INDIAN POLICIES OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, 1775-1788

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

A. A. : Force, Peter (ed.) American Archives. 4th Ser. 6 vols.; 5th Ser. 3 vols. Washington: M. St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force, 1837-1853.

J. C. C. : Ford, W. C., Hunt, Gaillard, Fitzpatrick, John C. and Hill, Roscoe (eds.) Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789. 34 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-1937.

L. C. C. : Burnett, Edmond Cody (ed.) Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress. 8 vols. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963.

P. A. : Hazard, Samuel (ed.) Pennsylvania Archives. 12 vols. Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1852-1856.

CHAPTER I

THE COLONIAL YEARS

> When you mentioned the affair of the Land Yesterday, you went back to the old Times and told us you had been in Possession of the Province of Maryland above One hundred Years, but what is One hundred in comparison to the length of Time since our Claim began? Since we came out of this Ground? The lands belonged to Us long before you knew anything of them.[1]
>
> Canastego, Indian Chieftain at the Treaty of Lancaster, 1744

So long as there was a frontier for Americans to settle, there was a concomitant Indian problem to be faced. The experience of dealing with the Indians occupied significant portions of official colonial life; colonial documents are full of references to the red men and ceremonial speeches to and from them. One scholar has even suggested that the Indian treaty is an independent form of literature, the colonial period's only contribution to letters.[2] The English Crown left handling of Indian affairs very much to the individual colonies during the first one hundred and fifty years of the colonial experience. While her colonies remained scattered outposts on the wilderness of the Atlantic coast, the diplomacy of the forest was considered a local matter. Early colonists were not always successful in this venture, and the Virginia massacres of 1622, the Pequot War of 1637 and the Yemassee War of 1715 witness that resort

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[1]Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 191.

[2]Lawrence Wroth, "The Indian Treaty as Literature," Yale Review, XVII (July, 1928), 749-766.

to arms was not an infrequent lubricant for friction between the two peoples.

As the colonies grew, more sophisticated methods were necessary. A symbiotic relation took form wherein the Indians provided furs that the colonists avidly desired for trade with Europe and the colonists provided the guns, powder and clothing upon which the red men had become dependent. This trade was a most important aspect of colonial economy, and caused provincial officials to interest themselves in effective Indian management. Each colony still managed its own affairs, but three were particularly important because of the tribes they had contact with; they were New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

New York, with its broad valley corridors to the west, was the principal home of the Iroquois confederacy -- the "Lords Paramount of the red Complexion"[3] as Edmond Atkin called them. This remarkable confederacy was composed of five Indian nations, the Onondaga, Cayuga, Oneida, Seneca, and Mohawk; after 1722 the Tuscarora migrated from South Carolina, making the Confederacy six nations. As early as the sixteenth century they had achieved a fairly complex federal system of government. A central council was maintained at Onondaga, and the tribes made all major decisions only in unanimous concert. Ferocious warriors, they were likewise masters of statecraft. Although their warriors probably never numbered over 2,000,[4] they cajoled or forced most of the tribes in western Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley into alliances, so that they exercised suzerainty over an area that ran from the Ottawa to the Tennessee rivers and from the Kennebec

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[3]Wilbur Jacobs (ed.), Indians of the Southern Colonial Frontier: the Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755 (Columbus, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), 41.

[4]Frederick W. Hodge (ed.), Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (New York: Pageant Books, Inc., 1959), I, 619.

to the Illinois river and Lake Michigan. This vast empire was finally limited by human, not geographic, boundaries. The Cherokee checked their advance in the south, while the Chippewa formed a barrier in the west as did the French in the north.[5]

In the constant rivalry between French and English for Indian allies, the Iroquois Confederacy usually tended towards the English. They were vitally interested in the fur trade, and the most accessible trading post was English-held Albany. In addition, they profited greatly from acting as middlemen in handling the pelts of the western tribes; this function made the French their natural enemies. Charles McIlwain explains "if the Iroquois permitted the Indians of the northwest to negotiate with the French and interposed no obstacle to the transportation of peltries from the upper lakes to Montreal and Quebec, they would forfeit all the commercial benefits that belonged to their geographic position."[6]

The Dutch established a council fire -- a permanent meeting place -- with the Iroquois at Albany; in addition the city was granted a monopoly for the fur trade. The English confirmed this privilege with a city charter granted by Governor Dongan in 1686.[7] Although the Dutch and English governors frequently met with the Iroquois chieftains personally, city officials at Albany, usually traders themselves, conducted day-to-day Indian affairs. In 1696, Governor Fletcher revised this organization and appointed a three-man Board of Commissioners to deal with the tribes. The system had many defects, but until the mid-eighteenth century the

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[5]Ibid., 618.

[6]Charles McIlwain (ed.), An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs by Peter Wraxall (Harvard Historical Studies, vol. XXI; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), xxxix.

[7]Allen Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 208.

governors and this Board met with the Indians in their rigidly formal councils. Persistently the French attempted to extend their influence over the Confederacy, but the governors of New York usually heard the Iroquois declare in their stylized form, "it is an Antient Custom to renew the Covenant Chain, and we that are left of the 5 Nations are now come to renew the same, to scour it clean & bright that it may shine like silver, and we promise that it shall be kept on our part so strong that Thunder shall not break it."[8]

Under the wise management of William Penn, the Quakers in Pennsylvania had no early conflicts with the Indians. As the colony moved west, however, the Scots-Irish and German frontiersmen came in contact with the warlike western nations, particularly the Delaware and the Shawnee. These tribes were bound by enforced alliance with the Iroquois; a branch of that Confederacy lived in Pennsylvania, but their control over their fierce vassals was not always successful. Pennsylvania had no permanent Indian department. For many years Conrad Weiser, a Palatine immigrant, was official interpreter and therefore Indian ambassador for the colony.[9] He had lived among the Mohawks and was a close friend of Shickellamy, the Iroquois vice-regent for the area. Weiser was in almost constant contact with the tribes, meeting them in formal council at Lancaster and Philadelphia. Occasionally he even traveled to Albany to protect and expand the proprietor's holdings. At first Weiser tried to work through the Iroquois Confederacy, but their hold over the western Indians was growing tenuous by the time of his death in 1760. As immigrants pushed Penn's settlement westward, the tribes became increasingly disconcerted. Affairs

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[8]McIlwain, 25.

[9]An excellent life of Conrad Weiser that also traces Pennsylvania Indian policy in the first half of the eighteenth century is Paul Wallace's Conrad Weiser.

in the colony became confused as the settlers' demand for protection and expansion clashed with the pacifist policy of the Quaker-controlled Assembly at Philadelphia; for many years the frontier farmers lived in danger, often of their own making.

The great tribes of the south were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Catawba, tribes that lived on the frontiers of Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia. These tribes were not so civilized as the Six Nations, though they had come to occupy fixed towns except when hunting or on the warpath. They were not united into any confederacy and intermittently made war on one another as well as mounting skirmishes against the Iroquois. They carried on a sizeable trade in deer skins with the English; Charleston was the center for this trade. The royal governors of South Carolina usually led the southern colonies in Indian affairs. Governor James Glen was particularly vigorous in Indian affairs and tried unsuccessfully to persuade the British government to build forts throughout Indian country for trading and administration. Assisted by state commissioners, he and his successors attempted to extend some control over trade, settle feuds between the tribes and purchase land for expansion.

In the eighteenth century, the importance of the Indians was further magnified by active rivalry with the French. Not only were the French keen competitors for the profitable fur trade, but in time they came to be rivals for an American empire. In this deadly competition the Indians were essential allies. "To preserve the ballance between us and the French is the great ruling Principle of the Modern Indian Politics,"[10] Peter Wraxall, Indian Secretary at Albany, explained. The French maintained

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[10] McIlwain, 219.

a centralized Indian administration; they sent traders to the Indian country to purchase pelts and give presents to the red men, while priests often followed to reinforce their message of loyalty. This centralized administration served the French interests well in Indian diplomacy.

The British antagonists were not so successful. Occasionally the colonies cooperated; in 1722, Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood of Virginia, Governor William Keith of Pennsylvania and Governor William Burnet of New York met together in Albany to negotiate with the Iroquois.[11] More often they were at odds. Colony was pitted against colony to secure trade or lands for themselves, and governors fought with assemblies about expenses for Indian management. Thus vital steps were often left undone. Through these distressing circumstances ran the private interests of the traders and land speculators, often working at cross-purposes with the official policies. The Board of Trade was told, "at present each distinct Colony persue temporary Expedients with the Indians without any regard to a general interest."[12] Peter Wraxall saw little hope for New York to conciliate the Indians because "our Albany Commissioners are too fat headed & have too much Belgick Phlegm for so judicious & Active a conduct."[13]

The chief area of concern was trade. To the Indians trade meant political alliance, and Englishmen began to understand that they could not protect their holdings and win an empire if they did not look to their commercial policies. The red men had come to a vital dependence on traders. Many had forsaken their ancient weapons, and guns and powder

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[11] Ibid., 7.

[12] Ibid., 62 n1.

[13] Ibid., 192.

were now necessary if these hunting people were to exist. In addition they placed a premium on cloth and paint and trinkets, the luxury items of their primitive civilization, while a great many had come to desire, above all, the rum that traders inevitably brought. The great problem of colonial officials was maintaining some sort of control over these traders. Trading was a dangerous life, physically and economically, and it did not attract a very high caliber of men. Professor John Alden says "in general, the traders were unscrupulous and abandoned wretches who trafficed heavily in rum, cheated their clients abominably, and abused them in every imaginable way."[14] This opinion is corroborated by colonial observers. Edmond Atkin emphasized that the southern traders were "the loosest kind of People, are dispis'd and held in great Contempt by the Indians as Liars and persons regarding nothing but their own Gain."[15] Peter Wraxall considered the traders who worked out of Albany to be devoid of all virtue and cuttingly concluded that "tho my cursory reflections on the Albanian Indian traders are severe, they do not rise to the Infamy of their character."[16] Cadwallader Colden concurred and told Governor Clinton that "the greatest discouragement in the management of Indian affairs is by the Indians being constantly cheated by them with what they deal . . . . It is but too obvious what the consequences of this treatment must be."[17] These men were hardly winning representatives of the empire. Most colonies passed laws to regulate the trade or, like South

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[14]John R. Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1944), 18.

[15]Jacobs (ed.), 8.

[16]McIlwain, 197.

[17]E. B. O'Callaghan (ed.), Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1855), VI, 741.

