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### Holding the line

the changing policies of the British Army with respect to Native Americans, 1759-1774

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David Watson

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Holding the line: the changing policies of the  
British Army with respect to Native  
Americans, 1759-1774

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## Introduction

The subject of this thesis is the meeting of the British Army and Native Americans on the colonial frontier in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War. More specifically, this is an examination of the policies and strategies adopted by the British Army when dealing with Native Americans. Much has been written on this period, yet the unusual role played by the British Army has often been simplified, perhaps because it eventually failed in its allotted task. Still, for a little over ten years, between 1763 and 1774 the British Army was used not to expand empire but to restrain its growth, and this deserves examination.

This study has several aims: firstly, to lay out the policies pursued with respect to Native Americans by both General Jeffrey Amherst, later Baron Amherst, the commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America at the end of the Seven Years' War and General Thomas Gage, who replaced Amherst as commander-in-chief in North America in 1763. The second aim is to answer the question of why these two Generals chose the policies they did, and what their goals were in doing so. The third aim will be to determine whether either Amherst or Gage changed their chosen strategies as the impact of their decisions became apparent. Finally, this study will examine how senior British officers responded to their orders concerning Native Americans, and the difficulties the army faced in carrying out those orders. The chronological structure of this thesis has been chosen in order to best answer these questions.

Chapter One is focused on the Seven Years' War, as it was the genesis of the Indian Department and the reason for the large-scale deployment of the British Army to America. This chapter also examines the key role the Seven Years' War played in shaping the attitude of the British Government towards the frontier and Native Americans. One of the lessons that the British took from the war was that the Colonies could not be trusted to handle Native American diplomacy, with the result that they created the Indian Department to take over that role. However, as a legacy of its wartime inception, the Indian Department was made subordinate to the commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America. This meant that in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, Jeffery Amherst, the commander-in-chief at that time, had the final say on the Indian policy adopted by both the Army and the Indian department. The policies he chose to adopt and the opinions that gave birth to them are the subject of Chapter Two. The foundation of all Amherst's dealings with Native Americans was his conviction that with sufficiently rigorous treatment they could be turned into hard-working vassals of the empire. Senior British officers on the frontier greeted this policy with a range of responses, and their varying reactions are detailed in Chapter Three. Amongst some senior army officers on the frontier there was a recognition that their position was inherently weak, and so they attempted to secure Native American acquiescence for the army's presence on the frontier rather than follow Amherst's policy, which insisted on economy above all.

Britain's occupation of the frontier, in breach of promises made to Native Americans during the Seven Years' War, eventually led to the

conflict known as Pontiac's War. Pontiac's War began in the spring of 1763, and was an almost successful attempt by a disparate group of Native Americans to remove the British from the frontier. Chapter Four covers the run-up to Pontiac's War, and details how a few senior officers tried engaging Native Americans with their traditional forms of diplomacy, while begging Amherst to change his stance on the treatment of Native Americans.

Amherst's failure to change tack helped to bring about Pontiac's War, and the differing strategies pursued by Amherst and his successor, General Thomas Gage, in the prosecution of the war are dealt with in Chapter Five. The key change brought about by Pontiac's War was the British Government's decision to replace General Amherst with General Thomas Gage in August 1763. Gage had managed to bring Pontiac's War to a spluttering end by 1765, with the result that he was now faced with the same problem that had confronted Amherst at the end of the Seven Years' War: how best to keep the peace on the frontier.

Gage's policies were a radical departure from Amherst's, and Chapter Six examines the new commander-in-chief's conception of Native Americans, and how his ideas shaped the policies he adopted. One of Gage's key beliefs was that Native Americans could be brought to accept British domination of North America, provided their concerns were listened to and, where possible, addressed.

Chapter Seven is focused on the army's attempts to carry out Gage's orders to resolve frontier conflicts and provide satisfaction to Native Americans with the limited powers at their disposal. Sadly, the powers

granted to the army by the Proclamation of 1763 and later the Mutiny Act proved to be insufficient for this task. In light of the army's failures and the growing Native American anger that resulted, Gage began urging his officers to permit Native Americans to revenge themselves on those who had wronged them. Gage argued that this should not just be the case for individual settlers but also for entire colonies, and expressed the opinion that since any conflicts with Native Americans were likely to be caused by colonial provocation, then it should be left to the Colonies to sort it out, without assistance from the British Army. This argument was the logical outcome of Gage's belief that Native Americans were rational beings who would only go to war if they felt it was in their interest. This change in policy, and Gage's role in bringing it about, is the focus of Chapter Eight. As the army struggled to make peace on the frontier both Gage and Whitehall came to the conclusion that this matter might best be handled by the Colonies themselves, provided they were made aware that the army would not be available to bail them out if they failed. Once adopted, this policy quickly proved a failure, resulting in Dunmore's War when, in April 1774, the colony of Virginia went to war with the Shawnee in an attempt to bolster its claim to the land that would become Kentucky. The rest of the chapter details the British Government's final attempt to take control of the frontier in 1774 with the Quebec Act, which was largely based on Gage's ideas and assumptions.

All too often, the accounts of the British Army's dealing with Native Americans consist of little more than the retelling of the same few events and personalities: Braddock's arrogance, Amherst's hatred, and the

infamous incident of the smallpox-infected blankets. The purpose of this work is not to deny these events or their importance, but to place them in context. The views held by Amherst, while shared by some in the British Army, were by no means universal and at times brought him into conflict with senior British officers.

This thesis is an examination of the methods adopted by the British Army to get Native Americans to accept the army's peacetime occupation of the colonial frontier. Obviously the conflict that would become known as Pontiac's War is included, but as it has been examined in many works, it is not the main focus of this study. Rather, it is the policies followed by the army during peacetime that are the focus of this thesis. As such it builds on the new military histories that examine not just the army's performance on the battlefield, but how it functioned as a society.

There have been many studies of the British Army and its role in colonial America. The archetype for most modern histories of the British Army is Fortescue's *A History of the British Army*.<sup>1</sup> This multi-volume book combines a history of the British Army in the field with a study of the British Army as an institution which spans over 200 years. Though Fortescue's conclusions now seem somewhat dated, its format of mixing military and social history has become standard in modern examinations of the British Army.

The new military history examines not only tactics and strategy but those issues that would have shaped the day-to-day lives of soldiers, such as disobedience, discipline, desertion, disease, food and entertainment.

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<sup>1</sup> J. W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (London; New York: Macmillan and Co., 1899).

Stephen Brumwell's book *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas 1755-1763* and Silvia R Frey's *The British Soldier in America* are two of the best recent works.<sup>2</sup> Both books provide detailed accounts of the types of men who made up the British Army, and the army rules and regulations that shaped their lives. Michael McConnell's *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775* also covers similar territory; while Frey and Brumwell concentrate on how the institutions of army life affected those who had signed up, McConnell focuses on the massive impact the environment of North America had on the British Army.<sup>3</sup>

While these books all provide detailed accounts of life in the British Army, they for the most part only touch briefly on the policies adopted by the army regarding Native Americans in the years after Pontiac's War. Even though McConnell's book provides an excellent account of nearly all aspects of army life on the frontier, Native Americans only warrant a few mentions, which are mainly concerned with the material aspects of relations with the British. For instance, there are accounts of soldiers exchanging their rations with Native Americans for fresh meat, and the adoption of Native American clothing by soldiers to replace the remnants of their uniforms, which were often little more than rags after years of hard service on the frontier.<sup>4</sup> Both these examples highlight the fact that interaction

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Silvia R. Frey, *The British Soldier in America: A Social History of Military Life in the Revolutionary Period* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Michael N. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775, Studies in War, Society and the Military* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 107 for trading food with Native Americans and pp. 64-65 for the use of Native American clothes. McConnell's discussion of relations between soldiers and Native

between the army and Native Americans was two-way, with the army often adopting aspects of Native American material culture as necessary, just as Native Americans had been adopting aspects of European culture for centuries.

The one historian in this group who does examine the relations between the British Army and Native Americans in any detail is Stephen Brumwell. In *Redcoats* he devotes a chapter to contact between Native Americans and British soldiers on the frontier, making fresh use of captivity narratives. Brumwell does well to point out that Amherst's vitriolic reaction to Pontiac's War, while important, should not be taken as typical of British responses to Native Americans, and that other officers displayed curiosity and fascination when confronted with the alien culture that Native Americans represented. However, the majority of the chapter is devoted to the experiences of those soldiers who were taken captive by Native Americans, and while their experiences are important it should be remembered that they represent exceptions to the norm. Though adopted captives played an important role as translators and cultural guides their experience was far removed from that of the ordinary soldier, and while a substantial number of soldiers may have attempted to desert by joining Native American communities, those who actually spent any length of time there always represented a minority. There are also questions about the

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Americans may be limited in this book because of his previous work: Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), which goes into some detail in this area. However, as discussed below, this is mostly from the Native American point of view.

reliability of captivity narratives as many may have been embellished when published to make them more exciting for the reader.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to its impact on the frontier, the British Army's presence in America also played an important role in helping spur the American colonists toward rebellion, and this is one of the themes of the work of Walter S. Dunn Junior.<sup>6</sup> In a trilogy of books Dunn examines the economic impact of the decision to leave a large number of British troops in America after the end of the Seven Years' War, with a particular concentration on the fur trade. Dunn makes a very convincing case throughout all three books that imperial mismanagement of the fur trade created a great deal of resentment among colonial merchants, helping to discredit British rule and precipitate the revolution.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the British Army played an important role in the post-war colonial economy by providing a market for American traders. Not only did the British Army have to supply the needs of its troops, it purchased large amounts of goods in order to supply Native Americans with presents. The huge total value of British Army purchases went a long way to balancing the trade deficit between the Colonies and Britain during the 1760s.<sup>8</sup> However, despite Dunn providing a comprehensive account of the role of the British Army in the fur trade, his books say little about the interaction between the army and Native Americans outside the economic sphere.

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<sup>5</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. p. 162 for reaction of British officers, pp. 168-179 for captives.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Scott Dunn, *Frontier Profit and Loss: The British Army and the Fur Traders, 1760-1764, Contributions in American History, 0084-9219 ; No.180* (Westport, Conn. ; London: Greenwood Press, 1998). Walter Scott Dunn, *The New Imperial Economy: The British Army and the American Frontier, 1764-1768* (Westport, Conn. ; London: Praeger, 2001). Walter Scott Dunn, *Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest* (Westport, Conn. ; London: Praeger, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Dunn, *Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest*. p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 148.



While there are few works concerned with relations between the army and Native Americans, the past 50 years have seen a rising trend in studies of the role of the British Army in American society, such as Shy's *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the coming of the American Revolution*. Like Dunn, Shy argues that the presence of the British Army in America was one of the main causes of the revolution.<sup>9</sup> This argument is developed further in Leach's *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans 1677-1763*, in which Leach argues that friction caused by the presence of British regular forces was a major contributing factor in bringing about the American Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Whenever American militias were serving with British soldiers both sides certainly found plenty to criticise in the other. The Redcoats were contemptuous of the colonial soldiers' lack of discipline and shabby appearance. The colonials on the other hand regarded the Redcoats as hidebound, obsessed with discipline and rank and unable to adapt to combat in the American woods. This animosity only increased when British soldiers were used in attempts to restore order to colonial towns and cities in the years preceding the revolution.<sup>11</sup>

The structure and society of the British Army affected not just its impact on colonial American society, but its conduct in wartime. Newer books on warfare examine how the cultures of the participants shape their chosen tactics and strategy, and how in turn the conflicts affected those who

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<sup>9</sup> John Willard Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (pp. x. 463. Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1965). p.423.

<sup>10</sup> Douglas Edward Leach, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763* (Chapel Hill ; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986). p.166.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p. 164.

participated. This is important for this thesis, as the situation that the British Army confronted in America in the years that it occupied the frontier was very much a creation of the Seven Years' War, and was further altered by Pontiac's War; therefore it is impossible to understand the actions of the British Army at this time without understanding these conflicts. War is also important culturally, and while much has been made of the role of warfare in some Native American societies it was of even greater importance in the unique society of the British Army, which was after all founded and maintained with the express purpose of prevailing in war. Any study that involves an examination of the army of a particular epoch must include some examination of the warfare of that period.

One of the best of these is Ian K. Steele's book *Warpaths*, a panoramic study of the evolution of warfare on the North American continent from 1510 until the end of the Seven Years' War.<sup>12</sup> While Steele provides a great deal of information on Native American culture and its impact on colonial warfare, his section on the British Army does not extend much beyond a discussion of Amherst's role in bringing about Pontiac's War and the tactics the British used against Native Americans. The role of the British Army on the frontier after 1765 is hardly mentioned at all, which is easily understandable in a book whose focus is on conflict.

Another good example of a book that examines how war is shaped by culture just as culture is shaped by war is Matthew Ward's *Breaking the Backcountry*. The book focuses on the impact that the Seven Years' War had on the society and inhabitants of the backcountry. Again, as in many

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<sup>12</sup> Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

other works, Ward sees the presence of the British Army as a major factor in bringing about the American Revolution. At the start of the war in America the British Army suffered a series of reverses which left a lasting impression on the backcountry folk who witnessed them. As events moved towards a break with the mother country many colonists remembered the feeble performance of the British Army, and concluded that if it came to war they had little to fear from them.

*Breaking the Backcountry* not only covers changes in backcountry society but also examines the tactics used by Native Americans in their fight against the British. Native Americans learned of the vulnerability of the colonial frontier to raiding in the early years of the Seven Years' War, and went on to repeat those tactics successfully in Pontiac's Rebellion.<sup>13</sup> Ward also reveals the important role psychological warfare played when the Indians confronted Braddock's Army. Native Americans proved highly adept at using psychological warfare to undermine the morale of British regulars: one of the tactics they used was to leave the mutilated bodies of soldiers in the path of the army, where they frequently terrified those soldiers who stumbled across them.<sup>14</sup> While the book provides an excellent insight into the ever-changing world of the backcountry, it often has little to say about the role of the army post 1765, despite the fact that the army continued to occupy the frontier for nearly another decade. In part, this thesis is intended to fill that gap.

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<sup>13</sup> Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press ; [London : Eurospan, distributor], 2003). p. 217.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. p. 55.

The role of the British Army is also examined in Fred Anderson's *Crucible of War*. This book covers not only the Seven Years' War but also Pontiac's War and the Cherokee War, and the repercussions of both. Anderson argues very convincingly that the increasingly uncompromising attempts by the metropolitan government to exercise control over the Colonies, which began in the Seven Years' War, and only increased afterwards, were responsible for bringing about the American Revolution. While his explanation of events up to 1765 is accurate, post 1765 Anderson comes a little adrift. He argues that Thomas Gage only wished to keep a symbolic presence on the frontier, and that he never believed good relations with Native Americans could be maintained. While Anderson is right to assert that Gage never saw the value in keeping large number of troops scattered on the frontier, he is completely wrong about Gage's attitude to Native American policy. As this work will show, even after Pontiac's War Gage was an optimist, and believed that through carefully-managed diplomacy Native Americans and empire could coexist.<sup>15</sup>

One of the most exciting recent developments in frontier literature has been the appearance of books which attempt to examine events from the point of view of Native Americans. Previously books that detailed the lives and customs of Native Americans did so from a European perspective, but now books such as Gregory Evans Dowd's *War Under Heaven* and Daniel Richter's *Looking East from Indian Country* not only attempt to explain the

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<sup>15</sup> Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (London: Faber, 2000). pp. 636-637.

structure of Native American society on its own terms, but examine European actions from a Native American perspective.<sup>16</sup>

In contrast to the often simplistic way in which the attitudes of the army have been portrayed, the attitudes of the Native Americans towards the army have been covered in some depth, particularly in works such as Gregory Evans Dowd's *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity 1745-1815*. Indeed, the dislike and hatred many Native Americans felt for the British Army and the empire it represented have been well documented. Yet throughout this period some Native Americans continued to travel to British forts to trade, and to obtain justice from the garrison commanders. If we assume that all Indians regarded the British Army with nothing but contempt this behaviour is hard to explain. Dowd's book proves he has an excellent understanding of how Native American societies functioned, and how the arrival of British troops affected those societies. It is the picture he paints of British soldiers as varying only in the degree to which they hated the Indians that lets him down. Dowd's view is too simplistic: it is incorrect to assume that all officers were motivated by a hatred of the Indian way of life.

Dowd's *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations and the British Empire* paints the army (almost to a man) as Indian haters driven by a need to dominate or destroy Native American society. Dowd believes that British commanders "embodied the drive for an empire of domination".<sup>17</sup> While this may have been the case for some officers, it was definitely not

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<sup>16</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore, Md. ; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). p. 64.

the case for all senior officers. This thesis will show that amongst those British officers who commanded posts on the frontier there were those driven by pragmatism who looked for peaceful ways to coexist, as well as those who sought only to dominate and demean those Native Americans they encountered.

Dowd's book contains many fine observations, and he clearly has a very deep understanding of how the Native American community in the Ohio Valley operated, but he has misunderstood the society of the British Army. In many places it seems that he has accepted the Native American view of the British Army's intentions as being the army's actual intentions. While it is important to understand how Native Americans regarded the British Army, their beliefs about them were often as wide of the mark as British speculations on the operation of Native American minds.

Another good example of history from a Native American perspective is *A Country Between the Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples 1724-1774* by Michael McConnell.<sup>18</sup> The transformation of historical representations of Native Americans from simple savages, who did little more than present an obstacle to European invasion, to autonomous actors with their own plans and aims has taken a long time, but is one of the greatest strengths of recent works. McConnell outlines the methods used by the various tribes of Ohio Indians to resist colonial expansion and retain their autonomy during the eighteenth century. Initially, this meant playing the British and French off against each other in the competition for empire. After the Peace of Paris, and the French surrender at the end of the Seven

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<sup>18</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*.

Years' War, this became impossible. Instead, various Native American headmen attempted to unite the Ohio Indians so that they might be strong enough to resist the British. McConnell does a very good job of explaining how the Ohio Indians tried to shape their own fate. Faced with the increasing encroachments of white settlers, inter-tribal diplomacy functioned to unite those who wished to use force to remove the squatters. Though the Ohio Indians never managed to bring about a pan-Indian alliance, they did almost succeed in removing the British from the Ohio Valley during Pontiac's uprising.

Richard White's *The Middle Ground* manages to examine the events of this tumultuous period from both a white and a Native American perspective.<sup>19</sup> White comprehensively rejects the old models of linear cultural collision where there were only two outcomes: either Native Americans would be conquered and assimilated by the Europeans or remnants of Native tribes could maintain some cultural autonomy by remaining apart from white society.<sup>20</sup> In either case colonial American society was left unchanged by its interaction with Native Americans.

White argues that this is a gross over-simplification, and that in the 'pays d'en haut' region around the Great Lakes first French and then British colonial society was greatly changed by its interaction with native society. Eventually, accommodation and some understanding were reached between Europeans and Native Americans through a process of "constructive misunderstanding". Though neither side was perfectly able to comprehend

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<sup>19</sup>Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, *Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. ix.

the language and rituals of the other, they found a middle ground in which a new language and new rituals arose to aid understanding. The efforts of people who had crossed the bridge between the two differing societies, such as French fur traders or adopted captives, created a language that mixed native metaphor and ceremony with European diplomacy and trade.<sup>21</sup>

The other important aspect of White's book is his portrayal of the changing attitudes of colonists and settlers towards Native Americans. White demonstrates that the defining of the Indian as the 'other' that characterised American policy towards Native Americans only began to develop around the time of the revolution.<sup>22</sup> At the same time White argues that British officials did actively seek to address Native American concerns in order to bring about a stable peace in the years following Pontiac's War. This is correct, but White says little about the officers of the army, whose job it was to do this on a day-to-day basis. He does discuss the attitudes of Gage and Amherst in some depth, but I believe his depiction of Gage is mistaken. White portrays Gage as following Johnson's lead when it came to Native American affairs, while in reality Gage had strong ideas of his own, and while working with the Superintendent for Indian Affairs played a large role in defining policy himself.<sup>23</sup> Gage, like Amherst before him, had a veto over actions suggested by Johnson, and there were always far more soldiers than Indian Agents on the frontier. At the same time as being in charge of these men on the ground Gage was also reporting to the ministers who had the final say on British frontier policy. Therefore, to

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. x.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. xv.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 290.



understand the evolution of Britain's approach to Native Americans, it is vital to understand the attitudes of military men like Gage.

Books by authors such as Dowd, McConnell and White do a great job of recreating the Native American viewpoint during the eighteenth century. Yet they do not do the same for the British Army. McConnell accurately describes the attitudes of Amherst, and mentions that Gage agreed more strongly with Johnson, but does not examine the opinions of other officers in any depth. Dowd attempts this, but I believe his attempt is unsuccessful. He brilliantly captures Native American ideas about the army, but his depiction of the army as driven by hatred and bent on domination is simplistic and inaccurate. For a more accurate view of what motivated the British army at this time it is necessary to turn to the new imperial history.

A recent development in the literature relating to Native Americans are books which attempt to relate Britain's treatment of Native Americans to the developing British culture of the eighteenth century. While books such as Sosin's (see below) have successfully linked imperial policy to the situation on the frontier, it is only recently that books have appeared that attempt to link eighteenth-century political and cultural theories with British frontier policy. Troy Bickham's *Savages Within the Empire* does a good job of linking policy with political theory and eighteenth-century ideas about Native Americans. Rather than arising from a desire to dominate, Bickham argues that the British system was "based on a consistent pragmatism and the drive for efficiency" with a "naïve tendency toward humanitarianism".<sup>24</sup> Bickham is right to argue that pragmatism and efficiency were at times the

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<sup>24</sup> Troy O. Bickham, *Savages within the Empire : Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). p. 115.

defining characteristics of imperial policy, and, as this thesis will show, occasionally the reasons behind the actions of senior British officers on the frontier. His assertion that “respect for American Indian power” as demonstrated during the Seven Years’ War was a foundation of imperial policy is true for many of those in Whitehall, but this thesis will show that respect for American Indian power was not shared by Amherst, and his view that Native Americans posed no threat to the British Army was decisive in determining his treatment of them. Gage, in contrast, was well aware of Native American military potential, and his respect for their strength is key to understanding the importance he attached to dealing with Native American grievances. Bickham’s claim of a tendency towards humanitarianism is less well-founded: while officers and politicians liked to talk of their desire to reduce suffering, when push came to shove they were prepared to sacrifice the lives of colonial Americans, Native Americans (and British soldiers, come to that) in order to preserve their vision of empire.<sup>25</sup>

Patrick Griffin makes a similar attempt to join ideology and policy in his book *American Leviathan*. Griffin argues that key to understanding the British frontier policy is the concept of subjecthood, and that the distinction between subjects and non-subjects was critical in terms of understanding how the British acted on the frontier. Griffin is certainly right to argue that it was culture and not race which defined peoples like the Native Americans in the British imagination. However, his focus on the line between subjects and non-subjects and the empire’s mission to civilise is misplaced. For a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. pp. 136-142.

start, it was Amherst who made the greatest efforts to “civilise” Native Americans, yet he was removed from power because his methods, and the war they created, were disapproved of. Furthermore, while men like Johnson may have liked to see Native Americans progress toward “civilisation”, it was hardly the focus of their efforts; pragmatic attempts to secure peace on the frontier were far more important to men like him and Gage. Furthermore, though the line between subjects and others was important, to focus exclusively on this is to ignore the huge role played by class in the British world-view. Every man in the army was a subject of the Crown, but Sir Jeffery Amherst would hardly have regarded the common soldier as his equal. Griffin’s theories are sound, but only go a little way in explaining the methods adopted by the British Army in the west, for while senior officers were no doubt aware of such theories as cultural progression, they were far more influenced by more immediate concerns.<sup>26</sup>

Looking at the historiography for race in the eighteenth century, there is a strong consensus centred on several key suppositions. The first of these is that the eighteenth-century understanding of race was very different from the way we understand it nowadays. Even nineteenth-century views on race differ a great deal from those held in the eighteenth century. The second supposition is that for most of the eighteenth century there was little consensus on what exactly race was, or what it meant. As described by Dror Wahrman, “the late eighteenth-century picture for race is less of sweeping unified clarity, and more transitional, multiplicity, and confusion.” That is to say no one model of racial difference was universally accepted by

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<sup>26</sup>Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007). pp. 11-28.

people in the eighteenth century. In fact the opposite is true: in the eighteenth century many competing explanations of racial variation existed alongside one another, and so when examining the period people's views on race should not be taken for granted.<sup>27</sup>

Though the concept of race was in flux, most authors agree that throughout the eighteenth century European ideas of civilisation gave Europeans a sense of superiority over indigenous peoples. There were some exceptions, such as those who believed in the ideal of the "Noble Savage" uncorrupted by decadent European civilisation, but for the most part Europeans believed they were superior because they possessed a superior culture. They felt that a civilisation based on settled agriculture and trade was infinitely more advanced than those they encountered made up of hunter-gatherers.<sup>28</sup>

Still, amongst many eighteenth-century commentators on race there was the belief that this situation was not necessarily permanent, and that native peoples could be civilised by their European betters. This theory existed for decades before it was codified by Scottish thinkers as the "four-stages" or "stadial" theory. According to the theory, all societies went through four stages. Stage one was hunter-gatherer, then pastoral, then agricultural and finally commerce. As it passed through each stage a society would find the morality and manners of its members improving. The way to

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<sup>27</sup> Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia ; [Great Britain]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) p. 169, Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2004) pp. 86-91. Wahrman notes that the idea that racial characteristics were innate and stable was accepted by only a minority of people in the mid eighteenth century.

<sup>28</sup> Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. p. 91-93 and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, CT: London : Yale University Press, 1992) pp. 60-61.

encourage a society along this path, eighteenth-century thinkers held, was through trade. This idea is explored in some depth in Griffin's *American Leviathan*. Griffin holds that cultural theories of development guided British treatment of Native Americans, and that many imperial policy makers, including Johnson, sought to "civilise" Native Americans using trade and Christianity.<sup>29</sup>

This thesis will show how the policies chosen by Gage and Amherst to deal with Native Americans are in line with these arguments. Both Amherst and Gage took very different approaches to dealing with Native Americans, which is evidence that they thought of them in very different ways, thus supporting the idea that racial ideas were neither fixed nor universal during the eighteenth century. Both Amherst and Gage, along with most British officers, were convinced of their superiority to Native Americans, and Amherst was determined to change Native American behaviour using trade when he was in charge of the frontier, all of which is consistent with the description of eighteenth-century ideas of race in the historiography.

While theories of race no doubt influenced some British officials, it should always be borne in mind that, as P.J. Marshall argues in *The Making and Unmaking of Empires*, "most of those who concerned themselves with empire were likely, however, neither to be doctrinaire theorists nor especially on the make". This was certainly true of certain senior army

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<sup>29</sup> Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*. pp. 7, 33-38 and Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier*. pp. 27-33.

officers in the Colonies, Gage and Amherst included.<sup>30</sup> Marshall emphasises both the importance of what came to be known as mercantile theory and the failure of the British Government to secure the co-operation of colonial elites in the clashes between Crown and Colonies that were the forerunners of the American Revolution. As my studies will show, both these factors are necessary for understanding the actions taken by British officers as they struggled to control the frontier.

In many ways these works build on the older imperial histories from historians like J. M. Sosin and Clarence Alvord, with Alvord, who argued for the role of theory in policy as the antecedent of Griffin's and Bickham's work, and Sosin, who emphasised the practical basis of many decisions, as the forerunner of Marshall.<sup>31</sup> Alvord is one of the few authors to note that ignorance played a large role in determining frontier policy; after all, few British policy-makers had ever been to the Colonies, never mind the frontier, and what information they did have was received from correspondents who were often pursuing a vested interest.<sup>32</sup> This thesis will show that ignorance and misconceptions about the frontier were not limited to those in Whitehall. Sosin too acknowledges that correspondence from the Colonies was crucial in shaping perceptions of the frontier in Britain, arguing that Gage played an important role in the formation of policy

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<sup>30</sup> P. J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). p. 10 for quote.

<sup>31</sup> J. M. Sosin, *The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763-1783* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967). And J. M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961). Clarence Walworth Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps" (2 vol. A. H. Clark Co.: Cleveland, 1917).

<sup>32</sup> Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps" p. 77.

through his letters to the ministers in London, something that is borne out by my own research.<sup>33</sup>

Another of the more recent works on empire is Eric Hinderaker's *Elusive Empires*. Hinderaker proposes that there were three different empires competing for dominion of the Ohio Valley. Each empire was associated in particular (though not exclusively) with a different power. There was the French Empire of trade (dealing mainly in furs); the British Empire of land; and finally the American Empire of liberty.<sup>34</sup> Although this theory is somewhat flawed it does highlight two of the most important forces shaping the history of the Ohio Valley: the fur trade and the quest for land. It was the money to be made from the fur trade and land speculation that helped draw both the French and the British into the Ohio Valley. The problem with Hinderaker's theory is that it is impossible to draw any clear line between the different types of empire. It was not just the French who were interested in the fur trade, and it was not only the British who were interested in populating the Ohio Valley. Still, Hinderaker does provide a great deal of information about the interactions between Crown and Colonies as they struggled with each other to dominate the Ohio valley, and this struggle will be one of the major themes of this work. For while the British Government wanted a halt to colonial expansion, the speculators and squatters in the Colonies were desperate for as much Native American land as they could get their hands on. Indeed, there were some senior officers of

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<sup>33</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 41 A report from Gage, while he was Governor in Montreal heavily influenced the Earl of Egremont, who was involved in the creation of frontier policy prior to the Proclamation of 1763.

<sup>34</sup> Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empire : Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). p. xi.

the army, Gage included, who would come to regard uncontrollable colonials as a greater threat to the empire than Native Americans.

The literature on the period between the end of the Seven Years' War and the start of the American Revolution is clearly extensive. However, the many excellent studies of the army in North America only briefly touch on the policies adopted by Gage after he succeeded Amherst. Amherst was not representative of all British officers, and even those books that do attempt to delve a little deeper into the army's treatment of Native Americans generally do not cover the period after 1765. Dowd's work, which does examine the attitudes of those in the army, does not paint an accurate picture, while the more recent series of works that attempt to place British frontier policy within an imperial context say little about the difficulties faced by those attempting to enact those policies, and instead focus their attention on the mindset of those within government. Therefore there is still a gap to be filled: a study of how the policy of the British Army changed in the years after the Seven Years' War and the obstacles facing the officers of the British Army as they struggled to carry out those policies.

This study aims to examine relations between the British Army and their Native American neighbours, and so wherever possible letters and diaries from soldiers and officers serving on the frontier have been sought out. Unfortunately, these are few and far between, partly as a result of the inevitable destruction of much of the material in the intervening 200 years. However, such records were few to begin with, as in the eighteenth century most soldiers were not literate, and very few left diaries or letters. With most of the soldiery illiterate, and the Native American society with which



they were mixing being non-literate, records of the feelings of the participants in the interaction between the army and the native inhabitants of the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region are rare, and records left by officers, such as the Gage Papers, provide the main source for this project.

Of course, all these sources need to be regarded carefully, and the sources left by those who came into contact with the British Army while they were on the frontier have been consulted wherever possible in order to get the widest possible picture of events. One large group of records comes from the Indian Department, who operated alongside, though not necessarily in step with, the army throughout their years at the edge of empire. Still, both groups were servants of the Crown, and the papers of traders, missionaries, and anyone else who moved through the backcountry in the relevant period provide a counter to the imperial perspective.

Just as there was a culture gap between the British Army and Native Americans, there was a similar, if slightly smaller, divide between the officers and men within the British Army. It follows that just as those who use European sources to view the society of Native American tribes must be constantly aware of the distorting effect of European attitudes and prejudices, so those using the writings of British officers to try to divine the attitudes of their men must be aware that these sources come with another set of assumptions and distortions.

One source that was considered for this project but eventually rejected was London newspapers and magazines. After an initial examination it was found that the content was simply too vague and inaccurate concerning events on the frontier to be of use for this study.

While articles about America may contain a wealth of information on attitudes of the press and the British public to America, they contain little on the attitudes of those actually in the Colonies.

It should be pointed out that some authors dislike the use of terms such as ‘tribe and ‘nation’ as they impose European concepts of culture and identity onto people who would have found them quite alien. However, these terms are still the best conceptual tools for dealing with the various cultural groupings of Native Americans, though they remain far from perfect. It is also worth noting that in the Ohio valley tribal affiliations were not as important as the village group. The Native American residents of the valley were migrants who had travelled there in order to escape Europeans or disease, and the chaos of relocation had often split or destroyed what had been single tribe communities. Consequently, when those that survived reached the valley they tended to settle in multi-tribal villages, with the result that the village often became the most important political unit. This was, in part, the reason that those attempting to form Indian federations had the most success in the Ohio Valley.

Throughout this study vague terms such as “Native American” and “the French” will be used. Of course such monolithic blocks of people existed only in the minds of British officials, but as this is a study of how British officials thought, such terms are appropriate. Indeed, the difference between perception and reality is one of the marked features of Britain’s drive to pacify the frontier, and it was the cause of many of their problems. In reality Native Americans were, and are, a hugely diverse set of peoples speaking many languages and with many cultures, who all followed separate

agendas; those called the “French” by the British were not quite so heterogeneous, but there was still a great deal of difference between the outlook of a Canadian voyageur and a military officer just off the boat from France.

Pontiac’s War will still be referred to as such simply to avoid confusion, even though it has long been established that he was not the main driving force behind the war. The term “Pontiac’s War” was made popular by Parkman’s *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War*, wherein Parkman lays the blame for the conflict almost entirely at Pontiac’s feet. This view has now been discredited but though Pontiac was not the originator of the war he did play an important role in the siege of Detroit and the subsequent peace.<sup>35</sup>

It was not Pontiac’s War but the Seven Years’ War that initially shaped Britain’s attempts to manage the frontier. The Seven Years’ War left an indelible impression on all involved. Colonists and Native Americans never forgot the redcoats’ initially disastrous forays into the backcountry, while the British never forgot the colonial intransigence that forced them to march into the backcountry in the first place. Neither could the British understand the colonial insistence of doing all they could to antagonise the region’s Native Americans. Both Parliament and the British Army became convinced that the only way to win the war and safeguard the empire’s frontier was to take control of it themselves. The war that brought

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<sup>35</sup> Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada*, Centenary ed. ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1922) p 190. Parkman claims that “But for Pontiac, the whole might have ended in a few troublesome inroads upon the frontier, and a little whooping and yelling under the walls of Fort Pitt.” This view is no longer accepted: for more on the origins of Pontiac’s War see Chapter Five.

them to this conclusion and the transfer of power from the Colonies to the Crown that resulted from it are the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter One

### Lessons of the Seven Years' War

The British Army had been sent to the American colonies by the British Government to fight the Seven Years' War, but it would also play a crucial role in the British Empire's relations with Native Americans in the years that followed. Both the British Army's role in Native American diplomacy and the factors which shaped it were the legacies of the Seven Years' War. By the time the conflict ended the British Army would not only be deployed on the frontier in unprecedented numbers, but it would be totally enmeshed in the complex world of Native American diplomacy.

The Seven Years' War not only brought the problems of Native American relations to prominence, but drastically altered the relationship between the Colonies and the British Government. Shortly after the war began the British Government became convinced that the Native Americans were too powerful to be ignored. The government blamed the British Army's failure to secure Native American allies on the Colonies' poor treatment of Native Americans. The main problems identified by the government were Amerindian land rights and the conduct of the fur trade. Certain that the Colonies could not be trusted to conduct successful relations with Amerindians, ministers decided that the Crown had to take direct control of Indian affairs. The British Government created the Indian Department, but as a legacy of its wartime creation it was made subordinate to the army, with the chief Indian agents forced to answer to the

commander-in-chief of the army in America. This meant that the senior army officer in America not only decided military strategy but controlled the conduct of relations with Native Americans. Meanwhile, while William Pitt's rise to power brought victory for the British, his strategies left the government with a mountain of debt. Victory also brought other problems, including how to manage and defend the large new territories added to the British Empire. It was decided that the British Army would occupy the area in a series of isolated garrisons, both to keep an eye on wary Native Americans and to protect the region from possible French counter-attack. The debt, the isolated garrisons and the subordination of the Indian Department to the army would all be critical in shaping events in the immediate post-war period, and were all a legacy of the Seven Years' War.<sup>1</sup>

By 1754 the French had been struggling to gain a foothold in the Ohio Valley for a number of years, but with only limited success.<sup>2</sup> In June 1752 the French had led 200 Ottawa and Chippewa in an attack on the town

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<sup>1</sup> Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps.", Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York ; London: Norton, 1988), Bruce Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783, Modern Wars in Perspective* (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001)., p. 114-194, Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*., pp. 175-272. The Seven Years' War produced a large body of literature covering both its course and its aftermath. Alvord's *Mississippi* and Sosin's *Whitehall* are growing long in the tooth but still provide a great guide to how Britain's governing elite perceived the war and the attempts they made to hold onto the spoils in the afterglow of victory. Both books do a superb job detailing the way the varying personalities of Britain's ministers and generals impacted on state policy. A more modern take on the conflict is the comprehensive *Crucible*, in which Anderson examines in detail the actions both political and military of all sides involved in the war. While this book provides an amazing close-up view on the war, to be understood it still needs to be placed in context. Lenman's *Colonial Wars* places Britain's actions against the states decades-long rivalry with its rivals in continental Europe. Meanwhile Steele's *Warpaths* traces the development of warfare in colonial North America, and examines how this was decisively changed by the arrival of unprecedented numbers of redcoats. Finally the crucial role by colonial politicians and Native American leaders, and the massive impact they had on the decisions made by the British, are covered in Jennings' *Empire of Fortune*.

<sup>2</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*.

of Pickawilany, a centre for British trade. This force succeeded in killing many Native Americans and one trader and taking another six traders captive. Terrified, most British traders fled the region, leaving the area's Native Americans with a choice of joining the French or starving.<sup>3</sup> In 1753, in order to better assert sovereignty in the region and create alliances with the Native Americans there, the French began to construct two forts in the Ohio Valley, Fort Le Presqu'isle and Fort Le Boeuf. This greatly alarmed Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia, who sent the French an order to withdraw, which they refused. Dinwiddie, who as well as being Governor of Virginia was involved in the Ohio Company, and knew that without a serious response the potentially profitable territory of the Ohio Valley could be lost to the French.

The Ohio Company was heavily involved in land speculation in the Ohio Valley. The company was keen for Virginian expansion to continue as they had acquired a grant of land of 200,000 acres near the "forks" of the Ohio. It was stipulated in the grant that the company could only hold on to the land if it were settled with a town and a fort.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when Dinwiddie managed to persuade a reluctant Virginian assembly that the French should be stopped from taking control of the Ohio Valley, his

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<sup>3</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 29-31.

<sup>4</sup>Eccles, W. "French Imperial Policy for the Great Lakes Basin." In David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001). pp. 28-31 and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. pp.121-122. The Ohio company possessed a grant for 200,000 acres of land near the forks of the Ohio, and Governor Dinwiddie was a shareholder, giving him powerful personal, as well as political, reasons to see the French removed from the Ohio. Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. pp. 10-13 details the start-up of the Ohio company. As Jennings wryly notes, though the Ohio Company was important, as it did a great deal to spur expansion in Virginia and Pennsylvania, it was not a success as a company, as it never made a profit.

actions were not solely inspired by the interests of the colony.<sup>5</sup> After some persuasion, the assembly voted money for a force to drive the French off, and to build and man several forts on the Ohio. Three hundred men were deployed to the area to guard against any more French incursions, while another force of around 400 men under George Washington set up camp some distance south of the forks of the Ohio, where the French were constructing what would become Fort Duquesne.<sup>6</sup>

Washington's men were engaged in the construction of their own fort when they were surrounded by 500 French troops. Washington knew that the ramshackle fort he was still constructing was not strong enough to protect his men, so he ordered them to take up positions outside it. There followed a bloody battle in which Washington lost over 100 men, but he was eventually left with little choice but to surrender as he had constructed his fort and positioned his men in a location overlooked by good firing positions.<sup>7</sup> The French returned him and his surviving men to Virginia, and then continued the construction of Fort Duquesne at the forks of the Ohio.<sup>8</sup>

With the failure of Washington's expedition, French control of the region was uncontested and they moved to dismantle all the British trading posts, while the area's Native Americans, with the exception of the Six Nations, who remained neutral, rallied round their new father.<sup>9</sup> The Amerindian inhabitants of the Ohio Valley had little choice in the matter:

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<sup>5</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Barker and Andrew Farmer, *Redcoat : The British Soldier in America* (London: Dent, 1976). pp. 182-183; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 33-35.

<sup>7</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 123.

<sup>8</sup> Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. pp. 182-183; Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 33-35 contains the most detailed account of the Virginian expedition to the Ohio.

<sup>9</sup> Eccles, W. "French Imperial Policy for the Great Lakes Basin." In Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. p. 34.



with no British traders left to supply them, they were entirely dependent on the French for the goods necessary for their survival, while those who refused to join the French ran the risk of attack from Canada's Indian allies.<sup>10</sup> Still, most Native Americans were heartily sick of attempts by Virginia, Pennsylvania and other colonies to cheat them out of their land, and were happy enough to tolerate the French presence, if it meant they could retain control of their hunting grounds.<sup>11</sup>

The British Government was deeply concerned that so many Native Americans should side with the French in the struggle for the Ohio Valley, and made enquires as to the reason why. Representatives of the Crown in the Colonies reported that letting the Colonies manage diplomacy with Native Americans themselves had been a failure. Amid the chorus of voices expressing dissatisfaction with colonial Indian diplomacy were William Shirley Governor of Massachusetts, Robert Dinwiddie Governor of Virginia and Edmund Atkin, a Charleston Indian trader and a member of the governor's council in South Carolina.<sup>12</sup> These colonial notables no doubt hoped that if they could persuade the government that a new organisation was needed to manage Indian diplomacy, then they would be first in line for a post in whatever organisation the government created to take over the task. This was certainly the motivation of Governor Hardy of New York, who modestly suggested that rather than allowing all the Colonies to conduct relations with Native Americans separately the Governor of New York

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<sup>10</sup> Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. pp. 190-194.

<sup>11</sup> W. J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1983). pp. 357-358.

<sup>12</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 134.

should be in charge of Indian diplomacy, while other governors were prohibited from interfering.<sup>13</sup>

While few other colonials would have agreed with Hardy's proposal that he should be in charge of Amerindian relations, most did concede that colonial autonomy was a major obstacle to smooth relations with Native Americans. Many amongst colonial elites argued that as a result of allowing the Colonies to conduct their own separate Indian diplomacy, they ended up competing with each other and so giving contradictory and conflicting messages to Native Americans, resulting in chaos and confusion. Most of those who had dealt with Native Americans agreed that the only end to this was to have one unified imperial system of Indian diplomacy.<sup>14</sup>

Initially, the government was reluctant to take responsibility for diplomacy with Native Americans and instead tried to force the Colonies into cooperating. The result, the Albany Congress of 1754, was a disaster. The Board of Trade had ordered the Colonies to co-ordinate Indian policy, and to that end New York had organised a conference for colonial delegates. "Virginia refused to attend, and the other Colonies pursued conflicting local interests; the chief result of the 'Albany Congress' was a plan for provincial

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<sup>13</sup> Governor Hardy to the Lords of Trade, 16 January 1756, taken from Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan and John Romeyn Brodhead, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, Procured in Holland, England and France*, by J. R. Brodhead, Agent ... Edited by E. B. O'callaghan. With a General Introduction by the Agent. (Vol. 12, Etc. Documents. Translated and Compiled from Original Manuscripts ... By B. Fernow. General Index [of Vol. 1-10], Etc.) (14 vol. Albany [N.Y.], 1856). Vol. 7 pp. 2-7 hereafter NYCD.

<sup>14</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 30.

confederation so inappropriate to the crisis that neither the Board of Trade nor any American government gave it serious consideration.”<sup>15</sup>

After the failure of the Albany Congress the British Government was convinced that the only way to guarantee the successful conduct of relations with Native Americans was by taking direct control. In 1755 the Board of Trade ordered the appointment of two Indian superintendents, one for the northern half of the Colonies and one for the southern, with the boundary between their jurisdictions marked by the Ohio River. Edmund Atkin received the appointment for the southern district and William Johnson received the commission for the north.<sup>16</sup> In this Johnson was no doubt heavily indebted to Thomas Pownall, who acted as the “eyes and ears” of the Board of Trade in America, and who had recommended Johnson be given the role.<sup>17</sup> This was a significant break with the past, when colonies such as Virginia and Pennsylvania had negotiated directly with Native Americans, and so was a direct transfer of power from the Colonies to the Crown.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Shy, John. “The American Colonies in War and Revolution 1748-1791” in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). pp. 304-305.

<sup>16</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 29.

Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. p. 76. Johnson had been the Indian agent for New York Governor George Clinton Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 468. Atkin was not a very active Indian superintendent and often left the conduct of diplomacy to the governors in the south.

<sup>17</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p.79-80. Pownall had been an observer at the Albany Congress, was very well connected, and via his older brother, John, who served them as secretary, was closely linked to the Board of Trade. Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. p. 95 and pp.116-117. Jennings calls Pownall the “eyes and ears” of the Board of Trade.

<sup>18</sup> Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. p. 37, pp.116-118.

The superintendents' immediate mission was to draw off those Native Americans allied with France, and if possible, persuade Native Americans to fight with the British. These goals were designed to aid the British Army in their mission to remove the French from the Ohio Valley, so it is not surprising that the superintendents received their first commission from the army. In 1756 Johnson received a new commission from the Crown to replace the one he had received from the army, but his salary and allowance were still paid by the senior army officer in the Colonies, and so despite his new commission Johnson still remained dependent on the military. Indeed, as a legacy of the Indian Department's wartime creation, the army would retain control over its finances for the next twenty years, giving the general in charge of North America a very effective veto over the actions of the Indian Department.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the personality of those chosen to command the British Army in the Colonies would have as much, if not more, impact on relations between Britain and Native Americans as the ideas of those placed in charge of the Indian Department in the post-war years.

The creation of two Indian superintendents was part of the British Government's effort to take more direct control of the war. In defence, as with Indian affairs, Whitehall had first hoped the Colonies would be able to solve their problems themselves, given a little prompting. When news of Washington's surrender and the construction of Fort Duquesne reached the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State for the Northern Department, he

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<sup>19</sup> Lords of Trade to secretary Fox, 17 February 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 p. 35 The commission was sent on 13 March 1756, and Johnson was allotted a salary of £600 per annum. Ibid. pp.75-79 provides a good account of Johnson's rise to prominence.

feared that “All North America will be lost” if the government did not act.<sup>20</sup> Newcastle at first wanted the colonists themselves to take the offensive, as he believed that, with their knowledge of the backcountry, they would be more effective than British soldiers, and with the government sitting on a budget surplus of £100,000 colonial troops would also be affordable without any increase in tax, unlike an expensive expedition of British regulars.<sup>21</sup> The Colonies themselves were not as quick to see the benefits of such a strategy, and most proved reluctant to provide both the men and support necessary for any substantial military operations. New England was an exception, and provided troops for a successful campaign that led to the capture of Nova Scotia. Despite this success, the Colonies’ apathy left Newcastle with few options, and so with the help of the Captain General, the Duke of Cumberland, he persuaded the king to allow two regiments from the Irish establishment, under the command of Edward Braddock, to be dispatched to Virginia.<sup>22</sup>

Braddock was not just sent out to command the two regiments that went out with him, he was also appointed to the new post of commander-in-chief of North America. This, like the appointment of two superintendents to manage Indian affairs, was part of the British Government’s attempt to take direct control of the war effort, which was now seen as the only solution to the Colonies’ inability to co-operate.<sup>23</sup> Under the new system, the Colonies would still be able to raise troops, but they would be under the

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<sup>20</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783*. pp. 89-90.

<sup>22</sup> Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. pp. 122-124.

<sup>23</sup> Bickham, *Savages within the Empire: Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. pp. 120-122.

control of the new commander-in-chief.<sup>24</sup> Whitehall hoped that by centralising the chain of command for the military and Indian Department, damaging intercolonial conflict could be eliminated and colonial resources more easily mobilised. While this strategy did bring some success in Indian affairs, it completely failed in its aim of speeding up the mobilisation of colonial martial potential.

Attempts to requisition aid for the imperial war effort were not aided by Braddock himself, who upon arrival in America managed to alienate any potential allies he may have had among the Colonies or Native Americans with his arrogance. In order to pay for his expedition, Braddock ordered the Colonies to contribute to a fund for the war effort that he would control. The Colonies refused, and to exacerbate the situation they suggested that the British Government should pay the costs of the adventure. Not only did Braddock find it impossible to secure funding from the Colonies, but material help was not forthcoming either. Braddock's plan was first to take Fort Duquesne and then move on to Fort Niagara, which required cutting a path through the dense American woods to enable the army's heavy guns to be brought to bear on the French forts. This was a monumental task, for which Braddock needed the Colonies to supply labour, wagons and supplies, all of which they initially refused. It was only through the heroic efforts of Benjamin Franklin that Braddock was able to secure enough assistance to set out.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. p. 116, Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 39-40.

