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The Ohio Company  
of Virginia



# THE OHIO COMPANY OF VIRGINIA

AND THE  
WESTWARD MOVEMENT  
1748-1792

A chapter in the  
History of the Colonial Frontier

by

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To my wife  
IRENE BAILEY  
who has been a constant help  
in preparing this volume





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## Preface

Writing in 1846 James H. Perkins stated: "No full history of the west can be written until the facts relative to the great land companies are better known." The organizations to which Perkins referred were the Ohio, Loyal, Mississippi, Traders', Susquehanna, Greenbrier, Henderson, and Walpole companies. Of these, the earliest and by far the most important was the Ohio company of 1748. Modern writers on the westward movement are beginning to place more emphasis on this company, but for the most part, such lack of information which Perkins decried has continued.

The history of the company varied inversely to England's success against France. When England's position was insecure, the company received British approval and support, but when Britain's star was in the ascendant, favoritism toward the company waned. After 1763, having outlived its *raison d'etre*, it was allowed to die a natural death through neglect and the endless litigation in which it became involved.

The importance of the company cannot be judged by the fact that it ended more or less a business failure. There were periods when the Ohio company was highly important in the westward movement. Especially was this true between the years 1748 and 1755;

but no complete study of the frontier or of the westward movement for the thirty years prior to the American Revolution can be made without special reference to this company.

The history of the Ohio company divides itself quite naturally into four main periods, the first of which is by far the most significant. This first period, 1748-1754, includes the company's formative years, its organization, early activities, Gist's explorations, the conflict with Pennsylvania traders, Logstown treaty, and finally, the rivalry with the French in the region of the Ohio. The second phase covers roughly the years of the French and Indian war. This period is marked by the ruination of much of the company's property by both the French and the English. It also shows its members making serious attempts to recover their losses soon after General Forbes's capture of Fort Duquesne. The failure to induce Colonel Bouquet to fall in with the company's plans aided in bringing on the Proclamation of 1763, and thus is entered the third period, which covers the years 1763-1776. This span is marked by legal action and petitions on the part of the company to regain its former position and includes competition with rival organizations, especially the Vandalia group. The fourth period, relatively unimportant, covers the closing years of the company's existence and includes particularly the attempts of George Mason to gain recognition of the company's claims in the Virginia assembly. This final phase shows the organization ending in dismal failure, but this does not detract in any way from its earlier success and significance.

For assistance in obtaining access to unpublished documents I am indebted to many persons in the United States, Canada, and England. In particular I wish to express my gratitude to Miss Mabel C. Weeks of the New York public library; Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg of the Wisconsin state historical society; Dr. Henry W. Shoemaker, archivist, of the Pennsylvania state library; Dr. Randolph G. Adams, librarian at the William L. Clements library; Dr. Thomas P. Martin, former acting-chief of the Division of Manuscripts at the Library of Congress; Dr. Julian P. Boyd, librarian of the historical society of Pennsylvania; and to Dr. Lawrence G. Wroth, librarian at the John Carter Brown library.

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## Origin of the Ohio Company



## Origin of the Ohio Company

The Ohio company was organized in 1748 by a group of influential men, most of whom were Virginians. The organization was effected in part for the purpose of securing a share of the rich Indian trade west of the Alleghenies, a trade that had been profitably exploited prior to that time by the Pennsylvanians and the French. The company also planned to build forts, make settlements, construct roads, and to develop this country. But a study of the Ohio company is far more than a study of a scheme in land speculation. It is a study of explorations, of Indian problems and policy, of colonial jealousy and conflict, of traders and of traders' problems, of the closing struggle between France and England for possession of North America, of British colonial and imperial policy, and of Virginia and Pennsylvania boundary disputes. Therefore the history of the Ohio company is a factor of major importance in the story of frontier advance into the Ohio country.

The Ohio company made its beginning in a setting filled with grave international problems. Most of Europe had been in a nearly constant state of war for the preceding fifty years. The company was formed at that period of American and European history which saw England and France fighting for supremacy on the continent and in the colonial field. In that

conflict this seemingly insignificant company had an important role to play. The weapons of war are largely made in peace time; the Ohio company, organized during the peace between the King George's and French and Indian wars, was conceived as a weapon to be used by the British against the French. At least some of the rivalry between Great Britain and France was due to trade competition and by desires to gain more land and possessions. For instance, the fur trade was to France what the gold of Mexico and Peru was to Spain. England too was reaping extensive profits from her traffic in skins. Any attempt to cut in on this lucrative trade would inevitably cause trouble between the two nations. Hence one reason for the importance of the Ohio company: one of its chief functions was to serve as a trading organization on the Ohio valley frontier.

By 1748 the frontier was moving westward with ever-increasing momentum; one hundred forty years of continual expansion had found many English colonists establishing settlements in the mountains in the rear of North and South Carolina, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. As these mountains contained many great lateral valleys, for a number of years the frontiersmen moved north and south rather than directly west. In time, however, the lure of rich land and the prosperous fur trade began to interest men in the region west of the mountains, especially the Ohio valley. English settlements had not extended into the Alleghenies by 1748, yet the Indian trade in the Ohio region was already well developed. The fight for the control of the trade of such Indians as the

Iroquois, Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware was destined to cause great rivalry between the traders of the French and the English. The possibilities of commerce were too great to leave unexploited.

Previous to the period of 1744-1748 England had not worked out any comprehensive western land colonization policy in America, but in the course of King George's war she began to fear the French in the Ohio country. By the close of this war it seemed possible that the Ohio valley might be secured by the French, and, as a result, England be limited to the region east of the Alleghenies. This potentiality of the enemy at her very back door forced Great Britain to adopt an energetic western frontier policy.

Both Great Britain and France made claims to the area but neither had any substantial settlements to back up their pretensions. The French laid claim to this locality through priority of discovery, through their building of forts, through a grant from their king,<sup>1</sup> and through an agreement with Great Britain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Lettre du ministre a M. Le Mis Duquesne," may 15, 1752, Arch. Nat. Col. F 3, 14/30-32 vo; "Lettre circulaire," february 19, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/158-162; Le Duc de Mirepoix, february 10, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/114-124 vo; Minister to Mirepoix, february 3, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/81-90; Reply to the letter of february 3, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/94-96; Minister to Mirepoix, february 19, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/175-192; Pedro Valmediana to Nicholas Tsparaytia, september 26, 1756, A. E. Angl., 440/290.

<sup>2</sup> William Shirley to the Earl of Holderness, may 1, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/243-253 (Library of Congress transcript). In referring to this claim, Governor Shirley wrote: "This [the French claim to the Ohio] is contained in the following part of the French officer's answer to those Indians . . . all the land and waters on this side of the Alleghenny hills (or Apalachian mountains) are *mine*, on the other side, *theirs* (meaning the English). *This is agreed on between the two Crowns on the other side of the waters.*"

The English on the other hand met argument for argument.<sup>3</sup> They argued that the region was not first discovered by La Salle but by the English; that it was included in grants made to Virginia in 1609; that the British had as many traders and trading posts in the Ohio valley as did the French, and indeed after 1748 they probably had more;<sup>4</sup> and that no agreements existed between France and Great Britain which recognized this territory as French.<sup>5</sup>

England claimed this region on these several grounds and also by reason of purchase from the lawful owners, the native Indian proprietors. The Iroquois claimed sovereignty over this area by right of conquest; by the treaty of Lancaster in 1744 they sold this territory to the English, and this sale, the English contended, was sufficient title to the land.<sup>6</sup> The French were as skillful in refuting these contentions as the English had been in meeting those of the French. They naturally ridiculed the authority of an English king to make grants within French territory, and as for rights acquired from the Indians

<sup>3</sup> *State of the British and French colonies in North America*, 117-128; Mirepoix to the minister, february 28, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438/232-242.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, january 29, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/84 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>5</sup> William Shirley to the Earl of Holderness, may 1, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/243-253 (Library of Congress transcript). Of this agreement Shirley wrote: "What treaty or agreement is here referr'd to, I am at a loss to guess. . . Neither is there to be found in any preceeding or subsequent treaty between the two Crowns, concerning their respective possessions in America, anything which carries the least appearance of such an agreement."

<sup>6</sup> "Some additions to the accounts sent from Virginia, concerning the extent and limits of that colony, and the encroachments that have been made upon it," april 14, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/429-440 (Library of Congress transcript).

by the English, the French denied that the Iroquois held any sovereignty over the Ohio Indians. To make matters worse, even the English did not agree among themselves as to their own rights in the area. For example, Governor James Glen of South Carolina claimed it belonged to the French.<sup>7</sup> Thus control of the Ohio country was in a state of confusion.

The colonial wars to the end of 1748 were inconclusive, and practically no attention was given to the Ohio country by either party. But by the close of the King George's war in 1748, it had become obvious that the Ohio valley was the most vital of any of the disputed territory. If the French gained the Ohio, it meant limiting the English colonies to the east of the Alleghenies; if it were gained by the English, it meant first that the French in Canada would be forced to reach Louisiana by a circuitous route; and second, that it would be an entering wedge to divide New France from Louisiana. England desperately needed the Ohio country; without it her western frontier was the Allegheny ridges. Her subjects would, moreover, be excluded from the profitable Indian trade.

King George's war had given Great Britain a decided advantage in this region. The British fleet's ability successfully to shut off French goods from trade with the Indians gave Great Britain the necessary opportunity to get started. If she were not to lose this advantage she must perforce find a way to settle the Ohio territory and thus gain it beyond all argument, because possession would prove decisive.

<sup>7</sup> James Glen to the Earl of Holderness, June 25, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/596-610 (Library of Congress transcript).

It was under such circumstances that the Ohio company presented its petition for land in the Ohio country. Such a move coincided with England's need for some agency to develop for her the Ohio region. Had the Ohio company not stepped forward at this particular time England would probably have been forced to develop it for herself. Thus the ambitions of the members of the Ohio company were in agreement with the objectives of the British ministry, since both were to further colonial trade and to prevent French occupation of the Ohio.

From the time of Alexander Spotswood until 1748 little had been done either in the way of strengthening the Virginia frontier or of attempting to acquire the Ohio valley. In 1720 Spotswood had been instrumental in securing recognition by the British government of the need for action in the west to forestall the French,<sup>8</sup> but his schemes merely pushed the Virginia frontier farther toward the Alleghenies.

The first known record of a petition by a British subject for land actually in the Ohio country was in the case of James Patton.<sup>9</sup> Patton had explored the Ohio region at his own expense and in 1743 had petitioned the Virginia government for "200,000 acres of land on three branches of the Mississippi and the

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<sup>8</sup> *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations (1719-1722)*, 273-299, 310.

<sup>9</sup> "Petition of James Patton and others, 200,000 acres on Woods river, 40 or 50 miles to the westward of the head springs of Roanoke river and 500 miles east from the great river Mississippi, was order . . . for further consideration; but they were to be preferred to subsequent petitioners," october 29, 1743, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1 (Historical society of Pennsylvania).



waters thereof, on which I proposed to settle one family for each 1,000 acres." <sup>10</sup> But not knowing the attitude of the home government on such a matter, fearing the granting of the land might precipitate a conflict with the French, and, further, not seeing any advantage to be gained by the colony from the "handfull of poor people that might venture to settle on these waters," <sup>11</sup> the Virginia government refused to make the land grant. It was promised Patton, however, that if war broke out between France and Great Britain, his petition would be granted. Thereupon Patton wrote out his arguments as to the feasibility of his scheme, "showing the great distance it was from any of the French governments, what a usefull barrier might be there in time between the French, French Indian and Virginia and of what use it might be to the latter by commerce and how it wold increase his majesty's revenues by other undertaken who doubtless would follow my example should I succeed in it." <sup>12</sup>

As Patton feared that "the noise" of his supplication might spread abroad and that other applicants might be entered ahead of him and consequently be able to reap the rewards of his industry, he requested that the council enter his petition on their books, stating that he was to have preference with regard to the two hundred thousand acres of land because he was the first petitioner. In april, 1745, Patton\*

<sup>10</sup> James Patton to John Blair, january, 1753, Draper manuscripts, 100175 (State historical society of Wisconsin).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 100175.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 100175.

was called before the council at which time he was granted one hundred thousand acres of land.<sup>13</sup> He was promised that as soon as he complied with his agreement to settle one hundred families on the land, he would receive the other one hundred thousand acres. His grant was located on the Woods and Holstons rivers.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, april, 1745, a similar grant was given to John Robinson, then president of the council.<sup>15</sup>

It is entirely possible that out of this concession grew the idea of the Ohio company. Thomas Lee was a member of the council at the time the grants were made, and to a man who was as interested in the west as was Lee, such action could hardly fail to have been impressive.\* It was less than two years later that Thomas Lee, Thomas Cresap, Lawrence Washington, and others began their active planning for the formation of the Ohio company.

It is also possible that the idea of organizing a new company was due to the fact that one year before this grant was made, Lee had been a Virginia commissioner at the Lancaster conference,<sup>16</sup> and in bargaining to secure the Ohio lands from the Indians, he might easily have thought out the scheme. A third possibility lies in the fact that Thomas Cresap, frontiersman, had been for some time in contact with the

<sup>13</sup> Grant to "James Patton and others, one hundred thousand acres in Augusta county in three branches of the Mississippi river, the one known by the name of Woods river and the other two to the westward thereof," april 26, 1745, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I (Pennsylvania historical society).

<sup>14</sup> James Patton to John Blair, january, 1753, Draper manuscripts, 100176.

<sup>15</sup> "To John Robinson Esq. and others one hundred thousand acres . . ." april 26, 1745, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>16</sup> See page 104.

Washingtons and Lees, and his discussions with them of necessity pertained to the west. Therefore, it is conceivable that at one of their meetings the idea of the company was suggested. At any rate, Richard Peters said in July, 1748, that it was "that vile fellow Cresap who had suggested a scheme to Col. Lee and other great men in Virginia to make trading houses at Alleghenny."<sup>17</sup>

On November 6, 1747, Sir William Gooch, the lieutenant-governor of Virginia, wrote to the Board of Trade informing them of the requests of several men in partnership who desired a grant of land lying on the western side of the Alleghenies.<sup>18</sup> Shortly thereafter, John Hanbury, a London merchant, laid before the Board a petition in which the purposes of the company were clearly stated, namely, to settle the Ohio country and to extend the British trade among the Indians beyond the Alleghenies. Hanbury argued that all of this land had been secured for Great Britain from the Iroquois at the treaty of Lancaster in 1744 and that not only the Iroquois but also the Ohio Indians had expressed their desire for British goods. He stated "that by laying hold of this favourable disposition of these Indians they may be forever fixed in British interest and the prosperity and safety of the British colony be effectually secured, and which your petitioners are ready and willing to undertake."<sup>19</sup> He then discussed the merits of the Ohio country, giving special emphasis to its climate, fertil-

<sup>17</sup> Herbert L. Osgood, *The American colonies in the eighteenth century*, IV, 78.

<sup>18</sup> Sir William Gooch to the board of trade, November 6, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1326/547, 554 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>19</sup> Petition of John Hanbury, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/54 (Library of Congress transcript).

ity, and accessibility. He emphasized the advantages to be gained for England by such a company, first, because it would strengthen the frontier, and second, still more important, it would be of direct economic aid to England by bringing her the rich fur trade of the Ohio country. At the same time it would promote the consumption of British manufactured goods, increase shipping and commerce, and augment the government's revenue by additional quit-rents.<sup>20</sup> Thus the company would bring wealth to its individual members through profits from the fur trade and land speculation, aid the British mercantilists, serve the Crown by adding revenue, and benefit the British colonies through added strength and protection.

When the above-mentioned persons in partnership, under the name of the Ohio company, requested this grant of land from Sir William Gooch, he refused their petition. He conceded the grant would prove beneficial to the colony but hesitated to act pending explicit instructions from the Crown.<sup>21</sup> On January 19, 1748, the Board of Trade acquainted the Duke of Newcastle, one of the secretaries of state, with the contents of Gooch's letter of November 6, and requested him to lay the matter before his majesty.<sup>22</sup>

On the same date the Board wrote Sir William Gooch, reminding him that as lieutenant-governor

\* <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/56.

✓ <sup>21</sup> Sir William Gooch to the board of trade, November 6, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1326/547 (Library of Congress transcript).

✗ <sup>22</sup> Gooch to the board of trade, June 16, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/7 (Library of Congress transcript); Papers relating to the Ohio company (from the archives of the board of trade and plantations in London) printed in Berthold Fernow, *The Ohio valley in colonial days*, appendix D, 242.

of Virginia he had power to make such a grant, and desired to know what obstacles prevented him from taking such action. They also requested additional information as to the purpose and terms of the grant as well as the location of the lands.<sup>23</sup> In answering this letter Gooch told the Board that the only objection he had to making the grant was the possibility of giving offense to the French at a time when there were hopes of securing a treaty insuring general peace. He stated that the terms the company asked were four years' time to make their surveys, a privilege customarily given grantees whose lands lay at some distance. As to the location, the proposed grant of two hundred thousand acres of land was to lie west of the Alleghenies on the branches of the Mississippi river.<sup>24</sup>

On february 23, 1748, the Privy Council took the matter under consideration and on that same day ordered the Board of Trade to determine whether the making of the grant would be advantageous for Virginia and British interests.<sup>25</sup> The Board, after an extensive study of the matter, approved the proposed grant on september 2, 1748. The Board took occasion to stress the advantages thereby accruing to England. They were particularly impressed with the possibilities of the company as a means of checking the encroachments of the French in the Ohio region. However, they felt that to insure protection to the interests

<sup>23</sup> Gooch to the board of trade, june 16, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/7 (Library of Congress transcript).

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

<sup>25</sup> Committee of council for plantation affairs to board of trade, february 23, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/1 (Library of Congress transcript).

of the Crown certain conditions and regulations should be laid down in the grant. As a fort would strengthen the English position on the frontier, and as the petitioners had proposed to build a fort at their own expense, it was suggested that the building of such a structure be a condition of the grant. To make certain that settlers would not leave lands where they were already paying quit-rents and move to the Ohio company's property, it was suggested that no such persons be admitted to the company's land.<sup>26</sup>

After considering the above report the committee of Council agreed with the suggestions of the Board, and on november 24, 1748, ordered that the commissioners prepare a set of instructions to be sent to Sir William Gooch. These instructions were to include previously determined points as well as any additional ones the commissioners might think necessary.<sup>27</sup> This set of instructions was then to be returned to the committee for further consideration.

On december 13, 1748, the Board of Trade completed the above order and sent to the committee of the Privy Council a document which contained additional instructions to Sir William Gooch in which were included the points that the Board had previously suggested.<sup>28</sup>

On february 9, 1749, the lords of the committee considered not only these additional instructions to the Virginia governor, but also John Hanbury's pe-

<sup>26</sup> Berthold Fernow, *The Ohio valley in colonial days*, appendix D, 245-246, 248.

<sup>27</sup> Order of the lords of committee of council, november 24, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/21 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>28</sup> Draught of additional instructions to Sir William Gooch, december 13, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/61-64 (Library of Congress transcript).

tition.<sup>29</sup> This latter request confused the Privy Council for a time as they noted: "And their lordships observing that the lands proposed to be granted by the said instruction, are situated in the same place with those prayed for by the afore-mentioned petition of John Hanbury and others, and may probably have some relation to each other." This situation had been caused by the fact that in his letter to the king, Gooch had referred to the petitioners merely as "persons in partnership," while Hanbury actually named them. Here indeed was for the Ohio company, even before it got started, an unexpected hurdle – a harbinger of the obstacles that somehow seemed fated to plague the organization throughout its history. As a result of studying the two reports together, the committee again returned them to the Board of Trade for their further deliberation.<sup>30</sup>

On tuesday, february 14, the Board of Trade reconsidered the Ohio company petition. That body was quick to sense that there was no conflict between the two petitions; they felt it unnecessary for them to open up further correspondence with Lee and his associates in America – especially since John Hanbury was in London and available for conference.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, as requested, Hanbury was present at the Board's meeting on february 16 but was unable to

<sup>29</sup> Lords of trade to the lords of the committee of the privy council, december 13, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/61; Draught of additional instruction to Sir William Gooch, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/63-64 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>30</sup> Petition of John Hanbury, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/53-57 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>31</sup> *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations* (january, 1741-2 to december, 1749), 380.



proffer anything in addition to what was contained in his original petition.<sup>32</sup> On february 22, the Board agreed to draw up the new instructions to Sir William Gooch and another report to the lords of the committee of Council.<sup>33</sup> This was done the next day.<sup>34</sup> The Board explained to the Privy Council that they had questioned John Hanbury on the matter and that his answers had proven satisfactory. While the company sought certain privileges not usually extended by the Crown in making land grants, the Board were of opinion that because of the great distance from Virginia of the proposed tract and because of the obvious benefits to the British colonies, the grant should be made on the conditions tendered by the company. As a further aid, the Board recommended that when the first ten-year period had expired the company should be forced to pay quit-rent only on the land actually under cultivation.<sup>35</sup>

On march 16, 1749, it was ordered at the council meeting that the instructions to Gooch be prepared for the king's signature. Gooch was to be empowered to make the grant to the Ohio company of "two hundred thousand acres of land lying betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo's creek on the south side of the river Alligane otherwise the Ohio, and betwixt the two creeks and the Yellow creek on the north side of the river. . ." <sup>36</sup> In general terms this region lay in the \*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 382.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>35</sup> James Munro and Sir Almerie W. Fitzroy (eds.), *Acts of the privy council of England, colonial series*, IV, 55-58 (hereafter cited as *Acts of the privy council*).

\* <sup>36</sup> Order of council approving the draught of the additional instruction



vicinity of the forks of the Ohio and extended a considerable distance north, south, and west. It was specifically stated that this grant was within the colony of Virginia. It was further stipulated that as soon as the company erected a fort and settled their grant with two hundred families, an additional grant of three hundred thousand acres was to be given adjoining the earlier grant, and on similar terms. On July 13, 1749, Sir William Gooch made the grant to the company as he was instructed.<sup>37</sup>

With this act the negotiations were at an end. The scene of action moved from England to the colonies. If Gooch had so desired, the company could have been spared the difficulties of obtaining their grant direct from the king, but the fact that the British government sanctioned the grant has special significance. It was a decided departure from the usual procedure for granting land, yet the home government saw in the Ohio company such merits that they determined to force the Virginia lieutenant-governor to make the grant even if he did not so desire. It is also significant to note that Gooch was soon to be replaced by a more vigorous western expansionist who was friendly rather than antagonistic to the interests of the Ohio company. Certainly the tenor of the discussions indicated that England saw far more in the Ohio company than a mere land speculation company.

proposed by the board, march 16, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/93-96 (Library of Congress transcript).

\* <sup>37</sup> Minutes of the council, July 12, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/333 (Library of Congress transcript).



Personnel of the Ohio Company



## Personnel

The Ohio company was organized by no chance group of men. Instead, it consisted of the cream of Virginia aristocracy, and contained within its membership every element needful to make of it a great success. The leaders of the British government were not trusting England's future in the Ohio country and in the west to fate or to an unequipped, miscellaneous group of business adventurers. They were placing that future squarely on the shoulders of some of the most influential men in London and the colonies. With such a personnel as the backbone of this venture, the outlook appeared promising indeed. Now to examine this personnel as to political, intellectual, economic, and social status:

The company was made up of the following men: Colonel Thomas Lee, Colonel Thomas Nelson, Colonel Thomas Cresap, Lawrence Washington, Augustine Washington, George Washington, John Hanbury, Capel Hanbury, Osgood Hanbury, John Mercer, George Mercer, James Mercer, John Francis Mercer, Francis Thornton, John Carlyle, George Fairfax, George Mason, William Nimmo, Robert Dinwiddie, Robert Carter, Lunsford Lomax, Presley Thornton, John Tayloe, James Scott, Arthur Dobbs, Gawin Corbin, Nathaniel Chapman, Jacob Giles, James Wardrop, Daniel Cresap, Samuel Smith,

Richard Lee, Philip Ludwell Lee, Thomas Ludwell Lee, and John Edward Lomax. It would have been difficult to assemble a more formidable roster of men of colonial business and politics.

These individuals were all rich men with the possible exception of Thomas and Daniel Cresap, and even they, by the time the Ohio company was started, had amassed considerable holdings. Any number of illustrations could be cited as to their social prominence – for instance, few if any colonials could boast of the background of the Fairfaxes, Lees, Carters, and Masons. Intellectually, we find that the largest proportion had been educated in England. Politically, we find that of the total number of twenty-five Virginians who belonged to the company at one time or another, twenty were members of the House of Burgesses. Of those twenty, nine served in the council, as did the fathers of at least two others, the brothers of several, and the close relatives of most of them; two became presidents of the council and one became acting governor. One of the members was appointed lieutenant-governor of Virginia and served during the most critical years of colonial history. Of the non-Virginians, four were very influential London merchants, one was a governor of a neighboring colony, and five were Marylanders. All of these men were important, one being by far the outstanding man in all western Maryland's pre-revolutionary history.

An examination of the membership of Virginia's council at any time between 1748 to 1774 shows a continuous presence of Ohio company members. Picking at random, the council in 1752 contained three Ohio

company members. In 1762 it was composed of five persons who were Ohio company members at one time or another and two others who were close relatives of members.<sup>38</sup> Again, in 1770, the council contained five individuals who had had connections with the company.<sup>39</sup> The importance of the members of the Ohio company can be seen from a brief statement of their accomplishments.

Thomas Lee, the fourth son of Richard Lee, was born in 1690. Thomas did not receive an extensive, formal education, although he possessed a vigorous and alert mind. His inheritance from his father's vast estates was comparatively meager, since it consisted of about one thousand acres in Maryland and about one hundred and fifty in Northumberland county, Virginia. This relatively small inheritance may have had the effect, however, of stimulating him to a greater effort in building up a fortune.

At the age of twenty-three, Lee became resident manager of the five thousand acre Culpeper-Fairfax holdings in the Northern Neck of Virginia. This position had formerly been held by Robert Carter, commonly known as "King," but in 1710, Catherine,<sup>40</sup> Fairfax's widow, inherited the property, and as she was not satisfied with the amount of the quit-rents being sent to her in London by Carter, she decided to change resident agents.<sup>41</sup> Upon the advice of Thomas

<sup>38</sup> H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1280 (hereafter cited as *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 1389.

<sup>40</sup> Catherine was the daughter of Margaret, Lady Culpeper, wife of the man to whom the grant was originally made.

<sup>41</sup> Burton J. Hendrick, *The Lees of Virginia: biography of a family*, 51-59.

Corbin,<sup>42</sup> she accepted Thomas Lee as her new representative.<sup>43</sup> With his position forming one of the incentives, Thomas Lee became an ardent advocate of and participant in the westward movement. To a great degree, he was responsible for the rapid influx of Germans into northern Virginia and the Shenandoah valley. He extended his influence far into the western country. From the first, even while yet a young man, he was particularly interested in the west from a commercial standpoint, probably visioning the future possibilities of that country. Always anxious and eager to acquire land in the west, he secured 4,200 acres in the region later known as Fauquier county: he obtained several thousand acres in Loudoun county where later Leesburg was built, and in 1717 he bought "Hollis Cliffs" in Westmoreland.

In 1732 Colonel Lee, as he came to be called, became a member of the Virginia council in the place of "King" Carter.<sup>44</sup> Lee's activities in the council were always directed towards westward expansion. If one were to summarize his attitude toward the west, it could be stated in his own words to the Board of Trade: "The French are intruders into this America."<sup>45</sup> Along with Colonel William Beverley, Lee acted as Virginia's commissioner at the drawing up of the treaty of Lancaster in conjunction with rep-

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Corbin was an uncle of Thomas Lee. He was a London merchant, dealing in Virginia tobacco. His partner was Thomas Lee's brother, Richard Lee.

<sup>43</sup> Another uncle of Thomas Lee, Edmund Jenings, was the titular agent, but Thomas Lee became the real and active agent.

<sup>44</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, II, 813, 820.

<sup>45</sup> Lee to the board of trade, september 29, 1750, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/231-246 (Library of Congress transcript).



representatives from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Six Nations.<sup>46</sup> It has been suggested as a possibility that it was while at Lancaster that Lee first thought out the idea of the Ohio company. In this connection, Richard Peters,<sup>47</sup> secretary of the colony of Pennsylvania, and thus a natural "enemy" of the Ohio company, said of Thomas Lee that he had a "plotting head," and that he had proposed a plan to the British ministry to erect forts on the Ohio river, "as if thereby all the country might be secured to his majesty up to the Mississippi."<sup>48</sup>

By 1749 Lee had become the senior councilor, and as such, was the council's president.<sup>49</sup> Upon the departure for England of Sir William Gooch, governor of Virginia, Lee became Virginia's acting governor.<sup>50</sup> In this position he attempted to settle various frontier questions such as the Pennsylvania-Virginia boundary dispute and the French rights on the Ohio. At least part of his great interest in these affairs was due to his concern over the Ohio company, although he was also interested in the westward movement because of his intense desire "to extend the British empire."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> William M. Darlington (ed.), *Christopher Gist's journals with historical, geographical, and ethnological notes . . .*, 217-219 (hereafter cited as *Christopher Gist's journals*).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Peters was appointed provincial secretary and clerk of the council of Pennsylvania on february 14, 1743. *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 639.

<sup>48</sup> Herbert L. Osgood, *The American colonies in the 18th century*, IV, 78.

<sup>49</sup> Colonel Thomas Lee to board of trade, october 2, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/115 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/113-114 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>51</sup> This is particularly apparent in letters between Lee and James Hamilton in 1748 and 1749. *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, V, 422-425.

Colonel Thomas Lee died on february 12, 1751, at a time when the Ohio company could ill afford to lose his guiding hand. He was the force behind its organization and left no one, with the possible exception of Thomas Cresap, who knew enough of frontier conditions or who had drive enough to see that the company kept on with its mission—the furthering of British interests in western America. And Thomas Cresap, the most interested of the members, was in no position to take over the leadership because he lacked influence, was comparatively poor, and was not a Virginian. The loss of Lee might not have been felt so greatly by the company at a later date after its foundation had been laid, but coming at the very beginning, it nearly proved fatal.

The death of Thomas Lee, however, did not end the influence of the Lees in the company. In 1722 Thomas Lee had married Hannah Harrison Ludwell. From this marriage six sons were born, each one of whom became a man of distinction in his own right. Three of these sons, Philip Ludwell (1726-1755), Thomas Ludwell (1730-1778), and Richard Henry (1732-1794), became members of the company. Philip Ludwell Lee lived in Leesburg in Loudoun county. He became a burgess from Westmoreland in 1756,<sup>52</sup> and a member of the council in 1757.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), *Journals of the house of burgesses of Virginia* (1752-1755; 1756-1758), x (hereafter cited as *Journals of the house of burgesses*).

<sup>53</sup> Representation to Philip Ludwell Lee to be one of the council in Virginia in the place of William Beverley, june 30, 1756, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/290 (Library of Congress transcript); Warrant appointing Philip Ludwell Lee to the council in Virginia, july 7, 1756, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/292 (Library of Congress transcript); *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1159.

He remained in the council until at least 1773.<sup>54</sup> Thomas Ludwell Lee lived at "Berry Hill," in Stafford. He became a burgess in 1758 from Stafford county,<sup>55</sup> and continued in office through 1765.<sup>56</sup> Richard Henry Lee,<sup>57</sup> the third son of Thomas, was educated in both England and America.<sup>58</sup> In 1758 he was elected to the House of Burgesses from Westmoreland county<sup>59</sup> and remained a member until the outbreak of the Revolutionary war<sup>60</sup> although the journals of the House of Burgesses do not show him to have been present in 1775. Neither he nor his brothers were of great importance in the company, although all remained active members throughout its existence.

John Hanbury, one of the original patentees, was the first London representative of the Ohio company. He was very influential in governmental circles and very popular with the colonial shippers, especially the Virginia planters. He died June 22, 1758.<sup>61</sup> Two

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 1482.

<sup>55</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1758-1761)*, viii.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* (1761-1765), 314.

<sup>57</sup> Considerable doubt exists as to whether the Ohio company member was Richard Henry Lee or his cousin Richard Lee. The evidence, however, seems to indicate that both were members.

<sup>58</sup> Hendrick, *Lees of Virginia*, 86-87.

<sup>59</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755; 1756-1758)*, x.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* (1773-1776), 164.

<sup>61</sup> Of John Hanbury's death his brother Capel wrote on June 23, 1758: "22nd June, 1758: Died at Coggeshall, in Essex, Mr. Jno. Hanbury of London, merchant, not more eminent for his diligence, punctuality and success in trade, than truly amiable for the unaffected simplicity of his manners, the cheerfulness of his conversation and the integrity of his heart. In domestic life his memory must be revered as a kind master, a tender parent and a faithful friend. In the busy world he merited invariably that extensive confidence reposed in him; and from the great, the native dignity of his address (sincere yet affable, plain but not rude)

brothers, Capel and Osgood, were also members of the company, although not among the original petitioners. The name of the Hanbury trading house changed over a short period of years from John Hanbury to John and Capel Hanbury, and later to Capel and Osgood Hanbury.<sup>62</sup>

Samuel Smith was also a London merchant but never took an active part in Ohio company affairs. On July 4, 1763, his share of stock in the company was acquired by the Hanbury firm.<sup>63</sup>

Lawrence Washington has been given some reflected glory from his half-brother George, yet Lawrence was a man of ability in his own right. He was the son of Augustine and Jane (Butler) Washington, and the brother of Augustine Washington, who also was a member of the company. Lawrence was sent to school in London at the age of fifteen. Upon his return to Virginia he served in the army. In 1743 his father died leaving him a fairly large fortune. He was married that same year to the eldest daughter of William Fairfax.<sup>64</sup> In 1742 he became a member of the House of Burgesses, representing Fairfax county,<sup>65</sup> and continued to hold this position until just

frequently won that attention to his advice or solicitation which artificial politeness cringes for in vain. Deception indeed was not his talent, for he lived and died an honor to the principles of his education, to his profession as a merchant and to his species as a man." (See letter of Capel Hanbury in the Brock collection at the Huntington library).

<sup>62</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 101, 102n.

<sup>63</sup> Minutes of a meeting of the Ohio company at Stratford, July 4, 1763, Emmet collection (N.Y.P.L.), 13417.

<sup>64</sup> J. M. Toner (ed.), *The daily journal of Major George Washington in 1751-2. Kept while on a tour from Virginia to the island of Barbados . . .*, 43-44n (hereafter cited as *The daily journal of Major George Washington in 1751-2*).

<sup>65</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1742-1747; 1748-1749)*, vii, ix.

prior to his death, which occurred on July 26, 1752.<sup>66</sup>

Augustine Washington, as has already been pointed out, was a younger brother of Lawrence, being the third son of Augustine Washington and Jane (Butler) Washington. He became a lawyer, a burgess, and a land-holder in Virginia. In 1754, upon the death of Robert Vaulx,<sup>67</sup> the Westmoreland representative in the House of Burgesses, Augustine was elected to fill the vacancy,<sup>68</sup> and remained in this position until 1758<sup>69</sup> at which time he left for London.<sup>70</sup> His influence in the Ohio company was never great. His stock in the company was eventually sold to Robert Carter.<sup>71</sup>

George Washington's importance to the company was due primarily to his activities in the west, centering around the forks of the Ohio. Many of Washington's efforts in this connection were doomed to defeat. He seems not to have exerted his influence in guiding the company's affairs. In fact, he did not always know the exact state of affairs with the company as his letter to William Crawford on September 21, 1767, attests.<sup>72</sup> Besides being a successful military

<sup>66</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*, I, 27n (hereafter cited as *The diaries of George Washington*).

<sup>67</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755; 1756-1758)*, 194.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>70</sup> Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (ed.), *Letters to Washington and accompanying papers*, III, 101 (hereafter cited as *Letters to Washington*).

<sup>71</sup> Kate Mason Rowland, *The life of George Mason, 1725-1792; including his speeches, public papers, and correspondence*, II, 6 (hereafter cited as *Life and correspondence of George Mason*).

<sup>72</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The writings of George Washington . . .*, II, 467-471. Washington writes: "I will enquire particularly concerning the Ohio companys [grant] that one may know what to apprehend from them."

figure, Washington served in the House of Burgesses as representative from Frederick county during the period from 1758<sup>73</sup> until 1765 although he may not have been in attendance at the assembly of 1761-1765.<sup>74</sup> In 1766 he became the burgess from Fairfax county,<sup>75</sup> serving until 1775.<sup>76</sup>

Thomas Nelson was the second Virginian named in the company's original list of petitioners. He was a very influential man at the time, although he took little active part in the affairs of the company because in June, 1749, he withdrew from its membership and gave his attention to a rival concern, the Loyal company.<sup>77</sup> He was a member of the House of Burgesses during the assembly of 1747,<sup>78</sup> was promoted to the council in the next year,<sup>79</sup> and remained in this body until the outbreak of the Revolutionary war. His brother William was also in the council and was for a time its president.<sup>80</sup>

The Fairfax family is important not only for the part played by George William Fairfax in the Ohio company but also for the influence which the family exerted upon the other members of the company. The

<sup>73</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1758-1761)*, vii.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* (1761-1765), 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* (1766-1769), 3.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* (1773-1776), 282.

<sup>77</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>78</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1742-1747; 1748-1749)*, viii, x.

<sup>79</sup> "List of the gentlemen in the council of Virginia as also of others recommended by Sir William Gooch to succeed to vacancies," June 16, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1326/477 (Library of Congress transcript); *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, II, 1040; Gooch to the board of trade, June 16, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/7-10 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>80</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, II, 559n; William Nelson to board of trade, October 18, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1348/321.

Carters, Lees, Washingtons, and many others were closely connected with the Fairfax family. The ancestry of George William Fairfax is of great interest and significance. Through an important marriage and subsequent inheritance, the Fairfaxes became proprietors of the Culpeper domains in America known as the Northern Neck of Virginia.<sup>81</sup>

The Northern Neck had been originally granted by Charles II in 1673 to a small group of Cavaliers who lost their estates in England due to their support of Charles I. The grant was reaffirmed by James II in 1689.<sup>82</sup> One of these patentees was a Culpeper, whose son, Thomas Lord Culpeper, already referred to as the Virginia governor, acquired through purchase the shares of the other proprietors. This Northern Neck grant ultimately came to include the entire area lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, thus composing over five thousand acres. The people of Virginia objected in various ways to the grant, and as a result, Thomas, sixth Lord Fairfax, came to America in 1747 to be in a better position to defend his claims. His cousin, William Fairfax, was already here, and in time became Lord Fairfax's agent. As Thomas was unmarried, it was William who founded the Virginia Fairfax family.

George William Fairfax, the Ohio company member and William's eldest son, was born on January 2, 1725, at Providence, Bahama islands.<sup>83</sup> He served as a burgess for Frederick county<sup>84</sup> from 1748-1755<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Fairfax Harrison, *The proprietor of the Northern Neck*, 73-82.

<sup>82</sup> *The statutes at large* . . . , IV, 520.

<sup>83</sup> *The diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*, I, 3n.

<sup>84</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1742-1747; 1748-1749)*, ix.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* (1752-1755; 1756-1758), vii.



and for Fairfax county from 1756-1758.<sup>86</sup> In the year 1768 he became a member of the council<sup>87</sup> and served in this capacity until 1773, at which time he departed for England.<sup>88</sup> However, his connection with the Ohio company was short lived as he resigned in June, 1749.<sup>89</sup>

Thomas Cresap was probably the most important member of the company after the death of Thomas Lee. The only man who might be considered more important to the company was Robert Dinwiddie. Skepton in Yorkshire was the place of Cresap's birth. He came to America at about the age of fifteen; he himself did not know the exact date. In a deposition given in 1732 occurs this reference to his age: ". . . Thomas Cresap of Baltimore county, planter, aged about thirty-two or thereabouts."<sup>90</sup> Upon arriving in America he settled on the Susquehanna river at or near present-day Havre de Grace.

At the time of his marriage in 1727,<sup>91</sup> Cresap was in financial difficulties and heavily in debt. In an attempt to straighten out his affairs, he went to Virginia where he made the acquaintance of the Washingtons and rented a farm from them. He returned to

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>87</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1379.

<sup>88</sup> *The diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799*, I, 3n.

<sup>89</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>90</sup> William Hand Browne (ed.), *Proceedings of the council of Maryland, 1732-1753*, 68 (hereafter cited as *Proceedings of the council of Maryland*).

<sup>91</sup> Mrs. Corra Bacon-Foster, in "The Ohio company, 1748-1785," *Early chapters in the development of the Potomac route to the west* says this happened when Cresap was thirty years old which would place the date at about 1732.



Maryland to get his wife but found her unwilling to accompany him to Virginia. Having his plans thus thwarted, he moved further up the Susquehanna to the vicinity of Wright's Ferry or Wright's Ville, opposite present-day Columbia. Here he was granted five hundred acres of land by Maryland. Unfortunately, his troubles had only begun. This territory was in dispute between Pennsylvania and Maryland. Cresap felt that Maryland's rights were being infringed upon; therefore he set about to prove the claims of the Calverts right and those of the Penns wrong.<sup>92</sup> Such an active interest in the dispute did he take that records in the *Maryland archives* and *Pennsylvania colonial records*<sup>93</sup> contain much evidence of the part he played. Pennsylvanians considered him the center of the opposition and directed their attack against him. In a battle which took place at Peach Bottom the Maryland group were victorious but the Penns soon were again in a position to push the attack. They did so by besieging Cresap in his own house in the middle of the night. After successfully withstanding their attacks for a time, Cresap was finally forced to flee when they set his house on fire.<sup>94</sup> He failed to make good his escape, was captured, taken to Lancaster, and thence to Philadelphia. He tried to make himself very obnoxious to his hosts,<sup>95</sup> and his success is attested to by a request for him to leave. But he stubbornly refused to do so until the king ordered his

<sup>92</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 57.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 63, 69, 122, 125, 129, 130, 140, 142, 156, 194; *Proceedings of the council of Maryland, 1732-1753*, 7, 20, 21, 60, 61, 62, 68, 71, 79, 84, 85, 86, 111, 113, 114, 117, 118, 119, 130, 131, 295.

<sup>94</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 109-110.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 110-111.

release.<sup>96</sup> In the meantime his wife had been cared for by Indians near Little York. Upon his release Cresap again moved, this time to a fine farm near Antietam. He set about collecting furs and borrowed £500 from his Maryland defense lawyer, Daniel Dulaney, to aid him in his venture. His first load of furs was lost and he was forced to give up his farm in payment of the debt.<sup>97</sup>

In 1742 or 1743 he moved to Old Town,<sup>98</sup> a place he unsuccessfully attempted to rename Skepton after his Yorkshire residence. At Old Town he built himself a home which at the same time served as a fort. In a few years this place began to be shown on frontier maps. On their way to wage war on the Catawbas, the Iroquois Indians would stop at the home of "Big Spoon" to partake of his great generosity.<sup>99</sup> At his home he was host to many of the important men of his day. Among the guests at Old Town were Edward Braddock, William Trent, George Croghan, Christopher Gist, Andrew Montour, Conrad Weiser, and George Washington.<sup>100</sup> His place thus became famous from the Carolinas to Canada.

In 1748 Cresap's name appeared in the membership of the Ohio company. He was the only outstanding American member who did not belong to the upper social rank of colonial society. He did not have the polish, education, influence, or wealth of a

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 144-145.

<sup>97</sup> J. Thomas Scharf, *History of western Maryland . . .*, 76.

<sup>98</sup> *Proceedings of the council of Maryland, 1732-1753*, 335. Old Town is on the Potomac, a short distance below present-day Cumberland, Maryland.

<sup>99</sup> Scharf, *op. cit.*, 76.

<sup>100</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of Washington*, I, 8.

Fairfax or a Lee, but this in no way forced him to take an inferior position for he became something of a field representative for the company. Besides his service to the Ohio company, he also aided Virginia in other respects, especially in advising Dinwiddie on Indian affairs.<sup>101</sup>

Cresap's later life was spent in aiding Maryland in various ways. Governor Horatio Sharpe engaged him to settle a dispute between Maryland and Virginia over the land between the two branches of the Potomac. He performed his duties well and made an important map of the territory.<sup>102</sup> He also served Maryland in the defense of her frontier.<sup>103</sup>

Daniel Cresap was the oldest son of Thomas<sup>104</sup> and lived near Old Town on the Maryland side of the Potomac. He was a prominent man in Maryland but did little to aid the Ohio company.<sup>105</sup> It seems that he never advanced any money and his name was placed on the petition merely to add possible prestige. He was officially dropped in June, 1749.<sup>106</sup>

The name of John Tayloe is frequently met with in

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<sup>101</sup> W. P. Palmer (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia state papers, 1752-1781*, I, 245; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 17.

<sup>102</sup> A reproduction of the map may be found in *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, I, 72.

<sup>103</sup> The *Maryland gazette* of July 19, 1763, noted Cresap's importance as follows: "Fredericks-town has contributed to the support of men to be added to Colonel Cresap's force, as we look upon the preservation of Cresap's fort at Old Town to be of utmost importance to us, and a proper check to the ravages of the Indians, and to keep the enemy at a distance, and thus, shelter the whole province."

<sup>104</sup> *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, III, 81.

<sup>105</sup> *Proceedings of the council of Maryland, 1761-1770*, 45-46, 52-58, 266; *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe*, III, 80.

<sup>106</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

Virginia history. The John Tayloe who was a member of the Ohio company was the founder of "Mt. Airy." He was born in 1721 and died on april 12, 1779.<sup>107</sup> He was the son of John and Elizabeth (Lyde Gwyn) Tayloe. John Tayloe sr., was a member of the council, his last appearance being in 1747.<sup>108</sup> The John Tayloe jr., of the Ohio company married a daughter of George Plater, governor of Maryland.<sup>109</sup> On march 20, 1756, John Tayloe was recommended to supply a vacancy in the council.<sup>110</sup> His first meeting with the council seems to have been on april 14, 1757,<sup>111</sup> and his last one on march 12, 1773.<sup>112</sup>

James Scott was one of the later members of the Ohio company. His first appearance in the House of Burgesses seems to have been in 1758 as clerk,<sup>113</sup> a position which his brother, Alexander, had previously held.<sup>114</sup> In 1768 James became a burgess from Fauquier county,<sup>115</sup> and retained the office until the outbreak of the Revolution.<sup>116</sup> James Scott was a minister as well as a burgess and a business man, and was for a considerable time in charge of the Det-

<sup>107</sup> Dr. A. G. Grinnan (copyist), "Marriage records from Ralph Wormeley's Bible," *William and Mary college quarterly*, VI, 153 (january, 1898).

<sup>108</sup> Order to supply a vacancy in the council, january 14, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/5 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>109</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, II, 375n.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; Representation proposing that John Tayloe be appointed to the council, october 9, 1756, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/293 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>111</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1159.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 1482.

<sup>113</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1758-1861)*, 29.

<sup>114</sup> *The statutes at large . . .*, VI, 630-631.

<sup>115</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1766-1769)*, 136.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* (1773-1776), 203.

tingen parish in Prince William county.<sup>117</sup> He was active in the Ohio company in the latter stages of the French and Indian war.

John Carlyle was of Scottish birth and immigrated to America early in life where he at once became a merchant on the Potomac. He was married twice, once to Sarah Fairfax, a daughter of William Fairfax.<sup>118</sup> Before 1745 he was a merchant in Alexandria. It was in this town in a large stone house that he entertained Braddock in 1755.<sup>119</sup> In 1754 Lieutenant-governor Dinwiddie appointed Carlyle to the position of commissary of provisions and stores for the Ohio expedition of that year.<sup>120</sup> Carlyle was a very close friend of Washington, and with members of his family, frequently visited at Mount Vernon. Along with several others, he was named trustee for the town of Alexandria.<sup>121</sup> He was one of the executors of the estate of Augustine Washington, George's half-brother. Nevertheless his connection with the Ohio company was brief as he withdrew in June, 1749,<sup>122</sup> although he always remained friendly with its members.

Nathaniel Chapman is listed in the Ohio company petition as being from Virginia<sup>123</sup> but, as a matter of fact, he lived in Charles county, Maryland, and was

<sup>117</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, 1, 84.

<sup>118</sup> Rupert Hughes, *George Washington, the human being and the hero, 1732-1762*, 161.

<sup>119</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, 1, 61, 66.

<sup>120</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, 1, 53-54.

<sup>121</sup> *The daily journal of Major George Washington in 1751-2*, 45.

<sup>122</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>123</sup> Petition of John Hanbury to king for grant of land, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/53 (Library of Congress transcript).

an extensive landowner in that colony. He did, however, own large tracts of land in Virginia, particularly in Prince William and in Fairfax counties. He was born about 1710 and died in 1760.<sup>124</sup> His importance to the company rested largely on the fact that he held land of such extensive proportions that he was able to be of influence both in Maryland and Virginia. His stock in the company was later inherited by his son, Pearson Chapman.<sup>125</sup>

William Nimmo was a prominent attorney-at-law in Williamsburg. His importance to the company was never great because he withdrew in June, 1749, and unfortunately died soon after.<sup>126</sup>

Robert Carter, owner of two company shares, was a grandson<sup>127</sup> of "King Carter," discussed above, and was called "Councilor" because of his long service in the upper house and to distinguish him from his predecessors. The Carter family was among the most important families in the colonial history of Virginia. Besides the position of the colonial Carters, there have been among the Carter descendants and collateral kinsmen six Virginia governors, two presidents of the United States, Robert E. Lee, and many others of nearly equal importance. The Ohio com-

<sup>124</sup> Sidney Methiot Culbertson, *The Hunter family of Virginia and connections*, 163-178.

<sup>125</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>126</sup> "Historical notes and queries," *William and Mary college quarterly*, 1st series, VIII, 275 (April, 1900); Col. Thomas H. Ellis, "William Nimmo of Williamsburg," *William and Mary college quarterly*, 1st series, V, 134-137 (October, 1896).

<sup>127</sup> Hendrick, *Lees of Virginia*, 66, states that this was a son of "King" Carter but the evidence in *Life and correspondence George Mason*, II, 5-6, seems to prove him to have been the grandson.

pany Carter proved no exception in this line of great men. Appointed to the council in 1758,<sup>128</sup> he remained in this position until at least 1769.<sup>129</sup> He became a partner in the Ohio company by purchasing two shares from Augustine Washington and Gawin Corbin.<sup>130</sup> In the later history of the company he was one of the leading figures.

Colonel William Thornton has long been considered one of the original Ohio company members but research shows this to be a mistake. George Mason, writing in 1778, stated that William Thornton was never a member, and while William's name appeared on the original petition, it should have been Francis Thornton. The latter, like most of the other Ohio company members, was a prominent Virginian. He served for several years in the House of Burgesses but was never a very important figure in Ohio company affairs for he withdrew in June, 1749, to devote more of his efforts to the Loyal company.<sup>131</sup>

Presley Thornton was a prominent figure in Virginia political life, although not of great importance in the company. He was born in 1721.<sup>132</sup> In 1749 he entered the assembly as a burgess from Northumberland county<sup>133</sup> and remained in the legislature until

<sup>128</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1201; Representation enclosing a warrant to appoint Robert Carter a councilor in Virginia in the place of William Fairfax, deceased, April 4, 1758, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/331 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>129</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1570.

<sup>130</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, II, 6.

<sup>131</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>132</sup> W. G. Stanard, "The Thornton family," *William and Mary college quarterly*, IV, 162 (January, 1896).

<sup>133</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1742-1747; 1748-1749)*, IX.



1761,<sup>134</sup> at which time he was appointed to the council.<sup>135</sup> He remained in this office until late in 1769. His last attendance was on november 7,<sup>136</sup> and he died december 8 of that year.<sup>137</sup> His share was inherited by his son, Peter Presley Thornton.<sup>138</sup>

It is difficult to distinguish which of several men by the name of Gawin Corbin was the Ohio company member. It appears certain, however, that the father of the Ohio company member served intermittently in the House of Burgesses from 1698 until his death in 1750.<sup>139</sup> The Ohio company Corbin probably first entered the house in 1742 and served until 1747.<sup>140</sup> This Gawin Corbin was known as Gawin of "Peckatone," Westmoreland.<sup>141</sup> He married Hannah, daughter of Thomas Lee, and thus naturally became interested in the company. He died in 1760, leaving

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* (1758-1761), 201.

<sup>135</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1261. Stanard erroneously gives this date as 1760 for his last appearance in the council (Stanard, *loc. cit.*, IV, 162, january, 1896).

<sup>136</sup> *Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 1395.

<sup>137</sup> The *Virginia gazette* of december 14, 1769, said of him: "On friday last died at his house, in Northumberland county, the Hon. Presley Thornton, Esq., one of his majesty's council in this colony. The virtues of this gentleman are so generally known that it may be unnecessary to enlarge on them in this place. In justice to his memory we must say his mind was as exalted as his station; that in his youth he imbibed the sentiments of benevolence, honour, and integrity, and to his death invariably practiced them."

<sup>138</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>139</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses* (1695-1696; 1698; 1699; 1700-1702), ix, x, xi; *ibid.* (1702/3-1705; 1705-1706; 1710-1712), 112; *ibid.* (1712-1714; 1715; 1718; 1720-1722; 1723-1726), viii, ix, x; *ibid.* (1727-1734; 1736-1740), ix; Edmond Jennings Lee, *Lees of Virginia, 1642-1892, biographical and genealogical sketches of the descendants of Colonel Richard Lee . . .*, 85.