Carolina, licensed their traders, but Edmond Atkin tells a common story when he points out that "the Law for regulating the Indian trade is almost a dead Letter; and the commissioner is of little more use than going thro' the mere form of giving licenses to Traders and taking Bonds for the observance of Instructions, which not being enforced are so little Regarded."[18]

The British had one great advantage, for they could provide goods to the Indians at a cheaper rate than the French, but great danger existed that inept management of Indian affairs would "give the French that Extent of Dominion and Ballance of Trade which, but for our Indolence and impolitic selfishness they could never possibly have compassed."[19] As early as 1751, the Board of Trade began talking about organizing some sort of central administration for Indian affairs,[20] with various colonials urging them to do so. Edmond Atkin was asked to draw up a report on the Indians for the Lords of Trade in 1755, and he insisted "the British Interest among the Indian nations in alliance with us . . . must in the present footing in the very nature of things continue to decline while we have any to loose and consequently there is an absolute Necessity of putting all Indian affairs immediately under some new and general Direction."[21] Peter Wraxall also told the Board of Trade "I am persuaded that putting the Indian trade under proper regulations is the only Method we have left to resist & overthrow the French influence among the Indians, in all other ways they are and will be our superiors."[22]

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[18]Jacobs (ed.), 21.

[19]McIlwain, 77.

[20]Alden, 41.

[21]Jacobs (ed.), 36.

[22]McIlwain, 111 nl.

In 1754 the Albany Congress met to discuss common defense, Indian alliance and united control of trade. Various delegates expressed fear that the Iroquois might defect to the French in the coming war; Cadwallader Colden spoke for most of them when he noted "the great advantage the French have is, that their affairs among the Indians are all directed by one Council . . . ."[23] These suggestions were not lost on Whitehall. There is some disagreement about the exact forces that sparked the British government into action, but generally "it would appear that the impending war convinced the home government that centralization of authority over Indian affairs was indispensable; the 'Representation' of the Albany Congress supported by the request of the Six Nations and by the papers of Thomas Pownall, furnished the major impetus leading to the establishment of the first Indian superintendencies . . . ."[24]

The British government set up two general superintendencies -- a northern and southern -- that corresponded roughly to the military division of the colonies. To the northern department William Johnson was appointed with a commission from General Braddock dated April 14, 1755, giving him "sole management & direction of the Affairs of the Six Nations of Indians & their Allies."[25] Johnson was to prove a happy choice and became a superintendent of great ability and resource. An Irish immigrant, he lived among the Mohawk and learned their language, being adopted into their tribe. He was a flamboyant person of apparent earthy charm and

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[23] O'Callaghan (ed.), VI, 744.

[24] John R. Alden, "The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVII (September, 1940), 206.

[25] Sir William Johnson Papers. (Prepared for publication by the Division of Archives and History, State University of New York; Albany, 1921), I, 465.

daring, and the Indians admired and trusted him. At his estate, Johnson Hall, in the Mohawk Valley he welcomed and aided chief or warrior, always reminding them of their duty of loyalty to the British king. He exerted great influence over the Six Nations, and Peter Wraxall was probably not exaggerating when he said "they [the Iroquois] looked upon him as their Cheif [sic] their Patron & their Brother they acted under his command & were almost wholly directed by him."[26]

To the southern post -- responsible for the area from Virginia southward -- Edmond Atkin, a Charleston merchant and member of the South Carolina Governor's Council, was appointed. At the time the Board of Trade established the superintendencies he was in London, and had drawn up for them a detailed report on the Indians and a plan for the superintendencies. Atkin was not so successful a superintendent as Johnson. Besides his harshness and short temper, he faced problems the northern superintendent did not. There was no confederacy among the southern Indians, a fact which multiplied his work. In addition, he was always short of funds. He relied on the Commander-in-chief, General Loudon, and the southern governors for his funds, but both sources were unwilling to part with much money. He succeeded in holding several conferences with the Indians and finally arranged a truce between the Iroquois and the southern nations, but his administration showed few other accomplishments. Diplomacy finally failed, and war broke out between the southern colonies and the Cherokee in 1760. The war was put down with the aid of British regulars in 1761, but it was a costly experience. Atkin complained that he was opposed by jealous governors, lying traders and power-hungry assemblies.[27]

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[26] McIlwain, 248 nl.

[27] Jacobs (ed.), xxviii.

On his death in 1762 he was succeeded by John Stuart, another Charlestonian.

John Stuart proved to be vain, pompous, jealous of his authority, afflicted with gout, and an excellent superintendent.[28] He persuaded the southern governors to work with him and gained the respect of the southern Indians. Although the Creek were restless and trading abuses continued, Stuart maintained peace throughout his administration. In fairness, he must be ranked with William Johnson as a great superintendent.

Although the creation of these superintendencies was an important step, defects remained in British Indian administration. Given royal commissions in 1756, both superintendents still remained under the control of the royal military commanders in America.[29] William Johnson was unable to work effectively with William Shirley, while General Amherst's interference in Indian policy did much to hasten Pontiac's War. Most important, the superintendents were still unable effectively to control trade. The need for further refinement in Indian administration was emphasized by the outbreak of serious Indian resistence in 1763.

With the exodus of the French after their defeat in Canada, the Indians of the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region, especially the Ottawa, Chippewa and Huron, who were great French allies, were dissatisfied with British control, fearing that settlers would soon be penetrating their

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[28]Philip Hamer, "John Stuart's Indian Policy during the Early Months of the American Revolution," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVII (December, 1930), 351.

[29]It has been suggested that the military commander was solely responsible for Indian affairs; actually his control did not extend beyond some financial and military restrictions on the superintendents. See Clarence Carter, "The Significance of the Military Office in America, 1763-1775," American Historical Review, XXVIII (April, 1922), 475-488.

hunting grounds. This apprehension was intensified by General Amherst's decision to decrease the amount spent for presents for the red men and to restrict their supplies of powder and rum.[30] This discontent was encouraged by French traders, who spread rumors of an imminent French return. War finally broke out in May, 1763, led by the Ottawa Chieftain Pontiac. The war was put down the next year, but only after all of the western forts except Detroit and Fort Pitt had been captured, nearly 450 British regulars and hundreds of settlers had lost their lives, and the government put to great expense.[31]

The British home government responded with two measures. The first step was to announce a policy for westward expansion. The first expression of this policy was embodied in the Proclamation of 1763.[32] This Proclamation drew an arbitrary line beyond which no settlement was allowed. Indian lands falling within the colonies could be purchased only by the governor or military commander-in-chief, and private purchases were forbidden. Traders were required to be licensed by the colonial governors or royal commander. The boundary line of 1763 was only a temporary expedient; its object was to quiet Indian fears of encroachment and to provide for some sort of orderly, government-sponsored expansion. The British government viewed it as the first of a series of boundaries that would be constantly edging westward. Despite the wisdom of such a policy, the Proclamation was quite unpopular in the colonies especially with land speculators and those settlers already living within the proscribed areas.

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[30] Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 101-102.

[31] Ibid., 239.

[32] A. A., I, 4th Ser., 172-175.

A second, and equally important reform, was the "Plan of 1764."[33] This comprehensive scheme, drawn up by the Board of Trade, would have placed trading completely under the control of the superintendent. A fatal defect was the expense required to enforce such an ambitious program; the British ministry proved unwilling to make such expenditures, and it was never promulgated. John Stuart tried to operate under its general provisions from 1765 to 1768, making a futile attempt to regulate the traders of the southern department. William Johnson made a similar effort. In 1768 Lord Shelburne announced that for reasons of economy trade would definitely remain in the hands of the individual colonies. An absence of official control over the fur trade was a continuing weakness of British administration.

Despite their organizational and administrative orders, the British government was never successful in keeping settlers off Indian lands. Besides those individual families that were always at the outer edge of civilization seeking land or adventure, many influential colonial citizens were involved in western land companies organized for large scale speculation.[34] The superintendents were never able to hinder these companies appreciably from making illegal land purchases, a situation which had the unfortunate effect of setting many important colonials at odds with official policies. By 1770, William Johnson at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix and John Stuart at the Treaty of Lochaber had completed a series of agreements with the tribes that moved the 1763 line westward to the Ohio, thus opening sizeable new areas to settlement. But the frontiersmen and the land companies pushed even beyond this limit.

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[33] O'Callaghan (ed.), VIII, 637-641.

[34] See generally, Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Ltd., 1937).

On the very eve of the Revolution, Virginia engaged in what was essentially a speculator's war to secure the Kentucky area, land south of the Ohio and west of the Great Kanawha. This region was stoutly defended by the powerful Shawnee tribe because it constituted their principal hunting ground. The colony of Pennsylvania also laid claim to the area, and Virginia's governor, Lord Dunmore, hoped that by sending an army into the region Virginia's claim would be strengthened. Settlers and land company surveyors steadily filtered into the area for some time; in 1774 the Indians were aroused by one Michael Cresap, an agent for a Virginia land company, who wantonly murdered several Indians while mapping the area.[35] The Indians retaliated by attacking settlers already on the lands, which conveniently prompted the Virginians to move in with armed forces. Lord Dunmore fielded an army that destroyed several Shawnee villages and finally forced the Indians to surrender at Camp Charlotte. An essential ingredient in their defeat was their isolation; by skillful negotiation, William Johnson had managed to keep the Six Nations out of the war while they in turn had kept the Delaware out, leaving the Shawnee without the aid they rightfuly expected.[36]

Pennsylvania protested that Lord Dunmore's War was the action of "land jobbers", and the Earl of Dartmouth, noting the provocation given the Indians, warned Dunmore that he must be careful to protect the king's dignity and justice.[37] Richard Butler, a trader in the area, reviewed the conduct of the Virginians leading to the war and found,

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[35] A. A., I, 4th Ser., 345.

[36] Randolph C. Downes, "Lord Dunmore's War: An Interpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXI (December, 1934), 327.

[37] A. A., I, 4th Ser., 774-775.

> these facts, I think, was sufficient to bring on a war with a Christian people instead of a savage people . . . . I am afraid for the Proceedings of the Chief of the White People in this Part of the Country that they will bring on a general war, as there is so little pains taken to restrain the common people whose prejudices lead them to greater lengths than ought to be shown by Civilized People . . . and I do really think is much to blame themselves in the whole affair.[38]

The defeated Indians finally agreed to move beyond the Ohio River, and the governor secured their promise to meet with him the following year to draw specific boundary lines. But the governor would not be present at this conference; by then he had fled to a British warship, and Virginia was in rebellion.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, then, the British experience provided them undeniable advantages in competing for support of the Indians. They had appointed competent superintendents and had attempted to secure some measure of economic justice for the red men. The superintendents lacked some necessary powers, but they did conduct all conferences with the Indians and through their demonstrated ability had a measure of influence over the colonial governors. Their cause was strengthened by the unfavorable image the colonists presented. Increasingly the Indians had come in contact with land-hungry settlers -- often as barbarous as any Indian might be -- and the sharp-dealing speculators. This experience was hardly calculated to incline the Indians favorably to the patriot cause. Whatever the designs of the British, it was all too obvious that the colonials lusted after Indian lands. The agents of the King, on the other hand, were not slow to point out that they were the suppliers, advisors and protectors of the tribes. Curiously enough, the situation was not unlike that which Britain had faced with the French, though in reverse; the

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[38] P. A., IV, 570.