Braddock fared little better in his meetings with Native Americans. When he confronted potential Amerindian allies at Fort Cumberland in the spring, he treated them rudely and ordered that their families be sent home, as he felt Native American women were distracting his troops. As soon as their families left, many Native American warriors joined them in order, they claimed, to safeguard them, though no doubt many were simply appalled by the general's arrogance. At this time the primary concern of those Native Americans who met with Braddock was the future of their hunting grounds in the Ohio Valley. There were some Native Americans who would have been happy to assist the British to drive the French away, had they been assured that once the dust settled they would remain in control of the valley.<sup>26</sup> When asked by Shingas, a Delaware headman, about British intentions, Braddock told him twice that the British would "Inhabit & Inherit the Land". With such an incentive, it is unsurprising that only eight Native Americans agreed to act as scouts for Braddock's march.<sup>27</sup>

Braddock's column planned to march to the forks of the Ohio and remove the French they found there, but they were instead routed and destroyed when they stumbled into a combined force of French and Native Americans. The battle took place only a few miles from Fort Duquesne, after Braddock had crossed Turtle Creek, a spot which would have made an ideal spot for an ambush. It was perhaps the successful crossing of the creek that caused the British to lower their guard, for prior to this every effort had been made by the army to avoid surprise. Whatever the reason, the British

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<sup>26</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp. 94-96.

<sup>27</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 40-42.

were clearly not prepared when they blundered head on into a combined force of French and Native Americans. It was not an ambush; the French had hoped to take the British by surprise, but the two forces had collided before the French could get into position. While regular French troops blocked the road, the confused and disorientated British were surrounded by Native Americans and Canadians who took cover in the woods, from where they were able to fire on the column with near impunity. Thomas Gage bears some share of responsibility for the catastrophe, for it was his duty to scout the high ground to the right of the army, and had he done so, first contact with the French might not have come as such a shock. Panic quickly overtook the regulars, who had never fought Indians before, and who seemed to completely lose their wits upon hearing Native American war cries. Officers and colonial Americans seem to have fared better, and the high proportion of officers killed at the battle has often been cited as proof of their bravery, but may have simply been evidence of their high visibility, as mounted on horseback they made easy targets. For all their efforts, there was little the officers could do to regain control of their men. Indeed, the men at the front of the column suffered many casualties from fire emanating from their comrades behind them. This was the bitter fruit of the British Army's stringent training, for once one soldier of a platoon fired, his comrades could not help but follow their training and do the same, even when it was fellow redcoats standing in front of them.<sup>28</sup> Under fire from within and without, the demoralised regulars soon decided that if they wanted to survive fleeing was their only option, and so the rout began.

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<sup>28</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 102.



Braddock, who acted bravely during the battle, was fatally wounded, a third of the men were killed, and almost all their equipment was lost.<sup>29</sup>

Disaster on land was compounded by disaster at sea, when the Royal Navy failed to stop large numbers of French reinforcements arriving in Canada. The arrival of more French troops and the destruction of Braddock's regulars made it clear that a much larger force would be needed if the British were to achieve any kind of victory in this war. Despite the fact that it was the redcoats who had given the worst showing during the Braddock debacle, the British Government felt that the reinforcements should be composed mainly of regular soldiers. "The Redcoats were coming to North America."<sup>30</sup> The dispatch of a large number of British troops to the Colonies was a pivotal moment in North American history, and the redcoats would come to play a vital role in subsequent events both on the frontier and the seaboard.

In December 1755 the order was given that ten new regiments were to be raised in Britain, and substantial bounties were offered as an incentive to recruiters. A month later Parliament passed a bill offering commissions to foreigners in North America provided they were not Roman Catholic.<sup>31</sup> It was hoped that as well as British settlers and American-born colonists, this

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<sup>29</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. pp.129-130 Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 189 Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 42-45. Ward argues convincingly that the redcoats may have been so terrified as a result of Native American psychological warfare. Native Americans, allies to the French, had managed to pick off many British soldiers who had wandered far from their comrades during the march, and they took care to leave their burnt and mutilated bodies in the path of the advancing British. Judging by the results this tactic seems to have excelled, in making the British regulars too terrified to fight effectively when confronted by Native Americans in battle.

<sup>30</sup> Barker and Farmer, *Redcoat : The British Soldier in America*. p. 6 and Shy, John. "The American Colonies in War and Revolution 1748-1791" In Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century*. p. 304.

<sup>31</sup> Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. p. 8.

would attract French, Swiss and German recruits from the ever-increasing population of Britain's North America dominions. Those recruited to the regular army in America joined the 62<sup>nd</sup> Royal American Regiment, which soon became the 60<sup>th</sup> due to a restructuring of the army. In October 1756 the strength of the army was set at 49,000, with 30,000 troops to remain in Great Britain and 19,000 in the Colonies.<sup>32</sup>

The destruction of Braddock's force had left the backcountry almost undefended, and resentful Amerindians were quick to take advantage. The raiding parties who ravaged the frontier were made up of Native Americans, occasionally accompanied by Canadian officers of the *Troupes de la Marine*. This was a parallel war fought by many nations, including the Ottawa, Mingo, Shawnee, Miami and Delaware. These tribes were not French allies fighting for French goals, but Native Americans fighting for freedom and security; most of all, fighting to end the threat to their land posed by the populous British Colonies. The aims of French and Indians overlapped, allowing co-operation, but French influence over their co-belligerents was tenuous and heavily dependent on the goods and supplies they provided to Native Americans from their forts.<sup>33</sup>

French supplies allowed Native Americans to undertake a prolonged campaign of guerrilla war against the British frontier settlements. French victuals fed the raiders and their families, while French powder kept their guns firing, removing the need for Native Americans to retire from the field to hunt and trade for these necessities. Freed from the requirements of

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<sup>32</sup>H. C. B. Rogers, *The British Army of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977). p. 25.

<sup>33</sup>Eccles, W. "French Imperial Policy for the Great Lakes Basin." In Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. p. 36.

hunting, the Native American fighters were able to hit the outlying British communities again and again, striking quickly, killing indiscriminately and rapidly fleeing with their new captives. These raiding parties moved quickly through their woodland home, easily evading all but the most determined or lucky attempts to bring them to battle. The destruction they wrought was incredible: Captain Dumas, the French Commander at Fort Duquesne, reckoned that the frontier war had cost the British some 2,500 casualties, men, women and children, before the end of 1756.<sup>34</sup> That year nearly 500 scalps and 200 prisoners were brought to Fort Duquesne with most thought to have come from Pennsylvania, and many more would have gone straight to Indian villages.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this destruction, the Colonies were surprisingly slow to react, further underlining the desperate need for regular troops to be stationed in North America. This was because their assemblies were dominated by landowners from the tidewater, who felt little sympathy or compassion for their suffering backcountry brethren. In 1756 Maryland raised only 250 provincials to defend the colony. The Virginia assembly authorised £1,500 to raise a Virginia regiment, but pay and conditions for soldiers were so bad that even after the introduction of conscription for the poor and destitute the regiment remained under half strength. In Pennsylvania it was only after the Quakers in the assembly removed

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<sup>34</sup> White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. p. 244.

<sup>35</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 162.

themselves from politics, rather than compromise their pacifist principles, that action on a scale commensurate with the problem was taken.<sup>36</sup>

The Colonies decided that the best way to make the backcountry defensible was to build a chain of forts the length of the frontier. In theory the forts would be solidly constructed and well manned, with the gaps between them regularly patrolled, in order to prevent Native American raiding parties slipping past them. In reality the forts were normally lightly manned stockades, incapable of defending themselves or mounting the active patrols necessary to make an effective barrier. Some of the forts were so useless that they actually became targets for raids, as when in August 1756 Fort Granville in Pennsylvania was burned to the ground and the entire garrison made prisoner.<sup>37</sup> In reality, the only security lay in stopping the raids, which would require either cutting off the supply of French goods or negotiating with the area's Native Americans. With the first attempt to bring peace to the frontier through force of arms being a disaster, the British began to realise that the only hope for victory lay in a combination of negotiation and military might.

The role played by Native Americans in the destruction of Braddock's column, and the mayhem that unfriendly Native Americans were inflicting on the frontier, brought home to the British Government the need for better communication with Native Americans, and better conflict resolution.<sup>38</sup> With the Crown attaching increasing importance to relations

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 159-160.

<sup>37</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*, White, *The Middle Ground : Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. p. 198.

<sup>38</sup> Hinderaker, *Elusive Empire: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. p. 144; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crown, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*. Ph. 95 and 116, Jennings.

with Native Americans, it became vital for the government to know what motivated them, and so it began to investigate what the Colonies had done that so displeased the Native Americans they dealt with.

In 1756 Secretary of Indian Affairs Peter Wraxall reported to William Johnson that “an unaccountable thirst for large Tracts of Land” was greatly weakening British “Interest & Influence” amongst Native Americans. Wraxall singled out the patents of “Keyderosseras, Connojahary and the Oneida Carrying Place” as the chief causes of unease for the Iroquois. The secretary theorised that the “Indians suspect we have different views; [and] that to restore their Lands to their natural state and ... [reinstate them] as Proprietors of the soil are not the ends we aim at.”<sup>39</sup>

The other major cause of Native American anger identified by Wraxall was the dishonest actions of fur traders. Wraxall’s summary of the situation in the late 1750s was pithy and accurate. “Our Power by the Indians was little respected—Our Intentions greatly suspected—they were exasperated by the avarice and dishonesty of our Indian Traders.”<sup>40</sup> Johnson agreed wholeheartedly with Wraxall, and made sure the government was well aware of this via a barrage of letters to London.<sup>41</sup>

The government was quick to act on this information, and one month after Johnson received his commission from the Crown, the Lords of Trade instructed Governor Hardy of New York to try to get the patents of Keyderosseras, Connojahary and Oneida vacated and annulled, by

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<sup>39</sup> Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 8 March 1756, p. 42 Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 10 November 1756, pp. 169-170 both NYCD Vol. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Wraxall to Johnson, 9 January 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 14-29.

<sup>41</sup> Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 8 March 1756, p. 42 Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 10 November 1756, pp. 169-170 both NYCD Vol. 7.

persuading the Legislature to pass a law to that effect.<sup>42</sup> These patents covered huge areas of land, and had caused much anger amongst those Native Americans whose hunting they would have destroyed if occupied.

In response to government instructions, the army and the Colonies started making real efforts to ease Native American fears over the future of their land. The Treaty of Easton played a vital part in removing the Ohio tribes from the French sphere of influence. The process that led to the treaty began with the Quakers, who were anxious to end the fighting in Pennsylvania, but army officers would play an important role in bringing that process to its conclusion. The Quakers and their intermediaries had arranged a meeting with the Eastern Delaware in 1757. At the meeting the Pennsylvanians were represented by their governor, William Denny, who managed to secure the neutrality of the Eastern Delaware by promising to look into their concerns. This included the Delaware's biggest bugbear, the 'walking purchase', through which the Iroquois and Pennsylvanian proprietors had connived to cheat the Delaware out of a vast amount of land.<sup>43</sup>

By easing the Delaware fears, the 1757 meeting paved the way for another conference the following year. The driving force behind this second conference was General Forbes, a British officer. Forbes was about to march on Fort Duquesne, and he knew that the only way for his mission to stand a chance of success was to neutralise the Shawnee and Delaware warriors, who would otherwise oppose him. Unfortunately, Forbes was a very sick man, and so his efforts to bring about reconciliation with these

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<sup>42</sup> Lords of Trade to Governor Hardy, 19 March 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 77-78.

<sup>43</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp. 205-206.

tribes were restricted to organising the conference through instructions to his subordinate, Governor Denny. Forbes was well aware how necessary this meeting was, and also how vital it was that the Pennsylvanians made some concessions to Native American concerns. As he wrote in his letter to the conference, “giving up sometimes a little in the beginning will procure you a great deal in the end”.<sup>44</sup> Concern with making progress on the frontier had led to the army taking a direct hand in Indian affairs.

Fortunately, the Pennsylvanians heeded this advice. The Penn family returned all the land west of the Allegheny Mountains to the Iroquois, the British promised not to establish permanent settlements in the Ohio region after the war, and Governor Denny agreed to negotiate directly with the Delaware in future, as opposed to the traditional method of going through the Iroquois. These concessions managed to allay the fears of the Ohio Indians, and so secure their neutrality for Forbes’s march on Fort Duquesne.<sup>45</sup>

Following the capture of Fort Duquesne, renamed Fort Pitt, Colonel Henry Bouquet assured the Indians there in December 1758 that it was not the intention of the king to deprive them of their lands.<sup>46</sup> These assurances, along with the promise issued at the Treaty of Easton to reopen trade with

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 268-279.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. Forbes quoted on pages 274 Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." p. 121 The Treaty of Easton was the first practical measure on the road to a boundary line. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 49 The treaty was a strong pledge on the part of the Crown; previous treaties had been vague and lacked precision. James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York ; London: Norton, 1999). pp. 253-282, provides an excellent and detailed description of such treaty meetings, the role of various participants, and the importance of backroom negotiations, where most of the work of creating agreement actually went on.

<sup>46</sup> The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for Empire 1754-1763, L. H. Gipson *Political Science Quarterly* p. 94.

the Native Americans of the Ohio Valley provided they withdrew support for the French, helped in neutralising some of those who had been allies of the French, but it was only after the taking of Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario in 1759 that British diplomatic efforts really began to bear fruit. Fort Frontenac had been a major supply depot for French Native American allies, and its loss seriously curtailed the ability of the French to supply arms and presents to Native Americans. As a result many previously loyal Native Americans left the French, most adopting a position of neutrality. These Native Americans now found the prospect of French defeat much more palatable thanks to the reforms forced on the British Colonies by the Crown.<sup>47</sup>

British success at Fort Frontenac and elsewhere was the result of the rise to power of William Pitt. Until Pitt took control, British war aims had been limited and confused. Pitt decided that not only was it feasible to push the French out of Canada, but it was vital. It would not be easy to take Canada, but funded by an ever-growing national debt, a flood of arms, ammunition, artillery and men began to flow into the American colonies.<sup>48</sup> The Colonies had proved unable to coordinate their defence on their own, and unwilling to do so under British command, and so Pitt treated them as partners who had to be persuaded to co-operate.<sup>49</sup> In order to take direct control of negotiations with the Colonies himself, Pitt greatly reduced the

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<sup>47</sup> Parmenter, Jon. W. "The Iroquois and the Native America Struggle for the Ohio Valley, 1754-1794" in Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. p. 110 and Richter, Daniel K. "Native Peoples of North America and the Eighteenth Century British Empire" In Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century*. p. 363.

<sup>48</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 142.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 453-4.



power of the commander-in-chief in North America when he replaced Lord Loudoun and gave Major General James Abercromby the role. The main form of persuasion used by Pitt in order to secure the necessary colonial contribution to the imperial war effort was, in effect, bribery.<sup>50</sup>

Pitt initiated a series of subsidies that offered reimbursement for nearly all colonial assistance to the war effort, with the exception of levy money and pay. In response the Colonies contributed men and supplies more readily than ever before, though at a cost to the British of £1,544,830.<sup>51</sup> The subsidies of colonial troops had finally managed to secure the rapid and extensive colonial action that the British had been struggling for since the beginning of the war. Prior to this, raising colonial troops for use in the war had proved incredibly difficult, as colonial assemblies would only vote limited funds for limited forces, and would often attach stringent conditions for their use. Furthermore, those troops that were enlisted would only agree to serve for a limited term and under their own officers; all of this made coordinating operations with colonial forces very difficult.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the paltry number of troops supplied by the Colonies previously, by 1758, as a result of Pitt's lavish spending, the British were able to field 44,000 men in America.<sup>53</sup> Weight of numbers, naval power and successful Native American diplomacy enabled the British to slowly turn the tide. In 1759 Major-General James Wolfe captured Quebec and won posthumous fame, with an assault from the St Lawrence River. In

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<sup>50</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 208.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 209.

<sup>52</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. pp. 33-35.

<sup>53</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 215.

1760 Montreal was taken by the British, making the French position untenable, and New France surrendered.<sup>54</sup> Pitt's strategy of stuffing the Colonies' mouths with gold had worked, but it left behind a legacy of debt that would haunt the British for decades to come. The cost of the war for the British was enormous: £5.5 million was spent on the army in America, almost £1 million went on the navy, and another £1 million on subsidising colonial troops.<sup>55</sup> This extravagant spending created massive national debt, which would become one of the main drivers of British policy in the next decade.

With the prospect of peace on the horizon, the government began the search for a sustainable way to manage relations with Native Americans on a long-term basis. The Seven Years' War had convinced the British Government that Amerindians were a power to be respected, and this is clearly seen in their subsequent legislation. In 1756 Wraxall had proposed that there should be two Indian superintendents, one for the north and one for the south. These men would have no involvement with the Indian trade, and would be subject to instruction from the army's commander-in-chief, the government and the governors of the Colonies. The superintendents would be responsible for all public meetings with Native Americans. Wraxall also proposed regulating the trade with Native Americans, relinquishing all claim to those grants that were not approved of by Native

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<sup>54</sup> Lenman, Bruce p. "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793" Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century.* p. 161.

<sup>55</sup> Lenman, Bruce p. "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793" Ibid. p. 161.

Americans, and only allowing the sale of additional grants in the presence of the Indian superintendent.<sup>56</sup>

In 1761 the government decided to adopt many of the features that Wraxall had proposed, and William Johnson and John Stuart were given commissions as Superintendent for Indian Affairs along with a salary of £600 a year. They were also told to obey punctually all the commands and directives of the commander-in-chief.<sup>57</sup> Johnson was the Indian superintendent of the north and John Stuart became superintendent of the south after the death of Edmund Atkin.<sup>58</sup> The Indian superintendents, despite Johnson's wishes, remained subservient to the army. This meant that as the Seven Years' War came to an end it would not be Johnson who had the final word on Native American diplomacy, but the commander-in-chief, and he would have very different views when it came to Native American diplomacy.

In addition to creating the Indian department, the Lords of Trade now made it clear that though they had not given up on new settlements they were taking the issue of Native American land rights seriously. In 1760 they ordered that the settlement of the area around the Great Lakes and on the frontiers of New York could go ahead only if "such settlements do

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<sup>56</sup> Wraxall to Johnson, 9 January 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 p. 14-29 One of Wraxall's more idiosyncratic suggestions was that "Soldiers to be encouraged by some gratuities & advantages to marry such Indian women as will embrace Protestant Christianity" Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p.134, Edmond Atkin, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Southern Department until 1761, put forward a very similar plan, with an emphasis on the Crown taking control of Native American diplomacy, and occupying posts, at which there would be gunsmiths to repair Native American weapons.

<sup>57</sup> Commission of Sir William Johnson to be Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 11 March 1761, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 458-459.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 468.

not interfere with the claim of our Indian Allies”.<sup>59</sup> The temper of Native Americans, rather than the views of men in the Colonies, was now the deciding factor on where new settlements would be sited.

A year later at the end of 1761 royal instructions were issued to the governors in America and the commander-in-chief prohibiting them from making grants of land that was occupied by Indians, or had “at any time” been claimed by them. Governor Monckton was told to publish a proclamation to let Native Americans and settlers know that this law was in effect, and that anyone who flouted it would be prosecuted. If anyone was to apply for a licence to grant lands, the governor was to refer the matter to the government in London. Finally, the colonial governors were ordered to make it public to everyone, including Native Americans, that the government was determined to uphold their “just Rights”.<sup>60</sup> Security, not settlement, was the priority for the British Government, a decision that would soon set them on a collision course with American colonists.

Security also necessitated the government finding a means of defending and holding the territories that had been won at such cost. Johnson had been lobbying the forts as the best way to control the frontier for some time. In 1756 he reported that the Seneca, Onondaga, Tuscarora, and Oneida amongst others desired forts in their country. The superintendent believed that placing forts in Native American towns was in part responsible for the French success in Native American affairs, and he

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<sup>59</sup> Lords of Trade to Governor De Lancey, 13 June 1760, p. 437 and Lords of Trade to Governor De Lancey, 21 February 1760, NYCD Vol.7 pp. 428-29.

<sup>60</sup> Royal Instructions to Governor Monckton, 9 December 1761, Flick, A. C. *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, (Albany, 1925) Vol. 10 p. 340-342 (hereafter referred to as WJP) and Draft of an Instruction for the Governors in America — grants of land, 2 December 1761, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 478-9.

commended the idea as of the “utmost moment” to the Lords of Trade.<sup>61</sup> A year later, in 1757, Johnson again recommended a system of forts on the frontier to deter Native Americans from further hostilities once the French were defeated.<sup>62</sup> Johnson was not the only one to recommend a system of frontier garrisons: Governor Hardy and Edmund Atkin also recommended forts as the best way to manage relations with Native Americans.<sup>63</sup> This idea was tried and tested; forts had been the chosen meeting place for trade and diplomacy on the Pennsylvanian frontier for many years, so it is not surprising that the British Government’s new effort to control trade and diplomacy with Native Americans was based on occupying forts in Native American territory.<sup>64</sup>

The decision to use British regulars to man these garrisons was never seriously debated.<sup>65</sup> In the minds of most British ministers, the reasoning was simple: at the start of the war, when the colonies had been threatened, they had failed to provide for their own defence, and to entrust the defence of empire to them now would be foolhardy. For the British Government, using British redcoats under their control to defend their newly won territories was simply common sense.<sup>66</sup> As J.R. Alden has stated, “There was no feeling among British politicians in 1763 that the task of defending

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<sup>61</sup> Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 8 March 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 42-43, Johnson also recommended that missionaries be sent amongst the Indians.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 28 September 1757, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 276-77.

<sup>63</sup> Governor Hardy to the Lords of Trade, 16 January 1756, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 2-7 and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 134.

<sup>64</sup> Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). p. 237 The forts had been built at the request of the proprietors of Pennsylvania in order to regulate the fur trade.

<sup>65</sup> Ian Ralph Christie and Ian R. Christie, *Empire or Independence, 1760-1776: A British-American Dialogue on the Coming of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1976). p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783*. pp. 112-113.

the new territories should be handled by the colonists”, especially as the new lands were considered additions to the empire as a whole, not just the existing colonies.<sup>67</sup>

Posting the army on the frontier was intended to serve a double purpose: the troops would both secure the new territories from French aggression and act to control the worst excesses of colonial settlers and fur traders. This army’s new role of policing the frontier was in part the result of lobbying from army officers serving in the Colonies, who had recommended such a deployment as the only way to preserve the peace on the frontier at the end of the war.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately for all concerned, the deployment of the army to the frontier would be one of the major reasons that the peace following the Seven Years’ War was so quickly shattered.

The end of the Seven Years’ War saw the British Army thrust into the role of representatives of the Crown, as seen by Native Americans, almost by accident. The army had been posted to the frontier to defend the area from French counter-attack and to watch over colonial settlers and fur traders, but their location also made those officers who commanded His Majesty’s garrisons the first point of contact between Native Americans and the Crown. How British officers coped in this role and the impact of the isolation and weakness of their garrisons on their actions will be explored in Chapters Four and Five.

The legacy of the Seven Years’ War would affect the army’s actions in other ways. The huge debt created by Pitt in order to achieve victory

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<sup>67</sup> John Richard Alden, *General Gage in America: Being Principally a History of His Role in the American Revolution* (Baton Rouge,: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1948). p. 127

<sup>68</sup> Christie and Christie, *Empire or Independence, 1760-1776: A British-American Dialogue on the Coming of the American Revolution*. pp. 30-31.

would force his successors in government to keep a tight hold of the purse strings while they searched for a new source of income. This drive for economy was to have a massive effect on the army's relations with Native Americans, just as the need for new taxes would have a massive role in changing relations between the Colonies and the Crown. The need for strict control of expenditure was certainly recognised by the commander-in-chief, and would play a pivotal role in relations between empire and Amerindians in the immediate post-war period.

The actions of the commander-in-chief had such an effect on relations between the British and Native Americans because he had been handed indirect control over Native American diplomacy. Not only did the commander-in-chief in North America have control of all those soldiers posted to the frontier, who were now in contact with Native Americans on a daily basis, but he possessed control of the Indian Department as well. What the new commander-in-chief intended to do with that power is the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter Two

### Amherst's Policy

As a result of the Seven Years' War the commander-in-chief of North America had been left in control of relations between the British Empire and Native Americans. Not only did both Indian superintendents have to report to the commander-in-chief, but he also directly controlled the hundreds of troops who had been deployed to the frontier at the end of the war. The government set the tone of policy, but the slow and uncertain nature of communication gave men on the ground considerable latitude to follow their own agenda. This gave General Jeffery Amherst, the commander-in-chief of the British Army in North America, the final say in how to treat those Native Americans who now dealt directly with the British; the government wanted peace and they wanted it cheap, but exactly how this was to be achieved was left to Amherst.

As soon as fighting ceased on the American mainland, Amherst moved to alter the relationship between the British and Native Americans permanently, with the grand aim of transforming Native American behaviour. Amherst regarded Native Americans as lazy and troublesome, and he was going to offer them a chilling choice: either be remade as obedient vassals of empire, or be destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

It was the intention of Amherst to transform Amerindians into obedient servants of the British by forcing them to work for the European

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<sup>1</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 9 August 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 514-516.



goods they needed to survive.<sup>2</sup> This was to be done by massively reducing gift giving and Amerindian access to rum, while providing Native Americans with a well-regulated and accessible fur trade. The first step in this process was a radical cutback in the value of gifts that Native Americans received from the British. Native Americans would no longer be indiscriminately presented with large gifts or numerous provisions, as had been the case during the war; instead Amherst ordered that there should be only token gifts of minimal value. Amherst saw no need to “buy” the friendship of Native Americans; he told Johnson that “it is not My Intention ever to Attempt to gain the Friendship of the Indians by presents”.<sup>3</sup> Amherst felt that presents made Amerindians lazy and explained that he could not “See any Reason for Supply the Indians with Provisions; for I am Convinced they will never think of providing for their Families by Hunting, if they can Supporting them by begging Provisions from Us.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, he felt, “the more they get the more they ask”.<sup>5</sup>

Amherst believed that Native Americans would remain idle as long as they received what they needed for free from the British. By cutting off the supply of gifts he would force them to hunt for skins, which they could

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<sup>2</sup> Jeffery Amherst, 1717-1797, came from a line of Kentish lawyers. As a boy he was sent to be a page for Lionel Cranfield Sackville, first duke of Dorset, at Knole. Dorset managed to secure him a commission as an ensign in the 1<sup>st</sup> foot guards through Sir John Ligonier in 1731. Ligonier was impressed by Amherst and so remained his patron. Amherst saw action in Europe during the war of the Austrian succession as Ligonier’s aide-de-camp. He then moved onto the staff of William Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland, where he remained until the outbreak of the Seven Year’s War. He was made a colonel of the 15<sup>th</sup> foot in 1756, and spent the early years of the war on the continent as commissary to German troops in British pay.

In 1758, after prompting by Ligonier, Pitt selected Amherst to head the expedition against the French Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton island. After a dangerous amphibious landing Amherst brought the fort to surrender in seven weeks using conventional European siege techniques. After this success he was named the new commander in chief of British forces in North America, replacing Sir James Abercromby ODNB.

<sup>3</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 11 June 1761, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 284-5.

<sup>4</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 3 April 1763, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 648-649.

<sup>5</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 9 August 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 515.

trade for the goods they needed. As far as he was concerned, once traders were established at British posts, Amerindians would be able to supply the entirety of their needs through trading furs, which meant there would be no need for presents.<sup>6</sup> Amherst was not alone in this view. In April 1761 General Robert Monckton, who Amherst had placed in command of those provinces south of New York, informed Croghan that “we have open’d to them a Free, and advantageous Trade, by which they [Native Americans] may easily live; if they will follow their Hunting. But that it will End in their ruin if they live in Idleness. That we shall at all times be ready, to relieve their unavoidable necessity’s but that they must not think we are to maintain them in Idleness.”<sup>7</sup>

This idea that trade could be used to transform character was often present in eighteenth-century thinking on race. The idea was not just that trade was a superior way to organise a civilisation, but that societies that lived by trade were more civilised because trading made them that way. This means that Amherst’s ideas about trade improving character were not unusual for the time, and were in fact closely connected to eighteenth-century ideas about progress. Rather than seeing racial characteristics as fixed or innate, many in the eighteenth century saw them as a result of environment or culture. Therefore it is not surprising to learn that Amherst

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<sup>6</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 22 February 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 345.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 387,498, 608 Robert Monckton would go on to lead the British assault on Martinique, before becoming an absentee Governor of New York. Monckton to Croghan, 6 April 1761 found in footnote George Croghan Journals, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 71. 1947 Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed. 1759-1763. pp. 305-444. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 164 Amherst was trying to reduce Native Americans to a docile peasantry.

thought he could change Native American morals by changing the way they earned their living.<sup>8</sup>

The main obstacle to this mission that Amherst could see was the rum trade. Officers like Amherst blamed what they saw as Native American idleness in part on their addiction to strong liquor. Amherst's decision to stop the rum trade was a foundation stone of his plan to make Native Americans into happy and hard-working serfs. In stopping the sale of rum, Amherst aimed both at reducing the trouble that Indians caused the British and at making them less indolent.<sup>9</sup> Amherst told one officer that "It is to be hoped from the Total Prohibition of Rum that the Indians will become more Industrious & be very well able by their hunting to Provide for their Familys."<sup>10</sup> The new commander-in-chief hoped that ending the rum trade would also reduce the trouble at British posts, where drunkenness was frequently cited by Native Americans as both cause and excuse for violent behaviour. On occasion, Amherst did make mention of weaning Indians onto spruce beer, a very mildly alcoholic beverage that was supplied to the troops, as part of his effort to "improve" Native Americans, but it seems to have been no more than an idle notion and no serious effort was ever made to supply Native Americans with spruce beer.<sup>11</sup> Amherst believed that ending the rum trade would leave Native Americans with no excuse for

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<sup>8</sup> Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*. pp. 33-38 and Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. pp.60-61.

<sup>9</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 16 January 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 353.

<sup>10</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 10 Jan 1763, Public Records Office War Office 34/41 (hereafter referred to as PRO WO) see also Amherst to Bouquet 2 May 1762, Historical Society of Pennsylvania hereafter HSP, Transcript of Public Archives of Canada.

<sup>11</sup> Amherst to Walters, 6 June 1762, PRO WO 34/23 Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 1995) p. 160. Mancall argues, correctly, that Amherst banned liquor, not out of a concern for Native American well being, but in order to preserve British interests and make the Native Americans less dependent on the posts, as well as reduce the trouble Native Americans caused.

neglecting their hunting, and that as long as Native Americans went hunting, they would be able to supply themselves with everything they needed through trade.<sup>12</sup>

To further mould Native American behaviour, Amherst would reward those who acted as he saw fit, while punishing those whom he believed had misbehaved. One of the incentives that he offered was the “protection” of the British Army.<sup>13</sup> The offer was no sham, and Amherst approved of the efforts that his officers made to secure Native Americans’ lives, property and possessions. When an Amerindian was beaten and robbed near Ticonderoga, John Ormsby, the senior officer at the post, sent five men to find the perpetrators without success.<sup>14</sup> Amherst heartily approved of the action taken by Ormsby, “as I would afford the Indians all the Protection they can expect, during their good behaviour”.<sup>15</sup> Under Amherst the army would protect Native Americans, but only as long as they met the standards of “good behaviour” that he defined.

Of course, if the innocent were to be protected, then the guilty had to be punished. To ensure that this happened, Native Americans suspected of criminal behaviour in and around the forts would be subject to military justice. This was possible because although the French forces in North America had been defeated, the peace was not signed till 1763. Consequently, while a state of war existed, Amherst believed that he had the power to subject Native Americans to courts martial. He decreed that “The Indians are not to be permitted to Commit the least disorder at out Posts,

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<sup>12</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 22 February 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 343-47.

<sup>13</sup> Amherst to Gage, 26 June 1761, PRO 34/7-8, Amherst to Hamilton, 30 March 1760, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 204-205.

<sup>14</sup> John Ormsby to Amherst, 20 November 1761, PRO WO 34/50.

<sup>15</sup> Amherst to Ormsby, 6 December 1761, PRO WO 34.50 .

without being confined & Tried in the same manner as one of our own people [i.e. soldiers], for I am determined to make no Difference.” This was no idle threat, and when the commander at Ticonderoga reported that Mohawks had made off with twenty-six pigs, Amherst told him that “when any of them [Native Americans] are Guilty of such Crimes at your Post, I desire they may be closely confined until you have reported the same to me, that I may give the necessary orders for bringing them to a Tryal”.<sup>16</sup>

Any Native American brought to trial by the army had good reason to be worried, as Amherst firmly believed that the army had the right to put to death any Native Americans who had wronged them. When two Indians were captured trying to kidnap some soldiers from a garrison, Amherst ordered their court martial, granting authorisation to approve the death penalty, if that was the sentence. Native Americans who had not lived up to Amherst’s definition of good behaviour would receive no protection from him. In a devious set of orders, Amherst instructed the colonel to carry out any ordered execution as soon as possible, as he was shortly to be replaced as the senior officer at the garrison, and Amherst hoped that his successor would be able to avoid much of the bitterness the executions would cause if he could blame them on his predecessor.<sup>17</sup>

Amherst, keen to punish the bad, did not forget his promise to reward good behaviour. When he was told that two deserters from the regular army had been caught and returned by Amerindians, he instructed that “At the same time, that I mean to stick ... to ... punishing the guilty; I shall likewise be as good as my word, in rewarding those that deserve it;

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<sup>16</sup> Amherst to Ormsby, 17 January 1763, PRO 17 January 1763.

<sup>17</sup> Amherst to Lieut Colonel Eyre, 16 June 1760, from PRO WO 34/23.

such seem to me the four Indians that pursued the five run aways and brought back two; to whom I would have you send some presents".<sup>18</sup> With the carrot and the stick, Amherst believed he could bend the Native Americans to his will.

The aim of this brutal social engineering was to save the British money, and reduce the risk of trouble. Amherst firmly believed that hard-working industrious Amerindians would not have the time to plan trouble for the British, nor the opportunity to carry it out.<sup>19</sup> Amherst's other aim, of course, was saving money. If Native Americans could be made to accept that they would never again receive presents from the British, then it would represent an enormous saving to the British treasury.<sup>20</sup> Yet though the British Government's economy drive set the tone of Amherst's policies, it did not create them. Amherst knew that he had to save money, but it was up to him to decide how to do so. His instructions were only to keep the peace while saving money; the decision to use the army and the Indian Department to fundamentally alter the way Native Americans lived was his alone. Amherst was the one who determined that savings could best be made by changing the way the British dealt with Native Americans.

Amherst's efforts to "improve" Native Americans were in part the product of his experience during the Seven Years' War. During the march to Montreal, which Amherst had led, many Amerindians had deserted the army, and Amherst was anxious that they should be punished, while those who had provided faithful service and stayed on till the end of the campaign

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<sup>18</sup> Amherst to Lieut Colonel Eyre, 16 June 1760, from PRO WO 34/23.

<sup>19</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 9 August 1761, pp. 514-516.

<sup>20</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp. 472-473.

should be rewarded. The general felt that only those Native Americans who were good servants of the British should receive gifts, but as he did not trust them, he could not rely on their word to determine who truly deserved British generosity. Amherst's solution to this problem, was to

“Make a proper distinction between those that have behaved well, and those that have demeaned themselves so scandalously, I shall therefore require of Sir William Johnson, an exact list of those that have remained with us for whom I shall .... [design] some mark by which they may be known and distinguished, and which shall be transmitted to the different Posts, within your communication that yourself and officers commanding at the same, may whenever such Indians present themselves to you or them, receive them in a kind and friendly manner, and all those, who shall not be the bearer of this mark ... ought to be kept at a Distance, and not suffered within any of the said Posts.”<sup>21</sup>

The plan was put into practice in May 1761, when 182 medals were issued to those Native Americans who had accompanied Amherst to Montreal. The officers at the posts were ordered that when Native Americans bearing the medals arrived at their forts, they should give them “all Marks of Favour in Their Powers”.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Amherst to Murray, 17 September 1760, PRO WO 34.4.

<sup>22</sup> General Orders enclosed in Gates to Bouquet, 1 May 1761, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and Henry Bouquet, *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg, 1972). Vol. 5 pp. 455-56, hereafter HBP.

During the Montreal campaign Amherst had written to General Monckton to stress the importance of being extremely frugal with those Native Americans attached to his army, and to take care when identifying Native Americans as friend or foe. He illustrated why with the tale of a provincial soldier who had been captured by Native Americans allied to the French. While he was their prisoner, the soldier observed these French Indians calling at two British forts, where they posed as friends and received provisions and supplies.<sup>23</sup> Amherst clearly regarded the tale as both a warning and an excellent example of Native American behaviour. Throughout his time in the Colonies Amherst was obsessed with ensuring that only deserving Native Americans were rewarded, while those he deemed to have misbehaved were punished. He believed that, given time, such a system would transform the lazy and treacherous savage into a faithful and useful subject.

All Amherst's plans rested on the incorrect assumption that Native Americans represented no threat to the British Army. The commander-in-chief viewed the likelihood of any Native American attack on the British as low, and the potential impact of any such attack as insignificant. Amherst believed a mixture of self-interest and fear would prevent Native Americans from attacking the British no matter how harsh they were, though he still felt it prudent to keep Native Americans short of ammunition.

This belief persisted because in all Amherst's campaigns he never had to face substantial Native American opposition. He had arrived in the colonies after Braddock's debacle, and his victory at Louisbourg had been

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<sup>23</sup> Amherst to Monckton, 2 August 1760, *Aspinwall Papers*, Coll. of the Mass. Hist. Soc., vol. IX, 4th series found in the online Ohio Valley – Great Lakes Ethnohistory Archives Miami Collection, (hereafter Miami Collection).



achieved using conventional European siege tactics following an amphibious landing. On his march to Montreal the main obstacles that Amherst faced, apart from securing the necessary supplies and assistance from the Colonies for his expedition to go ahead, were provided by French forts and ships, not Native American irregulars. This was due both to the diplomatic efforts of Sir William Johnson and the presence of the 700 Iroquois who accompanied Amherst. The Iroquois who marched with Amherst served as a clear testament of the changing balance of power on the frontier and the new acceptability of the British as allies and partners - an acceptability which had been hard won through diplomatic concessions in previous years.<sup>24</sup>

The Iroquois persuaded those Native Americans around Montreal who had previously supported the French not only to let Amherst's men pass unopposed, but to act as guides for the British. Without the presence of the Iroquois, Amherst's attack on Montreal would have been a much bloodier affair, with a much smaller chance of success. Amherst's failing was in never understanding why the Great Lakes Native Americans let him pass. He believed they were motivated by greed, opportunism and fear.<sup>25</sup> Amherst wrongly ascribed Native American conviviality to the strength of his army and the availability of British trade goods, and felt that nothing more would be needed to secure them to the British interest.

Amherst considered that Native Americans' self-interest would force them to accept British domination. He felt that Amerindians would never risk depriving themselves of trade or British "protection" by attacking their

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<sup>24</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp. 404-405.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 406.

benefactors. The general told Johnson in 1761 that the northern nations of Native Americans held no bad intentions toward the British because “they seem sensible, and indeed they cannot well be otherwise, of the advantages they may reap from His Majesty’s Protection”.<sup>26</sup> In another letter he outlined how continuing “to Act like true & faithfull Allies to His Majesty .... will appear to be so much for their own interest, that they will be careful of Deviating therefrom”.<sup>27</sup> For Amherst the advantages of living under the heel of the British were so obvious that Native Americans would have to be mad to consider attacking them.

If self-interest would not suffice, then Amherst was confident that fear of British power would serve to keep Native Americans cowed.<sup>28</sup> He told one officer that “they know our strength, & their own Weakness too well to Attempt any thing”.<sup>29</sup> To Amherst British military might was so great and terrible that no sane Native American would ever entertain thoughts of rebellion. This was extremely misplaced confidence from a man who had never faced significant Native American opposition.

Amherst considered any possible attacks by Amerindians not only unlikely but also inconsequential. His lack of experience of the horrors of forest warfare during the Seven Years’ War and his misreading of the Cherokee War left Amherst with a very low opinion of Native Americans’ ability in comparison to the British. After the successful conclusion of the Cherokee War he declared that Native Americans “are a Dastardly sett, and

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<sup>26</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 9 August 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 514.

<sup>27</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 22 November 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pg 570.

<sup>28</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 18 August 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 519-520.

<sup>29</sup> Amherst to Gage, 16 March 1761, PRO WO 34 7/8.

dare not face real Danger”.<sup>30</sup> In 1762 Amherst stated that “I am of the opinion that they [Native Americans] have neither the means, or opportunity of hurting us.”<sup>31</sup> Even as Pontiac’s War was beginning Amherst was telling his officers that “for my own opinions, that they [Native Americans] Never can Hurt us, unless We are Weak Enough to put ourselves in their power”.<sup>32</sup>

To further reduce the risk of attack, Amherst was also determined to keep Native Americans short of gun powder. Amherst believed that with the French defeated, the British were now the only source of ammunition for Amerindians. By restricting their supply of powder and shot Amherst aimed to remove the Native Americans’ ability to strike at the Colonies while at the same time cementing their dependence on British traders. When one officer questioned how much ammunition it was best to give to Native Americans, Amherst answered plainly “the less the better, for so long as they are deprived of it, they will do no more mischief for they cannot now get any Ammunition Elsewhere”.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, so great was Amherst’s confidence in the army and its ability to fight Native Americans that he believed any conflict between them would end with the extermination of any Native Americans who dared to stand against the British. He told one officer, “I am no ways apprehensive of their disturbing the Tranquillity that now subsist, for as soon as they do, so surely

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<sup>30</sup>Amherst to Grant, 1 August 1761, PRO WO 34/48 Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 469 Amherst learned “only military” lessons from the Cherokee war and Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*.

<sup>31</sup>Amherst to Commanding Officer at Fort William Augustus, 6 June 1762, PRO WO 34/54

<sup>32</sup>Amherst to Gladwin, 29 May 1763, PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>33</sup> Amherst to Walters, 2 November 1760, PRO WO 34/23.

shall they meet with destruction and I am very desirous they should be one and all acquainted with these my first Resolutions”<sup>34</sup>

This then was the choice Amherst offered Native Americans: obedience or oblivion. There was to be no middle ground, no room for compromise. Either Native Americans transformed themselves into servants of their imperial master or they would be wiped out. When in 1762 rumours began to circulate that the Six Nations were forming a confederacy to attack the British, Amherst told William Johnson:

“I must desire You to let them know from Me, that upon the first Hostilities they May be Guilty of, they Must not only Expect the Severest Retaliation, but an Entire Destruction of all their Nations, for I am firmly Resolved, Whenever they give me an Occasion, to Extirpate them Root & branch, but I am hopeful they will not force me to that cruel Necessity.”<sup>35</sup>

As far as Amherst was concerned, this was a statement of fact. He believed the British Army possessed the power to destroy any Native Americans who stood against them, and he was very prepared to use it. When in 1763 rumours about a possible Native American plot against the British began to circulate, Amherst told one officer that should the Native Americans get involved, “preserve in them it must End with their Total Ruin and Extirpation”.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Amherst to Gladwin, 7 August 1761, PRO WO 34/39.

<sup>35</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 18 August 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 519-520.

<sup>36</sup> Amherst to Gage, 12 June 1763, PRO WO 34/7-8.

Amherst hated Native Americans and saw nothing wrong with threatening them with genocide. Yet he clearly felt that the Native American character was not fixed, but could with the right treatment be transformed from lazy and duplicitous into hard-working and loyal. This attitude was a product of Amherst's experience during the Seven Years' War, and reveals the uncertain status of Native Americans in the eighteenth-century British mind. Amherst was clearly predisposed to dislike Native Americans before he arrived in the colonies, but his hatred of them grew because of what he saw as their greedy, lazy, and cowardly behaviour during the war.

The most dangerous of Amherst's delusions was his dismissal of Native American military power. Amherst did not care if his plan to transform Native Americans did not please them, for he arrogantly assumed that they represented no threat to the British Army; rather, he believed that the army was perfectly capable of destroying any and all Native Americans who dared to oppose it. This was a catastrophic misreading of the situation, from a man who had never had to face significant numbers of Native Americans in battle. The lack of opposition to his march on Montreal, which was the result of years of diplomacy, he wrongly attributed to opportunism and fear. These views, though, were not universal, and it would not just be Native Americans who resisted Amherst's vision for a new frontier.

## Chapter Three

### Weak Garrisons - Worried Soldiers

Amherst believed that the strength of British arms left him free to treat Native Americans as he wished. His plan was to use that freedom to make Native Americans into hard-working and obedient servants of empire; what Native Americans thought of this programme did not concern him. Amherst's officers were mixed in their reaction to this plan. Some were happy to go along with the commander-in-chief's instructions to restrict presents to a minimum, but there were senior officers who were deeply concerned by their orders.

Those officers worried by Amherst's plan did not share his assumptions about the military superiority of the British Army, or his contempt for Native American attitudes. This difference of opinion was primarily a result of environment. Officers on the frontier were often in isolated posts, with small garrisons made up of ageing and injured soldiers, frequently struggling with endemic disease. These officers did not have much faith in the awe-inspiring might of the army to prevent or defeat any Native American attack. They were very worried by the angry reaction of Native Americans to Amherst's plan, and frequently disobeyed their orders, because they felt that pleasing those Native Americans who surrounded them was more important than pleasing the general in New York. Such actions stand at odds with the normal depiction of British officers only concerned with imposing their dominance on Native Americans.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*.

The forts occupied by the British were expected to play a multitude of roles. Initially, they were intended as a defence against any possible French counter-attack, as well as jumping-off points for assaults on the remaining French positions. As the war began to wind down, the functions of the forts multiplied. They still retained their military function, and although fear of a French attempt to regain their empire never entirely left the British, it was primarily as a defence against Native Americans that the forts now served. It was hoped that not only would the imposing British forts deter potential Native American attacks, but that in the event of a war they would provide a barrier preventing the ravaging of the backcountry, which was still a recent and painful memory for most settlers. In addition to their military role, the forts were also intended to serve as marts of trade. By confining the fur trade to the forts, the British hoped to prevent the traders' worst behaviour with careful scrutiny. Finally, the posts would serve as intercultural meeting places, where Native Americans could bring their grievances to be heard, occasionally by an Indian agent, but most frequently by a British officer.

In truth, the buildings that the British hoped would serve all these requirements were commonly not fit for purpose. The forts occupied by the British Army were, with a few exceptions, flimsy wooden pickets or stockades. To fully grasp the state that these constructions were in, we need to remove the preconceptions of strength and permanence that the word "fort" conjures up in our minds. As Charles Stotz has pointed out, "frontier

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p.160 and p.195; Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. p. 2.; Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America, Pivotal Moments in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). p.1.

forts hold for us today a romantic appeal that certainly was shared by very few of the soldiers who used them .... A typical fort exuded foul odours, harboured vermin, and bred confusion. Except in the heat of a campaign, its garrison were often insubordinate.”<sup>2</sup>

Those posts built by the British, or by the provincials and later occupied by the British, were normally timber forts, often erected in a great hurry with the enemy close at hand and were ever after in a state of continual disrepair.<sup>3</sup> Wood rotted and pickets and fences became loose or were stolen, dangerously compromising the forts’ defences and exposing the men inside to the elements. Army officers barraged Amherst and later Gage with accounts of rotten and crumbling garrisons. By 1767 the decay at Fort Pitt was so bad that cattle could come strolling in, and the remaining stockade offered “only a shadow of Defence”,<sup>4</sup> and the defences at Niagara were so ravaged by 1766 that they could not even keep out wandering pigs.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes things got so bad that the defences of a fort collapsed

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Morse Stotz and Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania., *Outposts of the War for Empire : The French and English in Western Pennsylvania: Their Armies, Their Forts, Their People, 1749-1764* ([Pittsburgh, PA]: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005). p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Edmonstone to Gage, 1 November 1767, taken from Thomas Gage Papers, American Series, William L Clements Library hereafter referred to as Gage Papers WLCL

<sup>5</sup> Gage to Browne, 5 October 1766, Pioneer Collections p. 218 Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *History and Development of Old Fort Niagara* (Youngstown, N.Y.: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1985). This book provides a comprehensive account of the many changes made to the layout of Fort Niagara, as old buildings fell into ruin and new ones were constructed. All the forts on the frontier were in a continuous state of flux, as a result of decay and the actions of soldiers and civilians who added new buildings or converted old ones to meet their requirements. Stephen G. Strach, *The British Occupation of the Niagara Frontier, 1759-96* (Niagara Falls, Ont.: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1976) covers much of the same ground, but with a wider focus as it also includes those forts to the west of Niagara. See also Paul L. Stevens, *A King's Colonel at Niagara, 1774-1776 : Lt. Col. John Caldwell and the Beginnings of the American Revolution on the New York Frontier* (Youngstown, N.Y.: Old Fort Niagara Association, 1987).



completely, as happened at Louisburg, leaving the walls “a heap of Rubbish, and the Place entirely defenceless”.<sup>6</sup>

The cause of the trouble lay in the combination of a lack of preparation, poor workmanship and a poor choice of materials with unsuitable weather. Fort William Augustus, “which was only built for an occasion”, was by the time of William Dunbar’s arrival in 1763 about to “tumble to pieces; the fascines which support the face of the work are entirely rotten, the last rains occasioned above 40 yards of it to fall down, .... I may venture to say that when the frost goes off & the rain in the spring begins that very little of the works will be left standing to repair if any.” Dunbar felt things there were so bad that “if this post is to be kept up, that next year they will be obliged to rebuild it entirely”.<sup>7</sup>

Many forts were also at severe risk of flooding as they had been built on or near rivers to aid communication.<sup>8</sup> By 1763 three sides of Fort Pitt had almost been washed away by two floods, one in 1762 and one in 1763.<sup>9</sup> The 1763 flood had been so bad that the officer in charge had considered

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<sup>6</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 23 December 1766, taken from Thomas Hon General Gage and Clarence Edwin Carter, *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775. Compiled and Edited by Clarence Edwin Carter, [Yale Historical Publications. Manuscripts and Edited Texts. No. 11.]* (New Haven, 1931). Vol. 1 p. 117 hereafter Gage Correspondence. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. McConnell’s book provides a near comprehensive overview of the material aspects of life on the colonial frontier as experienced by the British Army. He details not only the crumbling accommodation that the men had to endure, but also the chronic supply shortages, rampant disease and other material deprivations that made garrison life so difficult and deadly for those soldiers subject to it.

