal troops, Detroit militia, and some 350 Indians, he descended the Wabash. Lieutenant Brouillet had been sent up river to watch out for any approaching troops, but he unluckily fell into the hands of Hamilton's Indian scouts on December 15, 1778. Brouillet's pockets were searched and two commissions were found, one from Abbott and one from Clark. Hamilton was angered by what he considered Brouillet's duplicity: "I should not certainly have hesitated at the propriety of hanging this fellow on the first tree but for two reasons — I was unwilling to whet the natural propensity of the Indians for blood, and I wished to gain the perverted Frenchman by lenity."¹²

When Hamilton arrived at Vincennes the next day, he found the fort defended by only one officer and one man. The French militia elected not to fight against an overwhelming force. They stacked their arms and trooped into the chapel to kiss the silver crucifix and again swear allegiance to King George. Confident of his superiority, Hamilton dismissed most of his forces for the winter. This was a mistake, for in late February of 1779 Clark made a surprise attack and captured the fort after a brief siege. The French once more swore

allegiance to Virginia, and Brouillet was again made a lieutenant in the American army. Though he was less than five years old at the time, Michel Brouillet, Junior, later claimed he could well remember the events that occurred. From the porch of his home, little Michel could look down the street to the house on the corner of St. Louis and Jerusalem Streets (now First and Main), where Clark's headquarters was during the siege, and in front of which Clark's men killed five Indian prisoners.¹³

On June 24, 1779, Michel Brouillet, Senior, was promoted to Captain of Militia as a reward for his fidelity and courage.¹⁴ And later, in September, Captain Brouillet was put in charge of a company of militia, under Captain Gamelin, on an expedition to Ouiatenon (now Lafayette), to prepare the way for Clark's projected attack on Detroit.¹⁵ But the attack did not materialize, because of a lack of reinforcements from Virginia and the Kentucky settlements.¹⁶ The rest of the war at Vincennes consisted of isolated Indian attacks, and, what for the French was probably almost as bad, the requisitioning of supplies by Virginia troops, who insisted on paying for it with worthless Continental currency.

In 1785, Father Pierre Gibault came to live in Vincennes, and he set up the first school in town. From him Michel Junior probably learned to read and write, and on May 30, 1785, the ten-year-old Michel signed his name for the first time on the church records, as the godfather of his sister Genevieve.¹⁷ This literacy was to prove useful for Michel, as few of the local French could even sign their names.

In 1795, young Michel was hired as a clerk for Detroit fur trader Antoine Lasselle.¹⁸ The clerk had an important part in the fur trade, since much of the business was on credit, and accurate records were essential. Beside keeping the books at Lasselle's storehouse (interestingly, the same building which Clark had used as his headquarters), the clerk was expected

to go up river to check on the trading posts at the Indian villages. One of these would have been Hyacinthe Lasselle's post at the mouth of the Vermillion River.¹⁹

It may have been on one of these expeditions upriver that Brouillet met his Indian wife. According to family tradition, Brouillet was captured by the Indians, who were preparing to torture him, when he was rescued by a squaw.²⁰ This story may be true, since Indian women traditionally had the right of selecting prisoners, usually to replace dead family members. But it may also be that Brouillet took an Indian wife voluntarily, according to the "custom of the country." Taking an Indian wife was a good way to seal a trade alliance with the tribe and get preferential trading terms as well as receive advance warning of any hostilities that might be planned. Whatever the reason, it seems likely that in 1796 young Michel fathered the half-French, half-Miami Indian, Jean Baptiste Brouillette, who later became a noted Baptist preacher and the son-in-law of Frances Slocum, the "Lost Sister of the Wyoming."²¹

The next year Michel Brouillet, Senior, died and was buried on 6 January 1797, "amid tears and sobs," as the church record notes.²² By this time the family had moved to the corner of Second and Busseron²³ where Michel shared the home with his widowed mother, and after her death on October 8, 1802,²⁴ with his brother-in-law Joseph Barron.

With his arrival in Vincennes in December 1800, Indiana Territory Governor William Henry Harrison was faced with the task assigned him by President Jefferson of acquiring land from the Indians upon which to settle the land-hungry settlers. One tool that Harrison decided to use was the licensing of selected traders. In this way, he could eliminate or reduce the influence of traders who might counsel the Indians to resist American land acquisition.