<sup>140</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses* (1742-1747; 1748-1749), vii.

<sup>141</sup> Mary Newton Stanard, *Colonial Virginia, its people and customs*, 277.



only one child, a daughter. His shares in the company were bought by Robert Carter.<sup>142</sup>

Lunsford Lomax is first mentioned as a member of the Ohio company in a letter from the company to George Mercer in London in 1763.<sup>143</sup> Lomax served for many years in the House of Burgesses. He entered in 1742 from Carolina county<sup>144</sup> and remained through 1755.<sup>145</sup> He served in 1747 as a commissioner to run a boundary of Virginia.<sup>146</sup> He was one of the Virginia representatives at the Ohio company's treaty of Logstown in 1752.<sup>147</sup> John Edward Lomax was a member in the later stages of the company. He served with honor in the Revolutionary war.

John Mercer lived at "Marlboro."<sup>148</sup> His importance to the Ohio company is at least twofold: he was secretary of the company; and he was the father of three of its future members, George, James, and John Francis. George Mercer was an important member of the company in its later history, particularly in his fight in London for the company's rights. George became a burgess from Frederick along with George Washington in 1761<sup>149</sup> and remained one until 1766.<sup>150</sup> James Mercer became a burgess from Hampshire county in 1762<sup>151</sup> when he succeeded

<sup>142</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, II, 6.

<sup>143</sup> J. M. Toner (ed.), *Journal of Colonel George Washington . . . sent by Robert Dinwiddie . . . across the Alleghany mountains in 1754 . . .*, 80-81.

<sup>144</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1742-1747; 1748-1749)*, vii.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* (1752-1755; 1756-1758), 330.

<sup>146</sup> William Fairfax and William Beverley to the council, June 10, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1326/527 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>147</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, II, 105.

<sup>148</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 29.

<sup>149</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1761-1765)*, 3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

James Keith.<sup>152</sup> He remained in the house until the outbreak of the Revolution<sup>153</sup> at which time he took part in the Revolutionary conventions. He was a member of the Continental Congress and later a member of the general court and the first court of appeals.

John Francis Mercer was a half-brother to George and James, and was born in 1759. He became governor of Maryland after the Revolution and was of no little importance in the company<sup>154</sup> in its later stages.

George Mason, a nephew of John Mercer, was destined to become one of the leading figures in the affairs of the company. The Masons had long been connected with Virginia affairs. A "Capt." Mason was one of the adventurers in the London company in 1609. A George Mason invested £12 10s in that company in 1620.<sup>155</sup> The first record of the Mason family of Virginia seems to be in reference to a patent of land in 1655. The George Mason of the Ohio company was born in 1725.<sup>156</sup> The first we hear of him in published records outside of his own county is in reference to the Ohio company. His particular duty appears to have been to transport supplies for his partners and to act as treasurer. He received merchandise, forwarded it, surveyed lands, and called meetings of the company members. He became a burgess from Fairfax county in 1758 and remained one until 1761, although there is no notice of his at-

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* (1773-1776), 282.

<sup>154</sup> Consult article in *Maryland historical magazine*, september, 1907, by James Mercer Garnett.

<sup>155</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, 1, 4.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 48.

tendance at the assembly in either 1760 or 1761.<sup>157</sup> He did not return at the next assembly in 1761 nor is there any record that he was even a candidate. This was his last political office until the Revolution. After the Revolution he labored in the assembly to gain the company's rights.

Robert Dinwiddie was one of the leading figures in the company, and along with Thomas Lee and Thomas Cresap, deserves recognition as one of its greatest personages. Dinwiddie was appointed on July 4, 1751, as lieutenant-governor of Virginia.<sup>158</sup> This was not his first experience in America, however, for he had served on the island of Bermuda as comptroller of admiralty rights and as customs collector from December 1, 1722, until April 11, 1738.<sup>159</sup> At this later date he was named "Surveyor-general of customs of the southern ports of the continent of America." On August 17, 1743, he was named "Inspector-general."<sup>160</sup> Dinwiddie had been interested in the Ohio company prior to coming to America as lieutenant-governor, as is shown by a letter from Lawrence Washington written while Dinwiddie was still in London.<sup>161</sup>

Dinwiddie's interest in the company is further attested by a letter of January 23, 1752, just a short time after his arrival in Virginia as lieutenant-governor,

<sup>157</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1758-1761)*, vii, 7-8, 12, 27, 29, 50, 80, 102, 124.

<sup>158</sup> Holderness to Dinwiddie, July 4, 1751, P.R.O., C.O. 324: 38/287.

<sup>159</sup> Dinwiddie papers, I, viii; *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations* (January, 1722-3 to December, 1728), 18.

<sup>160</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, ix.

<sup>161</sup> Jared Sparks (ed.), *The writings of George Washington . . .*, II, 481-482.

to Thomas Cresap in which he says, "I have the success and prosperity of the Ohio company much at heart . . ." <sup>162</sup> Throughout his stay in Virginia as lieutenant-governor, Dinwiddie did a great deal to promote the interests of the company, the account of which will be taken up in another connection. When Dinwiddie, in 1757, at his own request, was relieved of his office <sup>163</sup> and returned to England on January 12, 1758, he still took some part in the company affairs. On July 27, 1770, he died at Clifton, Bristol.

Jacob Giles and James Wardrop, like Nathaniel Chapman, were listed as Marylanders. While both actually did live in Maryland, they were members of Virginia families. James Wardrop owned considerable property in both colonies. He was listed in the original Ohio company petition as being from Virginia, <sup>164</sup> yet in the instructions of the Ohio company to Christopher Gist on April 28, 1752, he, along with Jacob Giles and Thomas Cresap, was listed as being from the province of Maryland. <sup>165</sup> Wardrop was a signer of a petition sent in 1754 to the king's council requesting a definition of the company's boundaries. <sup>166</sup>

Arthur Dobbs was a distinct outsider as far as the Virginia aristocracy was concerned although he definitely was an asset politically. He was born on April 2, 1689, <sup>167</sup> although the date is sometimes given as

<sup>162</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 17-18.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>164</sup> Petition of John Hanbury, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/53 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>165</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 235.

<sup>166</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, April 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/154-164 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>167</sup> John Burke, *Dictionary of the landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*, I, 336.

1684. In 1727 he was a member of the Irish parliament. On January 25, 1753, he was appointed lieutenant-governor of North Carolina.<sup>168</sup> He had been interested in North Carolina even as early as 1753 due to three large land grants of over two thousand acres which he had received. Before reaching North Carolina on his way from London, he stopped off at Williamsburg in order to confer with Dinwiddie and with Sharpe of Maryland. At this conference affairs in the west were discussed,<sup>169</sup> and here Dobbs showed his interest in the Ohio company. Dobbs's term of office in North Carolina proved to be one of turmoil. He fought with his assembly and with Governor James Glen of South Carolina; he could not control the affairs of the government, obey the king, and at the same time please the people. Work weakened him physically and mentally and he died on March 28, 1765.<sup>170</sup>

One fact stands out clearly as a result of a study of the membership of the company. They were, on the whole, a closely related body. This means not only a business, political, and social relationship; but also consanguinity. For instance, there were four Lees:—Thomas, three of his sons, Philip Ludwell and Thomas Ludwell, and Richard Henry Lee. Then Gawin Corbin was Thomas Lee's son-in-law, and John Tayloe became related to the Lees when his daughter married one of Thomas Lee's sons. Presley Thornton married an adopted daughter of Colonel

<sup>168</sup> William L. Saunders (ed.), *The colonial records of North Carolina*, v, 27.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, v, xxii.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 1321.

John Tayloe; William Thornton married a daughter of George Mason. George Mason was a nephew of John Mercer and obviously a cousin of George, James, and John Francis Mercer; the Scotts were related to the Masons. The Tayloes and Corbins were intermarried; the Lomax family was related to the Corbins and to the Tayloes both directly and through the Wormeley family. The Carters were related to the Lees, Corbins, Fairfaxes, Tayloes, and others.

Major John Carlyle married a daughter of William Fairfax; a daughter of John Augustine Washington married a son of Richard Henry Lee. Even Lieutenant-governor Robert Dinwiddie was indirectly related, his brother having married an aunt of George Mason. Notice for instance, such tell-tale names as the following: John Tayloe Thornton, John Tayloe Lomax, John Tayloe Wormeley, Anne Tayloe Corbin Lomax, Elizabeth Gwynn Tayloe, Robert Corbin Carter, Sarah Fairfax Carter, and Corbin Washington. Such names are typical of the interrelationships among the first families of Virginia; and since they are also typical of the relationship among the members of the Ohio company, it is clear that the latter body was a homogeneous group, a fact which brought about an additional point of common interest.

Activities of the Ohio Company  
1748-1751





## Activities, 1748-1751

While the negotiations were still under way in England, the petitioners were by no means idle; so positive were they of success that they proceeded to effect their organization. Accordingly, twenty shares of stock were issued with a subscribed capital of £4,000. Though the number of members in the company varied from time to time, the number of shares did not. Entrance into the company was gained through three avenues, by being a charter member, by purchase, and by inheritance. For nearly ten years it appeared that the organization would be a remarkable success and for that reason stock was rarely for sale. Gradually the personnel of the company changed but this was usually the result of deaths among the membership rather than of members selling out, although in June, 1749, six of the less active members withdrew and were returned their investments. While these resignations did not affect the organization of the company they did complicate matters somewhat, for when Gooch, in following out his royal orders, made the grant to the company, he did not know of this modification in personnel. Therefore the grant was awarded to the men specified in his instructions rather than to the company as reorganized. However, despite the numerous changes in membership over the years and the resulting com-

plications in the making of the grant, these vicissitudes did not alter or destroy the character of the company. The rights and duties of the members descended to their kinsmen who succeeded them in the organization.

The Ohio company was a joint-stock company and a corporation rather than a partnership. Throughout its existence it was treated as a corporation, enjoying rights as a company which its members as individuals did not have. One feature of a corporation, however, which the Ohio company did not always have, was that of a common seal. This is shown by the fact that at a later date when land was to be bought from the Indians, the company's agent<sup>171</sup> was instructed that if he could obtain a deed

or other written agreement from the Indians, it must be taken in the names of the Honorable Robert Dinwiddie Esq., governor of Virginia, John Hanbury Esq. of the city of London, merchant, John Tayloe . . . and their associates, members of the Ohio company; . . .<sup>172</sup>

The patentees, having received their grant and having organized their company, set about at once to carry out their promises to the English government, and incidentally, to advance their own interests. But the company ran into trouble almost before it got started. While its members were very influential men in Virginia, they were not to escape opposition – sometimes distinctly hostile. For instance, Lieutenant-governor Gooch seems to have been unfriendly to them. In the first place he withheld giving them their

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<sup>171</sup> Christopher Gist at the Logstown conference, 1752.

<sup>172</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 235.

grant of land while at the same time he issued similar grants to others. When pressed by the Board of Trade for an explanation of his inaction,<sup>173</sup> since he himself had had authority to proceed, he took the position that peace had just been secured with France and he had feared that any additional large land grant would lead to serious trouble.<sup>174</sup> The company was dubious of this statement as the real issue at stake since Gooch made other grants at this same time in proximity to the area sought.<sup>175</sup> Lee and his associates had petitioned the king for their grant not because it was legally necessary to obtain it in such a matter but only because they were unable to obtain it in Virginia. While Gooch possessed the power to make the grant had he so desired, he was under the influence of men

<sup>173</sup> Berthold Fernow, *The Ohio valley in colonial days*, appendix D, 242-243.

<sup>174</sup> Sir William Gooch to the board, june 16, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/7-10 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>175</sup> This refers particularly to the Loyal land company. In regard to these other grants Mercer wrote: "That many unforeseen obstructions arose soon after, not only from the forces employed by the Crown of France, but also from the obstacles raised to the execution of his majesty's instructions by the lieutenant-governor and council of Virginia, who, after they had notice of the said instructions, but before they were produced in form, granted either upon petitions for extending the time to which former petitions were limited or upon applications entirely new, 1,350,000 acres of land, west of the mountains to persons incapable of making effectual settlements, and whose grants cou'd therefore only serve to frustrate the ends of those to which the company were entitled under his majestys instructions." The memorial of George Mercer on the behalf of the Ohio company, june 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/415. See also P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/421-436, wherein Mercer states . . . "but meeting several difficulties and objections; as well from the government here, who had made many large grants and one in particular of 800,000 acres, to a company here, they were prevented from completing their settlement 'till the French came and took possession of the fort they were building, destroyed their houses, and drove off their workmen . . ."

not only unconnected with the Ohio company but actually opposed to it as competitors. The outstanding man of this group was John Robinson, at this time near the height of his career.<sup>176</sup> Robinson was probably as interested in western lands as was Thomas Lee. In 1745 he had been successful in securing a grant for himself of one hundred thousand acres on the Greenbrier river<sup>177</sup> and subsequently he had formed the Greenbrier company for purposes of developing and selling these and other lands. Therefore, when he and certain other prominent persons heard of the favorable action on the Ohio company petition taken by the British government, they made application for a still larger grant although not necessarily a conflicting one. This group became known as the Loyal company.

Several of the members of this company were as influential in Virginia as were the Ohio company members, although this influence did not extend to England.<sup>178</sup> In fact two former important Ohio company members, Thomas Nelson and Francis Thornton, joined the Loyal company. The grant to this company was to include eight hundred thousand acres and was to be located on the southwest frontier of Virginia, comprising territory now included in Kentucky. Four years were given in which to make

<sup>176</sup> For a brief biography of Robinson, see Thomas Perkins Abernethy, "John Robinson," *Dictionary of American biography*, xvi, 46.

<sup>177</sup> "List of early land patents and grants petitioned for in Virginia up to 1769 . . .," *The Virginia magazine of history and biography*, v, 175 (1898).

<sup>178</sup> The outstanding men in this organization were John Lewis, Dr. Thomas Walker, Colonel Joshua Fry, Thomas Meriwether, Francis Thornton, John Harvil, Peter Jefferson, and Edmund Pendleton.

surveys. In contrast to the Ohio company grant, the Loyal company was not required to settle any families.<sup>179</sup> The grant was made solely for the purpose of land speculation. In complaining to the Crown of the difficulties it had gone through, the Ohio company wrote in regard to the Loyal company's grant:

The [Ohio] company during this time met with several obstacles from the governor and council in Virginia notwithstanding his majesty's instructions, chiefly as they believe on account of very large grants of lands being made to private persons on the very first report of the instructions in behalf of the company being sent to the governor and before it appeared, as the members of the company in Virginia were informed of it many months before the government acknowledged the receipt of it, tho they were assured by the members here [London] it was sent out and at the same time—and no less than 1,350,000 acres of land were granted by the governor and council to borrowed names and private land-mongers who were incapable of making effectual settlements, and where grants could only therefore serve to frustrate the ends of those to which the company were entitled under the king's instructions. . .<sup>180</sup>

Through their influence over Gooch, the members of the Loyal company were able to gain their grant on the very day, July 12, 1749, that the members of the Ohio company received theirs.<sup>181</sup> Rivalry between the two groups developed at once and lasted throughout the life span of both companies. Both sent out explorers and surveyors in 1749 and 1750. The Loyal

<sup>179</sup> *Executive journal of the council of Virginia*, July 12, 1749.

\* <sup>180</sup> "Proceedings of the Ohio company, about the settlement, etc., of the Ohio," Shelburne papers (William L. Clements library), L, 93-95.

<sup>181</sup> "List of early land patents and grants petitioned for in Virginia up to 1769 . . ." *The Virginia magazine of history and biography*, v, 177 (1898).

company sent out Doctor Thomas Walker<sup>182</sup> while the Ohio company sent out Christopher Gist.<sup>183</sup> As long as Gooch was still the head of the Virginia government, the Loyal and the Greenbrier companies were the favored concerns; but Gooch did not remain the governor of Virginia long after the making of these grants. His place was taken *pro tem* by Colonel Thomas Lee, president of the council and generally recognized as the founder of the Ohio company. It probably was fortunate for the company that Lee became acting governor just at this time. His political position as president of the council and as acting governor of the colony gave him unusual prestige and placed him where he could promote the interests of the company and insure it considerable government backing, an action which he successfully continued until the day of his death. Further, he was the logical man to head such a project as the Ohio company, usually regarded as an imperialistic trade concern, because his wide interest and experience in the back country and on the frontier gave him a knowledge of conditions necessary for intelligent action in its behalf.

Familiar with frontier conditions, Lee well knew that the English trade among the Indians of the Ohio was carried on almost exclusively by the Pennsylvania traders,<sup>184</sup> and that the only way the company

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<sup>182</sup> For Thomas Walker's journal of this expedition, see J. Stoddard Johnson (ed.), *First explorations of Kentucky . . .*, 4-75; Lewis Preston Summers (ed.), *Annals of southwest Virginia, 1769-1800*, 8-26.

<sup>183</sup> See page 85.

<sup>184</sup> For a fuller discussion of the Ohio company's rivalry with Pennsylvania, see page 103.

could hope to achieve success would be to compete actively with its rivals. This unfriendly competition would of necessity take on the appearance of a trade war. Both sides would attempt to outdo, circumvent, and undersell the other. As the Pennsylvanians had an already established trade, they held at first a fine advantage, but Lee realized that the better route to the Ohio country lay through Virginia and goods could thus be sent westward quicker, easier, and cheaper. These factors would be decisive in such a trade war:

The company conceived, that they might derive an important advantage over their competitors in this trade from the water communication of the Potomac and the eastern branches of the Ohio, whose headwaters approximated each other.<sup>185</sup>

In order to engage successfully in this competitive trade the company needed capital. This was provided for at a meeting of the company on february 23, 1748. An assessment of one hundred pounds sterling was voted against each company member, the combined fund to be used as needed in purchasing merchandise in England.<sup>186</sup> The next step taken was to instruct John Hanbury, member, and the company's agent in London, to ship to America two cargoes of goods suitable for use in the Indian trade. The total cost of these shipments was not to exceed four thousand pounds sterling, and they were to be dispatched so

<sup>185</sup> Lee to the board of trade, october 18, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/195-196 (Library of Congress transcript); Lee to James Hamilton, november 22, 1749, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 422-423.

<sup>186</sup> Report of the committee of the Ohio company, february 23, 1748, Emmet collection (New York public library), 14853.



that the first cargo would arrive in Virginia in november, 1749, and the second in march, 1750.<sup>187</sup>

Naturally Lee could not wait until these goods arrived from London to commence operations. One of his first actions was to send young George Washington out in 1749 to survey lands for the company.<sup>188</sup> Washington was instructed to survey in the region of the mouths of the Fifteen Mile creek<sup>189</sup> and the Great and Little Capon.<sup>190</sup> The former was a tributary of the Potomac on the Maryland side while the latter were on the Virginia side.

In carrying out the provisions of the company's grant, Lee had three main problems to meet. First, in order to secure the settlement of two hundred families on the land granted, it was necessary to find a suitable tract of land and then actually to survey and lay off the grant. Lee and the company attempted to locate such a site in 1749 by sending out Thomas Cresap, Hugh Parker and others,<sup>191</sup> but as these men were traders and not surveyors, they did not have time to devote to searching merely for suitable land, and as a result were unsuccessful in their efforts. Therefore, in 1750, Lee sent out Christopher Gist to make a complete survey of suitable land.<sup>192</sup> Gist's work will be discussed subsequently.

\* 187 Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

188 Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 18.

189 Fifteen Mile creek joins the Potomac about fifteen miles above present-day Hancock, Maryland.

190 The name Washington gave to the Little Capon was "Little Capehon."

\* 191 Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156 (Library of Congress transcript).

192 *Christopher Gist's journals*, 31-32.



The second problem facing Lee was the requirement that the company build a fort.<sup>193</sup> The accomplishment of this task quite naturally depended upon finding the above discussed location and also upon obtaining the consent of the Indians both for a settlement and the building of the fort. This consent the company attempted to obtain by the liberal offer of presents and by the negotiations at the Logstown conference.<sup>194</sup>

The third of the company's problems, concerning trade with the Indians, was contingent upon nothing else, hence the company had traders in the Ohio country even before its grant had been approved. It hired various experienced traders and sent them into the Ohio country to compete with the independent Pennsylvania traders. As a matter of fact, the subsequent rivalry almost lost the country to both groups. In 1748 Hugh Parker<sup>195</sup> and Barney Curran<sup>196</sup> were at Kuskuskies as agents of the company.<sup>197</sup> In a letter from William Trent<sup>198</sup> to Richard Peters, october

<sup>193</sup> Lords of trade to the privy council, december 13, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/61 (Library of Congress transcript); Draught of additional instructions to Sir William Gooch, december 13, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/63-64 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>194</sup> See pages 136-137.

<sup>195</sup> Hugh Parker, prior to his employment by the Ohio company, had been a licensed trader from Maryland. His Ohio headquarters had for some time been located in Kuskuskies.

<sup>196</sup> Barney Curran had previously been in business with George Croghan, working as a Pennsylvania trader. He later was employed as a hunter by George Washington on his expedition to warn the French in 1753.

<sup>197</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 440; *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 14, 16, 31, *Virginia state papers*, I, 248.

<sup>198</sup> William Trent was a Scotchman, born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, february 13, 1715. His mother, Mary Coddington, and his father, William Trent sr., had been Scottish emigrants to America. His name first

20, 1748, we find reference to the activities of Parker and his men. Trent writes:

Last night came here from Allegheny one John Hays, who informs us that the night before he left it, the Indians killed one of Mr. [Hugh] Parker's hands. It was owing to ill usage Mr. Parker and his hands gave them that day, and his being a Maryland trader, who the Indians don't care should come amongst them. Mr. Parker had a large quantity of liquor up with him, which he was tying up in his goods, in order to send to the Lower Shawna Town; and the Indians kept pressing into his house, and he unwilling that they should see what he was about. Some he turned out, and others, as they came in, he pushed the door in their faces; upon which they were determined to take his liquor, unless he would let them have it at the price settled at the treaty. They brought him wampum, and offered to leave it in pledge; but he refused to let them have it; upon which they took a quantity from him. A good many of them got drunk, who then insisted upon revenge for the ill-treatment he gave them; and accordingly took Parker prisoner and tyed him, and determined to scalp him. But the rest of the whites who were in the town rescued him.

He immediately went off about two miles from the town, where some of his people lay and got a horse, and rid that night thirty miles, bare-backed, to the Logs Town. The Indians imagined that he was gone into his house. One of them laid wait for him at the door, with his gune. At last, one Brown, one of Mr. Parker's hands, came out, with a white match-coat round him; which the Indian took for Parker (as he was in his shirt at the time they had him tyed); and shot him down. This happened at Coscoske.<sup>199</sup>

appears in historical records in 1746 at which time he received a commission as captain in the Pennsylvania service. In december, 1749, he wrote the governor of Pennsylvania requesting certain funds for carrying Indian supplies (*Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 490). From 1752-1754 he was in the employ of the Ohio company and of Virginia. (P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/549-560 (Library of Congress transcript); C.O. 5: 1327/531-534 (Library of Congress transcript); C.O. 5: 1327/640 (Library of Congress transcript); *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 55-56).

<sup>199</sup> Charles A. Hanna, *The wilderness trail or the venture and adventures of the Pennsylvania traders on the Alleghany path . . .*, I, 346-347.

Throughout this period Parker, Cresap, and other traders were busy telling the Indians of the great advantages in trading with the company. It was the work of these agents that so worried the Pennsylvania *coureurs de bois* and the French.<sup>200</sup> For instance, at a conference held by Richard Peters at the home of George Croghan in Pennsboro township,<sup>201</sup> June 7, 1750, the Seneca chiefs from Logstown and Kuskuskies reported that in the fall of 1749, Barney Curran, Hugh Parker's right-hand man, carried to them from Colonel Thomas Cresap, the Ohio company's agent, a communication stating that he and Hugh Parker, at that time in Kuskuskies, would willingly trade merchandise at rates much cheaper than the rates charged by the traders of Pennsylvania: "A match coat for a buckskin, a strowd for a buck and doe, a pair of stockings for two raccons, twelve bars of lead for a buck . . .," and other items at equally low prices.<sup>202</sup>

As a preliminary step to actual occupation of their Ohio lands, the company bought from Lord Fairfax, through its agents, Hugh Parker and Thomas Cresap, lands lying on Wills' creek. This region was not new to Thomas Cresap because he had made an early survey of the Maryland side for Governor Thomas Bladen. At that time Cresap had called the place Wills' Town.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>x</sup> 200 The petition of the Ohio company, April 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>201</sup> Pennsboro was located west of the Susquehanna in Cumberland county, Pennsylvania.

<sup>x</sup> 202 *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 440.

<sup>203</sup> Wills' creek was known at that time as both "Caicutuck" and "Wills' creek." It received its name from a full blooded Indian who lived in the district. Will, his family, and a few followers, did not move out of the

See p. 71  
of the original

Charleston  
not checked  
Hagerstown  
and apolo

have found 200  
page 3  
page 10

Wills' creek was located at the "head of the Potomack river,"<sup>204</sup> at the site of present-day Cumberland, Maryland. Wills' creek had dug a deep ravine through Savage Mountain, and thus served with this principal range as the divide between the headwaters of the Youghiogheny, a branch of the Monongahela, and the Potomac. As a result it had become one of the favorite Indian paths from the Potomac to the Ohio river and its head tributaries. This route was later made into a road but in 1748 the Ohio company land at Wills' creek was the extreme western frontier.<sup>205</sup>

Wills' creek was chosen by the company as a location for its headquarters because it was a favorable, strategic position. It was easy to reach, it served as a passageway to the west, it constituted the last frontier outpost, it was a protection for many Indians living in the vicinity, and the furs and skins brought in locally were of the highest grade, of great variety, and plentiful. In 1749 the company built a storehouse here under the direction of its factor, Hugh Parker. The storehouse stood on the Virginia side of the Potomac, directly "opposite the mouth of Wills' Creek."<sup>206</sup> The principal structure was a two-story double building, made of logs, and stood directly on

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region when white settlers began occupying the land, but rather remained and became very friendly with them. Will died soon after the close of the Revolutionary war, and a monument was erected to his memory at his burying place on top of Wills' Knob.

<sup>204</sup> *Journal of Colonel George Washington . . . across the Alleghany mountains in 1754*, 39.

<sup>205</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 64.

<sup>206</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 68. See also the memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).



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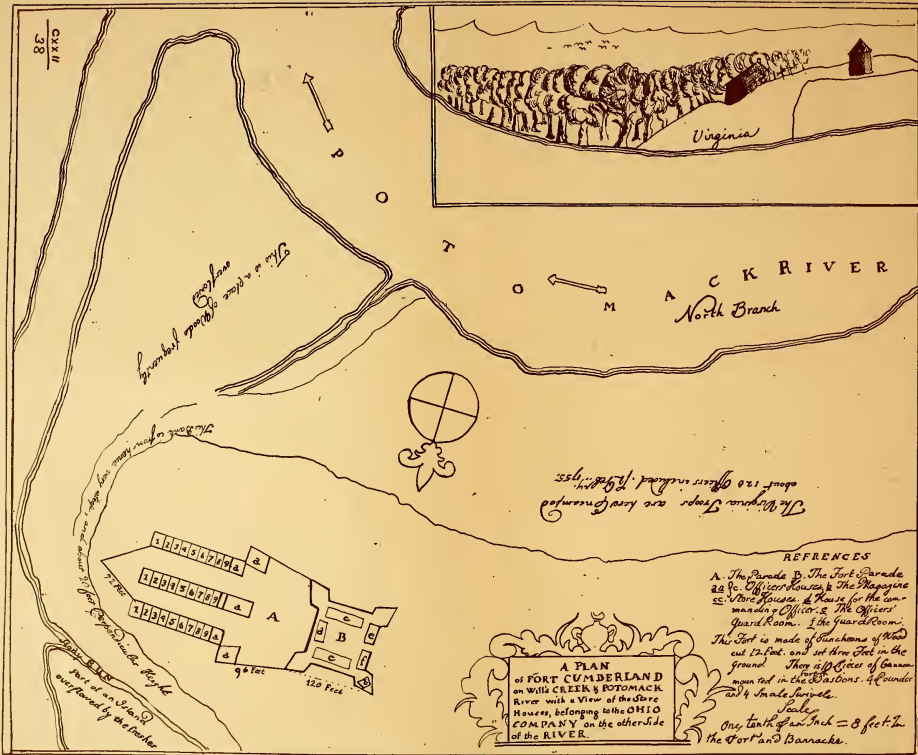
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<sup>206</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 68. See also the memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).



*Part of a place enclosed by a wall*


*The bank of the river here is very steep, and the ground is very high, so that the fort is almost entirely surrounded by the water.*



*The Virginia Troops are here (encamped) about 120 Officers included. 1st Regt. 1755.*

REFERENCES

- 1. The Parade D. The Fort Parade
  - 2. Officer Houses & The Magazine
  - 3. Store Houses, & House for the commanding Officer.
  - 4. The Officers' Guard Room.
  - 5. The Guard Room.
- The Fort is made of Sunchons of Wood cut 12 feet, and set three feet in the ground. They are fixed in the ground in the Bastions, & corners and 4 small Surveils.*

  
**A PLAN**  
 of FORT CUMBERLAND  
 ON WILD CREEK & POTOMACK  
 RIVER WITH A VIEW OF THE STORE  
 HOUSES, BELONGING TO THE OHIO  
 COMPANY ON THE OTHER SIDE  
 OF THE RIVER.

*Scale*  
 One tenth of an Inch = 8 feet in  
 the Fort and Barracks.





the bank of the Potomac.<sup>207</sup> It was well stocked immediately, since the four thousand pounds worth of merchandise, originally provided for, had arrived from Hanbury in London.<sup>208</sup> The first cargo arrived in march, 1750, while a third cargo arrived in 1751 on the same ship with Robert Dinwiddie. The new governor stated they had been stored at Colonel John Hunter's,<sup>209</sup> bad weather having prevented sending them to George Mason, the company treasurer.<sup>210</sup>

While these first goods were taken, upon arrival, to the Wills' creek storehouse, it was the original intention of the company to send them at once to the Ohio country to trade with the Indians of that territory. But the tribes of the Ohio region were as yet none too friendly toward the company's plans; the route was rough, making transportation westward difficult; and the company had not yet constructed a storehouse in that area. Thus it seemed wise to dispose of these goods in the vicinity of Wills' creek. The company had no difficulty in selling its merchandise because the Indians and traders were so eager to buy that there was great competition among them. Many of the traders, trappers, and hunters of this region were hired by the company to act both as traders and as guardians of the Wills' creek post and territory.<sup>211</sup>

<sup>207</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 68.

<sup>208</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>209</sup> Colonel John Hunter's place was near Hampton and served as a landing place for certain ships from England.

<sup>210</sup> Dinwiddie to Thomas Cresap, january 23, 1752, *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 17-18.

<sup>211</sup> Toner collection of Ohio company papers, VI, 349 ff.

In 1752 the company built a new storehouse near this site which was a much larger and more impressive structure than the first. This new storehouse was not only large enough for the company's goods, but also served as a residence for the company's agents. Besides, it was intended to serve as a place of refuge and retreat in event of Indian uprisings, which were always imminent on the frontier.<sup>212</sup> This second storehouse became very famous, and prior to the French and Indian war was really Virginia's most westward frontier defense, and during that war was made use of by British troops. Here troops were assembled because, as Dinwiddie said, it was "more generally convenient to us all and nearest to the scene of action."<sup>213</sup>

The company seemed to have staked great hopes on the future of the Wills' creek development as a real estate venture. They surveyed the lands on both banks of Wills' creek, and laid it off into a town which they named Charlottesville, in honor of Princess Charlotte Sophia.<sup>214</sup> The plans for the town were drawn up carefully and completely, including streets, paths, squares, and lots. The detailed map seems once to have been included in the Ohio company papers but has since disappeared, probably during the Civil war when the bulk of the Mercer papers were destroyed.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Will H. Lowdermilk, *History of Cumberland (Maryland) from the time of the Indian town Caiuctucruus in 1728, up to the present day . . .*, 29-30.

<sup>213</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 64.

<sup>214</sup> Princess Charlotte later became the queen of King George III.

<sup>215</sup> *William and Mary college quarterly*, 1st series, I, 198-200 (April, 1893).

On february 12, 1751, Thomas Lee died. This was a most unfortunate blow to the company. At the time of his death he was acting governor of Virginia. In this capacity it had been his duty and privilege to write to England to inform the Crown as to the progress of the colony. In these dispatches he allowed to pass no opportunity that might impress the Crown with the troubles of the company and make prominent the advantages to be gained for England by that organization. Particularly he warned that the Indians were leaving the British and becoming friends with the French. He maintained that the best way to gain them back was through trade.<sup>216</sup> The British government seemed to regard Lee's attitude toward the west very highly for they determined to appoint him governor of Virginia. This was a particularly high honor for Lee because no other native-born Virginian ever received such an appointment by the British Crown. Although Lee was officially appointed governor, he died before the commission arrived in Virginia. While the Loyal company may have predominated Virginia affairs during the closing years of Gooch's administration, certainly those in control of the British colonial policy did not accede to this point, as is evidenced by Lee's official appointment. What course of action Lee would have followed in regard to the company can only be surmised, but its later career certainly would have been considerably changed.

Lawrence Washington became the leader of the

<sup>216</sup> Board of trade to the Duke of Bedford, january 10, 1750, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1366.

company upon Lee's death. He at once entered into its problems with his characteristic enthusiasm and energy. Had he been able to give the company as much attention as he desired, it is very probable that this organization would not have encountered many of the difficulties which were soon to befall it. Washington, like Lee, possessed a fine knowledge of frontier conditions, was an influential person, and had a passionate interest in seeing the Ohio company succeed. He had foresight and was animated with that love for the west so characteristic in later years of his half-brother George. He exerted a marked influence over George and it is very possible, even likely, that it was Lawrence who first aroused George's interest in the west.

As leader of the company, Lawrence Washington was particularly concerned with the problem of settling families on the grant before the expiration of the allotted time. While the actual site of the land had not as yet been determined by the company, Washington wanted to be prepared to act as soon as the site was located; therefore he set about attempting to interest persons in moving west to the new grant. He thought out a plan for making the required settlement by colonizing it with Pennsylvania Dutch and with Germans direct from Germany. The chief objection the Germans had to settling in this area was being forced to pay parish taxes to the Church of England even though they were not members of that church. Several Pennsylvania Germans agreed to settle fifty thousand acres of the grant with two hundred families if Lawrence Washington could

guarantee them exemption from this tax.<sup>217</sup> This he attempted to do by writing his influential friends in London, John Hanbury and Robert Dinwiddie, informing them of the situation and suggesting they use their influence to secure an exemption.<sup>218</sup> He was not able to secure this exemption, however, and, so far as is known, no further attempt was made to work out this plan until after the French were driven from the Ohio. In answer to Lawrence Washington's letter, Dinwiddie explained that at that particular time the plan was impossible to work out, because parliament and the ministry were too busy to be concerned with it.<sup>219</sup>

While for this short period Lawrence Washington was an aggressive leader of the company, his actual accomplishments were meager. He was in poor health and most of his energy was consumed in combating the ravages of disease. All efforts and treatments failed, however, and his death occurred on July 26, 1752, at his home at Mount Vernon. The mantle of his leadership of the company fell upon shoulders scarcely equal to the task, notwithstanding that they were the shoulders of George Mason, Robert Dinwiddie, Thomas Cresap, and of John and George Mercer. Upon the death of Lawrence Washington a reorganization took place in the company. Because of several resignations, purchases, and deaths, numerous changes had taken place. New persons raised new problems and a new set of conditions was brought about. Therefore it was determined by the members

<sup>217</sup> Jared Sparks (ed.), *The writings of George Washington . . .*, II, 481.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 481.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 482.

to work out a definite written agreement. This took place at the general meeting in may, 1751, and the resulting document was called the "Articles of agreement and copartnership." This instrument was to serve as the basis of controlling the duties, activities, and the relationship of the company members for a period of twenty years.<sup>220</sup> At the same meeting it was noted that in order properly to carry out the planned Ohio trade, it would be necessary to obtain some land both in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Consequently, instructions were sent John Hanbury in London ordering him to petition proprietors Lord Baltimore and Penn for the necessary tracts of land. It was hoped that the company could receive these grants on the same basis as the one from the Crown. However, Hanbury was unsuccessful in obtaining these grants.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>221</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/157 (Library of Congress transcript); Petition of the Ohio company, june 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/423 (Library of Congress transcript).

## Explorations of Christopher Gist





## Explorations of Christopher Gist

The Ohio company, through its numerous advance agent explorers, performed a valuable service for the Crown and the colonists in acquainting them with the geography as well as with the flora and fauna of the trans-Appalachian west. In september, 1749, the company sent out various men, including Barney Curran,<sup>222</sup> Hugh Parker,<sup>223</sup> and Thomas Cresap,<sup>224</sup> to explore the land beyond the Allegheny mountains as well as to contact the Indians and to find a suitable location for making the company's surveys. But these men encountered opposition both from Indians and Pennsylvania traders and therefore were comparatively unsuccessful. As a result, the company in 1750 sent out Christopher Gist on a similar mission.<sup>225</sup>

Christopher Gist was born in Baltimore county, Maryland, between the years 1705-08.<sup>226</sup> Of his early life, little is known.<sup>227</sup> In 1728, at the time of his

<sup>222</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, II, 440.

<sup>223</sup> *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 31.

<sup>224</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, V, 440; *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 31.

\* <sup>225</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156-158 (Library of Congress transcript); *Maryland historical magazine*, VIII, 372 ff.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>227</sup> His father, Captain Richard Gist (1684-1742), was a native of Maryland, and seems to have been a man of considerable note. He was Baltimore county commissioner for a long period of years and was one of the seven commissioners appointed to lay out and erect Baltimore. From

marriage, he was given three hundred and fifty acres of land in Baltimore county. He became the father of five children; his two eldest sons, Richard and Nathaniel, were destined to be important frontiersmen.<sup>228</sup> In 1745 Gist failed in business and made an assignment to the firm of Cromwell and Stanbury.<sup>229</sup> Following this ill-fortune, he moved to a farm on the Yadkin river in northern North Carolina, a location that was out on the extreme frontier. Here he became noted far and wide for his ability as a surveyor. It was from this farm that he was called by the Ohio company in 1750.

Gist's ability as a surveyor is evidenced in his journals, which prove his knowledge along this line to have been expert. His minute reports and observations throughout the twelve hundred miles that he was called upon to explore, and that under the most trying circumstances, are surprisingly accurate. As an explorer he was unsurpassed in colonial times. Other men have been publicized and lauded, yet few, if any of them, can be credited with more extensive explorations; none of them experienced more difficult situations than he. It is a sad commentary upon both the fullness and the accuracy of our colonial history that the explorer of what later came to be our first national road should be so little known. We read much of the achievements of such men as George Washington, Edward Braddock, William

1740-1742 he was a representative from Baltimore county in the provincial assembly.

<sup>228</sup> For an account of Nathaniel Gist's work see L. P. Summers, *History of southwest Virginia, 1746-1786*.

<sup>229</sup> *Virginia magazine of history and biography*, VIII, 376.

Trent, and their associates, yet it was largely on information furnished by Christopher Gist that they relied in times of difficulty.

Little is known of Gist's education, but it certainly was not neglected. The English and spelling used in his journals were much above those of the ordinary Virginian. His easy grasp of the elements of geography and mineralogy shows that his education consisted of considerably more than a mere study of the fundamentals of surveying. Whether this education was gained in school or in experience we cannot be sure, but whichever the case may be, the results were excellent.

On september 11, 1750, the committee of the Ohio company gave Gist the instructions which he was to follow on his westward journey of survey and exploration. He was ordered to note the passes through the mountains, to observe the courses of the rivers, and to journey as far west as the falls of the Ohio. Particularly, he was to be on the lookout for fertile and accessible lands which would be suitable for settlement. He was instructed to observe the Indians that he encountered; note their relative strength and numbers, with whom they traded, and the kind of merchandise in which they dealt.<sup>230</sup>

If he found a large area of fertile, level land which he thought would meet the wishes of the company, he was to secure a good description of its boundaries, measure it several ways, and determine its exact position so that it could be easily found by following his description. But even though he should find such

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<sup>230</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 31.

a tract of land, he was still to continue on as far as the falls of the Ohio and make out a report upon the Ohio's navigation possibilities. He was further ordered to draw up a plan of the country that he passed through and keep a journal of his proceedings so that he could make an accurate report to the company.<sup>231</sup> In payment for his work, the company agreed to give him a £150 sterling guarantee, as well as any additional sums which his services might deserve.<sup>232</sup>

In accordance with his instructions, Gist set out upon his journey on October 31, 1750, from Old Town, Thomas Cresap's home on the Maryland side of the Potomac.<sup>233</sup> From Old Town he travelled westward towards Shannopin's Town,<sup>234</sup> a small Indian village of the Delawares at the forks of the Ohio. His route to Shannopin's Town lay northward from Old Town to the Juniata river, thence westward along the Juniata to its sources. From this point he travelled down-

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>232</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, April 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156-157 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>233</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 32.

<sup>234</sup> Shannopin's Town was located at what is now a part of Pittsburgh. At the time of Gist's arrival it was a small Indian village of some twenty wigwams containing nearly eighty Indians, about twenty of whom were warriors. It was somewhat of a trade center because it was the main passageway for the traders from east to west. The name of the town and its founder both appear in the records considerably prior to Gist's visit, Shannopin, himself, having been quite an important figure. He was a Delaware chief although his tribe was subject to the Iroquois. He seems to have always been friendly to the English. He was a member of the Philadelphia conference of August 1, 1740, which was between the Pennsylvania government and the Mingo and Delaware Indians. On September 15, 1748, he made a speech at Logstown to Conrad Weiser. His death occurred in approximately 1749. See *ibid.*, 34, 92; *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 443, V, 335, 519; "Journal of Conrad Weiser," *Historical society of Pennsylvania collections*, I, 29.

ward along the Kisiminitas, thence to Shannopin's Town. The trip from Old Town to Shannopin's Town took him twenty days, thirteen of which were spent in idleness, eight because of sickness, and five because of snow and rain. He noted that the country over which he passed was for the most part broken and stony, with an occasional good spot along the creeks, but not of sufficient size to be of use to the company.<sup>235</sup>

Gist spent four days at Shannopin's Town in an attempt to regain his good health. While here he took the occasion to do a bit of exploring in the vicinity. He did not dare use his compass in public, however, because it was dangerous to let the Indians see an Englishman with one.<sup>236</sup> Gist's remark that the possession of a compass was dangerous if known by the Indians brings to light certain facts and conditions which were to play an important part in the remainder of his journeys and also in the future affairs of the Ohio company. It will be remembered that the French had long laid claims to the Ohio country. They had backed up their move of burying leaden plates in 1749 by trying to break the alliance between these Ohio Indians and the English. One particular method used was telling the Indians that the English were planning on taking their lands from them. Consequently Gist was forced to keep secret his real purpose and to pose on his expedition as an envoy sent out by the Virginia government to recement the alliance between the English and the Indians. He had to ease tension and allay the Indians'

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<sup>235</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 33-34, 91-92.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

fears as to the purported plans of the English to take their land, while as a matter of fact, his very purpose was to find suitable land which the Ohio company could take. This land question remained serious right up to the French and Indian war and ultimately caused the great majority of these Indians to turn against the English and to the French. When Gist said that it was dangerous to show a compass, he knew whereof he spoke.

Gist set out on november 24 from Shannopin's Town, crossed the Ohio, and proceeded to Logstown, arriving there on the twenty-fifth.<sup>237</sup> He found the land from Shannopin's Town to Logstown very fertile along the river but the bottoms narrow. He noticed that at a short distance from the Ohio there was good level farming land, although it was covered with small white oaks.

Gist found practically no one at Logstown except "a parcel of reprobate traders, the chiefs of the Indians being out on a hunting. . ." <sup>238</sup> He seems not to have enjoyed his visit at this trading post. The inhabitants began to ask the nature of his business, and when he failed to give a prompt reply, they suspected him of scheming to gain their lands. In an attempt to avoid answering their questions, he tried

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 34; Logstown was located about eighteen miles from Shannopin's Town. It was just below the site of present-day Economy. The first description we have of Logstown is one made by Conrad Weiser in august, 1748. The town was first established by the Shawnee Indians in 1727-1730 soon after the near completion of their circuit migration. Captain Céloron de Bienville stopped here for two days (august 9, 10) on his 1749 expedition. See *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 348-358; "Journal of Conrad Weiser," *Historical society of Pennsylvania collections*, 1, 23 ff; *Christopher Gist's journals*, 34.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

to mislead them by appearing uninterested in their remarks.<sup>239</sup>

Learning that George Croghan<sup>240</sup> and Andrew Montour<sup>241</sup> had recently passed that way and knowing the high esteem in which the former was held by the Indians, Gist decided to pose as one of Croghan's friends. He added the statement that he had a message from the government of Virginia for the Indians and needed Montour to translate it. This partial fabrication served its purpose and made possible Gist's escape from harm. He wasted no more time at this post, leaving the next day. In his own words the reason for his hasty departure was that "Tho I was unwell, I preferred the woods to such company. . ." <sup>242</sup>

From Logstown, Gist continued down the Ohio to Beaver creek, so named for Beaver, the Delawares' king.<sup>243</sup> At this point he encountered Barney Curran, an Ohio company trader, and continued with him nearly to the Indian town of Muskingum.<sup>244</sup> At this

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>240</sup> George Croghan has been called the "prince of Pennsylvania traders." After immigrating to America in 1741 from Ireland, he became an Indian trader in 1744. For a number of years he traded privately and at the same time took part in Pennsylvania's Indian activities. In later years he became deputy Indian agent. For a detailed account of his work see A. T. Volwiller's splendid study, *George Croghan and the westward movement*.

<sup>241</sup> Andrew Montour was the son of the famous half-breed Madame Montour. Montour became a very useful Indian interpreter. He worked for Pennsylvania until the Logstown conference of 1752 at which time he entered the pay of the Ohio company for a brief period. (See page 105, note 278.)

<sup>242</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 35.

<sup>243</sup> Rochester, Pennsylvania, is now located at its mouth.

<sup>244</sup> Muskingum was a Wyandot town located on the Tuscarawas river,



town Gist met George Croghan who owned a trading house here. Gist found the town fairly evenly divided in its sympathy between the English and French. At the particular time of Gist's visit, the French had captured several English traders, and Croghan called in all the white men and many Indians of the vicinity for a conference. While Gist was still here, news came of several other traders being taken. Before leaving, Gist informed the Indians, through Montour, that the Ohio company had gifts ready to distribute if the red men would come to the forks of the Ohio to receive them.<sup>245</sup>

On January 15, 1751, Gist left Muskingum accompanied by Croghan, Montour, and their employees. Gist had found the country from Logstown to Muskingum fairly good for farming and not badly broken up, but from Muskingum on, it was broken, although fertile.<sup>246</sup> From Muskingum, he headed for the Twightwee town of Pickawillamy.<sup>247</sup> Enroute he passed through various Indian towns, Delaware, Wyandot, and Shawnee, and in each instance he invited the Indians to a conference at Logstown. He had planned to visit the Twightwees, because Lee had instructed him to find out the numbers and strength of certain Indians who lived west of the Ohio. Pickawillamy had long been famous as an

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a branch of the Muskingum river. It was located less than a mile from the forks, close to the present site of Coshocton (*Christopher Gist's journals*, 105-108).

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-41.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 42.

<sup>247</sup> Pickawillamy was located on the west bank of the Great Miami river at its junction with Laramie's creek, about two and one-half miles from the present town of Piqua.



Indian town. The Twightwees were considered English allies but it was Gist's duty to find out what influence the French might have with them and if the Ohio company could safely plan to trade with them.

In his journal, Gist explained the political set-up of the Miamis and told of their great influence among neighboring tribes. He showed the characteristic mid-eighteenth century lack of knowledge of American geography, however, when he surmised that the Twightwees might have great influence in the west, even possibly across the entire continent.<sup>248</sup>

On february 17 Montour gave his characteristic speech, this time stressing the need of clearing the French from the channels of trade.<sup>249</sup> From february 20-22 more councils were held, often with additional foreign tribes.<sup>250</sup> On february 23 and 24 considerable disorder was caused by a reported invasion of the French, but it turned out to be only four French Indian envoys who were attempting to swing the Twightwees to a French alliance. They were not successful, however, for the Twightwee chiefs were able to point to the fact that even the tribes of these French envoys were often at odds with the French. The result was an English alliance stronger than before. On march 1 the Indians stated in the council that they would be glad to come to Logstown to receive the Ohio company gifts.<sup>251</sup>

On march 2, Gist, Croghan, and the rest of the

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<sup>248</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 42-48.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-50; *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 522-524.

<sup>251</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 50-55.

group started out again.<sup>252</sup> The next day they parted company: Croghan headed for Hockhockin, and Gist for Shawnee Town, a place he had visited on his way to Pickawillamy. As the French Indians had threatened the travellers at Pickawillamy, Gist feared they might be lying in wait for him on the return journey, and as he was alone except for his servant, he did not follow the trail but went southwest along the Little Miamee river. Along this route he found fertile land and great, beautiful meadows with hardly a bush in sight. On march 8 he arrived at Shawnee Town, no event of particular note having taken place on his journey.<sup>253</sup>

The inhabitants of Shawnee Town, both Indian and white, came out to meet him upon his return to their village. A salute of about one hundred fifty guns was fired and subsequently an entertainment was held in his honor. The next day he had a talk with a Mingoe chief whom he had missed on his first visit because the chief had been down to the falls of the Ohio. Gist repeated the story of the Ohio company gift and of the invitation to come to Logstown. The Indian informed him of a French Indian party hunting near the falls and suggested that Gist refrain from going down in that direction as these Indians would be sure to take him prisoner and carry him to the French. Yet, as Gist was adventurous and desired to see the falls as well as to observe the country on the east side of the Ohio, he determined to venture as near the falls as possible.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-57.

Unexpectedly, the Ohio company went into the archaeological business. On march 13 Gist was on his way from Shawnee Town to the falls when he met Hugh Crawford<sup>255</sup> who had for him two teeth of a mammoth beast.<sup>256</sup> These bones had been taken from one of the salt licks a short distance above the falls. The rib-bones of one of these beasts found in this lick were eleven feet long and the skull bone over six feet in width; several teeth were found that were about five inches long. The tooth that Gist secured and brought in for the Ohio company weighed over four pounds.<sup>257</sup>

Upon arriving within fifteen miles of the falls, Gist found a number of signs of Indians. He desired to continue but his better judgment and his sense of duty to the company prevailing, he turned southward. He headed for the Little Cuttawa or Kentucky river, reaching it at about the site of present-day Frankfort. At various points along his route he observed extensive meadows. Near the mouth of Red river<sup>258</sup> he found some stones which he thought might be of value, therefore he took some of them for the company as samples. A short distance farther on he found some coal and brought some of it along, too. Because of the rough country he encountered, he found it impossible to progress rapidly and was often short of

<sup>255</sup> Hugh Crawford was a licensed trader, receiving his first license in 1747-8 (*Pennsylvania archives*, II, 14).

<sup>256</sup> Peter Collinson to Cadwallader Colden, february 10, 1768, *Cadwallader Colden papers (Collections of the New York historical society for the year 1923)*, VII, 132-135.

<sup>257</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 58-60.

<sup>258</sup> Daniel Boone reached this spot on his first journey into Kentucky in 1769, just eighteen years later.

food for both himself and his horses. From march 20 to may 7 he encountered little but discouraging difficulties. He lost several horses due to falls and similar trouble. If the way were not steep then he ran into thickets and more likely than not he encountered both.<sup>259</sup> On may 13 he reached the home of Richard Hall, located in Augusta county on the New river; Hall was one of the most western settlers.<sup>260</sup>

While resting at the home of Hall, he wrote a letter to Thomas Lee and the Ohio company informing them that he would be with them on june 15. Leaving this place he journeyed to his own home but found his family had been driven to Roanoke by Indian raids. On may 19 he reached Roanoke and found his wife and children well. This completed his first journey.<sup>261</sup>

After reading Gist's journal the company members noted that he had confined most of his observations to the north side of the Ohio. Because these lands were at too great a distance and too unprotected to be desirable, it was decided to employ him for a second journey, this time to observe and examine particularly the lands on the south side of the Ohio. This trip took him from november, 1751 to march, 1752.