<sup>7</sup> Dunbar to Gage, 31 August 1763, Phillips to Gage, 8 March 1766, Hamilton to Gage, 23 June 1766, in the last Hamilton blames the decay of Crown Point primarily on the rains Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>8</sup> McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*, McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*.p. 4 Whenever possible men and materials were moved by water.

<sup>9</sup> Bouquet to Gage, 27 December 1763 Gage Papers WLCL.

abandoning the fort.<sup>10</sup> A flood carried away most of the houses at Fort Edward, destroyed the walls, and left the barracks near collapse.<sup>11</sup> Years later, when the British occupied Fort Chartres, they found it perched precariously on a bank of the Mississippi, constantly in danger of being undercut by the river, and so extensive efforts were made to preserve it by shoring up the banks with rocks and rubbish.<sup>12</sup> Such work was “a difficult and fatiguing piece of Service.... [for] the wall is above three hundred paces Long, and in some places above twelve feet high, it has frequently sunk Six feet in less than twenty four hours, owing to its being a sandy bottom, which is washed away by the rapidity of the current”. So arduous was the work that it was one of the few pieces of maintenance for which the soldiers received recompense.<sup>13</sup>

The work undertaken on these posts was a Sisyphean task; the hasty, cheap and slapdash repairs made one year before quickly fell apart.<sup>14</sup> The work never stopped, and from the day they were occupied till the day they were abandoned the British struggled to keep their forts standing and defensible. When Gage was told that Niagara once more needed repair in 1764, he was dismayed, “and indeed surprised at the badness of the barracks, when I consider the money that has been expended there. Works and repairs have been carried on at Niagara every year since it has been in our possession.”<sup>15</sup> In 1767 Gage reported to Shelburne that

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<sup>10</sup> Ecuyer to Bouquet, 11 March 1763, Darlington, Marc C., ed., *Fort Pitt and letters from the Frontier* (Pittsburgh, 1892) p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon to Gage, 29 April 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>12</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 7 May 1771, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Forbes to Gage, 23 June 1768, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>14</sup> McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. p. Xvi maintenance was “an endless cycle of building and rebuilding”.

<sup>15</sup> Gage to Vaughan, 19 November 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

“The Continual Repairs wanting at the Forts, which are built of such perishable Materials that Parts tumble down every year, as also the constant Repairs of the Barracks, occasions the Expences[sic] of the Engineers; but nothing is done except making the Forts merely defencible[sic], and keeping the Soldiers from Wind and Rain.”<sup>16</sup>

Necessary work on forts was often delayed as there was a lack of skilled men to carry out the work. One officer reported of his post in 1763 that “if proper tools and artificers are not immediately sent, the place will be extremely uncomfortable. A Black Smith and armorer are absolutely necessary, none of whom are to be found among the troops here.”<sup>17</sup> In 1765 repairs to the Detroit barracks were delayed as there were not enough sawyers to cut the wood needed.<sup>18</sup> At Michilimackinac they were so short of labour in 1764 that the inhabitants were drafted in to help keep the fort standing.<sup>19</sup> Soldiers often lacked the skills for large-scale building projects such as those needed at Fort Pitt and Michilimackinac, forcing the army to

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<sup>16</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 4 April 1767, taken from Clarence Walworth and Carter Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, *The New Regime 1765-1767. Edited, with Introduction and Notes, by C. W. Alvord ... And C. E. Carter. [with Plates.], [Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library. Vol. 11.]* (pp. xxviii. 700. Springfield, 1916). Vol. 2 p. 553 hereafter IHC.

<sup>17</sup> Dunbar to Gage, 31 August 1763, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>18</sup> Campbell to Gage, 18 October 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell to Gage, 10 November 1764, Gage Papers WLCL. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. pp. 87-88; Eugene T Petersen, *Gentlemen of the Frontier a Pictorial Record of the Culture of Michilimackinac* (Mackinac Island: Mackinac Island State Park Commission 1964). Provides a good description of life and material culture at the fort, based on primary sources and archaeological evidence. See also Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *"The Necessity of Regularity in Quartering Soldiers." The Organization, Material Culture and Quartering of the British Soldier at Michilimackinac* (Michigan: Mackinac State Historic Parks, 1999). And Eugene T Petersen, *Michilimackinac: Its History and Restoration* (Michigan: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1962).

draft in civilian contractors.<sup>20</sup> With most of the forts a long way from the large communities where skilled craftsman normally resided, this was both difficult and expensive.

Packed into disintegrating accommodation, it is not surprising that many soldiers were frequently subject to debilitating illness. At nearly every fort disease was a constant presence. By the late 1760s the army in America was experiencing an annual rate of sickness running at 8%, with a 5% annual mortality rate for common soldiers (from all causes).<sup>21</sup> An account of life at Crown Point in July 1764 paints a bleak picture. Not only were the garrison suffering from the usual fever and agues, but they had contracted smallpox, and to make matters worse the surgeon was incapacitated. As a result of disease and desertion, the fort was barely left with enough men to mount a guard and cut the wood needed for fuel.<sup>22</sup> Beckwith described how of those who became sick many were “falling down and but few recovering”.<sup>23</sup>

Among the many diseases endemic amongst British soldiers in the west were typhus, dysentery, typhoid, smallpox and scurvy. Garrisons were “havens for disease”, and though officers were aware of the basic principles of sanitation, they struggled to get their men to follow them. As a result the death tolls due to disease were high. From 1759 to 1760 149 men, including the commander, died of disease at Niagara. Doctors could do little to help as they were still operating with little real understanding of the

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<sup>20</sup> McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> Beckwith to Gage 30 July 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>23</sup> Beckwith to Gage, 1 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

human body or disease, and so often inflicting cures, including bleeding and purging, that were as bad as the maladies they were seeking to treat.<sup>24</sup>

The men were not only sickly, but they were an ageing population, many of whom had been left battered and bruised by their participation in the Seven Years' War. By 1764 the men at the posts had been in America a long time, and it was beginning to show. In the seven companies of the 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment, there were 110 invalids; most of the men were between thirty and fifty, and there were only four with less than ten years' service.<sup>25</sup> This left less than twenty fit for duty, hardly surprising as the 45<sup>th</sup> had been transferred to the colonies in the mid-1740s; while the 45<sup>th</sup> had arrived in America earlier than most, such a decrepit regiment was the norm rather than the exception, with many regiments "chronically under strength."<sup>26</sup> The 45<sup>th</sup> regiment was an extreme example of the manpower shortages that affected all regiments, which had been exacerbated by wartime recruiting that had enlisted men for a term of years, rather than for life.<sup>27</sup> It was not until 1765 that a rotation of regiments was started, providing relief to a few

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<sup>24</sup> David G. Chandler and I. F. W. Beckett, *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). p. 124. There has been a lot of good work done on the high prevalence of disease amongst the British Army in America. There are chapters focusing on the impact of disease and its treatment in Ward Matthew C. "The British Army and Epidemic Disease among the Ohio Indians" pp. 63-78: the author examines not just the impact of disease on the British army, but the disastrous effect it had on the region's Native American population as permanent British garrisons served to infect them repeatedly, and so decimate their numbers.

<sup>25</sup> A return of the Invalids in Seven Company of His Majesty's 45<sup>th</sup> Regiment Louisbourg, 5 October 1764, Gage Papers WLCL. McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. p. 59 and p. 142. McConnell notes that many soldiers were in their mid twenties at the beginning of the occupation of the frontier, (1759-60), but many were elderly and infirm by the time they left.

<sup>26</sup> Walters to Gage, 5 October 1764, Gage Papers WLCL. Dunnigan, "The Necessity of Regularity in Quartering Soldiers." *The Organization, Material Culture and Quartering of the British Soldier at Michilimackinac* p.14.

<sup>27</sup> McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*.

of the veteran units who were stationed in the Colonies.<sup>28</sup> Such was the extent of the manpower shortage that in 1762 Amherst sent out instructions that “I would not, on any account whatsoever, send away a Soldier who can do Garrison Duty”.<sup>29</sup>

As a result, some of the garrisons were manned by only a handful of men. Fort Bedford was occupied by only six soldiers, plus officers, and that was before one of the soldiers deserted.<sup>30</sup> Most of the small garrisons were somewhat better off, housing contingents of ten or twenty-five men.<sup>31</sup> This number was hardly likely to achieve much in the face of a concerted Native American attack, and would have done little to place British officers in a strong bargaining position when confronting those Native Americans who visited them.

This shortage of manpower was exacerbated by the refusal of colonial militia to continue serving once the Seven Years’ War had ended and fighting had ceased. Men with families, farms and businesses which they had neglected during their service were not keen to remain in the west, given the tedium of garrison duty, once the threat of attack by French and Indians had passed. Those units not recalled by the Colonies in order to save money soon melted away as men took matters into their own hands and deserted. The provincial regiments were quickly disbanded as well; made up of men from the Colonies but paid for by the Crown during the war, the Colonies were simply unwilling to support them once they had to foot the

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<sup>28</sup>In 1765, 66 and 68, veteran regiments returned home to Britain or Ireland and were replaced by fresh ones Ibid. p. 26.

<sup>29</sup>Amherst to Murray, 28 November 1762, PRO WO 34/4.

<sup>30</sup>Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. p. 97.

<sup>31</sup>Ward Matthew C. “The British Army and Epidemic Disease among the Ohio Indians” in Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*.

bill themselves. This left the redcoats thinly stretched along the frontier, as they were forced to take on almost the entire burden of occupation themselves.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, many of the forts were extremely isolated, with no chance of help arriving for days, if not weeks, after trouble started. The fourteen posts and outposts occupied by the British were dispersed over an area of 100,000 square miles, with some of the garrisons separated from their nearest neighbours by huge distances.<sup>33</sup> The weakness of the garrisons and forts and the men within them left officers with little confidence in their ability to dominate or inspire awe in those Native Americans who came into contact with the British. British officers might have wished they could subjugate Native Americans, but their situation made this impossible. At all but the largest posts officers were forced to take Native American feelings into consideration as, due to their isolation and weakness, they were effectively at their mercy. After another bout of sickness had swept through the garrisons, an officer at Detroit worried that “the Indians presume a good deal on seeing the Garrison at the several Posts so weak”, for Native Americans behaved “very different at the Small Posts from what it is here, and some Sheep have lately been taken from Sutlers on the road from Fort Brewton to this Place.”<sup>34</sup>

Aware of their own weakness, Amherst’s orders to restrict the presents and powder given to Native Americans caused a great deal of apprehension amongst a section of senior army officers. When officer James Gorrell received Amherst’s instructions, he recorded: “These orders

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<sup>32</sup> Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. p. 96.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 96-97.

<sup>34</sup> Duncan to Johnson, 29 August 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 497-8.

made me uneasy, as I was assured I could not keep so large a body of Indians in temper without giving them something, as they had always been used to large presents from the French; and at the same time, if I did not give each nation the same I had given those that had been to see me, all would be lost to me and the service.” Officers knew that Native Americans were not going to be awed into submission by the appearance of their tired army, and their only chance of avoiding trouble was to satisfy their demands for presents. This Gorrell proceeded to do, handing out gifts including powder, lead, blankets and shirts to the Native Americans who came to his post. Throughout the period covered by Gorrell’s journal, he had no trouble with the Native Americans that visited his post - a fact for which disobeying Amherst’s orders was no doubt largely responsible.<sup>35</sup> This pragmatic response from Gorrell, with the aim of avoiding conflict, was not unique.

Captain Campbell, when he was the commanding officer at Detroit, felt that presents should be given until the Indians were accustomed to British rule, at which point they could be scaled back. Even before he had received Amherst’s orders, Campbell was stressing how necessary it was to give some presents. He told Colonel Bouquet: “The Indians Nations come to me from all Parts, I must give them some Provisions and other Small presents, I am much Surprised the Generals have not given some orders about it, I wrote very fully to General Amherst, the Necessity there was of managing the Indians *at this time*. I hope he will approve of what I have done [Emphasis added]”.<sup>36</sup> Campbell was more explicit in another letter, stating “I am Still of opinion, that ye Crown Should be at some Expence to

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<sup>35</sup> Gorrell, James, *The Journal of an Expedition which started from Detroit on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1761* (Detroit, 1818) p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell to Bouquet, 8 June 1761, HBP Vol. 1 p. 197-198.



keep the Indians in good Humour till the fate of the Country is known”.

Campbell knew that the continuation of gift-giving was the only policy that had a chance to prevent trouble and it was the willingness of post commanders like him to disobey their orders, which delayed a rebellion in response to Amherst’s orders.<sup>37</sup>

Campbell was not alone. He had “daily Representations from the officer at the posts” upon the necessity of giving Native Americans presents; Henry Gladwin, a fellow officer, felt it was “impossible to manage” Native Americans without some presents.<sup>38</sup> None of these officers placed any reliance on the strength of the army keeping Native Americans acquiescent to their presence, unlike Amherst. Just as with his instructions regarding presents, many officers found it hard to follow Amherst’s orders prohibiting the giving of ammunition, as they knew that this order would only cause trouble. Campbell told Colonel Bouquet, “I am certain if the Indians knew General Amherst’s sentiments about keeping them short of Powder it would be impossible to keep them in temper.”<sup>39</sup> The commanders of small posts dependent on Detroit were of the same mind, and Campbell received a constant stream of letters from their commanders, asking that they might have powder to give to Native Americans.<sup>40</sup> For Native Americans the shortage of ammunition was a life or death issue. Without gunpowder and shot, Native American hunters were at risk of starvation, and warriors were

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<sup>37</sup> Campbell to Bouquet, 26 August 1762, HBP Vol. 2, pp. 74-75. and Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 472.

<sup>38</sup> Campbell to Bouquet, 26 August 1762, Vol. II, pp. 74-75. And Gladwin to Amherst, 5 September 1762, PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>39</sup> Campbell to Bouquet, 12 October. 1761, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Hist. Collections*, Vol. 19 pp. 116-117.

<sup>40</sup> Campbell to Amherst, 18 September 1761, 8 November 1761, and 10 January 1762 PRO WO 34/49.

rendered defenceless, most having lost the ability to use bows and arrows many years before.<sup>41</sup> Such drastic consequences were the inevitable result of Amherst reducing the supply of powder, and most Native Americans viewed its stingy distribution as an aggressive act.

At the more isolated posts commanders often had no choice but to continue giving presents to Native Americans as, sometimes hundreds of miles from re-supply, they were dependent on friendly Native Americans bringing in meat (usually venison) and corn. In some cases supplies from Native Americans were all that stood between the soldiers and starvation. Far from universally seeking to impose their will on Native Americans, there were those senior officers who knew they could only continue to occupy their posts on their sufferance. Gladwin told Amherst as much, in an attempt to secure Amherst's approval for limited gifts, including ammunition:

“Quitattanon almost intirely depends on the Indians for their meats and ... by this means Mr Jenkins has hitherto been able to maintain his post which otherwise he might have abandoned I believe this matter has not been mentioned to you before there I think it my duty to report it.”<sup>42</sup> Ensign Holmes posted at the Miami told Colonel Bouquet how “the Indins they Bring In so Littel Meat that I Canot Get it as fast as the Men Requires it”, while they were “Continually tormenting me for presents”. In desperation

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<sup>41</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 182.

<sup>42</sup>Gladwin to Amherst, 23 Nov 1762, PRO, WO 34/49 The increased accommodation given by British officers to Native Americans when the British needed Indians to provision their garrisons has been commented on by McConnell. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 153.

Holmes had written to both Croghan and Amherst, but had received no reply by the time he wrote to Bouquet.<sup>43</sup>

These officers did what they could to keep Native Americans supplied with presents and powder because they feared the consequences if they did not. Even after Amherst had forbidden officers to give powder to Native Americans, Campbell continued to disobey his orders, and even begged Bouquet to send him more powder.<sup>44</sup> One officer described giving presents as “necessary” for “they are a jealous people and Should we hold our hand Entirely from them they will be Easily made believe We Intend them Some hurt”.<sup>45</sup> If British officers’ only goal was to drive Native Americans to their knees, it seems unlikely that one officer would report after a tour of the posts that it was only “with greatest difficulty that the Officers can keep them in good humour”.<sup>46</sup> Johnson himself recognised the impact of environment on the officers when he was later moved to note that he:

“Cannot but observe that Gentlemen whatever their sentiments of Indians are previous to their going to the Outposts, seem to alter them when there, & to Consider [all] Expences incurred as Extremely necessary to the Publick Service.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Holmes to Bouquet, 17 March 1762, HBP Vol. 1 pp. 52-53.

<sup>44</sup>Campbell to Bouquet, 26 August 1762, HBP Vol. 2 pp. 74-75.

<sup>45</sup>Walters to Johnson, 5 April 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 426.

<sup>46</sup>Journal and Report of Thomas Hutchins, 4 April-24 Sept 1762, WJP 10 pp. 521-529.

<sup>47</sup>Johnson to Gage, 24 August 1768, WJP Vol. 6 p. 332.

This hardly seems consistent with an unstoppable drive to put Native Americans in their place and dominate them, and more in keeping with a desire to avoid conflict. So, while Amherst was not alone in his views on Native Americans, it is simply wrong to ascribe them to the whole of the British Army. As well as those officers on the frontier content to ignore Native American pleading, there were those senior officers who simply wanted to keep those Native Americans they dealt with content in order to prevent violence; after all they were all too aware of how vulnerable they would be in their crumbling forts were they to come under attack.

In *War Under Heaven*, Gregory Evans Dowd argues that during this period officers “expressed discomfort that Indians accepted gifts not with marks of scrapping gratitude but with demands for more”.<sup>48</sup> Certainly the language used by officers when discussing gift-giving makes it sound as if it was something they resorted to only when it was absolutely unavoidable. When handing out presents to Native Americans, officers justified it as the only way of “Satisfying them”, because they felt “obliged” to hand over ammunition or because they were pestered.<sup>49</sup> Dowd argues that this indicates that officers deeply resented being forced to hand over presents, and asserts that “the British easily understood the meanings Indians attached to gifts;” that it was in part because they resented being forced to adapt to a

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<sup>48</sup> Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. p. 72.

<sup>49</sup>Pestered, “pested” in document, Gladwin to Amherst, 26 October 1762, PRO 34/49 “Satisfying them” Bouquet to Mercer, 1 September 1759, HBP Vol. 4 p. 11 “obliged” Campbell to Bouquet, 23 December 1760, HBP Vol. 5 p. 196.

Native American form of diplomacy that they wanted to destroy gift-giving.<sup>50</sup>

This is not exactly the case; amongst British officers there was a fairly widespread belief that gift-giving was not an essential part of traditional Native American diplomacy, but instead a wartime aberration that had been created by the competition between the British and French for Native American allies. The majority of British officers patronisingly viewed Native Americans as a blank slate, easily led by more intelligent and civilised Europeans. The army blamed the French for Native American demands for presents, and would later blame them for Native American anger. Rather than regarding Native American gift-giving diplomacy as traditional, British officers believed it was a product of French overindulgence. Gorrell at Detroit explained that the demands of Native Americans stemmed from that fact that they “had always been used to large presents from the French”, a belief shared by Campbell.<sup>51</sup> After his tour of the frontier posts Hutchinson told Croghan that the “French had always Accustomed themselves both in the time of Peace, and during the late War to make these People great Presents three or four times a Year”.<sup>52</sup> So amongst those British officers who tried to reduce the amount of presents they were giving to Native Americans there were those who might have been motivated by the thought of stamping out a Native American tradition, but there were also those who believed that they were merely combating the legacy of French largesse.

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<sup>50</sup> Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. p. 71.

<sup>51</sup> Gorrell, James, *The Journal of an Expedition which started from Detroit on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1761* p. 32 and Campbell to Amherst, 22 May 1761 PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>52</sup> Journal and Report of Thomas Hutchins, 4 April, 24 Sept. 24, 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 529.

Officers held the belief that Native Americans were easily influenced, and it was not only the French who could cause problems with over-generous behaviour. Robert Mackinen blamed the exorbitant demands of Native Americans in Florida on Major Forbes, and wrote to Gage expressing his sorrow that “they have been taught such a lesson, by having every-thing given to them at first, which they asked from Major Forbes; that at present they demand as a right, what they otherwise requested as a favour: it is difficult to avoid giving them offence, and their demands are generally very exorbitant”.<sup>53</sup>

Army officers often talked about giving presents in a resentful tone because they were frightened of ending up out of pocket. Officers on the frontier spent their own money, making sure to record all expenditures in their accounts. These were then sent to the commander-in-chief, who could pass them and issue monies to cover whatever the officer in question had spent. However, the commander could also refuse to accept them, and leave the officer out of pocket. This was no formality or rubber stamping: accounts were routinely failed, leaving officers seriously out of pocket. Amherst took this responsibility seriously and ordered checks on the accounts of those officers which he considered unusually high.<sup>54</sup>

It makes sense that men, frightened that they might be left to pay for the Indian presents they had brought if the commander-in-chief thought they had been too profligate, would do all they could to make it appear that they had given out only such gifts as were absolutely necessary. This is why officers used the language they did. Trapped between their general’s

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<sup>53</sup> Mackinen to Gage, 20 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>54</sup> Amherst to Gladwin, 31 December 1761, and Amherst to Gladwin 3 January 1762, PRO WO 34/49.

instructions and Native American anger, officers did what they could to help each other out. Campbell asked that Gladwin be allowed to assist him in assessing the accounts of the posts dependent on Detroit, as he knew how vital it had been for the officers at these posts to purchase presents for Native Americans.<sup>55</sup> Gladwin was aware of the pressure that the officers at the smaller posts felt to give presents, and in his orders he reminded them “that you will not contract any unnecessary expense there on account of the Indians, or your garrison as such accounts will not be paid.” However, he also reassured them that “I shall report to the General the necessity of giving the Indians some trifling presents to keep them in temper”.<sup>56</sup> In turn, officers like Campbell asked William Johnson to put a good word in with the general for them, so that their accounts might pass.<sup>57</sup>

While there were many British officers who were inspired by their precarious situation to do all they could to appease Native Americans, not all officers felt the same pressure. Captain Ecuyer at Fort Pitt was certainly not in favour of distributing gifts; he confessed that “Mr Croghan asks constantly for powder, lead and knives for them; that embarrasses me. Sometimes I refuse, at other times I give a little, and at other times I do not know on which foot to dance; I fear I do too much. Mr Croghan says we cannot refuse these trifles, which nevertheless, would be 45 lbs. of powder, 90 lbs of lead, knives, vermilion, &c. I informed him that I would not give them anything without having received your orders”.<sup>58</sup> A few months later

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<sup>55</sup> Campbell to Amherst, 5 September 1762, PRO WO 34/49, Gladwin to Amherst, 23 Nov 1762, PRO, WO 34/49 and Walters to Amherst, 12 Feb 1762, PRO WO 34/22.

<sup>56</sup> Gladwin, Orders to the Officers at the out posts Detroit, 27 August 1762, PRO WO 34/49

<sup>57</sup> Campbell to Johnson, 9 June 1762, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 757-758.

<sup>58</sup> Captain Ecuyer Fort Pitt to Bouquet, 8 Jan 1763 from Darlington, Marc C., ed., “*Fort Pitt and letters from the Frontier*” (Pittsburgh, 1892) pp. 111-112.

Ecuyer had clearly made up his mind, calling the Shawnee beggars and promising Amherst that “We have determined to receive them very coldly.”<sup>59</sup> This new attitude quickly took effect, and later that month the Shawnee left, “very much dissatisfied, although I have done for them more than I should perhaps”.<sup>60</sup>

Campbell, Gladwin and others tried to persuade Amherst of the necessity of giving presents. Campbell even explicitly stated that it was “absolutely necessary to bestow some trifles on them in our taking Possession of the Posts as the Garrisons are small & the Distances great”.<sup>61</sup> Amherst did not listen, but stuck to his old line that “I never prepose to gain Indian friendship by presents.”<sup>62</sup> The commander-in-chief felt that as long as Native Americans had access to trade there was no justification for giving them presents.<sup>63</sup> Nothing could change his mind. Late in 1762 Amherst told Johnson that “If the Indians are Industrious, And Barter their Skins for powder, &ca. I don’t think they can have much occasion or Indeed that they can Expect to be supplied[sic] by us”.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Captain Ecuyer to Bouquet Fort Pitt, 9 April 1763, from Darlington, Marc C., ed., “*Fort Pitt and letters from the Frontier*” (Pittsburgh, 1892) pp. 120-121. While it is clear that some officers hated Native Americans, to assert that the army fought, killed and insulted Native Americans whenever possible, is a generalisation that does not bear inspection. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p.160.

<sup>60</sup> Captain Ecuyer to Bouquet Fort Pitt, 23 April 1763, from Darlington, Marc C., ed., “*Fort Pitt and letters from the Frontier*” (Pittsburgh, 1892) pp. 121-123 Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. pp. 63-64. Native Americans were certainly given much reason to complain by many post commanders, but Dowd does not realise that not all officers let their actions be guided by a hatred of Native Americans. Dowd argues that British commanders “embodied the drive for an empire of domination”, yet few apart from Amherst seem to have taken any interest in ruling or governing Native Americans. In crumblng forts, with few men, and short on supplies, those officers who believed they could have dominated the Native Americans around them would have been borderline delusional (which is not to say it did not happen).

<sup>61</sup> Campbell to Amherst, 28 August 1762, PRO WO 34/49, Gladwin to Amherst, 5 September 1762, PRO WO 34/49, Walterst to Amherst, 12 February 1762 PRO WO 34/22.

<sup>62</sup> Amherst to Gladwin, 18 June 1761, PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>63</sup> Amherst to Gladwin 31 December 1761 PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>64</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 12 September 1762, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 508-509.



Amherst insisted that all would be well as long as Native Americans had the opportunity to trade, but in the immediate post-war period opportunities for Native Americans to trade with honest merchants for the necessities of life were few and far between. One of the most urgent requests from Native Americans at the end of the Seven Years' War had been for the fur trade to be reopened, but in the early years of the British occupation Indian trade goods were in very short supply, as were reputable traders to sell them. Rather, those traders who did venture west hoped to take advantage of Native Americans' desperation and brought with them substandard goods, which they then tried to sell at inflated prices. This meant that even those Native Americans who had hunted for skins to trade could find themselves without the European goods they desperately needed.

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A bad situation was made worse when the rum trade continued to flourish, despite the army's best efforts. The officers on the frontier tried hard to prevent the trade in rum, but it was an impossible task. They could throw traders out of the forts, and seize the rum of those who passed through their gates, but it was easy to sneak rum past the posts in the surrounding woodlands and sell it directly in Indian villages. This was acknowledged by senior officers like Gage and Bouquet, who knew that it would be impossible to stop the trade entirely.<sup>66</sup> If the traders were banned from selling rum at British forts, then they simply set up shop elsewhere. This is what the traders did at Toronto, and soon officers in Canada were

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<sup>65</sup> Gage to Amherst, 1 September 1761, PRO WO 34/5 Walters to Amherst, 6 April 1762, PRO WO 34/22 22 May 1761 Campbell to Amherst, PRO WO 34/49 Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 191.

<sup>66</sup> Gage to Amherst, 10 August 1761, Amherst Papers WO 34.5, Bouquet to Amherst, 7 March 1762 Amherst Papers WO 34.40 PRO 277.

complaining that many Indians were arriving at their posts naked, having sold all their possessions for liquor at the town.<sup>67</sup> The army did what it could, and a detachment sent to Toronto returned with one trader, and one trader's servant in custody.<sup>68</sup>

The dearth of Indian goods, high prices, and abundance of rum left the Native Americans, who had been promised a bountiful and fairly priced trade, bitter and angry. It also made the presents handed out at the posts more vital than ever. Native Americans who could not afford the exploitative prices charged by many traders, or who had been cheated of their hard-won skins when drunk, had little choice but to rely on British generosity, but Amherst was doing his best to stamp this out. At a time when Native Americans desperately needed help because the fur trade was still in disarray, they were frequently told that none could be given. Disappointed, many Native Americans felt a growing sense of resentment towards the British.

Johnson attempted to alert Amherst to this development, but without success. Amherst felt that Indian agents were trying to inflate their own status by exaggerating the consequences of distressing Native Americans.<sup>69</sup> Rather than acknowledge their concerns, Amherst instead moved to exert more control over the Indian Department. In 1762 he instructed Bouquet that "the Accounts in the Indian Department ought certainly be supported by written orders from the commanding officer, unless on particular

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<sup>67</sup>Gage to Amherst, 4 Dec 1762, Amherst Papers WO 34.5.

<sup>68</sup>Walters to Amherst, 10 May 1763, WO 34.22.

<sup>69</sup>Amherst to Bouquet, 7 June 1762, from Public archives of Canada, found in Penn Historic archives.

Emergencies when they cannot be obtained”.<sup>70</sup> In September of that same year Amherst decreed that in future Johnson would have to request from him any powder he wished to present ahead of time.<sup>71</sup> Whatever Amherst allowed Johnson to give the Indians was not enough. In late 1762 Croghan noted that Indians passing Fort Pitt were requesting powder, but that Bouquet was unwilling to supply them without an order from Amherst. The following year he reported that the Indians passing Fort Pitt were very “uneasy” at not being allowed any powder.<sup>72</sup>

By the start of 1763 things had deteriorated further, and even Bouquet felt that something needed to be done. He informed the Indian department that:

“it [was] necessary to be represented to the General this it has been customary to give Powder, Lead, ... & Knives to Indian going to War to the Southward and that since these Presents have been suppressed those Indians are become very troublesome at Fort Pitt and more so at the other Posts: Stealing Horses, Cattle or committing other disorders on the communication which obstruct the Trade and discourage the country People from bringing Provisions to the Fort: and the Colonel is of opinion that those disturbances could be prevented at a moderate expense if a fixed sum was

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<sup>70</sup>Amherst to Bouquet 4 April 1762, PRO WO 34.41.

<sup>71</sup>Amherst to Johnson, 12 September 1762, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 508-509.

<sup>72</sup>George Croghan Fort Pitt, 8 October 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 548 also 23 April 1762, Cogan’s Journal Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 71. 1947 Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed. 1759-1763. pp. 305-444. Croghan to Johnson, 12 March 1763, WJP .

appropriated yearly to be paid out in small presents to the warriors and occasionally to other Indians for services done, and in some clothes to be given to such as might be in real want, through age or Infirmerties [sic] which expense might be lessened after the War.”<sup>73</sup>

Bouquet knew he could not openly question Amherst’s order, and so he tried to use the Indian Department as a channel to make his concerns heard. He knew that the general did not fear war, so it was no use telling him that presents were necessary to prevent it. Instead Bouquet talked to Amherst in language he would understand, emphasising that there were Native Americans who needed the gifts to continue, and the improvements in behaviour that would result from a more generous attitude.

Bouquet was not the first to suggest setting aside an annual allowance for gifts: Campbell had suggested the idea to Amherst about six months earlier.<sup>74</sup> Yet despite the pleas from the commanding officers of the two biggest posts on the frontier, Amherst would not allow this. He wrote that “As to Appropriating a particular Sum to be Laid out yearly in presents to the Warriors & ca that I can by no means agree to; Nor can I think it necessary to give them any presents by way of Bribes”, though “Colonel Bouquet may out of Charity, to such as are in need, want & reduced by age or Infirmities Bestow what he thinks will be of most service to them”.<sup>75</sup> Again, with war only months away, Amherst could not let go of his mission to transform Native Americans, with the result that aid would only be

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<sup>73</sup> 14 Indian Department Queries from Colonel Bouquet, 10 Jan 1763, PRO WO 34/40.

<sup>74</sup> Campbell to Amherst Detroit, 21 June 1762, PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>75</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 10 Jan 1763, PRO WO 34/41.

available to those who he decided deserved it. A few weeks later Amherst again emphasised that, though he was against the giving of presents to ordinary Indians, Colonel Bouquet should “order Captain Ecuyer to Relieve such [Indians] as appear to be Objects of Charity; but not to give those who are able to provide for their Families any Encouragement to Loiter away their time and Potency ... about the Fort”.<sup>76</sup>

Amongst British officers, as this chapter has shown, there were certainly those happy to enforce their supposed superiority over Native Americans, but it must be acknowledged that there were also those more concerned with keeping them happy than dominating them. This was certainly not what Amherst desired, but the reality of British weakness on the frontier was simply too obvious for those officers in command of isolated posts to ignore. That there were those prepared to disobey Amherst indicates that there were British officers who believed that keeping the peace was more important than imposing their will on Native Americans. In a culture like the British Army, where obedience to orders was so prized, this is a startling indication of the importance some officers attached to Native American feelings. Indeed, they tried several times to persuade Amherst to change his attitude to presents, though with little result. This attitude extended to more than just the giving of presents, and the next chapter will examine the other difficulties faced by the British Army in their encounter with Native Americans in the years before Pontiac’s War.

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<sup>76</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 16 February 1763, PRO WO 34/41.

## Chapter Four

### The Problems of Frontier Diplomacy

A section of senior British officers had been inspired to persevere with gift-giving despite Amherst's orders because they knew their garrisons to be vulnerable. The effect of this weakness on British behaviour did not end there. There were some officers who hated Native Americans and felt secure enough to let their contempt show, but there were many more officers more anxious about their safety, who struggled to please the Native Americans they lived among. They tried to master Native American forms of diplomacy but faced many obstacles in this, not least their own inexperience. Officers also took action against colonists who moved on to Native American land, hoping it would help keep the peace.

While such actions did help to ease tensions, they did not address Native Americans' central grievance - the British occupation of the frontier. Native Americans found the numerous forts occupied by the British in the west threatening, and worried that they were but the first step in a coming invasion of their territory. The vast majority of British officers never fully understood this fear. When Native Americans began to confederate to better protect themselves, the British blamed not their own actions but rather those of the French. Instead of acknowledging Native Americans' concerns over the occupation of so many forts, the British instead concentrated on finding the French ring leaders they believed were inciting Native Americans to cause trouble.

Native Americans were already considering an assault on the British positions in the west when in 1763 news of the Peace of Paris arrived, and removed any hope that British domination of the Ohio and the Great Lakes would be reversed peacefully at the negotiating table. Still uncomprehending the nature of their situation, the British were taken completely by surprise when disgruntled Native Americans initiated the conflict that became known as “Pontiac’s War”.

The British Army was on the frontier to preserve the empire by keeping the peace, a task that was made considerably more difficult by the attitudes and actions of some of its own members. Whenever soldiers and Native Americans mixed there was a high probability of violence, and if rum was added to the mix, then trouble was nearly certain. In the years before Pontiac’s War the 44<sup>th</sup> regiment seems to have been particularly prone to treating Native Americans in an appalling manner, beating and insulting them whenever the opportunity arose.<sup>1</sup> In other incidents, Native Americans at Niagara were robbed and assaulted by soldiers, and five Native Americans were murdered by the garrison at Venango.<sup>2</sup> Such behaviour from soldiers encountering Native Americans was not universal, but it was common.

Neither was violent treatment of Native Americans confined to the lower ranks. Officers who did not feel the need to keep Native Americans in good humour quickly found many ways to make this abundantly clear to them. When the Indians of Conajoharee requested that an empty blockhouse inside a fort might be made available to them as a schoolhouse,

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<sup>1</sup> Claus to Johnson, 26 February 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 348-349 and Claus to Johnson, 2 May 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 382-384.

<sup>2</sup> Niagara and Detroit Proceeding, July-September 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 453-454.

the blockhouse in question was quickly made into a stable.<sup>3</sup> At Fort Ontario Alexander Duncan refused to let Native Americans make long speeches, a move that was a shocking breach of protocol, as most Native American diplomacy took the form of long speeches from headmen. Such arrogant behaviour was no doubt responsible for the fact that Ontario received few Indian visitors.<sup>4</sup>

Officers' mistreatment of Native Americans was not limited to rudeness, and they could be just as violent in their actions as any common soldier. On one occasion an officer beat a Native American until he was bleeding profusely, in a disagreement over a business deal.<sup>5</sup> Such behaviour understandably upset and angered Native Americans who had been promised that good treatment from the British would continue after the war. As a result, the ill behaviour of officers and men was a frequent complaint of Native Americans when they met with Sir William Johnson.<sup>6</sup>

Again, though frequent, this ill-treatment of Native Americans was not approved of by all officers. In contrast to those who abused Native Americans, there were other officers working hard to establish a good relationship with their Native American neighbours. In their orders these officers emphasised the importance of keeping "a good understanding with"

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<sup>3</sup> Journal of Indian Affairs Feb 17-18 1761 p. 216 and Journal of Indian Affairs 4 March 1761, p. 227 WJP Vol. 10.

<sup>4</sup>Duncan to Amherst, 9 June 1763, and Duncan to Amherst, 29 July 1763, PRO WO 34/19

<sup>5</sup> Claus to Johnson, 9 April 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 376.

<sup>6</sup> Niagara and Detroit Proceedings July-September 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 443-444, 486, Indian Proceedings April 21-28 WJP Vol. 3 p. 707, An Indian Conference with the Six Nations, September 8-10 WJP Vol. 10 p. 505 McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 160; while it is true that many officers and soldiers abused and murdered Native Americans, McConnell's argument that they insulted, fought and killed Native Americans whenever possible is an exaggeration.



those Native Americans who visited British forts.<sup>7</sup> Even Amherst instructed that as long as they behaved, Native Americans should always be treated civilly.<sup>8</sup> Those officers who were known to have disobeyed these instructions could be strictly reprimanded by Amherst and his subordinates.<sup>9</sup> After hearing complaints from Native Americans that they had been badly treated at Venango, Bouquet wrote immediately to the commanding officer there, and instructed him in a “Most Serious Manner” to prevent any future cause of complaint, to punish all who by word or deed injured a Native American, and provide redress for any Native Americans who complained to him.<sup>10</sup>

Common soldiers who mistreated Native Americans received much harsher punishment. In one instance a soldier who killed a Native American’s horse was given 100 lashes; at another time four men were whipped for robbing a Seneca.<sup>11</sup> In order to try and prevent such incidents from taking place, officers tried to segregate their men from the Indians whenever possible.<sup>12</sup> Such actions show that there were those in the army concerned about relations with Native Americans, and prepared to take action to prevent them being soured.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Copy of Instructions given the officers Commanding at the Several posts Depending on the Detroit, 28 August 1762, PRO WO 34/49 and To Officers at Western Posts, 16 September 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 577.

<sup>8</sup> Amherst to Ormsby, 7 August 1763, PRO WO 34/50, Amherst to Walters, 9 August 1760 PRO WO 34/23.

<sup>9</sup> Claus to Johnson, 24 May 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 394.

<sup>10</sup> Bouquet to Carre, 15 October 1761, p. 822-823, HBP Vol. 5.

<sup>11</sup> An Indian Conference, Jeffery Amherst, 25 September- 3 October 1761 WJP Vol. 10 p. 325, and Johnson, Journal to Detorit, 4 July- 30 October 1761, WJP Vol. 13 p. 234.

<sup>12</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. p. 167 and To Officers at Western Posts, 16 September 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 577.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 167-168 Brumwell’s assertion that “British officers spared no effort to defuse episodes of interracial friction” is an exaggeration, but there can be no doubt that there were those officers who went to great lengths to do just that.

In the hope of creating a good impression such officers struggled to adapt to the Native Americans' traditions forms of diplomacy: for example, they would use traditional Native American ceremonies when meeting Native American representatives.<sup>14</sup> However, the officers' efforts at intercultural mediation were severely hampered by their ignorance and inexperience.<sup>15</sup> While most officers had served against, or alongside, Native Americans on the battlefield, this in no way prepared them for their new role as the Crown's diplomatic representatives to Amerindians. Keen to make a good impression, these officers sought advice on such matters. To Amherst's credit, when Colonel Haldimand wrote to him asking for advice on Indian affairs, he directed him to Sir William Johnson.<sup>16</sup>

When Lieutenant James Gorrell took command at Fort Edward Augustus on the St Lawrence River, he did all he could to overcome his inexperience. Typically of those officers who wished to placate the Native Americans they met, at the time of taking his post Gorrell was ignorant of the norms of Indian diplomacy, desperate for guidance and short of vital materials. Having examined his order from Donald Campbell at Detroit, and finding "very little respecting Indians," he applied for more instructions, and was directed to Sir William Johnson. Johnson was at Detroit for an Indian conference and warned Gorrell "that unless I [Gorrell] did my best to please the Indians I had better not go [to Detroit]." Johnson then promised

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<sup>14</sup>Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, William Johnson, July-September, 1761 WJP Vol. 3 p. 452, Henry Balfour's Conference with Indians, 29 September 1761, WJP Vol. 3 pp. 537-545, Wilkins to Amherst, 7 December 1762, PRO WO 34/22.

<sup>15</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. p. 189 Brumwell notes that even though the British Army did adopt some Amerindian clothes and tools to make their lives easier they still possessed only a superficial knowledge of their culture.

<sup>16</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 29 May 1760, WJP Vol. 10 p. 158.

that after the conference he would make sure wampum belts were sent to Fort Edward Augustus, but Gorrell never received any. Gorrell, desperate for the wampum he needed to carry out the ceremonies required by Native American diplomacy, made three attempts to contact someone who could supply some, but all failed.<sup>17</sup>

Aware that greeting the Native Americans who lived in the region of his post without wampum to present to them would be disastrous, Gorrell was reduced to borrowing wampum from Indian women and fellow officers. This enabled Gorrell to make six belts, one for each nation that was to visit him, but he later found that some nations, which were represented by more than one town, required more than one belt. Gorrell continued to do what he could, but his journal makes it clear that his wartime service in no way prepared him for his peacetime role in the west.<sup>18</sup>

Gorrell was not the only officer to have trouble decoding the role that wampum played in Native American diplomacy. At one meeting with some Six Nations headmen at Niagara, William Walters tried to refuse the wampum belts with which they wanted to present him. Walters did this because he knew wampum was valuable and he felt he would be doing the headmen a favour, for by refusing their gift he was saving them money. In reality, refusing to accept a wampum belt would have been a grave offence to the headmen, as it was something only done by Native Americans when they refused to accept the message contained in the belts. As this wampum was intended to “renew the brotherly friendship” between the post of

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<sup>17</sup> Journal of James Gorrell 12 Oct 1761 – 14 June 1763 WJP Vol. 10 pp. 697-714. See Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*. pp. 187-193 for the importance of wampum in Native American diplomacy.

<sup>18</sup> Journal of James Gorrell 12 Oct 1761 - 14 June 1763, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 697 -714.

Niagara and the Six Nations, its refusal would have been taken as a rejection of the Six Nations' friendship. Luckily, the headmen persuaded Walters to accept the belts, and so symbolically accept their friendship.<sup>19</sup> Officers like Gorrell and Walters were clearly well-meaning, but struggled to do the right thing; they wanted to create good relations with those Native Americans they encountered, but they were severely hampered by a lack of experience.<sup>20</sup>

The truth is that these officers' previous service had made them ill-prepared for their role as cultural mediators on the frontier. Many would have fought alongside Native Americans, and some would even have been involved in smoothing over the conflicts that occurred between the army and their Native Americans allies, but this was no preparation for what was to come. During the Seven Years' War officers might have been expected to soothe the anger caused by a scuffle between soldiers and Amerindians, but only the most senior officers would have been expected to take part in formal diplomacy between the Crown and Native Americans. Now every post commander was expected to be a diplomat, representing the British Crown in dealing with Native Americans. Not only were officers suddenly expected to undertake formal diplomatic meetings with Native Americans, but they had to carefully settle disputes between soldiers and Native Americans, settlers and Native Americans, and even Native Americans and

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<sup>19</sup> Walters to Johnson, 11 November 1761, WJP Vol. 3 p. 332.

<sup>20</sup> Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763*. p. 302 argues that the British abandoned Native American diplomacy, which is not true. There were some officers who rejected traditional forms of diplomacy, but as shown above others did what they could to try and master them.

Native Americans. This was something for which they had minimal training and far too often minimal aptitude.<sup>21</sup>

Not only did most officers lack experience and other essentials such as wampum, but many lacked reliable interpreters, a prerequisite for clear communication with Native Americans. The Six Nations complained of the need for an interpreter at Oswego.<sup>22</sup> At Fort Brewster the commanding officer complained that “The Want of Interpreters frequently occasions Misunderstandings”. In response to the situation, Johnson sent an interpreter, but he could not undo the damage that had already been done.<sup>23</sup> Even when interpreters were available, there was no guarantee they would be reliable. Often they were French or Canadian traders, with little loyalty to the British.<sup>24</sup> With few men amongst the British who could understand native languages, such interpreters could often distort the messages that they were supposed to deliver for their own ends. In one example in 1762 the Mohawk complained that the translator at Detroit was causing trouble by not conveying their words accurately to the commanding officer.<sup>25</sup>

As well as struggling with Native American forms of diplomacy, the army would also on occasion take active steps to address Native American grievances, in order to maintain good relations. When Bouquet received

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<sup>21</sup> A good survey of the contact provided by the British army’s need for Native American allies is David L Preston, ““Make Indians of Our White Men”: British Soldiers and Indian Warriors from Braddock’s to Forbes’s Campaigns, 1755-1758,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 74, no. 3 (2007).

<sup>22</sup> Indian conference at Johnson Hall, 13-14, September 1762 with the Six Nations, WJP Vol. 10 p. 509-515.

<sup>23</sup> Duncan to Johnson, 29 August 1762, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 497-8 Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*. The whole book is an excellent analysis of what actually happened at the large diplomatic meetings between the colonies and Native Americans, and should be required reading for anyone who hopes to understand these events, of which the official accounts only give the barest outline. For the role, and extreme importance of interpreters see pp. 182- 185.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson to Officers at Western Posts, 16 September 1761, Johnson instructs the officers to use French inhabitants as translators. WJP Vol. 3 pp. 527-528.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson to Croghan, 24 October 1762, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 558-560.

reports that Native Americans were being disturbed by hunters and squatters moving on to their land and killing their game, he issued a proclamation ordering officers to seize any such people they should find, and send them to Fort Pitt where they would be tried and punished.<sup>26</sup> Bouquet was not alone in taking such action. Both General Monckton and Captain MacDonald took steps to remove hunters and settlers from Native American land when they learned that they were upsetting Native Americans.<sup>27</sup>

These examples prove that officers did not react to Native Americans as a monolithic group. There were those who detested Native Americans and who revelled in the opportunity to put them in their place which a posting on the frontier granted them. Other officers felt that the priority should be to establish good relations with Native Americans. Their attitude stemmed largely from circumstance and experience. As discussed in the last chapter, officers whose circumstances consisted of crumbling fortifications and small garrisons understandably saw little need to antagonise Native Americans if it was avoidable.

Just how much their vulnerability affected the actions of British officers is demonstrated by events at Fort Le Beouf. After an epidemic of horse stealing, including the theft of some horses that had been only 200 yards from the fort (giving a good indication just how far outside their garrisons British power extended) Townsend Guy, the officer in charge,

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<sup>26</sup> Bouquet to Livingston, 31 October 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 847, McDonald to Bouquet, 25 October 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 840 Monckton to Bouquet, 5 April 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 393 and Bouquet Proclamation against Settlers, 31 October 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 844 Such actions were not entirely selfless; while no doubt Bouquet was keen to see an end to the upset caused to the Indians, his involvement with land speculation in the area also played a role. After all, how could he hope to sell the land if it was already occupied?

<sup>27</sup> Monckton to Bouquet, 5 April 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 393 and McDonald to Bouquet, 25 October 1761, HBP Vol. 5 p. 840.

ordered some men to move outside to guard the horses. As the men left the fort, they came upon some more Native Americans stealing horses, which resulted in a fire fight. The men quickly retreated inside the fort, whereupon the Native Americans fired upon it. As soon as the firing ceased, Guy invited the Native Americans into the fort, gave them a drink, told them that they should not steal horses from the garrison, and then let them go. Even though these Native Americans had been stealing the king's horses and fired on king's men, Guy did not demand compensation or attempt to detain them. These are hardly the actions of someone who felt in a position of dominance. Such actions point more to a desire for reconciliation than revenge, a desire that was largely based on fear. Afraid of possible retaliation and aware of the vulnerability of the small garrison at Le Boeuf, twelve men and a corporal were sent to reinforce the post, after Guy had reported the incident.<sup>28</sup>

Those who struggled to reach an understanding with the Native Americans whom they encountered clearly faced considerable obstacles. They did not understand Native American languages or culture, and their guides into this new world were often unfriendly and unreliable French Canadians. It is therefore wrong to assume that every disagreement between British officers and Native Americans was the result of arrogance or hatred on the part of the army. Misunderstanding could result in trouble just as often as malice. Indeed, the British never truly understood the Native Americans' biggest grievance regarding their actions.

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<sup>28</sup> Cochrane to Bouquet, 1 June 1761, pp. 518-520 and Guy to Bouquet, 1 June 1761, pp. 521-522, both HBP Vol. 5.

