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## Between the River and the Flood: The Cherokee Nation and the Battle for European Supremacy in North America

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# **BETWEEN THE RIVER AND THE FLOOD**

## **THE CHEROKEE NATION AND THE BATTLE FOR EUROPEAN SUPREMACY IN NORTH AMERICA**

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Allen Bryant

1999

## APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Arts**

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Approved, July 1999

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*James Whittenburg*

James Whittenburg

*DEDICATION*

To my grandfather, Russell D. Norris, who taught me that a man's heritage is based more on his knowledge than the color of his skin.

# **BETWEEN THE RIVER AND THE FLOOD: THE CHEROKEE NATION AND THE BATTLE FOR EUROPEAN SUPREMACY IN NORTH AMERICA**

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the role of the Cherokee Indian nation in the Seven Years' War. This conflict was both the final act of the wrenching conflicts over colonial mastery of the North American continent by European powers and the prelude to the American Revolution. It also examines how the cultural differences that this war exposed between the whites and Indians culminated in the Cherokee War of 1760, an event that changed the Cherokees from British allies to enemies and broke the tribe's power on the continent. Much like the French they helped to defeat, the Cherokees were, ironically, also removed as a major continental force by the Seven Years' War.

Colonial governments understood that southern Indians, most notably the Cherokees, served two vital functions. First, they were of great strategic importance. The Cherokees held the option of working with the British or opening up a second front against them. The latter move would have stretched British forces thin and, while certainly not impossible, would have made the British victory more costly in both resources and lives. Second, the Cherokees were valued as both scouts and soldiers, because white colonists were unwilling or unable to fight in the so-called "Indian way," a way shown effective by the tragic demise of Edward Braddock's expedition against the French and their Indian allies in 1755.

This thesis argues that the Cherokees were a vital part of the British victory in the Seven Years' War and that their contribution deserves a vital place in the history of the conflict.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Cherokee nation of the mid-1770s was a mere shadow of the powerful ally the British had so diligently courted before and during the Seven Years' War. The Cherokees emerged from the conflict ripped apart by internal bickering and chastened by ancient Indian enemies. Cherokee elders like Attakullakulla, a headman of considerable importance and influence, were discredited among their own people as a result of the aftermath of the war. The warriors of the younger generation were left with a bitter taste of defeat in their mouth and a gnawing frustration at the plight of their nation. Colonial officials, the same men who had been so effusive in their praise only a few years before, were now stepping up to relieve the Cherokees of their ancestral land and ancient traditions as conditions for allowing them to live in peace. The Indians had made a terrific miscalculation when they agreed to support the British against the French. Cherokee leaders had believed that the British, with their help, would eventually toss the French from the continent. These same British would then, of course, reward their Indian allies and brutally punish the Indian nations who had aligned themselves with the French. As Attakullakulla surveyed his land in 1761, he must have wondered what had gone wrong.

Attakullakulla had been an ardent supporter of the British cause against the French in North America. With diplomatic aplomb and considerable skill, he had reasoned that the interests of his nation lay in assisting the local English colonists and their mother country. He had led Cherokee warriors into battle for this reason. He had stood at the head of delegations who sought to secure the best economic and military deals possible for his nation. He had been at the forefront during a period when Indian affairs were considered matters of foreign policy, not a domestic nuisance. The Cherokees then had been considered a powerful force in North America and essential to British victory in the southern colonies. But those times were gone.



In 1766 John Stuart, the superintendent of Indian affairs for the southern half of the British colonies, had written to his northern counterpart, Sir William Johnson, to inform him that the Cherokees were "much reduced, and at this time do not exceed two thirds the Number they consisted of about ten Years ago."<sup>1</sup> Stuart said that the Cherokees had been decimated by a war with the British and the ensuing attacks of their ancient rival, the Iroquois. The Cherokees, who only a few years earlier had entertained emissaries who sought their cooperation and loyalty, were reduced to flooding the halls of Parliament and colonial governments with desperate requests for a mediated peace. These battles with the Iroquois, coupled with a crippling smallpox epidemic in 1759-60, had caused the Cherokees to dwindle from twenty-two thousand early in the century to about twelve thousand in 1775.<sup>2</sup> In addition, they had lost thousands of acres of crops and fifteen of their towns to British and American troops in 1760.<sup>3</sup> The decline in numbers led to a decline in power and stature, which in turn had a devastating effect on Cherokee morale.

Cherokee society soon began to groan under the weight of these circumstances. Ancient traditions were soon cast aside and replaced with the frustration and anger of youth. As the continent prepared for yet another war, this one a so-called revolution against colonial authority and declaring the rights of man, Attakullakulla and other elders urged caution. They knew all too well the deadly possibilities of getting embroiled in one of the white man's wars. Under normal circumstances, the admonitions of these proven leaders and elder statesmen of the tribe would have been weighed carefully and, with few

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<sup>1</sup>Theda Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois in the Eighteenth Century," in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800*, eds. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 144.

<sup>2</sup>Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 182.

<sup>3</sup>Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois," 143.

exceptions, heeded. But the young men were in no mood to listen to these men, whom many probably held responsible for their present difficulties.

The warriors, including Attakullakulla's son Dragging Canoe, rejected the advice outright and agreed to band with northern warriors against the Americans. This may be attributed in part to the half-hearted pleas made by Attakullakulla and his peers. "Instead of opposing the rashness of the young people with spirit," John Stuart said, the leaders merely "sat down dejected and silent."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps they still harbored dreams of a return to their former glory, or perhaps they recognized the determination of their young men. Either way, the elders made it known, however timidly, that they did not feel it in their people's best interest to get involved in this war and their opinions were shoved aside.

Colin Calloway has written that Cherokee tradition held that "young men were expected to be aggressive in certain circumstances and old men to be rational; Cherokee society accommodated and harmonized the resulting tensions. However, in the Revolution the tensions became incompatible."<sup>5</sup> But it was not the Revolution alone that gave rise to these tensions. The Americans' war for independence only brought this conflict to the surface. The tremendous gap that had developed between the wise counsel of the elders and the angry impetuosity of the warriors can more accurately be traced back to the Seven Years' War and its tragic outcome for the Cherokees.

When the British came into their nation in 1756 to ask for their support, they had given it. Traveling and fighting miles from their ancestral homelands, Cherokee warriors had distinguished themselves as scouts and as soldiers. When the tide of war had turned in favor of their British allies, they had expected to be a party to the spoils of victory. In 1760, even as foreboding news of clashes between settlers and Cherokee veterans poured in from the frontier, men like Attakullakulla had reason to believe that they would share in

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<sup>4</sup>Calloway, *American Revolution*, 195.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 196-97.

the fruits of victory. They counseled caution against reprisals for the occasional violence against their veterans returning from the north. They were British allies, after all.

But Attakullakulla failed to recognize one essential fact. Once the French were removed as a colonial power, the Indians themselves became an impediment to complete English dominion over North America. This dominion had been the war's true aim from the very first shot. The Seven Years' War quickly led to the Cherokee War of 1760, a thoughtless conflict caused as much by ignorance as a failure of diplomacy. From the moment Cherokee warriors retaliated for the death or humiliation of their own, the might of the British came crashing down. Their villages and crops were put to the torch and their land seized indiscriminately. The Cherokee leadership was forced to make peace as soon as possible and at any cost.

The price was a drastic weakening of their society. The first step integrated the nation's warriors into the Cherokee political process. This step was designed to weaken the old clan ties and the ancient laws of retaliation, both essential and sacred traditions. The second step was a series of treaties which were little more than land cessions. One such treaty traded 27,000 square miles of land for a cabin loaded with trade goods. The land ceded separated the Cherokees from ancestral hunting grounds between the Ohio River and Kentucky.<sup>6</sup> These decisions irreparably divided the Cherokee people, which contributed to tribal divisions during the American Revolution.

It would be too dramatic to say that the Seven Years' War was the beginning of the end for the Cherokees, but it was a watershed. Their role in the war taught them two facts of their new world. First, their white neighbors were not to be trusted. Second, these same folks would have to be placated wherever and whenever possible. In 1756 the Cherokees had believed that their role in the war would assure them a peaceful and prosperous coexistence with the English and the Americans. By 1761 they were, like their

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid, 188-90.

avowed enemies the French, reeling from the wrath of British arms. Although there were major factors working against them, it was not inevitable that the Cherokee-British alliance would collapse. To discover how this came about, one must examine the cultural differences that the Seven Years' War exposed and the tragic responses of both sides.

## I. "ON THEM MUCH DEPENDS"

It did not take long for the news to reach George Washington, colonel of the Virginia regiment. He had been expecting it for some time, but that did not make its arrival any less alarming. He had made his camp in Winchester in order to acclimate himself to his new responsibilities. He had assumed command of the forces on September 1, 1755, and his instructions were clear: "drive the French from the Ohio."<sup>1</sup>

His promotion to commander of the force massing against the French gave him little comfort. He had taken command as a result of the sudden and unexpected loss of the previous commander, Major General Edward Braddock. Braddock's defeat and death in the field in early July 1755 had left a vacancy, and Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia had decided that Braddock's subordinate should assume the position of leadership. It was part of an incredible comeback for this young Virginian, who earlier had resigned from his regiment rather than be demoted for his leadership of a disastrous expedition against the enemy. Near the end of August, Dinwiddie fired off a commission, instructions, and memorandum to his new commander.<sup>2</sup>

Given the wartime circumstances, the news was simple and not really unusual: an English settlement had been attacked by the enemy. What made this news troubling and what got Washington's attention was that the enemy in this case was not the French but the Indians who had attacked the settlement and were terrorizing the British in the Ohio Valley. Such a report was not entirely unexpected. The British had known for some time that the French were working tirelessly to bring the powerful Indian nations of the Ohio Valley and their neighbors into the French camp. French traders had been dealing with

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<sup>1</sup>*The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, ed. W.W. Abbot, 10 vols. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 2: 4

<sup>2</sup>PGW, 2: 1.

these Indians for years and they were currently soliciting all the support they could with denunciations, promises, and presents. Washington and the British had hoped that the French were meeting with the same stonewalling that had met their own overtures. Governor Dinwiddie had complained in a letter to Washington that the Cherokees were "very tedious in their Consultations."<sup>3</sup> News of this Indian raid, however, made it clear to the young colonel that the French had been more successful at making inroads with the Indians than had the British.

The British understood from the outset that their success or failure in the campaign was, at least in part, dependent on their ability to convince the Indians of the legitimacy of their cause. Washington had been especially adamant about the need for native allies. He kept pressure on Dinwiddie to do everything in his power to match the gifts of the French and to procure the services of the Indians. On April 7, 1756, Washington wrote to the governor to assure him that "it is in their [the Indians'] power to be of infinite use to us."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he flatly stated that "without Indians, we shall never be able to cope with those cruel Foes to our Country."<sup>5</sup> His ardent belief in the need for Indian assistance was probably born out of his experience in July 1755, when he watched his mission with Braddock end tragically. In that encounter, Washington saw a force made up of nearly two-thirds Indians and only one-third French regulars thrash the British and send them retreating into the woods.<sup>6</sup> Despite promises from the government in Williamsburg, Indian scouts and warriors had not materialized that summer, and Washington had seen first hand the effect that had on his predecessor. Trained British regulars had panicked at the sight of the Indians and their style of fighting and the lessons were clear. Without Indians of their own to counteract this problem, the British would be in serious trouble.

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<sup>3</sup>PGW, 2: 356, (April 15, 1756).

<sup>4</sup>PGW, 2: 334, (April 7, 1756).

<sup>5</sup>PGW, 2: 334.

<sup>6</sup>John Richard Alden, *Robert Dinwiddie, Servant of the Crown* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1973), 54.

