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Confluences of Peace and Power:
A Microhistory of Peacemaking in Trans-Appalachia, 1765

by

Andrew Dyrli Hermeling

A Dissertation
Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

Lehigh University

May, 2025

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Andrew Dyrli Hermeling

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Confluences of Peace and Power:
A Microhistory of Peacemaking in Trans-Appalachia, 1765

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*Once, while writing this dissertation,
I accidentally copied and pasted a text message to my wife into a footnote.*

*After telling her about this,
she responded, "Leave it, it'll be my legacy."*

Kari, you are so much more than a footnote.

All of this is for you.

Acknowledgements

I have been working on this project, in one form or another, since I was in fourth grade, and thus it is of little surprise that I have many people whom I need to acknowledge.

First, to the historians who have shaped me. Michelle LeMaster, you have guided me through this process with humor and care. When you first agreed to be my advisor in 2014, I doubt you thought you would *still* be my advisor in 2025. I promise to learn the difference between “farther” and “further” fa/urther down the line. William Bulman, John Savage, and Scott Paul Gordon, not only have you been equally caring through this process, as teachers, each of you have also transformed how I think. I am sure you can see your fingerprints throughout these pages. And while you were not on my committee, I would be remiss if I did not also send a heartfelt thank you to Monica Najjar and María Bárbara Zepeda Cortés, as you were equally instrumental in shaping who I am as a historian. Likewise, many thanks to Jean Soderlund, you guided me through my master’s work and planted the first seeds of this dissertation. I am also thankful for the support of my colleagues in Lehigh’s history department and the Lawrence Henry Gipson Institute for Eighteenth-Century Studies, especially Rachel Engl Taggart and Samuel Dodge. Finally, to John Fea and Bernardo Michael, as historians you transformed and inspired me when I first arrived on campus as an 18-year-old history major. All of this is probably your fault too.

Second, to my wonderful family. My wife, Kari, you have been a constant partner and your patience with me never wavered as I spent summers and Saturdays writing.

Simply put, you are the love of my life and my deepest inspiration. Nilsa and Oskar, neither of you were around when I started this work, and I am in awe of who you have become as I wrote this. I honestly hope this makes you as proud of me as I am of you. Many thanks to Hazel and Dan as well. I am not exactly sure why you keep talking about my work at parties, but knowing how eagerly you have awaited reading this motivates me. And to my mother, Peggy, the first doctor I had the joy of knowing. Seeing you do this first gave me the confidence to know that I could do it too. To my grandfather Dana, you were the first to tell me stories of the past and you still have not stopped. I promise to keep the stories going. To my Hermeling family, thank you for letting me crash on couches and in guest rooms when I travelled for conferences and research, trips that conveniently followed the travel schedule of the St. Louis Cardinals. And thank you Claire for your photography support. Finally, to all the Dyrllis. I have been a graduate student almost as long as I have been a member of this family. I am honored to be able to now put your name—which you have generously let me take as my own—on the spine of this dissertation. Karl, Quinn, and Ethan, thank you for competing to see who could get the best photograph of the Battle of Wyoming Memorial.

Third, to my academic community at the Stone Independent School. When I started this journey, I did not think graduate work would lead me to teaching at a high school. But I am so thankful that, on a whim, I decided to join this remarkable community of educators. Mike Simpson and Abby Kirchner, thank you for giving me the time, space, and encouragement to finish this project. Horst Rosenberg, you are the best fellow time traveler and mustache wearer I could imagine having. To Maribel Perez Arias

[Aymara], you have been an equally invaluable sounding board for my anthropological theorizing. To the rest of my colleagues, thank you for always being interested in nerding out with me, and know how much I love returning the favor. And to my brilliant students, the joy you find in learning has energized me way more than the gallons of coffee, tea, and Diet Coke that I have consumed while writing. And thanks especially to Raya for helping me draw the map.

Lastly, there are those along the way who intersected with this work yet shaped it profoundly. To the staff of the state archives of Pennsylvania as well as those involved in the digitization of the Thomas Gage papers at the William L. Clements Library, thank you for assisting in giving me access to invaluable documents from the comfort of my own space. Thanks to Kelsey Todd Grimm who hosted me at the Great Lakes-Ohio Valley Ethnohistory collection at Indiana University. Thank you to Scott Smith at Franklin & Marshall College who graciously used his borrowing privileges to help me get my hands on hard-to-find books in their collection. Thank you to Dana Overholt for traveling to Newcomerstown, Ohio to capture images of the Lenape Diaspora Memorial. And thanks to Windsor, Ontario's Ken Turner who helped me track down the final resting place of Alexander McKee.

*Ye fertile Fields and glad'ning Streams, adieu;
Ye Fountains that have quenched my scorching Thirst,
Ye Shades that hid the Sun-beams from my Head,
Ye Groves and Hills that yielded me the Chace,
Ye flow'ry Meads, and Banks, and bending trees,
And thou proud Earth, made drunk with Royal Blood,
I am no more your Owner and your King.
But witness for me to your new base Lords,
That my unconquered Mind defies them still;
And though I fly, 'tis on the Wings of Hope.
Yes, I will hence where there's no British Foe,
And wait a Respite from this Storm of Woe;
Beget more Sons, fresh Troops collect and arm,
And other Schemes of future Greatness form;
Britons may boast, the Gods may have their Will,
Ponteach I am, and shall be Ponteach still.*

—Robert Rogers, *Ponteach; or The Savages of America, a Tragedy* (1766)

*Tales of spirits ever journeying, ever journeying
Tales of a good man come and gone, come and gone
Gone the days of Native might, but still the legends linger on
Ah ooh, ah ooh*

*Pontiac the chief and warrior, chief and warrior
Raised his wampum belts of war, belts of war
30 belts for 30 nations to drive the strangers from his shore
Ah ooh, ah ooh*

—Willie Dunn [Mi'kmaq], "Pontiac" (1978)

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Table 1: List of Indigenous Autonyms and Corresponding Exonyms

Autonym	Common Exonym(s)
Haudenosaunee	Iroquois
<i>Kanien'kehá:ka</i>	<i>Mohawk</i>
<i>Onyota'a:ka</i>	<i>Oneida</i>
<i>Onoñda'gegá'</i>	<i>Onondaga</i>
<i>Gayogohó:nq'</i>	<i>Cayuga</i>
<i>Onödowá'ga</i>	<i>Seneca</i>
<i>Skarù:rę?</i>	<i>Tuscarora</i>
Lenape	Delaware
Shaawanwa	Shawnee
Myaamia	Miami
Peeyankihšiaki	Piankesaw
Kiikaapoa	Kickapoo
Bodéwadomi	Potawatomi
Wendat	Huron/Wyandot
Ojibwe	Chippewa
Waayaahatanwa	Wea/Ouiatanon
Meshkwahkihak	Meskwaki/Fox
Anigiduwag	Cherokee
Mi'kmaq	Micmac
Odawa	Ottawa
Wolastoqiyik	Maliseet
Niúachi	Missouri
Wahzhazhe	Osage
Peewaareewa	Peoria

Table 2: List of Published Source Abbreviations

Title	Abbreviation
Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library	
<i>Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War</i>	<i>IOE</i>
<i>Trade and Politics</i>	<i>T&P</i>
<i>The Critical Period</i>	<i>TCP</i>
<i>The New Regime</i>	<i>TNR</i>
<i>The Papers of Benjamin Franklin</i>	<i>BFP</i>
<i>Colonial Records of Pennsylvania</i>	<i>CRPA</i>
<i>Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York</i>	<i>DRNY</i>
<i>The Papers of Henry Bouquet</i>	<i>HBP</i>
<i>Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania</i>	<i>MPCP</i>
<i>The Papers of Sir William Johnson</i>	<i>WJP</i>

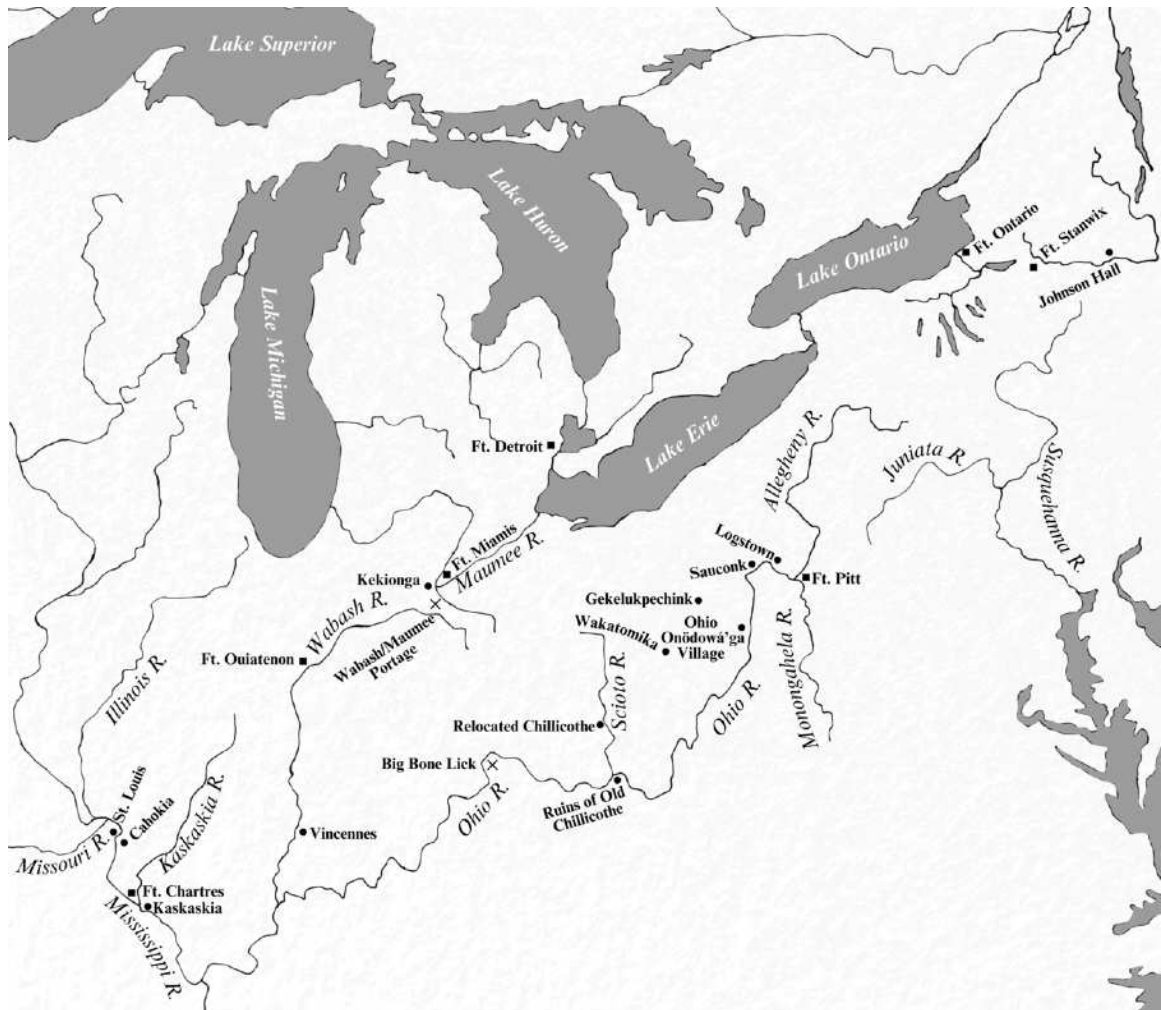


Figure 0.1: Map of the trans-Appalachian West during Pontiac's War. Map by Raya Hay and the author, March 30, 2025.

Introduction

Robert Rogers, known primarily for his innovations in forest warfare while commanding Rogers' Rangers, had met Pontiac—the Odawa [Ottawa] *ogima*, or war chief—in 1760 when Rogers was sent to oversee the transfer of Fort Detroit from French to British control after the fall of Montréal during the Seven Years' War. Upon meeting, Pontiac shared a calumet with Rogers and offered his assistance, assuring Rogers that Pontiac had the authority to declare to the Indigenous peoples of the region that Rogers was not to be harmed despite being an erstwhile enemy. However, Pontiac's support for Rogers' work was short-lived, as three years later Rogers had to fight to defend the fort against a confederation of Indigenous peoples from the Great Lakes under the command of Pontiac, a key battle within the war that now bears Pontiac's name.¹

Both his time spent meeting with Pontiac and fighting against him made a strong impression on Rogers. In 1765, as British agents and Indigenous diplomats discussed peace terms, Rogers traveled to London and attempted to transition from a career as a soldier to one as an author seeking his fortune among the literary elite in the metropole. Londoners, fascinated by stories of the “wilds” of the American colonies, were enthusiastic about his first two works, *The Journals of Major Robert Rogers* and *A Concise Account of North America*, the latter of which described Rogers' first meeting with Pontiac. However, Rogers' final publication was much more poorly received, a play dramatizing the life of his former adversary, titled *Ponteach; or the Savages of America, a Tragedy*. While the play was never staged, being broadly panned by critics upon its

¹ There is much debate over what to properly name this particular conflict. For the sake of clarity, “Pontiac's War” will be used consistently within this dissertation.

publication, it was in many ways emblematic of a mythologizing process that transmogrified Pontiac from a very real *ogima* and historical agent into an avatar of valiant-yet-doomed Indigenous resistance, standing hopelessly against the inevitability of “civilization.” Thus a new, imagined Pontiac was born.²

Rogers’ play ended with a tragic monologue—typical of the period—with Pontiac standing alone on the stage proclaiming that he would migrate to lands “where there’s no British foe,” so that he could rebuild his resistance movement and “beget more sons” who would become “fresh troops, [to] collect and arm.” With his final words Pontiac lamented that while “Britons may boast, the gods may have their will,” he was undaunted, playing the part of “tragic hero” by stating that “Ponthead I am, and shall be Ponthead still.”³ In many ways, the ending of Rogers’ play was simultaneously the beginning of the career of this imagined Pontiac, one that endures to this day. In the nineteenth century, the historian Francis Parkman cast Pontiac in a way that bore striking resemblance to Rogers’ character. In the words of Gregory Evans Dowd, Parkman’s Pontiac served “as the Indians’ forlorn hope, the best and brightest of a doomed and inherently benighted race, a

² Tiffany Potter, “Introduction: Staging Savagery and Fictionalizing Colonialism,” in *Ponthead; or the Savages of America, a Tragedy*, ed. Tiffany Potter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 16-21. Potter, in her otherwise excellent reproduction, contextualization, and annotation of *Ponthead*, nonetheless gives a sympathetic reading of Rogers’ portrayal of the real Pontiac that is unwarranted. While Rogers’ experiences with Indigenous peoples afforded him a somewhat deeper ethnographic understanding of their cultures and societies, much of his fame was rooted in the successful deployment of indiscriminate violence and destruction against Indigenous communities. Notably, he was known as “Wobomagonda,” or “White Devil” among the Wabanaki after he burned their community of Odanak to the ground, killing 200 Wabanaki people in the process by his own estimation. Stephen Brumwell, *White Devil: A True Story of War, Savagery, and Vengeance in Colonial America* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2005), 13.

³ Potter, “Introduction: Staging Savagery and Fictionalizing Colonialism,” 161. Gordon M. Sayre explores in great detail how American literature created a process by which the leaders of Indigenous resistance were portrayed as heroes despite being enemies to colonial rule. Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1-41, 126-161.

man of the savage past valiantly but futilely fighting the civilized future.”⁴ Even as he would surely bristle at Parkman’s racism, a century later, the Mi’kmaq singer-songwriter Willie Dunn likewise could not escape the shadow of Pontiac’s avatar when he sang of him as a “good man, come and gone.” For Dunn, Pontiac represented the sobering truth that “gone [were] the days of Native might.” In its place, only “the legends linger on.”⁵

This imagined Pontiac is but one example of the tragic figures within popular discourses around Indigenous peoples, as he joins a veritable pantheon of avatars of tragedy, such as Pocahontas, Tecumseh, Chief Joseph, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Geronimo. As historian Jean M. O’Brien [White Earth Band of Ojibwe] argues, all of this work served to insist “that non-Indians held exclusive sway over modernity, denied modernity to Indians, and in the process created a narrative of Indian extinction that has stubbornly remained in the consciousness and unconsciousness of Americans.”⁶ And yet the presence of figures like Pontiac, and the acknowledgement that even their imagined portrayals were attached to a real, lived experience cannot be ignored, thus creating a paradox that demands reconciliation. For Gordon M. Sayre, resolving this paradox required catharsis, “for only catharsis reconciles the contradictory reaction of enmity and admiration, pity, fear, and censure and articulates the responses of both historical agents and distant audiences.”⁷ And thus, the tragic Indian hero, as portrayed in Disney films, as

⁴ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 5.

⁵ Willie Dunn, “Pontiac.” Recorded 1978, track 13 on *Creation Never Sleeps, Creation Never Dies*, Light in the Attic Records, vinyl LP.

⁶ Jean M. O’Brien, *First and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xiii.

⁷ Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero*, 5-6.

sports mascots, and in public memorials provides a near constant opportunity for a settler culture to practice this catharsis, even as they do not always do so consciously.⁸

Beyond providing catharsis, portraying Pontiac as a notably “good man, come and gone,” whose “legend lingers on,” also implies that he was anomalous. Historian Philip J. Deloria [Standing Rock Sioux] warns of the dangers of treating those Indigenous people who left their mark on an archive that so often ignored them as anomalies, arguing that, “expectations and anomalies are mutually constitutive—they make each other. To assert that a person or an event is anomalous cannot help but serve to create and to reinforce other expectations.”⁹ In other words, to treat Pontiac’s leadership as anomalous is to make him into an exception that proves the rule. It is into these larger currents that this dissertation seeks to intervene. It is a study of peace, both as a choice and a practice, during a time much more commonly seen as exceedingly violent.¹⁰ To be clear, this study does not seek to argue that there was less violence than assumed—as this study will make abundantly obvious, this peace mission was marred by violence. Instead, it seeks to make clear that peace, like violence, was a choice available to historical agents. In other words, the violence of colonialism was not inevitable, nor were those who advocated for peace anomalous. When Pontiac, like so-many other Indigenous leaders, is depicted as an avatar of honorable yet doomed resistance, it reinforces the expectation that Indians were

⁸ For more on the role of public art in this process, see Lisa Blee and Jean M. O’Brien, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

⁹ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 5.

¹⁰ “Peace,” as a term, is not used lightly here, as this dissertation is deeply inspired by the interdisciplinary field of peace studies, which seeks to intervene into the underdeveloped historiography of early American peace history. This will be discussed further in both the methodology and historiography sections below.

excusable collateral victims of progress. There is too much value in troubling those expectations—which Deloria makes clear are discourses that define the broad swath of relationships between colonizer and colonized—to not make an attempt to tell the story of not only Pontiac, but the many historical agents, Indigenous or not, that courageously and sincerely sought peace in 1765. As Deloria implores his readers, one must “distinguish between the anomalous, which reinforces expectations, and the unexpected, which resists categorization and, thereby, questions expectation itself.”¹¹

The peacemaking that took place was not anomalous, but within the historiography of colonialism in North America, it was certainly unexpected. When representatives of the British, Shaawanwaki [Shawnee], Wendat [Huron], Lenape [Delaware], Haudenosaunee [Iroquois], Peeyankihšiki [Piankeshaw], Myaamiaki [Miami], Kiikaapoa [Kickapoo], Mascouten, Odawa, Bodéwadomi [Potawatomi], Waayaahthanwa [Wea/Ojibwe], Meshkwahkihak [Meskwaki/Fox], and Ojibwe met, they sought to redefine the political landscape that had so recently been upturned by the events of the Seven Years’ War. The British officials present were seeking acceptance from Indigenous delegates of British sovereignty over the trans-Appalachian West—an admittedly problematic term that denotes the territory that stretched west from the Forks of the Ohio to the Mississippi River and north to the Great Lakes—that they believed they had secured from the French at the Treaty of Paris two years earlier. While the Indians in attendance represented nations that had previously united in arms against the British, by the time they met to discuss terms, their various political positions had

¹¹ Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 11.

diverged. Realizing that their vision of the complete expulsion of European-descended people from the region was not to come to fruition, they sought to reset and redefine their relationships with the British—arguing for assurances that British occupation would be limited to the strategic network of formerly French forts that served as crucial sites of trade that had become invaluable to Indian and empire alike. But they also had to navigate old tensions between themselves, tensions that they had set aside while confederated in opposition to a common foe. Simultaneously, British agents also had to contend with the violent protestations of colonial settlers who wanted more than either Indians or British officials were willing to guarantee, particularly access to land titles in this territory, whether for speculation or expanded settlement.

This dissertation is a microhistory of those meetings, which began with British Indian agent George Croghan's arrival at Fort Pitt on the final day of February 1765 and ended later that year in September after a series of conversations in Detroit with Pontiac and other representatives from the many nations of the Great Lakes. Throughout these meetings, delegates debated issues that would be recognizable today as standard diplomatic fare, such as trade, sovereignty, and territory. However, also on the table were complicated discussions of cosmology, eschatology, and culturally differentiated definitions of kinship. Moreover, each delegate, in addition to coming from a diverse array of cultures and polities, also drew upon an equally diverse array of personal experiences, interests, beliefs and allegiances. And yet, by the end of these meetings, the vast majority of delegates in attendance walked away with some measure of optimism that peace was possible, even if in the end that peace was fleeting. Thus, this dissertation

seeks to trace the many paths taken—both literally and figuratively—en route to peace. Whereas previous histories of Pontiac’s War emphasize the ultimate failure of these peace proceedings, they do so teleologically, perhaps most emblematically in the title of David Dixon’s military and political history of the conflict, *Never Come to Peace Again*.¹² While it is true that the Proclamation Line of 1763 proved unenforceable, Croghan died penniless during the American Revolution under suspicion from both patriots and loyalists alike, and Pontiac was assassinated by a political rival, all of this lay in the future during the summer of 1765. By taking a microhistorical approach, this dissertation can avoid teleologies and emphasize the agency of individuals seeking peace as a cultural, social, and, most specifically, diplomatic process.

The records of these proceedings are a rich archive of transcultural politics and diplomacy.¹³ But as valuable as these treaty records are, they also obfuscate the tangled webs that connected and pulled on the diplomats who gathered together. For, while official British records speak with the voice of an empire seeking total control over recently acquired territories and populations, early American empires were in fact far more fragile. As Jacob E. Lee argues, “early American empires operated as a series of overlapping familial, economic, and diplomatic networks. Those networks permeated

¹² David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac’s Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005).

¹³ The use of the word transcultural here is highly intentional, as in this case diplomacy and politics were not a simple hybrid or cross-cultural product but instead represented a far more amorphous and complicated mixture and evolution of many intertwined cultures. The distinctions between these models of culture change are explored by Walter D. Mignolo, in *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 14-15. For more on the importance of treaty records Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), especially 231.

empires and extended beyond their borders, and kin ties pulled in multiple directions.”¹⁴ Thus, rather than a swath of territory painted a single color on a map, British imperial claims in North America could be seen as a framework of relationships, both formal and informal, that had to be delicately maintained. British Indian agents knew, even if their administrative superiors did not, that imperial control of British North America was built upon a delicate lattice of commitments with Indigenous nations, and this lattice was a far cry from full sovereignty as European empires understood it. Indian diplomats were well aware of this as well, and negotiated with varying degrees of success for better positions within this framework for the communities they represented. And while this framework was defined in part through words written on paper, it was also built on years of personal familiarity, beaded belts of wampum, intimate kinship relationships built through marriage and adoption, and complex cultural systems of deference and status underwritten by spiritual rituals and material exchange.

The meaning and substance of this framework was not immediately perceived the same way by all of those present at these negotiations, even as they did seem to agree that the framework existed and was vital to making peace. As such, this transcultural diplomacy also required the careful navigation of—and at times delicate improvisation within—overlapping cultural and social fields, the structured social and cultural spaces through which these agents operated.¹⁵ For example, to whom did land belong and how

¹⁴ Jacob E. Lee, *Master of the Middle Waters: Indian Nations and Colonial Ambitions along the Mississippi* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019): 3. This dissertation is also deeply indebted to Eliga Gould’s call in “Entangled Atlantic Histories: A Response from the Anglo-American Periphery,” *American Historical Review* 112, no. 5 (December, 2007): 1415-1422.

¹⁵ The language of “fields” and “improvisation” reflects a close engagement with the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu and those that have followed in his thinking. See the methodology section for a more thorough explanation of how practice theory informs this dissertation.

was that ownership defined? What did it truly mean to be kin? From where does one's authority to speak for one's people originate? The answers to all of these questions—a list that is by no means exhaustive—were and continue to be deeply ontological. In the case of kinship, for example, a captive in one community's understanding was in fact a brother in another's. Further, for that individual, disentangling those overlapping ontologies was easier said than done. As such, to understand, in this instance, the meaning of transcultural captive exchange requires a deep interrogation of just how this action moved across overlapping social and cultural fields.

But this is not to suggest that transcultural exchanges flowed between an Indigenous/colonial binary. For example, while there were certainly ways in which the Haudenosaunee were more similar to the Lenape than they were to the British, within the context of transcultural peace negotiations, the differences between these Indigenous groups were substantive and had a profound impact on their diplomatic approaches. Similarly, their diplomacy was conducted under the shadow of hundreds of years of history between these two groups. And this is but one example, as the martial reputation of the Shaawanwa was likewise profoundly influential as the Myaamiaki deliberated how to proceed after an ill-conceived assault on Croghan's multicultural party of diplomats traveling up the Wabash River.

It is equally important to give focused attention to the agency and emotions of those who were unrecorded yet haunt the archive. When diplomats, whether settler or Indigenous, imbued their speeches (and thus the archive) with emotional pleas to consider the communities back home that they represented, it is important to recognize

the ways in which those pleas are archival traces of the power and agency of unnamed individuals (often women), their unrecorded conversations around fires and hearths, and the historical strength of social connectivity. Returning again to the example of transcultural captive/adoptee exchange, while the discussions in treaty records convey a portion of the emotions of men negotiating on behalf of families back home, it flattens the full meaning of these exchanges to ignore the agency of those families.¹⁶ Although their exact words may not appear in the archives, this dissertation will attempt to create space for the traces of those often unnamed kin and community members back home, not just those who spoke at diplomatic meetings. In lieu of the words they spoke, this dissertation, for example, takes time to unpack the power and influence they wielded and the pain that diplomats worked to assuage.

While such concerns apply across a wide range of transcultural diplomatic contexts, this dissertation is also a work of microhistory, and therefore the answers will not purport to be nomothetic explanations of the functioning of peace and diplomacy broadly. In fact, it is a core argument of this dissertation that the peacemaking being studied can only be explained through an understanding of the specific agents involved. For example, this dissertation gives careful attention to the second vision of the Lenape prophet Neolin, who revised his eschatology prior to negotiations. His first vision had previously foreseen a North America once again devoid of white settlers and this vision inspired many Indians from distant nations—with Pontiac being the most famous—to take up arms against the British. But his second vision instead argued that peace would

¹⁶ The term “captive/adoptee” is used intentionally here, as it is at times impossible to disentangle these identities for many of the individuals affected.

come from focused cooperation between the Lenape and Pennsylvania's Quakers alone. Was this revision a calculated attempt to forge a closer relationship with the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures¹⁷—a private group of Quakers who sought to advocate on behalf of Indigenous Americans? And perhaps more cynically, was this an attempt to circumvent the position of privilege held by the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee due to the Six Nations' proximity to the Northern Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the British Empire, Sir William Johnson?

Similarly, the unique biography of Johnson's hand-picked agent on the ground, George Croghan, is critical for explaining the course of this particular diplomatic process. What motivated Croghan to take certain positions during negotiations? Was he diligently following the orders of his superior Johnson? Or did he instead take positions rooted in his deep-seated disdain for Quakers? Or was he more motivated by self-preservation, as his business practices and accumulation of land titles fomented tensions between competing speculators and individual colonial governments alike? Or was he driven by his affections for his Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] wife Catharine Tekarihoga? Or was this relationship purely a power grab by a settler who knew the economic and political value of kinship connections to Indigenous communities?

The gendered nature of domestic Indigenous politics, religiously inflected alternative visions of colonial North America, and a network of investors, traders, and speculators connected by promises and debts were all working behind the proceedings

¹⁷ Hereafter referred to as "The Friendly Association."

even if their signatures did not appear on future treaties. Understanding how they were connected to the officially sanctioned diplomats is as important to understanding the *how* of peace as interpreting the diplomats' own words as recorded in the treaty minutes. By placing these confluences of power in the foreground of the study, one can also see more clearly the contrasting stakes and impacts of the peace negotiations, leading to alternative assessments of the successes and shortcomings of the results from the perspectives of the communities invested in the proceedings.

As one peels back the layers of these questions, new questions are more often uncovered than clear answers. While it is undoubtable that families and romantic partners wielded influence over the proceedings, they are often unnamed in the archive. How are they then to be represented in a narrative that takes their feelings, motivations, and power seriously? In other words, how does one return agency to the mothers who either lost their adopted children over the course of these negotiations or saw the return of their children who had been captured years earlier? And what of the captive/adoptees, with their internally conflicted identities and desires, who are often portrayed as pawns of negotiation by both the archive and subsequent studies? How did their own pleas and pains intertwine with the proscribed speeches of diplomats during negotiations? These questions are at once analytical and narrative. While such an approach is theoretically rich, it will also reveal more clearly the way this diplomatic event not only had global political ramifications but was equally impactful on a diverse array of communities and individual lives as well as the improvisational creativity that was required to solidify a diplomatic agreement.

Foregrounding individuals, the unique situations that connected them to the peace process, and the ways they navigated diplomatic social field/s exposes a much more human picture of peacemaking. This study focuses on this diplomatic moment because of its immense richness and the vast diversity of peoples and interests that came together. It is about how agents navigated the many contexts in which they found themselves. Such an approach reveals a more atomized understanding of peace in an age of imperialism and its impact on individuals without the need to privilege certain voices in service of a larger, grand narrative. However, what unites the answers to these questions is the way their answers trouble expectations about the inevitability of transcultural violence, which is to say that even as they are largely idiographic explanations of a complicated confluence of events in 1765, they prove that peace was possible and thus the rejection of peace was a choice, not a teleological inevitability. While the conditions of peace in other contexts would therefore certainly be strikingly different, it is a goal of this dissertation, in line with a nascent turn towards peace studies in the eighteenth century, to make clear that there was not only space for peace but that it can be found if one knows where to look.

Methodology

At its core, this dissertation seeks to explore the tensions between structure and agency within the context of a single, transcultural moment of peacemaking. As such, this dissertation is a work of microhistory that relies heavily on the theories and methodologies of both ethnohistory and practice theory. Moreover, as the goals of these

negotiations were “peace,” the meaning of this term must be rigorously defined, both culturally and ontologically.

Firstly, this dissertation is deeply indebted to the sociological and anthropological concepts that fall under the umbrella of “practice theory.” Broadly, practice theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Marshall Sahlins, Sherry Ortner, Theodore Schatzki, and Robert Stones simultaneously deny that social and cultural structures determine human actions while also rejecting the notion that human agents operate independently of the social and cultural structures that define the fields through which they move and operate. Instead, as Sherry Ortner argues, the relationship between agent and structure is dialectical, not oppositional.¹⁸ As such, practices—and for the purposes of this dissertation, diplomatic practices particularly—should be seen as sites of improvisation that simultaneously transform agents on the ground as well as the larger social and cultural schemas that define how the world is perceived by those agents.¹⁹

It thus follows that under the rubric of practice theory, the term “field” also takes on a particular meaning. A field, following Bourdieu, is a domain of social interaction with its own rules, whether explicitly or implicitly defined. However, fields, as opposed to the more rigid structures theorized by structural anthropologists, are constantly being reformulated. In this sense, the actors in treaty negotiations were playing on “diplomatic fields,” in which there are defined rules about proper behavior or reasonable expectations.

¹⁸ Sherry B. Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 2. While practice theory is not new, it continues to find purchase among contemporary sociologists, anthropologists, and others doing a wide range of interdisciplinary work.

¹⁹ Theodore R. Schatzki, “Introduction,” *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, ed. Theodore Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina, and Eike Von Savigny (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), 1-14. Ortner, 18.

However, the diplomats had agency within such parameters, and, whether through conscious choice or a more amorphous “feel for the game,” deployed strategies in order to negotiate towards their preferred outcomes in ways that may have reaffirmed the “rules” or redefined them. Ortner takes both this line of thinking and the metaphor a step further, describing the actions of individuals within fields as a “serious game,” as they feature a remarkable amount of “play,” success was contingent upon “skill,” and the stakes of the game were of the utmost seriousness.²⁰

In order to see the dialectic of structure and agency at work within the diplomatic field, a microhistorical approach is profoundly useful. As István M. Szijártó argues, “the microhistorical approach creates a focal point, collecting the different rays coming from the past.” Or, as Giovanni Levi argues, “the unifying principal of all microhistorical research is the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved.”²¹ By dissecting the many contingencies, closely tracing the connections between people across a multitude of cultures, and thinking deeply about the different and often profoundly conflicted motivations behind individual actions, this dissertation will seek to give a more nuanced accounting of the ways diverse cultures, coalitions, and societies sought peace through diplomacy.

²⁰ Sherry Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 12-13.

²¹ Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 101. See also Francesca Trivellato, “Is there a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?” *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011). For more on the tensions between social and cultural historical methodologies in microhistory, see Simona Cerutti, “Microhistory: Social Relations versus Cultural Models,” in *Between Sociology and History: Essays on Microhistory, Collective Actions, and Nation-Building*, Anna-Maija Castrén, Markku Lonkila, and Matti Peltonen, eds. (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2004), 17-39; Renata Ago, “From the Archives to the Library and Back: Culture and Microhistory,” in *Between Sociology and History*, 41-50.

But the commitment to a microhistorical methodology should not be interpreted as an intentional limitation of scale. As much as this is a microhistory, it is also a firmly Atlantic history. As Lana Putnam observes, these two approaches are not as antithetical as they might seem. As she argues, an Atlantic microhistory offers a window into the vast interconnectedness of the Atlantic world that nonetheless “reduces the scale of observation...to the level of personal encounters or individual life histories,” so as to “[prove] the existence of connections heretofore denied.”²² Such an approach is especially vital in studies of cultural encounter, for, as Philip D. Morgan argues, “we must, on the one hand, encompass whole panoramas, entire sets of interrelated systems, truly pan-global contexts, and on the other, attend to individual particularities, local settings, and specific situational sockets.”²³ Such an approach is echoed in Bénédicte Zimmermann’s proposed *histoire croisée*, which seeks to solve the issues caused by “those basic dichotomies with which the social sciences struggle, structure versus action being just one of these, which works along with and often overlaps with others such as macro/micro, diachrony/synchrony, global/local, general/singular.”²⁴ Simply put, while the course of events described in this dissertation cannot be understood unless fully

²² Lara Putnam, “To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 615-616. For a rebuttal against accusations that microhistory is overly narrow, see Francesca Trivellato, “A New Battle for History in the Twenty-First Century?” *Annales* 70, no. 2 (2015): 261-270.

²³ Philip D. Morgan, “Encounters between British and ‘indigenous’ peoples, c. 1500-c.1800,” in *Empires and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850*, eds. Martin Daunton and Rick Halpern (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 68.

²⁴ Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Histoire Croisée: A Relational Process-based Approach,” *Footprint: Delft Architecture Theory Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2020): 10. See also Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (February 2006): 30-50 and Sebouh David Aslanian, Joyce E. Chaplin, Ann McGrath, and Kristin Mann, “How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History,” *American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December, 2013), 1431-1472.

contextualized at a personal, communal, and local scale observed through a tight chronology, they are nonetheless embedded within global, imperial, and structural currents that operate on a wider timescale.

The methodology of this dissertation has also been deeply influenced by the still emerging interdisciplinary literature of peace studies. For example, while Johan Galtung is not strictly a practice theorist, his work has influenced this dissertation's approach to the theoretical relationship between agent and structure and the distinction between personal and structural violence. While personal violence is defined as an attack on an individual agent by another individual agent, structural violence is that which culturally or socially limits the potential of individual agents without the use of personal violence. From this Galtung posits a distinction between "negative" and "positive" peace. Negative peace is the absence of personal violence whereas positive peace is the absence of structural violence.²⁵ In investigating historical agents and their peacemaking efforts, Galtung's definitions offer a rubric for understanding different strata of peace and violence. But Galtung's approach will not be used uncritically. Thomas Gregor, for example, notes that distinguishing between "positive" and "negative" peace runs the risk of being overly prescriptive. As such, he views peace at the structural level as coming in three types: "sociative," in which "institutions, values and attitudes...bind individuals in relationships of interest and sentiment"; "restorative," which describe the social approaches to reestablishing a peaceful state; and "separative," which ultimately rejects the moralizing connotations of "negative" and "positive" peace by arguing that peace can

²⁵ Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167-191.

be successfully maintained through various strategies such as avoidance, evasion, and deterrence, strategies that Galtung would categorize as forms of structural violence and therefore antithetical to peace.²⁶ Looking at the archive of these negotiations, it is clear that issues of personal and structural violence were of deep concern, yet one can also see an admixture of all three of Gregor's typologies of peace at work.

However, perhaps most important to this dissertation's methodological approach to peace is the work of anthropologist Donald Tuzin. As Tuzin argues, peace should not be seen as the polar opposite of war but instead as an idealized concept that is imagined *within* the context of violence. Tuzin argues that peace and its relationship to war is akin to philosopher Karl Popper's views on the "asymmetrical relationship of 'truth' and 'falsity,'" in which "truth is approached only through the elimination of error—*approached*, but never definitively attained, for we can never be sure that the next text will not falsify our present wisdom.... As with the methodological linkage of truth and falsity, we approach peace through the elimination of war; hence the paradoxical inherence of peace *within* war." Such an approach allows Tuzin, in his work with the Arapesh of Melanesia, to observe the "specter" of peace "buried inside" the violent cults of war that organized their societies. So too, will this dissertation explore the peacemaking that was at times on full display and in other instances "buried inside" the proceedings being explored.²⁷

²⁶ Thomas Gregor, "Introduction," *A Natural History of Peace*, ed. Thomas Gregor (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), xviii-xx.

²⁷ Donald Tuzin, "The Specter of Peace in Unlikely Places: Concept and Paradox in the Anthropology of Peace," *A Natural History of Peace*, ed. Thomas Gregor (Nashville TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1996), 8-9.

Finally, because the archive as a technology often erases Indigenous experiences by design, this dissertation will also use ethnohistorical methods. As Patricia Galloway notes, ethnohistory requires an element of reflexivity that points to the ways in which historical commitments to an “objectivity written from a ‘nowhere’ standpoint” is “Orientalizing” in the Saidian sense. As ethnohistory is “by definition written by people (even people sharing the same *ethnos* as their subjects) who experience themselves as ‘in history’ about people who may not, or at least not in the same sense,” it is “a moral/ethical exercise.”²⁸ In the case of this dissertation, this will require an awareness of the politics and problematics of text production. But in many ways, the ethnohistorical approach outlined by Galloway is only the start, not the end. As historians and researchers from and among Indigenous communities continue to point out, it is not enough to do good work about Indigenous people, as such a corrective does not work to undo the damage done by years of outsider research. Following in the scathing critiques issued by Indigenous leaders/scholars, perhaps most importantly by Vine Deloria Jr. [Standing Rock Sioux], researchers, especially those from Indigenous communities, have asked scholars to work in ways that respect and center Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith [Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou] argues, a truly decolonizing methodology requires “‘researching back,’ in the same tradition of ‘writing back’ or ‘talking back,’ that characterizes much of the post-colonial and anti-colonial literature.”²⁹

²⁸ Patricia Galloway, *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 8.

²⁹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2012), 8.

So inspired, calls for a more robust, Indigenous-centered approach have been issued, with an explicit outline for students of early America found in a recent forum published across both the *William and Mary Quarterly* and *Early American Literature*, urging researchers to employ methodologies gathered under the umbrella of “Native American and Indigenous studies” (NAIS). Specifically, NAIS as a methodological approach is anchored by four assumptions,

First, that Native people were and continue to be active presences who shape texts, political discourse, and historical events, none of which have predetermined forms or outcomes; second, that Native people have always communicated and expressed themselves in a variety of media, from speeches to images to inscribed materials; third, that Native communities and their knowledge bearers, past and present, possess expertise critical to our fields’ analytic and interpretive work; and fourth, that Native literatures and histories manifest tribally specific genres, languages, chronologies, and geographic boundaries, which often contrast with European phenomena.³⁰

This dissertation seeks to align to all four anchors. The microhistorical approach, for example, centers Native actors, especially those that are marginalized by the archive. Secondly, the importance of Indigenous public oratory traditions and wampum literacy is clearly evident in the peacemaking process. Finally, this dissertation will demonstrate the ways that a simple colonizer/colonized binary obscures the challenges of peacemaking in the eighteenth century. By taking seriously the oral traditions, politics, and ontologies of

³⁰ Alyssa Mt. Pleasant [Tuscarora], Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup, “Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (April 2018), 409. See also Keith Thor Carlson, John Sutton Lutz, David M. Schaepe, and Naxaxalhts’i [Stó:lō], eds., *Towards a New Ethnohistory: Community-Engaged Scholarship Among the People of the River* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018); Shawn Wilson [Opaskwayak Cree], *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2008). For an example of what’s at stake in this conversation, see Christine M. DeLucia’s response to David Silverman’s dismissal of her award-winning work that incorporated NAIS methodologies, Christine M. DeLucia, “Continuing the Intervention: Past, Present, and Future Pathways for Native Studies in Early American History,” *American Historical Review* 125, no. 2 (April 2020), 528-532.

distinct Indigenous communities to better understand how they understood themselves and their histories, this dissertation will make clear that reconciling competing perceptions of what eighteenth-century North America was, its politics, geographies, and cosmologies, was a critical component of the peacemaking process.

In concrete terms, this commitment extends to the terminology used to discuss Indigenous individuals and peoples. As a rule, the preferred contemporary autonym will be used for Indigenous peoples, with the more common exonym indicated in brackets the first time it is used. Additionally, a table is provided before this introduction to aid readers, as some terms are uncommon, even as they are becoming more prevalent in scholarship on Indigenous people. Exonyms in quotations will be replaced with bracketed contemporary autonoms, particularly because the term used in quotations was almost always poorly spelled and at times offensive. However, for the clarity and accuracy of citations, the exonyms in document titles have been left intact. Likewise, when referring to Indigenous people and places, preference will always be given to their Indigenous name, when possible, with the more prevalent name either indicated discursively or in brackets. In many cases this is an imperfect solution to the violent colonization of Indigenous languages, identities, and geographies, as these names were generally captured in European language archives and likely transliterated according to a poor understanding of Indigenous pronunciations and spellings. However, it is at least a closer representation of Indigenous understandings of themselves and their world than European terms. When needed, this dissertation also uses some “measured historical imagination,” to use Rebecca Hall’s phrase, to put those whose words that are missing in the archives

on more equal footing within the narrative, a move that has become increasingly common among feminist scholars and ethnohistorians.³¹ Finally, as has become custom among scholars and authors working on Indigenous issues, when scholars or artists who are themselves Indigenous are cited, their identities, as expressed by the legally recognized name of their nation, will also be referenced in brackets.

This dissertation's documentary base will begin with the imperial records of treaty negotiations. These documents are reliable in two particular ways that support the goals of this dissertation. First, they do seek to accurately transcribe the speeches of settlers, imperial agents, and Indigenous diplomats alike. This is not to say that the transcriptions are perfect, but they do sidestep many of the ethnocentric distortions of other contemporary genres penned by Europeans describing Indigenous people, such as captivity narratives and the histories of Indigenous people written in the eighteenth century. Second, they "accurately" record the names of many of the Indigenous diplomats who were present. Again, while these records are far from perfect, named among the Indigenous delegates were individuals who, at this point, rarely appear in other documents. However, they are nonetheless given space to speak and were therefore presumably known and respected by those at the conference.

Using these two qualities as a starting point, this dissertation will seek a deeper understanding of these conferences than what is superficially written on the page. Firstly, the treaty record offers glimpses of the full expression of Indigenous traditions of oratory. Secondly, one can see the use and circulation of the simultaneously spiritual and

³¹ Rebecca Hall, *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-Led Slave Revolts* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021).

mnemonically essential mediascape of wampum. In the case of the former, the work of Sandra M. Gustafson is especially instructive, as she demonstrates both the fallacy of emphasizing the written word over orality as well as concrete approaches to uncovering orality in the archive.³² Other scholars have turned their attention to wampum literacy, working to “read” these documents on their own terms, rather than understanding them as an “inferior” facsimile of alphabetism.³³ In both cases, this dissertation will seek to read the treaty archive “against the grain” in order to pull out the emotions, expressions, cultural motifs, and nonalphabetically written meanings behind the speeches and references to non-alphabetic documents that appear therein.

By pulling named individuals into the center of the narrative, this dissertation will also seek to trace the interconnected biographies of those who participated. The Irish-born diplomat George Croghan was given responsibility over these proceedings in part because of how deeply connected he was to important people in a remarkably diverse array of communities. While most imperial agents could not be bothered to keep track of Indigenous power brokers and the communities they represented, Croghan, in large part because of his business dealings, knew many of these people by name and broadly

³² Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory & Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), xx. See also, David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). For more on innovative methodological approaches to performance, see Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

³³ Richard Cullen Rath, “Hearing Wampum: The Senses, Mediation, and the Limits of Analogy,” *Colonial Mediascapes: Sensory Worlds of the Early Americas*, eds. Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 291. For more on transcultural engagements with wampum, see Paul Otto, “‘This is that which...they call Wampum:’ Europeans Coming to Terms with Native Shell Beads,” *Early American Studies* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2017), 1-36; Angela M. Haas, “Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2007), 77-100.

understood their cultural differences and conflicting national interests. This knowledge is demonstrated in the way the names of Indigenous diplomats were recorded by Croghan and his record keepers. But one can also assume that Croghan is the locus of the archive in part because he was the primary author of it. With that in mind, while this dissertation cannot truly decentralize Croghan specifically, and the British imperial project more generally, it will engage with him and his work critically, seeking to avoid casting him as either an archetypical hero or villain. Moreover, while a superficial reading of the archive makes it clear that Croghan was *an* important locus, this dissertation will seek to track down the ways other individuals were socially connected, especially Indigenous individuals.

Achieving this goal will also require paying critical analytical attention to gaps and traces in the archive. For example, there is only the faintest archival record of Croghan's wife Catharine Tekarihoga, the daughter of the powerful Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] sachem Nickus. But this relationship is more than a mere biographical detail when considering how Croghan exerted influence as a diplomat. While her exact words may be lost, this dissertation nonetheless explores how Catharine Tekarihoga wielded immense power rather than portraying her as a pawn of the political machinations of powerful men. Similarly, considering the central role played by captive/adoptee exchange within these treaty negotiations, these individuals are often surprisingly unnamed. This dissertation will attempt to reconstruct their jarring transcultural experiences more fully, both by tracing their lives when possible and by employing "measured historical

imagination” when necessary.³⁴

In order to make sure that the “historical imagination” is indeed measured, this dissertation employs “upstreaming” methodologies in a couple of ways. Firstly, it makes every effort to rigorously engage with Indigenous oral traditions as well as the communal memories of Indigenous communities. Sometimes these oral traditions are artifacts of an exploitive “salvage” ethnographic approach typical of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁵ However, these older ethnographic records nonetheless capture the voices of Indigenous peoples, and thus, when read critically, offer a window into how Indigenous people understood and continue to understand their politics, ontologies, and histories. Additionally, these older records will be tempered by newer works and retranslations of oral traditions, often written in much closer partnership with Indigenous communities. This is not to say that there is a stable Indigenous/colonial binary, as it is a working assumption of this dissertation that the “Indigenous” perspective is far from monolithic, and that tensions between particular Indigenous communities were one of the defining features of this diplomatic mission. Secondly, as already indicated above, it carefully interprets the material traces found within the archive. As Scott Manning Stevens [Akwesasne Mohawk] has argued, thin interpretations of Indigenous material

³⁴ For more on this methodological approach, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1-10. In the historical record, Catharine’s name is generally spelled “Tekarihoga,” although, as will be explored more in Chapter 1, the ritual name is now often spelled “Tehkarihoken.” For clarity I have chosen not to change the spelling of the name when associated with Catharine.

³⁵ For more on the wider nineteenth and twentieth-century project of “salvage anthropology,” see Samuel J. Redman, *Prophets and Ghosts: The Story of Salvage Anthropology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

culture have long been a colonialist tool for falsely creating a savage/civilized binary.³⁶

Instead, this dissertation turns to the innovative methodologies associated with NAIS and literary criticism.

Historiography

At its core, this dissertation seeks to answer a growing call for more rigorous historicizations of peace within the early American Atlantic context. As historian Michael Goode argues, the broader interdisciplinary field of peace studies is largely driven by contemporary interests, turning to sociology, anthropology, political science, and psychology to explain the root causes of conflicts. When historians do enter the conversation, they are largely drawn from more recent periodizations, focusing instead on the wars in places like Vietnam, the Balkans, or Israel and Palestine during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. But, as Goode notes:

Early American history, which has never been the focus of peace history, can make a vital contribution toward illuminating the contingencies of peacemaking as an historical process.... In early America, 'peace' could refer to the king's peace, juridical and imperial peace, African-American and [Indigenous] peace practices, peace treaties, familial and household notions of peace, religious peace, and pacifism. All of these forms of peace engaged with violence in complex ways. Historians of peacemaking demand that scholars pay closer attention to how particular groups articulated what 'peace' meant to them and the social and cultural expectations they placed on themselves and others to create a peaceful society. In other words, it requires looking for moments when people in the colonial Americas attempted to create tranquility through 'right

³⁶ Scott Manning Stevens, "Tomahawk: Materiality and Depictions of the Haudenosaunee." *Early American Literature* 53, no. 2 (2018), 475-511.

ordering,' as *they* envisioned and defined it.³⁷

Considering the diversity of voices present both at and behind the diplomatic meetings being analyzed, this dissertation therefore historicizes through a single case-study the nebulous notion of peace in early America on its own historically contingent terms. At once, this dissertation engages with notions of “the king’s peace,” “imperial peace,” “[Indigenous] peace practices,” “peace treaties,” “familial and household notions of peace,” “religious peace” (defined in different ways for different groups), and even Quaker commitments to “pacifism.” Rather than analyze one or two of these diverse expressions of historicized peace, this dissertation demonstrates how, within the diplomatic field, these concepts are interwoven in deeply complicated and creative ways.

Moreover, this dissertation answers Goode’s call to push back against a binary understanding of war and peace. As Goode argues, in early America, peace was more often a “specter,” invoking Tuzin, that haunted conflict rather than a steady state that emerged only when violence ended. Specifically, cultures of violence, whether British or Indigenous, were simultaneously tools for creating peace. In this sense, acts of war, captive-taking, and pan-Indian prophetic calls to “make war upon” a racialized enemy were, ironically, also acts of peace. As Goode states, “peace and violence existed in a reciprocal relationship in the colonial world.... [Indigenous] peoples, colonizers, and imperial states alternated between peace and violence as they tried to achieve a given moral ordering of relationships they believed would best achieve social and political

³⁷ Michael Goode, “The Relevance of Peace in Early American History,” *The Specter of Peace: Rethinking Violence and Power in the Colonial Atlantic*, eds. Michael Goode and John Smolenski (Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2018), 13. For an example of a work that seeks to find peace in “unexpected places,” see Richard W. Pointer, *Pacifist Prophet: Papunhank and the Quest for Peace in Early America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

harmony.... Histories of peacemaking enable us to better see colonialism as a simultaneously peaceful and violent process.”³⁸ All too often, histories of early America, especially histories of intercultural interactions, focus solely on the conflict, precisely because conflict was so persistent. But it is a central premise of this dissertation that while the diplomacy being analyzed was a direct result of conflict, there was a powerful and impactful peace “buried within” that conflict as well.

Beyond its contributions to an underdeveloped historiography of early American peace history, such an approach also allows this dissertation to intervene provocatively within the historiography of Pontiac’s War. Unsurprisingly, histories of the conflict are focused on explaining the causes of the violence. Gregory Evans Dowd argues that the heart of the conflict lay in the clash between two approaches to politics—one imperial and one Indigenous. As Dowd argues, “The status of the Native American peoples in this part of the realm claimed by the British Crown emerged as the single most important issue in Pontiac’s War, far more important than, for example, trade, Indian hating, or even title to the lands themselves.”³⁹ In the wake of this work, many historians have begun taking this oft-overlooked historical event more seriously. Two monographs on Pontiac’s War have followed Dowd’s, although they have not received the same level of scholarly

³⁸ Goode, “The Relevance of Peace in Early American History,” 19-21.

³⁹ Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 2. Dowd is responding to an older and largely problematic historiographical tradition of Pontiac’s War. Works from this tradition include Francis Parkman’s *Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995). Dowd also argues against the far less problematic work of William R. Nester, *“Haughty Conquerors”: Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), which argues that blame for the war should fall squarely on the shoulders of Commander-and-Chief of British forces in North America, Jeffrey Amherst—so much so that Nester believes the war should be more accurately called “Amherst’s War.” For another affirmation of Pontiac’s importance, see Richard Middleton, “Pontiac: Local Warrior or Pan-Indian Leader?” *Michigan Historical Review* 32, no. 2 (Fall, 2006), 1-32.

attention.⁴⁰ In 2013, two conferences, both hosted by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, marked the 250th anniversary of both Pontiac's War and the related tragic massacre of the Conestoga Indians in Lancaster, Pennsylvania at the hands of the Paxton Boys. Papers from both conferences have since been published, and make narrower arguments about various aspects of the conflict, such as the intersections between British trade policy and the politics of gift giving in Indian Country, issues of Indigenous mobility within Imperial geographies, and transcultural critiques of alcohol consumption.⁴¹ Others have produced work examining how the conflict transformed local politics, both Indigenous and colonial.⁴² Others do the opposite, demonstrating how Pontiac's War was a crucial turning point within enormous transatlantic imperial shifts.⁴³

⁴⁰ Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*; Richard Middleton, *Pontiac's War: It's Causes, Course, and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2007). For a different examination on Indigenous military tactics during the conflict, see Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 219-254.

⁴¹ Georgia Carley, "Cost, Commodity, and Gift: The Board of Trade's Conceptualization of British-Native American Gift Giving during Pontiac's War" *Early American Studies* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 203-224; Jeffrey D. Kaja, "'Sometimes bad people take the liberty of stragling into your Country': The Struggle to Control Mobility during Pontiac's War" *Early American Studies* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 225-257; Michael Goode, "Dangerous Spirits: How the Indian Critique of Alcohol Shaped Eighteenth-Century Quaker Revivalism" *Early American Studies* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2016), 258-283.

⁴² For example, see Patrick Spero, *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), especially chapter 8, "The British Empire's Frontier Crisis," 170-198; Spero, *Frontier Rebels: The Fight for Independence in the American West, 1765-1776* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018); Daniel Ingram, "A Year at Niagara: Negotiating Coexistence in the Eastern Great Lakes, 1763-1764," *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850*, Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart, eds. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 1-34; Andrew Keith Sturtevant, "'Elder Brother...in My Heart': The Local Context of Pontiac's War," in "Jealous Neighbors: Rivalry and Alliance among the Native Communities of Detroit, 1701-1766." (PhD diss. William & Mary, 2011); Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009). Although it predates Dowd's work, this body of work also includes Jon William Parmenter, "Pontiac's War: Forging New Links in the Anglo-Iroquois Covenant Chain, 1758-1766," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 4 (Autumn, 1997): 617-654. For a francophone perspective, see Carl A. Brasseaux and Michael J. Leblanc, "Franco-indian diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley, 1754-1763: prelude to Pontiac's uprising?" *Journal de la Société des Americanistes* 68 (1982): 59-70.

⁴³ Some examples of these works include Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Ian K. Steele, *Setting all the Captives Free*; Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).

However, in the end this dissertation is not so much “about” Pontiac’s War as it is about the process of making peace in colonial North America with Pontiac’s War serving as its context. Dowd’s study concludes that the “peace” process was ultimately a failure, a position that is well-defended if peace is considered the opposite of conflict, as violence persisted amid continued British imperial instability. Because of this, Dowd glosses over the negotiations that this study centers. Yet, if peace is not an endpoint but instead a countervailing force working *within* the violence of colonialism, this process is worthy of focused study, regardless of whether conflict ceased or not. Moreover, if peace can be found within violence, and the transcultural landscape created by colonialism meant that peace and violence were understood and expressed transculturally, diplomatic relations are an exceedingly rich text for exploring the uneasy tensions between the two. While the persistence of conflict may have obscured peace, it is an argument of this dissertation that peacemaking was in fact present, that it was deeply complex by virtue of its transcultural construction, and that it was as central to defining the social, political contours of late 18th-century colonial America as the endemic violence so often centered by studies of the period.

Historians have also dramatically pointed to the ways in which gender and empire were intertwined.⁴⁴ Because of the ways diplomacy brought together a patriarchal imperial politics with other forms of differently gendered Indigenous politics, such an approach is all the more relevant. As both Ann Little and Nancy Shoemaker have shown,

⁴⁴ Philippa Levine, *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1. Kathleen Brown coined the term “gender frontier,” which has proven influential for those who study transcultural relations and gender. See Kathleen M. Brown, “The Anglo-Algonquin Gender Frontier,” in *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, Nancy Shoemaker, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 25-48.

difference, whether martial or racial, between colonizers and colonized was demonstrated through gender.⁴⁵ Pathbreaking works by Theda Perdue, Susan-Sleeper Smith, Julianna Barr, and Gunlög Fur have all demonstrated how Indigenous politics was, in certain ways, femininely gendered, with peace itself often gendered female explicitly.⁴⁶ Ann Laura Stoler, in her highly influential essay, both in regards to this dissertation and the study of gender, empire, and power more broadly, has pointed to intimacy and sexuality as one locus point of this gendered imperialism.⁴⁷ Work by Ramón A. Gutiérrez, Sylvia Van Kirk, Jennifer S. H. Brown, and Ann McGrath show how sexuality between colonizer and colonized in North America both built empire while also threatening its universalizing principles.⁴⁸ Even the metaphors that were used to explain sovereignty and suzerainty were themselves differently gendered, a subject analyzed directly by Michelle LeMaster.⁴⁹ This dissertation seeks to continue this work, demonstrating how gender,

⁴⁵ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness*.

⁴⁶ Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Woman and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indigenous Prosperity and American Conquest: Indian Women of the Ohio River Valley, 1690-1792* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*; Fur, *A Nation of Women*.

⁴⁷ Stoler, Ann Laura, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, Ann Laura Stoler, ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 23-67.

⁴⁸ Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1980); Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1996); Ann McGrath, *Illicit Sex: Interracial Sex & Marriage in the United States & Australia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015); Richard Godbeer, "Eroticizing the Middle Ground: Anglo-Indian Sexual Relations along the Eighteenth-Century Frontier," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, Martha Hodes, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 91-111.

⁴⁹ Michelle LeMaster, *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

intimacy, and sexuality serves as a critical site for observing the specter of peace in 1765. More concretely, this dissertation will explore how peace lay hidden in the tensions between conflicting gendered conceptions of peace.

Chapter Outline

Because this dissertation seeks to hold different cultures, ontologies, and personal interests together in a single work of analysis, the chapters will be laid out thematically although they loosely align with the chronology of the peace mission. The first chapter of this dissertation is titled “Confluence of Visions.” This chapter foregrounds how peace was envisioned (whether figurative or prophetic in the literal sense) by those individuals who negotiated, communicated, and moved throughout the trans-Appalachian West during this peace process. Each individual present, as well as many not present at the negotiations, sought “peace.” Yet, the peace that was sought was diversely defined within the complex context of different cultures, national and personal interests. As such, the many visions of peace on the proverbial table were ultimately incompatible. The diplomatic process that was set in motion in February, 1765, was therefore animated by the “specter of peace,” as outlined above. This chapter will therefore closely trace how individuals navigated this process, seeking to reconcile their multifaceted assumptions about peace with the equally multifaceted assumptions of others. More concretely, this chapter also makes an important contribution in the historiography of Neolin’s spiritual leadership. Simply put, most histories that center Neolin’s eschatology struggle to integrate his revised vision, the only record of which is drawn from these particular peace

negotiations. As such, this chapter argues that the revisions were neither an abandonment of spiritual commitments nor a simple cynical attempt to elevate Lenape international standing but instead an continuation of an ongoing process that sought to reconcile Indigenous concepts of place in the world with the lived reality of that world.

The second chapter is tentatively titled “Confluence of Intimacies.” This chapter largely deals with the ways in which kinship, whether consanguineal, affinal, adoptive, or fictive, helped to define the course of the negotiations, often in surprising and ironic ways. As Ann Laura Stoler argues, intimacy lay at the heart of the construction of empire.⁵⁰ As such, this chapter explores how networks of intimacy and kinship and their regulation were crucial for the construction of peace. How, for example, were relationships, whether sexual, adoptive, biological, or fictive, shaped by the tension between conflict and peace? Or conversely, how did these relationships exert their influence over the peace being negotiated diplomatically? How were differing concepts of kinship brought into tension, especially through the cultural practices of captivity/adoption? This requires unpacking the culturally relative ethics and morals of transcultural captive-taking/adoption and the emotions of those who experienced it. More specifically, such exploration wrestles seriously with how restoring familial peace for one family or group simultaneously required violently rending another family apart. Moreover, it will present opportunities to explore the many ways that women wielded power and influence over these proceedings, even as the patriarchal rhetoric of empire

⁵⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, “Intimidation of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, Ann Laura Stoler ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 3.

sought to silence them, in addition to how these familial structures and the conflicts between identity and kinship shaped peacemaking within empire. More importantly, it adds to a growing body of literature that takes a nuanced approach to transcultural and imperial intimacies, arguing that intimate connections can be simultaneously exploitive and loving, echoing this dissertation's approach to peace embedded in conflict.

The third chapter is titled "Confluence of Political Ontologies." For those negotiating across the trans-Appalachian West, the world *was* a particular place. However, these agents did not operate under shared definitions. At its core, this chapter intervenes on the one of the most pressing questions in the historiography of Pontiac's War, that of what role, if any, did the French play in the support of the Indigenous confederacy of resistance. As sustained investigation has made clear, French officials were much more likely to offer aid to the British in their attempts to garrison formerly French forts. However, if one takes seriously the political ontologies of Indigenous peoples, just because French officials, as defined within the legal structures of European empires, did not support Indigenous resistance, that did not mean that there was not French support, as Indigenous diplomacy was much more concerned with the giving of gifts and following specific diplomatic protocols, practices with which French traders still living in the trans-Appalachian West had immense skill. As such, from an ontological perspective, French support could simultaneously exist and not-exist.

The fourth and final chapter is titled "Confluence of Geographies." At the heart of this chapter is an exploration of the deep tensions between different politics about physical space and geography. For example, European empires sought to add sovereign

territory in a zero-sum game of political control, what could be termed a “politics of territoriality.” Indigenous nations on the other hand sought to secure stable and beneficial relationships with other nations, whether Indigenous or European. While those desires were written on wampum belts and expressed through well-established rhetorical traditions, they were also expressed through human geography. The presence of a European fort, for example, was not an expression of imperial territorial sovereignty but instead seen as a stable meeting place for the maintenance of diplomatic relationships. As such, a more Indigenous approach to political geography could be termed a “politics of kinship.” However, by 1765, calling the European approach “territorial” and the Indigenous approach “kinship” would be overwrought. Indigenous peoples clearly understood the European approach and were willing to deploy territorial approaches in pursuit of social stability. Simultaneously, as an Indian trader, George Croghan had built his business on the deft use of Indigenous approaches to geography, all while also trying to secure land titles from Indians that could then be folded into his trade empire through the construction of multicultural settlements and trade depots, even as such practices seemingly went against the ban on western settlement outlined by the Proclamation Line of 1763, a proclamation that was enforced by the very department that Croghan represented.

In the end, the aims of this dissertation are undoubtedly ambitious. However, they are also important. As historians specifically, and societies more broadly, wrestle with the ways in which colonialism has created haunting silences and deep inequities that persist in the present, it is imperative that historical analyses seek to “write back” rather than

reaffirm this legacy. Yet, one of those silences haunting the archive is peacemaking itself. Too often, the violence of colonialism is cast as an inevitable symptom of structural inequity. These inequities undoubtedly existed and continue to exist to this day. But there is an inherent tension between agent and structure; just because there were larger countervailing forces working against peace does not mean that the work of those pulling in the opposite direction were inconsequential footnotes to history. In many ways, it is just as imperative to recover the spectral peace that is so often missing from histories of eighteenth-century colonialism as it is to recover those voices that are so often silenced. For those silenced voices were often, as this dissertation contends, raised in the service of making peace.

Chapter 1: Confluence of Visions

During *enikwsi kishux*, or Ground Squirrel Month—January¹ of 1765 according to the English calendar—the Lenape [Delaware] prophet Neolin had a second vision. In his first vision, the Master of Life urged Neolin to advocate for a rejection of European ways while demanding solidarity among all Indigenous people, a prophecy that was used to politically cohere an alliance of Indian nations that had taken up arms against the British in the trans-Appalachian West.² But his second vision presented him with a stark revision to his original instructions. No longer was the Master of Life telling Neolin to lead Indigenous people to embrace pan-Indian resistance. Instead, he was told by his heavenly “Father” that the Lenape and Lenape alone were to enter into peace negotiations with the Quakers of Pennsylvania, who had nine years earlier formed the “Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures” as a private diplomatic mission designed to ease tensions between the colony’s proprietary government and the Lenape people. According to the Master of Life, such a diplomatic approach would secure peace not just for the Lenape but all Indigenous people, as the Lenape would become the architects of a new transcultural diplomatic landscape. Neolin

¹ *Lenape Talking Dictionary*, Delaware Tribe of Indians, 2024, www.talk-lenape.org.

² Though problematic, “trans-Appalachian West” is the best term to describe the entirety of the region in which this diplomatic mission took place. As such, within this dissertation, the trans-Appalachian West connotes the Ohio Country (the region west of Fort Pitt and east of the Wabash River), the Illinois Country (west of the Wabash River, east of the Mississippi River), and the *Pays d’en Haut* (generally the region around the Great Lakes). For more on the importance of this region within Atlantic history, see François Furstenberg, “The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (June, 2008): 647-677.

therefore began his journey eastward towards Fort Pitt from Tuscarawas Town³ in the Ohio Country to share his new vision with those gathering there to discuss peace.⁴

A month later, the Irish-born trader and deputy of the British Indian Department George Croghan began his own journey towards Fort Pitt. Heading west from Philadelphia, he was tasked with orchestrating and overseeing a series of peace negotiations with diplomats from the same Indian alliance that had answered Neolin's prophetic call. As was Croghan's typical approach, he held few qualms about mixing his official duties with his personal interests. In Philadelphia, he used Crown funds to purchase £2,650-worth of goods to be used as diplomatic gifts, a crucial element of transcultural diplomatic protocol in eighteenth-century North America. However, Croghan simultaneously made sure that he made the purchase from his cousin, Thomas Smallman, who only months earlier had been released from captivity among the Shaawanwaki [Shawnee]. Further, if any of those "gifts" were to be used in the lucrative yet temporarily closed fur trade rather than freely given, Croghan was more than happy to keep the profits for himself. Setting off ahead of the heavy-laden wagon train, Croghan next passed through Lancaster, pausing to meet with Lieutenant Augustine Prevost who

³ Tuscarawas Town was so-called because of its location along the Tuscarawas River. The river itself was named after the Skarù:rë? or Tuscarora people. However, the town itself was founded by Lenape people who had migrated West from their native lands in Pennsylvania. C.A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 244-245.

⁴ George Croghan, "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," *The New Regime*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1916), 7-8, (hereafter *TNR*). Although Croghan only mentions that Neolin had come from "one of their towns," Neolin was known to have been from Tuscarawas Town and had last been listed among those seeking to meet with Colonel Bouquet there the previous October. Alfred A. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit: Native American Revitalization Movements in Eastern North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 22. "Delawares' Reply to Bouquet," *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, ed. Louis M. Waddell (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1994), 660, (hereafter *HBP*). Throughout, I have standardized spellings, capitalizations, and abbreviations within the quotations while leaving the grammar and syntax largely intact.

was preparing to marry Croghan's daughter Susannah in the coming months. He arrived at Fort Pitt on February 28 and began gathering delegates together for the upcoming peace conference while also sending word that the closed fur trade would soon reopen, placing himself at the vanguard of the sudden influx of peltry. Croghan thus eagerly awaited his train of trade goods, a train that would never arrive.⁵

It is not surprising that two different historical agents had complex and conflicting investments in the outcome of these peace negotiations. Croghan certainly was not the first imperial agent to leverage his position for personal gain. Similarly, as anthropologists of prophetic movements have noted, perhaps most explicitly articulated by Anthony F.C. Wallace, innovations and revisions were not only unsurprising but were to be expected as prophets such as Neolin navigated the treacherous waters of a culture in crisis in pursuit of a new "steady state."⁶ However, by centering these competing visions, and tracing how agents improvised and revised those visions on the ground, one can clearly see the dialectical relationship between strongly held competing ideologies and the practices that translated those ideologies and rendered them concrete within the context of a diplomatic field.

As such, "visions," as conceived within this dissertation, were the goals each agent carried with them as they moved into the diplomatic field in 1765. In some cases, these visions included supernatural elements, as in the case of Neolin, while others were strategic calculations formulated at a moment's notice in response to new inputs. In either

⁵ Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 213-215; *TNR*, 1.

⁶ Anthony F.C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *Revitalizations and Mazeways: Essays on Culture Change, Volume 1*, Robert S. Grumet, ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 9-29.

case, they were undoubtedly connected to and informed by communal and cultural commitments, and simultaneously individualized, as each individual agent was a locus for a unique combination of ideology and particular visions for themselves and their future. Moreover, they were formulated and reformulated within the crucible of a dynamic world that did not have any obligation to align with an ideal.

In this sense, this dissertation's concept of "visions" is deeply informed by the work of both Anthony F.C. Wallace and Sherry Ortner. In the case of the former, Wallace's concept of the "mazeway" is particularly useful. As Wallace argued:

it is therefore functionally necessary for every person in society to maintain a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of his own body and its behavioral regularities, in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the system. . . . This mental image I have called "the mazeway," since as a model of the cell-body-personality-nature-culture-society system or field, organized by the individual's own experience, it included perceptions of both the maze of physical objects of the environment (internal and external, human and nonhuman) and also of the ways in which this maze can be manipulated by the self and others in order to minimize stress.⁷

Ortner similarly describes the actions of individuals within systems or fields as a "serious game," describing it thusly:

The idea of the "game" is meant to capture simultaneously the following dimensions: that social life is culturally organized and constructed, in terms of defined categories of actors, rules and goals of the games, and so forth; that social life is precisely social, consisting of webs of relationship and interaction between multiple, shiftingly interrelated subject positions, none of which can be extracted as autonomous "agents"; and yet at the same time there is "agency," that is, actors that play with skill, intention, wit, knowledge, intelligence. The idea that the game is "serious" is meant to add to the equation the idea that power and inequality pervade the games of life in multiple ways, and that, while there may be playfulness

⁷ Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," 12.

and pleasure in the process, the stakes of these games are often very high. It follows in turn that the games of life must be played with intensity and sometimes deadly earnestness.⁸

In both cases, Wallace and Ortner emphasize how the choices individuals made were not expressions of consistently applied ideologies responding to external stimuli but were instead reflections of a dialectical relationship between firmly-held beliefs and on-the-ground improvisation.

But most importantly for the argument of this chapter, it is within this space between ideology and the contingencies of a lived reality that one can locate a fleeting peace actively under construction. As Michael Goode argues, locating peace in early America “requires looking for moments when people in the colonial Americas attempted to create tranquility through ‘right ordering,’ as *they* envisioned and defined it.”⁹ And as Brendan Gillis notes, “the project of keeping peace comprised both theory and practice of colonial government, incorporating a language of cultural conventions and a set of legal tools through which to enforce them. A culture of legal peace made it possible for agents of empire to understand the varied, chaotic, and fundamentally violent British imperial polity as a coherent whole.”¹⁰ There was no possible compromise between Neolin’s vision and Croghan’s, and in the end it was the latter’s vision that would prevail.

⁸ Sherry Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 12-13. In the case of both of the terms “mazeway” and “serious game” they are both deeply informative methodologically and, in my estimation, clunky as jargon. Hence my emphasis on terms like “vision.”

⁹ Michael Goode, “The Relevance of Peace in Early American History,” in *The Specter of Peace: Rethinking Violence and Power in the Colonial Atlantic*, eds. Michael Goode and John Smolenski (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2018), 13.