For most Native Americans, the large number of posts occupied by the British in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War was their greatest cause of concern. They could not understand why the British needed so many warriors and forts if their intentions were peaceful. At the Treaty of Easton in 1758 the British had agreed not to erect permanent settlements in the Ohio region, so it was a simple and insulting breach of promise when the town of Pittsburgh began to grow around the garrison at Fort Pitt. The Oneida and Tuscarora reminded Johnson of British wartime promises after the surrender of Canada in 1760, but the British were not going to give up their forts.<sup>29</sup> This greatly angered large numbers of Native Americans who, rightly, felt betrayed by the British. Many tribes began to suspect that the forts would be staging posts for a new British attempt to take their land. By 1763 this fear had become widespread, and one officer noted that "the Six Nations, Shawnese, & Delaware Indians are Ill Disposed ... They say We mean to make Slaves of them, by Taking so many Posts in their Country".<sup>30</sup>

Yet though they were aware of some Native American concerns, few officers realised the anger caused by the British Army's occupation of French forts and construction of new posts. There was a fundamental breakdown in understanding. The British thought of the forts and the land as French, and so felt that they had won ownership of them with victory in Canada. Native Americans felt that the forts, and the land they stood on, had never belonged to the French; rather, as they conceived it, they had allowed the French to build and occupy forts on their land in return for compensation in the form of access to trade and gifts. As far as Native

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<sup>29</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 227 and Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 202

<sup>30</sup>Gladwin to Amherst, 20 April 1763, PRO WO 34/49.



Americans were concerned the French defeat did not entitle the British to occupy the forts. This might have been overlooked had the British kept up the old agreement by providing access to cheap trade goods and plentiful gifts, but this they failed to do. Almost nobody in the British Army realised the resentment they created simply with their presence on Native American land.<sup>31</sup>

It was not just the occupation of the posts that worried Native Americans: they were also angered by the fact that wherever the army moved in they began making extensive changes to the surrounding landscape, such as clearing woodland and planting crops to feed the troops. This meant that the British forts had a much greater and more obvious impact on the environment than small garrisons favoured by the French. For Native Americans, already afraid that the army was intending to take up permanent residence in the backcountry, these changes were a most unwelcome development. These fears were voiced by an Onondaga headman at conference in 1763: “At Fort Brewton We daily see ye People cleaning large Fields of our Land. The Same at Osswego Falls, Not withstanding it was told to us by ye General that they were only to be temporary Posts for ye protection of provisions”.<sup>32</sup>

Native Americans, resentful that the army was taking control of the landscape in spaces that had traditionally been their domain, channelled this anger and resentment into acts of resistance that aimed to challenge British

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<sup>31</sup> Merrell, *Into the American Wood: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*. p. 184  
Native American culture discouraged direct confrontation, and so it should hardly be surprising that most Native Americans dismissed officers protestations of friendship as obscuration, when all their actions - taking so many forts, cutting off power supplies, reducing the number of gifts, and demanding the return of captives - spoke of hostile intent.

<sup>32</sup> An Indian Conference, 20-28 May 1763, Johnson Hall Friday 20 May 1763 WJP Vol. 10 pp. 674-691.

control of the environment. At Fort Hendrick, though the Native Americans had at first welcomed the British, they quickly made their objections known when the army began cutting wood on Native American land. Typically, the commanding officer at the garrison blamed Europeans, in this case the Schuyler Family of settlers, for stirring up the Indians. However, even had they wished to, the Schuylers would not have been able to force the Indians to object to the army's presence if the Native Americans had not already felt aggrieved.<sup>33</sup> This refusal to see their actions as the cause of Native American anger was typical of many British officers; they simply could not imagine that Native Americans would autonomously make choices or take action without prompting from an outside source. In reality, Native Americans did not need any coaxing to complain about the ever-increasing number of acres cleared by the British.

It was not just the forts themselves; many Native Americans were also concerned by the large number of settlers who followed the British Army into the west. The presence of the army encouraged settlement, by providing a market for goods and giving settlers a feeling of safety.<sup>34</sup> The roads cut through the woods by the army for their campaigns during the war also made access to the frontier easier.<sup>35</sup> The growing settlement around Fort Pitt was a prominent source of Native American anger. As the number of men stationed at the fort grew to over 1,000 a burgeoning community of

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<sup>33</sup>MacAulay to Johnson 2 December 1758 p. 58 and Johnson to MacAulay 5 December 1758 pp. 62-63 WJP Vol. 10 Johnson's response to the matter was to offer a reward of £12 to anyone who could supply proof of people stirring up the local Indians against the garrison.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp.524-525.

<sup>35</sup> Hinderaker, *Elusive Empire : Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. p. 149.

civilians appeared to cater to their needs; there were over 160 houses outside the fort by April 1761. This new town was a worrying development, which left Native American headmen wondering if the British “designed to Build another Philadelphia on their Lands”.<sup>36</sup> Relations were further soured by Amherst allowing officers and ex-officers to create new settlements around posts like Niagara. These settlements were intended to provide supplies for the garrisons at reasonable prices, but also created a considerable amount of trepidation amongst Native Americans who viewed them as the beginning of a process that would end with them dispossessed of all their land.<sup>37</sup>

Native Americans were very worried about British intentions, and when they received a frosty welcome at the forts many felt that their worst fears had been confirmed, and so they began to move their villages further west, away from the British. The Indians at Oswegatchie hoped that they might be safe if they put a river between themselves and the British.<sup>38</sup>

Amherst was pleased by this development as “it is much better the beasts should settle on the north side” of the river, further from the British.<sup>39</sup>

Just how bad relations between Native Americans and British had become is illustrated by the behaviour of a Native American sympathetic to the British at Detroit. In 1762 Henry Gladwin informed Amherst that “we have with some difficulty made another convert, who seems to be under great apprehension for fear of being discovered, and as he speaks a little

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<sup>36</sup>Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 202.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson to Claus, 20 May 1761, WJP Vol. 10 p. 270; Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. pp. 473-474; McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. pp. 170-171 When the army assumed control of the portage near Niagara and commenced building there it particularly angered the Genesee Seneca.

<sup>38</sup> Gage to Amherst, 2 May 1762, PRO WO 34/5.

<sup>39</sup> Amherst to Gage, 27 May 1761, PRO WO 34/7-8.

English, and some Dutch, he will not allow of an Interpreter, and in order to avoid suspicion, he desires he may be turned out of the Fort, as a troublesome fellow, whenever he is found here by any of his Brethren".<sup>40</sup> So great was his compatriot's hatred of the British that the Native American in question desired the British to pantomime his eviction from the post, rather than face the accusations that he was collaborating with them.

The language used by Gladwin would seem more appropriate from a police officer infiltrating a criminal organisation, as opposed to a group whose friendship the British were meant to be actively courting, and indicates how little trust existed between the two groups at this time. The convert was a Native American who had agreed to provide intelligence to the British, and though he was prepared to help the British, he was plainly terrified lest anyone should find out. Clearly by 1762 the army was so detested by those Native Americans in the vicinity of Detroit that any Native American seen to be openly helping the British would become an outcast, and was risking attack. The Amerindians' precautions demonstrate just how unpopular those who collaborated with the army had become amongst Native Americans by this time. On the other hand, Gladwin's language makes it clear that he was already very suspicious of those Native Americans whom he was meeting. This atmosphere of fear and distrust, created by Britain's broken promises of evacuating the Ohio, had reached crisis level thanks to Amherst's restrictions on presents.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Gladwin to Amherst, 24 February 1762, WJP Vol. 7 pp. 384-385.

<sup>41</sup> The atmosphere of distrust was not entirely the fault of the British: "Indians, too, had emerged from the war much more unsettled and suspicious, reluctant to discuss openly their future plans." Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763*. p. 239.

It did not take long for Native American resentment and anger over the British occupation of the west to harden into something more concrete. War belts began to circulate through both the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley tribes, as those Native Americans prepared to fight sought out like-minded allies. The British, refusing to realise that these plots were a reaction to their occupation of the frontier, blamed the French and Canadians for “stirring up” Indians and creating trouble. The British simply failed to grasp that Native Americans were making their own decisions, and were not being led by others. Reducing the British presence on the frontier was never discussed; instead, British officers tried to stop the steady stream of wampum belts and strings by searching for ringleaders and instigators so they could remove them from the backcountry, hoping that Native Americans would soon come to accept British domination once they ended the influence of the French. Rather than altering their treatment of Native Americans, officers concentrated on finding the ringleaders who they believed were behind the distribution of the war belts. When Thomas Gage, at that time Governor of Montreal, was informed that belts were being passed amongst the Indians, he ordered Major Gladwin “to endeavour to get further information, & to find out the Principals concerned”.<sup>42</sup>

This view that the French were responsible for inciting Native Americans to rebellion was common to many senior officers, and went hand in hand with the misconception that Native Americans would not take action unless prompted to do so by somebody else. James Gorrell remarked on the “villainy used by the Canadians to corrupt the Indians and excite them

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<sup>42</sup>Gage to Amherst, 23 Jan 1762, PRO WO 34/5 also Gladwin to Amherst, 24 February 1762, PRO WO 34/54.

against the English” in order to keep the Indian trade for themselves.<sup>43</sup>

Edmund Moran at Fort Edward Augustus reported to his superiors that “The Indians would do very well here, but for the Canadians, they Spirit them up to everything that’s bad against the English”.<sup>44</sup>

This was another area where Amherst and his men differed.

Amherst never believed that the French were responsible for causing unrest amongst Native Americans, but he believed that if Native Americans were threatened enough, they would behave. When Gladwin reported his concerns about French troublemakers amongst Native Americans, he was disgusted that Amherst threatened to drive Native Americans “off the face of the earth” rather than “striking at the root” [i.e. the French].<sup>45</sup>

Just as they blamed the French for Native American demands for gifts, so most officers incorrectly blamed French traders and Jesuits for Native American attempts to restore the French Empire in North America. In reality, the effort was led by Native Americans; men like Pontiac were desperate for a counterweight to British power. As time went on and Native Americans realised exactly how harsh British rule could be, this desire grew. In truth, the French were split; some helped and encouraged Native Americans to take up arms against their old enemy, while others, afraid of the consequences of another war, remained aloof or only helped under duress.<sup>46</sup> The French also provided a convenient excuse for Native

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<sup>43</sup> Gorrell, James, *The Journal of an Expedition which started from Detroit on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1761* (Detroit, 1818) but see below. pp. 25-27.

<sup>44</sup> Moran to Spear, 16 May 1763, WJP Vol. 10 p. 669-670.

<sup>45</sup> Gladwin to Johnson, 4 April 1762, WJP Vol. 3 p. 421.

<sup>46</sup> The best discussion of the role the French in creating Pontiac’s Rebellion is in Dowd’s *The French King Wakes up in Detroit*, *Ethnohistory* Vol 37 No. 3 Summer 191 pp254-278. Dowd emphasises the Native Americans desperate desire to recreate the French Empire as a counter weight to the British, and successfully demonstrates that Native Americans such as Pontiac, led the French, as much, if not more, than the French led the Native Americans.

Americans to blame when their plans and wampum belts were discovered, and one the British were all too ready to believe. French traders were not the only ones who came under suspicion. Many army officers such as Henry Gladwin were sure it must be the Jesuits, who had long been missionaries amongst the Indians, who were causing the trouble.<sup>47</sup>

William Johnson also saw the Jesuits as a troublesome influence on Native Americans. In 1762 he informed Amherst that Native Americans were being “inflamed by their Priests and Jesuits residing amongst them”. He added that “I am of opinion there are not wanting Emissaries, particularly amongst the Clergy who make it their business ... feeding them up with expectations of the French becoming again possessed of the Country, as well as by every means which artifice can suggest to render us obnoxious to them.”<sup>48</sup> Johnson and Croghan were of one mind on this. After hearing rumours of two Frenchmen moving through various tribes and urging them to attack the British, Croghan wrote

“I ... believe that the French living at the Ilinois [sic] Country and those residing at our different Posts over the Lakes have been endeavouring to Poison the minds of several of the Western Nations of Indians in Prejudice to His Majesty’s Subjects and endeavouring to Stir up all these Nations to Murder his Majesty’s Officers and Soldiers now in Possession of the several Forts given up to his Excellency

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Dowd also highlights the importance of Native American religious leaders, in helping bring about war.

<sup>47</sup> Gladwin to Amherst, 4 Feb 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 380.

<sup>48</sup> Johnson to Amherst, 20 March 1762, WJP Vol. 10 p. 405.

General Amherst, by the Capitulation at Montreal on the  
Reduction of Canada.”<sup>49</sup>

Indian agents resented the influence Jesuit missionaries had over Native Americans, but, unlike most officers, were well aware that the occupation of the frontier, compounded by reductions in gift-giving, was the main reason for Native American anger. Just before the outbreak of Pontiac’s Uprising Johnson wrote that the current troubles with the Indians “have been some time a brewing, and have been greatly occasioned by their meeting with much neglect & receiving few or no favours from Us, for permitting us to Occupy the Several Out Posts in their Country”.<sup>50</sup>

With relations on the frontier already fraught, it was a poor time to be making more demands of Native Americans, but this is exactly what Amherst decided to do. During the Seven Years’ War Native Americans had taken over 1,000 colonists captive, over 1,000 people from Pennsylvania alone, with one French official estimating that more than 3,000 people had been taken captive from Virginia by August 1756. A few had been tortured to death, but many more had been adopted and large numbers of them remained in Indian towns and villages. Those adopted would take on the roles and family ties of dead Native Americans, whom they had been captured to replace. Reactions to this sudden change in lifestyle and culture were mixed; while some longed for escape, others found much to admire in Native American society and quickly adapted to their new circumstances. This change was made easier by the good

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<sup>49</sup>Instructions of Croghan to Alexander McKee, 5 October 1762, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 546-47

<sup>50</sup>Johnson to Colden, 13 July 1763, WJP Vol.4 pp. 169-171.



treatment they received from Native Americans, for as long as the captives did not try to escape they would be accepted into Indian society.<sup>51</sup>

At the end of the Seven Years' War many adoptees had been living as Native Americans for several years. They had married, had children, and the younger ones often could not remember a time before their adoption. Such people were perfectly content where they were, and had no wish to return to homes and lives that they could barely remember. This did not matter to General Amherst. He, along with most officers and colonials, regarded these peoples as captives held against their will, whom the Indians were duty bound to free and return home. It should be remembered that though these adoptees may have enjoyed their new lifestyle, they had often left behind devastated families who did not know whether their loved ones were dead or alive. These people pressured the army and colonial authorities to return their relatives, and it was partly in order to help these deeply traumatised people that the army pressured Native Americans to return their captives.<sup>52</sup>

In response Amherst let it be known that "I by no means Intend to leave any Subject of the British Crown, in the hands of any of the Enemy's Indians; ...the Kings Subjects Wherever I find them ... I design to

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<sup>51</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. pp. 71 and 72 for captive figures. The differing effect of captive narratives on the British and colonial publics are explored in Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002). Colley points out that captivity and successful adoption of whites by Native Americans raised many difficult questions about identity and belonging. It was perhaps to avoid these questions that military men, and many colonials, refused to believe that some adoptees might choose to stay with Native Americans of their own free will.

<sup>52</sup> Petition of McColoch [McCullough], this was received by Bouquet in the summer of 1761 and is representative of the letters penned by desperate parents hoping for the return of their children. HBP Vol. 5 pp. 525-526.

release.”<sup>53</sup> Yet he was demanding the nigh on impossible. Not only did many captives have no wish to return, Native American headmen had no power to force those families with captives to give them up.<sup>54</sup> The Shawnee tried to explain the situation to Croghan, telling him in late 1761 that they had set all their “captives” free, but only five wished to return. Croghan merely gave them more presents, in the hope that this would persuade them to return all their “captives”.<sup>55</sup>

When the Native Americans of the Ohio Valley proved reluctant to return all their adoptees, Amherst’s response to the problem was to suspend all presents till the captives were returned. He explained his thinking in a letter to Colonel Bouquet.

“The Behaviour of the Indians in the detaining the Captives, Contrary to their repeated promises, is a very sufficient reason for suppressing all presents; and I am well convinced a due observation of this alone, will soon produce more than can ever be expected from Bribing them: we have a recent instance of this in South Carolina, where the Cherokees have at last delivered up all the English Prisoners that were remaining amongst them. And this was brought about merely by laying a restraint on the Trade which accordingly

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<sup>53</sup> Amherst to William Johnson, 3 September 1760, WJP Vol. 10 p. 178

<sup>54</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 210.

<sup>55</sup> 8 November 1761 George Croghan Journals, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 71. 1947 Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed. 1759-1763. pp. 305-444.

produced the desired effect, when Treatys, Bribes, and all other methods had failed.”<sup>56</sup>

This decision greatly angered many already irate Native Americans, but it was not yet enough to push them into open rebellion. For that, it would take a development that would crush all their hope of a peaceful removal of the British from the frontier.

The British take-over of the frontier was a disturbing event for many Native Americans, as was the defeat of the French in Canada, but while the Seven Years’ War continued there was always a chance that the French would be restored to power as part of a peace settlement.<sup>57</sup> When in 1763 the end of the war came, and with it the announcement that France had ceded control of Canada and the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys to the British, many Native Americans were deeply shocked. Not only was their father now gone, never to return, but lands the Native Americans considered as their own had been ceded by the French king. When the news of the peace settlement reached the backcountry, the Native Americans’ mournful reaction stood in sharp contrast to British celebrations. James Kenney noted in his journal that after the news was announced, “many of ye Indians seem more sober than they used their practice of singing & dancing was remarked to be ceased last Night.”<sup>58</sup> Gladwin also observed the effect that news of the

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<sup>56</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 25 July 1762, A. 4. p. 140 found in Transcripts Public Archives of Canada Sept 2 1758 Dec 22 1764 at the HSP.

<sup>57</sup> Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. p. 187 “The ring of competing powers that had provided an odd security to the Indian country” had collapsed. Also McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 181.

<sup>58</sup> James Kenney’s Journal, 1758-1763 Part 1 p. 50 HSP.

peace had on those Native Americans he met, and suggested that maybe they should be given some rum and medals in order to raise their spirits.<sup>59</sup>

After hearing of the peace, the Shawnee changed their plans to bring in those “captives” still among them. They hoped that their adoptees could also function as hostages and so prevent the army from attacking them. On hearing that Britain would take possession of those French lands that they had conquered during the war, “they said plainly that the English would soon be too great a People in this Country.”<sup>60</sup> Still Croghan tried to alert the army to the coming storm. In March 1763 he wrote to Bouquet to warn him that if they were too much distressed by a lack of presents and the surrender of France, the Ohio Indians would not consider the consequences of a war with the British.<sup>61</sup> Amherst did not care; he felt that as it was in the Indians’ interest to remain at peace with the British, their feelings on the French surrender were of “little consequence”.<sup>62</sup> Rather, Amherst believed “they will on due consideration, Deliver up all the Prisoners agreeable to their first Promise, and not Drive us to the Necessity of using harch[sic] methods.”<sup>63</sup> This renewed drive to recover captives combined with the French surrender, coming on top of the occupation of the frontier, restrictions on powder restrictions and limits on gifts, was too much for many Native Americans to stand, and so they decided to go to war.

Pontiac’s War was thus not caused by British efforts to dominate Native Americans. British actions, such as the occupation of posts and the

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<sup>59</sup>Gladwin to Amherst, 21 Feb 1763, PRO WO 34.49.

<sup>60</sup> 26 Feb 1763 Croghan’s Journal Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 71. 1947 Wainwright, Nicholas B., ed. 1759-1763. pp. 305-444.

<sup>61</sup> Croghan to Bouquet 9 March 1763 Transcript of Public archives of Canada, HSP.

<sup>62</sup> Amherst to Croghan, 10 May 1763, Transcript of Public archives of Canada, HSP.

<sup>63</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 15 May 1763, PRO WO 34/41.

insistence on the return of prisoners, were interpreted by Native Americans as a prelude to a full-scale attack on their society. The British never grasped this. While there were some officers who simply did not care what Native Americans thought, even those officers who did never realised the truth. Rather, officers hoped that Native Americans could be placated through diplomacy or by removing the French ringleaders, whom they held responsible for Native American violence. Reducing the army's presence on the frontier was never considered as an option. The last chapter demonstrated that officers were prepared to protest when they felt their orders would result in trouble, but there were no objections from officers concerning the occupation of the frontier. This implies that despite the efforts of some officers, there was a huge gap in understanding between Amerindians and the army in their midst.

The main obstacle to understanding was the officers' own prejudice. They were concerned by Native American anger, but did not credit Native Americans with the capacity to organise themselves to resist the British. They felt that this would only be possible with European help, as Native Americans lacked the intellect to do it themselves. This prejudice allowed officers to blame the Native Americans' attempt to confederate on the actions of French-Canadian troublemakers, when in reality it was caused by their own presence on the frontier. Up until news of the peace deal reached the Native Americans there was always a possibility that the British would be forced to leave the frontier peacefully. It was only once this was no longer an option that Native Americans chose to attack.

## Chapter Five

### Pontiac's War

The start of Pontiac's War came as a huge shock to the British. In the late summer of 1763, often using subterfuge, Native Americans captured nearly all the British posts in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region. The subsequent war lasted nearly two years and brought about the removal of Amherst as commander-in-chief of North America. The surprise attacks that began Pontiac's War revealed a deep split in the British Army over the treatment of Native Americans. Those on the frontier had trusted Native Americans enough to allow them access to their forts and even barracks in large numbers; in contrast, Amherst was deeply shocked by such behaviour. In response to the success of the surprise attacks, British officers announced that they would take no prisoners, should Native Americans be met in battle, and smallpox-infected blankets were issued to Amerindians. The army felt such a monstrous response was justified because Native Americans had not followed European codes of behaviour in their previous wars with the British.

Amherst was at a loss to explain the outbreak of war, but resolved to punish those Native Americans who had taken up arms so brutally that they would never dare to do so again. Indeed, his plans went further than this: Amherst hoped to weaken Native American society permanently, so that war against the British would be beyond them in the future. However, before Amherst could put his plan into action, he was ordered to return to Britain, and was replaced with General Thomas Gage. Unlike most of his

officers, Gage did not blame Pontiac's War on the French. Rather, he supposed Native Americans had felt threatened by the cession of Canada to Britain, and so had gone to war in order to reduce British power. Unlike Amherst, Gage did not believe Native Americans to be irrational, and he knew that the British Army was not strong enough to destroy the Native American ability to wage war. Gage believed that Native Americans had gone to war in order to further their own interests, and so felt that to guarantee peace for the foreseeable future he had to convince Native Americans that war against the British was most definitely not in their interest. Whereas Amherst had hoped to make war against the British impossible, Gage sought to make it unthinkable. This he would do by making a show of British strength and then demanding a harsh peace. Gage hoped that once columns of soldiers arrived in Native American communities they would feel so vulnerable that they would not only accept whatever terms the British offered, but that they would refuse ever to contemplate going to war again.

The conflict that would later become known as Pontiac's War began with a series of spontaneous and well-executed surprise attacks. The term "Pontiac's War", brought into use by Francis Parkman, is a misnomer: religious leaders such as Neolin played a larger part than Pontiac in the genesis of the conflict.<sup>1</sup> Pontiac himself was a follower of Neolin, though while Neolin hoped for an end to all contact with Europeans, Pontiac hoped

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<sup>1</sup> Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada*. Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire.*, p. 7. Dowd correctly identifies that Parkman's obsession with strong leaders greatly colours his decision to depict Pontiac as the driving force behind the conflict.

for the restoration of the old French father.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the pluralistic nature of Native American society, there has been a great deal of historical debate concerning the war aims of those Native Americans who took up arms against the British. While figures such as Neolin and Pontiac had many followers, there was no single person in charge of the Native Americans' war, and so there was nobody to define the objectives of all those who fought. Those who followed Neolin were fighting for the removal of all Europeans; others merely wanted the British removed from the frontier. But both groups would have fought alongside each other and alongside Native Americans who had heeded the call to arms for other reasons. Amongst these Native Americans would have been those fighting to avenge past wrongs committed by British soldiers and settlers, in addition to young men who would have been fighting primarily to make a name for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. pp. 197-199, and McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 179. Neolin preached the rejection of British goods and technology, and a return to "traditional" Native American ways. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. pp. 234-37. Delaware prophets had found many listeners amongst the Native American refugees who had fled to the Susquehanna Valley. They preached that all the misery that they had suffered was a result of the Master of Life's anger with them for turning away from traditional Native American tools and lifestyles, and that only by withdrawing from contact with Europeans and their trade goods could they once again win his favour. Such messages were preached by many prophets, who even amongst themselves disagreed on what needed to be done; some were pacifists, while others urged violent resistance to Europeans and their material culture.

<sup>3</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 182. The war was not directly controlled by Pontiac, and the "war" was really a combination of several smaller local conflicts between Native Americans and the British. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 186. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. p. 200; Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. p. 83; McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 172. Historians have disagreed over the aims of those Native Americans who went to war. McConnell argues that many Native Americans hoped that the destruction of the posts would cause the French to return, yet others argue that Ohio Indians merely wanted to ensure the security of their lands and restore traditional diplomatic gift-giving, while others think that they were attempting an "ethnic cleansing" of the frontier zone. Dowd calls it a struggle to avoid British subjection and the following taking of land. No



The War began in May 1763 with Pontiac leading a siege of Detroit which would go on to last six months. At the same time as Pontiac launched his siege of Detroit, and without any central direction, other Native Americans were spontaneously seizing British frontier posts. Most of these attempts relied on subterfuge rather than open attack, and they were widely successful until eventually the only British posts left in the north-west were Niagara, Pitt and Detroit. Fort Pitt was in a perilous position as, though it wasn't under close siege, communications had been severed and it was in danger of being starved out. The whole British position on the Northern frontier was in the balance until Colonel Henry Bouquet defeated a Native American ambush at Bushy Run and so relieved Fort Pitt.<sup>4</sup>

While they were fighting for a multitude of reasons, the Native Americans who went to war with the British were united in the tactics they chose. Those Native Americans who planned the attacks knew that their best chance of gaining access to the British forts was to use surprise; once word of hostilities spread, the army would lock the gates, and the sentries would be alerted, making it much more difficult and costly for the attacking Native Americans to force their way into the posts.<sup>5</sup> To prevent this, the attacks came unannounced, successfully taking the British by surprise in almost every instance. So widespread was anti-British feeling amongst Native Americans that almost every attack took place without any warning, which would have required only one Native American to break their silence.

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doubt there were Native Americans fighting for all these things, amongst those who fought the British.

<sup>4</sup> Richter, Daniel, K. "Native Peoples of North America and the Eighteenth Century British Empire" Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century*. p 364 and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. pp. 176-178.

<sup>5</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 177.

The only attack that was prevented by a warning was at Detroit. The identity of the person who alerted the British that a coming peace conference was in fact cover for a planned attack is disputed; it may have been an old Native American woman, or an officer's mistress.<sup>6</sup> Whoever was responsible for issuing the warning, it did its job and the attack on Detroit was the only one that failed. All the other forts assailed by Native Americans were successfully taken. At Fort Sandusky the garrison was massacred and the commander was taken prisoner after he sat down to smoke tobacco with some "of his own Indians." At St Joseph, a party of Pottawatomis gained access to the fort by asking to see their relations there, and then seized the commander. The commander of the garrison at Miami, despite being warned by a Frenchman that he had heard cannon fire on his journey to the fort, was taken when he left the stronghold to visit a Native American woman, who he was told was ill and wanted the commander to bleed her. Once the garrison learned their leader was captured, they soon decided to surrender.<sup>7</sup> At Michilimackinac the fort was taken under cover of a ball game, with Native American women carrying weapons into the post concealed under their blankets.<sup>8</sup> Venango was taken in a similar fashion, with the Indians "entering the Fort as friends, after which they put the garrison to the sword".<sup>9</sup> In the aftermath of their only failed surprise

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<sup>6</sup>Robert Elliot to Gage 24 June 1763 Gage Papers WLCL. It seems most likely that the warning came from Gladwin's mistress, a Wyandot woman. Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 538. However it is reported that at the time the Native Americans blamed the leak on an older woman. Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> A court of Inquiry held by order by Major Henry Gladwin to enquire into the manner of the taking of the Forts Sanduskey, St Joseph, Miami and Presqu'isle at Detroit 6<sup>th</sup> July 1763 WJP Vol. 10 pp. 730-732.

<sup>8</sup> George Etherington To Major Gladwin 12 June 1763 PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>9</sup>Johnson to Amherst 11 July 1763 NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 532-533.

attack at Detroit, the Native Americans there placed it under siege, and cut off the route to Fort Pitt.<sup>10</sup>

The methods chosen by Native Americans for their attacks bring to light the fact that British posts often played host to large numbers of Native Americans; after all, when planning a surprise attack the emphasis is on avoiding unusual actions that will alert your enemy that something untoward is going on. If Native Americans had never visited British officers to smoke tobacco, or never congregated around British garrisons to play games, making plans that relied on the army allowing them to do so would have made little sense.<sup>11</sup> The garrisons at those posts taken by Native Americans certainly did not feel threatened by allowing Indians access to their defences, or even barracks.<sup>12</sup> Had there not been some degree of trust between the army and Native Americans, then the surprise attacks would never have been so successful. Predictably, Amherst heaped scorn on those officers who had let themselves be deceived in this manner. After he heard of the taking of Venango and Presqu' Isle, he stated that it was "amazing that one officer should permit such a number of Indians to come in upon him as friends, and put himself in their power".<sup>13</sup> Amherst called the attitude displayed by some of his officers in dealing with Native Americans

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<sup>10</sup> Johnson to Amherst 19 June 1763, NYCD. p. 524-525 also Johnson to the Lords of Trade 1 July 1763, NYCD p. 525-526.

<sup>11</sup> One account of the taking of Michilimackinac describes how "a Parcell of Chipperways to the Number of 100 assembled near the Fort as customary in the Beginning of Summer." Extract from Daniel Claus Montreal 6<sup>th</sup> August 1763 WJP Volume 10 p. 777.

<sup>12</sup>At Sanduskey the Sergeant had remained outside the Fort when the Indians entered: "Notwithstanding he had given repeated Orders that in case any Indians came to the Fort, every Man should immediately come in." A court of Inquiry held by order by Major Henry Gladwin to enquire into the manner of the taking of the Forts Sanduskey, St Joseph, Miami and Presqu'ile at Detroit 6 July 1763 WJP Volume 10 pp. 730-732.

<sup>13</sup>Amherst to Egremont, (Extract.) 23 July, 1763. NYCD Volume 7 pp. 529-530.

a “most unaccountable Infatuation”.<sup>14</sup> Clearly, those officers who had frequent visits from Native Americans had taken care to keep the extent of their relations with Native Americans hidden from Amherst, and their commander’s outbursts show that there was a huge gap between how Amherst expected his officers to regard Native Americans and the reality. It was only because Amherst’s opinions of Native Americans differed so greatly from certain of his officers that he found their behaviour so inexplicable.

Amherst struggled to explain not only the behaviour of his officers, but also what had motivated the Native Americans to attack in the first place. He settled on the surprising rationale that the British had treated Native Americans too leniently, and that this “kindness” had been misinterpreted as fear, going so far as to call the attacks “Ingratitude”.<sup>15</sup> He never entertained the notion that the war might have been a response to Britain’s occupation of the frontier.

While he struggled to suggest a cause for the war, Amherst had no doubt about how best to end it. The outbreak of Pontiac’s War did not dissuade Amherst from his belief that he could alter Native American behaviour through severe chastisement. Rather, he came to see the whole conflict as an example of Native American misbehaviour that could only be stopped by applying ruthless correction. The commander-in-chief felt that

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<sup>14</sup>Amherst to Gage, 10 July 1763 PRO WO 34/7-8 he also uses the term infatuation in Amherst to Murray, 18 July 1763 PRO WO34/4.

<sup>15</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, 19 June 1763, PRO WO 34/41 Amherst to Johnson 30 September, 1763 WJP Volume 10 pp. 856-59.

punishment was “very Requisite for the future good behaviour of the Indians” and would secure “Peace and Quiet” for the coming years.<sup>16</sup>

Amherst’s war aims went beyond merely bringing Native Americans to heel through brutal treatment. He hoped to “put it out of the power of the savages to Repeat their attempts [to remove the British from the frontier] with any degree of success”.<sup>17</sup> This meant using the war to weaken Native American power by killing them and destroying their towns, so that they would have to accept subjugation by the British.<sup>18</sup> It was this desire to weaken the Native American capacity to resist British domination which led to Amherst’s infamous order to Bouquet to infect Native Americans with smallpox, via blankets from the garrison’s hospital. Amherst and others in the British army were well aware of the role disease was playing in eroding Native American power, and saw no objection to its use as a weapon, but their attempts were rendered ineffective by their own ignorance. The garrison at Fort Pitt did hand out blankets from their smallpox hospital but this effort was most likely ineffectual, as the smallpox virus, *Variola Major*, thrives in cool and dry conditions, and not those of a summer in the Ohio Valley. Native Americans were far more likely to catch smallpox through their contact with the disease-ridden garrisons of the British Army than through ill-conceived but deliberate attempts to infect them.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Amherst to Murray, 20 August 1763, PRO WO 34/3.

<sup>17</sup> Amherst to Stuart, 17 August 1763, PRO WO 34/48.

<sup>18</sup>Amherst to Gage, 21 August 1763 PRO WO 34/7-8. Amherst had written in a similar style during the Cherokee War, arguing that destroy the Cherokee’s corn was “the most effectual means of reducing them not only to Reason, but to that due subjection which they must be Compelled to”, Amherst to Grant, 13 July 1761, PRO WO 34/48.

<sup>19</sup> Fenn, E.A. “Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst” *The Journal of American History* 86 no. 4 (March 2000) 1552-1580 , Amherst to Bouquet 16 July 1763 PRO WO 34/41 smallpox order. Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. pp. 108-109 Barker notes that “Compared with biological warfare ideas propounded these days this was in the kindergarten class.” Ward Matthew C.

Whatever the source, smallpox devastated many Native American communities around this time, and played a huge part in weakening Native Americans' resistance during Pontiac's War. Killbuck, a Delaware, reported that the Shawnee alone had lost at least 150 people to the disease in 1764.<sup>20</sup> While the incident of the smallpox blankets is the most well-known of the British army's barbarities, it was not the only time that Amherst ordered his officers to commit heinous actions against Native Americans. He had previously informed Bouquet that "I wish to hear of no Prisoners, should any of the villains be met with in Arms[underlining in original]."<sup>21</sup> Bouquet in turn proposed hunting down Native American "vermin" with dogs.<sup>22</sup>

Proposals such as these, and Gage's wish that the army would soon be able to "set all their villages in a Blaze", highlight the fact that it was assumed by many officers that the rules or laws of war did not apply to their Native American opponents.<sup>23</sup> This attitude stems from the events at Fort William Henry during the Seven Years' War. After a European style set-piece siege, this British fort surrendered to the French on 9 August 1757. Montcalm, the commander of the French force, extended lavish generosity to his opponents, as was common in Europe at the time. They would hold

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"The British Army and Epidemic Disease among the Ohio Indians" In Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. pp. 63-78.

<sup>20</sup> Journal of Indian affairs 1-3 March 1765, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 615-620.

<sup>21</sup> Amherst to Bouquet 29 June 1763 PRO WO 34/41.

<sup>22</sup> Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. pp. 188-189. Brumwell notes that though during Pontiac's War British officers considered no means beyond the pale, if they would kill Native Americans, but "the notorious responses it evoked should not be seen as typical". While the anger provoked in the army by the uprising, combined with the worst type of prejudice, provoked some horrible atrocities, the war was not a watershed in army-Indian relations, nor is it right to argue that all British officers hated Native Americans and wished to exterminate them, as Dowd does. Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire*. p. 190.

<sup>23</sup> Gage to Amherst, 29 June 1763, PRO WO 34/5.

on to their muskets and private belongings and be allowed to return to the British as “parolees” having agreed that they would not take up arms against the French or their allies for the next eighteen months. Despite the fact that this agreement would deprive their warriors of their expected scalps and booty, it was reportedly approved by those Native American headmen accompanying Montcalm. When French soldiers began to lead the British away, they were surrounded by 1,600 Native American warriors desperate to claim what they believed were their rightful spoils of war. In the ensuing struggle, at least 69 British soldiers were killed, mostly resisting Native American attempts to deprive them of their possessions, with a question-mark lingering over the fate of a further 115. With a total of 2,400 soldiers in the column that was attacked such numbers seem relatively small, but despite this the event soon became known as the massacre of Fort William Henry, and was to have a massive impact on the minds of British officers in America.<sup>24</sup>

For many in the British Army the “massacre” quickly came to symbolise the savagery and duplicity of Native Americans. Such ideas were reinforced by the “massacre” at Fort Loudon in the Cherokee War. Upon the fort’s surrender, the Cherokees had agreed to allow everyone inside safe passage to Virginia or Fort Prince George. Instead, the retreating column, which as well as soldiers included both women and children, was attacked and 27 men and three women were killed. Once the fighting was done, 120 were made prisoner, and one unfortunate was tortured to death.<sup>25</sup> In the minds of many British officers, this cemented the view that Native

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<sup>24</sup>Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. pp. 203-205.

<sup>25</sup>John Oliphant, *Peace and War on the Anglo-Cherokee Frontier, 1756-63* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001). pp. 137-138.

Americans were bloodthirsty and perfidious, and it was this view that they felt excused their own barbarous actions. In short, many in the army felt that because they could expect no mercy from Native Americans they were justified in showing Native Americans none in return.<sup>26</sup>

The assumption that Native Americans could never be trusted can be clearly seen in Amherst's reaction to the news that many garrisons had surrendered once surrounded by Native Americans, rather than fighting to the death. He confessed himself amazed that they "should be so infatuated to capitulate with them, or have the least Confidence in their promises or Mercy".<sup>27</sup> For him the very idea of trusting Native Americans was madness. When he heard of Ensign Christie's surrender at Presqu' Isle, the only explanation that Amherst could conceive of was that "his brains must have been turned".<sup>28</sup> Of course, such opinions were clearly not universally held; when faced with the option of fighting to the death or trusting to Native American mercy there were those officers who chose the latter, a choice they were unlikely to have made if they were convinced surrender would inevitably be followed by slaughter. Still, the view that Native Americans could never be trusted was widespread. Gage warned that "Capitulation with Indians must ever turn out a massacre of the whole".<sup>29</sup> For some officers, the idea that their comrades may have trusted Native Americans, even when the only other choice was certain death, was shocking and almost inexplicable.

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<sup>26</sup>Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. pp. 179-190. After the failure of Native Americans to subscribe to European norms in the treatment of prisoners, many British officers felt Native American women and children were fair game.

<sup>27</sup>Amherst to Egremont.(Extract.) 23 July, 1763. NYCD Volume 7 pp. 529-530.

<sup>28</sup> Amherst to Gage 18 July 1763 PRO WO 34/7-8.

<sup>29</sup>Gage to Amherst, 23 July 1763, PRO WO 34/5.



Such opinions were only reinforced by reports that massacres had followed the triumphant Native American attacks that had opened the war.<sup>30</sup> Gladwin, who before Pontiac's War had been one of those who had tried to persuade Amherst to adopt a more lenient policy, felt in the wake of the Native Americans' surprise attacks that the army would be "fools as to trust them after what has happened ... nor would I advise any future Commander to trust them so far as to put it in their power to hurt him. So much for a worthless Race of People who deserve no Mercy at our Hands."<sup>31</sup> The link between British perceptions of Native American behaviour and their subsequent treatment was made explicit by Bouquet, who after hearing of the alleged "massacres" that followed the capitulation of several garrisons to Native Americans desired to "extirpate that Vermin from a Country they have forfeited and with it all claim to the rights of humanity".<sup>32</sup>

Like many of his officers, Amherst was furious that the first Native American attacks were spectacularly successful and caught the British entirely by surprise. In response, there was little the army could do. With his troops scattered all over the country, it would take time before they could be concentrated and mount any offensive action; the necessary supplies had to be organised, taking more time, and the British were not even sure who their enemies were.

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<sup>30</sup> A court of Enquiry into the taking of Forts Sanduskey, St Joseph, Miami and Presqu'isle. 6 July 1763, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 730-732.

<sup>31</sup> Gladwin to Johnson, 11 May 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 191-2.

<sup>32</sup> Bouquet to Amherst, 25 June 1763, PRO WO 34/40, Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763*. pp. 188-189. It should be remembered that these comments were made by men in a state of "rage and exasperation", and that though British anger at perceived Native American barbarities had a large influence on the army's behaviour in wartime, it was not the sole determinant of the army's treatment of Native Americans.

Amherst was convinced that the power of the British Army, with some help from colonial troops, would be enough to guarantee victory, and so he refused all offers of aid from Indian nations still tied to the British. When several tribes offered, through William Johnson, to send war parties against Britain's enemies, the general refused to have anything to do with them. At a face-to-face meeting with George Croghan he told him he would not employ them, as he felt there was not an Indian in America to be depended on.<sup>33</sup> In a letter to Johnson Amherst declared that "their assistance is rather a dangerous expedient" and informed him "I can by no means think of employing them upon this Occasion".<sup>34</sup> He expressed exactly the same sentiments when writing to Murray in Canada: "I am so far from Desiring any Assistance from them [Canadian Native Americans], as many wish to do, that I have none to ask of them, but rather to desire they will give us none, but live peaceable and behave well, and they may be Assured they will be treated accordingly".<sup>35</sup>

For the British it was vital that they took action as soon as possible. Detroit had been under siege from the spring of 1763 onwards. There was little chance that the fort would be taken by a Native American assault, but there was considerable risk of the garrison starving or running out of ammunition. That July, in response, Amherst began assembling a concentration of troops at Niagara to send against those Native Americans at war with the British. At the same time, Amherst began sending

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<sup>33</sup> Croghan to Johnson 28 Sept 1763 WJP Vol. 10 p. 825-27 Ibid. pp. 208-214. This was a definite change from Amherst's opinion during the Seven Year's War, when he had not objected to using Native Americans as allies.

<sup>34</sup> Amherst to Johnson 30 September 1763 NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 568-569.

<sup>35</sup> Amherst to Murray 20 August 1763 PRO WO 34/3.

reinforcements to Bouquet in Philadelphia, and ordered him to march to the relief of those posts that had been placed under siege.<sup>36</sup>

Bouquet set out for Fort Pitt in the late summer of 1763, and his march from Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, was the turning point of the war. On August 4, just short of the creek at Bushy Run, Bouquet's column was attacked by a large force of Native Americans. Their initial attack was repulsed, and Bouquet and his men formed up on a hill to better defend themselves, but were quickly surrounded. The army managed to hold together until night brought a brief respite, but the attack resumed the next day. The British were sustaining heavy casualties, and after many days' hard marching the men were thirsty, but with no supply of water within the British lines the supplies they had been carrying quickly began to run out. Bouquet knew he had to try something, so he ordered some of his men to fake a retreat, in the hope it would encourage the Indians to advance into the open, where they could be destroyed. The plan worked; the Native Americans made one failed attempt to break through the British lines before the shock of the first reversal and the casualties they had endured forced them to break off the attack. Bouquet and his men reached Fort Pitt on August 10.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Hough, Franklin B. ed., *Diary of the Siege of Detroit in the War with Pontiac, also a Narrative of the Principal Events of the Siege by Major Robert Rogers; A Plan for Conducting by Colonel Bradstreet and other Authentick Documents Never Before Printed* (1860, Albany New York) Amherst to Bouquet, 23 June 1763, PRO 278 34/42 Amherst to Bouquet, 12 June 1763 PRO 278 34/42.

<sup>37</sup> Bouquet to Amherst, 5 August 1763 and Bouquet to Amherst, 6 August 1763 PRO WO 34/40 Bouquet to Amherst, 11 August 1763, PRO WO 34/40 Brodine Jr., Charles E. "Henry Bouquet and British Infantry Tactics on the Ohio frontier" In Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. p.44. Generally Bouquet's victory was seen as shattering "the myth of Native American invincibility in the woods", both by some in the army at the time, and by many historians since. Brodine Jr's chapter (pp. 43-56) provides a thorough and well thought out account of Bouquet's development as a soldier and tactician. Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas*,

The men and supplies delivered by Bouquet saved Fort Pitt and preserved the British foothold in the west, but the casualties Bouquet's column had sustained left him too weak to push on to Detroit. Had the Native Americans succeeded in destroying Bouquet's column or forcing him to turn back, they may very well have succeeded in their aim of removing the British Army from the west. Native American morale was dealt a severe blow by Bouquet's success, which had destroyed hopes of a quick and decisive victory. In the winter of 1763, shortly after the relief of Fort Pitt, the Native Americans besieging Detroit sued for peace. Gladwin gladly accepted their offer.<sup>38</sup>

In August 1763 Thomas Gage replaced Amherst, who returned to Britain.<sup>39</sup> Gage's priority was to secure a peace that would be safe and durable. Unlike most of his officers Gage believed that the war was not a result of French puppeteering, but an expression of genuine Native American anger.<sup>40</sup> Many British officers believed that it was mainly the baleful influence of the French on Native Americans that had caused the

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1755-1763. pp. 220-222, Brumwell correctly identifies that Bushy Run was not really a watershed for the British army, though Bouquet had proved that with good leadership, strong discipline, a little luck, and the right tactics regulars could defeat Native Americans in the woods, but when any of these factors were lacking lumbering redcoats could still prove easy prey for agile Native Americans, as the successful ambush of 2 companies of the 80<sup>th</sup> regiment at Niagara that September proved. The idea that victory at Bushy Run was proof that the British army as a whole had gained mastery of forest warfare is a gross simplification. The army at this time had no system in place to harvest and then distribute the hard-won experience of its officers and men, and even if it had, there was still some disagreement as to the best methods of fighting Native Americans. So success or failure in battle against Native Americans depended very heavily on the quality of the officers present; officers like Bouquet, who had studied Native American tactics and drawn the correct lessons, could provide victory. In contrast, when Captain James Dalyell, who had learned nothing from the army's defeats in the woods, led his column to attack Pontiac's Camp at Detroit, the soldiers were quickly surrounded by hostile Native Americans, who rapidly killed Dalyell and 20 others, and put the rest to flight.

<sup>38</sup> Gladwin to Amherst 1 November 1763 HBP.

<sup>39</sup> Egremnot to Gage, 13 August 1763, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2 p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 545. The British were trapped by an understanding "of Indians as childlike violent creatures, and could not explain what had happened to them in the west unless they could stipulate a French conspiracy behind it all."

war, and that to ensure peace in the future it would make sense to limit contact between the two groups as much as possible. Bradstreet felt that for a lasting peace the British must “wean them [Native Americans] from the French”.<sup>41</sup> Another officer advised Johnson that “I would remove every Canadian from all out Posts to the inhabited Part of Canada, as also the Priests, to prevent their doing Mischief; I wish the same could be done with Respect to those at the Illinois.”<sup>42</sup>

Yet such attitudes should come as no surprise, as “fear and loathing of Catholicism was deeply imbedded in Protestant culture”. It was a common assumption at the time that a large network of Catholic spies and sympathisers not only existed in Britain, but were actively plotting to take over the country.<sup>43</sup> When the army moved to the Colonies, they carried these prejudices with them, and so were predisposed to see a Catholic hand in every disaster and reversal.

The problem for this mindset was the existence of men like Pontiac: Native Americans who appeared not to be under the control of worldly Europeans, yet were still doing all they could to drive the British from the frontier. As a result, British accounts of Pontiac always emphasise his unique status amongst Native Americans: almost an outside influence, an atypical demagogue, who had driven the otherwise peaceful majority Native Americans to war. Amherst called him “the Chief Ringleader of the Mischief”.<sup>44</sup> Gage informed Johnson that the Native Americans living on

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<sup>41</sup> Colonel Bradstreet's thoughts on Indian Affairs. 4 December 1765 NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 690-694.

<sup>42</sup> Eyre to Johnson 7 January 1764 WJP Vol. 11 pp. 5-10.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). pp. 176-181.

<sup>44</sup> Amherst to Gladwin, 10 August 1763, PRO WO 34/49.

the Illinois “were well disposed till Pontiac arrived about the beginning of that Month... [and] undid in one night, What He had been doing for Eight Months.”<sup>45</sup> As late as May 1765 Campbell was reporting that “all the Nations of Indians towards the Illenois[sic] are at present very ill disposed, and that, entirely owing to Pondiac, and some disaffected people that are among them.”<sup>46</sup> Almost nobody in the army understood the consensual nature of Native American politics. They did not realise that Native Americans would not follow leaders with whom they disagreed. Many officers felt that, just as with the French, only once the baleful influence of Pontiac had been removed could there could be a lasting peace.

Amherst certainly thought it would be a good idea to get rid of Pontiac, and offered the soldiers at Detroit £100 if they could kill him.<sup>47</sup> When this failed to bring about his assassination, Amherst offered an additional £100 if Gladwin thought it would act as a greater encouragement.<sup>48</sup> A huge sum of money at the time, Amherst would never have offered his men similar encouragement to assassinate a European officer, no matter how troublesome they were. Gage was slightly more sanguine, opining that Pontiac “shou’d be gained to our Interest, or knocked in the head, He has great Abilities, but his Savage Cruelty destroys the regard we Should otherwise have for him.”<sup>49</sup>

Gage shared with his officers a certain regard for Pontiac, and a distrust of the French. He was glad they were to cede Louisiana to the Spanish, “by which we shall get rid of a Most troublesome Neighbour and

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<sup>45</sup> Gage to Johnson 2 July 1764 WJP Vol. 11 p. 249.

<sup>46</sup> Campbell to Johnson 21 May 1765 WJP Vol. 11 pp. 744-46.

<sup>47</sup> Amherst to Gladwin 10 August 1763 PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>48</sup> Amherst to Gladwin 9 Sept 1763 PRO WO 34/49.

<sup>49</sup> Gage to Johnson 2 July 1764 WJP Vol. 11 p. 249.

the Continent be no longer embroiled with their Intrigues.”<sup>50</sup> He also proposed banishing the Jesuits from the “upper posts”.<sup>51</sup> Yet though Gage shared his officers’ suspicions of the French, he did not hold them responsible for the war.