Washington so believed in the need for Indians that the normally respectful young officer even ventured to give the governor some political advice. His convictions, he wrote "would not suffer me to be quite Silent" about the less-than-stellar performance of the traders and interpreters contracted by the British to treat with the Indians.<sup>7</sup>

Washington assured Dinwiddie that it was only his "Zeal to the cause" that led him to overstep his bounds in such a way.<sup>8</sup> Washington cautioned that the traders were themselves making a fortune passing off backwoodsmen and hunters as Cherokee leaders and "princes." His concern was that gifts that had been gathered for distribution to the loyal Cherokees would be wasted through such fraud, and he counseled Dinwiddie to place a trustworthy man in charge of these vital activities. George Washington understood from experience that the Indians were temperamental and he wanted every care taken to see that they were not somehow offended or alienated by the profiteering of "blood thirsty Villain's."<sup>9</sup>

Despite his early disclaimer that he was overstepping his bounds, Washington was explicit in what he expected from Dinwiddie. Although the tone of his letter dated October 17, 1755 is diplomatic and respectful, it is abundantly clear that Washington did not want to take the field without Indian allies. He cautioned that French efforts to sway the affections of the southern Indians should not be taken lightly. "I must look upon it as a thing of the utmost consequence, that requires our greatest and most immediate attention," he wrote from his headquarters.<sup>10</sup> Other correspondence between Winchester and Williamsburg in late 1755 and early 1756 decried the lack of supplies, the shortage of funds, and the resulting desertion of troops. Even with these conditions lingering over every military plan Washington and his advisors devised, he told Dinwiddie that no

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<sup>7</sup>PGW, 2:120 (Oct. 17, 1755).

<sup>8</sup>PGW, 2:120.

<sup>9</sup>PGW, 2:120.

<sup>10</sup>PGW, 2: 120.

expense should be spared if a man could be found that had the trust and respect of the southern Indians.

Washington's insistence on gathering Indians for his campaigns does not seem to have arisen out of any fear of facing French troops on the battlefield. From his letters it appears that his true fear was leading his Virginia militia against Indian opponents. In April 1756 he wrote that the Indians' "cunning and craft are not to be equalled; neither their activity and indefatigable sufferings: they prowl about like Wolves; and like them do their mischief by Stealth."<sup>11</sup> Washington also understood that Indians fighting with the British would be Indians not fighting *against* the British. Far more than just a numerical or a logistical consideration for the Virginian, it was a question of insuring that his men would be fighting an enemy they could train for, rather than an enemy who fought in a novel style. The "cunning and craft" of Indian warriors, coupled with their "stealth," was not something Washington felt prepared to confront. Let the French worry about what was lurking behind the trees of the Ohio Valley; the British did not need the distraction. "Without Indians to face Indians," he said in 1756, "we may expect but small success."<sup>12</sup>

Dinwiddie did not need convincing when it came to recruiting Indians for the crown. He was, however, faced with problems unknown to Washington that may have been difficult for the military man to understand. Dinwiddie's primary difficulties were political. As early as 1754, he had been working to insure the allegiance of the southern Indians and he had fully expected a force of them to accompany Braddock on the first march to Fort Duquesne. He had written to the Lords of Trade in October 1754 to assure them that his "Views and Inclinations have always been sanguine in cultivating a Friendship with the different Nations of Indians in Amity with Brittain and these colonies, particularly with the Southern Indians, the Catawbias and Cherokees."<sup>13</sup> In the fall of that year Dinwiddie

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<sup>11</sup>PGW, 2: 333.

<sup>12</sup> PGW, 3: 45, April 24, 1756.

<sup>13</sup>*The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of*



began to actively recruit the southern tribes. He sent messengers to inform them that the French had invaded Cherokee and Catawba hunting grounds and that he sought their assistance in removing the invaders. At the same time his personal battle with Governor James Glen of South Carolina began.

In another letter that Dinwiddie mailed in October 1754, he had some harsh words about Glen for the Earl of Halifax. The Virginian said that Glen sounded more like a "French commander...than...an English Governor."<sup>14</sup> These were harsh words when one remembers that the British were on the verge of total war with the French empire. Dinwiddie was not totally unaccustomed to being unpopular with fellow colonial officials; in fact, he had faced the same situation in Bermuda with Governor John Bruce Hope. Dinwiddie had been named Receiver General and Solicitor and Comptroller of the Admiralty on the Island and used this position to dabble in areas that Hope believed were none of his business. At one point, Hope accused Dinwiddie of stealing from the colony, an accusation that was never proven. But Dinwiddie's charm and diligence would turn him into "an intimate friend" of Hope by 1725.<sup>15</sup> James Glen would prove to be a more daunting challenge.

As far as Glen was concerned, the Cherokee and Catawba Indian nations were *his* responsibility, not Dinwiddie's. He enjoyed seniority over all his fellow governors, having been appointed to the South Carolina post in 1738. His tenure, in fact, was the longest of any colonial governor.<sup>16</sup> Much like Governor Hope, Glen resented what he saw as Dinwiddie's meddling in his territory. Glen did not appreciate that he had been virtually ignored by Dinwiddie in the Virginian's April 19, 1754 message to the Cherokee nation,

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*Virginia, 1751-1758*, ed. R.A. Brock, 2 vols. (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 1883). 1: 364.

<sup>14</sup>*RRD*, 1: 368.

<sup>15</sup>Alden, *Robert Dinwiddie*, 7.

<sup>16</sup>W. Stitt Robinson, *James Glen: From Scottish Provost to Royal Governor of South Carolina* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1996), ix.

asking the Indians for their assistance in expelling the French from the Ohio Valley. Dinwiddie informed his friend James Abercrombe that Glen "writes me in a very dictatorial style and seems to find fault with my conduct." The South Carolina governor bluntly told Dinwiddie "not to interfere with Catawbas and Cherokees, who are under the protection of [my] colony" which, according to Dinwiddie, "refuses any supplies."<sup>17</sup> Dinwiddie understood that he could not bypass the cranky Scot, but he was having no luck negotiating with him.

The summer months of 1754 offered no relief for Dinwiddie. Glen was finally able to get the green light for a projected fort among the Overhill communities of the Cherokee nation from the Board of Trade and Secretary of State for the Southern Department of the colonies. Although this fort had been Glen's own brainchild, he expected the Virginians to contribute to the cost, arguing that they would also benefit from the construction. When Dinwiddie requested an estimate of the costs, Glen unabashedly sent him the elaborate plans along with a price tag of seven thousand pounds. He explained that he felt the fort should be more than "a few Palisadoes or Puncheons put together."<sup>18</sup> Dinwiddie bristled at the cost and offered Glen one thousand pounds, a fraction of what Glen felt he was due. The Virginia governor's action sent Glen into the factional strife of his own assembly, where he was able to procure only an additional two thousand pounds. The elaborate fort in Overhill country was financially doomed.<sup>19</sup>

General Braddock's campaign in the summer of 1755 would intensify the conflict between the two governors. When 1755 opened, Dinwiddie was confident about the possibility of the southern tribes sending some of their warriors into battle beside British regulars and colonial militia. In January he had written his friend Arthur Dobbs, the

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<sup>17</sup>RRD, 1: 375 (Oct. 27, 1754).

<sup>18</sup>RRD, 1: 103.

<sup>19</sup>RRD, 1:103.

governor of North Carolina, that "I doubt not but many of the Indians will join us."<sup>20</sup> After all, the preceding spring Dinwiddie had written Lord Holderness to inform him that the Cherokees and Catawbas had promised one thousand men should the French invade their hunting grounds.<sup>21</sup> Dinwiddie also told Dobbs that no military action would be undertaken until Braddock and his men arrived from Ireland, which left enough time to negotiate a lasting peace with the Cherokees and the Catawbas.

By the time Braddock was ready to begin his march, Dinwiddie was virtually certain that the southern Indians were in his favor. Both the powerful Cherokee and Catawba nations were still promising aid to the British cause, and Dinwiddie had good reason to expect that they would join Braddock's force along the way. But Indian assistance never materialized and the reason for this infuriated Dinwiddie and drove a permanent wedge between Glen and himself. Barely three weeks after learning of the disastrous defeat of the British at Fort Duquesne, Dinwiddie told Dobbs that Glen "had a meeting with those two Nations of Indians *at the very time they should have joined our forces.*" Dinwiddie went on to say that, had this clandestine meeting not taken place, "we should not in all probability have been defeated, as they [the Indians] would have attacked the Indians in their Bush way of fighting, which the Regulars are strangers to."<sup>22</sup> In Dinwiddie's view, Glen had now progressed from a difficult man to a traitor. He blamed Glen for the death of Braddock and the entire fiasco, showing that he, too, believed that Indian participation was crucial to ensure a British victory. Glen had kept the southern Indians at home at the very moment when the British needed them, for which Dinwiddie would never forgive him.

But Braddock's expedition was felled by more than the untimely treaty negotiations of one man. Arthur Dobbs joined Dinwiddie in criticizing Glen for the fiasco, but neither

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<sup>20</sup>RRD, 1: 469.

<sup>21</sup>RRD, 1: 94.

<sup>22</sup>RRD, 2:123.

man was unbiased. In fact, their complicity in the matter is more unseemly than Glen's efforts at a treaty. Both Dobbs and Dinwiddie were members of the Ohio Land Company and therefore had a vested interest in expelling the French and their Indian allies from the region as quickly as possible.<sup>23</sup> Whether this caused them to send Braddock rushing in, without waiting for Glen's negotiations to end, can only be a matter of speculation. For his part, Braddock blamed "the folly of Mr. Dinwiddie and the roguery of the assembly" for his lack of Indians.<sup>24</sup> Angrily, he asked why Dinwiddie had not done a better job coordinating with the Carolinas since, as he phrased it, they were "natural allies."<sup>25</sup>

Dinwiddie also undoubtedly saw political and military ramifications in Glen's negotiations. At the very time he was trying to convince the southern Indians that the French meant to enslave all of America's Indians and could be expected to steal their lands, Governor Glen, representing the British crown and cause, was convincing the Cherokees to sell off a large tract of their land. In a letter to Dobbs in September 1755, Dinwiddie argued that "the French will make a proper use of it [the selling of the land], by observing that we make Purchases of their lands to enslave their whole People".<sup>26</sup> Here was Robert Dinwiddie, firing off letter after letter to his military commanders instructing them not to do anything that would offend the Indians, facing the embarrassing problem that one of his peers had committed the ultimate insult to the powerful Cherokees. Dinwiddie condemned Glen in strong language, but all he could really do was hope that the damage done by the southern leader could be overcome.

There were more obstacles to be overcome than just bickering bureaucrats. Other characters threatened to stand in the way of securing Indian loyalty to the British. Adam Stephen, a fellow colonel in the British cause, wrote to Washington at Winchester to let

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<sup>23</sup>Robinson, *James Glen*, 102.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, 102.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid*, 102.

<sup>26</sup>*RRD*, 2: 203.

him know that he seconded the opinion that any price should be paid to insure the loyalty of the southern Indians. He also believed that as long as this task was in the hands of the traders, no favorable outcome could be expected. He comforted Washington, saying that he, too, wanted to see a man of "weight and Integrity" placed in charge of Indian affairs.<sup>27</sup> The use of Indians was, he said, of the utmost importance to the survival of the colonies. The Delawares and Shawnees had already been lost to the French and they were paying dividends to the enemy. Rendezvousing at the Delaware town of Kittanning, Indian warriors from these tribes had easy access to settlers in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Like Washington, Stephen understood that the loss of the southern tribes would leave British armies and colonial militia in the unenviable position of trying to contain this type of raiding on two fronts. With the militia in such disarray, it was clear to British colonial leaders that constant harassment from the Cherokees or Catawbas could easily turn the tide of the war.