¹⁰ Brendan Gillis, “Violent Restraint: Keeping Peace in British America and India,” in *The Specter of Peace*, 96-97.

However, that was not because Neolin's vision lacked appeal among either the Lenape or Pennsylvania's Quaker community. Nor was it because Neolin's second vision was naïve, as the Friendly Association had set a precedent for successful diplomacy when they joined peace negotiations at 1758's Treaty of Easton, privately funding their own gifts and throwing their support behind the chief Lenape negotiator Teedyuscung, much to the chagrin of British agents who had grown accustomed to negotiating through the Haudenosaunee instead.¹¹ In many ways, Neolin's approach sought to replicate Teedyuscung's diplomatic successes seven years earlier. And while Croghan's dismissal of Neolin at Fort Pitt was ripe with disdain, his own experiences with both the Lenape and the Friendly Association make clear that his dismissal was a tactical show of strength designed to stave off a diplomatic agreement that would force him to relinquish his personal privileged position that advanced his private financial interests. As such, this chapter will trace the visions of two actors from very different contexts who would come face to face as they played a "serious game" in pursuit of a spectral "peace."

Amended Instructions from the Master of Life

In the midst of the social turmoil of colonialism, the Lenape prophet Neolin experienced visionary encounters with the Master of Life, the omnipotent being responsible not only for the creation of the world but also the social order of that world, in which European and Indigenous people were intentionally separated from each other by the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean. Neolin's vision was simultaneously explicitly

¹¹ Theodore Thayer, "The Friendly Association," in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67, no. 4 (Oct. 1943): 364-365.

nativist and innovative, arguing for a pan-Indian conversion to a new system of belief that was evangelical in a way that was antithetical to Indigenous religious practice before the arrival of Europeans to North America. Within the context of Neolin's first vision, the deep enmeshing of cultures experienced within colonialism, as evidenced by land sales to European colonial empires, the Indigenous consumption of alcohol, and the adoption of European technologies such as iron, steel, and firearms, was contrary to the Master of Life's designs. However, as the pan-Indian rebellion inspired by Neolin's prophetic teachings reached a stalemate, Neolin had a second vision that took a much more conciliatory and nuanced approach to colonialism. Now, instead of blanket denouncement of European ways, Neolin proclaimed that the Master of Life was instructing him to take the lead in advocating for a much more strategic approach in which the Lenape were to coordinate peace with the Quakers of Pennsylvania. Where his first vision had proclaimed that because the Master of Life hated European-descended people, Indigenous people should drive the Europeans from North America, in his second vision, the Master of Life offered a path for peaceful coexistence between both people.

The exact date of Neolin's first communion with the Master of Life is unknown, but the first archival trace of it can be dated to 1762. However, the clearest account of the first vision was recorded in 1763 by Robert Navarre, a witness of Pontiac's siege of Detroit. As Navarre recounted, Neolin met with the Master of Life after a harrowing journey to the mountaintop where the Master resided. After traveling for eight days, Neolin camped as he had all the previous nights of his journey. However, while the first eight days of travel had been easy, Neolin's route now split into three roads. Neolin

suspected that only one road led to the Master of Life, but he had no criteria with which to choose, so he decided to simply choose the road that was widest. However, after a half day of travel, he came to a pit of fire that grew in intensity as he approached it. Scared that the fire might consume him, he turned back and tried a second route, only to find that it too led to fire. He therefore took the third route. While he did not encounter an unquenchable fire this time, the road disappeared as he traveled, even as he saw before him a “mountain of marvelous whiteness.” Again, he felt fear, but this time he was met by a woman clothed all in white who instructed him that “the road which leads to [the Master of Life’s] abode is over the mountain, and to ascend it thou must forsake all that thou hast with thee, and disrobe completely, and leave all thy trappings and clothings at the foot of the mountain. No one shall harm thee; go and bathe thyself in a river which I shall show thee, and then thou shall ascend.”¹² Neolin heeded the woman’s instructions, despite his fear of climbing an ice-covered mountain naked.

Neolin’s faith in the women’s instructions was rewarded. As he reached the summit, the woman disappeared and he was invited into a village on the mountaintop by a male voice. After entering the village, Neolin was met by the Master of Life, who told Neolin to sit before him. The Master of Life spoke to Neolin, saying “I am He who hath created the heavens and the earth, the trees, lakes, rivers, all men, and all that thou seest and hast seen upon the earth. Because I love you, you must do what I say and love, and not do what I hate. I do not love that you should drink to the point of madness, as you do; and I do not like that you should fight one another.” He continued, saying:

¹² Robert Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy*, ed. Clarence Monroe Burton (Detroit: Speaker-Hines Printing Company, 1913), 22-26.

This land where you dwell I have made for you and not for others. Whence comes it that you permit the Whites upon your lands? Can you not live without them? I know that those whom you call the children of your Great Father supply your needs, but if you were not evil, as you are, you could surely do without them. You could live as you did live before knowing them, before those whom you call your brothers had come upon your lands.

In addition to forsaking alcohol and firearms—both consequences of European contact—the Master of Life instructed Neolin to no longer “‘make medicine,’ but pray, because in ‘making medicine’ one talks with the evil spirit.” According to the Master of Life, “When you wish to go to war, you conjure and resort to the medicine dance, believing that you speak to me; you are mistaken, it is to Manitou that you speak, an evil spirit who prompts you to do nothing but wrong, and who listens to you out of ignorance of me.”¹³

According to the Master of Life, the ways of the European settlers in North America were evil when performed by Indians. However, the Master of Life also made clear that many traditional spiritual practices also led Indians astray. It is possible that Navarre mistranslated the term “manitou,” drastically altering the meaning of this particular declaration from the Master of Life. In traditional Lenape belief, the order of the universe was disrupted by “Mahtantu,” or the “Evil One.” The creation of those things that caused harm, such as thorns on bushes, poisonous plants, and mosquitos and flies, were attributed to Mahtantu. It is certainly possible that a European-descended observer with a poor understanding of Algonquian languages could hear “Mahtantu” as the much more familiar and ubiquitous term “manitou.” However, the accompanying instructions to no longer make medicine, a practice in which Lenape specialists communed and interceded with both powerful and lesser manitous, lends credence to

¹³ Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy*, 28-30.

Navarre's word choice.¹⁴ Regardless, Neolin's vision was a truly revolutionary revision of Lenape cosmology.¹⁵

Similarly, the eschatological implications of the journey to the afterlife in Neolin's vision bears a much stronger similarity to Christian ideas about judgement after death. Nor does Kishelamàkânk, the more traditional equivalent to the Master of Life in Lenape cosmology, pass judgement with the same vigor as the Master of Life in Neolin's visions. According to Nora Thompson Dean, who was a Lenape traditionalist and one of the last fluent speakers of the Unami Lenape dialect, at a Lenape funeral, the deceased was sent forth towards the afterlife with the words "Our kinsmen is going away now. He is going into the hands of [Kishelamàkânk] who will watch over him. We must all carry on in this life to our best abilities, speaking kindly to one another, and living peacefully." After this was spoken, a dear friend of the deceased who was tasked with watching over the body while the ceremonies were performed would then say, "My friend, now we are at the parting. Go with a free mind. Think of us no more. Someday, when [Kishelamàkânk] tells us, we will be with you again, but do not think of us now. Go in peace." While it was

¹⁴ Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1986), 162-169, 181-186. An illustration accompanying John McCullough's narrative of his time as a captive/adoptee leads credence to the notion that "manitou" is a mistransliteration. Although the illustration, reproduced below as Figure 1.3, was anachronistic and designed to resonate with a non-Indigenous audience, a Satan-like figure is labeled "Mah-tan'-tooh, or the Devil, standing in a flame of fire, with open arms to receive the wicked." However, McCullough does not reference this term when he recalls second-hand interactions with the teachings of Neolin, although he does use the term when discussing traditional Lenape religious practices later in his narrative, an outline that also includes a footnote indicating that "the above were the general points, or heads of their creed, before their prophet made his appearance amongst them." John McCullough, "A Narrative of the Captivity of John McCullough, Esq." in *A Selection of the Most Interesting Narratives, or Outrages, Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People*, Archibald Loudon, ed. (Carlisle, PA: Press of Archibald Loudon, 1808), 272-276, 286-290.

¹⁵ For a comparison to ethnographic records of more traditional Lenape cosmology, see Robert S. Grumet, ed., *Voices from the Delaware Big House Ceremony* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 3-37.

possible that a sinful person would be punished, it was not by Kishelamàkânk but by Mahtantu, the “Evil One.” However, this evil manitou has more in common with the tricksters of Indigenous American cosmology than the Christian Satan.¹⁶ Moreover, punishment did not imply damnation in the all-consuming hellfire that Neolin encountered after the road to the Master of Life split into three routes. Instead, according to Dean, evil people were subjected to torment by insects under the direction of Mahtantu. Nor was this torment eternal, for as Dean describes, “when the Mahtantu gets tired of tormenting this sinful person he will turn him into an insect: a gnat, mosquito, or any type of insect that would annoy or sting. He will then turn this insect loose on earth so he will attack the living and make them mad, and they will do something bad in their anger. That is what the Mahtantu wants, and that is the way he wins people over.”¹⁷ In this sense, those who do evil in life become pawns in Mahtantu’s mischievous creation, perpetuating a cycle that disrupts the good of Kishelamàkânk’s creation.

Innovative visions such as Neolin’s were the core evidence for Anthony F.C. Wallace’s anthropological and historical analysis of revitalization movements. As Wallace argued, the failure of culture to reduce the stress of a society produced revitalization movements, as when “the culture is internally distorted; the elements are not harmoniously related but are mutually inconsistent and interfering. For this reason alone, stress continues to rise.”¹⁸ The many stresses, whether they be social, cultural, material,

¹⁶ More on how the Evil Spirit of Neolin’s vision echoes Christian images of Satan will be outlined below.

¹⁷ Nora Thompson Dean, “Lenape Funeral Customs,” *The Lenape Indian: A Symposium* no. 7 (1984): 65, 67.

¹⁸ Wallace, “Revitalizations Movements,” 16.

or political, could not be reconciled in accordance with the current mazeway, and thus needed to be reconceived. While individual components of the failure of the preexisting mazeway, such as alcohol consumption, use of firearms, polygamy, and the sale of both food and land, cannot be fully understood in isolation, considering the conditions of Lenape life and their political positions in North America, one can see where amendments might have been needed. For the Lenape, dispossession was a recurring stress within their society, perhaps best illustrated by the fact that Neolin himself was from the Ohio Country, far from the traditional homelands of the Lenape in what was to become New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania. The infamous Walking Purchase of 1737 and the Treaty of Easton in 1758 had forced the majority of the Lenape into Ohio, and the actions of the British in the immediate aftermath of the Seven Years' War left the Lenape worried that they would be dispossessed again.

However, dispossession was not a product of dubious European diplomacy alone. Over the course of the previous century, first the Five and then Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee had used their privileged position as British allies bound by the famed Covenant Chain to stave off their own dispossession by relinquishing Lenape land as if it was their own. While the Haudenosaunee claimed in treaty council that the Lenape were their tributaries, this claim was dubious. Instead, it was part of a concerted "Pennsylvania Strategy," an approach that resonated easily with Pennsylvania administrators, as the Proprietary government had also begun to shift its Indian policy in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Rather than work to build alliances with those Indigenous nations found squarely within the claimed borders of the province, the colony's diplomacy began

to look outside its borders instead. Because of the military prowess of the Haudenosaunee, Pennsylvania officials found it more prudent to seek a way to “outsource” the responsibilities of keeping hostile Indigenous populations “in-line.” As such, the Pennsylvania government took every opportunity to recognize the Lenape (as well as the small Susquehannock-descended community at Conestoga) as “tributaries” of the Haudenosaunee League. Thus began a nearly half-century of increased tension between the Lenape and the Haudenosaunee as the latter leveraged their preferential status to protect the sovereignty of their own lands at the expense of the former.¹⁹

The issues of dispossession were clearly present in Neolin’s original vision. As the Master of Life stated, “This land where you dwell I have made for you and not for others. Whence comes it that you permit the Whites upon your lands?²⁰” Yet, despite a history of tensions with the Haudenosaunee, “white” encroachment was the wrong that needed to be rectified. The tensions between the Haudenosaunee and Lenape, as well as any other tensions between Indian nations, were to be solved through peaceful coexistence. Moreover, this pan-Indian confederacy allowed Indians to side-step the

¹⁹ Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701-1754* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 156-203. Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41-49. Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 19-49. Historian Gunlög Fur makes a compelling, though ambiguous, case for questioning the perceived subservience of the Lenape during this period. Specifically, she argues that Europeans misperceived the diplomatic role of “Delaware-as-women” as one of lower importance to the more masculinely-described Haudenosaunee. In Indigenous perception, femininity was not a sign of weakness but instead symbolic of diplomatic work. Thus, the Lenape should instead be seen as the diplomatic half of an alliance between their people and the Haudenosaunee. Gunlög Fur, *Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 160-198.

²⁰ Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy*, 28.

tribal identities that were dependent upon colonialism for their formation.²¹ Clearly, the Master of Life was dismayed by the violence among fellow Indians.

In fact, it was this aspect of Neolin's vision that most inspired Pontiac. So central was this concern that other instructions from the Master of Life were deferred. While Neolin's vision instructed Indians to abandon firearms and relearn the art of the bow and arrow, the pan-Indian confederacy that besieged British forts throughout the Great Lakes and Ohio Country did so fully armed with muskets. As the Master of Life instructed, "those who come to trouble your lands,—drive them out, make war upon them. I do not love them at all; they know me not, and are my enemies and the enemies of your brothers. Send them back to the lands which I have created for them and let them stay there."²² The ability to make war upon the British as a pan-Indian confederacy was privileged over the abandonment of European martial technology. In fact, another (albeit secondhand) witness to Neolin's teachings, the captive/adoptee John McCullough, adds credence to the notion that the continued use of firearms was a choice of military expediency that deviated from the rigors of the prophecy. McCullough reported knowing a group of Neolin's adherents:

who had secluded themselves for the purpose of purifying from sin, as they thought they could do; I believe they made no use of firearms.... Whether they conformed rigidly to the rules laid down to them by their prophet, I am not able to say with any degree of certainty. But one thing I know is that several women resorted to their encampments and it was said that they made use of no other weapons than their bows and arrows.²³

²¹ The role of tribal identity formation within the context of colonialism will be discussed in much more detail below.

²² Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy*, 30.

²³ McCullough, "A Narrative of the Captivity of John McCullough, Esq." 273-275.

But it would seem these adherents were not on the front lines of the war but instead doing the work of purifying themselves, for, as McCullough noted, “it was said that their prophet taught them, or made them believe, that he had his instructions immediately from [Kishelamàkânk], or being that thought us into being, and that by following his instructions, they would, in a few years, be able to drive the white people out of their country.”²⁴

Yet, while there were divergent applications of portions of Neolin’s teachings, by 1763 even the central commitment to pan-Indian unity in opposition to white settlement in North America had begun to fracture. As the conflict approached a stalemate, individual nations began to break away and approach the British to discuss peace terms. Unsurprisingly, the Haudenosaunee took the lead. Its westernmost peoples, the Onödowá’ga and the Haudenosaunee diaspora in the Ohio Country, had been the only Haudenosaunee people to join the pan-Indian confederacy, as they had historically bristled at the broader League’s closeness to the British. But in light of recent military failures at the Forks of the Ohio, the western members of the diaspora began to make overtures about “polishing” the Covenant Chain and once again uniting with the rest of the People of the Longhouse. Not only would such a diplomatic maneuver call into question the power of the Master of Life’s prophetic instructions, it would also threaten to once again place the Lenape into a secondary position within the Haudenosaunee’s “Pennsylvania Strategy.”

²⁴ McCullough, “A Narrative of the Captivity of John McCullough, Esq.” 273.

In December of 1763, delegates from across the Haudenosaunee diaspora traveled to Johnson Hall to meet with Sir William Johnson. Delegates from the western Onödowá'ga, represented by Seriohana, began to cast blame on the Lenape. According to Seriohana, the root of the conflict was a Lenape desire to punish the British for previous offensives, stating that they:

sent a very large belt to the three nations at Detroit to persuade them to fall upon you, which nations on receiving the same put it under their feet to be considered upon at leisure. Sometime after, the three nations called their confederacy together and laid the belt before them when Pontiac told them that they all knew the meaning of the belt, and that he was determined to help his nephews in procuring revenge.²⁵

Johnson was wholly unconvinced by this argument, as were the rest of the Haudenosaunee representatives gathered there. At one point, the Onyota'a:ka [Oneida] representative Conoquieson stood and admonished the Onödowá'ga delegates, saying, “how often have we, as well as the rest of the Confederacy spoke to and entreated you... to lay aside your ax and wicked thoughts? Are there not belts of our wampum, which would make a very large heap, now in your Nation, which we have made use of since the commencement of hostilities in order to bring you to your senses?”²⁶ Seriohana, cowed by Conoquieson's words, responded, “We have attentively heard your advice and heartily thank you. You have really shook us by the head so often that we have not a hair left on

²⁵ Seriohana in “Journal of Indian Congress, December 5-22, 1763,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), vol. X, 964-965. (hereafter *WJP*).

²⁶ Conoquieson in “Journal of Indian Congress, December 5-22, 1763,” *WJP*, vol. X, 969-970. Daniel Ingram convincingly argues that the true motivation behind Onödowá'ga participation in the pan-Indian uprising was the strategic importance of the Niagara Portage. The Onödowá'ga supporters of the resistance were primarily from this region and had become close with the French and had benefitted greatly from French fur trade along the route. David Ingram, “A Year at Niagara: Negotiating Coexistence in the Eastern Great Lakes, 1763-1764,” in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850*, eds. Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 1-34.

it. I will take this advice with us to our country and promise you that we will behave so as never more to require your shaking us by our heads.”²⁷ However, while Seriohana had failed to use the Lenape as scapegoats so as to avoid the anger of the broader Haudenosaunee League, the return of the Western diaspora into the Covenant Chain did allow the Haudenosaunee to once again operate from a privileged diplomatic position vis-a-vis the British. Tellingly, the conference at Johnson’s home concluded with the remaining members of the League promising to bring not only their own people but also the Lenape and the Shaawanwaki back into peaceful relations with the British colonial presence.²⁸

The pressures of a sustained military campaign as well as the diplomatic work of the western Onödowá’ga under the leadership of the famed Kyashuta proved convincing for many among the Lenape and Shaawanwaki. About ten months after Johnson met with the Haudenosaunee, Colonel Henry Bouquet launched an expedition into the Ohio Country, having relieved the siege of Fort Pitt. In response, delegates among Lenape, including Neolin himself, sent a letter to Bouquet requesting that they might begin discussing peace terms.²⁹ Bouquet responded to the petition favorably, assuring the delegates, saying “you may come to me without fear, for I will not hurt or detain any one of you, but leave you at liberty to go away when you choose it.”³⁰ Two days later, delegates of the Onödowá’ga, led by Kyashuta, and the Lenape, led by Custaloga and

²⁷ Seriohana in “Journal of Indian Congress, December 5-22, 1763,” *WJP*, vol. X, 970-971.

²⁸ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 551-552.

²⁹ “Delawares’ Reply to Bouquet, October 14, 1764,” in *HBP*, vol. VI, 660.

³⁰ “Bouquet to Delawares, October 15, 1764,” in *HBP*, vol. VI, 662.

King Beaver, met with Bouquet. Kyashuta was given the privileged position to speak first, “in the name of all the chiefs present, of the [Onödowá’ga], [Lenape], and the [Shaawanwaki].” Speaking in the first-person plural, Kyashuta addressed Bouquet saying, “we clean your ears that you may hear what they are going to say, which is nothing but good.” Kyashuta continued to speak for the Lenape and the Shaawanwaki, proclaiming on a nine-row wampum belt that “now we have thrown everything bad away and nothing remains in our ears but good, we have taken fast hold of the Chain of Friendship, which the Chiefs of the [Lenape], [Shaawanwaki], and we who are related to the Six Nations desire you will likewise do.” Kyashuta next affirmed that he was in agreement with the most urgent British demand, the repatriation of colonial-born captive/adoptees. After Kyashuta finished it was Custaloga’s turn to speak. However, within a context in which sincerity was performed through lengthy oratory and the presentation of copious wampum, it is telling that Custaloga said very little beyond, “by this string I confirm everything that has been said now by our two young men,” and “I assure you my intention is good, and that I am determined to do as you desired me, in delivering you all your flesh and blood.” King Beaver was even more taciturn, saying only that “you will likewise see your flesh and blood who are prisoners with my tribe.” While Custaloga provided a string and belt of wampum along with “42 sticks” and King Beaver likewise presented “41 sticks,” neither deployed the diplomatic metaphors of condolence that Kyashuta had used at the beginning of the conference. Even more telling, despite

Kyashuta's claim to also speak for the Shaawanwaki, no delegate from the Shaawanwaki was given the opportunity to speak for himself.³¹

It was three days until Colonel Bouquet responded, and he did not do so with the brevity of the Lenape delegation. Bouquet clearly noticed the Lenape's tepid diplomatic performance, as he opened his speech by saying, "I wish that in your speeches you may have expressed the true sentiments of your nations, which we shall judge from your actions and not from your words." He then continued, reprimanding the delegates for following the designs of the more western peoples along the Great Lakes and Wabash River. He continued, expressing his rage at continued raids and captive-taking despite having sent out requests for peace. He continued, saying "you must be sensible that you deserve the severest chastisement, but the English are a merciful and generous people, averse to shedding the blood even of their most cruel enemies. And if it was possible that you could convince us that you sincerely repent of your past conduct, and that we could depend on your good behavior in the future, you might yet hope for mercy and peace." He then gave them an ultimatum, stating, "I give you twelve days to deliver in my hands at [Wakatomika] [Figure 1.1] all the prisoners in your possession, without exception, Englishmen, Frenchmen, women and children, whether adopted in your tribes, married, or under any other denomination whatever, and all Negroes, and to furnish all the said prisoners with clothing, provisions, and stores to carry them to Fort Pitt."³²

³¹ "Speeches of Seneca and Delaware Chiefs, October 17, 1764," in *HBP*, vol. VI, 669-670.

³² "Bouquet: Speech to Delawares, Shawnees, and Ohio Senecas, October 20, 1764," in *HBP*, vol. VI, 671-674.

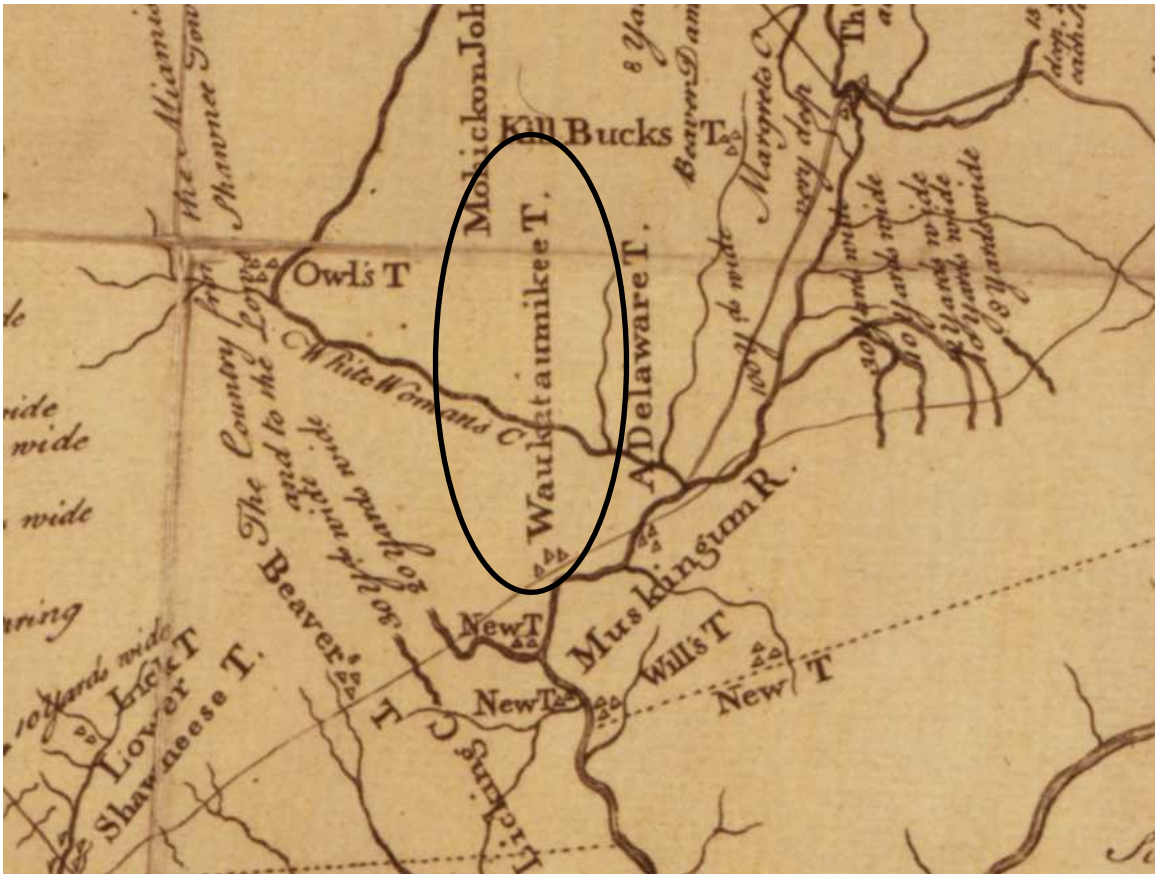


Figure 1.1: A cartographic description of Wakatomika. Excerpted from Thomas Hutchins, *A general map of the country on the Ohio and Muskingham showing the situation of the Indian-towns with respect to the Army under the command of Colonel Bouquet March of His Majesty's troops from Fort Pitt to the forts of Muskingham in 1764, 1765*, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001695748/>. Circled is “Wauketaumikee T.”

All three nations complied and began bringing captive/adoptees to Bouquet as they were able. However, not all captive/adoptees were returned. Perhaps as a sign of the trauma such a request caused Indigenous societies, the Shaawanwa *neenawtooma*, or war chief, Red Hawk wrote to Bouquet early in November saying that while they had delivered “a great number of your flesh and blood, which should have been given up to you before now, had we not heard some evil reports that you had some bad designs

against us.” Coincidentally, Red Hawk sent his letter via Thomas Smallman, Croghan’s cousin, returning him to colonial society in the process.³³

Additionally, there were factions among both the Shaawanwaki and the Lenape who were not yet ready for peace. Months after the conference at Johnson Hall, the Shaawanwa *neenawtooma* Charlot Kaské, who was a spokesman for the most militant members of the uprising, travelled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans on a mission to try to convince French colonial officials to officially bring French support to the Indian cause. When his efforts did not come to fruition, he returned to the Illinois Country and instead sought to disrupt the growing desire for peace among both the Indigenous people of the region and the British.³⁴ The Lenape likewise began to divide themselves between those who wanted to continue to resist British occupation and those who desired peace. Hints of tension appeared in a subsequent meeting held between the Lenape and the British. The Lenape were represented again by the delegates Custaloga, King Beaver, as well as Netawatwees, also known as King Newcomer, with Bouquet speaking through the interpreter and deputy agent Alexander McKee. Captive/adoptees continued to be returned, and they were joined by Indigenous hostages, including Custaloga’s son, who were to serve as collateral lest the Lenape recommence raids. Feeling that they had proven themselves to be acting in good faith, the Lenape delegates were clearly anxious to begin the next stage of the formal peace process at Fort Pitt. Bouquet warned them that he did “not think it proper that any of your people should go to

³³ “Red Hawk to Bouquet, November 8, 1764,” in *HBP*, vol. VI, 687.

³⁴ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 217-219.

our settlements, the inhabitants not yet being reconciled to you.” However, he assured them that if they were “only desirous of going to Fort Pitt, you may with safety.” But Bouquet next turned to the apparent tensions that had grown within the larger Lenape nation. While Custaloga spoke as a representative of the Munsee, or Wolf Clan, and King Beaver spoke for the Unalachtigo, or the Turkey Clan, Bouquet boldly inserted himself into Lenape kinship-based politics, expressing his frustration with the Unami, or Turtle Clan. Upon a belt of wampum, Bouquet proclaimed that, “the Chief of the Turtle Tribe having given me great reason to be dissatisfied with his conduct, I depose him this moment. He is no more chief. That tribe is therefore to choose another chief and present him to me and I will confirm him, and he shall be the king of the Turtle Tribe, and acknowledged as such by the English.”³⁵ While Netawatwees was a powerful leader of the Unami, his history of cooperation with the British made it unlikely that he was the leader that Bouquet was denouncing, especially considering that he would later travel to Fort Pitt along with King Beaver and Custaloga.

These tensions were not resolved by the time Lenape delegates began arriving at Fort Pitt. As the first Indigenous representatives began to arrive in April of 1765, delegates from the Onödowá’ga reported that two factions of the Lenape “were very averse to making peace with the English.” Whether because the Onödowá’ga themselves were unsure or because European observers struggled to describe the internal politics of Indigenous nations, it is hard to pin down who exactly made up these “war factions.” They further noted that the war factions blamed Custaloga, whom they called “an old

³⁵ “Minutes: Conference with Delaware Chiefs, November 11, 1764,” in *HBP*, vol. VI, 692-693.

woman,” for pushing for an undesirable peace when meeting with Bouquet the previous year. On the other hand, Custaloga was able to convince factions of the Onödowá’ga and the Shaawanwaki to follow him, despite the war faction’s insistence that “the French and nine nations living on the Wabash and in the Illinois Country have agreed to supply and support them in the war against the English,” and that “they should be able to drive [the English] out in less than two years.”³⁶ If these Onödowá’ga informants were to be believed, not only was the broader envisioned pan-Indian alliance devolving back towards national/tribal identities, factionalism within those identities was emerging as well. As such, the broad sweep of Neolin’s vision likewise transformed as he began to traverse a much narrower path.

It was within this context of both the fracturing of pan-Indian alliances and internal Lenape factionalism that Neolin experienced his revised vision, and both the symbolism and theology of Neolin’s teaching may help to explain this transformation. To help others understand his vision, Neolin drew a map of his theology. The nature of this map was documented by the Moravian missionary John Heckewelder. As Heckewelder noted, Neolin, on instructions from the Master of Life, had drawn “a kind of map on a piece of deer skin, somewhat dressed like parchment, which he called ‘the great Book or Writing.’ This, he said, he had been ordered to [show] to the Indians, that they might see the situation in which the [Master of Life] had originally placed them, the misery which they had brought upon themselves by neglecting their duty, and the only way that was

³⁶ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765” in *TNR*, 5.

now left them to regain what they had lost.”³⁷ Not a geographic map, it was actually an eschatological teaching aid. Depicted were the roads by which Indians could travel to the heaven that the Master of Life had created for them. However, the “‘avenue’ which had been intended for the Indians to enter into this heaven... was now in the possession of the white people, wherefore the great Spirit had since caused another ‘avenue’ to be made on the opposite side, at which, however, it was both difficult and dangerous for them to enter, there being many impediments in their way.” Guarding this harder road was the evil spirit who “kept at this very spot a continual watch for Indians, and whoever he laid hold of, never could get away from him again, but was carried to his regions, where there was nothing but extreme poverty.”³⁸ As such, the only route left for Indians who wanted to reach the paradise created for them was a perilous and narrow one. If one takes this map as an insight into the nature of Neolin’s prophetic thinking, one can see that accepting and implementing the Master of Life’s prescriptions were seen as a harrowing journey, not a single moment of instantaneous or magical conversion.

The original map, as reconstructed by Charles E. Hunter [Figure 1.2], was abstract and was designed to be easily reproduced so as to aid in the spread of Neolin’s message. (The Latin letters were added by Hunter and would not have been present on Neolin’s original map.) According to Hunter, the Indian (A) had previously entered Heaven (B) by the "avenue" (C), which was then blocked by the European (D) when he crossed the

³⁷ John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of The Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 291. Heckewelder refers to the Master of Life here as “Mannitto,” a common practice among missionaries who wanted to distinguish between Indigenous spiritual practices and Christian theistic beliefs. However, as quoted above, Neolin used the term manitou as distinct from and in opposition to the Master of Life.

³⁸ Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of The Indian Nations*, 292.

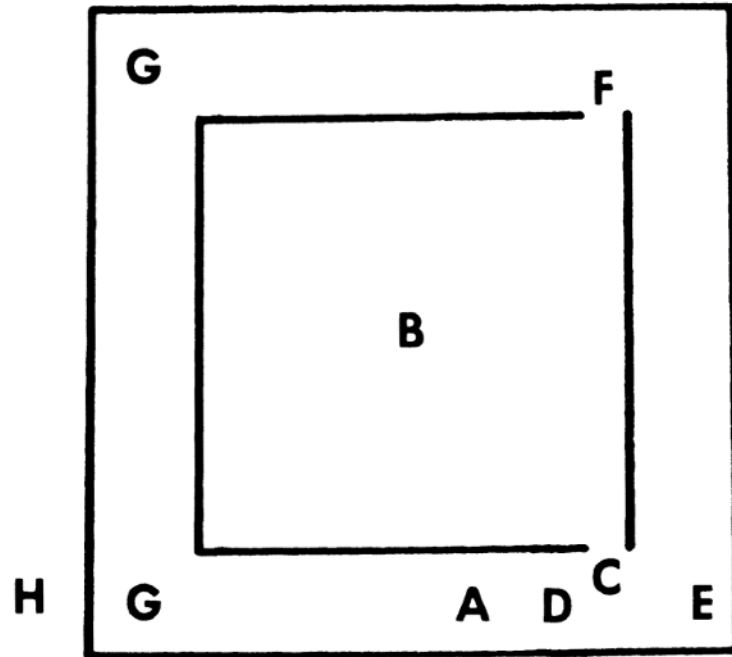


Figure 1.2: A reproduction of Neolin's teaching aid. Charles E. Hunter, "The Delaware Nativist Revival of the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in *Ethnohistory* 18, no 1 (Winter 1971), 45.

Great Water (E). The Indian was thereby forced to enter Heaven through a new "avenue" (F), after traveling a longer, more dangerous path (G,G) passing perilously close to Hell (H).³⁹ Hunter relied heavily on Heckewelder's description, an understandable approach considering the broader Moravian commitment to understanding the Lenape people in service of Moravian missionary efforts. The captive/adoptee among the Lenape, John McCullough, was also a witness to Neolin's prophetic movement, although he never saw Neolin speak himself. While his description of the movement and its principles align broadly with Heckewelder's description, it is possible that his presentation was distorted when it was published for a Euro-American audience. Featured in the first volume of Archibald Loudon's *A Selection of the Most Interesting Narratives, or Outrages,*

³⁹ Charles E. Hunter, "The Delaware Nativist Revival of the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in *Ethnohistory* 18, no 1 (Winter 1971): 45.



Figure 1.3: A depiction of Neolin's vision. John McCullough, "A Narrative of the Captivity of John McCullough, Esq." in *A Selection of the Most Interesting Narratives, or Outrages, Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People*, Archibald Loudon, ed. (Carlisle, PA: Press of Archibald Loudon, 1808), 272-276.

Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People, published in 1808, his narrative was accompanied by a depiction of Neolin's map [Figure 1.3] that was designed to be more evocative and scrutable to a non-Indigenous audience. However, while the

depiction of a devouring devil was anachronistic to Neolin's original map, many original elements persisted, with the square depiction of the world being the most obvious.⁴⁰

Taking this line of thought a step further, perhaps Neolin expected to make course corrections while traveling the narrow road. By the end of the conflict, Indian nations once confederated in opposition to British colonialism did exactly that. While the Indians who participated in Pontiac's War met a number of their objectives, their loftiest goal of driving Europeans out of North America was abandoned. While military victories allowed Indian nations to negotiate from a place of increased strength, by 1765, diplomats negotiated not for British expulsion but instead for a return to a colonial relationship of mutually beneficial trade and respect for Indigenous sovereignty in which the British behaved in a way similar to the French, who had abandoned their forts after the Treaty of Paris of 1763. Furthermore, while many Indian nations continued to cooperate on the diplomatic field as they had on the battlefield, Pontiac's loose confederacy was fracturing.

It was in this context that Neolin's vision was amended. While the Lenape once again found themselves in a subordinate diplomatic position due to the Covenant Chain binding the Six Nations and the British together, as they arrived, the presence of Neolin and his new vision began to dissolve the Lenape factionalism and in-fighting. The first word of Neolin's revised vision arrived at Fort Pitt on April 1, 1765, as Croghan prepared for the arrival of official delegations. According to George Croghan's journal:

⁴⁰ McCullough, "A Narrative of the Captivity of John McCullough, Esq." 272-276. Christian Feest, "The Prophet Stick: Detective Stories from the Museum World" in *Journal Fünf Kontinente* 3 (September, 2020): 118-120.

four [Lenape] came here from one of their towns where two of their tribes were collected together in council and said that they were sent by their chiefs to inform me that although Custaloga had sent me word, one of the men having been called up to Heaven by the Great Spirit of Life told him that he must acquaint his nation that before they made peace with the English, they must first consult the Quakers of Philadelphia, who would direct them how to make a lasting peace.

Their description of the reticence of “two of their tribes” to follow Custaloga lends credence to the Onödowá’ga delegate’s description of two Lenape war factions. The four Lenape delegates, clearly understanding the weightiness of this revision, then requested that “as the Great Spirit had told [Neolin] several things of great consequence to them, he desired that [Alexander] McKee might go there and commit it all to writing.”⁴¹ Croghan clearly was not interested in following the Master of Life’s suggestions, but maintained a cool head and did not respond in the moment. Waiting until the following day, Croghan prepared a formal response and presented it on a belt of wampum, stating that he:

was surprised at the message you delivered us yesterday.... The man you mention who says he spoke to the Great Spirit, you may rest assured is deceiving your people as we are persuaded that he never spoke to him.... You will therefore return to your chiefs and let them know that no people whatever in this country can give you peace but the King’s commander-in-chief, and we desire them to come here with the other nations and comply with your engagements to Colonel Bouquet and not suffer themselves to be amused by idle dreams or stories.⁴²

Likewise, the request for McKee’s transcribing talents was left unheeded, as it was not mentioned again in Croghan’s records.

Although this first diplomatic overture was rebuffed, the Lenape delegation was undeterred. Feeling that Neolin’s visions might be more powerful were they delivered to

⁴¹ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765” in *TNR*, 4.

⁴² “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765” in *TNR*, 4-5.

Croghan directly, the Lenape faction that was suspicious of Custaloga's approach decided to bring Neolin to Fort Pitt later that month. By this point, Custaloga, King Beaver, and Netawatwees had arrived, and Croghan thus "had a private meeting with the chiefs and the principle warriors of the three [clans] of the [Lenape] when they brought me the Indian which they said had been lifted up to Heaven and had spoken to the Great Spirit or Giver of Life." As Croghan recorded their meeting, noting that he "desired to know what the Great Spirit had told him. He remained silent for some time and then spoke as follows":

It is now one hundred and fifteen days since I saw and spoke with our Father which is in heaven by which I know everything on earth and good from bad. I have likewise been informed how far our Great Father allows us to know his will and in what manner we ought to proceed. In order to make a firm lasting friendship between one another the persons amongst the White people to whom we are to speak to on this head, by order of our Father, are the Quakers... God, when he first made us on this Earth considered us as his people and gave us direction in what manner to live and now this second time has discovered himself to me, acquainted me with the method we ought to pursue and to live agreeable to his desire. He spoke to me concerning all the people which inhabit this continent.⁴³

Obviously, this is a much more conciliatory tone than the call to "make war upon" all white people in North America. In fact, Neolin, in expressing this vision, indicated that there was space in the Master of Life's creation for settlers as well as Indigenous people, even implying that the Master of Life was the master of European-descended people as well. Clarifying what exactly he meant when he said that the Master of Life spoke to him

⁴³ Neolin, "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765" in *TNR*, 7. It is worth noting that the timeline presented at the start of Neolin's oration is difficult to reconcile with the timeline in the historical record.

“concerning all the people which inhabit this continent,” Neolin addressed Croghan and the rest of the British delegation as “Brethren,” stating that:

if we adhere to the advice our Father has given us, it will do us both good, as we are people of different colors who inhabit this continent. We are fully determined to comply with the orders of our Great Father, as we don’t think it would be right to disobey him, and we desire you to join us and let us both comply with this request, it will be better for us. We are his people and his is our father. You know brethren if we don’t do what he desires us, it will not be good for either of us.⁴⁴

But it would seem that Neolin was also addressing the different factions of Lenape present at Fort Pitt, as all the principal negotiators were present as well. Whatever discussions these Lenape delegates had among themselves went unrecorded, but unnamed representatives returned to Croghan the next day and further unpacked the diplomatic implications of the vision for the Lenape delegation, stating that “the Great Spirit had told them as they were the first nation that met the Quakers when first they came to Philadelphia, they ought to be the first applied to in making a lasting peace for all other nations in this country.” Unfortunately for the Lenape delegation, while Croghan was more conciliatory now that he was face-to-face with Neolin, he did not budge on his position. However, this time he did not question the legitimacy of Neolin’s prophecy but instead reminded them that this was a peace process already underway, and that if they no longer wanted to adhere to the previous commitments made with Colonel Bouquet, “they must go to the Quakers or sit alone in the woods, for it was out of [Croghan’s] power to comply with their request.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765” in *TNR*, 7-8.

⁴⁵ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765” in *TNR*, 8.

While Neolin's second vision featured significant revisions, it also was not a complete reversal. While Neolin expressed an increased willingness to explore peace, he still saw his mission as being on behalf of all Indians, not just the Lenape. But Neolin's audience was also the Lenape delegation, and he implored them to unite and take on the mantle of chief negotiators for all Indians that the Master of Life intended for them. This was surely a tempting proposition, as the Master of Life's instructions clearly sidestepped the preferred British approach to diplomacy, in which the Indian department negotiated first with the Six Nations. Perhaps Neolin saw those from the Six Nations who journeyed to treat with Sir William Johnson as ignoring the Master of Life, choosing the Covenant Chain over adherence to his teachings, thus framing the Six Nations as collaborating with the enemy. Regardless, Neolin felt that his people needed to occupy the most powerful diplomatic position in order to sustain the efficacy of his prophetic message. Moreover, the insistence that the Master of Life called the Lenape to be the architects of peace for all Indigenous peoples stands in sharp contrast to the language of the original vision in which no national distinctions were made.

There is a temptation to read these amendments cynically as an attempt by the Lenape spiritual leader to abandon a narrow road designed for all Indians and reframe it as one for the Lenape alone. Historian Gregory Evans Dowd explains Neolin's amended vision within the context of nativism versus accommodationism, arguing that, "nativists could attribute the failure of Native American arms not to British numbers, technology, or organization, but to the improper behavior of the accommodating Indians."⁴⁶ For Dowd,

⁴⁶ Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 37.

Neolin's second vision was an attempt to bring his most ardent followers to the fore. However, this explanation ignores Neolin's return to a tribal nationalism. His vision does not simply privilege true believers over skeptics, but instead the Lenape over other Indian nations. As Neolin traveled the "narrow road," pan-Indianism specifically, not simply a "big umbrella" nativism, proved unsustainable. Thus, the Master of Life offered new instructions that sought to both preserve the vision's commitment to peace in North America while offering a spiritual impetus for resolving intra-national factionalism by sacrificing a similar commitment to pan-Indianism within the context of colonialism.

There are certainly explanations for this tactical turn that are not supernatural in origin. As anthropologist Neil L. Whitehead argued, the formation of tribes, which colonial European observers saw as a natural yet less-sophisticated political stage of social development when compared to kingdoms and empires, was in fact a reaction to the muscular expansion of colonial states. Rather than a reflection of pre-colonial political geography, the tribes that European empires observed and obsessed over as they managed the territories to which they laid claim were instead "the product of the historical violence of the European occupation."⁴⁷ Although Whitehead's historical evidence is drawn from the colonialism of South America, he argues that tribalism, as observed in the Americas, was a means by which Indigenous actors and polities could translate their pre-colonial politics of kinship and ethnicity, in which a perceived clan or

⁴⁷ Neil L. Whitehead, "Tribes Make States and States Makes Tribes: Warfare and the Creation of Colonial Tribes and States in Northeastern South America," in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. Brian R. Ferguson (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2000), 128.

linguistic kinship formed political ties, into a political form that was more effective at resisting the encroachment of empire. As Whitehead stated:

both the permeability of group boundaries and the sociogeographical contiguity of settlement that had once underlain it were inhibited and interrupted.... Emphasis on the immediate locality as the only safe sphere of interaction, an increased emphasis on language as a political marker, and the refusal, on the part of the Europeans, to observe [I]ndigenous social distinctions therefore encouraged the kind of inward-facing, bounded, and isolated social unit that is classically a modern “tribal” formation.⁴⁸

In this sense, tribalism is a tactic, one that may have been at work as Neolin’s vision underwent reformulation. Neolin’s original pan-Indian commitments did not provide him and the people with which he had the strongest linguistic, kinship, and ethnic affinities with the “safe sphere of interaction” nor the “steady state” that his first prophecy had promised. Yet he also saw that a return to the status quo of the early eighteenth century, in which the Six Nations leveraged their especially strong articulation of national/tribal identity to deflect the pressures of colonialism onto their neighbors, as equally unsafe and disruptive. As such, Neolin’s instructions from the Master of Life sought a third way, conceding to the strength of tribalism as a political strategy while holding on to a vision of peace for all Indigenous peoples through divine guidance. There are also broader international political explanations for this change as well, although they are perhaps too overwrought to be satisfactory on their own. As historians Amy C. Schutt and Gunlög Fur both demonstrate, over the previous centuries the Lenape had established themselves as

⁴⁸ Whitehead, “Tribes Make States and States Makes Tribes,” 139.

the region's international diplomatic leaders in negotiating peace.⁴⁹ For both of these historians, the Indigenous international order was largely a product of a system in which military action was directed by the Haudenosaunee while peace was directed by the Lenape. In this sense, one could, at least in broad strokes, draw a rough parallel to the might of the British military establishment and the commitment to peace of the principally non-violent Quakers. However, whether this system ever operated effectively is debatable, by the Seven Years' War, it had broken down as the Lenape in the Ohio Country began to raid the settlements of Western Pennsylvania, attacks that instilled panic among Pennsylvania colonial settlers and Philadelphia officials alike.

In fact, in 1756, concerned Quakers had formed the "Friendly Association" as an independent diplomatic mission. Led by the famed Israel Pemberton, the primary impetus for the new mission was the news of Lenape attacks, a course of action that shocked many of Pennsylvania's Quakers who had expected the Lenape's history of peaceful relations with the colony to serve as a bulwark against attacks from French-allied Indians farther west. Additionally, these attacks had prompted political changes in Pennsylvania governance that further required the Quakers to attempt their diplomatic work privately.

The same year that the Friendly Association had been formed, debates in the

⁴⁹ Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 141-149. Fur, *A Nation of Women*, 1-13. It is worth noting that Amy Schutt is unconvinced that the revised prophecy was delivered by Neolin. Croghan's records are the only archival trace of the revised vision and he did not provide a name for the prophet who journeyed to Fort Pitt in 1765. Despite discussing Neolin at length within her work, Schutt attributes the 1765 exchange with Croghan to an unnamed "visionary speaker." Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 124-125. However, the broader historical consensus is that the man was in fact Neolin. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit*, 43; Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, 36. Neolin was present at least some of the 1764 meetings between Lenape diplomats and Colonel Bouquet in the region of Neolin's home in the Ohio Country. Also present were many of the same Lenape diplomats and warriors who would then travel to Fort Pitt in 1765. As such, I am more convinced that Neolin was left unnamed in Croghan's records because all present were well aware of who the prophet was, as they would have made clear upon meeting Croghan that the man was a new prophet had that been the case.

Pennsylvania Assembly over funding a frontier militia in response to Lenape attacks on Lancaster and Berks County had split the Quaker party, which held a majority in the chamber. While the majority of the party was willing to make compromises in their pacifist ideals and voted to support a militia bill, a select few, which included Pemberton, protested it, writing a “Humble Address” lambasting the majority of Quakers for abandoning William Penn’s vision. The Assembly was unswayed and Pennsylvania governor Robert Morris officially declared war on the Lenape and offered a bounty for Lenape scalps, horrifying Pemberton and the smaller group of pacifist idealists. Moreover, because Pemberton was often held up as the embodiment of Philadelphia’s Quaker political elite, his formal opposition to the militia bill invited public rage towards the whole of the Quaker party from Pennsylvania’s frontier non-Quakers, who did not differentiate between those who supported the bill and those who opposed it. The idealist minority resigned from the Assembly in protest, causing the Quaker party as a whole to lose their majority in the legislative body. Now private citizens, Pemberton and his idealist colleagues took the developments of 1756 as a signal that they needed to design more robust and focused strategies for making peace with their Indigenous neighbors.⁵⁰

The breakdown of diplomatic relationships between the Lenape and the Pennsylvania colony was noticed by Indigenous diplomats as well. Even as the Six Nations saw themselves as occupying a privileged position vis-à-vis Sir William Johnson,

⁵⁰ Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 78-82; Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years’ War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 123-156; David Little, “The Pennsylvania Experiment with Freedom of Conscience and Church-State Relations,” in *Disestablishment and Religious Dissent: Church-State Relations in the New American States, 1776-1833*, eds. Carl H. Esbeck and Jonathan J. Den Harton (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2019), 81-82; Robert Daiutolo, Jr., “The Role of Quakers in Indian Affairs During the French and Indian War,” in *Quaker History* 77, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 1-30.

they also acknowledged that the Lenape held a similar position vis-à-vis Pennsylvania. As Morris began his war against the Lenape during the Seven Years' War, he asked Johnson to request military and diplomatic support from the Six Nations. In a formal diplomatic meeting held in February of 1756, a Six Nations diplomat named Red Head noted that the violence between the Lenape and Pennsylvania colony was a consequence of Pennsylvania's mismanagement of that relationship. As Red Head stated:

We always looked upon the [Lenape] as the more immediate care of Onas [the Indigenous term for the Governor of Pennsylvania] that they were within the circle of his arms. We therefore are of opinion that he has not taken that friendly care of them as he ought to do, and therefore our common enemy hath taken the advantage of his neglect. For we can't but think that if there had been proper measures taken, they would have still continued faithful friends to the English interest.⁵¹

Just as Pemberton saw the conflict as a consequence of the abandonment of Quaker ideals, the Six Nations likewise laid the blame at the feet of Governor Morris and his new approach to international relations.

Those who formed the Friendly Association had significant experience with transcultural diplomacy, and their first order of business was to use private funds to purchase the large quantities of gifts that were required for making peace with Indigenous diplomats. While imperial governors and agents were wary of the Friendly Association, they conceded that the relationships Quakers had built with the Lenape in particular might prove useful and therefore invited the Friendly Association to the pivotal Treaty of Easton in 1757. While imperial representatives at the conference, including Croghan himself, as well as non-Lenape Indigenous diplomats, including Croghan's

⁵¹ Red Head in "The Answer of the Six Nations, the 21st of February, 1756," in *WJP*, vol. IX, 368.

Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] father-in-law Nickus, were annoyed with the Quaker presence, the Friendly Association was at least successful enough to garner increased investment. In particular, the perceived success of privately financed gift-giving allowed Friendly Association leader Pemberton, who, depending on perspective, was affectionately or pejoratively known as the “King of the Delawares,” to set up a Quaker and Mennonite-financed trading post in the vicinity of Fort Pitt. However, a combination of mismanagement, an inability to compete with traders such as Croghan, and suspicion from imperial administrators made this new trading post ineffective. The onset of Pontiac’s War in 1763 prompted the British to close trade with Indians and ultimately doomed the Friendly Association’s plan, which due to its infancy, could not financially weather the war, especially considering Croghan’s dual role as an imperial agent and trader whose business was so-often underwritten by official British funds. By the time Neolin made his prophetic appeal, the Friendly Association had devolved into a poorly-funded society of Philadelphians who were known to be supportive of Indigenous issues. However, beyond offering gifts to Indians visiting Philadelphia, the Friendly Association as a force within North American transcultural diplomacy was as impotent as Croghan indicated in his reply to Neolin at Fort Pitt.⁵²

Unfortunately for Neolin and the Lenape who supported this Quaker-oriented third way, his argument was unconvincing for the non-Lenape at Fort Pitt. In fact, it is hard to ascertain if Neolin’s second vision had a unifying effect on the Lenape delegation itself. Like so many discussions among Indigenous peoples, the record is incomplete, but

⁵² Theodore Thayer, “The Friendly Association,” in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67, no. 4 (Oct. 1943): 356-376. Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 96-97.

a violent argument among the Lenape drew the attention of Croghan. The night after the Lenape delegation had returned to Croghan to explain the diplomatic implications of Neolin's meeting, "two principal warriors of the [Lenape] differed in council and stabbed each other in such a manner that their lives are despaired of, which accident threw all the tribes of that nation into such confusion that Major Murray and [Croghan] were obliged to speak to them on three belts of wampum to reconcile them to each other."⁵³ It is impossible to know what prompted the fight, but certainly the weight of a vision from a famed prophet hung over the evening's events. Moreover, while Croghan was an adroit Indigenous negotiator, his words that night were not recorded, and he would not be the first colonist to take credit for pacifying Indigenous peoples, whether it was actually his arguments that lowered the temperature or not. What is clear is that the events of that night were the last indication of tensions within the Lenape delegation. Perhaps Neolin or those associated with him were instrumental in calming these tensions. Or, perhaps, this moment of violence represented the death knell of Neolin's movement. Regardless of whether it was Neolin's prophecy or Croghan's diplomacy that truly reconciled the delegation to itself, by the time official negotiations began a week later, the Lenape delegation spoke in a singular voice.

The other delegations however, whether Onödowá'ga, Shaawanwa, or British, did not respond to Neolin's prophecy. Whether the Onödowá'ga or Shaawanwa heard whispers of the prophet's presence at the Forks of the Ohio falls outside the scope of

⁵³ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 8. Croghan differentiates here between "tribe" and "nation." Despite his familiarity with Lenape politics, this is a misrepresentation of the political and social structure of Lenape peoples as there was no such clean distinction or proto-federal structure to Lenape governance. For more exploration of the complicated political and social worlds of the Lenape, see Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys*, 94-123.

Croghan's records. Regardless, Neolin returned to the Ohio Country as his particular movement lost its momentum. While subsequent historians have situated Neolin's prophecy within a longer story of Indigenous revitalization, the prophetic movements that came later would be rooted in new visions. Similarly, while this Quaker turn failed to make the intended impact within the broader pan-Indian nativist movement at the heart of Pontiac's War, it did not ultimately undermine the legacy of Neolin's original vision among Indigenous peoples and the posture of their political and diplomatic relationships with the British.⁵⁴ Moreover, there is evidence that Neolin's prophetic turn towards the Quakers was not only sincere, but it also had a more local impact on the spiritually-inflected politics of the Lenape. In 1766, the Presbyterian missionary Charles Beatty traveled to the Ohio Country and met Neolin that September at his new residence in the Lenape community of Gekelukpechink. Neolin spoke to Beatty about his previous visions, noting that his greatest concern was "about the evil ways he saw prevailing among the Indians since which time he had at times spoken to them and endeavored to persuade and instruct them as well as he could."⁵⁵ Many of these concerns were echoed by Neolin's neighbors who in meeting with Beatty implored him to assist them in helping stop the importation of liquor to their town as well as the prostitution of their women by white traders. They later thanked Beatty and his colleagues, stating that they were "much

⁵⁴ For more on the broader spiritual/political legacies of Neolin's movement, see Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*, Alfred A. Cave, "The Delaware Prophet Neolin: A Reappraisal," *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 265-290. Cave, *Prophets of the Great Spirit*. For more narrow legacies of Neolin's movement, and its impact on treaty precedents among Indigenous diplomats negotiating with the British, see Alain Beaulieu, *The Congress at Niagara in 1764: Historical Context and Meaning of the British-Aboriginal Negotiations* (Gatineau, QB: Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2017). The latter will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 3.

⁵⁵ Charles Beatty, *Journals of Charles Beatty, 1762-1769*, ed. Guy Soulliard Klett (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962): 65.

rejoiced to see [them] so earnestly engaged against those things that are bad and especially against the drinking of strong liquor which opens a door to so many evil things.”⁵⁶ They followed this expression of thanks with a request that Beatty and his party take a wampum belt along with a transcription of a speech to be delivered to the Quakers.

According to Beatty’s records, the Lenape spokesperson sent the following message:

Dear brothers the Quakers, by this belt we salute you. It may be you are saying we cannot hear our brothers the Indians—what they say only we hear them afar off. Dear brothers, we will not forget you. We are brothers since we have first entered into friendship. Brothers we now shake hands with you. We hope you are well but we are in the thick weeds among the bushes. Dear brothers, by this belt we let you know that we are well and have not forgot you and we hope you will receive it kindly as a mark of our friendship.⁵⁷

While Neolin’s attempt to use the historical relationship between the Quakers and the Lenape had failed, the feeling of attachment remained. Moreover, Neolin and his spirituality continued to be open to revision. The evening after receiving the message to be delivered to the Quakers, Beatty noted that “Neolin came to see us and sat with us a while and desired to hear something about the Christian religion.” Beatty gave the floor to his partner George Duffield, who, “then told him something about the promises of a savior Jesus that had been given of old and how according to them Christ came and then gave him a short summary of the way a sinner is brought to have an interest in this savior.” According to Beatty, as Neolin listened to Duffield’s impromptu sermon, “he appeared very attentive and pleased to hear these things and when we had done he affectionately shook hands and withdrew telling us if he could he would see us again in

⁵⁶ Beatty, *Journals of Charles Beatty*, 66-68.

⁵⁷ Beatty, *Journals of Charles Beatty*, 69.

the morning.” The next day, Beatty, Duffield, and their party left Gekelukpechink with Neolin journeying with them for a short time so as to see them off.⁵⁸

After this encounter, the only remaining historical records of Neolin’s movement appear in the records of Moravian missionaries as they sought to convert the same community. According to the Moravian John Heckewelder, a new nativist preacher named Wangomen began to preach the same year that Beatty visited, carrying a message that Heckewelder himself noted was strikingly similar to Neolin’s. When missionaries first arrived, Wangomen pledged to combat the Moravian’s message. However, Wangomen became frustrated with the commitment of his followers and decided to zealously work against the nativists on behalf of the Moravians, declaring “that wizards were getting the upper hand, and would destroy the nation, if they were not checked in their career.” Unfortunately for Moravian missionary efforts, Wangomen’s Christian zealotry was short lived, as his cool reception as a Christian preacher led him to return “to his former mode of preaching, recommending to his hearers to purge themselves from sin by taking certain prescribed medicines, and making frequent sacrifices to the Great Spirit.”⁵⁹ If Wangomen was indeed a direct follower of Neolin as Heckewelder suspected, it would seem that he was not as successful as his predecessor in building a following. It is unclear whether Wangomen’s failure was a consequence of his lack of charisma or a growing impatience with the radicalism of nativist prophecy among the Lenape people of

⁵⁸ Beatty, *Journals of Charles Beatty*, 69-70.

⁵⁹ John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States* (Philadelphia: Publication Fund of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 293-295.

the Ohio Country. Regardless, it would seem that by 1766, Neolin's status as a prophetic nativist leader had passed.

A Public Servant with Private Ambitions

When George Croghan set off for Fort Pitt in the opening months of 1765, he journeyed along a road with which he was deeply familiar. As he traveled west, he did so along the Forbes Road, a road built atop Indian trails as an artery for the movement of colonial troops during the Seven Years' War. Traveling in winter through Appalachia was harrowing, and reports of heavy snow drew concern from the military officials who rested their hopes on the prospects of Croghan's success.⁶⁰ While the updated road surely aided the speed of Croghan's travels, he would have been one of the few settlers for whom the previous trails were sufficient as he had built his livelihood upon entering into Indigenous spaces and connecting them to British markets. Since arriving in the British colonies, Croghan became famed for leveraging his skills as a transcultural diplomat and a trader. He had an unrivaled ability to be many things at once, doing so in ways that made him invaluable to both Indigenous communities and the British administration alike, all while enriching himself.

In 1765, Croghan's trip was the apotheosis of two simultaneous processes; the first was the increased centralization of imperial administration of Indian affairs and the second was his own career as an Indian trader, a profession that was as reliant on his

⁶⁰ "Colonel Henry Bouquet to Sir William Johnson, January 25, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. IV, 640; "Sir William Johnson to General Thomas Gage, February 14, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. IV, 646. An editorial footnote for the latter letter indicates that the letter was written in the hand of Guy Johnson, but was among the originals destroyed by the 1911 State Library fire in Albany, New York.

reputation as it was on his ability to navigate transatlantic markets. Simply put, he had created a trade empire, with two meanings of the word “empire” equally apropos. On the one hand, he oversaw a personal trade network that stretched across Pennsylvania and reached into the Ohio Country, and he was always willing to take great personal risk to push that network farther afield. In this sense, assigning a metaphorical imperialism upon his business practices is particularly apt. However, because trade and diplomacy were inseparable from an Indigenous perspective, his success in the Indian trade made him an irreplaceable agent of official British imperialism, and thus attaching the term empire to his trade practices need not be metaphorical.

Just as Neolin had envisioned, quite literally, new ways forward for his people, Croghan too was envisioning, albeit in ways devoid of spirituality, a new way forward for the British imperial project in continental North America. Similarly, Croghan envisioned a new era of peaceful political relationships between empire and Indigene, even if his selfish interest in that peace had more to do with his business ledgers than eschatological urgency. Likewise, just as Neolin had found others to share in his vision, Croghan was able to enact his vision with the support of an imperial agent who had a strikingly similar vision for British imperialism, Sir William Johnson. Finally, just as Neolin had to contend with erstwhile allies that had soured on the prophet’s message, Croghan too worked to push his vision forward even as other colonial forces sought alternative colonial paths. In fact, beyond the incompatibility of Croghan’s and Neolin’s visions for a sustained peace between the British and Indigenous people, the most striking difference was that in 1765, Croghan was successful in bringing his vision to fruition, while Neolin was not.

As the Seven Years' War approached its end, British administrators were desperate for agents with Croghan's skills and experience as well as a new military post to locate and protect their particular interests. Conveniently, Croghan was at the same time in need of a new job. Croghan had run afoul of Pennsylvania administrators for his business practices, a recurring theme in his life of public service. However, while his prospects ultimately soured within Pennsylvanian political circles, what he tried to accomplish in the 1750s further east served as a dry run for what he envisioned for the Forks of the Ohio. Located along the Aughwick Creek, a tributary of the Juniata River which in turn drains into the Susquehanna River, Croghan established a trading post. Because of Croghan's skill and renown as a trader, it quickly became the westernmost Pennsylvania entrepôt while the French still occupied Fort Duquesne. But it would be wrong to describe Croghan's homestead as a Pennsylvanian community, as the vast majority of those who called "Aughwick Old Town" home were Indigenous, and his relationships with them caused at least some concern from other colonial agents. Fellow transcultural interpreter Conrad Weiser, for example, visited Croghan at Aughwick in 1754 and gave a lengthy description of what Croghan had built:

I counted above twenty cabins about his house, and in them at least two hundred Indians, men, women, and children, and a great many more are scattered thereabouts, some two or three miles off... he has between twenty-five and thirty acres of the best Indian corn that ever I saw. He sends his servants every day to fetch four or five bags full of roasting ears for them, but there is not an hour in the day but what some steal into it and fetch more, and upon the whole it is my opinion they will destroy one half of it before it can be gathered in, to say nothing of the butter, milk, squashes, pumpkins, they daily fetch....I advised him to charge for it what was reasonable, and to get two or three credible men (as often come there from the inhabited parts) to value the corn that the Indians took

away and certify it. I cannot see what can be done else. Mr. Croghan must either be trusted to buy and distribute provision or the government must keep a man there in whom they can can confide to receive the provision from Mr. Croghan or those that bring it and so distribute it according to the Governor's instructions.⁶¹

Weiser had close relationships with Indigenous people, so the presence of so many Indians would not have been a cause of concern. However, apparently the generosity Croghan offered to his neighbors—and its potential impact on colonial budgets—apparently did, hinting at the kinds of business practices within Croghan's ideal trade empire that eventually damaged Croghan's relationship with the Pennsylvania government. However, Pennsylvania administrators did see potential value in how Croghan secured his post. As the first clashes between provincial forces and the French erupted at the Forks, Croghan constructed fortifications at Aughwick with the help of both his servants and locals, unsurprisingly naming the defensive structure "Croghan's Fort," at least until Pennsylvania forces took command of the post and renamed it Fort Shirley. Perhaps because of his successes fortifying his own home, he was next tasked with constructing two other posts, Fort Lyttleton twenty miles further south as well as Fort Carlisle, designed to defend the westernmost truly Pennsylvanian settlement, receiving a commission as a captain in order to give him the authority to do so. Unfortunately for Croghan, his pattern of generosity towards those with whom he associated, including enlisted men, along with his expenditures during the construction of

⁶¹ Conrad Weiser, "A Letter to Governor Hamilton from C. Weiser, September 13, 1754" in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, vol. IV (Harrisburg, PA: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 150 (Hereafter *CRPA*.)

Fort Carlisle, enraged Pennsylvania administrators. In response, Croghan resigned his commission.⁶²

Simultaneously, Croghan had also become the focus of anti-Catholic sentiment in Philadelphia. In an ironic coincidence, in 1756, just as frontier Pennsylvanians blamed Quaker pacifism for the violence in western Pennsylvania, a firestorm of fears of a Roman Catholic conspiracy erupted in Philadelphia. A series of intercepted communications, signed under the pseudonym “Filius Gallicae,” were discovered in Ireland and spoke of Catholic Irish immigrants in Pennsylvania serving as French double agents. Many suspected that “Filius Gallicae” was in fact Croghan, despite the fact that Croghan was an Anglican and gave money in support of Anglican congregations throughout his career. Moreover, this was not the first time Croghan had come under fire for his suspected secret Catholicism. An anonymous pamphleteer had written in London the previous year that “One George Croghan, an Irish papist, as an Indian trader was frequently employed by the government of Pennsylvania to carry presents to the Indians living on or about the Ohio, and to bring their answers back.” He continued, that now that he lived in the west, he did “all the mischief he can in revenge, by influencing the Indians and French against the English.”⁶³ Seeing his reputation growing increasingly tarnished within the context of Pennsylvania politics, he instead headed north to New York to meet

⁶² Jonathan A. Burns, George John Drobnock, Jared M. Smith, “Croghan at Aughwick: History, Maps, and Archaeology Collide in the Search for Fort Shirley,” in *PAST: Pioneer American Society Transactions* 33 (2010): 14-31; Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 102-106. Archaeological research at the Fort Shirley site is in its infancy, but initial data substantiates the historical record as most artifacts reveal a mixture of trade goods, Indigenous wares, and military artifacts that would be expected at such a fortification.

⁶³ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 106-109.

Sir William Johnson and apply to be his deputy in the newly formed Northern Superintendency for Indian Affairs.

Apparently Croghan made a great first impression on Johnson, as he was immediately hired as a deputy and given a salary of £200 along with the power to serve as an official diplomat to Indigenous peoples for the British Empire. But in working for Johnson, Croghan also gained access to a perfect model for fulfilling his vision of building a personal trade empire. Johnson had built his own trade empire and risen to the highest ranks of imperial administration. But more importantly, he had found his success by growing closer to Indigenous people in ways that would normally draw suspicion among colonial elites. Johnson had a relationship with a Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] woman named Konwatsi'tsiaienni or Mary Brant, the sister of the Kanien'kehá:ka leader Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant. A year into his service under Johnson, Croghan would likewise begin his relationship with the Kanien'kehá:ka clan mother Catharine, with their daughter eventually marrying Thayendanegea himself. Such relationships were incredibly powerful as they gave Johnson and Croghan deep connections with Indigenous communities even as they were seen as incredibly uncouth by most British colonists.⁶⁴ Regardless, Croghan's transition from working in Pennsylvanian political circles to working directly for imperial administrators began to immediately pay dividends. One of Croghan's first official orders of business was to serve as a negotiator at the same Treaty of Easton attended by Pemberton and the Friendly Association. Soon after, Croghan was given diplomatic responsibilities at the Forks of the Ohio under Johnson's

⁶⁴ The diplomatic power of Croghan's relationship will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 2.

recommendations, an appointment that allowed Croghan to return to the work of building his own wealth hand-in-hand with advancing British imperial interests.⁶⁵

Johnson clearly saw the wisdom in appointing someone like himself as an agent for this vital work. As Johnson noted when writing to the Lords of Trade in London in 1759, “An equitable, an open, and a well-regulated trade with the Indians is and ever will be the most natural and most efficacious means to improve and extend His Majesty’s Indian interest.” Likewise, perhaps presaging the continued influence of French traders as de facto agents of competing imperial interests, Johnson continued, saying, “All manner of trade with the subjects of France in these parts ought to be prohibited under the severest of penalties.”⁶⁶ Replacing Fort Duquesne, which the French had razed as they retreated in the face of General Forbes’s exhibition, was the British administration’s preferred approach. Not only did this establish a fortified British presence in the very region that had sparked the Seven Years’ War in the first place, it would also allow the British to extend and oversee the simultaneously lucrative and diplomatically essential Indian trade in ways that had proven so successful for the French in the Great Lakes prior to the war. And, if Fort Pitt was to become a new hub of transcultural imperial administration and lasting peaceful relations with Indigenous subjects, as the British hoped it would become, an agent like Croghan was essential.

⁶⁵ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 110-119, 156-158.

⁶⁶ “Sir William Johnson to the Lords of Trade,” *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1856), vol. VII, 377, (hereafter *DRNY*). The role of French traders as agents of empire will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

Croghan thus assumed his role as the official British diplomat at the Forks of the Ohio in 1758. While a string of military successes had put the French on the back foot, their alliances with Indigenous peoples in the Ohio and Illinois Countries remained strong, and British military commanders knew that weakening those alliances was of the utmost strategic importance as they entered the war's endgame. As Colonel Henry Bouquet noted in letter to Colonel Hugh Mercer, who had been given responsibility of military oversight at the Forks of Ohio until General John Stanwix could begin construction of Fort Pitt, "with your direction and assistance will I hope [Croghan] to be able to support our interest with the Indians, till we can raise the troops and enforce your arguments by the weight of an army."⁶⁷ Conveniently, Croghan already owned land in the vicinity and thus he built a new home for himself, which would eventually become known as "Croghan Hall," and began to do what he had done previously farther east in Pennsylvania.⁶⁸ He collected stores of trade goods and sent word through his social contacts, such as fellow Pennsylvania traders and financiers in Philadelphia, that trade was open, an approach that aligned with imperial objectives while simultaneously leaving Croghan poised to enrich himself.

By this point, the British were five years into a new plan designed to centralize their administration of Indian affairs. Seeing the chaos of allowing individual colonies to handle their own diplomacy with Indigenous nations, the British established two new administrative departments at the Albany Congress of 1754. Moving forward, the

⁶⁷ "Colonel Henry Bouquet to Colonel Hugh Mercer, May 8, 1759," *The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet*, Series 21652, eds. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940), 160.

⁶⁸ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 192.

administration of Indian policies within the colonies would be overseen by two superintendents, one in the North and one in the South.⁶⁹ As a part of his work, Johnson would back an even stronger centralization of Indian affairs, which, while never formally adopted, was fully expressed in the “Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs,” which historian Daniel K. Richter terms the “Plan of 1764.”⁷⁰ However, while the plan was not set to paper until five years after Croghan set up his trading post at the Forks, by 1759 Johnson had already begun earnestly writing his superiors, the Lords of Trade, in London, begging for a more streamlined and unified approach to Indian affairs.

Johnson’s requests further solidified Croghan as the perfect pick for chief trader diplomat at the Forks. In addition to pleading for a more robust yet well-regulated trade with Indians as well as the criminalization of French traders, as previously noted, Johnson also felt that sustainable peace required an approach to land acquisition that allowed Indians “to be redressed or satisfied in all their reasonable and well-founded complaints of enormous and unrighteously obtained patents for their lands.” He continued, saying that such an approach required “treaties of limitations with the respective provinces agreed upon, and religiously observed, with regard to the bounds of our settlements towards the Indian Country; in this the Province of Pennsylvania and New Jersey have lately very wisely and politically set an example,” referring to the diplomatic conclusions reached at the Treaty of Easton. His many years living in close

⁶⁹ John R. Alden, “The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27, no. 2 (Sept. 1940): 193-210.