This is borne out by Gage’s behaviour when two Frenchmen were arrested for carrying messages to the Illinois country and joining the Native Americans in their fight against the British. Gage sent Gladwin at Detroit the powers to court martial the pair, but urged him to gather proof against all people suspected of such behaviour because “If the Indians conclude a Peace, He will have Plenty of Accusations against the French; The Savages will throw all the Blame on them to exculpate themselves; but they so blend Truth with Falsehood in their Narrations, that it is a difficult matter to distinguish one from the other.”<sup>52</sup> Gage was prepared to believe the French settlers had been stirring up Native Americans, but he knew that the war had not been their creation.

Unlike many of his contemporaries Gage realised how much resentment Native Americans felt towards the British. He told Johnson that it was the “hatred” felt by many nations that had led them to believe the rumours spread by the French, and that they “had a fleet actually come up the River St Lawrence, I fear, there are few Nations who would not have taken Arms against Us”.<sup>53</sup> Gage was almost alone amongst officers in comprehending that Native Americans might blame the French in an effort

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<sup>50</sup> Gage to Johnson 23 January 1764 WJP Vol. 4 p. 304.

<sup>51</sup> Gage to Johnson 6 February 1764 WJP Vol. 4 p. 319.

<sup>52</sup> Gage to Halifax 7 January 1764 Gage Correspondence Vol.1 pp.9-11.

<sup>53</sup> Gage to Johnson 26 December 1763 WJP Vol. 4 p. 278.

to avoid culpability for the conflict.<sup>54</sup> He was one of few within the army to agree with Johnson that Native Americans “do not give the true reasons for the Commissions of their Acts of hostility”.<sup>55</sup>

Unlike Amherst, Gage had some idea as to why the war had begun. He knew that after peace was signed between Britain and France, Native Americans “saw us the sole Masters of the Country, the Balance of Power broke, and their own Consequence at an End. Instead of being courted by two Nations, a Profusion of Presents made by both, and two Markets to trade at, they now depend upon one Power... Rude and uncivilized as these Savages are, they have had sense enough to perceive the disadvantages which must arrive from them”.<sup>56</sup> Gage felt that Native Americans had gone to war with the British with the aim of weakening British power, as they saw British domination of the frontier as detrimental to their interests. While he looked down upon them, he still considered them to be rational, and so he felt it was important to appeal to their self-interest. This is in contrast to Amherst, who had little explanation for why the war had begun because he viewed Native Americans as irrational. Amherst’s efforts to weaken Native American power were a result of his denial of their rationality; after all, if Native Americans could not be trusted to act reasonably, then the only way to guarantee that they would not launch another illogical attack on the British was to put it out of their power to do so.

Amherst was removed before he could bring his plans to fruition, and the task of ending the war fell to Gage, who unlike Amherst believed

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<sup>54</sup>Gage to Gladwin 9 January 1764 Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>55</sup> Gage to Johnson 24 June 1764 WJP Vol. 11 p. 242-4.

<sup>56</sup> Gage to Halifax, 7 January 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 10-11.



that Native Americans could be reasoned with. This meant that in order to bring the war to a close, and ensure it was not to be repeated, Gage would need to convince Native Americans that war against the British did not serve their interests in any way. Bouquet had suggested that the best way to end the war and secure a lasting peace was to make Native Americans so afraid of confronting the British Army that they would not go to war against it again.<sup>57</sup> Gage agreed and explained why in a letter to Halifax shortly after becoming commander-in-chief in 1763:

“I am perfectly Sensible that the War we are now engaged in against the Indians, is ruinous and destructive, and that Peace can not be restored too soon, provided it can be made sure, and lasting; but in our present Circumstances, there is nothing can produce this Salutary End, but the carrying on an active and vigorous War against the Savages, till their Distresses shall oblige them to Sue for Peace, and that We have obtained a proper Satisfaction for the Injurys we have received.”

It was only then that the “Measures of equity and Moderation... together with the Sense the Barbarians will retain of our Power to chastise Them, must doubtless secure its duration”.<sup>58</sup> Note that Gage makes no mention of destroying the Native American capability to wage war. Unlike

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<sup>57</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 25 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>58</sup> Gage to Halifax, 9 December 1763, Gage Correspondence Vol. I pp. 2-4.

Amherst he knew that this was beyond the British Army, and so any peace would have to be a negotiated one.

While Gage emphasised harsh measures, the Proclamation of 1763 provided a note of reconciliation. This document was the British Government's temporary solution to the problems created by the end of the Seven Years' War. On top of the numerous letters that the government had received from men like Johnson and Gage during the Seven Years' War and its aftermath, the document was influenced by the writings of Henry Ellis, a former Governor of Georgia who had returned to London, and had written several documents on the need for reform in the colonial system of Native American management. Ellis was a mercantilist who favoured keeping the Colonies confined to the coast, as he believed that this would keep the cost of administration down and keep Native Americans happy. Ellis also feared that if the Colonies were allowed to move too far inland they might become ungovernable, and so start moving inexorably toward independence.<sup>59</sup>

Many men had influenced the development of the proclamation, but it was conceived by Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, and drafted by the Earl of Shelburne, who both intended the proclamation as a basis for further growth.<sup>60</sup> The idea of including the frontier in the government of Canada was proposed, but was rejected for the time being by the Lords of Trade, who felt that including the frontier in the government of Canada

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<sup>59</sup> Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. p. 93 Despite the title, the book is not really a study of the development of the Proclamation of 1763, which is only covered briefly, but a description of the situation on the frontier before the proclamation, and an examination of the impact of the proclamation on the frontier after it was applied. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 41.

<sup>60</sup> Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. p. 165.

could lead people to assume that the government only had rights in that area because of the conquest of Canada.<sup>61</sup>

The most important change contained in the proclamation was the provision for a boundary line which would define the limits of the Colonies. This was not new; implementing a boundary line had been discussed at the Albany Congress in 1754, and during the deliberations that produced the Treaty of Easton in 1758. In 1759 Johnson had suggested that the Colonies should settle boundaries with Native Americans, and “religiously” observe them.<sup>62</sup> The boundary line, which was ill defined, ran approximately along the Appalachian Mountains, a barrier beyond which settlers had already moved. Shelburne envisaged not an end to expansion, but a regulation of expansion. The power to negotiate grants of land was taken away from the Colonies and private individuals, and reserved solely for the Crown.<sup>63</sup> By taking direct control of land management the British Government hoped to keep Native Americans happy while keeping future expansion possible. This was a loss of sovereignty for both colonists and Native Americans, who now could no longer give or sell their land at their own discretion.

When they made the decision on temporarily halting expansion into the Ohio Valley, ministers did not believe that they could simply halt colonial expansion. They hoped that it could be diverted into the newly-conquered and less contentious areas such as Florida, Georgia and Nova

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<sup>61</sup> Lords of trade to Egremont, 5 August 1763, Doc relating to the history of Canada pp. 150-151 and Egremont to Lords of Trade, 14 July 1763, Doc relating to the history of Canada pp. 147-149.

<sup>62</sup> Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The British Empire before the American Revolution, Etc. (Second Edition.)* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1958). Volume XI p. 417 Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 17 May 1759, NYCD Vol. 7 p. 377. He also recommended the sending of missionaries to Native Americans as being of the highest importance.

<sup>63</sup> Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America.* p. 94.

Scotia.<sup>64</sup> It was even hoped by some that Florida could be used to supply the empire with valuable semi-tropical products.<sup>65</sup> The status of these new areas was outlined in the proclamation. The Province of Quebec was brought into being, consisting of the area of French Canada east of the Great Lakes, and Florida was divided into two provinces, with East Florida consisting of most of old Spanish Florida and West Florida of those areas west of the Apalachicola up to New Orleans.<sup>66</sup> The government hoped that legal and secure settlement would be a more attractive option than an illegal squat prone to attack from Native Americans at any moment. Pontiac's War was not responsible for the Proclamation of 1763 but it did greatly speed its creation, and after news of the war reached Britain the proclamation was drafted in only six days, and was then dispatched from Britain on a specially detailed packet ship on October 11.<sup>67</sup>

The new commander-in-chief was well aware that the new proclamation could go a long way to convincing Native Americans that peaceful coexistence with the British was their best option. Upon receiving it Gage sent copies to those commanders of the various posts "with Orders to publish the same as Speedily as possible". He also transmitted a copy to Sir William Johnson, so he could explain it to those tribes who still communicated with him. Gage was sure that the proclamation would

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<sup>64</sup>Steele, Ian K. "The Anointed, the Appointed and the Elected: Governance of the British Empire, 1689-1784" in Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century.* p. 122.

<sup>65</sup> Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." pp. 173-7.

<sup>66</sup> The American Revolution as an Aftermath of the Great War for Empire 1754-1763 L. H. Gipson *Political Science Quarterly* p. 93.

<sup>67</sup> Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen : 1763 and the Transformation of North America.*p. 94.

convince the Native Americans “of His Majesty’s Sincere Intention to favour and protect Them”.<sup>68</sup>

In order to bring the war to a close Gage decided to stick to Amherst’s plan of sending two columns into Native American territory, but made some changes of his own.<sup>69</sup> The British troops on the frontier were so weak and scattered that it had taken nearly a year since the first attacks to assemble a force that the British felt was large enough to risk sending against the Native Americans. One column under Bradstreet assembled at Niagara, and contained around 1,000 provincial troops, 300 Canadians and 1,000 regulars. During the summer of 1764 this force was to secure communications with Niagara and then attack the Wyandots, who it was alleged supplied other enemy tribes with corn. Bradstreet was then to proceed against the Shawnee and the Delaware, and from there down to Michilimackinac. Gage had ordered Bradstreet to “chastise the Tribes who continue in Arms and to receive under His Majesty’s Protection, those who desire .... To conclude a lasting Peace with the British Nation.”<sup>70</sup> At around the same time, and with the same mission, Bouquet and his force of 1,500 men at Fort Pitt were to march on the Delaware, who were regarded by the British as one of their chief enemies.<sup>71</sup>

The second part of Gage’s plan was intended to prevent Native Americans receiving supplies from the French. For Gage the main worry was not the influence the French had, but the ammunition he believed the French in the south were selling to Native Americans. Many officers were

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<sup>68</sup> Gage to Halifax, 9 December 1763, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 2 -4.

<sup>69</sup> Gage to Egremont, 17 November 1763, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 1-2.

<sup>70</sup> Gage to Halifax, 12 May 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 26-29.

<sup>71</sup> Gage to Halifax, 9 November 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 26-29.

certain that Native Americans were getting their supplies from the French. Bouquet told Gage “it appears plainly that the Savages have brought Powder at the French Villages near Fort Chartres, and that they will continue to supply them in hopes to keep us out of that Country and exclude us from their extensive trade.”<sup>72</sup> Gladwin felt that peace at Detroit would ultimately depend on the level of support and supplies that the Native Americans received from the French.<sup>73</sup> Fraser at Kaskaskia told Campbell in 1765 that “The Indians would almost have made peace with us on our own terms before this convoy came up, as they were in greatest want of everything, but the French who intended to quit New Orleans, as it is credited to the Spaniards have sent all their goods up here”.<sup>74</sup> They were backed up by reports from Indian agents such as Alexander Mckee, who blamed Shawnee insolence on expectations of supplies from the French. Mckee reported that the French had sent supplies up to the Shawnee on at least 3 occasions.<sup>75</sup>

Native Americans needed powder and shot not just to fight, but also to hunt. The British had suspended trade at the opening of the war; if the French supplies of ammunition could be halted, Native Americans would have nowhere else to procure more. Without ammunition those Native Americans at war with the British would be forced to make peace, or risk starvation and destruction. Gage aimed to cut off supplies from the French to Native Americans, and then he hoped that Native Americans would be forced to make peace with the British, as they would be the only ones capable of supplying them with what they desperately needed.

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<sup>72</sup> Bouquet to Gage, 27 May 1764, IHC p. 251.

<sup>73</sup> Gladwin to Johnson, 11 May 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 191-2.

<sup>74</sup> Fraser to Campbell, 20 May 1765, Pioneer Collections Haldimand p. 216.

<sup>75</sup> Mckee to Johnson, 17 November 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 474-5.

Convinced that cutting off the Native Americans' supply line was key to shortening the war, Gage tried everything he could to stop the flow of goods from the French in the south. He placed watches on several rivers to try and intercept anyone supplying the Indians.<sup>76</sup> In June 1764 Gage ordered Robert Farmer at Mobile to find some way of preventing the French from sending supplies to the Illinois without interfering with their right to navigate the Mississippi; exactly how Farmer was meant to achieve this was left to him.<sup>77</sup> Amherst had written to Mobile in 1763 with similar orders, but attached much less importance to the matter; he considered that any supplies sent from there would "be but very inconsiderable, and would be so long of coming that it could not answer their present purpose" of aiding the fight against the British.<sup>78</sup>

Though he felt that the French were not the main cause of the war, Gage was still keen to destroy the close relations that they enjoyed with Native Americans. In order to drive a wedge between French colonists and Native Americans, Gage ordered that Bradstreet's column be accompanied by a unit of Canadians. William Johnson had suggested this to Amherst in September 1763, as had another army officer, hoping that once Native Americans saw British and French troops fighting side by side it would break "the chain of affection" between the two.<sup>79</sup> Gage had previously suggested the idea to Amherst, who turned it down as he had been worried

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<sup>76</sup> Gage to Johnson, 30 April 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp.167-168.

<sup>77</sup> Gage to Farmer, 3 June 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>78</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 30 September 1763, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 568-569.

<sup>79</sup> Johnson to Amherst, 30 September 1763, WJP Vol. 4 p. 210.

that the Canadians would assume that the British needed them and so try to extract concessions from them.<sup>80</sup>

Once Gage had replaced Amherst, he proceeded to put his plan into action. A Canadian company was assembled and assigned to accompany Bradstreet's expedition. Gage informed Governor Burton: "I shall order Bradstreet to let them be the first to draw blood, and endeavor [sic] to make them as obnoxious to the savages as possible."<sup>81</sup> The new commander-in-chief hoped to drive a wedge between the Canadians and Native Americans by forcing them into combat against each other. If the Canadians were seen to be attacking Native Americans on the orders of the British, it would be much harder for them to pass themselves off as the Native Americans' only true friends. Whether the Indians found the Canadians obnoxious or not, in reality Gage's plan had little effect in terms of souring relations between Canadians and Native Americans.

As well as securing the assistance of Canadians, Gage made sure both Bouquet's and Bradstreet's columns were accompanied by friendly Native Americans. In the spring of 1764 Gage had authorised the use of "friendly" or "allied" Native Americans against the enemy.<sup>82</sup> Shortly afterwards, Gage begged Johnson to furnish Bradstreet's expedition with some friendly Indians.<sup>83</sup> Johnson was able to furnish Native Americans from those tribes who remained friendly to the British to accompany both expeditions.

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<sup>80</sup> Amherst to Gage, 18 July 1763, PRO WO 34.7-8.

<sup>81</sup> Gage to Burton, 25 April 1764, Gage Papers WLCL. In the same letter Gage stated that he would not be sorry to hear that the Indians had committed ravages on the Canadian frontier as it would draw Canada toward Britain and America.

<sup>82</sup> Johnson to Stuart, 18 March 1764, WJP Vol.11 pp. 103-104.

<sup>83</sup> Gage to Johnson, 4 May 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 175-176.



The critical moment of Bradstreet's march came when he encountered and treated with a delegation of Shawnee and Delaware Indians at Presqu' Isle in August 1764.<sup>84</sup> He made a full peace with them, which, as well as demanding the return of all "prisoners" amongst the Native Americans and the condition that the Native Americans relinquish all claims to British posts in their country, also stipulated that in future all Native Americans suspected of a crime against the colonials would be tried by half Indian, half white juries.<sup>85</sup>

When Gage was informed of the peace that Bradstreet had made, he was shocked and angry. Gage refused to "ratify or confirm" Bradstreet's peace, fuming that Bradstreet had never been empowered to make such a treaty. The colonel only had the power to sign a ceasefire, and direct the enemy Indians to send delegates to Johnson, the only one with the authority to make a peace. It was Gage's nightmare that Native Americans would see any British concessions as a direct result of Pontiac's War, and as a result would in future pick up the hatchet every time they felt they had a grievance against the British. Now, not only had Bradstreet overstepped his authority but in doing so he had made a peace "Derogatory to the Honour and Reputation of His Majestys Arms Amongst the Indian Nations, unsafe for the future Peace and Tranquility of His Majestys Subjects, and the Basis of Future Massacres". In order to prevent this, Gage was determined that any peace deal would be tough, and that it would only come after those Native Americans who had taken up arms had been convinced of the reality of British military power.

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<sup>84</sup> Gage to Halifax, 21 September 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. I pp. 36-38.

<sup>85</sup> Treaty of Peace, 12 August 1764, WJP Vol.11 pp. 328-333.

As far as Gage was concerned, Bradstreet had failed on both accounts; he had not managed to get close to any Native American settlements, never mind destroy them, and the peace he had brokered was far too lenient. Gage was terrified that this peace would soon be broken by Native Americans looking for fresh concessions, who would feel that the army was no threat to them.<sup>86</sup> Gage knew that the troops gathered together in Bradstreet's and Bouquet's columns would take many months to reassemble once they were dispersed, and so represented a singular opportunity to impress the strength of the British military on Native Americans. If this chance was squandered and Native Americans were not sufficiently convinced of the might of British arms, then Gage feared they would resort to war every time they were unhappy with their treatment. Bradstreet had not made Native Americans suffer enough before signing a peace, nor had he demonstrated that it was in his power to make them suffer. Not only that, but Gage came to believe that the Native Americans had negotiated in bad faith with the intention of preventing him marching into their country. Gage had two pieces of evidence to support his claim: first, that even after Bradstreet's peace, Native Americans still continued to attack the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia;<sup>87</sup> second, that the Indians that met with Bradstreet carried none of the usual diplomatic items such as wampum belts that they would surely have carried if they had been sent as envoys to make peace.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Gage to Johnson, 2 September 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 342-344.

<sup>87</sup> Gage to Halifax, 21 September 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. I pp. 36-38.

<sup>88</sup> Gage to Bradstreet, 15 October 1764, IHC pp. 344-347. Support for Gage's version of events comes from Thomas Morris. At the time of Bradstreet's expedition, Morris was a prisoner of the Miami; after witnessing a meeting between the Miami, Shawnee and Delaware, Morris recorded in his journal, "Doubtless their design is to amuse Col

Bouquet's expedition was much more successful. His column advanced through several deserted Delaware towns, and he then established a camp within striking distance of several occupied Shawnee and Delaware towns, where he made peace with the Shawnee, Seneca, and Delaware.<sup>89</sup> He proved that Native Americans could not remain safe from the British army by retiring into the woodlands. Hard hit by disease and with winter approaching, these tribes could not afford to put their crops at risk by antagonising Bouquet, and so had plenty of reason to negotiate.<sup>90</sup> Gage was ecstatic when Bouquet made his peace in the woods near the Shawnee and Delaware villages, for he had shown that these places were not beyond the reach of the British Army. The commander-in-chief believed that this made the British Army a credible threat to truculent Native Americans, something which Bradstreet's expedition, which stalled almost before it had started, had manifestly failed to do. It delighted Gage that Bouquet had demonstrated to those Native Americans with whom he had dealt that it was within the power of the British army to destroy their homes and families. The general believed that this had enabled Bouquet to dictate sufficiently demanding terms, which the Indians could not refuse without putting their homes and families at risk. One of the main conditions of the peace was that the tribes should return all prisoners and captives amongst them.<sup>91</sup> Gage told Johnson:

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Bradstreet with fair language; to cut off his army at Sandusky when least expected, & then to send their hatchet to the nations, a hellish plan, but not a foolish one, & well worthy of so detestable a race of mortals." Thomas Morris, Journal of trip to the Wabash August 26 to September 17 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>89</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 244.

<sup>90</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 202.

<sup>91</sup> Indian proceedings, October 13 – November 16 1764, WJP Vol. 4 pp. 435-467.

“I am Convinced without marching into the heart of their Country, and shewing them we would Dictate a Peace on our own Terms, with that Firmness & Steadiness which Colonel Bouquet has kept up with them in all his Transactions, that we should have had no Peace at all. His March threw them into a Terror & Confusion. He has Obliged them to deliver up even their Own Children born of white woman. — Above Two Hundred Prisoners were in his Hands, & his Partys Collecting the rest among the Shawnese Villages.... Colonel Bouquet believes from their present Humble Dispositions that they are Sincerley Disposed for Peace; and they will not Easily break it, provided they are kept under proper management. That no traders are permitted to go to their Towns to cheat them.”<sup>92</sup>

Gage believed that Bouquet’s expedition had demonstrated to those Native Americans fighting the British that their villages were not safe, and that this realisation had robbed them of the will to fight. Still, Gage was glad that Bouquet had stipulated “that the French are entirely Excluded from coming among them,” when making his peace with the Shawnee and Delaware, though the General admitted this “cannot be Effectted till we possess the Illinois”.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Gage to Johnson, 6 December 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 496-499.

<sup>93</sup> Gage to Johnson, 6 December 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 496-499.

The British still refused to trust Native Americans, and so Bouquet insisted that hostages were provided to ensure that the conditions on which he had insisted were met. Bouquet took six hostages from the Delaware and six from the Shawnee; of the Shawnee hostages he sent one away, two fell sick so were sent back to their nation, and three ran away.<sup>94</sup> Bouquet ascribed the flight of his hostages to their fear of punishment at British hands;<sup>95</sup> given the brutal treatment that Native Americans sometimes received from British officers, this seems an all too plausible explanation.

Rather than inspire the British to treat Native Americans better, the war convinced Gage that only by offering harsh peace terms would Native Americans be dissuaded from going to war again. Gage informed Halifax that “for the sake of future peace, of a Peace which shall be sure and lasting” he had instructed Sir William Johnson to secure from the Chenussio, a particularly anti-British village of Seneca, “the Advisers of the War, or at least that the Murderers before demanded, should be delivered up. And that an End might be put to all future Claims and Disputes about the Portage of Niagara, I demanded that the King’s Subjects should have the Right formally delivered up to them of a free and uninterrupted Transportation both ways, over that Carrying Place, without Fee or Reward, or Demand whatever of any Indemnification.”<sup>96</sup> Johnson successfully secured the agreement of the Chenussio to these terms.<sup>97</sup> Gage and Johnson took a

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<sup>94</sup> Gage to Johnson, 2 February 1765, WJP Vol. 11 p. 560.

<sup>95</sup> Johnson to Bouquet, 20 February 1765, WJP Vol.11 pp. 585-6.

<sup>96</sup> Gage to Halifax, 20 January 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 11-12.

<sup>97</sup> An Indian Conference Johnson Hall March 24 to April 23 1764 WJP Vol. 11 p. 153-161 The Chenussio were a band of Seneca, who had been greatly angered by Amherst’s granting land around Niagara to soldiers. As such they had long agitated for war against Britain and played an active role in “Pontiac’s Conspiracy”. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 238.

similar line with the Seneca, agreeing “we should accept of no Terms; unless they made proper Satisfaction for the Injurys they have committed”.<sup>98</sup>

Part of Gage’s plan for a lasting peace was to make the British presence on the frontier more secure. To this end he requested William Johnson to secure grants of land around the forts at Niagara and Pitt in his peace negotiations. Gage then hoped to grant the land in lots to ex-soldiers and other reliable men who would be required to perform military service by the terms of the grant. Thus there would be created a “Military settlement” around each post, supplying it with food and aiding its defence.<sup>99</sup> So, far from encouraging the British to make new concessions, the war had in fact prompted Gage to make new demands from Native Americans.<sup>100</sup>

This is borne out in the terms that most tribes agreed to when they made peace with Johnson. There were almost no stipulations in which the British ceded anything to Native Americans. Instead the British generally demanded the return of all “prisoners”; the removal of all French and black people from Native American villages; increased cessions of land and free rights of navigation; and that whichever tribe they were making a treaty with broke off all contact with those who promoted war.<sup>101</sup> The army was even able to send parties into Native American villages to ensure that all “prisoners” were returned.<sup>102</sup> The outbreak of war inspired the British to

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<sup>98</sup> Gage to Halifax, 11 February 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 14-16.

<sup>99</sup> Gage to Halifax, 14 April 1764, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 619-20.

<sup>100</sup> Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. Chapter 1, pp. 6-7. Skaggs claims that the British “concluded the Pontiac conflict with a series of concessions”. Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 178: “Gage was more interested in conciliating than in conquering”.

<sup>101</sup> Articles of Peace between Sir William Johnson and the Huron Indians. and Articles of Peace between Sir William Johnson and the Genesee Indians. Also Conference with the Six Nations and Delaware at Johnson Hall April 29 – May 22 , 1765. NYCD Vol. 7, pp. 718-742.

<sup>102</sup> Gage to Johnson, 31 December 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 515-517.

demand more control over Native Americans, including their inter-tribal diplomacy, and to dictate who they allowed into their communities.<sup>103</sup>

The start of Pontiac's War and the army's reaction to it highlight the deep divisions that existed among officers in their attitudes to Native Americans. The success of the surprise attacks suggests that some officers on the frontier trusted Native Americans to a degree, as does their decision to surrender to them. Yet officers like Amherst were left aghast by their choices, unable to explain them without invoking insanity. The fact that it was those officers who were actually on the frontier, who trusted Native Americans enough to allow them into their forts and buildings, suggests that prolonged contact with Native Americans softened their attitudes to them, if not vice versa.

In the wake of the stunning success of the Native American surprise attacks, the British Army resolved to show them no mercy. The smallpox blankets were issued, and no one disputed the fact that Native American villages were legitimate targets. Undoubtedly some officers like Amherst were racist and needed no excuse to indulge in savagery, but for others it was the failure of Native Americans to adhere to European standards of behaviour that motivated them to act as they did. The idea that it was ridiculous to hold another culture to their own invented moral code simply never occurred to the British.

Neither did officers consider the thought that it was their presence on the frontier that lay behind the war. Instead they chose to blame the French, the insidious puppet masters, on whom they could blame all their difficulties

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<sup>103</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 206.

with Native Americans. Such an attitude saw Native Americans reduced to childlike and simple beings in the British imagination, always vulnerable to the machinations of smarter and more sophisticated Europeans. It was fortunate that Gage, as the new commander-in-chief, was one of the few officers who did not believe that this was the whole story. He was worried about French influence over Native Americans, but he credited Amerindians with the intelligence to be acting in their own interests, and this was why his chosen strategy was based on convincing Native Americans that war against the British would never be in their interest.

The gap between Amherst and the officers on the frontier, and between Gage and his officers with regard to their views on Native Americans, makes it clear that within the British Army attitudes to Native Americans varied considerably. In reality it was their experience and the situation in which they found themselves, much more than any preconceived notions of difference, which shaped British behaviour.

This is confirmed by Gage's actions. He was desperate to impress the strength of the British Army on Native Americans while he had the chance, because he assumed that once the war was over the troops would again be scattered to their isolated posts. It should also be noted that the two columns that Gage sent against his Native American enemies both chose to negotiate rather than fight. This choice does not make sense if British officers' only motivation was a hatred of Native Americans. The actions of Bouquet and Bradstreet suggest that bringing the war to a speedy conclusion was a far greater concern for them than taking revenge on Native Americans for wrongs. Ending Pontiac's War had taxed the abilities of the



British Army to the limit, and maintaining the fragile peace that followed Pontiac's War would not be any easier.

## Chapter Six

### Gage's Policy

In the aftermath of the Seven Years' War the British Government's overwhelming concern was economy, the importance of which ministers never tired of stressing in their letters to their subordinates. Most in the government believed that the best way to keep expenditure down was by avoiding any more costly Indian wars. Ensuring continuing peace was left to the Indian Department and the British Army in America. The government had hoped to introduce a comprehensive policy to deal with the problems created by expansion in the west, which was detailed in Barrington's plan of 1766. Unfortunately, the plan was reliant on the funds raised by the Stamp Act in order to function. When the Stamp Act was repealed, the government's plan became unworkable.

In the absence of a coherent policy for the frontier, the government settled for setting broad objectives and letting Gage and Johnson figure out the details. The new commander-in-chief knew how important it was to avoid another expensive Indian war. After all, Amherst had just been removed for allowing a new war to break out and failing to bring it rapidly to a close. Gage knew that if he did not want to be dragged home in disgrace he would have to avoid blundering into another Native American war.

Gage believed that it was possible to win over Native Americans by listening to them and treating them with respect. He hoped to win their acquiescence to the British occupation of the frontier by showing them that

their views would be taken seriously and their grievances dealt with. His secondary aim was to separate them from French influence. To fulfil this second objective, Gage was determined to take possession of the Illinois. In order to secure Native American consent for Britain's occupation of the frontier, Gage made sure to seek their approval before new settlements and posts were built. Once the posts were occupied, Gage expected his officers to provide Indian headmen with limited presents and deal with their complaints. By these methods Gage hoped slowly to gain the trust of Native Americans, and so ensure continued peaceful relations. Gage aimed to build trust in order to persuade Native Americans to accept British domination because he knew that the army lacked the power to force them to do so. To this end he was prepared to go against colonial governors and even his own officers in order to preserve the peace.

The National debt had stood at £74.6 million at the start of the Seven Years' War, and had almost doubled to £132.6 million by its close. New taxes introduced in Britain in order to service the debt, such as the cider tax, were greeted with protest and resentment but the government desperately needed to increase revenue. Even though Parliament had retained many wartime taxes after the war's end, these were only just covering the interest on the debt, and without an increase in income the government would never be able to pay back the money it had borrowed to fund the war.<sup>1</sup> On top of the debt created by the conflict came the cost of garrisoning the army in

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<sup>1</sup> Conway, Stephen. "Britain and the Revolutionary Crisis, 1763-1791" in Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century.* p. 327.

America. In 1765 the army had 10,000 men on the frontier, which was costing the British Government £360,000 a year.<sup>2</sup>

Unwilling to burden themselves with yet more taxes, the landowners who made up the majority of Parliament decided to tax the Colonies in order to raise the money that the government so desperately needed. To that end the government passed the Revenue Act and Sugar Act in 1764, and the Stamp Act in 1765. The Mutiny Act, also passed in 1765, required colonists to feed, house and transport troops in certain circumstances, in an attempt to force Americans to meet some of the cost of garrisoning British troops in the Colonies. Within Parliament itself these measures were not controversial, as nearly all MPs subscribed to the belief that Parliament could exercise its authority throughout the empire. Most members of Parliament felt that it was only fair that the American colonists should help to pay for an army that was, in part, for their protection. This attitude was summed up by Grenville during the parliamentary debate on the Stamp Act, who asked whether “These children of our planting nourished by our indulgence, until they are grown to a good degree of strength and opulence, and protected by our arms, will ... grudge to contribute their mite to relieve us from the heavy load of national expense, which we lie under?”<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, like many Native Americans the American colonists felt that the British Army was far more likely to be used to persecute them

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<sup>2</sup> Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 181. For an in depth discussion of the topic see, Peter D.G. Thomas “The Cost of the British Army in North America, 1763-1775”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 3 pp. 510-516.

<sup>3</sup> Almon, J. (ed.) *A Collection of Papers Relative to the Dispute Between Great Britain and America 1764-1775* (New York 1971) p. 5. George Grenville had become Chancellor and First Lord of the Treasury in April 1763. Before introducing the Stamp Act Grenville had given the Colonies a year to suggest a way to raise the money that they needed themselves. It has been argued that this offer was not made in good faith, though this is impossible to prove as the Colonies simply ignored the offer. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. pp. 81-86.

than to protect them.<sup>4</sup> In Britain those who questioned Parliament's right to tax the Colonies, most notably William Pitt, were in a minority. In America the reverse was true and many were aghast that the British Parliament, where they had no representation, would deign to tax them. In reply MPs cited the theory of virtual representation, which held that places such as Birmingham which had no MP, and therefore no direct representation, were still represented by members of Parliament from other constituencies, who were supposed to consider the interests of those without MPs in addition to the interests of their immediate constituents. The Colonies did not care much for this argument, and began to organise boycotts of British goods. Shaken by reports of riots in the Colonies and the potential economic disruption which boycotts could have at home, Grenville, who had introduced the legislation, was dismissed. He was replaced by the Rockingham ministry which quickly repealed the Stamp Act, though Parliament quietly asserted the principal of their right to tax the Colonies in the Declaratory Act.<sup>5</sup>

The government had been relying on the money raised in America to pay for their new plan for the frontier - the 1766 Plan for the West, drawn up by Barrington, but with the repeal of the Stamp Act the plan was unaffordable and so was never adopted.<sup>6</sup> The government would not arrive at a new plan until 1768. With the failure of the British Government to

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<sup>4</sup> Almon, J. (ed.) *A Collection of Papers Relative to the Dispute Between Great Britain and America 1764-1775* (New York 1971) p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Conway, Stephen. "Britain and the Revolutionary Crisis, 1763-1791" in Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century.* p. 327-29 and Jeremy Black, *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt, 1742-1789, Problems in Focus Series* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990). p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Barrington's Plan for the West, 10 May 1766, IHC Vol. 2 p. 225-240, Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empire : Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783.* pp. 283-297.

produce a workable plan for the west, Gage was left to fulfil the government's objectives in whatever manner he could.

With the collapse of the 1766 plan Gage was forced to fall back on the policies outlined in the Proclamation of 1763, along with his own ideas and the rather vague instructions that he received from the government.<sup>7</sup> At the beginning of 1764 the Duke of Halifax had informed Gage that "many Persons of Consideration, as well in America, as here, are of Opinion that the Indians have of late years been too much neglected, and that the Commencement, and Continuation, of their present Hostilities have been in a great Measure owing to an apparent Contempt of Their Consequence, either as Friend or Foe."<sup>8</sup> In 1767 Shelburne told Gage, "His Majesty's ... wishes that every means may be used to conciliate the Tribes, and be made sensible His gracious Disposition towards them."<sup>9</sup> The British Government did not just expect Gage to take Native American views into account when making decisions; rather, they hoped he would do whatever he could to avoid another costly war against the Native Americans.

If the letters from London had not made the government's wishes clear to Gage, then the fates of his contemporaries should have. Amherst was removed not just because he failed to bring a speedy end to Pontiac's War, but also because he allowed a conflict with Native Americans to begin

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<sup>7</sup>Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." p. 300. Alvord attacks Gage for having no backbone and simply agreeing with whatever ministers told him. While Gage never told ministers they were wrong, he did frequently provide his own thoughts on Indian affairs, even if they were not in agreement with his bosses.

<sup>8</sup> Halifax to Gage, 14 January 1764, Public Records Office Colonial Office 5/83 (hereafter referred to as PRO CO).

<sup>9</sup> Shelburne to Gage, 19 February 1767, PRO CO 5/85.

in the first place.<sup>10</sup> Even though he might not have been informed directly, it seems unlikely that Gage would have been ignorant of the condemnation that Amherst had received at home.<sup>11</sup> He would have been in touch with friends and family in Britain, not to mention those officers and politicians who were linked to him by patronage. However it happened, the message got through, and when Gage heard that Governor Johnstone of West Florida was trying to start a war, he warned, "If Governor Johnstone is determined to bring on a war at all events let him answer the consequences".<sup>12</sup> Gage knew that the governor was risking his career with his warmongering, and was no doubt little surprised when in 1767 the governor was recalled for that very reason.<sup>13</sup> The fate of Amherst and Johnstone, combined with numerous missives urging the Crown's officers in America to live in harmony with Native Americans, made it clear to Gage, the army and the Indian Department, that their political masters wanted peace with the Indians, and if they wanted to keep their jobs they would have to do all they could to achieve it, whatever they thought of Native Americans.<sup>14</sup>

With the government's financial situation so precarious, they were quick to make Gage understand that economy was a high priority - a message he made sure to pass on to his officers.<sup>15</sup> Unlike Amherst, however, he knew there were times when expense could not be avoided. When Captain Murray gave presents to the Shawnee to consolidate their

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<sup>10</sup> Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. p. 208

<sup>11</sup> Croghan to Johnson, 14 April, 1764 Sir Wm J Mss. v.9 p. 19 ALS Penn historical Society. Croghan had told Johnson that Amherst was much condemned and his conduct disapproved of, and if Johnson knew, it is safe to assert that Gage would have known.

<sup>12</sup> Gage to Tayler, 10 December 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>13</sup> Shelburne to Gage, 19 February 1767, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2 p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Gage to Tayler, 30 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>15</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 100 Gage to Campbell, 7 June 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

friendship after the end of Pontiac's War, Gage heartily approved as he knew "Expenses of this kind must be bore on such critical Occasions and it must be plainly told that they must either be approved of, or We must have war again."<sup>16</sup> So although Gage knew that economy was a high priority, he was also well aware that excessive penny-pinching would only lead to trouble and greater expense later on.

The lack of a comprehensive government policy made Gage's attitudes key, for he was not just the commander-in-chief of the army in North America, he also oversaw the running of the Indian department. At the end of 1766 Shelburne explained to William Johnson that as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the north he should correspond with, and obey, the commander-in-chief. Shelburne reasoned that the commander-in-chief would be in contact with all the governors, so he would be in possession of the best information on which to make any decision.<sup>17</sup> This was not new, but Shelburne's explicit instructions made it clear to both Gage and Johnson that the Indian Department was still subordinate to the army. So Gage not only controlled the actions of the army, but also had to be consulted on major decisions made by the Indian Department. This makes understanding his thinking key to understanding the way the British conducted their relations with Native Americans in the aftermath of Pontiac's War.

Gage's most important assumption was that Native Americans were rational beings, and his treatment of them was firmly based upon this

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<sup>16</sup>Gage to Bouquet, 7 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>17</sup>Shelburne to Johnson, 11 December 1766, and Shelburne to Stuart, 11 December 1766, IHC Vol. 2 pp. 449-454.



characterisation.<sup>18</sup> Unlike Amherst, who had been unable to explain the outbreak of Pontiac's War, Gage believed its roots lay in Native Americans' rational fear of Britain's growing power. He told Halifax,

“The Savages have been induced to combine so readily against us, not only by their Attachment to the French, and the Jealousies infused in them by that People, of our bad Designs against all the Indian Nations; But thro' Motives of Policy, which would have engaged More enlightened Nations to take Measures, tho' perhaps better concerted, of the Same Nature. They saw us sole Masters of the Country, the Balance of Power broke, and their own Consequence at an End.... Rude and uncivilized as these Savages are, they have had sense enough to perceive the disadvantages that must arise to them, from the Conquest of Canada.”<sup>19</sup>

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Gage possessed some understanding of why Native Americans were so worried by Britain's annexation of Canada. Gage was aware that Native Americans dreaded Britain's “Extension over the continent by driving out the French, and think us too powerful Neighbours”.<sup>20</sup> He felt that Native Americans had gone to war in an effort to avoid becoming entirely beholden to the British. The

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<sup>18</sup>Anderson's assertion that the British were trapped by an understanding “of Indians as childlike, violent creatures” was true for many of this period, particularly Amherst, but not Gage, which is one reason why the policies of the two men differed so greatly. Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*.

<sup>19</sup>Gage to Halifax, 7 January 1764, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 10-11.

<sup>20</sup>Gage to Wright, 7 March 1765, Gage Papers, WLCL.

new commander-in-chief held that Native Americans were aware of their interests, and he knew that they were prepared to go to war to protect them. Writing about Pontiac's War later, Gage would argue that "the Savages have shewn (sic) us, that they understood their Political interest, extremely well".<sup>21</sup> He therefore set out to convince Native Americans that their interests were best served by a peaceful alliance with the British.

The commander-in-chief believed that Native Americans would come to accept British domination given enough "time and Management".<sup>22</sup> He hoped that "with proper care and management it is to be hoped that any suspicions of bad designs in us will entirely subside."<sup>23</sup> Gage believed that the recent conflicts between Britain and Native Americans, in particular Pontiac's War, were the results of specific and correctable errors made in diplomacy with Native Americans. In his mind these struggles were not the inevitable result of a clash of civilisations, races or cultures, and therefore they were avoidable, provided the proper steps were taken. Once he was commander-in-chief, Gage made it his job to ensure that Native American grievances were listened to, and that everything possible was done to make them happy in order to ensure a continuing peace.

However, Gage felt his efforts to win the affections of Native Americans could only achieve limited success while Amerindians remained under the spell of their French father, and so one of his first priorities following the end of Pontiac's War was taking control of the Illinois Country. Fearing that unless the influence of their French father could be removed Native Americans would never be reconciled to the British, Gage

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<sup>21</sup>Gage to Halifax, 13 July 1764, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> Gage to Johnson 12 May 1772, WJP vol. 8, pp. 479-481.

<sup>23</sup>Gage to Wright, 7 March 1765, Gage Papers, WLCL.

had made it a priority to take possession of the French posts on the river. These forts had been ceded by the French to the British at the end of the Seven Years' War, but because the British had been unable to reach them they were still occupied by their French garrisons. Gage believed that, left unchecked, the French inhabitants of the Illinois would continue to inspire Native Americans to make war on the British. Gage's worst nightmare was that those nations hostile to the British would move there, where succour and support from French traders would allow them to cause trouble for the British indefinitely. Gage theorised that taking control of the area would not only allow the army to keep an eye on the French but would give the area's Native Americans no choice but to make peace with the British, for "They will See Themselves Surrounded by our Forts, and that they Must depend upon the English alone, for all their Supplys."<sup>24</sup> Gage even went so far as to say "there is a good Prospect, if we get Possession of the Illinois and reconcile those Savages to our Interests, then we shall have no difference with any Nation of Indians upon the Continent."<sup>25</sup>

The methods which Gage instructed his offices to use when securing the Illinois would set a pattern for the way he also ordered his officers to behave when dealing with occupying new land on the frontier. Gage believed that the best chance of taking the Illinois would come from negotiating with Native Americans to securing their consent for the British occupation of the posts. The British expedition would attempt to reach the posts by travelling north from the Mississippi. Gage instructed the officer in charge, Farmar, to use "flattering Speeches and Presents" when he met those

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<sup>24</sup> Gage to Halifax, 13 July 1764, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 32-33.

<sup>25</sup> Gage to Barrington, 10 November 1765, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 p. 316.

Native Americans local to the area, in order to “obtain their free Consent to our passing up and down the Mississippi without Interruption.” If that did not work, Major Farmar was authorised to “make use of Threats” and use the friendly Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes to force the Illinois tribes to accept the British invasion, as long as he did so “without bringing on a general War; which He will take every Precaution to avoid”.<sup>26</sup> These instructions reveal Gage’s priorities clearly. He favoured diplomacy when dealing with Native Americans, and felt that force of arms should be a last resort, and only considered if it was certain that the conflict would not spread.

Farmar failed in his attempt to “take” the Illinois, and it was not until Croghan made a voyage down from Fort Pitt that the British made any headway in taking control of the forts. In the wake of Pontiac’s War, Croghan had managed to secure the assistance of a group of Shawnee headmen in his voyage. Once underway, they were attacked by Illinois Indians, who killed three of the Shawnee and took the rest of the party prisoner. Upon realising what they had done, and terrified of war with the Shawnee, the Illinois Indians promptly freed Croghan and the remaining headmen, and begged the British to make peace between them and the Shawnee. This they did, while at the same time securing the southern Indians’ permission to occupy the French posts. Once this had been achieved, Captain Stirling and 100 men from the 42<sup>nd</sup> regiment set out to relieve the French garrisons.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Gage to Halifax, 21 May 1764, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp.29-30.

<sup>27</sup> Gage to Conway, 23 September 1765, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 65-67.

It was not just the garrisons in the south that worried Gage. Throughout his time in charge, he continued in his efforts to remove French influence from Native American communities. In 1767 he told Johnson that “If we could prevail upon the Indians to bring in all the French families settled amongst them, it would be a good service.”<sup>28</sup> While the commander-in-chief may have wished French traders gone from the frontier, in reality there was little which his efforts could have achieved. In 1769 Gage was complaining that the French were still among the Indians of “whose Machinations Sir William Johnson makes constant Complaints”.<sup>29</sup>

There were many senior officers who agreed with Gage’s policy of removing the French from the frontier. In 1767 Turnbull complained that the French around Detroit were still poisoning Indian’s minds, and that “the removing of them entirely would be much in our interest.”<sup>30</sup> Tayler believed that if the French traders from New Orleans were removed then the nations in the south would “remain on a peaceable footing with us”.<sup>31</sup> Guy Carleton hoped that one of those Canadians who he believed stirred up the Indians would be caught and prosecuted, which would serve as an example to the rest.<sup>32</sup>

Still, though Gage felt French trouble-makers exacerbated the friction between the army and Native Americans, he was well aware that they were not the cause of it. When in 1769 it looked as if there might be a new Indian war, Gage told Johnson, “As for their Jealousy of our Power,

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<sup>28</sup> Gage to Johnson, 7 September 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>29</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 5 March 1769, Gage to the Secretaries of State, Vol. 1 p. 221.

<sup>30</sup> Turnbull to Gage, 20 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL. Turnbull thought that the army did not possess the strength for such a task, and so recommended the Chippeway Indians as the best people for the job.

<sup>31</sup> Tayler to Gage, 4 March 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>32</sup> Carleton to Gage, 10th November 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

Intrigues of the French and their attachment to them, those Circumstance may require Some management on our part, but I think can not alone be the Occasion of a Rupture between us.”<sup>33</sup>

The new commander-in-chief knew that the removal of the French from the frontier would have little effect unless the army made a serious effort to win Native American hearts and minds. One of the biggest changes that Gage instituted was to restore gift-giving. Gage recognised that Native Americans should be given “occasionally some small Presents” but that the amount should be strictly controlled, to prevent the British becoming “Tributarys, by giving them a Profusion of Presents, whenever they chuse(sic) to be angry”.<sup>34</sup> Gage knew that his officers were bargaining from a position of relative weakness, and that this encouraged many of them to forget economy and instead hand out gifts without restraint, in an attempt to avoid angering those Native Americans amongst whom they lived. The new commander-in-chief, aware that gift-giving was necessary but anxious that it should not spiral out of control, let his officers know that they should hand out only a limited number of presents. He instructed one officer with respect to treating Indian tribes, “We should assist them when in want, & at all time treat them with kindness & humanity without suffering them to impose upon us or becoming their dupes.”<sup>35</sup> In a later letter he was more direct, ordering that “Presents are not to be given profusely, but with a sparing hand”.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Gage to Johnson, 22 October 1769, William Johnson Papers Vol. 7 p. 225.

<sup>34</sup> Gage to Johnson 12 December 1763, WJP Vol. 10 pp. 953-4.

<sup>35</sup> Gage to Hamilton, 30 January 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>36</sup> Gage to Campbell, 18 January 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

There were certainly those amongst Gage's senior officers who agreed with him about the necessity of presents. In the summer of 1765, after most tribes had made peace with Sir William Johnson, Campbell assured Johnson, "I shall use my Utmost endeavours duering my stay here to preserve the Peace and Tranquility that Subsist at present, and show the Savages all the Civilities in my Power, particularly to Pondiac. I could wish to have it in my power to give a few Presents to some of their Chiefs when they come to see me with some of their Tribes, otherwise it will be impossible for me to Treat them as I could wish."<sup>37</sup> Bouquet acknowledged "we have evidently brought upon us this Indian war, by being to saving of a few Presents to the Savages, which properly distributed would certainly have prevented it."<sup>38</sup> When Colonel Bradstreet set down his thoughts on the best way to treat Native Americans, he recommended that:

"The Officers at all Posts, where the Savages frequent, should be enabled to treat particulars, such as Chiefs and well affected, with a little Rum, Pipes & Tobacco, with provisions in cases of necessity; they having been accustomed to much more from the French, & expect it from us; the expence is a trifle, but the want of that Civility may be severely felt."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Campbell to Johnson 16 Sept 1765, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 938-939.

<sup>38</sup> Bouquet to Gage 30 November 1764, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Historical Collections*, Vol. 19, pp. 283-295. Miami collection.

<sup>39</sup> Colonel Bradstreet's thoughts on Indian Affairs. 4 December 1765, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 690-694.

These officers' acceptance of Gage's policy stands in stark contrast to the flood of protest that greeted Amherst's attempts to outlaw gift-giving. Gage knew that it would take more than a few presents to make Native Americans into British allies, and the new commander-in-chief held that for relations with Native Americans to run smoothly, close co-operation between the Indian Department and the army would be key. Gage valued Indian agents highly, and considered their expertise, experience and intelligence essential for successful interaction with Native Americans. Throughout the time he was in command, Gage gave great regard to Indian agents and their knowledge. Even during Pontiac's War Gage was telling Johnson, "The Number of your Deputys, Interpreters &c should be increased, and the Several Nations with whom they are to deal, allotted to them."<sup>40</sup> When Major Farmar was sent down to the Illinois Country, Gage was worried that he was, "not very knowing in the Treating or Management of Indians, so that I wish Mr Croghan was sent out."<sup>41</sup> As soon as the war was over Gage told Johnson that he wanted people who could "manage" Indians at the principal posts, particularly Detroit.<sup>42</sup> In the south, he told Stuart that he should issue instructions to all the officers in his district concerning how to treat Native Americans, and should "inform them of the policy and interest of the several tribes, & how they are connected, and disunited with each other. All which it is necessary every person should be acquainted with, who carries on our affairs with the Indians."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gage to Johnson, 14 October 1764, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 375-78.

<sup>41</sup> Gage to Johnson, 9 March 1766, WJP Vol. 12, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Gage to Johnson, 22 June 1765, WJP, Vol. 11 pp. 802-03.

<sup>43</sup> Gage to Stuart, 31 March 1764, Gage Papers WLCL. This stands in clear contrast to McConnell's assertion that the army wanted to destroy Native American forms of diplomacy. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples*,



Gage felt that mistakes had been made in past dealings with Native Americans, and that these mistakes could be avoided by the application of the knowledge that Indian agents possessed. Rather than blaming friction between the army and Indians on Native American arrogance or stupidity, or on a clash of cultures, Gage saw at least part of the explanation in his officers' own ignorance. If he could remove that ignorance by forcing his officers to listen to their Indian agents, Gage hoped that he could ensure, or at least increase, the chance of good relations between the British Army and Native Americans.