British now had all the advantages while the colonies labored under significant disadvantages. One important difference was the fact that the colonies did not have the lever of cheap goods with which the British had pried the Indians from their French allies. Whether they could produce an administrative structure that would be sufficient to overcome these obstacles and win the allegiance of the tribes was an open question, one that disturbed many thoughtful colonists.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST YEAR

> This quarrel seems to us to be unnatural; you are two brothers of one blood . . . . We desire you will not apply to our Indian brethren . . . for their assistance, let us Indians be all of one mind . . . and you white people settle your own disputes betwixt yourselves.
>
> The Oneida Indians to Governor Jonathan Trumbull, 1775[1]

In 1775 the American frontier was pushing beyond the mountains in a surge of expansion. No longer only menacing the periphery of Indian country, colonial settlers were actually moving into its heart. Besides traditional irritants of trade abuses and foreign intrigue, Revolutionary Americans would soon have to face this new element of increasingly intense Indian resentment of frontier encroachment. The transmountain settlements would present novel defense problems to patriot officials and military commanders. Defending armies would require supplies that must be carried over mountain ranges, and the settlements would be too distant from one another for mutual protection. No longer would there be British regulars to rescue settlers from the Indians; citizen militia would have to be raised, and they would be burdened with families and crops to tend. It was during a sensitive, transitional period on the frontier that the American colonies chose to revolt.

To add to the settlers' woes, there was a vacuum of leadership on the frontier. July 11, 1774, old Sir William Johnson died, leaving his

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[1] *A. A.*, 4th Ser., II, 1117.

superintendency to his nephew Sir Guy Johnson and his deputies Daniel Claus and John Butler; while skillful, these men would never attain Sir William's mastery of the Iroquois. In Charleston, John Stuart, the stabilizing influence in the south, had not long to live himself. Among the Indians, the unity of the Iroquois Confederacy began to show signs of weakness, and no great chieftain appeared to lead the emerging tribes breaking away from the Iroquois empire.[2] This shift would add confusion to the wartime frontier.

In the imperial wars between England and France, the contending factions traditionally had sought to involve the Indians; thus the protesting and soon rebelling colonists fully expected the British to vie with them for support of the Indian nations. The frontier from Maine to Georgia was always rife with rumors of impending doom. Slow means of communications and the distance of the frontier from the settled areas, helped feed these rumors and added to the feeling of isolation and helplessness that would grip many settlers as they sought to maintain their outposts.

The speed with which the individual colonies moved to secure peace for their frontiers indicated the importance they attached to the war might of their red neighbors. In May, 1775, the Massachusetts Provisional Congress wrote to the small, scattered tribes on their frontier to explain that the British were trying to enslave both colonist and Indian.[3]

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[2]Of future Indian leaders, Cornstalk of the Shawnee, was under a temporary cloud because of his defeat in Lord Dunmore's War, Dragging Canoe was frustrated by the aging Cherokee hierarchy and Alexander McGillivray of the Creeks and Joseph Brant of the Iroquois had not yet risen to power. Dale Van Every, A Company of Heroes: The American Frontier, 1775-1785 (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1962), 44.

[3]A. A., 4th Ser., II, 610-611.

Conjuring up a community of interests that must have bewildered the Indians, coming from the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, they grandly declared that "our liberty and your liberty is the same, we are brothers and what is our good is for your good, and we, by standing together, shall make those wicked men afraid, and overcome them and all be freemen."[4] Fast on the heels of these sentiments came an invitation to join the colonial militia; the invitation was sweetened by promises of wages, a blanket and a ribbon for all volunteers.[5] Fearing the Mohwaks, the most easterly of the Confederacy, the Massachusetts government sent a delegation of Stockbridge Indians to reason with that tribe and explain the colonial cause. Letters were written to the Reverend Samuel Kirkland, missionary to the Oneida and Tuscarora, urging him to promote colonial allegiance among those tribes; if that failed, he was at least to secure their neutrality. The Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, the Indian educator, was requested to approach Joseph Brant, an ex-student and a rising chief of the Six Nations and secure his influence among those tribes.

From Crown Point, Ethan Allen wrote to the Canadian Indians inviting them to join his forces and "ambush" British regulars. Allen advised the Massachusetts Provisional Congress that the Canadian tribes would join the side that seemed strongest and exhorted, "I wish to God America would exert herself in the proportion to the indignities offered her by a tyrannical Ministery. She might mount on eagle's wings to glory."[6]

New York had obvious reason to fear Indian hostilities since the most powerful confederacy on the continent lived on her very doorstep. Sir Guy Johnson removed superintendency operations to Canada, but Sir John, his

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., 939.

nephew and Sir William's son, gathered his Scots and Indian retainers around him at Johnson Hall and virtually blockaded Tryon county.[7] This was cause for alarm for the New York Provincial Congress, and rumors of Sir John's supposed evil intents spread through the New York countryside. The Provincial Congress was not slow to instruct its delegates in the Continental Congress on June 7, 1775:

> The importance and the necessity of attention to Indian affairs is deeply impressed on our minds, because our public peace is more endangered by the situation of the barbarians to the westward of us, than it can be by any inroads made upon the seacoast. Britain will spare the last for her own sake, and policy will teach her ministers to light upon an Indian war upon our frontiers, that we may be drawn for protection to embrace the terms of slavery. To obviate such evils will, we hope, occupy a considerable share of your attention.[8]

The delegates were also advised to give careful consideration to the merits of an appointment of a continental Indian superintendent.

The Pennsylvania frontier was also a sensitive area. The center of frontier defense, Fort Pitt, was enclosed in a semi-circle of Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo and Wyandotte warriors. These fierce tribes had no central confederacy to negotiate with. The Shawnee and Mingo still resented their defeat in Lord Dunmore's War; Wyandotte lands were far enough west to be out of practical range for American retaliation, but close enough for Wyandotte warriors to mount raiding expeditions.

Two additional problems aggravated the situation on the Middle Frontier. Settlers had begun to push far into the hunting grounds of the Indians. This movement was accelerated by the substantial land cession of Ohio lands made by the Iroquois at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. The western tribes questioned the right of the Confederacy to make this

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[7]Ibid., 939.

[8]Ibid., 1281.

cession. Since the area had been conquered by the Iroquois a century before, they claimed the right to cede it and receive all resulting benefits. The western nations, however, rejected the Iroquois claim; this rejection was strengthened by the fact that the western tribes had nowhere to go had they been willing to relinquish their homes. Colonials also had their problem of jurisdiction. Both Connectiqut and Pennsylvania claimed the Wyoming Valley area, while Virginia and Pennsylvania disputed ownership of the Fort Pitt region. The colonists were bitter in their land rivalry, with their jealousy and greed preventing a united effort to protect these areas.

On receiving the news of Lexington, Virginia appointed George Washington, Thomas Walker, Adam Stephens, John Walter and James Wood to a commission, ordering them to meet with the Indians at Fort Pitt, conclude Lord Dunmore's War, and sue for Indian support in the developing dispute with Britain.[9] This conference met in September and October, 1775, and Thomas Walker reported to Thomas Jefferson:

> The few Indians here seem perfectly well disposed towards us, and all things would go on well were it not for the unhappy territorial dispute between the two colonies which has proceeded to an inconceivable length, and we are sorry to say that an eminent gentleman /James Wilson/ who we conceive was sent here for very different purposes appears to us to have greatly interested himself in this affair.[10]

The commissioners urged the Indians to neutrality.[11] In return they agreed to the Ohio River as a permanent Indian boundry, a promise they had no real means of keeping. Throughout 1776 the western nations remained

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[9]Ibid., 1240.

[10]Thomas Walker to Thomas Jefferson, September, 1775, Julian P. Boyd (ed.), Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), I, 411.

[11]A. A., 4th Ser., VI, 541.

relatively peaceful, but this situation was more the accomplishment of the Continental Congress than the Virginia emissaries. The assault on Canada, lasting from September, 1775, until June, 1776, closed the St. Lawrence to the British and prevented them from supplying the Indians with the arms, ammunition and presents that were necessary to mobilize them to war. When in 1777 this supply line was reopened, all these tribes, with the exception of a few Delaware under Chief White Eyes, would prove hostile to the Americans.

Like dwellers in other colonies, southerners were apprehensive about which side the southern Indians would favor if war with England came. For several years land speculators and individual settlers had been pushing deep into the wilderness and making homes along the Holston, Watauga and Nolichucky; these settlements produced great uncertainty in the Cherokee-colonial relations. The war-like Creek were unstable neighbors even in the best of times, and they produced uneasiness in South Carolina and Georgia. When the news of Lexington reached Charleston, rumors were widely credited that John Stuart, the southern superintendent, was urging the Cherokee and Catawba to attack the frontier; he was forced to leave his sick bed and flee to Georgia and ultimately Pensacola.[12] The Charleston Committee of Safety seized British powder meant for the Indian trade[13]

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[12]At least this early, Stuart was probably truthful when he testified to the Committee of Safety, "I never have received any orders from my superiors which by the most tortured construction could be interpreted to spirit up or employ the Indians to fall upon the frontier inhabitants; or to take any part in the dispute between Great Britain and her colonies." John Drayton, Memoirs of the American Revolution, From Its Commencement to the Year 1776 Inclusive; As Relating to the State of South-Carolina and Occasionally Refering to the States of North-Carolina and Georgia (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1821), I, 293. Also see Philip M. Hamer (ed.), "Correspondence of Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron with the Wataugas," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVII (December 1930), 451-459.

[13]A. A., 4th Ser., III, 792.

and sent state commissioners to negotiate with the Indians.

In such piecemeal fashion the colonies initially attempted to relieve the Indian threat. Local management of Indian affairs was, after all, a part of their colonial heritage only recently interferred with by the British government. This was one level of administration that would exist throughout the war and for years afterwards. The individual colonies, with their jealousies and conflicting interests, were not fully competent, however, to handle what would soon become a national, rather than a local, problem; another level of management, that of the Continental Congress, was soon superimposed.