⁷⁰ Daniel K. Richter, “The Plan of 1764: Native Americans and a British Empire That Never Was,” in *Trade, Land, Power: The Struggle for Eastern North America*, ed. Daniel K. Richter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 177-201.

proximity and partnership with the Haudenosaunee in New York had taught Johnson the wisdom in limiting colonial settlement farther west, as it inevitably led to violence between settlers and the Indigenous people who already called the land home. But he also knew that one of the best ways to regulate settlement was through an established British presence in the form of an agent with intimate knowledge of Indigenous politics and customs. Johnson added that the Lords of Trade should also encourage increased missionary activity coupled with “a handsome encouragement for interpreters of capacity and education,” as “there are at present none in any tolerable degree qualified for this important employment.”⁷¹

Considering Croghan had already received his appointment at the Forks, these statements by Johnson, at first glance, would seem to have been insulting to Croghan. Not only did Croghan pride himself as an interpreter, he was generally at odds with the Pennsylvania administration whom Johnson was seemingly praising. While his base of operations had always fallen within the border of the colony, his work often put him at odds with colonial officials. Why then, would Johnson praise those same officials? However, in his letter to the Lords of Trade, it would appear that Johnson was putting a bit of political spin on recent diplomatic history at the Treaty of Easton. As the secretary at the negotiations, Charles Thompson, noted, Croghan, along with the other famed interpreter Conrad Weiser, were invaluable in negotiating between the Lenape diplomat and firebrand Teedyuscung and Pennsylvania governor William Denny.⁷² In this sense,

⁷¹ “Sir William Johnson to the Lords of Trade,” in *DRNY*, vol. VII, 377.

⁷² Charles Thomas, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians from the British Interest* (London: J. Wilkie, 1759).

Croghan was one of the chief architects of a “Pennsylvanian” approach that Johnson deemed to be more fair and therefore more conducive to peace with Indians, and as such, his pleas to the Lords of Trade can be read as a request for more people like Croghan.

Adding to the argument that Johnson’s praise of Pennsylvania should actually be read as praise of Croghan, Britain’s new centralized approach to imperial administration had already begun to work at cross purposes with Pennsylvania colonial legislation that sought to regulate diplomacy and gift-giving with Indigenous peoples. The same year Croghan established his trading post at the Forks, the colonial legislature in Pennsylvania passed “An Act for Preventing Abuses in the Indian Trade,” which, while doing so under the auspices of Pennsylvania rather than the Indian Superintendencies, took a strikingly similar approach to regulating trade as Johnson’s proposal to the Lords of Trade. As the Act states:

the Indians living and hunting near the western and northern frontiers of this province have earnestly requested that this government would regulate the trade with them, prevent abuses therein and provide that they may be furnished with a sufficiency of the necessary goods by honest, prudent and sober men at reasonable rates, and that ministers of the gospel, schoolmasters and sober and virtuous men may be sent among them to civilize and instruct them in the Christian religion.⁷³

Initially, Johnson seemed to be content with letting Pennsylvania take the lead, as robust trade was more important than jurisdiction. In a letter to General Jeffrey Amherst, Johnson wrote that, “if the Spirit of that Act is righteously kept up to, I hope the good Consequences of it will be speedily felt, for I am convinced trade is one of the strongest

⁷³ “An Act for Preventing Abuses in the Indian Trade,” *The Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801*, vol. V, eds. James T. Mitchell and Henry Flanders (Pennsylvania: William Stanley Ray, 1898), 320.

cements to bind our Indian connections.”⁷⁴ However, while the goals may have been the same, colonial administrators in Pennsylvania proved far less capable of managing the Indian trade. Pennsylvania officials proved unwilling to make the investment necessary to their own trading post viable and therefore able to transact the price-regulated trade that the act required. The colonial assembly first permitted its chosen traders to supply the post by borrowing £4,000, and when that proved insufficient they raised the limit to £10,000. However, even that was not enough to prevent the store from being continuously devoid of trade goods. One of their hired traders, a man by the name of Robert Tuckness, was also seemingly unfit for the job, as he resigned when he could not manage to transport £800 worth of trade goods along the Forbes Road. Simply put, it became quickly apparent that the Pennsylvania-run post could not meet its mandate of establishing robust and fair trade, an essential component of sustained peace with Indigenous people living in the Ohio Country. Simultaneously, the aforementioned Quaker-run trading post, established by Pemberton and the Friendly Association, was also failing to meet its objectives. The Quaker post had been given special dispensation to run despite the new Pennsylvania law, an exemption that was given in large part because the Pennsylvania-run post was not able to meet its goals of providing the diplomatic trade necessary to break the Indigenous population’s loyalty to the French. Needless to say, there was copious evidence that an individual of Croghan’s experience would be necessary if trade was going to turn the hearts of Pennsylvania’s westward Indigenous neighbors. While both the Pennsylvania assembly and Israel Pemberton were incensed by

⁷⁴ “Sir William Johnson to General Jeffery Amherst, February 22, 1759,” in *WJP*, vol. X, 104.

Croghan's new trading post, an investigation into his actions overseen by General John Stanwix cleared Croghan of wrongdoing, even though the post obviously violated Pennsylvania law.⁷⁵

However, between the opening of his trading post in 1758 and the initiation of his peace mission in 1765, it became clear that neither Johnson nor the Pennsylvania assembly's vision of a robust and well-regulated and diplomatically advantageous trade was truly supported at the highest levels of British administration. Johnson knew there were some basic principles that supported transcultural diplomacy. First and foremost, in order to be perceived as sincere during negotiations, one must be generous. But secondly, this diplomacy always required patience. Agreements had to be recited repeatedly as a signal of affirmation. Political business was always preceded by spiritual business. And if one party could not attend a meeting, then a second meeting was required, as even if both parties agreed on the terms in principle, they did not become binding until the proper protocols were performed. However, while he had been given the power to guide diplomatic policy, Johnson still had to justify the costs, and in 1761 he hit the limit of what the British military was willing to underwrite.

Trying to undo the damage caused by poorly conducted diplomacy at Fort Detroit, Johnson traveled there in September of 1761. Croghan was already present and had been working hard to set the diplomatic stage for Johnson's arrival. Shortly after arriving, Johnson addressed a diverse gathering of leaders and diplomats of Indigenous

⁷⁵ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 162-163.

nations, expertly performing rituals of condolence so as to assuage the anger felt by those who saw the British as invaders, stating:

The great King George my master being graciously pleased some years ago to appoint me to the sole management and care of all his Indian allies in the Northern parts of North America directed me to light up a large council fire at my house in the [Kanien'kehá:ka's] country for all nations of Indians in amity with his subjects, or who were inclined to put themselves under his royal protection to come thereto and receive the benefit thereof. This fire yields such a friendly warmth that many nations have since assembled thereto and daily partake of its influence—I have therefore now brought a brand thereof with me to the place with which I here kindle up a large council fire made of such wood as shall burn bright and inextinguishable, whose kindly warmth shall be felt in, and shall extend to the most remote nations, and shall induce all Indians, even from the setting of the sun to come hither and partake thereof.⁷⁶

Johnson then outlined the intended British approach to the management of Fort Detroit, an approach that unsurprisingly mirrored Johnson's proposal to the Lords of Trade, all while liberally distributing gifts, the purchases and management of which Croghan was responsible, as a sign of British sincerity. The Indigenous diplomats gathered there responded positively and were relieved by Johnson's approach. Anáíása, a chief of the Wendat responded, saying:

We are heartily obliged to the great King for his good intentions towards us, and to the General for sending you to us to promote the good work of peace and to heal our wounds which were still running, and it is with pleasure we tell you that we now begin to see with our own eyes and can perceive the pains you have taken to dispel the darkness which so long hung over us, and to make the way smooth between our Brethren and us. We therefore with pleasure embrace this union and we join ourselves together with our brethren with a strong chain which can never be broken.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ William Johnson in "Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761," in *WJP* vol. III, 476.

⁷⁷ Anáíása in "Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761," in *WJP*, vol III, 485.

After the conference, Johnson excitedly wrote the aforementioned general, the new commander-in-chief, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, saying, “it is with great satisfaction I now inform your Excellency that I have left the Western Indians extremely well disposed towards the English, and I am of the opinion that matters are settled on so stable a foundation there, that unless greatly irritated thereto, they will never break the Peace established with them.”⁷⁸

However, it was an expensive affair, and while his costs were approved, Amherst was furious. By the general’s logic, with the surrender of the French, Indigenous people could no longer engage in what has come to be known as the “playing off system,” in which Indians leveraged their martial power to convince either the French or the British to increase the generosity of imperial gift-giving, lest they switch their allegiances to an imperial rival. As Amherst saw it, with the *pays d’en haut* now in British hands, the Indigenous peoples of the region would just have to learn to accept a much more frugal approach to the distribution of gifts. Now that the coffer-draining Seven Years’ War was over, Amherst was focused on administering the military operations in North America with incredible efficiency. As such, Amherst made clear that the approval of the Crown purchase of gifts at Detroit was a one-time occurrence, which meant that Croghan no longer received the financial backing of the British. In the short-term, Croghan began to pay for necessary gifts at Fort Pitt out of his own pocket, but he also knew that the

⁷⁸ “Sir William Johnson to General Jeffery Amherst, November 5, 1761,” in *WJP*, vol X, 330.

success of his trade-empire was built on profiting personally while being an official agent of empire.⁷⁹

Amherst's new policy undermined Johnson's work in Detroit and had immediate consequences. For the Indigenous nations who had just met with Johnson and Croghan, this conference and the reopening of gift-giving was supposed to be a return to diplomatic normalcy, not a one-time event. By putting an end to the recommended diplomatic practices, Amherst had "greatly irritated" the Indigenous people of the Great Lakes, and as Johnson had warned, the lasting peace was not to be. In response to Amherst's policies, the Odawa *ogima*, or war chief, Pontiac, having heard Neolin's preaching, used the prophecy to unite a confederacy of many of those nations present at Johnson's treaty council to take up arms against the British. Pontiac oversaw the siege of Fort Detroit, and while that siege quickly reached a stalemate, other Indians took control of eight smaller forts west of Fort Pitt. The confederacy of Indigenous allies next turned their eyes towards Fort Pitt itself. However, while Croghan certainly could have predicted these events as a response to Amherst's policies, he had headed east on business just before word of the sieges had reached the Forks. Although he attempted to head back west to resume his duties and protect his personal investment, the war prevented him from making it all the way back to Croghan Hall. He was directly ordered by Amherst not "to enter into any negotiations with the tribes engaged in the present insurrection until they have suffered a most severe chastisement... indeed their total extirpation is scarce

⁷⁹ Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 63-75. Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 184-185.

sufficient atonement for the bloody and inhuman deeds they have committed.”⁸⁰ In light of what he perceived as an untenable situation, Croghan first attempted to resign his position. After his resignation was rejected by Amherst, he then chose to travel to London as the chosen representative of an association of self-proclaimed “Suffering Traders” to try and plead for restitution for the losses that traders such as himself had suffered during both the Seven Years’ and now Pontiac’s War. Although his ship met with stormy seas and Croghan had to escape to Normandy in a life boat, he eventually made his way to London. While there, Croghan was informed that the Lords of Trade did not in fact have the authority to reimburse him; that required an Act of Parliament. However, while he failed at his primary objective, in conversations he was also informed of the “Plan of 1764,” which he knew to be the product of his diplomatic ally Johnson’s pleas.⁸¹

However, while it was certainly true that Johnson and Croghan saw the strategic value of approaching Indigenous peoples on their own terms, it would be naïve to assume that either were pure in their intentions. There was a certain duplicity at the core of Croghan’s vision for North America. Even as Croghan celebrated the “Plan of 1764,” and its firm boundary that separated areas available for settlement and those lands reserved for Indigenous peoples, Croghan also made known that he believed that he would be an appropriate candidate for overseeing the establishment of a new British colony in the Illinois Country. Before returning from London, Croghan wrote Johnson informing him of his progress. He lamented the slow movement of bureaucracy in the heart of imperial

⁸⁰ Jeffrey Amherst to George Croghan, August 7, 1763, *British Manuscripts Project*, Library of Congress, reel 34/38, item 249.

⁸¹ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 205-210.

Britain, noting that while metropolitan administrators were fed up with Amherst's policies in the colonies and had therefore recalled him, they wasted too much time in debate, as evidenced by the fact that they had at that point not yet named his replacement. But in the midst of these complaints, Croghan also informed Johnson that in addition to agreeing with Johnson's recommendations, among the Lords of Trade there was "talk of settling a colony from the mouth of the Ohio to the Illinois," and that they wanted Croghan's opinion on what form it might take.⁸² He thus returned to North America and eagerly traveled to Johnson Hall to inform his superior of the news.

While Croghan was in London, Colonel Bouquet successfully broke the siege of Fort Pitt. He then led his troops into the Ohio Country, and while the British advance helped push the Lenape, Shaawanwaki, and Ohio Onödowá'ga towards negotiation, it had proven to both the British and those still attempting their siege of Detroit that neither Pontiac's nor Amherst's military objectives were possible. Amherst had already been relieved of his duties as commander-in-chief in North America and replaced by Thomas Gage, with Gage much more willing to take the advice of Johnson on matters of diplomacy. Johnson thus began the process of doing exactly what he had attempted four years earlier in Detroit, trying to convince Indigenous people in the territories that the British claimed that the Crown intended to treat those seen as Indigenous subjects with respect and fairness. Writing to General Gage, Johnson made clear that "some steps should certainly be taken without delay for the gaining possession of the Illinois, without

⁸² "George Croghan to William Johnson, March 10, 1764," in *The Critical Period*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 222-223, (hereafter *TCP*). The implications of imperial as well as Croghan's personal interest in a new colonial venture is the subject of Chapter 4.

which we shall never be at rest.” He continued, saying that the Indigenous peoples of both the Ohio Country and the Illinois Country “will be constantly supported by the interested French to prevent us from possessing it, unless we first satisfy the Indians and obtain their consent,” and he knew the perfect person to complete the work, adding that he “should order Mr. Croghan immediately here—whose influence with the [Shaawanwaki] and the [Lenape] and even with the [Myaamiaki] is considerable—that he may be present at the peace.”⁸³ Arriving back just in time, Croghan left Philadelphia and made his way along the Forbes Road towards Fort Pitt, Croghan Hall, with his final goal being a meeting with Pontiac himself in Detroit.⁸⁴

While Amherst’s policies had been catastrophic, both in terms of human life and the security of British imperial interests, their failure had proven Johnson and Croghan correct and as such Croghan made his journey with confidence and the backing of the military. Bouquet, writing General Gage as they laid their diplomatic plans spoke plainly, stating: “Mr. Croghan is the fittest person in America to transact that business,” adding that a military officer, Lieutenant Alexander Fraser, would accompany Croghan to make sure Croghan’s decisions aligned with the military’s.⁸⁵ Johnson agreed, telling Croghan that he had told Gage that “the only method” for success was for Croghan to lead a mission, “engaging some chiefs of every nation on the way [to treat] with Pontiac.”⁸⁶ Croghan’s mission, from the perspective of British administrators, was to take place in

⁸³ Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, December 18, 1764, in *WJP*, vol. IV, 625.

⁸⁴ Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 162-179.

⁸⁵ “Bouquet to Gage, January 5, 1765,” in *TCP*.

⁸⁶ “Johnson to Croghan, December 18, 1764,” in *WJP*, vol XI.

two parts. His first job was to make peace with those nations that had participated in the assault on Fort Pitt: the Lenape, Shaawanwaki, and Ohio Onödowá'ga. Once that was secure, he was then to travel down the Ohio River and up the Wabash River to meet with Pontiac and the Western Confederacy of Indigenous nations that had besieged Detroit, conducting smaller meetings as needed en route.

Likewise, Amherst's commitment to limiting military expenditures proved untenable, and chatter grew about the significant sums that the British were willing to spend on peace negotiations. Joseph Galloway, a Pennsylvania assemblyman and close associate of Benjamin Franklin, observed that it was "very probable [Croghan] will meet with success, and do that at a trifling expense which has cost the Crown and this Province as I am informed near half a million."⁸⁷ While Galloway was surely exaggerating, as more conservative estimates list the cost closer to £20,000, with the total sum being a mix of private investment and only £2,000 provided through Crown funds, what is clear is that Croghan had more financial latitude under Gage than under Amherst.⁸⁸ However, with that additional latitude came more opportunity for Croghan to serve the Crown interest while enriching himself.

As soon as he had Crown approval, Croghan began to make purchases in preparation for his meetings at Fort Pitt, doing so in ways that raised suspicions among those who were not yet ready to see the Indian trade reopened. In Philadelphia with Alexander Fraser, Croghan turned to his cousin, Thomas Smallman. Smallman had

⁸⁷ "Galloway to Franklin, January 23, 1765," in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 12, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 25-27. (Hereafter *BFP*).

⁸⁸ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 212-214.

previously attempted to use his connections with Croghan to jumpstart his own career as an Indian trader only to find himself financially ruined and then captured and adopted among the Shaawanwaki. Recently freed during Bouquet's incursion into the Ohio Country, Smallman was once again trying to find his financial footing. Luckily, Croghan had money to spend and, more importantly, expenditures to hide from the public record. Not only did Croghan exceed what the Crown had allotted to him, spending £2,650 rather than £2,000, he also used private lines of credit to purchase an additional £1,900 worth of goods. Smallman still owed Croghan for the financial support prior to his capture and thus benefited from having an indebted relative on the books. Since the Pennsylvania assembly's prohibition against independent Indian trade still stood, any purchases beyond what was underwritten by the Crown were illegal in the colony. Perhaps the whispers surrounding a wagon full of Indian goods, an extremely hot-button issue in the colony in 1765, had over time reached Assemblyman Galloway, leading to his bloated estimation of what the Crown and the colony were willing to spend on diplomacy.

Regardless, Croghan was already beginning to try the patience of British officials while simultaneously working squarely against public opinion, especially in the so-called Pennsylvania "backcountry." Upon hearing of Croghan's purchases, Colonel Bouquet wrote Gage, stating that he would "not reflect upon the impropriety of hurrying on a trade before a peace is concluded; the motive of that eagerness is too conspicuous to need any comment. That step will effectually erase the impressions I had endeavored in all my transactions to make upon the savages." For Bouquet, Croghan's "generosity" undermined the diplomatic position secured by Bouquet's military successes. While he

made it clear that he “never had any differences with Mr. Croghan,” he expressed concerns about Croghan’s respect for military authority, noting that “if he takes such latitudes with me, what must inferior officers expect from him.” He added that his most salient memory of Croghan was when Croghan made him “complain in 1763 to Sir Jeffery Amherst that he had absolutely refused to attend me agreeable to his orders and duty.” But when Croghan attempted to resign and went to England, Bouquet simply dropped the issue. However, despite not having “differences” with Croghan, Bouquet was quick to express his concerns that “powers of such great importance to this country should in this instance have been trusted to a man so illiterate, imprudent, and ill-bred, who subverts to particular purposes the wise views of the government, and begins his functions by a ridiculous display of his own importance.” Regardless, Bouquet resigned himself to the necessary nature of the diplomatic work, and while he was concerned about the choice of diplomat, he recognized that diplomacy should “be carried into execution as soon as the season would permit,” and that “it would not be proper” to “interfere further in it.”⁸⁹ Bouquet was not the first to make comment about Croghan’s reputation of misbehavior and illiteracy, the latter accusation being only partially accurate, as Croghan could read and write, although both his spelling and handwriting were atrocious by even eighteenth-century standards. But like Amherst before him, Bouquet likewise likely failed to see Croghan’s transcultural diplomatic skill beneath the rough exterior, as his comment about Croghan’s “ridiculous display” echoes the comments of other outsiders upon observing the elaborate and in many ways liturgical

⁸⁹ “Bouquet to Gage, December 22, 1764,” *The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet*, Series 21653, 342-344.

protocols of Indigenous diplomatic forms, especially when performed by colonial diplomats.

While Bouquet begrudgingly allowed Croghan to conduct business despite his deep reservations, Pennsylvania's backcountry residents quickly raised the alarm. Bouquet himself expressed concern about how they might receive Croghan and his train of trade goods, noting that Maryland volunteers had murdered an Indian at Fort Pitt and that "another gang of similar villains are actually in the woods with the same perfidious intentions." He continued, lamenting that "the licentiousness of the frontier inhabitants in general is carried to the highest degree of insolence and if severe measures are not taken to restrain them within the proper bounds, it will be impossible ever to preserve peace with the savages."⁹⁰ When, in his westward journey, Croghan arrived in Carlisle, a settlement that served as the entry point into the backcountry, he hired sixty-five pack horses to carry his purchases across the Forbes Road to Fort Pitt. However, the winter had been especially harsh and as such, Croghan decided to move ahead of his wagon train, arriving at Fort Pitt on February 28, 1765. As he awaited the arrival of necessary gifts, he began the work of formally inviting diplomats from the Indigenous people of the Ohio River Valley, coordinating with Fraser and the multicultural Alexander McKee, the son of a white man and an Indigenous mother who was raised among the Shaawanwaki and now served as an agent and translator under Croghan at Fort Pitt.⁹¹

⁹⁰ "Bouquet to Gage, December 22, 1764," *The Papers of Colonel Henry Bouquet*, Series 21653, 345.

⁹¹ The impact of McKee's transcultural identity is discussed further in Chapter 2.

However, a wagon train laden with goods could not escape the notice of backcountry residents with a deep-seeded disdain for their Indigenous neighbors. At every stop, residents would take it upon themselves to make sure the train's papers were in order and that no contraband was being transported. Apparently the "contraband" was well hidden, or at least the train drivers were able to talk their way out of inspection because ammunition was an essential trade good and would have been a standard item among such a collection of gifts. However, while the train may have passed its first few inspections, luck was about to run out. As Croghan began initial discussions with arriving Indigenous diplomats, his train approached Fort Loudon. Waiting there was James Smith, a former captive among the Kanien'kehá:ka. By his side was a group of men who called themselves "The Black Boys," and on March 6, they ambushed the train, killed four horses and burned the goods. However, while the Black Boys found the usual trade goods along with "scalping knives," black powder was not found, despite Smith's confidence that it was there. Apparently, just as word of the caravan had reached Smith and company, word of Smith's patrol had reached the train's drivers. While resting over at the home of William Maxwell, the black powder had been unloaded and left behind to be sent up at a less conspicuous time. Unfortunately for the wagon train, however, the rumor mill continued to churn and the Black Boys descended on Maxwell's home and demanded "Croghan's store of powder and lead." They then began searching store houses and found eight barrels, which they then rolled into the woods and detonated, a detonation that likewise served as a metaphorical explosive spark in the backcountry, setting the military administrators still trying to make sense of the post-Seven Years' War political landscape

against settlers in Pennsylvania who claimed legal authority over goods traveling westward.⁹²

Six days later, Croghan received word that his goods were not going to arrive. He immediately sent word to Johnson of the news, beginning with assurances that the train only contained “what presents I thought absolutely necessary for this service.” He continued, stating that “such an outrage and insolence in the face of both civil and military authority surely can never be forgiven until the perpetrators are brought to justice.”⁹³ Military authorities already in the region seemed to already be aligned with Croghan’s position. Croghan learned the news from Lieutenant Nathaniel McCullough, who was the commanding officer at Fort Bedford. In his letter to Croghan, he outlined the damage done by the “villains,” and notes that their actions “by far exceeds the Paxton affair.”⁹⁴ For McCullough at least, it appears that attacking military property was a worse offense than the genocidal massacre of the Indigenous residents of Conestoga two years previous. However, while the Black Boys may have had reason to fear justice meted out by military authorities, if only because the gifts were being underwritten by them, civil authority was another issue. While Croghan saw James Smith and the rest of the Black Boys as vigilantes, and dangerous ones at that, Smith’s brother-in-law was a justice of the

⁹² Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 216-217. Patrick Spero, *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 176-178. Patrick Spero, *Frontier Rebels: The Fight for American Independence in the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), 53-70. Quotation from Spero, *Frontier Rebels*, 236, note 37. Spero’s work, in particular, highlights how the actions of the Black Boys were embedded in a broader “frontier” political movement. The complicated entanglement of identities among settlers who were captured and adopted into Indigenous communities is discussed in much more detail in Chapter 2.

⁹³ “Croghan to Johnson, March 12, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 634.

⁹⁴ Nathaniel McCullough to Croghan, March 12, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 635-636.

peace in the region and added a sense of legitimacy to the Black Boys' actions. In a time when overlapping political authority was in flux, including which authority took supremacy over which, the distinction between vigilante and justice of the peace was hard to pinpoint.⁹⁵

While much has been written about the importance of this emerging backcountry political movement, especially its relationship to the yet forthcoming American Revolution, for Croghan it was an immediate concern. Croghan had never hidden the munitions from his superiors, and in writing to Colonel Bouquet to express his anger at the destruction of his goods, he noted that "what goods is here is very ordinary," as ammunition "is an article they cannot do without, though in my opinion they should never be permitted to purchase but a small quantity at a time."⁹⁶ While Croghan had, up to this point, deftly maneuvered and muscled for rank within the politics and bureaucracy of Pennsylvania colonial and British military administration, west of Carlisle, there was another political force with which Croghan was quickly learning to contend. But, as disliked as he was by imperial administrators, powerful Quakers, and Western Pennsylvanian settlers alike, he was not selected by Johnson for this mission without reason; Croghan was particularly adroit when it appeared that his best laid plans were beginning to fall apart.

⁹⁵ Spero, *Frontier Politics*, 177-187.

⁹⁶ "Croghan to Bouquet, March 12, 1765," in *HBP*, vol. VI, 766. Croghan was actually told in the initial letter he received from McCullough that the powder had likely been found in the initial attack, as the soldier guarding the train who failed to stop the attack was unsure "whether these kegs contained powder or rum." McCullough assumed "that it must be powder, as the rascals were afraid to destroy it." In fact, it seems that the Black Boys had designs for the rum. "McCullough to Croghan, March 12, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. XI, 635.

Johnson stepped in to defend Croghan and assuage General Gage's anger, as Gage was becoming keenly aware of Croghan's attempts to hide private investment under the auspices of a Crown purchase. But Gage's anger was very different than the Black Boys'. Writing Johnson, Gage was mostly concerned about how the attack would be received by the Treasury, stating, "if any accident happens to Mr. Croghan or another person at a distance... it is impossible to say what will be the consequence. It will just depend on the sentiments of the treasury whether you should be paid for such expenses occurred by your deputies or not." Gage pointed to the receipts sent to him by Croghan, noting that he outspent what he was allotted, lamenting that he wished that Croghan "had managed better in this time of difficulty. He had at first setting out all he desired, and without giving you or me any previous notice, has doubled the first sum."⁹⁷ But that is not to say that Gage did not fear the consequences of the perception of impropriety in Western Pennsylvania. After Johnson had conferred with one of Croghan's business partners, he wrote Gage to assure him that private goods were en route to Fort Pitt in *anticipation* of the reopening of the Indian trade. While Gage was at least amenable to this explanation, he responded to Johnson, stating that the whole affair was "owing to Mr. Croghan troubling his head more about trade than the business he was employed in. Had he thought proper to have followed his instructions and made use of Colonel Bouquet's permit to get up his presents, which would have procured him escort at every post, no accident could have happened."⁹⁸ In response, Johnson put his own reputation on the line,

⁹⁷ "Gage to Johnson, March 31, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. IV, 703-704.

⁹⁸ "Gage to Johnson, April 15, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. IV, 717.

asking Gage for “the favor of [his] sentiments,” assuring him that Croghan “always appeared to me in a very different light, nor did he ever give me the smallest reason to suspect him of such a procedure and this I am persuaded of.”⁹⁹ However, it would seem that Johnson indeed had reason to be suspicious, as he had previously written Croghan to gently remind him that trying to circumvent the ban on the Indian trade had “occasioned much disfavor... in the province,” and that “I would therefore not let slip the opportunity of writing you... as I apprehend it will be necessary for you to clear up the matter in case it should go further, as the enemies of the department may well possibly carry it some length.”¹⁰⁰

As always, parsing out Croghan’s role as a diplomat and his role as an Indian trader is extremely difficult. While gift giving was of the utmost importance during transcultural diplomatic negotiations, it is also important to remember that beyond required gifts, the reopening of trade was of huge importance to Indigenous nations. Being ready to open a robust trade immediately after the agreement of terms was a diplomatic necessity. So, while Croghan certainly stood to benefit financially, and had taken all the steps necessary to ensure that he did, claiming that his private investment had a diplomatic purpose was not unfounded. As diplomatic parties from the Lenape, Shaawanwa, and Onödowá’ga arrived, they did so simultaneously ready to trade, having brought horse loads of skins and furs. As Croghan noted in his journal, six Ohio Onödowá’ga delegates noted that they were brought into the conflict by promises of trade

⁹⁹ “Johnson to Gage, April 27, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 732.

¹⁰⁰ “Johnson to Croghan, April 4, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol IV, 706.

from French traders and that they were now ready to make peace with the British “provided the English would open a free trade and intercourse with them and supply them with ammunition, goods, and rum as usual and not prohibit the sale of powder and liquors, as they had done before the late difference happened.” Croghan responded saying “there was no trade opened yet nor could there be any until the [Shaawanwaki] and [Lenape] had come in to perform their engagements with Colonel Bouquet.” Croghan then “gave them a belt of wampum, desiring them to rest satisfied until that time.”¹⁰¹ As he waited for all required parties to arrive, Croghan continued to return to this mode of consolation, as those Indians who waited were “very sulky on account of their not being suffered to trade,” which required Croghan to make “use of every argument in [his] power to explain to them the reasons of it.”¹⁰²

Croghan let Johnson handle smoothing things over with Gage and continued to organize the first conference at Fort Pitt. But while distance afforded Croghan the opportunity to operate outside of the gaze of his superiors, tensions quickly rose between him and the military’s eyes on the ground, Lieutenant Fraser. In ways that echoed his military superiors, Fraser was focused on tightly keeping to the proposed schedule, and lacked the patience necessary for effective treating with Indigenous representatives. In some ways, however, Fraser’s impatience was understandable. While he was to be a liaison between the British military and Croghan, he had an additional objective. After peace terms were solidified in the Illinois Country, Fraser was instructed to “proceed

¹⁰¹ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 2-3.

¹⁰² “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 6.

down the Mississippi to treat with such nations as lived on that river in order to facilitate the march of... the 34th regiment to the Illinois.”¹⁰³ As such, Fraser asked that he be allowed to depart immediately, saying, “that as the Indians were not met here, he purposed to set off down the river in two or three days as the service which he was set on was of a different nature from” Croghan’s.¹⁰⁴ While Croghan was sympathetic to the logistical complications stemming from Fraser’s instructions, he also knew that Fraser did not have the requisite experience to venture out on his own. If Fraser was to depart early, he ran the risk of conducting diplomacy out of order. However, Fraser was insistent, apparently oblivious to the potential catastrophe that could befall this diplomatic mission due to the absence of gifts. Croghan acquiesced, and furnished Fraser with a boat, some wampum and small gifts, some men, and sent both a Wendat man named Andrew and a Frenchman from Detroit named Alexander Maisonville to assist him. And while Croghan wished that “his journey may be attended with success,” he made sure to inform Johnson that Fraser’s decisions were his own, as he went “without Major [William] Murray’s [the commanding officer at Fort Pitt] or my approbation.”¹⁰⁵ Considering the plight that would befall Fraser and his party, it would seem that Croghan’s fears were well founded, as the party was captured, and according to Fraser, only barely escaped execution.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ “Croghan to Johnson, March 21, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 647.

¹⁰⁴ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ “Croghan to Johnson, March 21, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 647.

¹⁰⁶ “Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, May 15, 1765,” in *TCP*, 491-492. Fraser’s experiences in the Illinois Country will be explored in much more detail in Chapter 3.

Croghan was now without the required gifts as well as a key military liaison. While it is conceivable that Croghan may have privately celebrated Fraser's departure, as now he was no longer being observed by an officer handpicked for the occasion by Gage, it was still another blow to a mission that had only just begun. Luckily for Croghan, he had his network of traders and associates at his disposal, and quickly improvised a second set of gifts. Once again working through his cousin Thomas Smallman, Croghan ordered goods from the prominent Philadelphia merchants, Simon, Levy, and Company, at a total value of £2,037. Smaller than the first train, this second set of goods was nonetheless still a significant investment. However, it was clear that Croghan had learned a lesson with the seizure of the first train. With the exception of seventeen tomahawks and 2,400 gun flints, Croghan's account of this purchase did not include any ammunition. By far, the most expensive purchase was wampum, an essential tool for transcultural diplomacy.¹⁰⁷ Croghan was clearly willing to sacrifice an expected item included during diplomatic gift-giving in service of a broader peacemaking goal. While the absence of ammunition would have certainly been noted by Indigenous diplomats, avoiding further conflict with backcountry residents was, in Croghan's eyes, more important. However, he also knew the power of and need for wampum during these negotiations, especially if the much desired ammunition was not going to be available. Just as he did with the Onödowá'ga delegates who centered the reopening of trade as a primary objective for these negotiations, Croghan clearly relied on wampum to assuage the Indigenous

¹⁰⁷ "Croghan's Account, March 23, 1765," in *TNR*, 19-21.

disappointment in powder and shot not being made available, a trade that, had Croghan had his way, would have been wide open at this point.

A week later, the Lenape delegates who had conferred with Neolin arrived, and once again Croghan had to make sense of the incredibly complicated overlapping interests of imperial agents, Indigenous diplomats, and colonial residents. While he knew to reach out to imperial administrators in order to protect his financial interests that were threatened by backcountry politics and magisterial authority, when confronted with Neolin's revised vision, as well as those Lenape who looked to Neolin to guide them towards a new peaceful existence, Croghan could only rely on himself and his own years of experience in transcultural diplomacy. Croghan, as he so often did, found a way to bring all of these competing interests together in order to rebuff Neolin's plea. Specifically, when Neolin and his followers insisted that a path of cooperation between the Quakers and the Lenape would set the foundation for a broader peace between all Indigenous nations and the British, Croghan made it clear that they were too late, "as all other nations had made their peace already with Sir William Johnson, except [the Lenape] and the [Shaawanwaki.]"¹⁰⁸ Moreover, the reason for the Shaawanwaki delay was not because they were carefully considering Neolin's proposal but because peace required them to make the heart-wrenching decision to return adopted children and spouses who had been captured from settler communities as part of Indigenous captive/adoption practices.¹⁰⁹ As such, Croghan made clear to Neolin's Lenape party that there was only

¹⁰⁸ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 8.

¹⁰⁹ The emotional and intimate impact of these practices and compulsory return of captive/adoptees will be discussed in much further detail in Chapter 2.

one other nation left who were not already committed to the British proposed plan and they were “now coming in order to go to Sir William Johnson,” to join the growing peace coalition.¹¹⁰ They were welcome to try to convince the Shaawanwaki, but the process was already well in motion and by Croghan’s estimation it was unlikely that the Shaawanwaki would respond well to Neolin’s proposal.

And thus, the frustration felt by Neolin’s followers erupted into a disheartening climax for the movement. As previously mentioned, the tensions among the Lenape led to a physical altercation, which Croghan claimed to have calmed through his acumen with Indigenous diplomatic modalities. While he did not record his words nor acknowledge the arguments made by Indigenous diplomats present, the fact that he had to use three belts of wampum at least shows that unity within the Lenape party was a high-level diplomatic concern, as this much wampum was a significant amount and would therefore no longer be available for official council meetings. Irrespective of whether Croghan was actually the mediator in this moment, clearly he knew that this violence could very easily have upended the progress he and others had made with the Lenape.

Days later, the final party of Shaawanwa arrived with the members of their community that had been captured and adopted and official negotiations were able to begin. Custologa’s party had triumphed and he was the only Lenape given the floor to speak during the formal treaty negotiations. Having spent the first day listening to speeches by Croghan and the Ohio Onödowá’ga Kyashuta, Custologa informed those gathered that he was going to consider all that was said and respond the next day. In the

¹¹⁰ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 8.

morning, the Shaawanwa *hokima* Lawoughgua spoke first. When it was Custologa's turn, his words evinced the fact that Neolin's attempt to side step the special relationship between the British and the Haudenosaunee had failed, as he turned to the Haudenosaunee gathered and said, "Uncles, yesterday you desired us to be strong in complying with everything our Brethren, the English, might require of us; this we are determined to do and hope you will also do everything on your parts to forward a good peace." He then looked straight at Croghan and said, "as you told us you were ordered to visit the Western Nations, I now wipe your eyes and open your ears that you may see and hear those nations with pleasure when they speak to you. Likewise I clear the way, that you may have safe passage to the place you are going." He then presented Croghan with a belt of wampum and continued:

Brother, don't imagine what I have said comes from my lips only; I assure you it proceeds from the bottom of our hearts, and now by this belt, I remove every evil thing from your heart and make it like those of our ancestors when they thought of nothing but peace. And I also wipe the outside of your body clean, that not the least remains of anything which might give you trouble, may ever again appear, and by this belt we take fast hold of you, our brethren in peace.

He then handed a second "friendship belt of 20 rows, with the figure of two men, representing the English and themselves."¹¹¹ In metaphorically clearing the way for Croghan, Custologa was also putting a final end to Neolin's proposal. Neolin had envisioned a journey farther east to meet with the Quakers. Instead, Custologa put his trust in Croghan's journey west as the surest path to peace. In this moment, for Custologa, the peace that the ancestors knew, the peace that predated colonialism, was in Croghan's

¹¹¹ Custologa in "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 15.

hands. Croghan may not have been its sole author, but he was the agent in whom Custologa now placed his trust.

Croghan responded in kind, stating to all delegates present from the three nations residing in the Ohio River valley that:

when first your brethren the English settled here, they kindled a Council Fire for all the nations of Indians to the sun's setting, but for two years past, this fire has been neglected and was near going out. Now, brethren, I put some good dry wood on your Council Fire, that it may blaze up to the sky, so that all nations may see it and come here to smoke with their brethren in peace.

He then acknowledged the importance of trade to maintaining peace, demonstrating both his suitability for the role assigned to him by imperial administrators as well as the deep entanglement of his various interests. Croghan directly responded to both the formal and informal pleas for the reopening of trade, stating:

I must observe to you that had we a mind to recapitulate injuries, we could convince you that we have much more reason to complain of your conduct than you have of ours, but we have thrown away from our remembrance everything that gave us any trouble, and hope your future conduct will be such as will give us no reason to repeat past offenses, and to convince you of our sincerity, the Commanding Officers here, though he has no orders for it, will take upon himself to open the trade and suffer you to purchase such necessaries as is here.

Croghan next turned to spinning stories from the facts at his disposal, claiming that the lack of trade goods available was not because of the destruction of his wagon train at the hands of backcountry settlers but instead “owing to your own backwardness in not coming here early in spring, as you promised, but as soon as the General [Gage] is made acquainted with your conduct at this meeting, he will order our traders to supply you with

all the necessaries you may want.”¹¹² To further affirm British sincerity, Croghan convinced William Murray to give some of the ammunition and rum intended for the British garrison at Fort Pitt to the Indigenous delegates along with the clothing and goods that Croghan had acquired in his second order from Simons, Levy, and Company.¹¹³

However, while blaming the paucity of trade goods on the tardiness of Indigenous delegations may have been dishonest, he kept his word on the reopening of trade. Obviously, he was in no way a disinterested party in this reopening, but he immediately sent a copy of the proceedings copied by Alexander McKee to Governor John Penn, and soon after trade was reopened. While the Black Boys and their backcountry allies begrudgingly acquiesced to the reopening, in large part because with official backing wagon trains began to receive armed escorts, they maintained a cohesive political position that continued to provide headaches for Governor Penn.¹¹⁴ However, despite the many challenges along the way, Croghan succeeded in advancing both the objectives assigned to him as well as his personal desire to reopen trade at a location in which he was already deeply invested. Thus, with the first of his objectives met, Croghan next turned his attention to the Western Confederacy in the Illinois Country. With two bateaux laden with gifts and a party of Shaawanwa diplomats who had promised to support his efforts with the Western nations, Croghan made his way down the Ohio River to meet with Pontiac.

¹¹² “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 17-18.

¹¹³ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 18; Spero, *Frontier Rebels*, 92-93.

¹¹⁴ Spero, *Frontier Rebels*, 104.

At the confluence of two irreconcilable visions for peace, Croghan's had prevailed. He had successfully navigated a treacherous landscape of overlapping and incongruent politics, all while balancing his role as an official diplomat with his own economic interests. From an imperial perspective, he had received affirmation from the Indigenous delegations that the authority to maintain peace ended with the Crown.

Croghan made this clear when he spoke to the delegations, saying:

His majesty the king of Great Britain, having conquered the French in this country...all the forts and settlements the French had are now become the property of the king of England; the French troops are to be sent to France and the planters become subjects to England, therefore the General has ordered me to inform you that the king of Great Britain will take under his protection all the nations of Indians in this country to the sun setting and restore tranquility among all nations that your children unborn may enjoy the blessings of a lasting peace.¹¹⁵

Through his diplomatic skill, he successfully convinced the peoples of the Ohio River Valley that they need not look at the British as conquerors of Indigenous people, but instead as conquerors of the French alone, and as such they had every intention of acting as the French did, as allies and partners, albeit in a relationship in which the Crown held ultimate sovereignty. But in getting to this point, Croghan had also been instrumental in convincing the Crown to take this position, for had Amherst remained in his position, Croghan's promises at Fort Pitt would have been empty. In rebuffing Neolin's vision of a peace rooted in the special relationship between the Lenape and Quakers, he reaffirmed the Crown's own special relationship with the Haudenosaunee, a relationship that lay at the heart of what made both Croghan and Johnson so effective as transcultural diplomats. Moreover, he successfully reestablished his position as the foremost trader at the Forks of

¹¹⁵ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 12.

the Ohio, putting himself in prime position not only to grow his trade empire but also to reap the profits from potential land speculation, a process with which he already had a head start due to his conversations in London with the Lords of Trade.

But beyond Croghan's personal successes at Fort Pitt, his actions are emblematic of the kinds of practices that collectively made a fleeting, imperfect peace possible. As was made clear, a "perfect peace," wherein exploitation and coercion were vanquished, was not to be at the Forks of the Ohio. Neolin's vision for a perfect peace did not come to pass. The entire process was replete with violence, whether that be the destruction of trade goods or violent altercations between two representatives from the same nation on different sides of a political debate. While Croghan remained focused on both his assigned and personal objectives, he was not above using dishonesty and subterfuge to achieve those goals. But in the end, representatives of four different national political bodies gathered together and affirmed that formal hostilities were to end. And doing so required individuals to navigate institutions, cultures, and political movements that were in a rapid state of flux. Doing so deftly was indeed a "serious game," one that required some to be winners and some to be losers. At Fort Pitt, it was Croghan who emerged the winner. But the game was far from over.

Chapter 2: Confluence of Intimacies

On May 10, 1765, on the second day of official negotiations at Fort Pitt, the Shaawanwa delegate Lawoughgua rose to speak, having waited his turn in accordance with standard hybrid diplomatic protocols. These protocols had developed over the past century within the crucible of colonialism as a means of legally legitimizing the commitments made during negotiations within both European and Indigenous systems of governance.¹ Lawoughgua had spent the previous night carefully considering what it was that he wanted to say, knowing full well that the words he spoke would have a tremendous impact on his community.² Of course, peace hung in the balance—this was, after all, a meeting of officially sanctioned diplomats charged with setting the terms of a lasting peace. His people’s economic well-being was also at play, as the trade and exchange connections of a robust colonial economy had been severed by the conflict. But Lawoughgua also knew that families back home, perhaps even his own, would be radically changed by the outcome of these negotiations. Marriages, adoptions, and friendships would soon be rended. As he prepared his words the night before, whether privately or in council with the rest of the Shaawanwa delegation, he could likely hear the voices of those who had accompanied the diplomats to the Forks of the Ohio. Perhaps

¹ For more on hybrid negotiations, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiations on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 54-105. The importance of overlapping colonial and Indigenous international legal systems will be discussed in much further detail in Chapter 3.

² The centrality of oratory, performance, and the rhetorical forms of Indigenous speechmaking, both within international diplomacy and the internal politics of Indigenous polities, has long been of interest to outside observers of the time and more contemporary scholars. For a deeper theoretical examination of these issues, see David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing & Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) and Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

among those voices were mothers having what could have been their final conversations with their adoptive children, husbands and wives preparing for a forced separation, and brothers and sisters sitting around a fire together one last time.³

Lawoughgua had spent the first day of the conference, May 9, as a listener. One can only speculate as to his exact feelings, but considering the contents of the speeches delivered, it was likely a challenging day for Lawoughgua, as he knew that the people over whom the diplomats negotiated in the Council House remained at the Shaawanwa camp on the other side of the Ohio River. That day, George Croghan spoke first. Like Lawoughgua, Croghan had extensive experience with the hybrid diplomatic protocols that facilitated negotiation. Croghan had likewise chosen his first words carefully, as he knew that they would not only be entered into the official annals of imperial administration, but that successful treating with Indigenous diplomats required paying careful attention to ancient rhetorical conventions passed down through robust oral traditions and Indigenous mediascapes. In one breath, Croghan established his *bona fides* within a distinctly European discourse, contextualizing his authority within the official network of military administration by name checking his superiors, while being equally careful to include a requisite reference to the powerful diplomatic kinship metaphors so

³ While the record of these conversations is not captured in the archive, the presence of women, children, and captive/adoptees are. Among the Shaawanwa, George Croghan recorded in the official transcript the names of ten “chiefs,” of which Lawoughgua was one, the names of five “chief warriors,” and noted the presence of “45 warriors besides women and children.” While Croghan later records that the Shaawanwa brought to the conference “the English prisoners,” referring to captive/adoptees, later accounts record the names of 21 men/boys and 23 women/girls returned. Of those 44 captive/adoptees listed, 30 were listed with English names, 12 with Shaawanwa names, and 2 had both English and Shaawanwa names listed. George Croghan, “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” *The New Regime*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1916), 11, 13 (hereafter *TNR*); *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), vol. XI, 720-721 (hereafter *WJP*).

important to Indigenous diplomats. Croghan thus set the tone, stating, “Brethren, I have sent two months ago, by his majesty’s Commander-in-Chief [Thomas Gage] and Sir William Johnson Baronet, with messages to your several tribes and have sent several messengers to summon you together.”⁴ Along with his words, Croghan delivered strings and belts of wampum, thereby punctuating his speech with signs of his sincerity. He next followed with an expression of frustration, however, stating that, “to my great surprise, you have by your delays obliged me to stay here waiting for you thirty days longer than I expected.”⁵ Croghan followed this by outlining why he suspected caused the delay:

His excellency General Gage has ordered me to inform you that he expects you will immediately perform all the engagements you made last Fall to Col. Bouquet, one of which was to deliver up all the English Prisoners & Negroes, which were in your several villages. This article, in part, you then performed and was to deliver the rest early this Spring. And I hope, as you have delayed so long after I did send for you, that you have brought them agreeable to your promises.⁶

Captive exchange had thus far proven a point of frustration for Croghan and his British associates. After presenting two wampum belts, Croghan emphasized the gravity of the British position. In negotiations with Colonel Bouquet, the Shaawanwa had agreed to:

send deputies of your nations fully empowered to settle a peace with Sir William Johnson and at the same time leave such a number of hostages here until their return. How you have complied with this article I need not inform you. You have sent but one man to Sir William Johnson and he is not a chief of any of your tribes, and the hostages you delivered Col. Bouquet have all shamefully run away except three, though they were all as well used here as any of our own People and never confined. This

⁴ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 11. I have standardized spellings, capitalizations, and abbreviations within the quotations while altering grammar and syntax so as to make the text more readable without altering the meaning.

⁵ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 11.

⁶ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 11.

conduct Brethren has given all your Brethren the English a suspicion of your sincerity.”⁷

Croghan again presented two wampum belts to the assembled diplomats and affirmed that as soon as captive/adoptees were returned, “free trade and intercourse shall be allowed you and all other nations of Indians to the Sun setting, so long as they continue to behave well to his Majesty’s subjects.”

Croghan next outlined the changing political geography of the trans-Appalachian West, noting how as a consequence of the French loss in the Seven Years’ War, both French forts and formerly French subjects were now under British sovereignty. He likewise established his intentions to travel into the Illinois Country, inviting the gathered Onödowá’ga [Seneca], Lenape, and Shaawanwa to join him as part of his diplomatic delegation. The renowned Onödowá’ga Kyashuta spoke next, addressing not Croghan but the Lenape and Shaawanwa delegates present:

Nephews, the [Lenape], and Brethren the [Shaawanwa], you have heard what your brethren the English have said to you. They have desired nothing of you but what you solemnly promised last Fall to Col. Bouquet, all of which you ought to perform. For our parts we are determined to take the advice of our Brethren the English, as we know it, it will be for our good and we desire you as friends to do so. If you do not, you must take the consequences.⁸

In response, an unnamed Shaawanwa and the Lenape diplomat Custaloga both rose and affirmed that those words spoken by Croghan and Kyashuta were good and that they would respond more formally the next day.⁹

⁷ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 11.

⁸ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 12.

⁹ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 12-13.

The next morning, the Shaawanwa delegation left their camp and crossed the Ohio with the group of captive/adoptees who had accompanied them, “beating a drum and singing the Peace Song, agreeable to the ancient custom of their nation, which they continued until they entered the Council House.”¹⁰ Unlike the previous day, this day’s business was initiated by the Shaawanwa, with Lawoughgua as their official voice. Lawoughgua began by affirming his commitment to the terms upon which representatives of the British, Onödowá’ga, and Lenape had thus far agreed. As was standard, Lawoughgua did so through kinship metaphors rooted in Indigenous concepts of family. Addressing the British delegation, Lawoughgua stated:

Fathers, for so we shall call you hence forward, listen to what we are going to say to you. It gave us great satisfaction yesterday to be called the children of the king of England, and convinces us that your intentions toward us are upright, as we know a father will be tender to his children, and they more ready to obey him, than a brother; therefore, we hope our father will now take better care of his children than has heretofore been done.¹¹

Among those commitments was a promise to return to European-descended colonial society those whom the Shaawanwa had captured in war. Lawoughgua continued, “You likewise put us in mind of our promises to Col. Bouquet, which were to bring your flesh and blood to be delivered at this place. Father you have not spoke for nothing, we have prepared, you see, we have brought them with us.”¹²

However, he followed this affirmation with an additional plea, an expression of the suffering that such compliance would cause within Shaawanwa society. Lawoughgua

¹⁰ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 13.

¹¹ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 13.

¹² “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 13.

lamented, “here is your flesh and blood.... They have been all tied to us by adoption, and although we now deliver them up to you, we will always look upon them as our relations whenever the Great Spirit is pleased that we may visit them.” Fearing the future culture shock that these returned captives were sure to experience, Lawoughgua continued, adding, “we have taken as much care of these prisoners as is if they were our own flesh and blood; they are now become unacquainted with your customs and manners, and therefore, Fathers, we request you will use them tenderly and kindly, which will be a means of inducing them to live contentedly with you.” He then handed Croghan a six-row wampum belt depicting the sovereign leaders of both the British and Shaawanwa holding hands, an embrace that represented both peoples “holding the Chain of Friendship.”¹³

Watching all of this transpire, and more importantly, transcribing the words being spoken, was Alexander McKee, a man born within the border between white and Indian worlds but raised among the Shaawanwa.¹⁴ He had returned to Fort Pitt on November 28, 1764, having assisted Colonel Bouquet during peace negotiations in the Ohio Country. Croghan had sent a letter ahead of him, praising McKee for his work with Bouquet and instructing McKee to “acquaint the Indians of [Croghan’s

¹³ “George Croghan’s Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 14.

¹⁴ The use of the term “within the border” is intentional. While borderlands methodologies/histories have done well to center the liminal spaces between metropolises, all too often they oversimplify the ways that these zones represent the frictions and brokenness of competing territorial visions. Whether they yield “middle grounds,” “countries between,” or “zones of imperial friction,” the relationship and cultural productions in these borderlands are still determined by the territories that they border, not the border itself. These actors certainly existed in worlds that connected them to places traditionally defined as metropolises and those connections helped to define them. However, it would be wrongheaded to assume that they were simply representatives of metropolitan interests within a complicated space between. See Walter D. Mignolo, in *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 14-15.

upcoming] arrival.” McKee did so, sending invitations to leaders of the Shaawanwa, Lenape, Munsee, Wyandot, and the Six Nations diaspora in the Ohio Country. Now he was tasked with translating and recording the multilingual and multimodal negotiations that had begun at Fort Pitt. He was extremely well-suited for this work, considering his years of intimate connections across cultures and languages. However, his job—providing accurate alphabetic records of oral texts—meant that his own emotional reactions to the proceedings, especially the systemic dismantling of Shaawanwa families with which he was so deeply familiar, are lost to time.¹⁵

There was a sharp contrast in language between the speeches delivered on May 9 and those delivered on May 10. While it is clear that Croghan and Lawoughgua both displayed a facility with the discourses of hybrid diplomatic protocols, their word choice also belied the ways in which intimacy, kinship, and developing notions of racialized identity caused consternation for those negotiating. And most importantly, at this “confluence of intimacies,” the pursuit of peace—both political and familial—required attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. To Croghan, these forty-four individuals were “English prisoners.” While Lawoughgua likewise acknowledged their genetics—referring to them as the British settlers’ “flesh and blood,” he also made clear that they were now kin of the Shaawanwa as well, “tied to [them] by adoption,” and as such were “relations” and “as if they were [their] own flesh and blood.”

At first glance, it would appear that negotiations over the return of captives took place at a simple point of conflict between two cultures in which one party was

¹⁵ Larry Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them: Alexander McKee and the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754-1799* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), 50-53.

constructing a colonial order based on the fixity of racial difference while the other fought to maintain a more capacious and fluid definition of kinship and community. In her examination of captivity narratives specifically from the era of the Seven Years' War, historian Elizabeth Hornor, comes to such a conclusion, pointing to the establishment of the Proclamation line of 1763 as a means by which European-descended settlers assuaged their anxiety about a growing number of "intimate enemies," or European-descended people who had been adopted and integrated into Indigenous societies.¹⁶ However, "haunting" these negotiations was a cruel irony, especially in light of the ways in which the Shaawanwa community fractured itself in order to comply with British demands. As an Indian agent, the Irish-born George Croghan wielded his diplomatic power in part because of his sexual relationship with a Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] woman, Catharine, replete with all of its enmeshing kinship. Through this interracial intimacy, Croghan gained entrance into official spaces of Kanien'kehá:ka governance. His daughter by this relationship became a powerful political broker in her own right within the matrilineal Kanien'kehá:ka society. Further, this relationship, like the sexual relationships of Croghan's mentor, Sir William Johnson, arguably pulled Croghan into a position of favoring the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee during international negotiations such as the one taking place at Fort Pitt. In this sense, this single confluence of intimacies at Fort Pitt was more complicated than a conflict between Shaawanwa and British ideas of

¹⁶ Elizabeth Hornor, "'Intimate Enemies': Captivity and Colonial Fear of Indians in the Mid-Eighteenth Century Wars," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 82, no. 2 (Spring, 2015): 162-185.

kinship or as a means by which colonial authorities constructed a sharper separation between colonist and Indigene along an increasingly racialized frontier.

Additionally, seeking peace made public that which was typically perceived as private. As Ann Laura Stoler argues, “those thresholds of racial membership, sexual access, and colonial status were not ‘private’ sites of respite and retreat. In recluse and repose race was put to the test. In these ‘tense and tender ties’ of empire, relations of power were knotted and tightened, loosened and cut, tangled and undone. These ties are not microcosms of empire but its marrow.”¹⁷ Croghan’s words are evidence of the exploitation of “tense and tender ties” for the purpose of colonial domination, as in this moment, Croghan made clear that as an agent of empire, he was committed to regulating and policing the racial order, despite the cultural or social costs for those individuals being pushed across the tables of diplomatic negotiation. But, in a cruel twist of irony, in regulating the cultural identities of certain individuals, Croghan was channeling and thus leaving an archival trace of the power of an Indigenous woman who otherwise falls outside the scope of the archive. As Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton argue, such an approach helps to fight against a “less than satisfying view of how women experiences the movement of history, how dominant and [Indigenous] regimes saw them, and what role gender has played in helping to shave the civilizational attitudes as well as transnational movements and processes.”¹⁸ Moreover, not only does such an approach

¹⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, “Intimidation of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, edited by Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 3. Note that I knowingly adopt Stoler’s language of “tender ties” throughout this piece.

¹⁸ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories,” in *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History*, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 1-4.

give a measure of agency to an otherwise subaltern individual such Catharine, it is also true, as this chapter will argue, that this confluence of intimacies was also a site haunted by the “specter of peace.”

This focus on intimacy also advances a growing historiography studying “go-between.” A colonial identity first termed by the historian James Merrell, “go-between” historiography has focused on those rare individuals in the colonial Atlantic that could navigate both Indigenous and imperial worlds, serving as invaluable sinew that held both worlds together through their ability to conduct trade and diplomacy in ways that were intelligible to both sides. As such, it little surprise that Croghan served as an exemplar “go-between” in Merrell’s pathbreaking study.¹⁹ However, as more recent historians have demonstrated, especially Bryan C. Rindfleisch in his study of the similarly adept South Carolina Indian trader George Galphin, Merrell overemphasizes the singular power of the “go-between” at the expense of the vast networks of interconnection facilitated by the intimate connections, not only within Indigenous communities but within colonial communities as well. As Rindfleisch argues, “relationships provided the structural foundation for the imperial world that individuals like Galphin inhabited, which allowed them to physically and mentally process their place within the empire. What this all amounts to is that Galphin carved out a world of relationships within the imperial infrastructure, an intimate empire of his own making.” Similarly, Mary Ann Levine, in her analysis of the career of the transcultural diplomat Madame Montour, demonstrates that the notion of “go-between” is overly binary, as it assumes a clean divide between

¹⁹ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 28-34.

Indigenous and colonial worlds. However, as Levine makes clear, Montour was invaluable as diplomat because she adeptly moved between Algonquin, Haudenosaunee, French, English spaces, and well as spaces that existed “within the border.” Thus, for this chapter’s argument, the focus on intimate connections and the social networks that those connections created is designed to give deeper meaning to diplomatic work performed during Croghan’s mission, further demonstrating the incredible stakes of negotiations and emotional impact of their results, an approach that is indebted to Nicole Eustace’s pathbreaking work on the role of emotion within political discourse. Nevertheless, this chapter is in line with Emma Rothschild’s call to take seriously the political and “macrohistorical” connections of an intimate microhistory. While the previous chapter argued that Croghan envisioned a westward-expanding trade empire deeply connected to a larger British imperial project, it was an intimate empire, to borrow Rindfleisch’s term, as well.²⁰

This chapter will engage with intimacy at three different levels. Firstly, the power of intimacy can be traced through the political structures of Indigenous polities. Beginning with the Haudenosaunee and the political power of their rituals of Condolence and comparing those to the structurally different practices of both the Shaawanwa and Anishinaabe, this chapter will demonstrate how Indigenous governance and political

²⁰ Bryan C. Rindfleisch, *George Galphin’s Intimate Empire: The Creek Indians, Family, and Colonialism in Early America* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2019), 4-8; Mary Ann Levine, “Labor, Gender, and Intercultural Diplomacy: The Emergence of Madame Montour as a Professional Interpreter in Colonial North America,” in *World Archaeology* 55, no. 1 (2023): 107-120; Nicole Eustace, “The Sentimental Paradox: Humanity and Violence on the Pennsylvania Frontier,” in *William and Mary Quarterly* 65 no. 1 (2008): 29-64; Nicole Eustace, “Theories of Empire,” *Early Modern Emotions*, edited by Susan Broomhall (London: Routledge, 2017), 320-322; Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 2-8.

practice was an intimate affair. Ethnohistorians have long rooted the power of Indigenous politics within kinship.²¹ Moving from this broader, ethnographic level, this chapter next moves into its second level, exploring how both the rhetoric of intimacy and the power of kinship shaped the international order of colonial North America, as the far more relational Indigenous international politics became entangled with European imperial projects in the region. Lastly, this chapter will focus down into the microscopic level, engaging with the intimate practices of individuals connected, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, to the 1765 peace process. Intimate connections, whether forged through adoption, sex, marriage, or even friendship, or expressed through ritual and metaphor, were a driving force. Moreover, seeking peace required navigating the confluence of culturally defined and at times irreconcilable intimacies. As such, the practices of those involved required improvisation, compromise, and sacrifice, decisions that were deeply impactful for all those involved. And it is in these “tense and tender ties,” many of which were actively being painfully severed, that one can find that fleeting peace sought by all those gathered at Fort Pitt.

Intimacy, Kinship, and Indigenous Politics

Because the written records of transcultural diplomacy were designed specifically for an imperial audience, much of the emotionality and intimate sentimentality that was central to Indigenous politics and diplomacy falls outside of the archive. If the words

²¹ For an exploration of kinship as foundational to Indigenous politics, see Raymond J. DeMallie, “Kinship: The Foundation for Native American Society,” in *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects*, edited by Russell Thornton (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 306-56.

were spoken in council, they were most likely recorded, but the intimate familiarity that many of the actors had with each other was left unrecorded. As historian Daniel K. Richter notes, one of the challenges presented by the transcripts of transcultural treaty negotiations is that “oral narratives reduced to written texts lose not only the tears and laughter but the verbal emphases and body language that conveys much of the emotional content of the speakers’ messages.”²² Such was the case at Fort Pitt, and considering the demands being levied against the Shaawanwa, one should expect that the speeches delivered by Lawoughgua featured far more tears than laughter. But intimacy was more than that which produced sentimental attachments among those who gathered at the Forks. It was also the sinew that held Indigenous polities together. Thus, to best understand not only intimacy’s imbrication with the emotion of the moment but also the fundamental political utility of transcultural intimate connections, one must first understand how kinship ties defined the politics of Indigenous people, using the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Shaawanwa as relevant examples.

As anthropologists, sociologists, and historians have consistently observed, intimacy was foundational socially and politically for the Haudenosaunee.²³ In practice, the on-the-ground politics of the Longhouse were often complicated and improvised,

²² Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 118.

²³ While I will continue to use the past tense when discussing the politics of the eighteenth-century Haudenosaunee, it is important to note that these political and social structures continue into the present.

especially in the aftermath of the destabilizing impact of colonialism.²⁴ However, the political relationships that distributed power across the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee were designed to align to an ideal form, rooted in both the history and spirituality of the Haudenosaunee League. In examining these ideal forms, one can observe the operation of this intimacy in two ways. Firstly, kinship—both metaphorical and consanguineal—outlined political power relationships at both the confederacy and local levels for the Haudenosaunee. Secondly, the rhetorical expression of intimacy—again, whether metaphorical or sincere—was of equal importance to the effective functioning of politics within Haudenosaunee contexts.²⁵

Since its founding, the nations that make up the League of the Haudenosaunee have been divided into two moieties, with each rendered in kinship terms.²⁶ The “elder” moiety consisted of the keeper of the central Council Fire, the Onoñda’gegá’ [Onondaga], along with the two door keepers, the Onödowá’ga in the West and the Kanien’kehá:ka in the East. This moiety was generally termed *agadoni*, which translated means “my father’s kinsmen.” Conversely, the younger moiety, consisting of the Gayogohó:nq’ [Cayuga] and Onyota’a:ka [Oneida], was rendered as *kheya?dawenh*, or “my male kinsmen’s children.” Such designations reach deeper than simple metaphor, however, as they defined the

²⁴ The “Longhouse” is yet another example of Haudenosaunee politics defining itself with a combination of metaphor and reality. Not only does “Haudenosaunee” literally mean “People of the Longhouse,” but the living arrangements in each physical longhouse aligned to clan and therefore had political implications. Simultaneously, the original League of Five Nations was imagined as a geographical longhouse, with the Onödowá’ga as the keepers of the western door and the Kanien’kehá:ka as the keepers of the eastern door.

²⁵ The complicated confluences of political ontologies will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

²⁶ In anthropology, a moiety is a kinship group that operates in a pair with another kinship group. This term is anachronistic to the eighteenth century.

political relationships within the League itself. During Council debates, one moiety sat on one side of the fire while the other sat on the other. Moreover, while being the “elder” moiety did not necessarily connote dominance over the other, it did dictate the order in which individual nations sought council with other members of the League. It was important that consensus was established across the entire moiety before discussing affairs across the fire. It was, in this sense, not surprising that upon joining the League in 1722, the Skarù:rę? [Tuscarora] were also added to the younger *kheya?dawenh* moiety as were other groups, such as later Lenape people, who joined the Haudenosaunee as refugees.²⁷

The notion of clan, like the League-level moieties, were also rendered in kinship terms. Clan systems differed among the six nations that composed the League, but the Kanien’kehá:ka possessed three clans, *anowara* [Turtle], *okwaho* [Wolf], and *ohkwari* [Bear]. Although these groups are termed “clans” in anthropological literature and this term was adopted by Haudenosaunee people when speaking in English, they are rendered in their native language as “ongoing families.” When discussing members of one’s own clan, a person used the appropriate kinship terms of those who comprised one’s own “Longhouse family,” even if they physically lived some distance away. In this sense the clan is a “fictive” kinship, albeit one that is constructed through consanguineal

²⁷ William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 212-214. Fenton described three different seating arrangements at council fires. The first had one moiety arranged on one side with the other moiety on the other, seated in order according to each nation’s location geographically, each charged with keeping their own fire, with each fire horizontally in line with each other. The second featured a single central fire, with the Onödowá’ga and Kanien’kehá:ka on one side and the Gayogohó:nq’ and Onyota’a:ka on the other. The Onoñda’gegá’ sat between the two sides and as the central nation were charged with serving as firekeepers. The final model emerged after the American Revolution and incorporated the Skarù:rę?, Lenape, and Yesañ [Tutelo] by seating them with the Gayogohó:no’ while also reserving a space for a superintendent from the British Empire.

matrilineal descent.²⁸ The clan system was further subdivided into *ohwachiras*, which were also matrilineages, and bore names that referenced the broader clan animal. For example, in the case of the Bear clan, the three *ohwachiras* were “Adult Bear,” “Weanling Bear” and “Nursing Bear.” Each *ohwachira* was governed by a matron, or clan mother, who was generally the eldest female member of the *ohwachira*, although a woman who no longer felt she could administer her duties as matron could appoint another respected member of her *ohwachira* to replace her. One of the primary duties of the clan matron was to appoint League sachems or chiefs who were required to be descendants of a particular lineage, as indicated by their bearing of a name derived from one of the original founders of the League. In this sense, League sachemships were inherited positions, but they were also earned, as a matron both had the power to choose which descendant was to receive the name and, in cases of poor leadership, retained the right to remove the name and give it to someone else.²⁹

This flexible rendering of kinship, which was simultaneously “fictive” and consanguineal, was a crucial component of Haudenosaunee social organization and governance. While clans contained multiple “maternal families,” they behaved as if they were all members of the same maternal family. While this was expressed linguistically, insofar as a member of one’s clan was one’s “sister” or “brother,” regardless of parentage,

²⁸ I place “fictive” in scare quotes consistently. Within the broader anthropological literature on kinship, “fictive kinship” is an established category and thus is hard to avoid. However, I also believe that it carries a connotation of not being as “real” as consanguineal kinship. This is a very Western approach to kinship and thus misses the degree to which the various ways of constructing kinship employed by Indigenous communities were as real as consanguineal kinship. See Heidi Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire: Anishinaabe Governance through Alliance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 57-58.

²⁹ Barbara J. Siversten, *Turtles, Wolves, and Bears: A Mohawk Family History* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1996), 11-13. Fenton, *The Great Law of the Longhouse*, 24.

it was also expressed through social behavior, perhaps most obviously in the choice of sexual partners, as it was considered incestuous to have sexual relations with a member of one's own clan. Moreover, the flexible locus of the "fictive" and consanguineal extended to adopted members of the society as well, as there was no differentiation in the reckoning of lineages for adoptive members of the clan.³⁰ In this sense, "the maternal family is a physical reality that can become extinct if 'its ashes get cold,' whereas the clan continues. Long after family lines have faded from memory, clan identity is remembered and influences individual behavior."³¹ This familial flexibility was also expressed geographically, as individual settlements were associated with particular clans, even as they contained residents from every clan within the nation, a social development that was a likely hold over from earlier times when communities contained only a few longhouses. As history grew deeper and social life more complex, the system was adapted to maintain the vital social and political arrangements associated with the clan system while also making space for changing social realities.³²

National clan systems intersected with the League-level moieties through the position of League sachem. Moreover, just as the flexible rendering of kinship and clan facilitated the permanence of clan identities even in instances when individual lineages ended, so too did this system render a constitutional permanence to League governance.

³⁰ This taboo was so strong that some cite it as the reason for a lack of sexual violence during Indigenous raids on their enemies. Because captivity/adoption was so prevalent, and because adoption placed the adoptee firmly within a clan, rape ran the risk of becoming incestuous retroactively. See James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1982), 181-182.

³¹ Fenton, *The Great Law of the Longhouse* 24-27. Quotation on 27. Fenton referred to the clan system as a "legal fiction," but I think designating it as such misses the clan's power as a social reality.

³² Siversten, *Turtles, Wolves, and Bears*, 13.

As the “Great Binding Law” of the Haudenosaunee states, the title of sachem cannot “be carried into the grave,” meaning it had to be passed on through hereditary lines. This was uncommon within Indigenous politics of the time—in most Indigenous nations, leadership was bestowed upon an individual and was contingent on that individual’s personal leadership abilities. While new leaders would surely emerge, their leadership was considered distinct from that of their predecessors. Moreover, there were other positions within Haudenosaunee leadership, such as that of war chiefs and “Pine Tree” chiefs, or peace chiefs, that were based solely on the merits of the individual.³³ However, both the matrons of the *ohwachira* and the sachems that those matrons appointed were bearers of a name drawn directly from the founding of the League, as each League sachem was seen as descendent from one of the League’s founders.

In all, there were fifty League sachems in the Haudenosaunee League, with one of those sachemships being ceremoniously left unfilled as it descended from the Peacemaker, the spiritual leader who created the League and whose name is traditionally left unsaid except during sacred ceremonies.³⁴ Nine of those League sachems were Kanien’kehá:ka, one for each *ohwachira* and therefore three for each clan. While the ages of each League sachem obviously fluctuated as the position was passed on, the “seniority” of each position was fixed and determined by when each founder joined the League. As the first person to join the League was a Kanien’kehá:ka of the *anowara* clan, the Kanien’kehá:ka were seen as senior among the nations of the League and the

³³ Donald S. Lutz, “The Iroquois Confederation: An Analysis,” *Publius* 28, no. 2 (Spring, 1998): 102-103.

³⁴ It is only recently that academics have followed the lead of the Haudenosaunee and refrained from using the name of the Peacemaker.

anowara clan was seen as senior among the Kanien'kehá:ka, with that clan's senior sachem, *Tehkarihoken*, being seen as the most senior sachem for the whole Kanien'kehá:ka nation.³⁵

The passing on of a League sachem name required the performance of the Condolence Council. This council functioned as one of the most important political and spiritual practices of the Haudenosaunee League, and within it one can clearly see the political function of intimacy within Haudenosaunee society. During periods of transition, it was the opposing moiety who was responsible, as “clearminded” people, to bring solace to the other moiety, the “mourners” within the Condolence Council. These rituals were highly prescribed and centered on providing comfort to grieving kin. There are five core rituals that made up the Condolence Council. The first is termed “Going on the Road” in which the “clearminded” moiety journeyed to meet the “mourners” while reciting the “Roll Call” of the Founders of the League, in which the fifty inherited names of League sachems were recited. The second was the “Welcome at the Wood’s Edge,” during which the “mourners” ritually cleared the arduous path that the “clearminded” had taken to arrive at the Council. Thirdly, the “clearminded” recited the “Three Bare Words” to “wipe the tears,” “clear the ears” and “clear the throats” of the “mourners.” While additional “words” could be and were usually added, the “bare” minimum focused on tears, ears, and throats. Each “word” was also presented with a corresponding string of wampum. Fourthly, the “clearminded” sang songs of farewell to the League sachem who had passed. The rite then concluded with a recitation of the Laws of the Founders.

³⁵ Siversten, *Turtles, Wolves, and Bears*, 12. Fenton, *The Great Law of the Longhouse*, 192-195.