Gist's new instructions were given to him by the Ohio company on july 16, 1751. He was to go at his earliest convenience to Thomas Cresap's place at Old Town and secure as many of the company's horses as he should deem necessary for himself and whomever he should choose to take with him. His first job was

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<sup>259</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 60-64.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66.

to search for and to observe the shortest and most convenient road from the Ohio company's storehouse at Wills' creek to a point of landing on the Monongahela. He was to journey down the south side of the Ohio until he came to the Big Conhaway, then to ascend that river as far as he should judge proper, the only prerequisite being that he find good land. On this expedition he was to keep a more detailed description of the country he passed through, noting not only every fragment of good land, no matter how small, but also the bad land, describing both as to length, breadth, value, and produce, such as timber or trees. He was to notice particularly the length, breadth, and depth of all the streams flowing into the Ohio. In all his observations he was to look for suitable spots for the building of storehouses and trading centers by the company.<sup>262</sup>

On november 4, 1751, Gist, accompanied by his son, set out from the company's storehouse at Wills' creek. He was undoubtedly the first white man to pass along much of this route. From the Ohio company's storehouse he crossed the Potomac, then moved west about four miles through a gap in the Allegheny mountains upon the southwest fork of the Potomac. He described this trail clearly. Though the mountains were high, it was still the best road to the Monongahela. He stated that the trail was not steep, and although it contained much debris such as stones and old trees, it could easily be cleared and made into a wagon trail. The traders had been using another trail but Gist discovered the one he was following to

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-68.

be several miles shorter and a much better one.<sup>263</sup> He passed over the successive ranges of Wills', Savage, and Meadow mountains, thence downward into the Little Meadows. After passing through the Little Meadows, he climbed over Negro Mountain, crossed the upper Youghiogheny, and on november 24 camped near "Gabriel's Run." Here he met some Delaware Indians whom he invited "to the treaty at the Loggs Town, the full moon in may. . ." <sup>264</sup> These Indians seemed friendly enough, but Gist learned afterwards that they had threatened him. He next climbed over Briery Mountain, entered the Great Meadow, and then passed over Laurel Hill, the last Allegheny range.<sup>265</sup>

On december 7 he arrived at an Indian camp owned by Nemacolin, the Indian who later aided Cresap in marking out the Ohio company road. He invited Nemacolin to Logstown the same as he had the other Indians.<sup>266</sup> On december 9 he reached the Monongahela at about six miles upstream from the present site of Brownsville.<sup>267</sup> After spending some time in exploring the country, he started out again on december 15, crossing to the west side of the Monongahela somewhere below the Youghiogheny.<sup>268</sup> After spending considerable time exploring the surrounding country, he stopped at a camp upon Licking creek belonging to an Indian named Oppaymol-

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 138.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70, 139.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71; 139-141.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 71, 141.

leah.<sup>269</sup> As the Indians here wondered why he was travelling so far into the woods, Gist told him that it was to invite the inhabitants of the Ohio region to Logstown in may. From december 21 to january 19, 1752, little progress was made because Gist's son was suffering from frostbitten feet. On january 13 Gist found some rocks with yellow-colored veins running through them. He took a sample of this for the company, as he thought it might be a precious metal.<sup>270</sup> On one rock he chiseled out in large letters the following:

THE OHIO COMPANY  
FEBY 1751  
BY CHRISTOPHER GIST<sup>271</sup>

From this point Gist continued his searches, running into no particular incident of outstanding importance. He spent much of his time in lateral exploration rather than moving forward with any great speed. He went down the Ohio as far as the Big Conhaway and then turned homeward. By march 12 he was back to the Monongahela,<sup>272</sup> thence to the Potomac. He did not follow quite the same route home from the Monongahela that he had followed going but, instead, went more to the east. He found

<sup>269</sup> Oppaymolleah was the same Delaware chief who attended a conference at Fort Pitt in 1768, held by George Croghan, Alexander McKee, and their associates with the warriors of the Delawares, Wyandots, Six Nations, and others.

<sup>270</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 71-74.

<sup>271</sup> While Gist wrote his journal according to new style dating, he carved this date according to old style. The date of the carving was actually february, 1752.

<sup>272</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 74-77.

this passageway to be shorter and therefore recommended that the company build their road from Wills' creek to the Monongahela over this route rather than over the other one he had previously suggested. He gave as his reason the shortness of the road. It would be only seventy miles long and would connect with the Monongahela at its upper fork, a spot from which flat-bottomed boats could sail as far as the falls of the Ohio. Gist arrived at Wills' creek on march 29<sup>273</sup> with a considerable number of skins to show for his winter's travels. Due to other work for the company he was not able, however, to turn in his journal before october, 1752.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-79.

<sup>274</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156-157 (Library of Congress transcript).



## Pennsylvania and Virginia Rivalry



## Pennsylvania and Virginia Rivalry

One of the most important background incidents in the history of the Ohio company was the treaty of Lancaster of 1744. This was one of the first tangible evidences of interest on the part of the English colonists in the pecuniary profits available in the Ohio country. This treaty was a milestone in Indian relations which served as a basis for much of the later negotiations and treaties with the Indians concerning their western land. Its chief importance lies in the fact that it gave the English their first significant treaty claim to the Ohio region in their efforts to combat the claims of the French.

Nevertheless, the year 1744 was not the first occasion of an English attempt to settle disputes with the Indians regarding land to the west of the Alleghenies. In 1722 Governor Spotswood had arrived at an agreement with the Indians whereby the English were granted land as far west as the ridge of the Alleghenies, but no further. The English began to advance beyond this line, however, and the Indians, in consequence, began to protest these encroachments and to demand compensation. To adjust these differences a conference was called at Philadelphia in 1736 between the chiefs of the Six Nations and representatives of the Pennsylvania government.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> *Executive journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 552-553; II, 22-24; *Journals of the house of burgesses* (1712-1714, 1715-1718, 1720-

While Pennsylvania appeared willing to grant concessions, Virginia did not. The latter colony claimed that the western territory in dispute belonged to her as a result of her charter and because of past treaties, especially the 1686 treaty at Albany, whereby the Iroquois agreed to become the subjects of the British Crown and promised to give up their lands in return for protection. But by 1744 these Indians had come to appreciate to a greater extent the meaning and purpose of this treaty. They apparently had never intended actually to turn over their lands to the English, and when the latter's encroachments began to increase, a misunderstanding was created which for a time threatened to drive the Iroquois into open hostility toward the English and into close friendship with the French. Such a situation naturally led to a conciliatory attitude on the part of the English.<sup>276</sup>

Virginia's attitude also began to change, and as a result, the controversy over disputed western lands served as the occasion for calling together in conference the representatives of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania in conjunction with the chiefs of the Six Nations. This was the Lancaster conference of 1744. The Virginia commissioners to the conference were Thomas Lee and William Beverley, with William Black acting as secretary. Maryland sent Edmund Jennings and Philip Thomas. Governor

1722, 1723-1726), 319-354, *passim*; *Statutes at large* . . ., IV, 103-106; *New York colonial documents*, V, 655-681; *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, III, 204-205; P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1319/98; P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1322/139.

<sup>276</sup> *New York colonial documents*, III, 438-444; V, 489-493; *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, III, 21-23; *Executive journals of the council of colonial Virginia*, III, 446.

George Thomas of Pennsylvania presided. Additional representatives were Colonel Robert King and Colonel Thomas Calvil. Deputies were present from the Onondagoes, Oneidas, Cayogoes, Senecas, and Tuscaroraes.<sup>277</sup> Madame Montour acted as one of the interpreters.<sup>278</sup> The result of the treaty was the relinquishment on the part of the Iroquois of their lands in Virginia and the acknowledgement of the right of the English king to this territory. In return, the Indians were given a payment of £400, partly in merchandise and partly in specie. Future remuneration was promised as settlements progressed westward. An additional assurance was given the Indians that they could have an open road through Virginia into the Catawba country. Pennsylvania and the Six Nations confirmed existing treaties, and Pennsylvania gave the Indians merchandise equal to £300 value.<sup>279</sup>

Confusion grew almost at once from this treaty. The Indians believed that they had sold land only up to the headwaters of the rivers flowing westward into the Ohio; that they had successfully maintained claims in Virginia; that they had obtained a guaran-

<sup>277</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 698.

<sup>278</sup> Madame Montour was the mother of Andrew Montour, discussed in a previous connection. She was the half-breed daughter of a Frenchman named Montour. She was born 1684, and in 1694 was carried away captive by Iroquois warriors. She married a famous Iroquois war-chief, Carondawama. She was an Indian interpreter for Pennsylvania at various treaties, the first one being in 1711 at Albany at about which time she became known by her maiden name of Montour. She had such influence over the Indians that the French and English vied for her services. The latter were successful, and she appeared in various conferences, including the Lancaster treaty of 1744.

<sup>279</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, IV, 711-737; Memorandum on treaty of Lancaster, may 1, 1744, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/259-260.

tee of an open trail to the Catawba country; and that Virginia was to feed their warriors enroute. Virginia, on the other hand, thought she had completely extinguished all claims of the Iroquois to land within that colony.

Conditions were in this mixed state when the treaty of Logstown of 1748 took place.<sup>280</sup> Conrad Weiser<sup>281</sup> was one of the prominent English forces behind this treaty and he was from Pennsylvania. Thus at the conclusion of the treaty, Pennsylvania was in a very good position in relation to the Ohio trade. Up to that time, in fact, Pennsylvania traders had had almost complete control of the English end of the fur trading business in this region as the Virginia traders had usually travelled southwest to trade among the southern Indians. But by 1748 Virginia had begun to see great possibilities in the Ohio country. By the Lancaster treaty she had received confirmation of her claims to this country and Pennsylvania had offered no objections; hence it looked as though Virginia traders might be able to step in and reap some fine rewards. The Logstown treaty gave the English the

<sup>280</sup> See pages 125-137.

<sup>281</sup> Conrad Weiser was born in 1696 in Herrenburg, Germany. Coming to America at the age of thirteen, he settled at Livingston Manor in New York. He tried desperately to scratch out an existence by making tar and raising hemp, but after three years he quit this type of work, spending the next two years at Schenectady in the company of an Iroquois Indian chief. In 1729 he moved to the Tulpehocken valley in Pennsylvania. In 1731 Weiser began his work as an Indian interpreter, but did not officially enter the Pennsylvania service until 1738. From that time until after the French and Indian war Weiser was one of the greatest interpreters. On most occasions he served Pennsylvania but at times acted as interpreter for both the Ohio company and Virginia. For a secondary account of his work as an Indian interpreter see Joseph W. Walton, *Conrad Weiser and the Indian policy of colonial Pennsylvania*.

right to the fur trade from the forks of the Ohio to the Mississippi and from present-day Michigan to Pennsylvania. But now the struggle for profits became not only a French and English conflict but also a Pennsylvania and Virginia one. The Virginians had seemed suspicious of the motives of the Pennsylvanians even before the Logstown treaty, and therefore the assembly refused to make the necessary allotment of money required to send representatives to the conference. Sir William Gooch, at that time lieutenant-governor, found adequate means, however, and thus Virginia was able to participate, bearing one-fifth of the total cost.

While both colonies reaped great trade advantages from this treaty at the expense of the French, their thirst for profits was not quenched. Each set about to cut down the advantages of the other. Very little British patriotism was apparent among these traders as each strove to outstrip his English rival. Certain Pennsylvanians were willing to instigate the Indians against the Virginians, even if this would result in Britain's not being able to build forts for the purpose of cementing her claims to the country. Virginians, on the other hand, while not appearing willing to engage in destroying the English influence among the Indians, were just as guilty of attempting to gain a monopoly of the Indian trade. In view of the fact that Pennsylvanians considered the Virginians as interlopers into the field due to their later arrival, this attitude was certain to cause disturbances. For a very short time it appeared probable that Virginia traders would not be able to offer Pennsylvania much compe-

tition because of the unfavorable conditions under which the former were forced to operate. They were not only new in the field but also had as yet no satisfactory route to follow in travelling to and from the Indian country. Such was the condition in the Ohio country when the Ohio company made its appearance.

The company made a fine beginning when it sent out the cautious and capable Gist and built its storehouse at Wills' creek; <sup>282</sup> but that was only the start. The personnel working for the company was not as experienced as the group of traders representing Pennsylvania. One advantage the company did have, however, was coordination in its efforts; all its members were working for one objective while the Pennsylvania traders were notoriously individualistic. Nevertheless, the latter found a common bond of unity in their opposition to the Ohio company, even to outright attempts to bring about its ruin.

Mention has been made of Pennsylvania's traders, superior not only in number, but also in ability and influence with the Indians. The outstanding traders working for Pennsylvania at this time were George Croghan, the Lowry brothers (Lazarus, Alexander, and James), John Fraser and his employees (his headquarters being located at Venango), William Trent (at times a one-third partner of Croghan), Robert Callendar (also one of Croghan's partners), Hugh Crawford, Edward Ward, Thomas Smallman, Andrew Montour, and Lewis Evans. Even the

<sup>282</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/156-157 (Library of Congress transcript).





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MAP SHOWING ENGLISH AND FRENCH ROUTES TO THE OHIO (1756)

The dotted line from Fort Cumberland to Lake Erie  
denotes the common route of travellers.



religious interpreter, Conrad Weiser, and secretary Richard Peters engaged in the profitable business.

The members of the Ohio company had as their chief agent, Thomas Cresap, a man every whit as capable as any of the Pennsylvanians, and as their chief messenger and explorer a man unsurpassed in colonial times, Christopher Gist; but outside these two, they had very little to show in the way of trader personnel, and even these two can hardly be listed as Indian traders. They did have such men working for them as Barney Curran and Hugh Parker, but when they needed anything really important accomplished, they were forced to hire Pennsylvania traders. Of these, William Trent was the most important although at times Croghan, Ward, and Montour also worked for the company.

Almost as soon as the Ohio company was organized the Pennsylvania traders began to combat it with every available weapon.<sup>283</sup> Naturally the most important of these, and one ready at hand, was to make the Indians suspicious of the company. The red men were told that the company was planning to settle their hunting grounds and was also opening a road that would allow the Catawbias to invade the Ohio region. As these southern tribesmen and the Six Nations were great enemies, such utterances had their effect.

So strong did the feeling against the Ohio company develop that Thomas Lee wrote to the Board of Trade on October 18, 1749, complaining of the situation. He first pointed out that after receiving Sir

<sup>283</sup> *State of the British and French colonies in North America . . .*, 115.

William Gooch's additional instructions as to the true purpose and reason for making the grant,<sup>284</sup> the company members had held a meeting at which time they made out an order to John Hanbury for the necessary Indian merchandise with which to carry on trade and sent out a man to find a good place to build their factory. But it was found that conditions had changed. Lee continued:

. . . but those very Indians that had encouraged them at first, had been persuaded to believe that our design was to ruin, not trade with them; and such a spirit of jealousy is raised among them yet without a treaty and presents we shall not be able to do any thing with them. This was not the case when the Ohio company petitioned; the bulk of these Indians are such as being ill used by the French removed from the lakes of St. Lawrence, a short time before the end of the warr; in order to join the English in making warr upon the French; and tho they have been invited, refuse to return; and with these are some of the Six Nations, these are all friends, but friendship with these people must be kept firm by presents, which make way for trade. It will therefore I apprehend be necessary for this government to treat with them, and by presents fix them in the English interest. . .<sup>285</sup>

In a letter only a month later, dated november 22, 1749, written to Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania, Lee became very definite as to why the Indians were beginning to show a changed attitude. He fairly accurately summarized these early difficulties between Pennsylvania and Virginia when he wrote:

I am sorry that so soon I am obliged to complain to you of the insidious behaviour, as I am informed, of some traders from your

✧ <sup>284</sup> Draught of additional instructions to Sir William Gooch, december 13, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/63 (Library of Congress transcript).

✧ <sup>285</sup> Thomas Lee to the board of trade, october 18, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/195-196 (Library of Congress transcript).

province, tending to disturb the peace of this colony and to alienate the affections of the Indians from us.

His majesty has been graciously pleased to grant to some gentlemen and merchants of London and some of both sorts inhabitants of this colony, a large quantity of land west of the mountains, . . . all which his majesty has approved and directed the governor here to assist the said company in carrying their laudable design into execution; but your traders have prevailed with the Indians on the Ohio to believe that the fort is to be a bridle for them, and that the roads which the company are to make is to let in the Catawabas upon them to destroy them, and the Indians naturally jealous are so possessed with the truth of these insinuations that they had given leave to make, and by this the carrying the king's grant into execution is at present impracticable. Yet these are the lands purchased of the Six Nations by the treaty of Lancaster.

I need not say any more to prevail with you to take the necessary means to put a stop to these mischievous practices of those traders. We are informed that there is measures designed by the court of France that will be mischievous to these colonys which will in prudence oblige us to unite and not divide the interest of the king's subjects on the continent.<sup>286</sup>

A few weeks later Governor Hamilton very artfully answered this letter by declaring his great concern over the charge made by Lee against the traders of Pennsylvania. He promised Lee that his efforts would be directed against the punishment of the originators of the dangerous insinuations against the Ohio company. Hamilton stated further that while no traders were in Philadelphia at the time of his writing, as soon as they returned from the Indian country he would examine each of them and endeavor to stop the insidious practice of turning the Indians against Virginia.<sup>287</sup>

\* <sup>286</sup> Thomas Lee to Governor James Hamilton, november 22, 1749, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 422-423.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 424.

But this does not fully represent Governor Hamilton's attitude toward the company. He desired the maintenance of Pennsylvania's prestige among the Indians along the Ohio, and consequently when Lee, acting in the interest of the company, bewailed the activities engaged in by the Pennsylvania traders, Hamilton declared that responsibility for the misdeeds of these traders did not lie with him. He was, however, the man responsible for the issuance of licenses under which they operated. His attitude toward the company can be seen in the instructions issued to Lewis Evans in 1750; in these he ordered Evans to go to the Indian country and investigate the activities of the Ohio company: especially was he to get information as to their stock of merchandise, their scheme to trade with the Indians, and advantages or disadvantages under which the company labored. He was to determine, if possible, whether or not the company was apt to prove a dangerous competitor to Pennsylvania in the future. In order to make his journey safe and to avoid suspicion by Virginians, he was to be accompanied by a trader of his choice.<sup>288</sup>

In a letter to Robert Dinwiddie in december, 1751, Thomas Cresap complained of this same matter of the activities of Pennsylvania traders.<sup>289</sup> Being much distressed at the news,<sup>290</sup> Dinwiddie wrote to the Board of Trade on january 20, 1752, bemoaning such conditions in the following terms:

I have been informed by letters since my arrivall that many irregularities, even murders and robberies have been committed by

× <sup>288</sup> *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 47-48.

× <sup>289</sup> W. P. Palmer (ed.), *Calendar of Virginia state papers*, I, 245.

× <sup>290</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 17-18.



the traders among the Indians, and I have reason to think these people are of great prejudice to the general interest, and how to redress it at present I do not know, for to appoint magistrates on the Ohio these people dispute the authority of this province, as most of the traders belong to the collonies to the northward of us.<sup>291</sup>

But in fairness to certain Pennsylvanians, it should be pointed out that several times they advised the Indians to trade wherever they could buy cheaper, whether it be from the Ohio company or from Pennsylvania traders. Richard Peters, for instance, while unfriendly to the company, did advise the Indians to give preference to Ohio company traders if these treated them better and offered more liberal terms than did the Pennsylvanians. This attitude was exceptional, however.<sup>292</sup>

The Ohio company was not slow to use the same tactics as Pennsylvania. Thomas Cresap was ever ready to speak in terms detrimental to Pennsylvania traders. In 1750 a band of Indians enroute to Cresap's home at Old Town stopped off at Croghan's place at Pennsboro and informed Richard Peters and others who were there, of Cresap's allegation that the Ohio company could sell goods much cheaper than the Pennsylvania traders, and of his invitation to them to come to his home to talk matters over. Montour was requested by the Indians to acquaint Peters with the details of the invitation. Peters reported that Montour had said that in the last fall an Ohio company representative, Barney Curran, had brought the In-

<sup>291</sup> Robert Dinwiddie to the board of trade, january 20, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/348.

<sup>292</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 439.

dians a message from Cresap wherein the latter had told of a quantity of goods in his possession which he would sell to them at a low rate, "much cheaper than the Pennsylvania traders sold them; and notwithstanding the people of Pennsylvania always told them they were brethren and had a great value for them, yet this only came from their mouth and not from their heart, for they constantly cheated them in all their dealings, which he Col. Cresap was very well acquainted with, and taking pity of them he intended to use them in another manner, and mentioned the rates that he and Mr. Parker would sell their goods to them at, which is cheaper than the first cost be they any where imported. . . ." <sup>293</sup>

George Croghan seemed to feel that the blame for the state of ill-feeling between the Indians and the Ohio company was the fault of that company's own agents. While Cresap and Parker had promised the Indians cheaper goods, at the same time they had told them of the company's plans to make a settlement on the branches of the Ohio. The settlement was of course necessary if goods were to be supplied cheaper, but the Indians did not react favorably for the simple reason that they did not desire cheaper goods at the cost of a Virginia settlement west of the Alleghenies. Thus the Indians had turned in alarm from the English to the French, and in that turning had done the very thing the British had so long feared. <sup>294</sup>

Another subject which added to the problem of Pennsylvania and Virginia relationship had nothing to do with personnel but with the boundary contro-

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 440.

<sup>294</sup> *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 31.

versy. The western boundary of Pennsylvania was in dispute for many years; and by 1748 it had not yet been determined whether the forks of the Ohio fell within the bounds of Pennsylvania or of Virginia. The Ohio company acted on the assumption that the land about the forks belonged to Virginia and thus could be included within their grant. Pennsylvania quite naturally objected, and did everything within her power to prevent the Ohio company from establishing settlements there.

The boundary question arose out of the charters of both colonies. By her charter of 1609 Virginia's area extended from sea to sea. That is, it read two hundred miles each, north and south, from Old Point Comfort, westward to the South sea, and, as Lee and later Dinwiddie believed, including the "island of California" and all other islands lying less than one hundred miles off the mainland.<sup>295</sup> Two hundred miles north of Point Comfort made Virginia's northern boundary fall on the line of 40° 25' north latitude. It extended westward along this line to the western boundary of Pennsylvania, thence northwest.<sup>296</sup>

Pennsylvania's western boundary was to extend only five degrees of longitude west from the Delaware river. But how far west this was had not yet been determined. Throughout the middle of the eight-

<sup>295</sup> Sir William Gooch to the board of trade, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/167 (Library of Congress transcript); Thomas Lee to the board containing answers to the board's queries relative to the state of the colony of Virginia, september 29, 1750, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/231 (Library of Congress transcript); Gooch to the board of trade, june 10, 1747, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1326/465-470 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>296</sup> Michell's report on the limits of Virginia and the encroachments made upon it, april 14, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/429 (Library of Congress transcript).

eenth century three interpretations were being given as to the location from whence these five degrees were to be measured. According to the three different methods of reckoning, the measurement should be from the head of the Delaware river, from the lower bends at about Newcastle, or from a line run parallel to the entire river. The western limits would differ greatly, depending upon which of these methods was used for the determination of the boundary, the difference amounting to nearly a degree of longitude.<sup>297</sup> The Ohio company was particularly interested in the forks of the Ohio, and as this area was in the disputed section, ill-feeling and controversy naturally resulted.

In regard to this boundary dispute Lee wrote the lords of Trade as follows:

. . . The Pennsylvanians claim as I am told to your 39th degree, this will take from Virginia a considerable quantity of land, and prevent the Ohio company settling with any certainty; as noe such line has ever been run; there seems to be the same reason for settling the northern, as there was for settling the southern bounds of Virginia, and if your lordships think soe the same way may be taken by appointing comissioners.<sup>298</sup>

After he became president of the Virginia council, Lee travelled into the back country examining the situation, and in a report to the lords of Trade he again urged that something be done about the boundary dispute, arguing that it was to his majesty's benefit to have it run as soon as possible for several reasons; first, because if Virginia owned the land, settlement

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 1327/429-430 (Library of Congress transcript).

\* <sup>298</sup> Thomas Lee to the board of trade, october 18, 1749, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/196 (Library of Congress transcript).

would immediately be made, thus protecting the frontier from the French and Indians; secondly, the revenue in quit-rents to be gained if the land belonged to Virginia was of great consequence to the Crown because the area in controversy contained millions of acres; and thirdly, the grant to the Ohio company would prove more profitable than any the Crown had ever made. Lee then stated that Pennsylvania in 1750 was gaining quit-rents from less than half her land, and when the whole was settled, the monetary returns would be prodigious. Further, as the lands on the Ohio were rich, more people could conveniently settle there than at that time were living in New York, the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania combined, thus making this Britain's strongest rather than weakest frontier in America.<sup>299</sup>

In Hamilton's letter to Lee, January 2, 1749, previously cited, Hamilton opened up the debatable question of the company's rights in this area, this right contingent upon a decision as to ownership of the land. Hamilton felt that a boundary line should be run in order to determine whether or not the Ohio company's grant was within Virginia or Pennsylvania, and he stood ready at any time to appoint commissioners to run the lines.<sup>300</sup>

In Michell's report to England, April 14, 1752, concerning the extent and limits of the colony of Virginia, is included a discussion of this boundary question. Michell suggested that four steps be taken

<sup>299</sup> Thomas Lee to the board of trade, September 29, 1750, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/233-234 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>300</sup> See also *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 422, 425.

to clear up matters in the west. Only three of these points pertained to the Ohio company. These read :

If we may be allowed to give our opinion of what may be necessary to be come upon those occasions, it is briefly as follows.

1. To settle the bounds and limits of the different colony's in those western parts; so that the property and title to the lands may be ascertained.
2. To make the Ohio company lay off their large grant in those parts, and make the settlements agreed upon untill that is done, no others can well take a grant for any lands thereabouts, for fear of being ejected by that very extensive one that was granted before them.
3. If the like grants of smaller tracts of land were made to others upon the same terms with that of the Ohio company and all who will settle in that country were allowed a grant free from quit-rents and other charges for a certain number of years, to encourage and enable them to make settlements in such remote and distant parts, it is the opinion of those that are best acquainted with it, that the country on and above the river Ohio would soon be peopled and secured. . .<sup>301</sup>

One of the problems inherited by Robert Dinwiddie upon his arrival in America was the relationship of the Ohio company to the boundary dispute. In a letter to the Board of Trade, january 20, 1752, Dinwiddie reported the trouble on the frontier between Pennsylvania and Virginia traders, and reiterated that little could be done to regulate this matter because the Pennsylvanians disputed Virginia's authority in that section of the Ohio country.<sup>302</sup> He also felt that no definite Indian policy could be de-

<sup>x</sup> 301 Michell's report, april 14, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/439 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>x</sup> 302 Dinwiddie to the lords of trade, january 20, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/453 (Library of Congress transcript).

terminated upon until it was decided to whom the control of the Indians belonged. Dinwiddie concluded this phase of his letter by suggesting that commissioners and surveyors be chosen to run the line.<sup>303</sup>

In may, 1753, the subtle Hamilton wrote to Dinwiddie asking him if the Ohio company were planning on erecting any kind of a fort on the lands granted to them, his interest in the question lying in the fact that the Pennsylvania proprietors had requested him to aid the company in any way possible, only being sure that the proposed fort was not upon land belonging to Pennsylvania.<sup>304</sup> On may 22, 1753, Dinwiddie answered this seemingly cordial letter by stating that he had often spoken to the members of the Ohio company expressing his belief in Pennsylvania's willingness to cooperate.<sup>305</sup>

But the boundary question was not settled in time to be of any aid to the Ohio company, and serves as one of the basic causes for that company's failure to establish settlements in the Ohio region prior to the French and Indian war. The company could never be sure who owned the land and thus did not dare invest large sums of money where such uncertainty existed. Similarly, it was impossible to send out settlers until some place was definitely available for them to settle. It mattered little how much land they were able to secure from the Indians as long as it was not definite

<sup>303</sup> See also Robert Dinwiddie to the board of trade, june 5, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/461 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>304</sup> James Hamilton to Robert Dinwiddie, may 6, 1753, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 629-630.

<sup>305</sup> Dinwiddie to James Hamilton, may 22, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/667-670 (Library of Congress transcript).

whether the lands secured would not eventually fall to Pennsylvania. Time was to prove that Pennsylvania's claim was the better, Pennsylvania thus falling heir to much of the Ohio company lands.



## Logstown and Winchester Conferences



## Logstown and Winchester Conferences

Gist had stated to the Indians at various times that the Ohio company and Virginia had a gift for them. While it was true that the company had a few actual presents, in reality it was the Indians who were to serve as the givers. At the conference at Logstown, as at Lancaster, the Indians were again to meet the white man and again to give away their lands. One might wonder at the apparent stupidity of the Indian. He would come to these conferences seemingly determined not only to keep all he possessed but even to gain back some he had previously lost; yet always would he go away minus more and still more land toward the setting sun. The white man would usually go away exultant, having apparently again duped the ignorant savage. Yet why should he be elated? Had not the red man really tricked him? The Indian might sign away his home for some cheap gift, yet he seldom would live up to the arrangements made. For his effort in listening to the white man and signing his recognized signature, he had in reality lost nothing the white man would not have taken anyway, and on his part had gained a few free meals and a present. While these conferences might not have been quite so simple or as useless as this, they seldom meant much to the Indian, nor did he abide by the agreements.

The Logstown conference was ushered in under just such circumstances, the English feeling that the Indians had not lived up to the treaty of Lancaster of 1744, and the Indians thinking the white man was again stealing their land. Specific instructions were given to the English delegates to satisfy the Indians at nearly any cost to insure that the new treaty would not be repudiated. The meeting ended with everyone in fine spirits – the Indians under agreement to give up claims to some of their own land, the Englishmen confident they had gained a great victory. Yet, hardly had a year elapsed before the Indians repudiated the *bundobast* and all was as before. The treaty, however, cannot be dismissed so easily.

Though the Logstown treaty of 1752 has been accorded little if any comment in most historical works dealing with the period, it merits serious consideration. True, on the surface its results appear negligible, the proceedings of the conference itself not differing in any substantial way from the usual type of Indian-colonist treaty; nevertheless, it is so inextricably interwoven with the events of the era – the ventures of the Ohio company, the invasions of the French, the conflict of colonial rights, especially those of Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the formation of the Indian and frontier policy of Robert Dinwiddie – that a study of the treaty seems of paramount importance to an understanding of the problems of the Ohio company as well as to an understanding of the causes for the French and Indian war. It was the combination of problems leading up to and those resulting from this parley that made it significant.

The Logstown treaty had become a necessity to the Ohio company for several reasons: first, because the Indians had repudiated the Virginian interpretation of the Lancaster treaty of 1744 it was essential to the Ohio company that the grant of land made by that treaty be reaffirmed. By this treaty, and by earlier agreements, the English had established claims to much of the region west of the Alleghenies, and it has been shown how the Ohio company had made efforts to secure this land. But as long as the Indians of this region refused to allow the company to establish settlements around the forks of the Ohio, the English claims were well-nigh valueless. Second, due to the insidious propaganda being spread about by the Pennsylvania traders and the French, the Ohio company was rapidly attaining ill-repute among the Indians. It was to regain this Indian friendship that gifts were to be distributed at Logstown.

The conference was nearly doomed to failure before it even got under way because Pennsylvania traders did all in their power to prevent such a parley from materializing. They feared it would mean victory for the company. While able temporarily to delay the convention, the Pennsylvanians were unable in the end to prevent it. Success did crown the company's efforts, and had not unforeseen conditions arisen, the Logstown treaty would have been one of the most famous in Indian history.

While the conference was a Virginia affair, Pennsylvania did send George Croghan as an unofficial delegate. The attitude of the Pennsylvania traders did not seem to be the position of the Pennsylvania

government. The official attitude of Pennsylvania toward the conference was reflected in a letter from Governor Hamilton to Andrew Montour following the employment of the latter by Governor Dinwiddie as an interpreter for Virginia. Hamilton requested Montour to assure the Indians of Pennsylvania's agreement with Virginia on this matter and

. . . that as his majesty has been pleased to give these Indians such a speciman of his tender care of them as to order them a present, it is my advice that they give a very cordial reception to the Virginia commissioners, accept the king's present with all becoming thankfulness, and cultivate an affectionate friendship with his majesty's subjects of that colony . . . the kinder they are to the Virginia people, and particularly to those who are minded to trade with them, the more agreeable it will be to me.<sup>306</sup>

At the same time, april, 1752, Hamilton received a message from the Shawnee asking for aid in event of trouble with the French. In his reply, the governor advised them to seek counsel from the Virginia commissioners, doubting not that they would be able to give the Shawnee "good and faithful advice."<sup>307</sup>

No evidence can be found of Pennsylvania being officially represented at Logstown. In the preceding spring George Croghan, as the official representative of Pennsylvania, had met a group of Indians at this Indian town to present them with a gift from his colony, but evidently he did not attend the conference in 1752 in the same capacity. In the course of the meeting, the Half-King referred to the matter saying that "it is a great while since our brother, the Buck

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<sup>306</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 568.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 571.

(Croghan), has been doing business between us, and our brother of Pennsylvania, but we understand he does not intend to do any more.<sup>308</sup>

On april 28, 1752, George Mason, acting for the company, issued instructions to Gist, naming him an Ohio company agent at the forthcoming conference. The meeting was to commence on april 28, 1752, although it did not actually begin until june 1. Mason instructed Gist to inform the Indian chiefs, when gathered there, that the king of England had granted to the Ohio company a large amount of land on the Ohio river and its branches, thus making it possible for the white men to make settlements, carry on trade and commerce, and supply goods at a much cheaper rate than heretofore. In fact, one of the clauses in the grant made it obligatory on the company to supply these goods to the Indians. But the distance and the danger were so great that the company could not sell its goods as reasonably as it had anticipated unless a settlement could be established upon the Ohio and thus make possible the erection of a trading center. The company claimed legal right to these lands because the Six Nations had disposed of them to the king of Great Britain at the treaty of Lancaster. Such a settlement might cause the Indians inconvenience by scaring the game away and thus forcing them to push on to other hunting grounds. To forestall such an eventuality and any possible misunderstandings, the company was willing even to repurchase these lands, provided of course, they could be secured on

<sup>308</sup> "Treaty of Logg's Town," *Virginia magazine of history and biography*, XIII, 165 (october, 1905).

reasonable terms. This accomplished, the company could build forts and storehouses upon the Ohio, thereby proving to the Indians its good intentions. Furthermore, Gist was to invite any of the Indians, who might so choose, to take up land within the grant on the same terms as the whites, with the right to participate in all the latter's privileges.<sup>309</sup>

In order that Gist's proposition might be perfectly understood by the Indians, he was to hire Andrew Montour as interpreter. As payment for his services, Montour was not only promised compensation for his efforts, but if he were able to drive an advantageous bargain for the company, he was to receive a large tract within the company's land, would not be forced to pay any purchase price, and would hold it on the same terms as did the company. Gist was given wide latitude by the company in that it guaranteed to pay whatever amount he and the Indians agreed upon. If the Indians should desire any particular kind of goods, Gist was to list these, with the quantity of each item. The company promised to send immediately to Great Britain for them, and upon their receipt, to forward them to any stipulated destination.<sup>310</sup>

One thing in particular stood out in these instructions – the Indians were to be satisfied at any cost. Mason and his associates wanted to be sure that after this conference no claims of fraud or sharp dealings would be set up by the Indians. If Gist were able to obtain a deed from the Indians, it was to be drawn up in the name of the entire company's membership.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 231-233.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 233-235.

<sup>311</sup> The personnel of the company at this time was as follows: Robert



Gist was to secure from Thomas Cresap any wampum which he might need in carrying out his instructions. He was also to procure a company horse to use on his mission. As soon as the treaty was concluded he was to report the results to his employers.<sup>312</sup>

However, the conference was not to be held by the Ohio company alone; rather it was to be held under the auspices of Virginia. Lieutenant-governor Robert Dinwiddie, upon his arrival in Virginia in the fall of 1751, immediately took up the idea of such a meeting. In his letters to the various colonial governors, apprising them of his arrival, he also took the opportunity to announce his plans for the conference, inviting Governor Samuel Ogle of Maryland and James Hamilton of Pennsylvania to communicate with him if they had any business to transact with the Six Nations. This prompt action, and his enthusiasm in the matter, leads to the conclusion that he had been advised of the proposed conference while still in England.<sup>313</sup>

Throughout the winter Dinwiddie proceeded with the plans for the gathering. Having heard of the reputation of Conrad Weiser as an Indian interpreter, he invited Weiser to join the Virginia commissioners in may at Logstown, indicating that the commissioners would depend on him. Dinwiddie then wrote to Colonel Thomas Cresap asking him to prevail upon

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Dinwiddie, John Hanbury, Capel Hanbury, John Tayloe, Presley Thornton, Philip Ludwell Lee, Thomas Ludwell Lee, Richard Lee, Gawin Corbin, John Mercer, George Mason, Lawrence Washington, Augustine Washington, Nathaniel Chapman, James Scott, James Wardrop, Jacob Giles, and Thomas Cresap.

<sup>312</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 235-236.

<sup>313</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 12-16.

Andrew Montour to attend as an assistant to Weiser.<sup>314</sup>

In april Dinwiddie appointed as Virginia's representatives, Colonel James Patton,<sup>315</sup> Colonel Joshua Fry,<sup>316</sup> and Lunsford Lomax.<sup>317</sup> In Dinwiddie's instructions there were nine points. The first one pertained to the gifts promised by Thomas Lee through Gist. Dinwiddie had already commissioned Thomas Cresap to deliver the goods, therefore it was the business of the three commissioners to see that the goods were well taken care of, protected from the rain, and not stolen. Cresap was the logical man to make the delivery because he was an Ohio company member and knew the Indians well. His home was far up the Potomac, a fact which tended to make him the outstanding trader in that section who was well known to Dinwiddie. Dinwiddie stressed the fact that ill-consequences might result from failure to make the delivery of the promised goods, as this array of presents

<sup>314</sup> Governor Dinwiddie to Conrad Weiser, december 12, 1751, *ibid.*, I, 6-7.

<sup>315</sup> N. Walthoe to Colonel James Patton, december 13, 1751, *ibid.*, I, 9-10.

<sup>316</sup> N. Walthoe to Joshua Fry, *ibid.*, I, 7-9. Joshua Fry was born in Somersetshire, England. After being educated at Oxford, he came to Essex county, Virginia. In 1728-9 he served as the master of the grammar school of William and Mary college in Williamsburg, later becoming a professor of mathematics in that college. In 1738 Robert Brooke, William Mayo, and Fry recommended to the Virginia legislature that a map of Virginia be worked out. This proposal finally resulted in the Fry and Jefferson map of Virginia. From 1745-1754 he was a burgess from Albemarle county. He became Albemarle's county lieutenant in 1754 and in 1749 served as one of the Crown's commissioners in working out the Northern Neck boundary. He served as a commissioner from Virginia in running the North Carolina-Virginia boundary line. While a colonel in a Virginia regiment, he died in 1754 as the result of a fall from his horse.

<sup>317</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 7.

was one of the finest ever given by the white men to the Indians.<sup>318</sup>

After giving out the presents, the commissioners were instructed to bring up the Lancaster treaty, read it, and explain to the Indians the English interpretation of it. The points of friction and misunderstanding which had arisen from it were to be discussed and ironed out. As Weiser had been the interpreter at Lancaster, he was a very logical choice to act in the same capacity at this new conference. Special emphasis was to be placed on the sincerity of the king of Great Britain and on his desire not to overstep his rights or take advantage of the Indians.<sup>319</sup>

As a third point, the commissioners were to state that the presents were in fulfillment of promises given at Lancaster and also were to show the good faith of Virginia in trying to work out a favorable settlement of the Ohio question. As Dinwiddie was informed that the real objection of the Indians to the Ohio company was the clause forcing that organization to build a fort, he told the commissioners to inform the Iroquois that this grant had been given at a time when England and France had been at war. At that time a fort was needed in the Ohio country to protect the Indians; but now all this had changed, and the members of the company were trying to be freed from the necessity of building a fort because they were willing to rest their case on the friendship of the Indians. The purpose of the present treaty, it was to

<sup>318</sup> "The Treaty of Logg's Town, 1752," *The Virginia magazine of history and biography*, XIII, 143-147 (October, 1905).

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 147-148.

be maintained, was to increase this good feeling. While on the subject of forts, the commissioners were to ask why the Indians were allowing the French to build forts south of Lake Erie. They were to emphasize that French promises of good behavior were not to be trusted, as time would only prove too well if the Indians did not heed the English warning.<sup>320</sup>

The next point pertained to the bad impressions that Pennsylvania had given the Indians in regard to the Ohio company. The commissioners were to deal with this problem at their own discretion. The only suggestion Dinwiddie was able to give was that the present conference should make clear that the purpose of the company was to trade for the mutual benefit of both the Indians and the English. Only such settlements were to be made in the Ohio country as would protect both the Indians and the Britishers from the French in case of another war.<sup>321</sup>

In order to make a lasting friendship and alliance with the Iroquois, the commissioners were to select some man, well liked by the Indians, especially informed as to their language, manners, and customs, to be Virginia's constant Indian representative. Dinwiddie cautioned the commissioners not to select someone too closely attached to Pennsylvania's interests.

The sixth point of the instructions had to do with an English alliance. The Virginia representatives were to find out how far the French settlements extended into the Ohio country, how many there were of them, and particularly what methods the French

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 148-149.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 149.

used to alienate from the English the affections of the Indians. The empty meaning of French speeches was to be shown by demonstrating that the French had done little to prove their friendship while the English had done much; actions should speak louder than words, results louder than promises.<sup>322</sup>

The last three points pertained only indirectly to the company. The commissioners were instructed to reason with the Iroquois concerning their stealing, murdering, scalping, plundering, and other acts of violence against the English. It was to be insisted that these acts of depredation must stop at once, else Dinwiddie, in desperation, would be compelled to use force to protect the frontiersmen. Furthermore, Dinwiddie wanted to find out whether the Indians would allow an English religious teacher in their midst.<sup>323</sup>

The Virginia party to the conference, consisting of Fry, Lomax, Patton, Gist, and Montour, was first welcomed by the Delaware Indians at Shannopin's Town on May 28. Weiser, although instructed by Dinwiddie to be present, failed to put in an appearance. At Shannopin's Town the presents were loaded on four canoes, whereupon the company continued their journey down the river. At a point opposite the Delaware's town where Queen Aliquippa lived, they were again received with much ceremony. On May 31 the party arrived at Logstown where they awaited the late arrival of the Half-King of the Senecas.

After the opening ceremonies upon the arrival of the various delegates, the conference got under way on June 1, 1752. The English at once set about carry-

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 149-150.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 150-152.

ing out their instructions. Stress was placed on the assertion that the French wanted to exterminate while the English wanted to live in union with the Indians. After speaking to the Six Nations, Montour, as the English mouthpiece, spoke briefly to each the Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot. Next the presents were orderly distributed; the various chiefs divided them fairly and then instructed that they be turned over to other representatives who were to subdivide them upon arrival to their respective homes.<sup>324</sup>

On June 11 the business taken up pertained specifically to the affairs of the Ohio company. The Half-King explained that the Indians had never understood before that Virginia's lands were to extend westward beyond the Alleghenies. He then stated that the Indians were afraid of the French and, as a result, desired the Ohio company to build a fort at the forks of the Ohio, there to keep supplies, guns, ammunition, foods, and merchandise. The commissioners could not be sure whether the Half-King meant a settlement as well as a defense, hence that night they held a private conference with him to ask him frankly his meaning. The Half-King informed them that he did not mean a settlement, whereupon the Virginia delegates set about to convince him of the need of such a settlement in order to make a fort possible.<sup>325</sup>

On June 13 the Half-King informed the English that it was only in the power of the Onondago council to dispose of the Ohio territory, but later that day agreed to English settlements to the east of that river.

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<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 152-168.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 167-169.

A written treaty was drawn up and both parties signed it. The new treaty included the recognition by the Indians of Virginia's claims under the treaty of Lancaster and guaranteed the Ohio company the privilege of establishing settlements; furthermore, the settlements of the English would be unmolested by the Indians. The Six Nations also agreed to protect and aid any British subjects settling there. The conference continued a few hours after the affixing of signatures, but nothing of importance was taken up which pertained to the Ohio company.<sup>326</sup>

The commissioners turned in their report, and all looked bright. Dinwiddie and the company hoped that their major difficulty had been removed; but they wished in vain. Just a little over one year later the Indians again repudiated their pen and ink work, this time refusing, as they held, to become victimized by the Logstown treaty. This change was the result of the opposition of the Pennsylvania traders, in part, but more particularly was due to the French.

Almost immediately after the conclusion of the conference, the Indian observance of the treaty was threatened by French opposition. On June 21, 1752, the Twightwee Indians sent a message to Dinwiddie telling of an attack by the French upon their camp at Piqua. They charged also that the French had brutally murdered their chief, Old Britain.<sup>327</sup> Dinwiddie expressed his sympathy over the affair but evidently did not send enough aid to the Twightwees,

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 169-174; for a brief treatment of the Logstown conference see Samuel Wharton, *Plain facts . . .*, 38-44.

<sup>327</sup> "The Treaty of Logg's Town, 1752," *The Virginia magazine of history and biography*, XIII, 143-147 (October, 1905).



for within a few months there came a split in the tribe, a number of the Indians going over to the French side. Dinwiddie referred to the tribal rift in a letter to Captain Cresap, attributing the cause of the trouble to the fact that he had been unable to send a sufficient supply of ammunition. In the same letter he commented upon the intrusions of the French into the Ohio valley. His hope was that they had come merely for trade, but his fears were that they intended to cause trouble. This so-called invasion irritated him even more than the previous ones, because he believed that by the treaty of Logstown the British had received an even more unquestionable title to the lands into which the French were going.<sup>328</sup>

In May, 1753, Hamilton assured Dinwiddie of his willingness to assist the Ohio company in erecting forts and making settlements if the rights of the Pennsylvania settlers would be safeguarded.<sup>329</sup> The purpose of his offer was to aid in checking the French advance, and Dinwiddie expressed his appreciation and those of the company for the interest shown by the Pennsylvania governor.<sup>330</sup> The news of the French invasion was confirmed by a report from Andrew Montour. The interpreter had been told by a group of French Indians that the French intended to build two forts near the forks and close to Logstown.<sup>331</sup>

These reports served as an impetus to the plans of Dinwiddie to hold a conference with the Indians at

<sup>328</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 22.

× <sup>329</sup> Hamilton to Dinwiddie, May 6, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/625 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>330</sup> Berthold Fernow, *The Ohio valley in colonial days*, appendix II, 263.

<sup>331</sup> Extract of letter from William West to Hamilton, May 7, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/623-625 (Library of Congress transcript).



Winchester in the spring of 1753, to make peace between the northern and southern tribes and, by the alliance, to strengthen the English hold upon those lands gained in the Logstown treaty. Through the good offices of Montour and a chain of letters from Dinwiddie, the Indians and neighboring colonial governors were notified of the plans. Montour was sent to meet representatives of the Six Nations to inform them that a road had been built in order that they could more easily go to Winchester and receive a present. Soon after Montour's conference with this group, Dinwiddie sent them a warning of the possibility of a surprise attack from the French.<sup>332</sup> At about the same time, he wrote to the Catawbas<sup>333</sup> and the Cherokees, apprising them of the French designs to take the land upon the Ohio and reminding them of the friendship of the Six Nations and the English. To the Cherokees in particular, Dinwiddie urged a peaceful alliance with the Creeks.<sup>334</sup> In reference to these letters to the Catawbas and Cherokees, a communication from Dinwiddie to Governor Glen stressed the importance of gaining the friendship of those tribes.<sup>335</sup>

In september, 1753, Dinwiddie was making preparations for a conference at Winchester with delegates from the Six Nations, Delaware, Shawnee, Wyandot, and especially the Twightwee. On august

<sup>332</sup> Dinwiddie to the Six Nations, may 24, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/651-652 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>333</sup> Dinwiddie to the Catawbas, may 31, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/653 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>334</sup> Dinwiddie to the Cherokees, may 31, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/655-656 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>335</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses of Virginia*, VIII, 516.

11, 1753, Trent wrote from the forks of the Ohio explaining the attitude of the Indians in relation to the French. His report stressed the fact that right then was the time for action if the Indians were to be gained to the English cause.<sup>336</sup> Therefore, Colonel William Fairfax, father of one of the original company's members, and himself a member of the council of Virginia, was selected by Dinwiddie as Virginia's commissioner to hasten to the conference. The real purpose of the proposed consultation was to insure, if possible, the results of the Logstown conference.

Fairfax, accompanied by a small company of colonial militia, arrived at Winchester in advance of the Indians.<sup>337</sup> The Indians arrived on September 10,<sup>338</sup> and after the opening ceremonies, the convention got under full swing September 11. The important figures present at the assemblage in addition to the Indians and Lord Fairfax were Colonel George William Fairfax, Captain William Trent, George Croghan, Christopher Gist,<sup>339</sup> Major John Carlyle, Interpreter Andrew Montour,<sup>340</sup> Colonel James Wood,<sup>341</sup> Captain Thomas Bryan Martin,<sup>342</sup> Captain

<sup>336</sup> William Trent to Robert Dinwiddie, August 11, 1753, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>337</sup> Minutes of the Winchester conference, September 10, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/48 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/48-49.

<sup>339</sup> Minutes of the Winchester conference, September 13, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/55 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*; also Minutes of Winchester conference, September 11, 12, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/50 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>341</sup> Colonel James Wood was a close friend of both Lord Fairfax and George Washington. Later he became governor of Virginia.

<sup>342</sup> Captain Thomas Bryan Martin was a nephew of Lord Fairfax. He became very important in Virginia politics, being a member of the House of Burgesses.

William Gilpin, and William Cocke.<sup>343</sup> Of this group, at least the first six mentioned were closely connected with the Ohio company.

The main topic under discussion was the French invasion of the Ohio and the best means of meeting it. After much meaningless orating about the evil conduct of the French, the Indians pinned Fairfax down to facts. They reminded him of the various promises made by the Ohio company and Dinwiddie to drive out the French from the Ohio. Monacatocha, speaking in behalf of all of the tribes, assured Fairfax of their willingness to participate in such a venture but concluded his address by stating: "And brother, when we do that, we will consider what to say about the lands; and as to the strong house that is to be build."<sup>344</sup> While Fairfax did not know it at the time, this statement, in many ways, summarized the entire meeting. The English might strive for more but never were they successful in gaining it. On the whole, Fairfax found it unsafe to discuss the western land situation at this gathering because most of the Indians were still in a bad humor over the Lancaster treaty.<sup>345</sup> Coming at a time when their lands were being invaded by both French and English, such an attitude is quite understandable. Especially were they hostile to the Virginians on this matter because they feared the Ohio company grant. Fairfax, in a memo-

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<sup>343</sup> William Cocke owned a tavern in Winchester. He was a famous frontier fighter and captain of a regiment of Virginia rangers.

<sup>344</sup> Narrative of the proceedings of Wm. Fairfax with certain chiefs of the Six Nations of Indians and their allies with urgent request that they join hands with the English in case of war with the French, september 15, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/60-67 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>345</sup> *Plain facts* . . . , 44

randum summarizing the results obtained in the discussion of these western lands at the conference, wrote:

Though the Indians did not positively, in answer to my speeches, give a concession to the lands on Ohio, agreeable to the grant given last year [Logstown treaty]; the reasons then were, there were two Canciaguas, or French Indians, in their company, of whom they had a suspicion, and were not willing to declare their strong affection to the English in their presence; but I am convinc'd the Indians incline we shou'd have those lands. They were apprehensive his majesty had given his grant to several of his subjects [Ohio company], but I did not care to touch upon that subject; and I doubt not when your honor meets them next year, they will chearfully and faithfully confirm the said lands to his majesty.<sup>346</sup>

The conference resulted in one very interesting suggestion. The Indians requested Virginia and the Ohio company to appoint Andrew Montour, William Trent, and Christopher Gist, three Ohio company agents, as the official representatives to transact business between themselves (the Indians) and the English. They qualified this suggestion, however, by stating that if any one of these persons "shou'd misbehave, or do amiss; we shall return them home to your honour again. . ." <sup>347</sup> Fairfax was further reminded that the English had promised to supply the Six Nations with powder, lead, and any other necessities which would enable them to defend themselves against the French. Monacatoocha, the Indian spokesman, continued:

Now we desire you may imediately send such supplies out to us,

× <sup>346</sup> Narrative of the proceedings of Wm. Fairfax, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/61.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/61.

by those persons we have chose; and we will show them a place where the strong house shall be built, to store those things for our use — and we also desire you may give orders to your traders, that none of them shall scatter through the woods but be directed by us; and we will appoint such and such traders, to such and such towns, as shall be able to furnish the several towns with goods; and such of the traders, as will not be directed by us, they may fall into the enemy's hands; and we further desire you may give us from under your hand this agreement, that we may have it to show to your people if there shou'd be occasion.<sup>348</sup>

Besides the above regulations, it was desired by the Indians themselves that no liquor be allowed to be carried by traders because for some years past the use of this liquor had so inflamed the Indians that they had been unable to do their work. It was suggested that if any Indian desired the fire water, he should be forced to go to the English settlement to obtain it. It was also asked that their goods be sold cheap.<sup>349</sup>

The influence which the conference might possibly have exerted upon the Indians in favor of the Ohio company was lessened because of the fact that when these Indians departed from Winchester, they proceeded immediately to Carlisle. There they held a short discussion, which they had requested, with representatives of Pennsylvania.<sup>350</sup> These Pennsylvania delegates were Richard Peters, Isaac Norris, and Benjamin Franklin. Here the Indians again complained of the treatment which they had been receiving from the French, and from their complaints the Pennsylvanians concluded much of the trouble had been brought on by the underhand practices of the

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/61.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/61-62.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/66.

traders in that section.<sup>351</sup> The significance of this meeting, however, rested in the fact that the Indians still considered the Pennsylvanians as their natural allies and friends, regardless of the work done by the Ohio company and the Virginians.