The Second Continental Congress, meeting in Philadelphia during the long summer of 1775, was soon to realize the necessity of assuming some responsibility for Indian affairs. On Friday, June 16, the important business of the day was to inform George Washington that he had been appointed commander-in-chief of the forces "raised in defense of American liberty" and to appoint Shilip Schuyler, Patrick Henry, James Duane, James Wilson and Philip Livingston to a committee to consider some papers sent from New York relative to Indian affairs and to "report what steps, in their opinion, are necessary to be taken for securing and preserving the friendship of the Indian nations."[14] For almost a month this committee studied the Indian situation, interviewed interested parties, and undoubtedly heard the spreading rumors of an immediate Indian attack. On July 12, the committee issued a full report that was accepted by Congress.[15]

Recognizing that the British would "spare no pains" to win over the Indians, the committee thought "it becomes us to be very active and

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[14] J. C. C., II, 93.

[15] Ibid., 174-177.

vigilant in exerting every prudent means to strengthen and confirm /the Indian's/ friendly disposition towards these colonies . . . ."[16] The committee saw the potential advantage that was theirs since "the Indians depend on the Colonists for arms, ammunition, and cloathing, which are become necessary to their subsistence . . . ."[17] They recommended that commissioners be appointed to supervise the affairs of the Indians, providing for a decentralized organization of three departments. The Northern Department would have three commissioners and include the Iroquois Confederacy and all nations to the north of them. The Southern Department, with five commissioners, would reach from the Cherokee country southward. The Middle Department's three commissioners would superintend affairs of all the tribes between the other two. Commissioners were given the power to treat with all Indians in their departments in the name of the United Colonies and to select agents from among men with influence in the Indian nations. These agents were to live near the Indians and maintain a surveillance not only on the tribes, but also on the Crown agents. If the royal agents were found to be promoting hostility towards the colonies, the commissioners were authorized to seize them.

On the next day, July 13, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry and James Wilson were elected as commissioners for the Middle Department.[18] Philip Schuyler, Joseph Hawley, Turbot Francis and Oliver Welcott were chosen for the Northern Department.[19] It was July 19 before Congress had time

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[16] Ibid., 174.

[17] Ibid., 175.

[18] Ibid., 183.

[19] Ibid. Joseph Hawley later declined to serve as commissioner for the Northern Department; likewise Patrick Henry resigned from the Middle Department. An unfinished entry for the day indicates that Volkert P. Douw was also chosen a commissioner for the Northern Department.

to activate the Southern Department by authorizing the Committee of Safety of South Carolina to select three of the commissioners for the southern region, with Congress adding John Walker[20] and Willie Jones[21] to their number. Many of the Congressmen had experience with local Indian affairs in their own colonies, and they knew the expense that Indian affairs demanded. The Indians must be supported at all meetings, with fairly lavish present-giving an inescapable obligation. Therefore they provided $10,000 for the Southern Department and $6,666 2/3 each for the Northern and Middle Departments, to be drawn from the continental treasury.

Congress, then, recognized the need for special attention for the Indians as the British had in 1763. They patterned their geographic divisions on the British plan with an addition of the Middle Department, indicating the growing importance of the westward movement in this area and the slow breakdown of Iroquois authority. This was a wise decision, for the western nations would, in the coming years, act independently of the southern and northern tribes, presenting an independent problem of a geographically unified area. They had not the organization or experience of the other Indians, which made the Middle Department a troublesome assignment for any commissioner. An unfortunate deviation from the British pattern was the institution of multiple commissioners. One of the advantages Sir William Johnson and John Stuart had enjoyed had been the freedom of action and the continuity of procedure each could effect. Full realization of these potentials was not possible in the committee system. Beyond this, the selections made were not the best. Of the twelve commissioners, five were Congressmen, and the others were active in local

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[20] Ibid., 192.

[21] Ibid., 194.

politics. All of them had other important duties, with the result that frontier diplomacy was sometimes slighted in order to give more attention to other pressing problems. Thomas McKean, later a commissioner in the Middle Department, served on thirty-three committees and was chairman of five in one term of Congress; another term he was on nineteen committees and chairman of six.[22] Perhaps it is also significant that five of the first commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Walker, James Wilson, Turbot Francis and John Walker, were men who were directly or indirectly connected with land speculation ventures. This vested interest may have provided them with certain preconceived notions about the conduct of Indian affairs.

Like their British counterparts, the commissioners were ambassadors and advisers to the tribes, while the locus of initiating Indian policies resided elsewhere; in this case, it was in the Continental Congress. Yet in the Congress itself, there was no permanent Indian secretariat. Congress was slow organizing itself into an effective administrative body. The delegates of the 1775 session had no idea that they would be in session for the next fourteen years; even as this fact became more apparent, the Congressmen had few precedents to guide them in an era of rather crude administrative skills. During the winter of 1775-1776, the initiation and review of Indian affairs was vested in special committees, appointed to deal with specific problems and dissolved on their solution. This pattern, of course, provided no continuity of overall policy. In April, 1776, when the retreat from Montreal had become inevitable and distressing news about the Six Nations was coming in, Congress appointed a Standing

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[22]Jennings B. Sanders, Evolution of Executive Departments of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 4 n3.

Committee on Indian Affairs composed of George Wythe, James Wilson, Oliver Wolcott, Lewis Morris, and Edward Rutledge.[23] By the end of the year, the committee was composed of Wilson, Rutledge, James Duane (appointed May 16), Thomas Jefferson, Philip Livingston, and Samuel Huntington (all appointed July 6).[24] Even this attempt at permanence was hindered, then, by fluctuating personnel. Standing committees were appointed until 1779, when the Board of War seems to have taken over their duties. The Board of War was relieved of control in 1782, when Indian affairs were placed under the newly created Secretary of War.

In the remainder of their first year, the Second Continental Congress laid the general pattern for its wartime conduct of Indian affairs. Congress interested itself in the most minute of Indian problems. Eleazar Wheelock was granted a request of $500 to pay tuition for some Canadian Indian boys at his school; Congress hoped this generosity would favorably influence those tribes. The Reverend Samuel Kirkland, who was to prove a tireless Indian agent, was employed by Congress to serve as missionary and Congressional representative among the Iroquois. Mr. Kirkland worked principally among the Oneida and Tuscarora, with these two tribes remaining faithful to the patriot cause when the other members of the Confederacy had defected to the British. Various deputations of Indians were entertained in Philadelphia, but they seldom included the important chiefs, and the expense and bother of the visits would become most vexing to Congress. A committee was appointed to devise means for procuring goods for trade with the Indians; Congressmen were realistic enough to know that they stood little chance of retaining Indian support if they failed to

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[23] J. C. C., IV, 319.

[24] Ibid., VI, 1065.

supply trading goods. Congress made efforts each year to secure these items, which were then sold to private traders who would go among the tribes. The commissioners were ordered to license all traders to prohibit sharp dealings, but little evidence is found that the commissioners were able, or even made a sincere effort, to maintain this close restriction.[25] The Northern commissioners were authorized to engage an interpreter at $250 per year; James Deane was employed[26] and was another of the small number of effective American agents.

Finally, a message was sent to the tribes explaining the rudimentary policy which the Congress had worked out. Though some colonies had attempted to enlist Indians in their local militia, the Congress seems fairly well agreed that the Indians should be kept out of the war and urged to a strict neutrality. Both British and Americans had a reluctance to use Indians as fighting men -- though both sides would enlist their aid before the war was over. Particularly after the French and Indian War, there was a certain horror at unleashing them in this fratricidal struggle. John Adams explained that "the Indians are known to conduct their Wars so entirely without Faith and Humanity, that it would bring eternal Infamy on the Ministry throughout Europe if they should excite these Savages to War . . . . To let those blood Hounds to scalp Men and to butcher Women and Children is horrid."[27] The policy of neutrality was also a practical one; while the colonists knew of the Indian's might, they also knew of the expense involved in tempting him to fight, the fickleness and difficulty of commanding him and his indiscriminate cruelty, when aroused, that

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[25]Ibid., IV, 97.

[26]Ibid., III, 366.

[27]John Adams to James Warren, June 7, 1775, L. C. C., I, 114.

might lead him to attack both friend and foe. The message, sometimes delving into political theory and sometimes using the most childlike simplifications, gave the colonial explanation for the struggle and advised, "we desire you to remain at home and not join on either side, but keep the hatchet buried deep."[28]

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[28] J. C. C., II, 182.

CHAPTER III

THE WAR YEARS, I

> Ours is a kind of struggle designed I dare say by Providence to try the patience, fortitude and virtue of men . . . . General Mc.Intosh is only experiencing upon a small Scale, what I have had an ample share of upon a large one; and must, as I have been obliged to do in a variety of Instances, yield to necessity; . . . or in other Words if he cannot do as he wishes, he must do what he can.
>
> George Washington to Andrew Lewis[1]

The years of the Revolutionary War were a stage for three separate wars on the American continent: one between the Continental forces and the British, one between American patriots and Tories, and a bitter war on the frontier between determined, land-hungry settlers and equally determined Indians fighting for their hunting grounds. Sometimes these struggles overlapped, other times they went separate and independent ways. The war with the Indians received the least of Congress's attention, for it least directly affected the main struggle, the seaboard contest for political freedom. This is not to say that the events in the west were unimportant. The militia, though poorly trained and supplied and sometimes cowardly and cruel, did manage to contain the fury of the tribes to the frontier. For six years and more they were unable to bring peace to the west, but the frontier forces did keep the attacking tribes from penetrating to the older and more populous areas. In this way they

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[1]George Washington to Andrew Lewis, October 15, 1778, John C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), Writings of George Washington (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1936), XIII, 79. (Hereinafter cited as Washington Writings.)

freed Continental troops for seaboard duty. In addition, the years of the Revolution saw an ever increasing frontier population despite the hardships the settlers had to endure. These determined settlers and the conquests of their militia provided a claim to the Old Northwest that was successfully maintained at the treaty table in 1783.[2]

In 1775-1776 both British and Americans raced to obtain Indian support. The commissioners of each Congressional department sought to bind the tribes to them by treaties and presents, never neglecting the latter. Men who knew Indian affairs could only agree with the Georgia legislators who told General Lee, "it is a fixed principle with the Indians to be paid for their good offices, and in this controversy they will expect to be paid well, even for their neutrality."[3] This provided a rather one-sided competition, for Britain, with her control of the seas and her greater financial and industrial resources, could easily outdistance the Continental Congress, which was often unable to pay and provision its own soldiers. Congress periodically ordered the commissioners to procure clothing, tools and trinkets for the Indians,[4] but they were unable to match the British and sometimes unable to supply anything at all. Likewise, there is no evidence that the blacksmiths, missionaries and teachers that Congress authorized[5] were ever employed. The British, working from posts at Detroit, Niagara, Mackinac, Pensacola and the

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[2]This is listed as a "momentous consequence" of western events in Louise Phelps Kellogg, "Indian Diplomacy During the Revolution in the West," Illinois State Historical Society Transactions, XXXVI (1929), 56.

[3]A. C. Candler (ed.), Revolutionary Records of the State of Georgia (Atlanta: Franklin-Turner Company, 1908), I, 154.