Because the pain of mourning was seen as a hinderance to clearmindedness and therefore sound governance, the Condolence law of the Haudenosaunee dictated that mourners be cared for and League sachems replaced before proceeding with any new business.³⁶

In these moments of condolence, one can clearly see not only the impact of flexible kinship definitions, in which the legitimization and preservation of political authority is rendered matrilineally, but also the intimate implications of such understandings on Haudenosaunee governance and politics. Throughout the many centuries of European and Haudenosaunee contact, outside observers have consistently observed the potency of these rituals.³⁷ These were not metaphorical tears but very real ones being wiped from the cheeks of mourners. And the shedding of these tears was seen as an essential element for the basic functioning of Haudenosaunee social life and politics. The tears, and the care for those who shed them were elements that bound the League together. The League itself was not a federated political body, legislating policy for its constituent nations. Instead, it was a set of core relationships, perceived through the lens of kinship, designed to facilitate peace and cooperation between its constituent nations. In this sense, the relationship between each of the nations of the League was sustained through intimacy.³⁸

Like the Haudenosaunee, the many nations that were collectively Anishinaabe centered kinship and intimacy in their politics. For the Anishinaabe, the “shared soul” was the essence of kinship. While one can draw broad comparisons to other

³⁶ Fenton, *The Great Law of the Longhouse*, 137.

³⁷ Fenton, *The Great Law of the Longhouse*, 180-190.

³⁸ Lutz, “The Iroquois Confederation, and Analysis,” 101.

conceptualizations of the soul from other cultures, the unique qualities of the Anishinaabe concept of the “shared soul” were instrumental for holding Anishinaabe society and politics together. While societies, like those of European settlers, that emphasized consanguinity within their definitions of kinship saw sharp distinctions between those who were adopted and one’s own “flesh and blood” for example, for the Anishinaabe, kinship was traced through those who shared the same *doodem*. While the anthropological literature can have conflicting accounts of the origins and nature of *doodem*, common across these accounts is the knowledge that: first, the *doodem* tradition was ancient; second, it transcended individual nations such as the Ojibwe, Odawa, or Bodéwadomi; third, it drew Anishinaabe peoples into kinship not just with other humans but both other-than-human souls and the very land itself as well; and lastly it was the most important social category available to Anishinaabe peoples.³⁹

In his 1885 ethnohistory of his own people, the Ojibwe historian William W. Warren noted that “each grand family is known by a badge or symbol, taken from nature; being generally a quadruped, bird, fish, or reptile. The badge, or Dodaim (Totem, as it has been most commonly written), descends invariably in the male line; marriage is strictly

³⁹ Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 41-69. As with my discussion of the Haudenosaunee, my use of the past tense should not be interpreted as implying that these traditions do not continue into the present. Anishinaabe perceive people as having at least two souls. The first, as outlined above, is the “shared soul” that connects them to *doodem* relations. The second is the individual soul, which could leave the body during dreams and travel to the afterlife after a person died. Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 54-55.

forbidden between individuals of the same symbol.”⁴⁰ Writing in the nineteenth century, Warren was describing Anishinaabe ontology and cosmology to a very different audience, and consistently attempts to use Western ontological metaphors to make sense of Anishinaabe concepts. In this sense, while he refers to one’s *doodem* as a “badge,” it was, in fact, a central kinship identity that shaped one’s intimate relationships. Additionally, while *doodem* was patrilineal in most instances, to label it a consanguineal kinship would be misleading. With the arrival of Europeans during the colonial period, and especially as predominately male French colonists and voyageurs began to make connections in the Great Lakes, the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, adoption practices were developed to ensure that Anishinaabe people with non-Anishinaabe fathers either gained or retained their *doodem* connections. Specifically, one born of such unions could be adopted into their maternal grandfather’s *doodem*, granted a new *doodem* identity through naming ceremonies, or in some cases, their original *doodems* were introduced into Anishinaabe society.⁴¹ Again, the perceived fixity of consanguineal kinship and the assumptions about what descent implies can distort the ways in which the knowledge of with whom one shared their soul was more powerful than genetics.

⁴⁰ William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, edited by Theresa Schenck (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009), 17. While Warren spells it “Dodaim,” clearly, the Anishinaabe word *doodem* is the root of the poor transliteration “totem” that is much more ubiquitously used in English. For a discussion of Anishinaabe terminology, see Bohaker, xiii-xvii. I will be using Bohaker’s terminology throughout.

⁴¹ Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 72-74. Anton Treuer [Ojibwe], *Assassination of Hole in the Day* (St. Paul: The Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2011), 17-18; Cary Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 65-112.

Just as Haudenosaunee tradition connected sachemships to founding members of the league, so did one's *doodem* connect one to the origins of the Anishinaabe. However, while Haudenosaunee kinship and intimacy connected eighteenth-century peoples to a historical moment, perceived as such and recorded in the oral tradition of the League's founding, the *doodem* tradition connected individuals through kinship to the founding of human society itself. The French trader, Nicolas Perrot, who had lived among the Anishinaabe in the late seventeenth century, noted that the Anishinaabe believed "that before the earth was created there was nothing but water; that upon this vast extent of water floated a great wooden raft, upon which were all the animals, of various kinds, which exist on earth; and the chief of these, they say, was the Great Hare."⁴² Unable to find land, the Great Hare, or *Nanabozhoo*, instructed his companions to dive into the water to pull up land, which, after several failed attempts, Muskrat was able to do. However, it was not until the task was complete and the animals, who were themselves persons, had retired and died, that human society was created. As Perrot noted, "when the first ones died, the Great Hare caused the birth of men from their corpses, as also from those of the fishes which were found along the shores of the rivers which he had formed in creating the land." Perrot continued, noting that the Anishinaabe, "derive their origin from a bear, others from a moose, and others similarly from various kinds of animals.... You will hear them say that their villages each bear the name of the animal

⁴² Nicolas Perrot, "Beliefs of the savage tribes of North America regarding the creation of the world, before Europeans had visited and associated with them," in *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, edited by Emma Helen Blair (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1911), 31-32. One must read Perrot's account with a heavy dose of criticism. Throughout he clearly echoes the language of both Biblical creation and the Biblical flood. For a contemporary analysis of power, its origins, and functions within Anishinaabeg society, see Cary Miller, *Ogimaag*, 21-63.

which has given its people their being, as that of the crane, or the bear, or of other animals.”⁴³ But these first animal persons were not simply past ancestors, but instead active and immediate relations. Despite being separated in time by a vast distance, at least insofar as Westerners perceive it, ones *doodem* relations, living or dead, were active relations.⁴⁴

In centering *doodem*, one can clearly see the degree to which a distinction between national/tribal politics and international politics runs the risk of being anachronistic. If the intimacy of kinship networks gave shape to the social structures of the individual nation, it likewise gave a broader category of distinct peoples a common identity. Warren noted that *doodem* held together many tribes of culturally and linguistically related people. However, as he argued:

this division, though an important one and strongly defined, is but a subdivision, which has been caused by domestic quarrels, necessity, or caprice, and perpetuated by long and wide separations and non-intercourse.... The separation does not date many centuries back. The first grand division is that of blood and kindred, which has been perpetuated amongst the different tribes by what they call the Totemic System, and dates back to the time “When the Earth was new.”⁴⁵

Notably, Warren was writing at a time in which the power of consanguinity kinship language was so ubiquitous that it was the only metaphor available to him, as he continued, “an individual of any one of the several Totems belonging to a distinct tribe, as for instance, the [Ojibwe], is a close blood relation to all other Indians of the same Totem,

⁴³ Perrot, “Beliefs of the savage tribes of North America,” 37. For a discussion of the connection between *Nanabozhoo* and Anishinaabe heroism, see Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, & the British Empire* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 12-15.

⁴⁴ Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 57.

⁴⁵ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 17.

both in his own and all other tribes, though he may be divided from them by a long vista of years, interminable miles, and knows not even their existence.”⁴⁶

However, as historian Bohaker argues, while *doodem* served as the kinship tie that bound broader Anishinaabe peoples together, they were also keenly aware of their geographic place in the world. In this sense, “by naming both *doodem* and place, speakers situated themselves in the web of their relations. They identified both the node of place and the lines of relatedness connecting them to their *doodem* kin. *Doodem* in one’s daily life operated as a set of categories that gave people a network of family in all four directions.”⁴⁷ Not only did Anishinaabe people build place into their identity, they were likewise tied to places through *doodem* kinship. There was no distinction among the Anishinaabe between the souls of humans and animals. In this sense, animals were other-than-human persons, although even labeling them as such adds a distinction between them that would have been foreign to the Anishinaabe. For them, animals were simply other members of their society and kinship networks.⁴⁸ Even those things which European observers might see as inanimate objects could likewise be ensouled. As such, a place, like an ancestor, could be a close kin relation if that place and person shared a *doodem* soul.

⁴⁶ Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 17-18. It is striking how Warren’s language here resembles the notion of an “imagined community” articulated by Benedict Anderson nearly a century later. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso Books, 1983).

⁴⁷ Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 69.

⁴⁸ A. Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View,” in *Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 357-390. Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, xiii-xiv.

Finally, for the Anishinaabe, one's *doodem* identity was the most important social category. While the distinctions between male and female, Anishinaabe and English, or old and young, were all potent categories of identity, *doodem* took precedence. It transcended what non-Anishinaabe people define as human society, creating a more capacious social system than the relationships between humans. It guided one's intimate relations, as a person who might in a consanguineal kinship system be completely unrelated was a close, intimate relative if there was a shared *doodem* identity. And, as Bohaker makes clear, it was the most potent and animating identity in Anishinaabe politics and diplomacy. For example, as she argues:

marriage relationships functioned as micro-alliances bringing different doodemeg together... Women made important social and political connections by marrying men from other doodemag, sometimes from quite considerable distances away. Such marriages, spread out geographically, created the Anishinaabe political world. It meant that travellers [sp] could then rely upon the hospitality of kin as they voyaged through the region. War leaders and warriors could count on the support of their spouse's relatives and allies.⁴⁹

It is in this sense, just as the Longhouse and clan gave shape to the society and politics of the Haudenosaunee through intimacy, albeit in significantly different structural ways, so too did the shared soul of *doodem* relations shape Anishinaabe political relationships.

Like both the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, the Shaawanwa used clan systems as tools for giving shape to their political, familial, and spiritual relationships. Like the Anishinaabe, the Shaawanwa clan system was connected to the creation of the world. As the nineteenth-century Shaawanwa prophet Tenskwatawa related the story in 1824, at the beginning of time, Meteelemelakwe, or the Great Spirit, began to experiment with the

⁴⁹ Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire*, 78.

human form. As Meteelemelakwe's principle concern was to create a male and female who could reproduce, it took several attempts to create humans with efficiently placed genitals, and therefore he "changed their position to each other frequently, at each change seating himself to examine the effect, until they faced each other and by dint of the changing or moving became connected in the act of copulation."⁵⁰ After discovering that the woman was pregnant, Meteelemelakwe "then told the man and woman that they should live, increase and multiply in that manner, that he had made them and thereafter they must make themselves.... By this time there were 12 Indians at the residence of the Great Spirit. They were all [Shaawanwa], but the roots of the 12 [divisions].⁵¹ Before placing the original twelve Shaawanwa on the Island he had created for him, Meteelemelakwe realized that they would need some additional guidance, so he said, "I therefore give you the sun to take of you and give you light during the day, and the moon for the same purpose at night. I will also put some of my grey hairs upon one of you and

⁵⁰ C. C. Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, edited by Vernon Kinietz and Ermine W. Voegelin (Ann Arbor: The Regents of the University of Michigan, 1939), 1.

⁵¹ Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 2. In many eighteenth and nineteenth-century accounts, there is incredible inconsistency in the terms used to differentiate different social groups. The original here is "tribes" but I have changed it to divisions for clarity. See Sami Lakomäki, *Gathering Together: The Shawnee People through Diaspora and Nationhood, 1600-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 244, n.11. While this account seems to imply that there were originally twelve divisions, by the eighteenth century, there were five principle divisions of the Shaawanwa, with only two tracing their origins to the first twelve Indians created. See James H. Howard, *Shawnee!: The Ceremonialism of a Native American Tribe and Its Cultural Background* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981), 25-27.

he shall be an old man, and you shall call him Grandfather.”⁵² After adding a second Grandfather, Meteelemelakwe laid the twelve Indians and two Grandfathers on the island he had created for them. As they began their journey through this new creation, the first Grandfather “observed that as he was too old to lead the party he would give his pack to one of the others and he appointed Tshilikāūthee [Chalaakaatha] to be the leader.⁵³

Chalaakaatha was the primary culture hero of Shaawanwa oral tradition, a name often translated as meaning “First Man,” and was also the name of the division from which the principal chief must come. As their numbers increased the five divisions recognizable in the historical period solidified. Besides the Chalaakaatha, the Shaawanwa divisions were the Mekoche, Thawikila, Pekowi, and Kishpoko, with each group given different responsibilities for the care of the broader Shaawanwa people. The Mekoche was charged with taking leadership on spiritual matters. There is disagreement on the traditional roles of the Thawikila; some argue that as this division was the only other that can trace its origins to the original twelve, principal chiefs can also be drawn from the Thawikila. The Pekowi were known as the “talking band” and were given the responsibility for speaking for the Shaawanwa. Finally, the Kishpoko were generally

⁵² Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 3. It is worth noting, as this account was presented to a white outsider well in the colonial period, that it included an explanation of the origin of white people as well. As Tenskwatawa explains, “The Great Spirit then opened a door, and looking down they saw a white man seated upon the ground. He was naked, and destitute of hair upon his head or his body and had been circumcised. The Great Spirit told them that this white man was not made by himself but by another spirit who made and governed the whites and over who or whose subjects he had not control. That as soon as they reached their Island and got comfortably situated, this great white spirit would endeavor to thwart his designs, and would certainly exert himself to change the period of their existence from 200 years to a shorter time.” Earlier the Great Spirit explained to his original twelve Indians that they were designed to live for 200 years and that medicine had been created to restore them should they “drop down” before they reached that age.

⁵³ Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 4. The latter spelling of Chalaakaatha is the one used in most contemporary accounts of Shaawanwa political divisions. Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*, 14-16.

given responsibility for both fighting wars and performing rituals in support of wars and in celebration of heroism in battle.⁵⁴

Below the level of division, Shaawanwa society was further divided into *m'shomas* or “name groups.” While relaying ethnographic data, Tenskwatawa noted in 1824 that there were originally 34 *m'shomas* and that they were not “originally made for the purpose of government, but say that the several [*m'shomas*] were originally single families, the heads of which bore the names by which their descendants were afterwards distinguished. The children are always considered as belonging to the [*m'shoma*] of their father,” unlike the matrilineal societies of the Haudenosaunee.⁵⁵ However, by Tenskwatawa’s time, only twelve *m'shomas* remained. Moreover, by 1860, pioneering ethnographer Lewis Henry Morgan observed that while name groups were ideally patrilineal, names were increasingly assigned as needed by the community, irrespective of lineage. This trajectory continued so that by the twentieth century, *m'shomas* were no longer patrilineages but instead ceremonial roles assigned by the community.⁵⁶ The degree to which this transformation from patrilineages to ceremonial naming had begun in 1765 is extremely difficult to determine. However, considering the demographic pressures that the Shaawanwa were experiencing in the eighteenth century and the clearly

⁵⁴ Howard, *Shawnee!*, 24-30. Here, Howard is relaying ethnographic data from his informants. He later expresses skepticism that the roles of each division could have been strictly maintained in the historical period, considering the scope of the Shaawanwa diaspora and the tendency of each division to settle into their own towns. Instead, it is perhaps best to see these as idealized responsibilities rather than practical ones. 107-108.

⁵⁵ Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 16-17. Again, I have substituted *m'shoma* for “tribe” in the original as “tribe” is confusingly used for both division and *m'shoma*.

⁵⁶ Howard, *Shawnee!*, 88-89.

articulated practice of adoption, those captured, adopted, and integrated into Shaawanwa society would have been enfolded into both a division and a *m'shoma*.

Regardless of the degree to which division and *m'shoma* was an expression of consanguinity or “fictive” kinship, it created social bonds that were simultaneously flexible and strong, granting both cohesion and social support across the geographic breadth of the Shaawanwa diaspora. As historian Sami Lakomäki notes, the Shaawanwa people were separated into a larger number of social groups than their other Indigenous neighbors, and therefore each group was more sparsely populated than other Indigenous sociopolitical divisions. Lakomäki speculates that this was an adaptation rooted in the Shaawanwa’s propensity for mobility, a unique quality in the colonial Northeast, as most Indigenous groups held tightly to their traditional territories, at least until the pressures of colonialism proved too great.⁵⁷ Instead, Lakomäki argues that this was a strategy used by the Shaawanwa to construct a “kinscape,” or:

a landscape in which widespread groups of [Shaawanwa] relatives constituted anchorlike nodes, connected by networks of paths and rivers. Through decades, individual towns, clans and families navigated this network in search of security, trading partners, and assistance. This network, and the safety it provided, fostered a sense of common identity among the scattered communities.⁵⁸

Moreover, while *m'shomas* gave the various peoples of the Shaawanwa distinctive identities, they also were tools of ritual connection across the diaspora. In ways that seem

⁵⁷ Lakomäki is not the first to note the power of Shaawanwa mobility. Not only did eighteenth-century observers note that the Shaawanwa were “the greatest travellers in America,” but, as Stephen Warren argues, mobility was the root of Shaawanwa power in the colonial eighteenth century and therefore the breadth of the Shaawanwa diaspora should not be seen as a symptom of dispossession but instead as an expression of their power and identity. Stephen Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 1-26.

⁵⁸ Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*, 33. Lakomäki’s concept of “kinscape” will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

to echo the Condolence rituals of the Haudenosaunee, Tenskwatawa outlined the proper death rituals of the Shaawanwa, noting that “when life leaves the body, the friends of the deceased assemble around the corpse and there remain some time in weeping. Then some friends, of a different [*m'shoma*] from that of the deceased, dress the body in new clothes and paint the face. In this manner the corpse is kept two days, when it is carried to the grave by the same attendants who dressed and laid it out.”⁵⁹ Again, while the texture of how intimacy was constructed was unique to the Shaawanwa, and those differences were substantive and significant, it is nonetheless equally significant that strength and flexibility of intimacy and kinship was, just as it was for the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, the tender tie that held the Shaawanwa people together socially and politically.

Additionally, the Shaawanwa approach to governance was rhetorically intimate and gendered, just as it was for the Haudenosaunee. As was common among Indigenous communities, the Shaawanwa divided governance responsibilities between civil/peace chiefs, which they termed *hokimas*, and war chiefs, or *neenawtoomas*. Likewise, they assigned gendered governing responsibilities to *hokima wiikwes*, or “chief women,” with some designated peace women and others designated war women. Each of the four roles were seen as natural extensions of the gendered responsibilities of the community. For example, regardless of whether the community was at war or not, peace women oversaw the preparation of corn and vegetables for the community while war women were in charge of preparing meat. By dividing responsibilities and requiring consensus between

⁵⁹ Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 24.

the four groups, Shaawanwa leaders ensured that the total communal impact was considered before any consequential action was taken. But beyond being a system of “checks and balances,” this approach was also an expression of intimacy between the people of the community. As Tenskwatawa related:

the principle employment of the peace woman is by her entreaties and remonstrances to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood; and if a war chief is bent upon prosecuting some undertaking not countenanced by the nation, the council chiefs apply to the peace woman, who goes to the war chief, and setting before him the care and anxiety and pain which the women experience in their birth and education she appeals to his better feeling and implores him to spare the innocent and unoffending against whom his hand is raised.⁶⁰

Rather than appealing to the strength of law as an abstract concept, Tenskwatawa made clear that law and governance was only as effective as the power of rhetorically expressed ties of intimacy.

While the specific ways intimate and kinship ties brought shape to Indigenous polities differed among them, what is clear is that none of these polities could function without intimacy. More importantly, these ties were not mere metaphors designed to make sense of the structures of authority and governance, they lay at the heart of how authority and power were distributed throughout Indigenous polities. Who one was related to, whether through genetics, marriage, or adoption, also established the directions of authority within the community, as well as one’s relationships to that authority. Moreover, beyond giving shape to systems of authority, intimacy and kinship also provided stability to the system in time, as kinship, as expressed through the clan system, connected Indigenous peoples and their politics to the foundations of the world.

⁶⁰ Trowbridge, *Shawanese Traditions*, 12-13. Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*, 18-19.

As such, considering how central intimacy was for Indigenous domestic politics, international diplomacy with Indigenous peoples, whether conducted by other Indigenous groups of European settlers and their empires, inevitably brought those outside distinct Indigenous communities into intimate contact with them and their functioning.

Intimacy and International Diplomacy

It is not surprising that the Haudenosaunee's core rituals of intimacy, while central to giving shape to the League itself, were adapted as tools of diplomacy as well. The League was born not out of nationalism or conquest, but diplomacy, as it was a tool for ending endemic conflict between the five founding nations of Iroquoian peoples. Thus, just as the "Three Bare Words" and the presentation of wampum became an essential feature of diplomatic work outside of the League itself, the rites and intimacy of Condolence became a central feature of the hybrid diplomatic protocols that were so essential to transcultural international relations in eighteenth-century North America. In this sense, international diplomacy was an intimate affair, and while there were certainly European diplomats who were simply going through the motions when performing what for them was a cold and calculated process, success at least required a proficiency in intimate rhetoric. It is, therefore, little surprise that the most effective transcultural international diplomats in the eighteenth-century colonial Northeast were intimately connected across cultures, whether by birth or through their lived experiences.

For example, in 1743, Indian agent Conrad Weiser traveled to the central fire of the Onoñda'gegá in order to present gifts and assuage Haudenosaunee anger after a clash between Onoñda'gegá and Onyota'a:ka warriors and Virginia militiamen at the Battle of Galudoghson in December of the previous year. After presenting his case informally, Weiser waited while Haudenosaunee delegates met privately. As Weiser noted, "Jonnhaty, the captain of the unhappy company that had the skirmish last winter in Virginia, was sent for with two more of his companions. He was desired to tell the story from the beginning how every thing happened which he did. He seemed to be a very thoughtful and honest man, and took a deal of time in telling the story."⁶¹ Private conversations continued for four more days until an outline for the business of official council was established "and the wampums were divided into so many parts as there were articles to be spoken of, and the goods were to be divided between the families in mourning and the public council of the [Six Nations]."⁶² The next day at noon:

The council then met at our lodging and declared themselves complete, and a deal of ceremonies passed. First the [Onoñda'gegá] rehearsed the beginning of the Union of the Five Nations, praised their grandfathers' wisdom in establishing the union or alliance, by which they became a formidable body; that they (now living) were but fools to their wise fathers, yet protected and accompanied by their fathers' spirit. And then the discourse was directed to the deputies of the several nations, and to the messengers from Onas [the Haudenosaunee term for the Governor of Pennsylvania] and Assaryquoa [Virginia], then to the [Nentego, or Nanticoke], to welcome them all to the Council Fire which was now kindled. A string of wampum was given by Tocanontie, in behalf of the [Onoñda'gegá], to wipe off the sweat from their... bodies, and God, who

⁶¹ Conrad Weiser, "Conrad Weiser's Report of his Journey to Onondaga on the Affairs of Virginia," in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, vol. IV (Harrisburg, PA: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 660 (Hereafter *CRPA*.)

⁶² "Conrad Weiser's Report of his Journey to Onondaga on the Affairs of Virginia," in *CRPA*, 663.

had protected them against the Evil Spirits in the woods who were always doing mischief to people traveling to Onondago, was praised.⁶³

Weiser, along with other deputies from those outside of the League, then selected a person to speak for them from among the Haudenosaunee, in order to make sure that the correct protocols were followed. They:

appointed Aquoyiota to return thanks for their kind reception with another string of wampum. Aquoyiota repeated all that was said in a singing way, walking up and down in the house, adding more in praise of their wise fathers and of the happy union, repeating all the names of those ancient chiefs that established it. . . . Then proclamation was made that the council was now opened, and Assaryquoa was to speak next morning in the same house. . . . All those Indian ceremonies took up that afternoon.⁶⁴

Clearly, these ceremonies required extreme care and could not be rushed, regardless of how impatient European observers may have been. Weiser spoke Kanien'kehá:ka and was personally deeply connected to the Haudenosaunee, most famously through his close friendship with the Onyota'a:ka merit chief Shikellimy, and therefore likely had a respect for the importance of the Condolence Council as a core element of diplomatic relations, thus giving us a more thorough account than most treaty records. But even the equally connected Croghan glossed over the ceremonies when making official transcripts. Croghan's records from the official council meeting at Fort Pitt simply notes, "The [Shaawanwa] and [Onödowá'ga] sent for Major Murray and me, and performed all the Ceremonies of Condolence as usual on meetings of this nature."⁶⁵

⁶³ "Conrad Weiser's Report of his Journey to Onondaga on the Affairs of Virginia," in *CRPA*, 663.

⁶⁴ "Conrad Weiser's Report of his Journey to Onondaga on the Affairs of Virginia," in *CRPA*, 663.

⁶⁵ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 9.

However, the Haudenosaunee need not be present for the rituals of condolence to be applied to diplomatic relations, as much of the protocol outlined in the Great Law of Peace was echoed in the protocols of the Haudenosaunee's neighbors, including all of those that had united in common cause against the British occupation of the trans-Appalachian West. Similarly, while wampum was an essential tool for establishing the sincerity of Condolence, it too, while often associated most closely with the Haudenosaunee, was a powerful tool for many other Indigenous cultures as well.⁶⁶ Moreover, just as understanding rituals of intimacy makes Haudenosaunee politics more legible, it is clear that these rituals of intimacy were an essential component of transcultural international relations in colonial North America as well as a requisite for peace.

Because of his renown, many European observers assumed that Pontiac held a title that simply did not exist in his society. Instead of functioning as a centralized authority, Pontiac, as an *ogema* among the Odawa, held no coercive power.⁶⁷ He was able to exert persuasive power, however, in part by arousing the emotions of his audience in council. He did so by demonstrating the failures of the British to perform the proper actions of an intimate relation, as evidenced in his call to arms at Detroit, a call often cited as the catalyst that started the war that now bears Pontiac's name. In council with

⁶⁶ It is tempting to see the ubiquity of condolence rituals and wampum among the Indigenous peoples of the Northeast as evidence of Haudenosaunee political domination among Indigenous Americans, especially as the rituals find their most coherent articulation within the oral traditions of the Great Law of Peace. However, considering the predominance of the Haudenosaunee in the history of anthropology, especially in the nineteenth century, I think it is wise to be cautious in reading too deeply into this. I believe it is equally possible that these rituals predate the formation of the League and in this sense were tools that were employed by the Peacemaker during the League's formation.

⁶⁷ For an excellent review of Pontiac's political power and the way its character has been distorted historiographically, see Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 5-11.

members of the Bodéwadmi [Potawatomi] and Wendat [Huron], Pontiac laid out the case for making war against the British. After lambasting the British for the poor quality of the goods given to Indigenous people as gifts, he lamented, “when I go to see the English commander and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and you.”⁶⁸ For Pontiac and Pontiac’s audience alike, the reciprocal expectations of not only gift giving, but intimacy itself had broken down.

It was not unreasonable for Pontiac to expect such relationships from the British who took control of Detroit, nor was his claim that the French were much more willing to meet those expectations hyperbole. The social fabric of Detroit prior to British occupation was built on the intimate connections between French men and Indigenous women. Moreover, as historian Karen L. Marrero makes clear, when the British first arrived, they sought to continue these practices. As she argues, “by the time the British arrived at Detroit in 1760, women of the family networks had so skillfully fused the multiple strands of gendered behavior of European and Indigenous worlds, they became sought-after marriage partners to English merchants.” However, it would seem that British merchants were not as interested in sustaining those relationships, for as “once [Indigenous] expertise had been incorporated in this manner... these same men regarded the ‘Indian-like’ behavior of these women as base and unbecoming the wives of affluent businessmen,” with British men being particularly worried by the ease with which

⁶⁸ Robert Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy*, edited by Clarence Monroe Burton (Detroit: Michigan Society of the Colonial Wars, 1912), 38.

Indigenous and Métis women independently navigated Detroit society.⁶⁹ Ironically, had these same British traders not rejected the independence of Indigenous women as “unbefitting,” they may have avoided much of the violence of Pontiac’s siege of the settlement—and perhaps the whole war more broadly—as much of the uneven and contradictory intel that British military authorities gathered just prior to and during the siege had been haphazardly gathered from the networks of intimate connections between Indigenous and Métis women and British men. However, rather than see this as an asset, much of the communication between officers, including some letters written to Croghan himself, focused on the moral failings of the British men who made such connections and whether their liaisons with Indigenous women made them untrustworthy. Rather than embrace the opportunity to enmesh themselves within Detroit’s Indigenous society, the British military brass instead looked to intimacy between their occupying force and the local population as muddying sharp distinctions between those who were loyal and thus could be trusted and those who may be engaged in an illicit conspiracy. To be fair, considering that many of the Indigenous and Métis women of Detroit were also intimately connected *habitants*, British anxiety was not completely unfounded. However, the disdain and anxiety that British authorities held towards transcultural intimacy and sexuality clearly negatively impacted their ability to make sense of the political situation in Detroit.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Karen L. Marrero, *Detroit’s Hidden Channels: The Power of French-Indigenous Families in the Eighteenth Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2020), 110.

⁷⁰ Marrero, *Detroit’s Hidden Channels*, 111-139. More on how the intimate connections between *habitants* and Indigenous women in Detroit and its implications for what French support for Indigenous people during Pontiac’s War meant will be explored further in Chapter 3.

But Pontiac was not alone in conducting diplomacy by emphasizing the proper sentiments produced through intimacy. The Shaawanwa leader Charlot Kaské, who was married to an English woman and was himself the son of a German immigrant and a Shaawanwa mother, continued to seek the support of French leadership even as Lawoughgua and his fellow Shaawanwaki were preparing for talks at Fort Pitt. On February 24, 1765, Kaské, along with Levacher, a leader from the Illinois Confederation, met with the newly appointed governor of Louisiana, Charles Phillippe Aubry, who was charged by the French crown to oversee the transition of the territory from French to Spanish control after the sudden death of the previous governor, Jean Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie. Kaské had travelled with the intention of convincing the former governor to offer support to the Indian cause against the British, and had even delivered a speech to d'Abbadie just prior to his death. Kaské, now tasked with making the same plea to d'Abbadie's successor, rooted his diplomacy in the intimate bonds one feels for kin, lamenting:

[I] had the good fortune to see M. d'Abbadie, but it was as if [I] had seen him only one night, because the Master of Life had disposed of him.... [I] mourned the death of [my] father, just as [our] wives and children mourn it; they will be sad and their eyes will be wet since our father has died; all the world will open their eyes when he announces that death. [I] will whiten the house that there would be no more mourning and that it is M. Aubry who is [our] father now.⁷¹

While Aubry ultimately rebuffed Kaské's request for French support, he did so using the Indigenous intimate modality, stating, "You have come from far away to see your father.

⁷¹ Charles Phillippe Aubry "Speeches by Indian Chiefs, February 24, 1765," in *The Critical Period*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 448-449 (Hereafter *TCP*.) The original transcript of the speech, written by a French observer, alternates awkwardly between the first and third person. I have changed the entire quoted portion into the first person.

The Master of Life has disposed of him, and my heart has been grieved that I have been a long time without being able to hear you. It is I who am today in his place, and I am going to speak to you. I know both of you; I have been in your villages and I have made long trips with you.”⁷²

War, like diplomacy, among Indigenous people was not a tool of conquest between empires or states but instead seen as a way of responding to threats to relationships. As historian Wayne E. Lee notes, broadly speaking, Indigenous warfare in the Northeast had three interlocking goals: to “administer political ‘lessons’ in proper relationships between groups,” to assuage the “demand for blood revenge,” and as an opportunity for young men “to assert adulthood” and “increase their status within the group.” While one of these three motivations may take precedence in a particular instance, they “did not exist in isolation from each other. . . . The recruitment of individuals for a succession of raids that might have political or material consequences still relied on blood feud and status rhetoric to motivate young warriors.”⁷³

In the case of blood feud, the connection to relationships is obvious, as violence and capture were seen in Indigenous cultures of the region as a way to reconcile the death of a loved one at the hand of another. If the death was caused by someone within the community, the community’s system of justice could regulate the need for vengeance. For example, among the Shaawanwa, if someone was murdered, the *hokimas* would facilitate a payment of wampum to the kin of the victim, totaling 120 yards if the murdered person

⁷² “Speeches by Indian Chiefs, February 24, 1765,” in *TCP*, 452.

⁷³ Wayne E. Lee, “Peace Chiefs and Blood Revenge: Patterns of Restraint in Native American Warfare, 1500-1800,” *The Journal of Military History* 71, no. 3 (July, 2007): 713.

was a man and 150 yards if she was a woman.⁷⁴ In both cases this was an extraordinary and likely unattainable sum, especially considering the short time frame allotted for the transaction. The family could choose to accept it, and it would then be handed to them directly from the murderer in front of the assembled council of *hokimas*, at which point the matter would be settled. However, if the grieving family refused the sum, or more likely the murderer was incapable of paying it, the *hokimas* would not interfere in the retributive slaying of the murderer by the murdered person's family.⁷⁵

However, if the slaying was committed by someone outside of the community, the event could lead to a community-wide response, especially if the victim was a prestigious person. Regardless of scale, the methods for finding balance after intercommunal conflict was relatively similar to the approach to intracommunal conflict. These processes among the Haudenosaunee are well documented, and like Condolence, represent an approach to warfare that echoed across Indian Country. Often termed "mourning war," the killing or capture of enemies was a means by which to assuage the pain of the aggrieved.

Moreover, in ways that were strikingly similar to the condolence process that held the League together, raids were the responsibility of those men who were connected to the mourning family but not members of the mourning clan. As clan membership was matrilineal, the raiders would therefore be comprised of men who were attached through

⁷⁴ The higher price for assuaging the grief over the loss of a woman was not isolated to the Shaawanwa. William Penn noted that among the Lenape, the killing of a woman "required twice the amount of wampum given for killing a man, as 'she breedeth Children, which men cannot do.'" This observation was echoed by the Moravian missionary David Zeisberger over a century later. There does not, therefore, seem to be a correlation between the valuation of the gendered communal impact of murder and whether a society is patrilineal, like the Shaawanwa, or matrilineal, like the Lenape. Quotation from Tom Arne Midtrød, *The Memory of All Ancient Customs: Native American Diplomacy in the Colonial Hudson Valley* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 46.

⁷⁵ Howard, *Shawnee!*, 112.

marriage. After a raid, captives would be brought back to the community, and the grief of the mourners would determine the captive's fate. If it was determined that an adoptee could bring condolence by living—a fate more likely for women and children—they became members of the community. However, if the grief was too great, then the adoptees would be executed. Yet even the rituals of execution were laden with intimacy, as they would first be adopted and as they awaited execution, they would be referred to as kin. Even during the execution itself, during which the victim was ritually burned, these acts of torture were termed “caresses.”⁷⁶ However, just as in cases of conflict within a community, condolence gifts could also be arranged—most likely in the form of wampum—so as to avoid further bloodshed.⁷⁷ In this sense, as historian Nicole Eustace notes, it is important not to overemphasize the notion of revenge within Haudenosaunee ritual approaches to reconciliation. Instead, violence was a tool within a larger toolkit that also included adoption and gift-giving as a means of restoring balance.⁷⁸

From European perspectives, there was a sharp difference between violence between states and violence between individuals. While persistent violence between peoples of differing national identities could certainly lead to state-level conflicts, doing so was seen as leveling up the conflict. However, as violence and conflict was, for Indigenous people, seen through a more intimate lens, conflicts that Europeans would categorize as private matters could more easily become public affairs. For example, as

⁷⁶ Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 33-36.

⁷⁷ Midtrød, *The Memory of All Ancient Customs*, 44-45.

⁷⁸ Nicole Eustace, *Covered with Night: A Story of Murder and Indigenous Justice in Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2021), 10-12.

Ian Steele has argued, Shaawanwa participation in the Seven Years' War—which from a Shaawanwa perspective indistinguishably transitioned into Pontiac's War after the Treaty of Paris in 1763—can be traced back to the capture and killing of Itawachcomequa, who was leading a raid on Catawbas before being imprisoned in Charles Town, South Carolina and then killed, likely in the woods as he fled imprisonment.⁷⁹ While Europeans at the time were incapable of connecting the dots between the death of Itawachcomequa and Shaawanwa declarations of war against the British, as Steele demonstrates, Indigenous diplomats from several nations clearly saw the connection, and were quick to remind the British that they were the ones at fault—even if the diplomat was a British ally. Such was the case with the Kanien'kehá:ka Little Abraham, who, at the Treaty of Lancaster in 1757, reminded the British that the Shaawanwa were only at war with their enemies the Catawba until they were poorly treated by Carolinians. Likewise, the Onyota'a:ka Thomas King, noted at the Treaty of Easton a year later that the British “gave the first offense, for in a time of profound peace some of the [Shaawanwaki] passing through South Carolina to go to war with their enemies were taken up and put in prison...and one who was a head man of that nation lost his life and the others were severely used.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Ian K. Steele, “Shawnee Origins of Their Seven Years' War,” *Ethnohistory* 53, no. 4 (Fall, 2006): 657-687. Steele was unable to firmly establish the specifics of Itawachcomequa's death as the primary source evidence about the killing is vague. Steele, “Shawnee Origins of Their Seven Years' War,” 666-667.

⁸⁰ Steele, “Shawnee Origins of Their Seven Years' War,” 677. While I have only included one of the quotations, it is worth noting that despite both speeches being delivered a year apart, they both outline the event using remarkably parallel words and structure, demonstrating the consistency with which this offense was interpreted by Indigenous observers.

However, while the impact of private conflicts on international affairs was often lost on Europeans, this was not universally true. Croghan himself knew the importance of assuaging anger through an Indigenous modality so as to secure peace. As April drew to a close in 1765, Croghan continued to prepare for formal discussions at Fort Pitt. As this was to be a well-attended international summit, preparations were proving to be challenging. The Shaawanwa had not yet arrived and, as previously discussed, Lenape delegates presented to Croghan amended instructions from the Master of Life, stating that the Lenape prophet Neolin had received another vision, arguing that the intimate connections between the Lenape and Quaker settlers was the best route forward for peace and that the two groups should take the lead in negotiating for all those present. This would have been a drastic change to British policy, as both Croghan and his superior Johnson used their own intimate connections with the Six Nations (and the Kanien'kehá:ka specifically) as leverage over other Indigenous groups. As noted, Croghan quickly dismissed the Lenape request, and tensions within the Lenape delegation escalated into a violent and nearly fatal altercation.⁸¹ Even though the conflict was between two members of the Lenape delegation, Croghan, as the host of the summit, was quick to intervene, using the intimate approach to justice, so as to prevent the conflict from escalating and potentially jeopardizing negotiations.

⁸¹ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 8. Croghan differentiates here between "tribe" and "nation." Despite his familiarity with Lenape politics, this is a misrepresentation of the political and social structure of Lenape peoples as there was no such clean distinction or proto-federal structure to Lenape governance. For more exploration of the complicated political and social worlds of the Lenape, see Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 94-123.

Navigating the Confluence of Intimate Ties

It was at this confluence of intimate ties that Lawoughgua and Croghan met. Lawoughgua as a *hokima* spoke specifically for his *m'shoma* and his division. But he also seemed to speak for all the Shaawanwa present.⁸² This may be a case of the colonial archive misrepresenting Indigenous governance, although if his words were accurately recorded, he was at least comfortable with the British interpreting his speech as being representative of a broader Shaawanwaki position.⁸³ Croghan of course spoke for the British, although, as discussed earlier in Chapter 1, Croghan was especially adept at finding ways to use his official position to advance his own personal interests. But these two were not alone in navigating the confluence of intimate ties. While captive/adoptees being handed over by the Shaawanwa had a remarkable lack of agency in this moment, one can imagine what they felt and what they desired. Other agents, such as Alexander McKee, a man raised in both British colonial and Shaawanwa cultures who served as Croghan's right hand man at Fort Pitt, surely had to make difficult decisions as they navigated culture and loyalty. While McKee was able to build a military career upon his transcultural identity, others, like the trader Gershom Hicks, found this confluence of intimacy too treacherous to navigate. Similarly, the way individuals moved forward from

⁸² Lawoughgua's archival traces appear to be limited to these formal negotiations. While I am able to make educated assumptions about his status as a *hokima*, I cannot confidently trace his exact kinship connections nor his intimate connections with British people beyond the familiarity with which the British delegation speaks to him during these negotiations. However, if he had been sent to speak for the Shaawanwaki as it appears he was, there is some degree of possibility that he was from the Pekowi, as they were traditionally the division generally given responsibility for conducting diplomacy, although as noted above, the ethnography James H. Howard is dubious about the persistence of these traditional responsibilities within the historical period. Howard, *Shawnee!*, 107-108.

⁸³ Lakomäki points to Lawoughgua's speech as evidence of an emergent Shaawanwaki national identity. See Lakomäki, *Gathering Together*, 72-101.

the transcultural experience of being captured and adopted could come into direct conflict with each other, as was the case for Croghan's cousin and trading associate Thomas Smallman and the leader of the so-called Black Boys, James Smith. Others, like Catharine, Croghan's Kanien'kehá:ka partner, were not at Fort Pitt, nor were any of her kin beyond Croghan himself. But the power she held as a matron of her *ohwachira* reverberated through Croghan, and presumably there were other powerful women whose actions also made an impact, but whose archival traces are too faint to be seen. Throughout, the individuals, whether present at the negotiations, awaiting their fate on the other side of the river, or managing domestic affairs back home in the Longhouse, navigated a diplomatic field in which intimacy, kinship, and knowledge of the other generated significant social capital. But deploying that capital came with great risk, and unfortunately for some, not every individual was successful.

While sexual relationships between male British colonists and Indian women were not unheard of, especially among traders such as Croghan, such relationships were more contested in the British colonies than elsewhere in colonial North America.⁸⁴ Even the interracial relationship at the heart of British America's foundational mythology, that of Pocahontas and John Rolfe, caused Rolfe a great deal of anxiety, which Rolfe termed a "private controversy."⁸⁵ Some British colonists, such as the Virginia planter William Byrd, argued that the British should follow in the footsteps of the French and embrace

⁸⁴ Ann McGrath, *Illicit Love: Interracial Sex and Marriage in the United States and Australia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015): 15.

⁸⁵ Richard Godbeer, "Eroticizing the Middle Ground: Anglo-Indian Sexual Relations along the Eighteenth-Century Frontier," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, ed. Martha Hodes (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 91-93.

métissage, while others, such as the trader James Adair, warned that marriages formalized within Indigenous communities, especially those that featured a “wanton female government,” ran the risk of eroding the patriarchal privileges that Adair considered essential to the functioning of a civilized society.⁸⁶

However, while *métissage* was highly contested, there were certainly sectors of the British Empire that found value in such connection. At Fort Pitt, for example, translation duties were handled by Alexander McKee, a man born from the partnership of a white Indian trader, Thomas McKee, and a woman who was at least culturally Shaawanwa. It is known that a woman known as Mary McKee raised Alexander, although it is unknown if she was his biological mother. Mary was likely a captive/adoptee that had been raised since infancy among the Shaawanwa. However, regardless of his parentage, Alexander was raised among the Shaawanwa, spoke their language fluently, and was active in their cultural and ritual life. It is hard to determine the specifics of Alexander McKee’s social and kinship connections among the Shaawanwa as well as others of Indigenous, French, or English descent who were born and lived “within the border.” However, it is equally hard to imagine that McKee did not have a passing familiarity with other agents like Andrew Montour, another translator under Croghan’s employ who was of Canadien and Haudenosaunee descent. Moreover, at least one of his brothers entered the historical record later in the eighteenth-century to sue the Supreme

⁸⁶ Godbeer, “Eroticizing the Middle Ground,” 94, 105.

Court of Pennsylvania—now a commonwealth of the newly independent United States—for lands that had been confiscated when McKee declared his loyalty to the Crown.⁸⁷

While his closeness with the Shaawanwa could have aroused suspicion among the British during Pontiac's War, he was personally close with Croghan and had proven his loyalty through his service to the Crown during the Seven Years' War. Croghan had first employed McKee in 1759 as one of his most trusted assistants as Croghan built out his trade operations at Fort Pitt.⁸⁸ However, Croghan was certainly familiar with McKee prior to employing him, as Croghan had also worked closely with Alexander's father, having employed him as a translator and negotiator both within Croghan's trade empire and as an official agent of the Crown, including during the aforementioned Treaty of Easton.⁸⁹ Thus, it is little surprise that Croghan came to rely on McKee's multicultural fluency as conflict was appearing on the horizon. In a letter dated October 5, 1762, months prior to the ratification of the Treaty of Paris and the formal onset of armed hostilities, Croghan instructed McKee to "proceed to the two [Shaawanwa] towns, as soon as you conveniently can," and "tell them that the reason of our sending you now is that we are surprised that our Brethren the [Shaawanwaki] should be the last Nation delivering up our Flesh and Blood."⁹⁰ Notably, not only was the demand for the returning of "flesh and blood" relatives already in place before the outbreak of Pontiac's War, but clearly Croghan felt little concern with sending a culturally Shaawanwa man to deliver

⁸⁷ Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them*, 24-28.

⁸⁸ Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 176.

⁸⁹ Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them*, 25, 31; Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 130.

⁹⁰ "Instructions of George Croghan to Alexander McKee," in *WJP* vol. X, 546-547.

the message. In addition to trying to secure the return of captive/adoptees, McKee was to investigate the possibility that the French were responsible for fomenting unrest among the Shaawanwa, as Croghan had:

the greatest reason to believe that the French living at the Illinois Country and those residing at our different posts over the Lakes have been endeavoring to poison the minds of several of the Western Nations of Indians in prejudice to his Majesty's subjects and endeavoring to stir up all these nations to murder his Majesty's officers and soldiers now in possession of the several forts given up to his excellency General Amherst.⁹¹

McKee apparently could not uncover any evidence of French collusion, but he did arrive in the Shaawanwa town at the same time as a party of Myaamia [Miami] who were discussing the exchange of war belts and the formalization of a broader alliance in opposition to the British. While the attempt to secure an alliance between Indians of the Illinois Country and the peoples of the Ohio River Valley did not in this moment come to fruition, Croghan continued to be nervous. Shortly after McKee delivered his intelligence, Croghan wrote to General Bouquet, saying, “ I am of the opinion it will not be long before we shall have some broils with them,” even as he “made use of all the arguments [I] was master of and used all the influence [I] had to persuade them that their jealousies and suspicions of us are wrong and ill-grounded but it has not made that impression on their minds which I could wish.”⁹²

Clearly, Croghan’s instincts were correct, as war came to Fort Pitt in June of 1763. Moreover, Croghan’s trust in McKee was equally well-founded. In fact, one

⁹¹ “Instructions of George Croghan to Alexander McKee,” in *WJP*, vol. X, 547.

⁹² Croghan in *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, vol. VI, edited by Louis M. Waddell (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1994), 138 (Hereafter *PHB*.)

observer, knowing that McKee was both culturally Indigenous and loyal to the British, carefully observed his interactions with visiting Indians prior to the siege and used those observations to prepare for the coming violence. Specifically, William Trent, Croghan's business partner, was stationed at Fort Pitt, and, according to his journal, began to become suspicious that war was coming. Word of Pontiac's siege of Detroit had not yet reached Fort Pitt, but British soldiers outside of the fort noticed that Lenape Indians had vacated their villages in the region. The same day, a group of Lenape came into the fort and hastily traded skins in a way that Trent found odd, "their Chief seeming to press Mr. McKee to go down the country and not stay above four days, [which] all gave us more suspicion of the Indian's designs and put the inhabitants upon arming themselves."⁹³

The Lenape visiting looked to McKee as Indigenous, and urged him to escape while he could. Instead, during the siege McKee took up arms and helped defend the post from assault, with the attacking force including Shaawanwa, meaning McKee was willing to shoot at his own people. However, it was equally clear that McKee was able to use his dual identities to navigate the conflict in ways that may have both allowed Fort Pitt to stand against the siege and kept the conflict from escalating further. Specifically, Trent observed that four Shaawanwa called from across the Ohio River asking to speak to McKee specifically. McKee complied, crossed the river, and listened to what the four men had to share. The first victim of the war in the vicinity of Fort Pitt was an Indian trader and associate of Croghan, Colonel William Clapham. This was a cause of alarm for Indian traders, as their business meant that they spent much of their time living in Indian

⁹³ William Trent, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt, 1763," edited by Albert T. Volwiler, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 11, no. 3 (December, 1924): 394.

villages. McKee had sent messages to Indigenous communities urging them to take care of the traders who lived among them, to which the Shaawanwa had come with an response, stating, “we received the messages you sent us on the death of Colonel Clapham and our chiefs desired us to inform you that they will take care of the traders in our towns.”⁹⁴ For the remainder of the conflict, McKee used his transcultural skills to gather intelligence and negotiate with bands of Indians in the region.⁹⁵

But time spent among Indigenous people could also raise suspicions. On April 14, 1764, William Grant, the captain of the 42nd Highland regiment stationed at Fort Pitt, sent the record of a deposition of an Indian trader named Gershom Hicks to Colonel Bouquet. According to Grant, Hicks was “a man about thirty years of age,” who “arrived at Fort Pitt having made his escape from the Indians.”⁹⁶ At first, Grant was notably excited about the prospect of gathering valuable evidence from Hicks, as he spoke “the [Lenape] language very well and also understands the [Shaawanwa] tongue a little, and as the Indians had great confidence in him from his being a prisoner with them once before, and having what he calls friends amongst them, he was therefore trusted with all their

⁹⁴ Trent, “William Trent’s Journal at Fort Pitt,” 399. The record of this exchange does not name the traders nor the specific community from which the Shaawanwa delegates hailed.

⁹⁵ Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them*, 45-49. During one of these interactions between McKee and Lenape leaders, Trent noted that after the Lenape affirmed that “they would hold fast the Chain of Friendship,” that the British “out of regard to them we gave them two blankets and a handkerchief out of the small Pox Hospital. I hope it will have the desired effect.” Trent, “William Trent’s Journal at Fort Pitt,” 400. This is a key piece of evidence in debates over the order to intentionally spread smallpox among Indians through the distributions of infected blankets. See Elizabeth A. Fenn, “Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst,” *The Journal of American History*, 86, no. 4 (March, 2000): 1552-1580. Philip Ranlet, “The British, the Indians, and Smallpox: What Actually Happened at Fort Pitt in 1763?” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 67, no. 3 (Summer, 2000): 427-441. For a broader discussion on rumors of the spread of smallpox in colonial America, see Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 38-62.

⁹⁶ William Grant in *PHB*, vol. VI, 514. Hicks’s report is likewise another important piece of evidence in historiographical debates over the intentional spread of small pox.

secrets and designs.”⁹⁷ Hicks then supplied Grant with information about the numbers of warriors remaining among the peoples of the Ohio River Valley, that they were running low on supplies, that an outbreak of small pox was raging through their villages, and that the Lenape in particular were beginning to urge the Ohio Valley peoples to sue for peace.⁹⁸ However, after giving his testimony, a gunshot was “heard over the Allegheny River and a dog swam across to this side [which] gave reason to believe some party of the enemy was skulking about the fort and which very possibly Hicks might know of.”⁹⁹ Immediately, Grant became suspicious of Hicks and reexamined him, connecting two seemingly unrelated events purely based on assumptions about the power of Indigenous influence on Hicks. Hicks claimed that he was running away from his captors largely because he no longer had faith in their ability to successfully continue their war against the British, but that he was afraid to tell Grant this when he first arrived. He added “that the Indians had their spies upon the river all the way down, to watch the motions of the English, and also at this post.”¹⁰⁰ Grant noted that “Hicks, having now told two different

⁹⁷ Grant in *PHB*, vol. VI, 515.

⁹⁸ Grant in *PHB*, vol. VI, 515-516.

⁹⁹ Grant in *PHB*, vol VI, 522. It is possible that Grant had other information about Hicks, as this was not his first time being recorded in the vicinity. However, the tone of Grant’s examination makes me think that those examining Hicks were unaware of this information, as the information contained in the first encounter should have prompted Grant to arrest Hicks on the spot. William Trent recorded in June of the previous year that an informant, upon finding Fort Cumberland abandoned, encountered “a white man named Hicks and an Indian named Recois who would have burnt the fort had he not persuaded them from it, [and] that Hicks told him that an Indian War was broke out and that he would kill the white people wherever he found them.” Trent, “William Trent’s Journal at Fort Pitt,” 397. The use of the term “skulking” was loaded, as it was a derogatory description of Indigenous warfare. For further discussion on the problems of this term, see Wayne E. Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way: Indigenous Warfare in Eastern North America, 1500-1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2023), 1-34.

¹⁰⁰ Grant in *PHB*, vol VI, 523.

stories, was confined and threatened with death, if he did not divulge everything he knew concerning the Indians and tell the whole truth.”

It would seem that the main difference between the two stories was whether Hicks’s running away from the Lenape was an act of bravery or less-than-honorable opportunism. However, while the basis of Grant’s suspicions may have been dubious, when examined under duress, Hicks seemingly affirmed those suspicions. Under oath, Hicks admitted to going into Pennsylvania “with seven Delaware Indians to go to war down to the frontier inhabitants, that they passed all the English forts at a distance, and came first in upon Shearmans Valley, where they murdered and scalped at a plantation one James Evans and his wife, and brought of prisoners two boys; their children about 8 and 12 years of age.”¹⁰¹ Hicks then claimed that his party convinced him “to come in here, as if he had made his escape from the Indians, and to inquire and find out what provisions, ammuniton, and troops was in this fort, and what parties were sent out, and what guards were kept, etc.”¹⁰² He then added that “the [Lenape], [Shaawanwa], [Wendat], and [Odawa] purposed to come to their post, with their chiefs under pretense to hold a council in the fort this May, and that if they were admitted they would endeavor to surprise the garrison and murder them all; that they were not inclined to peace and if this scheme miscarried they would then do the best they could, and fight til the English drove them beyond the Lakes and down the Mississippi.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ “W. Grant: Reexamination of Hicks, April 19, 1764,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 523.

¹⁰² “W. Grant: Reexamination of Hicks, April 19, 1764,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 523.

¹⁰³ “W. Grant: Reexamination of Hicks, April 19, 1764,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 525.

There simply is not enough evidence to definitely confirm if Grant's suspicions about Hicks's lack of trustworthiness were well founded, although clearly Hicks was either lying when he first arrived or making up an even more scandalous story while being interrogated by military authorities. Regardless, Grant's suspicions were further bolstered when, later that fall, Henry Bouquet noted that representatives from a party of Lenape came to Fort Pitt, having:

heard from some of the Six Nations Indians that they had made peace for them with Colonel Bradstreet, and they came to know from us whether it was so. Their intentions appearing very suspicious, as they had neither belts nor message to deliver, Colonel Reid desired [a Lenape representative] would send for the rest of his party, which he did, but only two more came in, and at last a third, who proved to be a white man and a brother of Hicks, who has been reported to you.¹⁰⁴

The white brother mentioned was named Levi, and both Hicks brothers were then detained at Fort Pitt until they were turned over to the Pennsylvania government to be tried.¹⁰⁵

Whether Gershom's confession was also reliable intelligence about the tactics of the Lenape, Shaawanwa, and Ohio Onödowá'ga is hard to determine—his addition of the Wendat and Odawa within the plan seems particularly far-fetched. Regardless, by the end of 1764, Bouquet successfully led a campaign to the Tuscarawas River in the Ohio Country, prompting to the Ohio Indians to sue for peace—the details of which Croghan was negotiating at Fort Pitt. And considering that captive/adoptees were actively returned during those negotiations, it would seem that if there ever was a plan to use the proposal

¹⁰⁴ "Colonel Henry Bouquet to General Thomas Gage, September 26, 1764," in *PHB*, vol. VI, 646.

¹⁰⁵ "Colonel Henry Bouquet to General Thomas Gage, November 15, 1764," in *PHB*, vol. VI 705.

of a peace conference as a Trojan Horse to gain access to Fort Pitt, that plan was certainly abandoned by 1765.

However, while it may prove impossible to understand the specifics of Gershom Hicks's motivations, it would seem that he was attempting to navigate a cultural field in which he struggled to retain agency. Unlike someone like Croghan, who navigated this field with aplomb, leveraging his understanding of diverse cultures to his own personal advantage, Hicks seems to have botched it. As historian Gregory Evans Dowd notes, the spreading of rumors, especially rumors about Native American martial power and the spread of disease, came with significant social capital in the colonial world.¹⁰⁶ Whether intentionally or through an instinctive feel for the game of transcultural intimacy, perhaps Hicks was trying to spin his connections and understanding of the Lenape into some modicum of power as he navigated the front lines war. Regardless of his goals, surely ending up in shackles was not the desired result, and as such, unfortunately for both Hicks brothers, their designs failed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Dowd, *Groundless*, 1-14.

¹⁰⁷ There is a dearth of details with which to trace the lives of either Hicks brother after their arrest. But by the American Revolution, Gershom's familiarity with the Lenape language made him valuable to the Continental Army, and he was deployed as a spy by General George Washington in 1779, with Washington offering a passport to Hicks that read, "This will serve as passport for Gershem [sp] Hicks, who may appear in Indian Dress, & the Officers commanding will receive him." Upon receipt of the passport, Colonel Zebulon Butler, who commanded the garrison at Wyoming, Pennsylvania, wrote that the next officer should "take into his care Gershom Hicks, who is not to be examined or searched until he goes before his Excellency Gen. Washington. I inclose you his Excellency's letter. Be careful that your people, who are out on duty, or fatigue, receive Hicks, who may appear painted, and in a canoe." "From George Washington to Colonel Zebulon Butler, Major Barnet Eichelberger and the Commanding Officer at Fort Wallis, Pa., 1 March 1779," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-19-02-0321>. Hicks would return with intelligence about the poor provisioning of British troops and their Indigenous allies at Chemung, New York. To George Washington from William Patterson, 3 April 1779," *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-19-02-0682>.

While the experience of the Hicks brothers exposes the way transcultural intimacy had complicated and varying consequences, it does not appear that either had a direct impact on Croghan's work at Fort Pitt. However, two adult men captured by Indigenous peoples who leveraged their experiences in nearly opposite ways came into confrontation with one another in such a way as to nearly derail Croghan's efforts altogether. Specifically, the Indian trader—and Croghan's cousin—Thomas Smallman immediately returned to business after being returned by the Shaawanwa to Bouquet at Tuscarawas, and used his experiences and claims of insider knowledge to advance his work within the small network of European Indian agents and their superiors. It was he who supplied the enormous quantity of trade goods that were to be given to the Indian delegations at Fort Pitt, purchased by the Crown in a deal negotiated with a heavy dose of nepotism by Croghan. However, that train of goods, shipped from Smallman's base of operations in Philadelphia, never reached Fort Pitt because it was intercepted by another former captive and settler from Western Pennsylvania, James Smith, the leader of the so-called Black Boys. Smith was likewise responding to his experiences both as a veteran of war with Indians and as an individual forcibly adopted by the Kanien'kehá:ka. Their actions cannot be understood without accounting for their time spent as captives, and thus, like the other transcultural intimate connections, these experiences profoundly impacted the course of the proceedings at Fort Pitt.

Indian traders, such as Croghan and Smallman, consistently operated on a razor's edge between success and ruin. Most Indian traders were facilitating transactions that required enormous quantities of goods to be acquired through a line of credit offered

either by a private backer or by the Crown itself. In a petition sent to the King on behalf of “the Suffering Traders of 1754,” Croghan outlined the relationship clearly, offering “that your petitioners have, for several years past, imported here from Great Britain, large quantities of manufactures and other goods suitable to...the Indian trade and sold them on credit amongst the Indian traders in the back parts whom they employed to go and trade therewith, amongst the numerous tribes of Indians in alliance with the English.”¹⁰⁸ This relationship was highly profitable, both to the trader and the Crown, when operating smoothly. Trade goods were considered the foundation of good relations between individual Indigenous communities and their neighbors, and as such the Crown was wise to support the flow of goods. But there was also a heavy profit to be made for the trader who was literally willing to risk life and limb to negotiate these trades. Unfortunately for them, however, negotiating such trade also put traders on the front lines, and they often fell victim to violent capture when negotiations went sideways. Even before the formal onset of the Seven Years’ War turned the Ohio Country into a front of global war, traders were regularly captured as the French and British competed for the lucrative Indian trade. The onset of formal conflict merely escalated the risk, especially for British traders who did not have the support of garrisoned forts west of the Appalachian Mountains as the French did.¹⁰⁹ Not only did capture expose traders to violence and the risk of injury or death, but also financial ruin. Again, as Croghan notes in his petition:

¹⁰⁸ “Petition of the ‘Suffering Traders of 1754,’” in *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753-1817, being primarily papers of the “Suffering traders” of Pennsylvania*, ed. Kenneth P. Bailey (Argata, CA: Sons of the Revolution Library, 1947), 34. The relationship between trade and government support and how its relationship to diplomacy impacted perceptions of French involvement in Pontiac’s War will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ian K. Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free: Capture, Adjustment, and Recollection in Allegheny Country* (Montreal: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2013), 33-53.

that besides the loss of the great quantities of goods of which our Indian traders are plundered and robbed, the French have, by seizing and possessing all that fine Country on the Ohio...ruined and cut off all our trade and intercourse with these Indians, whereby the great debts owing amongst them to our Indian traders are entirely lost, and they are thereby rendered unable to pay...the large sum owing for the goods.¹¹⁰

It is thus perhaps unsurprising that of the sixty-eight Indian traders returned during the negotiations at the conclusion of Pontiac's War, few returned to the business. However, those like Smallman who did continue to ply their trade were able to leverage their time spent in Indian Country as experts, as they had, whether willingly or not, received an immersive education in Indigenous language, customs, and diplomacy.¹¹¹

Smallman himself was captured while journeying to Detroit to conduct business. He was named on a list of captured traders attached to the records of a court of inquiry overseen by Colonel Bouquet on September 3, 1763, following the scalping of Colonel William Clapham.¹¹² Croghan's half-brother, Captain Edward Ward, wrote to Sir William Johnson from Carlisle, Pennsylvania on May 2 the following year, pleading for Johnson's support in finding his cousin, as he "received a letter from Lieutenant Hutchins from Fort Pitt" in which "he informs me that a few days ago, one Hicks [a renegade and traitor] came into Fort Pitt from the Indians who informs him that for certain my cousin Major Thomas Smallman is a prisoner with the [Shaawanwa]...I would beg as the greatest favor ever done my brother or me that you would please send some of the Five Nations to make

¹¹⁰ "Petition of the 'Suffering Traders of 1754,'" in *The Ohio Company Papers*, 35.

¹¹¹ Steele, *Setting all the Captives Free*, 376-377.

¹¹² "Court Inquiry Re: Clapham's Estate," in *PHB*, vol. VI, 406-413. Clapham was one of the first people killed in Pennsylvania at the onset of Pontiac's War, as his trading post was raided just prior to the siege of Fort Pitt.

inquiry for my poor cousin and if possible, for them to bring him to you.¹¹³ While Ward was unsuccessful, it seems that Smallman made good use of his time among the Shaawanwa, as they apparently trusted him enough to use him as an envoy to the British. In negotiations at Lake Erie on August 14, 1764, Colonel John Bradstreet noted that he was surprised that the Shaawanwa were eager for peace “so soon after... causing an impertinent letter to be wrote as that you sent by Smallman to Fort Pitt.”¹¹⁴ A letter was again referenced later by Bouquet as he delivered formal speeches at Tuscarawas on October 20, 1764, stating, “you have consistently declared you never would make peace with the English, and when the [Onödowá’ga], and all the Western Indians have submitted, and humbly begged for peace, you alone, have pretended to stand out, declaring that you despised all the efforts we could make against you, as appears in that insolent letter which you obliged Thomas Smallman to write and sent to Sir William Johnson at Niagara.”¹¹⁵

However, while the tone of British officers seemed to indicate that Smallman was being misused, the Shaawanwaki who discussed his fate spoke with a different tone. Miskapalathy, or Red Hawk, a *neenawtooma*, informed his “brother” Bouquet at

¹¹³ Quotation found in Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail; or, The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*, vol. II, (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1911), 29. It is intriguing that Ward makes mention of Hicks. It is certainly possible that this information was provided by Hicks, but it does not appear in either examination recorded by William Grant and sent to Colonel Bouquet. The first examination notes that “Hicks says he thinks that with the [Lenape] and [Shawaanwa] he has seen about 50 or 60 white prisoners most of which are women and young persons,” while the second examination includes discussion of Hicks witnessing a conversation between Shaawanwa warriors who presented scalps as being from two British soldiers, but these were purportedly taken in Western Pennsylvania. Again, see the above discussion about the power of rumor.

¹¹⁴ “Bradstreet: Indian Treaty,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 604.

¹¹⁵ “Bouquet: Speech to Delawares, Shawnees, and Ohio Senecas,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 673. At present, the contents of these letters cannot be found. I am unsure if they are referencing the same letter, copied and sent to two different places or if two separate letters were composed with one sent to Fort Pitt and one sent to Sir William Johnson.

Tuscarawas that “we the [Shaawanwaki] have thought proper to send our friend Mr. Smallman to acquaint you of our arrival at this place and have, according to your desire, brought with us a great number of your Flesh and Blood, which should have been given up to you before now had we not heard some evil reports that you had some bad designs against us.” He continued, “we now dispatch the Bearer [Smallman] with one of our young men to know the truth of it and upon your invitation of writing, proceed with all the prisoners to your camp. We, the [Shaawanwaki], are come with no other intent than to see you and ratify and confirm our ancient friendship and to make an everlasting peace with you our Brothers.”¹¹⁶ While Miskapalathy’s trust in Smallman did not go so far as to send Smallman as an envoy alone, clearly he saw in the captured trader an individual with a unique skillset capable of helping smooth over what had been a rocky series of communications between the Shaawanwa and the British.¹¹⁷

Upon his return, Smallman, through his attorney and Croghan’s financial partner, William Trent, petitioned Sir William Johnson for restitution, along with other traders who had lost goods during the war. Smallman listed his losses at £3085.10, nearly

¹¹⁶ Miskapalathy in “Red Hawk to Bouquet,” in *PHB*, vol. VI, 687. Miskapalathy’s name is spelled Mesquapamesque in the original.

¹¹⁷ There were differing reports over what specifically was making negotiations challenging. As was the case at Fort Pitt, British authorities were impatient with the speed by which the Shaawanwa returned captive/adoptees. William Smith wrote of the return of Smallman in his *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians*, noting that Smallman explained upon his return that many of the captive/adoptees attached to Shaawanwa leaders were on a trade mission with French traders and would be returned at a later date. William Smith, *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, 1765), 20. It is also possible that the “bad designs” Miskapalathy mentioned amounted to being accused of stealing horses and murdering a British soldier, although elsewhere it is clear that Bouquet came to believe that an Onödowá’ga had stolen the horses and a Lenape had murdered the soldier.

\$670,000 dollars by today's standards.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately for Smallman and the other traders Trent represented, they were never compensated, despite Croghan traveling to London himself to plead his case to Crown authorities just prior to the proceedings at Fort Pitt. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that upon his return, Croghan tried to help his cousin, now rebuilding his own trading business, by purchasing £2,650, or around \$575,000, worth of goods from Smallman using Crown funds. While Croghan certainly could have been making a sincere attempt to help his cousin get back on his feet, it was also likely that Croghan was using Smallman as a front to help purchase goods for official business while hiding his own investment, as Croghan was poised to pocket any profit that might have been made upon the reopening of trade, despite a prohibition on private gains by Indian agents.¹¹⁹

Smallman seems to have navigated captivity without too much hardship. Perhaps Alexander McKee's communications from Fort Pitt to his associates in Indian Country were heeded. What is clear is that Smallman was certainly eager to get back to business. Perhaps it was because he saw an opportunity for a European-descended trader who was seen as a "friend" by Indigenous peoples at a time when the violence between Indigenous nations and the British was becoming increasingly racialized. Or maybe it was a simple numbers game, as Smallman realized that the only way to get out of debt was to get back to business, as it appeared that the Crown was not going to bail him out for the goods he

¹¹⁸ Converting historical currency into current values is more of an art than a science. The number above should therefore be seen as an estimation designed to emphasize the enormity of Smallman's losses. For conversion, I used Eric W. Nye, *Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency*, accessed Wednesday, August 02, 2023, <https://www.uwo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>.

¹¹⁹ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 214.

lost at Detroit. Regardless, Smallman earned a significant sum by supplying goods for negotiations at Fort Pitt. Unfortunately for Croghan, who was now on the hook for their cost, it was not Indian capture that would lead to another significant financial loss, but an act of vengeance from a man formerly captured by Indians.

James Smith began working for his brother-in-law when he was eighteen years old, cutting a new wagon road from Fort Loudon to Braddock's Road in Western Pennsylvania. While he was attempting to expedite some supply wagons, he was captured by a party of Lenape and thus began his four years as a captive/adoptee among the Kanien'kehá:ka. Much more is known about his time as a member of Kanien'kehá:ka society, in large part because he published his captivity narrative. However, while this detailed narrative is valuable for reconstructing his motivations, it also comes with the risk of distorting his experiences. As Pauline Strong notes, the "captivity narrative" as a colonial literary genre was what Raymond Williams called a "hegemonic tradition," in which what was perceived was shaped by a colonial mindset, in this case the assumption that "savages" behaved "savagely" and were thus outside of the bounds of civilization. As such, captivity narratives dull the complexity of the experience of being captured and adopted and instead seek to reconcile the reality of what is experienced with the hegemonic representations European-descended captive/adoptees were expected to experience.¹²⁰ As such, Smith's recollections should not be seen as neutral observations but instead as a view through a colonial lens.

¹²⁰ Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 1-18. For more on the gender and racial politics of captivity narratives, see June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 1-112.

Smith was honest about his initial confusion upon being captured. After being brought to Fort Duquesne, he was made to run the gauntlet, and it was clear that he was unaware of the practice. As he recalled:

they formed themselves into two long ranks, about two or three rods apart. I was told by an Indian that could speak English that I must run betwixt these ranks, and that they would flog me all the way as I ran; and if I ran quick, it would be so much the better, as they would quit when I got to the end of the ranks. There appeared to be a general rejoicing around me, yet I could find nothing like joy in my breast.¹²¹

Upon running he fell and yet the flogging continued, and he recalled that “before I lost my senses I remember my wishing them to strike the fatal blow, for I thought they intended killing me but apprehended they were too long about it.”¹²² He was then knocked unconscious, as the next thing he remembered was “being in the fort amidst the French and Indians, and a French doctor standing by me, who had opened a vein in my left arm: after which the interpreter asked me how I did. I told him I felt much pain.”¹²³ Smith spent a few days in the fort being subjected to occasional interrogations about the movements of the British troops under General Braddock’s command. Smith claimed to have exaggerated about the nature of Pennsylvania road-cutters joining Braddock’s column in order to protect them, as Smith stated, “I told them the truth, that there were three hundred. The next question was, were they well armed? I told them they were all well armed (meaning the arm of flesh), for they had only about thirty guns among the whole of them; which if the Indians had known they would certainly have gone and cut

¹²¹ James Smith in *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith* (Lexington, KY: John Bradford, 1799), 8-9.

¹²² Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 9.

¹²³ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 9.

them all off; therefore I could not in conscience let them know the defenseless situation of these road-cutters.”¹²⁴ While his exaggeration may have spared a few lives, it did not turn the tide of the forthcoming battle, as, despite Smith’s “high hopes that [he] would soon see them fly before the British troops and that General Braddock would take the fort and rescue [him],” he instead witnessed the French bringing in the spoils from Braddock’s defeat, as he “saw Braddock’s artillery brought into the fort” along with “several Indians in British officers’ dress, with sash, half-moon, laced hats, etc.”¹²⁵

Smith soon recovered from the injuries he suffered running the gauntlet, and he was taken to the predominately Mohican village of Tullihass, up the Allegheny River. As he began the process of being adopted, Smith was again presented with cultural practices that he did not understand. Smith recalled that upon arriving in the town, “a number of Indians collected about me and began to pull the hair out of my head...as if he had been plucking a turkey, until he had all the hair clean out of my head, except a small spot about three or four inches square.” Next they:

bored my nose and ears, and fixed me off with earrings and nose jewels; then they ordered me to strip off my clothes and put on a breech-clout, which I did; they then painted my head, face, and body in various colors. They put a large belt of wampum on my neck, and silver bands on my hands and right arm; and so an old chief led me out in the street, and gave the alarm halloo, *coo-wigh*, several times repeated quick; and on this, all that were in the town came running and stood round the old chief, who held me by the hand in the midst. As I at that time knew nothing of their mode of adoption, and had seen them put to death all they had taken, and as I never could find that they saved a man alive at Braddock's defeat, I made no doubt but they were about putting me to death in some cruel manner.

¹²⁴ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 10.

¹²⁵ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 11-13.



Figure 2.1: Depiction of James Smith being submersed in water as appeared in the reproduction of his narrative in Joseph Pritts, *Mirror of Olden Time Border Life* (Lancaster, PA: G. Hills, 1841), 16.