On December 12, 1801, Michel Brouillet was given a license to trade with the "Miami" nation at their town of Renaud.²⁵ This was probably a mistaken reference to the Kickapoo village of Joseph Renard, near the mouth of the Vermillion River. On May 1, 1803, Harrison appointed Brouillet as an interpreter at the treaty that he held at Fort Wayne in June of 1803. The French interpreters were an essential element in the treaties to persuade the Indians to go along with the land cessions. In this treaty, the Indians ceded the land around Vincennes. Brouillet did not sign the actual treaty, but was probably active persuading the Indians. He may have tried too hard. On October 6, 1803, Brouillet was dismissed for "drunkenness, keeping bad company, and neglect of his duty."²⁶ This apparent black mark did not prevent the Governor on July 10, 1804, from granting Brouillet another trade permit with the Kickapoo Indians in their towns on the Vermillion, although he did write in the provision "All Spirituous liquors prohibited."²⁷

Nor did any doubts the governor may have had stop him from using Brouillet as interpreter in a treaty on December 30, 1805, at Vincennes with the Piankashaw Indians, in which they ceded a large part of eastern Illinois.²⁸ Probably few men other than Brouillet had the confidence of the Indians. Be that as it may, Indian resistance to Harrison's aggressive land-acquisition policies was beginning to develop.

In early 1805 the Shawnee Prophet began to preach that he had had a revelation from the Great Spirit, who told him that the Indian's salvation from the White Man could only come from turning away from the white man's ways and his goods, especially his whiskey.²⁹ Those Indians who had converted to Christianity were identified as witches in the power of the "Evil Serpent," and some were put to death. The new religion spread like wildfire among the Delaware on the up-

per White River. In late 1806, Moravian missionaries witnessed the persecution and martyrdom of some of their converts, and soon there was strong pressure for the missionaries themselves to depart. Helping them in their withdrawal from the White River to Cincinnati, from September 16 to November 12, 1806, was a French trader named "Bruje" (in German spelling) who had an Indian wife in one of the villages.³⁰ This may have been Michel Brouillet, whose Indian wife was recorded as being on the nearby Mississinawa River in the early 1800's.³¹

In any case, 1806 is also the year when Michel Brouillet took a French wife, at Vincennes: Marie Louise Drouet de Richerville, of an old Vincennes family.³² And, quite likely it was in 1805 or 1806 that Brouillet had the "Old French House" built on First Street, between Seminary and Hart Streets.³³ The house was probably built by a professional carpenter and was rather nice for its time, costing about \$450. In this house were born eight children, six of whom survived infancy, descendants of whom are yet with us.

On August 18, 1807, Michel Brouillet was appointed Captain in the first Battalion of the first Regiment of the Knox County Militia.³⁴ This was a position that he always treasured, and in later years he went by the name "Captain Brouillet." After his death, among his effects was listed an officer's sash, which he probably proudly wore during parades and militia exercises.

Soon Brouillet was in trouble again. The Quakers had undertaken to "civilize" the Indians on the Mississinawa, by teaching them White Man's methods of farming. The experiment was perhaps doomed to failure, but the Quakers chose to put some of the blame on Brouillet in a letter they wrote from Fort Wayne to the Secretary of War on 26 May 1808:

“There is little or no attention paid to the Law prohibiting the introduction of spirits liquors into the Indian Country, it is sometimes sold to the Indians at this Post yet no notice has been taken of it, the White people treat this Law with great contempt, many alleging that the sooner the Indians are destroyed the better, and scarcely care by what means this is effected, it would take up too much time to notice in detail the many instances where whiskey has been introduced into the Indian Country in violation of Law and in utter contempt of the public authority one case which has occurred since the arrival of Friends at Fort Wayne will be noticed as a specimen only — A certain Michel Brouillet of Vincennes was engaged by Governor Harrison to deliver a quantity of salt on Account of the US. at “Dennis’s Station” near the forks of the Wabash for the use of the Indians in the month of April last it appears that in ascending the river from Vincennes he disposed of *nineteen* Kegs of *Whiskey* at Massasinway and other Villages on the River to the Indians, carrying away in return an immense quantity of skins, and thereby depriving the Indians of the means of paying their just debts and [purchasing] necessities for their families — The scenes that were acted at Massasinway after the receipt of this liquor are well known to Friends and are unnecessary to detail here — this same Brouillet was once an Interpreter at the U.S. Trading House Fort Wayne and was dismissed therefrom for drunkenness and other bad practices.”³⁵

In April of 1808, the Prophet moved with his followers from Ohio to a new village called the Prophet’s Town, on the upper Wabash River, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River. He did this as much to remove his followers from the corrupting influences of the Whites as to, as he put it, keep a closer eye on the White/Indian border.³⁶ In August the Prophet paid a visit to Harrison at Vincennes, and reassured him of his motives to the extent that the governor supplied him

with grain to feed his starving followers. Harrison confided that the Prophet might even be a useful tool for the United States. Just to be sure, on May 16, 1809, Harrison dispatched a “confidential Frenchman who speaks the Indian languages” to reside at the Prophet’s Town for a few weeks to watch his movements and to discover his politics.³⁷ This “confidential Frenchman” was Michel Brouillet, and, this marked his entrance into the dangerous career of spying.