Before the Winchester conference had been concluded, it was agreed to meet again at the same place in may of the next year, the southern Indians also to be included, and at this parley Dinwiddie would be present in person to give out the guns, ammunition, and presents.<sup>352</sup> This proposed council did not take place as planned, however, because Governor Glen of South Carolina was particularly zealous in promoting South Carolina's trade and saw little in this projected assemblage except what he regarded as a scheme of Dinwiddie's to entice the Indians, especially the Cherokees, into a trade agreement. His personal dislike of the Ohio company led him to explain most of Dinwiddie's activities in westward expansion in terms of private gain through the medium of that organization.<sup>353</sup>

If any one thing stands out as the result of a study of these conferences, it is the increasing rivalry with the French. These constant impasses with the French brought the Ohio company face to face with the most serious problem which they had yet encountered. But this introduces a new set of troubles which should be considered in a special chapter.

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<sup>351</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 665.

<sup>352</sup> Dinwiddie to board of trade, november 11, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/21-24 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>353</sup> Glen to Dinwiddie, june 1, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/489; Glen to (?), august 15, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/469; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 273.

Activities of the Ohio Company  
1751-1754





## Activities, 1751-1754

Between Gist's first expedition and the completion of his second journey a marked change had come over the company. Several of its earliest members had either died or sold their shares. Its two outstanding leaders, Thomas Lee and Lawrence Washington, were dead. Their places had been taken by others; Robert Dinwiddie, George Mason, and George Washington were among the new members. Even the purpose of the company had in considerable measure changed. Prior to 1752 the company had used the government of Virginia in every way possible to promote its own good; after that date, the reverse was more nearly true. Under Gooch the company had been more or less at odds with the government; under Dinwiddie the company was a part of the government, although certainly not the controlling part. The coming of Robert Dinwiddie to Virginia as lieutenant-governor marked this new phase in the history of the company. The new governor arrived at Williamsburg on november 20, 1751.<sup>354</sup> The fact that he was a member of the company raises now, as it did then, the question as to his reasons for joining. Some have claimed his connection was the result of personal business interest. The evidence, however, seems

<sup>354</sup> Dinwiddie to the lords of trade, january 20, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/464 (Library of Congress transcript).

fairly conclusive that he and the home government saw in this company of adventurers the solid basis for English acquisition of the Ohio region. As a result of Dinwiddie being a member of the company each and every one of his activities in pushing westward expansion and fighting the French quite properly fell under the suspicion of vested interest. Persons, who under different circumstances might have favored the English claim and English attempts to gain the Ohio country, were now thrown into the opposition; they felt that every measure Dinwiddie urged, even though it might result in advantage to Virginia, would also redound to the benefit of Dinwiddie personally and to the company. Such was the explanation of his interest in the westward movement as given by certain of his contemporaries. This would almost of necessity be true of any public official who assented to legislation which might prove profitable to him as a private business man, even if it were also designed for the national good.

But the facts indicate that Dinwiddie was not guilty of any of these charges. History does not read a man's mind but it can at least deduce the general trend of his thinking by judging from results. Undoubtedly Dinwiddie's interest in the Ohio company was due to an entirely natural interest both in personal gain and in the development of the British empire. Yet it seems beyond question that the latter was much the stronger of the two motivating forces. The full explanation and the proof to substantiate this position can best be presented by studying the activities of the company, of Dinwiddie, and their

interrelationships. Much of the material in this and subsequent chapters, especially in Dinwiddie's relation to the French and Indian war, will bear out the truth of this contention.

It will be remembered that the administration in London as early as 1748 realized that Great Britain needed the Ohio country if the American colonies were to be retained. Apparently England saw in the Ohio company a method of securing it. This was the prime reason for which the company's petition was sanctioned. Notice the words of instructions to Sir William Gooch:

. . . and whereas such settlement will be for our interest and the advantage and security of our said colony as well as the neighboring colonys. . .<sup>355</sup>

It was probably largely due to this attitude on the part of the British government that Dinwiddie was accepted as the new lieutenant-governor of Virginia. Dinwiddie was highly regarded in London as a British imperialist. Lord Loudoun wrote to Dinwiddie that he had little concern over the affairs of Virginia "whilst the administration of the government is in the hands of one who's zeal for his majesty's service is so well known."<sup>356</sup> Dinwiddie himself said he felt that every governor should regard it as his solemn obligation to do everything in his power which would benefit the colonies as a whole regardless of what opposition he might encounter in so doing.<sup>357</sup>

<sup>355</sup> Draught of additional instructions to Sir William Gooch, december 13, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/63.

<sup>356</sup> Earl of Loudoun to Robert Dinwiddie, march 22, 1756, Loudoun papers, 9548 (Huntington library).

<sup>357</sup> Dinwiddie to James Hamilton, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 688.

As the new driving force behind the affairs of the company, Dinwiddie at once set to work promoting its interests and its activities. Almost his first action upon arrival at Williamsburg was the appointment of commissioners to the Ohio company's conference at Logstown; <sup>358</sup> he wrote the lords of Trade expressing need for dispatch in settling the Ohio problems; <sup>359</sup> he wrote James Hamilton emphasizing the need for cooperation in the Ohio country; <sup>360</sup> and he sent presents to the Indians to win their favor. <sup>361</sup>

In december, 1751, Dinwiddie received from Thomas Cresap a letter that explained some of the problems confronting the company. Dinwiddie's reply to Cresap on january 23, 1752, showed serious concern over the affairs of the company. He wrote:

. . . I have the success and prosperity of the Ohio company much at heart, tho' I have not a line from any concern'd since my arrival, but this from you. There is a cargo for the concern'd come in the ship with me, it now lies at Col. Hunter's, the severity of the weather prevented his sending the goods to Col. Mason. I am surpriz'd at what you write, that Patton, or any person should obstruct that company's making a settlement on the Ohio, but shall take care that it shall be strongly urged to the Indians, and doubt not of success. . . As you are a member of the Ohio company, I think your good offices will be very necessary, and will be acknowledged by the company. <sup>362</sup>

The mention of Patton suggests the great rivalry

<sup>358</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 6-9.

<sup>359</sup> Dinwiddie to the lords of trade, january 20, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/453 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>360</sup> Dinwiddie to James Hamilton, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, V, 688.

<sup>361</sup> N. Walthoe to Colonel James Patton, december 13, 1751, *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 8-10.

<sup>362</sup> *Virginia state papers*, I, 245; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 17-18.

which was taking place in Virginia over western lands. The Pennsylvania-Virginia dispute has already been shown, the Anglo-French will be shown subsequently, but now appears a hint of sectional rivalry in Virginia herself. This idea has been introduced by Abernethy in his *Western lands and the Revolution* but should receive even more emphasis. At least four major concerns were interested in the lands in the west: the Loyal company, the Greenbrier company, Patton and his associates, and the Ohio company. Generally speaking, the Loyal company was composed of persons living south and west of the Rappahannock river while all of the active Virginia members of the Ohio company had homes north of the same river. All of the regular American members, with the exception of Arthur Dobbs of North Carolina, lived in the Northern Neck or in bordering counties. The natural result was rivalry in the House of Burgesses. Men who were bitter business rivals found cooperation in politics difficult.

The actual competition between these rival groups may be seen in the action taken by the Ohio and Loyal companies against Patton. By 1752 Patton had become very active in bringing settlers into his grant and as a result was coming into conflict with the larger companies. To prevent Patton from selling land in the disputed area, John Mercer, in behalf of the Ohio company, and James Powers, in behalf of the Loyal company, entered caveats against Patton and his associates. Patton protested of this action as follows:

The noise of which caveats has made my first settlers very un-

easy not knowing what may be their fate lest should they have their own improvements to pay for, nevertheless they had bought their land from those new caveateers.

As to those two gentlemen who in the course of their practice may have been fee'd to perplex a good cause and plead with great assiduity to the justice of a bad one had they got a double fee, they could not have fallen on a more effectual method to discourage the settling of these frontiers than they have done by the above caveat, and as they intend me so much trouble especially the latter I cannot do less in justice to myself then to beg of your honours to give me an order of council for the foresaid 100,000 acres and that no renewal be given for the 800,000 on ye waters of Woods river and Holstons river untill that I have mine surveyed which am willing to do in a moderate time. As to the Ohio company who I understand intends to survey their lands to the northward of the waters of Woods river, if so it cannot interfere with mine.

Nevertheless if the company for 800,000 acres will go on friendly and settle bounds with me, I should be willing that they would go survey and settle the contry so that I may not be prevented from my claim, perhaps they may have fallen into a mistaken notion that they cannot get their quantity of good land when I am served, but if they will pay me for it I think I can shew them a much larger quantity than they want.<sup>363</sup>

Returning to the more specific affairs of the Ohio company, we next find them considering a means of cheap, rapid, and easy transportation to the Ohio country. As such a means of passage was needed for the company to carry out its work, plans for the construction of a road were put in operation in 1751 and 1752. As has been shown, in 1751 Gist made explorations from Wills' creek to the Monongahela and mapped out a fine route for a road.<sup>364</sup> Also in 1751

<sup>363</sup> James Patton to John Blair, january, 1753, Draper manuscripts, 10075 (State historical society of Wisconsin).

<sup>364</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 68-71.

the company had opened a narrow trail from Wills' creek to the three forks of the Youghiogheny, a spot known as Turkey Foot. The company then engaged the services of Thomas Cresap to construct a road from Wills' creek to the Monongahela.<sup>365</sup>

In Gist's instructions of april, 1752, he was ordered by the company to serve in the capacity of advisor and assistant to Cresap in choosing the proper Indians to build the road and in discovering the best and cheapest route along which to construct the highway.<sup>366</sup>

In 1752 Cresap engaged Nemacolin, a Delaware Indian, to help blaze the trail.<sup>367</sup> The route as finally worked out by Gist, Cresap, and Nemacolin, started from Wills' creek and crossed successively Wills', Savage, and Meadow mountains. It then descended into the Little Meadows, crossed a tributary of the Youghiogheny river which itself is a tributary to the Monongahela. From this river at "Little Crossings" the trail went over Negro Mountain, thence across "Big Crossings" on the upper Youghiogheny. After passing over Briery Mountain it descended into Great Meadows, thence northwest over Laurel Hill to the Monongahela via Red Stone creek.<sup>368</sup> In general terms it may be stated that from Wills' creek the road extended slightly north of west to a spot known as Laurel Hill or Mount Braddock near present-day

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 77-78.

\* <sup>366</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/157 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>367</sup> Nemacolin was the son of a Delaware chief, Checochinican. See *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, 239-266; *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, II, 643; III, 36.

<sup>368</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 68-71, 77-78.



Uniontown, Pennsylvania. At this point, instead of following the traders' route to the forks of the Ohio, it turned northwest to an eastern bend in the Monongahela river at the mouth of Red Stone creek, a spot near present-day Brownsville. The mapping out of the road was easy compared with the building of it. This was slow work due to a lack both of equipment and of adequate materials. The next year William Trent widened the path so that pack horses could pass,<sup>369</sup> but even at best it was a very poor excuse for a thoroughfare.

In 1752 the Ohio company erected a second major storehouse; this one was situated on the right bank of Red Stone creek near its juncture with the Monongahela river.<sup>370</sup> Shortly thereafter a further improvement was made by building an addition nearby which became known as the "Hangard." This storehouse was built not only with the guidance of the regular staff of advisors but also with the counsel of William Trent,<sup>371</sup> the ex-Pennsylvania trader, who now entered the service of Virginia and the company. The company chose this spot as the site for their storehouse because in relation to Wills' creek it was the closest convenient landing on the Monongahela river. The new structure was designed to store supplies and merchandise sent out from Wills' creek because from here they could be transported on down the river by boat.<sup>372</sup>

<sup>369</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/157 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>370</sup> "Proceedings of the Ohio company, about the settlement . . . of the Ohio," Shelburne papers, L, 93-95. Thwaites states that this was a temporary fort built at the mouth of Dunlap creek.

<sup>371</sup> See page 71, note 198.

<sup>372</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 269.



This Ohio company structure was used also as a military fort. It was known as Red Stone Old Fort and "Monongahela." After the capture by the French in 1754 of the company's fort at the forks of the Ohio, it was to Red Stone Old Fort that Ensign Ward <sup>373</sup> took his men. <sup>374</sup> In his plan to retake the fort at the forks, George Washington wrote Horatio Sharpe of Maryland as follows:

... We proposed to go as far as RED-STONE creek, which falls into the Monongahela, about thirty-seven miles this side of the fort which the FRENCH have taken, from thence all our heavy luggage may be carried as far as the OHIO. A store is built there by "the Ohio company," wherein may be placed our ammunition and provisions. <sup>375</sup>

The "Hangard" was burned in 1754 by the French. <sup>376</sup>

Following the Logstown treaty, Gist, who had represented the Ohio company at the conference, was appointed by the company as their official surveyor. The college of William and Mary gave him a special commission which appointed him "surveyor of the lands belonging to the Ohio company." <sup>377</sup> Subsequently he was ordered to lay out a fort and town site

<sup>373</sup> Edward Ward was in command of the Ohio company fort at the forks of the Ohio during the absence of Captain William Trent. Ward had been an active Pennsylvania trader prior to this time. He was a brother-in-law of George Croghan.

<sup>374</sup> Ensign Ward's deposition, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O 5: 14/396 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>375</sup> *Journal of Colonel George Washington . . . across the Alleghany mountains, in 1754, . . .*, 48-49.

<sup>376</sup> "De Villiers journal," cited in *ibid.*, 161.

<sup>377</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library). See also Neville B. Craig (ed.), *The olden time; a monthly publication devoted to the preservation of documents and other authentic information in relation to the early explorations, and the settlement and improvement of the country around the head of the Ohio*, 1, 10.

on Chartiers creek about two miles below the forks on the east side of the Ohio. As he now had a permanent position with the company he decided to give up his old home in North Carolina and move on to what was thought to be company's property. This he did in 1752. As a site for his home he chose a spot now known as Mount Braddock. He had already done considerable surveying in the vicinity and thus knew the choice location. His new home was located west of the Alleghenies in the Monongahela valley between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers, a few miles west of Laurel Ridge, and not more than ten miles from Red Stone Old Fort.<sup>378</sup> By 1754 Gist and the Ohio company had persuaded eleven other families to move to this spot and together they formed a fortified settlement.<sup>379</sup> Those eleven families were probably the ones Washington met in January, 1754, on his return trip from his visit to the French.<sup>380</sup> Repeated attempts have been made by genealogists of Fayette county, Pennsylvania, to determine the identity of these pioneer settlers, but the only names of which we can be positive were Gist's two sons, Thomas and Richard, and William Cromwell, his son-in-law. It was probably close friends and relatives that made up the remainder of the group.<sup>381</sup> The

<sup>378</sup> Actually located in present-day Dunbar township near the North Union township line.

<sup>379</sup> William Russell also claimed this land, thus preventing Gist from bringing more than his first group of settlers. *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755; 1755-1758)*, 223.

<sup>380</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of Washington*, 1, 30. See next chapter for opposition of the French to the Ohio company.

<sup>381</sup> J. Percy Hart (ed.), *Hart's history and directory of the three towns; Brownsville, Bridgeport, West Brownsville*, 5.

Ohio company also built storehouses here, but the locality continued to be known on maps of the time merely as *Gist's*.<sup>382</sup> These settlements can hardly be called permanent, however, because they were destroyed by the French in 1754.

As has already been intimated, the exact location of the Ohio company's grant had never been determined. This was true for several reasons: first, the boundary of Pennsylvania was itself undetermined; second, there were other claimants to a part of the territory supposedly granted to the Ohio company; and third, the very language of the company's grant was such as to make difficult if not impossible any precise determination of an exact area. True, this indefinite wording had been purposely employed originally to enable the company to be free to choose its own tract wherever the best land could be located; but times had changed, and the company was no longer the only body in the field. Therefore, it was presently decided to petition for a specific area, larger than the original grant and with fixed boundaries. Consequently, on april 2, 1754, the Board of Trade received from the committee of the Ohio company, composed of Arthur Dobbs, John Hanbury, Samuel Smith, and James Wardrop, a petition requesting an enlargement of its grant and an immediate settlement of the boundary of the grant as including the land within the following confines:

. . . from Romanetto or Kiskominetto creek on the south east side of the Ohio to the fork at the entrance of the great Conhaway

<sup>382</sup> "Proceedings of the Ohio company, about the settlement . . . of the Ohio," *Shelburne papers*, L, 93-95.

river and from the said Conhaway river to the entrance of Green creek or till a west line from the mountains intersects the said spring and along it to its entrance into the Ohio.<sup>383</sup>

The company members had come to the conclusion that definite demarcation lines to their grant would prevent all dispute and further delay. In return for such an explicit grant they were willing to settle three hundred families instead of one hundred and would agree to push the completion of their two forts, the one on Shurtees creek and the other at the forks of the Ohio.<sup>384</sup>

On april 2 this petition was referred by the lords of the committee of Council to the Board of Trade<sup>385</sup> and on april 5 was examined by that body.<sup>386</sup> On may 29<sup>387</sup> and 31<sup>388</sup> the Board studied the matter again and on june 25, 1754, sent a favorable answer to the lords of the committee of Council.<sup>389</sup> But the company never received the new grant,<sup>390</sup> mainly because the French and Indian war broke out; and after its conclusion there was no longer any justification for the company's continuance.

The company, meantime, had engaged in many other activities, but most of them were closely related to other happenings and will be discussed in their

\* 383 Petition of the Ohio company, april 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/155-159 (Library of Congress transcript).

384 *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/159 (Library of Congress transcript).

385 *Acts of the privy council*, IV, 244.

386 *Journal of the commissioners for trade and plantations* (january 1754 to december 1758), 32.

387 *Ibid.*, 44.

388 *Ibid.*, 45.

389 *Ibid.*, 52.

390 *Conduct of the ministry impartially examined . . .*, 23-24.

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appropriate connections. Of outstanding importance was an attempt to erect a fort at the forks of the Ohio. The building of a fort had been one of the conditions of the grant. Explorers and traders had been sent out to find a suitable spot and had held a conference with the Indians to obtain their permission to build such a defense; but since it was the French that furnished the major opposition to the undertaking, the actual building of the fort and the obstacles encountered will be discussed in the following chapters.



## Opposition of the French





## Opposition of the French

The French were gravely concerned over the activities of the Ohio company. Heretofore only individual English traders had invaded the district of *la Belle rivière*, as the French called the Ohio, but now they were faced with an organized company, one determined to outmaneuver the opposition and gain the Ohio country for the English. In fact, this was one of the avowed purposes of the company.<sup>391</sup> Therefore, the French set about at once to defeat the designs of the new organization.<sup>392</sup> It was feared by the French that if their competitors, the English, were allowed to gain a foothold in the Ohio valley, the results would be even more disastrous to them than was the English post at Oswego. This latter station had greatly injured French trade, but the Ohio river was situated so strategically that an English settlement thereon would be well-nigh fatal to the French trade as far west as the Illinois country.<sup>393</sup>

The French realized that if the English were to

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<sup>391</sup> Thomas Lee to the board of trade, september 30, 1750, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/195, 200 (Library of Congress transcript); Petition of John Hanbury, 1748, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/53-57 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>392</sup> *State of the British and French colonies in North America . . .*, 115.

<sup>393</sup> Memoir on the colonies of France in North America, by M. le Marquis de la Galissonnière, 1751, cited in Theodore Calvin Pease (ed.), *Anglo-French boundary disputes in the west, 1749-1763*, 14-15 (hereafter cited as *Anglo-French boundary disputes*); *New York colonial documents*, X, 199-205.

establish a post here, they would be in a most favorable position to win the friendship of the Indians of this region. The Marquis de la Galissonière,<sup>394</sup> governor-general of New France, foresaw also that such a settlement was an attempt to interrupt the French communications between Louisiana and France, because it was only through the Ohio valley that overland troops and supplies of sufficient proportions could be sent from Canada to the feeble colony of Louisiana. Control of this river would make it possible for the English to attack the French posts among the Miami and the Illinois Indians. Such was the threat of the Ohio company to the French.<sup>395</sup>

The French had long claimed the Ohio country and ridiculed the contentions of the English.<sup>396</sup> While they held this territory to be theirs by reason of the discoveries of La Salle in 1679, and the subsequent establishment of trading posts, it was the organization of the Ohio company that determined them to strengthen these previous claims. This they attempted to accomplish by several methods. First, they used diplomatic arguments to persuade England of the validity of the French viewpoint and the absurdity

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<sup>394</sup> Roland Michel Barrin, Marquis de la Galissonière was born november 11, 1698, at Rochefort. He served with distinction in the navy from 1710 until his appointment as governor of New France. In 1749 he left New France to become head of the department of nautical charts. He died on october 26, 1756, at Nemound (Biographie universelle).

<sup>395</sup> *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, 15-17; *New York colonial documents*, X, 239-241.

<sup>396</sup> Minister to Duquesne, may 15, 1752, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14/30-32 vo; "Lettre circulaire," february 19, 1755 A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 158-162; A. E. Corr. Pol. Angl., 439:172; 437:465. For the Spanish view of the arguments see Pedro Valmediana's 175 page discourse on the subject, september 26, 1756, A. E. Angl., 440:290.

of the English contention.<sup>397</sup> It was argued that the English had never previously made any pretention of owning the country, much less undertaken to make it good.<sup>398</sup> The French ministry acrimoniously stated in 1752 that the English had undertaken to carry on commerce over the Ohio for only a few years prior to that date, yet already they were attempting to exclude the French from it.<sup>399</sup>

The French further ridiculed the basis for the English allegation to this region; namely, that it belonged to the Iroquois, and since the English held sovereignty over the Iroquois, the Ohio lands naturally belonged to them. This argument had long been fundamental with the English although it was the treaty of Utrecht which officially recognized the Iroquois as subjects of the British Crown. France had agreed to this treaty, therefore legally the arguments should have narrowed down to whether or not the Iroquois held sovereignty over this area. Here the status quo would have supported the English. Hardly any Indian in the entire region would have dared deny the sovereignty of the Six Nations. In addition to the treaty of Utrecht, the British could point to the

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<sup>397</sup> A long list of documents pertaining to these diplomatic negotiations appears in *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, xxix-lx; "Lettre circulaire," february 19, 1765, A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 158-162; Lettre de M. Vaudreuil, february 16, 1756, Arch. Nat. Col. F 3, 14/212-223 vo.

<sup>398</sup> Minister to Duquesne, may 15, 1752, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14/31; Minister to Mirepoix, march 5, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 247-250.

<sup>399</sup> An explanation of a map made by Vaudreuil showing boundaries of English and French colonies, february 16, 1756, Arch. Nat. Col. F 3, 14/219-223 vo; Le Duc de Mirepoix to Minister, february 10, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 81-92; reply to the letter of february 3, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 94-96; Pedro Valmediana to Nicholas Tsparaytia, september 26, 1756 (English motives for war on France), A. E. Angl., 440; 290.

Lancaster treaty of 1744 at which they purchased this land from the Indians. Regardless of arguments put forth by Rouillé<sup>400</sup> and other Frenchmen, the British could still produce much evidence which strengthened their claim to the region through the medium of the Iroquois.<sup>401</sup> These claims are well summarized by the words of Robert Dinwiddie when he asserted: "My lord, can there be a more equitable right to the lands on the Ohio, than by having it confirm'd to the British Crown, by the original proprietors of the soil? nay I may say, by a fair purchase . . . at the treaty of Lancaster. . ." <sup>402</sup>

While the French could contend that the Iroquois did not own this Ohio land and that the so-called sovereignty of the English over the Iroquois was a chimera,<sup>403</sup> they could not prove their own claims. They might counter with the arguments that France owned this region by reason of discovery and subsequent conquest by the establishment of forts,<sup>404</sup> but they could not successfully point to any documents or conquests which would prevent English rebuttal. They could not prove beyond doubt that La Salle discovered the Ohio in 1679, while England could point to the explorations of Thomas Batts and Robert Fallam in 1671 in which year they were known to have been in the southern part of the Ohio region; <sup>405</sup>

<sup>400</sup> Antoine-Louis Rouillé, Comte de Jouy (1689-1761), was minister of marine from april 26, 1749-july 28, 1754, and minister of foreign affairs, july 28, 1754-june 25, 1757.

<sup>401</sup> *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, 84-248, *passim*.

<sup>402</sup> Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, january 29, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/84 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>403</sup> Minister to Duquesne, may 15, 1752, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14/31.

<sup>404</sup> Memoir of Rouillé, may 9, 1755, *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, 221-229.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, lix-lx.



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<sup>404</sup> Memoir of Rouillé, may 9, 1755, *Anglo-French boundary disputes*,

221-229.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, lix-lx.







and that many English traders, particularly from Pennsylvania and New York, had been in the Ohio prior to 1700. Certainly France could not prove conquest as the Indians of the region were still under the rule of the Iroquois.

Neither the French nor the English proposed to base their case upon arguments alone; both determined to gain undisputed rights to the country by action.<sup>406</sup> The English moved first by forming the Ohio company. As a result, France determined upon a plan of action. In 1749 the Marquis de la Galissonière sent out an expedition under Captain Céloron de Bienville to explore the Ohio region; as proof of French ownership he was to deposit leaden plates along the route of his journey.<sup>407</sup> The French hoped, however naively, that the planting of these plates denoting ownership of the surrounding territory would impress both the Indians and the English.<sup>408</sup> Subse-

<sup>406</sup> La Galissonière to Minister; measure to check English encroachment, Arch. Nat., Col., c 11/93/143.

<sup>407</sup> Pierre Margry (ed.), *Découvertes et établissements des Français*, vi, 666; for Céloron's journal translated in English, see Wisconsin historical society, *collections*, xviii, 36-38; *New York colonial documents*, vi, 532; for another good account of this expedition see the "Account of voyage on the Beautiful river made in 1749, under the direction of Monsieur de Céloron, by father Bonnacamps," *Jesuit relations*, LXIX, 151-199.

<sup>408</sup> The English translation of the inscription on one of these plates is as follows: IN THE YEAR 1749, DURING THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV, KING OF FRANCE, WE CÉLORON, COMMANDER OF A DETACHMENT SENT BY MONSIEUR THE MARQUIS DE LA GALISSONIÈRE, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF NEW FRANCE, FOR THE RESTORATION OF TRANQUILLITY IN SOME VILLAGES OF INDIANS OF THESE DISTRICTS, HAVE BURIED THIS PLATE AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE OHIO AND TCHADAKOIN, THIS 29 JULY, NEAR THE RIVER OHIO, OTHERWISE BEAUTIFUL RIVER AS A MONUMENT OF THE RENEWAL OF POSSESSION WHICH WE HAVE TAKEN OF THE SAID RIVER OHIO AND OF ALL THOSE THAT THEREIN FALL, AND OF ALL THE LANDS ON BOTH SIDES AS FAR AS THE SOURCES OF THE SAID RIVERS, AS ENJOYED OR OUGHT TO BE ENJOYED BY THE PRECEDING KINGS OF

quent events showed this strategy to have been futile.

The third step taken by the French in response to the organization of the Ohio company was the seizure of English traders found in the Ohio country.<sup>409</sup> As many of the traders as possible were captured or expelled from that area. Some of those captured were taken to France and imprisoned.<sup>410</sup> In one report alone is related the capture of eight English traders and the death of three others – five of Croghan's men and three of Lowry's were the ones captured, while three of John Finley's were the ones killed.<sup>411</sup> The legal grounds on which the French acted in expelling the English traders can be seen from a letter from Céloron to Hamilton in which Céloron asserted:

. . . I have been much surprised to find traders belonging to your government in a country to which England never had any pretension. I have treated them with all possible courtesy, though I had a right to regard them as interlopers and vagabonds, their undertaking being contrary to the preliminaries of the peace signed at Aix la Chapelle, over fifteen months ago. I hope, sir, that you will be so good as to prohibit that trade in future. . .<sup>412</sup>

In another document on this same subject Céloron stated that at an Indian town on the Ohio river, he summoned to a meeting all of the Englishmen that

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FRANCE AND AS THEY THEREIN HAVE MAINTAINED THEMSELVES BY ARMS AND BY TREATIES, ESPECIALLY BY THOSE OF RISWICK OF UTRECHT, AND OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE. *New York colonial documents*, VI, 610-611.

<sup>409</sup> Dinwiddie's speech to the assembly of Virginia, february 14, 1754, Draper manuscript, 1JJ17-1JJ20.

<sup>410</sup> *Maryland gazette*, july 5, 1753, Draper manuscript, 1JJ8, 1JJ9; *State of the British and French colonies in North America . . .*, 110-111; Minister to Duquesne, may 15, 1752, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14/30-32 vo; Provincial papers of Pennsylvania, XIII, 84.

<sup>411</sup> *Maryland gazette*, may 17, 1753, Draper manuscript, 1JJ6-1JJ8.

<sup>412</sup> Captain Céloron to Governor Hamilton, *New York colonial documents*, VI, 532.

he could find. He then ordered them to leave the country with all of their belongings. The penalty for noncompliance was to be treatment as rebels.<sup>413</sup>

Subsequently La Jonquière followed the policy of seizing all English traders found in the region. In 1752 William Trent, while on a good will tour of the Ohio in the interest of Virginia, reported numerous instances of French aggression against both the English and the Indians.<sup>414</sup> In december of the same year Robert Dinwiddie bitterly complained of the killing or capturing of English traders by the French. His particular grievance was that the French had promised the Indians one hundred crowns for each white scalp brought in.<sup>415</sup>

Of the English traders captured by the French, a considerable number found themselves prisoners at Quebec, and then, after untold hardships, transferred to Rochelle.<sup>416</sup> To their rescue came the Earl of Albemarle, England's playboy ambassador to the frivolous court of Louis xv. Following out instructions from Holdernesse, Albemarle demanded that the French government release the unlawfully captured traders.<sup>417</sup> He demanded also the restoration of their belongings, punishment of the offending French

<sup>413</sup> Céloron's statement expelling the English traders from the Ohio country, august 10, 1749, *ibid.*, VI, 532.

<sup>414</sup> Journal of William Trent, june, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/549-560 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>415</sup> Robert Dinwiddie to the board of trade, december 10, 1762, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/531-537 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>416</sup> *Conduct of the ministry impartially examined* . . ., 9-12.

<sup>417</sup> Earl of Holdernesse to Earl of Albemarle, february 24, 1752, *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, 27-28; Albemarle to Holdernesse, march 1, 1752, *Conduct of the ministry impartially examined* . . ., 14-15 (see also *New York colonial documents*, X, 241-242).

officers concerned, and guarantees that these outrages against English citizens would not reoccur. Albemarle was successful in gaining the release of the captives, but his other demands were refused.<sup>418</sup> The French government declined to consider the restitution of the trader's goods and this dispute remained an unsettled question at the outbreak of hostilities.

A fourth method used by the French to combat the English and the Ohio company was to attempt to win the Indians away from their English alliances. This type of attack took various shapes. One example was the order for the French commanders at the various posts to do all they possibly could to "disgust the Indians with the commerce which they carry on with the English, by taking all the possible measures to induce them to trade solely with the French without however, making any expenditures in its behalf on the account of the king."<sup>419</sup>

The Indians were to be won over to the French by superior "presents" lavishly distributed. This method was usually successful only so long as the supply of gifts did not run out. Another method was the use of simple persuasion. For instance, Céloron attempted to change the Indian's allegiance from the English to the French by promising that the French would send better traders, secure better clothes for the Indians, and thus guarantee that the Indians receive a better deal.<sup>420</sup> The French made one concession in

<sup>418</sup> Albemarle to Holderness, march 8, 1752, *Anglo-French boundary disputes*, 16-17.

<sup>419</sup> Ordonnance de M. de la Jonquière, relative "aux abus qui s'étoient glissés dans les postes," may 29, 1750, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14, 11-1100 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>420</sup> Croghan's letter in regard to Indian affairs, *New York colonial documents*, VII, 267.

their Indian policy in april, 1752, however, by telling the Indians they could go to the English to trade as much as they liked, but that the English traders would not be allowed to come to them.<sup>421</sup>

If none of the above methods should prove effective, then the French intended to resort to force in bringing the Indians into a French alliance. An illustration can be seen in Céloron's reported speech at Logstown:

We are once more come to see you and further we are to let you know that we are to come next spring and trade with you: we are now going down the river in order to whip home some of our children, that is the Twitchwees and Wayandotts and to let them know that they have no business to trade or traffick with the English: further, children, we desire you may hunt this summer and fall, and pay the English their debts, for we will not suffer them to come here to trade after this winter.<sup>422</sup>

One other favorite method used was to send French Indians among the Ohio Indians in a shrewd attempt to win over the latter to a French alliance. Whenever such a device would fail, the French Indians often resorted to violence. In one such raid by these French Indians on june 21, 1752, the Twightwees or Miamis were attacked by a force of two hundred and forty Frenchmen and French Indians, who, after a brief engagement, forced the Miamis to surrender all of the Englishmen in the fort.<sup>423</sup>

The English combatted such methods of the French by sending presents to the Indians and, particularly, by playing up the traditional friendship of

<sup>421</sup> Instructions given to Duquesne, *ibid.*, x, 244.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, vi, 533.

<sup>423</sup> *Maryland gazette*, november 9, 1752, Draper manuscript, 1JJ1-1JJ2; *ibid.*, december 7, 1752, Draper manuscript, 1JJ3-1JJ6.

the Six Nations and the English.<sup>424</sup> To be sure of the support of the Six Nations, the English promised them arms, ammunition, and other forms of material help in case of need against the French.<sup>425</sup> From 1753 on, these Iroquois Indians were asked by the English to keep their troops at home and in readiness to fight the French. Often, as a result of English propaganda, the French were unable to make any impression upon the Indians.<sup>426</sup>

A fifth method used by the French to combat the possible settlement of the Ohio region by the Ohio company was to start the building of a chain of forts in the "Beautiful" river country.<sup>427</sup> In 1753 Captain Pierre Paul Marin was sent out to begin the construction of these forts. The expedition set out with Captain Michel Pean in charge of the advance force. Forts were started at Presque Isle,<sup>428</sup> at Le Boeuf or French creek,<sup>429</sup> and at Venango<sup>430</sup> — the trading post of John Fraser, the Pennsylvania trader. The French were beset by great difficulties, including the death of Marin, but they were also cheered by the desertion of various Indians, particularly the Miamis, from their English alliance.

The English in general, but Dinwiddie in par-

<sup>424</sup> Dinwiddie to the Catawbas, may 31, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/653-654 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>425</sup> Dinwiddie to the Six Nations, may 24, 1755, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/651-652 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>426</sup> *Maryland gazette*, february 14, 1754, Draper manuscript, 1JJ12-1JJ13; *ibid.*, february 7, 1754, Draper manuscript, 1JJ13-1JJ14.

<sup>427</sup> *State of the British and French colonies in North America . . .*, III, 115.

<sup>428</sup> Site of present-day Erie, Pennsylvania.

<sup>429</sup> Site of present-day Waterford, Pennsylvania.

<sup>430</sup> Site of present-day Franklin, Pennsylvania.

ticular, taking note of the French advance toward the Ohio, resolved to end their own inactivity and, by aggressive measures, to stop the French.<sup>431</sup> Dinwiddie had protested long and loud the activities of the French in this region and now was determined to cut them short by sterner measures.<sup>432</sup> Acting under general orders from Great Britain, Dinwiddie decided to take steps which would bring the issue to a head. Protests in Paris had failed. Since 1750 the French had become more and more defiant.<sup>433</sup> Therefore, Dinwiddie resolved to warn the French once more, and this failing, force would be employed. If the French could use armed force to chastise the Twightwees and other Ohio Indians, then it was up to Dinwiddie to defend his allies by similar means — armed force. If the French could punish the Indians for being friendly toward the English, and the latter should then fail to come to their rescue, it would follow that English influence among the Indians would disappear. This disaster Dinwiddie intended to prevent. His first step in attempting to clear the Ohio valley of the French was to send a message by the

<sup>431</sup> Robert Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, november 17, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/7-10 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to the board of trade, november 24, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/21-24 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>432</sup> *Maryland gazette*, august 16, 1753, Draper manuscript, 1JJ9-1JJ10; Dinwiddie to Sharpe, november 24, 1753, *Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe 1753-57*, I, 10-11; Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, november 17, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/7-10 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to Glen, january 29, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/279-282; Dinwiddie to the board, november 24, 1743, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/21-24 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to the board of trade, august, 1751, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/417 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>433</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 607-609; 614-617; 665-670.

youthful George Washington ordering the French from the disputed area. Thus was ushered in a series of imperialistic acts participated in by both sides. To these acts should be devoted a separate chapter, as they include the demands, moves and counter-moves which led to the French and Indian war.



## Prelude to Hostilities



## Prelude to Hostilities

### Washington's Journey to the French The Ohio Company Fort

One of Dinwiddie's first steps in his plan to defeat the French was to send a messenger to them ordering them to leave the Ohio valley. As his deputy, Dinwiddie chose George Washington. Washington was to go over the mountains to the new French posts at Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, and Venango. The young emissary, upon receiving his orders, set out at once on his journey. At Fredericksburg he engaged the services of Jacob Van Braam<sup>434</sup> to act as French interpreter. Leaving Fredericksburg he proceeded in succession to Alexandria, Winchester, and thence to the company's storehouse at Wills' creek, arriving there november 14.<sup>435</sup>

At Wills' creek, Washington engaged Christopher Gist as guide.<sup>436</sup> As hunters he hired Barney Curran

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<sup>434</sup> Van Braam was a close friend of Washington, having served as the latter's fencing master. In the Carthage expedition he had served under Lawrence Washington. He has become infamous in history for his poor French translation by which Washington confessed the assassination of Jumonville, while he merely intended to state that Jumonville was dead.

<sup>435</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 23.

<sup>436</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 80. Gist showed his fortitude and interest in his country, because, as he says: "We set out, and at night encamped at George's creek, about eight miles, where a messenger came with letters from my son, who was just returned from his people at the

and John Mac-Guire, and as Indian traders he employed Henry Stewart and William Jenkins. When he arrived at the forks of the Ohio he was especially impressed with the potentialities of this location for a fort site. He thus concurred with George Croghan's conclusions a short period previous when Croghan had attempted to get Pennsylvania to construct a fort here. Pennsylvania had delayed, however, thus giving the Ohio company an opportunity to lay its own plans for fortifying the place. True, the Ohio company's fort was to be built about two miles below this spot, but later the plans were changed, and the company started to build at the forks. While here, Washington compared the two locations. He pointed out the expense and difficulty in erecting a defense at Shurtees creek in comparison with the cheapness and ease in erecting one at the forks of the Ohio. In addition he realized that such a structure at the forks would have much greater military strength.<sup>437</sup>

The trip to the first French fort was uneventful. Upon his arrival at Venango, Washington found the French flag flying on the former home of John Fraser. In answer to his inquiry for the commander, Washington was informed by Captain Joncaire that a general officer was located at a nearby fort. The French treated Washington very cordially. Both French and English engaged in drinking wine together, which in time induced the French to voice a bit of braggadocio

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Cherokees, and lay sick at the mouth of Conegocheagne. But as I found myself entered again on public business, and Major Washington and all the company unwilling I should return I wrote and sent medicines to my son, and so continued my journey . . .," *ibid.*, 80.

<sup>437</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 23-24; *Christopher Gist's journals*, 81-82.

in regard to the Ohio region. The following morning Washington and his company set out for the next fort, but encountering heavy weather, did not arrive until seven days later.<sup>438</sup> Here, after a short wait for the commander to arrive, Washington met Legardeur de St. Pierre who had been sent to succeed Marin.

After Washington had presented Dinwiddie's letter, the French commander retired to translate it.<sup>439</sup> Dinwiddie in the letter had asked the French officer by whose orders he was invading British territory with an armed force, constructing forts, and making settlements upon branches of the Ohio.<sup>440</sup> While the French commander was holding a council with his staff to obtain advice in preparing his answer to Dinwiddie, Washington took advantage of the opportunity to make observations as to the size of the fort, location, and strength. St. Pierre was very courteous to Washington, even to the point of supplying his party with liquor and provisions.<sup>441</sup> The letter that St. Pierre sent back to Dinwiddie was also polite but very firm. He acknowledged receiving Dinwiddie's message but wished that Washington had proceeded on to Canada, there to report to Marquis Duquesne;

<sup>438</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 25-27; *Christopher Gist's journals*, 82-83.

<sup>439</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 27.

<sup>440</sup> "Copy of the governor of Virginia's letter to the commandant of the French forces on the Ohio," *Maryland gazette*, march 28, 1754, Draper manuscripts, 1JJ28-1JJ31; Dinwiddie to the board of trade, january 29, 1754, including copy of Dinwiddie's letter to commander of French forces on the Ohio, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/97-107 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie's letter to the French commanding officer, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/117-118 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>441</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, I, 27; Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, january 29, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/83-86 (Library of Congress transcript).

but since this had seemed impossible, he, St. Pierre, would dispatch the message to Duquesne with all possible haste. In answer to Dinwiddie's order for him to withdraw, St. Pierre stated that regardless of how the British felt about it, he was there upon the order of his superiors and would remain until ordered out by the French government. As to the acts of hostility of which Dinwiddie complained, St. Pierre declared that he could not answer in a positive manner since Dinwiddie had not been specific in his charges.<sup>442</sup> Dinwiddie later explained the reason he had not been more specific as to the grievances against the French for taking of English traders and their goods was that, while at the time he had information that he regarded as reliable, it nevertheless was only general.<sup>443</sup>

Washington's return journey was one of great hardship. After days of travelling through bad weather Washington and Gist, in order to save time, set out on foot. At one point they tried to cross a river on an improvised raft; they were beset by floating ice and nearly drowned but fortunately reached an island after being forced to swim the last part of the way. Next morning the river had frozen over thus allowing them to walk across. "After as fatiguing a journey as it is possible to conceive," they finally reached the shelter of Fraser's house.<sup>444</sup> On the remaining journey to Wills' creek they met seventeen horses carrying materials and goods to the forks of the Ohio for the

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<sup>442</sup> Legardeur de St. Pierre to Dinwiddie, *Maryland gazette*, march 7, 1754, Draper manuscripts, 1JJ14-1JJ17.

<sup>443</sup> Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, january 9, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/83 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>444</sup> See note 474.

building of a fort.<sup>445</sup> This opens up another phase of the story.

It will be remembered that one of the conditions of the Ohio company's grant was that the company build a fort in the Ohio region. But before this fort could be built the consent of the Indians was necessary. To gain this consent had been one of the main purposes of the Logstown conference in 1752. But Indian opposition was not the only stumbling block in the company's path because some of the leading Pennsylvanians also were desirous of erecting a fort in this territory. As early as 1750 the Indians had asked Croghan to have a fort built on the Ohio,<sup>446</sup> but the Pennsylvania government had failed to act favorably. This left the field open to the Ohio company.

After gaining the Indians' consent at Logstown for the fortification, the company set about at once laying plans for its erection. At Stratford a meeting of the Ohio company's committee was held July 25-27, 1753, and determined that:

'tis absolutely necessary that the company should immediately erect a fort for the security and protection of their settlement on a hill below Shurtee <sup>447</sup>creek upon the south east side of the river Ohio; that the walls of the said fort shall be twelve feet high, to be built of sawed or hewen logs, and to enclose a piece of ground ninety feet square, besides the four bastions at the corners of sixteen feet square each, with houses in the middle for stores, magazines, etc. according to a plan entered in the company's books. . .<sup>448</sup>

<sup>445</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, 1, 27-30; *Christopher Gist's journals*, 84-86.

<sup>446</sup> "Croghan's journal," *Early western travels*, 1, 54.

<sup>447</sup> This was Chartier's creek, named after Peter Chartier, a Philadelphia half-breed trader.

<sup>448</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 236.

William Trent was at this time company factor. Thomas Cresap, Christopher Gist, and Trent were appointed to arrange the details, such as agreeing with the carpenters and other workmen, finding an industrious yet honest person who could serve as an overseer of the laborers, securing hunters to supply the fort with provisions, and guaranteeing that the workers would be furnished with plenty of the necessities such as flour and salt.<sup>449</sup> All of the land on the hill upon which the fort was to be erected was to be used exclusively for defense. Adjoining this hill a town was to be laid off. The town was to include two hundred acres of land besides the streets and public places. It was to be laid off

in squares of two acres each, every square to be divided into four lots so that every lot may front two streets, if the ground will so admit, and that all the streets be of convenient width, that twenty of the best and most convenient squares be reserved and set apart for the company's own use, and one square to build a school on for the education of Indian children and such other uses as the company shall think proper and that all the rest of the lots be disposed of.<sup>450</sup>

In order that the fort might be well equipped with arms and ammunition, George Mason, acting for the company, ordered twenty swivel guns plus other arms and ammunition from Hanbury in London. It was further agreed at this july meeting that as soon as the munitions arrived they were to be rushed to William Trent in order that they might be put to immediate use in the fort.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, 236-237.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*



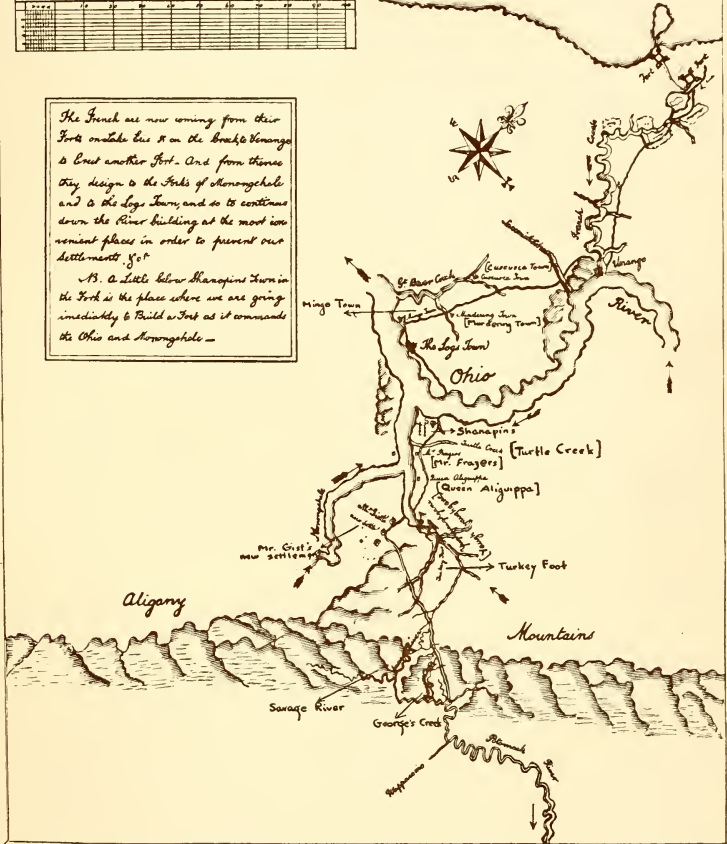
A Scale of Miles

Part of Lake Erie



The French are now coming from their Forts on Lake Erie on the banks of the Ohio & East another Fort. And from thence they design to the Forks of Monongahela and to the Log's Town, and so to continue down the River building at the most convenient places in order to prevent our settlements. &c.

N.B. A little below Shamogins Town in the Fork is the place where we are going immediately to Build a Fort as it commands the Ohio and Monongahela -



MAP SHOWING PROPOSED LOCATION OF OHIO COMPANY FORT



To find a means of working out a plan for financing the construction of this fort, the Ohio company committee met again on november 2, 1753, and passed the following resolution :

Agreed and ordered that each member of the company pay to Mr. George Mason their treasurer, the sum of twenty pounds current money for building and finishing the fort at Shurtees creek, grubing and clearing the road from the company's store at Wills creek to the Mohongaly, which are to be finished with the utmost dispatch. . .<sup>452</sup>

By the middle of 1753 it was apparent that a fort must be built in a hurry either by Pennsylvania, Virginia, or the Ohio company, upon Ohio company lands. William Trent's report of november, 1753, had shown how aggressive the French and French Indians were, and how near to open warfare conditions were in the Ohio country.<sup>453</sup> Therefore, action was necessary. Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania wrote to Dinwiddie on may 6, 1753, asking what the Ohio company's and Virginia's plans were in regard to the building of forts on the Ohio. He further promised Pennsylvania's cooperation in the matter and stressed the need of rapid execution of whatever plans might be agreed upon.<sup>454</sup>

Dinwiddie wrote many letters to various persons in regard to this fort-building program of the Ohio company. In some instances he referred to it as the

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<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>453</sup> William Trent's account of his proceedings with the Six Nations and their allies, november 17, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/27-44 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>454</sup> James Hamilton to Dinwiddie, may 6, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/625-628 (Library of Congress transcript).

Ohio company fort, at other times as Virginia's fort, and yet again as his majesty's fort, but in each instance he had reference to the Ohio company fort because until after its fall to the French, Virginia made no attempt to construct a fort with government money. Dinwiddie's attitude in regard to the relationship between the Ohio company and the Virginia government is rather difficult to understand and explain. When one attempts to explain this relationship by stating that Dinwiddie did only what he thought was best for England, he is subject to the charge of hero worship. Yet the facts remain that apparently Dinwiddie saw in the Ohio company a means of furthering British aims, and as long as the aims of the company and of Great Britain coincided, he would exert every effort, officially and otherwise, to gain those ends. Further, a letter from Dinwiddie to the British government on January 20, 1752, shortly after his arrival in Virginia as lieutenant-governor, implies a close understanding between Dinwiddie and the home government in regard to the affairs of the Ohio company.<sup>455</sup> In concluding this point we may be sure that Dinwiddie was thinking only of Great Britain when he was pushing the interests of the Ohio company: that is, we may be sure if we place reliance in Dinwiddie's own words:

And I am sure tis the duty of every governor to extend his views for the benefit of the British nation and the whole colonies which is what I entirely aim at. . .<sup>456</sup>

<sup>455</sup> Dinwiddie to the board of trade, January 20, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/453-460 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>456</sup> Dinwiddie to James Hamilton, *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 688.

Dinwiddie's latter activities tend to prove this position. Regardless of his interest in the Ohio company he did not hesitate to use their land, their buildings, and their supplies in the public interest whenever such action seemed expedient for Virginia's good. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

In 1753 Dinwiddie attempted to secure cannon from the British government for the company's fort. At first this attempt met with opposition in England,<sup>457</sup> but on August 10, 1753, the Privy Council decided that in view of the fact that the forts were to be used to protect British settlers and British territory, as well as defend allied Indians, it would be proper and practicable to send the cannon.<sup>458</sup> Thus if Dinwiddie is to be condemned for using public money and public soldiers to protect the Ohio company interests, the British home government must stand convicted of the same charge. Obviously such was not the case; the company was still Britain's favored agency for gaining the Ohio country.

On August 28, 1753, Dinwiddie received an important set of instructions, namely what was tantamount to the right of deciding whether it would be war or peace between England and France. He was directed to erect the fort and drive the French out of the Ohio, by force if necessary.<sup>459</sup> These were the

<sup>457</sup> Office of ordnance to the board of trade, April 17, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/617-618 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>458</sup> Order of council, August 10, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/1-8 (Library of Congress transcript); P.R.O., C.O. 5: 211/11-14 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>459</sup> Earl of Holderness to Dinwiddie, August 28, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 211/21-32 (Library of Congress transcript); Instructions to Dinwiddie, August 28, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 211/31-42. See pages 201-203, note 486.

orders which precipitated the French and Indian war.

Returning to the actual progress being made in the construction of the Ohio company fort, it is found that after their meeting of november 2, 1753, the company moved rapidly; they soon had equipment, materials, and supplies moving toward the Ohio. Washington stated that on january 6, 1754, he met a caravan, including seventeen horses carrying supplies and materials, heading for the forks of the Ohio, there to build a fort.<sup>460</sup> The next day he met a group of settlers going out to settle on company land.<sup>461</sup> If Washington was accurate in stating where they were planning on building the fort, then the company had changed its plans after its november 2 meeting because at that time they had planned to build the fort on Shurtees creek.<sup>462</sup> They must have made the change in plans independent of the observations Washington had made on his way to the French posts, at which time he had stated that the forks were much superior as a site for the fort than the place the company had chosen.<sup>463</sup> His reasons for this conclusion were that:

As I had taken a good deal of notice yesterday of the situation at the forks, my curiosity led me to examine this more particularly (the Ohio company fort site), and I think it greatly inferior, either for defence or advantages; especially the latter: for a fort at the FORKS would be equally well situated on the OHIO, and have the entire command of the Monongahela; which runs up to our settlements and is extemely well designed for water carriage, as it is a deep still nature, besides a fort at the FORK might be built at much less expence, than at the other place.

<sup>460</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, 1, 30.

× <sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 30.

<sup>462</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 236.

× <sup>463</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, 1, 23-24.

Nature has well contrived this lower place, for water defence; but the hill whereon it must stand being about a quarter of a mile in length, and then descending gradually on the land side, will render it difficult and very expensive, to make a sufficient fortification there. — The whole flat upon the hill must be taken in, the side next the descent made extremely high, or else the hill itself cut away: otherwise, the enemy may raise batteries within that distance without being exposed to a single shot from the fort.<sup>464</sup>

But Washington had had no opportunity of informing the Ohio company of his observations. Further, it is hardly likely that his advice would have been accepted against that of Gist, Trent, and Cresap. Finally, Gist was, as is well known, with Washington when the latter made his observations on the forks as a superior site for a fort. It seems very likely, therefore, that if Washington and Croghan saw the military value of this location, then Trent, Cresap, and Gist did also.