After a speech from the chief that Smith did not understand, a group of women “then made signs for me to plunge myself into the water but I did not understand them; I thought that the result of the council was that I should be drowned and that these young ladies were my executioners.” But after one of the women who knew some English assured Smith that he was not being harmed, “on this I gave myself up to their ladyships who were as good as their word, for though they plunged me under water, and washed and rubbed me severely, yet I could not say they hurt me much.” [Figure 2.1] He was then outfitted in new clothes and presented to the community. This presentation was translated for him, in which the chief told him:

My son, you are now flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. By the ceremony which was performed this day, every drop of white blood was washed out of your veins, you are taken into the Caughnewago nation [a division of the Kanien'kehá:ka] and initiated into a warlike tribe; you are adopted into a great family, and now received with great seriousness and solemnity in the room and place of a great man. After what has passed this day, you are now one of us by an old strong law and custom. My son, you have now nothing to fear—we are now under the same obligations to love, support, and defend you that we are to love and to defend one another; therefore, you are to consider yourself as one of our people.¹²⁶

At this point, Smith was quick to interject for his readers, and it is in this moment one can see the way in which Smith navigated the hegemonic tradition that shaped the captive experience of Europeans in colonial America. As he stated, “at this time I did not believe this fine speech, especially that of the white blood being washed out of me; but since that time I have found out that there was much sincerity in said speech; for, from that day, I never knew them to make any distinction between me and themselves in any respect whatever until I left them. If they had plenty of clothing, I had plenty; if we were scarce, we all shared one fate.¹²⁷ Seemingly, Smith had developed an appreciation for the care he was provided by his adoptive family. However, throughout the rest of his recollections, he maintained the detached view of a captive, as opposed to the view of an

¹²⁶ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 14-17. It is important to be mindful here about the way in which Smith was writing within a hegemonic tradition, especially in regard to the role of young women within the adoption process. As Rayna Green observes, since colonialism's onset in North America, European observers have had what she terms a “Pocahontas Perplex,” in which the observer works through the tensions between what is perceived as “noble” and “savage” among Indigenous people using an equally oppositional virgin/whore dialectic, sexualizing the purity of young Indigenous women while emphasizing the savagery of older Indian women, derogatorily termed “squaws.” This was especially true of those Indigenous women who had sexual relationships with white men, a dynamic that will be explored more below. While the sexualization of John Smith's rescue by Pocahontas is much more explicit, the way James Smith described the youth of his captors and his physical contact with women during his adoption clearly contains echoes of the Pocahontas Perplex. Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture,” *The Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (Autumn, 1975): 698-714. June Namias likewise names this moment in Smith's account as a moment in which a male captive works through his anxieties about a racialized sexual boundary, a recurring motif within male captivity narratives. Namias, *White Captives*, 92-93.

¹²⁷ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 17.

insider within the community. While he would refer to Tontileaugo as his “adopted brother,” he spoke with disdain about the Kanien’kehá:ka approach to governance. At one point, the men of his winter encampment “held a council and concluded that they must have horses to carry their loads, and that they would go to war even in this inclement season in order to bring in horses.” Tontileaugo was eager to prove his bravery “but the votes went against him as he was one of our best hunters,” and therefore had to remain to make sure that the encampment was fed. The council continued and “they then began to go through their common ceremony. They sung their war songs danced their war dances, etc... Our camp appeared to be rejoicing, but I was grieved to think that some innocent persons would be murdered not thinking of danger.”¹²⁸ At another point Smith was observed laughing during a ceremony by an elder named Tecaughretanego, for which Tecaughretanego admonished Smith, saying:

Brother, I have somewhat to say to you, and I hope you will not be offended when I tell you of your faults. You know that when you were reading your books in town I would not let the boys or any one disturb you; but now, when I was praying, I saw you laughing. I do not think that you look upon praying as a foolish thing; I believe you pray yourself. But perhaps you may think my mode or manner of praying foolish; if so, you ought in a friendly manner to instruct me, and not make sport of sacred things.¹²⁹

Moreover, when it came time for Smith to recount his escape and return to settler society, he told the story devoid of emotion, despite the years spent among the Kanien’kehá:ka, merely that while hunting in the vicinity of Montreal, he “heard of a French ship... that had English prisoners on board, in order to carry them over sea and exchange them. I

¹²⁸ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 32

¹²⁹ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 97-98.

went privately off from the Indians, and got also on board.” Smith then stayed in a French prison in Montreal until he was exchanged.¹³⁰

One lesson that Smith appeared to have learned from his time among the Kanien’kehá:ka, however, was the best means to fight them. Upon returning to Western Pennsylvania, Smith was appointed captain of a privately-funded company of rangers. Smith next chose who would serve directly under him, noting that:

I chose two of the most active young men that I could find, who had also been long in captivity with the Indians. As we enlisted our men, we dressed them uniformly in the Indian manner, with breech-clouts, leggings, moccasins, and green shrouds, which we wore in the same manner that the Indians do, and nearly as the Highlanders wear their plaids. In place of hats we wore red handkerchiefs, and painted our faces red and black, like Indian warriors. I taught them the Indian discipline, as I knew of no other at that time which would answer the purpose much better than the British.¹³¹

As historian Philip J. Deloria [Standing Rock Sioux] notes, the very act of “playing Indian” was (and continues to be) a way of manifesting and making real the imagined Indian while also reconciling oneself with the anxiety caused by racialized difference.¹³² Specifically, Smith perceived himself as existing in a time and space that was on the frontlines of a racialized conflict, and yet his lived experience divided him across both sides of that frontline. While, by his own accord, the Kanien’kehá:ka who adopted him no longer looked upon him as distinct, he never stopped racializing the differences between him and his adoptive kin. By playing Indian, Smith was able to reconcile his

¹³⁰ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 105.

¹³¹ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 106-107.

¹³² Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 6-7.

“Indianness,” a quality that he did not admire about himself, by turning it into a costume, and thus something that he could remove and put back on as he desired.

Because of their propensity for costumed Indian play, Smith’s rangers came to be known as the “Black Boys,” and they took it upon themselves to not only provide defense to the settlers of Western Pennsylvania, especially as Pennsylvania “was then a Quaker government, and at the first of [Pontiac’s] War the frontiers received no assistance from the state,”¹³³ but also, as historian Patrick Spero argues, to reject the British plans “to incorporate trade and good relations with Indians into their plans for the empire’s future,” as “colonists in war-torn regions felt there could be no peace with Native Americans.”¹³⁴ Rather than give him a sensitivity to Indian ways, his experiences of intimate contact with the Kanien’kehá:ka drove Smith to reject any notion of peaceful coexistence. It is therefore little surprise that upon hearing that such a large wagon train of goods—including large quantities of munitions—was headed to Fort Pitt in order to facilitate the reopening of Indian trade, Smith rallied his men. They first implored the traders to abandon their mission in light of what Smith’s associates said was “the great danger the frontier inhabitants would be exposed to if the Indians should get a supply... as it was well known that they had scarcely any ammunition and were almost naked. To supply them now would be a kind of murder and would be illegally trading at the expense of the

¹³³ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 106.

¹³⁴ Patrick Spero, *Frontier Rebels: The Fight for Independence in the American West, 1765-1776* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2018), xxi. See also Patrick Spero, *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); and Jay Donis, “The Black Boys and Blurred Lines: Reshaping Authority on the Pennsylvania Frontier,” *Journal of Early American History* 6, no. 1 (2016): 68-93.

blood and treasure of the frontier.”¹³⁵ The traders laughed off the pleas, at which point Smith and his men “blackened and painted” themselves and hid behind trees further along the road and awaited the passing of the wagons. Using staggered loading techniques to keep “a constant flow fire upon them from front to rear,” the rangers opened fire on the train, at which point the Black Boys “heard nothing of these trader’s merriment.... When they saw their packhorses falling close by them, they called out ‘pray gentlemen, what would you have us do?’ The reply was ‘collect all your loads to the front, and unload them in one place; take your private property and immediately retire.’ When they were gone, we burnt what they left which consisted of blankets, shirts, vermilion, lead, beads, wampum, tomahawks, scalping knives, etc.”¹³⁶ With that, the wagon train, purchased from former captive/adoptee Thomas Smallman by George Croghan with Crown funds was destroyed at the hands of another former captive/adoptee, James Smith.

Despite Croghan’s reputation, there are but faint archival traces of his partner Catharine. She was the daughter of the powerful Kanien’kehá:ka sachem, Nickus Peters Karaghiagdatie, and sister of the sachem Johannes.¹³⁷ The couple had a daughter named Catharine Adonwentishon, who is much easier to trace as she later married the famed

¹³⁵ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 109.

¹³⁶ Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences*, 109-110.

¹³⁷ Nickus is often listed in the archive as a sachem of the *okwaho* or Wolf clan. As Barbara Siversten notes, by the early eighteenth century, the influence of colonialism and Christianity had caused Haudenosaunee men to increasingly pass on names from father to son, especially when recorded in baptismal records, yet this had not yet changed the way sachemships were passed down, as they continued to be reckoned through the matrilineal clan system. As such, Nickus’ name Karaghiagdatie is not one of the three sachem names of the *okwaho*, however it is possible that he was a sachem as outlined above. There is likewise no record of Nickus’ mother’s name, and his two brothers mentioned below had a different mother, Canastasi Koaroni, who was a matron of the *ohkwari* or Bear clan. It is also possible that those writing about Nickus did not understand the distinction between sachems and Pine Tree chiefs, who were merit chiefs. However, most scholars seem to accept that Nickus was indeed a sachem. See Siversten, *Turtles, Wolves, and Bears*, 85, 146. Hendrick is one of the subjects of: Eric Hinderaker, *The Two Hendricks: Unraveling a Mohawk Mystery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 159-160.

Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant, becoming his third wife. That being said, framing either Catharine in terms of their relationships with men runs the risk of accepting their obscure position in the archive at face value. Within the matrilineal society of the Kanien'kehá:ka, several men more familiar in the twenty-first century actually derived their power from their associations with these women, as both women were matrons of their *ohwachira* and were thus the caretaker of the name *Tehkarihoken*, which was the name of the most senior sachemship among the Kanien'kehá:ka, and thus held considerable political and social authority. As outlined above, matrons were tasked with choosing a successor upon the death of its previous male owner. In 1830, Croghan's daughter conferred the title on her son John Brant.¹³⁸ And perhaps most importantly, by partnering with Croghan, the elder Catharine brought her lover into an equally intimate political relationship with many of the most powerful leaders among the Kanien'kehá:ka and the rest of the Haudenosaunee.

It would be dangerous to speculate too much about Catharine's motivations, but it does seem that her sexual partnerships were consistently political. In 1754, Nickus and his two half-brothers, Hendrick and Abraham, were listed as chiefs from the Kanien'kehá:ka settlement of Canajoharie by Indian trader John Henry Lydius at the famed Albany Congress. The brothers had had easy dealings with Sir William Johnson, but they were beginning to doubt the value of their previous loyalty to the British amidst

¹³⁸ Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 274-275, 277-279, 658. Wm. C. Bryant, "Joseph Brant, Thayendanegea, and His Posterity," *The American Historical Record* 2, no. 19 (July 1873), 290, 292, 295-296. Bryant, in preparing his article, met with Catharine Croghan's granddaughter, who, according to Bryant, "wore a gold locket containing an exquisite miniature likeness of her father painted in London. This, she said, was the most faithful likeness of Capt. Brant extant."

increasing Anglo-French tensions. Johnson already had less trust in Nickus than his other two brothers, in large part because Nickus's daughter Catharine's first partnership was with a French Indian. However, adding to this distrust was Nickus's time in close proximity with the French.¹³⁹ In the midst of King George's War, Nickus was captured by the French, and despite the normal exchange of prisoners that came at the end hostilities, Nickus, as an Indian, was not considered a British combatant and was therefore not returned. While he was eventually ransomed, upon his return, Nickus recounted stories from his captivity that caused great alarm among the three brothers. While in custody, Nickus was apparently shown evidence by the French of British designs to use the war between the two empires as a ruse to trap the Indians of the region and then join forces to destroy them. It took three days of meetings with the brothers for Johnson to convince them that the plot was an intentional lie designed by the French to pull the Kanien'kehá:ka away from the British.¹⁴⁰ As such, Johnson already preferred to deal with Hendrick and Abraham, but now it appeared that he might be losing all three. However, this changed once Catharine formed her partnership with Croghan in 1757.¹⁴¹ One can only speculate as to the degree to which Catharine was the architect of this particular political pairing. However, clearly, as a matron and inheritor of the most powerful name

¹³⁹ While it would be a stretch to claim that Nickus's relatively short time as a prisoner of war constituted an intimate connection with the French, in large part because the French certainly did not have a cultural apparatus for adopting Indian captives that paralleled Indigenous captive/adoption practices, it is interesting the way Nickus's experiences of captivity raised suspicions in ways similar to those outlined above.

¹⁴⁰ Hinderaker, *The Two Hendricks*, 199-204.

¹⁴¹ Siversten, *Turtles, Wolves, and Bears*, 141, 172. Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 138.

in Kanien'kehá:ka governance, her sexual partnerships had significant political implications.

Regardless, it did not take long for this relationship to start shaping the course of transcultural diplomacy between the British and Indigenous nations. A mere year later at the 1758 Treaty of Easton, the Lenape diplomat Teedyuscung butted heads with Croghan. Teedyuscung wanted to draw the Lenape closer to Quaker representatives while Croghan advocated for the preferential relationship between British imperial officials and the Six Nations. As Nickus rose to speak at the deliberations, an observer commented that Nickus was “Croghan’s father-in-law, and him ’tis thought Croghan now makes use of to raise disturbance among the Indians, as he found himself baffled in his other scheme. He could not prejudice Teedyuscung and set him against the People of the Province [the Quakers]; he therefore now labors to set the Indians against him by the same methods, I suppose, that he attempted the former.”¹⁴² It is here that one can see both the influence Croghan derived from his own sexuality as well as the ways in which his sexuality began to exert an influence on North American colonial international politics. If Johnson had helped facilitate the partnership between Catharine and Croghan as a way of helping to secure his diplomatic relationship with Nickus and his brothers, it certainly worked. Moreover, this partnership established a consistent pattern of preferential treatment offered by Croghan towards the Haudenosaunee, as he oversaw a similar diplomatic maneuver at

¹⁴² Charles Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians* (London: J. Wilkie, 1759): 178.

Fort Pitt, where the Onödowá'ga Kyashuta was instrumental in bringing Lawoughgua and the Lenape Custaloga into alignment with British interests.¹⁴³

However, one must be careful not to overemphasize the white/red binary nature of transcultural sexuality and its political implications. Transcultural sexuality was also a powerful tool for crossing cultural differences between different Indigenous groups as well. Johnson, so powerfully connected to the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, saw transcultural sexuality as the glue that bound the diverse peoples of the Ohio Valley together. More importantly, from Johnson's perspective at least, it is what drew many Onödowá'ga communities away from the proverbial Longhouse of the Haudenosaunee and into alliance with the Shaawanwa and Lenape. In 1764, Johnson continued to work from his home, strategically located in the heart of Iroquoia and deeply connected to the Haudenosaunee kinscape, to strengthen the Covenant Chain and simultaneously split the Ohio Valley alliance. Writing to Thomas Gage on November 8, 1764, Johnson lamented the powerful role that the Onödowá'ga played in the hostilities, stating, "The [Onödowá'ga] during their continuance of hostilities sent many belts (at least 12 or 14) to the several nations extending to the Illinois, etc., to induce them to make war upon the English, to which I apprehend they required but little encouragement."¹⁴⁴ However, through negotiations, Johnson had grown confident that he had secured peace with the Onödowá'ga peoples who still resided within their traditional territories in Iroquoia. What Johnson could not yet accomplish was to bring back into the Covenant Chain those

¹⁴³ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 11-19.

¹⁴⁴ "Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, November 8, 1764," in *WJP*, vol. XI, 399.

Onödowá'ga who resided in the Ohio River Valley.¹⁴⁵ As Johnson stated, “the [Onödowá'ga] of Ohio, etc., who have resided in that quarter for some generations... are fast friends to the [Shaawanwa] and [Lenape] by intermarriage, etc. These [Onödowá'ga] have not included themselves in the treaty with me, and have...continued to act against us ever since, the [Onödowá'ga] here having no more influence or authority over them.”¹⁴⁶ Moreover, citing both negotiations with Colonel John Bradstreet at Presque Isle the previous August and speeches delivered at the Shaawanwa community Chillicothe along the Scioto River—commonly known as the “Lower Shawnee Town” to the British—Johnson came to believe that the Ohio Onödowá'ga “seem to direct the whole,” meaning that Ohio Valley alliance of Shaawanwa, Lenape, and Ohio Onödowá'ga, and “that they speak for all the nations in them parts and are sincere.” Johnson concluded by reminding Gage that those without experience in Indigenous politics might mistakenly see the actions of the Ohio contingent as representative of all the Onödowá'ga, but that they should be seen as fully separate political entities.¹⁴⁷

More is known about the interracial intimacies of Croghan's superior, Sir William Johnson. In fact, it would appear that Johnson was Croghan's patron and role model in more ways than one. He appeared as a character in the “novel of circulation” *Chrysal: or, the Adventures of a Guinea*, in which he was imagined as the head of an exotic brown harem, proclaiming that he would never abandon his countless, doting Indian lovers for

¹⁴⁵ This body of largely Onödowá'ga emigrants (although other Iroquoian emigrants were also living among them) are generally referred to as “Mingos” in the archive. However, this term is not only offensive to present day descendent communities but it also reflects a deep misunderstanding among colonial observers of Indigenous migration and politics and as such will not be used.

¹⁴⁶ “Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, November 8, 1764,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 399-400.

¹⁴⁷ “Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, November 8, 1764,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 402-403.

the company of a more civilized European-descended wife.¹⁴⁸ As fantastical as the portrayal may be, it was echoed by his less fictional colleagues. New York governor George Clinton compared Johnson to a Moroccan emperor, estimating the size of the latter's harem at around 700. Likewise, a fellow British official remarked that Johnson "like Solomon has been eminent in his pleasures with the brown ladies."¹⁴⁹ Further, Johnson personally gave Croghan a lesson on the utility of publicly shaming political opponents by accusing them of engaging in interracial sex, one's own infamy in that regard notwithstanding. Shortly after the conclusion of a 1762 peace conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Johnson instructed Croghan to spread gossip about the prominent Quaker Israel Pemberton's sexual liaisons with Lenape women as part of "his pious intentions of propagating the species" so as to taint the closeness between Quakers and the Lenape with suspicion. Clearly Johnson was unconcerned with the deep irony in such instructions, and considering the flurry of print propaganda casting Pemberton as the lustful "King Wampum," it would seem that Johnson's strategy was successful.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps it was also an instructive moment for Croghan as he learned to harness interracial sexuality as a tool for gaining access to political power in certain instances and as a cudgel to be used against his political opponents in others.

¹⁴⁸ Novels of circulation were a popular British literary genre in which the narrative of the novel follows the movement of a commodity throughout the British world. See Wolfram Schmidgen, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Law of Property* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 127.

¹⁴⁹ Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 102-108, quote on 104. It is not hard to see the blatant Orientalism in these depictions of Johnson. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

¹⁵⁰ Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 208-209. Again, the Pocahontas Perplex seems to be at work here.

Perhaps because of his uniquely intimate knowledge of Indian people, Croghan was sought out as an expert on the differences between Indians and Europeans. He was called upon by the famed Dr. William Robertson to respond to a questionnaire as Robertson prepared his *History of America*, first published in 1777. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the questions focused either on the biological or political differences between Indians and Europeans. Robertson was particularly curious about sex, asking Croghan about the presence of Indigenous “discourses” related to the “animal passions between the sexes,” or whether Indian males “were defective in the animal passions for their females, and are they inferior to the people of the Ancient Continent both in desire and ability?”¹⁵¹ Croghan responded to such questions unflinchingly, noting that Indian men were equally capable lovers but were more modest in discussing such issues unless under the influence of alcohol. Upon being asked if Indians were good parents, Croghan stated succinctly and definitively that, “no people on earth take more care of their children.” Yet, while he expressed a tender respect for the culture that raised his own daughter, he was equally unflinching in his commitment to a concept of race that, in Ann Stoler’s words, “secures racial designations in a *language* of biology and fixity and in the quest for a visual set of physical difference to index that which is not ‘self-evident’ or visible.”¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., “The Opinions of George Croghan on the American Indian,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 71, no. 2 (Apr., 1947): 154-156. Either Croghan’s responses never reached Robertson or Robertson chose to ignore them, perhaps because they did not fit into the racialized discourses that informed Robertson’s analysis.

¹⁵² Stoler, “Intimidation of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,” 2.

Croghan's relationship and reputation made him susceptible within the increasingly violent politics of Indian hatred in Allegheny Country. The orderly and highly prescribed intercultural diplomatic protocols that facilitated the repatriation of captives stood in stark contrast to the violence that had preceded it during the Seven Years' and Pontiac's War. On the one hand, a certain sympathy developed for the plight of Indians being forced to rend their families, most clearly demonstrated in Benjamin West's 1766 engraving, "The Indians Delivering Up the English Captives to Colonel Bouquet." [Figure 2.2] White children, well-fed, clearly recoil at the outstretched arm of Colonel Bouquet, reaching instead for the embrace of an Indian mother.¹⁵³ There was little such sympathy, however, among those colonists who lived in Western Pennsylvania and Virginia and had hoped to enact a more bloody revenge on the Indians, as was clear when the Black Boys targeted Croghan and his crucial caravan of gifts that were being sent to Fort Pitt as exchange for the returned captives. They would have been far more susceptible to the dramatic scenes that were described within the highly prescribed colonial literature on Indigenous captivity practices, with much of the sentimentality that would later shape perceptions about joyous reunions was found in the work of William Smith, the first provost of the institution that was to become the University of Pennsylvania. Smith wrote an account of the 1764 Bouquet Expedition intended to celebrate the triumph of Christian civilization over Indigenous savagery, weaving quoted evidence with copious amounts of artistic license. In describing the return of captive/adoptees to Bouquet he painted "a scene, which language indeed can but weakly

¹⁵³ Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free*, 347-349.



Figure 2.2: The Shaawanwa repatriating captive/adoptees to Colonel Bouquet. Pierre Charles Canot, engraver, and Benjamin West. “The Indians delivering up the English captives to Colonel Bouquet near his camp at the forks of Muskingum in North America, 1766. [Philadelphia: William Smith]

describe,” in which there were “fathers and mothers recognizing and clasping their once-lost babes; husbands hanging around the necks of their newly-recovered wives; sisters and brothers unexpectedly meeting together after long separation, scarce able to speak the same language, or, for some time, to be sure that they were children of the same parents!” To heighten the drama of the tableau, Smith made sure to point out that “the Indians too,

as if wholly forgetting their usual savageness, bore a capital part in heightening the most affecting scene. They delivered up their beloved captives with the utmost reluctance, shed torrents of tears over them, recommending them to the care and protection of the commanding officer.”¹⁵⁴ Apparently, the lack of consistency, in which captive/adoptees were simultaneously delivered into the custody of desperately awaiting parents and military officials did not concern Smith, which is unsurprising considering that Smith was not a first-hand witness nor was this scene described in Bouquet’s papers; and considering that there is no other evidence that families of origin were present during the exchange, this exaggerated rhetorical sentimentality was surely a literary fabrication. He would likewise, in a commencement speech to graduates of his institution, thank God as “the mournful captives, hopeless and forlorn, from gospel-light, from friends, and freedom torn, restored by him, again behold their home, rejoiced in savage wilds no more to roam! Yon heavens the deed approve, strike bold the lyre, and let returning peace the strain inspire.”¹⁵⁵ Croghan, as a resident of the so-called backcountry who had a very different opinion of Indigenous people than most of his settler neighbors, would have been deeply immersed in both of these discourses. And yet, during negotiations, he seemingly makes little effort to assuage the pain of Shaawanwa families. In this sense, Croghan’s full-throated admonition of Shaawanwa attachments to their adoptive kin can also be seen as a keen deployment of *real politick*.

¹⁵⁴ Smith, *An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians* (Philadelphia, William Bradford, 1765), 26-27.

¹⁵⁵ William Smith, “Dialogue, Air and Chorus, at the Commencement in the College of Philadelphia,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 13, 1765.

While it is true that Croghan was following orders—he was sent in part to ensure that conditions previously laid down by Bouquet were met—the fact that Croghan was unmoved by a pain that he surely understood is notable. Perhaps Croghan choked back tears during his address, hoping to prevent Shaawanwa delegates from seeing him as a mouthpiece of empire, forced to enforce terms that he knew to be cruel in his heart. Or perhaps Croghan was as cold-hearted as the official record makes him appear. Or maybe he deftly communicated his understanding to the Shaawanwa in such a way that it would be omitted from the record. Such are the limits of written records of diplomatic oratory. Any knowing glances that may have communicated empathy, if they existed at all, are lost. It is perhaps even harder to imagine that Alexander McKee, who was serving as Croghan’s secretary, was unmoved by the scene. Not only were these people whose language he understood, there were certainly members of McKee’s *m’shoma* among those being returned.

However, just as the rending of adoptive Indigenous families surely caused great pain for those communities, the efforts to reunite settler communities were also the product of the pain caused by the initial capture of settlers. As the captive taking ramped up in the midst of the Seven Years’ War, the families of those captured initially responded by attempting to pay ransoms for the return of their kin. Sometimes, families looking to pay ransoms to Indigenous people benefitted from starkly incongruent cultural understandings of what the ransoming of captives meant. For European-descended families, the exchange of prisoners of war was a regular occurrence among the elite during times of war. But for Indigenous communities, being involved in a prisoner

exchange was a sign of weakness when compared with the opportunity to stoically perform one's masculinity while being ritually tortured. As such, individual families, as well as those who were able to rely upon the generosity of rich colonial benefactors, were sometimes able to secure the release of men captured in battle, in part because for Indigenous peoples the return of these men brought further shame upon them. However, this mostly applied to military captives, not civilians, and especially not women and children. For those British civilians captured by Indigenous people during the Seven Years' War, their best chance to be reunited with their families was through the interventions of the Indigenous peoples' French allies, who would often convince Indigenous people to abandon their plans to adopt captives into their families and instead turn them over to the French who would then, in accordance to European warfare conventions, make efforts to reunite civilians with their families. The efforts of private organizations had a much more uneven success rate. For example, the aforementioned Friendly Association of the Quakers were very active in trying to use their financial resources to reunite settler families, but despite their diplomatic skills were largely unsuccessful. Moreover, once the war between France and Britain ended, European notions about keeping prisoners in times of peace convinced British administrators such as General Jeffrey Amherst to put an end to ransom attempts. It was not until the resumption of war—although from an Indigenous perspective Pontiac's War was simply a continuation of the Seven Years' War—that the British transitioned toward making the “redemption” of captive/adoptees a military objective.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free*, 290-308.

In the end, forty-four captives were returned, twenty-one men and twenty-three women. The oldest was a thirty-year-old woman named Rose Gore who had lived among the Shaawanwa for seven years. Many had lived with the Shaawanwa for more than half of their lives. A third of those returned only had Indian names recorded.¹⁵⁷ Two boys were brothers from a family of seven children captured along with their then pregnant mother; the younger was in fact captured in utero, and was therefore considered a “white Indian” with both his European name Joseph and his Shaawanwa name Pechyloothame recorded. Their mother did not return until two years later while another of the seven siblings, Joseph, never returned, instead remaining in Shaawanwa society, eventually rising to the position of *neenawtooma*.¹⁵⁸ A twenty-year-old man named Wechquessinah had spent half of his life among the Shaawanwa and next to his name was a note reading, “can’t speak English, knows not from whence taken,” the only such person listed among the returned at Fort Pitt.¹⁵⁹ Clearly, therefore, many of those being returned would have only been identifiable as “white” through the reading of phenotypic traits that served as racial signifiers such as the color of their hair or eyes. If identified according to cultural signifiers such as dress or language, they would be seen as Indian.

However, others were likely much more enthusiastic about their return to white society. The twenty-five-year-old Andrew Clark had only been captured seven months earlier. Likewise, the nineteen-year-old Peggy Sea had been captured along with her mother Catherine and other siblings only two years earlier after her father had been killed

¹⁵⁷ “List of Prisoners,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 720-721.

¹⁵⁸ Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free*, 221, 523.

¹⁵⁹ “List of Prisoners,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 720

by the Shaawanwa. Not only was violence likely still in the forefront of Peggy's mind, but her mother, two brothers, and sister had already returned during the negotiations with Colonel Bouquet. Yet, what surely seemed like a short time away from colonial society for Peggy was relative. Her brother John who was returned at the same time at Fort Pitt fled Virginia back to his Shaawanwa family. It was another two years before he was brought back to Virginia again, at which point he had to be "broken" of his "wild Indian ways." As his sister Mary would later recall, "it was utterly impossible to keep clothes on" him and "in the summer she did not attempt it." John would regularly be found "wallowing naked in the sand beaches on the shores and in [his] melancholy moments [he] would often be heard to exclaim, in all the apparent agonies of distress, 'my Innies, my Innies!'" (meaning Indians). It took a number of years to root out this attachment, and indeed it was thought by a part of [his] friends that [he] carried remnants of it to [his] grave."¹⁶⁰

Moreover, even for those who were enthusiastic about their return to colonial society, there was likely no warm welcome from loved ones awaiting them when they arrived at Fort Pitt. It does not appear that any families traveled to Fort Pitt in eager anticipation of the return of their relatives, although it is possible that some who had been returned a year earlier stayed in the vicinity of the post to await the release of other relatives. Instead, the British military likely took care to escort those who the Shaawanwa brought with them back to their home communities, adding another harrowing leg to

¹⁶⁰ Felix Renick, "A Trip to the West," in *American Pioneer* 1 (1842): 78-79.

what was surely already a a challenging journey from the Ohio Country.¹⁶¹ Still others were “returned” without any idea of where they should be returned to. For example, after the success of Bouquet’s 1764 negotiations, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* began publishing descriptions of children who could not know who their biological parents were in hopes that a desperate parent would read the paper and claim their children. However, ominously, the advertisement concluded that if the children were not claimed, they would be given over to either be apprenticed or adopted so as not to continue to be a financial burden on the colonial government.¹⁶²

When Croghan arrived at Fort Pitt in 1765, this intimate and ironic union of transracial institutional authority and simultaneous commitment to discourses of racial difference was on full display. Croghan wielded authority, both as a British official with intimate knowledge of Indian ways and as Catharine’s lover, a European-descended man with a rare voice of power around the council fires of Indigenous governance. These negotiations serve as a nexus point between an imperial imaginary, the international politics of a region hotly contested between European empires and Indigenous sovereignties, the grandiose aspirations of New World barons, the sexual politics of an Indigenous culture held together by “fictive” kinship, and, perhaps, the very real sexual desires of individuals. In other words, the interracial intimacies of Johnson and Croghan can be seen as both Foucault’s “dense transfer point” of power as well as a site for the

¹⁶¹ There is no record of how the specific captive/adoptees returned by the Shaawanwa at Fort Pitt were received, only the previously cited list of names, ages, and locations of each person original capture. However, the captive/adoptees previously released to Colonel Bouquet in the Ohio Country were put under the protection of soldiers and cared for by a female camp follower. Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free*, 330-335.

¹⁶² Hornor, “Intimate Enemies,” 162-163, 182.

production of racialized discourses serving the expansion of empire, as identified by Stoler.¹⁶³ Furthermore, as these two imperial agents lay with Indian women, they exerted as well as derived real institutional power, which is to say, they gained officially sanctioned voices of influence within both the Longhouse of the Haudenosaunee and the British Empire even as they called upon and reinforced discourses of racialized others. It is but one of the cruel ironies of empire that Croghan used this rare dual power to rend the tender bonds of interracial families among the Shaawanwa.

However, perhaps most importantly, these “tense and tender ties” were not only haunted by empire, although that was certainly true. They were also haunted by the “specter of peace.” Just as the personal and at times greedy aspirations of individuals were haunted by peace, so too were their intimate ties. In this sense, it took the prospect of peace to compel the Shaawanwa to comply with British demands. Simultaneously, while the union between Croghan and Catharine may be seen in a cynical light, it was nonetheless a tool for peacemaking, even if it was an exploitive one. Whether domestically or through international diplomacy, intimacy was an essential element of peacemaking, and peacemaking at the confluence of diverse Indigenous nations and expanding empires only made the process that much more complicated. Moreover, peacemaking did not distribute the fruits of that peace equally across the many societies whose representatives met at Fort Pitt. For some, enormous and traumatic sacrifices were made, while others were able to bask in the elated glow of familial reunification. And for a good many others, especially those forty-four captive/adoptees at the heart of this

¹⁶³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 1-8, quote on 3.

exchange, it very well might have been a torturous combination of both. But such was this fleeting moment of peace; it was not limited only to those places of intimate joy but found its way into those places of pain and sorrow that could only be caused by the rending of intimate connections.

Chapter 3: Confluence of Political Ontologies

J. Capucin, a French trader living in Vincennes along the Wabash River, kept a close eye on the military and diplomatic actions of his Indigenous neighbors. Far removed from the loci of both French military and civil oversight, Capucin and other French *habitants* had traded with Indians unencumbered by imperial regulation.¹ As the region underwent radical imperial realignment in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, Capucin sought to maintain the status quo. Considering the British military's eagerness to regulate and, if necessary, deport those *habitants* who were now British subjects, it was in Capucin's best interest to disrupt Croghan's peace efforts. Having received word of Croghan's grand council at Fort Pitt, Capucin was confident that Croghan's words of peace would fall on deaf ears farther inland. While Capucin was not a French official by any means, he certainly saw value in British failure in the place he had come to know as the *pays de Illinois*.²

Louis St. Ange de Bellerive was the French commander at Fort de Chartres, located on the east bank of the Mississippi River in the *pays de Illinois*. He was completing his final assignment there, as he was tasked with literally holding down the fort until it could be formally transferred to British control. A British officer, Lieutenant John Ross, had recently arrived, having traveled in advance of the rest of his 34th regiment to make St. Ange aware of their approach. On April 4, 1765, St. Ange used the occasion to try to conduct diplomacy to ensure that the transition was received peaceably

¹ Florence Goold Watts, "Some Vincennes Documents of 1772," *Indiana Magazine of History* 34, no. 2 (June 1938): 200.

² "J. Capucin to Baptiste Campau, June 7, 1765," *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), vol. IV, 765-766. (Hereafter *WJP*)

by the Indigenous peoples who called this region of the Mississippi River Valley home. He therefore invited Indian delegates from the Illiniwek, Niúachi [Missouri], and Wahzhazhe [Osage] nations into his home. Within a formal council, St. Ange implored the Indigenous delegates to receive the British with the same love that they had shown the French. He then welcomed a response from the delegates present. Tamarois, a chief among the Illiniwek, rose first and made clear that the Illiniwek had no intention of allowing the British to occupy the Illinois country. He then begged St. Ange to forgive them for ignoring his request, noting that they could not reconcile their attachment and love of the French with these instructions, even if they were being spoken in the name of their French father the King himself. He then turned to Lieutenant Ross and advised the British to leave peacefully and quickly, as only the French were welcome in the region. He then extended his hand, not as a sign of friendship but as a way of signaling the finality of his decision. A second, unnamed chief from among the Wahzhazhe rose next and echoed the words of Tamarois. He likewise faced Lieutenant Ross directly, and repeated the command “leave.” Like Tamarois, he also extended his hand, and as they were all speaking French at the meeting, he literally bid Lieutenant Ross a threatening *adieu*.³

Charles Philippe Aubry had recently succeeded Jean-Jacques Blaise d’Abbadie as the French colonial governor of New Orleans. His appointment was meant to be temporary, as Louisiana was, in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, to become Spanish territory. However, Spanish administrators had not yet arrived, and therefore French

³ “St. Ange to D’Abbadie, April 7, 1765” in *The Critical Period*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), 471-481 (hereafter *TCP*).

administrators remained, if only to ensure a smooth imperial transition. Aubry had just received a letter, dated May 24, 1765, from the British officer Major Robert Farmer who was leading the 34th Regiment up the Mississippi to take command of Fort de Chartres. In the letter Farmer implored Aubry to support British efforts by turning over any British deserters seeking refuge in New Orleans.⁴ In his response, Aubry assured Farmer that he would do exactly as requested, pointing out that he had already arrested one deserting sergeant as soon as he was made aware of his presence in the city. However, while the original petition focused exclusively on the issue of deserting soldiers, Aubry did not miss an opportunity to add that he was likewise doing all that he could to dissuade the Indigenous population of the Illinois Country from taking up arms against the British who were reestablishing their garrisons in the formerly French forts that had fallen to besieging Indians.⁵

Throughout Pontiac's War, British military officials were fully convinced that behind every Indigenous attack was a Frenchman pulling the strings. As the likes of Sir William Johnson, Generals Jeffrey Amherst and Thomas Gage, Colonel Henry Bouquet, and George Croghan communicated about and debated the next best diplomatic course of action, they continually returned to the need to not only draw Indigenous peoples away from their attachment to the French, but to root out a French conspiracy that was inspiring their Indian allies in the first place. Even as the British shifted away from fighting the war towards doing the work of making a lasting peace, they could not shake

⁴ "British Officers Petition Aubry, May 23, 1765," in *TCP*, 498-499.

⁵ "Aubry Answers Petition of British Officers, May 26, 1765," in *TCP*, 512-513.

the feeling that the process was one French cloak and dagger maneuver away from falling apart. As Indian diplomats arrived at Fort Pitt in 1765, Croghan kept an ear to the ground, recording any rumors of interactions between Indians and the “French,” making sure to pass any of that intel along to his superiors.

What is striking upon reading Croghan’s intel, however, is how imprecisely he tracks who “the French” actually were. On the whole, he never made any distinction between French military officials and *habitants*, simply noting when Indians had been received by “the French.” It would be easy to accept this at face value: that Croghan’s opinions of the French were so negative that he simply could not be bothered to make the distinction. But such a reading ignores the evidence that Croghan understood the value of employing people of French descent for the purpose of advancing British diplomatic goals. For example, as noted in the previous chapter, when Alexander Fraser impatiently advanced down the Ohio River without Croghan, Croghan made sure to assign both an Indigenous and a French associate to accompany him, presumably to make it easier for Fraser to negotiate with any Indians and French officials he may encounter on his mission. Clearly, Croghan had enough trust in the Frenchman Alexander Maisonville to assign him to serve as an interpreter and negotiator in service of critical British objectives. Yet, when talking about those of French descent in the Illinois Country, he simply described them in blanket terms. In other words, from Croghan’s perspective on the ground at Fort Pitt, there was no distinction between the likes of J. Capucin and Louis St. Ange de Bellerive.

It is in this amorphous space that this chapter seeks to make a critical historiographical intervention. As the historiography of Pontiac's War has evolved, it has moved at a steady rate away from those who took the suspicions of British officials as trustworthy evidence of a French conspiracy towards those who see their suspicions as the hallucinations of those prone to conspiratorial thinking rooted in an anti-French sentiment born of centuries of global imperial rivalry. The accusations of French involvement first appeared in the work of Francis Parkman, where the French played the role of co-conspirators alongside a romanticized portrayal of a noble savage heroically standing against an inevitable wave of white civilization. While subsequent scholars have rightfully grown dubious about many of Parkman's conclusions in light of his ethnocentrism, the notion of French support behind the Indian uprising persisted, despite a complete absence of French administrative records implicating themselves as co-conspirators. All evidence cited appeared in the records of British administrators—most of whom echoed Parkman's thoughts about the military inferiority of their Indian foes. When French officials were on the record discussing Pontiac's War, they were unequivocal about their desire to support British efforts in taking control of formerly French-claimed territory. Moreover, as historian Gregory Evans Dowd notes, virulent anti-Catholicism—one aspect of which was the assumption that "papists" were always conspiring against the British—was rampant among the British of the time. As suspicions of French collusion only appear in the records of British officials, Dowd concludes that

such anxieties say more about the mentalities of the British than they do about the legitimacy of French involvement.⁶

However, while Dowd is right to deflate the racism of colonialist historiography, it is not only the British who make mention of French support of the Indigenous war effort. As Dowd himself notes, much of the talk of French support came from the “lips of Indian speakers” and thus serves as a “disturbing, repetitive skip in the record.”⁷ True, the records of these Indian speeches are found in anglophone archives, but as many scholars have noted, treaty negotiations represent some of the most accurate recordings of Indian voices in the eighteenth century. Why then did so many Indian delegates claim to have support from the French? Dowd argues that it is because the Indians sought to convince the French to reinvest in the region, which is likely a substantial part of the equation. But this argument fails to take the work of French traders in the *pays d’en Haut* and *pays de Illinois* seriously, as that work and the political status of *habitants* changes when seen in a way that centers Indigenous politics.

As historian Christian Ayne Crouch argues, the violent crucible of war was a place where people’s interpretations of one another had profound implications. In her study of the French military during the Seven Years’ War, she notes that the war effort was as dependent on how French regular soldiers, provincial French marines, and Indigenous allies came to understand each other as it was on logistics and military strategy. In other words, one must pay close attention to the entanglement of martial cultures to understand

⁶ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 108-109. Dowd, “The French King Wakes up in Detroit: ‘Pontiac’s War’ in Rumor and History,” *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 3 (Summer, 1990): 254-278.

⁷ Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 112-113.

the contours of transcultural wars. Additionally, she pays careful attention to the role played by status, which was all the more important the farther one was from the administrative institutions that purported to organize empire.⁸ While Crouch is mostly concerned with the how this entanglement impacted the war effort, the same approach can be just as easily applied to the peace-making process as well.

Just as status could enable a person to function as one person in one context, and as a different person in a different context, Pontiac's War was a conflict that entangled two different corpuses of legal philosophy. While much scholarly attention has been paid to the ways in which a European legal and diplomatic tradition gave shape to international relations around the Atlantic Basin, an equally vibrant and energetic set of Indigenous diplomatic and legal customs gave shape to relations in Indian Country.⁹ This is not to say that these two logics were not deeply influenced by one another. As historian Jeffrey Glover has shown, the expansion of British imperialism forced British legal thinkers, already operating under the tensions between their own common law traditions and an international European order built on Roman civil law, to incorporate many Indigenous notions about international law and relations into their own as they sought to establish sovereignty over the Indigenous people in what was becoming seventeenth-

⁸ Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Marital Culture, Indians and the End of New France*. (Ithaca: NY, Cornell University Press, 2014), 1-15, 178-190.

⁹ Eliga Gould, *Among the Powers of the Early: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 26-32.

century New England.¹⁰ Likewise, the negotiations that took place at the end of Pontiac's War followed a hybrid diplomatic protocol that had developed over centuries of interaction between Atlantic empires and Indigenous nations. But there were sharp ideological and even ontological differences between Europeans and Indians and their approaches to politics. As such, this chapter proposes that equal attention should be paid to an Indigenous Law of Nations as a distinct and equally sophisticated philosophy of international relations. Nicole Eustace argues provocatively for a methodological approach for reading treaty records to reconstruct Indigenous political philosophy, an approach that will be deployed extensively throughout this chapter.¹¹

Similarly, David Murray demonstrates exactly how trade and gift-giving were the central components of transcultural economies of power. As Murray argues, "on both sides giving was deeply implicated as an expression of power in the articulation of social relations, and when exchanges took place between the two sides they were inevitably understood and represented in these terms."¹² He continues, noting that a key feature of transcultural power relationships laid in the "importance of demonstrating the power to

¹⁰ Jeffrey Glover, *Paper Sovereigns: Anglo-Native Treaties and the Law of Nations, 1604-1664* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 1-25. For more on Indigenous awareness and use of European legal norms towards their own ends, see Craig Yirush, "'Chief Princes and Owners of All': Native American Appeals to the Crown in the Early Modern British Atlantic," in *Native Claims: Indigenous Law against Empire, 1500-1920*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 129-151.

¹¹ Nicole Eustace, *Covered with Night: A Story of Murder and Indigenous Justice in Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021), 1-12.

¹² David Murray, *Indian Giving: Economies of Power in Indian-White Exchanges* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 15. See also Joseph M. Hall Jr., *Zamumo's Gifts: Indian-European Exchange in the Colonial Southeast* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 1-11; Cameron B. Wesson, "When Moral Economies and Capitalism Meet: Creek Factionalism and the Colonial Southeastern Frontier," in *Across a Great Divide: Continuity and Change in Native North American Societies, 1400-1900*, eds. Laura L. Scheiber and Mark D. Mitchell (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2010); Cary Miller, *Ogimaag: Anishinaabeg Leadership, 1760-1845* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 46-47, 100.

give and distribute as an essential attribute of sovereign leaders.”¹³ Eustace echoes this, arguing that “in pairing words and goods, [Indians] were trying to make something ineffable—that is, the feelings that came with unity—into something tangible.” But this is perhaps over-theorizing what Indigenous people had long made plain. Responding to colonial New York’s regulation of the movement of French traders, one Haudenosaunee diplomat informed the New York governor William Cosby in 1735 that “trade and peace we take to be one thing.”¹⁴ Likewise emblematic of this philosophy of international politics in action, Eustace quotes an unnamed Indigenous diplomat who said that as a way of spreading the pleasure and security provided by a diplomatic agreement, “the presents then delivered to them were divided into the smallest parts that [they] might reach all the Indians everywhere and be read as a letter.” As Eustace explains, “the letter” was not a single message but instead a correspondence relationship.¹⁵ But the gifts also function as primary evidence of official agreement, not unlike the correspondences that one might use to reconstruct the contours of military strategy or a diplomatic mission. As such, a central feature of this chapter’s argument is that political and diplomatic status, especially in the eyes of Indigenous agents, was established within the economy of power articulated through material exchanges. While technologies for establishing status within imperial administrations, such as certifications, noble titles, military commissions, and mandates from superiors, are clearly observable within the archive, it is a central

¹³ Murray, *Indian Giving*, 67.

¹⁴ Peter Wraaxall, *An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1915), 195.

¹⁵ Eustace, *Covered with Night*, 50-51.

argument of this chapter that these technologies did not operate the same way within transcultural diplomatic fields. This is not to say that the official imperial statuses of British and French officials were meaningless to Indigenous people, but there were also other meaningful ways to establish one's status and authority.

Moreover, the role of *habitants* as official agents of empire should not be seen as a “creative misunderstanding,” to use Richard White's term, but instead an intentional design of empire within the *pays de Illinois*, a region of considerable distance from the centers of French imperial control in places like Montreal and New Orleans. As historian Robert Michael Morrissey argues, it was true that “the earliest colony in Illinois was not only unplanned but clearly opposite to the designs that French official had for their North American empire. However, while the development of the *pays de Illinois* may have run contrary to larger imperial plans emanating from Versailles, this meant that the design of imperialism fell to those who ventured there, as “Illinois became a haven for fur traders, farmers, missionaries, and Indians who sought to realize alternative visions of colonial life,” who “asserted a kind of self-determination that gave the community a unique identity within French empire.” As such, the imperial project in the *pays de Illinois* should be seen “as a complicated system mutually created by diverse, entangled peoples.”¹⁶

But this line of thinking can actually be taken a step further, as status implies a perception of who a person was. However, as has been demonstrated across the previous two chapters, cultural difference ran deeper and should be seen as ontological. Neolin and Pontiac did not simply *perceive* the world as created by the Master of Life; for them it

¹⁶ Robert Michael Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 4-5.

was a fact that the Master of Life created the world. Similarly, settlers captured in war by Indigenous people were not simply treated as kin, they *became* kin. While some might interpret this as a distinction without a difference, for anthropologists, especially those from within the so-called “ontological turn,” assuming that culture functions as a lens in which two actors from two different cultures perceive a “real world” is self-defeating, as it presumes a “real world” outside of culture, even though all actors can only observe it through culture. Or, as Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pederson argue:

what makes the ontological turn distinctive is the fact that it fundamentally recasts and radicalizes this problem by exploring the consequences of taking it to its logical conclusion. The epistemological problem of *how one sees things* is turned into the ontological question of *what there is* to be seen in the first place. Accordingly, what ultimately tints the anthropologist’s glasses are not social, cultural, political or other presuppositions, but ontological ones, by which we mean basic commitments and assumptions about *what things are, and what they could be* (including things like society, culture, politics and power).¹⁷

In other words, anthropologists who accept the ontological turn point out that the power differential, in which one actor—the observer—can declare with authority what the real world is, while the other actor—the observed—cannot, undermines the very essence of the broader anthropological project.

For the purpose of this chapter, the idea of “support,” in terms of one nation supporting another nation, was, during Pontiac’s War, not a concept in which there was ontological agreement across cultures. In this sense, this chapter draws heavily from Mario Blaser’s doubly-defined concept of political ontology. As Mario Blaser argues,

¹⁷ Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pederson, *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-29, quotation on 5. See also Paleček, Martin and Mark Risjord, “Relativism and the Ontological Turn within Anthropology,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 43, no. 1 (2012): 3-23.

“the term ‘political ontology’ connotes two inter-related meanings. On the one hand, it refers to the politics involved in the practices that shape a particular world or ontology. On the other hand, it refers to a field of study that focuses on the conflicts that ensue as different worlds or ontologies strive to sustain their own existences as they interact and mingle with one another.”¹⁸ For Blaser, such an approach is essential if one is going to avoid assuming that one world, in this case the world as known by colonial empires, was more politically enlightened or sophisticated than the other—in this case the world in which Indigenous politics were animated. The question of whether Indigenous peoples were supported by the French in their resistance efforts against the British in the trans-Appalachian West requires an approach that centers both of Blaser’s meanings of political ontology. Moreover, these political ontologies were not stable but instead underwent constant reformulation as sovereignty was practiced. As Lauren Benton argues, the building of overseas empires required agents to reconcile legal theories with the ways that sovereignty might be applied in a new world.¹⁹ But while Benton’s focus is the practices and improvisations of sovereignty within Atlantic empires, the same can be said of Indigenous polities as well.

Beyond taking a political ontological approach, this chapter also makes two core assertions about what could and could not be known by certain agents. First, Indigenous

¹⁸ Mario Blaser, “Political Ontology: Cultural Studies without ‘cultures’?” *Cultural Studies* 23, nos. 5-6 (September-November, 2009): 877. Blaser is primarily focused on present conjuncture and its impact on Indigenous peoples today. For an exploration of how this kind of thinking might work in a historical study, see Daniel K. Richter, “Intelligibility or Incommensurability?” in *Justice in a New World*, eds. Brian P. Owensby and Richard J. Ross (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 291-305.

¹⁹ Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1-39. Benton’s approach to sovereignty and geography will be even more influential in Chapter 4.

political thinkers could not observe the machinations of imperial logistics and negotiations the same way European agents could and second, that the same Indigenous people had a deep and rich understanding of how empires were built on the ground. In the case of the first point, this is not to imply that Indigenous thinkers did not understand how European treaty-making, or “pen and ink witchcraft” as they called it, was conducted generally.²⁰ Consistently throughout the historical record, Indians spoke out against deceptive treaty practices and adopted many of the European record-keeping techniques and technologies in order to preserve Indigenous sovereignty within the onslaught of colonial exploitation. But Indigenous people were not privy to the sheer volume of political interactions found within the correspondences between imperial officials, a lettered exchange that was the hallmark of imperial administration. This network of information exchange makes up the bulk of the diplomatic archive and is the primary tool available to historians to interpret the treaty records themselves. However, that is a vantage point available in the present but was not to those on the ground during negotiations in 1765. But secondly, while Indigenous thinkers may have struggled to see behind the imperial curtain, they were much more aware of how empires operated on the ground than high-level imperial officials, especially in regions like the trans-Appalachian West where European settlement was sparse. While imperial officials may have directed troop movements and reassigned officers as they saw fit, much of the work of successfully maintaining an empire in what were largely Indigenous spaces was lost on them.

²⁰ Colin Calloway, *Pen and Ink Witchcraft: Treaties and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-48.

There are of course exceptions to imperial naïveté, with both Sir William Johnson and George Croghan being obvious examples. In fact, it was his ability to see both aspects of empire building that perhaps explains why Croghan was so imprecise in distinguishing between commanding officers and *habitants* trading illegally. Just as Croghan was adept at being both trader and diplomat, so too did he understand that that was how empires like what the French had constructed in the trans-Appalachian West were built. While Croghan knew to how to play the administrative game, he simultaneously knew that the Indians with whom he treated were not checking those imperial credentials. Instead, it was his status as a trader who was simultaneously fluent in Indigenous diplomatic protocol that served as his credentials for Indigenous diplomats. But again, the purpose of this chapter is not to argue that this was a simple difference of perspective. Instead, more boldly, it is to argue that *habitants*, in offering material support towards their Indigenous neighbors, those with whom they had built deep, intimate relationships akin to those discussed in the previous chapter, were “the French” within Indigenous political worlds. As such one could assert both that the French were supporting the Indigenous-led war effort and that French support was an impactful fantasy within the minds of conspiratorial British agent. Within a conjuncture between political ontologies, these otherwise contradictory statements could in fact both be true.

The French Imperial Project in Vincennes

The Wabash River Valley was a liminal space between more well-established French colonies. The French had already established several posts there under the

direction of New France in an attempt to strengthen their relationships with the Indigenous people, a strategy that they felt was increasingly urgent as they heard reports of English traders entering the region. However, while the area was originally administered as the southernmost extension of the *pays d'en haut*, or the Upper Country, the area was transferred to Louisiana in 1717 and came to be known as the Illinois Country or *pays des Illinois*. Recognizing the need for a more robust marine presence in the region, troops were sent up the Mississippi River to the newly built Fort de Chartres, situated just north of the already established colonial town of Kaskaskia. From there, administrators continued to advocate for a more robust trade presence along the Wabash River, despite severe restrictions on spending. Their solution was to send Jean-Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, to live among the Myaamiaki [Miami] as a means of preventing them from establishing trade relationships with the English to the East. He was shortly joined by his son, François-Marie Bissot. When the senior Vincennes died, his son continued his work.²¹

The spendthrift approach to the administration of Louisiana concerned the French Crown, especially as English influence expanded, and in 1730, royal administration of Louisiana was restored and budgets for the establishment of posts in the *pays des Illinois* increased. In 1732, the junior Sieur de Vincennes was given instructions to establish a post farther down the Wabash than the previously constructed Fort Ouiatenon. To make the new post viable, Sieur de Vincennes persuaded the Waayaahatanwa [Wea or

²¹ John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker, *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 1971), 57-80; Paul C. Phillips, "Vincennes in its Relation to French Colonial Policy," *Indiana Magazine of History* 17, no. 4 (December, 1921): 311-323.

Ouiatanon], a group closely related to the Myaamiaki, to move farther south with him away from the vicinity of the fort named after them. The goal was not to create a fully settled colony but instead to influence and control the human geography in the region in ways that benefitted French imperial goals. However, from the beginning, Sieur de Vincennes struggled to fully dissuade the Indigenous peoples of the Wabash from trading with the English. Writing to his superiors in 1733, Sieur de Vincennes noted:

On account of the nearness of the English, it has been impossible for me to bring together all these nations because there has always been a lack of merchandise in this place. The fort which I have built is about eighty miles in the Wabash country up the river by which the English have been able to descend and open up commerce with these nations. The place is very suitable in which to build a great settlement which I would have done if I had had troops enough. In regard to the commerce which one can carry on here, a traffic in skins could go on all year to the extent of 30,000 skins. This is the only commerce, Monsieur, which could be carried on for the present.²²

Sieur de Vincennes continued, noting that even a meager garrison would aid him greatly in his efforts. Clearly however, according to Sieur de Vincennes, a robust trade was the single most important criterion for the long-term success of the post.²³

In fact, a more martial-minded approach almost doomed the French project along the Wabash. Despite his pleas, the post under Sieur de Vincennes's command continued to be undersupplied and understaffed, despite continued pressure from both English traders and, more importantly, tensions with the Chickasaw people to the South. By this point, the Chickasaw had grown close to the English in South Carolina, yet the western

²² Sieur de Vincennes in "Sieur de Vincennes Identified," *Indiana Historical Society Publications*, vol. VII, ed. Pierre-Georges Roy (Indianapolis: C. E. Pauley & Company, 1923), 92.

²³ Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 17-20.

borders of their territories also reached the Mississippi River, thus giving them control of the vital connection between New Orleans and the *pays de Illinois* [Figure 3.1]. Tensions came to a head in 1736 when the French, led by the commandant of *pays de Illinois*, Pierre d'Artaguiette, along with their Indigenous allies from the region decided to attack the Chickasaw. Sieur de Vincennes was among the French contingent, and in May of 1736, the small army descended on a Chickasaw village, despite warnings from their Indigenous allies, who pointed out that they did not have the requisite provisions to survive an assault into enemy territory. Nevertheless, d'Artaguiette convinced the party that the first Chickasaw village would be easily overrun and would therefore provide all the necessary supplies. Unfortunately for the commander, Indigenous warnings proved prescient, and the French and Indigenous army was easily routed by the defending



Figure 3.1: The location of the Chickasaw community. Excerpted from Edward Crisp, Thomas Nairne, John Harris, Maurice Mathews, and John Love. *A compleat description of the province of Carolina in 3 parts: 1st, the improved part from the surveys of Maurice Mathews & Mr. John Love: 2ly, the west part by Capt. Tho. Nairn: 3ly, a chart of the coast from Virginia to Cape Florida, 1711*, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004626926/>. The location of the Chickasaw has been circled.

Chickasaw. Sieur de Vincennes, along with d'Artaguiette and a French Jesuit, were captured, subjected to ritual torture, and met their demise by being burned at the stake.²⁴

With the post's founder dead, Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, whose brother was also killed during the failed assault on the Chickasaw, was given command, and it was he who came to name the post after its fallen founder. Much of the early period of St. Ange's administration is lost to time, as the records were destroyed during the transition from French to British control. However, it was during this time that the settlement became more than a mere military post. The Wabash became increasingly important for connecting the Mississippi River settlements of Kaskaskia and Fort de Chartres to Canada. A small number of *habitants* moved to Vincennes, creating a hybrid economy that was mostly focused on trade in furs but supported through small-scale agriculture. However, the most important inhabitants at the post were Indigenous, as the French were well aware that the post's *raison d'être* was to maintain robust trade and therefore peaceful relationships with the Indigenous people of the region. In fact, while the post was created in conjunction with the migration of Waayaahatanwa to the region, by 1750 under St. Ange's command the same group decided to migrate and "establish themselves on the Great Miami River," which not only undermined the viability of Vincennes but also threatened the relationship between the Waayaahatanwa and the French as "the English directed all the tribes to settle there with them."²⁵ In need of an Indigenous

²⁴ Barnhart and Riker, *Indiana to 1816*, 86-88. Phillips, "Vincennes in its Relation to French Colonial Policy," 329-331. For a review of the archaeology of the French period in Vincennes, see Michael Strezewski, "French Colonial History and Archaeology at Fort Miamis and Vincennes," in *The History and Archaeology of Fort Ouiatenon: 300 Years in the Making*, eds. Misty M. Jackson, H. Kory Cooper, and David M. Hovde (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2024), 89-98.

²⁵ "Raymond to La Jonquière, January 5, 1750," *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War*, ed. Theodore Calvin Pease (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1940), 154. (Hereafter *IOE*).

constituency, St. Ange proposed reaching out to the Niúachi in the Missouri River Valley—a group with whom he had deep ties not unlike Vincennes’s ties with the Myaamiaki—in an attempt to persuade them to relocate to the Wabash. This plan never came to fruition, but it illustrates how important a vibrant Indigenous community was for the French imperial project in the *pays de Illinois*.²⁶ The lack of an Indigenous constituency continued to plague St. Ange, as the Waayaahatanwa who had migrated indeed did grow closer to the English and began mounting small-scale attacks on the post. However, St. Ange was less concerned about the attacks, having expanded the fortifications at the post. Instead, he made clear that “what most disquiets me is that we have no more Indians at the post, which induces some of our inhabitants to leave the place as they can live only by the trade with the Indians.”²⁷

The French *habitants* had likewise started to become impatient with the poor provisioning of the post, causing St. Ange to write to his superiors warning them “that all the inhabitants and volunteers... are at the point of abandoning it, as they cannot manage to live there,” in large part because the post lacked a mill for grinding wheat into flour.²⁸ A mill was promised for the next year, but funding and provisioning was kept at a bare minimum, even as French authorities recognized the importance of the post in facilitating connections between New France and Louisiana. Instead, administrators continued to rely on St. Ange’s proficiency with transcultural diplomacy. Due to the paucity of records, it is

²⁶ Carl J. Ekberg and Sharon K. Person, *St. Louis Rising: The French Regime of Louis St. Ange de Bellerive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 37-38.

²⁷ “St. Ange to Vaudreuil, February 28, 1752,” in *IOE*, 484-485.

²⁸ “Macarty and Buchet to Vaudreuil and Michel, Kaskaskia, March 29, 1752,” in *IOE*, 570.

unclear how the Indigenous population in the region rebounded in order to return the post to a sustainable position, although it seems that members of another Myaamiaki-related group, the Peeyankihšiaki [Piankesaw] were dissatisfied with the growing closeness between Myaamiaki peoples and the British, and that they “wished to draw near the French.”²⁹ Regardless, by the time St. Ange received word that the French had begun the process of surrendering the *pays de Illinois* to the British at the end of the war, the population of Vincennes had grown, albeit modestly.

As a consequence of the French surrender, St. Ange, the longest serving military administrator in Upper Louisiana, was recalled. Upon departing, he appointed two militiamen to oversee the transition, noting that “their first care should be to maintain good feeling among the Indians to prevent disorder so long as they are in charge.” Likewise, they “can not watch too carefully that the citizens keep up their fences, it being to the public interest that the cattle should not pass from the commons to the grain fields.”³⁰ What remained, after St. Ange’s departure, was a community built on two things: robust trade between French and Indigenous people and the willingness of French people to live in a tight community with Indigenous peoples.³¹ While both Sieur de Vincennes and St. Ange had been given their positions through official military commissions, they did their most impactful work while living among Indigenous peoples.

²⁹ “Macarty to Vaudreuil, September 2, 1752,” in *IOE*, 674. Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 41-42.

³⁰ “Farewell Proclamation of Louis St. Ange,” in *Documents Related to the French Settlements on the Wabash*, ed. Jacob Piatt Dunn (Indianapolis, IN: The Bowen Merrill Company, 1894), 408.

³¹ Although his framework has come under increased scrutiny, historian Richard White pointed to Vincennes during the early American republican period as being an exemplar of the persistence of French and Indigenous “middle grounds.” Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 422.

But more importantly, they sustained the French imperial project by convincing Indigenous peoples to help create this tight community. As the governor of Louisiana, Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlérec, noted, the Peeyankihšiki, “numbering eighty warriors, are settled there.... They’re much attached to the French, and they merit consideration because they cover the Post of Vincennes or St. Ange. This post has prospects for growth, especially while Sieur St. Ange resides and commands there.”³²

While Kerlérec speaks of Peeyankihšiki attachment to “the French,” it is clear that the faces of the French that elicited such attachment were people who had earned that trust through years of living in close proximity. The post was not established within an already established Indigenous political geography; instead, from its beginnings, Vincennes as an outpost of French imperialism in North America required Indigenous people to also relocate. And it was robust trade that convinced Indigenous peoples to do just that, just as it was the prospect of better trade relationships that likewise caused Indigenous people to abandon the community. What did not matter to Indigenous peoples was whether this work was done in ways that tightly aligned to the strictures of European military administration. Instead, it was the consistent presence of individuals who had achieved status as trustworthy that kept the community together.

While the social fabric of French colonial Vincennes was, like any other community, unique, it was nonetheless emblematic of the broader imperial project in the *pays de Illinois*. As historian M. J. Morgan notes, French settlements in the *pays de Illinois* were best described as “trade matrices.” On the one hand, beyond providing food for the

³² Quotation found in Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 43.

settlements, small-scale agriculture in the *pays de Illinois* became essential for provisioning larger settlements and garrisons farther south in Louisiana. But the provision trade could not be sufficiently supplied by European-style agriculture and animal husbandry. Instead, it required trade with Indigenous people, which meant the importation of trade goods as well as the trading of furs at a less-commercial scale than farther north in New France. However, more importantly, it was a largely unregulated trade, for, as Morgan argues, “the slippery, spontaneous trade of riverine traffic remained impossible to monitor.” This was not a trade conducted by licensed French agents but a more ad hoc series of exchanges by farmers, soldiers and other *habitants*.³³

Louis St. Ange de Bellerive’s formal departure from Vincennes marked a period of rapid and messy transition for the *pays de Illinois*. Property was being auctioned off and French officials scrambled to figure out their next steps, all while managing their relationships with their Indigenous allies. However, for residents with an entrepreneurial spirit, it was a time of opportunity. As such, political developments often followed the ambitions of traders willing to take risks rather than the well-articulated plans of officially credentialed imperial agents. Even as Louisiana came under the control of the Spanish crown, French traders continued to build something akin to empire within the vacuum left as the French officially departed. As historian John Reda notes, the Spanish, while ostensibly in control of Louisiana, needed and therefore relied on informal French agents to do the work of actually building the requisite relationships that would allow

³³ M. J. Morgan, *Land of Big Rivers: French and Indian Illinois, 1699-1778* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 90-115, quotation on 99.

places like St. Louis to flourish.³⁴ Again, just as was the case in Vincennes, these relationships were built around trade. In fact, the desire to continue to pursue such trade opportunities lay at the heart of St. Louis's founding. In 1763, just as the Treaty of Paris was being drawn up, Pierre Leclède was traveling up the Mississippi River trying to find a suitable place to set up a new post with from to trade with the Wahzhazhe. He picked his spot just below the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Two years later, the fledgling community welcomed St. Ange as commandant of Upper Louisiana, now that the British controlled Fort de Chartres.³⁵ Now, across the Mississippi River and outside of territory in which the British claimed sovereignty, St. Ange continued his work in St. Louis.

Pontiac's Relationships with French Empire

Throughout the conflict, Pontiac pursued a much more nuanced approach to colonial encroachment than Neolin's eschatological vision of a world in which Europeans and their descendants returned to the eastern side of the Atlantic. Pontiac's hatred burned only for the British, and he consistently longed for both the continued presence of the French in the trans-Appalachian West and requested the support of any French person who could lend aid. He had had a sustained relationship with the French of Detroit and had fought beside them during the Seven Years' War. In 1757, when Croghan himself

³⁴ John Reda, "From Subjects to Citizens: Two Pierres and the French Influence on the Transformation of the Illinois Country," in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America, 1630-1815*, ed. Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013), 159-163.

³⁵ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 72.

tried to persuade Odawa to join the British in fighting the French, Pontiac resisted and expressed his steadfast allegiance to the French cause.³⁶ It is thus little surprise that in 1763, before official start of the conflict that would come to bear his name, Pontiac delivered a speech in council with Odawa, Wendat [Huron], and Bodéwadmi [Potawatomi] peoples. In it he made clear that his proposed war was against an invading nation, not colonialism writ large, stating that “it is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us.” He continued, asking:

All the nations who are our brothers attack them, why should we not attack? Are we not men like them? Have I not shown you the wampum belts which I received from our Great Father, the Frenchman? He tells us to strike them, why do we not listen to his words? What do we fear? It is time. Do we fear that our brothers, the French, who are here among us will prevent us? They do not know our plans and they could not hinder anyway if they would?³⁷

He clarified that the French were incapable of making war because their weapons had been taken from them by the British, thus implying that the responsibility to resist a British invasion fell on them, those that remained capable of a sustained resistance.

A month later, after the siege of Detroit had begun, he likewise met with concerned French settlers to assure them that he saw them as valuable allies and brothers within a larger conflict against the British. As Pontiac stated, “I do not doubt, my brothers, that this war causes you annoyance because of the movement of our brothers, who are coming and going in your homes constantly; I am chagrined at it, but do not

³⁶ Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 139.

³⁷ Robert Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy*, ed. Clarence Monroe Burton (Detroit: Speaker-Hines Printing Company, 1913), 38.

think, my brothers, that I inspire the harm which is being done to you.” He continued, asking:

How does it come then, my brothers, that you would think me today ready to turn my weapons against you? No, my brothers, I am the same French Pontiac who helped you seventeen years ago; I am French and I want to die French, and I repeat that it is altogether your interests and mine that I avenge. Let me carry out my plan. I do not demand your assistance, because I know you could not give it; I only ask for provisions for myself and all my followers. If, however, you should like to help me I would not refuse; you would please me and get out of trouble the quicker, for I promise when the English shall be driven away from here, or killed, we shall withdraw to our villages, following our custom, to await the coming of our French Father.³⁸

Again, he acknowledged that he understood that they were not in a position to take up arms, but that did not mean they did not have a role to play in the conflict. Moreover, Pontiac saw a clear alignment between the plight of his people and the French *habitants* who feared a future as British subjects.

However, it would seem that the desires of these *habitants* no longer aligned with the French officials who remained in the region during this period of transition. A month before George Croghan began his trip to Fort Pitt, St. Ange, still at his post in the *pays de Illinois*, wrote to Colonel John Bradstreet, responding to an earlier letter delivered by the same Maisonville who later accompanied Lieutenant Fraser, requesting assistance in rooting out French *habitants* and traders who were providing assistance to Pontiac and other Indigenous leaders. St. Ange did so with the formality that was standard for communications between officers and gentlemen of the time, saying “that you did me the honor to write to me on the subject of the Frenchmen who have evil intentions

³⁸ Navarre, *Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy*, 124-126.

concerning the Indians.” St. Ange continued, making sure to put distance between himself and the individuals in question, stating:

these same Frenchmen, since the capture of Canada, have always lived among the tribes, and are on that account beyond the control of the French government and that of England.... I am convinced that these same people, who are vagrants, have fallen in with the sentiment of the tribes who have made war upon you and who, to put off the time of their punishment are still re-exciting the same Indians to continue the war; in short, sir, I know nothing about this and do not even know whether they find kindred spirits among the Indians. What I can assure you of is that if such persons fell into my power, I should take away from them the opportunity of continuing this maneuver, thus satisfying the demand you have made me concerning them; and conforming to the orders I have, there is nothing more that I can do to remedy the situation until I am in a position to do that.³⁹

Three things are striking about this paragraph. First, it is consistent with the broader historiographical consensus regarding formal French support for the Indigenous war effort. St. Ange, as a French official, seemed to be expressing a sincere support for the British during this period of imperial transition. Second, however, was that St. Ange does not deny that there was some form of French support, even if St. Ange saw the supporters as “vagrants,” who were using the war effort to avoid punishment from official authorities. That being said, it is the third striking feature of this paragraph that is so important for the argument of this chapter. In the end, St. Ange admits that he was, even in his position of authority, incapable of doing more to help stop these “vagrants” from continuing to offer their support of Indigenous military efforts.

Within this same letter, St. Ange next turned his attention to one such vagrant, a man by the name of St. Vincent. St. Ange informed Colonel Bradstreet that St. Ange was:

³⁹ St. Ange to General Bradstreet, 5 January, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

less inclined than you to punish [St. Vincent], considering that he has always lived in the posts of the Canadien territory, and that he is under the protection of Indians whom I can only control by letting them know, in a gentle way, of their evil enterprise and of the wrong they are doing in opposing your arrival here.

St. Ange continued, ensuring Bradstreet that he was doing everything in his power and that he begged Bradstreet “to be persuaded, thus to believe that if it is possible for me to arrest Mr. St. Vincent as well as his companions (if he has any) I shall do it as you desire.”⁴⁰

St. Vincent was close with Pontiac himself, and had been assisting him in communicating with his associates throughout the trans-Appalachian West, and all available evidence adds credence to St. Ange’s claim that the French supporters were deeply embedded within Indigenous communities. The British Captain Thomas Morris, whose record of his encounter with Pontiac was later published, gave a vibrant, albeit deeply prejudiced description of St. Vincent.⁴¹ In fact, it was likely Morris’s encounter with St. Vincent that prompted Bradstreet to reach out to St. Ange in the first place. Morris was sent by Bradstreet on an ill-fated mission in 1764 to try to persuade the Indians he met along the route to Fort Chartres to lay down their arms.⁴² Accompanied by a French Canadien named Jacques Godefroy—who was sentenced to be hanged but

⁴⁰ St. Ange to General Bradstreet, 5 January, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁴¹ Throughout his published journal, it is abundantly clear that Morris was more concerned about making sure that he was telling a riveting and therefore a “bestselling” story, rather than an accurate account of his encounters. While it is clear from unpublished sources that Morris did in fact take this trip, I will be especially judicious in how his journal is used as evidence.