Harrison apparently received reassuring news from his spy, for on September 30, 1809, he conducted a treaty at Fort Wayne and purchased a large tract of land around Terre Haute.³⁸ By December, he was planning to dismiss Brouillet on his return from Prophet’s Town and replace him with his brother-in-law Joseph Barron, whom he considered a better interpreter.³⁹ However, in April of 1810 Brouillet brought alarming news from Prophet’s Town — the Indian forces were massing, perhaps for an attack on Vincennes.⁴⁰

In a letter to the Secretary of War dated 25 April 1810, Harrison reported:

I have lately received information from sources which leave no room to doubt its correctness, that the Shawnee Prophet is again exciting the Indians to Hostilities against the United States. A Trader [Michel Brouillette] who is entirely to be depended on, and who has lately returned from the residence of the Prophet, assures me that he has at least 1000 Souls under his immediate control (perhaps 350 or 400 men) principally composed of Kickapoos and Winebagos, but with a considerable number of Potawatimies and Shawnees and a few Chippewas and Ottawas.

The friends of the French Traders amongst the Indians have advised them to separate themselves from the Americans in this town lest they should suffer from the attack, which they meditate against the latter.

I have no doubt that the present hostile disposition of the Prophet and his Votaries has been produced by British interference. It is certain that they have received a considerable supply of ammunition from that source. They refused to buy that which was offered them by the Traders alleging that they had as much as they wanted, and when it was expended they could get more without paying for it and the former appeared to the traders to be the fact, from the abundance the Indians seemed to possess.”⁴¹

In early May, Brouillet was again dispatched to spy on the Prophet, and since the governor thought there was danger of Brouillet getting killed, he also sent another Frenchman as a backup.⁴² Things began to heat up: on June 14, Brouillet reported that there was 3,000 men within 30 miles of Prophet’s Town, who were constantly in council. Their plans were secret, but it was thought that they would at least try to prevent the American surveyors from getting on the newly acquired land.

The next day the boat that had been sent up river to carry the salt annuity as partial payment for the land, returned, having been sent back.⁴³ For the first time, Tecumseh, yet identified only as “the Prophet’s brother,” made himself noticed. He told the boatmen to load the salt back on the boat, and while they were doing so he seized them by the hair, shook them, and asked violently if they were Americans. (Fortunately they were French.) Then the Indians called Brouillet “an American dog” and plundered his store of its provisions. “Brouillettee is not known as an agent of mine by the Indians. He keeps a few articles of trade to disguise his real character,” commented Harrison. Obviously, however, the Indians were beginning to suspect him.

Harrison called out the militia, but the following week,

Brouillet arrived from Prophet's Town with reassuring news; he had erred in his estimate of the Prophet's followers: there were no more than 650, and the Prophet had been at pains to assure the governor that he had no hostile intentions. In order to reassure the populace, Harrison allowed Brouillet's report to be printed in the Vincennes *Western Sun* newspaper, thus uncovering Brouillet's role as a spy.⁴⁴ In the place of Brouillet, Harrison sent first Toussant Dubois and then Joseph Barron to Prophet's Town.⁴⁵ By this time the Prophet had had his fill of spies. As Barron stood before him, the Prophet glowered, and said, "Brouillette was here, he was a spy. Dubois was here, and he was a spy. Now you have come. You too are a spy." Then pointing to ground before him: "There is your grave, look upon it!" Fortunately, at this point Tecumseh came and reassured Barron that he would visit Vincennes in August to talk with Harrison.

However, Tecumseh's meeting with Harrison did not resolve the conflicts between the two cultures. Harrison told Tecumseh that he had bought the lands fairly, but Tecumseh called him a liar. The following year at another meeting, the results were equally bad. During this time, Harrison employed Brouillet as a scout, traveling about the remote settlements to calm the settlers, and to carry messages to the Prophet.⁴⁶ Finally, in September of 1811 Harrison decided to drive the Prophet from Prophet's Town and disperse his followers. What resulted was the Battle of Tippecanoe, fought on November 7, 1811.

Michel Brouillet was not at this battle. He was at Fort Harrison, near Terre Haute, and a few days after the action, he interviewed some of the Indians to get their account of the battle.⁴⁷

During the ensuing War of 1812, Brouillet was busy acting as a scout and carrying messages between Fort Harrison

and Vincennes. After the war, he served as Indian agent at Fort Harrison until 1819, when the Indians sold out their claims in central Indiana and moved west of the Mississippi, thus ending the fur trade in southern Indiana. After this, Brouillet settled down in Vincennes, and went into the grocery business, which seems to have mostly consisted of selling liquor.