Gage's contention that peaceful coexistence was possible as long as Native Americans were treated well can be clearly seen in his orders. Gage wanted everyone under his command to understand that it was vital that Native Americans were handled respectfully. The new commander-in-chief considered this crucial in keeping the peace. In his own instructions to officers at garrisons, Gage always emphasised treating Native Americans with respect. He told Robert Bayard, who relieved the previous garrison commander at Detroit in 1766, "I cannot too strongly recommend it to you to treat them with kindness and humanity, avoiding too familiar an intercourse with them, and that you will give out orders effectually to prevent their meeting any insult, or their being treated churlishly, or with rudeness or contempt".<sup>44</sup> Gage knew that if Native Americans were to be

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1724-1774. p. 235. It is also questionable whether Gage would have sent out these orders, had he, as Anderson asserts, never believed that Indian commissaries or military officers could keep up good relations with Native Americans. Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. p. 636.

<sup>44</sup>Instructions to Bayard from Gage, 14 June 1766, Gage Papers WLCL. A year later Gage instructed the Captain at the head of the regiment relieving Fort Pitt "to inform yourself of all matters relative to the Indians; The manner in which they are to be treated when they come to you, on what occasions only the Deputy Agents are to give presents, & the manner in which you Certify them, when necessity makes the Delivery of presents necessary, of

kept happy, they would have to be treated well, and so that is what he ordered his officers to do. He told Major Farmar that “it behoves Us to do everything to please these people [Native Americans], & avoid every occasion of quarrel.”<sup>45</sup> Those officers who did what they could to please Native Americans quickly won their commanders’ approval; Gage told Bouquet, “Captain Murray does very well to Cultivate that [friendly]Disposition, by showing them [the Shawnee] favour, and receiving them in a Friendly manner.”<sup>46</sup>

Other senior officers echoed Gage’s concern over the treatment of Native Americans. Even before the end of Pontiac’s War, Bradstreet was ordering that “it is absolutely necessary they [savages] be treated with civility moderation and kindness whenever they come here [Detroit] that you hear them patiently [and] see justice done them in their trade”<sup>47</sup> One officer reported to Gage that he had instructed the commanders of the garrisons in his area to “treat the Indians who come to their posts in a friendly manner civilly”.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the engineer Harry Gordon praised the good treatment which the Seneca received from the commander at Niagara, calling such conduct “very necessary”.<sup>49</sup> While such sentiments were hardly universal amongst officers, these letters make it clear that Gage was far from being alone in his desire to see Native Americans treated with respect by the British Army.

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which you will be the judge: Captain Murray is very capable to give you the best Information in these Points." "Instructions to the Captain of the 18th Regiment Ordered to Fort Pitt" 17 July 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>45</sup>Gage to Farmar, 7 May 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>46</sup>Gage to Bouquet, 7 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>47</sup>Bradstreet to Campbell, 10 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>48</sup>Cochrane to Gage, 25 May 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>49</sup>Gordon to Gage, 27 August 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

Part of Gage's plan to keep Native Americans happy was to provide them with access to well-regulated trade. Under the rules outlined in the proclamation, colonial governors would issue traders with licences. As well as obeying the proclamation and all laws regarding trading with Native Americans, governors were free to attach conditions to the licences that they issued, which the traders also had to obey. Upon purchasing a license the traders left a deposit, which they would forfeit if they broke the conditions of their licence.<sup>50</sup> In order to ensure that the traders were behaving, commerce would be confined to the army's posts so that it could be overseen by Indian commissaries operating in concert with army officers.<sup>51</sup> It was felt to be better to ban traders from going into Native American communities as there was no way to control their activities once they were there.

Gage ordered the officers at the posts to offer all assistance to the commissaries as they tried to protect the traders, prevent Indians being cheated, stop the sale of rum and spirits, and enforce the conditions of the traders' passes. Unfortunately for the army, this plan for trade failed to win the support of either traders or Native Americans, the two groups on whose co-operation it depended for success.<sup>52</sup> Traders were not pleased with being restricted to forts, particularly those from Quebec, as they had been allowed to travel to Native American villages when they were under French rule.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Proclamation of October 7 1763, 7 October 1763, IHC, Vol. 1 pp. 44-45.

<sup>51</sup> Gage to Officer Commanding at Quebec 11 July 1766, Gage Papers WLCL and Orders and Regulations for Trade, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 246-248.

<sup>52</sup> McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*, p. 243.

<sup>53</sup> Gage to Conway, 24 June 1766, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 p. 97.

Despite many complaints from these and other traders about being confined to the posts, Gage refused to alter the rules keeping them there.<sup>54</sup>

Yet just as when Amherst was in charge, British officers would break the rules set by their commander if they felt that it would help keep the peace. One officer in Canada had let a few traders go out to Native American communities as he felt that the Indians were in great want of goods, and feared that the Native Americans would resort to violence if nothing was done. Those traders not permitted to go were furious and complained loudly to anyone who would listen, including General Gage. In response, Gage reminded his subordinate of his orders, which he ruefully agreed to obey.<sup>55</sup>

The officers were well aware that one of the Amerindians' main grievances before the war had been the abuses of the fur traders, and so, in agreement with Gage, they considered it important that once the war was over the fur trade should be overseen properly, to ensure it was honest and open. This, it was hoped, would keep Native Americans happy, and so reduce the chance of future conflict. Officer William Eyre proposed that officers "by Way of Magistrate to see Justice done between the Indians and the Traders", should be stationed at posts.<sup>56</sup> Bradstreet suggested that there should be a court at Detroit so that "Offenders, Inhabitants, Indians, Indian Traders & others, might be brought to justice, and punished by a Law that might prevent litigious suits, and satisfy the Savages, that the strickest[sic] justice is done them at all times." Furthermore, as "the Savages have a

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<sup>54</sup> Gage to Officer commanding at Quebec, 11 July 1766, and Gage to Farmar, 7 May 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>55</sup> Howard to Massey, 10 July 1766, and Gage to Massey, 15 September 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>56</sup> Eyre to Johnson 7 January 1764 WJP Vol. 11 pp. 5-10.

contemptible opinion of all Indian Traders”, Bradstreet proposed that “it is therefore necessary the Officers commanding at the Posts should not Trade, but inspect into the Trade, prevent abuse, and bring offenders to that justice the Law may require, by this, they will be respected, and beloved by the Savages.”<sup>57</sup>

The officers at the posts did what they could to regulate the fur trade, but it was not an easy task. In Florida a trader refused to refund a Choctaw who claimed that a kettle which he had been sold had had a fault in the chain. An officer ordered the trader to give the Indian a new kettle, but the trader refused. After refusing three times to exchange the kettle, the trader was confined to a “vaulted dungeon too bad for the worst of criminals”. The man was freed after nine hours when he agreed to exchange the kettle, and was told he would only be allowed to continue trading if he paid a security to the army to guarantee fair dealings in future. This he refused, and instead left the province.<sup>58</sup>

Traders at Detroit were also refusing to obey the regulations. They argued that they only had to obey Acts of Parliament, which left them free to ignore the Proclamation of 1763. To make matters worse, only two of the traders at the posts had bothered to obtain a licence from a governor. Turnbull, the officer in charge, despaired that clandestine trade was carried on with “impunity”. In order to bring some order to the chaos Turnbull proposed that the traders leave a bond of 500 pounds of New York currency with him, which he would return as soon as they produced a government

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<sup>57</sup> Colonel Bradstreet's thoughts on Indian Affairs. 4 December 1765, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 690-694.

<sup>58</sup> Johnstone to Gage, 2 January 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

licence. They all refused.<sup>59</sup> A month later Turnbull reported that "they [traders] have been worse and worse every day. Trampling upon all order or authority whatsoever in short I was under a necessity of Confining Two of them for a breach I may say of every order or regulation."<sup>60</sup>

Worried that attempts to enforce the regulations might leave his officers open to law suits from traders, Gage ordered them to let the commissaries take the lead, and with it the risk of being sued, in all cases.<sup>61</sup> Gage felt that the problem stemmed in part from colonial governors, who did not impose strict enough conditions on the traders when they issued them passes. Again, he ordered his officers not to interfere in such cases, in view of potential legal problems.<sup>62</sup> Gage was right to be worried. In 1767 he was told by Stewart, the Indian Superintendent for the Southern District, that the colony of Virginia, "Jealous of the Liberty of the Subject, have Appointed Commissioner to manage the Indian Trade, and will not Suffer the Traders to be Subjected to any Regulations or Restrictions whatsoever." Charitably, Stewart believed that Governor Fauquier had only undertaken this action as he had not received a copy of the proclamation, and so he sent the governor instructions and information regarding the regulation of the Indian trade.<sup>63</sup>

The commander-in-chief desperately wanted to be able to control the fur traders, but felt unable to do so under the current regime. The problem was that the authority and jurisdiction of the Indian Department and the army were ill-defined and weak. As a result, whenever they tried to take

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<sup>59</sup> Turnbull to Gage, 10 January 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>60</sup> Turnbull to Gage, 17 February 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>61</sup> Gage to Brown, 17 November 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>62</sup> Gage to Massey, 15 September 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>63</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 20 August 1767, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 144-145.

traders to task for cheating Native Americans, or ignoring the regulations, they faced legal challenges. Frustrated by this, Gage proposed to the Board of Trade “That they must be restrained by law, and a judicial Power Invested in the Officers Commanding at the Posts, to See such Law put in force. And without this, Regulations may be made, but they will never be observed.”<sup>64</sup> By the beginning of 1768 Gage felt that “The framing new Laws in the Provinces, and enforcing Obedience thereto, for the better Securing the Indians in their Persons and Properties, seems a most essential Point”.<sup>65</sup> The expenses of any potential war against disgruntled Native Americans meant that for Gage, at least, Native American concerns took precedence over colonial ones.

In addition to providing plentiful and honest trade and treating Native Americans with respect, Gage believed that only if Native Americans’ concerns were listened to and addressed could peace be maintained. For many Native Americans, their greatest worry was European settlers’ designs on their land. Establishing new Colonies in the interior of America was not part of Gage’s agenda, and neither was making large additions to those Colonies already in existence, but he was not against new settlements per se. Gage felt that new communities that served some useful purpose, such as helping to feed the army, should be allowed as long as they could be established without antagonising the local Native Americans.

After the army took possession of the posts on the Illinois, French settlers and Indians began to move away. Gage told Johnson that if this

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<sup>64</sup> Gage to Johnson, 25 January 1767, Gage Papers WLCL and Gage to Shelburne, 11 November 1766, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 p. 112.

<sup>65</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 22 January 1768, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 p.157.

should continue, the army would need and welcome new settlements to feed the garrisons there, “using necessary precautions to avoid disputes with the Indians”.<sup>66</sup> When Gage gave the go-ahead to such settlements, he usually did all he could to ensure that Native Americans were informed and, if he thought it necessary, that they approved of any settlement. When Gage decided to allow a farm at Little Niagara (Fort Schloser) to feed the cattle there, he told Johnson, “It may perhaps be necessary that the Seneca Should be apprised of it, and told on what Account it is done, and that it is not undertaken with a view to make or begin any settlement there.”<sup>67</sup>

When officers attempted to annex land for the use of the army on their own initiative, Gage insisted that they could only do so with Native American consent. In 1768, when Mr MacDougal wanted to occupy Hog Island in the Straits just outside Detroit with a farm to feed the garrison there, the commander-in-chief once again put his policy of certifying Native American consent into action.<sup>68</sup> Gage issued detailed instructions to MacDougal on how to proceed “in your Presence by Indians concern’d in the property of these Lands to which you must sign the marks of their Tribes, and you will certify the same to be done by you under my authority and in your Presence.” This would ensure that consent for the new farm had been obtained and recorded.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Gage to the Lords of Trade, 28 March 1766, PRO CO5/85.

<sup>67</sup> Gage to Johnson, 17 March 1766, WJP, Vol. 12 p. 44.

<sup>68</sup>Brian Leigh Dunnigan, *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838*, *Great Lakes Books* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001). pp. 68-70 The island was also known as the “Isle aux Cochons”. In fact it would be French residents who held that the island was common land, and not Native Americans, who made the greatest outcry over attempts to annex the island.

<sup>69</sup> Gage to Turnbull, 29 August 1768, Pioneer Collections. For another example of this see Gage to Hillsborough November 3 1768. Gage to the Secretaries of State, Gage advised the Secretary of State that the use of a copper mine on Indian land was not to be attempted “till



It was the same when new posts were to be established: Native American approval had to be secured before construction could go ahead. Gage instructed Archibald Robertson, the engineer in charge of establishing a post at Iberville, that “As the friendship of the Indians is to be conciliated by every means in our power so you will use every Endeavour to obtain permission from those who may claim a right to the land before you begin any work.”<sup>70</sup> It all came down to trust. Gage wanted Native Americans to trust the army. He knew that without trust Native Americans would never accept the continued presence of the army in the west. For this reason he ordered his subordinates to inform Native Americans of new settlements, and secure their permission before constructing new forts; this he hoped would build trust, and that this trust would lead to acceptance.

It was not just the construction of new forts or settlements that required consultation with Native Americans; as far as Gage was concerned, it was any issue that might cause them worry. When Gage heard that British vessels sailing across Lake Huron had panicked the Chippewas in the area and caused them to move away, he instructed Campbell to “try to calm the Indians fears, [and tell them]the vessels are for their benefit as well as ours, as they can carry great quantities of goods.”<sup>71</sup> In his efforts to win over Native Americans, Gage even attempted to portray action taken on the orders of Whitehall as being undertaken at the request of Native Americans. When Gage received orders that the troublesome (for the British) French settlers around Post Vincent should be removed, he instructed Johnson to

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the Indians are fully apprised of everything that is to be done; and that they shall give their free and full consent thereto.”

<sup>70</sup> Instructions to Archibald Robertson, 9 February 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>71</sup> Gage to Campbell 20 November 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

give the Indians there “Some Specious Reasons for it, that tend to their Benefit and our own” so that good relations could be preserved.<sup>72</sup>

Although Gage may have been anxious to keep Native Americans content and avoid any more wars, he did not necessarily believe that they had rights to all the land they claimed. Rather, the general believed that Native Americans held the rights to discrete parcels of land, either due to their habitation there since ancient times or through the right of conquest. In the case of white settlements in the Illinois Country, Gage told George Croghan that the local Indians had no right to object as “these lands were never theirs, they followed the French there and sat down upon them . . . And never received or demanded from the French anything for them, of course [they] have no right to them nor ought we have any thing to do with purchases from them as in other parts of the continent.”<sup>73</sup> In essence, Gage argued that because the Indians had settled on these lands only recently, they had no claim to them and therefore could not sell them. Gage felt that as the Native Americans had not charged the French for establishing settlements there, they had established a precedent. Gage was worried that if Native Americans realised that they would receive gifts when outposts and settlements were built on their land, then they would start to claim land that they had no right to in order to get more gifts. In his orders he specified, “We must not pretend to seize what is really theirs by Force, or yield implicitly to their demands, of all which they pretend to belong to them.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Gage to Johnson, 9 March 1772, WJP, vol. 8, p. 417-419.

<sup>73</sup> Gage to Croghan 4 April 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>74</sup> Gage to Farmar, 14 April 1766, Gage Papers WLCL See also Gage to Johnson, April 7, 1766 [HCL., Gage Letter Book] New York, Collections of the Illinois History Society, for

In cases where true ownership of the land was in doubt, Gage believed it was best left to the law. The general never made any attempt to exclude Native Americans from the legal process; in fact quite the opposite, as he encouraged Native Americans to use legal avenues to recover their lands. When he had been Governor of Montreal, he had encouraged Native Americans to engage in a law suit against the Jesuits. The Jesuits had been granted land by the French government to aid their missionary work, upon which Native Americans could settle, but nobody else. Counter to this condition, the Jesuits had been renting out some of the land to French tenants. The Indians took the matter to Gage and he called a council to determine the matter, which found in their favour. Gage was well aware that by taking the side of the Native Americans and exposing the duplicity of the Jesuits, he would go a long way to winning the Native Americans' trust.<sup>75</sup> Gage learned this lesson well, and put it into practice when he was commander-in-chief.

Gage adopted the same position during a similar case in 1766. Johnson wrote to inform Gage that a Mr Cartier had told the Caughnawaga to leave their land; Cartier had a deed to the land, but Johnson had doubts as to its validity.<sup>76</sup> Gage replied that he thought the whole thing was a trick and that, should the claim be genuine, evidence would be found in the registers of the French government still located at Quebec. Gage advised Johnson that

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another occasion were Gage believed that Native Americans were laying claim to land they had no right to, this time at the St Lewis falls. Though in this case, by using his own criteria of ownership he was mistaken, as the tribe in question (The Tamora) had occupied the land as far back as 1680.

<sup>74</sup> Johnson to Gage, 1 March 1766, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 32-33.

<sup>75</sup> Gage to Amherst 17 February 1762, and Gage to Amherst, 16 March 1762, PRO WO 34/5.

<sup>76</sup> Johnson to Gage, 1 March 1766, WJP, Vol. 12, pp. 32-33.

“you should lay all this Matter before the Governor of Quebec without Delay, and desire that the Indians Rights may be defended in the best Manner, and carried as far as it will be proper to pursue it, of which the Lawyers will be the best judge.”<sup>77</sup> The basis for this recommendation was Gage’s belief that Indians did have very limited rights to discrete areas of land and that they should have recourse to the legal system.

Though it might have been expected that Gage would dispute French land claims, this was not the only time he sought to defend Indian land rights. When he received reports that officers at Detroit and on the Illinois had been granting lands to white settlers, Gage acted quickly and annulled all the grants. He argued that such a power to make grants of land lay only with the Crown, and he was “not Satisfied that it is His Majesty’s Pleasure, that the Increase of the Settlements should be encouraged”.<sup>78</sup> The commander-in-chief had not taken this case to the courts, but then there was no need to do so, as he could simply order his subordinates to annul the grants. Gage was prepared to assert Native American land rights, not just against the French, but against his own officers, because he knew that it was only by making Native Americans feel secure that the peace would continue.

Gage was a mercantilist who believed that further expansion of the Colonies, only possible by taking land from Native Americans, would not benefit Britain or the Crown whom he served. Gage argued that new inland colonies would be too distant for profitable trading, and the Colonies would begin to manufacture goods themselves in order to supply their needs. This

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<sup>77</sup> Gage to Johnson, 9 March 1766, WJP, Vol. 12, pp. 37-40.

<sup>78</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 3 September 1771, Gage Correspondence Vol. I pp. 307-309

would break their links with and dependence on the mother country, and perhaps even lead to independence.<sup>79</sup> Rather, he believed, it was “for the Interest of Great Britain, to confine the Colonists on the Side of the back Country, and to direct their Settlements along the sea-Coast, where Millions of Acres are yet uncultivated”. Not only would it be better for Britain to confine the Colonies to the coast, but Gage questioned whether any move inland “could be effected, without an Indian War, and fighting for every Inch of Ground”? Rather, he felt it would be better to leave the Indians in peace and trade with them, as “Our Manufactures are as much desired by the Indians, as their Peltry is sought by us”. Thus leading Gage to the conclusion “that the Principles of Interest and Policy should induce us rather to protect than molest them”.<sup>80</sup> Gage felt that expanding the Colonies any further westward would be of little benefit to Britain, and would come at a tremendous cost in lives lost and trade destroyed.

Gage’s was a good choice to try and bring peace to the frontier, for he believed it was not only possible but desirable. The British Government

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<sup>79</sup>Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." p. 57-59 This fear that distant colonies would seek independence was shared by some in the British government.

<sup>80</sup>Gage to Hillsborough, 10 November 1770, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 274-281. Gage used similar mercantilist arguments against the founding of new interior colonies in a letter to Barrington in 1772. Gage to Barrington, 5 August 1772, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2 pp. 615-616. Gage’s views were very similar to Hillsborough’s, but that should not be taken to mean that Gage was simply parroting his master’s view back at him. Surveying his letters from 1759 to 1774, Gage’s views seem fairly consistent, and if Gage was the type simply to tell his masters what they wanted to hear, why would he tell Barrington what he had told Hillsborough? No doubt Hillsborough’s view influenced Gage, and most sensible subordinates do not gainsay their masters, but Gage wrote on the subject of living in peace with Native American too often and for too long for it to have been merely an echo of his master’s voice. For Hillsborough’s view on Indian affairs, and the impropriety of inland colonies see: Hillsborough to Gage, 31 July 1770, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 2 pp. 107-109. As White asserts, Johnson no doubt did play a role in persuading Gage that peace was the best option, and Gage certainly held Johnson in a high regard, but it was Gage’s view of empire that played the critical role in his formulation of frontier policy. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. p. 290.

did not want to waste money fighting Native Americans, and Gage believed there was nothing to be gained from such conflicts anyway. In 1762 Gage had declared that “the only end of making war with these Gentry [Native Americans] is to obtain Peace; nothing else is to be had from them; and I believe without using them very ill, Peace is easily preferred”.<sup>81</sup> Even before Pontiac’s War was over, Gage acknowledged that “the War we are now engaged in against the Indians, is ruinous and destructive, and that Peace can not be restored too soon, provided it can be made sure and lasting.”<sup>82</sup>

Gage saw the long term goals of the British Empire and Native Americans as fundamentally compatible. He realised that Native Americans wanted to hold onto their land, and he felt that the British were best served by leaving them there, as this would allow the fur trade to flourish. This is why the new commander-in-chief put so much effort into winning the trust of Native Americans. He could afford to be patient because he saw the continued presence of Native Americans on the Colonies’ borders as actually beneficial for Britain, as they would keep the Colonies in check and provide a market for manufacturers from the home country. As Gage believed that there was no fundamental conflict of interest between the army and Native Americans, he saw no reason why the two groups could not live in peace, provided the army took care to treat Native Americans with respect and take account of their grievances.

Calling all of this a plan or strategy would be to ascribe a coherence to Gage’s thoughts that did not exist at the time. It would be more accurate

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<sup>81</sup> Gage to Amherst 16 November 1762, PRO WO 34/5.

<sup>82</sup> Gage to Halifax, 9 December 1763, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 2-4.

to say that they were a series of assumptions that guided Gage in his planning whenever he dealt with Native Americans. He assumed that it was possible to live in peace with them, and that this could be achieved through acknowledging those things which distressed Native Americans and then dealing with them. He also assumed that the interests of the British were best served by confining the Colonies to the seaboard, and so there was no need to remove Native Americans from their land. Following on from these assumptions, war against Native Americans became not only undesirable but counter to the best interests of the British Crown, and it was for that reason that Gage struggled so hard to prevent it. Gage also recognised that the army was too weak to consider any other options. He might have felt that “If we had more troops we should make fewer presents”, but he knew that “the Government finds that the Expense of one Regiment will bribe a great many Indians and that it is much more for our interest to make presents, than go to war.”<sup>83</sup>

This was in sharp contrast to the views of Amherst, who distrusted and hated Indians, and after the outbreak of Pontiac’s Uprising seemed to relish the chance of destroying them as a people. Amherst warned Johnson that:

“I shall only say, that it behove the whole race of Indians to beware (for I fear the best of them have in some measure been privy to and concerned in the late mischief) of carrying matters much farther against the English, or daring to form conspiracys, as the

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<sup>83</sup> Gage to Grant, 29 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

consequence will most certainly occasion measures to be taken that in the end will put a most effectually stop to their *very being*. ”<sup>84</sup>

Amherst believed that Native American power could be so weakened that they would be forced to accept British domination; Gage believed that force was primarily a means to bring Native Americans to the negotiating table (or council fire). If Gage had likewise considered conflict inevitable, then there would have been little reason to establish a dialogue between the army and Native Americans.

Gage was not against new settlements per se. The new commander-in-chief was, after all, anxious to establish new farms near his posts to help feed his garrisons. Rather, he differentiated between the extension of the Colonies further inland by cessions of new land from Native Americans, which he was against, and settlement on land that he felt the British had a right to, such as those areas in the immediate vicinity of the posts.

When the British Government proposed directing people to Florida and Georgia to solve the increasing problem of land hunger elsewhere in the Colonies, Gage told Governor Grant that “as matters now stand the Consent and good will of the Indians is the best and only security we can have for settling. And that should first be gained, and all of them thoroughly reconciled to our taking such a step, before we attempt it.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Amherst to Johnson, 27 August 1763, NYCD. In the same letter Amherst goes on to discuss a meeting between Captain Ecuyer and a party of Indians who Amherst believed went on to attack Colonel Bouquet. Ecuyer treated the Indians with civility but Amherst tells Johnson, “I must own I should not have blamed him had he put every one of those who were in his power to death.”

<sup>85</sup> Gage to Gov Grant, 29 September 1764, Gage Papers, WLCL.



As Gage saw it the choice was simple: no matter the location, the only options were to either purchase the Native Americans' land from them fairly, or be prepared to go to war with them. When British settlers brought plots of land in Florida from the Spanish, the Creeks protested and threatened violence. The Creeks believed that the only land which the Spanish had any right to sell or cede was the land that their forts had been built on; the rest would remain their property. Gage thought that "it's pretty plain, that a formal Purchase should be made of the lands from the Indians, or we must maintain Possession by Force of Arms."<sup>86</sup> Given that both Gage and his political masters held that the second option was undesirably expensive, and probably impossible with the army so weak, the only choice was to secure Native American consent before taking control of their land.

Gage was even prepared to go against governors, such as Governor George Johnstone in Florida, in order to avoid war with Native Americans. Florida was at this time divided into two separate colonies, East and West, and was one of the new territories that Britain had gained from France at the end of the Seven Years' War. West Florida was officially established as a Crown colony in 1763, with Johnstone as its first governor. It did not take long for the governor and the army to fall out. Johnstone reached the colony in October 1764 and the first letters complaining of his behaviour to Gage are dated November of the same year.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Gage to Halifax, 10 March 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 17-20.

<sup>87</sup> Pares, Richard, *King George III and the Politicians. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, 1951-2* (Oxford, 1953) p. 220 See also Mackinnen to Gage 19 Nov 1764, Johnstone to Gage 3 Nov 1764, Mackinnen to Gage 25 November 1764, Gage Papers WCL. In fact most of the correspondence from Florida in this period touches on the governor/military conflict until Johnson is removed.

The conflict in Florida was more than a simple personality clash. Johnstone frequently quarrelled with army officers in West Florida regarding many matters, but at the heart of the dispute was the issue of who had command of the troops based in the province.<sup>88</sup> Johnstone was attempting to claim control over the military in the colony, and the most likely reason for this is that he was planning a war against the local Creeks. Johnstone knew that unless he could establish himself as commander-in-chief of all military forces in the colony he would not be able to dictate the course of his hoped-for war. After the murder of two traders by the Creeks in 1766 it seemed that Johnstone was about to get the war he wanted. John Stuart, the Superintendent for Indian Affairs in the Southern Department, noted that “Mr Johnstone is so convinced of the necessity of a war with the Creeks that in a letter to the Secretary of State ... he propositions a plan of operation against them.”<sup>89</sup>

William Tayler, the officer in charge at Pensacola, was at first squarely behind the governor, and displayed the callous attitude toward Native Americans typical of some officers. Not only did he believe that “every hostile measure permitted by the Laws of Nations should be used against the Creek Indians, in return for the murders,”<sup>90</sup> but also that “if we succeed in the war with them, no women or children which we may happen to take should be left in the country, they should be moved to other parts at a distance or to the islands.”<sup>91</sup> Such a move would have meant the destruction

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<sup>88</sup>Richard Pares and King of Great Britain Biographical and historical works relating to George III, *King George III and the Politicians. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, 1951-2* (pp. 214. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1953). p. 230.

<sup>89</sup> Stuart to Gage, 2 August 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>90</sup> Tayler to Gage, 4 October 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>91</sup> Tayler to Gage 11 October 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

of the Creek culture and caused great distress to all the Indians involved, but Tayler showed no concern for such matters.

What did concern Tayler, however, was whether the war was necessary or indeed if it was in the best interests of the Crown. If the colony was to go to war, then it would likely receive a large influx of money from the government to ensure a successful outcome. Tayler began to wonder if it was the prospect of this money that would largely be spent at the governor's discretion that made Johnstone so keen to fight. Tayler was also afraid that both he and the colony's civil leaders lacked experience in Indian affairs, which might result in them blundering into a war accidentally when other options were available. To remedy this, he resolved to meet Stewart the next time he was in the area, and enlist his aid in untangling the present crisis.<sup>92</sup> Tayler understood that Gage was unequivocally against war if it could be avoided. When news of the trouble in Florida reached Gage, he thundered that "no man in his senses will wantonly go to war with them [Native Americans]; and nothing but absolute necessity should ever prevail upon us to do it".<sup>93</sup>

Concerned by what was happening, and no doubt spurred on by Gage's letter, Tayler sent an agent to talk to the Creeks. Tayler's emissary informed the Indians "that your excellencies [General Gage's] intentions and mine was, that they should live in peace with us, but if they persisted that I was to bring down troops from all parts to attack them." Shortly after this exchange, a meeting took place between Tayler and two Creek headmen, Emistesgo and Molten, at which the Creeks informed Tayler that they had

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<sup>92</sup> Tayler to Gage 15 Oct 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>93</sup> Gage to Tayler, August 14 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

provided satisfaction for the murders by killing the chief responsible and leaving “his body for the beasts in the woods.” As Gage had wished, Tayler’s decisive intervention had prevented a costly Indian war in the south.

Though the officers in western Florida never openly accused Johnstone of trying to start a war, the recommendations made by Tayler for preserving peace with the Indians made it clear who he thought was to blame for the crisis. Tayler advised Gage, “His Excellency is not insensible that my duty calls upon me to attend the general interest of the whole, without being limited to a single province, and I must humbly express my conclusion of the necessity of one great plan for the whole country, independent of the partial or interested views of any future governor either for his province in the second place, or himself in the first [Underlining in the original]”<sup>94</sup>

Tayler’s view strongly implies that as far as he was concerned Johnstone was an agitator interested in encouraging an Indian war.

In the wake of Pontiac’s War, Gage tried to preserve the peace using a two-pronged strategy. French support would be cut off by taking control of the Illinois, and Native American affections courted by making sure that the army always acted with one eye on their opinions. To this end Gage tried to mould his officers into successful go-betweens, stressing the importance of understanding Native American views and close co-operation with the Indian department.

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<sup>94</sup> Tayler to Gage, November 30 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

In areas that had caused friction in the past, such as the building of new settlements, the army tried to remove Native American fears and secure their consent before acting. The army and the Indian department also tried to ensure the fur trade was well run, but here they came up against the limits of their power. Gage wanted to end those abuses that had so angered Native Americans before, but he knew that if his officers took the lead they would be left open to lawsuits. Rather than instruct them to do nothing, he ordered them to let the Indian department take the lead, while he lobbied the government for changes to the law.

Such actions illustrate that the reality of the situation on the frontier was the determining factor in Gage's treatment of Native Americans. For Gage it was vital to listen to Native American concerns because this would bring peace and prosperity to the empire, as well as allowing him to keep his job. Rather than Gage's actions being dictated by a need to dominate, he saw his role as preventing another war by working for reconciliation with those Native Americans on the empire's border.

Pontiac's War had brought about a huge change in the army's treatment of Native Americans, but not because it changed the attitudes of those within the army. There were officers who approved of Gage's policy of bridge-building, the same ones who had urged Amherst to adopt a less confrontational policy before the war, but Pontiac's War had done little to change these men's attitudes. However, it had given them a leader who agreed with them. It should be noted that while Amherst's policies drew strong protest from many officers, Gage's more moderate orders were normally accepted without complaint.

While most officers were able to fall into line behind their new commander-in-chief, there were many in the Colonies who felt that Native Americans had forfeited their right to live alongside the Colonies with their behaviour during Pontiac's War. The next chapter will examine how the army struggled to keep the peace on the frontier while many in the Colonies did all they could to undermine it.

## Chapter Seven

### A Lack of Authority

Gage's efforts to persuade Native Americans to accept British domination faced two significant obstacles: frontier violence and squatter settlements on Native American land. Both these troubles sprang from the same source, the poor white settlers who kept moving west in ever greater numbers. The commander-in-chief knew that if the army failed to contain these problems the Native Americans would likely take matters into their own hands, and there would be another Indian war. Desperate to prevent that, the army struggled to tackle both problems, but faced huge difficulties in doing so.

In the aftermath of Pontiac's War when dealing with white criminals who had attacked Native Americans, army officers were initially unsure how to act. In fact their powers were extremely limited, and officers could do little more than send offenders to the nearest colony for trial. This proved grossly inadequate, as most offenders escaped any form of punishment, which greatly displeased those Native Americans who had been promised satisfaction. Keenly aware that such broken promises were deeply damaging to relations with Native Americans, Gage ordered his officers not to intervene, while Native Americans were allowed to take their revenge on those who had wronged them.

The army found their powers similarly limited when they attempted to deal with illegal settlements on Native American land.<sup>1</sup> They knew that such settlements disgusted Native Americans, and the army wished to remove them, but officers were forbidden to use force. The regular army was only allowed to move against civilians if ordered to do so by a civil authority. More concerned with grabbing what land they could for their colonies, and afraid of their assemblies, colonial governors refused to ask the army for aid in dealing with these settlements. Despairing of ever getting help from the governors, Gage was prepared to sacrifice these communities if it would prevent an Indian war.

The government made sure, via the instructions, that Gage was aware of just how seriously they took violence against Native Americans. When the Paxton Boys barbarically murdered a large number of friendly Conestoga Indians, Lord Halifax made the significance of the issue perfectly clear. He informed Gage that “You will cause every proper measure to be taken which may tend to prevent the bad consequence of those impressions which the said Murders will probably have made on the Minds of the Indians in general”.<sup>2</sup> What exactly constituted “Proper measures” was left to Gage’s discretion. A little over a year later, Conway reminded Gage that the “unjustifiable Behaviour” of “Settlers on the Borders ... requires the greatest Attention”, and just a year later Shelburne ordered Gage to use

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<sup>1</sup> David Hackett Fischer, James C. Kelly, and Virginia Historical Society., *Bound Away : Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville ; London: University of Virginia Press, 2000) is the best discussion of migration into the west for this period.

<sup>2</sup> Halifax to Gage, 10 March 1764, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2 p. 12.



“Your utmost Endeavours” to support the proclamation and prevent disorder on the frontier.<sup>3</sup>

The government in London expected Gage to intervene actively when Native Americans had been attacked, and so Gage expected his subordinates to keep him informed of all such incidents. In the summer of 1766 Gage was notified by Sir William Johnson that several Onondaga Indians had been killed near Fort Pitt. The general replied that he had received several reports from the commander at Fort Pitt and that none mentioned the murders. Gage expected that his officers would report any such incident to him if they knew of it, and so he concluded that the incident had taken place but that the commander of Fort Pitt must be ignorant of the affair.<sup>4</sup> When officers did not send Gage the information he required he was greatly annoyed. Colonel Reed felt his anger when, after months on the Illinois, he had neglected to inform Gage of his “situation, that of the French and Spainyards [sic] the Disposition of the Savages, or any other Intelligence proper for me to be acquainted”.<sup>5</sup> Gage clearly felt that it was vital he was kept informed of developments on the frontier, including the temper of Native Americans, as he attached a good deal of importance to such matters.

In the closing phase of Pontiac’s War, many frontier settlers seized their opportunity for revenge by assaulting any Native American they could get their hands on; some Maryland volunteers killed and scalped an Indian near Pittsburgh, and a group of settlers travelled to Fort Augusta with the

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<sup>3</sup> Conway to Gage, 24 October 1765, p. 27 and Shelburne to Gage, 13 September 1766, p. 44-46, both Gage Correspondence Vol. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Gage to Johnson, July 14, 1766, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 142-143.

<sup>5</sup> Gage to Reed, 17 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

intention of murdering all the Indians there, only to be foiled when it turned out the Indians had already fled; in Augusta County Virginia nine Cherokees were murdered, and near Redstone Creek two Indians were killed and scalped.<sup>6</sup> Gage was very concerned that if such attacks on Native Americans were to continue it would make it impossible to bring the conflict to an end. He despaired that “if this disposition in the People of the Frontiers of killing every defenceless Indian they meet with continue, it will be too little purpose to confer or treat with any of the nations”.<sup>7</sup> Gage knew that it would be impossible for the leaders of the Indian nations to get their young warriors to accept a peace if settlers were seen to be murdering Indians with impunity.<sup>8</sup>

In a case where an Indian headman was killed, Gage was so worried that it might prolong the war that he threatened to take the matter to the highest authority if he could not secure sufficient co-operation from the colonies. He told Bouquet, “And if it [the murder of the Chief] should be the cause of the continuation of the war, and further broils with the Savages, it will be necessary that the King should know what has been done in it, and

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<sup>6</sup> Bouquet to Gage, 22 December 1764, Transcript of Public Archives of Canada, HSP. Gage to Johnson, 3 June 1765, WJP Vol. 11 p. 762-63, Mckee to Johnson, 18 June 1765, WJP Vol. 11p. 796-97. Mckee reported the murders had occurred three months prior to his writing the letter.

<sup>7</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 26 February 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>8</sup> John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). p. 12. Grenier argues it was violence that led to racism amongst the frontier settlers, and not the other way around. Certainly the brutalising effects of Native American raids during the Seven Year’s War and Pontiac’s War should not be underestimated. This point is also made in Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years’ War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 3. And Hinderaker, who makes it clear that for many backcountry settlers the Seven Year’s War was a catastrophe that demonstrated the folly of co-operating with Native Americans. Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. Merritt, *At the Crossroads : Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763*. p. 237, “Many white settlers however believed that the Indians had lost their right to share common ground in Pennsylvania since some had taken up arms against the English”.

what obstructions there are in the Provinces to preserve the common course of Justice.”<sup>9</sup>

It is not surprising that settlers felt such anger toward Native Americans. Two thousand settlers and traders were killed or captured by Native Americans during Pontiac’s War. Thousands more were driven from the homes and farms, or faced the trauma of losing a loved one. The resentments created by such destruction were never going to dissipate quietly.<sup>10</sup>

Native Americans who had been the victims of such attacks made their feelings clear to the empire’s Indian agents. Shortly after the conclusion of Pontiac’s War, Ogista, a Seneca Chief, complained that three Indians of his nation had been killed by white men, but aware that the new state of peace was precarious, he asked that they not be punished. Instead, he hoped that Johnson would advise them to “do better in future” so that the friendship between whites and Seneca could be maintained.<sup>11</sup> Native American leaders were prepared to offer the British some leeway, but they knew that they would not be able to keep control of their young warriors in the face of repeated insults.

The seriousness with which Gage took such crimes can be seen in his orders. After the apprehension of a man who had murdered an Indian, Gage made it clear that it was vital Bouquet dealt with the matter correctly. He informed him to ensure that “nothing may be wanting in us towards carrying on the Publick service, as far as in our power. The fact is already

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<sup>9</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 4 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>10</sup> Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. p. 241.

<sup>11</sup> Indian Proceedings Fort Pitt, 16-17 June 1765, WJP Vol. 11 pp. 790-794.

reported to His Majesty's Secretary of State.”<sup>12</sup> Orders like that ensured that most officers on the frontier understood that catching and punishing those who abused Indians was seen as vitally important by the commander-in-chief and the British Government.

Amongst senior officers on the frontier there were those well aware of how much anger violent attacks on Native Americans caused, and they did what they could to prevent them. At a conference with the Wolf King held at Pensacola Captain Robert Mackinen took time to assure the Creek headman that should “the white people” be guilty of any “mischief”, then the Creeks should bring them down to the fort where they would be punished. The Wolf King replied that he hoped Mackinen would be able to prevent the white people doing any mischief.<sup>13</sup> However, Mackinen was making a promise he did not have the power to keep. Unless those who transgressed against the Indians were soldiers, he did not have the authority to punish them. No matter what they had done, he could not punish any civilians, only transport them for a civil trial in the nearest colony. It is possible Mackinen was making this promise with the knowledge that it was in bad faith, but he may simply have been confused about what powers he actually possessed. If he was mistaken, Mackinen was not the only British officer who overestimated their authority in the backcountry.

In the wake of the Proclamation of 1763, there was much confusion about what powers the army actually possessed to enable it to carry out its role on the frontier. It was often only when officers were confronted with

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<sup>12</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 4 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>13</sup> When Robert Mackinen met with the Wolf King, he was aware he lacked experience in Indian diplomacy and felt that the presence of an Indian agent would have been useful as “he might have directed and set me right in things wherein I may have erred”. Mackinen to Gage, 20 September 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

the crimes of white settlers for the first time that they discovered just how limited their powers were, and how difficult it was to bring miscreants to justice. This is clearly demonstrated by an episode on the eve of Pontiac's War, when the British officer, Captain Cochrane, was confronted with disgruntled Indians. The Native Americans complained of white people venturing into their hunting grounds near Fort Prince George and destroying their stocks of beaver. Cochrane immediately ordered the officer stationed there, Ensign Price, to apprehend them and deliver them up to a civil magistrate.<sup>14</sup> Price managed to secure three prisoners but the governor, after consulting with his attorney general, ordered that they be released, despite being not entirely sure what he was to do in such cases. Cochrane refused to carry out the governor's order to free the prisoners, insisting that only he had that power; he then outlined his position in a letter to Gage, and requested further orders".<sup>15</sup>

Cochrane and Mackinen were not the only ones who did not understand the limits of their power as army officers in North America. This confusion existed right at the top of the army and within the elite of the colonial establishment. Gage was unsure what his powers were; governors, when presented with prisoners were unsure what to do; officers simply held people captive while waiting for enlightenment from above. Such

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<sup>14</sup> Cochrane to Gage, 8 March 1763, Gage Papers WLCL. The new settlers did not rely on the Indian trade to survive, but often hunted themselves. As a result they had no incentive to remain on good terms with Native Americans. Merritt, *At the Crossroads : Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763*. p. 264 This is in contrast to the garrisons who were often dependent on Native American good will for food, for as had been proven on many occasions, and as the British were well aware, Native Americans could cut off supply routes to British forts at their leisure. (see previous chapters).

<sup>15</sup> Cochrane to Gage 9 April 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

enlightenment was not often forthcoming. In his reply to Cochrane Gage only managed to clarify the situation a little:

“Your having made prisoners of some of the Beaver Hunters, will its hoped, prevent other pursuing that business, which must bring us into frequent Quarells with the Indians unless prevented. I find a sort of law prevailing throughout the provinces, not to take up people for crimes committed in other provinces, which I suppose was the reason that Gov Bull thought the Beaver Hunters could not be tried in Carolina, as the fact was committed in Georgia.”<sup>16</sup>

The phrase “I find a sort of law” is hardly characteristic of someone who had been well briefed on their powers, or who was now clear as to their extent. Initially, Gage had hoped that he could bring those who killed Native Americans beyond the boundaries of the Colonies to a court martial, but in fact he possessed no such power.<sup>17</sup> This he realised would make “the bringing a Murderer to Justice very difficult indeed”. The general had no doubt that the “Lawyers would have discovered more easy methods, to bring the murder to his tryal” had the victim been white.<sup>18</sup>

It was the Mutiny Act of 1765 that finally granted the army the powers to bring frontier criminals to justice.<sup>19</sup> Prior to this, the army had lacked any officially sanctioned way of securing punishment for civilians who committed crimes outside the Colonies. The Mutiny Act specified that

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<sup>16</sup> Gage to Cochrane, 8 May 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>17</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. pp. 104-105.

<sup>18</sup> Gage to Bouquet, 4 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>19</sup> Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." p. 179. The Mutiny Act was an improvement on what had gone before, but it was not a workable solution, as suggested by Alvord.

the army would not be allowed to place people on trial or court martial them, but would only be allowed to apprehend the accused and, provided there was a written and signed oath from a witness, transport them to a magistrate in the adjoining province, where they would be held until they could have a civil trial.<sup>20</sup>

The decision to use this system was a disaster. The army and the Indian Department were given the responsibility of keeping Native Americans happy but denied the authority to punish those who most distressed them. Whenever Native Americans came to an officer or Indian agent to complain about an attack upon them or their tribe, it was incumbent upon the officers and agents, as representatives of the empire, to promise them that something would be done. If they did not, then the Native Americans would soon see that there was little point in dealing with them. The problem with the system was that although the empire's representatives had to promise that offenders would be punished, they could not guarantee that this would happen, as any punishment was contingent upon a successful trial over which the army and the Indian Department had no control.

Hillsborough later regretted the decision, and acknowledged that the settlements in the west

“which not being included within the Jurisdiction of any other Colony are exposed to many Difficulties and Disadvantages from the want of some form of Government necessary in Civil Society, it is very evident that, if the case

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<sup>20</sup> The Mutiny Act, 24 March 1765, IHC Vol. 1 pp. 484-486.

of these Settlements had been well known or understood at the time of forming the conquered Lands into Colonies, some Provisions would have been made for them, and they would have been erected into distinct Governments, or made dependent upon those other colonies, of which they were either the offspring, or with which they did, by circumstances and situation, stand connected.”<sup>21</sup>

Even getting offenders to trial proved to be an enormous problem for the Crown’s agents in the west. The first difficulty for anyone wishing to bring a criminal from the backcountry to trial was simply finding them. This was especially difficult for the small and isolated garrisons of the regular army. Recently moved to the frontier, rotated from garrison to garrison and with a pitifully slow rate of movement off-road, the British regulars had little chance of finding backcountry settlers who did not wish to be found. Those they were chasing often had extensive local knowledge, large networks of friends and family to hide them, and ample warning of approaching columns should they be discovered. This made rooting them out a very difficult task for the army. The low probability of being caught encouraged many backcountry folk to seek violent solutions in any conflict they might have with Native Americans - something of which Gage was well aware.<sup>22</sup>

Even when suspects could be detained, there was no guarantee that they would see trial. The same friends and family that had helped them

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<sup>21</sup> Hillsborough to Gage, 9 December 1769, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2, p. 93.

<sup>22</sup>Gage to Conway, 6 May 1766, Gage Correspondence Vol. I, pp. 89-91.



escape capture were not about to sit idly by and let the accused sit in jail, when their only crime was to kill an Indian. Jailbreaks were far from unknown, and those involved knew that they could expect scant opposition from sympathetic guards and militias. In one particularly disturbing episode Frederick Stump, one of the most notorious backcountry criminals, managed to effect an escape.<sup>23</sup> This was especially troublesome as his crime - killing around ten Indians with the aid of a servant - was particularly abhorrent, and news of it had travelled through many Indian tribes, where it had caused a great deal of alarm.<sup>24</sup> The problem of offenders escaping was one that the army never managed to solve. In 1769, after the capture of a man accused of killing a Seneca, one official hoped he could be brought to trial, "if he is not rescued".<sup>25</sup>

Those offenders that the authorities were able to get hold of were still all too likely to get away with murder. The right to a civil trial with a jury of their peers made it unlikely that anyone from the frontier would receive a conviction for the murder of an Indian.

Obtaining evidence against such people was nigh on impossible. Crimes in the west were usually committed out of sight of posts and villages, where the only witnesses would be sympathisers, accomplices or Indians. There was little worry of the first two testifying against the accused and no legal possibility of the second, for Native Americans were

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<sup>23</sup> Johnson to Gage, 5 March 1768, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 459-460.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson to Shelburne, 14 March 1768, NYCD, also McKee to Croghan, 13 February, 1768 [A.L.S.]Miami Collection. The murders were committed by Frederick Stump, a German, on the 10th and 11th January 1768. As with many crimes in the backcountry, drink was thought to have played a part.

<sup>25</sup> James Tilghman to Johnson, 20 July 1769, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 62-64.

forbidden to give evidence in colonial courts.<sup>26</sup> The 1764 plan for Indian affairs had proposed changing the law to allow Native Americans, “under proper regulations and restrictions,” to give evidence, but the plan was never put into action.<sup>27</sup> This left those attempting to secure justice for Native Americans in a very difficult position, as those most likely to witness a crime committed against Native Americans were either disinclined or disbarred from giving evidence.

Besides these problems, the obstacle of gathering evidence remained. In one case of an African-American slave accused of raping a Native American woman, Gage was anxious that as much evidence as possible, as well as any available witnesses, would be available for the trial. Gage wrote to the commander at Detroit to ensure that this would happen.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, as was the norm, little evidence apart from circumstantial could be procured.<sup>29</sup> That the commander-in-chief of America would take such an interest in a single case is indicative of his attitude and the importance he gave to Native American affairs. He was anxious to get a successful prosecution, as doing so was the only way of ensuring peace on the frontier.

The final problem with sending prisoners up country for their trials was that even if there was a guilty verdict and subsequent execution, no Native Americans would be around to witness it. Both Johnson and Gage

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<sup>26</sup>Tilghman to Johnson, 20 July 1769, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 62-64.

<sup>27</sup> Plan for Imperial Control of Indian Affairs, 10 July 1764 IHC Vol. 1 p. 276. Johnson disagreed with the proposal, and asked that only Christian Indians who could prove their attendance at worship be allowed to give evidence. This was because Johnson felt that most Indians would not understand “the nature of an oath”. Johnson on the Organization of the Indian Department, enclosed in Johnson to the Lords of Trade, 8 October 1764, pp. 321-331, Illinois Vol. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Gage to Johnson, 1 June 1767, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 322-323.

<sup>29</sup> Gage to Johnson, 4 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

were aware that this was not ideal. Even though there was peace, the relationship between the empire and the Native Americans of the backcountry was strained, and the trust they sought to create was often in short supply.