William Trent was busily engaged in building the Ohio company's storehouse at Red Stone creek in february, 1754, when an order arrived informing him that he, in conjunction with Gist and Cresap, was to construct a fort for the company at the forks.<sup>465</sup> In january he had been commissioned by Dinwiddie to raise a force of about one hundred men to protect the company's fort and to drive the French out of the Ohio country.<sup>466</sup> He was further informed that he would soon be joined by Colonel Washington and a body of men. Trent went to the forks with about

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 24.

\* <sup>465</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 269.

\* <sup>466</sup> Robert Dinwiddie to William Trent, january 26, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/147-150 (Library of Congress transcript).

twenty men, armed at his own expense.<sup>467</sup> Upon arrival on february 17, he was met by Christopher Gist and several others. Gist and Trent expected the rest of the people sent out by the company in two or three days, and when these people should arrive, construction of the fort was to begin at once. Between a total of seventy and eighty men were expected in all. The Indians under the Half-King<sup>468</sup> were to join them with the expectation that the combined forces would be adequate for any emergency. However, all was not well. From the Indians themselves Gist and Trent learned of a speech made by a French officer to the Indians on or about february 5, in which the officer boasted that within twenty days the French would be down to take the English fort. Trent therefore wrote Washington asking him for aid in defending the new stronghold.<sup>469</sup> Gist wrote Washington a similar letter stressing the need of reinforcement.<sup>470</sup>

While waiting at the forks, Trent had his men hew timber, saw boards, make shingles, and build a storehouse.<sup>471</sup> Then work on the fort was started. The Half-King was given the honor of laying the first log.<sup>472</sup> The men worked in haste in order that they might get a suitable defense erected before the

<sup>467</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 269.

<sup>468</sup> The Half-King was Tanacharison, a Seneca chief. He was also named Dinwiddie after Lieutenant-governor Dinwiddie. He was always for the English, maintaining the French had slain and eaten his father. He was very humiliated at the thought of the English giving up the fort to the French. He died october 4, 1754.

<sup>469</sup> *Maryland gazette*, march 14, 1754, Draper manuscript, 1JJ23-1JJ25.

<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*, Draper manuscript, 1JJ25-1JJ26.

<sup>471</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 269.

<sup>472</sup> Ensign Ward's deposition, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/393-396 (Library of Congress transcript).



French should arrive. In an attempt to secure more men and food Trent left the rising structure and journeyed over many miles of frontier in search of aid.<sup>473</sup> While he was away John Fraser<sup>474</sup> was to be in command. Fraser was a Pennsylvania Dutch trader but was in a position to be of great aid to the company in building the fort, hence had been appointed lieutenant. He accepted this commission only with the understanding that he could be away at times looking after his private affairs. In this regard, he differed little from Trent himself, because the latter had often declared that he did not want a commission since he could do much better for himself in private business. Fraser, so Fate decreed, had chosen one of his occasions to be absent just when the French arrived. With neither Fraser or Trent at the fort, Ensign Edward Ward<sup>475</sup> was in command. Ward had heard of the approach of the French and had sent word to both Trent and Fraser asking them to return with aid if possible, but if not with aid, at least to

<sup>473</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 269.

<sup>474</sup> Fraser located in the Ohio region at Venango, an old Indian town situated at the mouth of French creek. Here he established an Indian trading house and a gunsmith's shop. On about August 10, 1747, he received a trader's license. He was very successful in his trading activities. In 1753 the French took Fraser's home and turned it into a fort. Fraser then built a new home at the mouth of Turtle creek where he continued in the Indian trade. In 1754 he was commissioned lieutenant of the army that was to build the company's fort. Following the fall of the fort it was impossible for either Fraser or Trent to escape censure. Dinwiddie gave orders to Colonel Fry to examine their actions by court martial. Although he could hardly be considered blameless, Fraser's absence was much more excusable than that of Trent because of the conditions agreed to before accepting the commission.

<sup>475</sup> Sworn statement of Ensign Ward, June 13, 1756, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I. See page 155, note 373.

return; but neither did. The French arrived even sooner than Ward had expected, appearing on april 17, before the fort had been fully completed. The French marched within a short distance of the fort, then Contrecoeur, the French commander, sent Le Mercier to deliver Ward a summons. Ward was forced to determine within an hour whether he would capitulate or fight. There was little choice.<sup>476</sup> The French were composed of a force of nearly one thousand men while Ward's soldiers numbered only about thirty-three frontiersmen and traders. Ward, acting upon the advice of the Half-King, asked the French commander to wait for his answer until Trent returned;<sup>477</sup> but Le Mercier refused because the request was against his explicit instructions.<sup>478</sup> Dinwiddie had ordered out reinforcements, but Ward had no means of knowing when these would arrive.<sup>479</sup> Therefore he surrendered the fort. He was allowed to march off the next day and to take with him everything belonging to the English, including his carpenters' tools which Le Mercier had tried to buy. Ward and his company marched to the Ohio company storehouse at Red Stone Old Fort and then to

<sup>476</sup> Mirepoix to Minister, january 16, 1755, A. E. Angl., 438 ff. 15-20.

<sup>477</sup> Ensign Ward's deposition, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/393-396 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>478</sup> "Sommaton faite par ordre de Monsieur de Contrecoeur capitaine d'une des compagnies franches du détachment de la marine, commandant en chef des troupes de sa majesté très chrétienne actuellement dans la Belle rivière au commandant de celles du roy de la Grande Bretagne à l'embouchure de la rivière Malengueullée," P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/389-392.

<sup>479</sup> Dinwiddie to James Glen, april 15, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/485-488 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to Holderness, april 26, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/261-264; Dinwiddie to Sharpe, january 29, 1754, *Dinwiddie papers*, 1, 67-68.

Wills' creek, where he met Washington and his reinforcements.<sup>480</sup>

The French commander justified his action in taking the Ohio company's fort in time of peace by the following words:

Nothing can equal my surprise at seeing you attempt an establishment on the lands of the king, my master, and that is the reason I am today, sir, deputizing the Seigneur Chevalier Le Mercier . . . to find out from yourself, sir, by whose order you have come here to establish a fort on the domain of the king, my master. This strategy seems to me to be so contrary to the last peace treaty concluded at Aix-la-Chapelle between his most christian majesty and the king of Great Britain, that I do not know to whom to impute such an usurpation, for it is an incontestable fact that land situated along Belle river belongs to his most christian highness.

Contrecoeur then proceeded to blame the Ohio company for the whole trouble in the Ohio country when he said:

I am assured, sir, that your enterprise has only been planned by a company which had in view commercial interests rather than labouring to maintain union and harmony which reign between the Crowns of France and Great Britain, although it is as interesting for your nation, sir, as for ours to maintain them.

However that may be, sir, if you have come to this place vested with authority, I command you in the name of the king, my master, in virtue of the orders issued to me by my general, to retire with your troops from the kings lands as peaceably as possible, and never

→ <sup>480</sup> Ensign Ward's deposition, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/393-396 (Library of Congress transcript); James Hamilton to William Shirley, may 6, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/353-357; Dinwiddie to the board of trade, june 18, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/267-274 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to the Earl of Holderness, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/377-381; Dinwiddie to the board of trade, may 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/211-214 (Library of Congress transcript); Washington to James Hamilton, *New York colonial documents*, VI, 840-841.

to return there, failing of which order, I shall be obliged to perform my duty by forcing you to do so. I hope, sir, that you will not postpone for one instant, nor that you will force me to take last resources. If you do attend to my commands, sir, you can rest assured that I shall give orders that my detachment do you no harm.

I warn you, sir, that it is useless for you to ask me for more than an hour's delay, or to await my consent for your stay until you receive orders from your government. It can give none on the domains of the king, my master. The order I received from my general is my law; thus, sir, I am unable to set it aside.

If, on the contrary, sir, you were not ordered to come here, and you only came for commercial purposes, I am sorry to tell you that I cannot help seizing you, and confiscating your effects for the good of the savages, our children, our allies, and our friends, it being forbidden that you do any prohibited commerce.

It is for that reason, sir, that last year we stopped two Englishmen who were doing business on our lands. Besides, the king, my master, only demands his right; he has no intention of disturbing the good harmony and friendship which reign between his majesty and the king of Great Britain.

The general of Canada can give proof of his efforts to maintain the perfect union which reigns between the two friendly princes, for, having learned that some Iroquois and Neppissingues Indians of Two Mountains Lake had struck and destroyed an English family of Carolina, he barred their road, and forced them to return a little boy belonging to that family who was the sole survivor, and whom Mr. Wlerich, who was engaged in negotiations at Montreal, brought back to Boston.

Moreover, he forbade all the savages from exercising their cruelty on the English with whom we are friendly.

I could complain bitterly, sir, of the instigations made all winter to the savages to take up the hatchet and strike us, while we were only working to maintain peace.

I am assured, sir, that you will receive M. Le Mercier politely, as much because of his mission as because of his distinction and his personal merit. I count upon your sending him back to me with one of your officers, who will bring me a precise reply signed by you.

Since, sir, you have savages with you, I send an interpreter with M. Le Mercier, so that he can inform them of my intentions in regard to them.<sup>481</sup>

It was in the course of Washington's efforts to regain this fort that he met with defeat at Fort Necessity;<sup>482</sup> thus the Ohio company was directly one of the leading factors responsible for the French and Indian war.<sup>483</sup> While the war was all but inevitable, the Ohio company was responsible for the time and the place. Events in Europe were favoring war. Diplomatic relations had daily been growing more strained since 1752. The Ohio country dispute was merely one of the points of conflict between the two governments but it was the most pressing and vital one. Various documents indicate that both France and England feared that the ultimate fate of their respective colonies depended upon the results of these

<sup>481</sup> "Sommmation faite par ordre de Monsieur de Contrecoeur . . .," P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/389; another translation of the second paragraph appears in *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, VI, 29, and is as follows: "Your undertaking has been concerted by none else than by a company who have more in view advantage of a trade than to endeavour to keep the union of harmony which subsists between the Crown of France and Great Britain."

<sup>482</sup> A copy of the capitulation granted Washington by de Villiers is to be found in "Journal de la campagne and M. de Villiers . . .," Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14, vo 46-59; in "Capitulation conceded by M. de Villiers, captain of the infantry commandant of his most christian majesty's troops, to the commandant of the English troops now occupying Fort Necessity, constructed on the lands of the king's domain, this third day of july, at eight o'clock in the evening," P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/427-430 (Library of Congress transcript); "Relation, de ce qui s' est passée le 3 juillet 1754 entre les troupes du Canada et celles de la Caroline du Sud, de la Caroline du Nord et de la Virginie sur la rivière appellée en Anglais Ohio ou Belle rivière," september 20, 1754, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14, 62-6400.

<sup>483</sup> For confirmation of this point see Mirepoix to the minister, A. E. Angl., 438, 19-20 vo.

movements in the Ohio. Thus while the capture of the Ohio company fort was not of particular importance in itself, its repercussions were felt over a wide area.

The Company and the French  
and Indian War





## The Company and the French and Indian War

The preceding chapter has briefly outlined some of the conditions and rivalries that caused the outbreak of the French and Indian war. Nevertheless there were others. The actions of the Ohio company were vigorously supported by Virginia's lieutenant-governor, Robert Dinwiddie, who seems to have been of the belief, at least after 1754, that war was inevitable.<sup>484</sup> Dinwiddie's aggressive western policy was bound to cause warfare, because the economic policies of the two nations were thus brought into direct conflict. With both powers attempting to gain control of the rich fur trade, no compromise seemed possible. Dinwiddie appears already to have determined to defeat the aims of the French in the Ohio region, as may be noted by his attempt immediately to send troops westward to reinforce Trent's men when building the Ohio company fort at the forks and to drive the French out of that region.<sup>485</sup> The fact that the French anticipated Dinwiddie's intent and moved before he was prepared, does not make his actions defensive. His policies had received official approval at home<sup>486</sup> and he meant to act.

<sup>x</sup> 484 *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 48, *supra*.

<sup>x</sup> 485 Robert Dinwiddie to William Trent, January 26, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/147; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 59.

<sup>x</sup> 486 Holderness to Dinwiddie, August 28, 1753, Holderness wrote:

However Dinwiddie and the Ohio company were not the only forces in Virginia. Other groups desired peace. The Ohio company, including Dinwiddie's

"The lords of Trade having transmitted to me, for his majesty's information, an extract of your letter, of the 16th june, I thought it my duty, to lay it before the king, without loss of time; and his majesty having likewise from other quarters received intelligence of the march of certain Europeans, intending as it is supposed, to erect forts and act in an hostile manner, in parts of his majestys dominions; the king has been pleased this day, to sign an instruction for you, directing you, how to proceed, in case you shall find upon examination, that this intelligence is well founded. And I have his majesty's further commands, in transmitting to you, by this express, his royal orders, to give you some further directions, explaining the spirit, and meaning of them, and the manner in which it is the king's intention you should put them in execution.

"His majesty saw with pleasure the considerable force, to which the militia of the province of Virginia now amounts, and that according to the last report of his adjutant general there, the said troops were well appointed with arms, etc. And I cannot doubt but that by a proper exertion of so considerable a force, all attempts to disturb his majesty's subjects, in the quiet possession of their properties, or to make an invasion upon any parts of his majesty's territories may be easily frustrated. And I have that opinion of your prudent conduct, that I cannot doubt, when you have received these his majesty's orders, you will be able to render any attempt of an incroachment on his majesty's just rights ineffectual.— You are now enabled to draw forth the armed force of the province.— You are warranted by the king's instructions to repell any hostile attempt by force of arms; and you will easily understand, that it is his majesty's determination, that you should defend to the utmost of your power, all his possessions within your government, against any invader. But at the same time, as it is the king's resolution, not to be the agressor, I am, in his majesty's name, most strictly to enjoin you, not to make use of the force under your command, excepting within the undoubted limits of his majesty's province.

"I must likewise apprise you, that the order in council dated august 10 directing the board of ordnance to furnish 30 pieces of cannon, the better to enable you to erect certain forts etc. upon the river Ohio, was confirmed by his majesty, before the receipt of your former representations. You have now his majesty's orders, for erecting forts within the king's own territory.— If you are interrupted therein, those who presume to prevent you from putting in execution, an order, which his majesty has an undoubted, (nay hitherto an undisputed) right to give, are the

activities as a member, had been under suspicion in Virginia for some time. As has been pointed out, every act of Dinwiddie's which had to do with the

agressors, and commit an hostile act. — And this is one case, in which you are authorized to repell force by force. Another is if you shall find persons not subjects to his majesty, not acting under his royal commission, presuming to erect fortresses upon the king's land, and shall not upon your requiring them to desist from such proceedings, immediately forbear the continuance of them, the persevering in such unlawfull act, in disobedience of the requisition made by the king's authority, is an hostility; and you are required by your instructions to inforce by arms, (if necessary) a compliance with your summons.

"This I hope may be sufficient for your instruction, if you are obliged to come to extremities, which however, you will avoid as long as possible, and try all means of representation, and persuasion, to prevent the fatal consequences of a real exertion of force, tho' you must have recourse to that, if other measures fail.

"I send you inclosed a copy of a letter I have wrote to the board of ordnance requiring them to be as expeditious as possible in sending you the cannon and stores directed by his majesty's order in council, and authorizing them to hire a ship to perform that service, which will be put in execution without loss of time, in the mean time his majesty has commanded me to dispatch this express with instructions for your conduct. I also send you inclosed several letters to his majesty's governors on the continent of America, which you will take care to forward in the most expeditious manner, they contain a general order to be upon all occasions aiding, and assisting each other for his majesty's service, but as you will receive one to the same tenor by this express, it is needless to enter farther into their contents.

"[His majesty extremely approves your having sent a quantity of ammunition to the Indians upon the river Ohio, whom you represent to be steady in their friendship to the English nation, and determined to prevent as far as in them lies any foreigners from making a settlement on his majesty's land. — You will endeavour by all means, to cultivate the good disposition of these friendly Indians; and you may assure them, that so long as they continue firmly attached to his majesty's government, they will meet with support, and encouragement.]

"You will take care to transmit to me for the king's information constant accounts of your proceedings in consequence of his royal instructions, and of this letter, which is wrote by his majesty's express command." P.R.O., C.O. 5: 211/21-30 (Library of Congress transcript).

west naturally was met with apprehension on the part of the public, particularly the lower house. Most of his efforts to build up an army for the defense of the west met with stubborn resistance from this legislative body. Nor was the opposite to be expected. The house had no desire to push the interests of a speculative company from which they derived no benefits. They subscribed to a Virginia policy rather than to an English one, and they could see little need of engaging in needless border warfare because the profits would hardly fall to them.<sup>487</sup> Virginia, they agreed, did not need the Ohio country. There were considerable vacant lands which could yet be settled, and when migration did take place it was not crossing the mountains into the Ohio country but was reaching fine fertile land by moving southward down Virginia's great lateral valleys.<sup>488</sup>

Further, the average colonial Virginian by this period had become a plantation worker rather than a hunter and trader. He did not look to the west for his markets but toward Europe. The Ohio country played little part in his life. Only a small minority of the people would have moved westward in 1753 even had there been no French. The Greenbrier and Loyal companies were meeting difficulties in interesting Virginians in the west. It will be remembered that the Ohio company had thought seriously of settling their lands with Germans because these emigrants were more willing to move into the Ohio country than were the Virginians. The number interested in the fur trade can easily be realized from Dinwiddie's

<sup>487</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755)*, *passim*.

<sup>488</sup> Hayes Baker-Crothers, *Virginia and the French and Indian war*, 22-27.

report of the export trade of Virginia in 1755 wherein it is shown that less than 17 per cent of Virginia's trade was in goods received through furs and Indian trading, and only a small portion of that would normally come from the Ohio country as most of Virginia's traders went southward into the Cherokee country.<sup>489</sup>

Therefore it can be seen that the economic causes of the war can be easily misrepresented. If the war were fought over economic causes, it seems to have been really for the economic interests of the very few, and even those interests had no reason to clash except in the distant future. The war was probably a necessary measure for the economic and political welfare of the farsighted home government, but hardly so of the colonies, especially Virginia. Thus it is not surprising that the assembly balked at Dinwiddie's plans. There was too much danger that it would result in "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight." Dinwiddie and his council, seeing the advantages for Great Britain in the long run, and possibly sensing their personal reward awaiting them, favored the Crown's policy of expansion. Undoubtedly the first point would have been sufficient, but the latter one would hardly detract from their interest. However, far from proving definitely that their personal interests shaped their course, in certain instances the reverse seems true.

But the governor and council were not the whole government of Virginia. The upper house had its powers but so did the House of Burgesses. Virginia's

<sup>489</sup> Report of Governor Dinwiddie on the state of Virginia, transmitted to the board of trade, January, 1755, *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 380-390. The total exports of Virginia are listed as 334,000 pounds, *ibid.*, I, 386.

resources were theoretically at the disposal of the latter body, not of the governor. And from the foregoing discussion one can be sure that they would not, and did not, favor an aggressive western policy. This representative body in several instances refused to cooperate in Dinwiddie's plans to defeat the French. They refused to increase Dinwiddie's power over the colonial forces when they knew of the French advance into the Ohio country from Presque Isle, thus entering an area asserted to be a part of Virginia. In their opposition to Dinwiddie and the company, the house even went so far as to request that the governor in the future make small grants instead of large ones in the western lands.<sup>490</sup> In their mind this measure would decrease the influence of such groups as the Ohio company by breaking up the monopoly. The pistole fee dispute of 1753<sup>491</sup> precluded any possibility of cooperation for a few months, but French attacks on Virginia traders,<sup>492</sup> as well as on Trent at the forks of the Ohio,<sup>493</sup> forced the burgesses in 1754 to give at least some support, although even this support was inadequate.<sup>494</sup>

Nor was Dinwiddie successful in his early attempts

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<sup>490</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755)*, 6, 104, 110, 115, 175-176, 190, 292; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, *passim*; P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/167-172 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>491</sup> The pistole fee dispute arose from Dinwiddie's attempt to charge a pistole (\$3.60) for making land patents. *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 44-46, 100, 103, 118, 137, 139-140, 153, 156, 160, 208, 210, 299, 307, 362, 370, 373, 376, 511; II, 3, 57; *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755)*, 121.

<sup>492</sup> Trent's journal to the Twightwees, June, July, and August, 1752, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1327/709 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>493</sup> Ensign Ward's deposition, May 10, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/393-396 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>494</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses (1752-1755)*, 181-183, 191-196, 201-205; *Statutes at large . . .*, VI, 416-422; *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 98, 101, 137, 156, 294.

to bring the other colonies to his assistance. Pennsylvania naturally opposed the Ohio company, although Governor James Hamilton<sup>495</sup> favored cooperation with Virginia.<sup>496</sup> Maryland, through 1753 and 1754, refused to assist Virginia,<sup>497</sup> but with Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity, her attitude changed.<sup>498</sup> From that time on she gave cautious support to Governor Sharpe who, on the whole, was in agreement with Dinwiddie.<sup>499</sup>

North Carolina, like Virginia, was under the governorship of an Ohio company member, and as would be expected, some aid was given by that colony,<sup>500</sup> although the North Carolina assembly had no interest in the Ohio country so could hardly be expected to be very free with their money. As a matter of fact, North Carolina's aid at this time was negligible because her contributions were chiefly in paper money which was useless in other colonies.<sup>501</sup>

South Carolina, from whom Dinwiddie seemed especially to look for help, was under no imperialistic governor. Glen<sup>502</sup> opposed any move which might

<sup>495</sup> James Hamilton was governor of Pennsylvania from 1748 to october, 1754, and again from 1759-1763. In 1771, while president of the council, he again became acting governor for a short time. During the Revolutionary war he was a loyalist. He later moved to New York where he died, august 14, 1783.

<sup>496</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, v, 148; VI, 25, 27, 40, 45, 134-140, 165-168, 186, 191-193.

<sup>497</sup> *Correspondence of Horatio Sharpe*, I, 67-68.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-89.

<sup>499</sup> Plan of operations, october 25, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/565.

<sup>500</sup> For Arthur Dobbs, see pages 58-59.

<sup>501</sup> W. L. Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial records of North Carolina*, v, 109.

<sup>502</sup> James Glen was governor of South Carolina from january, 1744, to 1756. Upon his return to England he published *A description of South Carolina* (1761).



result in war. He too was suspicious of Dinwiddie's interest in the Ohio company.<sup>503</sup> When Dinwiddie, through clever diplomacy, received an agreement from the Cherokees to attend a conference at Winchester to work out plans for fighting the French, Glen blocked the way, prevailing upon them to stay at home.<sup>504</sup> On the whole it seems fair to suggest that the recalcitrant position of these colonies was due in part to their animosity toward the Ohio company. They could see no reasons for sending men and money to advance the personal business of these speculators. They were not convinced that Virginia's western policy was also for their own good. Every advance made by the Ohio company strengthened Virginia's position in the Ohio country at the expense of the other colonies. The British government might look upon the Ohio company as a useful weapon to gain the Ohio country and injure the French, but the other colonies did not. Instead of cooperation the result was colonial inaction.<sup>505</sup>

Mere inactivity on the part of the English did not keep the French from moving. Once they had started, they rapidly carried their plans into execution. They did not stop with the capture of the Ohio company fort but continued to drive the company from all of its strongholds west of the mountains. Thus the

<sup>503</sup> Gov. Glen's message to the assembly, march 5, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/287-291; Glen to Dinwiddie, march 14, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/295-298; Glen to Dinwiddie, march 14, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/299-301; Glen to ?, march 30, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 14/267; Glen to Dinwiddie, june 21, 1753, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 13/595 (Library of Congress transcript); *Dinwiddie papers*, 61-63, 237, 272-276.

<sup>504</sup> Dinwiddie to Glen, august 5, 1754, *ibid.*, 1, 273.

<sup>505</sup> Hayes Baker-Crothers, *Virginia and the French and Indian war*, 45.



French and Indian war had begun. Others may date this event from Braddock's defeat or from the formal declaration, but the facts remain that the first official act was the destruction of the Ohio company fort.

The affairs of the Ohio company suffered badly as a result of the outbreak of this war. As has been stated, the war had resulted from the French attack on the company's fort, and an important part of the entire war was fought in attempting to regain this post. The early campaigns were all fought on company property. Wills' creek, Red Stone Old Fort, Nemaquin's road, and Gist's settlement were all scenes of war activity.<sup>506</sup>

It will be remembered that Ward, following the French attack, had marched his men from the forks of the Ohio to Red Stone Old Fort. Here the men awaited word from Washington and his reinforcements. On June 28, 1754, Washington and his army arrived at Gist's settlement and began making preparations to leave for the company's storehouse at Red Stone Old Fort.<sup>507</sup> On the next day, however, it was decided to remain at Gist's, there to build fortifications and to await the French. The choice by Washington of this place as a suitable site for a fort attests the wisdom of Gist's selection of it as a spot for his settlement. Gist's plantation became the hub of the war activities for several days, but on June 30 it was decided to retreat to Wills' creek. Because of weary, hungry, and sick men, and because of adverse travelling conditions, Washington's men were forced

<sup>506</sup> "Proceedings of the Ohio company, about the settlement . . . of the Ohio," Shelburne papers, L, 93-95.

<sup>507</sup> See page 155.

to halt at a quickly constructed fort in Great Meadows called Fort Necessity. Here, as is well known, the French on July 3 and 4 attacked Washington and finally forced his capitulation.

Returning to Gist's place we note that on July 2 the French under de Villiers visited Gist's home. De Villiers described the place as "consisting of three houses surrounded by some pieces standing on end and by some enclosures the interior of which was found to be commanded by the neighboring heights. . . ." <sup>508</sup> On July 5, after forcing Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity, de Villiers returned to Gist's place, again looked the situation over, then ordered it and the neighboring houses to be burned. <sup>509</sup> The burning of these buildings left Gist financially ruined. On October 30 he made a futile attempt to salvage something when he petitioned the House of Burgesses to be repaid for some of the damage done by the French because it had been due to the fact that the English soldiers were there and his horses were employed by Washington in the king's service that he had been unable to remove his belongings. <sup>510</sup> Gist certainly seemed to have had just and weighty arguments on his side, but to no avail, for on May 9, 1755, that body rejected his petition. <sup>511</sup>

The French were not satisfied with destroying the company's fort at the forks and with Gist's settlement

<sup>508</sup> "Journal de la campagne and M. de Villiers depuis son arrivée au fort Duquesne jusque à son retour au d. fort," joined to a letter of M. le Chev. de Drucour, December 7, 1754, Arch. Nat., Col., F 3, 14-56.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, vo. 59.

<sup>510</sup> *Journal of the house of burgesses (1752-1755; 1756-1758)*, 223.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.



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<sup>510</sup> *Journal of the house of burgesses (1752-1755; 1756-1758)*, 223.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.



A To Where I suppose they begin, as they informed me their Deed, which was upon the Branches of Red Stone Creek. He runs the Course marked 123 some Distance the 1 was N 30 E which cornered within 10 or 12 Poles of William Cromwells House the 2 was N 30 W which they run to leave out Mr Gist and his Convinclaw William Cromwell, being willing (as they said) to leave them hab doome Settlement the 3 was N 45 000 62 W which part within of a Mile of Mr Gists House, to the River Yauyugaine, down which I saw them present, about 5 Miles from Mr Gists Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of April in my Pass to the Indian Towns. Where this Branch is about 20 Miles to the Westward of a North line of 35 Miles run by Col. Croshaw from the Field Springs of Potomack up the dotted Lands B, C, tho' their Grant was

A Where the Company propose to erect a Town. It is a Plain about 1/2 of a Mile in length and is a Mile in Breadth, bounded on the North by a very high Hill where the Fort is to be built, on the Southward and East by Shurtess Creek, on the Eastward and West by the Ohio River which runs round this Hill.

This Hill is a very fine Situation for a Fort, being very steep on the North and South sides, the River running at the Foot of it on the North Side, as it does at the East End which is inaccessible, being near 100 Feet high and huge Rocks putting one over the other to the Top. The West End has a gradual Descent down to the River.

There has been an Indian Fort there some Years ago. The Ditch is now to be seen. Here the Indians always fled upon an Alarm as it was reckoned the strongest Fort they had, several thousand have lost their lives on the attack of it, but it never was yet taken.

CONTEMPORARY MAP SHOWING PROPOSED LOCATION OF OHIO COMPANY FORT



but next turned to Red Stone Old Fort. They were determined to eradicate every vestige of English control west of the Appalachian mountains, particularly the Ohio company property. Thus Red Stone Old Fort, the last Ohio company outpost west of Wills' creek, was demolished on July 6.

The Wills' creek station now became the pivot of the English preparations and defense. Here Washington took his men after his defeat at Fort Necessity, and from this time on it was requisitioned by the Virginia government to serve as the general meeting point of colonial troops.<sup>512</sup> The company buildings were utilized by the army. Company guns, stocks, and equipment were put into use by the government of Virginia as though it were publicly owned instead of being the property of a private concern. For instance, in August, 1754, Dinwiddie instructed Colonel Innes to make use of certain Ohio company property. He said: "There are six swivels at Wills's creek belonging to the Ohio company, which is all we have. You must make use of them. . ." <sup>513</sup> On the thirtieth day of the same month Dinwiddie again wrote Innes, this time ordering him to

take possession of the Ohio company's warehouse at Wills's creek for your provisions; get your great guns all up there, mount them for defence. Can you make sheds round it for accommodating your people in case of bad weather? <sup>514</sup>

In his letter to Governor Horatio Sharpe of Mary-

\* <sup>512</sup> Dinwiddie to board of trade, August 15, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/275 (Library of Congress transcript).

\* <sup>513</sup> *Dinwiddie papers*, I, 270.

\* <sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 297.

land of september 6, 1754, explaining the above order to Innes, he stated that "it is better to rent than to build new ones at this time."<sup>515</sup>

The picture of Wills' creek being used as the focus of British activity for a time looked as though it would work out for the company's advantage. It raised their property and holdings to a position of prime importance. It was really the only defense against the French prior to the arrival of General Edward Braddock.<sup>516</sup> Even then Braddock's expedition was to use their road from Wills' creek to the forks of the Ohio. Several of its members were to take an active part in this campaign. Thomas Cresap was to supply meat for Braddock's army, Christopher Gist to act as a guide, and George Washington was to be the aide de camp of the general himself. Great publicity was to be turned on the Ohio region, thus making it easier to obtain settlers after the French were driven out.

Such a picture was not to last for long. Even before Braddock's fatal expedition was under way, the company's fortune had begun to turn, its sun to sink. George Mason wrote of subsequent events as follows:

. . . by the French and Indian war . . . your memorialists were not only prevented from proceeding further into the execution of their plan, but sustained very great losses, to the amount of [several hundred] pounds, in their materials, tools, stores, horses, and other effects in that country, and even in their houses and property upon Potomack river; which were wantonly destroyed by our own troops, and the lands the company had purchased near Fort Cumberland entirely pillaged of timber, for the public buildings, and

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 305.

<sup>516</sup> Memorial of George Mercer on behalf of the Ohio company, june 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/416 (Library of Congress transcript).



for beef, pork, and flour-barrels; without your memorialists ever being able to obtain the least satisfaction or redress. And that the nature of the trade your memorialists were engaged in was such, that they were obliged to give large credits to the Indian-traders, most of whom were killed, captivated, or ruined in the course of the war, and the debts due to your memorialists thereby lost. . .<sup>517</sup>

Then, as if its claims to any particular tract of land were not already muddled enough, a new grant of land was made in the very heart of its grant. This new grant was indeed an unfortunate blow. Later misfortunes seemed to have taken their lead from this point. On february 19, 1754, in an attempt to encourage recruits for his small military force, Lieutenant-governor Dinwiddie issued a proclamation promising, besides the regular pay, a grant of land in the Ohio country to all soldiers who would volunteer for the service. This one hundred thousand acres of land which Dinwiddie granted was to be located within the bounds of Virginia, on the east side of the fort at the forks of the Ohio, contiguous to the fort being built there by the Ohio company. The other one hundred thousand acres was to be located on or near the Ohio river. The conditions of this grant were that it depended not only upon voluntary military enlistment but also upon good behavior and length of time spent in the service, the portion due each person being dependent upon the report of their officers as to their respective merit. The grant was to be given immediately after the driving out of the French from the Ohio valley.<sup>518</sup>

<sup>517</sup> Toner collection of Ohio company papers, VI, 349 ff.

✓ <sup>518</sup> Governor Dinwiddie's proclamation, *Maryland gazette*, march 7, 1754, Draper manuscripts, 1JJ20-1JJ22.

This action on the part of Dinwiddie served to bring the company into a long series of disputes with the soldiers, not only in the House of Burgesses, but also with the British ministry in London. George Washington, a member of the company, later bought up a large number of these soldiers' grants. Many of the soldiers, despairing of ever gaining their lands, were willing to sell their respective shares at a very low price. As a result, Washington, always interested in western land, after buying a sizable amount of this land, turned his attention to obtaining it. When the Walpole grant was up for consideration, Washington in a letter to Lord Botetourt, then governor of Virginia, condemned this new grant and argued for the soldiers' grant. He wrote:

These, my lord, are the bounds of a grant prayed for, and, if obtained, will give a fatal blow, in my humble opinion, to the interests of this country. But these are my sentiments as a member of the community at large; but now I beg leave to offer myself to your excellency's notice, in a more interested point of view, as an individual, and as a person, who considers himself in some degree the representative of the officers and soldiers, who claim a right to two hundred thousand acres of this very land, under a solemn act of government, adopted at a very important and critical period to his majesty's affairs in this part of the world; . . .

. . . I shall beg leave to refer your lordship to an order of council, of the 18th of february, 1754, and to Governor Dinwiddie's proclamation, which issued consequent thereupon, both of which are enclosed; and then add, that these troops not only enlisted agreeably to the proclamation, but behaved so much to the satisfaction of the country, as to be honored with the most public acknowledgements of it. . . Would it not be hard, then, my lord, to deprive men under these circumstances, (or their representatives,) of the just reward of their toils? Was not this act of the governor and

council offered to, and accepted by the soldiery, as an absolute compact between them? And though the exigency of affairs, or the policy of government, made it necessary to continue these lands in a dormant state for some time, ought not their claims to be considered, when the causes cease, in preference to all others? We fain would hope so. . .<sup>519</sup>

Braddock's defeat really sealed the doom of the Ohio company. In the first place, for a considerable length of time its traders could not go out beyond Wills' creek because the French controlled all of its possessions west of the mountains, and when relief from this enemy came, it was due to the Forbes expedition which was of Pennsylvania origin. Throughout the remainder of the war it was unsafe to venture far into this country because its inhabitants were pro-French. The company, therefore, having already lost its buildings, marked time until the close of the war.<sup>520</sup>

But this was not the only cause of its members' deep concern. Their grant had lapsed. They had not fulfilled its conditions. The required families were not settled within the seven years and their forts had not been built. True, this was hardly a fault of theirs as the war had prevented any possibility of the carrying out of their instructions. However, their grant had not been extended in 1754 and there was no assurance that it would be. Affairs became so bad for the company that in 1760 John Mercer, secretary of the com-

<sup>519</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of Washington*, III, 11-12; cf *ibid.*, III, 26-29; Washington to Governor Botetourt, October 5, 1770, - enclosed in William Nelson's letter to board of trade, October 18, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1348/355 f.

\* <sup>520</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, April 2, 1754, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1328/153-164.

pany, sent to the British ministry a long memorial or history of the company in which he explained the situation on the frontier and requested a renewal of the grant or else reimbursement of expenditures.<sup>521</sup>

In 1761 the company decided to use every weapon it could command. Dinwiddie had resigned as lieutenant-governor of Virginia in 1757 because of ill-health<sup>522</sup> and had returned to England. Therefore the company wrote to him there requesting his interest and influence in gaining recognition of the company's claim to the lands granted it. The letter was signed by James Scott, John Mercer, George Mason, Thomas Ludwell Lee, and Philip Ludwell Lee. It reads as follows:

As we may expect a peace next winter, and have no doubt NORTH AMERICA will be secured to the BRITISH government, and LIBERTY WILL BE THEN GRANTED TO HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS IN THESE COLONIES TO SETTLE ON THE LANDS ON THE OHIO;— We, the committee of the OHIO company, think it a proper time, as soon as peace is concluded, TO APPLY FOR A GRANT of the lands intended us, by his majesty's instructions to Sir WILLIAM GOOCH, and have for that purpose sent over a petition to his majesty, and a large and full state of our case; and have employed Mr. CHARLTON PALMER, a man, we are informed, of great capacity and diligence, to SOLICIT our cause, and ENDEAVOUR BY ALL MEANS TO GET US A PATENT IN ENGLAND. He will be directed to apply to our members in LONDON, for their

<sup>521</sup> *Acts of the privy council*, IV, 727.

<sup>522</sup> Dinwiddie to William Pitt, march 22, 1757, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 18/55-58 (Library of Congress transcript); Dinwiddie to board of trade, may 16, 1757, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1329/61-64; P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1329/69-73 (Library of Congress transcript); Board of trade to Earl of Holderness, june 23, 1757, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/317 (Library of Congress transcript); P.R.O., C.O. 324: 51/103 (Library of Congress transcript); Board of trade to Dinwiddie, july 1, 1757, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1367/319-320 (Library of Congress transcript).

advice and assistance; and as no person knows the affair better than Mr. DINWIDDIE, nor can it be imagined any of the company have such an acquaintance or interest with persons in power; — let us beg you will please to exert yourself in GETTING US A PATENT by natural bounds, on the best terms possible; — for RATHER THAN BE REMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT HERE, WHO FROM JEALOUSY, OR SOME OTHER CAUSE have ever endeavoured to disappoint us in every design we could form to settle and improve the lands; — WE WILL AGREE TO ANY REASONABLE CONSIDERATION FOR SUCH A DEED FROM ENGLAND. But if this cannot be obtained, that the most plain and positive INSTRUCTIONS to the governor of VIRGINIA BE PROCURED on terms the most advantageous to the company.<sup>523</sup>

The company seems at first to have willingly placed all of its facilities at the disposal of the Virginia government in its attempts to drive out the French. The reason for this is not particularly difficult to understand. If the French were to prove successful, then the Ohio company would have little use for its stations anyway, and if the use of these stations aided in defeating the French, then it would be to the company's advantage. All that was lost could easily and rapidly be replaced once peace were secured.

The company was justified, therefore, in the expectations that her sacrifices would be appreciated and her position of preference be maintained after the close of the war. True, her activities had brought on the war, but it had been for England's good. The company had never been popular with the people of Virginia as a whole and became even more unpopular when it was found necessary to send Virginia recruits to the frontier to finish what the company had begun. As for the attitude of the mother country, after

<sup>523</sup> *Plain facts . . .*, 120-121.

the war was over, the French driven out, and the Ohio country won, it appeared to be the simplest procedure to prevent all speculation and expansion to the west. It was hoped that this would pacify the Indians who were even then just putting the finishing touches on Pontiac's conspiracy. This was exactly the policy England now followed.<sup>524</sup>

In complaining of this policy to the Crown, the Ohio company made a very good summary of the status of their company during the war. This summary is in part as follows :

. . . and while the company were thus engaged in removing these difficulties . . . and having also begun a fort, at the place now called Pittsburg, and raised a garrison for that service, the whole force of the French in Canada was employed by the governor of that country to disappoint their measures; and these forces too powerful for a private company of only 20 members to resist effected their design, by the destruction of the fort they had begun at Pittsburg, and another fort or blockhouse which they had actually compleated at the mouth of Red Stone creek on the river Monogahela, together with some store houses they had built on the comunication to Red Stone creek, at a place called in the maps GISTS on the west side of the mountains, and by plundering their effects, which ruined most of the traders they had employed, and the rest being chiefly killed, on the Indians whom they had traded with, being mostly engaged against them the company lost all the money they had advanced for the trade—

The government of Virginia pitched upon the spot now called Pittsburg where the company had begun a fort, as a proper post to fortify, and finding it necessary to raise for the defence of that country, gave by proclamation 200,000 acres of land 100,000 acres to be contiguous to the fort, to the officers and soldiers employed on that expedition free from any rights or, the payment of

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<sup>524</sup> Petition of the committee of the Ohio company to the king, june 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/422 (Library of Congress transcript).

any quit-rents for 15 years – a step the company immediately acquiesced in, though the proclamation had been made without any application to one of their members,<sup>525</sup> and judging it for the good of the service, they immediately publicly gave up all their pretensions to any lands the government might allot the military, as every one in that country knew their claim to the very lands which had been promised without their consent to the officers and soldiers—

The company were obliged to remain without attempting any thing during the war, but on the proclamation of the peace immediately resumed their plan of settling the country that had been promised them, and which from former possession they claimed a right to, and thinking an establishment on the east side of the mountains the first step that ought to be taken purposed to lay out a town, and dispose of the lots to persons, particularly mechanics who were willing to settle there – and pitched upon the spot at Wills's creek for that purpose as the most proper place, being the first spot where goods could be embarked in boats on the Potomac and immediately on the communication to the country to the westward. The Ohio company informed of the convenience of this spot had bought it of private proprietors at a large price, and built store houses there before the war – called in the maps **THE NEW STORE** – and had at their own expence opened a road from thence over the mountains (wh[ich] route General Braddock took with his army in 1755) to the mou[th] of Red Stone creek on the Monongahela, where goods might again be embarked in flat bottomed boats, and sent down the Ohio – a fort was built, at this place, by his majesty's troupes, called **FORT CUMBERLAND** and the company's store houses which cost them a large sum, not only constantly used while necessary for the troops, but when they abandoned them and retired to the fort, were pulled down to build barracks, and the timber for above a mile round cut down and destroyed to the amount of some hundred pounds – yet the company never complained, or asked a recompence for the damages, but purposed to pursue their original plan, and

<sup>525</sup> This is hardly an accurate statement as Dinwiddie, who made the proclamation, was a company member.



build new store houses which they were permitted to compleat, but were absolutely refused leave by the commander in chief to whom personal application was made by one of the company in behalf of the rest, to lay off or build the town they proposed — as it was thought probable from the convenience of the situation a royal magazine might be established there, and the company were obliged to give up their design.

The company have actually expended above £10,000 in support of their undertaking, and have never been able notwithstanding their frequent applications first to the government and council in Virginia, and afterwards to his majesty to obtain a renewal of their grant, which of course prevents them from every other proceeding which they originally proposed.<sup>526</sup>

After 1758 the war on the Ohio was practically over. Neither Indians nor French were subdued, yet after Forbes's expedition the English were in control. As would be expected, the English victory in this region saw the return of great interest in western lands. Many land speculators, as well as the Ohio company, hoped to gain advantages from this new condition, but their difficulties were great. From 1758 forward, it gradually became the policy of the British ministry to pacify and be friendly with the Indians. The first real example of this was the treaty of Easton by which Pennsylvania pledged the Shawnee and Delaware Indians that no settlements would be made west of the Alleghenies without the Indians' consent.<sup>527</sup> Colonel Henry Bouquet, commander at Fort Pitt after General John Forbes's death, concurred with this treaty in 1761 when he issued his proclamation keeping the English out of all lands

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<sup>526</sup> "Proceedings of the Ohio company, about the settlement . . . of the Ohio," Shelburne papers, I, 93-95.

<sup>527</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, VIII, 174--223.



west of the Alleghenies. His proclamation reads as follows:

WHEREAS by a treaty at EASTON, in the year 1758, and afterwards RATIFIED by his majesty's ministers, THE COUNTRY TO THE WEST OF THE ALLEGANY MOUNTAIN, is allowed to the INDIANS for their hunting ground. And as it is of the highest importance to his majesty's service, and the preservation of the peace, and a good understanding with the Indians, to avoid giving them any just cause of complaint: This is therefore to forbid any of his majesty's subjects to SETTLE or hunt to the WEST of the ALLEGHANY mountains on any pretence whatever, unless such have obtained leave in writing from the general, or the governors of their respective provinces, and produce the same to the commanding officer at Fort PITT. And all the officers and non-commissioned officers, commanding at the several posts erected in that part of the country, for the protection of the trade, are hereby ordered to seize, or cause to be seized, any of his majesty's subjects, who without the above authority, should pretend, after the publication hereof, to settle or hunt upon the said lands, and send them, with their horses and effects, to Fort PITT, there to be tried and punished according to the nature of their offence, by the sentence of a court martial.<sup>528</sup>

Bouquet was not the only person to agree with this new principle. George Croghan, acting as deputy Indian agent, in 1759 affirmed the treaty,<sup>529</sup> while Colonel John Stanwix<sup>530</sup> and General Monckton<sup>531</sup> also agreed to the treaty of Easton and later to its principle.

In order to make any progress in working out its plans, it was necessary for the Ohio company first to

<sup>528</sup> *Plain facts* . . . , 56; *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, III, 571-574; Bouquet papers, vol. 21656, fols. 7vo-8.

<sup>529</sup> *Minutes of the provincial council of Pennsylvania*, VIII, 382-91.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII, 429-435.

<sup>531</sup> *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, III, 744-752.

find some means of getting around this new precept. As a first step it was decided to gain the support of Colonel Bouquet, thus securing the cooperation of the British forces. Colonel Bouquet was a good friend of various members of the company, especially George Mercer.<sup>532</sup> It was determined, therefore, to offer Bouquet a share of Ohio company stock in return for which he would push the company's interests. The first of these offers was made by Thomas Cresap on July 24, 1760, when he told Bouquet of the willingness of the company to allow him to accept a share of their grant of five hundred thousand acres, each member to receive twenty-five thousand acres. In this letter Cresap told of their new plans for settling the grant. The company proposed that when the war was over Germans and Swiss immigrants be brought in to settle the land.<sup>533</sup>

Bouquet answered Cresap very craftily, acting interested, but in reality pretending this interest only as a means of drawing information from the latter. Bouquet told Cresap that he must take time to consider the proposal to take shares in the company. He remarked that he would be able to get the Swiss and German families to move on to this land, but pointed out that the treaty of Easton prevented the settlement of land west of the Alleghenies, and that while Maryland and Virginia were not parties to the treaty, they were equally forced to abide by it. He did assert interest in the plan though he felt he should have more details of the project before he could join. Regard-

<sup>532</sup> Note letters from Mercer to Bouquet in Bouquet papers, vol. 21645, fols. 340-341v0, vol. 21648, fols. 160-161v0, 307-308 v0. *U*

<sup>533</sup> Thomas Cresap to Bouquet, July 24, 1760, *ibid.*, vol. 21645, fol. 163.

less of whether or not he decided to join the company, he stated that he stood ready to assure any inquiring person that he felt the settlement would be a great benefit to the colonies.<sup>534</sup>

He also received a letter from his good friend George Mercer informing him of the share in the company which was ready for disposal. However, Mercer did not offer to give it to Bouquet, instead suggested that Bouquet purchase it. Mercer explained how each member had advanced £500, and if Bouquet did the same, he would be entitled to a twentieth part of five hundred thousand acres.<sup>535</sup>

Bouquet refused to become involved in the deal, and instead, used his position to prevent settling in this area by issuing his above-quoted proclamation of October 30, 1761. He declared that no one, no matter what the pretense, was to venture west of the Allegheny mountains without a signed permit from the governor of his province. It was to be a court martial offense if anyone was caught disobeying this order.<sup>536</sup> In a letter to General Jeffrey Amherst, April 1, 1762, Bouquet referred to Cresap's letter and spoke of it as an attempted bribe, but that he (Bouquet) refused to be tempted by it. He stated that he merely wrote to Cresap in hope of learning details of the plan.<sup>537</sup>

Governor Francis Fauquier, Dinwiddie's successor in Virginia, was worried at first over the Ohio question because he felt Virginia's rights were being infringed upon. His early correspondence with Bou-

<sup>534</sup> Bouquet to Thos. Cresap, Sept. 12, 1760, *ibid.*, vol. 21653, fols. 24-25vo.

<sup>535</sup> Mercer to Bouquet, Dec. 27, 1760, *ibid.*, vol. 21645, fols. 340-341vo.

<sup>536</sup> *Plain facts* . . . , 56; *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, III, 571-574.

<sup>537</sup> Bouquet to Amherst, April 1, 1762, Bouquet papers, vol. 21634, fols.

quet indicates his indecision in the matter.<sup>538</sup> He expressed approval of the new principle in case it did not interfere with grants already made. He was a friend of the Ohio company but was very cautious because he was not sure that the Ohio company's grant was to be renewed. He therefore decided to follow the Easton principle and refrain from any action pertaining to western lands unless sure of the home government's approval.<sup>539</sup> He seems not to have been opposed to land grants in the west as such but objected to the large and extensive grants the size of the Loyal and Ohio company grants. He believed large grants to be "destructive to the well settling and peopling a colony." He said further: "This is the opinion of all the gentlemen who are themselves concerned in some of these grants, they acknowledge them to be detrimental; but as they expect some proffit may be made by them they desire to have their share." Fauquier's greatest concern with these grants, however, was that the grantees be forced to lay off their grants at once and that the marked out land should be contiguous and as nearly a square plot as possible in order to prevent the running of narrow lines along the rivers.<sup>540</sup>

This policy of Bouquet and Fauquier soon received the approval of the British ministry and be-

<sup>538</sup> Amherst to Bouquet, february 28, 1762, *ibid.*, vol. 21634, fols. 100-100v0; Bouquet, january 17, 1762, *ibid.*, vol. 21648, fol. 5-5v0; Bouquet to Fauquier, february 8, 1762, *ibid.*, vol. 21648, fol. 25-25v0; Fauquier to Bouquet, march 12, 1762, *ibid.*, vol. 21648, fol. 60-61.

<sup>539</sup> *Journals of the house of burgesses of Virginia (1758-1761)*, 281-290, 295.

<sup>540</sup> Lieutenant-governor Francis Fauquier to the board of trade, january 30, 1759, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1329/248-249 (Library of Congress transcript).

came their guiding principle. The chief difficulty with the Indians, so contended the Board of Trade in a statement of July 1, 1759, arose out of the white man's attempt to defraud and abuse him, using every conceivable method to obtain his land. And Lord Halifax, president of the Board of Trade, did little to remedy the situation. He believed in western settlement but also saw the dangers from unfriendly Indians, therefore he merely slowed down the pace of subduing the frontier but did not stop it altogether. For instance, in 1760 he agreed to a suggested settlement west of Lake Champlain, subject to keeping the Indians satisfied.<sup>541</sup>

In 1761 the British government officially accepted the principle of the Easton treaty. The Board of Trade, influenced by the secretary of state, Earl of Agremont, Pitt's successor, proclaimed the policy on November 11, 1761.<sup>542</sup> The Privy Council made this into a general policy pertaining to all Indian lands in America. By this decree, all rights of granting Indian lands were removed from the powers of the governor and turned over to the Crown.<sup>543</sup> This act was to last only for the duration of the war at which time a new policy was to be instituted.

Obviously the Ohio company was hard hit. After waiting through the war they now were checked by legislation. Their operations were not the only ones hurt, to be sure, because the soldiers who were to have received grants under Dinwiddie's proclamation were also balked. But it was the Proclamation of 1763

<sup>541</sup> *New York colonial documents*, VII, 428-29, 437.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 472-76.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 478-479.

which embodied all of these ideas as to western settlement that really killed the chances of the company. True, the company fought on in spite of obstacles. The road had been rough before; from now on it was practically impassable. However, it took years of labor and the expenditure of much money to prove its impossibility.

The Proclamation of 1763 actually affected the Ohio company little more than the series of events above discussed, and was in reality only a proclamation by the British government of what had already become an established principle. While the treaty of Easton and Bouquet's proclamation prevented the Ohio company from settling their western lands, this royal decree did have an additional effect. It added a degree of permanence to the principle already laid down in 1758; and it brought additional authority and standing to the proclamation of Bouquet.

While the British government had agreed in theory to the Easton treaty and to Bouquet's proclamation, Halifax's half-hearted policy did not prevent Indian trouble. Therefore, when the news of Pontiac's war reached the lords of Trade, it proved to them, as Clarence W. Alvord has said, "that the announcement of their intention had been too long delayed."<sup>544</sup> From the period 1758 to 1763, as has been intimated, they had worked out some conclusions as to the management of their new territory, but they had not as yet publicly declared their definite Indian policy. Upon hearing of the state of affairs in the back

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<sup>544</sup> Clarence W. Alvord, *The Mississippi valley in British politics*, 1, 187.

country, the Board realized their mistake, and almost at once issued the Proclamation of 1763.

Contrary to plans, the Proclamation failed to block westward expansion; its provisions could not be enforced. It naturally slowed down this westward migration but the effect was only temporary. It has been estimated that from 1765 to 1768 some thirty thousand whites completely ignored the expression of "royal will and pleasure" by making their homes west of the Alleghenies.<sup>545</sup> In Virginia the opposition was particularly strong. In spite of Governor Fauquier's attempts to prevent them,<sup>546</sup> they moved westward in great numbers. At last the governor was forced to admit that armed force alone could keep the pioneers back.<sup>547</sup>

The general view of the time was that this measure was only temporary and would soon give way to a systematic program of colonization. For this reason various influential Virginians and Marylanders formed a land company known as the Mississippi company. The leading men in this project were also members of the Ohio company, among them being George Washington, Presley Thornton, and four members of the Lee family.<sup>548</sup> This company peti-

<sup>545</sup> James Alton James, *The life of George Rogers Clark*, 6-7.