As a kind of epilogue, in November of 1826, the remnants of the Shawnee tribe, with the Prophet and the son of Tecumseh, stopped at Vincennes on their way west.⁴⁸ They went to the tavern of Michel Brouillet at the corner of Second and Main because he could interpret their language. It is not recorded what they said.⁴⁹

On 26 December 1838, Captain Michel Brouillet died, and the next day, as the *Western Sun* reported, "his remains were committed to the silent grave with military honors and accompanied by a large concourse of his fellow citizens."⁵⁰ As noted earlier, Michel Brouillet was not famous and he did not change the course of events. Nevertheless, he certainly was a participant in an important and exciting period in the history of the frontier.

NOTES

¹ Michel Brouillet's age is given as 45 in the Vincennes census of October 18, 1787. Continental Congress Papers, item 48, pp. 167-173. The census also lists a Francois Brouillet, age 42, probably Michel's brother, and a Louis Brouillet, age 35. Jacob P. Dunn, ed., *Documents Relating to the French Settlements on the Wabash*, Indiana Historical Society Publications, II, No. 11 (Indianapolis, 1894), pp. 427 and 430.

² It is identified as "Riviere a la Brouette" in Thomas Hutchin's map of 1778, based on his visit to the area in 1767-8. Literally this means "River of the Wheelbarrow," but this is probably a mistake for "Riviere a Brouette," a common spelling for Brouillet. "A New Map of the Western Parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and North Carolina," by Thomas Hutchins, 1778, Plate XXIX of *Atlas of the Illinois Country 1670-1830*, ed. Sara Jones Tucker, (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Museum, 1942).

³ John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker, *Indiana to 1816; the Colonial Period*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society 1971), pp. 122, 164, 202n.

⁴ Copy of May 1, 1773, Deed to Michel Brouillet from Charles Boneau, RHC #180, in Byron R. Lewis Historical Library, Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana.

⁵ Records of the Parish of St. Francis Xavier, Vincennes, Indiana, Vol. I, 1749-1784, p. 20, in Lewis Library, VU.

⁶ Barnhart and Riker, pp. 178-179, 187.

⁷ John D. Barnhart, ed. *Henry Hamilton and George Rogers Clark in the American Revolution with the Unpublished Journal of Lieut. Gov. Henry Hamilton* (Crawfordsville, Indiana, 1951), p. 146.

⁸ Letter from Winthrop Sargent to Robert Buntin, October 23, 1797, in *American State Papers. Public Lands* (8 vols., Washington, D.C., 1834-61), vol. I, p. 87.

⁹ Barnhart and Riker, pp.188-189.

¹⁰ James Alton James, ed., *George Rogers Clark Papers, 1771-1781* (*Illinois Historical Collections*), VIII, (Springfield, 1912), pp. 56-59.

¹¹ Barnhart, p. 146.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Deposition of Michel Brouillette, August 22, 1823, in records of Francis Vigo Chapter of D.A.R., Vincennes, Indiana.

¹⁴ Copy of Commission from John Todd, County Lieutenant of the County of Illinois, Commonwealth of Virginia, in records of Francis Vigo Chapter, D.A.R., Vincennes.

¹⁵ Orders to Captain Michel Brouillet from Major J. M. P. Legras, Post Vincennes, September 29, 1779. Copy by Mrs. Eliza McKenny Brouillet for Mary A. Brouillette, in records of Francis Vigo Chapter, D.A.R., Vincennes.

¹⁶ *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XIX, p. 467.

¹⁷ John J. Doyle, *The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1686-1814* (Indianapolis, 1976), p. 51. Records of St. Francis Xavier Church, Vincennes, vol. I, p. 80, in Lewis Library, VU.

¹⁸ Deposition of Michel Brouillette, August 22, 1823.

¹⁹ Vincennes *Western Sun and General Advertiser*, February 25, 1843.

²⁰ H. C. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County* (Chicago, 1891), p. 125.

²¹ Otho Winger, *The Lost Sister Among the Miamis* (Elgin, Ill., 1936) p. 142, lists Jean Baptiste Brouillette as born in 1796. His obituary in the *Lafayette Courier*, July 6, 1867, says he was born at Fort Harrison (near present-day Terre Haute), "his father was a Frenchman, and was made a captive when a youth." In *The Journals and Indian Paintings of George Winter, 1837-1839* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1948) p. 44, George Winter recollects that J. B. Brouillette was the half-brother of the Brouillette who played the fiddle for the dances in Logansport in 1837. This would have been Michel Brouillet's son Michel Bradamore Brouillett who published *A Collection of Cotillions, Scotch Reels, &c. Introduced at the Dancing School of M. B. Brouillett*, (Logansport, Indiana, 1834,) a copy of which is in the Indiana Collection of the Indiana State Historical Library.