Dinwiddie agreed with Stephen that having Indian relations in the hands of the traders was not in the best interests of the colonies. He had learned the hard way that traders could be more of a hindrance than an asset. Dinwiddie believed that it was the personal feud between two traders, Richard Pearis and Christopher Gist, that had enabled James Glen to keep the Cherokees and Catawbas from Braddock's side. In a letter dated June 26, 1755, Dinwiddie scolded Pearis for allowing "Quarrels and Disputes between private Persons" to stand in the way of "Public Service."<sup>28</sup> Only later would the governor realize the significance of this episode and it would convince him of the need for reliable, honest men to be sent into Indian country. When Braddock's unit had faced the French and their Indians, fighting in the Indian way, they had been pummeled. Dinwiddie could not afford for that to happen again.

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<sup>27</sup>PGW, 2: 159 (Nov. 7, 1755).

<sup>28</sup>RRD, 2: 77.

More than just a fear of an Indian enemy was involved in the recruitment of native support for the English. Colonial officers *needed* the Indians for their skills. Dinwiddie wasted no time in advising Washington on how his troops should be trained. The defeat of Braddock had been a major setback for the British cause and the governor did not want to see Washington meet the same fate. For Dinwiddie, it was imperative that the militia be trained in methods that could defeat French regulars, which meant fighting like Indians. "I hope the men are duly exercised & taught the Indian Method of fighting," he wrote Washington in December 1755, "that they may be prepared for action in the Spring."<sup>29</sup> Christopher Gist had written to Washington from Opechan earlier in the year, where he was recruiting Pennsylvanians for the war. His letter shows that, despite the animosity which existed between Indians and whites in the area, the settlers had been forced by experience to acknowledge their Indian neighbors as skilled warriors. In fact, Gist informed Washington, the potential recruits all talked about taking the field and fighting "in the Indian way."<sup>30</sup> It must have been a blow to professional soldiers such as General John Forbes to hear the colonists wanting to fight like "savages," not like British regulars.

The Americans understood that it was in their best interest to secure the favor of the Indians. The French had already managed to align themselves with northern tribes such as the Delawares, but the powerful southern tribes were leaning towards the British. Washington, Dinwiddie, and others wanted to see to it that this opportunity was not lost, for, as Washington told the governor, "upon them much depends."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>PGW, 2: 213.

<sup>30</sup>PGW, 2: 114-15 (Oct. 15, 1755).

<sup>31</sup>PGW, 3: 397 (Sept. 8, 1756).

## II. COURTING THE INDIANS

The task of winning the loyalty of the southern Indians, particularly the Cherokees and Catawbas, fell to William Byrd III and Peter Randolph. Both men were members of the Royal Council of Virginia and both met the requirements set out by Washington and Adam Stephen: they were well respected and they could be trusted. Their job was to make a treaty with the Cherokees and Catawbas to insure that they would enter the field with the British. Byrd's reputation and family history helped him land this job. His father and grandfather were known to have worked with the Indians of the southern colonies, and it was believed that this incarnation of the William Byrd name also knew much about these tribes. Although he was also well known for gambling and spending freely, William Byrd III would prove to be a good choice for Dinwiddie.<sup>1</sup>

Peter Randolph also came from a long line of public servants. Born in 1713 to William and Elizabeth Randolph, Peter hailed from "Chatsworth" in Henrico County. He had been appointed to the Council at the age of thirty-eight. An uncle of Jefferson's, he had made a name for himself for being reliable and level-headed. He had married Lucy Bolling of Prince George County, and one of their children, Beverley, would go on to become governor of the state of Virginia.<sup>2</sup>

Byrd and Randolph had worked together on the Council in the past, serving on the same committees. Although the call to bring about a peace with the Cherokees and Catawbas was the most important task the two men had been given, their other jobs suggest that they held the trust of their fellow councilmen. Randolph had been placed on a

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<sup>1</sup>*The Correspondence of The Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776*, ed. Marion Tinning, 2 vols. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 2: 603-4.

<sup>2</sup>"A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians at the Catawba-Town and Broad River, in the Months of February and March 1756," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 13 (Jan. 1906), 235.

committee in February 1752 in charge of clearing out the Appomattox and Pamunkey rivers, both of which had become "useless to the inhabitants of this colony, by means of mill-dams, fish-hedges, and other obstructions therein." Randolph was one of a group of men expected to contract out the job of getting the debris out of the rivers and making them useful again to the people of Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Randolph and Byrd were each named as trustees for the towns of Richmond and Falmouth by their peers. Among other responsibilities, they were expected to "regulate the streets, and... settle the bounds of the lots in the said town" and to ease the "inconveniences" of the inhabitants.<sup>4</sup>

On December 23, 1755, Dinwiddie sent the two men out on business far more serious to the survival of the colonies. They were to proceed to the Catawba Nation and deliver two speeches written by the governor. Along with the speeches, they received instructions on how to deal with the Indians. The commissioners were to take all necessary steps to convince the Indians of the love and esteem that the British people and American colonists had for them. All power was invested in these two men to conclude treaties with the Indian nations.

Upon receiving their papers, Byrd and Randolph began their journey into Indian country. It had been decided that they would negotiate with the Catawbans first, leaving themselves more time to deliberate with the more numerous and powerful Cherokees. The Catawba villages were located about 250 miles to the northwest of Charles Town (present-day Charleston, South Carolina). Whites had been trading with these Indians since the late seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> The commissioners arrived at Catawba Town around February 20, 1756.

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<sup>3</sup>William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, From the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (reprinted Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 2:291.

<sup>4</sup>Hening, *Statutes*, 2:281.

<sup>5</sup>James H. Merrell, *The Catawbans* (New York: Chelsea House, 1989), 15.



Along with their secretary, Thomas Adams of Henrico County, Byrd and Randolph were met by "King Hagler" and Catawba warriors and sachems. William Giles served as their interpreter. Hagler, or Nopkeche as he was also known among his people, had been dubbed a king by the whites. His own people knew him as their *eractasswa*.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the splintered leadership of his Cherokee neighbors, Hagler exercised a dominance over his people that was rarely seen among the southern Indians. A dedicated and proven friend of the English, Hagler had solidified his position among his own people by always wringing the most lucrative possible terms out of the whites. He had become the chief of the Catawba in 1750 and would remain in that position until his death at the hands of a Shawnee war party thirteen years later. He had traveled extensively in the southern colonies and was known to Indian and white power-brokers alike.<sup>7</sup> The first order of business for the commissioners was to assure this powerful man of their authority to do business with him. To this end they opened the conference by reading their commission from Governor Dinwiddie. This commission nearly guaranteed that Byrd and Randolph would at least get a fair hearing. A military commission bearing the colonial seal and the signature of the governor carried great prestige among the Catawbas. In fact, North Carolina governor Arthur Dobbs observed that a member of the Catawbas carrying one of these official documents received "a distinction in his Nation" that could propel him to political power.<sup>8</sup> Armed with this powerful and symbolic paper, the commissioners proceeded to read the message from the governor himself, describing the atrocities committed by the French and their Indian allies and laying out the desire of the British to have the Catawbas join with them in avenging these acts. Dinwiddie reminded the Catawbas that the Six Nations had already taken up the British cause with great success,

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<sup>6</sup>James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 151.

<sup>7</sup>Merrell, *The Catawbas*, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 150.

referring to the battle of Lake George in September 1755, when the British and warriors from the Six Nations had soundly defeated the French.<sup>9</sup>

After reading this speech, the commissioners rose to speak their own minds. Byrd and Randolph went considerably further than did Dinwiddie in their denunciations of the French. They probably agreed with the assessment of Edmond Atkin, a former member of the South Carolina assembly, who had said that, in war, the Catawbas were "inferior [to] no Indians whatever."<sup>10</sup> The enemy, they assured the Catawbas, would rest only after they had conquered the entire world and brought it under the French monarchy. They were a people of "boundless Ambition," and their victory over the British would mean the certain destruction of the Catawba Nation as well.<sup>11</sup> The Indians who had aligned themselves with these devils were also in direct violation of a treaty made with the English at Logg's Town three years earlier and were therefore clearly the enemy of the Catawbas, who had diligently adhered to that treaty. Finally, the commissioners bestowed their gifts on King Hagler and his people--belts of wampum and promises of arms.

When Byrd and Randolph had completed their sales pitch, Hagler rose. To insure that there had been no mistakes, he repeated what he saw as the important parts of what he had been told. None of the deferential tone associated with the language used by Indians towards white men was likely evident in this speech. Hagler understood that the war between the Europeans had given his people extraordinary bargaining power. Historian James H. Merrell wrote that by the time the Seven Years' War exploded on the North American continent, the leaders of the Catawba nation "delivered....'strong' speeches, in which Indians were not afraid to approach the limits of polite discourse in order to get their point across."<sup>12</sup> After driving his point home with the colonial representatives

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<sup>9</sup>VMHB, 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians," 235.

<sup>10</sup>Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 119.

<sup>11</sup>VMHB, 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians," 239.

<sup>12</sup>Merrell, *The Indians' New World*, 162.

Hagler retired with his chiefs, promising the English emissaries an answer the next morning.

On the morning of February 21, Byrd and Randolph were summoned before Hagler and the Catawba council. Hagler spoke first, directing his comments towards the treaty that Byrd and Randolph had mentioned the previous day. The Shawnees and Delawares had broken "the Chain of Friendship" between Indians and the English, and Hagler vowed not to rest until "we have sufficiently revenged the Blood of our Friends."<sup>13</sup> He called upon the Cherokees to set the example for other southern tribes by also answering the call of the British. Byrd and Randolph must have breathed a joint sigh of relief, for they could not have scripted a more resounding answer.

King Hagler's answer was followed by eloquent and emotional statements of loyalty from the warriors at the meeting. One by one, many of the warriors stood and declared their loyalty to the British cause. The warrior Chippapaw summed up the feelings of the nation with his simple response to the English request. "You have put a bright Hatchet in our Hands," he said, "which we have accepted and hold fast. You have also directed us where to strike it. I am determined, either to dye it in the Blood of our Enemies, or to lose my Life in the Attempt."<sup>14</sup> Now it was on to the Cherokee Nation, where the commissioners understood there was much more at stake.

Getting the Cherokees to sign a treaty promising to send their young men into battle with British and American troops would not be nearly as easy as had been making the treaty with the Catawbas. The Cherokees were already involved in the fighting between the two European powers. In December 1755 Dinwiddie had written Washington to inform him that the nation had sent 130 warriors to New River, where they were to meet with British regulars and militiamen to proceed to the Ohio Valley. Here they were to

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<sup>13</sup>VMHB, 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians," 241.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 241.

engage and destroy the Shawnees. The command of this campaign had fallen to Andrew Lewis, an experienced military man who had served as a major in Washington's failure at Fort Necessity and had been present when Braddock fell.<sup>15</sup>

Ironically, just as Byrd and Randolph were arriving in the Cherokee Nation to solicit support, the Sandy Creek Expedition, as it came to be called, was falling apart. When Lewis's force reached the headwaters of Sandy Creek, they began to struggle. For two weeks after arriving at the creek, the army vainly tried to follow it to the Ohio River. As supplies ran low, the rangers' commitment to the campaign faded. Finally, they simply refused to go forward, forcing Lewis and the Cherokees to turn back.

The significance of this expedition, at least at the time of the negotiations between the commissioners and the Cherokees, lay not in its failure. The important fact on March 14, 1756 was that the Cherokees had already sent away 130 of their warriors. The primary concern for the Cherokees, as the British would soon learn, was national security.