⁴² This was part of the larger yet equally unsuccessful Bradstreet expedition, which was conducted simultaneously with Colonel Bouquet’s expedition into the Ohio Country. See Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 617-626.

received a pardon in return for his translation services—an Ojibwe chief named Warsong, an Odawa chief named Attawang, as well as other unnamed Haudenosaunee Indigenous allies,⁴³ Morris journeyed toward Kekionga along the Maumee River.⁴⁴ While the majority of the population of Kekionga was Myaamia and has at times been called “the capital” of the Myaamia nation, it was actually a diverse collection of ethnic communities centered at the vital portage between the Wabash and Maumee Rivers. As such, it had grown into a central location for Indigenous nations looking to conduct international diplomacy between themselves, and thus it was not surprising that this was Morris’s intended destination.⁴⁵ However, before making it to Kekionga, Morris first passed through Odawa village that was home to Pontiac. Outside the village a large delegation of Myaamia were camped, and Morris was “astonished to see a great number of white flags flying,” which were likely designed to be representations of the *drapeau blanc* flown by the French military.⁴⁶ However, no sooner had he arrived in the village than he was surrounded by Pontiac and his men. His party now captured, Morris came face to face with St. Vincent. According to Morris “by his dress, and the air he assumed, he appeared

⁴³ Morris lists these Indigenous allies as “Mohawk” or Kanien’kehá:ka, although other documents make clear that at least one of them was Onyota’a:ka [Oneida]. Below, it is noted that Pontiac spoke directly to these unnamed allies and says that they were representatives from the nation that first sent him war belts which would imply that at least some were in fact Onödowá’ga [Seneca], likely from the Ohio Country. As such, I am choosing to describe them broadly as Haudenosaunee.

⁴⁴ In the historical record, this river is sometimes referred to as the “Miami River.” In order to not cause confusion with the Great Miami River, which is not far from the Maumee River in what is today Western Ohio, I will substitute “Maumee” for “Miami” in quotations.

⁴⁵ Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 71-72.

⁴⁶ On the whole, historian Gregory Evans Dowd reads these events somewhat differently than I do. However, regarding the flags, he argues that they were likely created by the Indigenous inhabitants as a way of demonstrating their allegiance to the French. On this particular interpretation of Morris’s journal, I am in full agreement. Gregory Evans Dowd, “The French King Wakes Up in Detroit: ‘Pontiac’s War’ in Rumor and History,” *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 265.

to be a French officer: I afterwards found that he was a native of old France, had been long in the regular troops as a drummer, and that his war name was St. Vincent.”⁴⁷ St. Vincent then invited Morris to join a formal council. There Pontiac spoke to Morris, translated by Godefroy, and presented a letter, written in French, that claimed that following a British defeat in Louisiana, a French army had landed in New Orleans and was on its way to join the resistance against the British in the trans-Appalachian West. The defeat along the Mississippi did indeed happen, as an earlier attempt to send troops to Fort Chartres under the command of Major Arthur Loftus had met resistance from the Quapaw [Arkansas] and Tunica and were forced to turn back.⁴⁸ However, as for the other details, Morris was confident that the letter was a forgery, and regardless of whether Morris intuited this or was privy to much better military intelligence, he was correct. The next day, the council resumed and Morris made clear that the French had surrendered and ceded these lands to the British. At this, according to Morris, a Myaamiaki “chief,” who was likely a *neenawihtoowa*, or war chief, “started up and spoke very loud, in his singular language and laughed. Godefroy whispered me that it was very lucky that he received my intelligence with contempt and not anger, and desired me to say no more, but sit down, and let [Attawang] speak; accordingly I say down, and [Attawang] produced his belts, and spoke.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ “Journal of Captain Thomas Morris, of His Majesty’s XVII Regiment of Infantry; Detroit, September 25, 1764,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: A. H. Clark Company, 1904), 304.

⁴⁸ “Loftus Attempts to Ascend the River” in *TCP*, 225-232.

⁴⁹ Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 305-306. It is possible that this *neenawihtoowa* was a man named Le Gris, who would later meet Croghan in Kekionga a year later. Anson, *The Miami Indians*, 69.

The rest of Morris's report requires careful analysis, as it is clear that Morris was neither a good interpreter of Indigenous protocols nor terribly thorough when recounting important diplomatic events. However, the relationships and contours of the events nonetheless gesture towards the diplomatic role played by Frenchmen among Indigenous people. According to Morris, St. Vincent was more receptive to Morris's arguments about the supposed lies contained within Pontiac's letter, and eventually Pontiac resigned himself to the fact that the tide was turning against his leadership. As Morris reports, Pontiac addressed Morris's Indigenous colleague, likely an Onödowá'ga, saying "if you have made peace with the English, we have no business to make war on them. The war belts came from you." However, more tellingly, Pontiac then addressed Godefroy, saying "I will lead the nations to war no more; let 'em be at peace, if they choose it: but I myself will never be a friend to the English. I shall now become a wanderer in the woods and if they come to seek me there, while I have an arrow left, I will shoot at them."⁵⁰ Despite Morris being the only official representative of the British present, Pontiac seemingly ignored him. While it is certainly possible that Pontiac was turning first to a fellow Indian and then a Frenchman who knew Algonquian languages simply because they would be the most likely to understand Pontiac's words, Pontiac had directly addressed Morris earlier. Considering the reprimand that Morris received from his own colleague, it would appear that the turn towards speaking to and through Frenchmen was not a mere act of convenience.

⁵⁰ Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 307.

This is not to say that Morris was not seen as an official voice and Godefroy was. Instead, Godefroy's French identity trumped his assignment as a member of a British diplomatic retinue. After Pontiac resigned himself to staying alone in the woods, the council appeared to go off the rails. The rest of the Indigenous people gathered at council, with the exception of Morris's colleagues, determined that they should put Morris to death. Pontiac, however, intervened, arguing that "we must not kill ambassadors," pointing out that when diplomats from southern Indigenous nations arrived, whom Pontiac termed "our greatest enemies," they were "always treated with hospitality," an argument that Morris cited as being evidence that Pontiac "was acquainted with the Law of Nations."⁵¹ Morris was apparently saved in this moment, but things continued to go downhill for his party. One member of Morris's Indigenous escort apparently made off with the party's supplies, except for two barrels of rum that he sold to the Odawa village. As the Odawa men consumed the rum, they again attempted to kill Morris, but he was saved this time by Godefroy. Morris then hid, admitting that he was "concealed under my mattress, as all the young Indians were determined to murder me," and "was afterwards obliged to put on Indian shoes and cover myself with a blanket to look like a savage, and escape by fording the river into a field of Indian corn with St. Vincent, Godefroy, and the other Canadien." Morris, along with any other English member of the party, thus spent the rest of their time in the town under the guard of either a Frenchman or, in the case of Morris, Attawang's two sons.

⁵¹ Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 307.

Morris next relied on French assistance to make an escape from an increasingly dangerous situation. With a bit of help, Morris was able to leave the village the next day, seemingly abandoning any hope of convincing the Indigenous people of accepting the presence of a British officer. He was, however, leaving with two smaller diplomatic victories. He was first and foremost able to convince one of Pontiac's most important French allies, St. Vincent, to join the trip to Kekionga. He likewise succeeded in making a positive impression on at least one of the Odawa diplomats, whom Morris called "the Little Chief," who sent his son to join Morris's party and gave Morris a copy of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in return for some gunpowder.⁵² Morris did not record any concrete diplomatic work surrounding this act of trade, but it is important to remember that exchanges such as these were diplomatic and political acts within Indigenous cultures rather than simple commercial ones. This moment was described in a tone by Morris that was designed to serve as evidence for his settler colonial audience of the inferiority of the Indigenous economic mind, but instead it should be seen as evidence of Morris's defective understanding of transcultural diplomacy.

Rather than a sound record of transcultural diplomacy, much of Morris's description is tied up in the distortions that both anthropologists and literary scholars have noted are characteristic of captivity narratives.⁵³ However, there continued to be telling hints of the important diplomatic role of French individuals. As they made their

⁵² Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 307-308.

⁵³ For example, see Pauline Turner Strong, *Captive Selves, Captivating Others: The Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Gordon Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

way down the Maumee River toward the *pays de Illinois*, Morris was again captured while, by his telling, leisurely enjoying his newly found copy of Shakespeare in the canoe while the rest of his party fished. The party was taken into Fort Miamis, which at that point was without a garrison as it had been defeated earlier during the war. However, while the British no longer had a presence, the French *habitants* remained, as did a Kekionga on the other side of the river. According to Morris, his captors “led my Indians to the village, on the other side of the water, and told me to stay in the fort with the French inhabitants; though care had been taken to forbid them to receive me into their houses, and some strings of wampum, on which the French had spoken to spare my life, had been refuted.” Apparently, Lenape and Shaawanwaki delegates had arrived and “having come there with fourteen belts and six strings of wampum,” had “declared they would perish to a man before they would make peace with the English.”⁵⁴ The Lenape and Shaawanwaki were apparently persuasive, as Morris was then tied up and prepared for ritual torture. Again, it was up to Morris’s French colleagues to save him, with both Godefroy and St. Vincent pleading for Morris to be spared. Again, Morris bumbled his way through advocating for himself, with Godefroy again admonishing Morris and urging him to stay quiet lest he make his case worse. Eventually Morris was untied but not yet set at liberty. According to Morris, P’Koum-Kwa, commonly known as Pacanne who was the *akima*, or civil chief, at Kekionga, rose and said, “I give that man his life. If you want meat go to Detroit, or upon the lake and you’ll find enough. What business

⁵⁴ Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 312-313.

have you with this man's flesh, who is come to speak to us?"⁵⁵ He was then given a pipe to smoke but simultaneously shoved out of the room. Presumably confused by the rituals taking place that he could not understand, he next chose to lay low in the home of another Frenchman named L'Esperance, and in the middle of the night was informed by St. Vincent that discussions about his release were not going well. Morris resolved to make a run for it and abandoned his mission. He gave all of the gifts that he had brought with him to conduct diplomacy to those few Indigenous people who had aided him, abandoned many of his personal belongings, which had been left "with one Capucin, a Frenchman," and finally left a letter from Colonel Bradstreet with St. Vincent along with a "signed certificate which he was pleased to put into my hands, specifying that, on many occasions, he had saved my life," to be delivered to St. Ange himself. In return, St. Vincent gave a letter to Morris to be passed along to Pontiac.⁵⁶

Morris eventually made it to safety, and British authorities, in light of both the failure of Morris's mission as well as Colonel Bradstreet's larger campaign, began to investigate what exactly went wrong. Surprisingly, one of the most prominent diplomats of the Onyota'a:ka [Oneida], Thomas King, was also a part of Morris's party, presumably one of the unnamed Indigenous people who accompanied him. Considering Thomas King's renown, his absence from Morris's record would cast the reliability of Morris's

⁵⁵ Historian Harvey Lewis Carter, for one, finds P'Koum-Kwa's actions confusing when taken at face value. Despite Morris calling P'Koum-Kwa a "king" of the Myaamia, he also noted that he was a youth at the time. Anson suspects that P'Koum-Kwa was using the ritual release of Morris as a way of assuming his new role as *akima*. Harvey Lewis Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle: First Sagamore of the Wabash* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 68. See also, Karen L. Marrero, *Detroit's Hidden Channels* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2020), 142-143. I have removed Morris's parenthetical asides from the quotation, in which he makes clear that by "meat" P'Koum-Kwa was referencing ritual cannibalism and that going "upon the lake" meant fighting their English enemies.

⁵⁶ Morris, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 1, 316-324.

account in doubt, were it not for King's testimony during a court of enquiry held later that fall in Sandusky. King testified that, "Pontiac had received a letter from the King of France with an account that he had been *dead*, and *risen again*." He likewise confirmed the presence of St. Vincent, who advocated on behalf of Morris and his colleagues. The main difference between King's account and Morris's is the attention King gave to the specific details of performing diplomacy according to the proper protocols, which is unsurprising considering how apparently ill-prepared Morris was to do this kind of work. According to King, Morris "was naked and bound, and an Indian prepared with his tomahawk ready to dispatch him," at which point Pontiac's nephew cut him loose saying, "will this one Englishman atone for all my brethren now exposed at Detroit?" King continued to negotiate, using wampum belts and formal diplomatic protocols to counter the presence of belts from Indigenous allies in the Ohio country that had been sent to encourage the continuation of hostilities against the British. King informed Morris's captors that King "was sent by Colonel Bradstreet and the chiefs of the Six Nations in order to make peace with hem, if they were inclined to it—that if they had anything to say, the road should be open from the Illinois to Onondaga."⁵⁷

But King was not the only Indigenous diplomat to testify to the failings of Morris's expedition and the way the concept of French support was expressed. At a treaty conference held at Johnson Hall later in December of 1764, a man named Tahaghtaghquisere spoke, saying "he was surprised Colonel Bradstreet did not use some means (when desired by them) to have a French officer and his small party of about five

⁵⁷ "Testimony of Thomas King," in *WJP* vol. XI, 369-372.

in number at the Maumee River apprehended who were come to Pontiac and his part to stir him and the Indians up against the English.” He continued, saying that Thomas King received “a large French flag, which he said would be a protection to those who carried it,” a flag that he handed over upon returning to Detroit. He then lashed out at Bradstreet, noting that Bradstreet blamed his failures on his Indigenous allies’ unwillingness to fight, saying “we always thought that a great man, or head warrior would not *lie*; but now we see otherwise; for we were always ready, had he shown us where and set the example. But all he wanted was that some of us Indians should go and try to scalp one of the [Shaawanwaki] or [Lenape] while he lie in his camp idle.”⁵⁸

Untangling St. Vincent’s exact role here is challenging. Morris was an unreliable narrator when it came to recounting Indigenous diplomacy. However, there are assuredly certain patterns that emerge. Firstly, St. Vincent clearly had the ear of Pontiac in ways that an Englishman did not. On the face of it, that is not surprising—individuals like St. Vincent had long lived in close proximity with Indigenous people, spoke their language, and more importantly, understood their discourse. But what may be more telling is the important role played by Godefroy. Twice during particularly precarious points in negotiations where Morris’s life was on the line, he was told to be quiet and let the experts handle things. As both King and Tahaghtaghquisere’s later testimonies make clear, there was plenty of high-level and high-stakes diplomacy taking place, using all of the requisite protocols and spiritually entangled ritual use of both wampum and torture. These were negotiations that had profound implications for the military strategies and

⁵⁸ “Indian Proceedings, December 2-16, 1764,” in *WJP* vol. XI, 504-505.

foreign relations approaches of the Indigenous nations present. For the historian Gregory Evans Dowd, the presence of Indigenous-made French flags and Pontiac's forged letter is evidence of an Indigenous strategy of trying to convince French authorities to return to the imperial role in the trans-Appalachian West. But such an argument under-examines the importance of status that individuals like St. Vincent and Godefroy carried with them, as, to use Pontiac's term, "ambassadors."⁵⁹ Triangulating between Morris and Indigenous accounts, it is clear that formal diplomacy was being conducted during both of Morris's captivities. Morris himself attested to the use of wampum as a negotiating tactic by French people. Tahaghtaghquisere likewise was perplexed by the British position, which let these French *habitants* remain despite their commitment to continue to "stir" up trouble. To say that Tahaghtaghquisere's frustration was in response to a French nuisance, in which traders passed along rumors in order to incite Indians, does not make enough space for a core difference in political ontology between Indigenous peoples and European empires.⁶⁰ Instead, Tahaghtaghquisere was so angry because British officials seemingly could not see the French traders for who they were, French agents offering support for the Indigenous resistance to British occupation through official Indigenous diplomatic institutions.

In fact, the moment when Morris commented that Pontiac's defense of his life as an "ambassador" was evidence that Pontiac was aware of the "Law of Nations" serves as

⁵⁹ Dowd, "The French King Wakes Up in Detroit."

⁶⁰ Dowd continues to investigate the power of rumor in Early America in his work *Groundless: Rumors, Legends and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). While this work is masterful in its alignment to a theoretical approach to rumor, it is also the exact kind of approach to truth and rumor that the ontological turn in anthropology seeks to problematize. See also Joshua Piker, "Lying Together: The Imperial Implications of Cross-Cultural Untruths," *The American Historical Review* 116, no. 4 (Oct. 2011): 964-986.

a particularly revealing dense transfer point between two distinct political ontologies. Negotiations such as those taking place during Morris's expedition represent a moment in which these two logics became entangled. While British delegates approached these negotiations with a particular set of assumptions about treaty law, so too did Indians. In some cases, these two systems overlapped neatly. But that was not the case in the *pays de Illinois* during Pontiac's War. Morris was approaching this moment carrying basic understandings about how the world of diplomacy, one orchestrated by Atlantic empires, operated, and in this moment Pontiac's actions seemed to evince a similar understanding. But according to an equally vibrant and institutionalized "Indigenous Law of Nations," Pontiac actually had an overlapping but not wholly congruent understanding of who Morris was in the Indigenous diplomatic world. In the case of this particular set of negotiations, Morris had a roughly equivalent role in both worlds. However, men like Godefroy and St. Vincent did not. In the case of Godefroy, this was a man who was to be hanged by British authorities as a traitor, but who was being pardoned because of his skills as a translator. However, in those moments when Godefroy told Morris to be quiet, it was clear that Morris's status did not rival Godefroy's in the eyes of the Indigenous people who were deciding whether Morris was to live or die. In fact, throughout the narrative, Godefroy's life was seemingly never threatened, despite being an officially sanctioned agent of the British. Instead, his status as a Frenchman within the world of the Indigenous Law of Nations was more important to the Indigenous diplomats than his current association with the British imperial project.

Thomas King was a much more reliable voice for articulating Indigenous political philosophy-in-action. Much of his testimony during the court of enquiry intricately described Indigenous protocols at work, especially the exchange of wampum. Both Morris and King report that Pontiac was eager to confer with the Haudenosaunee who accompanied Morris. In fact, having taken Morris into custody, Pontiac then claimed that he did so because he thought Morris was in the custody of the Haudenosaunee delegates, saying “the reason he had struck was owing to his having through the Six Nations had continued in carrying on the war, from the belts he had received from [Genesee] sent him by the [Onödowá’ga], and that he should take care for the future how he should be deceived.” To help their party in the future, Pontiac produced a very large belt “to make the road clear, that nothing should molest them, and gave it to St. Vincent a French trader to deliver it.”⁶¹ What is so striking is that while Pontiac was actively apologizing for attacking Morris and endeavoring to help Morris avoid being attacked in the future, Morris was not given custody of the belt. Instead, that highly important and necessary diplomatic role was handed over to St. Vincent. Later, as Morris was being prepared to be released, St. Vincent admonished the Myaamiaki who had continued to threaten Morris saying, “he was astonished at their behavior whilst Pontiac was making peace.” The Myaamiaki responded saying “had you delivered us this belt before their arrival, this would never have happened.”⁶² Again, it was a Frenchman who was seen, this time by the Myaamiaki, as the person with the authority and responsibility to negotiate. Just as

⁶¹ “Testimony of Thomas King,” in *WJP* vol. XI, 369-370.

⁶² “Testimony of Thomas King,” in *WJP* vol. XI, 370.

Morris had interpreted Pontiac's comment as evidence of Pontiac's understanding of the Law of Nations, the Myaamiaki looked to St. Vincent as a person who had both understanding and the requisite status within the context of the Indigenous Law of Nations.

Croghan, Fraser, Kaské, and Capucin at the Confluence of Laws of Nations

As noted in the previous chapter, George Croghan's role as a trader and a diplomat made him keenly aware of the importance of gift-giving within transcultural diplomacy and politics. But it also meant that he understood how his status empowered him within Indigenous communities—and he could identify those with similar status who played similar roles as transcultural diplomats. As soon as he arrived at Fort Pitt, as was previously noted, his ability to provide the requisite exchange was put into jeopardy. Not only the did the “Black Boys” destroy his train of goods, Pennsylvania regulations prevented Croghan from engaging in a sustained exchange that would bind the Shaawanwaki, Lenape, and Ohio Onödowá'ga in a lasting peace. But he also knew that the continued presence of French traders west of Fort Pitt meant that the Indigenous peoples of the Ohio Valley had other options. Beginning in March of 1765, waves of Indigenous peoples came with their goods looking to trade and grew impatient with Croghan when Croghan informed them that the reopening of trade was dependent on further negotiations.⁶³ However, their frustration was made all the more concerning when

⁶³ “George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765,” *The New Regime*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1916), 2-3, 5-6, (hereafter *TNR*).

delegates also spoke of other European gift-givers and traders. On March 1, a day after Croghan arrived, he received word from the Onödowá'ga:

that the deputation from the [Shaawanwaki] and [Lenape], which were sent last summer to the Illinois to counsel with the French and Indians in that country, were returned, that they had been well received by the French, who on their arrival, clothed them and told them they would supply with every necessary they wanted to carry on the war against the English and would send traders with them to their towns when they should set out.⁶⁴

Such news startled Croghan, who penned a letter to General Thomas Gage after the meetings at Fort Pitt had been completed, stating that:

as soon as I set out from Fort Pitt, I spoke to the [Shaawanwaki] about the French traders that was yet at their towns, near the Plains of Scioto and told them they must send some of their warriors to bring those French traders to the mouth of the Scioto that I might take them to the Illinois, as they had no right now to Trade with any Indian nations without permission from your excellency.⁶⁵

While Croghan successfully navigated the treacherous waters caused by the destruction of his goods, he knew that he needed to address the continued presence of French traders lest they continue to undermine his own ability to establish peace through the ties of material exchange.

Certainly, the regulation of legal and illegal trade was a legitimate concern for an empire that had grown increasingly proactive in the administration of its territories in North America in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War. In this sense, simply stopping Frenchmen who operated west of Fort Pitt would be a clear object of the Lords of Trade who oversaw the Indian Department. But Croghan clearly took the Onödowá'ga and

⁶⁴ "George Croghan's Journals, February 28, 1765—October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 1-2.

⁶⁵ "George Croghan to Thomas Gage, May 26, 1765," in *TNR*, 22.

Shaawanwaki at their word, becoming fearful that French traders were supplying the Indigenous war effort. However, while Croghan's opinion here is hearsay at best, there is also direct evidence of such illegal traders working against English interests in support of Pontiac. At the same time that Croghan was making his way to Detroit, Sir William Johnson came into possession of an intercepted letter from a French trader, J. Capucin—the same Capucin who was given custody of Morris's belongings after his hasty flight back to Detroit—who was living in Vincennes along the Wabash River. Johnson forwarded it to the proper authorities with the note indicating that the “author, who is well known, has spoke the sense of all the French... and his unjust charge against the English manifests the tales they propagate to stir up the spirit of discord among the Indians.”⁶⁶ Moreover, there was at least some evidence that Capucin had a direct connection to Pontiac himself, as the letter was addressed to Baptiste Campau, who had served as a translator and transcriber for Pontiac in Detroit.⁶⁷ As the letter states, “Mr. George Croghan is much expected; but I think that, if he arrives, he will be no better received than the others.” As evidence of his expectations for Croghan's cold reception, Capucin cited the many boats of English goods that the Indians of the Illinois Country rejected as well as the French goods that continued to flow through the region. He concluded his letter with a statement of unbridled confidence, claiming that “everyone seems to stretch out his arms to us. Heaven grant that the seeming disposition may come

⁶⁶ “J. Capucin to Baptiste Campau, June 7, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 763-764.

⁶⁷ “Indian Intelligence, June 4, 1764,” in *WJP*, vol. XI, 219.

from the bottom of their hearts, and that the devices of the English may not corrupt the nations. *That is what we must wish* [emphasis original].”⁶⁸

If one is dubious about claims of a French conspiracy, it would be easy to assume that in this moment Johnson was projecting when he claimed that Capucin spoke for all the French. However, what is clear in the letter is that Capucin was working directly against Croghan’s peace process. More than that, Capucin had been paying close attention to the news that circulated in the *pays de Illinois*, and was shockingly up-to-date on the British diplomatic plans. But perhaps most importantly, Capucin was keenly aware of the flow of goods moving up the Mississippi River along French trade routes, and that despite alleged British control of these routes, this control was not reflected on the ground. As Capucin wrote, “the English are not attempting to come up to the Illinois country,” out of fear of the power of the Shaawanwaki and Illiniwek. Aware that a French escort made it easier for goods to pass freely, the British even tried to use French agents loyal to the British cause to disguise their shipments. As Capucin continued, “in spite of this Frenchmen are found who have undertaken to come up with two boat loads of English merchandise on English account, but Pontiac is waiting for them to put them in the stew.”⁶⁹ French identity may have made it easier to pass through Indigenous spaces along the Mississippi River and into the Illinois Country, but it would seem that the Frenchmen under British employ lacked the status built through sustained material and diplomatic exchange that people like Capucin and Croghan possessed.

⁶⁸ “J. Capucin to Baptiste Campau, June 7, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 765-766.

⁶⁹ “J. Capucin to Baptiste Campau, June 7, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 764-765.

It would likewise seem that Capucin was a master of the transcultural communication networks that connected a place like Vincennes to not only imperial metropolises but also Indigenous communities. As historian Katherine Grandjean argues, places like Vincennes were “communications frontiers.” As Grandjean notes, a communications frontier is emblematic of “the movement of people, goods, and information (communications) across a region of inter-cultural contact (frontier.)”⁷⁰ The ability to see these networks with a birds-eye-view, let alone influence them, yielded great power. In Vincennes, Capucin had a keen sense of large-scale imperial politics, knowing both about Croghan’s pending arrival as well as the political situation in New Orleans as French administrators oversaw the slow transition of the city from French to Spanish control. And Capucin was not the only Frenchman with a similar mastery of the communications frontier. In fact, assuming that the story Capucin shared about the reception of Frenchmen escorting English goods is the same as similar intelligence gathered during a court of enquiry in Detroit, Capucin was but one of a series of French *habitants* who wielded significant diplomatic power as representatives of French interests in the post-French-controlled Illinois Country.

When Captain Morris had passed through Fort Miamis on his failed mission to the Illinois, he did at least succeed in convincing one Frenchman to start feeding intelligence to British military officials. By the time Croghan started negotiations at Fort Pitt, British

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that Grandjean acknowledges the problematic history of the term “frontier,” and I wholeheartedly agree with the dangers of those problems. However, like her, I find the value of emphasizing the liminal nature of these spaces outweighs the more problematic associations of the term. Katherine Grandjean, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 11. See also Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.)

officers at Detroit listened intently as this man, by the name of John Baptist Billiond, passed along information about an impending attack staged by the Myaamiaki as well as support being offered by St. Vincent and other Frenchmen at the post. Determined to warn Captain Morris of the forthcoming attack, Billiond hid a note in the barrel of a musket. Unfortunately for Billiond, a man named “Clermont and one St. Vincent, two Frenchmen, had wrote in the name of Pontiac to the Chiefs of the [Myaamiaki],” informing them that there were informants in their midst and “recommended to them to pillage [the informant].” To underscore the sincerity of their words, “Clermont had bought two barrels of powder, one of which he promised the Indians at [Fort Miamis] if they would commit hostilities at Detroit.” However, while Billiond had his gun confiscated, the note inside remained undetected until the gun was thrown in the river, perhaps to render it useless as a firearm, which caused the note to be discovered as it floated to the surface. Clermont, having then read the letter, confronted Billiond and demanded that he read it out loud as well. Bravely, Billiond not only refused but “took up the letter, tore it, and threw it into the fire, as he knew Clermont would make ill use of it.” After leaving instructions that Billiond should have all of his possessions given to the Indigenous people there were he to attempt to escape, Clermont next travelled to Fort Ouiatenon. This connection between Fort Miamis and Fort Ouiatenon was apparently central to his work among the Myaamiaki, as he had only recently returned from there, having bought a two gallon keg of rum that he gave to the Myaamiaki, “telling them it

was [from] their Father.”⁷¹ Billiond then added that “before the drinking of the rum, the Indians had not the least disposition for war.”⁷²

While Billiond described a single event in significant detail, two other Frenchmen, Mr. Potvine and Mr. Tadot, provided a broader sense of the politics at work at Fort Miamis during the same investigation. According to Potvine, the Myaamiaki had grown increasingly concerned about the threat of ethnically French people working for the British, with Clermont being the most vociferous voice articulating the danger of the presence of such individuals. In particular, Clermont grew suspicious of the intentions of any French people coming from Detroit, whose British garrison never fell during the conflict. Potvine named both Godefroy and Maisonville as two such Frenchmen under British employ.⁷³ Tadot’s testimony echoed Potvine’s sentiments. When Tadot arrived at Fort Miamis, he was immediately taken captive by the Myaamiaki. According to Tadot, “they carried him to the fort as a prisoner telling him he was an Englishman.” They began to question Tadot, asking him “why he came as such a good for nothing... upon their ground?” They continued, saying “this road is not for Englishmen, it belongs to our Father and we will not allow an Englishman to pass. The English say this land belongs to them, and that our Father gave it to them, can he give what is not his? Our Father said when he made the road that it was only for him to pass.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ The original quotation is “telling them it was *for* their Father” [emphasis mine.] I believe this to be an error somewhere along the transcription chain, whether at the original disposition or as the disposition was copied and distributed. While changing the word “for” to “from” changes the meaning of the phrase significantly, the phrase “for their Father” does not make sense within the larger context of the disposition.

⁷² “A Court of Enquiry, March 11, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 670-671.

⁷³ “A Court of Enquiry, March 28, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 671-672.

⁷⁴ “A Court of Enquiry, April 6, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 673.

While in custody, Tadot was presented with an energetic argument about the pending wars between the French, Spanish, British, and Dutch, information that was deeply inaccurate from an imperial perspective. Yet, while a resumption of imperial war was not in fact forthcoming within the political world of European empires, this was a wholly ontologically different political world. As these Myaamiaki thinkers argued:

The Peace that we have made with them is like that that the French made with them. It is over and there are more people killed on the other side of the great Lake than here. You must have heard that as well as us, but you pretend to be deaf. The Nations here that shake hands with [the British] every day have not made Peace, it is not that way that Peace is made. They go into the Fort, shake hands with them and call them Brothers in order to get a little rum, but if they could catch them out of the Fort they would scalp them. To make a Peace with us the Nations should see one another and chose each a chief to settle the conditions, and then it would be good. You say the [Shaawanwaki] and [Lenape] have made Peace, but I tell you no, if they had made it they would have withdrawn the Belts which they left here and which we now show you, there are fourteen of them. It is not us that made the war, we are only a handful of people therefore incapable of it. 'Tis the [Shaawanwaki] that were the causes of the War. The Chief that was sent here last Fall saw their Belts—if our Father has made Peace with the English why has he not sent a Chief with a Belt to tell us so, and that he has given up his pretensions to trade with us. To them then we should be quiet and stay at home, we have seen peace made three times, at all which times our Father sent a Chief with a Belt and goods to inform us of it. And to bid us not strike the English, at those times we traded with the English. Formerly the English were amongst us, at which our Father was angry, and sent Mr. Belletre [the former French commandant at Detroit] and some Indians to strike us, and we lost two chiefs, and I was wounded.⁷⁵

First, the speaker distinguishes between “Chiefs” and those without that status. Of course, those Europeans with the status of “chiefs” among the Myaamiaki held a different status within European political worlds. But what is more striking is the evidence cited that

⁷⁵“A Court of Enquiry, April 6, 1765,” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 673-674.

demonstrated that the French had not yet abandoned their Indigenous allies. Not only had the Myaamiaki not yet received wampum belts indicating that their French father was no longer in possession of the *pays de Illinois*, but he had not yet “given up his pretensions to trade with us.” It would seem that within the political world of the Myaamiaki, the continued presence of French traders and the goods that they supplied was a signal that the French father was still committed to his allies. Moreover, were the Myaamiaki to trade with English people, they would run the risk of incurring the wrath of their French father.⁷⁶

It is hard to say definitively if French individuals like St. Vincent, Clermont, or Capucin held the status of foreign “chiefs” among the Myaamia. On the one hand, Clermont and St. Vincent seemed to wield immense authority among the Myaamiaki, at least according to the French informants being examined in Detroit. Billiond noted that they had the power to “write in the name of Pontiac,” which at least indicates that they were trusted to speak for someone with such authority. There is less detail with which to try to triangulate Capucin’s status. However, even if these individuals did not act as “chiefs,” they did continue to provide material support which, for Indigenous people, represented maintaining the status quo. Moreover, they proved vital for the gathering of intelligence, especially in regards to who was loyal to the French father and who had instead thrown their lot in with the British.

⁷⁶ Gregory Evans Dowd argues that the presence of “belts” as symbols of alliance cannot be trusted as they could continue to circulate even after political alliances have been altered. However, again, this privileges European political ontologies. Clearly, for those holding these belts among the Myaamiaki, they continued to bind the French and the Myaamiaki in a firm alliance. Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 108-109.

George Croghan departed Fort Pitt on May 15, 1765. Having convinced the Shaawanwaki, Lenape, and Ohio Onödowá'ga to accept the British presence in the Ohio River Valley, he was now on a mission to bring the peoples of the Wabash River and the Illinois Country into a similar peace. He was joined by deputies of all three Ohio River peoples and travelled with two bateaux of goods and wampum in order to properly conduct diplomacy according to the Indigenous Law of Nations. Croghan's associate, Lieutenant Fraser, had already impatiently entered into this space, and a comparison of their two experiences further demonstrates just how two overlapping political ontologies functioned and clashed. Fraser had left over a month earlier, on March 22, accompanied by Maisonville, a British sergeant, some soldiers, and two Indigenous diplomats. His mission was different than Croghan's, as he had been instructed by General Thomas Gage to travel to Fort Chartres in order to deliver a letter to St. Ange. He took with him a single bateaux of provisions along with some wampum with which to perform diplomacy. However, while Fraser's mission was not to make peace with Indigenous peoples—that was Croghan's job—his dismissal of the Indigenous Law of Nations was to prove a mistake. As he waited anxiously for Croghan to begin his business at Fort Pitt, he noted in a letter to Gage that he would be much more efficient in his journey were he to go “with a very few or no Indians.”⁷⁷ In another letter he blamed the delay on the slowness of “the vile formalities attending their councils.”⁷⁸ Moreover, he set off without gifts, having left before Croghan's replacement train had arrived. While he made sure that he

⁷⁷ Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, March 4, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁷⁸ Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, March 21, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

had enough provisions for his journey, he clearly did not have patience to ensure that diplomacy was done well.

Instead of focusing on how best to navigate Indigenous spaces en route to Fort Chartres, Fraser was focused only on rooting out French support. While at Fort Pitt both he and Croghan heard word of French traders living among the Shaawanwaki at their major settlement, Chillicothe, known to Europeans by the very unimaginative name “Lower Shawnee Town.” This was the second major Shaawanwa community to be given either name, as the settlement had formerly been located at the mouth of the Scioto River. However, in 1758 the whole community migrated farther north along the river to escape the threats of Virginian militia during the Seven Years’ War. Croghan was deeply familiar with the community. Not only was it the heart of the Shaawanwaki nation, it was also home to many Lenape and Ohio Onödowá’ga as well as members of other nations that hailed from farther afield. It lay at an important Indigenous crossroads and as such it was a crucial trade hub. In fact, Croghan himself had established a trading post at the original location in 1749, only to see his post destroyed during the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War.⁷⁹ Considering that control of the Ohio Country was the spark that ignited the war, the presence of French traders in such an important Indigenous community so close to the Forks was provocative. According to Fraser, “what is beyond any doubt is that any traders who go amongst them will ever be endeavoring to set them at variance with us and that they have always supplied the Indians that way with arms and ammunition to

⁷⁹ A. Gwynn Henderson, “The Lower Shawnee Town on Ohio: Sustaining Native Autonomy in an Indian ‘Republic,’” in *The Buzzel About Kentuck: Settling the Promised Land*, ed. Craig Thompson Friend (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 25-55. Croghan’s return to the location of the original settlement will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

carry on the war against us.” He continued, putting the blame for their presence squarely on St. Ange, saying: “my getting to the Illinois while these people are actually trading with the Indians will leave Monsieur de St. Ange no room... to deny his giving his assent to these traders, supplying the Indians while at war with us with arms, ammunition, etc.”⁸⁰

While it was certainly possible that St. Ange was intentionally allowing traders to move freely, he consistently made clear that he was powerless to control the movement of these traders, and therefore Fraser’s accusation was likely unfounded. In a letter likely written to Fraser himself, St. Ange insisted that he had done all he could to conduct formal diplomacy and dissuade the Indigenous people of the Illinois Country from continuing their war against the British, noting that he had sent the minutes of the council to Fraser as evidence of his sincerity.⁸¹ Later, after Fraser arrived at Fort Chartres, St. Ange reiterated that “he could not help what traders did who were so far off,” and affirmed British jurisdiction, insisting that the British should not hesitate in arresting illegal traders, stating that they “should seize such [themselves] as were in [their] neighborhood.”⁸² While historians Carl Ekberg and Sharon Person suspect that St. Ange

⁸⁰ Fraser to Gage, March 21, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁸¹ Louis B. St. Ange to [Fraser?], April 7, 1765, Box 3005, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁸² Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, April 27, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives. This letter was extremely long—30 pages in manuscript form—and written by Fraser while in captivity. At one point Fraser asked Gage to “excuse the length of the letter, I had no opportunity of writing before since I left Fort Pitt and I thought it proper to be as minute as possible now, least anything should happen to myself.” He later added that because he was so often threatened unexpectedly, “your excellency can scarcely read what I have wrote—I beg your excellency will be good enough to overlook the many faults that my hurry must have occasioned it.” As such, I have judiciously made some small grammatical edits and excised words that did not make sense within the structure of Fraser’s sentences because they appear to be artifacts of a man who could not carefully chose nor edit his words.

offered his support to the British transition begrudgingly, it would seem that St. Ange was at least making an effort.⁸³ However, assuming that St. Ange was being nothing but sincere, his claim of impotence in controlling the actions of traders further illustrates just how much more powerful the Indigenous Law of Nations was in the Illinois Country. As Fraser traveled down the Ohio River, he moved through a truly Indigenous space.

Fraser's first two meetings with Indigenous people went smoothly enough. Like Morris before him, Fraser's records of his diplomatic work were thin, due to either his arrogance or ignorance. He first met Lenape people who were returning from a hunt, and Fraser apparently had to dissuade them from believing that another British army was about to enter into the Ohio Country. As Fraser recounted, "I assured them that they had nothing to fear and that Mr. Croghan was at Fort Pitt awaiting the arrival of their chiefs whom he daily expected—I told them I was on my way to the Illinois on some business" of Gage's. Apparently he was convincing as he also asked if "one of them would go along with me; one of them accordingly offered to come and has been with me ever since." He next reached the mouth of the Scioto River, south of the second settlement of Chillicothe where he met some Shaawanwaki. He again heard that there were French traders present, and he became particularly concerned about a canoe full of goods—including bars of lead—which Fraser interpreted as being French. However, his interactions with the Shaawanwaki were pleasant enough, perhaps because he unknowingly engaged in meaningful small-scale exchange. As Fraser recounted, "I gave them a little salt and some tobacco, which they were very well pleased with, though they had asked nothing—they

⁸³ Ekberg and Person, *St. Louis Rising*, 68-71.

gave us such as they had to eat and made me a present of some venison.” However, rather than interpreting this exchange as a successful diplomatic act in accordance with the Indigenous Law of Nations, he attributed “their generosity and modesty more to their fear of our men than anything else, as [our men] were more in number... I can scarcely suspect the French traders who are amongst them have imported *good will to the English* [emphasis original] among other commodities.⁸⁴

However, these easy interactions were not to presage an uneventful journey to Fort Chartres. Upon reaching the mouth of the Wabash, the ever impatient Fraser decided to split his party, leaving the British sergeant and some of his Indigenous guides with the bateaux so that Fraser could move more quickly with only Maisonville, two soldiers, and two Indigenous guides. This was a poor choice, as he did not feel it was necessary to include in his party anyone who had traveled the roads into the Illinois Country before. Likewise, at some point the bateaux was robbed and nearly destroyed by the strong currents. However, Fraser’s biggest issue was convincing the Indigenous people that he met along the road not to take him into custody. Once he reached the village of Kaskaskia, he was advised by the residents to only travel at night lest he be captured. He tried to convince one of the French residents to serve as an escort, but he was unsuccessful. However, while it appears he did not heed to the advice to travel at night, he arrived at Fort Chartres unscathed. It would seem this was simply luck, as St. Ange, upon meeting him, told him “he was very sorry that [Fraser] came in the day time as he

⁸⁴ Fraser to Gage, April 27, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

was afraid the Indians might insist on getting [Fraser] from him before I could be got away by favor of the night.”⁸⁵

St. Ange was right to fear for Fraser’s safety, for that evening Pontiac himself along with eight of his colleagues interrupted Fraser’s dinner and took hold of him. Luckily for Fraser, both St. Ange and a priest were dining with him, and St. Ange spoke up in Fraser’s defense offering his own life in place of Fraser’s. This satisfied Pontiac, who left Fraser with St. Ange. However, what St. Ange said next demonstrates the limited efficacy of European Law of Nations protocols at Fort Chartres at this time. As Fraser recounted:

When he went away, Monsieur St. Ange begged me once more to set off immediately—say that he had already offered his life for me but that he was certain the Indians would insist on his delivering me to them the next day if I did not go away. I assured him that I would not go until I had finished the business I came about, adding that I was very sensible of his goodness in assisting me to resist Pontiac, but that I expected he would continue to give me his assistance further if I should stand in need of it.

Outside of the walls of his home, in which Fraser sought refuge, St. Ange was nearly powerless. Whether at Fort Chartres or farther south in New Orleans, French officials were incapable of convincing Indigenous diplomats to abandon the war effort. Fraser, a British officer well-versed in the European Law of Nations but clearly deeply unfamiliar with its Indigenous counterpart, scolded St. Ange on failing in his duties as a fellow officer, as it was a central feature of the Law of Nations that officers and gentlemen provided protection for those of equal status among their enemies in times of war. Such actions likely only further intensified Fraser’s belief that St. Ange was actually

⁸⁵ Fraser to Gage, April 27, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

duplicitous and using traders and *habitants* to circumvent the Treaty of Paris and support his former Indigenous allies. However, what was much more likely was that while St. Ange maintained his status as a diplomat and spokesperson for the Indigenous people's French father, French traders and *habitants* did as well and were acting independently and in opposition to St. Ange's wishes. In other words, Indigenous people were receiving conflicting messages and opting to choose the one that more closely aligned to their vision of a French return to the *pays de Illinois*.

It would seem that Fraser had merely stumbled into his first two diplomatic successes with the Lenape and Shaawanwaki. Fraser simply did not have the status nor the acumen with Indigenous diplomatic protocols to do much beyond delaying his execution. Although he had a small supply of wampum, he did not have gifts, and thus his arguments—which he reported back to Gage with a tone of dismay as they were to him seemingly logical and sound—fell on deaf ears. He, for example, pleaded with Illiniwek peoples, saying that the British “had never done their nations any harm, and that I was much surprised to see one man [Pontiac] (*and that of another nation*) [emphasis original] have such influence over them, as to make them seize as prisoners men who had come with a friendly message to them, a thing contrary to the customs of their people as well as those of white people.”⁸⁶ However, it would seem Fraser had a bit of luck left, as he again stumbled into an argument that worked, albeit not for the reasons for which he had deployed it. After another night spent under house arrest, Fraser, spoke directly to Pontiac, and noted that “Mr. Croghan would soon come down this way and would be glad

⁸⁶ Fraser to Gage, April 27, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

to see him,” adding that Croghan had “sent a belt for him alone by Monsieur Maisonville who came along with me.” This speech seemed to finally provide Fraser with a sense of personal security, but what is so telling is that it required offering a belt—which was of course a requisite expression of diplomatic sincerity—delivered in the names of Croghan and Maisonville, two individuals who held a status that Fraser did not. Pontiac made this point clear, as he responded to Fraser saying, “he was glad Colonel Croghan was the person intended to speak to him as he could not think he would be impudent enough to come and tell them lies now as they had detected him before in so many.”

Fraser was incapable of fully understanding what had finally allowed him to convince Pontiac not to kill him, but it was clear that he was starting to put the pieces together. In a letter to an unknown British military recipient, Fraser recounted with a seeming tone of disdain how he had finally:

prevailed on him and the different tribes of the Illinois to accept the belt of pearl which I told them would be ratified by Mr. Croghan at any place where they would choose to meet him at. I told them that I expected him soon at the Wabash with presents for them and accompanied by several chiefs of the different nations of the Ohio.⁸⁷

On April 28, delegates from the Ojibwe and Bodéwadmik [Potawatomi] arrived and, under the influence of alcohol, again captured Fraser. However, he had at this point learned his lesson and immediately turned to the peace belt that he had brought while evoking Croghan’s name, which convinced them not to harm Fraser. But Fraser still could not accept St. Ange’s seeming diplomatic impotence, stating his second capture:

⁸⁷ Alexander Fraser to ?, May 14, 17, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

happened all in the fort and presence of Monsieur St. Ange, which plainly demonstrated that we should expect little help from him. Indeed, we could have easily seen from the beginning that he could give us but very little assistance with forty soldiers who have not the least remains of discipline amongst them and the commandant so timorous that he is despised by those that ought to fear him, the Indians too who are sensible of his weakness take the advantage of it and by threats they make him believe and do what they please.⁸⁸

Luckily for Fraser, he had a new person to offer him protection. By this point, Pontiac clearly understood that productive negotiations with Croghan required that Fraser be returned unscathed. Fraser had not earned status, but his death would certainly anger someone who had. Thus Pontiac took Fraser under his care and waited in Kaskaskia to receive word of Croghan's arrival. Fraser likely understood this as well, as he continued to grow exceedingly anxious about the fact that Croghan still had not arrived at the Wabash River, aware that his safety was now tied to Croghan's appearance.

Unfortunately, as he awaited Croghan's arrival, Fraser continued to bounce rapidly between emboldening news and news that threatened to put the entire peace process in doubt. Throughout his time in Illinois, Fraser continually relied not only on evoking Croghan's name, but pointing out that the peoples of the Ohio Valley had already made peace. However, this argument was undermined by the arrival of considerable quantity of goods escorted by the Shaawanwa *neenawtooma*, or war chief, Charlot Kaské. According to Fraser, "everything was on the best footing imaginable" until Kaské arrived with a "war belt (from Monsieur Aubry [the French governor of New Orleans] who desired him to send it to all the nations) for to bid them strike the English," along with

⁸⁸ Alexander Fraser to ?, May 14, 17, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

“considerable presents” and a promise “that he would from time to time send them more as well as traders with supplies of arms and ammunition.”⁸⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter, Kaské had traveled to New Orleans to explicitly request support, but was firmly rebuffed. However, it would appear that Kaské was unwilling to take “no” for an answer. Instead he presented a war belt attributed to the French governor, an extremely provocative gesture indeed.

It is hard to ascertain the degree to which Kaské’s belt was a duplicitous act designed to make it seem that the French said something they actually did not or if Kaské instead was, like those Indigenous people who met with Fraser at Fort Chartres, choosing to present what he saw as the most desirable of mixed messages. As Fraser noted, the presence of French traders was presented by Kaské as evidence of French sincerity in their support of the Indigenous resistance. Fraser quickly wrote back to St. Ange for a letter contradicting what was received from New Orleans, but communication networks being what they were at the time, such a letter would take time. In the meantime, Fraser simply had to wait and hope that the tide did not turn against him. He worriedly wrote to Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell, the commander at Detroit, that:

The Indians would almost have made peace on our own terms before this convoy came up, as they were in the greatest want of everything, but the French who intended to quit New Orleans as it is credited to the Spaniards have sent all their goods up here and they are eternally spurring on the Indians to continue the war thinking to dispose of it the sooner. The shops and most of the houses in town were already crowded with goods

⁸⁹ Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, May 15, 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives. Fraser wrote the governor’s name as “d’Obrie.” The previous French governor of New Orleans, Jean Jacques Blaise d’Abbadie, had died suddenly just before Charlot Kaské’s arrival in New Orleans, meaning that Kaské instead met with the acting governor Charles Philippe Aubry. It is unlikely that Fraser was aware of d’Abbadie’s death and perhaps had split the difference between what he heard, “Aubry,” with what he believed to be true.

before the arrival of a second convoy here last night, which has brought a considerable quantity more. I have been insulted by some of the traders here and threatened in the plainest terms that I might assure myself if I made the least mention of them to the Indians that I should suffer for it.⁹⁰

He would later clarify to Gage that “a number of the merchants [at Kaskaskia] with some of its inhabitants told me that they were assured I had held a council with the Indians for cutting the throats of all the Frenchmen in the colony,” along with other threats that Fraser assured Gage he was “equally innocent of and which I denied and defied them to prove.”⁹¹ But Fraser’s defense of his character should not be read as arrogance but instead as a fearful plea, as he continued that he “ought not forget... that it required but a single word from any of the French to make the Indians cut me to pieces,” adding that they kept a close eye on him to make sure that he could not relay any actionable information back to Gage and that “they said they owed no allegiance to the King of Great Britain nor would they ever acknowledge him as their sovereign.” Things continued to look like they were falling apart, with Fraser compelled to buy rum at exorbitant prices on credit to give to the Indians gathered as a means of ensuring his bodily safety, until Pontiac finally received word that Croghan was en route. Pontiac, knowing that were he to leave Fraser in Kaskaskia, Fraser would likely be killed, instead implored him to set off for Detroit. Fraser instead opted to head south to New Orleans, leaving Maisonville in Kaskaskia to communicate as needed. Fraser made it to New Orleans safely and spent his time there trying to convince British officials to reimburse him for the debts he had accrued while

⁹⁰ Alexander Fraser to Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, May 20, 1765, Box 3005, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁹¹ Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, May 26, 1765, Box 1506, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

buying rum while in Kaskaskia, all the while continuing to keep a close eye on the goods going up the Mississippi and worrying about how impactful Charlot Kaské had been during his visit with Governor Aubry.⁹² Luckily, while Kaské's arrival in the Illinois had certainly cast doubt on the legitimacy of Fraser's claim about the Shaawanwaki now being at peace with the British, the largest Indigenous delegation accompanying Croghan were also Shaawanwa, and they were bringing a much different message.

While Fraser had continued to put the blame on Croghan's tardiness as he worried near constantly about being murdered in Kaskaskia, Croghan was in fact demonstrating his mastery of the Indigenous Law of Nations at Fort Pitt. These negotiations took time, with protocols followed in an exacting manner. However, whereas Fraser's impatience had nearly gotten him killed on several occasions, Croghan was successful in bringing the representatives from the Lenape, Ohio Onödowá'ga, and Shaawanwaki into agreement over terms of peace. With terms established and their sincerity underwritten by the distribution of gifts and wampum, on May 15, Croghan and his delegation of diplomats from all three Ohio nations commenced the easiest part of their journey, traveling with two bateaux carried by the current of the Ohio River. At the same time that Kaské was using the presence of French traders to bolster his claim of French support in Kaskaskia, the Shaawanwa contingent accompanying Croghan was likewise using the presence of French traders to make the exact opposite statement. The intelligence about the presence of French traders at the Shaawanwa town of Chillicothe was accurate, and as soon as

⁹² "Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, June 1765," Box 3005, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives; Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, December 16, 1765, Box 1506, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

their party arrived at the mouth of the Scioto River, the Shaawanwa delegates traveled to Chillicothe and “brought with them seven Frenchmen traders, which was all that was in their towns, and delivered them to me, which I take to be a further proof of this nation’s sincerity.”⁹³ However, the most vital portion of Shaawanwa support was yet to come.

In addition to citing the presence of French traders as proof of broader French support, the Indigenous people of the Illinois likewise cited tensions between them and the Anigiduwagi [Cherokee] farther south as proof that the British ultimately intended to enslave the people of the Illinois. This was apparently a fear that was held across the Illinois Country, as Fraser encountered it during his time in Kaskaskia as well. In exchange for returning to Fraser’s care some of his party that were also being held in captivity, the Illiniwek “begged that as they now had made peace that I might acquaint your excellency that they wished the English would use their influence with the [Anigiduwagi] to prevent their striking the Indians of this colony.”⁹⁴ Sporadic violence between the more southerly Anigiduwagi and peoples farther north continued to add another wrinkle to peace negotiations, as the Anigiduwagi were seen as acting in league with British interests. Before he left Fort Pitt, Croghan encountered the same issue, when four Haudenosaunee people arrived with five Anigiduwagi scalps, claiming that they had been working with “Virginia hunters... who had like to have killed them.”⁹⁵ Likewise, a week into their journey down the Ohio, an Indigenous member of Croghan’s party

⁹³ “George Croghan to Thomas Gage, May 26, 1765,” in *TNR*, 22.

⁹⁴ “Alexander Fraser to Thomas Gage, April 27,” 1765, Box 1007, Great Lakes - Ohio Valley Ethnohistory Collection, Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Archives.

⁹⁵ “George Croghan’s Journal, February 28, 1765-May 11, 1765,” in *TNR*, 5.

observed what he believed to be three Anigiduwagi, which prompted Croghan's party to "keep out a good guard the first part of the night." However, in this instance Croghan's party were left alone, which Croghan attributed to the fact that their "party being pretty strong, I imagine the [Anigiduwagi] were afraid to attack us and so ran off."

These fears were not unfounded. Sir William Johnson, who was the *northern* Superintendent of the Indian Department, had a southern counterpart, John Stuart. Just as Sir William Johnson had a close connection and therefore often gave preference in negotiations to the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, Stuart had built a close relationship with the Anigiduwagi. As such, throughout Pontiac's War, Stuart turned to the Anigiduwagi to help create a buffer between the southern colonies and the violence that was taking place north of the Ohio River. The Anigiduwagi then used this support to disrupt the same Mississippi River trade that had caused Fraser such anxiety.⁹⁶ However, it would seem that they did so *judiciously*, knowing that if they were too brazen in their attacks, they ran the risk of a wider conflict. Capucin, while in Vincennes, related a story about a fellow Frenchman who recently was returned after being captured by the Anigiduwagi. According to Capucin, he was:

badly treated when he reached the villages of the Indians, not only by the nations themselves, but by the English who were found there, because he was a Canadien, and that a Frenchman who had been taken with him had suffered no insult. Nevertheless the [Anigiduwagi] sent him back, saying to him that if they struck the French it was only on the solicitation of the Englishman, who was always telling him to make war on us and stop the Ohio River trade against the French.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 226-227.

⁹⁷ "J. Capucin to Baptiste Campeau, June 7, 1765," in *WJP*, vol. IV, 766.

The Anigiduwagi apparently drew a distinction between *habitants*, or Canadiens, and Frenchmen direct from Europe, but also understood that violence towards the former threatened to cross the line and invite retribution from the latter.

Just over three weeks into his journey to meet Pontiac, Croghan and his party confronted these tensions head on. On June 6, Croghan and his party arrived at the mouth of the Wabash River. From this point on, their journey was to become much more difficult, as his bateaux now had to work against the current. They decided to actually continue just a bit farther down the Ohio to camp and rest up at the ruins of an old Shaawanwa village. Croghan—not actually knowing that Fraser had been taken prisoner—wrote both him and St. Ange letters informing them “of my arrival here, that peace was made between us and the Six Nations, [Lenape] and [Shaawanwa] and of my having a number of deputies of those nations along with me to conclude matters with them.” The same day, apparently one of Croghan’s “men went into the woods and lost himself.” It is impossible to say if Croghan’s lost man was connected to the events of the next dawn or if it was just a coincidence, but certainly a white man lost in the woods would have been quite conspicuous in a region of the Illinois that was almost one hundred miles from the nearest French settlement, Vincennes. Regardless, according to Croghan:

At day break, we were attacked by a party of [Kiikaapoa, or Kickapoo] and [Meshkwahkihaki, or Meskwaki] who killed two of my men and three Indians, wounded myself and all the rest of my party except two white men and one Indian, and then made myself and all the white men prisoners, plundering us of everything we had.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ “George Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765–October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 30.

Once again, Croghan saw his carefully curated gifts plundered, this time by Indians who saw him as an invader. But this time, Croghan was severely wounded himself. He later wrote to William Murray at Fort Pitt while still in the custody of his captors that he “got the stroke of a hatchet on the head, but my skull being pretty thick the hatchet would not enter, so you may see a thick skull is of service on some occasions.”⁹⁹ However, Croghan, even as he was surely at risk of dying of blood loss, reaped the benefits of his diplomatic acumen. One of the Shaawanwa delegates had escaped the attack, despite being shot in the leg, and hid in the woods until he saw his opportunity. At first, he thought their attackers were Anigiduwagi, with whom the Shaawanwa had likewise clashed. However, upon figuring out that they were actually Kiikaapoa and Meshkwahkihaki, he emerged and “made a very bold speech telling them that the whole [Shaawanwaki] would join in taking revenge for the insult and murder of their people.” This was apparently extremely effective, as the attackers, “began excusing themselves saying their Fathers the French had spirited them up telling them the English were coming with a body of [Anigiduwagi] to take their country from them and enslave them.”¹⁰⁰ Croghan, in the same letter to Murray affirmed that it was fear of the Shaawanwa that had likely saved him, as “there is nothing those nations dread more than a war with the [Shaawanwa], [Lenape], and the Six Nations, which will be the consequence. This fear has brought the five nations settled on this river to reason, more than if I had given them five times the quantity they robbed me of in presents.”¹⁰¹ However, while the Shaawanwa delegate had been successful in

⁹⁹ “George Croghan to William Murray, July 12, 1765,” in *TNR*, 58.

¹⁰⁰ “George Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 30-31.

¹⁰¹ “George Croghan to William Murray, July 12, 1765,” in *TNR*, 58.

convincing the attacking party that they were not in fact an invading force, he could not dissuade them that such a force existed. The Kiikaapoa and Meshkwahkihaki therefore took Croghan's party into custody and divided up the goods which could be easily carried and left behind what was too heavy to carry and began a hurried march towards their village outside of Fort Ouiatenon, far up the Wabash River.

Just as a general fear of Anigiduwagi attack was not unfounded, nor was the Kiikaapoa and Meshkwahkihaki fear of enslavement, even as slave raiding in the region had abated in recent years. Population decreases and the pressures of colonialism had previously caused the Indigenous peoples of the South to meld their own captive taking practices with those of the Atlantic Slave trade. The British no longer encouraged such practices, and by 1717 the practice had largely abated. However, even fifty years later, there seemed to be those in the Illinois Country who feared a return of the practice. The Kiikaapoa and Meshkwahkihaki likewise had experience as captors and therefore would have had a keen understanding of this process, as the French had adapted Indigenous captivity practices in service of the French colonial economy in the Great Lakes. The Meshkwahkihaki had years earlier been active in this trade, only to find themselves enslaved by the French and their Indigenous allies when the Meshkwahkihaki resisted French colonialism during the so-called Fox Wars between 1712 and 1733.¹⁰²

Croghan thus found himself in a very similar position as his colleague in Kaskaskia, but Croghan was far more adept at navigating the Indigenous Law of Nations.

¹⁰² Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 46-79, 139-141; Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous & Atlantic Slavery in New France* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 20-71, 197-221. "Fox" is an even older exonym for the Meshkwahkihaki.

First and foremost, Croghan had already laid the groundwork, enmeshing himself within both fictive and literal kinship networks over years of managing his trade empire, as discussed in the previous chapter. Despite his potentially mortal head wound, Croghan, along with his party, many of whom were also injured, were marched the nearly one hundred miles from the ruin of the Shaawanwa village to the French settlement of Vincennes. The Indigenous members of his party, including the Shaawanwa man shot in the leg, were allowed to walk unencumbered but Croghan and the other European-descended members were likely bound as they traveled, although Croghan was given the opportunity to continue to journal.¹⁰³ After seven days of what was surely an arduous and painful journey, Croghan and his party were finally allowed to rest at Vincennes, albeit under the careful watch of his captors. Luckily, upon arriving, Croghan immediately met some Peeyankihšiaki whom Croghan knew personally. His acquaintances immediately began to vouch for Croghan, telling his captors “to take care of [Croghan] until the Chiefs of the several nations would return from the Illinois where they had gone to meet me, and reprimanded this party for their bad conduct,” reminding them that their “chiefs are gone to make peace and you have begun a war for which our women and children will have reason to cry.”¹⁰⁴

However, while Croghan was able to immediately find trustworthy acquaintances, he was also likewise confronted with his limitations as a British agent in a town that still

¹⁰³ Croghan’s journalling during this portion of his journey will be analyzed in much closer detail in chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴ “George Croghan’s Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765,” in *TNR*, 40; “George Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 32. Croghan kept two journals after leaving Fort Pitt, with each designed for two different purposes. In this chapter, these differences are less relevant but the nature of their differences will be explored in much more detail next chapter.

very much functioned as a French post among an Indigenous population loyal to France, the 1763 Treaty of Paris notwithstanding. He interacted almost exclusively with the Indigenous population, and asked them to allow him to send official communications. According to Croghan, “the Indians permitted me to write to the commander at Fort Chartres [St. Ange] but would not permit me to write to anybody else. This I suppose was a precaution of the French lest their villainy should be perceived too soon.” But Croghan’s presence was powerful enough to sow doubts about their French loyalty among the Indigenous people there. As such, the Indigenous people “had a private council with the French,” informing them that they needed more concrete assurance of forthcoming French support as they worried that their actions at the mouth of the Wabash might lead to a renewed war. But again, the French inhabitants were treated within the context of the Indigenous Law of Nations as official spokespeople of French policy. As part of their negotiations, they attempted to give “the French a scalp and part of the plunder,” from the attack. However, the French of the town were either aware that accepting such a gift would be far too inflammatory while Croghan was in town or were themselves attempting to use the nexus of the two Laws of Nations to have it both ways, as “they refused to accept of any and declared they would not be concerned in the affair.” However, while in official council they rejected material exchange, a refusal that was perhaps not unsurprising considering the gift included human remains as a trophy of war, they did not hesitate to draw some profit from the spoils of the attack, as the French residents had just earlier that day traded a pound of vermilion for a considerable sum of gold and silver specie, which Croghan saw as evidence that “they took secret pleasure at

our misfortunes.”¹⁰⁵ Either the French *habitants* were wise to the fact that a commercial transaction at Croghan’s party’s expense would be interpreted by Croghan as offensive but expected in a place such as Vincennes while accepting a scalp in council could lead to a renewed military conflict or they found a way to show their support of the Indigenous cause out of view of Croghan.

Regardless, it is important to remember that among the French *habitants* and traders in Vincennes was J. Capucin. It is unclear if Croghan came face to face with him, as the single letter, cited above, with which Capucin makes his biggest archival impact was dated the day before Croghan was attacked and sent in the opposite direction towards Detroit. And while Johnson passed this damning evidence up the chain of command, he did not note how he came into possession of it. Nevertheless, Croghan had made it to the mouth of the Wabash, and, to paraphrase what Capucin had predicted in the above quotation, he had not been received any better than Fraser. The entrance of a bloodied Croghan could not have escaped Capucin’s notice. To see Croghan wounded by an Indigenous weapon would have struck Capucin as unequivocal evidence that the Indigenous people of the *pays de Illinois* really did open their arms to the fellow children of their French father. However, it bears repeating Capucin’s prayerful closing to his letter, which addressed Pontiac’s sometimes secretary as “papa.” With the final strokes of his pen, Capucin wrote, “heaven grant that the seeming disposition [of the Indigenous people] may come from the bottom of their hearts, and that the devices of the English

¹⁰⁵ “George Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 32.

may not corrupt the nations. *That is what we must wish* [emphasis original].”¹⁰⁶ While all evidence thus far pointed towards his prayers being answered, Capucin had underestimated Croghan. Whereas Fraser had bungled his way through the Indigenous Law of Nations, holding stubbornly to his European approach to diplomacy, Croghan was, as he was in so many other aspects his life, a master of being many things at once. As such Croghan turned his captivity, and the subsequent councils formed to discuss what should be done with him, into an opportunity to negotiate for the peace he had been sent to secure.

Following his time at Vincennes, Croghan and his party were next escorted farther up the Wabash to Fort Ouiatenon. Croghan again relied on connections he had cultivated over years as a trader, as on his arrival there he “met numbers of Indians with whom [he] was formerly well acquainted and who were extremely civil to [him] and [his] party.” However, while his connections had at least complicated interactions between French and Indigenous people at Vincennes, at Fort Ouiatenon, Croghan’s arrival seemingly turned the tides against French influence. As Croghan recalled, “a Frenchman arrived from the Illinois with a pipe and speech from thence to the [Kiikaapoa] and [Meshkwahkihaki], to have me burnt. This speech was said to be sent from a [Shaawanwa Indian] who resides at the Illinois and has been during the war and is much attached to the French interest.” The Indian in question was surely Kaské, and considering how powerfully he had been received according to Fraser, it would seem that Croghan had justifiable reason to fear that his years of trade, friendship, and even marriage among Indigenous people was about

¹⁰⁶ “J. Capucin to Baptiste Campau, June 7, 1765” in *WJP*, vol. IV, 764-766.

to end in ritual torture. Or perhaps Croghan had a confidence in those relationships.

Between his two journals, Croghan recounted the events in slightly different tones. In his official journal, his friends at Fort Ouiatenon were never at risk of accepting Kaské's demands, for as Croghan recounted:

as soon as this speech was delivered to the Indians by the French, the Indians informed me of it in council, and expressed their great concern for what had already happened and told me they would set me and my people at liberty and assured me they despised the message sent them and would return the pipe and belt to their fathers the French.¹⁰⁷

However, in his personal journal, Croghan had to at least do some work to get his captors to that point, stating that, "the French have a very great influence over these Indians and seldom fail of telling them many lies to the prejudice of his majesty's interest by making the English nation odious and hateful to them. I had the greatest difficulties in removing these prejudices." He continued saying that the "French told them that as the [Anigiduwagi] had for two years past made war upon them it must been at the instigation of the English who are bad people. However, I have been fortunate enough to remove their prejudice and in great measure their suspicions against the English."¹⁰⁸

Triangulating between the two records, it is likely that Croghan placed new diplomatic arguments on a foundation of previous skillful work among Indigenous people. In the end Kaské's message was rejected and Croghan and his party were set free.

While it is impossible to know for sure, it is possible that the French in Vincennes (among whom may have been Capucin) had doomed their project when they rejected the

¹⁰⁷ "George Croghan's Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765," in *TNR*, 40-41.

¹⁰⁸ "George Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 34.

scalp and the plundered goods. If the scalped remained in the possession of those who captured Croghan and his party, they could have been carried up to Fort Ouiatenon.

While Croghan no longer had his diplomatic gifts in his possession, he may have pointed to them and insisted that he had brought them for the people of the Illinois. Croghan did not explain explicitly how he was able to convince the Indigenous people to reject the French and Kaské, but clearly it required great skill. Regardless, Croghan had turned the tide, as the Indigenous members of council concluded that they should free Croghan and asked him “to stay with them until the deputies of the Six Nations, [Shaawanwaki], and [Lenape] arrived with Pontiac at Ouiatenon in order to settle matters.” Now Croghan and his party had to wait for Pontiac and begin negotiating a new relationship between Indigenous peoples and the British Empire in the trans-Appalachian West.

In the end, it is clear that Croghan not only knew how to play the diplomatic game upon overlapping fields of Laws of Nations, he knew that peace required that subsequent agreements continue to do so. After returning from the mission, Croghan wrote to Johnson, stating that the Indians were so fond of the French because “they have been bred up together like children in that country, and the French have always adopted the Indian customs and manners, treated them civilly, and supplied their wants generously.” As such, Croghan warned Johnson that “if trading posts are not established at proper places in that country soon, the French will carry the best part of the trade over the Mississippi,” to the newly established settlement of St. Louis.¹⁰⁹ Clearly, while Croghan was tasked with being a crucial player within the treaty negotiation process as defined by the European

¹⁰⁹ “George Croghan to Sir William Johnson, November 1765,” in *TNR*, 53-55.

Law of Nations, he was simultaneously working within the context of an Indigenous Law of Nations. This second legal and political system was not peripheral and Croghan could not simply pay it lip service. Just as Croghan's approach was influenced by the imperial rivalries that kept the British and French at odds with each other throughout the eighteenth century, Indigenous political and moral economies likewise drove Croghan's decision making. In fact, as his report back to Johnson makes clear, British fears of the French were legitimate, insofar as the Indigenous Law of Nations was concerned. In this sense therefore, it is perhaps time to reconsider what French "collusion" actually was. Considering Indian diplomats were not invited to Paris in 1763, it is unsurprising that they were less concerned about the bona fides of French representatives as agents of empire. That was a Law of Nations that regularly excluded Indigenous voices even as it debated the roles of Indigenous peoples within Atlantic empires. For Indian peoples, material exchange was the engine of their political and moral economies. And just as the Treaty of Paris of 1763 had enormous implications for Indian Country, it would seem that an Indigenous Law of Nations— which fully legitimized French traders within its processes—had equally profound implications for empire in 1765.

Chapter 4: Confluence of Geographies

The Odawa *ogima*, or war chief, Pontiac had spent the last two years faithfully following the commands of the Master of Life as communicated through the Lenape prophet Neolin. While he had taken some liberties, such as continuing to use firearms of European manufacture instead of traditional bows and arrows so as to be more effective on the battlefield and making space for his French “brothers” within the world he was fighting to maintain, he was unwavering in his commitment to ensuring that the lands that he had always called home were free of British influence. They had been made for him and his people, not for the British who had arrived from across the Great Sea. The presence of British people anywhere in North America was such an affront to the Master of Life’s designs that Pontiac was willing to put down his proverbial hatchet while among Odawa’s traditional enemies, such as the Haudenosaunee, in order to create a new alliance of opposition to British colonial encroachment. Even as his allies began to waver in their commitment, Pontiac kept the faith, even if that meant living alone in the woods, quietly waiting for a British person to approach him so that he could expend one final arrow on a savage invader.¹ But in the summer of 1765, Pontiac’s heart changed. The sharp red and white contrast of a war with eschatological implications had softened. The Master of Life had promised peace in return for unwavering faith. But Pontiac could no longer see peace at the end of “the narrow road.” All he heard was the wailing of women

¹ My inversion of colonialist discourse, in which people of faith encounter “savages” in the New World, is intentional.

and children in his village near the mouth of the Maumee River.² Their cries drowned out the sound of the Master of Life's words.

As George Croghan and his bateaux traveled hastily down the Ohio River from Fort Pitt, Croghan journaled diligently. In an Atlantic World in which gentlemen were praised as “men of letters,” Croghan had earned a reputation for being uncouth in large part because he was barely literate. But he was confident that the future gentlemen who would have to squint and guess as to what his poorly scribbled words said would come to value his intelligence nonetheless. Employing oiled and waterproofed leather to protect his words from the dangers of riverine travel, Croghan kept two separate journals for two very different audiences. His official mission was to advance the diplomacy of the British Empire, as communicated to him by Sir William Johnson, and as such he kept close records of diplomatic proceedings as was expected of him as a diplomatic deputy. However, Croghan also kept a second journal to record reconnaissance for a loose group of traders and land speculators that, over the years, came to be known by various names, such as “the Suffering Traders,” “the Indiana Company,” and “the Vandalia Company.” But their most official name was “the Grand Ohio Company.”³ The idea for this formal association had begun as a kernel of thought when Croghan was visiting London the previous year, looking to secure reimbursement for trade losses from the deep purses of the Lords of Trade. Although he failed at his primary objective, he caught wind of

² Within Indigenous cultures, those who advocated for peace often pointed to the pain of women and children caused by war.

³ Kenneth P. Bailey, “Introduction,” in *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753-1817: Being Primarily Papers of the “Suffering Traders” of Pennsylvania*, ed. Kenneth P. Bailey (Arcata, CA: Sons of the Revolution Library, 1947), 11-14.

imperial interest in the establishment of a new, interior colony, which would be Britain's first without an Atlantic coastline.⁴ Now traveling deep into the North American interior, Croghan wrote down observations about what crops might grow, what animals might provide protein before the arrival of more stable flocks and herds of domesticated animals, and how river networks might connect this colony to the Atlantic. Ultimately, he would send this second journal to one of the nascent company's most famous members, Benjamin Franklin. Not that Croghan had to keep his journaling secret—Sir William Johnson was a supporter of the company as well.

As historians of empire and territoriality have more recently shown, imperial claims of sovereignty over large swaths of physical space were in fact a mirage.⁵ As Lauren Benton argues:

Empires did not cover space evenly but composed a fabric that was full of holes, stitched together out of pieces, a tangle of strings. Even in the most paradigmatic cases, an empire's spaces were politically fragmented; legally differentiated; and encased in irregular, porous, and sometimes undefined borders. Although empires did lay claim to vast stretches of territory, the nature of such claims was tempered by control that was exercised mainly over narrow bands, or corridors, and over enclaves and irregular zones around them.

Benton continues, stating that:

It is tempting to interpret such patterns as merely temporary formations on the way toward more evenly expansive territorial rule and settled sovereignties. But to do so is to project backward in time the post-nineteenth-century idea that territoriality was not just one element of sovereignty but its defining element. Although control of territory formed an important part of early modern constructions of sovereignty, European

⁴ This trip to London was discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 1.