²² Records of the Parish of St. Francis Xavier, vol. II, p. 15.

²³ Knox County Deed Book "A," p. 175-6, in Knox Co. Recorder's Office, Vincennes, Ind.

²⁴ Records of the Parish of St. Francis Xavier, vol. II, p. 126.

²⁵ Charles B. Lasselle, "The Old Indian Traders of Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, vol. II, p. 7, and p. 13, f.n. 19.

²⁶ National Archives, Record Group No. 75, LR - 1803 I O.I.T., Fort Wayne Factory.

²⁷ Logan Esarey, ed. *Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Commission, 1922) vol. I, pp. 102-3.

²⁸ Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indiana Affairs. Laws and Treaties* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1903), II, pp. 89-90.

²⁹ R. David Edmunds, *The Shawnee Prophet* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1983), Chapters 1-3.

³⁰ Lawrence Henry Gibson, *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River, Indiana Historical Collections* (1938), vol. XXII, pp. 455-7, 627-8.

³¹ In the Lasselle Papers of the Indiana Historical Society is a list of Indians on the Mississinewa who owed money to the Lasselle fur-trading company, among them "la femme de Michel Brouillet."

³² The marriage was before a Judge, probably in 1806; it was re-validated by the church on 21 September 1811, according to parish records of St. Francis Xavier Church.

³³ Knox County Deed Book "A," pp. 241-3.

³⁴ William Wesley Woolen et al., eds. *Editorial Journal of the Indiana Territory, 1800-1816, Indiana Historical Society Publication*. (1900), vol. III, p. 141.

³⁵ National Archives, RG 107, F-1808, Secretary of War, Letters Received, "Memorandum for the Committee of Friends from Baltimore," Fort Wayne, 26 May 1808.

³⁶ Edmunds, Chapter 4.

³⁷ Esarey, vol. I, pp. 346-7.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 349-78.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 395.

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⁴⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 417-8

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 425.

⁴² *Ibid*.

⁴³ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴ *The Western Sun*, June 23, 1810.

⁴⁵ John B. Dillon, *A History of Indiana* (Indianapolis, 1859), pp. 449-50.

⁴⁶ Esarey, pp. 475-6, 480-1, 512, 537-8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 643-6.

⁴⁸ *The Western Sun*, December 13, 1826.

⁴⁹ "Recollections of Vincennes," by "Howard," *The Vincennes Weekly Western Sun*, January 25, 1868, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *The Western Sun*, December 29, 1838.

**Selected Papers from the First and Second George Rogers Clark
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Pioneer Stereotypes

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Our forebears of a century ago and more were not pluralists. Jane Addams and the A.P.A., Henry L. Dawes and Richard L. Pratt, Theodore Roosevelt and William Jennings Bryan, one and all sought a homogeneous American population. Deviations from the true American type were described and treated as stereotypes. And academics shared the trait. Frederick Jackson Turner, in the epochal essay to which we all owe so much, scattered stereotypes everywhere. Thus at one point Turner wrote, "The tidewater part of the South represented typical Englishmen" Elsewhere he quoted Governor Glenn of South Carolina speaking of the "'very industrious and thriving Germans'" in the frontier settlements.¹ Or, again, this time quoting John Mason Peck:

First comes the pioneer, who depends for the subsistence of his family chiefly upon the natural growth of vegetation, called the "range," and the proceeds of hunting. . . . He is the occupant for the time being, pays no rent, and feels as independent as the "lord of the manor." . . . [He] occupies till the range is somewhat subdued, and hunting a little precarious, or, which is more frequently the case, till neighbors crowd around . . . and he lacks elbow room. The preemption law enables him to dispose of his cabin and cornfield to the next class of emigrants; and to employ his own figures, he "breaks for the high timber," "clears out for the New Purchase," or migrates to Arkansas or Texas, to work the same process over.

Peck continues, identifying a second class of frontiersmen as purchasers of the land, who improve both the land and their

surroundings and “‘Exhibit the picture and forms of plain, frugal, civilized life.’” The third class Peck calls “‘the men of capital and enterprise,’” who buy the improvements of the second class. These men move further on to “‘become . . . [men] of capital and enterprise in turn.’”²

This three-fold division of the frontier population, or some variation of it, seems almost universal among observers of the frontier, whether travelers through the region, or later historians of the western expansion. Virtually all the reporters agree in their approval of the second and third types, while the first class suffers from a very unfavorable stereotype, as a sampling of historians will remind you.