All of this left those imperial officials entrusted with Native American diplomacy in a very difficult position. If they were to admit that there was little they could do to grant Native Americans justice, there would be no reason for sachems and headmen to bring their grievances to them. The tribal leaders would have had little choice but to turn loose their young warriors on the white settlers as the best means of giving them satisfaction for the wrongs done to them, a course of action that might very quickly lead to all-out war. This may be in part why older Native Americans continued to bring their complaints to Indian agents and army officers, even when it was becoming clear that they had little chance of getting satisfaction; the sachems and headmen had seen the horrific and brutal nature that came with war in the backcountry and did not wish to experience it again.

If, on the other hand, Indian agents and garrison commanders kept making promises that they could not keep, they would lose the respect and trust of the tribes with whom they were dealing. They could only continue in their role as mediators between the two cultures while both sides trusted them. If they no longer enjoyed the confidence of the Native Americans, then they would be unable to perform their role. This could have been catastrophic given the already strained nature of contact between Native Americans and the imperial establishment. Johnson was deeply worried by the violence on the frontier. He was afraid that while men who had killed

Native Americans remained free, “all my endeavours to bring them [Native Americans] to peace, and to remove their suspicions must appear calculated to amuse and deceive them, while [they will assume] their ruin is our Aim.”<sup>30</sup>

The great fear of the army and the Indian Department was that after repeated insults Native Americans would unite (confederate, as they termed it) to attack the British and drive them from the west. When in 1767 this appeared to be happening, both Indian agents and officers were enormously concerned.<sup>31</sup> In a letter to Governor Grant of New York, Gage outlined his views on why the Indians were uniting:

“The Behavior of the Inhabitants above Augusta in Georgia relative to their destroying the little Indian Village at Oconee corresponds with the Behaviour of all the frontier people from Pensilvania to Georgia inclusive. There never was such a sett of Banditti in any Country, but those of Virginia exceed all the rest. Since the year 1764 that Peace was Concluded with all the Indians, great numbers of them have been privately or openly killed and wounded by these Villians. It is proved impossible to bring them to Punishment and give the Indians Satisfaction by the Ordinary course of Justice and Nobody will use extraordinary means. The Militia will not act because they

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<sup>30</sup> Johnson to Penn, 28 March 1766, WJP Vol. 12 p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> Such was the concern that Gage issued several letters instructing the Commanders in the backcountry to prepare for an Indian attack, and make their forts secure. See Gage to Edmonstone, 23 November 1767, and Gage to Reed, 15 July 1767, Gage Papers WCL.

are concerned, Jurys will not condemn for the same Reason, and declare so Publickly. and it is contrary to laws and the Liberty of the Subject to remove Tryals to the Capitals of the Provinces, or asks for Military Assistance, or I may say to accept of it when offered.. From these laudable Tenets which so nobly Maintain and support the Priviledge and Libarty of British Subjects we are likely to be involved in an Indian War, after repeated promises that they should have satisfaction, and as often failing to give it, they have at length confederated, and held several private meetings in the woods, and have appointed the lower Town of the Shawnese for the Place of a general Congress, where the Cheifs of all the Confederacys are to be Assembled. What the Results will be we are to learn, but I find all the Indian Folks very much alarmed.”<sup>32</sup>

In the end the Indians never managed to form a general confederacy. It was only after the withdrawal of the army from the frontier that open warfare broke out, with Lord Dunmore’s War.

Such were the obstacles in bringing Indian murderers to justice that in his dispatches to the Secretary of State, Lord Shelburne, Gage claimed that by October 1767 Native Americans had been given satisfaction in only one such incident.<sup>33</sup> Such a figure, while not far from the truth, was an

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<sup>32</sup> Gage To Grant, 5 October 1767, Gage Papers WCL.

<sup>33</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 10 October 1767, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 151-154. Gage was exaggerating: to give just two examples of Native Americans receiving satisfaction, at the start of 1766 a soldier had been executed for killing a Native American in Florida, and

exaggeration, which Gage hoped would add weight to his repeated requests to make bringing justice to Native Americans easier. Gage was right to worry: Native Americans were not happy with the little satisfaction they had received for the wrongs done to them. In late 1767 Croghan travelled to a Delaware village where the Indians complained they could get no justice from the British. The Indian agent tried to persuade them that they were doing all they could to bring the people who had wronged them to justice, to which a Delaware headman replied, “We thought you had Laws for that purpose.”<sup>34</sup>

Hampered by the law, Gage began to do what he could to change it. The solutions he suggested say much about his opinion of backcountry settlers. In one letter to Shelburne, Gage suggested removing the trials of the “Banditti” to the capitals of the Colonies. This would mean “the Jurys would be composed of Men more civilized than those of the Frontiers.” Gage felt that “The framing new Laws in the Provinces, and inforcing Obediance [sic] thereto, for the better Securing the Indians in their Person and Properties, seems a most essential Point; without which there can be no End to our Quarrells [sic]”.<sup>35</sup>

Johnson had written to Shelburne a year earlier on exactly the same subject. The Indian Superintendent was apprehensive for the future, and could foresee that there would be great difficulty in maintaining peaceful relations with the Native Americans on the empire’s border unless the law

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in August 1766, two men were executed in the colony of New Jersey, for the murder of a Native American woman. Stuart to Gage 21 January 1766, Franklin to Gage, 25 August 1766 Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>34</sup> Journal of George Croghan, October 16 – December 17, 1767, WJP Vol. 13, pp. 335-437.

<sup>35</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 22 January 1768, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 155-158.

was changed to grant them “speedy Justice without Dispute or evasion.” Johnson did not go so far as to suggest an alternative, merely pointing out that the colonial law courts were not designed with the aim of providing justice for Native Americans, and that the laws were not written with Native Americans in mind. If that was not enough to overcome “the Jurys being often ignorant ... Sometimes prejudiced, as are all the Members of the Law on such Trials”<sup>36</sup>

Gage knew that his efforts to change the law would take a long time to bear fruit, if they succeeded at all. In the meanwhile something had to be done, and the solution to which Gage resorted was shockingly direct. He began urging his officers on the frontier to let Native Americans deal with murderers themselves. In one example, where several Indians had been brutally murdered, Gage informed Captain Murray that “it’s to be wished that the Indians could apprehend the murtherers [sic] and put them to death without further ceremony,” and that if the Indians did revenge themselves on the killers “you are by no means to retaliate upon the Indians.”<sup>37</sup>

Gage urged turning a blind eye because he had lost faith in the legal system. He hoped his new orders would help the frontier remain peaceful, but few officers were prepared to follow his instructions. In a letter to a subordinate Gage explained his reasoning: “it is always best-when they [Native Americans] take immediate satisfaction [for murder]: For we must expect they will at length be roused by so many repeated murders, for which they have never been able to get any satisfaction, or probably ever will.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Johnson to Shelburne, 30 May 1767, IHC Vol. 2 pp. 572-574.

<sup>37</sup> Gage to Murray, July 7 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>38</sup> Gage To Murray, 5 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

Gage's urging was in vain. Those Native Americans who lived near the posts continued to bring in those whom they believed had wronged them. Perhaps Native Americans who had felt the sting of Amherst's harsh treatment and the fury of the British Army during Pontiac's War could not believe that the army would not move against them if they took their revenge on white settlers. When Fort Pitt was being demolished, one witness noted, "The warriors could not conceal their joy at this event. The Fort had been a bridle upon them hitherto, to restrain their murders & depredations on the frontiers."<sup>39</sup> The officers there had clearly failed to transmit Gage's intentions to Native Americans.

Gage was disappointed that nobody would follow his instructions. "Since the year 1764 that Peace was Concluded with all the Indians, great numbers of them have been privately or openly killed and wounded by these Villains [frontier settlers]. It is proved impossible to bring them to Punishment and give the Indians Satisfaction by the Ordinary course of Justice and Nobody will use extraordinary means."<sup>40</sup>

In the light of Gage's other letters the meaning of the phrase "extraordinary means" becomes clear. Gage believed that peace on the frontier had to be preserved at all costs, even if that meant Native Americans killing a subject of the British Crown without any kind of trial. Race was not primarily important to Gage; rather it was keeping the peace and protecting the empire.

It was not just in his orders to subordinate officers that Gage promoted the idea that Indians could, within reason, take revenge on white

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<sup>39</sup> David McClure, "*Diary of David McClure Doctor of Divinity 1748-1820*" with notes by Franklin B. Dexter (New York, 1899) p. 85.

<sup>40</sup> Gage to Grant, 5 October 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.



settlers. When he heard that the Cherokees had killed a total of eighteen people from Virginia in revenge for a number of Cherokees who died in the colony two years previously, Gage argued that the Cherokees were entitled to some measure of revenge because they had never obtained satisfaction from the Virginians either in the form of justice for the murderers or presents to compensate them for their loss. Gage's aim was to ensure that Native Americans were left satisfied by their dealings with the Colonies. It would be best if this could be done by the performance of condolence ceremonies and the giving of presents or by the execution of the criminals in question. In the opinion of the commander-in-chief, if the Colonies would not act to satisfy those Native Americans who had been wronged, then those Native Americans were entitled to revenge.<sup>41</sup>

The revenge, however, had to be proportionate. In this case the Cherokees had gone too far. Though the "white People who [were killed] were no doubt to blame", since the Cherokee had already obtained "sufficient satisfaction", the latest killings were too much. Gage instructed Stuart to inform the Indians that the British would be expecting satisfaction, not for all the murders, but just the latest batch.<sup>42</sup>

If allowing Native Americans to take their revenge did not work, then Gage was certain that the army was not to be involved in another Indian war. As early as 1765 he had instructed Croghan:

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<sup>41</sup> Gage to Johnson, 5 April 1767, WLCL Gage Papers.

<sup>42</sup> Gage to Johnson, 5 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL. Gage goes on to add that the Cherokee "seemed to have confined their revenge to the Virginians, which rather more consisted with reason than their general practice of killing without Distinction."

“...if these outrages continue & go unpunished that the Indians will break out, and that they will fall upon the settlements, should it be impossible to divert this storm, we must use our endeavours to point out to them the proper objects of their resentment, and to guide them to the provinces where these lawless and abandoned crew reside, and use all means to prevent their confounding all the provinces with two or three, and making a general war of it.”<sup>43</sup>

At the start of 1766 Gage told Governor Bull of South Carolina that “when they [Native Americans] are prompted to revenge themselves they might let their resentment fall upon the guilty only, and prevent the provinces being drawn into a cruel and ruinous wars, through the fault of some of the most abandoned and lawless of mankind.”<sup>44</sup> As far as the commander-in-chief was concerned, if Native Americans decided to take revenge for the attacks upon them, then it was not enough reason for the British Army to go to war. Gage hoped that making this clear to the Governor of South Carolina might force that colony, and others, to take action against those settlers in the west who were the source of the trouble.

Gage’s concern for Native American feelings did not mean that they would be allowed to abuse soldiers and civilians on the frontier as they wanted. In the commander-in-chief’s opinion, if there was no reason for a Native American attack, then passing over the crime was not an option as

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<sup>43</sup> Gage to Croghan 21 March 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>44</sup> Gage to Bull, 17 January 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

this would only encourage more violence. Threats were not the solution. The general told his officers that threatening Native Americans was to be avoided, as “it is wrong ever to think of frightening by threats of what you will do, for they will take it for granted that you will put your threat into execution, and begin first, and the only way with them, when they murder, is if possible to retaliate immediately and then make matters up.”<sup>45</sup>

Brutal as it was, immediate retaliation remained Gage’s recommendation to his officers throughout his time in command. After the murder of an officer’s gardener in 1767, Gage informed Sir William Johnson that “We must talk loudly of this Affair and Demand Satisfaction which had better have been taken immediately.” Demanding satisfaction was all very well, but Gage knew that there was a much better chance of receiving it if the Native Americans with whom the army was dealing trusted the British and felt they had been dealt with fairly. Unfortunately, the army had failed to secure justice for a Native American murdered by a bateau man two years previously, and a slave recently accused of killing two Native American women was still languishing in jail.<sup>46</sup> Gage lamented that if the slave had been executed, “we might with a better grace insist upon the Indian being brought to justice.”<sup>47</sup>

The finale of this case clearly demonstrates that Gage was much more concerned with keeping the peace on the frontier than with providing justice. The Chippewa Indians who killed the gardener were captured and sent for trial. However, times were tense and Sir William Johnson

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<sup>45</sup> Gage to Campbell, 20 April 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>46</sup> White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. p. 348.

<sup>47</sup> Gage to Johnson, 12 July 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

disapproved of this course of action, which he feared could result in war with several Indian tribes. Gage therefore left Johnson to decide what should be done, but did express hope that Johnson would “insist upon Satisfaction”.<sup>48</sup> The matter was brought to a head when, in retaliation for their incarceration, relatives of the murderers killed nine Englishmen and two Indians in an attack on a trading company’s two bateaux. Rather than retaliate for this Johnson released the accused, for not only were the British proving unable to provide justice for Native Americans wronged by white men, but, as it turned out, the gardener had a long history of abusing Native Americans.<sup>49</sup>

Previously, during Pontiac’s War, when Native American sentiments had mattered less to the British, Gage had not been so reluctant to execute Native Americans. In 1764, when a Native American had been tried and executed for killing a man in South Carolina, Gage wrote approvingly to the governor, stating that such an example would serve to prevent more murders.<sup>50</sup> Such executions were fine when the British and Native Americans were at war, but after 1765, when they carried with them the risk of antagonising the then peaceful Native Americans and bringing on another conflict, Gage was not so keen on them.

Immediate retaliation was a better strategy, and Gage made this clear in his orders to Captain Turnbull, written in the aftermath of the gardener’s murder. “Assure the Indians of the Difficulty Lt St Clair had, to keep his men, from taking their own Revenge upon the Spot and they should be

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<sup>48</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 24 August 1767, IHC p. 591.

<sup>49</sup> White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. pp. 347-349.

<sup>50</sup> Gage to Bull, 16 November 1764, Gage Papers WLCL.

assured that if any of their people dare to be Guilty of such horrid and Barbarous Murders for the future that the Soldiers will be no longer restrained from taking their own immediate satisfaction."<sup>51</sup> Gage believed that Native Americans would excuse revenge killings made in the heat of the moment, but not those done in cold blood.<sup>52</sup>

Though Gage's methods were brutal, he stopped short of the lengths that some of his subordinates considered necessary. British officers would occasionally have preferred to use more brutal and bloody methods in their dealings with Native Americans, but Gage was determined to restrain them in order to retain peaceable relations. For many years the Potawatomis had caused severe trouble for the garrisons at Niagara and Detroit, often killing soldiers who ventured too far from the fort. Eventually, Captain Campbell decided that it was time for drastic action. He ordered all trade with the nation to be stopped until the murderers were delivered up to him. When a party of Potawatomis travelled to the Fort with a Panne slave to give to Campbell in atonement for their crimes, Campbell ordered that they should be ambushed. The Indians discovered the ruse before the ambush could take place, and only three were captured. Of the three, one was an Indian woman, and she was subsequently released. Campbell then proposed attacking the Potawatomi village, burning it to the ground and killing everyone they could find, "whether men, women or children".<sup>53</sup> In reply, Gage denied Campbell his attack on the village, only allowing him to make a plan of attack in case it was ever needed.<sup>54</sup> An attack on the village would

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<sup>51</sup> Gage to Turnbull, 13 July 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>52</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 12 August 1769, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 233-234.

<sup>53</sup> Campbell to Gage, 10 April 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>54</sup> Gage to Campbell, 15 June 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

likely have resulted in war with the Potawatomi tribe, which could easily have spread. Whatever he may have felt personally about the case, Gage knew that this could not be allowed to happen. As always, Gage's priority was not justice, or revenge, but ensuring that there was not another Indian war.

This example of leniency was characteristic of Gage, who consistently acted to veto the more brutal, violent, and most importantly inflammatory, schemes proposed by his men. In 1768, after they had been employed by a Captain Forbes, some white hunters were murdered. Forbes wished to seize the Native Americans who came to atone for the crime. Again Gage demurred, fearing that such actions would be "a Breach of public Faith", though he was prepared to bow to Johnson if he disagreed.<sup>55</sup> Again, the most important thing for Gage was retaining the trust of the Native Americans. This meant that any retaliation had to be done immediately after the crime, as Native Americans would, in Gage's view, find this excusable.

Gage's orders to allow immediate retaliation did not have the deterrent effect that he had hoped for, and Native American attacks continued. In response, the commander-in-chief looked for other methods of punishment and deterrence. After the frequent murders of British traders by certain tribes became too much to bear, Gage wished to use what he termed "more civilized Nations" like the Iroquois to chastise them. Gage blamed French and Canadian traders for stirring up the Indians to commit these murders, and in response he was using an old French technique to end

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<sup>55</sup> Gage to Johnson, 10 October 1768, WJP Vol. 6 pp. 433-434.

the trouble. Gage left Sir William Johnson and the Indian Department to put this plan into action.<sup>56</sup> When eventually put into effect, though, the results of the scheme were mixed. Shortly after the Six Nations killed six or seven Potawatomis in 1773 and then sent a message threatening the Potawatomi with war, the Potawatomi still murdered a trader and his servant. The commander at Detroit was ordered to get satisfaction for the affair, which Gage again blamed on a French trader residing at the Indians' village.<sup>57</sup>

The methods favoured by Gage were unpopular with some of his officers. After the imprisonment of four Seneca at Niagara for the shooting of a soldier, traders heard one officer remark "that he wondered how Capt Brown Could Confine them, for it was not much to Kill an Englishmen", and that had Johnson been present he would have released the Indians and given them presents.<sup>58</sup> This feeling that the army was pandering to Indians may have been in the minds of many officers, but they were wrong if they thought it was Johnson alone who was controlling current policy. Gage had made it clear that he was firmly behind the idea of dealing leniently with Indians if it would prevent war; if the commander-in-chief was behind it, then all his subordinates had better be as well. Indeed, it is probably the knowledge that Gage strongly disagreed with sentiments such as those expressed above that prevented them from being aired in official army correspondence. If they were aired, it would be in conversation, of which almost no record exists, or in private letters, of which few survive.

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<sup>56</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 15 May 1768, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 174-175.

<sup>57</sup> Gage to Haldimand, 3 June 1773, Gage, Thomas in: Library of Congress, British Museum, Additional MS. 21665, f. 141-142. From Miami Collection.

<sup>58</sup> Wade & Keiuser to Johnson, 24 November 1770, WJP Vol. 7 pp. 1018-1020.

One of the themes that came to characterise Gage's writing was that while Indians would rarely act unless provoked, the opposite was true of the backcountry folk. His view was that though "We must always expect Quarrels between the Indians and the back inhabitants ... in general we shall find the latter in fault."<sup>59</sup> Struggling to control the lawless behaviour of settlers in the west had clearly soured Gage's opinion of them. Rather than hatred or indifference of Native Americans dictating the army's actions, it would seem that indifference to the fate of whites in the west characterised Gage's policy.

Even when Gage's subordinates were prepared to blame Native Americans for their misfortunes, the commander-in-chief was not quick to take the bait. The schooner *Victory* had been laid up for some time near Niagara, and in the winter of 1766-67 it was heavily damaged in a fire. The commander at Niagara responded by closely questioning many of the Indians who had come to the fort.<sup>60</sup> When he was told of this, Gage informed the commander that it was as likely to have been careless soldiers as malicious Indians who had burnt the boat and that, more importantly, had the vessel been guarded properly, the affair would never have happened.<sup>61</sup>

The army was not in the west to dispense justice, but to keep the peace. This meant the army only got involved with crimes that could impact on relations between the Crown and Native Americans. When

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<sup>59</sup> Gage to Fraser, 30 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>60</sup> Brown to Gage, 4 December 1766, Gage Papers WLCL. Indeed the burning of the boat, combined with the generally high level of tension between Indians and the army at the time seemed to have made Brown quite paranoid about the intentions of Native Americans. He insisted on every Native American who visited the fort being reported to him, and interviewed quite a number of them, much to the consternation of the post's commissar. See Brown and Roberts to Gage, Dec-Jan 1766-1767 Niagara, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>61</sup> Gage to Brown, 2 February 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.



colonial settlers restricted the victims of their crimes to other colonists the army did not get involved, for such crimes did not affect the chances of maintaining peace on the frontier. Crimes by Native Americans against Native Americans were also usually ignored, for the same reason. In 1772 an Indian appealed to the commander of Fort Pitt to grant him justice, as the murderer of his father, another Native American, was within the fort. The commander refused to interfere, so the Indian took his own satisfaction and the army took no action.<sup>62</sup> The overriding concern whenever the army acted in the west while Gage was in charge was to keep the peace, and all actions were taken with a view as to whether they would affect relations between the Crown and Native Americans.

The violence in the west was closely connected to another issue that threatened to tear apart Gage's plans for a peaceful frontier. Illegal settlements, made up of squatters living on Native American land to which they had no claim or right, were a huge cause of friction between Crown officials and Native Americans.

These squatters moved to the frontier as it was the only place they could afford to live. Most of them simply could not afford to purchase land legally, or pay the taxes that would have ensued had they done so. This situation was made much worse by land speculators who bought huge parcels of land as investments. These speculators would often sit on their purchases for years at a time, hoping for prices to increase, and as a result their activities played a major role in raising land prices throughout the Colonies. So endemic was squatting that when a land owner cleared one

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<sup>62</sup> p. 69 David McClure *"Diary of David McClure Doctor of Divinity 1748-1820"* with notes by Franklin B. Dexter (New York, 1899).

family from his land he would inevitably find the land resettled almost immediately. Squatting was so common that a 1772 survey found that in Northumberland County, on the north eastern Pennsylvanian frontier, only two fifths of households owned the land they were on.<sup>63</sup>

Most of the squatters were farmers, though a few were criminals on the run from the law for various crimes. Both farmers and fugitives managed to cause their own share of trouble on the frontier. The fugitives did not abandon their criminal ways when they moved east, and were happy to murder and rob both settlers and Native Americans. The farmers angered Native Americans by clearing the land and driving away game, which destroyed hunting grounds. Many of these settlers were Scots-Irish, who even before the Seven Years' War had little love for Native Americans. These Presbyterian settlers regarded Native Americans as heathens who had forfeited any claims to the land by leaving it "idle". After the frontier raids of the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's War many frontier settlers felt Native Americans had forfeited the right to existence.<sup>64</sup>

The illegal settlements located at Redstone Creek in Pennsylvania and on the Cheat River caused more trouble for the British Army than any other squatter towns.<sup>65</sup> One officer estimated that by 1766 there were around 500 families living in the region, all located directly on the route that

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<sup>63</sup> Allan Kulikoff, *From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers* (Chapel Hill, N.C. ; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). pp. 159-160

<sup>64</sup> Richard Middleton, *Colonial America: A History, 1565-1776*, 3rd ed. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). p. 376

<sup>65</sup> There were other such settlements, and the army normally dealt with them in a similar way, doing whatever it could to move the settlers on. When the Cayugas and Oneidas complained to Johnson of settlers moving into abandoned army posts on their land, Johnson was quick to inform Gage. (Johnson to Gage, 27 June 1766, WJP). The commander-in-chief replied that if the people's presence offended the Indians then they should be ordered to remove. (Gage to Johnson, 7 July 1766 Vol. 12 p. 133-135).

the northern Indians took when going to war with the Cherokee.<sup>66</sup> None of them were there legally, and predictably there was a great deal of friction between these communities and the Native Americans with whom they came into contact.<sup>67</sup>

The army reacted to the problem swiftly, but was limited in what it could do. Without the approval of a civil authority, the army could not move directly against civilians.<sup>68</sup> Redstone Creek and the Cheat River were claimed by both Pennsylvania and Virginia, so Gage wrote to the governors of both colonies informing them of the problem, and offered Francis Fauquier, the Governor of Virginia, the use of troops to remove the squatters.<sup>69</sup> Gage was worried that if there was a skirmish at Redstone and blood was shed, there would be a huge outcry from the colonies, unless the army had been acting under civil instruction.<sup>70</sup>

Gage was not the only officer in the army who took this matter seriously. Lieutenant Colonel Wilkins, stationed near Philadelphia, offered the services of his troops to augment those stationed at Fort Pitt to help remove the settlers from the Indians' lands. Furthermore, he also offered to remain at Fort Pitt with the troops to prevent any future incursions.<sup>71</sup> Sadly, the governors were much less eager to respond to the crisis. Governor

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<sup>66</sup> Gordon to Gage, 4 June 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>67</sup> Gordon to Gage, 15 June 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>68</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 7 July 1770, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 262-263. In reference to a different occasion when the military had been authorised to act against civilians, Shelburne had stated, "It is to be hoped that the Rights of the Parties were very well ascertained before the Military Power was called in to the aid of the Civil, for few Exigencies can justify such a kind of decision." Shelburne to Gage, 11 December 1766, Illinois Collection Vol. 2 p. 455. The army's failure to remove the settlers is usually blamed on a lack of manpower, McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 244; though this was a factor, the army's lack of authority was far more important in this case.

<sup>69</sup> Gage to Faruquier, 2 July 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>70</sup> Gage to Johnson, 22 June 1766, WJP, Vol. 12 pp. 111-112.

<sup>71</sup> Wilkins to Gage, 8 January 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

Fauquier of Virginia issued three proclamations informing the settlers that they would not be protected from an Indian attack, but took no other action to remove them.<sup>72</sup> The Governor of Pennsylvania also issued a series of proclamations urging those living there illegally to leave, but, like Virginia, did nothing to enforce them. Yet at any time either governor could have requested military assistance from the army to move the squatters off the land. Gage, not content with just raising the issue but actually wishing to see it resolved, ordered Captain Murray of Fort Pitt to keep a watch on the squatters, and to inform him whether or not they obeyed the proclamations.<sup>73</sup>

The proclamations from Virginia and Pennsylvania, despite threatening those who remained on Indian land with death, had little effect on the settlers.<sup>74</sup> If the law would not budge them, then the army hoped the threat of Indian attacks might. After a settler on the Cheat River murdered a Delaware hunter the commander of Fort Pitt, William Murray, sent the settlers an ultimatum to retire or expect Indian reprisals, and if they were attacked to expect no help from the garrison.<sup>75</sup> According to Murray his message had the desired result, and he believed that many of the settlers had left the area.<sup>76</sup> Gage approved of Murray's actions but knew that the settlers would soon be back, if they had left at all. He ordered Murray to ensure that no one else settled in the vicinity of the fort, but was worried that "we must

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<sup>72</sup>Fauquier to Gage, 25 September 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>73</sup> Gage To Murray, 6 October 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>74</sup>Gage to Shelburne, 30 January 1768, p. 163, and Gage to Shelburne, 12 March 1768, pp. 164-163, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1.

<sup>75</sup> Murray to Gage, 27 Feb 1767, Gage to Johnson, 5 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>76</sup> Murray to Gage, 7 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

at last come to force of arms with the settlers at Redstone Creek & Cheat River.”<sup>77</sup>

The point of all these actions was to prove that Native Americans could trust the British to uphold their promises, which was necessary to maintain the delicate peace that followed Pontiac’s War. As Gage put it, “If we can remove the Settlers from their Encroachments, it will be a Manifestation of Our Earnest desire to do them [Native Americans] Justice.”<sup>78</sup> Of course, the efforts to remove squatters were a waste of time if local Indians remained unaware of them, and so Gage ordered, “It is necessary that some of the Indian Chiefs should be acquainted [sic] with your transactions, and success if you meet with any in this business; That they may be thoroughly Persuaded of our earnest desire to do them Justice.”<sup>79</sup>

Gage was desperate to get rid of such illegal settlements, for they were a constant source of trouble. In a typical incident some young Seneca warriors stole horses from an illegal settlement, and in retaliation the settlers threatened to march on the Seneca village. Fearing the results of such an action, Murray ordered the Seneca to return the horses to him so he could pass them on to the settlers. Gage approved of these actions, but ordered Murray to tell both the Seneca and settlers that “if these abandoned settlers presume to occasion any other uneasiness, or dare to put their threats into Execution, that I will interfere and Order Troops to March to protect them from any insults they may offer, and you will likewise, please to make these

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<sup>77</sup> Gage to Murray, 13 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>78</sup> Gage to Johnson, 16 January 1768, from WJP Vol. 12 pp. 414-416.

<sup>79</sup> Gage to Murray, 5 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL. The commander-in-chief was also aware that propaganda could be used to serve his ends when dealing with squatters. He instructed Murray to tell those he found living on Indian land, “you expect daily orders to march against them to remove them by force if they will not comply with the King’s Proclamation”, even though Gage was not authorised to issue such orders.

my intentions know to the Inhabitants[sic]."<sup>80</sup> Gage hoped that this news would reduce the risk of any further confrontations, and it may have worked as the settlers never marched on the village. This leaves open the question of whether Gage would have ordered the troops to march, or whether his announcement was just a bluff. Whether or not the order was a bluff, the general had made it clear that in disputes between squatters and Native Americans he was firmly on the side of the Native Americans.

Later, in 1767, after the garrison at Fort Pitt was reinforced, another effort was made to remove the settlers from Redstone Creek. The army, accompanied by Indians of the Six Nations, travelled to the squatters' village and told the settlers to leave, warning them that if they remained it would be very difficult to prevent the young men of the Indian nations attacking them. The soldiers then burned those houses they could find.<sup>81</sup> Gage was aware that many of the settlers might return, but believed that by bringing Native Americans with the army to Redstone it would at least provide headmen with proof of the army's good intentions. Consequently, even though the army was incapable of forcing the settlers away, the headmen would be aware that "it is at least the Inclination of the King and His Servants to be at Peace with them and do them all the justice in Our Power". This would then make it easier to confine the Native Americans' attacks to the Virginia frontier and the illegal settlements on its borders, should it come to war.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gage To Murray, 8 June 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>81</sup> Gage to Murray, 12 June 1767, for the orders to go to Redstone; Murray to Gage, 24 June 1767, for an account of what happened there. Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>82</sup> Gage to Johnson, 28 June 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

Gage's reaction to other squatter settlements further illustrates the central importance of maintaining a good relationship with Native Americans. In 1767, when he was informed of some people who had illegally settled close to Fort Stanwix, Gage did not order their immediate dispersal. Instead, he informed Johnson that only if they "do not behave properly or give jealousy to the Indians by an Imprudent Conduct they must be drove away."<sup>83</sup> The legal status of the settlement was of only secondary importance to Gage; the community's fate would be decided by how the area's Native Americans reacted to it. The general aim was not to uphold the law in the west in the absence of colonial authority, but to build trust with Native Americans by removing those things that antagonised them. If a settlement was not a problem for local Native Americans, then it was not a problem for Gage.

As his irritation with the illegal settlers continued, Gage also grew increasingly weary of the governors' inaction. After Stuart had written to Gage, asking him to ensure that the governors obeyed the Proclamation of 1763, Gage replied:

"I should readily comply with your request in recommending to the respective governors within your District to comply with the King's Proclamation of 7th of October 1763 could it answer any purpose. If the Proclamation itself does not carry sufficient weight to enforce an obedience thereto from His Majesty's Servants

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<sup>83</sup> Gage to Johnson, 7 September 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

and the Circular Letters sent therewith by the Kings  
ministers to require a due observance to the Contents of said  
Proclamation: neither your Applications or my  
Recommendations can avail much.”<sup>84</sup>

When Fauquier, the Governor of Virginia, eventually replied to Gage’s letter, it was only to claim that he was powerless. “I entirely agree with your excellency that nothing but a military force will remove them [the settlers]: and in this I can give you no assistance whatever, being fully convinced that the Militia which is the only force I have in my hands, would stand by these unlawful settlers, rather than act against them.”<sup>85</sup> While the governor was probably correct in his assessment of the loyalty of the militia, his refusal even to ask Gage if he could help in the matter would seem to imply that the governor was not unaware that he could call upon the army for assistance, and that he chose not to do so for reasons he left unstated. Most probably, Fauquier feared the repercussions from his assembly if he used troops to remove people from Indian land.<sup>86</sup> This was the view taken by Gage in a letter to Johnson: “I must believe that the governors would do all in their power [to stop encroachments on Indian land], but that they are not properly supported by the other branches of their Legislature. And it is not improbable I might say very suspicious that some

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<sup>84</sup> Gage to Stuart, 13 August 1767, Gage Papers WLCL. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 106. This does not match Sosin’s description of Gage as confident that governors and magistrates would punish settlers.

<sup>85</sup> Fauquier to Gage, 25 September 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>86</sup> Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years’ War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. p. 237. Fauquier was aware that using force to remove settlers would be deeply unpopular throughout Virginia.



men of interest abet these encroachments.”<sup>87</sup> Johnson agreed that assemblies would be reluctant to call for troops, although in his letters to Gage he put the blame on the traditional British fear of a standing army.<sup>88</sup>

Gage outlined why he was unwilling to use the regular army with colonial assent in a letter to Shelburne: “There would have been no Hesitation in ordering a Body of Troops to force these People off the Lands”,<sup>89</sup> were the area in question indubitably outside colonial authority. The problem was that Redstone and the Cheat River were disputed between Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Virginians no doubt feared that if they did not protest against any exertion of military authority in these lands, such silence might be taken to signify that they had given up any claim to the area. So Gage’s hands were tied. No colony was prepared to authorise action, but both Pennsylvania and Virginia claimed jurisdiction, and Gage was not prepared to act unilaterally.<sup>90</sup>

Competing colonial claims were not the end of the complications with which Gage had to deal in the Redstone affair. It was not simply that Native Americans wanted the settlement removed and the British Army failed to oblige them. In reality, some Native Americans desired that some settlers might remain there so they could trade with them for corn. Indeed, one of Captain Murray’s first attempts to remove the settlers from Redstone was prevented by Native Americans.<sup>91</sup> This was not the last time that the

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<sup>87</sup> Gage to Johnson, 9 Nov 1767, Gage Papers WLCL. Bickham, *Savages within the Empire: Representations of American Indians in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. p. 131. A large amount of the blame for the frontier trouble was laid at the door of the colonial assemblies in both America and London.

<sup>88</sup> Johnson to Gage, 4 July 1766 WJP Vol. 12 pp. 139-142.

<sup>89</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 13 June 1767, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 142-143.

<sup>90</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 22 January 1768, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 155-158.

<sup>91</sup> Clarkson’s Diary 6 August 1766 - April 1767, IHC Vol. 2 pp. 349 -355.

army found it difficult to secure Native American assistance. Murray, in another of his many attempts to remove the settlers, applied to the Indians for representatives to accompany him, but the Shawnee and Delaware refused, claiming that the land belonged to the Seneca and Mingo.<sup>92</sup>

Native American reaction was similar when Pennsylvania tried to solve the problem in 1768 by passing a resolution ordering settlers to remove from Indian lands by July of that year or face execution.<sup>93</sup> When a group headed by Reverend John Steel, sent by Pennsylvania to order settlers to remove from Indian lands, met with those living at Redstone, the inhabitants of Redstone claimed that “the Indians were very peaceable, and seemed sorry that they were to be removed, and said they apprehended the English intended to make war upon the Indians as they were moving off their people from their neighbourhood”. Hearing that some Mingo would be in the area, Steel asked them to attend a conference that he had called with the inhabitants of Redstone. The Mingo agreed, and when they arrived they told the people of Redstone that there was soon to be a conference, and after that was concluded then they would tell them what to do. This rather reduced the impact of Steel’s order for the settlers to leave or face dire consequences. The inhabitants took the speech to mean that the Indians were happy for them to remain there, and so most resolved not to move at least till after the conference. As Steel put it, “The Indians coming to Redstone and delivering their speeches, greatly obstructed our design.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Gage to Johnson, 4 October 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>93</sup> Daniel W. Kauffman, *Early History of Western Pennsylvania, and of the West, and of Western Expeditions and Campaigns* (Pittsburg, Pa; D. W. Kauffman, 1846). p. 193.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* p. 316 Journal of Rev. John Steel, 1768.

At the promised conference the subject of the settlement at Redstone was once again raised, and this time the Native Americans there, mostly Six Nations, urged the British to remove the villages. George Croghan, presiding at the conference, tried to find Indians to assist in the removal of the squatters, but failed. Kyushu, a Seneca explained why:

“...all our young men are very unwilling to carry a message from us to the white people ordering them to remove from our lands. They say, they would not choose to incur the ill will of these people, for if they should now be removed, they will hereafter return to their settlements, when the English have purchased the country from us, and we shall be very unhappy if, by our conduct towards them at the time, we should give them reason to dislike us, and treat us in an unkind manner, when they again become their neighbours.”<sup>95</sup>

The commander-in-chief had appealed to John Penn, Governor of Pennsylvania, and Francis Fauquier, Governor of Virginia, many times for permission to use troops against those squatting on Indian land. The Pennsylvanian Governor declined his offer and Fauquier simply ignored it. Gage knew that he could not allow soldiers to move against civilians without a request from a governor or a magistrate as such an action would produce a huge outcry in the Colonies, and could result in soldiers being

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p.202 Croghan's Journal, May 2 1768.

placed on trial or sued. He complained to the government about these settlements, but nothing was done, and he was never given the necessary power to tackle the problem.<sup>96</sup>

Frustrated, Gage tried to make the best of a worsening situation. If the presence of settlers on their land was going to result in Native American attacks, then the army would do all it could to ensure that the reprisals fell only upon the guilty. If a general war could be avoided by sacrificing the lives of the 'low born rabble' in the backcountry, it seemed to many officers in the army a fair price to pay. After a group of Seneca Indians returned some horses that they had stolen from the inhabitants of Redstone, they were told by an officer that the people living there were "not part of us".<sup>97</sup> This line was approved by Gage, who wrote to tell Murray that "if these people [the settlers] thro' their obstinacy will bring mischief upon their own heads, there is no one will greatly pity them, when they come to suffer for it".<sup>98</sup>

By 1767 Gage knew that he was battling not just the squatters on Native American land but powerful groups in the colonies as well. Gage told Johnson that he despaired of Native Americans getting satisfaction, for

"I don't find the provincial Legislature very ready to assist in putting an effectual stop to insults or encroachments. I judge only from the answers I get for I

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<sup>96</sup>Gage wrote to Fauquier, the Governor of Virginia, numerous times to inform him of the problem of settlers at Redstone, and to offer the use of troops to remove them. Fauquier simply ignored all the offers. See Gage to Fauquier, June 2 1766, Gage to Fauquier, 19 April 1767, Gage Papers WLCL, Gage to Johnson, 22 June 1766, WJP, Gage to the Lords of Trade, 22 January 1768, C.O. 5/85.

<sup>97</sup> Murray to Gage, 16 May 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>98</sup> Gage to Murray, 21 July 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

must believe that the governors would do all in their power, but that they are not properly supported by the other branches of their Legislature. And it is not improbable I might say very suspicious that some men of interest abet these encroachments.”<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, Gage declared that if “after taking all the pains we can, if the Indians do break out, and should confine their hostilities to those spots [encroachments onto their lands] only, tho the killing of People must be shocking to Humanity. I could not answer giving any assistance, or to begin any Hostilities against the Indians till the whole affair should be laid before the King, and I should receive His Majesty's Orders thereupon” . The commander-in-chief was saying that he would not go to war to defend the Colonies from Native American attack; he would only go to war on the orders of the king.<sup>100</sup>

Gage was not the only imperial servant prepared to sacrifice those who had crossed boundary lines if it would preserve the peace. In 1765 Stuart promised the Creeks that “if any white people settles beyond them [the boundary markers] we will never enquire how they came to be killed.”<sup>101</sup> What mattered to these servants of empire was above all avoiding another Indian war, and this end, they felt, justified the sacrifice of some troublesome backcountry folk.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup>Gage to Johnson, 9 November 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>100</sup>Gage to Johnson, 9 November 1767, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>101</sup>Creek Congress at Pensacola, May 1765, Gage Papers WLCL.

<sup>102</sup>Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. p. 5. Colley claims that “As time went on Britons defined themselves against those colonial people they conquered.” In the North American colonies class, as much as race or ethnicity was the defining factor of identity.

Gage's final strategy for keeping the empire out of any new Indian wars was simply to step aside and let those tribes who felt aggrieved vent their rage in attacks on frontier settlements. If war was to break out again, Gage hoped to confine it to the one or two colonies that he believed were most responsible for angering the Native Americans. The colony most often mentioned in such a context was Virginia.<sup>103</sup> It would not take long for Virginia to put Gage's plan to the test.

It proved beyond the army's capabilities to remove the illegal settlements which had already been established. The army failed in this task because, as with suppressing frontier violence, the army was given responsibility for a problem but not the authority to resolve it. The army could not move against settlers without the approval from colonial officials, and this proved impossible to obtain. It has long been established that the army lacked teeth as a restraining force. In the past, this has been ascribed to indifference, at best, to the plight of Native Americans. Clearly this was not true. Gage was prepared to gainsay even his own officers and Indian agents if he thought their actions would anger Native Americans. In the end he was reduced to hoping that Native Americans' attacks would remove the problem of illegal settlements.

The army's frustration in bringing justice to the frontier highlights the huge significance that the correct (or in this case incorrect) framing of legislation can have on whether it achieves its intended goal. The Mutiny

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Officers defined their identity against those of the lower class settlers moving to the frontier, despite them sharing a common European heritage. On p. 119 Colley highlights the transformation of Scotland into "useful, loyal and British . . . entitled as any other part of the island to have civilian law upheld against arbitrary attack". British officers would never have seen Native Americans as loyal or British, but they were useful, and Gage at least felt they were entitled to the protection of the law.

<sup>103</sup>Gage to Johnson, 28 June 1767, Gage to Phillips, 26 April 1766, Gage Papers WLCL.

Act, which prohibited the army from doing anything to criminals other than transporting them back to the Colonies, was not intended to give settlers free rein to victimise Native Americans on the frontier, but this is what it ended up doing. It did not matter that the government wanted peace on the frontier; by preventing the army or the Indian Department from effectively punishing those who annoyed Native Americans the Mutiny Act actually moved the frontier closer to war, the opposite of its stated goal.

Even operating under the government's tight restrictions the army clearly achieved something in its time on the frontier, despite its lack of success in providing justice for Native Americans. Its most important function may have been providing an alternative to more personal revenge. Chiefs and sachems could not maintain support in their communities if they appeared to be allowing the British literally to get away with murder. Sachems only operated with the consent of their community, and if their people felt that the British could not be trusted, it would not matter what the sachems wanted; they would not be allowed to do business with the British. By taking their cases to Indian agents and army officers, it allowed them to take action, and if that action failed, the blame could be shifted onto the British.

That Native American leaders continued to bring their complaints about those who had wronged them to British officers suggests that some officers performed their role of cultural mediators competently. It is hard to imagine that Amerindians would have continued to do so had British officers met their concerns with the dismissive and hateful attitude toward Native Americans that they are traditionally depicted as having. Indeed, the

lengths to which some officers went in order to placate Native Americans, whether it was repeatedly visiting squatter communities to order them to move or hunting for elusive murder witnesses in the backcountry, proves that there were officers who took such matters seriously. Of course they did this because they wished to avoid another war, but the actions of British officers clearly indicated that there were those for whom a desire for domination was not the overwhelming motivation.

The issue of land during the years immediately before the War of Independence provides a clear illustration of just how far Crown and Colonies were diverging. The British Government no longer wished for uncontrolled expansion, regarding it as undesirable, possibly unprofitable and dangerous. For the Americans there could never be enough land, both for individuals and colonies. This conflict was played out in the backcountry, where the agents of the Crown (the army and the Indian Department) found it impossible to secure the assistance of the Colonies. Clearly Crown and Colonies were heading for a confrontation, but before then Gage would have to face the situation he feared most: a new war between Virginia and Native Americans on the frontier.



## Chapter Eight

### The Final Act

Whether or not the army's efforts to police the frontier were successful, they still cost the government a great deal of money. The rejection of the Stamp Act by the Colonies pushed the government into a new and hurried search for revenue. When import duties failed, the British Government had no choice but to reduce its expenditure in the Colonies. Their chosen method was to hand control of the frontier and the fur trade to the Colonies, while abandoning the majority of the army's backcountry posts. The government hoped that by withdrawing the army, the Colonies would be awakened to the threat posed by Native American anger and so take the necessary steps to neutralise it. While this may seem a sudden shift in policy it was in fact following in the footsteps of the army, for Gage had already decided that if the Colonies could not control their settlers, then they should not be sheltered from any resulting violence. Sadly, this plan was a failure; the Colonies refused to take responsibility for the frontier or the fur trade, with the end result being Dunmore's War.

Disgusted by the Colonies' inability to preserve peace on the frontier and terrified by the prospect of a general Indian war, the government decided once again to take control of the frontier themselves. The tool that they used to do this was the Quebec Act. The Quebec Act would place the north-eastern frontier under the control of the province of Quebec, which had no elected assembly and a Crown-appointed governor, and so give the British Government much more direct control of the region. These changes

not only highlight the shifting priorities of the British Empire away from Protestant colonists, but also underline the role played by the army in the formation of policy. Many of the measures incorporated in the Quebec Act had been previously suggested by Gage, and he was in England while the Act was being drawn up. An army that had been sent to the Colonies to fight the French and their Native American allies had ended up promoting laws to protect them.

After the repeal of the Stamp Act, the government was again forced to begin the search for a replacement source of revenue to cover its colonial expenses.<sup>1</sup> Still unwilling to increase their own share of the tax burden, British Parliamentarians decided to make another attempt to tax the Colonies, a task that fell to Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townsend. In June 1767 he introduced a number of duties on items imported into America, most famously tea, with the express intent of raising money for the army and civil administration in America. The British Government now conceded that colonial Americans were unwilling to pay internal taxes imposed by Parliament, but hoped that they would acquiesce to new import duties. Colonists already paid duties on some goods without protest, which the government took as proof that the Colonies would not object to the imposition of further duties. This theory was soon proved to lack any basis in reality. Many colonists were furious that the British were once again seeking to impose new taxes. The colonists took some time to get organised, but once they did they were quickly able to make their disgust for the new duties felt on both sides of the Atlantic. Soldiers were sent to

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<sup>1</sup> Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 96.

Boston in the hope that their presence would maintain order, but in reality this only provoked more trouble. With the colonists unwilling to pay and the government as yet unwilling to force them, the British had little room for manoeuvre, and save for the duty on tea the levies were withdrawn in April 1770.<sup>2</sup>

With the finances of the empire in turmoil, the need for economy once again became the main driving force of policy. In April 1768 the government informed Gage that a new plan for Indian affairs had been approved: the troops would be withdrawn from most of the frontier posts and the Colonies would be expected to police the fur trade. The primary motivation for these changes was financial; the British were spending thousands of pounds on the frontier, and this expenditure was no longer sustainable. The Colonies' rejection of British taxation forced the government to cut its costs drastically in the Colonies. By withdrawing from the forts vast sums would be saved, as the cost of carrying food and other supplies to the distant and inaccessible posts was enormous. By ending the need for Crown commissaries to oversee the fur trade, the government would make saving not only on their wages but also on the hugely expensive Indian gifts that the commissaries purchased to distribute. This, Hillsborough hoped, would "relieve this Kingdom from the enormous expense she at present groans under".<sup>3</sup>

Withdrawal from the frontier also served another purpose. By removing troops from the frontier Gage was able to concentrate them near

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<sup>2</sup> Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empire : Britain, India, and America C.1750-1783*. pp. 307-317.

<sup>3</sup>Hillsborough to Johnson, 12 March 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 36, and Hillsborough to Johnson, 12 October 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 101.

the coast where they could respond to potential civil unrest. The colonial response to the British Government's ever more desperate attempts to tax the colonies was strident, and protest was often accompanied by violence. In response to the Stamp Act in 1765 there had been riots and protest from New England to South Carolina. Royal officials had been the subject of attacks and intimidation in order to prevent them putting the act into effect. In June 1768 Hillsborough ordered troops and warships to Boston to aid customs officials in their attempts to enforce the Townsend Duties. This deployment of troops amongst an angry and resentful population inevitably ended in violence, with the event that would subsequently become known as the Boston Massacre. On March 5 1770, after heavy provocation, a group of soldiers opened fire on an unarmed mob, resulting in a total of five deaths. Sharing a feeling that the coastal towns were in danger of erupting into violence almost without warning, both Gage and the government agreed that moving troops out of scattered frontier posts and closer to the seaboard represented a sensible precaution.<sup>4</sup>

The British attempt to restrict the fur trade to British forts had been undertaken to allow commissaries to oversee the trade, but it was an attempt that had proved futile. Native Americans resented being made to travel many hundreds of miles in order to barter their skins, and so did all they could to persuade traders to relocate to their villages, with many traders only too happy to oblige. Those traders prepared to flout the law and relocate had a massive advantage in acquiring the skins over those few who remained at the posts under the scrutiny of the commissaries. Even when

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<sup>4</sup> Barker and Farmer, *Redcoats: The British Soldier in America*. pp. 122-123 and Shy, John, "The American Colonies in War and Revolution 1748-1791" in Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire. Vol. 2, the Eighteenth Century*. pp. 312-313.

traders did remain at the posts, it was impossible to make them act according to the law. The authority and jurisdiction of the Indian Department and army were too weak and ill-defined, as Gage had realised, and as a result, whenever British officers or Indian agents tried to take traders to task for cheating Native Americans, they faced legal challenges in colonial courts. Frustrated by this, Gage had informed the Board of Trade that “That they [the traders] must be restrained by law, and a judicial Power Invested in the Officers Commanding at the Posts, to See such Law put in force. And without this, Regulations may be made, but they will never be observed.”<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of 1768 Gage informed London that “The framing new Laws in the Provinces, and enforcing Obedience thereto, for the better Securing the Indians in their Persons and Properties, seems a most essential Point”.<sup>6</sup>

When they examined the fur trade, the Lords of Trade came to the same conclusion as Gage: that it was impossible for it to “be properly and effectually controlled by Officers having no other authority, that what they derive from your Majestys Commission”. Like the general, the Lords of Trade believed that regulations required the “authority of law to carry them into execution”.<sup>7</sup> It was hoped by the government that giving control of the fur trade to the Colonies would encourage them to regulate it properly themselves. The government and Gage also felt that there was more chance of traders obeying colonial laws than British ones. In his letter informing colonial governors of the new plan, Lord Hillsborough was at pains to

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<sup>5</sup> Gage to Johnson, 25 January 1767, Gage Papers WLCL and Gage to Shelburne, 11 November 1766, Gage Correspondence, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 22 January 1768, Gage Correspondence, p. 157.