[4]J. C. C., IV, 96-97.

[5]Ibid., 267.

Canadian bases would exploit this material weakness to its limit.

The Northern and Middle Departments enjoyed a period of quiet in 1775-1776 because the Canadian campaign had closed the St. Lawrence supply line, but the British agents were busy confirming the Indians in their loyalty to the king. It was the initial plan of the royal ministry to use the Indians only in conjunction with forces of British regulars. There was no plan yet to wage real frontier war on the rebelling colonies, but the king's officials had no intention of foregoing the support that the warriors could provide.

This period of quiet was a welcome one, for the frontier was practically defenseless. Many fighting men had gone east to the major theatre of war, and there was no force to organize the west for its own defense on any great scale. Hoping to protect the borders of New York and New England by a barrier of peaceful Iroquois, General Philip Schuyler, of the Northern Department, moved quickly to secure an agreement with those tribes. In August and September of 1775, he called a preliminary meeting at German Flats and urged the Six Nations to attend a full conference at Albany. The purpose of the Albany meeting was to persuade the Indians to follow the Congressional policy of neutrality. The meeting elicited promises of neutrality, but it was not an unqualified success. Joseph Brant kept the Mohawks from sending any delegates, and many influential Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca were not present. Those delegates who did attend did not hide their affection for their British agents or their loyalty to the king.[6] Schuyler complained that the meetings went slowly and, after hours of the ceremonies the Indians demanded, the chiefs were not loath to suggest, "as we are weary from having sat long in Council we

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[6] *A. A.*, 4th Ser., III, 486.

think it time for a little drink."[7] The Reverend Samuel Kirkland had influenced the Oneida and Tuscarora to stand with the Americans, but it was too apparent that the other nations were almost lost.

Schuyler had also hoped to win over the Canadian Indians to aid in American attacks on Canada. He received "melancholy" news from Ethan Allen that the latter had sent an emissary to Canada to treat with those tribes, but the messenger had been shot in the forehead "of which he immediately expired."[8] The best General Schuyler could hope for was an uneasy truce as he sought to counteract growing British influence.

British influence in the south was under the capable direction of John Stuart who, though he was mortally ill, kept supplies flowing to the Cherokee and Creek from his base at Pensacola. William Henry Drayton, commissioner for the Southern Department, circulated a talk to "The Beloved men, Head men and Warriors of the Cherokee Nation"[9] presenting the colonial cause and urging the Cherokee to remain at peace and "cheerfully" submit to a shortage of goods and ammunition until the state could open new trade routes. Stuart's agents could promise the Indians more than future goods; through the winter of 1775, they armed the Cherokee so the warriors might cooperate with the British force preparing to attack the southern colonies.

In June, 1775, the British force under Sir Peter Parker and Sir Henry Clinton failed in its attack on Charleston, but the Indians could not be restrained. By July, Dragging Canoe persuaded a sizeable part of the Cherokee nation to strike the southern frontier from southern Virginia to

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[7]Ibid., 474.

[8]Ibid., 493.

[9]A. A., 4th Ser., III, 790-794.

northern Georgia, killing and burning. There were frantic rumors that the whole southern frontier might be abandoned, but the southern states fielded troops and, in a rare show of cooperation, delivered decisive defeats to the Indians.[10] "Nothing will reduce these wretches so soon as pushing the war into the heart of their country," advised Thomas Jefferson, "but I would not stop persuing /sic/ them while one of them remained on this side of the Mississippi."[11]

In June the South Carolinians destroyed the Middle Towns, and Virginia forces attacked the Overhill settlements. By October the Cherokee were defeated; Dragging Canoe retreated to the Chickamauga to continue the raids, but the fighting power of the Cherokee nation was largely broken. By the treaty of De Witts Corner, May 20, 1777, the lower Cherokee surrendered their remaining land in South Carolina; at the treaty of Long Island, June 20, 1777, the Overhill chiefs gave up tribal holdings east of the Blue Ridge and the region occupied by the Watauga and Nolichucky settlements.[12] This action, managed, directed and financed entirely by the Southern States, was probably the most successful military operation against the Indians of the entire war.

If 1776 had been a year of uncertainty in Indian affairs, the worst became apparent in 1777. In March of the "year of the three sevens" the Shawnee and Mingo led with furious attacks on the Kentucky settlements. The settlers fled to three fortresses, Boonesborough, Harrodsburgh and St. Asaph. No Continental forces could be spared, so that the Kentucky

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[10]Drayton, II, 352-353.

[11]Thomas Jefferson to John Page, August 5, 1775, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, I, 485-486.

[12]Drayton, II, 362.

Stations had to rely on their own disorganized forces and such aid as Virginia could afford them.

On April 10, 1777, Congress sent General Edward Hand to take command of Fort Pitt and the Middle Department frontier.[13] This was an assignment made more difficult because of the divisive dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania over ownership of the area. Edward Hand was the first of a succession of commanders who would find to their frustration that the magnitude of their assignment, combined with the paucity of men and supplies and the ungovernable nature of the frontiersmen, presented an impossible task.

Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit, was ordered to harass the frontier; he lacked men, drained off for the St. Leger-Burgoyne campaign, to command large scale operations, and the best that he could do was encourage promiscuous raiding. Throughout mid-summer and fall the warriors fell on the Pennsylvania border, driving the settlers before them. In November, western citizens reported to President Samuel Wharton of Pennsylvania "the present situation of this Country is so truly deplorable that we should be inexcusable if we delayed a moment in acquainting you with it, an Indian War is now raging around us in its utmost fury."[14] They also insisted that not a day went by without news of some raid, with people fleeing the frontier in large numbers; indeed, there was danger of depopulation if something was not done immediately.[15] But neither Congress nor Pennsylvania had any aid to send.

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[13]William T. Hutchinson and William M. E. Rachel (eds.), Papers of James Madison (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), I, 217 n7.

[14]Thomas Smith and George Woods to President Wharton (of Pennsylvania), November 27, 1777, P. A., VI, 39.

[15]Ibid., 40.

During this year, when major portions of the western settlers were fighting for their lives, Congress rarely found time even to discuss Indian affairs. John Adams explained:

> When fifty or sixty men have a Constitution to form for a great empire, at the same time that they have a country of fifteen hundred miles in extent to fortify, millions to arm and train, a naval power to begin, an extensive army of twenty-seven thousand men to raise, pay and victual, I shall really pity those fifty or sixty men.[16]

Hard pressed to maintain the war in the east, Congress had no material aid to offer the frontier, had they found time to consider its plight.

On October 4, 1777 a new Standing Committee on Indian Affairs was elected, consisting of James Duane, George Walton, Thomas Burke, Joseph Jones and Richard Law.[17] They sent three commissioners to Fort Pitt to seek peace with the Indians and prepare for an attack on Detroit, the source of Indian hostilities.[18] The commissioners, of course, could find no Indians to negotiate with, and an attack on Detroit was to be a continuing daydream of the Continental Congress. Through most of the war, the forces at Fort Pitt were hardly strong enough to maintain that post, much less lead an aggressive campaign to distant Detroit. Had there been sufficient forces, the Indians would not grant permission to cross their lands for the attack. While Detroit remained in British hands, the Indians would continue hostile; while the Indians were hostile, there was no hope of attacking Detroit. It was a vicious circle.

The raids finally dwindled with the coming of winter -- Indians avoided winter fighting whenever possible -- and all Congress could do

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[16]Charles Francis Adams, Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams, During the Revolution (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1875), 85.

[17]J. C. C., IX, 776.

[18]Ibid., 992-994.

was send a peremptory message to the Six Nations berating them for their continued loyalty to the British, demanding that they exercise authority over the western tribes and call a halt to their attacks.[19] "Look into your hearts, and be attentive. Much are you to blame, and greatly have you wronged us. Be wise in time. Be sorry for and mind you faults."[20] Bold and arrogant threats and instructions the commissioners penned, but they had nothing to back them up, and the Indians knew this to be true. Predictably the message had no effect.

It was a particularly brutal type of warfare the settlers faced. Since the British were not as successful militarily as they had hoped, they were unable to use the Indians as auxiliaries in planned campaigns. Left to their own devices, the red men were the terror of the frontier. They would fall on an isolated farmhouse, kill all its inhabitants, regardless of age or sex, burn everything, and slip back into the forest. An ingrained hatred of the red man became a part of the social make-up of every frontiersman, and he passed it on to his children. Undoubtedly the callousness toward the Indians that was to characterize much of American policy in years to come originated during this period.

This is not to say that the frontiersman did not have his moral shortcomings. The settler could kill as indiscriminately and cruelly as his Indian foe. To frontier shame, White Eyes of the Delaware and Old Tassell of the Cherokee as well as Corn Stalk of the Shawnee were all murdered while on their way to, or attending, peace conferences. The wanton slaughter of one hundred Christian Indians in 1783 at Gnadenhutten ranks in premeditated savagery along with any exploit that the Indians

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[19] Ibid., 994-999.

[20] Ibid., 995.

could boast of.

The year 1778 saw no rest for the frontier, only increased hardships. As early as January 20, John Harris wrote President Wharton of Pennsylvania, "I am of Oppinion that the Indians will take an active part next Spring . . . as their Young men don't understand Acting as Neutrals in time of Warr . . . ."[21] He insisted that the war must be carried into the Indian country if the raids were to be stopped, sounding the first note of what would become a full chorus as the year wore on. Rumors of coming disaster led the frontier to plan for the worst, but Vice President George Bryan of Pennsylvania advised them not to rely on the state to provide arms. It could spare few, he said, since Congress made heavy demands on it for the Continental forces.[22]

Finally General Hand, who had been unable to provide any significant protection for the frontier in 1777, was ready to move. In February, 1778, he led 500 militia to attack a newly established Indian supply base located on Lake Erie at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. Heavy rains, inadequate supplies and less than adequate leadership finally proved too much for the expedition, and it turned back to Fort Pitt. All it had accomplished was to kill a few friendly Delaware Indians.[23] General Hand was disgraced by this "Squaw Campaign," as it was contemptuously called, and he requested transfer back to the Continental Army; in April he was relieved, Brigadier General Lachlen McIntosh being sent to take command of Fort Pitt.

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[21]John Harris to President Wharton, January 20, 1778, P. A., VII, 211.

[22]Vice President George Bryan (of Pennsylvania) to Lt. Carothers, May 3, 1778, ibid., 467-468.

[23]Van Every, 132-133.