<sup>546</sup> Fauquier to the board of trade, september 4, 1766, Chalmers papers, Virginia, II, No. 11 (N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>547</sup> Fauquier to board of trade, november 18, 1766, Chalmers papers, Virginia, II, No. 12 (N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>548</sup> Besides the persons already mentioned the membership consisted of Francis Lightfoot Lee, John Augustine Washington, Anthony Stewart, Richard Parker, Robert Wooddrop, William Flood, Robert Brent, William Beale jr., Henry Fitzhugh, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Ludwell Lee, Adam Stephen, William Lee, William Booth, Thomas Bullitt, William Brokenbrough, William Fitzhugh.

tioned for land near the Mississippi river lying twenty miles north of the Ohio, extending eastward to the Wabash, thence to the Tennessee, then westward to the Mississippi.<sup>549</sup> The project was very similar in aims to that of the Ohio company. They sent Dr. Arthur Lee to London to act as their agent. They soon changed the location of their requested grant because they saw the futility of attempting to settle in the then far west. They did not press their suit, however, probably because they felt the Ohio company had a better chance to succeed.<sup>550</sup>

The Mississippi company was only one such example of this new spirit of westward speculation. Others were more important and had a much greater effect on the history of the Ohio company. Two in particular stand out, the Traders' company and the Grand Ohio company, and therefore merit special attention.

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<sup>549</sup> For the articles of the Mississippi company, see Archer Butler Hulbert, "Washington's tour of the Ohio" and articles of 'the Mississippi company,' Ohio archaeological and historical society *publications*, xvii, 436-439 (1908).

<sup>550</sup> Clarence W. Alvord, and Clarence E. Carter, *Great Britain and the Illinois country, 1763-1764*, 165 ff; *Lee papers* (New York historical society collections, 1874) iv, 214.



Indiana and Vandavia



## Indiana and Vandalia

The period following 1763 was an era of land speculation by companies formulated along the lines of the Ohio company. Prior to that period the companies of Virginia had been the most important of these schemes, but after the Proclamation of 1763 Pennsylvanians began to play a more active role. A forerunner to these designs was the plan of Samuel Hazard, a Philadelphia lawyer, to bring settlers from New England and locate them on a tract of land beginning one hundred miles west of the western boundary of Pennsylvania and extending one hundred miles west of the Mississippi. He had a number of followers ready to move as soon as he could receive his grant,<sup>551</sup> but as he was about to leave for London to press his case, he died, and the project ended.<sup>552</sup>

At about the same time that Hazard was dreaming of his western settlement, Benjamin Franklin began to take an interest in the Ohio country, particularly because of the French hostility. In 1755 he proposed that the region to the west of Pennsylvania and north of the Ohio be divided into two distinct colonies.<sup>553</sup>

At that time Thomas Pownall<sup>554</sup> acted as Franklin's

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<sup>551</sup> *Pennsylvania archives*, 1st series, II, 301-302.

<sup>552</sup> October 13, 1757, Provincial papers (Pennsylvania archives at Harrisburg).

<sup>553</sup> John Bigelow (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Franklin*, III, 148-157.

<sup>554</sup> Thomas Pownall (1722-1805) was a lieutenant-governor and governor of New Jersey, Massachusetts, and South Carolina.

mouthpiece in England but to no avail. Pownall argued vehemently for the establishment of a barrier colony in the "back of Virginia filling up the vacuum between the Five Nations and Southern Confederacy."<sup>555</sup> Before his plan could be acted upon the outbreak of the French and Indian war precluded for a time the establishment of this western colony.<sup>556</sup> As a result, the idea lay dormant for about thirteen years, only to blossom forth again at the end of that time as a concrete plan known as the Vandalia colony.

While the idea of the Vandalia project may have owed its origin to Franklin and Pownall, its immediate antecedent was the Traders' company. During the early days of the French and Indian war many merchants and Indian traders had gone bankrupt, largely because of the Indians' hostility and the French control of the Ohio area.<sup>557</sup> Early in 1763 the Shawnee, Delaware, and Huron Indians had rebelled under the leadership of Pontiac and, among other things, had seized the goods and merchandise of a number of Pennsylvania traders located in the vicinity of Logstown.<sup>558</sup> The total value of the estimated losses of these traders was £85,916 10s 8p, New

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<sup>555</sup> "Memorial stating the nature of the service in N-America 1755 and proposing a general plan of operation founded thereon," by T. Pownall, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 18/643.

<sup>556</sup> For another manuscript showing more complete views of Pownall on this scheme, see letter of Thomas Pownall to John Pownall: "Considerations on the means and nature of settling a colony on the lands south of Lake Erie," Loudoun papers (Huntington library), no. 716.

<sup>557</sup> "To the kings most excellent majesty, the petition of divers merchants of the city of Philadelphia, in the province of Pennsylvania who were lately concerned in the Indian trade" (n.d.), Etting collection of "Ohio Company Papers," 1.

<sup>558</sup> *Plain facts* . . . , 59.

York money.<sup>559</sup> As these three Indian tribes were tributaries of the Six Nations, the English held the latter Indians responsible for the raids. The only possessions owned by the Indians which could be used to repay these losses was land. The result was the Traders' land company.

These "suffering traders" had bought their goods chiefly on credit from the firms of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, or Simon, Trent, Levy, and Franks. Samuel Wharton and William Trent at once became leaders in the attempt to obtain reimbursement for their losses.<sup>560</sup> Closely cooperating with these two men was George Croghan who had lost about £4,500 on his own account. In december, 1763, Samuel Wharton, William Trent, George Croghan, Jeremiah Warder, Robert Callendar, David Franks, Thomas McKee, and several other traders met at Indian Queen tavern in Philadelphia to formulate plans for obtaining some form of remuneration. After a series of meetings it was finally agreed to appoint Moses Franks and George Croghan as agents. As payment for their work the agents were to receive £210 plus ten percent of all the land or money granted.<sup>561</sup> The agents were instructed to make petitions to the Crown, and in order to have more influence and to bring more pressure on the Board of Trade, the support was obtained of such influential men as Generals Amherst,

<sup>559</sup> For a detailed discussion of the losses see Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I, *passim*.

<sup>560</sup> See "The memorial of George Croghan, William Trent, . . . and other Indian traders . . ." (n.d.), Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>561</sup> A. T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the westward movement*, 265-266.

Monckton, and Gage, Colonel Bouquet, the assembly of Pennsylvania, the Penns, Lord Halifax, and some merchants in London who had incurred losses in common with the traders.

After their return from England the traders' agents decided that their best method of procedure was to secure a grant of land from the Six Nations. A suggestion of this nature was made to Sir William Johnson, Indian agent, who readily agreed to the plan, as he had favored Franklin's earlier scheme.<sup>562</sup> On April 29, 1765, Johnson made such a proposal to the Indians,<sup>563</sup> and it was more or less generally recognized by the Six Nations as a suitable penalty for the Indian outrages. At a conference held at Fort Stanwix on November 5, 1768, these traders definitely received their grant from the chiefs and sachems of the Six Nations.<sup>564</sup> The members of the company were George Croghan, William Trent, Robert Callendar, David Franks, Joseph Simon, Levy Andrew Levy, Philip Boyle, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, George Morgan, Joseph Spear, Thomas Smallman, Edmund Moran, Evan Shelby, Samuel Postlethwait, John Gibson, Richard Winston, Dennis Crockon, William Thompson, Abraham Mitchel, James Dundas, Thomas Dundas, John Ormsby, and the administrator for John Welch, deceased.<sup>565</sup>

<sup>562</sup> James Sullivan and A. C. Flick (eds.), *The papers of Sir William Johnson*, I, 853, 994; II, 559-560 (hereafter cited as *The papers of Sir William Johnson*).

<sup>563</sup> *Plain facts* . . ., 59.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-63; for other discussions of this treaty see *New York colonial documents*, VII, 112, 117, 128, 134; *The papers of Sir William Johnson*, V, 454; "Proceedings at a treaty held by Sir William Johnson, November 3, 1768," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>565</sup> *Plain facts* . . ., 82-83; Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

The grant was a large one covering much of the area already in dispute. Beginning on the south side of the Little Kenhawa creek where it emptied into the Ohio, the boundary line of the grant ran southeast to Laurel Hill, thence down the Monongahela to the southern boundary line of Pennsylvania, then westerly along this line as far as Pennsylvania's boundary should extend. From this point the line of the grant turned to the Ohio river, then followed westward along this river to the starting point<sup>566</sup> at the Little Kenhawa creek.

It will be noted that this grant included land claimed and partially settled by the Ohio company, including the site of the former home of Christopher Gist, since dead. The traders guaranteed that the persons already settled there could have peaceful possession of their lands upon compliance with the terms of the new association's general land office. It was promised that purchase could be made on easy terms.<sup>567</sup>

While the Traders' grant was serving to involve the Ohio company in considerable difficulties as to legal right to this land, another and more powerful company made its appearance upon the scene to involve the issue further. This was the Walpole company or what is commonly called the Vandalia scheme. This organization was in many ways a continuation of the ideas suggested by Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Pownall, and Sir William Johnson in

<sup>566</sup> Grant to Pennsylvania traders at treaty of Fort Stanwix, *ibid.*, 1; *Plain facts* . . . , 86-87.

<sup>567</sup> "Proceedings of the grantees of lands from the Six Nations Indians . . . dated nov. 3, 1768, to the suffering traders anno 1763," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1.

1756. That year witnessed Franklin's and Pownall's proposal for the formation of a new colony patterned after the colony of Massachusetts, but, as has been pointed out, their design failed to materialize. It was Samuel Wharton rather than Franklin who first began making progress with the scheme after 1768.

Wharton had been one of the suffering traders most interested in obtaining the grant from the Indians. When Johnson had arranged the treaty of Fort Stanwix it had been agreed between himself and the Indians that the traders should receive this large area of land; but Lord Hillsborough, who followed Lord Shelburne as colonial office secretary, did not favor the Traders' grant.<sup>568</sup> Therefore, to plead the Traders' cause, Wharton departed for England. When he, along with William Trent, arrived in London, he found that the Board of Trade had upheld Hillsborough's attitude in regard to the Traders' grant.<sup>569</sup> It thus became necessary for Wharton to direct his efforts along different lines and to gain the support of influential men in England.

Using all the methods at his disposal, Wharton was able to meet and interest various prominent governmental and financial figures in his plans. Chief of these was Thomas Walpole, the banker. Wharton, Trent, Walpole, and Pownall worked out a plan whereby a company should be formed for the purpose of buying from the Crown the land granted to the British the year previous by the Six Nations at the treaty of Fort Stanwix.<sup>570</sup> The company was

<sup>568</sup> *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, VI, 652-653.

<sup>569</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 118-120, 495-496.

<sup>570</sup> Petition of Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Wharton to congress,



formed into a joint-stock company with seventy-two shares.<sup>571</sup> As William Trent was the agent of the traders, he was able to incorporate their claims into the larger organization and to assure them a proportional number of shares.<sup>572</sup> In its final form, the company was made up of many great figures in England, as well as America, particularly of Pennsylvanians.<sup>573</sup>

As a committee to manage its business the company appointed Samuel Wharton, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Pownall, Thomas Walpole, and John Sargent. This committee attempted to secure favorable action on the part of the Crown. In June, 1769, they made their petition for the land which had been granted at Fort Stanwix.<sup>574</sup> Their petition was referred by the Privy Council to the Board of Trade of which the Earl of Hillsborough was president. In

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feb. 25, 1780, Bigelow (ed.), *The works of Benjamin Franklin*, xii, 341-367; Samuel Wharton, *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 137; *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, vi, 568-569.

<sup>571</sup> For a comprehensive study of this Walpole grant, see Clarence W. Alvord, *The Mississippi valley in British politics*, II, 91-177, and Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Western lands and the revolution*, 40-58.

<sup>572</sup> William Trent's letter showing his power as the traders' agent, feb. 20, 1769, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>573</sup> Other members of the company were Benjamin Franklin, John Sargent, Richard Walpole, Anthony Todd, John Foxcraft, Robert Trevor, John Maddison, Naphali Franks, Henry Dagge, John Dagge, Henry Ellison, Robert Ellison, the Earl of Hartford, Lord Camden, Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, Thomas Pitt, Grey Cooper, Arnold Nesbit, William Franklin, Robert Wood, Joseph Gallaway, William Strahan, Sir George Vanderput, George Maddison, Atkinson Wharton jr., George Allen, Earl Temple, Robert Walpole, Richard Jackson, John Robinson, Thomas Bradshaw, Sir William Johnson, Moses Franks, John Franks, Laughlin Macleane, Richard Stonehewer, Thomas Wharton, George Mercer, John Cornwall, Joseph Wharton sr., Michael Colling, Andrew Strahan, George Winter, Charles Wharton, Sir George Colebrooks, Lord Gower, and Lord Rockford.

<sup>574</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 137.

december, 1769, the company's committee attended one of the Board's meetings at which their proposed purchase was considered. At this assemblage Hillsborough appeared very friendly, even going so far as to suggest that the company work out a contract, if possible, with the lords of Treasury for the purchase of a tract of land large enough for the establishment of a separate government.<sup>575</sup> Hillsborough claimed to know the opinion of the lords of Treasury on the matter and offered personally to present the petition to them.<sup>576</sup> As this looked like a fine opportunity, the Walpole committee agreed. Hillsborough presented the proposal, and much to his surprise and chagrin, the lords of Treasury reacted favorably to the scheme. Hillsborough's apparent design to hurt the plans of Wharton, Walpole, and their associates had miscarried.<sup>577</sup> As a result of the favorable reception of their scheme, the Walpole committee presented on january 4, 1770, a memorial wherein they proposed to buy this large tract of land.<sup>578</sup> The lords of Treasury took the memorial under consideration and subsequently unanimously agreed to accept the terms offered.<sup>579</sup> On january 19, 1770, Hillsborough gave the

<sup>575</sup> This proposal for a new colony is discussed at much length in "Propositions for the establishment of a colony and government upon the lands west of the Allegany mountains ceded to the Crown by the Indians at the congress at Fort Stanwix in 1769," P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/347-369; "At a meeting of the grantees of lands from the Six Nations [Pittsburg, 1768] . . .," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," II.

<sup>576</sup> *Facts and observations* . . ., 2 ff., Appendix II, 138-139.

<sup>577</sup> P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/315.

<sup>578</sup> *Facts and observations* . . ., Appendix II, 139-140; *Plain facts* . . ., Appendix I, 149-150.

<sup>579</sup> Treasury minutes, january 4, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/315-318; *Facts and observations* . . ., Appendix II, 139-140; *Plain facts* . . ., Appendix I, 150.

lords of Treasury an account of the quit-rents in the land grants nearest to the one applied for by Walpole.<sup>580</sup> At this time George Mercer was in London working in the interests of the Ohio company.<sup>581</sup> With him was Arthur Lee who was acting for the Mississippi company. In order to protect themselves from charges of injustice toward other groups, particularly the Ohio company, the lords of Treasury at a meeting on april 7, 1770, informed Walpole and his associates, who were in attendance, that the Treasury was concerned with nothing but the problem of the purchase price and the quit-rents: any question relating to the policy to be followed by the British government and any consideration of the points of justice was not for them to decide.

As a result, on may 8, 1770, Walpole and his committee again presented their petition to the Council requesting the grant of land.<sup>582</sup> On may 25 the Council referred the petition to the Board of Trade, and on july 15 Hillsborough requested the attendance of the Walpole committee at the Board's next meeting.<sup>583</sup> When they assembled he informed them that before the grant could be made it would be necessary to determine whether any settlers from Virginia were within the proposed bounds of the grant. Further, as Virginia had made a proposal of her own for the purchase of much of this same land, Hillsborough

<sup>580</sup> *Facts and observations* . . . , Appendix II, 142.

<sup>581</sup> See petition of Dr. Arthur Lee to the board of trade for the Mississippi company, january 24, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/319-322.

<sup>582</sup> *Facts and observations* . . . , Appendix II, 144-145; *Plain facts* . . . , Appendix I, 150.

<sup>583</sup> *Facts and observations* . . . , Appendix II, 145; *Plain facts* . . . , Appendix I, 150.

was of the opinion that it would be necessary to find out Virginia's reaction to such a grant to the Walpole group.<sup>584</sup> At the same time he promised to remind Lord Botetourt, then governor of Virginia, that the Proclamation of 1763 was still in effect.

Accordingly, on July 20, 1770, the Board of Trade sent Lord Botetourt the necessary papers and information in regard to the proposed Walpole grant. In particular, Hillsborough requested information on Virginia's attitude toward the grant and asked Lord Botetourt to answer questions pertaining to other land grants made by Virginia of Ohio country land. This last question was asked to allow the Virginia council an opportunity to defend themselves against charges of corruption and unfair practices.

Before the letter arrived Lord Botetourt died. His duties fell upon William Nelson, president of the council, and in due time Nelson considered the Board's letter. He studied the matter with his council, and on October 18 made his reply.<sup>585</sup> He first began a refutation of charges that the Virginia council had shown favoritism and corruption in making their grants. Attached to the Board of Trade's letter of July 20 had been a letter from an anonymous writer to Walpole wherein this writer condemned the actions of Virginia's council. He accused that body of having realized a large amount of money by making illegal grants and selling lands to various individuals.

<sup>584</sup> "Case with respect to Virginia," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1; Walpole to Lord Hillsborough, July 16, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/403-408 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>585</sup> William Nelson to the board of trade, October 18, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1348/321-330; Samuel Wharton, *Statement of the petitioners in the case of the Walpole company grant*, *passim*.

He closed by emphasizing the justice of the Walpole scheme. Nelson, in referring to this anonymous writer, stated, that while the writer failed to sign his name, he was undoubtedly a member of the Walpole company, using this insidious means as a blind. He pointed out that all of these grants referred to were made long before the Proclamation of 1763, at a time when it was thought beneficial to the colonies as a whole to settle the back country.<sup>586</sup> Further, these grants were made only to men of importance who were in the best position to develop their grant. As to the charge that the council had made any large profits from the sale of these grants, Nelson stated that the facts were otherwise because the price fixed on these sales in most instances was only £3 Virginia currency per one hundred acres. Nelson was in an excellent position to defend the actions of the council since he personally had never received any of the grants.

The anonymous writer above referred to was particularly bitter against the Ohio company. He charged that this organization was composed of members of the Virginia council who acted only in their own interest. Nelson answered this argument by showing that while some of the members of the company were in the council, most of them were not, and that several were resident in Great Britain.

The next grant attacked was that of Dinwiddie's proclamation setting aside the two hundred thousand acres for Virginia soldiers. This grant was easy for Nelson to defend for "their right seems to be a good

<sup>586</sup> This statement was agreed to by John Blair jr., in the same year, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1.

one, as many of them seal'd the contract with their blood, whose shares will be apportion'd among their surviving wives, children and other legal representatives." <sup>587</sup> As five thousand acres were to be granted to a colonel, and lesser amounts proportionally as the scale of rank descended, the full two hundred thousand acres would be necessary. If by the treaty of Fort Stanwix, George Croghan and the Pennsylvania traders were to receive one hundred thousand acres respectively, certainly the soldiers were due their small allotment.

The John Lewis and James Patton grants were well settled by 1770 and could hardly be classified as being within the disputed area. Further, Nelson was of the opinion that any profits from James Patton's grant which his family might receive were justifiable "since the old man paid his scalp as the price of it. . . ." <sup>588</sup>

In defending the claims of the Ohio company against those of the Walpole concern, Nelson explained that the original grant was not carried out, first, because of the war with France, and second, because at the close of the war the Proclamation of 1763 again prevented the company from settling their land. While Nelson had no objection to the Walpole grant as such, he wished to be sure that all prior rights to the region were respected. He was of the opinion that if the Ohio company were a scandalous land grabbing scheme, then the Walpole grant was more so. After showing many problems and unfair clauses in the Walpole grant, he closed by including

<sup>587</sup> Nelson to board of trade, oct. 18, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1348/321-330.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*

a list of the various land grants made by Virginia of her western lands.<sup>589</sup>

On february 25, 1771, Hillsborough informed Walpole that the reply from Virginia had been returned, and that copies of those parts of the letter which pertained to their prospective grant were to be given to him. As soon as the Board of Trade could meet, a report on the application would be made.<sup>590</sup> On march 7 Walpole wrote Hillsborough again on this subject. After meeting most of Nelson's arguments, he requested that the grant be made without further delay, as postponement would be to the disadvantage of both his company and of England.<sup>591</sup> Hillsborough, while outwardly seeming to favor the company, secretly was stubbornly opposed to their plans.<sup>592</sup> He wrote on july 1, 1772, in regard to their scheme that it was

a measure which we conceive is altogether as unnecessary as it is impolitic, as we see nothing to hinder the government of Virginia from extending the laws and constitution of that colony to such persons as may have already settled there under legal titles.<sup>593</sup>

In answer to Lord Hillsborough, Franklin wrote a detailed and skillful pamphlet setting forth the ar-

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*, 333-353. Other lists of these grants are to be found in Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I, and in *Virginia magazine of history and biography*, v, 175 ff., 241 ff.

<sup>590</sup> "Case with respect to Virginia," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 150-151.

<sup>591</sup> "Case with respect to Virginia," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 151-153; *Statement of the petitioners . . .*, Appendix III, 11 ff; for another source of Walpole's answer to Nelson see P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/365-366.

<sup>592</sup> *Statement of the petitioners . . .*, 18.

<sup>593</sup> "At the court of St. James, the 14th day of august 1772," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.



guments in favor of the company. This commentary was read at a Council meeting, July 1, 1772. Franklin maintained in his essay that Virginia had never owned the land, but that it belonged to the Six Nations until purchased from them at Fort Stanwix in 1768.<sup>594</sup> At this same session Walpole made some apt comments on the point at issue, but the outstanding feature of the meeting was a speech by Samuel Wharton. Reverend William Hanna wrote to Sir William Johnson in regard to this speech as follows:

. . . Mr. Wharton spoake next for several hours and replied distinctly to each perticular objection; and thro' the whole of the proceedings he so fully removed all Lord Hillsborough's objections, and introduced his proofs with so much regularity, and made his observations on them with so much propriety, deliberation and presence of mind; that fully convinced every lord present: and gave universal satisfaction to the gentlemen concerned: and I must say it gave me a particular pleasure to hear an American and a countryman act his part so well before such a number of great lords, at such an august board; and I know have the great pleasure to inform you that their lordships have overruled Lord Hillsborough's report, and have reported to his majesty in favour of Mr. Wharton and his associates. . .<sup>595</sup>

As this quotation indicates, the result of this Board session was approval of the grant, and the Council so reported to the king.<sup>596</sup> On August 14 the king approved the grant and ordered the Board of Trade to inform the Council of whatever terms, in addition to the financial arrangements, should be included in this

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<sup>594</sup> Jared Sparks (ed.), *Works of Franklin*, IV, 302-379.

<sup>595</sup> Hanna to Johnson, July 20, 1772, *Documentary history of New York*, IV, 297.

<sup>596</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 146-149; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 153.



grant.<sup>597</sup> The same day the Council gave to the Board of Trade the necessary directions for carrying the above order into execution.<sup>598</sup> The Earl of Dartmouth, successor to Lord Hillsborough as colonial office secretary, informed Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian affairs,<sup>599</sup> who in turn, through his deputy agent, informed the Six Nations, that a settlement was to be made on the land which was purchased from them in 1768.<sup>600</sup> The western tribes were informed at Scioto on april 3, 1773, and seemed well-pleased with the arrangements.<sup>601</sup>

On may 6, 1773, the Board of Trade, headed by the Earl of Dartmouth, submitted a draught of a new constitution for the government of Vandalia.<sup>602</sup> In the same report the Board defined the boundaries of the new colony. Starting from a point on the south side of the Ohio directly opposite the Scioto river, the boundary line ran southward to the south side of the Ouasioto mountains, thence northeast to the junction of the Greenbrier and the New rivers where they

<sup>597</sup> "At the court of St. James, the 14th day of august, 1772," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I.

<sup>598</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 157-158; Order in council, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 27/311.

<sup>599</sup> Dartmouth to Johnson, *New York colonial documents*, VIII, 311; Stuart to Dartmouth, january 4, 1773, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 74/43.

<sup>600</sup> *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 154; Johnson to Dartmouth, november 4, 1772, *New York colonial documents*, VIII, 311; Dartmouth to Johnson, *ibid.*, VIII, 311; Stuart to Dartmouth, january 4, 1773, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 74/43.

<sup>601</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 154-156; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 154.

<sup>602</sup> See proposition for the establishment of a colony upon the lands west of the Allegheny mountains, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/347-369; Report of the board of trade outlining new government, may 6, 1776, Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," I. Another similar copy exists in the Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," II.

joined the Great Kanawha. From these forks the line continued along the east side of the Greenbrier river to the source of the northeastern branch of that river, thence eastward to the Allegheny mountains, along these mountains to the Lord Fairfax line, and beside this line to the source of the north branch of the Potomac river. From this spot it followed the Maryland line to the southern boundary of Pennsylvania. The southern and western confines of Pennsylvania then served as its boundary until the Ohio river was reached. The line terminated by descending the Ohio to the Scioto river.<sup>603</sup>

Walpole's company chose as its name the Grand Ohio company to distinguish it from the old Ohio company. The grant was made subject to a few reservations and conditions. Upon the date of the grant the grantees were to pay £10,460 7s 3p, subject to the agreement of January 4, 1770. The second reservation was to the effect that all claims to any part of this area made prior to the purchase by Walpole and company on July 4, 1770, be reserved to the respective possessors. A third reservation was that Dinwiddie's soldiers' grant of two hundred thousand acres be located "in one contiguous tract."<sup>604</sup>

On May 19, 1773, the Board of Trade referred this report to the Council. On July 3, 1773, the Council ordered the king's attorney and solicitor-general to prepare a proper instrument which would include

<sup>603</sup> "Meeting of the Grand Ohio company held in London at the Crown and Anchor tavern on Wednesday the 27th day of December, 1769," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1; *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 158-159; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 155.

<sup>604</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 162; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 156.

all of the above-discussed points. On July 16, 1773, the king's attorney made his report to the Council, and after a few weeks of consideration, this body requested on October 28 that the king's attorney and solicitor-general insert more definite information as to the bounds of the grant. Early in 1775 the grant was worked out and agreed upon both by the Crown and the company but it had to be suspended until hostilities ceased between the United Colonies and Great Britain.<sup>605</sup>

In 1781 Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Wharton presented a memorial to the United States congress in which the history of the proposal was stated, showing how a large amount of money and time had been spent with no tangible returns. It was argued that while the United States had obtained sovereignty over the said territory, contracts should be respected, and that the terms of the grant be renewed on terms advantageous to the United States. But this grant, like that of the first Ohio company, failed to be sanctioned by the United States congress.

It is of interest to note that when the old Ohio company was trying to gain recognition of its claims, the Walpole company began ridiculing their arguments, but when the Walpole company was in a similar position, their arguments were very similar to that of the former. Seldom in history have two organizations started with greater prospects, yet both ended most dismally.

<sup>605</sup> *Facts and observations . . .*, Appendix II, 163-168; *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix I, 156.



Status of Grant, 1763-1771



## Status of Grant, 1763-1771

At the close of the French and Indian war the Ohio company was in desperate straits. The Virginia assembly still would not favor the organization; all efforts to involve Colonel Bouquet had failed; and now Pennsylvania speculators began to show renewed activity. In order to further its affairs, the company resolved again to petition the king. In 1760, John Mercer, secretary of the company, drew up a statement of the company's case, and sent it to Charlton Palmer, a solicitor in London, who was in the employ of the company. Palmer was instructed to make application to the king for the renewal of the grant. If possible, he was to obtain orders from the king to the governor of Virginia, instructing that official to take whatever steps were necessary to enable the company to carry out its plans.<sup>606</sup> But Palmer was unsuccessful. This was the period wherein England was formulating the policy later found in the Proclamation of 1763, thus any chances which the company might ordinarily have had were now greatly lessened. Therefore, after a delay of three years, the company resolved to send one of their own number to England in an attempt to secure definite information and urge the

<sup>606</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

matter of renewal. They chose for this mission George Mercer<sup>607</sup> who left America on July 8, 1763.<sup>608</sup>

Mercer's arrival in London was really at a most unfortunate time for such a mission as his. To the usual obstacles such as the interests of private individuals and the conflicting claims of the soldiers and officers under Dinwiddie's proclamation, must be added the Proclamation of 1763. All of Mercer's six years in London were spent in futile attempts to overcome these and other obstructions, but in vain. In the end his claims were not recognized, while those of a later, but more influential body, received official approval.<sup>609</sup>

In June, 1765, Mercer, still in London, addressed a memorial to the king, wherein he requested the Crown either to renew the company's old grant, reimburse the company members for their losses, or to grant them a new tract of land in another location.<sup>610</sup> The petition presented an historical review of the company, its expenses, achievements, and difficulties, as they pertained both to the French and to the colonial opposition. Particular emphasis was placed upon the value of the company's work to England. Mercer attempted to demonstrate that the Ohio company had furnished the only English defense west of the Alleghenies before Braddock's expedition. It was

<sup>607</sup> Minutes of the meeting of the Ohio company at Stratford, July 4, 1763, Emmet collection, 13417 (N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>608</sup> Sir William Johnson to the board of trade, July 8, 1763, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1330/511.

<sup>609</sup> The Walpole grant. See Indiana and Vandalia chapter.

<sup>610</sup> The memorial of George Mercer on behalf of the Ohio company, June 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/417-418 (Library of Congress transcript); *ibid.*, 5: 1331/416.



maintained further that the proof of the company's great value to England lay in the fact that the latter power fought for years in order to secure the Ohio, and that the "immense advantage resulting to the nation from the cession of the territory by the late glorious peace will always be a permanent evidence of the truth of the allegations in their first petition."<sup>611</sup>

Mercer then told of the renewal of operations by the company at the close of the war, explained how the members had collected a new fund, made new plans, and had then sent him (Mercer) to London in an attempt to gain the king's support of their project. While the Proclamation of 1763 had temporarily halted all activity in the west, the company felt it advisable to have their grant renewed, as it was believed that the Proclamation was not to be a permanent policy.<sup>612</sup>

Accompanying Mercer's memorial was an extremely flattering petition from the committee of the Ohio company, also to the king.<sup>613</sup> This petition differed very slightly from Mercer's except in its tone. The same general ideas were expressed although emphasis was placed on different points. For instance, in referring to the losses of the French and Indian war, the petition dwelt upon the great sufferings and sacrifices experienced by the company's members in their attempt to gain the Ohio valley.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>612</sup> *Ibid.*, 5: 1331/416-417.

<sup>613</sup> This petition was signed by John Mercer, Philip Ludwell Lee, Thomas Ludwell Lee, John Tayloe, Presley Thornton, and Lunsford Lomax.

Mercer's own activities were summarized and lauded, especially his experiences in the western country. It was suggested that he would be able to give the king and his ministers any information that was desired on this matter.<sup>614</sup>

On June 21, 1765, Mercer's petition was referred to the Board of Trade by the Council with instructions to determine the advisable course to follow in regard to it. However, the Board of Trade did not deem it necessary to continue its investigation to a conclusion at this time because, in the first place, Mercer did not appear to solicit his suit, and secondly, because the Proclamation of 1763 had precluded further settlement.<sup>615</sup>

Upon his failure to secure the government's recognition of the company's grant, Mercer concluded to return to America but decided that at the same time he could secure some additional income and enhance his importance by accepting the tempting position of stamp distributor in America for the Crown. Mercer had been in England for several years and therefore did not realize the colonial attitude toward the stamp act. He was quite unprepared for the type of welcome which he received upon his arrival in Virginia. Had the leading officials of Hampton not acted quickly in his behalf, it is likely that he would have been mobbed by the violent colonials. His reception at Williamsburg was nearly as unfavorable, but the

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<sup>614</sup> Petition of the Ohio company, June 21, 1765, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/423-424 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>615</sup> Lieutenant-governor Fauquier on the claims of the Ohio company, October 8, 1767. Shelburne papers, LIV, 67-70 (William L. Clements library).

crowd subsided when it was announced that he would give his stand on the proposition the next day. When at the appointed time, he stated that he would not collect the tax without the consent of the Virginians, he at once changed character from that of the villain to that of the hero. A great celebration took place in his honor, and Williamsburg became the scene of great rejoicing and banqueting.<sup>616</sup> Mercer did not seem to enjoy his stay in America because after remaining in the colonies only ten days, he wrote that he was "under a necessity of returning immediately to England," not only because of Ohio company affairs, but also because of the stamp situation.<sup>617</sup>

In 1767 Mercer again pressed the Ohio company's case. It was necessary that he find out the actual status of the company because there was danger that the governor of Virginia might be encouraging settlement in the Ohio region. In the process of its investigation, Mercer was called before the Board of Trade and examined on pertinent matters. In a letter to the company written november 21, 1767, Mercer thus described this interview:

I took an opportunity in the course of my examination to mention the disappointments of the Ohio company, to show the use and necessity of their scheme of settlement, etc. . . , and at the same time I thought it hard treatment to the Ohio company that a set of gentlemen just informed of the fertility of that world, should be allowed to settle it, and have all the advantages which the first execution of a settlement there must at first enjoy over a later one, while the Ohio company were restrained from what they esteemed a right, and for which they paid very heavily; while

<sup>616</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, 1, 125-126.

<sup>617</sup> Ms letter, Maryland historical society, cited in *ibid.*, 1, 126.

these adventurers acknowledged themselves, not only indebted to the discoveries made at the expence of the company, for part of their information, but for the passage they had at a great expence too, opened for them through the mountains, as they should always use the company's road to convey everything and their settlers to their government. Indeed I complained as much as I thought I dared to do, of the delays the company had met with, and especially in the last reference of their claim to the governor of Virginia.<sup>618</sup>

At this same meeting to which the above quotation refers, the Board decided that in order to carry out their investigation properly, they should have before them the facts as to the original circumstances which gave rise to the formation of the company and what expenditures the organization had been actually forced to make. In order to obtain this information they wrote Governor Francis Fauquier of Virginia.<sup>619</sup> Fauquier desired first-hand information before returning his answer and therefore requested certain members of the Ohio company to give it to him.<sup>620</sup> Affairs of the company at this time were at a low ebb as is attested by the fact that it was not until two years later that John Mercer, father of George, even knew there was an investigation.<sup>621</sup>

On november 20, 1769, Mercer made another attempt to secure recognition of the Ohio company

<sup>618</sup> George Mercer to the Ohio company, november 21, 1767, cited in *ibid.*, I, 156.

<sup>619</sup> Lieutenant-governor Fauquier on the claims of the Ohio company, october 8, 1767, Shelburne papers, LIV, 67-70 (William L. Clements library).

<sup>620</sup> George Mason to Robert Carter, january 23, 1768, cited in *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 131-132.

<sup>621</sup> John Mercer to (?), december 21, 1769, Emmet collection, 6302 (N.Y.P.L.).

claims.<sup>622</sup> In this petition Mercer reiterated all of the company's accomplishments as well as subsequent losses in the French and Indian war although his main point pertained to the new Walpole grant. He stated that he was

encouraged to hope the Ohio company, who were the very first adventurers, and have expended, so large a sum of money, upwards of 14 years since, on a settlement begun under the sanction of government, will not be prevented, from prosecuting their design, while others of your majesty's subjects, who have lately only formed their scheme, enjoy the benefit of the company's labour, and discoveries. . .<sup>623</sup>

On december 18, 1769, Mercer again addressed a petition to the Board of Trade. In this one he was principally concerned with requesting the Board not to recommend the making of any grant to other persons within the limits prescribed in the original Ohio company grant. He argued that while there were sundry petitions before the Board requesting land grants on the Ohio, these new petitioners had no right to this land. The Ohio company had been the first concern to attempt a settlement west of the Alleghenies and the later companies were interlopers. The Pennsylvania and London speculators did not even know the names of the rivers in that region until the Ohio company prepared a chart of the country.<sup>624</sup>

By this time it was obvious to George Mercer that

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<sup>622</sup> Memorial of George Mercer on behalf of the Ohio company, november 20, 1769, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/301-306 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/302.

<sup>624</sup> Memorial of George Mercer on behalf of the Ohio company, december 18, 1769, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1331/307-310 (Library of Congress transcript).

there was little opportunity for the Ohio company to secure its rights, therefore he resolved to salvage from the wreckage whatever he could for his concern. He wrote various letters home to his associates, explaining the situation and requesting instructions, but received no replies that substantially aided him.<sup>625</sup> The company held no general meetings and thus was unable to give the desired information. Therefore, when on may 7, 1770, the Grand Ohio company agreed to incorporate the Ohio company members into the larger organization, Mercer accepted. The agreement gave Mercer personally one seventy-second share of the company's stock, and the Ohio company as a unit two seventy-second shares. This agreement was as follows:

We the committee of the purchasers of a tract of country for a new province on the Ohio in America, do hereby admit the Ohio company as a company purchaser with us, for two shares of the said purchase in consideration of the engagement of their agent Col. Mercer, to withdraw the application of the said company for a separate grant within the limits of the said purchase. . .

The whole being divided into seventy-two equal shares; by the words "two shares" above is understood two seventy-second parts of the tract as above purchased.

THOMAS WALPOLE	B. FRANKLIN
T. POWNALL	SAML. WHARTON <sup>626</sup>

As an added inducement to his signing away the Ohio company's rights, Mercer was promised the

<sup>625</sup> George Mason to a young kinsman (?), december 6, 1770, Mason papers, 23-35 (Bancroft collection, N.Y.P.L.); Mason to Robert Carter, "Carter Letter-books," cited in *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 156.

<sup>626</sup> *Christopher Gist's journals*, 244; P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/365-366.

position of governor of the new colony which was to be established by the Grand Ohio company. On december 2, 1773, he wrote to George William Fairfax to tell him of the compromise which he was planning with the Vandalia scheme, adding significantly however, "I am not yet governor."<sup>627</sup>

On may 8, 1770, Mercer again wrote the Board of Trade, this time withdrawing his former petitions because of the agreement reached between himself, as the Ohio company representative, and the Walpole company. In closing this memorial Mercer declared his hope that no further delay might be offered to Walpole's grant on account of the claims of the Ohio company.<sup>628</sup>

On july 24, 1770, Mercer wrote George Mason in regard to the Ohio company. He spoke very doubtfully of the company's affairs but, surprisingly enough, failed to mention the merger he had just completed. He complained of writing many letters to Mason but of receiving no replies. This complaint convinced Mason that someone familiar with their handwriting must have interrupted their correspondence because he too had written several letters but had not received any response.<sup>629</sup> In another letter Mason remarked that he was unable to give any satisfactory statement as to the affairs of the company in Virginia because "it is absolutely more difficult to procure a meeting of our members than it is to assemble a German Diet—notwithstanding appoint-

<sup>627</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 157.

<sup>628</sup> Memorial of George Mercer, may 8, 1770, P.R.O., C.O. 5: 1332/353 (Library of Congress transcript).

<sup>629</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 157.

ments and advertisements without number, I verily believe there has never been a meeting of the company since he [Mercer] went from Virginia.”<sup>630</sup>

Having come to an agreement with the Walpole group, Mercer's next problem was to secure the acceptance of his action by the other Ohio company members. Here he ran into more difficulties. While most of the company members had given their promises to abide by his actions, whether or not they should be attended by success,<sup>631</sup> he hardly had the authority to dispose of the company in the manner which he attempted. Merging the company was too drastic a move. The London members accepted his agreement as did some of the men in America, but nine of the Virginia members refused to abide by his act.<sup>632</sup> This resulted in renewed political maneuvers to achieve the old aims.

But Mercer cannot be judged too harshly for his action in merging his company into the larger organization. In 1774 Mercer, writing to Robert Carter, explained his side of the matter. First he complained that the other members of the company failed to become explicit in their instructions and demands until after he had reached his agreement with the Walpole group. Even when they first heard of his agreement there was no action, instead

. . . they waited above two years after they were informed of the contract, before they had a meeting, or would give me [Mercer]

<sup>630</sup> George Mason to a young kinsman (?), december 6, 1770, Mason papers 25-35 (Bancroft collection, N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>631</sup> George Mercer to Robert Carter, august 6, 1774, Emmet collection (N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>632</sup> *Ibid.*; Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).



any instructions or advice individually, or generally; and they must certainly have looked upon it as an affair of no importance, as the resolutions they made, after two years deliberation, were not even attempted to be copied out, to be sent me, for 4 months, from may to september; and I make no doubt they were kept up 3 months more, before they were finished transcribing, as I did not receive them till the 29th of january, 8 months after the meeting – circumstances which as they appear strange to me, I shall not attempt either to censure, or remark on – though I think they ought to have met sooner than they did, two years after they were informed of the contract, – that they had an opportunity of entering, or declaring their dissent to it, long before it was published in all the news papers, and was notified to the governor of Virginia – “that his majesty in council had been pleased to approve of the contract, made with the Hon. Thomas Walpole of his associates, for a grant of lands on the Ohio in North America. . .”<sup>633</sup>

In further justification of himself, Mercer pointed out that the lands claimed by the Ohio company had been given outright to the Traders’ company by an article of the treaty of Fort Stanwix and that these Traders’ rights had been included by purchase in the Walpole grant.<sup>634</sup>

By accepting a share in the Walpole company the Ohio company automatically became partners to the plan for the establishment of a new government in the Ohio region. Yet the Ohio company was a Virginia concern and should hardly take part in an attempt to divide that colony as the Vandalia scheme intended to do. For a short period the Ohio company was again in ill-repute until it was explained that the Virginians had never agreed to Mercer’s proposal to take part in the Vandalia design. In defending

<sup>633</sup> George Mercer to Robert Carter, august 6, 1774, Emmet collection (N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*

himself and his partners, George Mason denied that they ever had had any interest in such a project. He argued that the charters of Virginia demonstrated that the entire area in dispute was in Virginia and consequently it was impossible for any other colony to be established there. He then blamed all of the problem on Walpole's extraordinary application for a proprietary charter in order to establish a new colony between the Allegheny mountains and the Ohio river. Mason objected seriously to this scheme because it would not only deprive Virginia of a large area of her territory but it would also remove from the protection of Virginia several thousand Virginians already settled there. His defense of the company reads as follows:

To this illegal and injurious attempt several gentlemen in Virginia, the Ohio company, were made in some measure accessory, without their knowledge and very contrary to their inclination; but at the first general meeting after having received notice of it, they unanimously declared their disapprobation of the measure and their absolute refusal of having any concern in it, which regulation they not only entered in their own books and communicated to the members of their company in England, but for their justification to posterity sent a copy thereof to the governor and council to be entered if they thought fit, on their journals.<sup>635</sup>

This, then, was the answer of the Ohio company's Virginia members to Mercer and Walpole. No further serious attempt was made to press their case in England, but they continued in their efforts to gain recognition from the Virginia assembly. Such a

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<sup>635</sup> "Extracts from the Virginia charters, with some remarks on them, made in the year 1773." (Mason papers in the Bancroft collection, N.Y. P.L., 125-137).

change in approach was in keeping with the general change in attitude of the colonies toward the mother country. It was only logical that men who were condemning the actions and control of England should carry their arguments into operation by maintaining that Virginia had sole control of her western lands and was the only agency with proper authority to make land grants in the Allegheny region. Thus the westward movement affected the revolutionary spirit prior to 1776 not only by the opposition aroused against the Proclamation of 1763, but also added the argument of colonial rights, whereby the king was merely an agency acting for the colony. This was Mason's claim in regard to the Ohio company's grant. The king, acting as the agent of Virginia, could not grant Virginia land contrary to the wishes of that colony. Consequently the Walpole grant was illegal because in this instance the king had acted contrary to the known sentiment of Virginia.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*; *Plain facts . . .*, *passim*.



## Closing Years of the Ohio Company



## Closing Years of the Ohio Company

By granting to the Walpole company the lands west of the Alleghenies, the British government became involved in a bitter controversy with Virginia. As has been indicated, the validity of the grant was at once questioned. The cause of the Ohio company now became that of Virginia. Considerable material was printed on the subject by Samuel Wharton, Benjamin Franklin and others in the interests of the Walpole company, while George Mason ably defended the counterclaims of the Ohio company.

It was only three years until the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, but during that brief period the conflict over western lands raged bitterly. Wharton's and Mason's groups were not the only ones engaged in this controversy. The inhabitants of the Ohio country sent a petition to Lieutenant-governor Dunmore of Virginia protesting the Walpole grant.<sup>637</sup> Their protest was based primarily on their desire to remain connected with Virginia. It was under the protection of this colony that they made their start, and Virginia was still their only place of trade. It was feared that merchants of Virginia would no longer

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<sup>637</sup> "To his excellency . . . John Earl of Dunmore his majesty's lieutenant and governor general of the colony of Virginia . . .," Etting collection of "Ohio company papers," 1. This is an interesting document in which the margins contain notes written by a person favorable to the Walpole grant. The marginal statements criticize and contradict the arguments of the petitioners.

give credit if it became necessary to bring suit at some distant spot.<sup>638</sup>

In July, 1776, a conference was held at Pittsburg under the supervision of four Virginia commissioners<sup>639</sup> in an effort to collect evidence on the petition just previously discussed, as well as to bolster the claims to this area of both Virginia and the Ohio company.<sup>640</sup>

On October 7, 1776, the proprietors of the Traders' grant (Indiana) sent a memorial to the Virginia House of Burgesses in which their claims were set forth. The purpose of this memorial was to defend their grant against adverse legislation passed by the Virginia house.<sup>641</sup> On June 24, 1776, the Virginia assembly had passed a resolution questioning the validity of the Traders' grant. This action had been instigated by Mason in an attempt to aid the interests of the Ohio company.<sup>642</sup> He was successful in constituting the Virginia House of Delegates into a court for the determination of the validity of the Traders' grant, the result being that on June 17, 1779, that body declared the Indiana grant void.<sup>643</sup>

Such action on the part of the Virginia assembly called forth a flaming denunciation of their actions

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<sup>638</sup> In 1784 another petition of 587 inhabitants of the Ohio region was sent to Virginia. It protested the action of the British Crown in making the Vandalia grant (Toner collection of Ohio company papers, VI, 349).

<sup>639</sup> John Harvey, Charles Simms, James Wood and Abraham Hite.

<sup>640</sup> *Plain facts . . .*, 104.

<sup>641</sup> The Virginia assembly had ruled in favor of Dinwiddie's soldiers' grant of 1754. See *Journals of the house of burgesses (1775-1776)*, 127.

<sup>642</sup> "Extracts from the Virginia charters, with some remarks on them, made in the year 1773," 125-137 (Papers of George Mason, Bancroft collection, N.Y.P.L.).

<sup>643</sup> *Plain facts . . .*, Appendix II, 139-140.



by Samuel Wharton. Wharton charged that this body set themselves up as judges in a case wherein they were interested parties, thus being partial and biased judges.<sup>644</sup> Wharton then turned to attacking the arguments of Mason. Mason had maintained that Virginia had the right of preemption of all lands lying within her chartered boundaries. Wharton denied this point, especially as it applied to the Traders' grant, first, because the grant was made by an independent Indian nation, and second, because Virginia could show no actual charter to prove her claim. Further, by looking over the various Ohio company petitions, Wharton noticed that George Mason was among those petitioning the king for liberty

. . . to settle on the 'lands on the Ohio,' Colonel Mason did not then, as he does now, imagine, that they were the exclusive property of Virginia, or that the citizens of that state were ONLY to possess them. The foregoing letter affords the strongest proof to the contrary of the latter opinion by his, and his associates' endeavoring by all MEANS TO GET A PATENT IN ENGLAND;—FOR, they said, rather than be remitted to the government here, (Virginia) ETC. WE WILL AGREE TO ANY REASONABLE CONSIDERATION FOR SUCH a deed from England.<sup>645</sup>

Obviously Wharton had placed Mason's arguments in a difficult position for if, as Mason claimed, the king was only a trustee for the use of Virginia, it was definitely useless to apply to him for a grant. If Virginia had sole control of her land then it was impossible for the king to make such a grant. The governor of Virginia alone had that power.<sup>646</sup> While

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, 121-123.

Mason may safely be accused of being inconsistent, the same charge applies to Samuel Wharton. In *Plain facts, being an examination into the rights of the Indian nations of America to their respective countries; and a vindication of the grant from the Six United Nations of Indians to the proprietors of Indiana against the decision of the legislature of Virginia*,<sup>647</sup> he too was guilty of certain inconsistencies and definitely presented only a partial picture.

While Mason was busily engaged in his controversy with the Indiana and Walpole companies, he did not allow an opportunity to pass for the bringing of the problems of the Ohio company to the attention of the Virginia governing bodies. In 1772, acting for the company, he presented the governor and council of Virginia with a petition which set forth all of the difficulties that it had encountered. After complaining of the effects of the French and Indian war and the Proclamation of 1763, the petition bitterly attacked the action of George Mercer in merging the Ohio company with the Walpole concern. The governor and council took the memorial under consideration and on July 27, 1772, made a declaration confirming the original two hundred thousand acre grant.<sup>648</sup>

Throughout the Revolutionary war Mason remained active in his fight for the rights of the Ohio company. On February 6, 1778, at "Bellevue," the home of Thomas Ludwell Lee, he wrote to James Mercer telling of the problems the company faced in

<sup>647</sup> Philadelphia, 1781.

<sup>648</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

its attempts to gain recognition of its rights, stating:

. . . it is incumbent upon the members of the Ohio company to take the proper preparatory steps for making good their title and obtaining a patent for the 200,000 acres actually surveyed. Which is all I have any hopes of, and that, I think, is upon such a foundation as that nothing but our own negligence can deprive us of it. It is an object of sufficient importance, I think to engage our attention, being equal, by all accounts of it, to any land on this continent. There are, however, some very considerable difficulties in putting this business into proper train, which I have not room to explain in a common letter. Your advice and assistance both as a lawyer and a friend, will be much wanted, and I flatter myself if you, Thomas Lee and myself could spend two or three days together on the subject we could reduce it to order, and we might then call a meeting of the company which otherwise would answer no good. . .<sup>649</sup>

On november 20, 1778, Mason tried a new method of approach. On this day he presented a petition for the Ohio company to the House of Burgesses, wherein he requested that the house grant to the members of the company both in Maryland and Virginia, land patents, to "each in his own name, for his due share or proportion of two hundred thousand acres of said grant."<sup>650</sup>

In 1779 the Ohio company problem again came up before the assembly, but, as Mason said, the company was not given a special investigation of their claim, but instead, was "obliged to submit to the description in a general bill, and thus in fact denied a hearing . . ." <sup>651</sup> He further stated that he did everything in

<sup>649</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 291-292.

<sup>650</sup> Petition of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>651</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 334.

his power to secure justice for the company, but failed, leaving the only possible recourse to be that of referring the case to the court of appeals.

Not all of the company's activities after 1770 were legal or political problems. Besides their large grant, they owned various scattered holdings such as their Wills' creek lands. And still hoping against the inevitable, they continued to plan a development of their grant. From 1770 on, their attention was turned to Kentucky. Gist had explored in Kentucky in 1750-1752, but from that date on their efforts had centered around the vicinity of the forks of the Ohio. With the return of active participation in the westward movement, they again planned to survey their grant. In 1773 William Crawford<sup>652</sup> was commissioned by the college of William and Mary as the official Ohio company surveyor. In 1774 Hancock Lee<sup>653</sup> was appointed his assistant.<sup>654</sup> Crawford and Lee gathered a surveying party together and started for Kentucky but at the falls of the Youghioghenny they met with misfortune. Their canoes were upset, two men were drowned, and all of their arms, ammunition, and provisions were lost. Their misfortunes plus Indian troubles forced them to wait until the next year, but in 1775 the survey was completed.<sup>655</sup> Crawford's work in making this survey was never extensive; the

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<sup>652</sup> William Crawford was a famous frontiersman and a close associate of George Washington. He had aided Washington in selecting and surveying the lands granted by Dinwiddie to the soldiers. He was a captain under Forbes, and later settled on the Youghioghenny river.

<sup>653</sup> Hancock Lee was a descendant of Colonel Thomas Lee. His birth took place approximately in 1736 and his death in 1820.

<sup>654</sup> John Tayloe to Preston, January 28, 1775, Draper manuscripts, 4005.

<sup>655</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

greater part of his work was at the instigation and in the interest of George Mason.<sup>656</sup> It was Lee and his associates who made a number of Ohio company surveys.<sup>657</sup> Connected with these Kentucky surveys were some men who became famous in western history, chief of whom were George Rogers Clark, Benjamin Ashby, Joseph Blackwell, Richard Henry and Willis Lee, John and Charles Morgan, and John Crittenden.

George Rogers Clark hired out as an assistant to Hancock Lee in 1775.<sup>658</sup> His activity in working for the Ohio company throws considerable light on the land speculating situation. His pay was eighty pounds per year plus the privilege of taking for himself whatever land he wanted. Because of the great land speculation, Clark, in 1774, informed his brother, Jonathan, that great haste should be made in obtaining a patent on their land.<sup>659</sup> Clark and the others surveyed in the region of North Elkhorn river and the Licking valley.<sup>660</sup> While their survey was laid out to include an area of two hundred thousand acres, in reality it included nearly eight hundred thousand acres.<sup>661</sup>

A letter of George Mason to Robert Carter, march

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<sup>656</sup> Captain William Crawford to George Washington, Hamilton (ed.), *Letters to Washington*, IV, 301.

<sup>657</sup> For a detailed discussion of the surveys of the Ohio company during this period, see Samuel M. Wilson, *The Ohio company of Virginia, 1748-1798*, *passim*.