Billington quotes an official observing the frontier around Pittsburgh after the fall of France, “[these pioneers] will remove as their avidity and restlessness incite them, . . . wandering seems engrafted in their Nature.” His description of Daniel Boone’s way of life makes Boone the archetype of the pioneer of Peck’s first class.³ Echoing Peck, Richard Bartlett speaks of the “‘Cutting-edge Squatter’ who left ‘for the tall timber’ while the buyer of his clearing picked up in making improvements where the original pioneer had left off.”⁴ In the course of several pages of description, Bartlett identifies the Scotch-Irish as the “stock frontier type”:

In America the counterpart of the Irishman whose land was stolen or taken by force was the Indian — the new guerilla fighter was the Indian brave. It was a simple matter to replace the Irish as objects of their hatred with the Indians, and the Scotch-Irish achieved this transfer with great success. . . . Here the men could abandon all self-discipline and become addicts of drink, for they early learned how to make corn into a potent liquid; peach brandy was a common product also. A second addiction was the hunt. To many a man, the wilderness, his gun, his dogs, and the

unrestrained freedom to hunt equaled the closest approach he knew to heaven on earth. They were a restless people, these Scotch-Irish, caring little for their farms, content to live in lean-tos — cabins still open to the world on one side — or completed cabins with earthen floors and few improvements.⁵

Most observers deplored pioneer morality. One reporter, admittedly prejudiced, “accused the back country folk of ‘swopping wives as cattle’ and estimated that 95 per cent of the young women he married were already pregnant. He further concluded that nine-tenths of the settlers had venereal disease.”⁶ E. P. Fordham, visiting Illinois in 1818, noted:

Their women never sit at table with them; at least, I have never seen them. I cannot speak in high terms of the manners or of the virtue of their squaws and daughters. Their houses contain but one room, and that used as a sleeping room as well by strangers as by the men of the family, they lose all feminine delicacy, and hold their virtue cheap.⁷

The Scotch-Irish, says Bartlett, were “distinctly anti-intellectual, . . . a mobile people, moving again and again and yet again. They were despoilers, creating farms without beauty. . . . They were a people who could work unceasingly for a time, then lapse into a long period of lethargy. . . .”⁸

To summarize, observers of the pioneers of Peck’s first class agreed on a number of traits. The most common of these was surely mobility. Fordham wrote, “‘This class cannot be called first Settlers, for they move every year or two.’” Don-dore quotes Sir William Johnson referring to their “‘wandering disposition.’”¹⁰

These nomads were basically hunters. “‘Their rifle is their principal means of support,’” Fordham declared, and George Flower agreed.¹¹

Johann Schoepf, in common with other observers,

recognized that the backwoodsmen were “vastly fond” of their way of life, although it meant that they became “indifferent to all social ties.” Neighbors, “by scaring off the game,” were “a nuisance.” Schoepf also noted another attraction. “They are often lucky on the hunt,” he wrote, “and bring back great freight of furs, the proceeds of which are very handsome.”¹² The “Cutting-edge” frontiersman was also the original Indian-hater. They were “‘a daring, hardy race of men, who live in miserable cabins, which they fortify in times of war with the Indians, whom they hate. . . .’”¹³

This “‘most vicious of our people’” was widely reported as “ignorant” and given to strong drink and brawling; they led “a roistering existence,” says Dondore.¹⁴ Their poverty, many observers agreed, derived from “‘their extreme Indolence.’”¹⁵ “‘Too many,’” Henry C. Knight thought, “‘instead of resting one day in seven, work only one day in six.’”¹⁶ “‘These men cannot live in regular society,’” declared Timothy Dwight, “‘They are too idle; too talkative; too passionate; too prodigal, and too shiftless; to acquire either property or character.’”¹⁷ Sir William Johnson deplored the influence of these men on the Indians. He said: “‘Many of these emigrants are idle fellows that are too lazy to cultivate land and invited by the plenty of game they found, have employed themselves in hunting, in which they interfere much more with the Indians than if they pursued agriculture.’”¹⁸ Buley endorses the charge of idleness, at least as applied to Indians.¹⁹

Most descriptions allowed that the backwoodsman was “‘impatient of the restraints of law, religion, and morality.’”²⁰ “[He was] content,” Buley has concluded, “with the rudest of shelters, a corn and pumpkin patch, a few hogs of the same bold disposition as himself.” He was “crude in speech and as naively unaware of his picturesque profanity as he was innocent of underwear or a daily bath.”²¹

Undoubtedly part of this reception — and perception — of the people of Peck's first class rested on revulsion at the nearly universal squalor of their persons and habitations. Their "miserable cabins"²² sheltered dirty women fostering filthy children all "pigged together" in a single room, along with whatever passersby happened along.²³ They were reportedly no more fastidious in their persons than they were in their dwellings. William Cullen Bryant traveled the Illinois frontier in 1832 and met some of these pioneers:

In looking for a place to feed our horses I asked for corn at the cabin of an old settler named Wilson. Here I saw a fat dusky woman barefoot with six children as dirty as pigs and shaggy as bears. She was lousing one of them and cracking the unfortunate insects between her thumbnails. I was very glad when she told me that she had no corn or oats.²⁴

For some, however, the revulsion might be mitigated if the proprietor turned out to be a man of substance. During a steamboat wooding stop, Edmund Flagg

entered easily into confabulation with a pretty, slatternly-looking female, with a brood of mushroom, flaxen-haired urchins at her apronstring, and an infant at the breast very quietly receiving his supper.