⁵ The description of Croghan's Illinois aspirations as a "mirage" is borrowed from Croghan's most well-known biographer, Nicholas Wainwright. See Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 201-238.

powers often asserted and defended imperial dominion on the basis of strategic, symbolic, and limited claims while recognizing the incomplete and tentative nature of more expansive spheres of influence. Some legal practices, including rituals defining subjecthood and acts controlling criminality, had only an indirect relation to dominion over territory.⁶

In other words, territoriality was an impulse that drove imperial projects towards a goal, but that goal, like real mirages, always seemed just at the horizon, no matter how quickly one moved towards it.

Within the pages of his two journals, Croghan was clearly chasing that mirage. However, in choosing to bifurcate his observations, Croghan also offered historians in the present a rare opportunity to draw contrasts between different strategies for sovereign control being developed simultaneously through the eyes of a single historical agent. However, his voice is not the only one to appear within his journals. As a transcultural diplomat in the late eighteenth-century, he also kept close records of the speeches made by Indigenous actors, who also had a say in what sovereignty looked like in these territories. While Pontiac, like Neolin before him, had to temper his objectives as the conflict reached a stalemate, he and the other Indigenous military leaders who began to talk of peace had not lost. Their successes granted them a seat at the table—or more accurately, a voice at the council fire—a voice that they were not able to raise two years earlier at the Treaty of Paris.

As has been the case across the three previous chapters of this study, the specter of peace moved in the spaces between the objectives of diplomats, the overlapping legal

⁶ Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2-4. For more on the importance of connecting histories of colonialism with geographic studies of landscape, see Andrew Sluyter, “Colonialism and Landscape in the Americas: Material/Conceptual Transformations and Continuing Consequences,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91, no 2 (June, 2001): 410-428.

structures of deeply culturally divergent polities, and the networks of relationships that functioned as the fabrics of societies. Moreover, as historian William J. Campbell has shown in his study of the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix, a treaty that featured many of the same agents as featured in this study—including Croghan himself—large-scale, imperial interests and structures cannot be divorced from the highly localized interests of the individuals negotiating on the ground, a synergistic relationship that had profound implications for the territorial claims of empires, land speculators, and Indigenous communities.⁷ However, while Campbell and others such as Karen J. Travers have approached this dynamic with nuance, they stumble when they seek to explain what they see as irreconcilable tensions between, for example, the prohibition against white settlement as spelled out in the Proclamation of 1763 and the speculator ambitions of people like Croghan and his colleagues among the “Suffering Traders.” For them, Croghan and his colleagues were either dangerously myopic or worse, outright duplicitous. Conversely, while the historian Jacob F. Lee takes Croghan’s ambitions at face value, noting that Croghan seemed to have learned valuable lessons about collaboration with Indigenous peoples of the North American interior from the French, he has a pessimistic read on Croghan’s ability to convince anyone else within the British

⁷ William J. Campbell, *Speculators in Empire: Iroquoia and the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 3-13.

administration and therefore sees his mission as doomed from the start, a position echoed by Patrick Griffin.⁸

There are a couple of problems with this position. Firstly, it seems to assume that agents such as Croghan, Johnson, and Alexander McKee designed the treaties they negotiated to be, as Gesa Mackenthun terms them, “ironic texts.” Mackenthun defines these texts as those “whose function consisted in being read but not understood, in being performed but not necessarily observed.”⁹ Mackenthun’s definition is drawn from the use of the sixteenth-century *Requerimiento* as a text explicitly designed to be inscrutable so as to justify dispossession. This is the most egregious example and also serves as an urtext for a conquest rooted in a European sense of alphabetic superiority. Both Campbell’s and Travers’s approach assumes that as agents of empire, Croghan and his colleagues were in a similar business, employing “pen and ink witchcraft” to simultaneously give Indigenous people a sense of geographic security while undermining that security at the same time. First and foremost, such an argument does not fully account for the presence of some of the empire’s most accomplished translators—both in

⁸ Karen J. Travers, “Empire Revisited: The Covenant Chain of Silver, Land Policy, and the Proclamation of 1763 in the Great Lakes Region, 1760-1800,” in *The Nature of Empires and the Empires of Nature: Indigenous Peoples and the Great Lakes Environment*, ed. Karl S. Hele (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), 85-110; Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 26-4; Jacob F. Lee, *Masters of the Middle Waters: Indian Nations and Colonial Ambitions along the Mississippi* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 122-155; David Andrew Nichols, *Peoples of the Inland Sea: Native Americans and Newcomers in the Great Lakes Region, 1600-1870* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018), 73-91; Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 46-94.

⁹ Gesa Mackenthun, *Metaphors of Dispossession: American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire, 1492-1637* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 10-15.

terms of the actual language and also cultural norms—during these negotiations.¹⁰

Moreover, while there were surely those in the upper echelons of British administration who saw formal negotiations with Indigenous peoples as an inconvenient roadblock en route toward an uncontested sovereignty over North America, this was not the position of the British agents actually doing the negotiating. Both Johnson and Croghan had long advocated for integrating rather than outright dispossessing Indigenous peoples.

Simultaneously, it undermines the agency of Indigenous negotiators. Pekka Hämäläinen makes clear that in late eighteenth-century North America, there were many spaces where Indigenous and imperial power was “multipolar,” in which diverse groups were able to shape the trajectories of their polities and relationships with others in ways that reject the accommodationism born of collective weakness that serves as a hallmark of so-called “Middle Grounds.”¹¹ Or, as Chad L. Anderson argues, quoting Hämäläinen in the process, “the Haudenosaunee leveraged their geography, access to European technology and political skill to establish one of several long-lasting ‘shapes of power’ in North America.”¹² In other words, there was enough agreement on the ground during

¹⁰ For a fine-grained analysis of the complicated relationship between language used in transcultural negotiations and the political arrangements built upon that language, see Jane T. Merritt, “Metaphor, Meaning, and Misunderstanding: Language and Power on the Pennsylvania Frontier,” in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830*, eds. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Frederika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 60-87.

¹¹ Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Shapes of Power: Indians, Europeans, and North American Worlds from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century,” in *Contested Spaces of Early America*, eds. Juliana Barr and Edward Countryman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 61-62. It is worth noting the Hämäläinen sees imperialism as a “zero-sum” game and builds on this idea to argue that the Haudenosaunee could accurately be described as imperialistic in the eighteenth century, a position that this chapter soundly rejects. Hämäläinen, “Shapes of Power,” 44, 50-51.

¹² Chad L. Anderson, *The Storied Landscape of Iroquoia: History, Conquest, and Memory in the Native Northeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 6-7.

negotiations to demonstrate that these negotiations were sincere and that all those involved were well aware of the immediate implications of their preferred terms.

Secondly and relatedly, these arguments suffer from a teleological reading of negotiations, as they read backwards the transmogrification of the codified terms as well as the force of revolutionary currents within the British Empire. Unlike the infamous Walking Purchase of 1737—in which the terms were intentionally misleading—Croghan and his colleagues were forthright about their plans. While the terms negotiated in 1765 did indeed eventually presage the undermining of Indigenous land rights, that process was directly connected to the upheavals of an American Revolution that was all but inconceivable in 1765. While the famed Stamp Act was passed in March of that year, Croghan negotiated blissfully unaware of the forthcoming turmoil. Many of Croghan's future actions that are cited as evidence of his duplicity, particularly his sale of grants secured through his involvement in the Grand Ohio Company, were done under extreme duress as his plans were undermined simultaneously by an empire trying to right its finances and a revolutionary movement that saw agents such as Croghan as the underlings of a Crown project that, as the Declaration of Independence itself stated, “excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.”¹³ While the sales of privately owned lands gained during official treaty negotiations give the appearance of a

¹³ Thomas Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence,” (1776). For more on the countervailing political currents in the British Empire, see Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

speculator devoid of scruples, these were the consequences of bad bets, not a man performing a premeditated swindling of Indigenous peoples.

None of this is to say that Croghan and his associates who would form the Grand Ohio Company were not in pursuit of their own wealth. However, their pursuits, when held against the desire of the Indigenous peoples with whom Croghan negotiated, were not a zero-sum game. In his analysis of a concurrent process in colonial New York/Iroquoia, Alan Taylor notes that:

In a marriage of convenience, [Sir William] Johnson's and the [Kanien'kehá:ka's] interests intertwined in a tense synergy. Although Johnson's exploitation was part of the story, so was Native agency. The New York frontier of the 1760s offered a place and period of experimentation in the modes of acquiring and settling Indian land—some more mutual and benign than others. These possibilities even included a few local alliances between common settlers and hard-pressed natives against the great landlords of the colony. Such alliances suggested alternative paths to a future not yet hardened into the arbitrary and almost complete dispossession of Indians that hindsight now imposes on the past as a given.¹⁴

In fact, if Croghan was to be successful in his personal “scheme,” as it was called at the time and still is in contemporary historiography, he needed a robust and active Indigenous economy with which to trade. His goals were never dispossession but instead establishing a place of privilege in close proximity with Indigenous communities. Throughout his life, he continually relocated his operations closer to Indigenous territory, moving gradually westward as Indigenous peoples were pushed likewise. But even as his actions would have dispossessive repercussions in the future, these were not his goals in 1765. In fact,

¹⁴ Alan Taylor, “Sir William Johnson’s Interest: Indian Land and Transatlantic Power,” in *Native Americans and Anglo-American Culture, 1750-1850*, eds. Tim Fulford and Kevin Hutchings (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 95.

one could argue that he was at his most successful when he was far away from his creditors in Philadelphia and within the much more comfortable confines of his trading posts.

Even with the benefit of hindsight, Croghan's partners reflected on the ideal outcome for the "Suffering Traders" plan for western settlement. According to one of Croghan's creditors, George Morgan:

By him and through him we were to have an exclusive contract to supply with goods not only all the Natives within the district to our immense profit on the skins and furs we should receive in payment, but also to furnish the prodigious quantities of merchandise which would be wanting by Sir William Johnson and Colonel Croghan to conciliate the affections of the savages to the English and also supply all the back posts with provisions.¹⁵

Morgan would continue, lamenting Croghan's struggles with accurate book-keeping; however, what is clear is that these "schemes" were not designed to supplant Indigenous territories but instead facilitate easier trade and profit from British needs for diplomatic gifts to be given to Indigenous peoples, not unlike the imperial system created by the French in the trans-Appalachian West. Certainly Croghan and his creditors were pursuing their own riches, but they were exploiting relationships with Indigenous peoples as opposed to envisioning new lands devoid of Indigenous peoples and therefore ripe for lucrative resale to white settlers.

But what is most striking is the degree to which the colonial visions of the "Suffering Traders" neatly aligned with Pontiac's desired imperial arrangement when negotiating with Croghan. While it certainly was not Pontiac's ideal outcome, as he ultimately wanted to see his homeland free from British influence, by the time Croghan

¹⁵ Quotation found in Campbell, *Speculators in Empire*, 90.

had arrived at Fort Ouiatenon, Pontiac had become resigned to the fact that his French supporters were rapidly approaching a point in which they would become incapable of supplying their Indigenous neighbors with the goods to which they had become accustomed. As such, if they wanted to continue to have access to brass kettles, firearms with which to hunt, and the textiles that had been produced in Europe but designed according to Indigenous tastes, they would need at least some British presence in the region. And if Pontiac was going to accept a British presence, his clear preference was to have those efforts lead by a trader like Croghan overseen by a British official like Sir William Johnson, especially now that those commanders such as General Jeffery Amherst, who were spend-thrifts and completely ignorant to Indigenous political economies, no longer oversaw British Indian policy.

As such, the central argument of this chapter is that the final negotiations between Croghan's delegation—which included the support of the Ohio Onödowá'ga [Seneca], Lenape, and Shaawanwa [Shawnee]—and the Indigenous peoples of the Wabash River valley and the Great Lakes, including Pontiac himself, served as a locus between two frameworks for political geography. Understood in overly binary terms, Indigenous approaches to political geography were rooted in relationships. These relationships were likewise rendered as kinships, to the extent that historian Sami Lakomäki has termed the construction of Shaawanwa political geography as creating a “kinscape,” in which the political relationships between Shaawanwa communities were held together not because they cohabitated within a sovereign territory but because they were tied together through clan. Conversely, the post-Seven Years' War period of British administration of its North

American empire doubled down on its territorial approach. As S. Max Edelson shows, the significant territorial gains made by the British at the Treaty of Paris in 1763 prompted administrators to deploy new surveying and cartographic technologies to better envision and assess their territorial claims.¹⁶ These are convincing birds-eye-view assessments of two diametrically opposed political frameworks, which for sake of parallelism, can be termed “politics of kinship” and “politics of territoriality.” This is not say that Indigenous peoples did not make claim to or draw attachment from specific geography. As Vine Deloria, Jr. [Standing Rock Sioux] made clear, the removal of Indigenous people from their traditional homelands not only impacted their abilities to provide for themselves, it also divorced them from their sacred places.¹⁷ However, as anthropologist Christian Gish Hill shows, that connection to the land is better described as a kinship to it rather than a desire to control it, with that desire for control and its semiotic projection onto colored maps hung upon the walls of imperial elites being central to the “politics of territoriality.”¹⁸

What is so striking about the agreements negotiated at the end of 1765, however, is the degree to which peace required reconciling these two binary oppositions in ways that were not so much a “middle ground” defined by compromise but instead an overlapping of political frameworks, which in this case allowed both frameworks to hold

¹⁶ S. Max Edelson, *The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America Before Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 1-19.

¹⁷ Vine Deloria, Jr., “Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom,” in *For This Land: Writing on Religion in America* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 203-213.

¹⁸ Christina Gish Hill, *Webs of Kinship: Family in Northern Cheyenne Nationhood* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 16-82. For more on the consumption of cartography as a projection of social power, see Martin Brückner, *The Social Life of Maps in America, 1750-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

sway. As historian Robert Michael Morrissey argues, “middle grounds,” as Richard White describes them, were places where “rather than truly mediating their differences, [Indians and settlers] related to each other through ‘creative misunderstandings’—joining in diplomacy, religious ceremonies, legal traditions, and even marriages without actually knowing what the other meant by these agreements. Their accommodations solved expedient problems but were necessarily temporary and in many ways naïve.” But Morrissey has shown how French *habitants* and their Indigenous neighbors in the *pays de Illinois* engaged instead in what he terms “empire by collaboration,” an approach that was anything but naïve but was instead “informed” and “purposeful.”¹⁹ Such was the case when these same Indigenous people began their negotiations with Croghan’s party. Rather than read backward future dispossession by the settler United States as evidence of Indigenous naïveté when entering into collaborative relationships with empires, these negotiations should be seen as agreements between clear-eyed diplomats.

Of course, it is true that this peaceful collaboration was short-lived. The so-called “Plan of 1764” was never fully implemented, and ultimately the provincial lust for open lands available for wholesale settlement overwhelmed the promises made by individuals like Croghan and Johnson. Johnson died before the American Revolution and Croghan died shortly thereafter under a cloud of suspicion about his loyalties to the British project. But even before that, most of the provisions of the “Plan of 1764” were abandoned under the pressures of a colonial populace who were horrified by its economic and judicial

¹⁹ Robert Michael Morrissey, *Empire by Collaboration: Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 9-10.

implications.²⁰ Pontiac was likewise murdered by an Indigenous assailant. The details are scarce, but most historians suspect that the murder was retribution for Pontiac having badly wounded the unnamed assassin's uncle, Makachinga. What was clear was that outside observers feared that Pontiac's murder threatened a larger conflict between Makachina's Peewaareewa [Peoria] and the Odawa, which speaks to the dissolution of a unified Indigenous check against British imperialism. And clearly, it would seem that Pontiac's trust in a sustained new approach from the British Empire and its descendants within the nascent United States was ill-placed. However, that was not the case when Pontiac and Croghan met face-to-face at Fort Ouiatenon, as both were deeply invested in constructing a peace that made sense for all parties within both the politics of kinship and the politics of territoriality. But such was the specter of peace: it was fragile and too often fleeting. However, that does not mean that it was not present at a particular point in time.

George Croghan, Agent of the Plan of 1764

In order to understand George Croghan's diplomatic approach on the ground in 1765, one must make sense of the larger colonial vision that Croghan held, a vision that can be seen both in his preparations for his mission as well as his continued advocacy upon the mission's conclusion. As was noted in the previous discussion of George Croghan's trip to the Lords of Trade on behalf of the so-called "Suffering Traders," while he was there he was made privy to two vital imperial developments. First, many of his

²⁰ Daniel K. Richter, "The Plan of 1764: Native Americans and a British Empire That Never Was," in *Trade, Land, Power: The Struggle for Eastern North America*, ed. Daniel K. Richter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 200.

superior Sir William Johnson's suggestions for a more organized, uniform, and effective approach to diplomacy with Indigenous peoples in British North America had taken root among the Lords of Trade, so much so that they codified these ideas in the "Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs," or as historian Daniel Richter calls it, the "Plan of 1764." Secondly, the Lords of Trade also saw value in establishing a new, interior colony west of the Appalachian Mountains, and apparently were at least interested in Croghan's opinion on what shape that colony might take. At first glance, these two plans appear to be contradictory and incompatible with each other. In particular, the previous year's passage of the Proclamation Line of 1763 seemingly made a sharp distinction between those territories available for colonial settlement east of the Appalachian Mountains and those reserved for Indigenous peoples to the west. As the Proclamation clearly stated, "all the lands and territories lying to the westward of the sources of the rivers which fall into the sea from the West and the Northwest," were to be reserved for Indigenous peoples, whom the British government saw as under their protection, and as such they decided to "strictly forbid, on pain of our displeasure, all our loving subjects from making any purchases or settlements whatever, or taking possession of any of the lands above reserved, without our special leave or license for that purpose first obtained."²¹

However, the final clause in the previous quotation leaves open the possibility for the elaboration made possible in the "Plan of 1764." As both the Proclamation of 1763 and the "Plan of 1764" made clear, peaceful relationships with Indigenous people required both protections against settler encroachment as well as the maintenance of

²¹ "The Proclamation of 1763" (London, UK: Mark Baskett, 1763).

robust trade. Considering the vast geographical distances between many of the Indigenous people who resided west of the Appalachian Mountains, satisfying both desires required the construction of an imperial infrastructure, as British merchants required routes by which to deliver goods while the British military needed garrisoned forts to prevent the westward movement of illegal squatters from the colonies. This was especially true north of the Ohio River. South of the river, it would seem that Indigenous communities were able to adequately oversee the regulation of trade within their settlements, as the “Plan of 1764” made clear that traders should establish their storehouses and trading posts within the Indigenous villages that fell under the jurisdiction of the Southern Superintendency. However, in the North, where Croghan was an official deputy, “each truckhouse or post of trade” should “be fortified and garrisoned and that all traders have free liberty to retire into such garrison with their effects whenever any disturbance shall arise.”²² In addition to a garrison, these fortified trading posts would also employ a “commissary” who would regulate prices, prevent the sale of liquor and arms, and protect Indigenous people from predatory lending, all while serving as a justice of the peace empowered to punish those traders who did not abide by the regulations outlined in the Plan.²³

As Richter argues, this plan bore significant resemblance to the way trade was regulated by the French during their period of imperial control over the Illinois Country. However, there were substantial differences that made implementing the French model

²² “Plan for the future Management of Indian Affairs,” in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1856), vol. VII, 640, (hereafter *DRNY*).

²³ Richter, “The Plan of 1764,” 195.

under the auspices of the British Crown impossible. As Richter states, “New France had confronted the problem of geography by combining trading posts with mobile voyageurs, all loosely supervised by the interlocking quasi-governmental monopolies that tied the *pays d’en haut* to Quebec City.”²⁴ However, as both Robert Michael Morrissey and the previous chapter make clear, sustained relationships between French colonists and Indigenous populations were a key feature of colonialism in the region, and in this sense had a regulatory effect that would not exist were British traders to simply replace the French traders in the region. Simply put, French traders could not survive in the region were they to engage in abusive trading practices. Far from the levers of imperial regulation, traders were kept honest through their intimate connections to Indigenous people. But the British had not yet made those intimate connections in this region. Thus, the Lords of Trade attempted to solve this issue by creating posts with an element of punitive authority provided by a commissary and a garrison to help ensure that traders were not employing abusive practices while also maintaining the civil rights to which British subjects had grown accustomed by ensuring that punishment was not meted out through courts martial.

Simultaneously, however, the Lords of Trade and other British administrators with a similar interest in the successful management of the trans-Appalachian West continued to be concerned about the rising costs of creating a sustainable peace with the Indigenous people of the region. While, as discussed previously, General Jeffrey Amherst’s miserly approach had ended disastrously, British administrators also knew that Croghan’s crown-

²⁴ Richter, “The Plan of 1764,” 189.

subsidized spending on gifts was equally unsustainable. Croghan knew this to be true as well, although he never wavered in insisting that he only purchased what was absolutely necessary for peace. Fortunately for him, he gained a staunch ally in William Franklin, Benjamin Franklin's son and royal governor of New Jersey.²⁵ William wrote his father immediately after Croghan's return and outlined what he saw as the perfect compromise for meeting British objectives in the trans-Appalachian West while defraying the costs. Since traveling to London, Croghan had been arguing vociferously for the need to compensate the "Suffering Traders" for their losses during the Seven Years' War, and while his requests for cash reimbursement had been rebuffed, Croghan was presented with a new opportunity "to engage the Indians to agree to settle a boundary between them and us and to make *retribution* for the damages they did our traders by their late hostilities."²⁶ As Croghan himself argued in a letter to Benjamin Franklin a week earlier, a trade colony would actually place its maintenance costs on Indigenous consumers through a duty on trade goods. According to Croghan:

a duty of five percent upon the trade would raise more that would defray the whole disbursements incurred by maintaining peace with the Natives and regulating the commerce. This tax indeed would be none to the merchants for they would necessarily add it to the price of goods and therefore of consequence, the Indians themselves would pay the whole

²⁵ While William's steadfast allegiance to Great Britain eventually fractured his relationship with his founding father, in 1765 they were still working together closely.

²⁶ "William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, December 17, 1765," in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 12, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 404. (Hereafter *BFP*).

expense of our negotiations with them and also of our superintending and regulating their trade.²⁷

For Croghan, such an arrangement satisfied the needs of all relevant parties, and most importantly, left him perfectly positioned to continue to extend his trade network westward.

But Croghan also argued that this arrangement would be crucial in staving off what he saw as an ominous development: the establishment of a new French colony at St. Louis. In the same letter to Franklin, Croghan noted that it “highly behooves the British nation” to make firm their peace with Indigenous peoples, as “the French are forming an establishment on the west side of the Mississippi,” which “will again engross all the traffic with the numerous nations to the westward of us and therefore deprive us of *the present use* [emphasis original] of our Canada conquest.”²⁸ Not only was Croghan nervous that the presence of a French post would cut into potential profits, he also saw it as an existential threat to the imperial project in the trans-Appalachian West. As outlined in the previous chapter, peace and sustained material exchange went hand-in-hand, and the presence of a robust trade with the French at a new post just outside of British-claimed territory threatened to undo his hard work and undermine the stable British administration of the region. William Franklin agreed, noting that British imperial officials should not hesitate in backing Croghan’s proposal, arguing that “if it is much

²⁷ “George Croghan to Benjamin Franklin, December 12, 1765,” in *BFP*, vol. 12, 399. It would seem that Croghan did not truly understand nor accurately predict colonial sentiments toward such duties, as he continued by saying that “of this, the merchants here are so fully sensible that they have not, I assure you, the least objection to it, as they thereby flatter themselves a safe and advantageous commerce will be secured to them.” Croghan was likely unaware of the brewing resentment towards the Stamp Act passed the same year.

²⁸ “George Croghan to Benjamin Franklin, December 12, 1765,” in *BFP*, vol. 12, 399.

longer delayed there will be danger that the present good dispositions of the Indians may cool; or that they may be persuaded to act otherwise by the artful insinuations of the French, or by the suggestions of evil disposed persons among ourselves.”²⁹

But beyond being sound fiscal policy and a crucial tool in staving off a resurgent French presence in the region, those supporting a trader colony also saw it as a vital tool in regulating a sustainable relationship between settlers and Indians. As William Franklin argued, the proposed location for a colony along the Ohio River would do little to upset Indigenous peoples, as “there will be little danger of our making any encroachments on their hunting grounds for years to come.” Simultaneously, acquiring the land not through sale but as reparations for the Indigenous killing of traders during the Seven Years’ War would establish “a *precedent* for the Indians *making satisfaction* for injuries done our traders,” which would “make them much more cautious of committing the like hereafter.”³⁰ Sir William Johnson agreed, as he wrote Croghan’s financial backers, the Philadelphia mercantile firm *Bayton, Wharton, & Morgan*, arguing that quickly establishing such a precedent would be the most expedient and fiscally sound approach to incentivizing a peaceful coexistence of Indigenous peoples and British traders in the trans-Appalachian West.³¹

Unfortunately, Croghan, Franklin, and Johnson’s pleas for a hasty resolution went unheeded, and the resulting turmoil would affirm the wisdom of their proposed approach.

²⁹ William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, December 17, 1765,” in *BFP*, vol. 12, 405.

³⁰ William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, December 17, 1765,” in *BFP*, vol. 12, 405.

³¹ “Sir William Johnson to Baynton, Wharton, & Morgan, January 30, 1766,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Alexander C. Flick (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), vol. V, 16-17. (Hereafter *WJP*).

Despite a significant diplomatic success in securing land for the “Suffering Traders” from the Six Nations at the treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, the venture never gained traction among British administrators nor were land-hungry settlers interested in entering into a collaborative colonial relationship with Indigenous peoples. But throughout 1765, Croghan still had reason to believe that a new type of British colony, rooted in trade and built in partnership with Indigenous nations, was possible. As his delegation traveled down the Ohio River, the geography he observed was rich with possibility. Now he just had to convince the Indigenous enemies of the British to enter into collaboration with the empire they had spent the last two years fighting.

George Croghan, Agent on the Ground

As soon as George Croghan began his journey down the Ohio River, he started to diligently record topographical details in a journal that would ultimately end up in the hands of Ben Franklin. Most of his observations were made from the vantage point of his bateaux as he and his companions floated down river. Such a point of view makes clear that for Croghan, the transportation of goods and people facilitated by the river was of central importance to the success of this colonial venture. As smaller creeks and rivulets emptied into the Ohio, Croghan would remark on the “spacious bottoms,” or flood plains rich in alluvial soil. Croghan and his party chose to camp on one such bottom on May 16, the second day of his journey, in which he noted that the trees were “covered with grape vines,” another indication of the potential for sustainable agriculture.³² In addition, he

³² “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *The New Regime*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1916), 24. (Hereafter *TNR*).



Figure 4.1: The location of Logstown and Shaukonk. Excerpted from John Patten, *A trader's map of the Ohio country before 1753*, 1753, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002324/>. Circled are both Logstown and Shaukonk, or Shingas's Town.

also made note of how the human geography had changed over time. Earlier that day they had passed the since abandoned Shaawanwa town of Logstown, an important landmark as one entered the Ohio Country [Figure 4.1]. Croghan was familiar with the town, having visited it early in his career in 1748 as a member of delegation led by Conrad Weiser, an equally adept transcultural diplomat who taught Croghan much of what he knew as Croghan was first beginning his career as an imperial agent. While Croghan did not record exactly why he stopped at the ruins of the town, perhaps the opportunity to reminisce upon an early diplomatic success proved too strong to resist. Later that same

day, Croghan “passed an old settlement of the [Lenape] where the French in 1756 built a town for that nation on the north side of the river. Some of the stone chimneys are yet remaining.”³³ The settlement had been known as either Sauconk or Shingas’s Town, the latter referring to the powerful Lenape leader who may have participated in the siege of Fort Pitt two years prior even as he tried to negotiate a more peaceful solution to tensions between the British and the Lenape.³⁴ While Croghan did not disembark this time, it would seem that for him, the ruined chimneys held three meanings: that this location could support permanent settlement, that there was a legacy of colonial/Indigenous collaboration, and finally and perhaps most importantly that the location was currently unoccupied.

However, while Croghan spent the second day of his journey noting the cultivability of an abandoned landscape, the next day he had his first opportunity to build the type of collaborative relationships that would be the hallmark of his envisioned colony. Shortly after dawn on May 17, Croghan and his party arrived at the village where the famed captive/adoptee Dehgawanus, or Mary Jemison, was formally adopted into Onödowá’ga society. While she had since moved farther down river, she would later recall the village as it existed in 1759 as “pleasantly situated on the Ohio...the land produced good corn; the woods furnished plenty of game, and the waters abounded with fish... We spent the summer at that place, where we planted, hoed, and harvested a large

³³ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 23.

³⁴ C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 244-246.



Figure 4.2: The location of the Ohio Onödowá'ga community. Excerpted from John Montrésor, *Map of the Ohio River from Fort Pitt*, 1776, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002315/>. Circled is the Onödowá'ga village, named using the pejorative term “Mingo” as well as “two creeks” that Croghan had used to identify the community. Also note the straightness of the river’s course as it flows past the village as noted by Croghan.

crop of corn, of an excellent quality.”³⁵ Upon arriving, Croghan recorded that “the chief of this village offered me his service to go with me to the Illinois which I could not refuse for fear of giving him offense although I had a sufficient number of deputies with me already.” [Figure 4.2]³⁶ While his records are unclear on this point, there was certainly a

³⁵ Mary Jemison, *A Narrative of the Life of Mary Jemison, the White Woman of the Genesee*, ed. James Everett Seaver (New York: The American Scenic & Historic Preservation Society, 1925), 40.

³⁶ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765–October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 24.

strong possibility that this was a community that members of Croghan's delegation called home, as Croghan had recorded earlier during negotiations at Fort Pitt that "about eighty [Onödowá'ga] Indians came here from their town at the two creeks and brought with them a quantity of skins and furs expecting to trade."³⁷ Regardless of whether any residents of the village were already delegates, clearly this was a community with whom Croghan expected to have a sustained relationship, as they were already eager to re-establish trade. Croghan clearly had to make a strategic calculation, even though it meant adding the increased burden of another travel companion. Were this village irrelevant to future plans or had Croghan held it to be a simple impediment to future settlement, he certainly would not have felt the need to be so tactful.

As Croghan's delegation, now one person larger, continued down river, Croghan likewise continued to note locations that would be advantageous for settlement, commenting at one point that the Ohio River had begun to run "a straight course for twenty miles and makes a delightful prospect." The next day, on May 19, he noted that they "encamped in a fine rich bottom after having passed fourteen islands, some of them large and mostly lying high out of the water. Here buffaloes, bears, turkeys, with all other kind of wild game are extremely plenty. A good hunter without much fatigue to himself could here supply daily one hundred men with meat."³⁸ The next day Croghan's party took a long rest as they fought strong winds that were working against them. It was here that Croghan took the opportunity to again build relationships, opting to:

³⁷ "Croghan's Journal, February 28, 1765—May 11, 1765," in *TNR*, 5.

³⁸ "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 25-26.

dispatch an Indian to the Plains of the Scioto with a letter to the French traders from the Illinois residing there among the [Shaawanwa] requiring them to come and join me at the mouth of the Scioto in order to proceed with me to their own country and take the oaths of allegiance to his Britannic Majesty as they were now become his subjects and had no right to trade there without license. At the same time I sent messages to the [Shaawanwa] to oblige the French to come to me in case of refusal.

The winds proved more favorable on May 21, and thus they continued their journey down river through a region that abounded “with buffaloes, bears, deer, and all sorts of wild game in such plenty that we killed out of our boats as much as we wanted.”³⁹

While the importance of removing French trader influence was already discussed in the previous chapter, in this moment, Croghan was also demonstrating his commitment to collaboration by sending messages to the Shaawanwa directly via an Indigenous ally. One could read the juxtaposition of his colonial gaze, which focused itself on the benefits and possibilities of exploiting territorial control, and his relationship building with the Indigenous communities that fell within that territory as a two-faced attempt at setting the conditions of future dispossession. But such a reading is troubled by the way he discussed not only the active communities he encountered on his trip but also the remnants and ruins of communities that were impacted by colonialism. Upon reaching the mouth of Scioto River, Croghan made his usual observations about the richness of the soil and the abundance of game, but he also relayed a brief history of the Shaawanwa community, Chillicothe, alternately known as Shannoah or “Lower Shawnee Town,” that used to be located there. According to Croghan:

on the Ohio, just below the mouth of the Scioto on a high bank on the south side near forty feet formerly stood the [Shaawanwa] town called the

³⁹ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 26.

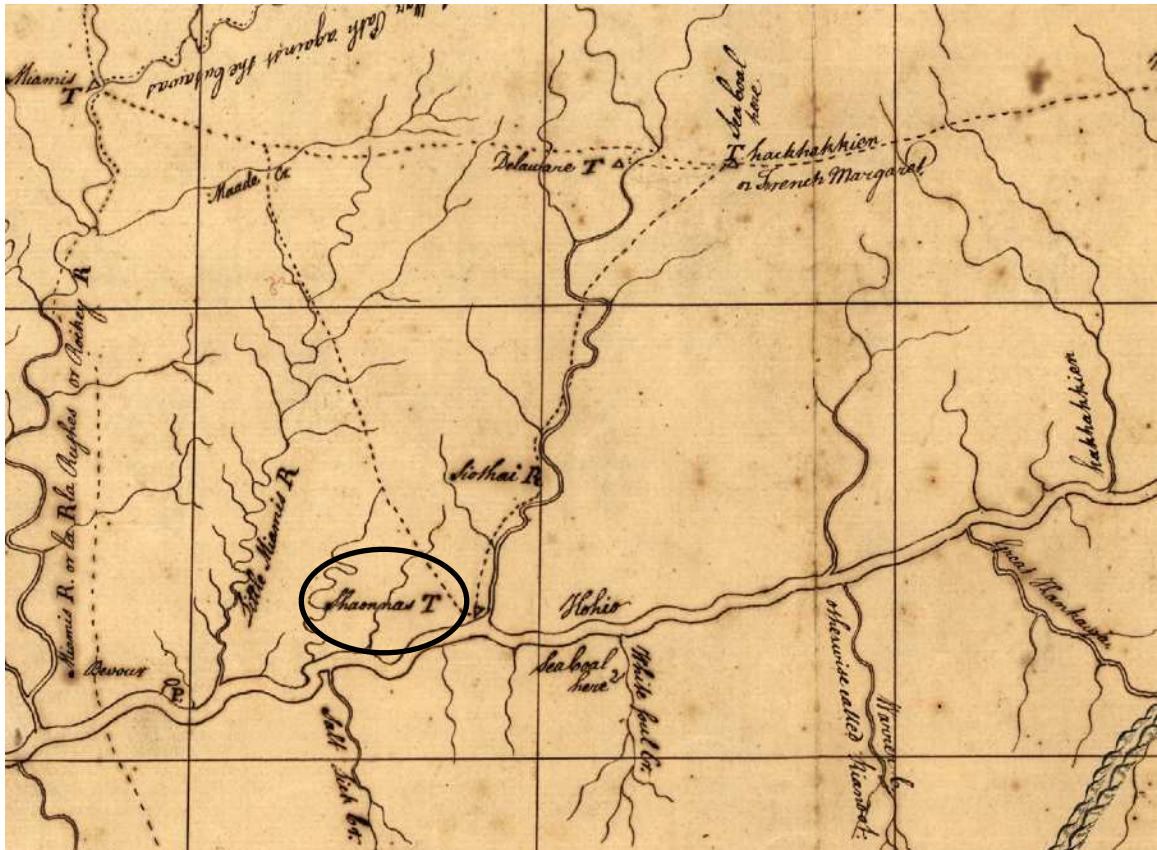


Figure 4.3: The earlier location of Chillicothe. Excerpted from John Patten, *A trader's map of the Ohio country before 1753*, 1753, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002324/>. Circled is “Shaonnas Town” at its first location.

Lower Town which was all carried away except three or four houses by a great flood of the Scioto. I was in the town at the time, though the banks of the Ohio were so high, the water was nine feet on the top which obliged the whole town to take to their canoes and move their effects to the hills. The [Shaawanwa] afterwards built their town on the opposite side of the River, which during the French War they abandoned for fear of the Virginians and moved to the plains on the Scioto. [Figures 4.3 and 4.4]⁴⁰

The relocated community retained both the Shaawanwa and English name, and it was in this community that the illegal French traders were conducting business. But it is what Croghan does not say in his journal that is the most telling. It was in this former location that Croghan had established a trading post in 1749, and likewise it was this original

⁴⁰ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 27.



Figure 4.4: The later location of Chillicothe. Excerpted from Thomas Hutchins, *A general map of the country on the Ohio and Muskingham showing the situation of the Indian-towns with respect to the Army under the command of Colonel Bouquet March of His Majesty's troops from Fort Pitt to the forts of Muskingham in 1764, 1765*, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001695748/>. Circled is the second location of “Lower Shawanese Town” on the plains of the Scioto River.

community that expelled Croghan and other English traders in 1754, and yet neither detail was recorded here.⁴¹

It is again vital to consider the intended audience of this particular journal. As a representative of an association of “Suffering Traders,” the absence of any mention by Croghan of his own economic suffering speaks volumes. Instead, Croghan focused on the suffering of Shaawanwa families, whether as a consequence of a natural disaster or

⁴¹ A. Gwynn Henderson, “The Lower Shawnee Town on Ohio: Sustaining Native Autonomy in an Indian ‘Republic,’” in *The Buzzel About Kentucky: Settling the Promised Land*, ed. Craig Thompson Friend (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 25-55.

colonial pressure from Virginia. If Croghan's intention was to outline an effective route towards future dispossession, it would seem much more likely that he would note this as the place where his property was destroyed, thus making a clear case for requesting the transfer of this strategically valuable yet recently abandoned land at the confluence of the Ohio and Scioto from the Shaawanwa as dispensation for past actions. But instead, he notes that this was the previous location of a still extant community that could again become a valuable trading partner. Moreover, he makes sure to demonstrate his own personal history with this community, cast in a positive light, demonstrating the value of his continued role as a trader and diplomat within the developing colonial venture.

However, while Croghan's understanding of the contemporary Indigenous human geography exceeded that of the majority of his colonial peers, his understanding of the deeper natural and human history of the region was much more ambiguous. On May 30, a week after arriving at the mouth of the Scioto, Croghan's party arrived at the mouth of the Great Miami River and soon reached a place known as "Big Bone Lick," which Croghan simply called "the place where the elephant's bones are found." [Figure 4.5]⁴² Licks were important geographical features for Indigenous people, as sites of wet and salty soil along the river bank were frequented and licked by big game, thus making them valuable hunting grounds as well as places to procure salt for cooking. But this lick in particular doubled as a veritable treasure-trove of fossilized megafauna. As historian Stanley Hedeon argues, this location should be seen as the birthplace of American paleontology, as its many specimens ended up not only in the private collections of future

⁴² "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 28.



Figure 4.5: The location of Big Bone Lick. Excerpted from Lewis Evans, *A general map of the middle British colonies in America*, 1765, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/75692295/>. Circled is the location of the “Great Salt Lick River,” which is now known as the Licking River, as well as the location of elephant fossils.

presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and William Henry Harrison, as well as Benjamin Franklin, but in the royal collection of the French King, where the fossils were studied by Louis Leclerc de Buffon and Georges Cuvier.⁴³ By the time of Croghan’s arrival at Big Bone Lick, fossil specimens had already been collected and sent back to Fort Pitt as curiosities that were then distributed through networks of enlightenment philosophers and displayed in cabinets of curiosities. While Croghan likely would not have counted himself among such learned individuals, he certainly knew that many of his colleagues were, and as such made sure to make space among his cargo for a souvenir

⁴³ Stanley Hedeon, *Big Bone Lick: The Cradle of American Paleontology* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008), xvii-xviii.

from his visit, noting that “it appears there are vast quantities of these bones lying five or six feet underground which we discovered in the bank at the edge of the lick. We found here two tusks about six feet long. We carried one with some other bones to our boat and set off.”⁴⁴ He returned to the location a year later on a follow-up mission, and, as one of his colleagues on that trip, Captain Harry Gordon, recounted, they “discovered laying about many large bones, some of which were the exact patterns of elephant tusks and others of different parts of a large animal.... We picked up several of the bones, some out of the mud others off the firm ground.”⁴⁵ Eventually these specimens would make their way to Franklin who along with his peers would use the presence of elephants in North America as evidence that there must be a land route connecting the continent to Asia.⁴⁶

Indigenous peoples made their own arguments about what these bones were and how their presence told a story about the deep history of the region. When the Philadelphia naturalist John Wright asked a Shaawanwa interpreter in 1762 if there were oral traditions that might explain from where the skeletons had come, his informant told him that while no living person had a memory of the animals:

they had indeed a tradition. Such mighty creatures once frequented those savannas, that there were then men of a size proportionable to them who used to kill them and tie them...and throw them upon their backs as an Indian now does a deer. They had seen marks in the rocks which tradition said were made by these great and strong men when they sat down with their burdens, such as a man makes by sitting down on the snow. When there were no more of these strong men left alive, God killed these mighty creatures that they should not hurt the present race of Indians.... They

⁴⁴ Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765–October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 28.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail: or the Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1911), 42.

⁴⁶ Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 241.

supposed them to have been killed by lightning—these the [Shaawanwa] said were their traditions, and as to what they knew, they had told it.⁴⁷

When Croghan returned to the site in 1766, he received a different explanation from a Haudenosaunee sachem who was traveling with Croghan's party who combined the presence of the fossil record with an explanation of racial difference:

After the Great Spirit first formed the world, he made the various birds and beasts which now inhabit it. He also made man; but having formed him very white and imperfect and ill-tempered, he placed him on one side of it where he now inhabits and from whence he has lately found a passage across the great water to be a plague to us. As the Great Spirit was not pleased with this his work, he took of black clay and made what you call a negro with a woolly head. This black man was much better than the white man, but still he did not answer the wish of the Great Spirit, that is, he was imperfect. At last, the Great Spirit having procured a piece of pure, fine red clay, formed from it the Red Man, perfectly to his mind; and he was so well pleased with him that he placed him on this great island separate from the white and black men, and gave him rules for his conduct, promising happiness in proportion as they should be observed. He increased exceedingly, and was perfectly happy for ages. But the foolish young people, at length forgetting his rules, became exceedingly ill-tempered and wicked. In consequence of this, the Great Spirit created the great buffalo, the bones of which you now see before us; these made war upon the human species alone and destroyed all but a few, who repented and promised the Great Spirit to live according to his laws, if he would restrain the devouring enemy; whereupon he sent thunder and lightning, and destroyed the whole race, in this spot, two excepted, a male and a female, which he shut up in yonder mountain ready to let loose again should occasion require.⁴⁸

While Europeans saw the bones as evidence of a yet undiscovered connection between the Old and the New World, Indigenous peoples saw the bones as proof of their ancient claim to a land that was created for them.

⁴⁷ Quotation found in Hedeon, *Big Bone Lick*, 23.

⁴⁸ Quotation found in Hedeon, *Big Bone Lick*, 24-25.

Having played amateur naturalist, Croghan and his party continued down river, their last week of using the current to ease their travel. On June 6, they arrived at the mouth of the Wabash and began the work of preparing to make their way upstream. Knowing the challenges that awaited them, they set up camp six miles farther down the Ohio to take advantage of the remains of a Shaawanwa village. As the previous chapter discussed, this was not to be a restful time for Croghan's party, as two days later they were ambushed by Kiiikaapoa [Kickapoo] and Meshkwahkihaki [Meskwaki] warriors. As they set up camp, however, Croghan was blissfully unaware and continued to make his usual observations about the quality of the land, noting that the mouth of the Wabash ran "through one of the finest countries in the world, the lands being exceedingly rich and well watered. Here hemp might be raised in immense quantities." Croghan cited the presence of a "great plenty of red and white mulberry trees" in the region as evidence of the soil's quality. But Croghan also recorded the presence of "a breastwork" that was "supposed to be done by the Indians."⁴⁹ However, while Croghan interpreted this site as a defensive fortification, it was much more likely a mound constructed by a Middle Woodland mound-building culture. That being said, what is perhaps more intriguing is how Croghan came to this knowledge.

While Croghan did not indicate whether Indigenous informants or fellow colonial traders first revealed to him that the site was "supposed to be done by Indians," at some point, the understanding of the provenance of the place would have originated from Indigenous cultural memory as the first Europeans to see the location would have needed

⁴⁹ "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 29.

an Indigenous interpretation to make sense of it. While the site was built by a culture that predated the Shaawanwa as understood in the eighteenth century, both ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence point to the fact that the break between these two cultures was not a sharp one. As Steven Warren and Randolph Noe note, the Shaawanwa represented a cultural link to precolonial Mississippian peoples, as evidenced by the persistence of Mississippian pottery motifs on Shaawanwa earthenware, as well as archaeological work conducted at the Hardin Village archaeological site (located near the ruins of the first Chillicothe community), which was one of the only Fort Ancient communities to remain occupied during the colonial period.⁵⁰ More direct archaeological research on mounds in the region of the confluence of the Wabash and Ohio rivers likewise point to the use of these sites far closer to the colonial period than previously believed. As archaeologist Mackenzie Smyth Caldwell Rohm argues, “it is not appropriate to conceptualize the transition from the Middle Woodland as a collapse,” because while “the widespread disappearance of Hopewellian traits does happen suddenly in certain areas... it does not seem to happen everywhere at the same time,” with the mound sites in the Wabash region being the last to be abandoned.⁵¹ While hundreds of years still separated the active use of

⁵⁰ Stephen Warren and Randolph Noe, “‘The Greatest Travelers in America:’ Shawnee Survival in the Shatter Zone,” in *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South*, ed. Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 164-165. Whether the Fort Ancient culture can be seen as “proto-Shaawanwa” has been hotly debated within archaeological and ethnohistorical literature, with the debate having profound impact on contemporary Shaawanwa sovereignty. Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin argued that while the Shaawanwa were firmly established within the Ohio River Valley by the colonial period, she was less convinced of an archaeological connection between the Shaawanwa and the Fort Ancient peoples, a position she argued in front of the Indian Claims Commission, established in 1946 by the United States Justice Department in order to allow Indian nations to sue the United States for violating treaty commitments. Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin, “Ethnohistory of Indian Use and Occupancy in Ohio and Indiana Prior to 1795,” in *Indians of Ohio and Indiana Prior to 1765*, ed. David Agee Horr (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), 169-176.

⁵¹ Mackenzie Smyth Caldwell Rohm, “A Terminal Middle Woodland Ceramic Complex from Southern Illinois,” Master’s Thesis, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 2008.

the mound site and the contemporaneous Indigenous communities with which Croghan interacted, what is clear is that Indigenous peoples saw this site as a piece of their ancient history, a view which Croghan likewise accepted.

Two days later, Croghan's party was attacked and taken into custody. While the attack forced Croghan to literally negotiate as if his life depended on it, not even captivity could stop him from continuing to make observations about the natural geography through which he traveled. For example, on June 10, he observed that they "traveled through fine rich bottoms overgrown with reeds which make the finest pasture in the world, the young reeds being preferable to sheaf oats. Here is plenty of wild game of all kinds."⁵² However, it was when Croghan arrived at Vincennes that he could clearly envision what more robust colonization of the region might look like. As he wrote, "on my arrival there I found a village of about 80 or 90 French families settled on the east side of this river being one of the finest situations that can be found. The country is level and clear and the soil very rich, producing wheat and tobacco. I think the latter preferable to that of Maryland or Virginia." Perhaps as a way of emphasizing just how easily this post could become a valuable piece within a British colonial trade network, he added that "the French inhabitants hereabouts are an idle and lazy people, a parcel of renegades from Canada and are much worse than Indians." Clearly, Croghan envisioned a future role for Vincennes within the proposed trade colony, as he added that it was "a place of great consequence for trade, being a fine hunting country all along the Wabash and too far

⁵² "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 31.

for the Indian which reside hereabout to go either to the Illinois or elsewhere to fetch their necessaries.”⁵³

While Croghan had already traveled extensively through the Ohio Country, his time moving up the Wabash River revealed new places with which he was unfamiliar. After negotiations at Vincennes, which were analyzed in the previous chapter, he was no longer a captive, so Croghan bought new clothes and horses on credit and continued his mission, although he was exhausted from the ordeal. Even though he met Pontiac en route to Fort Ouiatenon, he made no mention of him in his personal journal. Instead, he kept track of the human geography of the region, noting when they came across Myaamia [Miami] communities while also taking an informal census of French families residing at the fort. Again, his disdain for the French colonization of the region came to the fore, and this time he accused the French of purposely hiding the value of the region, stating that:

it is surprising what false information we have respecting this country. Some mention these spacious and beautiful meadows as large and barren savannas. I apprehend it has been the artifice of the French to keep us ignorant of the country. These meadows bear fine wild grass and wild hemp ten or twelve feet high which if properly manufactured would prove as good and answer the same purposes of the hemp we cultivate.⁵⁴

⁵³ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 31-32. Historian M. J. Morgan offers a very different explanation for the condition of French settlement that Croghan observed. As she argues, French farming practices had largely depleted the soil while overhunting and logging had further impacted the environment of the *pays des Illinois*. However, in her chapter on the period of the French exit from the region, she does not engage with Croghan’s journals. While there is plenty of reason to believe that Croghan observed the environment with proverbial rose-colored glasses, much of her secondary research is based in older sources, which tended to underestimate the size of Indigenous populations and their economies. M. J. Morgan, *Land of Big Rivers: French and Indian Illinois, 1699-1778* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 135-160; Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 171-238.

⁵⁴ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 34-35.



Figure 4.6: The locations of the Wabash-Maumee Portage and Fort Miami. Excerpted from J John Patten, *A trader's map of the Ohio country before 1753*, 1753, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002324/>. Circled is the labeled portage and Fort Miami.

He also continued to pay close attention to how trade would be navigated within the colony. This became especially important on August 1, as they reached the portage between the Wabash and Maumee Rivers and visited Fort Miami, which had never been regarrisoned after Myaamia warriors had killed all but five of the British soldiers stationed there in 1763. [Figure 4.6] As Croghan noted, “the navigation from hence to Ouiatenon is very difficult in low water on account of the many rapids and rifts, but in freshes, which generally happen in Spring and Fall, bateaux or canoes will pass without difficulty from here to Ouiatenon in three days.... From Ouiatenon to Post Vincent and then the Ohio, bateaux and canoes may go at any season of the year.” He likewise made note of the sizable Myaamia community, Kekionga, the same settlement where Captain Thomas Morris had been captured and met Pontiac a year earlier. Despite observing the

presence of a “stockade fort, somewhat ruinous,” he noted that there were “40 or 50 cabins” built by the Myaamia, which would mean that the Myaamia population would be around 640 and 800. Unsurprisingly, Croghan also made clear that French families likewise called the post home, noting that they were “a lazy and indolent people fond of breeding mischief and spiring up the Indians against the English and should by no means be suffered to remain here.”⁵⁵

However, despite the important role played by Kekionga as a community with a sizable international population drawn from both the French and the many Indigenous nations of the region, Croghan made little comment about the powerful Indigenous leaders who lived there. While his earlier journaling signaled his familiarity with the Indigenous political and human geography of the Ohio River valley, it is clear that Croghan was in the process of making new meaning out of what he observed at this invaluable portage. While this has led some historians to argue that he only sought land for speculation, the fact that he made note of the French population while speculating on the dangers their presence could cause in the future seems to indicate that he would prefer an English presence at Kekionga instead, signaling his desire to replace French trade

⁵⁵ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 35-36. The population estimate and village name is found in Erminie Wheeler-Voeglin, Emily J. Blasingham, and Dorothy R. Libby, “An Anthropological Report on the Miami, Wea, and Eel-River Indians,” in *Miami, Wea, and Eel-River Indians of Southern Indiana*, ed. David Agee Horr (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), 81. For more on the archaeology of Fort Miamis, see Michael Strezewski, “French Colonial History and Archaeology at Fort Miamis and Vincennes,” in *The History and Archaeology of Fort Ouiatenon: 300 Years in the Making*, eds. Misty M. Jackson, H. Kory Cooper, and David M. Hovde (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2024), 86-88. There is evidence that Croghan was grossly underestimating the difficulty of his proposed shipping route. When one of his creditors, the Philadelphia merchant George Morgan, took his own trip to the region to explore the viability of overseeing a trade in furs he found the route into the interior far easier than the return journey to Philadelphia via the Mississippi through New Orleans. However, despite the setbacks, Morgan did not abandon the plan, which would seem to indicate that he still found the trade to be viable. Lee, *Masters of the Middle Waters*, 149-151.

networks with his own.⁵⁶ Despite Kekionga's strategic location at a crucial link that connected the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River via the Wabash, Croghan seemed comfortable with the idea that such a sizable Indigenous population would remain there. In fact, considering the importance of river travel for his own business practices, the presence of such an international Indigenous population at a single location had the potential to make Kekionga a vital entrepôt.

Once again presented with the opportunity to go with the flow of the river, Croghan and his party traveled the Maumee River until they reached Detroit, which was to be the site of his final negotiations with Pontiac and the rest of the Western Confederacy. Perhaps with an eye towards integrating French land titles under British sovereignty, when he arrived at Detroit he made note of the presence of the seigneurial system, pointing out that "the country is thick settled with French, their plantations are laid out three or four acres in breadth on the river and eighty acres in depth." Again, Croghan looked upon the *habitants* with disdain, noting that they were:

generally poor wretches and consist of three to four hundred families, a lazy idle people depending chiefly on the savages for their maintenance, even though the land with little labor produces plenty of grain, they scarcely raise as much as supply their wants. In imitation of the Indians whose manners and customs they have entirely adopted and cannot subsist without them, the men, women, and children all speak the Indian tongue perfectly well. In the last Indian War, the most part of the French were concerned in it although the whole settlement had taken the Oath of Allegiance to his Britannic Majesty, they have therefore great reason to be thankful to the English clemency for not bringing them to deserved punishment.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Harvey Lewis Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle: First Sagamore of the Wabash* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 69.

⁵⁷ "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 37.

Over a month later, on September 26, Croghan departed Detroit en route to Niagara. Again, he made little mention of his official business, merely noting that “during my stay here I held frequent conferences with the different nations of Indians assembled at this place with whom I settled matters to their general satisfaction.”⁵⁸ However, negotiating “matters to their general satisfaction” required finding ways to meet Indigenous needs and perceptions about the human geography of the region, the details of which were given rich detail within the records of Croghan’s official journal.

Pontiac and Indigenous Designs for an Interior Colony

As George Croghan made the difficult journey up the Wabash, wounded and exhausted, Pontiac headed in the opposite direction from the vicinity of Detroit to meet him. Even though he likewise had to work upstream for a time, going against the flow of the Maumee River until he reached the Kekionga portage, his travel was less encumbered by the hazards that Croghan had had to navigate. Whereas Croghan knew there was a near-constant threat to his life that only his diplomatic skill could abate, Pontiac navigated a kinscape of both Indigenous and French kin held together by bonds built earlier in the eighteenth century. Pontiac traveled with a multiethnic coalition of Indigenous diplomats, including Myaamia delegates with whom Croghan had not yet treated, as well as Shaawanwa, Lenape, and Ohio Onödowá’ga delegates who had earlier separated themselves from both Lieutenant Alexander Fraser and Croghan’s delegations

⁵⁸ “Croghan’s Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765,” in *TNR*, 37-38. As Croghan’s official journal recorded Indigenous voices much more robustly, the details of these conversations will be unpacked in much more detail below.

in order to communicate messages and news to Pontiac and other Indigenous diplomats in the Wabash region. Although there is no record of it, this sizable delegation was surely shown hospitality within the Indigenous communities of the region described by Croghan as well as the cabins of *habitants* who still resided in the region.

On July 18, Pontiac and his party met Croghan along the Wabash River just upstream from Fort Ouiatenon. Although Croghan did not record whether it was him or Pontiac who chose to return downstream to Fort Ouiatenon, it was likely a choice of convenience. That being said, there was something fitting about Croghan turning around to follow Pontiac's route within a country that was much more Indigenous than colonized. Across both of his journals, Croghan made note of the diversity of peoples that lived in the vicinity of the fort, but more recent archaeological work makes clear that Indigenous settlement in the region was robust, as more people sought to engage with the fur trade centered at the formerly French fort.⁵⁹ While Croghan had spent the summer thus far exploring new places and envisioning what they might become were they enfolded within a new British colony, Pontiac was only just beginning to accept that the place he had fought to defend from colonialism might need to let go of its loyalty to the French in order to make sure that it continued to feel like home. As Croghan recorded in his official journal, upon returning to the fort they "held a conference in which I settled all matters with the Illinois Indians. Pontiac and they agreed to everything the other nations had done, all of which they confirmed by pipes and belts." However, while

⁵⁹ "Croghan's Journal, May 15, 1765-October 8, 1765," in *TNR*, 33-34; "Croghan's Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765," in *TNR*, 40-41; Michael Strezewski, "Outside the Fort: Completing the Picture of the Ouiatenon Landscape," in *The History and Archaeology of Fort Ouiatenon*, 57-79.

Croghan's opening line seemingly placed the credit for successful negotiation upon himself, he never refuted Pontiac's explanation of why Indigenous people had taken up arms in the first place, nor did he reject Pontiac's terms around what needed to change in order to build a lasting peace between the British and the peoples of the region. As Croghan recorded, Pontiac began by telling him that "the French had informed them that the English intended to take their country from them and give it to the [Anigiduwagi] to settle on, and that if ever they suffered the English to take possession of their country they would make slaves of them."⁶⁰ While relations between the British and the Anigiduwagi had been seemingly fractured during the Anglo-Cherokee War of 1759-1761, Sir William Johnson's southern counterpart, John Stuart, had put immense effort into healing that relationship, with his own deputy Alexander Cameron establishing himself among the Anigiduwagi, advocating for them as he witnessed abuses at the hands of settlers and traders. As Cameron noted, "It is shocking to express the tearing, cheating, and horse stealing that has been committed among the Indians by the traders and packhorsemen last winter in this nation.... It is no wonder that the [Anigiduwagi] should withdraw their affection from us when we allow such villains to trade or reside amongst them."⁶¹

It is hard to determine for certain if the work of Stuart and Cameron prompted the French to begin feeding this dubious intelligence to Pontiac. However, it is notable that Pontiac framed the conflict as being one between one imperial/Indigenous alliance and

⁶⁰ "Croghan's Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765," in *TNR*, 42.

⁶¹ Quotation found in John L. Nichols, "Alexander Cameron, British Agent among the Cherokee, 1764-1781," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 97, no. 2 (April, 1996): 97.

another imperial/Indigenous alliance. For Pontiac, it was hard to see past the durability of not only his people's historical alliance with the French but also the durability of the alliance between the British and the Anigiduwagi farther south. The Anigiduwagi had proven vital as British allies early during the Seven Years' War, but the types of abuses Cameron noted had destroyed the alliance.⁶² By 1765, though, it was apparently being repaired and Pontiac and his French associates had caught wind of it. If these alliances did function as transnational kinscapes, Pontiac seemingly presumed that in occupying formerly French forts, the British were interested in conquering one kinscape in order to replace it with another.

Pontiac continued, deepening his argument that the political geography he fought to defend was a kinscape rather than a relationship between an imperial suzerain and its subject peoples. As Pontiac made plain, the most important condition for lasting peace between his people and the British was a British acknowledgement that "their Father the King of England might not look upon his taking possession of the forts which the French formerly possessed as a title for his subjects to possess their country as they never had sold any part of it to the French." If the British were to acknowledge this as true, Pontiac assured them that they "may rest satisfied that whenever the English came to take possession [Indigenous people] would receive them with open arms."⁶³ With this statement, Pontiac was given the last word, as Croghan's entry for the day ends there.

⁶² Paul Kelton, "The British and Indian War: Cherokee Power and the Fate of Empire in North America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (October, 2012): 763-792. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 457-471. Tyler Boulware analyzes how the Anglo-Cherokee War deepened a sense of Anigiduwagi national identity. Tyler Boulware, "The Effect of the Seven Years' War on the Cherokee Nation," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5, no. 2 (Fall, 2007): 395-426.

⁶³ "Croghan's Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765," in *TNR*, 42.

Croghan did not reopen his official journal for another week, beginning his entry on July 25 by noting that he “set off for Detroit having settled everything with these several nations to the westward and accompanied by several chiefs of those nations which were going to Detroit to meet Colonel Bradstreet.” Yet he made no record of what *he* said that made him so successful. Instead, he simply recorded Pontiac’s demands, seemingly acquiescing to them.

After the completion of his mission, Croghan wrote to his superior Sir William Johnson outlining all that he had accomplished. In so doing, Croghan further affirmed that sustained peace required building a sustainable kinscape, just as Pontiac demanded. Croghan was quick to cast Pontiac and his people in a negative light, claiming that “all Indians are jealous and from their high notion of liberty hate power,” and that “they are by no means so sensible a people as the Six Nations or the other tribes this way,” evincing Croghan’s preference for the intimate relationships he had built over the years with other Indigenous peoples. However, the perceived lack of sense of the Indigenous peoples in the region of Detroit and the Wabash River notwithstanding, Croghan was unequivocal that years of sustained material exchange between the French and Indigenous people had “in a manner taught the Indians in that country to hate the English, by representing them in the worst light they could in all occasions.” Croghan continued, noting that “they have made the Indians there believe lately that the English would take their country from them and bring the [Anigiduwagi] there to settle and enslave them, which report they easily gave credit to, as the Southern Indians had lately commenced war against them.” While Croghan bragged that through his diplomatic skill, he was able

to assuage their fears, he did note that “it will require some time [and] a very even conduct in those that are to reside in their country before we can expect to rival the French in their affection.” From there, Croghan made clear that “they will expect some satisfaction made them by us for any posts that should be established in their country for trade,” adding that several nations along the Wabash River had in the process already “applied for traders to be sent to their settlements,” which he noted he could not personally authorize as a deputy and therefore implored Johnson to do so as quickly as possible lest these peoples turn to the newly established French settlement of St. Louis.⁶⁴ In other words, Croghan made clear to Johnson that the British should meet Pontiac’s demands, and do so urgently.

As mentioned above, Croghan had a much thinner familiarity with the predominately Myaamia peoples of the Wabash River—which the Myaamiaki had known as Waapaahšiki Siippiwi for far longer than it had been known as the Wabash—and as such glossed over his negotiations with them in his journals. But applying for traders within their network of communities would have enfolded British trade interests within the well-developed riverine landscape of Myaamionki, the traditional homelands of the Myaamia peoples. An analysis of the Myaamia understanding of Myaamionki may help shed some light on the gaps left in Croghan’s journals. Sometime around the turn of the twentieth century, the ethnographer and Indiana historian Jacob Dunn recorded the origin story Myaamia as told by the Myaamia informant Gabriel Godfroy. As the story goes:

At first, the Myaamiaki came out of the water. The place they emerged is called “Coming Out Place.” The first ones came to the surface of the

⁶⁴ “George Croghan to Sir William Johnson, November 1765,” in *TNR*, 54-55.

water. “Grab ahold of tree limbs,” they told each other. Then they came out. Then they formed a town there. From there they set off. They left the town. After a while one returned. But he saw Indians there. When he came back the other people saw him at Coming Out Place. To our surprise they spoke the same language we spoke. They gave them a name. They called those Indians “old Moccasins.” I don’t know what tribe they belonged to. Nobody had any idea where they went. This is how my mothers told me, my mother “Takes Hold,” and her older sister “Swan Woman.” All the old Indian men believed it. They call the river “Coming Out River” at the place where they came out from. That’s why “Takes Hold, “He Takes Hold of it,” and “Taking Hold Woman” are named that way.⁶⁵

The “Coming Out Place” was known as Saakiiweesiipiwi and is now known as the St. Joseph River, which drains into Lake Michigan. But beyond establishing aboriginal claims to Myaamionki, this story also provides hints as to how the Myaamia people viewed their relationship to Myaamionki. For the Myaamia, they were born of the rivers and was an essential component of their identity. But the rivers did not belong to them. As they explored beyond the “Coming Out Place,” it became the home of another people, and those people were simultaneously familiar, as speakers of the same language, but also foreign, as communal memory lost track of their national identity.

Although Saakiiweesiipiwi may have been the natal river for the Myaamiaki, they soon found other rivers to settle upon. Eventually, they established Kekionga at the portage between the Taawaawa Siippiwi [Maumee River] and the Waapaahšiki Siippiwi. Even before the French arrived in Myaamionki, this portage served as a vital trade center for diverse Indigenous peoples, linking the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. And when the fur trade arrived in the seventeenth century, the population of Kekionga

⁶⁵ Gabriel Godfroy [Myaamia], “Eehonci Kiintoohki Pyaawaaci Myaamiaki: ‘Where the Miamis First Came From,’” in *As Long as the Earth Endures: Annotated Miami-Illinois Texts*, ed. David J. Costa (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), 227-230.

exploded. As the population put added strain on the environment, Myaamia peoples began to establish new communities farther down the Waapaahšiki Siippiwi, further widening the geographic breadth of Myaamionki.⁶⁶ In this sense, the population and reach of the Myaamia people were extended by the arrival of the French. Beyond introducing technologies that accelerated population growth, French men, whom the Myaamiaki called “Meehtikoošia,” also married into Myaamia families, further deepening alliances through a “confluences of intimacy,” in ways discussed previously.

According to George Ironstrack [Myaamia]:

Through intermarriage Myaamia people became familiar with the language and culture of the Meehtikoošia and the traders became a part of a Myaamia family network, which they could turn to when challenges arose in their work. The children of these marriages became living symbols of the alliances between the groups, and as they matured they often served as interpreters at negotiations. Europeans were often puzzled and confused by these individuals, labeling them “mixed-bloods” in English or “métis” in French. However, their Myaamia relatives did not share this confusion. If these individuals lived in the community and dedicated their lives to the community, then they were usually viewed as full members of that Myaamia community. This was the only means of determining whether someone belonged or not. There were no “half-members” or “quarter-members,” one either was or was not Myaamia.⁶⁷

Moreover, the construction of the French Fort des Miamis further bolstered the importance of Kekionga, the latest example of tradition non-Myaamia peoples building foreign encampments take advantage of the strategic importance of the portage.

⁶⁶ George Ironstrack [Myaamia], “Walking Myaamionki,” *Aacimotaatiiyankwi* (blog), *Myaamia Center at Miami University*, December 16, 2010. <https://aacimotaatiiyankwi.org/2010/12/16/walking-myaamionki/>. For more on the long history of Myaamionki, see Diane Hunter [Myaamia], “Myaamiaki (Miami People): A Living People with a Past,” in *The History and Archaeology of Fort Ouiatenon*, 217-231.

⁶⁷ George Ironstrack [Myaamia], “The Good Path: Part I,” *Aacimotaatiiyankwi* (blog), *Myaamia Center at Miami University*, November 1, 2011. <https://aacimotaatiiyankwi.org/2011/11/01/the-good-path-part-i/>

Clearly, the people of the Wabash River had grown accustomed to and saw significant value in a multi-ethnic kinscape, with the Myaamia having been the primary architects of that kinscape for at least two centuries. Moreover, the Myaamia had a way of understanding kinscapes that was not rooted in a zero-sum conceptualization of sovereignty. They had long welcomed non-Myaamia people into their communities, and as long as they were active members within that community, they were treated as Myaamia. While they had previously seen the British as invaders and successfully chased them from the fort the French had built outside Kekionga, by requesting British traders to come into their communities, they were changing their position and taking a step forward in creating a new kinscape built according to well-established rules.⁶⁸

On August 17, nearly a full month after first meeting Pontiac outside of Fort Ouiatenon, both Croghan's and Pontiac's parties arrived at Detroit. Thus began a series of formal treaty negotiations between the British and Pontiac's Odawa, along with delegates from the Bodéwadmik [Potawatomi], Ojibwe, Wendat [Huron], as well as Myaamia, Mascouten, and Kiikaapoa peoples who had traveled with the delegation from Fort Ouiatenon. It was this latter group that were given the first opportunity to address Croghan and Bradstreet on August 23 and 24. While Croghan's journal does not note who exactly spoke for these peoples, he later listed the names of the leaders of each delegation. Listed among the Myaamia, were two well-known *akimaas*, or civil chiefs, Le

⁶⁸ Ironically, Fort Miamis was taken by the Myaamiaki through a potential manipulation of intimate ties. According to a court of inquiry, the commander of the fort was invited out by a woman he was having a sexual relationship with under the pretenses of requesting medical care for another ill woman. The commander was then shot dead and the rest of the garrison surrendered. The report readily uses the pejorative term "squaw" to describe the woman, leaving open the possibility that the commander was abusing his position in relation to the woman, thus further justifying her deception. "A Court of Inquiry, July 6, 1763," in *WJP*, vol. X, 731. See also, Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 125-126.

Gris [the Gray] and Gros Loup [Big Wolf], as well as Hairy Thighs, Le Natte [the Braid], Crooked Leg, the Goose, and the Black Fly. Majawabia represented the Kiikaapoa and Majinoboa represented the Mascouten.⁶⁹ As the latter two were representatives of peoples who had attacked Croghan's party two months earlier, they again asked Croghan to "take pity on their woman and children," adding a request that Croghan do what he could to "make up the difference subsisting between them and the [Shaawanwa], [Lenape], and the Six Nations," knowing that their attack had also invited retribution from those more easterly peoples. Perhaps as a consequence of their miscalculated attack, they seemingly did not negotiate from the same position of strength as Pontiac did. According to Croghan, they gave "up their sovereignty of their country to me and His Majesty and promised to support his subjects in taking possession of all the posts given up by the French, their former fathers, to the English, now their present fathers, all which they confirmed with a belt."⁷⁰

However, even as Croghan used the word "sovereignty," notably in a record of Indigenous speeches not written in the first person like so many others in his official journal, his response to them would seem to indicate that the final agreement between the people of the Wabash River and the British was again a proposal for constructing a new

⁶⁹ "List of Indians Met at the Detroit Conference, August 1765," in *TNR*, 56-57. Croghan already struggled with spelling in English and thus his records of French words are often hard to decipher. I have corrected the spelling into standard French, making educated guesses as needed. Thus, I have interpreted "La Greass" as Le Gris, "Gross Cope" as Gros Loup, and "La Natt" as Le Natte. Le Gris and Gros Loup were known *akimaas*, or civil chiefs, among the Myaamia, and a village in the region was known as Le Gris's Village. Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle*, 66. Paul L. Stevens, "'One of the Most Beautiful Regions of the World': Paul Des Ruisseaux's Mémoire of the Wabash-Illinois Country in 1777," *Indiana Magazine of History* 83, no. 4 (December, 1987): 14.

⁷⁰ "Croghan's Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765," in *TNR*, 43-44.

kinscape. As was customary, Croghan did not respond until the next day, August 25, and in so doing he “delivered them a road belt in the name of Sir William Johnson Baronet to open a road from the rise to the setting of the sun, which we charged them to keep open through their country, and cautioned them to stop their ears against the stories or idle reports of evil-minded people and continue to promote the good works of peace, all which they promised to do in the most sincere manner.” While “the road” was a common metaphor within Indigenous diplomacy, with “clearing the path” of obstacles signaling that peaceful communication had been reopened, it was a metaphor rooted in a lived reality. For Indigenous peoples, the road was the sinew, both literally and figuratively, that facilitated a politics of kinship.⁷¹ And while on the face of it, it would seem that Croghan was claiming victory in achieving British sovereignty over the peoples of the Wabash, as someone who had built a career traversing literal roads between Indigenous communities while conducting business by fluently deploying Indigenous metaphors, he surely understood what a wampum belt depicting a clear road meant to the people who received it. As such, the next day, the delegation of Wabash peoples “set off for their own country” along the newly cleared road, having received presents from Croghan, with which Croghan noted they were “well satisfied.”⁷²

The next day Croghan opened up negotiations with Pontiac as well as other Odawa, Bodéwadmik, Ojibwe, and Wendat representatives. Croghan began by reciting

⁷¹ For more on roads as both symbols and vital political infrastructure, see James H. Merrell, “‘That Road between Us and You:’ Passages through the Woods,” in *Into the American Woods* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 128-156; Joshua A. Piker, “‘White & Clean’ & Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years’ War,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (2003): 315-347.