Adding to the problem of hostile Indians at Fort Pitt was the increasing belligerency of frontier loyalists. Colonel John Proctor reported to Philadelphia in April that Alexander McKee -- an influential agent among the western tribes -- and "Sevin other Vilons" had declared their loyalty to the king and fled to live among the Indians. In addition, twenty soldiers had deserted at Fort Pitt. "What may be the fate of this country," he concluded, "God only knows, but at Present it wears a most Dismal aspect."[24] Every day brought the authorities at Philadelphia news of new hostilities. In early May, Congress sent 240 rangers to bolster the Fort Pitt garrison,[25] and later in the month, General McIntosh arrived with the 13th Virginia and 8th Pennsylvania Continental regiments.[26] These were still too few troops to hope to patrol the border of the upper Ohio. Increasingly it was being urged that the frontier could not be guarded, and that a punitive expedition must go into the Indian country if the settlers were to have any relief.[27]

On June 11, 1778 the Board of War announced to Congress that an Indian war was imminent and that the Seneca, Cayuga, Mingo, Wyandotte, Onondaga, Ottawa, Chippewa, Shawnee and Delaware had so fallen under British influence that immediate steps must be taken.[28] The Board endorsed an aggressive campaign and urged such an action to cow the tribes and capture Detroit.[29] They called for an expedition of 4,000 men,

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[24]Col. John Proctor to President Wharton, April 20, 1778, P. A., VI, 445.

[25]Council to Lt. Samuel Hunter, May 21, 1778, ibid., 537.

[26]Vice President Bryan to Lt. Samuel Hunter, May 20, 1778, ibid., 564.

[27]Council to President of Congress, May 19, 1778, ibid., 524; General Armstrong to Congress, 1778, ibid., 613-614.

[28]J. C. C., XI, 587.

[29]Ibid., 588.

suggesting an appropriation of $932,742 1/3 to finance it. In addition, they recommended that General Horatio Gates be ordered to send a force into Seneca country to punish that tribe and to capture the British post at Oswego.[30]

Like many of Congress's decisions on Indian policy, this recommendation came too late. On May 30, Joseph Brant and his Iroquois warriors appeared in the Mohawk Valley, an area hitherto spared by the Iroquois barrier. It was a rich region and was an important bread basket for the Continental forces. Living off the country, Brant's warriors kept up a series of swift, erratic raids for two months, as they spread desolation and a maximum of terror. By the end of June, even greater disaster overtook the frontier. Leading a combined force of Iroquois and Tories, Colonel John Butler marched into the Wyoming Valley. On June 4, the principal stronghold of the valley, Forty Fort, surrendered, and the rich farming community endured massacre and devastation that became a part of frontier folklore. A flood of immigrants fled to eastern Pennsylvania spreading terror and panic. Lt. Samuel Hunter, a militia commander reported that hundreds were fleeing the Pennsylvania frontier and that "nothing but a firm reliance on Divine Providence and the Virtue of our neighbors induces the few to stand that remain . . . ."[31] William Maclay pleaded, "for God's sake, for the sake of the Country, let Lt. Hunter be reinforced at Sunbury -- send but a single company if you can't do more."[32]

But the frontier received no aid. On July 12, Congress determined

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[30]Ibid., 589-590.

[31]Lt. Samuel Hunter to Commanders of Militia, July 9, 1778, P. A., VI, 631.

[32]William Maclay to Council, July 12, 1778, ibid., 634.

that General McIntosh's expedition against Detroit must be abandoned due to lateness of the season and the exorbitant cost of supplies.[33] The General was ordered to use such forces as he had gathered to strike the local Delaware towns. This expedition accomplished little except to establish the useless Fort Laurens, which only provided a convenient post for any passing Indians to stop and attack.[34] On August 22, the Board of War also recommended that the expedition against the Seneca be called off for similar reasons and for fear of weakening the "Grand Army."[35] Washington approved this move, significantly explaining that frontier conditions were terrible "but they are evils of a partial nature which do not effect the general security, and consequently can only claim a secondary attention."[36] On September 3, Congress approved the cancellation of the Seneca mission and passed responsibility to General Washington, directing him to do whatever he could for the frontier.[37]

Still the settlers' ordeal was not over. In September, the Brant-Butler forces methodically destroyed German Flats, a major patriot granary. Even the first snows of winter did not stop the attacks. On November 11, Walter Butler led a force down on Cherry Valley, and thus the frontier had another massacre to add to the list.

Elsewhere, the year 1778 saw renewed attacks by the Shawnee on the Kentucky Stations and general unrest all along the southern frontier.

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[33] J. C. C., XI, 720.

[34] Lachlen McIntosh to Vice President Bryan, December 29, 1778, P. A., VII, 132.

[35] J. C. C., XI, 829.

[36] Washington Writings, XII, 264.

[37] J. C. C., XII, 868.

Congress found that "the present situation of the State of Georgia by reason of the frequent inroads and depredations of the Floridans and Indians is truly alarming and render it absolutely necessary for the security of the said state that the military force raised for the defense and support thereof be kept and paid in Continental Currency."[38] A military chest of $1,000,000 was established, but the badly needed Continental troops were not forthcoming.

The most daring and aggressive action of the war was in the Illinois country. George Rogers Clark persuaded the state of Virginia to support him in an attack on those distant posts north of the Ohio. With a small force, he reached Kaskaskia on July 4 and captured the fort from the startled British, who had no idea that American forces were anywhere in the region. Cahokia and Vincennes soon capitulated with little resistance. By mid-August, Clark controlled the Illinois country and called a general council with the nieghboring Indians -- Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi, Chippewa, Ojibwa, Kickapoo, Winnebago, Sauk and Fox -- where his arrogant and confident manner so impressed them that they swore allegiance to the United States.[39] Hearing the news of this coup, Governor Henry Hamilton of Detroit immediately set out to redeem the country; on December 29, he recaptured Vincennes. On February 24, 1779, however, Clark not only regained Vincennes but took Hamilton prisoner, an action that brought joy to frontiersmen who believed the governor to be the source of their woes. Like pendulums swinging back and forth, the tiny forces on each side

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[38]Ibid., 938.

[39]Congress provided almost no assistance for any of George Rogers Clark's expeditions. Lack of material support to provide presents for the Illinois Indians hampered his negotiations with them. Patrick Henry in Council to George Rogers Clark, December 12, 1778, Papers of James Madison, I, 276.

fought for control of the important Illinois region. Again, as in the Cherokee War of 1776, significant achievements in Indian and western diplomacy were accomplished with no aid from Congress.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAR YEARS, II

> . . . when a powerful nation will descend to the low Employment of an Incendiary; and plume herself on wasting a Country which she cannot subdue; when she can sacrifice her Glory to her Vengeance . . . is it to be wondered at that she should be successful in Feats not beyond the Atchievement of the midnight Ruffian!
>
> James Duane to George Clinton[1]

Spring, 1779, seemed to offer no respite to the frontier, only a tragic repetition of the past two summers. In April, William Maclay reported that the Indians had struck at Wyoming, Fort Jenkins, Fishing Creek, Freeman's Mill, Fort Muncy and Loyal Sock. He mourned that "the whole force of the Six Nations seems to be pouring down upon Us."[2] Warning that the spring crop had probably already been lost, he added his voice to the two-year-old litany declaring that only an expedition into the Indian country could offer any salvation for the frontiersmen.[3]

At last such an offensive campaign was in store. Two factors favored an operation into Indian country in the summer of 1779. First, the western war was beginning to affect directly the war on the seaboard. The inroads made into the productive New York and Pennsylvania valleys must be stopped if adequate supplies for the Continental Forces were to be

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[1]James Duane to the Governor of New York (George Clinton), November 14, 1780, L. C. C., V, 444.

[2]William Maclay to the Council, April 27, 1779, P. A., VII, 357.

[3]Ibid.

maintained. Second, there was no indication of a return of the French fleet from the West Indies, and the Continental army could not engage the British in New York without their assistance. Rather than remain idle, part of that army might now be used against the Indians. In addition, General Washington suggested political pressure for the campaign when he later explained:

> The motives to the undertaking, besides the real importance of rescuing the frontier from the alarms, ravages and distresses to which it was exposed; and which in all probability would have redoubled this year, were the increasing clamours of the country and the repeated applications of the States immediately concerned, supported by frequent references and indications of the pleasure of Congress. The combined force of these motives appeared to me to leave no alternative.[4]

In February, Congress ordered General Washington to begin preparations for a punitive campaign. Even before this authorization, the General had been writing to gather information concerning routes to be taken, strength of the Indian tribes and related matters.[5] In March, he offered the command of the expedition to General Horatio Gates; when he declined, Major General John Sullivan was chosen.[6] The overall plan was to divide the army into two wings: one to march from a base in New York, the other from a Pennsylvania site, and both to join at Tioga for an assault on the Iroquois country. At the same time, Colonel Daniel Brodhead, the new commander of Fort Pitt, was to march north from his post to attack the Mingo and Seneca towns on the upper Allegheny. In this way, the Iroquois would be struck from all sides. General Sullivan was instructed

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[4]George Washington to President of Congress, August 15, 1779, Washington Writings, VI, 107.

[5]Two such letters were: George Washington to Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh, January 31, 1779, Washington Writings, XIV, 62; George Washington to General Schuyler, February 11, 1779, ibid., 94-95. The Reverend Samuel Kirkland, James Deane and General Wadsworth were also written.

[6]George Washington to General Horatio Gates, March 6, 1779, ibid., 200.

that "the Immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their [the Iroquois] settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every sex as possible."[7] This treatment, it was hoped, would pry the Indians from their British alliance; their destruction was to be complete because "our future security will be in their inability to injure us . . . ."[8]

A well provisioned force of 4,000 men was massed. General Sullivan led three brigades commanded by Brigadier Generals Edward Hand, Enoch Poor and William Maxwell; the second arm was the brigade commanded by Brigadier General James Clinton. In addition, Virginia and Pennsylvania were requested to provide state militia. On June 18, 1779, Sullivan began his march, reaching Tioga by August 10. On August 22, Clinton's army joined him, and on August 26, they led their combined might into the Iroquois country. The Confederacy was unprepared to meet this force, and the army cut its way through the country with considerable ease. Only once were they met in actual battle; at Newtown on August 29, Brant and Butler tried to stop the army, but were defeated in a short battle.[9] By September 30, the army had regained Tioga, and on October 15, the forces had reached their return base at Easton, Pennsylvania. It appeared to be a totally successful, if not spectacular, campaign. Forty Iroquois towns and a corn crop amounting to an estimated 160,000 bushels had been destroyed with a total loss of only forty Continental soldiers.[10] This was

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[7]Instructions to Major General John Sullivan, May 31, 1779, ibid., XV, 189.

[8]Ibid., 192.

[9]General Orders, September 10, 1779, ibid., XVI, 259.