Flagg continued in this vein, but then added:

Subsequently I was informed that the worthy woodcutter could be valued at not less than one hundred thousand! Yet, *en verité*, reader mine, I do asseverate that my latent sympathies were not slightly aroused at the first introduction, because of the seeming poverty of the dirty cabin and its dirtier mistress!²⁵

Hear Bryant again:

At the next house we found corn and seeing a little boy

of two years old running about with a clean face I told John that we should get a clean breakfast. I was right. The man whose name was Short had a tall young wife in a clean cotton gown and shoes and stockings. She baked us some cakes, fried some bacon and made a cup of coffee which being put on a clean table cloth and recommended by a good appetite was swallowed with some eagerness.²⁶

"These men of the 'long knife' stock," Buley writes, "were not tenderfeet, for back of them was usually more than one generation of pioneers."²⁷ Solon J. Buck reached the same conclusion. "From the time it appeared on the continent their strain had been in the vanguard of settlement. As frontier conditions passed away in one place, they packed up their few possessions and pushed farther into the interior."²⁸ The "cutting-edge" backwoodsman, then, played a continuing role in the frontier movement.

I think these statements point us toward an understanding of these vanguards of American expansion. They represented a different culture, a different society, with obviously different values. "'If the People did not live up to other people's ideas, they lived as well as they wanted to,' " one of their defenders declared. "'They didn't make slaves of themselves, they were contented with living as their fathers lived before them.' "²⁹ One need not accept the identification of these people with Scotch-Irish, as Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney have proposed, to perceive that here was a different culture.³⁰

The charges against the backwoodsmen resemble in almost every particular the contemporary ideas about the Indians. This fact, of course, has not escaped the notice of reporters and historians of the frontier. Johann Schoepf, shortly after Independence, noted:

These hunters or “backwoodsmen” live very like Indians and acquire similar ways of thinking. They shun everything which appears to demand of them law and order, dread anything which breathes constraint.³¹

Fordham commented that this “daring and hardy race of men” resembled the Indians in “dress and manners.”³² It well may be that the dislike, often antagonism, expressed toward these pioneers derived from the same sources as the Indian-hating described by Roy Harvey Pearce. In the foreword of his *Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, Pearce writes:

I have tried to recount how it was and what it meant for civilized men to believe that in the savage and his destiny there was manifest all that they had long grown away from and yet still had to overcome. Civilized men, of course, believed in themselves; they could survive, so they knew, only if they believed in themselves. In America before the 1850's that belief was most often defined negatively — in terms of the savage Indians who, as stubborn obstacles to progress, forced Americans to consider and reconsider what it was to be civilized and what it took to build a civilization.³³

In many ways the “cutting-edge” frontiersman posed as much of a threat to the stability and respectability of “American society and culture” as the Indian, perhaps even more of a threat since a bath and a shave could eradicate the most obvious stigmata of the backwoodsman. These white Indians constantly reminded the established order how precarious “civilization” really was.

The above discussion leads to several conclusions. In the first place, the foregoing observations may serve to extend to the middle western frontier the notions about the Scotch-Irish that McWhiney and McDonald have applied to the South. Richard Bartlett would surely subscribe to this view.

Secondly, the unsympathetic picture of the first frontiersman has no doubt concealed many of the facets of his life and of the history of the frontier that a more sympathetic, less culture-bound investigation may disclose.³⁴ For instance, that these woodsmen did not aspire to be farmer-settlers may well explain why they declined to establish their homesteads on the prairies. Historians, by definition non-farmers, have generally implied that these pioneers' neglect of prairie locations represented a conservative, if not timid or even stupid, rejection of novelty, novelty that from our perspective is so obviously advantageous. On the other hand, these foresters knew wooded land. The forest held their game; it sheltered them from storms; it fed their herds of swine; it provided them with fencing and building materials. The prairie lacked almost all of these attractions. Finally, the coincidence of unfavorable judgments about both the first pioneers and their Indian neighbors invites contemplation of what this tells us about the dominant society's secret self. Roy Pearce's reasoning would suggest that the established order harbored considerable uncertainty about the merits of the work ethic and associated virtues.