Protocol for the summit with the Cherokee leadership was much the same as it had been with the Catawbas. Byrd and Randolph again began by assuring the Indians that they were indeed authorized to make a treaty, and they then proceeded to read Governor Dinwiddie's speech to them. Dinwiddie's attacks on the French were more pointed in the speech to the Cherokees than they had been to the Catawba. He had been informed that the French were trying desperately to gain the allegiance of this nation, and he understood the gravity of allowing this to occur. He warned the Cherokees that the French would make every effort to alienate them from their English brothers and he urged them not to succumb. Dinwiddie informed the Cherokees not to let the French build any forts within their boundaries and to destroy those already there. As he had with the Catawbas, Dinwiddie played his trump card: the inherent competition between the North American tribes. He reminded the Cherokees that the Iroquois had already helped the British secure

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<sup>15</sup>RRD, 1: 113 n.

a major victory against the French. Did not the Cherokee warriors want to do the same? Playing on the rivalry between the Cherokee and Iroquois was an intuitive psychological ploy by the whites.

The rivalry that existed between the Cherokee and the Iroquois predated the arrival of the European in America. Cherokee is an Iroquoian language and "radically different from Muskogean, the language spoken by most native people in the South."<sup>16</sup> The language is but one indication of cultural ties between the two Indian nations. Cherokee delegates meeting with colonial officials in Philadelphia in the summer of 1758 referred to their northern Indian neighbors as their "Eldest Brother," another indication of the familiarity that existed between them.<sup>17</sup> The Cherokee likely migrated south following warfare with the Iroquois. This movement did not diminish, however, the enmity between the two groups. As late as the 1730s the Cherokees and Iroquois had been actively killing and capturing each other in raids and ambushes along the Great Warriors' Path, a road frequented by the Indian allies of the British.<sup>18</sup>

Although men like Byrd and Randolph could and did skillfully exploit this rivalry, the colonial governments understood clearly that it was in their best interest to put an end to the fighting between the Indian nations. As historian Theda Perdue points out, the overriding concern of the British "was that the French would exploit these divisions in the ranks of Britain's native allies or that the nations would become so weakened by their own wars that they would not be able to help Britain in her conflicts."<sup>19</sup> The Cherokee nation provided a protective buffer zone between English settlements and French armies or their Indian allies. Iroquois warriors were necessary for the coming campaigns to conquer the Ohio River Valley. The British understood that warfare between these groups diminished

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<sup>16</sup>Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois," 136.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, 140.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 138.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 138.

their effectiveness in these two areas, both of which were of vital importance to the crown's war effort. Beginning in the late 1730s colonial agents began to exert great pressure on the Indians to conclude a peace. As a result, in June of 1742 and then again in the spring of 1757 Cherokee and Iroquois delegations affirmed their friendship for each other and their loyalty to His Majesty's cause. This "peace," brought about as it was by the strenuous efforts of the whites, showed a fundamental misconception of Indian culture and government. The Cherokee and Iroquois leaders "had made a peace they could not keep."<sup>20</sup> In the years following the truce there continued to be bloodshed on both sides, even if somewhat less than in previous years. And even this relative calm would crumble, without much concern from the English, at the end of the Seven Years' War. Still, a relative truce was more advantageous to the British than no truce at all, if for no other reason than it allowed men like Byrd and Randolph to take advantage of the rivalry without much risk of inciting all out war between the Indians. They understood that any movement by either nation to gain prestige among the English would certainly be watched closely and almost certainly followed by the other.

William Byrd and Peter Randolph went about dealing with the Cherokees in much the same way they had dealt with the Catawbans. They assured the Cherokees of their fidelity and friendship and told the leaders they hoped their relationship would continue for as long as there was a sun and a moon. The commissioners quickly let the Cherokees know that they had come bearing gifts and that more would follow if the Cherokees took up the hatchet against the French. As they had done in their summit with the Catawbans, they described the horrible murders being committed along the Ohio by the French, Delawares, and Shawnees. The commissioners argued that it served the best interests of the Cherokees to join the British because the French had become infamous for their

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 142.

"encroaching upon the lands" of other people.<sup>21</sup> It must have been all the Cherokees could do to suppress knowing smiles.

The commissioners also raised the specter of French relations with other Indian tribes. They reminded the Cherokees that the French had virtually wiped out the Natchez and that they had made the same efforts against the Chickasaws. Byrd and Randolph were understandably silent about the English treatment of the Powhatan chiefdom in the previous century.

Finally, the commissioners had to defuse a controversy that threatened their success. Richard Smith, a friend of the Cherokees, had told the Indians that presents meant for them had been left behind with the Catawbas. This was considered a serious insult by the Cherokees. Byrd and Randolph assured the assembled Indians that none of their gifts had been left with the Catawbas and apologized for the scarcity of material goods they had been able to bring with them on the journey. To appease their slightly miffed Cherokee audience, they offered a deal. The Cherokees could send some of their children back with the commissioners to Virginia, who would see to it that they were enrolled at the Indian School of William and Mary College, also known as the Brafferton.<sup>22</sup>

This offer says as much about what the whites wanted to do *to* the Indians as *for* them. The purpose of any enrollment of Indian students at the Brafferton was as much about acculturating them as it was educating them. The Cherokees had, in fact, already tried their hand at English education with decidedly poor results. Eight Cherokee boys had been enrolled from 1753 to 1755. Those who did not "pass away....ran away."<sup>23</sup> In 1756 Governor Robert Dinwiddie wrote to some of the Cherokee headmen that the "Young Men that came here for Education at our College did not like Confinement" and had "no

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<sup>21</sup>VMHB 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians," 248.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 250.

<sup>23</sup>James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 195.

Inclination to Learning."<sup>24</sup> One such student crossed the James River and trekked the three hundred miles home on foot "while living on nuts and berries."<sup>25</sup> The Cherokees tactfully declined to try again.

As King Hagler had done a few weeks before, the Cherokee leader Attakullakulla rose at the end of the British presentation to repeat what he felt were the important aspects of what had been said. Once certain that he understood the terms his people were being offered, he told the commissioners that his council would deliberate and return their answer as soon as possible. Just as the Catawbias had done, the Cherokees left the British to wait through the winter night as the Indians debated the issue.

Both Byrd and Randolph had been told from the outset that attaining the support of the Cherokees was the essential goal of their mission. Their more lengthy speeches to the Cherokee council also showed that they understood that the Cherokees would be more difficult to persuade than the Catawbias had been and they were not wrong. Unlike their neighbors, the Cherokees did not return an answer the next day. Instead, the council debated the proposal through the night of the thirteenth and all day the fourteenth. When the British met again with the leaders of the nation, they did not find the resounding support that had characterized their second meeting with the Catawbias.

Attakullakulla spoke to the British from the standpoint of a leader concerned for his own people. Stories of murder and terror among the English did not particularly move the Indian emperor. His people, he argued, were just as vulnerable to the attacks of the rival Indians as were any English settlement. He could not in good conscience send his men away to protect the English if it meant leaving the women and children of his nation exposed to the French and their allies. As the English had done, Attakullakulla brought up a treaty that had been made earlier between the Cherokees and the British. Governor Glen

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 195.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 196.



of South Carolina had agreed to build a fort in Cherokee country, in return for which the Cherokees had signed a release of some of their lands to the king of England. The fort had never been built and, when it came to the likelihood that the governor would actually do so, the Cherokee leader bluntly stated, "we don't much rely on him."<sup>26</sup> Attakullakulla assured the commissioners that his people were ready and willing to go with their armies into battle, but not until they could be certain their families were secure.

Attakullakulla and the Cherokees could also appreciate the irony of the governor of Virginia sending ambassadors to convince the Indians that his colony loved them when Virginia still refused to make any trade agreement with the nation. The Cherokee leader asked Dinwiddie's representative to look around at his people, specifically at their "nakedness." The Cherokee emperor reminded his guests that their king had promised to see to all of the Cherokees' needs. The evidence in front of them, however, clearly showed this to be another promise that had not been kept. If Cherokee men were to fight with the British, it was expected that the British would provide for them fully. Those were the terms and once they were stated the Cherokees left Byrd and Randolph to decide how best to answer them.

The next day--March 16, 1756--Byrd and Randolph again went before the Cherokee leaders. The two men told the Cherokees that the speeches they had heard the day before had reminded them that there were obligations to be met by both sides and that the British had not been meeting theirs. The commissioner admitted that they had not considered Cherokee villages to be in immediate danger from the enemy and that this had been an oversight on their part. Importantly, Byrd and Randolph promised that the colony of Virginia would do its part to see that a protective fort was built in Cherokee country to insure the safety of the Indians while their warriors were fighting for the British crown. Finally, Byrd and Randolph hoped that another meeting would not be necessary but that

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<sup>26</sup>VMHB 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indian," 251.

the treaty could now be concluded. Attakullakulla told them that they would receive their answer the next day.<sup>27</sup>

On the seventeenth, the Cherokees again came together with Byrd and Randolph. They had discussed the British response to their requests and they were ready with a response. They would send at least four hundred of their warriors to assist the British, and Attakullakulla believed he could eventually send twice that number. This would all be done *after the fort was completed*. Byrd and Randolph agreed and the treaty was quickly signed. The group then drank to each other's health and prosperity and the Indians returned to their camp.<sup>28</sup>

In April 1756, upon hearing of the successful treaty negotiations with the Cherokees, Governor Dinwiddie dispatched a message to the Virginia House of Burgesses to procure the funds for building the Cherokee fort. The Virginia legislature lost no time in agreeing with the provisions stipulated by the treaty and resolved that the fort would be built immediately, using funds available to the governor from the British king. Dinwiddie then moved quickly to purchase the materials needed for construction and supplies for the men who would be assigned to garrison the fort.<sup>29</sup> He wrote to Governor Dobbs of North Carolina to let him know that the fort would be under construction quickly because "if not built this summer they [the Cherokees] will join the French." He also complained to his friend that over a year earlier he had "sent Governor Glen...near 1000 [pounds] Sterling towards the building" of just such a fort, but Glen had made no efforts to begin it.<sup>30</sup>

Dinwiddie placed Andrew Lewis in charge of overseeing the construction. Lewis, who had just returned from the failed Sandy Creek expedition, was one of the most respected Virginians of the day, and his appointment shows the importance the colony was placing

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<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>30</sup>*RRD*, 2: 382.

on getting the Cherokees into the field with Washington and others. Lewis left on April 24, 1756 to enlist men capable of helping with the construction. He had been ordered to get sixty men and to lead them immediately into Cherokee country. Upon his arrival, he was to confer with the Cherokee chiefs to learn where they wanted the fort to stand. He was also to convince the Cherokees to lend his men some of their youths to assist in the labor. By the end of August, the fort had been completed and Dinwiddie wrote that it met with the approval of the Cherokees. Once completed, the building was named Fort Loudon, after the commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America.<sup>31</sup> In October 1756, the Virginia Assembly appropriated two thousand pounds for garrisoning the fort with royal subjects and provisions.

The completion of Fort Loudon among the Cherokees secured the treaty that Byrd and Randolph had made with the Indians. The affections of the most powerful and influential of the southern tribes had now been secured, no doubt to the great relief of Washington and the other British leaders. But the challenge was only beginning. The British understood that the Indians tired of causes quickly. Now that Indians were behind the crown, the British had to find ways to keep them happy. There was also the difficulty of living up to the treaties. The English would have to find ways to provide for their Indian troops as the agreement called for. But in late 1756 the British were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for their own armies. Clothing and arming their Indian allies would be no less difficult, and it had to be done without alienating the American militia, a group that had already shown itself to be less than dependable.

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<sup>31</sup>YMHB 13 (Jan. 1906), "A Treaty Held with the Catawba and Cherokee Indians," 259.