⁷² “Croghan’s Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765,” in *TNR*, 44.

what ritual and symbolic actions he was taking to ensure that all those gathered were of the proper disposition for peace. He began by using a belt to “dress up your ancient fire and throw some dry wood upon it, that the blaze may ascend to the clouds so that all nations may see it and know that you live in peace and tranquility with your fathers the English.” He likewise used belts to “disperse all the black clouds from over your heads, that the sun may shine clear on your women and children,” to “gather up all the bones of your deceased friends, and bury them deep in the ground that the herbs and sweet flowers of the earth may grow over them,” and “take the hatchet out of your hands and pluck up a large tree and bury it deep, so that it may never be found anymore, and I plant a tree of peace, where all our children may sit under and smoke in peace with their fathers.” With his last belt, Croghan returned to the road metaphor, noting that:

we have made a road from the sun rising to the sun setting, I desire that you will preserve that road good and pleasant to travel upon, that we may share all the blessings of this happy union. I am sorry to see our children dispersed through the woods. I therefore desire you to return to your ancient settlements and take care of your council fire which I have now dressed up and promote the good work of peace.⁷³

Notably, this request to return to their ancient settlements and council fire was *not* a metaphor. Pontiac’s community had previously been located directly next to Detroit, a relationship that had benefitted both the French and their Indigenous neighbors. Clearly, for Croghan, a return to a similar relationship would prove extremely valuable for Croghan’s envisioned trade colony.

⁷³ “Croghan’s Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765,” in *TNR*, 45.

However, when Pontiac responded the next day, it was clear that while he agreed with Croghan's proposal in spirit, the relocation of his community was not in the cards.

Pontiac opened his speech, saying:

We have all smoked out of the pipe of peace, its your children's pipe, and as the war is all over, and the Great Spirit and giver of light who has made the earth and everything therein has brought us all together this day for our mutual good to promote the good works of peace. I declare to all nations that I have settled my peace with you before I came here and now deliver my pipe to be sent to Sir William Johnson, that he may know I have made peace and taken the King of England for my father in the presence of all the nations now assembled, and whenever any of those nations go to visit him, they may smoke out of it with him in peace.

However, immediately after unequivocally declaring that the war was over, he turned directly to Croghan's request for his community's return to the vicinity of Detroit. As

Pontiac stated:

Fathers, we are obliged to you for lighting up our old Council Fire for us, and desiring us to return to it, but we are now settled on the Maumee River, not far from hence. Whenever you want us, you will find us there ready to wait on you. The reason I choose to stay where we are now settled is that we love liquor, and did we live here as formerly our people would be always drunk which might occasion some quarrels between the soldiers and them. This, father, is all the reason I have for not returning to our old settlements, and that we live so nigh this place, that when we want to drink, we can easily come for it.

For Pontiac, the risks of further quarrels far outweighed the benefits of living in close proximity to an important colonial entrepôt, especially as he was confident that his people's current location would allow them to continue to trade as needed while avoiding the temptations that so often accompanied that trade. He further emphasized that his desired distance from Detroit need not be seen as a lack of desire for trade, as he then told Croghan that, "Our fathers the French formerly used to credit his children for powder and

lead to hunt with. I request on behalf of all the nations present that you will speak to the traders now here to do the same.” In order to make clear how important this request was to him and the communities for whom he spoke, he repeated himself, saying: “My father, once more I request you will take pity on us and tell your traders to give your children credit for a little powder and lead, as the support of our families depends upon it. We have told you where we live, that whenever you want us and let us know it, we will come directly to you.” At that point, Pontiac declared business to be concluded and requested that Croghan “open the barrel that your children may drink and be merry.”⁷⁴

Although Pontiac took a step back during proceedings from that point on, it was clear that he had set the tone, as further negotiations continued to echo Pontiac’s demands from his meeting with Croghan at Ouiatenon. Another group of Myaamia arrived on August 30 and proclaimed their hope for building a new relationship with the British, but warned that they needed traders to be “sent to their villages to supply them for the winter, or else they would be obliged to go to the Illinois and apply to their old fathers the French for such necessaries as they might want.” Likewise, they noted that they had taken up arms because they:

had been informed that the English, where ever they settle, make the country their own, and you tell us that when you conquered the French, they gave you this country. That no difference may happen hereafter, we tell you now the French never conquered us neither did they purchase a foot of our country, nor have they a right to give it to you. We gave them liberty to settle for which they always rewarded us and treated us with great civility, while they had it in their power. But as they are become now your people, if you expect to keep these posts, we will expect to have proper returns from you.

⁷⁴ “Croghan’s Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765,” in *TNR*, 46-47.

Three days later, on September 2, a Wendat delegate said much the same when he said that he had spoken to Sir William Johnson a year earlier “about the lands on which the French had settled near Detroit,” which belonged to the Wendat, and asked Croghan to mention it to Johnson again as “they never sold it to the French and expected their new fathers the English would do them justice.” On September 4, Pontiac again spoke to those assembled, reiterating the same position first established at Ouiatenon, saying that “their country was very large and they were willing to give up such part of it as was necessary for their fathers the English to carry on trade at, provided they were paid for it, and a sufficient part of their country left for them to hunt on.”⁷⁵

Clearly, Pontiac and all those Indigenous people who joined him in the fight against British occupation never wavered from their opposition to such an occupation. What changed was their acceptance that it might be possible that the British might instead agree to collaborate on the creation of the kind of imperial relationship that they had grown so fond of when the French still controlled their forts within what was by every other measure an Indigenous space. And it would seem that their faith was not unfounded. The following summer, on July 24, 1766, Pontiac along with other delegates who had been present at the negotiations at Detroit traveled to Fort Ontario in colonial New York to formalize the agreement with Sir William Johnson himself. Johnson opened the conference and demonstrated that the British had listened to their demands. As he stated upon a belt of wampum:

You begin already to see and feel the fruits of peace, from the number of traders and plenty of goods at all the garrisoned posts, and our enjoying

⁷⁵ “Croghan’s Official Journal, May 15, 1765-September 25, 1765,” in *TNR*, 47-48.

the peaceable possession of the Illinois will be found of great advantage to the Indians in that country. You will likewise now see that proper officers, men of honor and probity, are appointed to reside at the posts to prevent abuses in trade, to hear your complaints, and such of them as they can not redress to lay before me. Interpreters are likewise sent for the assistance of each of them, and smiths are sent to the posts to repair your arms and implements, all of which is attended with a great expense, which is now done by the Great King, your father, as proof of his regard so that casting from you all jealousy and apprehensions.⁷⁶

Johnson then turned to new concerns that threatened the freshly established peace. First, he expressed his distress at the murder of two soldiers at Detroit, for which two Bodéwadmik were being held and well cared for in order to incentivize the turning over of those who committed the murder to be tried by the British. He then noted that two Indigenous women were likewise killed, but that since the killer was of African descent, the murder should not be seen as an English atrocity, as “he is of a different color and disposition from us, so that his action can not be attributed to the English. On the contrary, he will meet with the punishment adequate to the crime and your people may be present to see it inflicted.” However, Johnson made sure to express his deepest condolences about another set of murders that could not be so easily dismissed through racist characterizations. As Johnson said:

It is with infinite concern that the great men at the head of affairs in this country have heard of the murder of some Indians, by a parcel of lawless banditti on some of the frontiers. These mad people were possibly induced thereto from the cruelties exercised upon some of their friends during the late war, and probably many of the Indians have acted indiscreetly since towards them, but be the cause of their conduct what it will. His Majesty highly resents it and his great men in this country (particularly the General) are determined to find them out, and to prosecute them with the utmost severity, so as to deter others from being guilty of the like. Let this

⁷⁶ “Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pontiac and other Indians,” in *DRNY*, vol. VII, 855.



Figure 4.7: “Wampum belt, purple and white beads, the design reads 1766.” 1887.32.2, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK. There are no provenance records for this item prior to its donation, but studies of the object point towards it being authentic to 1766 with most believing that it was likely given to Sir William Johnson by Pontiac during the negotiations outlined above.

therefore give you no further concern, as it is not a national thing, but rest assured of our inclination to do you justice and detestation of those who by acts like these would disturb the public tranquillity so happily established for your interest.⁷⁷

All of these proclamations landed well with Pontiac, who responded with well-prepared words and belts of wampum [Figure 4.7], saying he would do all in his power upon his return to encourage the Bodéwadmik to turn over the murderer. He likewise thanked Johnson for not only reopening trade but doing so in a way that protected Indigenous interests, saying:

we thank you for the goodness you have for us in sending plenty of merchandise to Detroit. This will be a great means of promoting a good understanding between us, as it will enable us to clothe our children well. We likewise heartily thank you for not letting the traders to straggle through the woods to our villages, but to trade only at the posts under the inspection of the commissaries.⁷⁸

A fortified and well-regulated entrepôt was as welcome to Pontiac as it was to Johnson and the superintendencies of Indian Affairs.

More than anything, while meeting at Fort Ontario in 1766, it was clear that Pontiac’s interests and the interests of those that supported the “Plan of 1764” had come

⁷⁷ “Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pondiac and other Indians,” in *DRNY*, 855-856.

⁷⁸ “Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with Pondiac and other Indians,” in *DRNY*, 859.

together. The imperial trade infrastructure that the Lords of Trade had outlined as the best course forward for peaceful relations with the British Empire's newfound Indigenous subjects was, in more ways than not, legible to those Indigenous peoples as the kind of collaborative transcultural kinscape they had previously knitted together with the French in the region. Additionally, in less than a year, Pontiac and his Indigenous peers had already begun to see this new collaboration bear fruit. Even occasional violence between Indigenous peoples and the British did not seem to threaten this new arrangement, so long as the roads of communication were maintained and free of obstacles. Moreover, Pontiac's words affirmed Croghan's position as a diplomat and trader, as he had consistently argued that sustained trade was the only means by which to maintain peace with Indigenous peoples.

A Brief Experiment in British Empire by Collaboration

One cannot be certain, but it would seem that Pontiac's heart had fully changed. Gone were the pledges to kill every last British person who set foot west of the Appalachian Mountains. In its place were expressions of gratitude for the presence of commissaries and other British agents of empire who were proving invaluable in ensuring that trade goods flowed freely and fairly while simultaneously stemming the flow of those settlers who threatened Indigenous lives. Likewise, Croghan clearly saw all of the fruit of a crop sown over years of trade and diplomacy beginning to ripen. Months before Johnson met with Pontiac at Fort Ontario, Croghan was busy securing pledges from his financial partners and drawing up the Articles of Agreement of the Illinois Company, an

agreement that bore the signatures of Croghan, William Franklin, George Morgan, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, Joseph Wharton Sr., Joseph Warton Jr., John Hughes, and Joseph Galloway, as well as George Croghan signing for Sir William Johnson.⁷⁹ Croghan sent a copy of the proposal to Johnson, noting that it should receive Johnson's full and urgent attention, saying "the sooner your honor considers this plan and writes governor Franklin the better, as one half of England is now land mad and everybody there has their eyes on this country."⁸⁰ Johnson did as Croghan asked, writing to Franklin on May 3, remarking that, "the intended settlement may be productive of a regular civil government in that valuable country and this without doing violence to, or overreaching the Indians, which from sentiments of policy as well as justice should be always cautiously avoided."⁸¹

On July 10, two weeks before meeting with Pontiac at Fort Ontario, Johnson got to work outlining in far more formal and exhaustive terms the intended shape of this proposed colony. Drawing directly from Croghan's notes, Johnson made clear that settlement along the rivers could become a breadbasket for the rest of the British colonies as well as providing indigo, hemp, and other useful commodities. But more importantly, according to Johnson, these riverside settlements would further facilitate "a more extensive and advantageous fur trade with the numerous Indian nations which reside near the lakes and the different branches of the Mississippi than was ever known since the first settlement of America, supplying them with British manufactures in vast amount." But,

⁷⁹ "Articles of Agreements of the Illinois Company, March 29, 1766," in *TNR*, 203-204.

⁸⁰ "Croghan to Johnson, March 30, 1766," in *TNR*, 206.

⁸¹ "Johnson to W. Franklin, May 3, 1766," in *TNR*, 224.

more importantly, Croghan's records of his travel made clear to Johnson that with properly placed settlements, this trade would be much more easily maintained than any French attempts to do likewise from St. Louis. As Johnson wrote:

the French will [not] be able to rival us in this trade, as we can transport our goods through Pennsylvania and Virginia to that country much cheaper than can be done from New Orleans, up the Mississippi. This is the only passage the French now have left, and being all the way against the stream, it is extremely difficult and tedious. Whereas the English have now a ready communication from Virginia and Pennsylvania to Fort Pitt, on the Ohio and from thence have water carriage with the stream to the Mississippi. And when they have disposed of their goods to the Indians in that country, they may easily transport the commodities they receive in return down the Mississippi to Mobile, and from thence ship them to England.

As such, Johnson urged the crown to “purchase of the Indians all their right to that tract of country lying on the east side of the River Mississippi, between the Illinois River and the River Ohio, and fifty miles back from the said River Mississippi,” adding that this region already contained the formerly French settlements of Fort Chartres, Cahokia, and Kaskaskia, and that “the Indians have expressed an inclination to part with it to the English on very moderate terms...they having a greater quantity of fine hunting country than they can ever have any use for. This would be a sufficient tract to begin a colony upon, and having a natural boundary, would be the most preferable.” Johnson then noted that an effective colonial government there would require that “the first governor be a person experienced in the management of Indian affairs and who has given proofs of his influence with the savages,” conspicuously avoiding mention of the fact that both he and his son had been earlier suggested for this post.⁸²

⁸² “Reasons for Establishing a Colony in the Illinois, 1766,” in *TNR*, 248-257.

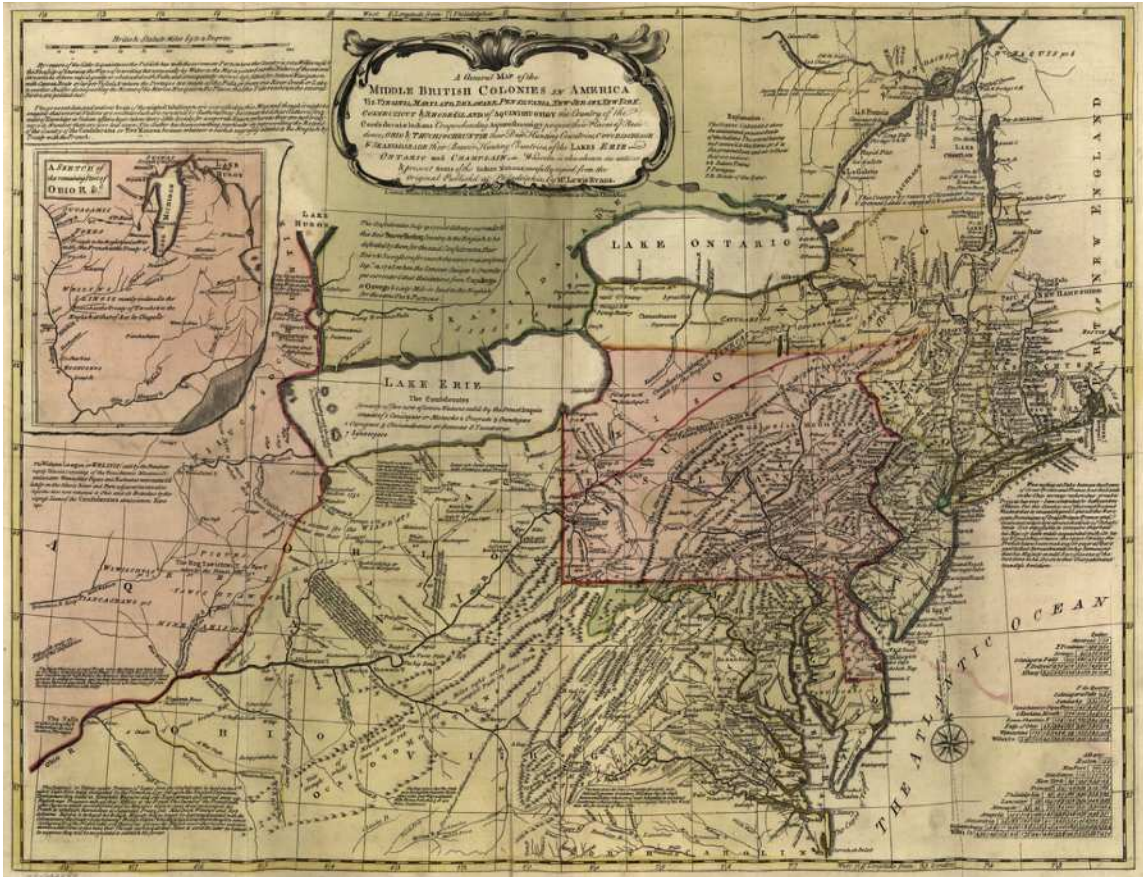


Figure 4.8: Lewis Evans’s map presented along with plans for an interior colony. Lewis Evans, *A general map of the middle British colonies in America*, 1765, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/75692295/>.

Unfortunately for Croghan, Johnson, and the rest of the “Suffering Traders,” the fruit of their efforts seemingly rotted on the stem before it could be plucked. The first signs of trouble came when the plan was presented, along with one of Lewis Evan’s colonial maps [Figure 4.8] and a copy of Croghan’s personal journal, by Benjamin Franklin to William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, who at the time served as the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, the cabinet position that administered the British colonies in North America at the time. According to Franklin, Lord Shelburne:

found it did not quadrate with the sentiments of people here; that their objections to it were, the distance, which would make it of little use to this country, as the expense on the carriage of goods would oblige the people

to manufacture for themselves; that it would for the same reason be difficult both to defend it and to govern it; that it might lay the foundation of a power in the heart of America, which in time might be troublesome to the other colonies, and prejudicial to our government over them; and that people were wanted here and in the already settled colonies, so that none could be spared for a new colony.⁸³

For Lord Shelburne, the continued pressures of a cash-strapped empire and the rising colonial tensions in North America made the establishment of a new colonial venture unrealistic. By 1767, partners began to abandon the venture, with one of the signers of the original plan, Samuel Wharton, writing to William Franklin asking him to “urge your father...to drop the Illinois affair,” because he feared that dwelling on it had distracted the “Suffering Traders” from the simplest and most immediate solution, direct restitution for their losses, as “the latter would be an immediately great thing and of infinitely more consequence to you and us than the former.”⁸⁴

But not all had lost the faith in Croghan’s envisioned colony, although they did pivot their sights from the Illinois Country towards the Ohio. In the summer of 1768, Johnson deftly negotiated with diplomats from the Haudenosaunee, including those from the diasporic communities along the Ohio River. Croghan was there as well, and he was instrumental in giving shape to a significant grant that was to become known as Indiana [Figure 4.9] (although it never overlapped with today’s state of the same name.) In so doing, Croghan released many of his previous claims that had become a complicated patchwork in the region, hoping that this much more formal and organized claim would be more easily confirmed by British administrators. However, while at the outset it

⁸³ “B. Franklin to W. Franklin, September 27, 1766,” in *TNR*, 394-395.

⁸⁴ “S. Wharton to W. Franklin, 1767,” in *TNR*, 468.

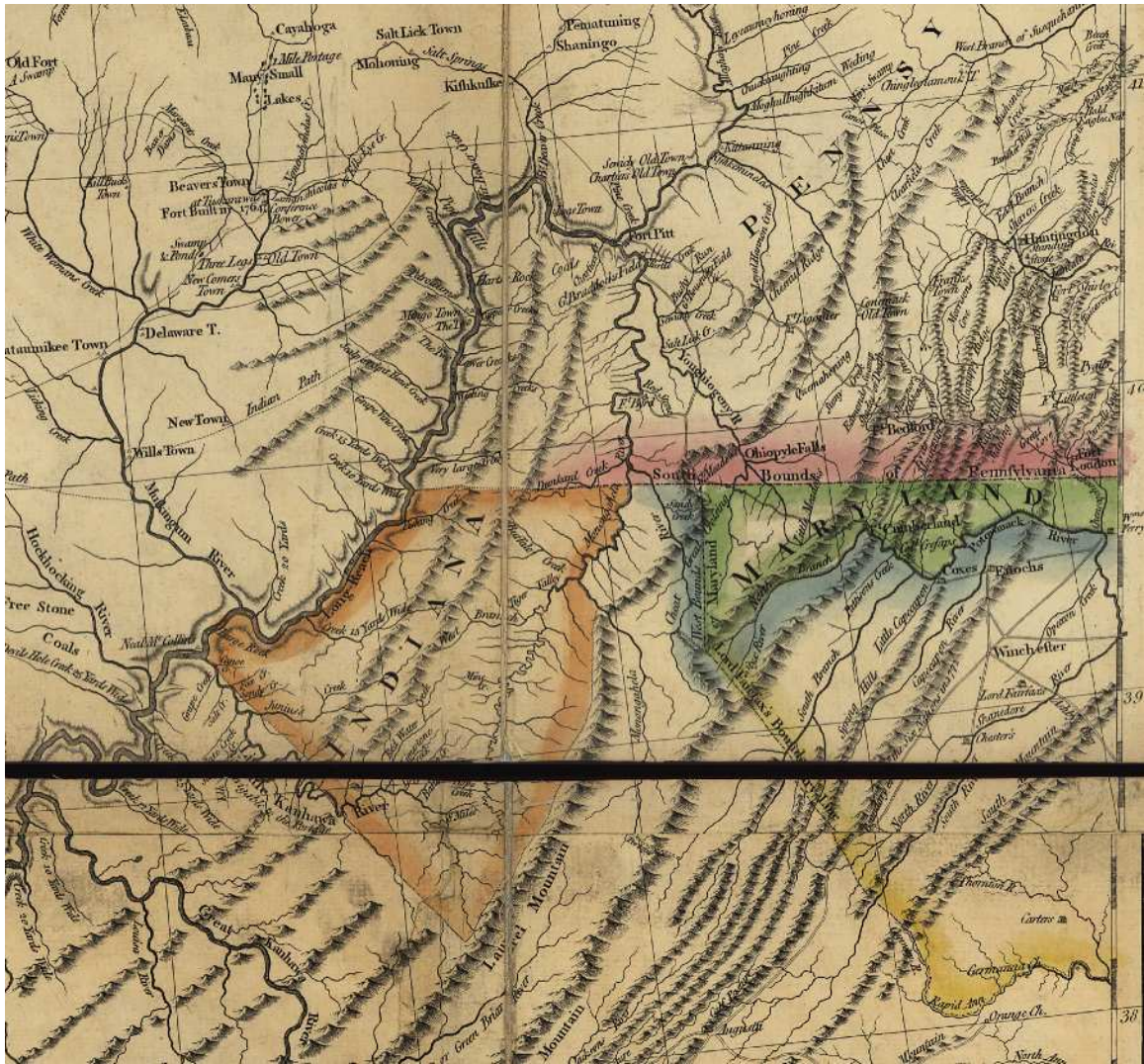


Figure 4.9: A map depicting the proposed Indiana colony. Excerpted from Thomas Hutchins, *A new map of the western parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina; comprehending the River Ohio, and all the rivers, which fall into it; part of the River Mississippi, the whole of the Illinois River, Lake Erie; part of the Lakes Huron, Michigan &c. and all the country bordering on these lakes and rivers, 1778, map, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm71002165/>.*

certainly seemed to be a roaring success for Croghan and his colleagues among the “Suffering Traders,” it also put Croghan at odds with other stakeholders. Specifically, while colonial Pennsylvania’s charter did not extend westward indefinitely like so many other colonies, Virginia’s did, and the Indiana grant fell squarely within territory that Virginia claimed, and more importantly, that many wealthy Virginians were eyeing,

including George Washington himself.⁸⁵ As Washington had written the previous year to a Pennsylvania surveyor:

I can never look upon the Proclamation [of 1763] in any other light (but this I say between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians. It must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians consent to our occupying those lands. Any person who neglects hunting out good lands, and in some measure marking and distinguishing them for his own, in order to keep others from settling them will never regain it. If you will be at the trouble of seeking out the lands, I will take upon me the part of securing them, as soon as there is a possibility of doing it and will, moreover, be at all the cost and charges surveying and patenting the same after which you shall have such a reasonable proportion of the whole as we may fix upon at our first meeting as I shall find it absolutely necessary and convenient for the better furthering of the design to let some few of my friends be concerned in the scheme and who must also partake of the advantages. By this time it may be easy for you to discover, that my plan is to secure a good deal of land. You will consequently come in for a very handsome quantity and as you will obtain it without any costs or expenses I am in hopes you will be encouraged to begin the search in time. I would choose if it were practicable to get pretty large tracts together, and it might be desirable to have them as near your settlement, or Fort Pitt, as we could get them good; but not to neglect others at a greater distance if fine and bodies of it lie in a place.⁸⁶

Simultaneously, illegal settlers had already poured into the region, and a legitimate colonial claim would have been immediately threatening to them.

Croghan was certainly aware of both of these issues, as he had spent his entire career navigating the tensions between western colonial claims while also living in close proximity with the types of settlers that were willing to take advantage of poor regulation.

⁸⁵ Campbell, *Speculators in Empire*, 139-166; James Donald Anderson, "Vandalia: The First West Virginia?," *West Virginia History* 40, no. 4 (Summer 1979): 375-392. For more on the longer history of imperial experimentation in the Ohio River Valley, see Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁸⁶ "George Washington to William Crawford, September 20, 1767," *George Washington Papers, Series 5, Financial Papers: Copybook of Letters and Invoices, 1767-1775*, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, MSS 44693: Reel 116.

In fact, earlier that year Croghan was called in front of the Pennsylvania colonial assembly to testify as an expert on Indian relations as they investigated growing violence between Indians and those settlers moving westward. While the letter from the Pennsylvania Assembly does not mention him by name, nine days prior to issuing their report, an illegal settler in western Pennsylvania named Frederick Stump argued with a party of Onödowá'ga who he claimed were intoxicated. In response, Stump and his servant John Ironcutter killed the entire party, which consisted of four men and two women, and “afterwards, in order to conceal them, dragged them down to a creek near his house, made a hole in the ice, and threw them in.” In order to further cover up the murder, the next day Stump traveled “about fourteen miles” to a pair of Indian cabins “where he found one woman, two girls, and one child, which he killed in order to prevent their carrying intelligence of the death of the other Indians... and afterwards put them into the cabins and burnt them.”⁸⁷ In response to Croghan’s testimony, the assembly concluded that “the cause...is the non-establishment of a boundary negotiated about three years ago by his majesty’s orders to Sir William Johnson between these colonies and the Indian Country.” Not acting expediently as Johnson urged elicited a response from Indigenous peoples, who:

warmly complained that although they have received no consideration for the lands agreed to be ceded to the Crown on their side of the boundary, [the Crown’s] subjects are daily settling and occupying those *very* lands, and a number of the Indian warriors have been lately murdered by the frontier people, chiefly those of Virginia, in their passage to or from war against the [Anigiduwagi].

⁸⁷ “The Deposition of William Blyth of Penn’s Township, January 13, 1768,” in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: Theo. Penn & Co, 1852), vol. IX, 414-415. (Hereafter *CRPA*).

The Assembly was so alarmed by this that they proposed a bill that would make such illegal settlement a “felony of death, without benefit of clergy,” citing a fear that the recent murders could lead to further escalation akin to “the late horrid and cruel massacre of the Indians at *Conestoga* and *Lancaster*,” at the hands of the so-called Paxton Boys in 1763, as justification for such extreme measures.⁸⁸

Croghan’s close colleague Alexander McKee confirmed the Assembly’s worst fears about escalating violence from his home at the Forks of the Ohio. According to McKee, the actions of Frederick Stump had enraged his Indigenous associates, who cited the murders as proof that “the English are certainly determined to [make] war on us, or otherwise they would not scalp our [people],” with McKee noting that “the scalping of those Indians is worse than murdering [them].”⁸⁹ To make matters worse, after being imprisoned in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, a mob sympathetic to Stump and Ironcutter surrounded the jail and freed them. In response Johnson argued that this was “one of the most dangerous accidents that could have happened at this period and I much fear that the lawless gentry on the frontiers will render it worse by screening the murderer or contributing to his escape.” He continued, claiming that he feared the opportunity for a peace-ensuring colony was slipping past them, arguing that establishing a colony and requesting the ceding of land from Indians was impossible until “all prejudices were

⁸⁸ “Pennsylvania Assembly to B. Franklin and R. Jackson, January 19, 1768.” in *Trade and Politics*, ed. Clarence Walworth Alvord (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1921), 156-157. (Hereafter *T&P*).

⁸⁹ “Alexander McKee to George Croghan, February 13, 1768,” in *T&P*, 170. The other records of the murder do not mention that the Indians were scalped. Either this inaccurate detail was added as word spread or the term served as a kind shorthand for the gruesome treatment of the bodies. The original manuscript of this letter was, like so many of Sir William Johnson’s papers, burned during the fire at the New York State Library in 1911. However, enough remains that I have reasonable confidence in the words that were lost, indicated in brackets.

removed, a firm tranquility established, and the Indians previously consulted.” According to Johnson, any news of a proposed colony under the conditions of early 1768 would only exacerbate tensions. It would take all of his diplomatic skill to undo the damage done by the likes of Stump when he finally succeeded in securing the Indiana claim later that year at Fort Stanwix.⁹⁰

Unfortunately, while Croghan and Johnson had immediately appeared to be successful at Fort Stanwix, their diplomatic achievements quickly evaporated. According to Daniel K. Richter, several processes doomed the “Plan of 1764,” which was crucial for creating the type of colony that Croghan and his colleagues desired. In particular, the Stamp Act Crisis negatively impacted the plan in two ways. Firstly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, it began to sow increased public resistance to imperial administration and oversight. But it also made the application for trading licenses that would be required increasingly onerous because they were one of the types of documents that required an official stamp. As such, traders en masse grew accustomed to trading illegally and with impunity.⁹¹ In fact, mere weeks after Frederick Stump and John Ironcutter were freed from the Carlisle jail, the Lords of Trade put the Plan of 1764 to rest permanently. In particular, the plan to build and maintain garrisoned posts designed to operate as entrepôts was deemed too expensive, and as such the regulation of trade should once again fall to the individual colonies. In a moment of shocking naïveté, the Lords of Trade expressed confidence:

⁹⁰ “Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, February 18, 1768,” in *T&P*, 171-172.

⁹¹ Richter, “Plan of 1764,” 198-200.

that the experience which the old colonies have had of the ill effects of such inattention and neglect will induce all of them to use more caution and better management for the future, and particularly to adopt such of the regulations established by the present Superintendents as have evidently operated to the benefit of the trade and to the giving that satisfaction and content to the Indians from which alone the colonies can hope to derive either immediate profit or lasting peace and security.⁹²

Considering the delay in receiving trans-Atlantic news, the Lords of Trade were doubtlessly unaware of the actions of Stump and Ironcutter. One can only guess as to whether such news would have influenced them, but considering the growing political resistance to imperial authority and revenue-generating taxation in the colonies, it is reasonable to assume that they would have come to the same conclusion regardless.

Despite his success in securing the Indiana grant, Croghan's designs for a trader colony in the Ohio Country grew increasingly untenable. From that moment forward, Croghan's reputation deteriorated. As he sought to navigate the perilous waters of highly leveraged speculation, his erstwhile financial allies grew increasingly impatient with him. The pressures of his debt forced him to sell his stake in Indiana to other members of the company mere months after securing the claim. Nevertheless, he stayed connected to the venture, which was folded into a larger project then known as "Vandalia" so as to flatter King George's wife Charlotte who claimed to be descendant from Vandals. He argued that such a colony would be essential for maintaining peace with Indian nations as he claimed that five thousand colonial families were already settled there and their behavior would inevitably provoke a new war unless they could be brought under the rule of law.

⁹² "Representation of the Lords of Trade on the State of Indian Affairs," in *DRNY*, vol. XIII, 25.

However, he also could not leave Croghan Hall in Pittsburgh lest he be thrown into debtor's prison.

But, even as Croghan's prospects grew dimmer, he never wavered from his belief in the wisdom of an interior colony designed to facilitate trade between the British Empire and Indigenous peoples. Hoping to regain his status as well as his financial stakes in the Vandalia venture, Croghan continued to work as an agent in support of Johnson's plan to leverage land rights that the British claimed through the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix signed with the Six Nations.⁹³ In 1770, Thomas Pownell, a member of Parliament and former colonial governor known as an ardent supporter of the rights of colonists in the time leading up to the American Revolution, saw wisdom in the Vandalia venture and worked to reinvigorate interest. Writing to Johnson, he noted that a society around the venture had formed in London, telling the superintendent that "you and Col. Croghan are made original partakers." Tellingly, Pownell was also clearly fully convinced of Croghan's design for the colony, as he made clear that:

From our peculiar situation as a frontier province and as immediately connected with the Indian Country, some peculiar additional departments will be wanting in our form of government and that is an Indian department formed for negotiation in matters of policing a just and regular intercourse in trade and so connected with the military branch as to become a principal part in a time of war.

He continued, insisting that a colony that was uniquely collaborative with Indigenous peoples was the key to success, stating that it needed "a department interwoven into the constitution of the government of this province," and therefore Pownell urged Johnson to "give me your plan and explanatory sentiments such as will establish a proper federate

⁹³ Campbell, *Speculators in Empire*, 167-201.

connection and intercommunion between our government and the Indians founded on one hand in justice and true policy towards these Indians and on the other creative of the only security which such a province so situated can, or ought to, confide in.”⁹⁴

In 1772, Croghan and McKee continued work on bringing this new plan to fruition from their established base at Pittsburgh. In a letter to Sir William Johnson, McKee affirmed that “Mr. Croghan has communicated to me the...intentions of forming a new colony on the Ohio...with me in the necessity of taking the earliest opportunity to notifying it in his Majesty’s name to the several nations this way, for which purpose I shall shortly set out to execute it agreeable to your honor’s directions.” Although the original letter is badly damaged and therefore some important details are missing, it would seem that the Ohio Onödowá’ga Kyashuta had joined the endeavor as a vital diplomat communicating between the Six Nations in their native homelands and the Onödowá’ga diaspora in the Ohio Country. McKee indicated that Kyashuta had sent messengers throughout the Ohio Country and “enjoined them in the most earnest manner to be strict in preserving peace and tranquility until he had the opportunity of delivering to them the speeches he is charged with from your honor and the Six Nations chiefs.”⁹⁵ Kyashuta’s work as an advocate for the plan continued into 1774, when he hosted a conference at Fort Pitt outlining the plan, attended by Johnson, Croghan, McKee, and representatives from the Ohio Onödowá’ga, Myaamia, Odawa, Lenape, Shaawanwa, and Wendat. After Kyashuta worked to assuage fears about the behavior of traders, Croghan

⁹⁴ “Thomas Pownell to Sir William Johnson, April 15, 1770,” in *WJP*, vol. XII, 815-817.

⁹⁵ “Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, December 31, 1772,” in *WJP*, vol. VIII, 678-679.

rose and likewise made clear that his goal was to help facilitate and oversee a colonial administration that would treat Indians and settlers alike with justice and fairness. Hoping to draw the Ohio Onödowá'ga closer into the alliance between Sir William Johnson and the rest of the Haudenosaunee League, he then invited them "to collect their people that were dispersed on the Ohio and its environs and make a Settlement along somewhere above Fort Pitt in order to be in one body and more respectable than they were at present."⁹⁶

But the years of promises of a robust and regulated trade interspersed with violence and broken promises of hospitality had soured Indigenous delegates in attendance on the prospect of an interior colony. While all agreed to do their best to maintain peaceful relations, an unnamed delegate stood and articulated exactly what they feared:

Having now gone through the business of this meeting which was assembled for the preservation of peace and tranquility with all the Indian nations in these parts agreeable to his Majesty the King of England and his gracious intentions towards us, we have still to observe to you that we were ever so willing and inclined to peace. Your people counteract us by their unfriendly and hostile behavior towards us. For we cannot cross on the side of the Ohio River which you call yours or our people are ill treated and even knocked in the head and thrown into the river by yours, whereas when your people come on our side they have the liberty to walk peaceably, and quietly wherever they please. You Pennsylvanians will endeavor to exculpate yourselves and throw this charge on the Virginians, but we are convinced you are equally culpable. It is therefore you white people who oppose the good intentions of the King and his Servants, and we must assure you that if there be not a stop soon put to such insults on your part, it must bring on a general quarrel which will not easily be made up afterwards.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ "Conference with Kayaghshota, January 5-15, 1774," in *WJP*, vol. XII, 1044-1048.

⁹⁷ "Conference with Kayaghshota, January 5-15, 1774," in *WJP*, vol. XII, 1051-1052.

The unnamed diplomat's speech is revealing insofar as it places the blame not on the presence of British colonialism broadly but on the encroachment of preexisting colonies. Were Vandalia to be created as Johnson, Croghan, McKee and their associates proposed, it would be well received. Likewise, the speaker was happy to envision himself as a subject of the King, and in many ways he saw himself as a far more obedient subject of the King than Pennsylvanians and Virginians. But equally telling was the pessimistic tone of McKee and Croghan's response, as they stated, "that they were very sensible of many irregularities and insults of the whites and sorry for it. But all they could do was to forewarn those settlers from behaving so for the future and to acquaint them with their Speech." Fittingly, the official record notes that they made their speech "without wampum," an apt metaphor for the seeming paucity of persuasive capital left at their disposal. After years of working to establish a different kind of colony built on exchange and kinscapes, the continued encroachment of unaligned settlers had seemingly done irreparable damage to the reputation of the Vandalia project.⁹⁸

Farther inland, in the vicinity of the Kekionga Wabash/Maumee portage, the tensions of transcultural kinscapes within an "empire of collaboration" were likewise on display. In her exploration of power and gender in Indigenous-French families, historian Karen L. Marrero investigates how marriages between Indigenous women and *habitants* were folded politically into the nascent British administration of the region. She thus turns to a 1774 marriage dispute between the Myaamia *akimaahkwia*, or female civil chief, Tahkamwa, and her *habitant* husband Richardville. Richardville, in collaboration

⁹⁸ "Conference with Kayagshota, January 5-15, 1774," in *WJP*, vol. XII, 1052.

with his business partner, Alexis Maisonville, had sought to usurp the Myaamia's economic privileges over the portage. Maisonville had proven himself loyal to the British during Pontiac's War when he was assigned to secure the portage by Sir William Johnson in 1764. As such Tahkamwa wanted a divorce, knowing that Richardville was only in the position to wrest control of the portage because of his intimate ties to her and her clan. However, because Tahkamwa wanted to take her property and privileges with her in the divorce, the process had to be adjudicated according to British laws that pitted the Myaamia people's comfort with female leadership against the patriarchal families of Europe. In the end, the British administrator in Detroit, Captain Richard Berringer Lernoult, ruled in favor of Tahkamwa, a ruling that allowed her and her clan to continue to profit from one of the North American interior's most lucrative portages.

However, while the ruling certainly signals a British administrator's willingness to oversee a collaborative empire, it also demonstrates the complications that lie at the heart of melding an Indigenous kinscape within a transatlantic empire. Not only did Lernoult have to take into account the legal repercussions of including the same types of *habitants* that had threatened British administration during Pontiac's War, it also required making space for the political implications of starkly different concepts of gender and marriage. In the process of trying to leave Richardville, Tahkamwa had moved into the residence of another *habitant* named Beaubien. According to the British Indian Agent in Detroit, Jehu Hay:

[Baubien] is a man whom the rest of the French traders say is dangerous there. He has taken the wife of one Richarville [sp] from him, and Richarville complained against him at Detroit....As the woman is of the

Pacanne family of that Nation, she is capable of doing a good deal of mischief, and the rest of the French traders are under some apprehension she will, through the instigation of this Beaubien.

Tellingly, not only did Lernoult rule that Tahkamwa's property was hers, he also ruled that Beaubien likewise could not make any claim to it either. In this sense, Lernoult clearly demonstrated his preference for maintaining a British/Myaamia kinscape over protecting the perceived property rights of *habitants*. But Lernoult also made clear in the same ruling that British claims would be maintained, as he ruled that Maisonville's privileges would remain.⁹⁹

However, just as the "Suffering Traders" were finding small successes despite prevailing headwinds working against them, so too did this case illustrate the fragility of a British-Indigenous kinscape. Although British anxiety about the perceived irregularities of families such as Tahkamwa's would continue unabated, the arrival of the American Revolution soon made the resolution of those anxieties a moot point. The larger forces would seemingly prevail. However, just as peace proved fragile and seemingly fleeting, both Croghan and his business associates as well as British administrators saw the maintenance of a deeply integrated British-Indigenous kinscape worthy of investment and integral to their vision of a new approach to empire in North America. And to call that vision "doomed" because of the significant strains on imperial coffers and the protestations of land-hungry settlers and revolutionary colonial assemblies alike forestalls the possibility of seeing something unexpected, the possibility, no matter how

⁹⁹ Karen L. Marrero, *Detroit's Hidden Channels: The Power of French-Indigenous Families in the Eighteenth Century* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2020), 141-166, quotation on 157. For another perspective on the political and economic development of Detroit during this period, see Catherine Cangany, *Frontier Seaport: Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 106-136.

challenging, of creating a new type of British colony that integrated Indigenous peoples rather than simply dispossessing them.

Epilogue: Departing the Confluence of Peace and Power

As the most famed architect of British-Indigenous relations during his time, it is perhaps fitting that Sir William Johnson died while in the midst of negotiations. Despite securing an updated line separating white from Indigenous settlements during the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, tensions continued to rise, especially as Virginia colonists continued to violate that line. By 1774, such violations had convinced the Shaawanwa and the Ohio Onödowá'ga to once again take up arms in a conflict known as Lord Dunmore's War. Johnson, desperate to stem of the spread of the conflict and stave off a conflict as far reaching as Pontiac's War ten years earlier, began negotiations with the rest of the main body of the Haudenosaunee. The Haudenosaunee diplomats expressed their frustration over settler encroachment, with the Onödowá'ga delegate Serihowane stating:

We are sorry to observe to you that your people are as ungovernable, or rather more so, than ours. You must remember that it was most solemnly and publicly settled and agreed at the General Congress held at Fort Stanwix in 1768 on behalf of the great King of England our Father and the governors and commissioners of the several provinces then assembled there, that the Line then pointed out and fixed between the Whites and Indians should forever after be looked upon as a barrier between us and that the White People were not to go beyond it. It seems, Brother, that your people entirely disregard and despise the settlement agreed upon by their superiors and us.

The next day Johnson responded, lamenting that the plan to have a centralized trade policy rooted in a new colonial approach—a plan both he and George Croghan backed—did not come to fruition. Instead it was up to individual colonies, and while Johnson tried to assure the Haudenosaunee that these colonial governments were earnestly trying to

regulate settlement, he could not help but acknowledge that settlers were moving across the line with impunity. He thus pleaded with the delegation to avoid bloodshed and if they needed immediate remedy from colonial abuses, they should turn to Croghan or the Ohio Onödowá'ga Kyashuta, as the latter had begun serving as an ambassador between the main body of Haudenosaunee and the Ohio Onödowá'ga. Johnson then departed to give the Haudenosaunee delegates time to deliberate. However, two hours later, Johnson had a stroke and died.¹

The following day, July 13, 1774, Johnson's body was taken and buried in the family vault at St. John's Episcopal Church in Johnstown, New York. [Figure 1] In attendance at his internment were 2000 people, a number which included many of the Haudenosaunee delegates who were shocked by his sudden passing. However, the next day the Haudenosaunee took the lead and performed the Condolence Ceremonies that were required at a time like this. Conoghquieson, a sachem of the Onyota'a:ka [Oneida], spoke first, addressing Guy Johnson, Sir William Johnson's nephew and now acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs, saying:

Brother. It yields us vast pleasure to find that the fire which was in danger of being totally extinguished by the great loss we have sustained, is for the present rendered bright by you. The good words you have spoken to us yesterday, having revived us, and kept our young men within reasonable bounds who otherwise would have lost their senses, we rejoice at it and accordingly with this belt we cause the fire to burn clear as usual at this place, and at Onondaga which are our proper fire places and we hope the great King will approve, and confirm it.

¹ "Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1857), vol. VIII, 476-479, (hereafter *DRNY*).

Keeping with the Haudenosaunee approach to mourning and governance, however, once proper condolences were performed, the delegates returned to negotiations, with Guy Johnson taking the lead in his uncles place.²

The public memory of Sir William Johnson has continued to be robust. His historic home, Johnson Hall, is now a museum located in a town that is likewise named after him and which features the desk upon which Johnson penned many of the letters directing Britain’s transcultural diplomatic efforts. [Figure 5.2] Moreover, while other

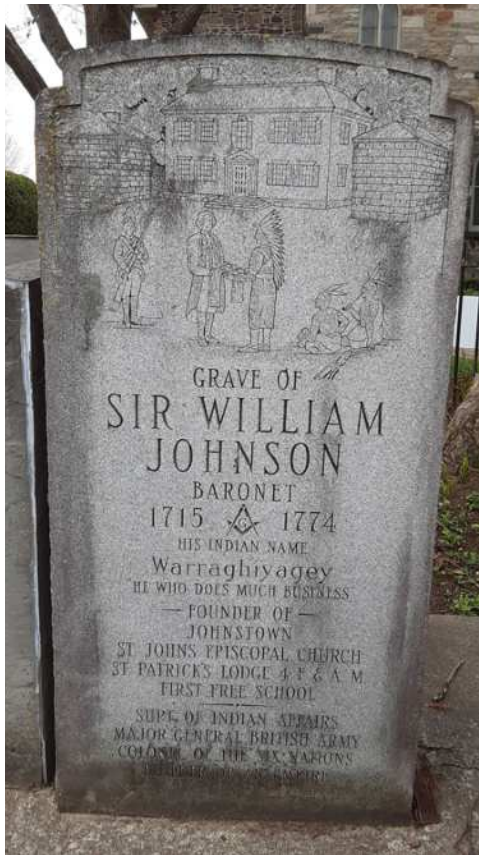


Figure 5.1: Sir William Johnson’s Gravestone, St. John’s Episcopal Church, Johnstown, NY. “Grave of Sir William Johnson,” *The Historical Marker Database*, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=54281>.



Figure 5.2: Sir William Johnson’s Desk, Johnson Hall, Johnstown, NY. Photo by author, August 10, 2019.

² “Proceedings of Sir William Johnson with the Indians,” in *DRNY*, 480-484; William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 570-572.

colonial characters from this period may be more well-known, portrayals of Johnson in history-themed media are not uncommon, with Johnson being a key villain in the historical science fiction video game, *Assassin's Creed III*—although the designers of the video game took significant artistic liberties as the player-controlled Kanien'kehá:ka protagonist Ratonnhaké:ton must assassinate Johnson over the course of the game, an ironic turn considering Johnson's efforts to temper British colonial encroachment onto Haudenosaunee lands.³

Despite the profound impact of Neolin's eschatological vision, there is no equivalent monument to him, nor is the exact location of his death known. His last recorded whereabouts were in Gekelukpechink in the Ohio Country, which came to be known in English as Newcomerstown, named after the English name of the Lenape sachem Netawatwees. Eventually, as was the case throughout their history, pressures from white migrations forced the Lenape to move, and, in an ironic turn of events considering Neolin's original vision, Newcomerstown eventually became yet another Indigenous space now occupied by settlers. However, glimpses of the community's Indigenous past are re-emerging, as a new Lenape Diaspora Memorial, a series of six bronze statues representing six generations of Lenape people, is currently under construction. Of the two statues completed, one depicts Netawatwees in the pose of a statesman while the other is of his son, Bemino, often known to the British as John Killbuck Sr., who stands arms raised, ready for battle.⁴ [Figure 5.3]

³ Ubisoft, *Assassin's Creed III*, Microsoft 360, 2012.

⁴ Chris Crook, "Sculptor Honors Roots with Lenape Diaspora Memorial" *Times Recorder*, January 30, 2022. <https://www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com/story/news/local/2022/01/30/sculptor-honors-roots-lanape-diaspora-memorial/6512743001/>.



Figure 5.3: Lenape Diaspora Memorial, Newcomerstown, OH. Photo by Dana Overholt, March 29, 2025.



Figure 5.4: Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), *Wikimedia Commons*. February 24, 2007.

It is even harder to trace the life of Catharine Tekarihoga after 1765. Yet, what can be traced is the name for which she served as caretaker in Haudenosaunee political tradition. Her daughter with George Croghan, Catharine Adonwentishon, as previously mentioned, married the famed Thayendanegea, or Joseph Brant, a man who is memorialized in the Canadian capital of Ottawa at the “Valiants Memorial,” which “pays tribute to the people who have served this country in times of war and the contribution they have made in building our nation.”⁵ [Figure 5.4] However, the most important legacy is the continued use of the name “Tehkarihoken.” Despite the continued pressures

⁵ “Valiants Memorial,” *Government of Canada*, accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/art-monuments/monuments/valiants.html>.

of colonialism, the Kanien'kehá:ka sachem continues to wield ceremonial authority by tracing matrilineal descent from Catharine.⁶

Despite the important role Lawoughgua played at Fort Pitt, George Croghan's journal is, at this point, the only archival trace of the Shaawanwa *hokima* that has been found. While genealogists have attempted to place him in family trees, with some claiming that Lawoughgua was the brother of the *neenawtooma* Blue Jacket, any work he performed as a leader in his community after 1765 was heard but never preserved on paper.⁷ As such, one can only speculate about what Lawoughgua felt when he returned to his home, having overseen the rending of the social fabric of his community. Likewise, as Shaawanwa factions began to form around the question of whether they should stay neutral or take sides in the growing tensions between the American colonies and the Crown, it is impossible to know which faction Lawoughgua supported, or if he was even alive to witness events such as Dunmore's War.⁸ Nor can one be sure if Lawoughgua ever experienced the joy of the return of some of his adoptive kin, even as the majority of captive/adoptees who were adopted as children eventually found their way back to their adoptive societies.⁹

Of those present in 1765, Alexander McKee's career within the British Indian department continued the longest. As revolution swept North America, he remained

⁶ "Current Clan Mothers and Chiefs," *Haudenosaunee Confederacy*, accessed March 27, 2025, <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/government/current-clan-mothers-and-chiefs/>.

⁷ For example, see Don Greene, *Shawnee Heritage I: Shawnee Genealogy and Family History* (United States: Lulu.com, 2008), 40.

⁸ Sami Lakomäki, *Gathering Together: The Shawnee People through Diaspora and Nationhood, 1600-1870* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 102-131.

⁹ Ian K. Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free: Capture, Adjustment, and Recollection in Allegheny Country* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 381-383.

staunchly loyal. In fact, George Croghan's continued association with McKee was one of the primary reasons Croghan found himself accused of loyalism by the Continental Army. However, by the time Jay's Treaty was signed in 1794, much of McKee's work shifted as British administrators looked to cut costs. Now that they no longer had use for an Indigenous buffer against a common enemy, they adopted an approach that was strikingly similar to General Jeffery Amherst's after the defeat of the French in the Seven Years' War. McKee was appointed "Deputy Superintendent General and Inspector for Indian Affairs for Upper and Lower Canada," and he began work administering gift giving and trade between the British and the Indigenous peoples across the river from Detroit, which was to be evacuated of British forces as per the recently signed terms. However, just as Croghan became embroiled in controversy thirty years earlier when military officials accused him of overspending on gifts, so too did McKee run afoul of his military superiors. Unfortunately for McKee, he never had a chance to fully defend himself, however, as, like Sir William Johnson before him, he died in 1797 with mountains of unfinished business, and he was buried at his son Thomas's home. Notably, Alexander Fraser, at that point a full captain, was at McKee's funeral, noting that it was well-attended by the important political and military leaders of the region.¹⁰

However, beyond the records of McKee's funeral, most information about his final resting place were lost to time, at least until recently. In, 1994, while working to build the footing for a new grain silo for ADM Agricultural industries along the "Ojibway Parkway" in Windsor, Ontario, skeletal remains were uncovered. However, despite being

¹⁰ Larry L. Nelson, *A Man of Distinction among Them: Alexander McKee and the Ohio Country Frontier, 1754-1799* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1999), 178-187.



Figure 5.5: Site of Alexander McKee’s unmarked grave at Windsor Memorial Gardens. The headstone at right is not McKee’s, but in the vicinity of where the discovered human remains are buried. Photos by Ken Turner, April 1, 2025.

turned over to the University of Windsor anthropology department, the remains were all but lost when the anthropologist in charge of the project took a new position in the United States. Luckily, the original discovery never escaped the attention of local historian Ken Turner, who was eventually able to coordinate with local researchers and is now “99-percent certain” that the remains belong to McKee. Turner draws this conclusion because the remains were buried in a British uniform, the skeleton bore marks of arthritis from which McKee was known to suffer, and the location of the find was on the historic property of Thomas McKee. However, without DNA confirmation, it is impossible to know for sure. Since the discovery, the remains have been reinterred in an unmarked grave at the Windsor Memorial Gardens.¹¹ [Figure 5.5]

It would seem that Alexander Fraser’s experiences in 1765 altered the course of his career. By the American Revolution, he was given charge of an elite company of

¹¹ Gary Rennie, “Mystery Bones may be Pioneer’s,” *The Windsor Star*, July 12, 2003; Ken Turner (local historian) in discussion with the author, November 29, 2024.

marksmen within the 34th regiment. Often known simply as “Fraser’s Rangers,” this elite group of light troops were assembled to work in tandem with Indigenous fighters and loyalist militia. Fraser became well-known for his familiarity with Indigenous ways, with one observer noting during a winter dinner that:

A few days since I was invited to dine with Captain Fraser...who gave us a dinner entirely of wild meats. Most of the dishes were only to set off the table, there being such things there as very few of the company could partake of; We had the leg of a bear, indeed, which was salted and far exceeded in flavor a leg of pork, another dish, which though deemed a great rarity with you, is not esteemed such here, a very fine haunch of venison.¹²

Fraser’s Rangers became renowned for their work during Lieutenant General John Burgoyne’s 1777 Saratoga campaign. By all reports, Fraser’s Ranger’s fought valiantly, even as the British losses during this campaign are cited by many military historians as the turning point of the war. At the Battle of Bemis Heights, on October 7, Fraser witnessed the death of his uncle, Brigadier General Simon Fraser, an event immortalized in a romantic engraving entitled “The Burial of General Fraser.” Pictured kneeling next to him is Alexander. [Figure 5.6]

James Smith, the leader of the Black Boys, was, in many ways, one of the only individuals with direct influence over what happened in 1765 that got exactly what he wanted. For him, what Croghan envisioned was the exact opposite of what Western Pennsylvanians had fought for during the Seven Years’ War. While Smith was ultimately unable to stop Croghan from getting valuable gifts to Indigenous peoples in 1765, by

¹² Stephen P. Strach, “A Memoir of the Exploits of Captain Alexander Fraser and his Company of British Marksmen, 1776-1777,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 63, no. 255 (Autumn 1985): 164-179.



Figure 5.6: “The Burial of General Fraser,” 1794, print, Library of Congress, <https://lcn.loc.gov/2003679949>.

1788 he moved with his family to Kentucky, becoming the kind of settler that Croghan wanted to stop from pouring west of the Appalachian Mountains. Upon arriving in Kentucky, he joined the religious revivals being held at the Cane Ridge Meeting House, a movement that gave birth to the Disciples of Christ. While he did not remain a part of the denomination, he eventually became an ordained Presbyterian minister who used his ability to speak Indigenous languages in support of missionary work. But Smith held few qualms about combining missionary work among Indians with violence against them. Even as he aged, he joined General William Henry Harrison’s army during the War of 1812 in a non-combat role, an act that coincided with his publication of *A Treatise on the*

Mode and Manner of Indian War, Their Tactics, Discipline, and Encampments, the Various Methods They Practice, in Order to Obtain the Advantage. Although he made it through combat safely, a year later, Smith died in Green County, Kentucky at the home of his nephew John Rodgers.¹³

Both Gershom and Levi Hicks reappeared by the time of the Revolution. Gershom in particular, because of his experience with Indigenous ways and languages, served George Washington as a spy. However, the traces they left during that time are often difficult to untangle from mythological portrayals of rugged frontiersmen. Both ended up as settlers in the contentious Wyoming Valley of Northeastern Pennsylvania, fighting for the Patriot cause along with other relatives of theirs. According to a nineteenth-century history of the region by Uriah James Jones, during a mission to attack a party of Tories and their Indigenous allies, Gershom and another brother of his, Moses, were captured and taken back to Detroit where they remained until the end of the war. However, if Jones is to be believed, Levi was not so lucky. On May 12, 1778, Indigenous allies of the British attacked Levi and his family in their homes, scalping Levi and his toddler daughter. As Jones gruesomely recounts, Levi's daughter, "in spite of its fractured skull and the loss of its scalp, actually recovered, and lived for a number of years after the outrage, although its wounds were never dressed by a physician. It was feeble-minded, however, owing to the fracture."¹⁴ However, there are many reasons to be skeptical of

¹³ Martha Ann Atkins, "Colonel James Smith's Death Verified," *Kentucky Ancestors Online* (blog), *Kentucky Historical Society*, July 25, 2014. <https://kentuckyancestors.org/colonel-james-smiths-death-verified/>.

¹⁴ Uriah James Jones, *History of the Early Settlement of the Juniata Valley: Embracing an Account of the Early Pioneers, and the Trials and Privations Incident to the Settlement of the Valley* (Harrisburg, PA: Harrisburg Publishing Company, 1889), 236-237, 254-256.

such sensationalist claims. The “massacre” of Hicks’s family has been seen as a prelude to the so-called “Wyoming Massacre,” which was actually a battle fought solely between combatants representing Patriot militias and Loyalist soldiers and their Haudenosaunee allies. According to William Tharp, “while the Battle of Wyoming amounted to a small-scale conflict that only had minor effects on the military situation during the Revolutionary War, this brief encounter along the Susquehanna River took on massive proportions in the American imagination that reached far beyond its limited military significance.” He continues, pointing out that accounts of the battle sensationally included details, like those cited by Jones, that were designed to emphasize the savagery of Indigenous peoples, and thus implicate the British who chose to fight side-by-side with Indigenous peoples. Tellingly, many of these accounts included that Croghan’s son-in-law Thayendanegea was present at the “massacre,” a detail that was almost certainly fabricated.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Levi Hicks’s name is included on the Wyoming Monument at the site of the battle. [Figure 5.7]

Tracing the *habitant* J. Capucin is likewise hard, in large part because there is some speculation that “Capucin” was a *nom de plume*. In a 1767 letter to Sir William Johnson, Guy Carleton, who was governor of Quebec at the time, wrote that seven *habitants* were:

among the Indians without passports, namely, Capucin, Lorain, La Motte, Pot de Vin, Bartholome, Bergeron, and Richarville. The six last are Canadians, and have been settled among the [Myaamiaki] and [Waayaahatanwa] from fifteen to twenty years, except Pot de Vin who has

¹⁵ William R. Tharp, “‘Savage and Bloody Footsteps Through the Valley:’ The Wyoming Massacre in the American Imagination,” Master’s Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 2021, 6-7, 37.

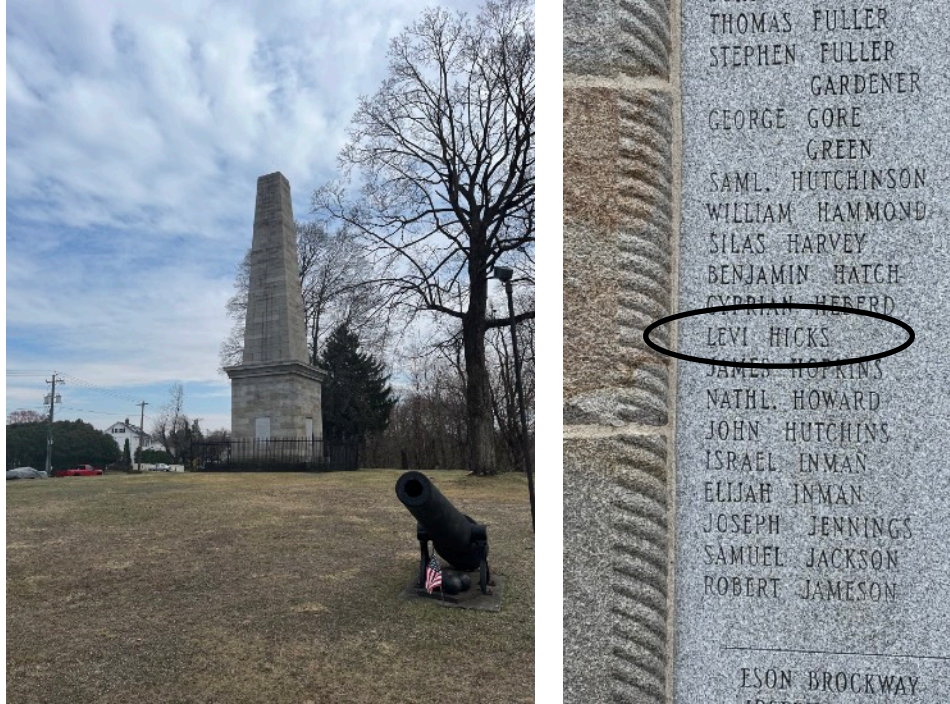


Figure 5.7: Battle of Wyoming Memorial. Levi Hicks’s name is circled. Photos by Quinn, Karl, and Ethan Dyrli, March 30, 2025.

been settled as long at Detroit, but I can give you no certain Account of Capucin, who is also among the [Myaamiaki]. it is supposed that is not his real name but a fictitious one to conceal that of his family.¹⁶

A year later, the Indian department still worried about the potential damage to British interests that could be caused by a man respected as a representative of French interests. Guy Johnson wrote Thomas Gage expressing fear that a *habitant* who had escaped after being charged with murder, “has been very busy in spreading the most dangerous reports amongst the Indians on the Wabash, and that Baptiste Campau, La Motte, Bartholomie, and Capucin are doing the same at the Maumee.”¹⁷ Despite how explosive Capucin’s 1765 letter to Baptiste Campau had been for British administrators, both seemingly

¹⁶ “From Guy Carlton, March 27, 1767,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965), vol. V, 523. (hereafter *WJP*).

¹⁷ “Guy Johnson to Thomas Gage, July 5, 1768,” in *WJP*, vol. XII, 544.

continued to live and trade with impunity among those whom Croghan so desperately wanted to trade with the British exclusively.

During the American Revolution, Quaker pacifist commitments invited suspicion from the Continental Congress, and their shared location in Philadelphia certainly did not help matters. On September 1777, Israel Pemberton was arrested and banished from Philadelphia along with many of his coreligionists on the charge that they had fed treasonous intelligence to the British as they advanced towards the city. Pemberton held true to his principles and refused to take a “test” or oath pledging his loyalty to the Patriot cause, and thus the Continental Board of War, now relocated to York, Pennsylvania due to the British occupation of Philadelphia, upheld the legality of their banishment. However, luckily for the many Quakers who were arrested for their religious commitments, Pemberton and other well-placed Friends were successful in finally getting an exemption to the test for the Society. Sadly, Pemberton did not have much opportunity to revel in his victory as his health failed, and in April, 1779, Pemberton died. His funeral was held at the Great Meeting House on Market Street in Philadelphia, with contemporaries commenting that it was the largest funeral they had ever seen in the city. While there are seemingly no records of his burial, it is likely he was, following Quaker custom at the time, buried in an unmarked grave at the Arch Street Burial Ground, a small plot that is the estimated final resting place of around 20,000 similarly unmarked Quakers, much of which is now under the Arch Street Meeting House. [Figure 5.8]

In many ways, 1765 was the apotheosis of George Croghan’s career. Despite the continued efforts from Croghan and his associates, the Lords of Trade were unconvinced



Figure 5.8: Arch Street Burial Ground, Philadelphia, PA. Photo by author, March 19, 2025.

of the viability of the plans for an interior colony, and the formal proposal for a Vandalia colony was never approved. Moreover, Croghan's continued attempts to desperately raise liquid capital so as to pay back his debts made him appear increasingly untrustworthy. In fact, as revolution came to the continent, growing distrust of Croghan and his business practices ended his career as an Indian agent altogether. Initially he welcomed the coming talk of independence, and he chaired a Committee of Correspondence in Pittsburgh. He likewise applied to the Continental Congress to be an Indian agent based at his home at the Forks of the Ohio, but twice he was passed over for other candidates, perhaps because of his historic tensions with the Pennsylvania colonial government. In fact, both Continental and imperial officials suspected Croghan of treason. His continued

association with the known loyalist Alexander McKee drew suspicion from Continental officials, especially General Edward Hand, who, after a rare trip by Croghan eastward, denied him passage back to his home at the Forks, forcing him to stay in Philadelphia. However, when British troops occupied the young capital of the independence movement, he was put on house arrest by British General William Howe for his work with the Committee of Correspondence. Yet, as soon as the British evacuated the city, Croghan was put on trial as a treasonous loyalist. Although he was acquitted, both his reputation and health were ruined.¹⁸

From that point on, Croghan descended towards pennilessness, with only his death releasing him from the pressure of his mounting debts. Despite his outsized role in the work of transcultural diplomacy and the enormity of his trade empire, by the time of his death, he was relatively unknown and was buried in the churchyard at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Despite his historic antipathy towards the Quakers of Philadelphia, St. Peter's was and still is just blocks away from the Arch Street Burial Ground, meaning that in a certain sense, even in death, his legacy is still entangled with his bitter rival, Israel Pemberton. In yet another twist of irony, Philadelphia's history tourism industry has brought a small renewed measure of interest in George Croghan and in 2008, the Sons of the Revolution restored Croghan's headstone. Yet in so doing, they overemphasized Croghan's patriot commitments, and now his headstone also features the instantly recognizable Betsy Ross flag, a symbol reserved for veterans of the patriot

¹⁸ Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), *George Croghan*, 273-310. Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 375-392.

cause. [Figure 5.9] Less surprisingly, Croghan's name is also becoming more recognizable in the historical memorialization in Pittsburgh, especially as the museum at Fort Pitt seeks to center Indigenous voices—voices often recorded in Croghan's journals. [Figure 5.10]

Pontiac's fall from respectability was even faster than Croghan's. In fact, Pontiac's words at the Fort Ontario meeting with Sir William Johnson were perhaps his final words spoken with any real authority. By the time he returned to his settlement on the Maumee River, a number of his past actions began to catch up to him. His involvement in the reported 1763 murder of a British captive child because she was violently ill had caught up to him when former French *habitants* also implicated in the murder were brought to trial in Detroit in 1767. While Pontiac was never tried in British courts, his involvement tarnished his relationship with the British. Perhaps under the influence of those who wished to follow the Shaawanwa Charlot Kaské and reignite the resistance against the British, Pontiac also lost the support of the nation he had once represented, who began sending messages to Sir William Johnson insisting that Pontiac was no longer their *ogima*. So precipitous was Pontiac's fall that he was no longer welcome in his village and thus relocated to the vicinity of Fort Ouiatenon, which would remain his final home until he was assassinated. While the details are sparse, on April 20, 1769, an unnamed Peewaareewa [Peoria] man killed Pontiac when the latter was visiting the Indigenous settlement outside of the French village of Cahokia. Although Pontiac's killer was not recorded, it was recorded that he was the nephew of Makachinga, whom Pontiac had stabbed in 1766. While contemporary observers saw the murder as a political



Figure 5.9: George Croghan's Grave and View from the Gravesite, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, PA. Photo by author, March 19, 2025.

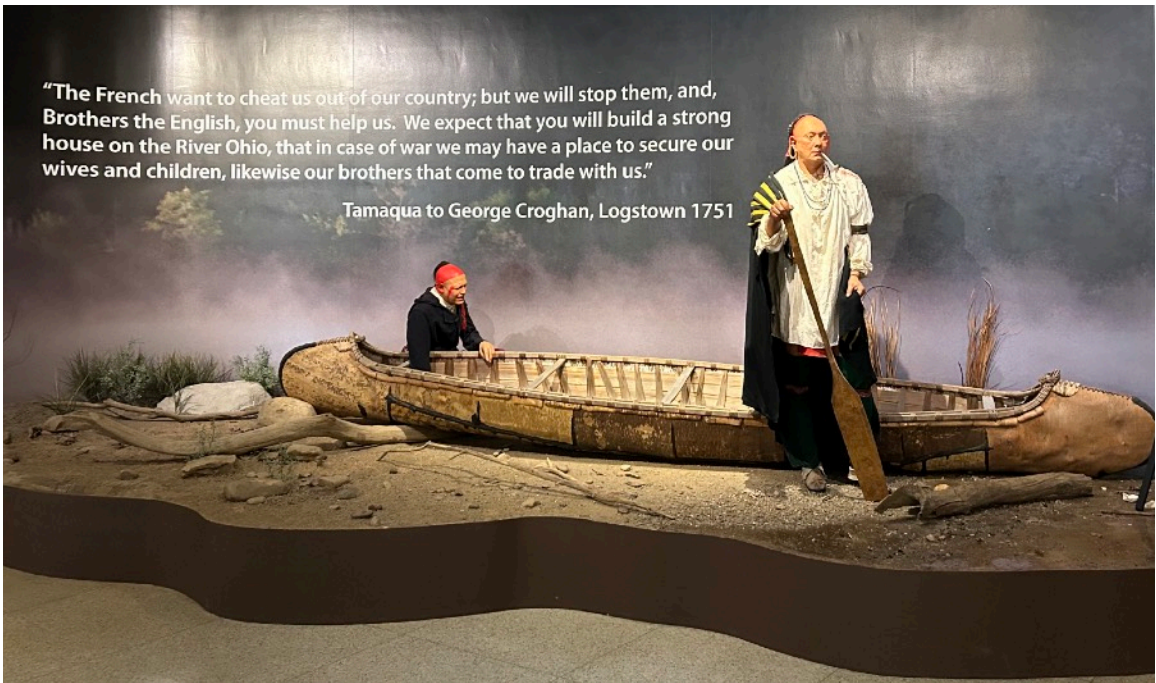


Figure 5.10: Entryway to the Fort Pitt Museum, Pittsburgh, PA. Photo by author, April 17, 2024.

assassination that was connected to ongoing imperial rivalries in the region, there are not enough recorded details to be confident of the killer's true motivations.¹⁹

Because of his renown, the burial of Pontiac is shrouded in the kind of romanticism that likewise unpins his depiction in Robert Roger's play *Ponteach*. While there are no accounts contemporary to his death to confirm the veracity of the story, local memory in St. Louis, Missouri claimed that upon learning of his death, Louis St. Ange de Bellerive retrieved Pontiac's body and had it buried at the corners of Broadway and Walnut in downtown St. Louis, still a relatively small town at the time.²⁰ As the city grew around this spot, little effort was made to draw public attention to the location. Eventually however, a small plaque was added to the parking garage that now stands at that the purported location of Pontiac's burial, channeling the legacy of Pontiac, the avatar of doomed resistance, arguing that he abandoned his resistance to expansion upon realizing "the hopelessness of his cause." In a final twist of irony, from spot of the plaque one can see the Gateway Arch, one of the United States' most celebrated monuments to westward expansion. [Figure 5.11]

At its core, this dissertation has sought to disprove the teleological inevitability of colonial violence. To be clear, colonialism from its onset was exceedingly violent, that violence was instrumental in the dispossession and marginalization of Indigenous peoples, and the structures created through that violence continue to profoundly impact Indigenous peoples and their relationships with settler states to this day. But throughout

¹⁹ Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 249-258.

²⁰ "Chief Pontiac's Legend of the Mound Which Gave St. Louis its Nickname," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 1, 1892; "How and Where did Chief Pontiac Die?," *St. Louis Magazine*, August 1, 2019.



Figure 5.11: Plaque Marking Pontiac's Final Resting Place, St. Louis, MO. Photo by Claire Hermeling, December 24, 2024.

that long history, violence was a choice made by people who saw it as a means towards achieving certain ends. For the empires that colonized North America, those ends are increasingly and rightfully seen as unjustifiable. For the Indigenous peoples who violently resisted their colonization, it is much easier to find justification in their actions, even as certain tactics such as ritual torture or forced adoption might give one pause. However, along the long chain of colonial history, there were those who sought to brighten a chain of peace, who envisioned different types of colonial relationships. They were intimately entangled with one another, and as such had to navigate that entanglement as they sought to reconcile their global perspectives on how they saw their worlds with the face-to-face relationships they had built with one another. They had to figure out how their own definitions of politics and political status interfaced with wholly

different definitions of the same. And in the end, they sought to construct new colonial polities and structures that could facilitate stable and sustainable relationships across cultures and identities.

In 1765, a desire for peace brought this cast of characters together. By the ends of their lives, this confluence was a memory they collectively shared despite their thousands of miles of separation. In meditating upon the public memories they left behind, one can easily become pessimistic. Whether it be a Betsy Ross flag, a plaque emphasizing the “hopelessness” of violent resistance, a romantic depiction of a valiant death in battle, a memorial to an imagined massacre, or a statue celebrating Indigenous military resistance, these memorials, on the whole, interpret their legacies within the longer story of North America through the lens of violence and conflict, whether that violence is to be celebrated or not. But such an interpretation is incomplete. As much as the story of colonialism is violence, peace was there too. Even if, after 1765, the peace that had visited British and Indigenous peacemakers—expressed in official journals diplomats and through wampum belts and the promises of buried hatchets, cleared roads, and the dried the eyes of women and children—seemingly vanished, that does not mean it was never there.

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