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² Ibid., 19-20. See also Dorothy Anne Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description* (New York: Antiquarian Press, Ltd., 1961; first published 1926), 203-204.

³ Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion, A History of the American Frontier*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), 156, 162.

⁴ Richard Bartlett, *The New Country, A Social History of the American Frontier, 1776-1890* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 118. See also Robert E. Riegel, *America Moves West*, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1956), 79-80. Riegel really says little relevant to the stereotype except that he moved on leaving "land that had been at least partially cleared . . ."

⁵ Bartlett, *New Country*, 131-135. See also E. Estvyn Evans, "The Scotch-Irish: Their Cultural Adaptation and Heritage in the American Old West," in *Essays in Scotch-Irish History*, ed. E. R. R. Green (London: Kegan Paul, 1969), 82.

⁶ Ibid, 136.

⁷ Quoted in R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest, Pioneer Period, 1815-1840*, 2 vols. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1950), 1:28

⁸ Bartlett, *New Country*, 139-140.

⁹ Solon J. Buck, *Illinois in 1818*, 2d. ed., rev. and repr. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967, first ed., 1917), 103. See also *ibid.*, 101-102, where Buck says, "As frontier conditions passed away in one place, they packed up their few possessions and pushed farther into the interior."

¹⁰ Dondore, *The Prairie*, 123. See also Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:28.

¹¹ Quoted in Buck, *Illinois*, 103 (Fordham) and 104 (Flower). See also Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:24, 27-28, and James Flint, a traveler in Illinois in 1818-1820: "His farther operations are performed with his rifle. The formation of a settlement in his neighborhood is hurtful to the

success of his favourite pursuit, and is the signal for his removing into more remote parts of the wilderness." (Buck, 104-5.)

¹² Johann David Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784*, trans. and ed. by Alfred J. Morrison (Philadelphia, 1911), 238-239, quoted in Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1962), 194.

¹³ Buck, *Illinois*, 103; Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:27-28.

¹⁴ Dondore, *The Prairie*, 123, quoting Crevecoeur; William Cullen Bryant, New York, to Sarah S. Bryant, 23 Aug. 1832, in *Letters*, ed. Bryant and Voss, 1:357. Dondore also quotes Johnson calling these men "the most dissolute Fellows," p. 123. *Ibid.*, 203-204 for "the roistering existence."

¹⁵ Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The South from Self-sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," *AHR* 85, no. 5 (Dec. 1980): 1095-1096. See also Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:31.

¹⁶ McDonald and McWhiney, "The South," *AHR* 85, no. 5 (Dec. 1980): 1095-1096.

¹⁷ Dondore, *The Prairie*, 290, citing *Travels in New England and New York*, 4 vols., 1821. Vol. 2: 459.

¹⁸ Quoted in Dondore, *The Prairie*, 123.

¹⁹ Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:29.

²⁰ Dondore, *The Prairie*, 290. See also Schoepf, *Travels*, 238-239, quoted in Dunaway, *Scotch-Irish*, 194.

²¹ Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:27-28, and 31.

²² Buck, *Illinois*, 103.

²³ William Cullen Bryant, New York, to Sarah S. Bryant, *Letters*, ed. Bryant and Voss, 1:355-359.

²⁴ William Cullen Bryant, Jacksonville, IL, to Francis F. Bryant, 19 June 1832, *Letters*, 1:348-349.

²⁵ Edmund Flagg, *The Far West*, 83, from Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels*, 26:112.

²⁶ William Cullen Bryant, Jacksonville, IL, to Frances F. Bryant, 19 June 1832, *Letters*, 1:348-349.

²⁷ Buley, *The Old Northwest*, 1:27-28.

²⁸ Buck, *Illinois*, 101-102.

²⁹ McDonald and McWhiney, "The South," *AHR* 85, no. 5 (Dec. 1980): 1095-1096.

³⁰ Ibid. See also Evans, "The Scotch-Irish: Their Cultural Adaptation," in *Essays*, ed. Green, 80: "The Scotch-Irish preferred to make fresh clearings and move on once they had 'taken the good' out of the land. They were in effect practising their old 'outfield' system, adapted to a forested landscape of seemingly limitless extent. They were not tied to a plot of earth by a regular system of crop-rotation or any tradition of fruit-growing. The Indian methods of 'deadening' the woodlands served their purpose."

³¹ Schoepf, *Travels*, 238-239, quoted in Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish*, 194.

³² Buck, *Illinois*, 103.

³³ Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), ix.

³⁴ Clarence W. Alvord showed an inkling of this idea when he wrote, "The vanguard in the winning of the West has been composed of men of hardy nature with few social graces; and observers coming from better surroundings have frequently identified the external ugliness with the inward reality." *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics: A Study of the Trade Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1917), 2:237-238.