### III. Braddock's Ghost

John Forbes's men affectionately referred to him as "the Head of Iron" and he was worthy of the distinction.<sup>1</sup> Forbes was a proven soldier, known for his tenacity and intelligence. He was capable of both inspiring and intimidating as the situation dictated, and he was exactly the kind of man the English needed as 1758 opened. Legend had it that the general's life had been saved at the battle of Culloden in 1746 by a farthing, a small coin that had impeded the progress of the bullet that had been meant for his breast.<sup>2</sup> He had risen by determination and skillful networking to the rank of lieutenant-colonel by 1750, had fought in the war of the Austrian Succession, had served as the aide-de-camp of high-ranking English officials, and had helped thwart Charles Stuart's ill-fated attempt to regain the English throne.<sup>3</sup> He was no stranger to war or to the death that surrounded it.

Despite his nickname, John Forbes was a distinguished looking soldier. His portrait reveals a man with a quiet, unassuming confidence. He had a rounded face, with gentle, piercing eyes; his broad nose and pursed lips show a man of almost feminine good looks, but his stare betrays an intensity that only men tainted with the blood of old enemies exhibit. His genteel, distinctively English appearance must have spawned a few jokes among the backwoodsmen and frontier men he was asked to turn into soldiers and to mold into an army.

Forbes was appointed a colonel in the 17th Foot regiment of the British army in early 1757 and he arrived in the American colonies with Lord Loudon, the new commander-in-

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<sup>1</sup>William Mulligan Sloane, *The French War and The Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 61.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred Proctor James, ed., *Writings of General John Forbes, Relating to his Service in North America* (Menasha, Wis.: Collegiate Press, 1938), x.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

chief of the British forces in North America, shortly thereafter.<sup>4</sup> His first year of action in the American theatre was a study in frustration for Forbes and the men he commanded. The year 1757 seemed to follow the course set by Braddock with his tragic expedition against the French. Time and again, the English found themselves repelled and embarrassed by their European and Indian rivals. Early on, the English failed in their attempt to wrestle Louisbourg away from the French and this failure meant that the French held on to the St. Lawrence River and its surrounding area. Without this essential piece of real estate, British officials felt that it would prove nearly impossible to eventually attack the capital of Quebec. By year's end, the British had also lost Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario and Forts George and William Henry on Lake Champlain. The French were firmly in control of the Ohio Valley and its outlying areas, and the British had been demoralized by many defeats and setbacks.

The success of William Byrd III and Peter Randolph in mid-1756 had quickly been overshadowed by these military failures. The pact with the Cherokees and Catawbas had meant that the British would not be faced with a second, southern front. This assurance, however, was not as comforting to professional British soldiers like Forbes, Henry Bouquet, and Loudon as it was to the Americans living in and around southern Indian country. These men saw the conflict on the North American continent in terms foreign to the colonists. The soldiers were well aware that the mother country was also trying to stave off the French threat in India and that North America, though important, was only part of the larger equation.<sup>5</sup> The Seven Years' War was, in reality, a world war. The professional men in His Majesty's service understood the conflict in the context of the other wars that had ripped through the European continent. Beginning with King William's War in 1689 and continuing through Queen Anne's War, which divided Europe

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

from 1702 to 1713, the latest trouble was only the latest chapter in the continuing saga of the English and French efforts to keep each other from achieving world dominance. As a prelude to the war, George Washington had been dispatched by Governor Dinwiddie to warn the French that they were encroaching on lands claimed by the English. Once the war began, however, the goal was no longer to drive the French off these lands; instead, it was a matter of driving the French off the *continent*. In the eyes of the British, anything less would only serve to postpone yet another bloody conflict in the future.

The outcome of the encounters of 1757 certainly left the impression that the French would be the ones to remain in North America. Lord Loudon had been less than successful as a commander and the results had been disastrous. Historian William Sloane wrote that Loudon was "fertile in inventions and busy with plans which never left the paper they were sketched on."<sup>6</sup> Loudon's tentative nature had cost his nation greatly. As 1758 neared, French forces controlled five-sixths of the North American continent east of the Mississippi, and the British were securely in control of less than half of the remaining areas. Moreover, the French controlled the Mississippi and St. Lawrence rivers, as well as nearly every waterway in between. Calling for the British government to step in and impose greater controls on the people in America, Loudon blamed the colonies themselves for his failures. Loudon went so far as to call for a Stamp Act on the colonies, claiming that this was the only way to insure they would share responsibility for the war. Sloane wrote that it "seems impossible to explain the imbecility of the Englishmen then in America."<sup>7</sup>

Thomas Gage, one of the British officers attending the war, wrote to George Washington in October 1757 to inform the Virginian that the "same Fatality that has, since my Memory, attended all our Expeditions, attended that of this summer to the Northward"

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<sup>6</sup>Sloane, *The French War*, 59.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 60.

and that a "very considerable regular Force is now in these parts [Albany, New York], *but what They will be employed in, is more by far, than I can inform you.*"<sup>8</sup> The disgust and uncertainty for the British command that runs through the letter is an obvious sign that the war was not going the way the English had hoped that it would. Loudon had intended to attack the French from Nova Scotia but the expedition failed. Loudon was also facing criticism from Gage and others because he, like John Forbes and General Abercromby, was of Scottish descent. His English subordinates felt that preference was given to lesser qualified Scots when it came time for promotions, and they quickly formed alliances against the already troubled commander.

Loudon knew that his situation in America was precarious. His relationship with the home government was strained and he had no victories to solidify his command. With this in mind, he planned a campaign against Fort Ticonderoga in the winter of 1757. As Gage said in his letter to Washington, this campaign met with the same disastrous fate as so many others. The actual plan for the campaign was not even completed until early 1758, by which time Loudon's fate had been sealed. But not even this campaign would have bolstered Loudon's reputation, because a heavy snow fell on the troops at Fort Edward and with no snowshoes the troops were unable to take the field. Another winter had set in on the hapless British and again the commander had failed to attack either Montreal or Quebec.<sup>9</sup> The mounting failures were more than the home government could stomach. Lord Loudon's time was up.

"I am with Concern to acquaint Your Lordship, that the King has judged proper, that your Lordship should return to England: And His Majesty having been pleased to appoint Major General Abercromby to succeed your Lordship as Commander in Chief of the King's forces in America," Secretary of State William Pitt wrote Loudon from Whitehall

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<sup>8</sup>PGW, 5: 5.

<sup>9</sup>Stanley Pargellis, *Lord Loudon in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 349.

on December 30, 1757.<sup>10</sup> In other words, Lord Loudon had failed and Pitt was giving him no more chances. The same day, Pitt dispatched orders to Abercromby, placing him in charge of the North American forces because of his "zeal" and "abilities."<sup>11</sup>

Abercromby had not been Pitt's first choice for the job, but the prominence of his rank made it impossible for him to be overlooked. This may be the reason for Pitt's mention of "zeal;" there would be no more tolerance for the tentative maneuvering that had characterized Loudon's tenure. Moreover, Pitt wrote to six northern governors to assure them that the change was made because the king, "having nothing more at Heart, than to repair the Losses and Disappointments, of the last inactive, and unhappy Campaign," was determined to "avert, by the Blessing of God on His Arms, the Dangers impending in North America."<sup>12</sup> Pitt's change was significant because it legitimized "the opposition of colonial assemblies to the prerogative as represented by the commander-in-chief" and insured that the colonies would be reimbursed for all their expenses by the home government.<sup>13</sup> The shake-up went farther than the top position of command. Wolfe and Amherst were sent against Louisbourg, and Pitt had effectively flexed his muscle so that Abercromby knew better than to try to bypass the Secretary in making out his strategies. The old school of officers had failed and been "shelved" by Pitt. One of the few who survived the massive changes of late 1757 was John Forbes.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Correspondence of William Pitt When Secretary of State with Colonial Governors Military and Naval Commissioners in America*, ed. Gertrude Selwyn Kimball (London: MacMillan, 1906), 134.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 134.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 136-37.

<sup>13</sup> Pargellis, *Lord Loudon*, 277.

<sup>14</sup> James, *Writings of General Forbes*, xi.



As 1757 dragged on, the warriors of the Cherokee nation often must have felt that they had signed on with the wrong side. This must have caused some nervous moments for the Indians, who knew that their entire way of life could be destroyed through an alliance with the wrong European power. The British seemed unable to put together any military plan that met with success, and the Cherokees were constantly frustrated in their attempts to aid the whites. In April 1757, the Virginia legislature passed a resolution that forbade the Indians from being armed during muster. The warriors who had been so diligently pursued by the likes of Washington and Dinwiddie were instead relegated to being employed as "drummers, trumpeters, or pioneers, or in such other servile labor as they shall be directed to perform." To add to this insult, the proud Cherokees were clumped together with "free mulattoes" and "negroes" in this distinction.<sup>15</sup> Cherokee warriors had been committed to taking up the hatchet against the French and their Indians; they had left their homes to assist the British in wiping out the French presence on their continent, not to be part of a drum and bugle corps for the British army.

The Indians who were fortunate enough to be included in the military plans of the English were no happier. Arriving at British outposts was usually a disappointment for the Indians. White settlers were highly unlikely to assist the Cherokees or other Indian groups as they marched to the side of the British armies, and when they arrived they were tired, ragged, and usually in desperate need of supplies. The British, however, were finding it increasingly difficult to provide for the regulars, and the Indians fared no better. Washington wrote to Robert Dinwiddie in late 1757 that the Indians seemed "to have a natural strong attachment to our interest" but that the treatment they were receiving endangered this bond. He went on to say that "the chief of the Cherokee party...was so incensed against what he imagined neglect and contempt, that, had we not supplied him with a few necessaries, *without which he could not go to war*, he threatened to return,

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<sup>15</sup>Henings, *Statutes*, 2:95

fired with resentment, to his nation."<sup>16</sup> Washington was very clear in this document about what the Indians were demanding. The Cherokees were not expecting gratuitous gifts or luxury items. These warriors were incensed because they had not been provided with materials without which they "could not got to war" such as firearms.

Cherokees not only were not met with gifts or fanfare, but they often found themselves rebuked for arriving when they did. Forbes dubbed the Cherokees "bad Judges of time" who had "not the patience to wait our time."<sup>17</sup> Timing annoyed the Cherokee warriors for more reasons than just the lack of gifts and supplies. The Cherokees did not understand the British unwillingness to *act*, to attack their enemies. It was against the very nature of the Indian troops to sit around camp and wait for orders. Forbes, Washington, and Colonel Henry Bouquet all bemoaned the impatience of their Indians. William Pitt and the Indians could no doubt have had long conversations about the "timidity" of English forces.

The removal of Lord Loudon raised the hopes of the colonists and the English back home. John Forbes was placed in charge of the southern forces, and Colonel Henry Bouquet began to assert himself as a soldier. Abercromby understood that the Ohio Valley had to be ripped from the hands of the French, for that area would be the launching point for the attacks on French-Canadian territory. Forbes began to formulate his plans for taking Fort Duquesne, a plan for which he needed Indians. The ghost of Edward Braddock had to be exorcised, and 1758 was the year to do it. The English, the Americans, and the Indians were about to get their war.

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<sup>16</sup>PGW, 5: 2.

<sup>17</sup>James, *Writings of General Forbes*, 141.