<sup>658</sup> George Rogers Clark to Jonathan Clark, april 1, 1775, Draper manuscripts, 40Q5 (State historical society of Wisconsin); James A. James, *George Rogers Clark papers*, 9.

<sup>659</sup> George Rogers Clark to Jonathan Clark, april 1, 1775, Draper manuscripts, 40Q5.

<sup>660</sup> John Tayloe to Colonel William Preston, january 28, 1775, *ibid.*, 4 Q 5.

<sup>661</sup> Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *Western lands and the revolution*, 128.

12, 1776, which discussed the results of Lee's survey, shows the treasury of the Ohio company at this time to have been very much depleted. Mason first wrote of the location of the survey. The surveyors had been particularly careful to keep it free from any contact with either the Vandalia or Henderson claims. Before the survey had been made several of the members had promised to pay fifty pounds sterling each to defray expenses, but had failed to do so. The total cost of the survey was six hundred and fifty pounds. Including his own share, Mason had collected slightly less than two hundred pounds with which to meet this debt. The surveyors had finished their work and were awaiting their pay, therefore Mason was in need of the promised levy. In his concluding paragraph Mason gave somewhat of an insight into the affairs of the Ohio company; in discussing Carter's future connection with the company he wrote as follows:

. . . I ask no pecuniary favor of any man, and desire only justice. I must acknowledge that you were not one of the number who promised to make the said advance, and that you told me, when I last conversed with you on the subject, you believed you should not make any further advances as a member of the Ohio company, and would rather lose what you had already paid than run any further risk, and it is therefore that I now put it to you as a man of honor, or, what is more intelligible and important, as an honest man, whether you intend to claim any benefit from the survey lately made or not? If you do surely you ought to idemnify me from all but my proportional charge. If you do not, you should let us know it candidly, that your shares may be disposed of for the payment, or sunk in the company; or if you do not like to be further concerned, and will sell out to me, I will purchase one, or perhaps both your shares. In case you intend to claim your part

of this survey, I am convinced you will immediately furnish me with your proportion of the money; . . .<sup>662</sup>

These eleventh hour attempts of Mason to complete the Ohio company surveys were doomed to failure. It seems very probable that had no other vested interests intervened, Mason's persistent efforts might have been crowned with success. But such was not the case. In an effort to discredit the company's surveys, the legality of William Crawford's surveyors license was attacked, but before a decision was reached in the matter the company agreed to use Willis Lee as their official surveyor.<sup>663</sup>

With the outbreak of the Revolutionary war the company was completely disrupted. Six shares were held by persons residing in London and no means of communication was possible between the colonial and London groups. The result was that on november 20, 1778, George Mason, acting for the American members, sent a long memorial to the general assembly of Virginia. After outlining a general history of the company, Mason suggested a means whereby the entire matter could be settled. In his first point we gain a picture of the membership of the company at the time. On this point his memorial reads as follows:

That the said Ohio company was always intended to consist, and doth at present consist of twenty shares, of which the following persons are at this time the proprietors, viz. eleven shares belonging to persons residing in Virginia; one held by the honorable John Tayloe Esq., one by the late Thomas Ludwell Lee Esq.,

<sup>662</sup> *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, I, 15.

<sup>663</sup> Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Writings of George Washington*, III, 152-153; 280-281; Hamilton (ed.), *Letters to Washington*, V, 158; John Camm to Col. William Preston, Draper manuscripts, 4 QQ 10.



one by Richard Lee Esq., one by James Scott, clerk, one by George Mason Esq., one by Peter Presley Thornton Esq., one by Thomas Lomax Esq., one by the heirs of John Mercer Esq., deceased, one by the heirs of the honorable Philip Ludwell Lee Esq., deceased, and two by the honorable Robert Carter Esq., three shares belonging to persons residing in Maryland; one held by Col. Thomas Cresap, one by Jacob Giles Esq., and one by Pearson Chapman Esq., and six shares held by persons residing in Great Britain; one held by Osgood Hanbury, merchant, one by the heirs of Capel Hanbury, merchant deceased, one by the heirs of the honorable Robert Dinwiddie deceased, one by the heirs of the honorable Arthur Dobbs Esq., deceased, one by the heirs of James Wardrope Esq., deceased, and one by Col. George Mercer; some of which shares in Great Britain are considerably in arrear to the company, for their quota of stock not paid up. . .<sup>664</sup>

As the twenty-year period of the partnership entered into in 1752 had expired, and as war separated the members in America from those in Great Britain, Mason proposed that the grant be made to the individual members rather than to the company as a whole. It was further suggested that in lieu of a garrison and fort the company pay ten shillings sterling for each hundred acres. While the members in Virginia and Maryland were prepared to pay for the fourteen American shares, they were not willing to assume the responsibility for those in London. With this petition Mason enclosed a plot of the surveyed area as well as a number of signed statements by members of the company giving him authority to act for them. No favorable action on this petition was ever taken by the assembly.<sup>665</sup>

On June 22, 1779, Mason was successful in ob-

<sup>664</sup> Memorial of the Ohio company to the general assembly of Virginia, Nov. 20, 1778 (Virginia state library).

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*



taining the approval of the Virginia assembly of a bill which he intended as a measure to validate the Ohio company surveys. But his surveyors had been appointed by the college of William and Mary instead of by the individual county in which the surveying was done. The result was that the Ohio company surveyors failed to receive official recognition, and all Mason's work went for naught. One further attempt in 1781 brought no more favorable results. On April 14 of that year, Robert Carter stated that while the house had rejected the claims of the company because their surveyors had not been legally appointed, other concerns had received confirmation of their grants with less authorized surveyors. The company had quite naturally relied on these precedents, but their plans had miscarried.<sup>666</sup>

The last records we have of proposed meetings of the Ohio company were the two called by George Mason in 1778<sup>667</sup> and 1779<sup>668</sup> to discuss the fate of the organization.

In 1788 the remnants of the company became entangled in legal difficulties. In that year, Mason, as company treasurer, became the defendant in a law suit brought by one David Ross.<sup>669</sup> Little is known of this suit, other than that Ross made claims on certain tracts within the Ohio company survey. This suit dragged on through 1792. The lawyers for the company were Colonel John Francis Mercer and Luther

<sup>666</sup> Carter Letter-books, cited in *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, II, 6.

<sup>667</sup> *Virginia gazette*, May 1, 1778.

<sup>668</sup> *Maryland gazette*, November 10, 1779.

<sup>669</sup> Colonel John Francis Mercer, May 1, 1788, *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, II, 214.

Martin. Mason was anxious to close the Ohio company affairs before his death and thus desired a conclusion of the suit.<sup>670</sup>

Other legal difficulties besides those pertaining to attempts to gain recognition of the grant itself, were those in the vicinity of Wills' creek. One case in particular was in reference to the Wills' creek subdivision. While the company owned the territory from outright purchase, Governor Robert Eden fraudulently granted to someone named French, the tract known as the "treasury of Walnut Bottom."<sup>671</sup> This needless suit also wasted the company's finances and involved it in unnecessary legal disputes.

The company was dealt the final blow in 1792 when Kentucky was organized as a state, thus making sure that not only the Ohio company but the Vandalia group as well were not to receive their grants. However, the two companies, once vitalizing forces in the westward movement, had in reality been dead for about fifteen years, and the formation of the state of Kentucky was merely the act that pronounced them dead.

On October 7, 1792, that grand old warrior, George Mason, died. He has long been recognized as a stalwart Old Dominion advocate of the rights of Virginia in opposition to the British Crown, but his part in the westward movement has been mostly overlooked. He was every whit as interested in the west as was George Washington. Perhaps the latter's efforts in this direction were more successful but his interest could hardly have been more acute. Letters of

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<sup>670</sup> Mason to J. F. Mercer, May 12, 1792, *ibid.*, II, 355-356.

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 214.

Washington and of Crawford mentioning Mason's activities in western lands are proof in themselves of Mason's true interests.

Following the death of Mason there was no one left who had enough hopes in the ultimate success of the company to push its interests. Instead, its affairs were brought to a speedy close by Mason's son. The actual assets of the company at the time of Mason's death were £102 12s 9d. In his will he wrote in regard to the company:

. . . I give and bequeath unto my said son George and his heirs forever, all my stock in the Ohio company as a member thereof, together with my share and part of all the said company's lands, but whatever ballance (if any at the time of my death) appears by my books of account to be due from me to the said Ohio company is to be paid out of the common stock of my estate in the same manner as any other debts.<sup>672</sup>

Mason fulfilled his final obligations and share in the company's activities when he stated in his will:

. . . and whereas I hold sundry tracts of land in the county of Hampshire in Virginia, and in the county of Frederick in the province of Maryland near Fort Cumberland, patented in my name in trust for the Ohio company, authorize such deeds as council learned in the law shall advise . . . unto the said Ohio company upon their paying the ballance of my bond with the interest thereon due to Mrs. Bladen or Mrs. Tasker's executors, for the purchase of part of the said lands. . .<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Will of George Mason (quoted in *Life and correspondence of George Mason*, II, 461).

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 214.



## Conclusion



## Conclusion

In conclusion, certain facts should be re-emphasized in order to crystallize the significance of the Ohio company on the American colonial frontier.

The company served as an intermediate step between the old proprietary type and the new more speculative variety. Various companies had been organized in England and other countries prior to this time for the purpose of exploitative colonization. For instance, the prototype of all later similar organizations was the Virginia company of 1606, which, like its immediate successors, not only had control over the economic affairs of its colonies but also in varying degrees dominated their civil governments. This feature of economic control and civil authority was characteristic of many companies even as late as the Vandalia scheme. On the other hand, subsequent to 1748, companies followed the policy of organizing primarily for speculative purposes. In return for financial or other guarantees, these companies were granted the right of speculative settlement. The Ohio company, however, included phases of both types of companies and can therefore be regarded as marking a transition stage. Indeed it was the first important company organized in America for the purpose of settlement of the country west of the Alleghenies. It was not the the first body to receive western lands,

however, as previously there had been the Culpeper grant and the various conflicting grants in that area, the Beverley grant of 1736 for 118,491 acres, the Borden grants from 1734-1739 totalling six hundred thousand acres in the Shenandoah valley, and Patton's grant in 1745 of one hundred thousand acres. But these grants were not west of the Alleghenies and therefore, while in a sense they served as precedents, they little resembled the Ohio company. In a small way they were meant to strengthen the Virginia frontier but received little attention in England, and cannot be regarded as a deliberate attempt to forestall the French. Neither was this true of the contemporary companies in competition at times with the Ohio company: the Loyal, Greenbrier, Traders', and Vandalia companies. The distinction of being given its grant for the purpose of defeating the French was reserved for the Ohio company.

It was in some respects the fulfillment of Governor Spotswood's dream thirty years previous wherein he had visioned the west being gained for England through concerted, planned action. It will be remembered that this was the original design of the Ohio company. Other companies, quickly following the latter's lead, were soon organized, but on a basis less patriotic. The Ohio company was projected also for the personal gain of its members, but certainly not for that alone. In the company's original scheme, its members saw only one enemy—the French, and it cannot be successfully maintained that they shrank from any possible opportunity of injuring that nation; and from such a point of view the company must not be



considered as within the narrow limits of a mere land speculating organization, but predominantly as an imperialistic enterprise functioning patriotically for the advantage of the British empire. This can be said only in a limited sense of the other companies operating at this time. Such was its first distinction.

The second significant feature of the company's work was its exploration of the west. Early knowledge of present-day Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, western Maryland, and western Pennsylvania must be credited to the accounts of Christopher Gist, Colonel Thomas Lee, Thomas Cresap, George Washington, William Trent, Barney Curran, William Crawford, and Hancock Lee. Even George Rogers Clark was for a time exploring in the name of the company. Undoubtedly the accomplishments of Gist were by far the outstanding achievement of these explorations, and his journals alone are important enough to justify a study of the history of the company. One of the most noteworthy things the company did was to turn the attention of this North Carolina surveyor from his Yadkin river farm to an examination of the region to the west of the Alleghenies both north and south of the Ohio. George Mercer even went so far as to maintain in his petitions, that all knowledge of that part of the west prior to the French and Indian war was based on information obtained by company employees.

Besides the actual explorations of the company, it should be remembered that its agents were actively engaged in settling the west and bringing it under English control. Within the ranks of its employees

were practically all of the important Ohio Indian traders of the time. A company that included or employed such frontiersmen as William Trent, John Fraser, Ensign Edward Ward, George Croghan, Conrad Weiser, Andrew Montour, Thomas Cresap, Christopher Gist, George Washington, and Barney Curran certainly merits historical attention.

It can safely be said that the Ohio company was the first organization fully to understand the Ohio problem. Its members perceived the importance of this area in the struggle between France and England for supremacy; they discerned the probability of the English colonies being confined to the eastern slope of the Alleghenies unless the Ohio region was obtained at once. They realized further, that the struggle for the Ohio was not to be an easy undertaking but were prepared to throw a great amount of man-power and money into the venture. If they under-estimated any of the problems it was in relation to the Pennsylvania traders. They had planned to fight the French but hardly the English as well. Much of the subsequent hostility on the part of the Indians was due to the influence of the Pennsylvania traders.

Besides fully comprehending the Ohio situation themselves, the company was successful in turning the eyes of the world to this controversial area. Even Voltaire wrote in reference to the conflict in the Ohio country that "a shot fired in America [was] the signal for setting all Europe together by the ears." Washington's journey to the French in 1754 was highly publicized both in America and in Europe. Brad-

dock's expedition was sent over the Ohio company's road and was, in fact, sent to recover an Ohio company fort. True, the average Englishman had little knowledge of the actual condition of this region but he was at least made conscious that there was an Ohio country for which both France and England were striving. Heretofore nearly all that was known of England's conflict with France pertained to Europe, and while this phase continued to hold the center of interest, yet all of Europe was coming to understand that at least a portion of the French and Indian war was being fought for possession of the region west of the Alleghenies.

Again, the history of the company cuts across the Virginia-Pennsylvania boundary impasse. While this controversy has herein received considerable treatment, it is well to stress that the dispute owed its origin to the Ohio company. The quarrel might have occurred in any case, but it is difficult to visualize such a major conflict for the forks of the Ohio had not some private group been highly interested in obtaining this strategic point. Prior to 1748 it had been assumed by Pennsylvanians that the forks were within the Penn grant. When, however, a group of adventurers appeared to gainsay this claim, rivalry naturally resulted. The company's ramifications forced Pennsylvania to re-define her boundaries. This Virginia-Pennsylvania conflict, long and bitter, nearly resulted fatally for the English cause in the Ohio region and unquestionably did delay the final British victory.

The Ohio company was thus the opening English

wedge in the country of the Ohio. For several years it was the lone English defense west of the mountains and, as far as Virginia was concerned, was from 1750-1755 the only defense she had against the French. Of course it is debatable whether Virginia would have needed any defense but for the Ohio company. Those Virginians who at that time were interested in the opposing companies, could see little excuse for crediting this organization for its service of defense, when the same company was held by them responsible for any danger from invasion. But in viewing the situation from the standpoint of broad English policy, the role of the Ohio company in this regard becomes a matter of importance.

Partly as a result of the activities of the company, England and France found themselves in 1754 again in conflict. True, the company cannot be accorded the full blame or credit, whichever the case may be, for the outbreak. Heretofore American historians have pointed to Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity as the opening event of that conflict. Historians may with equal justification date the outbreak from the taking of the company's fort at the forks by the French. This incident cannot be dismissed by the explanation that it was the fort of a private organization. It was sponsored just as much by the government of Virginia as was the Washington expedition. Both were acting in the interest of the Ohio company and similarly in the interest of Virginia.

It is quite obvious that from its very inception the Ohio company had been closely connected with the Indian problem. When the company began its ac-

tivity in 1748, England had no definite Indian policy. The Logstown treaty and the Winchester conferences were carried out in the interests of the Ohio company with little more than superficial supervision by the government of Virginia. Chiefly as a result of the company's activities, the English government began to realize the need of a permanent Indian policy. This permanent policy had its origin within the bounds of Pennsylvania, but it must be admitted that one of the leading factors responsible for it were the activities of the Ohio company. The other main factors responsible were the activities of the Pennsylvania traders and Pennsylvania and Virginia settlers. Thus it would seem that the Proclamation of 1763 was directed at least in part against this Virginian organization.

In summing up the results of the company one must consider the questions raised as to its success. It has always been regarded as an unsuccessful corporation, but such was hardly the case. It is nearer the truth to say it was luckless as a business venture. Even here, however, one must be careful in his statements because the company had many objectives, many interests, and in some of them was fairly successful. There were periods when its business prospered; when its stock was of great value. From 1748 to 1754 it actively engaged in the Indian trade, and by the latter date had traders and posts scattered throughout the Ohio region. While the outbreak of the war ruined this business it could hardly destroy the profits which had already been made. Further, the company owned some real estate outright and capitalized on

increasing values. For instance, this was true of the Wills' creek property, although much of this was lost by various litigations in which the company became involved. When historians have discovered that the company never received its grant of five hundred thousand acres, they have declared it a failure. In regard to the company, looked at as an investment in land, it was a disappointment to its members. It is this point particularly that has prompted investigators in the past unreservedly to label the entire organization a failure. On the other hand, no excessive assessments were ever levied on its members, and in its closing years very little good money was sent after bad. Much individual effort was futilely expended in these years but little capital.

But anyone who thinks of the Ohio company as merely a land speculation scheme is doing scant justice to such great men as Colonel Thomas Lee, Lieutenant-governor Robert Dinwiddie, Lawrence Washington, Arthur Dobbs, and George Washington. These men in the early years of the company's history were patriotic Virginians and Englishmen. Its political objectives were worthy and ultimately successful. History is often lenient in its judgment of success because it looks not to the immediate but to the ultimate. To measure the company's success we need only re-examine its stated purpose. It will be remembered that one of its aims was to gain the Ohio region for England. This was one of Britain's chief reasons for making the grant. The French and Indian war resulted in the success of this program. Thus from this point of view the company was a success both for its patriotic members and the British government.

But whether it was a success in itself is not the important factor. Its significance lies in its influence on colonial history – the westward movement in general and the Ohio region in particular. It is surprising that writers on the westward movement have spent so little time on the enterprise which planned the first important organized movement to the region west of the Alleghenies. From 1748-1776 no other group of men so influenced the history of the west as did the Ohio company. In the last fifteen years of this period they had plenty of competition from the Vandalia, Traders', and Loyal companies as well as from individuals; yet the fact remains that it was the Ohio company through the work of Hancock Lee and his assistants that made the only extensive land survey in Kentucky prior to 1781.

If, after 1763, the westward movement gained great impetus, it was in large part the result of the Ohio company's activities in the period from 1748-1755. In comparison to the transcontinental stretch of the United States, the region around the forks of the Ohio may seem relatively insignificant, yet it was the focal point of the westward movement for many years. The forks were certainly the gateway to the west, and it was the Ohio company which first made any serious attempt to exploit this region. No more fitting conclusion to a study of the Ohio company need be given than to state that the company played a leading part in proving Bishop George Berkeley's dictum, "Westward the course of empire takes its way," and to add that this company deserved better from the hands of fate.





Appendix  
of  
Ohio Company Petitions



Letter of Lieutenant-governor William Gooch  
to the Board of Trade, November 6, 1747<sup>674</sup>

Williamsburg Novemr. 6th. 1747

[A Duplicate: Orige. not recd.]

MY LORDS: Having been lately much sollicitd by several Persons in Partnership, for Grants for Lands lying on the Western Side of the great Mountains, where We have already two Counties well peopled, very near, if not upon the Borders of some of the Branches of Mississippi, extending to the Lake Erie (which would cut off the Communication the French have from that Place to Canada;) in Order, as it is the Center of all His Majesty's Provinces, to the carrying on a more extensive Skin-Trade with several Nations of Indians, who are willing to enter into Commerce with Us; tho' I am persuaded that the granting such Petitions would in the Course of a few Years be productive of many National Advantages, as well as a great Increase of His Majesty's Quit-Rents, yet I thought, and the Council concur'd with Me in Opinion, that We ought not to comply therewith till His Majesty's Permission was first obtain'd. I therefore beg of Your Lordships that I may be inform'd of the Royal Sentiments on this Head. . .

Your Lordships, most obedient humble Servant,

WILLIAM GOOCH

I lately sent Your Lordships a first and second Letter recommending Mr John Lewis to the vacant Seat in the Council occasioned by the Death of Mr Tayloe.

ENDORSED. (in red) VIRGINIA: Letter from Sr. Wm. Gooch Bart-Lt. GOV. of Virginia, to the Board, dated the 6th. of Novr. 1747, acquainting them that sevl. Persons in Partnership had made Application to him for Grants of Lands on the Western side of the Great Mountains, setting forth the Advantages that would attend the making such Grants, & desiring the Royal Sentiments on that Head. Reced Decr. ye 17th. 1747. Read Ditto

<sup>674</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1326/547-554.

Petition of John Hanbury to the King  
on behalf of the Ohio Company, 1748<sup>675</sup>

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty in Council. The humble Petition of John Hanbury of London Merchant in behalf of himself and of Thomas Lee Esqr. a Member of Your Majestys Council and one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Your Majestys Colony of Virginia Thomas Nelson Esqr. also a Member of Your Majestys Council in Virginia Colonel Cressup Colonel William Thornton William Nimmo Daniel Cressup John Carlisle Laurance Washington Augustus Washington George Fairfax Jacob Gyles Nathaniel Chapman and James Woodrop Esquires all of Your Majestys Colony of Virginia and others their Associates for Settling the Countrys upon the Ohio and extending the British Trade beyond the Mountains on the Western Confines of Virginia.

MOST HUMBLY SHEWETH THAT by the Treaty of Lancaster and also by Deed bearing date the 2d day of July 1744 the Northern Indians by the Name of the Six Nations (who Claim all the Lands West of Virginia and also to and on the Waters of the Mississippi and the Lake by right of Conquest from several Nations of Indians who formerly Inhabited that Country and have been Extirpated by the said Six Nations) did yield up and make over and for ever quit Claim to Your Majesty and Your Successors All their said Lands West of Virginia with all their Right thereto so far as Your Majesty should at any time thereafter be pleased to Extend the said Colony.

THAT most of the Nations of Indians West of the Mountains and upon the Lakes and the River Ohio have entered into an Alliance with Your Majestys Subjects and with the Six Nations in Friendship with the British Colonys and have desired Your Majestys Subjects the Inhabitants of Virginia to send them British Goods and Manufactures as they inclined to Trade solely with Your Majestys Subjects.

THAT by laying hold of this Opportunity and improving this favourable Disposition of these Indians they may be for ever

<sup>675</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1327/53-57.

fixed in the British Interest and the prosperity and safety of the British Colonys be effectually Secured and which Your Petitioners are ready and willing to Undertake.

THAT Your Petitioners beg leave humbly to inform Your Majesty that the Lands to the West of the said Mountains are extremely fertile the Climate very fine and healthy and the Waters of Mississipi and those of Potomac are only seperated by One small Ridge of Mountains easily passable by Land Carriage So that by the Convenience of the Navigation of the Potomac and a short Land Carriage from thence to the West of the Mountains and to the Branch of the Ohio and the Lake Erie British Goods may be carried at little Expence and afforded reasonably to the Indians in those Parts In case the Lands to the West of the said Mountains were Setled and a Fort Erected in some proper Place there for the protection and Encouragement of Your Petitioners and others Your Majestys Subjects in Adventuring their Persons and fortunes in this Undertaking In which if Your Petitioners meet with that Success they have the greatest reason to expect It will not only be made the best and strongest Frontier in America But will be the means of gaining a vast Addition and encrease to Your Majestys Subjects of that rich Branch of the Peltry and Furr Trade which Your Petitioners Propose by means of Settlement herein after mentioned to carry on with the Indians to the Westward of the said Mountains and on the said Lake and Rivers and will at the same time greatly promote the Consumption of Our own British Manufactures, enlarge Our Commerce, increase Our Shipping and Navigation and extend Your Majestys Empire in America and in a short space of time very considerably encrease Your Majestys Revenue of Quit Rents as there is little room to doubt but that when this Settlement is once begun by Your Petitioners but that a great Number of Foreign Protestants will be desirous of Settling in so Fertile and Delightfull a Country under the just and Mild Administration of Your Majestys Government especially as they will be at little more Charge than the Transporting themselves from their Native Country.

THAT Your Pet[itio]ners for these great and National Ends and purposes And in Order to improve and extend the British

Trade amongst these Indians and to Settle these Countrys in so healthy and fine a Climate and which are Your Majestys undoubted Right have Entered into Partnership by the Name of the Ohio Company to Settle these Countrys to the West of the said Mountains and to carry on a Trade with the Indians in those Parts and upon the said Lakes and Rivers But as effecting the same and more especially the Erecting a sufficient Fort and keeping a Garrison to protect the Infant Settlement will be attended with great Expence.

YOUR PETITIONERS who are the first Adventurers in this beneficial Undertaking which will be so advantageous to the Crown in Point of Revenue, to the Nation in point of Trade and to the British Colonys in point of Strength and Security most humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to encourage this their said Undertaking by giving Instructions to Your Governor of Virginia to Grant to Your Pet[itione]rs and such others as they shall admit as their Associates a Tract of Five hundred Thousand Acres of Land betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo's Creek on the South side of the River Aligane otherwise the Ohio and betwixt the two Creeks and the Yellow Creek on the North side of the said River or in such other parts to the West of the said Mountains as shall be adjudged most proper by Your Petitioners for that purpose and that two hundred Thousand Acres part of the said Five hundred thousand Acres may be granted immediately without Rights on Condition of Your Petitioners Seating at their proper expence a hundred Familys upon the Land in Seven Years the Lands to be Granted free of Quit Rent for Ten Years) on Condition of their Erecting a Fort and Maintaining a Garrison for Protection of the Settlement for that time Your Pet[itione]rs paying the usual Quit Rent at the Expiration of the said Ten Years from the date of their Patent—And Your Pet[itione]rs further pray that Your Majesty will be graciously Pleased to send Your said Governor a further Instruction that as soon as these two hundred thousand Acres are Settled and the Fort Erected That three hundred thousand Acres more residue of the said Five hundred Thousand Acres may be granted to Your Petitioners adjoining to the said Two hundred Thousand Acres of

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Land so first Granted with the like Exemptions and under the same Covenants and to give all such further and other Encouragements to Your Petitioners in this their so usefull and Publick an Undertaking as to Your Majesty in Your great Wisdom shall seem meet. And Your Pet[itio]ne]rs will ever Pray.

JOHN HANBURY

Petition of John Hanbury  
referred to the Board of Trade

February 9, 1748<sup>676</sup>  
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At the Council Chamber Whitehall, the 9th of February  
1748 By the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of  
Council for Plantation Affairs

WHEREAS His Majesty was pleased by His Order in Council of the 11th. of last month to refer unto this Committee the humble Petition of John Hanbury of London Merchant in behalf of himself and of Thomas Lee Esqr. a Member of His Majesty's Council and One of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature in His Majestys Colony of Virginia, Thomas Nelson Esqr. also a Member of His Majestys Council in Virginia, Colonel Cressup, Colonel William Thornton, William Nimmo, Daniel Cressup, John Carlisle, Laurence Washington, Augustus Washington, George Fairfax, Jacob Gyles, Nathaniel Chapman and James Woodrop Esqrs. all of His Majesty's Colony of Virginia and others their Associates for settling the Countrys upon the Ohio and extending the British Trade beyond the Mountains on the Western Confines of Virginia humbly praying (for the Reasons therein contained) that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to encourage their Undertaking by giving Instructions to the Governor of Virginia to grant to them and such others as they shall admit as their Associates a Tract of 500,000 Acres of Land betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo's Creek on the South Side of the River Aligane otherwise the Ohio and betwixt the two Creeks and the Yellow Creek on the North Side of the River or in such other parts of the West of the said Mountains as shall be adjudged most proper by the Petitioners for that purpose, and that 200,000 Acres part of the said 500,000 Acres may be granted immediately without Rights, on Condition of the Petitioners Seating at their proper Expencc a hundred Familys upon the Lands in seven years, the Lands to be granted free of Quit Rents for Ten Years on Condition of their Erecting a Fort and Maintaining a Garrison for protection of the Settlement for that time the Petitioners paying the usual Quit Rents at the Expiration of the said Ten Years from

<sup>676</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1327/51-70.

PC 2/10/1 ff 184-86



the Date of their Patent. And further praying that the said Governor may be further Instructed that as soon as these 200,000 Acres are Settled and the Fort Erected 300,000 Acres more Residue of the said 500,000 Acres of Land may be granted to the Petitioners adjoining to the said 200,000 Acres of Land so first granted with the like Exemptions and under the same Covenants and to give all such further and other Encouragements to the Petitioners in their so useful and publick an Undertaking as to His Majesty in His great Wisdom shall seem meet. The Lords of the Committee this day took the said Petition into their Consideration, and are hereby pleased to referr the same (a Copy whereof is hereunto annexed) to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations to consider thereof and Report their Opinion thereupon to this Committee. And Whereas there was likewise laid before the Lords of the Committee a Report made by the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations dated the 13th. of December last, together with a Draught of an Additional Instruction prepared by the said Lords Commissioners, for Sir William Gooch Bart His Majestys Lieutenant Governor of the Colony of Virginia, empowering him to make Grants of Lands on the Western Side of the great Mountains, to persons in Partnership, who have applied for the same, And their Lordships observing that the Lands proposed to be granted by the said Instruction, are Scituated in the same place with those prayed for by the aforementioned Petition of John Hanbury and others, and may probably have some relation to each other, Do therefore think it proper to referr back to the said Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, the said Report and Draught of Additional Instruction, for their further Consideration.

W. SHARPE

ENDORSED. VIRGINIA: Order of the Lords of the Committee of Council, dated ye 9th of Febr'y. 1748-9, referring to this Board the Petition of Mr. John Hanbury of London Merchant, in behalf of himself & of Thos. Lee & Thos Nelson, Members of His Majesty's Council in Virginia, & several others, Inhabitants of that Colony, & others their Associates for Settling. . . Recd. Febr'y. ye 13th. Read Febr'y. ye 14th. 1748/9.

Order of Council  
referring the humble petition of the Ohio Company  
to the consideration of the Board of Trade  
April 2, 1754<sup>677</sup>

At the Council Chamber Whitehall the 2d day of April  
1754 By the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee  
of Council for Plantation Affairs

HIS MAJESTY having been pleased, by His Order in Council of the 28th of last Month, to refer unto this Committee the humble petition of the Ohio Company, praying that upon Condition the Petitioners enlarge their Settlements and Seat three hundred Familys instead of one hundred by their former Contract, and in Consideration of their erecting two Forts, One at Shurtees Creek, and the other at the Fork where the great Conaway enters the Ohio, and maintain them at their own Expençe, That His Majesty will be graciously pleased to enlarge their Grant under the same Exemption of Rights and Quit Rents as in the former Instructions, and to fix the Bounds without any further delay of Survey from Romanettoe or Kiskominettoe Creek on the South East Side of the Ohio to the Fork at the entrance of the great Conhaway River, and from thence along the North Side of the said Conhaway River to the Entrance of Green Brier River, and from thence in a Streight Line or Lines to and along the Mountains to the South East Spring of Mohongaly River, and from thence Northwards along the Mountains to the North East Springs of Romanettoe or Kiskominettoe Creek or 'till a West Line from the mountains intersects the said Spring and along it to its Entrance into the Ohio, which will prevent all Disputes or Delay about the Limits, which are necessary to be immediately determined, as the Season is advancing to procure Foreign Protestants and others of His Majestys Subjects to go on with the Settlement, and to procure Materials to erect their Second Fort at the Mouth of the great Conhaway River (the Fort on Shurtees Creek being now building to prevent the Intrusion and Inroach-

<sup>160</sup>  
<sup>677</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1328/153-159, 164.

ments of the Indians in the French Alliance, and secure Our Settlements upon the Ohio, which if not immediately put in Execution before they get possession, may be highly detrimental to the Colonys, and occasion a great future Expence to Britain. The Lords of the Committee this day took the said Petition into, their Consideration, and are hereby pleased to referr the same (a Copy whereof is hereunto annexed) to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, to consider thereof, and Report their Opinion thereupon to this Committee.

W. SHARPE

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty in Council. The humble Petition of the Ohio Company.

SHEWETH THAT Your Pet[itione]rs upon Intimation given by seve[ral] Nations of Indians residing near the Ohio and other Branches of the Missisippe & near the Lakes Westward of Virginia that they were desirous of Trading with Your Majesty's Subjects and quitting the French; And knowing the value of those rich Countrys which were given up and acknowledged to be Your Majesty's undoubted right by the Six Nations who are lawfull Lords of all those Lands by Conquest from other Indian Nations at the Treaty of Lancaster the 2d day of July 1744 Your Pet[itione]rs being sensible of the vast Consequence of securing these Countrys from the French did in the Year 1748 form themselves into a Company to Trade with the Indians and to make Settlements upon the Ohio or Allegany River by the Name of the Ohio Company.

THAT the Company in the beginning of the Year 1749 Petitioned Your Majesty wherein they set forth the vast Advantage it would be to Britain and the Colonys to anticipate the French by taking possession of that Country Southward of the Lakes to which the French had no right nor had then taken any possession except a small Blackhouse fort among the Six Nations below the falls of Niagara, they having deserted Le Detroit Fort Northward of Erie Lake during the War and retired to Canada; The reasons for Securing the same being mentioned at large in their said former petition and in which they prayed that Your Majesty Wou'd

give Orders or Instructions to Your Govr of Virginia to make out to Your Pet[ititioners] five hundred Thousand Acres betwixt Romanetto and Buffaloe Creeks on the South Side of the Allegany or Ohio River and between the two Creeks and Yellow Creek on the North Side of that River, upon the Terms and with the Allowances thereinmentioned to which they beg leave to referr.

THAT Your Pet[ititioners] in pursuance of the sd petition obtained an Order from Your Majesty to Your Lieut Govr of Virginia dated March 18th 1748/9 to make them a Grant or Grants of 200,000 Acres of Land between Romanettoe and Buffaloe Creeks on the South Side of the Ohio and betwixt the two Creeks and Yellow Creek on the North Side thereof or in such part to the Westward of the great Mountains as the Company shou'd think proper for making Settlements and extending their Trade with the Indians with a Proviso that if they did not erect a Fort on the sd Land & maintain a sufficient Garrison therein & seat at their proper expence a hundred Familys thereon in Seven Years the sd Grants should be void. And as soon as these terms were accomplished he was ordered to make out a further Grant or Grants of 300,000 Acres under the like Conditions Restrictions and allowances as the first 200,000 Acres adjoining thereto & within these Limits. These Orders were delivered to the Honoble Wm Nelson on the 12th of July following 1749 and upon producing them before the Govr & Council they made an Entry in the Council Books that the Company should have leave given to them to take up and Survey 200,000 Acres within the Places mentioned in Your Majestys said Instructions and Orders.

THAT Your Pet[ititioners] upon this Entry in the Council Books sent to Great Britain for a Cargoe of Goods to begin their Trade & purchased Lands upon the Potomack River being the most convenient place to erect Storehouses; and in Sepr following 1749 employed Gentlemen to discover the Lands beyond the Mountains to know where they shou'd make their Surveys But they not having made any considerable progress the Company in Sepr 1750 agreed to give Mr Christopher Gist £150 certain and such further handsome allowance as his Service should deserve for searching & discovering the Lands upon the Ohio and its seve[ral]

Branches as low as the falls on the Ohio with proper Instructions He accordingly set out in Octr 1750, & did not return till May 1751 after a Tour of 1200 Miles in which he visited many Indian Towns and found them all desirous of entering into strict Friendships & Trade with your Majesty's Subjects.

THAT Your Pet[itione]rs at their general Meeting in May 1751 judging it necessary for their Trade and passage to the Ohio to have a Grant of some Lands belonging to Maryland and Pennsylvania wrote to Mr. Hanbury to apply for the same to the proprietors & laid out & opened a Waggon Road Sixty feet wide from their Storehouse at Will's Creek to the three Branches on Younyangain River computed to be near eighty Miles and applied to the president and Masters of William and Mary College for a Commission to a Surveyor to lay out the Lands as they pretend they had a Right so to do proposing to begin the Survey after receiving Mr. Gist's Report.

YOUR PET[ITIONE]RS finding by sd Gists Journal that he had only observed the Lands on the North Side of the Ohio and finding that the Indians were willing that they should their Settle on the Miamees River or on the North Side of the Ohio & the Lands lying too much exposed & at too great a distance as may appear by the Chart hereunto annexed to which Your Pet[itione]rs beg leave to referr, They employed the sd Gist to go out a Second time to view and examine the Lands between Mohongaly and the Big Conhaway Woods or New River on the South East Side of the Ohio which employed him from 4th Novr 1751 to the March following 1752 but he could not finish his plan & Report before Octr 1752 at which time the Company gave in a petition to the Governor and Council praying leave to Survey and take up their first 200,000 Acres between Romanettoes otherwise Kiskominettoes Creek & the Forks of the Ohio and the great Conhaway otherwise New River otherwise Woods River on the South Side of the Ohio in several Surveys.

THE GOVR & Council having not thought fit to comply with the Prayer of the sd Petition to allow Your Pet[itione]rs to survey their Lands in different Tracts as wou'd best accomodate the Settlers & secure their Frontiers from Attacks the President &

Masters of the College also refusing to give out a Commission to a Surveyor & the late Govr & Council having made out large Grants to private persons Land jobbers to the amount of 1,400,000 Acres immediately nay even the same day after Your Majesty's Instructions for making out Your Pet[itone]rs Grants & Survey's became publickly know where the Lands were not properly described or limited nor surveyd; by which means their several Grants might have interfered with the Lands discovered & chosen by the Company Your Pet[itone]rs were laid under difficultys in surveying and settling their Lands & erecting the Fort tho Your Pet[itone]rs have been at very great expence & are willing to be at a much greater to secure those valuable Countrys and the Indian Trade.

THAT Your Pet[itone]rs apprehend from these Obstructions and the delay & expence attending Surveys & from the Suits that may be commenced upon Account of the Grants made out to other persons since the Instructions given by Your Majesty to grant to Your Pet[itone]rs the Lands mentioned in the said Instructions which may occasion longer delays. The Company may be prevented from fulfilling their Covenants of settling the Lands & compleating their Fort in the time specified by the said Contract and as Boundarys to large Grants are much more natural and easy to be ascertained by having Rivers for their Limits & streight Lines or Mountains to connect them from River to River & at much less expence and delay in fixing them.

THEREFORE Your Pet[itone]rs pray that upon Condition Your Pet[itone]rs shall enlarge their Settlements & Seat three hundred Familys instead of One hundred by their former Contract and in Consideration of their erecting two Forts One at Shurtees Creek and the other at the Fork where the great Conhaway enters the Ohio, and maintain them at their Own Expence That Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to enlarge their Grant under the same exemption of Rights and Quit Rents as in the former Instructions & to fix the Bounds without any further delay of Survey from Romanetto or Kiskominetto Creek on the South East Side of the Ohio to the Fork at the Entrance of the great Conhaway River from the said Conhaway River to the Entrance of

Green Creek or 'till a West Line from the Mountains intersects the said Spring and along it to its entrance into the Ohio which will prevent all Disputes or delay about the Limits which are necessary to be immediately determined as the Season is advancing to procure foreign Protestants and others of Your Majestys Subjects to go on with the Settlement & to procure materials to Erect their Second Fort at the Mouth of the great Conhaway River (the Fort on Shurtees Creek being now building) to prevent the intrusion and incroachments of the Indians in the French Alliance and secure Our Settlements upon the Ohio which if not immediately put in Execution before they get possession may be highly detrimental to the Colonys and Occasion a great future expence to Britain. And Your Pet[itione]rs will ever Pray & ca.

ARTHUR DOBBS

SAMUEL SMITH

J. HANBURY

JAMES WARDROP

In behalf of Ourselves and the rest of the Ohio Company

ENDORSED. VIRGINIA: Order of Council dated 2d of April 1754 referring to the Consideration of this Board the humble Petition of the Ohio Compy to His Majesty praying an Enlargement of their Grant of Lands and for ascertaining their Boundaries. Recd April 4, Read April 5th.

ALSO ENDORSED. 2d Apl 1754. Referrence of the Lds of the Commee of Council to the Lds of Trade, of the Petition of the Ohio Company praying an Enlargement of their Grant of Lands & for ascertaining their Boundarys. JASA SHARPE. SOLLR.



Memorial of George Mercer  
on behalf of the Ohio Company  
June 21, 1765<sup>678</sup>

To the King's most Excellent Majesty in Council.

The humble Memorial of George Mercer on the behalf of the Ohio Company in Virginia.

MOST HUMBLY SHEWETH THAT it has been always deemed of the utmost Importance to the Safety of your Majesty's American Dominions and to the Welfare & prosperity of Great Britain, to Secure to your Majesty's Subjects in America, an Intercourse with the Indian Nations in the Interior part of North America, and to Acquire & keep such Possession on the great Rivers and Inland Waters of that Country as might prevent the Execution of a Plan long since laid by the Crown of France and its Governors in Canada for the absolutely cutting off that Intercourse, & thereby for uniting all the said Indian Nations against the British Colonies.

THAT for the purpose of effectually making such Settlements with the good will of the Indians, and in Order to Secure them when made, the first Members of the Ohio Company deemed it advisable to raise a joint Stock, and, soon after the Conclusion of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle to apply by Petition to your Majesty's Royal Grandfather for such Grants of Land and Privileges as the Govr. of Virginia was not empowered to make, and they were the rather induced to make this Application because that as there were just Grounds to apprehend that such Settlements would not remain undisturbed either by Secret Practices or by open Violence on the part of the French, it would not only be necessary to expend very large Sums of Money, but to take no step on so delicate an Occasion, but with the knowledge & Approbation of his Majestys Ministers.

THAT the said Company by the Petition presented on their behalf by the late Mr. John Hanbury, did humbly pray his said late Majesty, that his Majesty wou'd be graciously pleased to encourage their said Undertaking by giving Instructions to his Lieutt. Govr. of Virginia, to Grant to the Petitioners a Tract

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<sup>678</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1331/413-418.



of 500,000 Acres of Land between Romanettoe's and Buffaloe's Creeks on the South Side of the Ohio and between the Streams called the two Creeks and Yellow Creek on the North Side of the said River, and that 200,000 Acres part thereof might be immediately Granted, upon Condition of Setling at their proper Expence 100 Families thereon in 7 Years & upon Condition of Erecting a Fort & maintaining a Garrison as in the sd. Petition mentioned, and that 300,000 Acres the remainder of the said 500,000 Acres might be Granted to the Petitioners when they had Complied with the Terms of the first Grant.

THAT upon a Reference by the Lords of the Committee of the Council to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, their Lordships were pleased to Report that it was their Opinion that it would be for his Majestys Service to Grant the said Petition, especially as such Settlement would be a proper step towards Checking the Incroachments of the French by interrupting part of their Communication from their Lodgment on the great Lakes to the River Mississippi, by means whereof the British Settlements were exposed to their Incursions and that of the Indians in their Interest, which benefits would be further extended under the said Companys Proposals.

THAT his said late Majesty was thereupon pleased to give such Instruction as was prayed by the Petitioners to the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia.

THAT the Company forthwith engaged in a very Considerable Expence to the Amount of many thousand Pounds for the Attaining the beneficial Ends of the said Grants, by causing Surveys to be made, Setlers to be engaged & Materials for Erecting a Fort to be provided, and which Fort was afterwards in a great measure Erected at the Expence of the Company.

THAT many unforeseen Obstructions arose soon after, not only from the Forces employed by the Crown of France, but also from the Obstacles raised to the Execution of his Majesty's Instructions by the Lieutenant Governor and Council of Virginia, who, after they had Notice of the sd. Instructions, but before they were produced in form, granted either upon Petitions for the Extending the time to which former Petitions were limited or upon Applica-

tions entirely New, 1,350,000 Acres of Land, West of the Mountains to persons incapable of making effectual Settlements, and whose Grants could therefore only serve to frustrate the Ends of those to which the Company were Entitled under his Majesty's Instructions.

THAT while the Company were engaged in removing those Difficulties & in Conciliating the Affections of the Indians residing on the Ohio, at a very considerable Expence, & when they had Actually begun to Erect their Fort & had raised a proper Garrison for that Service, the whole force of the French Colony in Canada was employed by the Governor of that Country (Sensible of the great Importance and Utility of the Measures the Company were taking to the Crown of Great Britain) to disappoint the same, and those Forces too powerful for the Company to resist, effected their design by the entire Destruction of that Fort begun to be Erected & of all the other footing the Company had Obtained in that Country.

THAT the Company however, so long as any hopes remained of preserving this valuable Country without a Royal Army, neglected no means, nor did they spare any Expence for that purpose, & were the Principal Occasion of such defence as was made of it until the Arrival of General Braddock.

THAT the Obstinacy with which the Country on the Ohio hath since been Contended for, is a Proof how well founded & just the Proposals of the Ohio Company were for the benefit of the British Nation & the Immense Advantage resulting to the Nation from the Cession of this Territory by the late Glorious Peace will always be a permanent Evidence of the truth of the Allegations in their first Petition.

THAT as soon as the Peace was Proclaimed the Company, notwithstanding the heavy Expences they had been at, and from which they had yet reaped no fruit, but vigilant how they might, as early as possible, improve the benefits Secured by it, begun to raise a New Fund, in Order to Enable themselves to effectuate the wise Intentions of his late Majesty's Instructions & thought it their Duty to send over your Memorialist from Virginia, humbly to intreat your Majesty's Royal Protection and Approbation of their Design.

BUT THAT your Memorialist soon after his Arrival in England being informed of your Majesty's Royal Proclamation restraining all future Grants & Settlements within the Bounds therein described & conceiving your Majesty's Royal Pleasure to be that no further steps shou'd be taken under the said Instructions until further Order from your Majesty, hath been hitherto with held thereby from making the humble Application he had directions to make to your Majesty upon the Case of the Ohio Company, and the Company, on the Advice they received from your Memorialist thought themselves bound in Duty, altogether to Acquiesce under your Majesty's Proclamation, yet understanding that your Majesty in your Royal Wisdom has Signified that the Provisions of the said Proclamation were intended to be Temporary only, your Memorialist most humbly hopes that there is no reason to distrust the Company's want of Obedience thereto so long as your Majesty shall in your great Wisdom deem the same fit to continue in force, altho' the Grants directed in the said Instructions should be Actually made.

YOUR MEMORIALIST therefore most humbly Prays that your Majesty would please to take the [document blurred] into your Royal Consideration & to renew the said Instructions to the Lieutt. Governor of Virginia for the time being, or that, in Case such Instructions shod. by your Majesty in your Royal Wisdom be deemed inconsistent with the Rules of Policy that ought to be observed in that Country, your Memorialist not presuming to entertain a doubt on the Subject of your Majesty's Royal Counsels, most humbly prays that your Majesty would be graciously pleased to recommend to the Parliament of Great Britain, the making some Provision for the Reimbursement of the great Expences incurred by the Ohio Company, as the Event hath turned out for the benefit of the Publick only, or that the sd. Company may receive, by a Grant of Land in some other part of your Majesty's American Dominions, or otherwise such Compensation as your Majesty in your Bounty shall be Graciously pleased to bestow upon them. And your Memorialist shall most humbly Pray.

GEO. MERCER

Memorial of George Mercer  
on behalf of the Ohio Company  
November 20, 1769<sup>679</sup>

To the Kings most Excellent Majesty in Council

THE MEMORIAL of George Mercer on behalf of the Ohio Company in Virginia, &c

MOST HUMBLY SHEWETH THAT, in the Year 1765, your Memorialist, as Agent for the said Company, presented a Memorial; which your Majesty in Council, was graciously pleased to refer to the Right Honble the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations: and your Memorialist humbly begs leave, to refer to their Lordships Report, of the 16th. of June last, on the said Memorial.

THAT your Memorialist being Informed, permission will be given to your Majestys Subjects, to settle on the Waters of the Mississippi, and the interior parts of North America, humbly conceives, the reference then recommended, by their Lordships to be made, to the Governor of Virginia, is become less necessary, their Lordships having Assigned, as the chief Reason for this reference, their own Inability, at that time, to determine, as to the Expediency of a Settlement in that County. That being no longer a Subject of Deliberation, and your Memorialist thinking himself, now, fully prepared, to Answer every other Objection, which then Occurred to their Lordships, and he begs leave to say, the Governor of Virginia's Report must Confirm his Information, presumes, on behalf of the Company, to renew their Claim, to the Lands Granted them, by your Majesty's late Grandfather, which they, at the Treaty of Log's Town in June 1752, obtained the permission of the six Nations to Settle, and on which, they had really established, several ffamilies, before the last War.

YOUR MEMORIALIST presumes to Inform your Majesty, that the first Actual Survey of that Country, was made at the Company's Expence, and that the Road from Willis's Creek to the Ohio, the Route of your Majesty's Troops in 1754 & 1755, was not only traced out, but Compleated, entirely at the Companys Charge,

<sup>679</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1331/301-306.

that the Company had Built strong Houses, to Secure the Communication, from the River Potomack to the Ohio, which were used as Magazines for your Majesty's Stores, and some of them afterwards destroyed by the Regular Forces to Erect Stronger fortifications.

THAT your Memorialist is encouraged to hope the Ohio Company, who were the very first Adventurers, & have Expended, so large a Sum of Money, upwards of 14 Years since, on a Settlement begun under the Sanction of Government, will not be prevented, from prosecuting their Design, while others of your Majesty's Subjects, who have lately only formed their Scheme, enjoy the benefit of the Compys. Labour, and Discoveries, especially when it is considered, of what great Advantage, their Settlement must be, as well to those now proposed, in the Interior parts of North America, or which may hereafter be judged necessary to establish, as to those provinces already very populous; To the former of these, it would be a Support, and at the same time, secure to them, the safest, and shortest Communication, that can ever be formed, and through which only, the Manufactures of Great Britain can, at a moderate Expence, be Transported to the Mississippi, as the whole passage from the Navigable part of Potomack River, including 80 Miles Land Carriage by the Ohio Companys Road, may be performed in three weeks; and to the latter it would soon become a strong Barrier, and the Surest protection from the Indian Incursions, which so greatly distressed your Majestys Subjects, on the Frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, during the late War.

YOUR MEMORIALIST therefore most humbly Prays, your Majesty would be graciously pleased, to take the Case of the Ohio Company into your Royal Consideration, and order, that their grant may be renewed; that they may undertake their Settlements agreeable to their former Engagements, with Government, at the same time, your Majesty's other Subjects are permitted to pursue their Plan, that the Company may enjoy in Common with them, the Advantage of their own discoveries and Labour, or that your Majesty, would be graciously pleased, to recommend it to the Parliament, to make provision to reimburse the Company, the great Expences they have

Incurred, and of which the publick have enjoyed all the Benefit, as they greatly forward the Expeditions carried on by your Majesty's Regular Troops on that Quarter; or such other Relief, as your Majesty in your Royal Wisdom, shall judge best. And your Memorialist will ever most humbly pray.

GEORGE MERCER

ENDORSED. VIRGINIA: Order of the Lords of the Committee of Council for plantation-affairs, dated Novr. 20 1769, referring to this Board, for their consideration & report, the petition of George Mercer in behalf of the Ohio Company, praying that the King would renew the grant made by His late Majesty to them of certain lands lying on the back of Virginia; or recommend to the parliament to provide for the reimbursement of their expences; or give such other relief as His Majesty shall judge best. . . Recd. Novr. 24 1769, Read Janry 3 1770.

Memorial of George Mercer  
on behalf of the Ohio Company  
December 18, 1769<sup>680</sup>

To The Right Honorable The Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations,

THE MEMORIAL of George Mercer, on Behalf of the Ohio Company,

HUMBLY SHEWETH THAT, the said Company have expended a large Sum of Money, in Consequence of His late Majesty's Royal Instruction, to his Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, dated the 16th. of March, 1748, directing a Grant, or Grants to be made to Them, of 500,000 Acres of Land, on the Waters of the Ohio, within certain Limits, and on certain Conditions therein mentioned: But have been prevented by sundry Acts of Government, and particularly, His Majesty's Royal Proclamation of October the 7th. 1763, from prosecuting their Design, or Schemes of Settlement.

THAT your Memorialist is informed there are sundry Petitions preferred to your Lordships, praying Grants of Land on the Ohio and its Waters, (even the Names of which were not known to the Public, till a Chart of that Country was made at the Company's Expence) which he imagines may interfere with the Grant, ordered by his late Majesty, to the Ohio Company.

YOUR MEMORIALIST therefore most humbly prays your Lordships, not to make any Grant within the Limits prescribed by the Royal Instruction, to the Company; as they are, and have ever been willing, and desirous to proceed in their Undertaking, and fulfil their Engagements to Government. And that no unnecessary Delay may be offered to the Petitioners on Behalf of the Ohio Company, your Memorialist begs Leave humbly to represent that he is fully prepared, whenever your Lordships shall be pleased to command him, to justify the Companys Pretensions, and shew that they have, through no Neglect on their Part, been delayed upwards of twenty Years, from executing a Plan which would have contributed as much to the public, as their own private

<sup>680</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1331/307-310.