[10]General Orders, October 17, 1779, ibid., 478.

a harsh blow to the relatively civilized Six Nations. Iroquois towns were built of substantial log buildings, and they had been filled with the harvest of the Indians' fields and orchards and domestic animals when Sullivan's soldiers burned them. In addition, Colonel Brodhead had set out on August 11 with 600 men and gone some 180 miles up the Allegheny, destroying all the Seneca towns in that region. He met only token resistance and carried out his assignment without the loss of a man.[11]

General Washington gloated that the British had allowed their faithful allies the Iroquois to be destroyed by a force altogether inferior to their own.[12] He and General Schuyler expected the Indians to sue for peace, and Washington wondered if an attack on Niagara could be made a condition to granting it.[13] Finally, it appeared, Congress was in command of the frontier, and peace was to be restored.

In the winter of 1779 and the spring of 1780, settlers flooded west. Based on a belief that General Sullivan's expedition had ended the frontier war, new settlements sprang up all along the border. Frontiersmen and Congress alike were to suffer a rude awakening. The splendid successes of General Sullivan soon became hollow victories. Destruction of their towns proved a hardship to the Iroquois during the winter, but this only drove them closer to the British, who provided them sustenence during that season. By June, James Madison had to report to his friend Thomas Jefferson:

> It appears from sundry accounts from the Frontiers of N.Y. and other N. States, that the Savages are making the most distressing incursions under the direction of British

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[11]George Washington to General Horatio Gates, October 16, 1779, ibid., 472.

[12]George Washington to Benjamin Harrison, October 17, 1779, ibid., XVII, 24.

[13]George Washington to General Philip Schuyler, January 30, 1780, ibid., 466.

> agents . . . . It is possible the Enemy will be but too successful this campaign in exciting their vindictive spirit against us throughout the whole frontier of the United States. The expedition of Genl. Sullivan agnst. the six nations seems by its effect rather to have exasperated than to have terrified or disabled them.[14]

In fact, the New York frontier had been attacked as early as February, when the vengence-seeking warriors made an unprecedented march on snow shoes.[15] In April, Joseph Brant returned to strike at Harpersfield, Ulster, Cherry Valley, and Minisink. In August, Brant punished the Oneida for their loyalty to the United States. In October, Major Guy Carlton produced justified alarm as far east as Schnectady and Albany with his raiding party. At the same time, Sir John Johnson and Brant combined forces and ravaged the Schoharie Valley.[16] In answer to demands from the New York Assembly that he send troops to save their ravaged frontier, General Washington could only answer that Congress had approved a resolution calling for the state to raise 800 militia for its defense, and that he was sure the Assembly would take so wise a step.[17] As winter began, the Indian and Tory forces began to withdraw to Niagara, Detroit and Oswego, burning and killing as they went.

The same unhappy fate awaited the Pennsylvania frontier. In March, the first news of raids began to trickle into Philadelphia.[18] In addition

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[14]James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, June 2, 1780, L. C. C., V, 181.

[15]Again, the Indians were striking valleys significant for their productivity; James Madison estimated that the Schoharie alone produced 8,000 bushels of wheat yearly. James Madison to Joseph Jones, November 14, 1780, Papers of James Madison, II, 45.

[16]George Washington to Governor George Clinton, April 12, 1780, Washington Writings, XVIII, 253-254.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Extract of a letter from John Hackencalder, March 30, 1780, P. A., VIII, 152.

to the Indians, the frontier commanders complained about the loyalists on the border who assisted and fought with the Indians. "This is a strange divided Quarter -- Whig, Tory, Yankey, Pennamite Dutch, Irish and English influences are strangely blended," observed William Maclay.[19]

Frontiersmen and Congress hoped that Colonel Brodhead might lead an attack from Fort Pitt on Detroit which, if successful, would remove an important center of British influence and badly damage their prestige. Holding Fort Pitt itself was, however, about the limit of Brodhead's ability. He vainly attempted to plan a Detroit campaign, but found that he was unable to persuade local militiamen to guard the Ohio forts while the Continental regulars moved into the interior; it was a distressing, but perhaps not incomprehensible, example of frontier provincialism.

It is doubtful whether Brodhead could have in fact carried out such a campaign if the militiamen had cooperated. Both Pennsylvania and Virginia, the sources of supply for Fort Pitt, were in financial straits resulting from the long war years and depreciated Continental currency. In August, Colonel Brodhead wrote President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania that the garrison had been without bread for several days and that the troops were beginning to "murmur"; he added that he had been forced to close the small supporting forts for lack of supplies.[20] In September he reported to Philadelphia that the Congressional Board of War had instructed him to rely on commissioners appointed by Virginia and Pennsylvania to supply his troops, but that Pennsylvania had appointed only one such commissioner and Virginia none at all.[21] He dourly and menacingly concluded, "I sincerely

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[19]William Maclay to President Joseph Reed (of Pennsylvania), April 2, 1780, ibid., 156.

[20]Daniel Brodhead to President Reed, August 18, 1780, ibid., 514.

[21]Daniel Brodhead to President Reed, September 5, 1780, ibid., 536.

wish your Excellency may interest yourself in our favor, for unless something is speedily done, these posts which are of the utmost importance, must be evacuated and the Country will of course be deserted or as some have hinted, join the Enemy."[22]

The state of Virginia had also planned its own attack on Detroit to relieve the frontier. George Rogers Clark was to lead the force, and George Washington ordered Colonel Brodhead to supply Clark all the aid he could spare.[23] The jealousy of Brodhead and the parochialism of the Kentucky and Virginia frontiersmen, who simply refused to volunteer to fight for such a distant objective, killed all hope of the expedition. Clark then turned his energies to building Fort Jefferson at the mouth of the Ohio, a poor alternative.

Clark was more successful in the Illinois country, where he was soon called to turn back a British-Indian force out of Mackinac led by Emanuel Hesse. At the same time, Captain Henry Bird, leading a force of Indians from Detroit, was attacking Kentucky. Using cannon, he forced Riddle's Station to capitulate on June 20, the first Kentucky Station ever to surrender. George Rogers Clark rushed back to Kentucky too late to do battle with Bird, who returned to Detroit with over one hundred prisoners, but he did form the frontiersmen, now more willing to fight, into an expedition directed against the Seneca. This force burned the Seneca towns of Chillicothe and Piqua, thus freeing Kentucky from attack for the remainder of the year.

Only in the south was the news good. The Cherokees had begun to

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[22]Ibid., 537.

[23]George Washington to Governor Thomas Jefferson, December 28, 1780, Washington Writings, XX, 23-24.

attack the frontier again. In autumn, 1780, Colonel Arthur Campbell of Virginia and Colonel John Sevier, the leader of the Watauga settlements, led a retaliatory force that destroyed the towns of the Overhill Cherokee, leaving them homeless and without food for the coming winter. In the Spring of 1781, Sevier returned with another force and destroyed the Middle towns, forcing that faction of the Cherokee nation to sign the second Treaty of Long Island, surrendering further lands.

Although Lord Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, virtually ended the organized war on the seaboard, the frontier war raged on until 1782. These two years saw only a repetition of the dismal fate that had been the frontier's since 1776. An impotent Congress, hampered by the chaotic state of Continental finances, now almost abdicated all responsibility for the west. The Indians fell regularly on the New York border, but General Washington repeatedly told New York state officials that they must not rely on him for any aid, though "I entreat your Excellency [Governor Clinton] to assure the Assembly, that it is impossible to feel more than I do for the distresses of the state . . . ."[24] He was also at pains to remind the governor that "as an officer interested in the general interest of the Confederacy"[25] he could view New York border attacks as only one part of a larger struggle. In May, Fort Schuyler (Fort Stanwix, patriotically renamed), an important post in northwest New York that had served as the farthest point of American control in that area throughout the war, had to be abandoned and its forces drawn back to German Flats because of scarcity of supplies.[26] The New York frontier was

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[24]George Washington to Governor George Clinton, February 14, 1781, ibid., XXI, 288.

[25]Ibid., 287.

[26]George Washington to President of Congress, May 27, 1781, ibid., XXII, 121.

almost a desert when, in late 1781, the state finally raised a force of local militia under Colonel Marinus Willet. They drove the Indians from the Mohawk Valley, inflicting a severe defeat on them at West Canada Creek.

In the upper Ohio country, the Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandotte struck with renewed fury, and Congress was unable to bring any order out of the confusion. Colonel Brodhead, the principal officer in the area, was court-martialed for irregularities in his command, whereupon his successor at Fort Pitt, Brigadier General William Irvine, even suggested abandoning that essential post and retreating to Chartier's Creek.[27] The Board of War announced that Fort Pitt, in fact, might have to be closed if essential supplies were not found; they reported that the soldiers were reduced to hunting buffalo to feed the garrison.[28] In two years, 1781-1782, the post was able to support only one major campaign, that against the Seneca towns on the Sandusky. Far from being successful, this force, under the command of Colonel William Crawford, was defeated, over half of the men being captured and tortured to death by the Indians.[29]

When peace finally came to the west in 1782, American fortunes on the frontier were at a nadir. Almost all the Indians were in the enemy ranks, the Illinois country had apparently been lost when Virginia withdrew her troops in 1781[30] and the British still held the vital posts at

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[27]George Washington to Brigadier General William Irvine, December 18, 1781, ibid., XXIII, 396.

[28]J. C. C., XIX, 411.

[29]George Washington to Brigadier General William Irvine, July 10, 1782, Washington Writings, XXIV, 417.

[30]Whether this constituted an abandonment or not, and as to its effects on boundary negotiations in Paris in 1783, disagreement exists. One scholar says that George Rogers Clark's activity in Illinois country

Detroit, Niagara, Oswego, and Mackinac. Although the British were regularly successful in persuading the Indians to fight for and with them, the Americans had failed almost totally in their effort to enlist warrior-soldiers. After the Canadian defeat, Congress had quickly repented its policy of neutrality and found "that it is highly expedient to engage Indians in the service of the United Colonies."[31] In addition, the Northern commissioners were to urge the Indians of that department to attack Niagara, while the Middle commissioners were to organize an Indian assault on Detroit.[32] The optimistic Congressmen even approved a force of 2,000 Indians for use in Canada.[33] Such disregard for the fact of growing Indian defection must have amazed Philip Schuyler, who could only reply, "so far from being able to procure two thousand Indians to join us, I shall be extremely happy if we can prevent them from acting against us . . . ."[34] In 1778, at the height of the attacks, Congress again approved

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really only weakened the hold of the mother country on a small corner of the disputed territory" and that "the basis for the success of American diplomacy had been laid not by the victory of the arms of Virginia, not through the boldness of George Rogers Clark . . . but in the liberal principles held by a British statesman /Lord Shelburne/." Clarence W. Alvord, "Virginia and the West: an Interpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, III (June, 1916), 19-38. On the other hand, there is evidence that Clark was still in control of the Illinois country at the end of 1782 and that the negotiators in Paris knew of this; see, James Alton James, "To What Extent was George Rogers Clark in Military Control of the Northwest at the Close of the American Revolution," American Historical Association Annual Report, (1917), 315-329; James Alton James, "An Appraisal of the Contributions of George Rogers Clark to the History of the West," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVII (June, 1930), 98-115; Lewis J. Carey (ed. and trans.), "Franklin is Informed of Clark's Activities in the Old Northwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXI (December, 1934), 375-378.