#### IV. INTO THE FIELD

Colonel Henry Bouquet had become the most trusted advisor to the ailing but determined John Forbes. Bouquet was of Swiss descent and he saw himself as a soldier of fortune. Forbes placed many of the important details for the crucial expedition against Fort Duquesne in Bouquet's hands, and Bouquet saw to it that the British troops would not be thwarted while under his care. It was Bouquet who carved out Forbes Road, the alternate route into western Pennsylvania that allowed the British to sneak into the backyard of the French. It was Bouquet's attention to detail and precision that allowed the British to defeat the French at Duquesne, and in a very real sense it was Bouquet's success that shook the foundation of trust the English had cultivated with the Cherokee nation.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Bouquet led the Royal American Regiment, also called the 60th. The 60th was the only regiment of British regulars in which a foreigner could hold a commission. The regiment was raised through recruitment of Pennsylvania settlers, largely of German descent, and the officer corps was largely Swiss and German.<sup>2</sup> Bouquet understood the pressing importance of his duties. William Pitt was determined to establish himself as the power back in London and the best way for him to achieve this was to defeat the French. Pitt had not only signed off on the expedition against the enemy in Pennsylvania but he had *ordered* it, personally placing General Forbes in charge. If Bouquet were to fail, Forbes would fail, and that failure could in turn mean the end of Britain's hopes in the Ohio Valley. Amid the difficulties of overseeing the operation against Fort Duquesne,

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<sup>1</sup>*The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, ed. Donald H. Kent, Autumn L. Leonard and S.K. Stevens, 2 vols. (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951), 2:iii.

<sup>2</sup>Edward P. Hamilton, *The French and Indian Wars: The Story of Battles and Forts in the Wilderness* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1962), 249.

Bouquet also found himself trying to retain the services of the Cherokee Indians at his disposal.

The pressure on Bouquet came from all sides. Pitt wanted results, Forbes wanted organization, the regulars and militiamen wanted Indians, and the Indians wanted action. Knowing that the cause could ill afford another Braddockesque attack in the Ohio Valley, Bouquet refused to move before he felt comfortable. Despite the infuriating impatience of the Indians, roads and bridges had to be built; the Indians would simply have to wait. Still, his fellow officers were becoming wary of the wait and the effects it could have on their Indians. Captain William Trent, a Pennsylvania trader and speculator, wrote to Bouquet on June 5 1758 to complain about "how ill the Cherokees were used at Carlisle."<sup>3</sup> He complained that the Cherokees came expecting a war and were used only for occasional intelligence gathering. Two days later, Bouquet himself lamented to Forbes the way the Indians were acting. "The Cherokees are behaving so badly," he wrote, "that it seems they have made their decision, and are ready to leave us."<sup>4</sup> The news seems to have shaken the ailing Forbes. He was unusually grim in his letter to William Pitt dated June 17, writing that "The Cherokees are, (I am afraid) no longer to be kept with us, owing to their natural fickle disposition which is not to be got the better off by words nor presents" and concluding "we shall lose the best part of our strength as all the Northern Indians mostly our enemies were kept in awe by the presence of so many Cherokees."<sup>5</sup> The Cherokees, however, were uninterested in serving only as window dressing; the northern tribes feared their southern rivals because of their prowess on the battlefield, and the Cherokees felt their prowess being wasted.

But Forbes's description of the Cherokees' "fickle disposition" could not have been more accurate. Every time the English were convinced that their Indians were packing

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<sup>3</sup>PHB, 2: 37.

<sup>4</sup>PHB, 2: 49.

<sup>5</sup>James, *Writings of General Forbes*, 117.

and leaving, the Indians decided to stay. The Cherokees seemed determined that they would not be taken for granted by their English benefactors. On June 8, eleven Cherokees arrived at Fort Loudon. Despite an outbreak of smallpox, Bouquet wrote to inform General Forbes on June 16, "After two days of intrigue, dinners, and public councils, the Cherokees who were determined to leave us have changed their minds."<sup>6</sup> Forbes must have appreciated the Cherokees' obvious concern for his failing health. Bouquet understood that the time for the campaign was drawing closer and he quickly moved to solidify his support among the Cherokees and the Catawbas who were at his camp. This is the speech he made to the troublesome Indians:

*Brethren*

*As long as we shall be united as one solid Stand we Shall chace our Ennemys before us, as the wind blows the dry leaves of the Trees, Ist us therefore Shut our Ears to all bad Talks, Jalousies and disafation. We are your brothern and we have all the Same Father the Great King, we will take care of you, and supply you with every thing we have, that can be of service to you.*

*Let our friendship run forever as clear & Smooth as the Water of the Ohio.*

*Some of your People who called themselves Warriors have left us to go home. they could Stay no longer without seeing the Wife. How will they dare to Shew their faces before you in the great Council of your Nation. after this shamefull retreat I am not Sorry they are gone: We have strength Sufficent wth your assistance to destroy the French. They were come only to get Presents, but we are come to fight for our Liberty and glory of our Nations.<sup>7</sup>*

Bouquet deftly played on all the major biases he had discovered during his experience with the Cherokee people. Cherokees "who called themselves warriors" is a phrase that surely struck at the very heart of the Cherokees, who prided themselves on their bravery and honor. By calling into question Indians' reputation as warriors, Bouquet essentially called into question whether they could even call themselves Cherokee. In case his audience missed the point, Bouquet continued to needle the Cherokees who had departed, because they "could Stay no longer without seeing the Wife." If this barb didn't send

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<sup>6</sup>PHB, 2: 54, 95.

<sup>7</sup>PHB, 2: 101.

snickers rippling through the Indian crowd, it must have at the very least made them bristle. In any other situation, these would have been fighting words. Finally, Bouquet assured the faithful that they would fight and triumph. "Liberty" and "glory" were words the Cherokees could understand far more easily than "strategy" or "patience."

The speech must have been a resounding success because Bouquet wrote to Forbes on June 16 that the Cherokees "resolved to follow us everywhere you may want to lead us. They promised to follow the orders and directions of the commander, and to conquer or perish with us." In addition, Bouquet assured the general that he "was astonished to find so much spirit, imagination, strength, and dignity in savages."<sup>8</sup> Then, as if to prove their worth, the chief of the Cherokee party had one of his warriors, recently returned from a scouting mission near Fort Duquesne, trace out the road leading to the French base on the ground with his knife. The intricacy of the makeshift map is amazing to read about. Bouquet wrote that the Indian included "all the rivers and roads which lead there, entering into the smallest details on the nature of the ground which is said to be mountainous everywhere except along the Monongahela....He said that the polygon which faces the river is still only a very high stockade, the land being very steep on that side. He was obliged to climb into a tree to get a true idea of it."<sup>9</sup> This account alone makes it clear why the British valued the Cherokees. Forbes wrote to Bouquet on June 16 to say "Nothing can hinder us from proceeding but the defection of the Cherokees, bad roads, [or] our Waggons."<sup>10</sup> He had taken care of the Cherokees, and he was putting the finishing touches on a road that would cut right through the heart of French territory. The momentum was shifting.

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<sup>8</sup>PHB, 2: 95.

<sup>9</sup>PHB, 2: 96.

<sup>10</sup>James, *Writings of General Forbes*, 115.

By the end of June 1758, Bouquet could brag to Forbes that "Our Indians are behaving very well, scouting every day in the vicinity of the camp, and I always have hunters in the field."<sup>11</sup> The Cherokees were assuming the roles of scouts, cooks, and medics for Bouquet's army. The Indians hunted game daily to keep the troops fed and had saved a Virginian's life after he was bitten by a rattlesnake. The Indians he had been accompanying on a scouting trip gave him a root to chew and showed the soldier how to wash the wound. At the time Bouquet wrote, the soldier "continued to chew the roots, and he is almost cured."<sup>12</sup> Cherokee scouts had also managed to kill and scalp a Frenchman who was out hunting.

Yet Bouquet's letter to Forbes of June 28 is important for another reason. He wrote that he had sent Lieutenant Colby Chew, a "very alert young man" from George Washington's regiment, out with a party of Indians to gather some knowledge of the French strength at Fort Duquesne. Chew and the Indians were instructed to capture a prisoner and to learn as much as they could about the enemy's forces. Chew and the Indians arrived near Duquesne sometime in mid-August, and the cultural differences between the whites and their Indian counterparts were never more obvious than on this particular mission. The Indians demanded that the party stop about a mile before reaching the fort to make "magic" and repaint their faces. After this prelude, the Indians insisted on passing out "magic amulets" that would ward off enemy bullets before they would go any closer to the fort. The Indians then stripped down "to breechclouts and moccasins [and] they went on with their mission."<sup>13</sup>

The Cherokees and the Catawbas were beginning to assert themselves as essential to the British effort. Forbes wrote to William Pitt on June 17, 1758 that he had "used every art and Means to get intelligence of the French and Indians (in their Alliance) in those

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<sup>11</sup>PHB, 2: 143.

<sup>12</sup>PHB, 2: 144.

<sup>13</sup>Hamilton, *French and Indian Wars*, 256.

parts [Fort Duquesne]." The "art and means" typically employed were similar to those experienced by Colby Chew. Throughout the summer and early fall of 1758, the English sent out groups of southern Indians, accompanied by several white soldiers, to reconnoiter the French position. In mid-July, Washington wrote to Bouquet from his camp at Fort Cumberland to inform him that he had sent out three intelligence-gathering parties. These parties were made up of a white officer and eighteen Cherokee scouts. Washington went on to say that he believed "these Scalping Partys of Indians we send out will more effectually harass the Enemy (by keeping them under continuall alarms) than any Partys of white people can do."<sup>14</sup> Washington understood that Bouquet was having difficulty with the Indians, but advised him that, "as I cannot conceive the best white men to be equal to them in the woods," all attempts should be made to keep the Indians happy.<sup>15</sup>

Bouquet understood all too well the importance of the Indians to his cause, but that did not make him care any more for the Indians. His correspondence reveals a man constantly frustrated by Indian threats to leave for home. Still, his letters also show the importance of these Indians to his mission. In early July, Bouquet himself had sent out a party of Cherokees to view the Ohio Valley and to evaluate French strength there. As did all the English commanders, Bouquet made sure to send a white man along with the Cherokees to insure the reporting of the "truth."<sup>16</sup> The Cherokees had also surprised the Swiss commander by "working for us" and helping them to build a storehouse. Bouquet wrote that this was an action which "I never heard of any Indian doing."<sup>17</sup> In late July another group of Cherokee scouts returned to Bouquet with "a scalp and a French gun." Bouquet immediately dispatched their report on the French position to General Forbes; interestingly, he did so after confirming the report with only another Cherokee scout.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>PGW, 5: 291.

<sup>15</sup>PGW, 5: 292.

<sup>16</sup>PHB, 2: 180.

<sup>17</sup>PHB, 2: 149.

<sup>18</sup>PHB, 2: 253.



The urgency with which Bouquet dispatched the Indians' report illustrates the credence the English gave to the intelligence gathered by their Cherokee allies. Washington told Bouquet in the summer of 1758 that he believed the troubles the English were having with the Cherokees and other Indian groups were a result of their being "too sensible of their high importance to us."<sup>19</sup> Washington's assessment was not sarcastic; rather, it resulted from his sincere belief that the Indians understood only too well how much the English needed their eyes and stealth.

In early August, the first reports of the French weakness at Fort Duquesne began to sift into Bouquet's camp. Five Cherokees returned and reported that many of the northern Indians had abandoned the French, that there were no tents or troops around the fort, and that the French no longer felt confident enough to venture beyond the walls of Duquesne after dark. Along Braddock's road there were fresh tracks neither of human nor of animal. The French position had weakened, and the Cherokees were the first to bring the news to the British. The time for attack was swiftly approaching.

By the late fall of 1758, Cherokee scouting parties had provided mounting evidence to the British that the French hold on the Ohio Valley was tenuous. The summer had seen Amherst, recently elevated over Abercromby to commander-in-chief of the North American forces, take the French post at Louisbourg with an ambitious attack coordinated by land and sea. Now Fort Duquesne appeared to be within England's reach as well.