<sup>7</sup> Representations of the Lords of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, 7 March 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 24.

remind them of the necessity of laws “for the control and punishment of those atrocious Frauds and Abuses which have been practiced by the Traders and have been one principal Cause of the disaffection of the Savages”.<sup>8</sup>

Hillsborough explained to Gage that though this disaffection had led to conflict in the past, it was only the presence of British Army posts on the frontier that had compelled the Crown to become involved in these conflicts. Therefore, “entrusting the Management of the Trade with Indians to the Colonies ... Depend[s] in great Measure upon a reduction of such Posts in the interior Country, as are, by their Situation, exposed to the Resentment of the Savages.” To withdraw the army from the frontier would “diminish the Necessity of carrying on an Indian War at the Expence[sic] of the Kingdom”. As far as the government was concerned, if the Colonies brought about another conflict they would have to face the consequences alone. In order that expenses could be kept to a minimum and Britain’s new American Empire preserved, the government was prepared to sacrifice colonial ambitions and lives. For Hillsborough, if any future war against Native Americans resulted in “the temporary Abandonment of a few stragling Settlements upon the Frontiers”, it would be no great loss.<sup>9</sup>

As well as saving the British from the further expense of a future frontier war, it was hoped that the realisation that they could not rely on the redcoats to fight Amerindians would focus colonial attention on the

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<sup>8</sup>Hillsborough to the Governors in America, 15 April 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 55-56.

<sup>9</sup>Hillsborough to Gage, 15 April 1768, Gage to the Sec of State Vol. 2 p. 61-66. Evacuating some garrisons would also save a great deal of money on their upkeep and supply, and make forming troop concentrations easier, as Gage had argued. Hillsborough used the same arguments in a letter to William Johnson: Hillsborough to Johnson, 15 April 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 57.

importance of keeping Native Americans satisfied. To make sure that the message got through, Hillsborough warned the governors of the Colonies that under the new plan it was only by “giving that Satisfaction and content to Savages ... [that] the Colonies can hope to derive either immediate Profit or lasting Peace”.<sup>10</sup>

With the Colonies now in charge of the fur trade, there was no longer any need for the army to pay for forts to act as marketplaces where traders and Native Americans could meet under the watchful eye of the Indian Department. As a result, the cost of supporting the army in America went from a peak of £424, 609 in 1771 to £340, 457 by 1773.<sup>11</sup> Gage was instructed by the ministers to prepare a list of all unnecessary posts, which he was to submit to them for final approval before abandoning them. Previously Gage had only been allowed to abandon the smaller posts; now even the largest posts were to be dispensed with. Gage felt that forts Chartres and Pitt were good prospects for evacuation.<sup>12</sup> Fort Chartres was expensive to maintain, and Gage felt it did not bring much advantage to the British. The general held that goods from the country around Fort Chartres would always flow downstream towards New Orleans, which rendered the trade at Fort Chartres minimal. At the same time Fort Chartres was costly to

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<sup>10</sup>Representation of Lords of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, 7 March 1768, pp. 19-31 and Hillsborough to the Governors in America, 15 April 1768, p. 56 NYCD. Given the growing friction between the Colonies and Great Britain, the British government was very keen that the Colonies acted separately in this matter, as they were increasingly worried that any move toward **unity was** also a step close to independence; so when Hillsborough was informed that colonial commissioners would be meeting to discuss the Indian trade, he was aghast, and went so far as to describe such meetings as dangerous. Hillsborough to Colden, 14 April 1770, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 210-211, Hillsborough to the Governors in America, 15 April 1768, p. 56 NYCD Vol. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Peter D. G. Thomas, "The Cost of the British Army in North America, 1763-1775," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45, no. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 79. Sosin blames the withdrawal entirely on a shortage of money, which, though it was a factor, was not the only one; by this time Gage had managed to convince the government that the forts were not an effective tool for controlling the frontier.

provision and keep up, being 1500 miles from any supply depot and about to fall into the river as a result of erosion undermining the fort's foundations. Once Chartres was evacuated, Gage believed that Fort Pitt could be left too, as the general considered its only use was as a staging post for supplying the fort on the Mississippi.<sup>13</sup> Gage had told Johnson as far back as 1766 that were it not necessary for communication with the Illinois Country, then Fort Pitt would be abandoned.<sup>14</sup> The government accepted Gage's recommendations, but moved slowly, so it was not until the end of 1771 that Hillsborough finally gave Gage permission to abandon Fort Chartres and Fort Pitt.<sup>15</sup>

This new plan was a marked change in government policy: no longer were British troops at the disposal of colonial governors to pacify Native Americans as they had been in the Cherokee War and Pontiac's War. The Colonies would no longer be treated as brothers in arms by the British, but like unruly teenagers they would be given the responsibility they craved, on the understanding that they would have to clean up any mess they made. The British would no longer protect colonists from Amerindians, but simply try and limit the scale of any new wars. The rationale for this was mainly economic.

Yet this huge change in government policy was in some ways only catching up with what was already happening in reality. In response to

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<sup>13</sup>Gage to Hillsborough, 16 June 1768, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 175-179.

<sup>14</sup>Gage to Johnson, 23 July 1766, Gage Papers WLCL, J. W. Huston, "The British Evacuation of Fort Pitt, 1772", *The Western Pennsylvanian Historical Magazine*, October 1965 Volume 48 Number 4 pp. 317-331. On p. 321 the author alleges that Gage distrusted Edmonstone, the Commander at Fort Pitt when it was evacuated, because Edmonstone issued a report on the decayed condition on the fort when he arrived there. Given that this was normal behaviour for every officer arriving at a new post it seems an unlikely reason for Gage to have taken against him. If Gage distrusted Edmonstone, then the commander's poor treatment of Native Americans who visited the fort seems a more likely reason.

<sup>15</sup>Hillsborough to Gage, 4 December 1771, Gage Correspondence Vol. 2, pp.136-138.



repeated violations of the boundary line by Virginian settlers, Gage had already resolved not to come to their aid if they were attacked by Native Americans. With the new plan for the frontier, government policy and army practice were finally marching in step, with both agreed that it was best to sacrifice the frontier settlers if it meant avoiding a wider war.<sup>16</sup>

The 1768 plan so closely followed decisions taken by Gage because it was heavily influenced by ministers' correspondence with the commander-in-chief. Gage had already begun to remove troops from the frontier, but this was accelerated under the plan. He had decided that if the Colonies provoked another Indian war, they would be left to fight it on their own; this too was made government policy under the plan. He had argued that the Colonies should pass laws to regulate the fur trade better, and the government now hoped that the new plan would prompt them to do so. The transfer of power to the Colonies under the plan of 1768 clearly represents a break with the past, but it should not be allowed to overshadow the many elements of continuity linking government policy to army practice.

The plan of 1768 was not only a dramatic shift in government policy, it was also an almost complete failure. In 1770, two years after they had been given the task of managing the Indian trade, the Colonies had yet to take any action. Only the province of West Florida had set out regulations for trading with Indians.<sup>17</sup> James Stevenson, the commander at Detroit, noted that "The Provinces are very dilatory in arranging the Indian affairs, indeed is it absurd to think they will ever form a rational plan for that purpose, their interest is too divided, nor do they appear from their

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<sup>16</sup>See Chapter 7 pp. 16-17.

<sup>17</sup>Gage to Hillsborough, 8 September 1770, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 267-69.

proceedings to know anything about the matter”.<sup>18</sup> Gage, as ever motivated by a desire to avoid war, did what he could to push the Colonies into taking action, and in spring 1769 he wrote to those colonial governors whose colonies were involved in the fur trade, recommending that they supply “Commissarys, Interpreters and Smiths” to keep Native Americans content.<sup>19</sup> The Earl of Hillsborough also sent letters to all the governors in North America urging them to do something to regulate the Indian trade and the violence on the frontier.<sup>20</sup> When it became clear that the Colonies were not going to do anything, Gage ordered his men to pay for the blacksmiths and interpreters at the posts, so that their services could be retained without their wages showing up in the accounts of the Indian Department.<sup>21</sup>

The new unregulated fur trade was a disaster and caused a great deal of anger amongst Native Americans. Following the introduction of the 1768 plan, trade with Native Americans had greatly decreased. This was in part a result of the Colonies’ inaction, but the fur trade had also been hit by the non-importation agreements that some colonies had enacted in order to protest the attempts by the British Government to tax the Colonies, as the majority of the goods that Native Americans desired were imported from Britain.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the unregulated traders were disrupting Native Americans’ hunting by wandering the forests, disturbing the game and selling rum to Native Americans while they were hunting, who would then

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<sup>18</sup> Stevenson to Johnson, 18 December 1770, WJP, Vol. 7 p. 1040.

<sup>19</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 13 May 1769, Gage Correspondence, Vol. 1 pp. 224-225.

<sup>20</sup> Hillsborough to the Governors of America, 15 November 1770, NYCD, p. 284.

<sup>21</sup> Gage to Johnson, 11 December 1769, and Gage to Johnson, 24 September 1769, WJP Vol. 7 p. 298 and p. 188. Gage was not alone in thinking that keeping blacksmiths and interpreters at the posts was vital to maintaining friendly relations with Native Americans. Turnbull to Johnson, 30 September 1769, WJP Vol. 7 p. 196.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson to Hillsborough, 14 August 1770, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 224-225.

return empty-handed to their desperate families, having already drunkenly bartered away all their skins.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Native Americans were still frequently robbed and murdered by frontier inhabitants, causing yet more anger.<sup>24</sup>

Native Americans might have been able to overlook these affronts if the British had been able to lay to rest their fears for the future of their hunting grounds. The British hoped this could be achieved by the negotiation of a boundary line between Native American lands and the northern colonies.<sup>25</sup> This new boundary was not planned to extend the limits of the Colonies, but instead intended to clear up any ambiguities as to where exactly the line lay, which, it was hoped, would prevent squabbles with Native Americans. The new boundary was not an attempt by the government to grab more land; this was precisely what the British wanted to avoid and what it was afraid would happen if the Colonies were in charge of the negotiations. Rather, the boundary line was an attempt to settle Native American grievances, and prevent further land-grabs, by erecting a barrier that could only be changed by negotiation between the Crown and Native Americans. The Lords of Trade felt that the new boundary was “essentially necessary to the gaining Their [Native American] good will and affection, and to preserving the tranquility of the Colonies”.<sup>26</sup>

This new, precisely defined boundary would replace the vague line drawn up by the Proclamation of 1763, and it would not be policed by the British Army but by the Colonies. The plan of 1768 called for colonial

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<sup>23</sup>Claus to Johnson, 8 July 1772, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 971-972.

<sup>24</sup>Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians, July 1770. Johnson met representatives of the Six Nations, who complained NYCD Vol. 8 p. 239.

<sup>25</sup>Lords of Trade to Shelburne, 23 December 1767, NYCD Vol. 7 pp. 1004-1005.

<sup>26</sup>Representation of Lord, of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, 7 March 1768, p. 22.

legislatures to give Native American lands full legal protection.

Hillsborough instructed the Colonies that they were “to provide by the most effectual laws for preventing any settlements being made beyond the line that shall be agreed upon with the Indians”.<sup>27</sup> Once again, where Crown authority had failed, the Colonies were being given a chance to take responsibility. Now it would be their task to restrain the settlers who daily streamed west in ever greater numbers.

The task of negotiating this boundary line was given to the Indian Department. Despite the fact that they had lost control of the fur trade in the plan of 1768, the Indian Department was maintained as the medium through which the king and his Parliament (as opposed to the Colonies) would negotiate with Native Americans. Only the Indian Department, assumed by the British Government to be “independent of ... connection with any particular Colony”, could be trusted with the vital task of ensuring friendly relations and a lasting peace between empire and Native Americans.<sup>28</sup>

This assumption was tragically flawed, and would end up entirely subverting the government’s hope that the new boundary could facilitate good relations with Native Americans. The belief held by those in government that Sir William Johnson would put imperial goals first when negotiating with Native Americans turned out to be hopelessly naive. The new northern boundary line was decided at a meeting between William Johnson and the Six Nations, Shawnee, Delaware and Seneca at Fort

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<sup>27</sup> Hillsborough to the Governors in America, 15 April 1768, p. 56 NYCD Vol. 8. It is not right to dismiss ministers’ efforts as insincere simply because the Colonies refused to heed their calls. At the time the government had no reason to suppose that the Colonies would want to risk another Indian war by neglecting to extend legal protection to Native Americans.

<sup>28</sup> Representation of Lord of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs, 7 March 1768, pp. 19-31 and Hillsborough to the Governors in America, 15 April 1768, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 56.

Stanwix in October and November 1768. Before the meeting, Gage had instructed Johnson that “All Nations who have Pretensions should certainly be consulted, and treated with on this Occasion. Which may prevent disputes with any of the Nations in time to come.”<sup>29</sup> Johnson deliberately ignored this advice, for his goal was to secure as much land as possible for himself and his friends, and to do this he was going to abuse the tradition of the covenant chain. Rather than discuss the terms of the treaty with all the nations, Johnson let the Iroquois lead the deliberations, in accordance with the traditions of the covenant chain. By adhering to the outdated custom of the covenant chain, Johnson forced the western nations to let the Iroquois speak for them, even though the Western Nations were the ones occupying most of the land under discussion. By deliberately sidelining those Native Americans who occupied the lands, Johnson managed to delineate a new boundary line, which added large amounts of land to both Virginia and Pennsylvania. The treaty of Fort Stanwix also specified that some land be set aside for George Croghan and the “suffering traders”, as compensation for money that they claimed to have lost due to the recent wars on the frontier.<sup>30</sup>

In acquiring this land for the Colonies and Croghan, Johnson was directly disobeying his orders, which had been to settle a boundary line in order to satisfy Native American worries, not his cronies’ greed. Johnson

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<sup>29</sup>Gage to Johnson, 8 May 1768, WJP Vol. 12, pp. 493-94. In the letter Gage goes on to note that unless Native Americans have their “Person’s and Property” protected, it does not matter where the boundary is fixed.

<sup>30</sup> The conflict between Johnson’s public role and private **ambition** shaped the Stanwix Treaty. For Johnson the temptation of personal wealth was too much to resist, and “shaped” his actions. Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. pp.163-169. He had agreed to act on behalf of the suffering traders at the treaty. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. p. 250.

had used his influence and the traditions of the covenant chain to cheat the Shawnee and other tribes out of their land in order to help his friends in Virginia and Pennsylvania and his deputy Croghan, all of whom stood to make a lot of money from this newly-acquired land.<sup>31</sup> Not only had the Iroquois bargained away land occupied by other nations, but they received the vast majority of the gifts handed out at the conference. Rather than reducing tensions between Native Americans and the Colonies through the actions of Johnson, the Fort Stanwix Treaty increased them.<sup>32</sup>

When news reached London of what had happened, Conway and Hillsborough were furious. They felt Johnson had gone too far, obtained too much land, and should never have allowed land grants to private individuals such as Croghan to be part of the treaty. Johnson had been instructed that all the land ceded should go to the Crown. The government had not wanted settlers moved so far inland, where there would be no way to control them.<sup>33</sup> The government were aghast that despite there being no Cherokee at the treaty discussions, Johnson had moved west the boundary line already negotiated between John Stuart, the Indian Superintendent for

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<sup>31</sup> Fort Stanwix Treaty Conference, 6 November 1768 NYCD pp. 111-137. Stanwix did provide a glimmer of hope that the government's policy of separating themselves from the Colonies was working. At the end of the conference, when the line was settled, the Native American spokesperson requested "that whatever transaction might thereafter be necessary should be with the King or those by him directed to treat with them".

<sup>32</sup>Parmenter, Jon. W. "The Iroquois and the Native America Struggle for the Ohio Valley, 1754-1794" in Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. pp. 106-112. Parmenter argues that the Stanwix Treaty was in part Johnson's attempt to take revenge on the Mingo. The Mingo were refugees from the Iroquois who had moved south "after the harsh winters of 1740-41" looking for better hunting. The Mingo had been heavily involved in Pontiac's War, and by negotiating through the Iroquois Johnson was able to take their hunting land, while denying them anything except token presents.

<sup>33</sup> Franklin to Wharton, 29 May 1769, WJP Vol. 7 pp. 16-17.

the South, and the Cherokee.<sup>34</sup> Hillsborough ordered Johnson to renegotiate the line and return as much of the land as he could”.<sup>35</sup>

Johnson was not about to hand back the land and the money-making opportunity it represented, so rather than attempt to alter the treaty he launched a correspondence counter-attack, barraging ministers with letters in defence of his actions. Johnson argued that, by making the cession as extensive as possible, he had given people room to settle and prevented future disputes. He also claimed the grants for Croghan and the suffering traders were merely confirmations of old deeds.<sup>36</sup> Johnson continued to deny that the treaty was a problem into the 1770s.<sup>37</sup> Without any way to impose their will upon Johnson the government gradually caved in. In May 1769 Hillsborough instructed Johnson that it would ratify the boundary line, as agreed at Stanwix, with the proviso that the grants to Croghan and the suffering traders would not be confirmed.<sup>38</sup> Johnson did make a half-hearted attempt to alter the boundary line in July 1770 by telling the Six Nations that the king did not want the land to the south, claimed by the Cherokee, “if it was of the least inconvenience to his Children”. The Six Nations quickly rejected any such notion, and replied that their title to the land was “Indisputable”, and confirmed the cession of the land.<sup>39</sup>

The debacle of the Fort Stanwix Treaty combined with the Colonies’ neglect of the fur trade left many Native American peoples feeling betrayed.

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<sup>34</sup> Lords of Trade to the King, 25 April 1769, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 158-163.

<sup>35</sup> Hillsborough to Johnson, 4 January 1769, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 144-145.

<sup>36</sup> Johnson to Gage, 9 August 1769, WJP Vol. 7 pp. 81-84.

<sup>37</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 6 January 1770, WJP Vol. 7 p. 332 and Johnson to Gage, 1 June 1770, WJP Vol. 7 p. 705.

<sup>38</sup> Hillsborough to Johnson, 13 May 1769, NYCD, Vol. 8 pp. 165-166.

<sup>39</sup> Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians. A Conference with the Six Nations and the Cherokee at German Flats, July 1770, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 236-240.

Even before the meeting at Fort Stanwix had ended, the Shawnee had begun working to create a confederacy capable of taking on the British. They quickly persuaded several nations including the Miami and Illinois to join them. In 1770 all the nations involved in the new confederacy met at Chillicothe to discuss their response to the Fort Stanwix Treaty, and they agreed to try and make peace with the Creeks and Cherokee in order to better resist British power.<sup>40</sup> Working through the Huron, and exploiting fear of war with the Iroquois, Johnson managed to frustrate Shawnee efforts to mobilise more tribes against the British and the uneasy peace continued, but the Crown's servants remained deeply concerned that if the area's Amerindians were given sufficient provocation, they might unite and move against the Colonies.<sup>41</sup> So when in 1774 Virginia appeared to be preparing for all-out war with the Shawnee, the British Government was more than a little concerned.

Virginia's war against the Shawnee, which would become known as Dunmore's War, was born from the insatiable land hunger that pervaded that colony's society from top to bottom. At the lower end of the social scale people moved westward in their thousands, simply grabbing land where they could, little caring which Native Americans they were angering.<sup>42</sup>

Not content to leave the land grabbing to the lower orders, the rulers of Virginia did all that they could to further the colony's claims to any

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<sup>40</sup>Hinderaker, *Elusive Empire : Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. p. 169.

<sup>41</sup>White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. p. 354.

<sup>42</sup>Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. pp. 173-175.



suitable contested territory in the west. These efforts were concentrated on the areas around the former Fort Pitt, the ownership of which was claimed by Pennsylvania, Virginia and George Croghan. The new Governor of Virginia, Dunmore, offered to patent 200,000 acres for veterans of the Seven Years' War, and sent out men to conduct surveys in 1772 and 1773. The surveyors went to work on lands around Pittsburgh and near a Shawnee settlement at Scioto.<sup>43</sup>

In 1774 Virginia finally seized Fort Pitt and claimed the forks of the Ohio and the surrounding lands; they also rebuilt the now dilapidated fort, abandoned two years previously by the British, and renamed it Fort Dunmore. Rumours of a coming conflict between Native Americans and Virginians began to circulate. Squatters on the frontier either fled or formed themselves into militias, and constructed forts for their defence. At the same time, Virginians continued aggressively to survey and explore the frontier, a deeply provocative act for Native Americans already worried that they were about to lose their hunting grounds. Tensions were further increased when farmer and merchant Michael Cresap sparked a series of tit-for-tat killings by murdering two men, a Shawnee and a Delaware, who had been employed by a trader.<sup>44</sup>

Dunmore decided that in the face of competing claims from Pennsylvania the best way to secure Virginia's claim to the lands that he coveted would be to fight the Shawnee, the Native American group who were objecting most strongly to their actions. In response to Virginia's alarming behaviour, the Shawnee had sent a delegation to Pittsburgh to

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid. pp. 173-175.

<sup>44</sup>White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. pp. 357-362.

protest the Virginians' surveys around Scioto and complained to the Indian agent at the site of the former Fort Pitt, but remained peaceful.<sup>45</sup> In the summer of 1774 Dunmore began recruiting a militia and eventually assembled a force of 2,400 men to lead against the Shawnee. Their aim was to secure the land that Virginia claimed from both Native Americans and Pennsylvania. On 27 April the Virginians attacked two groups of Iroquois and Shawnee, beginning what would become known as Dunmore's War. The war had but one battle, which occurred at Point Pleasant (the confluence of the Kanawha and Ohio rivers) where a force of frontier militia bested the Shawnee. The conflict ended with the Treaty of Camp Charlotte at which Virginia's claim to Kentucky was recognised by a faction of the Shawnee.<sup>46</sup>

If the origin of Dunmore's war lay in lust for land, its shape was determined by British policy. There was now no possibility of British troops marching to further colonial interests at the expense of Native Americans. The Virginians would be allowed their war, but they would also have to deal with the consequences. The British hoped that a bloody reversal on the frontier might teach the Virginians to take Native American concerns seriously.

Gage's greatest fear was that Dunmore's War would result in a general conflict between Native Americans and colonists, which would force the British Army to become involved. Rather than make threats or take military action, Gage pinned his hopes on diplomacy, conducted through the Six Nations, to prevent an alliance of Native Americans

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid. . 357-362.

<sup>46</sup>Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. pp. 190-194 and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783*. p. 232.

forming. Gage was convinced that the influence of the Six Nations would be key in preventing the other Native American tribes from uniting and starting a general war with the Colonies. He instructed the Indian Department to do all they could to keep the Six Nations onside with the British.<sup>47</sup>

Gage was right to be worried, for in response to Virginian aggression the Shawnee tried to assemble a confederacy of Native Americans to fight back. They sent feelers to many tribes including the Seneca, and Guy Johnson believed that they had contacted the Great Lakes Indians, using the name of the Six Nations, to request assistance.<sup>48</sup> With the prospect looming of a general war between the Colonies and Native Americans, the government's plan to limit such conflicts rather than prevent them was about to be severely tested.

With connections between the Crown and Native Americans more important than ever, they were nearly severed by an accident of fate when on July 11 1774 Sir William Johnson died. He had been holding a conference with the Six Nations. The consequences were potentially catastrophic. The link that Johnson had provided between Native Americans and the British depended to a huge extent on the fact that he was known and respected by those Native Americans with whom he dealt. If his replacement was unknown then he would never be trusted or respected by those Native Americans with whom he would have to negotiate, no matter what titles or honours he was granted by the British. The death of Johnson produced a great deal of "confusion & doubt" amongst those Native

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<sup>47</sup>Gage to Guy Johnson, 18 September 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 679-680 and Gage to Guy Johnson, 14 November 1774, William Johnson Papers Vol. 13 p. 693.

<sup>48</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 11 August 1774, WJP Vol. 13, pp. 666-670.

Americans who were at the meeting. These feelings were shared by many Native Americans in the north. Johnson had been their conduit to the king, and, they believed, their only chance of having their complaints heard and their grievances addressed. Johnson's worsening state of health had been visible for some time, and had greatly concerned many of the Native Americans with whom he had met. When the Native Americans realised that Johnson would not survive much longer they requested "that all affairs with them should be conducted by an Agent belonging to His Majesty as the most regular & best channel, and that which was most agreeable [sic] to them ... and that they had reason to fear that in case of my Death their affairs might fall into some of those channel Is[sic] which gave them their first prejudice against the English".<sup>49</sup> Now that he was dead, they worried that the king and the British would abandon them completely, and leave them to the tender mercies of the Colonies.<sup>50</sup>

Such fears were not eased by rumours circulating amongst Native Americans that the Crown was to "reject them and their Affairs". These fears were based on the withdrawal of commissaries from their posts and the Colonies' refusal to manage the fur trade, and served as a mark of the importance and fragility of the link between them and the Crown.<sup>51</sup>

Fortunately for the British, there was a suitable candidate available to ease such worries. Guy Johnson had been both Johnson's deputy and his secretary; indeed, much of the correspondence between William Johnson

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<sup>49</sup>Johnson to Dartmouth, 17 April 1774, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 419-420.

<sup>50</sup>Guy Johnson to Dartmouth, 12 July 1774, NYCD. Vol. 8 p. 471.

<sup>51</sup> Guy Johnson to Gage, 24 November 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 694-695.

and Gage was written by Guy Johnson.<sup>52</sup> As a result, he had a lot of experience in meeting with Native Americans and was well known to them; he was also Johnson's recommendation as his successor. Guy made the decision to step into the breach and to take on Johnson's role until a permanent replacement was appointed. This decision was approved by Gage, although he lacked the power to make the appointment permanent.<sup>53</sup>

Guy's decision was also approved by the Six Nations, and when he told them that he would assume Johnson's role, at least until a successor was named, it did a lot to calm their fears.<sup>54</sup> When Guy Johnson met with the Six Nations he reassured them that reports that the Crown was to abandon them were nonsense, which gave them "much satisfaction".<sup>55</sup> In September Guy was given a little security by his appointment as William's successor "until the state of the Indian Department can be further considered".<sup>56</sup> While his future looked uncertain, Guy did his best to secure his position by proving he was suitable for the job. Many Native Americans were worried by the implications of Johnson's death. A Seneca headman, meeting Guy Johnson for the first time after his father-in-law's death, asked

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<sup>52</sup>Johnson to Dartmouth, 17 April 1774, NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 419-420 Daniel K. Richter, "Johnson, Guy (c.1740–1788)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14883> and Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online, <http://www.biographi.ca/>. Guy Johnson b. c. 1740 in Ireland; d. 5 March 1788 in London, England. He claimed to be William Johnson's nephew, and they were certainly related, though perhaps not as closely as Guy claimed. During the Seven Year's War he was an officer in the provincials, leading a company of rangers. He then served as a secretary in the Indian Department until 1762 when Sir William made him a deputy agent. In 1763 he married William Johnson's daughter Mary (1744–1775), and the couple subsequently had two daughters. His time as a deputy agent was key to his success in the negotiations into which he was thrust following **his father-in-law's death**. The many years he had spent meeting Native Americans and attending conferences meant he was both known and trusted by many of the Amerindians he was now charged with pacifying.

<sup>53</sup> Guy Johnson to Dartmouth, 26 July 1774, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 473.

<sup>54</sup> Guy Johnson to Dartmouth, 12 July 1774, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 471.

<sup>55</sup> Guy Johnson to Gage, 14 December 1774, WJP Vol. 13 p. 701.

<sup>56</sup>Dartmouth to Johnson, 8 September 1774, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 489.

whether he would “*take him by the Hand* on the Terms that Sir William had done”. It was only because Native Americans had dealt with Guy Johnson in the past in his role as William’s deputy that they trusted him to take on his father-in-law’s mantle. He was known to them, and they felt he could be counted on to voice their concerns to the British.<sup>57</sup> This is what the role of superintendent depended on. Had the British Government chosen to parachute someone unknown to the Native Americans of the northern department into the role, it would have been a disaster, for it did not matter how highly any Indian agent was regarded by the British if he did not have the trust of Native Americans. As it was, Guy Johnson’s appointment seems to have calmed the fears of most Native Americans, and so prevented a catastrophic breakdown in communications which might have followed William Johnson’s death.<sup>58</sup>

Guy did not have much time to grow accustomed to his new role before he was hard at work. Upon the outbreak of Dunmore’s War, Gage told Guy Johnson that the allies of the Shawnee must be advised “that this is no general War against the Indians, that the King’s Troops in the Posts are peaceable inclined, and give them always a good Reception, that the Provinces of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland have taken no part in the present disputes, and that it is merely a Contest betwixt the Virginians and Shawnese”. As per Gage’s order, the redcoats took no part in the war.<sup>59</sup>

Guy Johnson quickly arranged to meet with headmen from the Six Nations and persuaded them to dispatch deputies with wampum belts, in the

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<sup>57</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 6 October 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 685-687.

<sup>58</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 26 August 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 673-674.

<sup>59</sup>Gage to Guy Johnson, 28 November 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 698-99 and again Gage to Guy Johnson, 28 December 1774, WJP Vol. 13 p. 703.

hope that they could prevent any other tribes from joining the Shawnee, and Guy Johnson held councils with many tribes to the same end. The views of Guy Johnson and Gage were in unison, and when meeting with the Chiefs and deputies of the Six Nations Guy informed Gage that

“In public as well as several private Conferences I took much pains to Explain matters by showing that the difference was merely between some persons in Virginia & one Indian Nations that had long neglected the Councils of the Confederacy, and deserved to Suffer, Notwithstanding which, so great was His Majesty’s Clemency that he had sent Orders to restrain them, and that neither the General, the Troops, or the other Colonies approved of, or had any designs against them.”<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, the Shawnee were doing all they could to bring other tribes into the war. In an attempt to secure more support, those Shawnee in favour of war spread the rumour that Virginia’s attack was just a prelude to an attack by all the Colonies upon the Native Americans on their borders.<sup>61</sup> These attempts failed. Guy’s diplomacy and the government’s new plan seem to have worked, for Dunmore’s War, despite all of Gage’s anxieties, never developed into a general war between Native Americans and the army or the Colonies, and the conflict remained confined to the Virginians and

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<sup>60</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 14 December 1774, WJP Vol. 13 p. 701 and Proceedings of Colonel Guy Johnson with the Six Nations, December 1774 NYCD Vol. 8 pp. 521-522.

<sup>61</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 8 September 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 676-677 and Guy Johnson to Gage, 29 September 1774, WJP Vol. 13 pp. 680-681.

Shawnee.<sup>62</sup> The war was ended with the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, in which the Shawnee gave up their claims to the land south of the Ohio.<sup>63</sup>

The Colonies had been offered the chance to take responsibility for maintaining a peaceful frontier, and as far the British Government was concerned they had refused it. Rather than control settlement, they had done nothing to stop people moving west, destroying the British Government's hopes for controlled expansion in co-operation with Native Americans. Despite pleading to be allowed to control the fur trade, the Colonies had done nothing to regulate it when given the chance, causing many Native Americans a great deal of upset and anger. Dunmore's War was the final straw. The British Government decided that it could no longer risk the future of its American possessions being placed in jeopardy by colonial irresponsibility.

In 1774 the Quebec Act was passed, which redefined the boundaries of the province of Quebec to include all the land not currently included in other colonies up to the Mississippi River in the west and the Ohio River in the south.<sup>64</sup> The Quebec Act was not one of the so-called coercive acts; its genesis had begun long before news of the Boston Tea Party reached

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<sup>62</sup>Guy Johnson to Gage, 11 August 1774, pp. 666-668, Guy Johnson to Gage, 19 August 1774, pp. 669-671, Gage to Guy Johnson, 21 August 1774, pp. 671-672, Guy Johnson to Gage, 26 August 1774, pp. 673-675, Guy Johnson to Gage, 8 September 1774, pp. 676-678, Guy Johnson to Gage, 29 September 1774, pp. 680-682, Guy Johnson to Gage, 21 October 1774, pp. 688-689, Gage to Johnson, 14 November 1774, p. 693, Guy Johnson to Gage, 24 November 1774, pp. 694-697, Gage to Guy Johnson, 28 November 1774, pp. 697-699, Gage to Guy Johnson, 28 December 1774, p. 703, All WJP Vol. 13 McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774*. pp. 274-279. Dunmore's agent on the ground did everything he could to provoke a major conflict.

<sup>63</sup> Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. Chapter 1 p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> The Quebec Act, Documents relating to the History of Canada, pp. 570-576



Britain.<sup>65</sup> Neither was the Act a bribe to ensure the loyalty of the region's French colonists. Rather, the Act had initially been aimed at solving the problem of how to fit a French Roman Catholic colony into the legal framework of the British Empire.<sup>66</sup> This was a problem that had been accidentally increased in scope by the Proclamation of 1763, which had left the small French communities in the interior of the continent without any form of government.<sup>67</sup>

While initially intended to provide these scattered French villages with the rule of law, the extension of Quebec province into the interior quickly came to be seen as a way of controlling the masses migrating west. Many British politicians were already concerned about the potential difficulties of controlling settlers as they moved inland, when reports of the Boston Tea Party reached London. This event seemed to many Parliamentarians a fearful portent of what would happen if the Colonies were allowed to expand inland. As a result, the extension of the boundaries of Quebec Province began to be seen not only as a way of providing French villages on the Illinois with the rule of law, but additionally as a powerful disincentive to Protestant settlers looking to move westward. British politicians, including Dartmouth and Solicitor General Wedderburn, felt that few Anglo-Saxon colonists would willingly subject themselves to the

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<sup>65</sup>Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775*. p. 240.

<sup>66</sup>Reginald Sir Coupland, *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr., 1925). p. 7.

<sup>67</sup>Alvord, "The Mississippi Valley in British Politics. A Study of the Trade, Land Speculation, and Experiments in Imperialism Culminating in the American Revolution ... With Maps." p. 195.

vagaries of French law, even if that meant giving up on the promise of a new start in the west.<sup>68</sup>

The new Act placed Governor Carleton in charge of the west, and was a last attempt by the British Government to take control of Indian diplomacy once again. Unlike the colonies of British origin Quebec lacked a troublesome legislative assembly, and once the Act was passed it would be controlled by a Crown-appointed governor and council. So, by placing all the frontier north of the Ohio River under the jurisdiction of Quebec, the Crown was taking control of the area directly. The Colonies, and their unco-operative assemblies, would no longer have a say in the future of the frontier. The law furthermore required all furs “from the region to go through Montreal or Quebec”.<sup>69</sup> The instructions issued to Carleton specified that commissaries, interpreters and smiths would be provided for all tribes in both the Northern and Southern districts. All the colonial laws relevant to the Indian trade were once again repealed. All the Indian agents were to be made Justices of the Peace, with the power to commit offenders to trial, and Indian evidence was to be allowed at trials. The army would be completely removed from any involvement in Indian affairs.<sup>70</sup> For the British Government, the Quebec Act was one more attempt to bring order to the ever unruly frontier.

The British Government’s decision to hand jurisdiction over the northern frontier to Quebec was symptomatic of wider changes within the

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<sup>68</sup> Hilda Neatby, *The Quebec Act: Protest and Policy* ([S.l.]: Prentice, Canada, CN, 1972). pp. 37-40.

<sup>69</sup> Skaggs and Nelson, eds., *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. Chap 1 p. 7.

<sup>70</sup> Instructions to Governor Carleton and Plan for the future management of Indian affairs, 3 January 1775, Doc Con Canada, pp. 395-619.

empire. No longer would the needs of the Colonies be placed ahead of the other groups within the empire simply because they shared their origins with Britain's rulers. The British Government wanted stability and security, even if it came at the expense of colonial ambition. The past ten years had proved to the British that the Colonies could not be trusted to put the long-term interests of the empire as a whole ahead of their own short-term desires. As a result, the British reasoned that they had forfeited their right to claim pre-eminence amongst the peoples of colonial America. In the late eighteenth century, Britain's rulers clearly felt that the pragmatic concerns of finance and security trumped considerations of religion and ethnicity when managing the British Empire.

As the Colonies' status declined, Native Americans' status rose. Commissaries chosen by the Crown and with the powers of a justice of the peace would reside in Native American communities to provide immediate access to the law, and hopefully a more sympathetic hearing than colonial magistrates, who owed their position to their fellow frontier settlers. Native Americans were not subjects, but no longer would the British Government allow them to be denied justice by biased colonial institutions. To increase the chances of those who wronged Native Americans receiving justice, Amerindian evidence would be admissible in court. In the final years of Britain's American Empire, racial difference did not preclude access to the law, at least if that racial group was believed powerful enough to place the future of Britain's colonies in jeopardy.

Many elements of these seemingly radical changes had either been anticipated or called for by Gage. For years Gage had been lobbying for

Native Americans to be given better access to justice. He felt it was important that Native Americans received the full protection of the law. Army officers had sent him numerous first-hand accounts of how Native Americans were abused and taken advantage of by unscrupulous traders, and how much anger this caused. If giving legal protection to Native Americans was the only way to stop this, Gage felt that it should be done. The general proposed that commissaries should be given legal powers, or made Justices of the Peace, not to impose British law on Indians but to regulate traders better.<sup>71</sup>

Indeed, the cornerstone of the army's withdrawal from the frontier after Pontiac's War had been the replacement of forts with commissaries living in Native American communities, and this was now government policy. Gage had argued that these agents should all be made Justices of the Peace, and again, this was now government policy. The army had also called for an end to colonial management of the fur trade: this was now policy. In fact, most of the elements of the Quebec Act that were concerned with Native Americans had either been requested or put into action by the army in the years preceding its publication. The only exception was the enlarging of Quebec to include the northern frontier. Far from persecuting Native Americans, the British army under Gage had been at the forefront of moves to protect them.

Gage had been particularly vocal in his calls for Indian agents posted in Native American communities to replace fortified garrisons. He had long

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<sup>71</sup>Gage to Hillsborough, 4 March 1772, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 pp. 317-319 and Gage to Johnson, 9 March 1772, WJP vol. 8, p. 417-419. Gage to Johnson, 12 May 1772 WJP. Vol. 8 pp. 479-480. The man chosen for this posting by Johnson was Alexander Mckee, a long time Indian agent. Johnson to Gage, 20 May 1772, WJP Vol. 8 pp. 491-2.

ago acknowledged that army officers were “doing no more than ...skilful Indian officers posted judiciously amongst the nations”.<sup>72</sup> This was when the officers were intelligent and well-informed, yet in most cases Gage and William Johnson agreed that commanders at the posts were not competent to judge whether Native Americans should get presents, never mind make more complex judgment calls. Instead of posts, Gage believed that commissaries or Indian agents living amongst Native Americans could do a much better job as messengers and diplomats than officers in posts that Native Americans resented.<sup>73</sup> In 1768 Gage had felt that the best solution to the “frequent Depredations of the Chactaw Indians” was to send a commissary, experienced in dealing with them, to live among them. Gage reckoned that a knowledgeable commissary would have a much greater chance of success than the threat of military force in quieting troublesome Native Americans.<sup>74</sup> Gage envisioned the role of such commissaries as both a diplomat and an arbiter. As a diplomat, the commissary would act as the Crown’s representative amongst the Indian Nations, and in turn would report Native American concerns to the Indian Department. As an arbiter, the commissary would oversee the fur trade, ensuring it was conducted honestly, and mediate upon some matters such as the selection of new headmen. The commander-in-chief was convinced that this system would be both cheaper and more effective than stationing Indian agents at army posts. In 1771 Gage recommended to Hillsborough that a commissary be sent to the Chickasaws, and one to the other nations on the Mississippi, as

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<sup>72</sup> Gage to the Lords of Trade, 10 November 1770 PRO CO5/88.

<sup>73</sup> Gage to Johnson, 3 April 1769, WJP Vol. 12 pp. 709-710.

<sup>74</sup> Gage to Shelburne, 24 April 1768, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 169.

the best way of keeping them in the British interest.<sup>75</sup> In March 1772, when Fort Chartres was to be evacuated, he extended this policy to the north and recommended placing an Indian agent with presents upon the Wabash, as he thought that this system had worked very well on the Mississippi. Finally, when the army did evacuate Fort Pitt, Gage offered “the best of the Buildings” to Croghan as an inducement to stay, and also gave Alexander Mckee a house at the fort.<sup>76</sup> The scheme to place men within Amerindian communities met with the approval of some Native Americans. Those Native Americans attending the Fort Stanwix Treaty talks specifically requested “that we may have proper persons in our Countrys to manage affairs”.<sup>77</sup>

The Quebec Act and Governor Carleton’s instructions strongly bear the hallmark of Gage’s thinking, and this is not surprising, for he had been in England just as ministers began to discuss these matters in earnest. On June 8 1773 Gage left the Colonies for England after finally receiving the permission for leave that he had first requested in October 1772. After his arrival in Portsmouth on July 6, Gage met with Barrington and had an audience with the king. No doubt their conversations covered many aspects of Britain’s colonial policy, including Quebec and the west. These topics were certainly the primary talking point when Gage met Lord North and Lord Dartmouth in September 1774 in a conversation that was vital in bringing about the Quebec Act.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Gage To Hillsborough 7 May 1771, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 296.

<sup>76</sup> Gage to Hillsborough, 7 October 1772, Gage Correspondence Vol. 1 p. 335.

<sup>77</sup> Stanwix Treaty, NYCD Vol. 8 p. 126.

<sup>78</sup> Alden, *General Gage in America: Being Principally a History of His Role in the American Revolution*. pp. 192-200 and Winsor, J. “Virginia and the Quebec Bill”, *The*

The British Army had been sent to America to remove the threat to the British Empire posed by the French and their Native American allies. By the end of their time occupying the frontier their commander-in-chief was pushing a policy that would give Native Americans great rights as part of that empire. In 1774 the threat, at least as seen from Whitehall, was no longer external aggression but uncontrolled colonial expansion. The British were terrified that rapid expansion westward would inevitably lead to loss of control of the Colonies. The measures adopted after 1768 were framed in such a way as to make Native Americans the answer to this problem. The British hoped that once the Colonies realised that they would be left to face any Native American reprisals on their own, they would take the necessary steps to conciliate them.

This was a major miscalculation by the British. The Colonies viewed the prospect of war with the Native Americans of the frontier as an opportunity, not as a catastrophe. In Virginia it was assumed that any such conflict would enable the colony to expand and consolidate its frontier territories, and they were not the only colony to think so. Dunmore's War was a direct result of these colonial assumptions, combined with Britain's policy of leaving the Colonies to fight their own battles.

Yet the British hope that they could rely on Native Americans to check colonial expansion quickly proved untenable. When the Shawnee attempted to form a general confederacy in response to Virginian aggression, the British realised that they might soon find themselves in the

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*American Historical Review* 7, no. 3 (Apr 1896) p. 439 covers his involvement in the creation of the bill.

middle of conflict between Virginia and most of the Native American nations of the north-east. It would be almost impossible to stop such a struggle from spreading or to bring it to an end, and the army and the Indian Department knew it. To prevent this nightmare, the Indian Department mounted an all-out diplomatic offensive to keep the Shawnee isolated. The result was that when the Shawnee and Virginians finally went to war things went much better for the Virginians, who faced only limited opposition. Far from the colony experiencing an unambiguous reversal, many in Virginia regarded the outcome of the conflict as a victory. The British were trapped by a dilemma of their own making. They wanted Native American resistance to check colonial growth, but they were afraid to let Native Americans gather the strength to do so.

With their frontier policy in tatters, the government moved to reassert control of the region via the Quebec Act. The Act demonstrated just how far apart colonial and imperial aims had drifted. In order to prevent westward expansion the British were placing the Ohio Valley under the jurisdiction of the province of Quebec, and to keep peace on the frontier the British were prepared to give greater legal rights to Native Americans, all as part of an Act that had been heavily influenced by the commander-in-chief of the army in America. An army that had been dispatched to America in order to end the threat that the French and their Native American allies posed to the Colonies was now promoting the rights of these groups to counter the threat posed to Britain's empire by their own colonies.



## Conclusion

The policies that were chosen by Amherst clearly reflect several themes that were common in eighteenth-century thinking on race. Amherst believed Europeans to be superior to Native Americans both morally and militarily, and he also believed in the power of trade to transform the Native American character. In addition, it is clear that Amherst hated Native Americans. He hoped the threat of destruction would keep them subservient during peacetime, and once Pontiac's War had begun he did everything he could to make that threat of destruction into a reality.

Yet the way Amherst's senior officers reacted to his orders makes it clear that not everyone in the British Army shared his assumptions. Those senior officers who insisted on disobeying Amherst's orders to end the practice of gift-giving clearly felt that there was a need to do what they could to keep Native Americans happy. Unlike Amherst, they did not trust the reputation or reality of British military power to keep them safe from Native American anger.

Despite their protests, Amherst refused to listen to those of his officers who wanted to adopt a more conciliatory policy toward Native Americans. Amherst believed Native Americans could never be a threat to the British and so saw no reason to court their favour. This decision helped precipitate Pontiac's War, which Amherst viewed as an opportunity finally to destroy Native American society. As this study shows, once Gage replaced Amherst he pursued a different strategy. Gage knew that it was

beyond the British Army to destroy the Native Americans' ability to wage war; rather, his strategy was to convince Native Americans that war with the British was not in their interest. This he did by pushing two columns of troops into their territory where he forced them to negotiate a harsh peace. As the research shows, Gage did this because, unlike Amherst, he believed Native Americans to be rational, and as a result he felt it was possible to persuade them to live in peace with the British.

This thesis has shown that the British Army's policy towards Native Americans changed greatly as a result of Pontiac's War. The policy pursued by Gage of winning Native American hearts and minds is clearly very different to Amherst's attempt to force Native Americans to accept British domination. This change in policy came about not because Pontiac's War transformed how the British Army thought about Native Americans, but because it precipitated the removal of Amherst and his subsequent replacement with Gage, who held radically different assumptions about Native Americans.

Amherst assumed Native Americans presented no threat to the army, and so assumed there was no risk in trying to change their behaviour with harsh treatment. Gage assumed that Native Americans were a threat to both the army and empire, and that as rational beings they could be persuaded to accept the army's presence on the frontier. The only way we can explain the vastly different policies pursued by the two men is if we accept that they held vastly different ideas about Native Americans.

Gage's attempt to deal with Native American grievances was the foundation of his policy of winning Native American hearts and minds. As

Gage saw it, Native Americans' major grievances were: squatters moving on to their land, frontier violence and the poorly regulated fur trade. This thesis has established that the army failed to remedy these issues because of the problems they faced in trying to do so, and not as a result of indifference to Native Americans' concerns.

This study has shown that the changes Gage made to frontier policy were an attempt to overcome these obstacles. Unlike Amherst, Gage took the threat of war with Native Americans seriously. In order to prevent the outbreak of such a conflict Gage felt that it was sometimes acceptable to let Native Americans murder frontier settlers. While some may argue that such a strategy is at odds with Gage's mission to protect the Colonies, research shows that Gage believed that the sacrifice of a few frontier communities was worth it if it would ensure the safety of the Colonies as a whole. Such a course of action seems a clear indication that the reality of the situation on the frontier played a far larger role in guiding Gage's thinking than preconceived notions of race.

That the policy of refusing to come to the aid of those who antagonised Native Americans was later adopted by the British Government is a clear indication of the influence that Gage had on policy. The extent of this influence is confirmed by the Quebec Act, which put into practice several ideas Gage had long supported, such as placing Indian agents in Native American communities. The policies enacted by Gage and later incorporated into the Quebec Act clearly signal the changing nature of the British Empire at this time. Victory in the Seven Years' War had forced British politicians and officials to consider what place French Canadians

and Native Americans would take in the British Empire. For Gage, at least, it was clear that the army had to take Native Americans' needs seriously as long as they continued to pose a military threat to the Colonies, even if this meant bringing the army into conflict with Protestant colonists.

The differing goals of the army, Native Americans and colonists were brought into sharp relief by Dunmore's War, and as this thesis has shown, Dunmore's War only took the form that it did because of the policies that Gage had decided to adopt. Gage had declared that the colonists would have to fight their own battles against Native Americans and, in Dunmore's War, this is precisely what he left Virginia to do. Gage did this in the hope that the colonists would receive a reversal in the conflict rather than a victory, but his failure to predict this does not alter the motives for his actions.

In terms of further research several questions present themselves. Was Gage an anomaly, or were his efforts to win over Native Americans carried on by his successors in North America? It is also worth asking whether the anger Gage felt at frontier settlers fed into a general resentment towards colonists, and if this influenced his actions in the run-up to the revolution. Gage's actions certainly had an effect on the British Government, who adopted many of his policies, and it would seem worth investigating if this happened in any other parts of the British Empire.

To conclude, Amherst and Gage pursued vastly different policies with respect to Native Americans during their time in the Colonies. For Amherst, his prejudice was paramount in his decision-making; for Gage it was the reality of the situation on the frontier that guided his choices. When

Gage went on to change his policies it was as a result of the growing crisis on the frontier and the changing nature of the British Empire. Examining the changes Gage made, it is clear that the actions of the army while on the frontier can only be successfully explained if we take into account both their prejudices and the situation they found themselves in.



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