Interest. And your Memorialist will most humbly pray &c &c.  
GEO. MERCER

December the 18th. 1769

ENDORSED. VIRGINIA: Memorial of George Mercer Esqr. on behalf of the Ohio Company, to this Board, dated Decr. 18. 1769, praying their Lordships not to recommend the making of any grant to other persons within the limits prescribed by the Royal Instruction to the said Company. . . Recd. Decr. 22. 1769. Read Janry 3. 1770.



Memorial of George Mercer  
May 8, 1770<sup>681</sup>

To The Right Honourable The Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations

The Memorial of George Mercer,

Humbly sheweth, that your Memorialist on the 18th. Day of December last, presented a Memorial to your Lordships, praying that no Grant might be made to those Persons, who petitioned for Lands within the Limits prescribed to the Ohio Company, by his late Majesty's Royal Instructions, dated the 16th. Day of March 1748/9. AND WHEREAS your Memorialist, on Behalf of the Ohio Company, has agreed to join with Messrs. Thomas Walpole, Thomas Pownall, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Wharton and their Associates, for purchasing a new Province on the River Ohio: He humbly begs Leave to withdraw his said Memorial, as far as it may oppose, or interfere with the Purchase of the Lands proposed, by the aforesaid Messrs. Walpole and Associates, and that no farther Delay may be offered to Them, on Account of the Ohio Company. AND your Memorialist will humbly pray &c.

GEORGE MERCER

May the 8th. 1770.

<sup>681</sup> Public records office (London), colonial office 5: 1332/353.

Memorial of the Ohio Company  
November 20, 1778<sup>682</sup>

To the honourable the General Assembly of Virginia, The Memorial and petition of the Ohio Company. Humbly sheweth That sundry Gentlemen of Virginia, Maryland and Great Britain, in or about the Year 1748, formed a Copartnership, by the Name and Stile of the Ohio Company, for exploring the Country westward of the Great Mountain upon both Sides the Ohio River (at that time known only by Name to the People of Virginia) for taking up five hundred thousand acres of Land upon the Waters of the said River, and carrying on a Trade with the Indians; and thereupon presented a petition to his late Majesty King George the second in Consequence whereof Additional royal Instruction bearing Date of the Court at St. James's the 16th. Day of March 1748/9, was given to Sr. William Gooch Bart. then Governour of Virginia, to make a Grant or Grants, upon certain Conditions therein specified "to John Hanbury of London Merchant, the honble Thomas Lee Esqr.. the honble Thomas Nellson Esqr. Colo. Thomas Cresap, Colo. WILLIAM Thornton, William Nimmo, Daniel Cresap, John Carlyle, Lawrence Washington, Augustine Washington, George Fairfax, Jacob Giles, Nathaniel Chapman, and James Wardrope Esqrs. AND THEIR ASSOCIATES for two hundred thousand Acres of Land, betwixt Romonettoes and Buffaloe's Creek, on the South Side the River Alleghany, otherwise Ohio, and betwixt the two Creeks and the Yellow Creek on the North side of the said River, OR AS AFORESAID TO THE WESTWARD OF THE GREAT MOUNTAINS, free from the payment of any Rights, as also from the payment of any Quit-rents for the Space of ten Years from the Date of the Grants, at the Expiration of which Term, the said petitioners are to pay the usual Quit-rent for so much of the said Lands as they shall have cultivated within that time" And upon the Terms on which the first two hundred thousand Acres were to be granted being complied with "to make a further Grant or Grants to the said petitioners of three hundred thousand Acres more, residue of the said five hundred thousand

<sup>682</sup> Virginia state library.

acres of Land." That in the month of June 1749, the following Gentlemen, whose Names has been inserted in the said petition and Royal Instruction; vizt. the honble Thomas Nellson Esqr. Colo. Francis Thornton (who thro' Mistake had been mis-called Colo. WILLIAM Thornton) William Nimmo, John Carlyle, and George Fairfax Esqrs., desired to resign their Shares and Interest in the said Company; which Resignations were accordingly accepted, and entered in the Company's Journals; and such of them as had advanced anything had their Money returned to them: And that Mr. Daniel Cresap (whose Name was inserted in the petition and Royal Instruction [never was] a member of the said Ohio Company, never advanced a Shilling, [or hath] had any Manner of Concern, or Interest whatever, in the said Undertaking, or Copartnership; But the Governor and Council, not at that time having proper Notice of the before mentioned Resignations, or knowing who were the real Members of the said Ohio Company, and literally pursuing the words of the Royal Instruction; which was communicated by the Governor to the Board, on the 12th Day of July 1749, caused an Entry to be made in the Council Books, in the Name of the first mentioned Gentlemen, for the first two hundred thousand acres of Land, as aforesaid: to which Entry, as well as the Royal Instruction whereon it was founded, Your Memorialists beg Leave to refer. IN PURSUANCE OF THEIR SAID PLAN THAT your Memorialists erected large Store houses and other Buildings, at a very great Expence, upon Potomack River, opposite the place where Fort Cumberland was afterwards fixed, purchased a Number of Horses, and imported several large Cargoes of Goods, to the amount of several thousand pounds Sterling, from London; for the purpose of carrying on an extensive Indian Trade.

That in the Year 1750, they employed Mr. Christopher Gist, at the Expence of one hundred and fifty pounds, to explore the Country on the North Side the Ohio River, as low as the Great Falls, and upon the Great and Little Miamee Rivers, to discover what Tribes of Indians inhabited there, and endeavour to conciliate them to the Interest and Friendship of Virginia; And the Year following, they employed the said Christopher Gist, at the

Expence of fifty pounds, to explore and examine the Country upon the South Side the Ohio River, from the Monongahaly to the Great Conhaway; as will appear by the said Gist's Journals.

That in the same Year 1751, there having been considerable Changes made by Resignations and Alienations of Shares, the Members of the said Ohio Company entered into and executed, regular Articles of Agreement and Copartnership for the Space [and Term] of twenty Years: And in the two Years following, were at considerable [charge in] laying off and clearing a Road from the Mouth of Will's Creek on Potomack River, over the Alleghany Mountains, to the Waters of the Ohio; and in building a warehouse near the Mouth of Red-Stone Creek, on the Monongahaly.

That as the Location of the Company's claim, from the words of the Royal Instruction, and their Entry on the Council-Books, was so very extensive, affecting any Lands TO THE WESTWARD OF THE GREAT Mountains, on either Side the Ohio River, where no Settlements had been yet made, or Countys established, Your Memorialists obtained, from the President and Professors of William and Mary College, in the Year 1753, a special Commission for the before mentioned Christopher Gist, appointing him Surveyor of the Lands belonging to the Ohio Company; and began to survey some of the Lands upon the waters of the Monongaly and Yough-Youghaine (about the place now called the Red-Stone Settlement) and at the Confluence of the Ohio and Monongaly Rivers (where Fort-Pit now stands) and settled the said Christopher Gist's, and several other Families thereon. They also imported, from London, twenty new Swivel Guns, with a Quantity of suitable Ball, small-arms, Blunderbusses, Tools, and other Military Stores, prepared Materials, and were erecting a Fort, on the Spot where Fort pit now stands, under the Direction of Captain William Trent, the Company's Agent; when about seven hundred French and Indians, commanded by a regular officer, with several pieces of Cannon, came down the River in Battoes, and landing within a small Distance, drove away Your Memorialists' Workmen and People, took possession of the place, and built their Fort Du Quesne there.

That upon this Occasion, and by the french and Indian War which followed, Your Memorialists were not only prevented from proceeding further in the Execution of their plan, but sustained very great Losses, to the amount of [several hundred] pounds, in their Materials, Tools, Stores, Horses, and other Effects in that Country, and even in their Houses and property upon Potomack River; which were wantonly destroyed by our own Troops, and the Lands the Company had purchased near Fort Cumberland entirely pillaged of Timber, for the public buildings, and for Beef, Pork & flour-Barrels; without Your Memorialists ever being able to obtain the least Satisfaction or Redress. AND THAT the Nature of the Trade Your Memorialists were engaged in was such, that they were obliged to give large Credits to the Indian-Traders, most of whom were killed, captivated, or ruined in the Course of the War, and the Debts due to Your Memorialists thereby lost.

That by these Events, which are faithfully recited, and generally known, Your Memorialists were prevented from proceeding in their Surveys during the last War; as they were also, after the Conclusion of the War, by the King's Proclamation, prohibiting the setling or granting any Lands to the westward of the Great Mountains.

That Your Memorialists, finding the Land they had begun to survey about Fort-pit was appropriated to the use of a public Garrison, and the Lands they had surveyed upon the Branches of Monongahaly and Youghyoughgaina were claimed by the Province of Pensylvania, as well as by another Company in Virginia, and not caring to contend with such powerful adversaries, determined to take their Land lower down the Ohio, between the Monongahaly and the Great Conhaway, as soon as the Government would permit them to make Surveys; but afterwards, at the particular Request of General Washington, and some of the Members of the Council, Your Memorialists promised not to interfere with the said [Virginia . . . Claim of] two hundred [thousand] acres of Land under Gover [nor] Dinwiddies proclamation, and to suffer that to be first laid off; by which all the good Bodys of Land, upon the Ohio, between the Great and Little

Conhaway, in the Country your memorialists had been at the charge of exploring many years before, were taken up.

That in the year 1772, Your Memorialists, apprehending that the former proclamation, prohibiting the settling or granting Lands to the Westward of the Great Mountains, was repealed by a late royal Instruction for running a western Line, presented a Representation and petition to the Governor and Council, setting forth the Difficulties they had laboured under, and how they had been prevented from surveying by the late War, and afterwards by the King's Proclamation; complaining of their Agent Colo. George Mercer having undertaken, without their Consent or authority, to make an Agreement of Copartnership between them and Thomas Walpole Esqr. and others, his Associates in Great Britain; which they disclaimed; and praying for a new order or Warrant to survey their Land. Upon which the Council was pleased, on the 27th. Day of July in the said Year 1772, to order the Substance of the said Representation to be entered upon their Journals, and make an order of Council recognising, confirming, and declaring still in Force Your Memorialists first Entry and order for the two hundred thousand Acres herein before mentioned, and therefore that any further or other Warrant or order was unnecessary; to which order, together with a Letter from the Clerk of the Council, wrote by order of the Board, Your Memorialists beg Leave to refer.

THAT in the Year 1773 (their former Surveyor Mr. Gist being dead) Your Memorialists obtained, from the President and Professors of William & Mary College a special Commission, appointing Mr. William Crawford Surveyor of their Lands; who had a year or two before, by Virtue of a like special Commission, [for] that purpose, from the said President and Professors, surveyed the two hundred thousand Acres for General Washington, and the officers and Soldiers of his Regiment; upon which Surveys, regular patents had been granted and passed. AND the year following they also obtained, from the said President and Professor, a Commission for Mr. Hancock Lee, as Deputy Surveyor to the said William Crawford: and they were proceeding down the River, in order to begin their Surveys; but had the Misfortune to have

their Cannoes overset, in attempting to pass the Falls of Youghoughaina, and to lose all their provision, arms, and amunition, and have two of their men drowned; which, together with the Indian War that Summer, prevented their further progress.

THAT in the next Year, 1775, your Memorialists had their before mentioned Quantity of two hundred thousand Acres Land surveyed, laid off, marked, and bounded, all in one compact well shaped Tract, upon both Sides the main South Fork of Great Licking Creek, in Fincastle now Kentucky County; as will appear by the Certificate of Survey, and plat thereof, returned under the Hands of the said William Crawford, and Hancock Lee, the Surveyors, clear of any prior Titles, or Surveys; but the Confusion of the present Troubles preventing any Land-Office being open'd, Your Memorialists knew not where, or how [to make . . . of the said survey . . . being expired] and several of the Members residing in Great Britain, with whom the Members in America can now have no Communication, they are utterly at a Loss how to proceed, or in what Manner to secure the Lands, to which they have acquired a just Title, at so great Expence, without the Interposition of the Legislature.

THAT the said Ohio Company was always intended to consist, and doth at present consist of twenty Shares, of which the following persons are at this time the proprietors, vizt. eleven Shares belonging to Persons residing in Virginia; One held by the honble John Tayloe Esqr. one by the late Thomas Ludwell Lee Esqr. one by Richard Lee Esqr. one by James Scott Clerk, one by George Mason Esqr. one by Peter Presley Thornton Esqr. one by Thomas Lomax Esqr. one by the Heirs of John Mercer Esqr. decd. one by the Heirs of the honble Philip Ludwell Lee Esqr. decd. and two by the honble Robert Carter Esqr. three shares belonging to persons residing in Maryland; one held by Colo. Thomas Cresap, one by Jacob Giles Esqr. and one by Pearson Chapman Esqr. and six Shares held by persons residing in Great Britain; one held by Osgood Hanbury Merchant, one by the Heirs of Capel Hanbury Merchant decd. one by the Heirs of the honble Robert Dinwiddie decd. one by the Heirs of the honble Arthur Dobbs Esqr. decd. one by the Heirs of James Wardrope Esqr. decd. and one by Colo.



George Mercer; Some of which Shares in Great Britain are considerably in arrear to the Company, for their Quota of Stock not paid up.

THAT the Term of their Co. Partnership being expired, in the present dispersed Situation of their Members, and a War carried on against America by Great Britain, Your Memorialists conceiving it absolutely impracticable for them to comply with that part of the Royal Instruction respecting the Fort and Garrison (originally intended in the Lieu of paying Right-Money) and also that the same is [utterly] incompatible with the Nature and Constitution of the present Government, Such of the Members of the said Company as reside in Virginia and Maryland are willing and desirous to receive a seperate Grant or Patent, each in his own Name, for his due Share or proportion of the said two hundred thousand Acres of Land, in the common Form, and in Lieu of the Fort and Garrison, to pay for the same the ancient accustomed Right-Money, of ten Shillings Sterling per hundred acres; but do not care to advance their Money for others; especially for those beyond Sea, in the present Situation of Affairs.

In tender Consideration of the premises, of the great Charge and Trouble they have incurred, and of their having complied, as far as was practicable, with every Requisition of Government. YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY, that an Act of Assembly may pass for issueing Patents, in the common Form, (so soon as a Land-office shall be established) to all the said proprietors of Shares in the said Company now residing in Virginia and Maryland, each in his own Name, for his due Share or proportion of the said Tract of two hundred thousand acres of Land, upon their respectively paying down the Sum of ten Shillings Sterling per hundred acres, Right-Money for the same, AND for reserving the Quantity or proportion due to the said six Members residing in Great Britain, all in one Tract or peice, subject to the further order of the General Assembly; for which purpose Your Petitioners have prepared an accurate plat (the Out-lines whereof are exactly copyed from the Surveyor's original plat) in which all the said Shares are divided and laid off accordingly; so that the Courses of the several Patents may be ascertained [with the greatest precision.]



Your Petitioners beg Leave to observe, that by this [more such of the Members in America] as are ready to pay down their Right-Money will be secured in this property, no Injustice will be done to the Members in Great Britain; and to the Public, it will be exactly the same thing, as if a Patent for the whole two hundred thousand Acres was granted to the Company, and afterwards divided among them in separate Shares, and mutual Deeds of Conveyance, for each Person's Proportion, duly executed.

YOUR PETITIONERS are not able to suggest any Method of settling this Matter so unexceptionable as that they have proposed; but thoroughly confiding in the Wisdom and Justice of this honourable Assembly, they humbly beg Leave to submit the Case to their Consideration; not doubting but that such Remedie will be granted to Your Petitioners, and such order made therein as shall be judged just and reasonable. AND YOUR PETITIONERS WILL EVER PRAY.

#### G. MASON FOR THE OHIO COMPANY

I approve of the above Petition and in case of my absence for George Mason Esqr. to act for me RICHARD LEE

I consent to the foregoing Petition & authorize Colo George Mason to act [therein in the . . .] behalf of myself Colo. George Mercer & the Estate of John Mercer deced. [J. MERCER?]

I assent to & approve of this petition, & empower George Mason Esqr. to act for me in fixing the particular part or Lott which each Member is to have in the Survey, in the same Manner as if I myself was present. PEARSON CHAPMAN

I do highly approve the above proposition and as Trustee for the estate of the late hon. Phil. Lud. Lee give my assent thereto. I do also hereby empower George Mason esqr. to act for said Estate in the way that shall be agreed on to fix the part that each Member is to have of said Survey. April 25th 1770. RICHARD HENRY LEE ADMINISTRATOR

I also assent to, & approve this Petition, & empower Geo. Mason Esqr. to act for me also in the same Manner. JAMES SCOTT



## Bibliography



## Bibliography

ABERNETHY, Thomas Perkins. *Western land and the American revolution* (Virginia university institute for research in the social sciences, monograph, no. 25) (New York, 1937).

Abernethy indicates his realization of the importance of the Ohio company and presents numerous interesting observations on the relationship of the Ohio company and the Loyal company.

ADDITIONAL manuscripts (British museum).

These manuscripts contain a volume (6865) of material covering the French and English disputes over the Ohio region in 1755.

ADVANTAGES of a settlement upon the Ohio in North America (London, 1763 [1773]).

The Vandalia company is discussed in this work. As Alvord points out, it is obvious that the book was written in 1773 instead of 1763 because of the various references to 1772.

ALDEN, George Henry. *New governments west of the Alleghanies before 1780* (Madison, 1897).

ALVORD, Clarence W. and Clarence E. Carter. *The critical period, 1763-1765* (in Illinois historical library, collections, x, British series, Springfield, 1915).

ALVORD, Clarence W. and Lee Bidgood. *The first explorations of the trans-Allegheny region by the Virginians, 1650-1674* (Cleveland, the Arthur H. Clark company, 1912).

Background material on the English claims to the trans-Allegheny region is presented in this volume.

ALVORD, Clarence W. "Genesis of the proclamation of 1763." *Michigan pioneer and historical society, collections*, xxxvi, 20-52.

— "The British ministry and the treaty of Fort Stanwix." *Wisconsin historical society proceedings* (1908), 165-183.

— *The Mississippi valley in British politics; a study of trade, land speculation, and experiments in imperialism culminating in*

the American revolution (Cleveland, the Arthur H. Clark company, 1917), 2 vols.

Alvord has written a valuable history of the Vandalia scheme. He depicts the relationship between England and her colonies in regard to western lands. His work is also valuable for its survey of the literature of the period.

ALVORD, Clarence W. "Virginia and the west; an interpretation." *Mississippi valley historical review*, III, 18-38 (1916-17).

AMERICAN Jewish historical society (New York City).

This library possesses some of the original minutes of the Ohio company for the period of the American revolution.

ANDREW, Matthew Page. *Virginia, the old dominion* (New York, 1937).

Andrew awards considerable attention to Ohio company, especially in its conflict with the French.

BACON-FOSTER, Mrs. Corra. "The Ohio company, 1748-1785" (Part I in *Early chapters in the development of the Potomac route to the west*).

BAKER-CROTHERS, Hayes. *Virginia and the French and Indian war* (Chicago, 1928).

Baker-Crothers presents a critical discussion of Virginia and the Ohio region during this period. The author recognizes the importance of the Ohio company and the role it played in bringing about the French and Indian war.

BANCROFT transcripts (New York public library).

In this extensive collection are several papers of George Mason. Especially worthy of note was "Extracts from the Virginia charters with some remarks on them, made in the year 1773." Pages 125-137 relate to the Ohio company. Another document of significance is a letter of George Mason to a kinsman wherein he writes of matters relating to the Ohio company.

BEVERLEY, William. *Letters* (New York public library).

These noteworthy letters include a communication from Beverley to Charles Smyth, wherein the former writes of his activities in connection with the treaty of Lancaster in 1744.

BOUQUET papers (21631-21660) (British museum).

The Bouquet collection consists of 17 volumes of letters, accounts, orders, and warrants of General Bouquet. The Ohio company materials center around Bouquet's attempts to keep settlers out of the western lands during the period from 1758 to 1763 and with the at-

tempts by Thomas Cresap and George Mercer to interest Bouquet in becoming a member of the company.

BOYD, Julian P., editor. *The Susquehannah papers, 1750-1772* (Wilkesbarre, 1930-1933), 4 vols.

The Susquehannah papers give scattered references to the Ohio company.

BROCK collection (Huntington library, San Marino, California).

The Brock collection contains several papers of importance to this study including a letter of Capel Hanbury of June 23, 1758, the Nelson family collection, correspondence and documents, and the journal of William Black, kept while acting as secretary to Virginia's commissioners at the Lancaster conference, May-June, 1744.

BRYMMER, Douglas, editor. *Report on Canadian archives* (1889) (Ottawa, 1890).

The report for 1889 indexes and summarizes the Bouquet papers.

BURKE, John. *A genealogical and heraldic dictionary of the landed gentry of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1847-49).

CHALMERS papers (New York public library).

The Chalmers collection embraces useful materials on diversified Ohio country problems. They are of particular worth for the years following 1763. Two important letters of Lieutenant-governor Fauquier of Virginia are included, wherein he writes of the problems arising out of illegal settlement of land beyond the line of the Proclamation of 1763.

CLARK, Dan E. *The west in American history* (Oxford, Toronto, 1937).

CLARK, George Rogers. *Papers, 1771-1781* (collections of the Illinois state historical library, VIII, Virginia series, III) (Springfield, 1926).

Included in these papers is an account of Clark's activities in Kentucky while surveying for the Ohio company.

COLDEN, Cadwallader. *Letters and papers* (New York historical society, collections, 1917-1923, 1937).

Colden was interested in Indian affairs and his letters and papers make several references to conditions in Ohio region.

CONDUCT of the ministry impartially examined, in a letter to the merchants of London, second edition (London, 1756).

The problems faced by the British ministry in connection with the Ohio country are herein reviewed.

CONTINENTAL Congress, journals, 1774-1789, edited by Gaillard Hunt and Worthington C. Ford (Washington, 1904-1928).

Contains valuable discussions of the western land question.

CRAIG, Neville B., editor. *The olden times*; a monthly publication, devoted to the preservation of documents and other authentic information in relation to the early explorations, and the settlement and improvement of the country around the head of the Ohio [V. 1-2, jan. 1848-dec. 1847] (Pittsburgh, 1846-48).

Craig's famous work presents brief accounts of the Ohio company and of Nemaquin and his road. It is not particularly accurate.

— Washington's first campaign, death of Jumonville, and the taking of Fort Necessity; also Braddock's defeat; also the march of the unfortunate general explained by a distinguished historian, traced on the ground by a civil engineer, and exhibited on a neat and accurate map, prepared under his direction (Pittsburgh, 1848).

\* CULBERTSON, Sidney Methiot. *The Hunter family of Virginia and connections, embracing portions of families of Alexander, Pearson, Chapman, Travers, Tyler, West, Gray, Smith, and Safford of Virginia and Maclay, Colhoun and Culbertson of Pennsylvania* (Denver, Colo., 1934).

DINWIDDIE, Robert, lieutenant-governor of the colony of Virginia, 1751-1758, official records, edited by R. A. Brock (vols. III and IV of the Virginia historical society collection, Richmond, 1833), 2 vols.

While these two volumes by no means comprise all of the available Dinwiddie letters, they are a fine beginning. As Dinwiddie was one of the most important figures in the company, his papers are naturally of significance to a study of this nature. Particularly is this true of his letters relating to the French on the Ohio just prior to the outbreak of the Seven Years war.

\* DODSON, Leonidas. *Alexander Spotswood, governor of colonial Virginia, 1710-1722* (Philadelphia, 1932).

A scholarly work which serves as a background to this study by showing Spotswood's schemes for settling country west of Alleghenies.

DOUNED, Randolph C. "Trade in frontier Ohio." *Mississippi valley historical review*, XVI, 467-494.

DRAPER manuscripts (Wisconsin historical society).

In his many years of collecting, Draper chanced upon several notices in regard to Ohio company affairs. Many of these Draper manuscripts were copied from the *Maryland Gazette* of the Maryland historical society, Baltimore. Others are merely summaries written by Draper



himself. These documents were of particular aid in reference to Anglo-French rivalry on the Ohio and for the later surveying activities of the company in Kentucky region. Several letters pertain to William Preston's connection with the Ohio company in the later period of its history.

DREER collection (Pennsylvania historical society).

In the Dreer collection are several letters in regard to Washington and the western lands.

ELLIS, Thomas H. "William Nimmo of Williamsburg." *William and Mary college historical quarterly*, v, 134-137.

EMMET collection (New York public library).

The Emmet collection incorporates numerous consequential documents pertaining to the Ohio company. These manuscripts include letters, reports, brief minutes of meetings of the company, and at least mention of the following leading members: Lawrence Washington, James Scott, Nathaniel Chapman, John Carlyle, Thomas Lee, John Hanbury, George Mercer, Samuel Smith, Philip Ludwell Lee, Thomas Ludwell Lee, John Mercer, John Tayloe, Lunsford Lomax, Presley Thornton, Richard Lee and Robert Carter.

ETTING collection, Ohio company papers (Pennsylvania historical society).

This two volume collection is comprised of letters, accounts, and warrants covering the period 1753-1817. Volume I pertains to the years 1753-1775 while Volume II extends from 1775 to 1817. As most of these papers treat of the losses of Pennsylvania traders during the French and Indian war and the Indian uprisings of 1763, their name is misleading. Only about two documents of the entire first volume mention the Ohio company. Nevertheless, the documents are of great value in that they are absolutely necessary for a complete understanding of the claims of the traders which led to the founding of the Traders' company and later the Grand Ohio company.

EVANS, Lewis. Geographical, historical, political, philosophical and mechanical essays; the first containing an analysis of a general map of the middle British colonies in America, and of the country of the confederate Indians; a description of the face of the country; the boundaries of the confederates; and the maritime and inland navigations of the several rivers and lakes contained therein (Philadelphia, 1755).

EXPEDIENCY of securing our American colonies by settling the country adjoining the river Mississippi, and the country upon the Ohio (Edinburgh, 1763).

This pamphlet is reprinted in Alvord and Carter, *The critical period, 1763-1765*. Alvord states that an original copy is in the Harvard college library.

FERNOW, Berthold. *The Ohio valley in colonial days* (Albany, 1890).

The value of this work lies in the documents reproduced in appendix D.

FILSON, John. *The discovery, settlement, and present state of Kentucke* (Wilmington, 1874).

Filson gives an account of Gist's expedition into Kentucky in 1751.

FORCE, Peter, editor. *American archives* (Washington, 1837-1853), 9 vols.

Force presents brief accounts of the Ohio and Walpole companies as well as an important petition of settlers on the Ohio objecting to the Walpole grant.

FRANKLIN, Benjamin. *Complete works*; including his private as well as his official and scientific correspondence, and numerous letters and documents now for the first time printed (London, 1887-88).

— *Works*; containing several political and historical tracts not included in any former edition, and many letters official and private not hitherto published, edited by Jared Sparks (Boston, 1856), 10 vols.

— *Writings*, edited by Albert Henry Smyth (New York, 1907), 10 vols.

In addition to his more famous diplomatic work, Franklin played an outstanding role in the westward movement. From 1755 onward he was interested in the Ohio country. Thus we find his works are replete with matters pertaining to the Ohio country, especially in regard to the Vandalia scheme.

FRANKLIN, W. Neil. "Pennsylvania-Virginia rivalry for the Indian trade of the Ohio valley." *Mississippi valley historical review*, XX (march, 1934), 463-480.

A fine article on this problem but unfortunately based almost entirely upon secondary materials.

— "Virginia and the Cherokee Indian trade, 1673-1752." *East Tennessee historical society's publication* (january, 1932), 3-21.

— "Virginia and the Cherokee Indian trade, 1753-1775." *East Tennessee historical society's publication* (january, 1933), 22-38.

FRANCE: Archives de ministere des affaires etrangeres  
Memoires et documents, Angleterre.

Volume 25 of this series includes numerous documents on the state of the French colonies in America as well as various boundary disputes. These manuscripts show the plans of France to limit England to the seaboard area.

FRANCE: Archives nationales, colonies.

Series B embraces material concerning Céloron's expedition to the Ohio in 1750, as well as the French measures to check English encroachments on the Ohio.

FRANCE: Service hydrographique.

Among the records found in this depository is the journal of Father Bonnecamps who accompanied Céloron on his Ohio expedition in 1750. FRENCH encroachments exposed; or Britain's original right to all that part of the American continent claimed by France fully asserted; wherein it appears, that the honour and interest of Great Britain are equally concerned, from the conduct of the French, for more than a century past, to vindicate her right (London, 1756).

England's rights to the Ohio region are asserted in this pamphlet.

FRENCH policy defeated: being an account of all the hostile proceedings of the French against the inhabitants of the British colonies in North America, for the last seven years (London, 1755).

GIST, Christopher. Journals with historical, geographical, and ethnological notes . . ., edited by William M. Darlington (Pittsburgh, 1895).

Gist was one of the most prominent figures in the westward movement from 1749-1756, and consequently his journals are of great importance. Darlington has also included several other useful documents.

GRATZ papers (Pennsylvania historical society)

These papers contain a considerable number of letters on Indian trade in the Ohio country, and center around the years of 1757-1759.

GREAT BRITAIN: Acts of the privy council of England (colonial series), edited by W. L. Grant and James Munro (Hereford, 1908-1911), 6 vols.

GREAT BRITAIN: Commissioners for trade and plantations, journal (London, 1920-1931), 8 vols.

Brief notes on the Ohio company, especially those acknowledging receipt of petitions, make these volumes noteworthy.

GREAT BRITAIN: Public Record office (London).

COLONIAL office papers, C.O. 5: 13-20 (Original documents 1742-1762, correspondence with colonial governors, chiefly military).

Volumes 14 and 15 were of value in regard to the French danger on the Ohio river.

C.O. 5:67 (Original document 1766-1767, plantations general).

One particular document of this series pertains to petitions of merchants and of American provincial troops for lands on the Ohio.

C.O. 5:211-215 (Entry books. 1753-1763. Secretary's dispatches).

Volume 211 pertains to the letters from Holderness to Dinwiddie in regard to the Ohio situation.

C.O. 5:1308-1334 (Virginia papers, letters and enclosures to the original board of trade, from the governors, Edmund Andres to Lord Dunmore).

Volumes 1327-1332 are of vast importance to a study of the Ohio company because they contain some petitions of the company, as well as many letters to Thomas Lee and Robert Dinwiddie.

C.O. 5:1337-1338 (Virginia. 1694-1753. Letters from the governors, Alexander Spotswood to Robert Dinwiddie, to the secretary of state).

Volume 1338 includes a number of letters of Dinwiddie on the Ohio situation.

C.O. 5:1344 (Virginia. 1722-1780, 1783. miscellaneous).

Volume 1344 contains miscellaneous materials, including several Dinwiddie letters as well as Ensign Ward's deposition.

C.O. 5:1345-1353 (Virginia. 1762-1771. Letters to the secretary of state from the governors, Francis Fauquier to Lord Dunmore, with enclosures).

These volumes embody numerous letters of Governor Fauquier, especially in regard to western lands.

C.O. 5:1358-1369 (Virginia. 1689-1774. Entry books).

Volume 1366 pertains to the board of trade's approval of Dinwiddie's Indian and land policies (1753).

C.O. 325 (Miscellaneous).

One document in particular relates to the events on the Ohio in 1753. STATE PAPERS: Domestic and home office papers (Naval. 1700-1772. Naval. commander's dispatches).

In this classification is an entry book of secret instructions of Sir Edward Hawke wherein is shown England's answer to the seizing of the Ohio company fort at the forks of the Ohio by the French.

GREAT BRITAIN: Public Record Office (London).

CHATHAM Papers.

These papers portray the various problems connected with the years immediately after the close of the French and Indian war.

HANNA, Charles Augustus. *The wilderness trail; or the ventures, and adventures of the Pennsylvania traders on the Alleghany path, with some new annals of the old west, and the records of some strong men and some bad ones* (New York, 1911).

In addition to a well written account of early conditions in the Ohio country, Hanna publishes two letters concerning the early activities of traders working for the Ohio company.

HARRISON, Fairfax. *The proprietors of the Northern Neck, chapters of Culpeper genealogy* (Richmond, Va., 1926).

— *Virginia land grants: a study of conveyancing in relation to colonial politics* (Richmond, 1925).

HECKEWELDER, John G. E. *History, manners, and customs of the Indian nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania, and the neighbouring [sic] states* (Philadelphia, 1876).

Reprinted from American philosophical society, Philadelphia, transactions of the historical and literary committee . . . Philadelphia, 1819-43.

HENDERSON, Archibald. *The Transylvania company and the founding of Kentucky* (pamphlet).

HENDRICK, Burton Jesse. *The Lees of Virginia; biography of a family* (Boston, 1935).

In addition to presenting a fine account of the various Lees who were members of the Ohio company, Hendrick gives some interesting observations on the company itself.

HILDRETH, S. P. *Pioneer history: being an account of the first examinations of the Ohio valley and the early settlement of the Northwest territory* (Cincinnati, 1848).

HINSDALE, A. B. "The western land policy of the British government from 1763 to 1775." *Ohio archeological and historical quarterly*, 1, 207-229.

HUIDEKOPER, Frederic Louis. "The struggle between the French and English for the valley of the Ohio, 1749-1758." *Some important colonial military operations* (Washington, 1914).

HUGHES, Rupert. *George Washington, the human being and the hero, 1732-1762* (New York, 1926).

In this writer's opinion Hughes's work is the best account yet written of the early life of Washington.

HULBERT, Archer Butler, editor. "Washington's tour to the Ohio and articles of 'the Mississippi company.'" State archeological and historical publications (1908), xvii, 431-488.

HUNT, Gaillard and Worthington C. Ford, editors. Journals of the Continental Congress. See *Continental Congress*.

JAMES, James Alton. The life of George Rogers Clark (Chicago, 1929).

JESUIT relations and allied documents, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, 1896-1901), 73 vols.

Volume LXIX contains a journal of Father Bonnecamps, in which Céloron's expedition on the Ohio river, made in 1749, is ably described.

JOHNSON, Sir William, papers, edited by James Sullivan and Alexander C. Flick (Albany, 1921-1933), 8 vols.

Johnson's activities among the Indians makes this work indispensable. Of particular consequence to the Ohio company is the material on Johnson's activities in connection with the Traders' company and the Vandalia scheme.

JOHNSTON, J. Stoddard, editor. First explorations of Kentucky: Doctor Thomas Walker's journal of an exploration of Kentucky in 1750, being the first record of a white man's visit to the interior of that territory, now first published entire with notes and biographical sketch; also Colonel Christopher Gist's journal of a tour through Ohio and Kentucky in 1751, with notes and sketch (Filson Club publications, no. 13, Louisville, Kentucky, 1898).

Johnston's Journal of Christopher Gist is taken from Darlington's work. Dr. Thomas Walker's Journal is almost a necessity to this study because of his explorations for the Loyal company.

KELLOGG, Louise Phelps. The French regime in Wisconsin and the northwest (Madison, 1925).

KENTUCKY: Petitions of the early inhabitants of Kentucky to the general assembly of Virginia, 1769 to 1792, edited by James R. Robertson (Filson Club publications, no. 27, Louisville, 1914).

KOONTZ, Louis Knott. "Robert Dinwiddie: a chapter in the American colonial frontier." Pacific historical review, v (march, 1936) 359-368.

KOONTZ, Louis Knott. *The Virginia frontier, 1759-1763* (Baltimore, 1925).

This work includes the best treatment of Robert Dinwiddie yet to appear.

— "Washington on the frontier." *Virginia magazine of history and biography*, xxvi (1928) 307-328.

LANCASTER, Pennsylvania. A treaty, held at the town, by the honourable lieutenant-governor of the province, and the honourable commissioners for the provinces of Virginia and Maryland, with the Indians of the Six Nations, in June, 1744 (Philadelphia, 1744).

As the Lancaster treaty served for the basis of both Virginia's and Pennsylvania's claims to the Ohio region, the importance of the above work is obvious.

\* LEE, Edmund Jennings. *Lee of Virginia, 1642-1892*; biographical and genealogical sketches of the descendants of Col. Richard Lee with brief notices of the related families (Philadelphia, 1895).

LEE, Richard Henry, letters, edited by James C. Balogh (New York, 1911-1914), 2 vols.

LEE, Richard Henry. *Life of Arthur Lee* (Boston, 1829), 2 vols.

✓ LEE, William, letters, 1766-1783, edited by Worthington C. Ford (Brooklyn, 1891), 3 vols.

LEYLAND, Herbert T. "The Ohio company." *Historical and philosophical society of Ohio quarterly publication* (1921), xvi.

Presents little more than the traditional picture of the company as presented by Jared Sparks, Neville Craig and others.

✓ LOUDOUN papers (Huntington library, San Marino, California).

The first part of these papers comprises a large number of French documents, mostly in relation to Louisiana, although four pertain to Céleron and the Wabash region. By far the most important letters for this study were those between Dinwiddie and various important men in England. Particularly valuable were those letters pertaining to the French and English rivalry for the Ohio valley.

LOWDERMILK, William Harrison. *History of Cumberland* (Maryland) from the time of the Indian town Caiuctucue, in 1728, up to the present day, embracing an account of Washington's first campaign, and battle of Fort Necessity, together with a history of Braddock's expedition (Washington, D. C., 1878).



Lowdermilk writes a valuable account of Wills' creek and gives biographical information concerning Thomas Cresap.

MARGRY, Pierre, editor. *Decouvertes et établissements des Francais, dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amerique septentrionale (1614-1754)*, *Memoires et documents originaux* (Paris, 1876-1886), 6 vols.

Among other documents this collection contains Céloron's journal of his expedition down the Ohio in 1749.

MARYLAND, proceedings of the council, 1636-1770, edited by William Hand Broune *et al* (Baltimore, 1885-1912), 11 vols.

Thomas Cresap's work in western Maryland is adequately presented in these volumes.

MASON, George, life, 1725-1792; including his speeches, public papers, and correspondence, by Kate Mason Rowland (New York and London, 1892), 2 vols.

Probably originally intended as a secondary biography, Rowland's work serves as a source in this instance because many important letters concerning the Ohio company are reproduced. As a matter of fact, the entire two volumes are merely a compilation of letters connected by explanatory sentences.

MITCHELL, John. *Contest in America between Great Britain and France, with its consequences and importance, giving an account of the views and designs of the French, with the interests of Great Britain, and the situation of the British and French colonies in all parts of America* (London, 1757).

MINUTES of conferences held at Easton, in october, 1758, with the chief sachems and warriors of the Mohawks, Oneidoes, Onondagoes, Cayugas, Senecas, Tuscaroras, Tuteloes, Skaniadara-digronos, consisting of the Nanticokes and Conoys, who now make one nation; Chugnuts, Delawares, Unamies, Manickanders, or Monickons; Minisinks, and Wapingers or Pumptions (Philadelphia, 1758).

MONETTE, John W. *History of the discovery and settlement of the valley of the Mississippi* (New York, 1846), 2 vols.

This work is old but nevertheless suggests some very good points in regard to the settlement of the Ohio.

NEW JERSEY: Documents relating to the colonial history of the state of New Jersey, first series, edited by W. A. Whitehead, Ricard, and Nelson (Trenton, N. J., 1880-1916), 28 vols.



NEW YORK: Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York, edited by E. B. O'Callaghan and J. R. Broadhead (Albany, 1856-1861), 15 vols.

For a study of the Ohio Indians from 1748 to 1776 this work is essential. The same general comment just as aptly applies to correspondence concerning the French in the Ohio region.

NEW YORK historical society. Lee papers (New York, 1871-1874), 4 vols.

These papers contain several letters referring to Ohio company affairs.

NORTH CAROLINA colonial records, edited by William L. Saunders (Raleigh, 1896-90), 10 vols.

In the colonial records may be found North Carolina's reaction to the danger of French encroachment.

O'CALLAGHAN, E. B. and J. R. Broadhead, editors. Documents. See *New York*.

— The documentary history of the state of New York (Albany, 1850-1851), 4 vols.

OSGOOD, Herbert L. The American colonies in the eighteenth century (New York, 1924), 4 vols.

PARGELLIS, Stanley McCrory. Lord Loudoun in North America (New Haven, 1933).

PARKMAN collection (Massachusetts historical society).

In this collection are five volumes of documents pertaining to Robert Dinwiddie. They were copied from the Dinwiddie letter-books in London in 1880 and consist chiefly of Dinwiddie letters between 1751 and 1755, the greatest number of them dealing with the French problem. However, most of them are published in the Dinwiddie papers.

PEASE, Theodore Calvin, editor. Anglo-French boundary disputes in the west, 1749-1763 (collections of the Illinois state historical library, vol. XXVII, French series, vol. II, Springfield, Illinois, 1936).

A collection of documents showing Anglo-French rivalry for the Ohio valley. While containing few documents which pertain directly to this study, it is indispensable for this general problem. Not the least worthwhile is a capable introduction.

PENNSYLVANIA archives, first series, edited by Samuel Hazard (Philadelphia, 1852-1856), 12 vols.

The Pennsylvania archives are second only to the Pennsylvania

colonial records as a source for that colony's activities in the Ohio country.

**PENNSYLVANIA.** Minutes of the provincial council, from the organization to the termination of the proprietary government (Philadelphia, 1851-52), 10 vols.

The minutes make up the first ten volumes of Pennsylvania colonial records and are commonly cited by that name alone. It contains a virtual mine of information on the westward movement as a whole and considerable on the activities of the Ohio company in the same connection.

**PENNSYLVANIA provincial papers:** Pennsylvania archives (Pennsylvania state library)

Many documents of merit are collected in this depository but most of them have been published in the Pennsylvania archives. Those which have not and which pertain to this study are of relatively little consequence although they include such problems as Indian conferences (1753, 1755, 1758), reports of French behavior in regard to English traders in the Ohio (1754), Samuel Hazard's scheme for a colony west of Pennsylvania (1755), requests of other groups for preference in choosing unoccupied land about the forks of the Ohio (1768), and the grant to the Walpole company (1772).

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Report of the commission to locate the site of frontier forts of Pennsylvania, compiled by C. M. Busch and George D. Albert (Harrisburg, 1896), 2 vols.

Albert's work contains a description of Ohio company fort at the forks of the Ohio as well as the storehouse at Red Stone creek. Several maps add to the book's importance.

**PERKINS, James H.** Annals of the west; embracing a concise account of principal events, which have occurred in the western states and territories, from the discovery of the Mississippi valley to the year eighteen hundred and fifty, second edition, revised and enlarged by J. M. Peck (St. Louis, 1851).

This old work gives a surprisingly comprehensive study of the early western movement.

**POWNALL, Thomas.** A topographical description of such parts of North America as are continued in the (annexed) map of the middle British colonies, etc., in North America (London, 1776).

In appendix vi appears "A journal of Christopher Gist's journey; began from Col. Cresap's at the old town on Potomack river, Maryland, October 31, 1750, continued down the Ohio, within 15 miles of the falls thereof; and from thence to Roanoke river in North Carolina

where he arrived may 19, 1751; undertaken on account of the Ohio company." Pownall had long favored a barrier colony in the Kentucky region, and his "topographical description" was written particularly in defense of the Vandalia scheme.

ROWLAND, Kate Mason. "The Ohio company." William and Mary college historical quarterly (april, 1892), 1, 160-168.

This interesting article tells of the fate of the Mercer papers which were, in reality, the Ohio company papers.

SCHARF, John Thomas. History of western Maryland, being a history of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Allegheny, and Garrett counties from the earliest period to the present day; including biographical sketches of their representative men (Philadelphia, 1882), 2 vols.

Of value for information on Thomas Cresap and the Wills' creek settlement.

SHARPE, Governor Horatio, correspondence, 1753-1771, edited by William Hand Broune (vols. 6, 9, 14, 31, pt. 2 of archives of Maryland, Baltimore, 1888-1911), 4 vols.

Sharpe's correspondence with Thomas Cresap is here included.

SHELburnE papers (William L. Clements library, Ann Arbor, Michigan).

In the Shelburne papers are four manuscripts on the Ohio company, especially for the years following 1760. Included is a long letter by the acting-governor of Virginia, Thomas Lee, submitted to the board of trade, september 29, 1750, which pertains to the Indian trade and western settlements; a letter from Shelburne to Governor Fauquier, october 8, 1767, which refers to a petition made by George Mercer in behalf of the Ohio company in 1765; an unsigned and undated document entitled "Some advantages for carrying on the Indian trade at the back of Virginia," which mentions the argument between the Indians and the Ohio company; and an unsigned and undated (probably 1766) petition of the Ohio company which gives a resume of the company's activities. Volumes L and LIV were of the most use.

SHIRLEY, William. Massachusetts and military commander in America, 1731-1760, correspondence, edited by Charles Henry Lincoln (New York, 1912), 2 vols.

In the early years of the French and Indian war Shirley was actively engaged in fighting the French, hence his correspondence is of considerable value to a study of the Ohio country during this period.

SOUTH CAROLINA state archives: Indian book (1750-1757).

The material for the above dates appears in volumes II-V inclusive.

Most of the material relates to South Carolina Indian affairs, but there is some material on the Iroquois, particularly the relations of English, Catawbas and Six Nations.

SPOTSWOOD, Alexander, lieutenant-governor of the colony of Virginia, 1710-1722, official letters, edited by R. A. Brock. (vol. 1 of Virginia historical society collections, Richmond, 1882).

In these letters is published extraordinary material on Spotswood's schemes for the west.

STANARD, William G. and Mary Newton. The colonial Virginia register, a list of governors, councillors and other higher officials and also of members of the House of Burgesses, the revolutionary conventions of the colony of Virginia (Albany, N. Y. 1902).

— "The Thornton family." William and Mary college quarterly, IV, 88-93, 157-164; V, 58-60, 197-200; VI, 53-57, 65-68, 109-113, 236-244.

STATE of the British and French colonies in North America with respect to number of people, forces, forts, Indians, trade and other advantages (London, 1755).

This work gives a brief discussion of the Ohio situation. Its publication called forth a letter of defense from Robert Dinwiddie to the publisher.

SUMMERS, Lewis Preston, editor. Annals of southwest Virginia, 1719-1800 (Abingdon, Va., 1929).

Summers includes a copy of Christopher Gist's journal of his first trip to the Ohio.

— History of southwest Virginia, 1746-1780 (Richmond, 1903).

THWAITES, Reuben Gold, editor. The French regime in Wisconsin, 1743-1760. (Wisconsin state historical society collections (1908), XVIII, 1-222).

Thwaites has herein published an English translation of Céloron's journal of his expedition down the Ohio in 1749.

— Early western travels, 1748-1846 (Cleveland, the Arthur H. Clark company, 1904-1907), 32 vols.

Volume 1 contains the valuable journals of Conrad Weiser (1748) and George Croghan (1750-1765).

VEECH, James. The Monongahela of old (Pittsburgh, 1910).

VIRGINIA: Calendar of Virginia state papers and other manuscripts

preserved in the capitol at Richmond, edited by W. P. Palmer, *et al.* (Richmond, 1875-93), 11 vols.

Volume 1 of the calendar covers the period 1652-1781.

VIRGINIA: Executive journals of the council of colonial Virginia, edited by H. R. McIlwaine (Richmond, 1925-1930), 4 vols.

These journals serve as a source for the biographical materials used in chapter on Personnel.

VIRGINIA: Journals of the house of burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1776, edited by J. P. Kennedy and H. R. McIlwaine (Richmond, 1905-1915), 13 vols.

Noteworthy are the numerous records showing the response of the House of Burgesses to Dinwiddie's activities in connection with the French. It is also useful for biographical information.

VIRGINIA: Legislative journals of the council of colonial Virginia, edited by H. R. McIlwaine (Richmond, 1918-19), 3 vols.

Like the executive journals, these volumes are a source for biographical information as well as for material on the reaction of the Virginia government to French hostility on the Ohio.

VIRGINIA miscellaneous papers (New York public library).

These papers include "The memorial of the inhabitants of the country, west of the Alleghany mountains to the honorable president and delegates of the thirteen united American colonies, in general congress assembled."

VIRGINIA: The statutes at large: being a collection of all the laws of Virginia from the first session of the legislature in the year 1619, edited by W. W. Hening (Richmond, 1819-1823), 13 vols.

The laws pertaining to western lands are included in this work.

VOLWILER, A. T. George Croghan and the westward movement, 1741-1782 (Cleveland, the Arthur H. Clark company, 1921).

This important study on the western traders of this period is the best of its kind.

WASHINGTON, George. Journal of, commanding a detachment of Virginia troops, sent by Robert Dinwiddie, lieutenant-governor of Virginia, across the Alleghany mountains, in 1754 to build forts at the head of the Ohio, edited by Joseph Meredith Toner (Albany, 1893).

Washington's very famous journal has received a detailed discussion in the body of this study.

— Journal of my journey over the mountains while surveying

for Lord Thomas Fairfax, baron of Cameron in the Northern Neck of Virginia, beyond the Blue Ridge in 1747-8, edited by Joseph Meredith Toner (Albany, N. Y. 1892).

In this journal Washington tells of his first surveying work for the Ohio company.

WASHINGTON, George. The daily journal of, in 1751-2, kept while on a tour from Virginia to the island of Barbadoes, with his invalid brother, Major Lawrence Washington, edited by Joseph Meredith Toner (Albany, N.Y. 1892).

This journal was useful for material on Lawrence Washington.

— The diaries of, 1748-1799, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (New York, 1925), 4 vols.

In his diary of a surveying expedition in 1748, Washington writes of working for the Ohio company. These diaries are also helpful in that they tell of other connections of Washington with the company.

— Letters to, and accompanying papers, edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton (New York, 1898-1902), 5 vols.

Hamilton's footnotes may be used to advantage. His work also reproduces many of Washington's letters concerning his interest in western lands.

— The writings of, edited by Worthington C. Ford (New York, 1889-93), 14 vols.

Ford's footnotes are accurate and serviceable.

— The writings of, edited by Jared Sparks (Boston, 1837), 12 vols.

Sparks presents a description of the Ohio company as well as two important letters between Robert Dinwiddie and Lawrence Washington.

— The writings of, from the original manuscript sources, 1745-1799, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington, D. C., 1931 to date), 25 vols.

This is the most complete and scholarly collection of Washington's writings. Washington was greatly interested in the west and several of his letters pertain to the Ohio company's problems.

WHARTON correspondence (Pennsylvania historical society).

Thomas and Samuel Wharton were leading figures in the Ohio controversy after 1768 and consequently their correspondence is of great value.

WHARTON, Samuel Edward and Bancroft. View of the title to Indiana, a tract of country on the river Ohio, containing Indian

conferences at Johnson-Hall in may, 1755: the deed of the Six Nations to the proprietors of Indiana: the minutes of the congress at Fort Stanwix, in october and november 1768: the deed of the Indians, settling the boundary line between the English and Indian lands: and the opinion of counsel on the title of the proprietors of Indiana (Philadelphia, 1776).

For comment on Wharton's works, see Wharton, Samuel, *Plain facts*. . .

[WHARTON, Samuel]. Considerations on the agreement of the lord commissioners of his majesty's treasury, with the honorable Thomas Walpole and his associates, for lands upon the river Ohio, in North America; in a letter to a member of parliament (London, 1774).

— Facts and observations: respecting the country granted to his majesty by the six united nations of Indians, on the south east side of the river Ohio, in North America; the establishment of a new colony there, and the causes of the Indian war, which, last year, desolated the frontier settlements of the provinces of Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia (London, 1775).

— Plain facts: being an examination into the rights of the Indian nations of America, to their respective countries; and a vindication of the grant, from the six united nations of Indians, to the proprietors of Indiana, against the decision of the legislature of Virginia together with authentic documents, proving that the territory westward of the Alleghany mountains never belonged to Virginia (Philadelphia, 1781).

Wharton, founder of the Walpole company, wrote this defense of the grant of land to his company because of the fight he was having with the Ohio company. Wharton treated the matter in a historical manner, thus attempting to prove that the Ohio company members and for that matter, the Virginia government, recognized that the Ohio region never belonged to Virginia. If such were true, then Virginia would never hold illegally the king's grant of land in the Ohio region. All of Wharton's various works pertain to this same general problem in one form or another.

— Report of the lords commissioners for trade and plantations on the petition of the honorable Thomas Walpole, Benjamin Franklin, John Sargent, and Samuel Wharton, esquires, and



their associates for a grant of lands on the river Ohio with observations and remarks (London, 1772).

WHARTON, Samuel. Statement for the petitioners in the case of the Walpole company grant (s. l., 1771).

— To the king's most excellent majesty in council; the memorial of the honorable Thomas Walpole, in behalf of himself and the Earl of Hartford, Earl Tampla, and the right honorable Charles, Lord Camden, the honorable Richard Walpole, the honorable Robert Walpole, Sir Henry Featherstonebaugh, baronet, Sir George Colebrooke, baronet, Thomas Pitt, esquire, Richard Jackson, esquire, John Sargent, esquire, and Samuel Wharton, esquire, their associates (London, 1774).

WHARTON, Thomas. "Selections from the letter-books of Thomas Wharton of Philadelphia, 1775-1783." *The Pennsylvania magazine of history and biography*, xxxiii, (july, october, 1909) 319-339, 432-453.

WILSON, Samuel M. *The Ohio company of Virginia, 1748-1798* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1926).

Judge Wilson's study is primarily concerned with the problem of various land grants in Kentucky and pertains very little to the Pennsylvania region.

— "Washington's relations to Tennessee and Kentucky." *East Tennessee historical society's publications* (january, 1933), 3-21.

WROTH, Lawrence C. "The story of Thomas Cresap, a Maryland pioneer." *Maryland historical magazine*, ix.



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