The Indians had provided the British with crucial intelligence, but the relationship between the two had deteriorated throughout the summer months. The Cherokees were in constant conflict with the Virginia frontier settlers, and South Carolina feared that the conflict was going to boil over into an uprising of the powerful Indian nation. Moreover, Attakullakulla (Little Carpenter), arguably the most influential warrior, was demanding

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<sup>19</sup>PGW, 5: 292 (July 16 1758).

more gifts from Bouquet and Washington. The Cherokees were beginning to tire of the effort and were gradually leaving the British encampments. Still, those who remained continued to bring in information that was critical to the march on Fort Duquesne.

By late November 1758, the English were knocking on the door of the French stronghold in Pennsylvania. The daily drill was for the remaining Indians to deploy ahead of Bouquet's forces in order to scout out the territory. After receiving word from these scouts, Bouquet moved forward a little each day. John Forbes, "thoroughly ill and worn-out," had decided on November 2 to proceed no farther than the French base at Ligonier.<sup>20</sup> That same night, however, the French had attacked and been repelled by Forbes's army. A prisoner taken during this raid told the general that the French had lost their Indian allies and that their position was weak. Forbes decided that the time for resting would have to wait; he could not take a chance on the French regaining their Indians or being reinforced. He pushed his army forward in conjunction with Bouquet and Washington. On November 22, Forbes wrote to Bouquet: "I beg that the Indians be sent forward to morrow for Intelligence, with orders to lye out all next night and watch any force that the Ennemy may either send to attack us or bring to their fort."<sup>21</sup> At this point, historians have missed (or omitted) the importance of the Indians' role in the taking of Fort Duquesne. From Bouquet's own hand it becomes apparent that it was Indian scouts who first reported to him that Duquesne was his for the taking.

Historian Edward Hamilton wrote that on the night of November 24 1758, British troops "heard a great explosion as the French blew up their fort and abandoned the Forks of the Ohio."<sup>22</sup> After hearing the explosion, the British supposedly moved quickly to Fort Duquesne and discovered that the French had been forced to flee rather than face Forbes's army. This account does not agree with what Bouquet wrote about that day. Bouquet

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<sup>20</sup>Hamilton, *French and Indian Wars*, 257.

<sup>21</sup>PHB, 2: 607.

<sup>22</sup>Hamilton, *French and Indian Wars*, 258.

wrote to William Allen on November 25 that "In the evening our Indians reported that they had discovered a very thick smoak from the Front extending in the bottom along the Ohio; a few hours after they sent word that the Enemies had abandoned their Fort after having burnt everything."<sup>23</sup> Bouquet's account makes it clear that the Indians had been sent ahead for the dangerous job of sneaking around the French fort and gaining any intelligence they could about the French. Bouquet's account also agrees with Forbes's order to send the Indians ahead to scan the fort. Only after the Indian allies witnessed the French retreat did the English march victoriously into the Ohio Valley.

Bouquet wasted no time in firing off letters to announce the "reduction" of Fort Duquesne and its symbolic transformation (at the behest of General Forbes) into Pittsburgh.<sup>24</sup> On December 14, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* printed an excerpt from a letter written in Pittsburgh giving credit to the Indian allies. "We were informed by one of our Indian Scouts...that it was burnt and abandoned by the Enemy...and the whole Army followed."<sup>25</sup> General Forbes proudly declared in that same edition that "the British Flag flies over the Debris...in Triumph."<sup>26</sup> The Ohio Valley was now His Majesty's property and the French were reeling. On November 28, the army had marched proudly onto the road where Braddock had lost his life. The war had come full circle. British soldiers quietly buried the remains of some of Braddock's troops the French had left to the elements. One major reportedly recognized the bodies of his father and brother, locked in a final embrace.<sup>27</sup> The British and their Indians had regained the momentum and there would be no stopping the British armies now that they were firmly in control of the valley. The alliance with the Cherokees, however, had suffered greatly. Most of the Cherokees had departed before the victory, and those who remained would forever be alienated by

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<sup>23</sup>PHB, 2: 610.

<sup>24</sup>PHB, 2: 610, (Nov. 25 1758)

<sup>25</sup>PHB, 2: 612.

<sup>26</sup>PHB, 2: 613.

<sup>27</sup>Sloane, *The French War*, 74.

the treatment they received on their way back to Cherokee country. The British had won the northern theatre, but the south was about to explode in a new and bloody episode.

## V. FROM ALLY TO ENEMY

Bedford County, Virginia, has never held a particularly large place in histories of the Seven Years' War. The county, however, provides the historian with a small episode that is indicative of what went wrong between the Cherokees and the English settlers they had been recruited to help. Even before Fort Duquesne was smoldering beneath the British flag, the cracks that were always present beneath the surface of the Anglo-Indian alliance had begun to widen. Many Cherokees had done just what Bouquet alluded to in his speech: they left the British to go home to their people. Along the trail leading to their home, many of these Cherokees were harassed by whites living in the area. Often hungry and on foot, these warriors occasionally stole horses and cattle from the farmers and settlers living in Virginia. The whites responded by killing the offending Indians. The Cherokee code of conduct, established long before the arrival of the whites, dictated that these deaths be avenged. The peace in the southern colonies was soon torn apart by these misunderstandings between outraged whites and vengeful Cherokees.

In mid-May 1758 one of the first instances of Cherokee-white conflict on the Virginia frontier occurred. William Callaway wrote from Bedford to inform Colonel Washington of the troubles the Indians were experiencing. Callaway related the story of a group of Indians who had been fired upon after stealing horses from some settlers. These Indians pulled men off their horses, stripped and whipped them, and then made off with the animals. The Indians sometimes called themselves Cherokees and at other times called themselves "Shonees."<sup>1</sup> The exchange quickly became deadly, with one white man and

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<sup>1</sup>PGW, 5:183.

three Indians killed. The implications were clear to Washington and other members of the British army: the southern Indians were rebelling.

William Byrd III was now commanding the Second Virginia Regiment under Lord Loudon. He was also hearing the ugly rumors that were emanating from Bedford County. Byrd fired off a series of letters to General John Forbes trying to assure his superior that the coalition he had so delicately put together would hold. Byrd had written to Forbes in April of 1758 that he had heard that a party of nearly four hundred Cherokees was prowling the Virginia countryside. He had sent out messengers to bring these Indians to his camp for a meeting, but the messengers returned "without a single man."<sup>2</sup> The magic that Byrd had performed in gaining the support of the southern Indian tribes was not to be replicated.

But the irrepressible Byrd was not finished. If the Indians who had already fled and plundered in Bedford County were not to be coaxed back into the fold, then he felt it was his responsibility to hold on to those still under his and Forbes's command. To this end, he dispatched a message from the Indians (referred to as "*my savages*" by the commander) accompanying him to the Indians in the northern theatre. Byrd explained to Forbes that his reason for the urgent message was to prevent the Cherokees from becoming alarmed and fleeing en masse, "the consequence of which would be the utter destruction of this part of the country & an unavoidable warr with these people."<sup>3</sup>

The warriors responsible for the mischief in Bedford, whether Cherokee or not (and the consensus quickly said that they were) did not represent the Cherokee nation. The divisions between the whites and the Indians reflected the discord occurring back home for the Indians. Many Cherokees were still scouting for Bouquet and Forbes, and many were still loyal to the British cause. William Byrd sang the praises of three of his Cherokees as

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<sup>2</sup>Marion Tinling, ed., "Some Unpublished Correspondence of William Byrd III," *VMHB*, 88:3 (July 1980), 280.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, 281.

late as August 24, 1758, for returning from a scouting expedition with two scalps.<sup>4</sup> The consensus that Byrd had obtained in 1756, however, was now gone for good. More and more Cherokees returned home with stories of maltreatment at the hands of the whites. Many of the Indians who returned to Cherokee country in the summer of 1758 were not the deserters of whom Bouquet had spoken with such contempt. Many were simply returning from having faithfully served the British as intelligence gatherers or warriors. These Indians no doubt thought that the least the whites could do to show their appreciation was to provide for them on their long journey homeward. The discontent soon spread throughout the ranks, eventually leaving Byrd to lament to his commanding officer that "every one of my cursed Indians has left me."<sup>5</sup>

Without the expected tribute from the farmers whose homes lay between the battlefield and the Cherokee nation, the Indians turned to a practice that was a natural part of their everyday life: raiding. In one instance following close on the heels of the Bedford County disturbance, whites at Rabl's Fort in South Carolina turned away an Indian raiding party. The bodies of the dead intruders were then cut up and fed to local dogs.<sup>6</sup>

The alliance also suffered as a result of peace negotiations between Forbes and northern tribes such as the Delaware. The Cherokees had understood the agreement to call for the destruction of both the French *and* their Indian allies; the peace overtures between the English and these rival tribes must therefore have seemed treacherous to them. Francis Halkett wrote to Washington from Philadelphia on May 4, 1758, to say that "Thier is a Treaty on foot just now between the Shawanes, the Delawares, and the people of this province" and that he was "very sorry to learn, that several of the Cherokees have taken into their heads to ramble this way."<sup>7</sup> Halkett understood that the peace talks could

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 288.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 287.

<sup>6</sup>Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokees and South Carolinians Through the Era of Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 128.

<sup>7</sup>PGW, 164.

potentially alienate the southern Indians, but he also understood that Forbes was determined to forge ahead with the negotiations.

Such attempts to make peace with the northern tribes were troubling news to the men garrisoning Fort Loudon in Cherokee country. The officers there immediately held a council and passed a resolution, which they forwarded to their superiors. The resolution said:

We considered that, The Cherokees are now firmly engaged by our means in a war against the French & their Indians, & having received some small losses, have frequently begged of us not to think of making Peace till they as well as we are satisfied.

They are a jealous people, and may probably say, when they hear as peace is proposed, that we are about to do, what they have often told us they were afraid of, namely, that as soon as they had firmly engaged, and incensed many Nations, by their friendship for the English, we should make peace and leave them to be destroyed.

The men at Loudon understood that these peace talks would only serve to exacerbate the problems between the Cherokees and the British.<sup>8</sup>

The English and the Cherokees each made noble efforts to avert a war. Once the blood had been shed, however, the cycle seemingly became self-perpetuating, and the cooler heads on both sides were being overcome by calls to arms. The spring of 1758 brought with it much violence, including one exchange where white settlers killed thirty Cherokees. In April 1757, the Virginia legislature had passed a resolution paying hefty rewards for Indian scalps. This same piece of legislation also made it a felony to kill a "friendly Indian," but the Virginia lawmakers soon found it difficult to tell which scalps belonged to what tribe.<sup>9</sup> As a result the lawmakers were forced to repeal the law in the summer of 1758.

The campaign against Fort Duquesne had also served to weaken the bond between the English and the Cherokees. Little Carpenter complained that Forbes had not supplied

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<sup>8</sup>*VMHB* 19 (Jan. 1911), 66.

<sup>9</sup>Hening, *Statutes*, 2:121-23.



them with "so much as... a little paint."<sup>10</sup> As a result, the influential Cherokee leader had abandoned the mission two days before the taking of the fort. Forbes responded by detaining and disarming the Cherokees who followed Little Carpenter. This action only served to further anger the Indians. Although Little Carpenter worked diligently for peace after the war, his voice was not heard by his fellow Cherokees. Little Carpenter had been a delegate to the court of King George II in 1730 and had perhaps been impressed with the sheer number of the king's subjects and with the ostentatious display of wealth he and the other Indians were shown.<sup>11</sup> But for once his counsel was not heeded by his people. The insults were mounting in the minds of the Cherokee people.

Back in Cherokee country, away from the front lines on the Virginia frontiers, circumstances were no better. Carolina settlers were moving even farther onto Cherokee hunting grounds, and there were rumors that soldiers from Fort Prince George had even raped Cherokee women while the warriors were up north (putting an interesting twist on Bouquet's mockery of the native need to go home to see their wives).<sup>12</sup> In the summer of 1759, only one year after the Cherokee scouts had played such a key part in helping the British drive the French from the Ohio Valley, tensions quickly escalated. Cherokees living in the Lower Towns of their nation revolted against the English, an action that culminated in the killing and scalping of three whites: a packhorse man, a soldier, and a trader.<sup>13</sup> The violence sent the settlers who had encroached upon Cherokee lands scrambling for the shelter of Fort Prince George and Fort Loudon. Several days later, these same Cherokees, against the wishes of the Little Carpenter, showed up at Fort Loudon demanding ammunition. When their demands were refused, they set up road

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<sup>10</sup>P.M. Hamer, "Fort Loudon in the Cherokee War, 1758-1761," *North Carolina Historical Review*, 2 (1925): 443.

<sup>11</sup>Duane H. King, *Cherokee Heritage* (Cherokee: Cherokee Communications, 1988), 96.

<sup>12</sup>Hamer, "Fort Loudon," 445.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 445.

blocks on all the roads leading into the fort. Open warfare had not yet been declared by either side, but the siege of Fort Loudon had begun.

Fort Loudon stood near the present-day city of Knoxville, Tennessee. Early in the war, the Cherokees had considered the fort a good buffer against French attempts at vengeance and had induced artisans and other whites to move near the fort by offering them gifts of land.<sup>14</sup> Lying some two hundred miles from the nearest South Carolina outpost, the fort held little significance to the English other than as one of the stipulations the Cherokees had made before they agreed to take up the hatchet against the French. The siege of the fort was a direct result of the early skirmishes between whites and Cherokees. As a result of the murder of whites along the Virginia frontier, in nearby North Carolina counties, and in South Carolina itself, Governor William Henry Lyttelton of South Carolina had demanded that the Cherokees turn over the twenty-four Indians suspected of killing the settlers. Lyttelton, an English aristocrat with great ambition, did not have the extensive network of intelligence that had been available to his predecessor Glen. The new governor relied heavily on a few military advisors who answered to him directly, ignoring "information from a broad network of traders and shopkeepers throughout western Carolina and the Cherokee country."<sup>15</sup> Lyttelton wrote to William Pitt on December 29, 1759, that he would like to pardon these Indians, as a show of good-will to the Cherokee people.<sup>16</sup> But Lyttelton failed to convey this to the Cherokee people. Rather than wait for the twenty-four murderers to be brought in, he demanded that an equal number of Cherokee hostages be left at Fort Prince George to ensure Cherokee compliance with the agreement. Historian P.M. Hamer wrote that this was

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<sup>14</sup>VMHB, 30: 89.

<sup>15</sup>Hatley, *The Dividing Paths*, 109.

<sup>16</sup>Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt*, 230.

viewed "as an act of aggression...even the Little Carpenter could not satisfactorily explain."<sup>17</sup>

When the Little Carpenter heard the terms set out by Governor Lyttleton, "he had wept, knowing that these men had acted by the basic law of family and clan and that he must deliver them to death in order to bring peace."<sup>18</sup> But he also had his own fortunes to think about. The Little Carpenter understood the amount of political influence he would risk by agreeing to Lyttleton's demands. The only course available to him to insure peace was anathema to the Cherokee people. Neither of the governor's requirements made any sense to the majority of the tribe. They did not understand taking hostages who were not involved in the crime. Nor did they understand accusing Cherokee warriors of murder in an action that they felt was brought about by the increasing encroachment and aggression of white settlers.

The fate of these Indian hostages seems to have been the final blow that took the conflict from mere skirmishing to outright warfare. Soldiers attempted to place their Cherokee prisoners in leg irons, a move the Indians resisted with violence. Taking up knives and hatchets they had hidden away, the Indians managed to kill one soldier and wound another. At this, the other soldiers pounced upon the Indians, killing all of them.<sup>19</sup> When news of this debacle reached the Cherokees in early 1760, the reaction was an all-out cry for war. John Kelly, a trader near the Cherokee country, was one of the first to feel their wrath. Kelly was killed and his body quartered, with his hands posted on stakes near the Hiwassee townhouse to send a message to all whites in the area.<sup>20</sup> Little Carpenter, realizing that events were rapidly spiraling out of control, left for the woods

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<sup>17</sup>Hamer, "Fort Loudon," 449.

<sup>18</sup>David Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier, 1740-62* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 186.

<sup>19</sup>Hamer, "Fort Loudon," 450.

<sup>20</sup>Corkran, *Cherokee Frontier*, 191.

with his family. He could not bear to watch what he believed would be the destruction of his nation.

The soldiers at Fort Loudon were quickly running out of provisions. The fort was heavily armed, making it impossible for the Indians to take it by force, but without food there was little the whites could do but wait. Henry Timberlake, a lieutenant in the army, reported that many of the soldiers had food smuggled into them by their Cherokee wives, but this practice was quickly discovered and ended.<sup>21</sup> Major General Amherst, realizing that the situation was grim, dispatched 1,300 men under the leadership of Col. Archibald Montgomery to relieve the troops and to discipline the rebellious Cherokees.

Montgomery had hoped to engage the Cherokees with a force considerably larger than the one he led into the field. But even with a significant raise in pay, militia recruitment stalled. A backcountry observer noted that "I can find in my mind not one proper person that I think will take Commission."<sup>22</sup> Montgomery even found traditional native enemies of the Cherokees hesitant to join the campaign. The same observer who had noted the lack of passion among the whites noted that even the Catawbas had "no relish for going against the Cherokee."<sup>23</sup> On June 27, 1760, Montgomery, still miles away from Fort Loudon, was turned back by a force of Cherokee warriors. The British colonel lost twenty men and had seventy more wounded. He was forced to return to Charleston, and Fort Loudon was once again left on its own.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, on August 7, the fort surrendered to the Cherokees. The terms were simple: the whites were to leave the fort to the Indians, who would in turn escort them safely to Fort Prince George. On August 8, the Cherokees officially took over the garrison,

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<sup>21</sup>Thomas H. Cook, "Old Fort Loudon, The First English Settlement in What is Now the State of Tennessee, and the Fort Loudon Massacre," *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, 7 (1921), 111-133.

<sup>22</sup>Hatley, *The Dividing Paths*, 129.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Hamer, "Fort Loudon," 452.

"moving their families into the barracks and officers' houses."<sup>25</sup> The Indians escorted the whites for one day, taking them as far as Cane Creek, about fifteen miles from Loudon. On the next day, August 10, however, the Cherokees attacked the whites, killing many and taking the rest prisoner. Over the next several months, the Cherokees ransomed these prisoners to the South Carolina government. Such was the event that became known as the Fort Loudon massacre. The English were incensed at the treatment their men had received at the hands of the Cherokees and were determined to break the back of the powerful southern tribe.

In 1761 Lieutenant James Grant was sent from New York with a battalion of the 77th to destroy the Cherokees; he ravaged the Lower Towns, which had been the primary instigators of the war, and then proceeded to plunder the Middle Towns.<sup>26</sup> The Cherokees were no match for the British who, with no French threat to speak of anymore, were able to concentrate their forces on the Indian nation. The Cherokees sued for peace and the war came to an end.<sup>27</sup>

In 1756, the Cherokees had been the jewel in the crown of the likes of Robert Dinwiddie, George Washington, and William Byrd III. The southern Indians were clearly "a part of the political landscape" and "the colonists could not afford to undertake diplomatic initiatives without at least a glance west."<sup>28</sup> Despite wariness on the part of professionals like John Forbes and Henry Bouquet, the Indians had proven themselves on the battlefields of North America. They had led the British to Fort Duquesne, and they had bled and died beside white men.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid, 455.

<sup>26</sup>Corkran, *The Cherokee Frontier*, 207.

<sup>27</sup>Hamer, "Fort Loudon," 457.

<sup>28</sup>Hatley, *The Dividing Paths*, 27.

Yet at the end of 1761, they, like the French they had helped to defeat, were a defeated nation. The Cherokee nation would not share in the victory of the Seven Years' War, although it was a victory they helped to forge. Instead, they would try to piece their own lives back together. The Cherokees had played a part in realigning the powers of the world, but they found themselves outsiders looking in on the new world order. Unpredictable, often unreliable, and hopelessly divided, they had seen the might of colonial militias and British regulars turned against their homes. Although only a few years before George Washington had extolled the values of their fighting methods and William Byrd III had begged for blankets to clothe his men "after the Indian fashion," they were now merely dispensable savages. Most whites viewed the Indians as ungrateful and treacherous. Had the natives not, they asked, turned their backs on their benefactors to plunder the countryside, killing indiscriminately as they made their way back home?

In the end, however, it was not a matter of the Indians being turncoats or the whites being ungrateful. It was a cultural chasm that could not be bridged without a dialogue that war and ethnocentrism on both sides rendered impossible. The Indians had little tolerance for the pace of the white man's warfare and the whites grew tired of constantly having to coax their allies to stay. Perhaps the bloody and tragic end was the logical conclusion to what, at best, amounted to a tenuous and temporary partnership.

Still, we cannot make excuses for the exemption of the Indian from the histories of the Seven Years' War. The Indian mode of warfare that the British had once eschewed would again be employed by the colonists, as it had been against the French, to toss another European colonial power from the continent. Upon the natives, as George Washington had said, much depended. This omission of the American Indians from the histories of the Seven Years' War have inevitably led to an omission of the Indians' role in the American Revolution. Historian Colin G. Calloway notes that American histories have accorded

"Indians a minimal and negative role in the story of the Revolution: they chose the wrong side and they lost."<sup>29</sup> Failure to document and discuss the importance of the American Indian in the Seven Years' War has also led to the national fallacy that, in the intervening years between Squanto and Sitting Bull, the Indians were but a shadowy presence on the continent, ceding land and killing the occasional settler, without making any contribution of lasting value to a developing nation. Calloway further points out that "white Americans excluded Indians from the republican society the Revolution created."<sup>30</sup> The first step in rectifying this exclusion may be to rectify the history itself. This is a matter of simple, overdue *inclusion*, not revision.

The loss of a European rivalry upon which to play considerably narrowed the maneuvering room for Indian leaders and people. They were now at the mercy of the whites' good intentions, of which there were precious few. The tenuous peace that had existed between the Cherokees and the Iroquois exploded into all-out war shortly after the conclusion of the Cherokee War, leaving the Cherokees further devastated. The British had themselves destroyed "fifteen towns and 1400 acres of crops" and they were in no mood to deny the Iroquois their own booty from their weakened southern brethren.<sup>31</sup> Unlike before, the British placed no pressure on the two groups to stop the fighting. In fact, this time it was the Cherokees who asked the British to help bring about peace with the Iroquois. But colonial officials were in no mood to play mediator. As Theda Perdue observes, "Now that the French had been defeated, the British could permit the Indians to destroy each other."<sup>32</sup> Not only could they permit it, it was in their best national interest to do so.

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<sup>29</sup>Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, xii.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, xv.

<sup>31</sup>Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois," 143.

<sup>32</sup>Perdue, "Cherokee Relations with the Iroquois," 145.

The cooperation of the southern Indians had prevented the possibility of a two-front war for the English. It had given the English additional manpower. They had trained, by example, their white counterparts in the art of guerilla warfare. The Indians contributed to the victory that contributed to their ultimate downfall as a political force on the continent they called home. Henceforth their most powerful bargaining chip lay in their ability to wage war against the more numerous and better armed white colonists. Diplomacy, like Indian dreams of parity, was gone.



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