[31] J. C. C., IV, 396.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 412.

[34] A. A., 4th Ser., VI, 795.

of enlisting Indians;[35] such actions indicated only a total ignorance or disregard for the state of Indian affairs.

Why had the Americans lost the support of the Indians? A number of reasons can be given. The British skillfully played on the theme that the Americans were only interested in possessing Indian lands. In the first years of the war, the Continental Congress actually had no expansion policy, but land-hungry settlers seemed to prove the British charge only too well. This obvious grievance of the Indians was beyond repair by a Congress that had no physical control over the encroaching settlers. The British, on the other hand, could point to the Proclamation of 1763 and the cessions of Forts Stanwix and Lochaber as examples of their recognition of the Indian claim to the soil.

Equally important was the superior ability of the British to supply goods and presents to the Indians. As the war progressed, Congress was increasingly unable to meet even the minimal demands of the red men, and the states could do little better. William Henry Drayton had warned, early in the war, "experience has taught us that occasional presents to the Indians has been the great means of acquiring their friendship."[36] George Washington complained that he had no hope of getting Indians to join the army so long as the British could better reward them.[37] James Duane, the knowledgeable interpreter in the Northern Department, saw war with the red men as an alternative to presents; he advised, "these misguided Nations must Feel the Power of the United States, since we have

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[35]George Washington to Commissioners of Indian Affairs, March 13, 1778, Washington Writings, XI, 76.

[36]Drayton, II, 108.

[37]George Washington to President of Congress, May 3, 1778, Washington Writings, XII, 343.

not the means of preserving their Fidelity by our Bounty . . . ."[38] Colonel Daniel Brodhead summed up the plight of the Middle Department when he reported, perhaps with a little sarcasm, "If the Friendship of the Delaware Indians is thought to be valuable, it is time that goods should be forwarded to clothe them before winter, otherwise they will be compelled to go where they can be supplied."[39] More often, the goods were not forthcoming, and the Indians did go elsewhere.

Another reason for the Indian allegiance to Britain was the high quality of personnel in the British Indian department. Besides the legacy of good relations bequeathed by Sir William Johnson and John Stuart, the British maintained a full complement of agents in the wartime department. Joseph Brant, William and John Butler, William Grogan, Alexander Cameron, Henry Hamilton, and Sir John and Guy Johnson are only the better known of the British agents who worked among the Indians during the war. At one time there appear to have been as many as fifty officials in the northern superintendency who devoted all or part of their time to securing Indian allegiance.[40] The Americans had nothing to match this wealth. Perhaps the most effective of the Continental agents was the Reverend Samuel Kirkland, missionary to the Oneida and Tuscarora. Early in the war, Washington testified, "I cannot but intimate my Sense of the Importance of his /Kirkland's/ Station and the great Advantages which have and may result to the United Colonies from his Situation being made respectable. All the accounts agree that much of the favorable Disposition

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[38]James Duane to President of Congress, January 12, 1778, L. C. C., III, 28.

[39]Daniel Brodhead to President Reed, September 16, 1780, P. A., IX, 559.

[40]Walter H. Mohr, Federal Indians Relations: 1774-1788 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933), 42.

shown by the Indians may be ascribed to his Labor and Influence."[41] Throughout the war, the Oneida and Tuscarora remained peaceful, even when attacked by Brant for their stand. Besides the Reverend Mr. Kirkland, there was James Deane, interpreter in the Northern Department, and George Morgan, agent in the Middle Department, but this exhausts the list. Among the Congressional Commissioners, Philip Schuyler appears to be the only one who was enthusiastic and forceful in his office, and he was saddled with many other duties. Considering her other disadvantages, America had real need for aggressive and inventive personalities in her Indian department; instead mediocre functionaries provided erratic and desultory leadership.

A final element of weakness was the confusion as to where authority for initiating western and Indian policy lay, and the concomitant confusion as to what the policy was. Until 1779 the source of policy seems to have been lodged in the periodically elected Standing Committees on Indian Affairs. However, these committees regularly consulted General Washington, who seems to have considered the frontier an integral part of his command. After 1779, no evidence exists that Congress even bothered to appoint Standing Committees for Indian affairs, and their function was taken over by the Board of War; again, this Board leaned heavily on Washington to help them formulate the little consistent policy that appears in the war years. This reliance was unfortunate for the frontier, for Washington seems to have considered the western war of only secondary importance, a matter to be left to the states and the frontiersmen themselves as much as possible. The General steadfastly refused to weaken

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[41] George Washington to President of Congress, September 30, 1775, Washington Writings, III, 526.

the Continental army to provide trained troops so necessary for successful western operations. He approved the expedition in 1779 because the frontier activities were beginning to impinge on his seaboard activity. Washington's general policy was not necessarily a blunder, for he had neither the men or supplies to wage a two-front war, but it was an unfortunate necessity for the west.

Besides committees, boards and generals, there were the Congressional commissioners; they sometimes awoke from their lethargy to appoint regional agents who went very much their own way, neither seeking or following any over-all policy. Added to this national level of Indian management was the equally important state level. State agents and commissioners were often the most active men of influence among the tribes, each striving to foster the individual interests of his own state.

All of these defects combined to leave the west open to years of devastation and hardship. Yet no fundamental solutions emerged from the conflict in the west. Basic questions of Indian policy remained unanswered at the end of the war, leaving a residue of new problems with which the post-war Congresses had to contend.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF PEACE: 1783-1788

> As to orginating the Indian war, so far from being originated by Great Britain, I know that it originated in the false policy of Congress in 1783; I foretold it then with all of its consequences.
>
> Elias Boudinot, President
> Continental Congress, 1782-1783[1]

The Treaty of Paris set the western boundary of the United States at the Mississippi River, ceding the nation a great unsettled western empire. This cession set squarely on the Congress the perennial problems of how to treat with the Indians and then peacefully remove them from the area, how to dispose of the lands in an orderly and profitable manner, and how to govern the settlers who were straining to flood in.[2] At the same time Congress was confronted with a multitude of conflicting western claims by the individual states. With the dangers of the war removed, these states were displaying an increasingly overt spirit of fear and jealousy towards the Congress and their sister states.

Following the British and wartime traditions, the states seemed agreed that the national government should have some voice in

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[1]Mohr, 103.

[2]Prospects of peace increased the continuing flow westward. In October, 1782 the commanding officer at Fort Pitt reported "the people are in great numbers flocking over the Ohio into what has hitherto been called Indian country and are busy in taking up and improving lands as well on what is supposed to be within the bounds of Pennsylvania as beyond the western line thereof." Brigadier General William Irvine to Secretary at War (Benjamin Lincoln), October 28, 1782, L. C. C., VI, 542 n2.

the direction of Indian affairs. During the war years they had been willing to give Congress a fairly free hand. Few instances of conflict had appeared, possibly because Congress was never able to take a firm grip on Indian affairs, and that which later might appear state interference in the Indian Department was accepted as state assistance. Besides this, Congress obtained no general cessions of lands during the war, and the core of conflicts and jealousy centered about the states' western pretensions.

As early as 1775 Benjamin Franklin, in his suggested plan of government, had reserved certain aspects of Indian management to a central colonial government.[3] Article X provided that no colony was to engage in any offensive war with any nation of Indians without consent of Congress. Article XI planned a national offensive and defensive alliance with the Six Nations; this suggests that national supervision might replace that of New York and Pennsylvania over this most important confederation. Boundaries would be established to protect the Indians, and no encroachments permitted. Quite important was the Franklin regulation that forbade private or colonial land purchases. Land transfers could be arranged only between Congress and general councils of the Indians.

In John Dickinson's first draft of the Articles of Confederation,[4] these provisions were generally adopted, though the prohibition against private or colonial land purchases was set in abeyance until the exact limits of the colonies could be ascertained. The Dickinson draft spelled out specifically what Franklin's plan suggested: exclusive right to regulate trade and manage the affairs of the Indians was given to Congress.

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[3] J. C. C., II, 195-199.

[4] Ibid., V, 546-554.

In the final draft,[5] which became operative on March 1, 1781, only the provision giving Congress the right to regulate trade and manage Indian affairs was retained; this was limited by a warning to the effect that the legislative right of any state within its own boundaries was not to be infringed.

As peace slowly returned to the frontier and the question of western lands became more prominent, the commitment of the states to national supremacy in Indian affairs became more and more tenuous. As early as 1778 James Duane, loyal son of New York, had refused an appointment as Indian commissioner because:

> ...the Jurisdiction of this State over the Country of the Six Nations is unquestionable as well as ancient. On it depends the legality of all our settlers in the Mohawk Country. Apprehension that the interference of Congress might one time or other cross the rights of the Interests of the State, and that as a Trustee for Congress I might be embarrassed and restrained in supporting our separate and exclusive Jurisdiction, I did not see my way clear to engage in it.[6]

The farseeing Mr. Duane was right, for the days of conflict over the Iroquois country were not far off.

To understand the continued hesitancy and seeming neglect with which Congress handled Indian affairs in the 1783-1788 period, it must be remembered that both the increased responsibility for the west and the growing opposition from the states came at a time when Congress was least able to face them. The Continental Congress was never a consistently strong institution and, as if exhausted from the effort, it lapsed into real lethargy and weakness after the war. Faced with the national spirit

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[5]Richard Peters (ed.), Public Statutes at Large (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1848), I, 4-9.

[6]James Duane to Governor of New York (George Clinton), March 13, 1778, L. C. C., III, 129.

of disunity that peace brought, the overwhelming financial problems, and chronic absenteeism, the accomplishments of Congress came slowly and painfully. On June 21, 1783 the United States in Congress Assembled -- as Congress styled itself after the Articles went into effect -- was actually forced to leave Philadelphia by mutinous soldiers demanding back pay. The Congressmen traveled to Princeton, insulted and indignant, but impotent. In that small college town things were no better. "We have Done Litle Bussiness since we Came to this place haveing often but Six states represented and indeed we Can do but Litle at such a Distance from the Publick offices they being all at Philad'a and will Continue there," reported John Montgomery.[7] Widespread pessismism existed about Congressional ability to pull itself together. Richard Peters expressed relief to have vacated his seat and declared "I am much the happiest when I hear or think nothing of the erratic meteor which rose with so much splendor and I fear will set with no small disgrace."[8] Waxing classical, he compared America to Antaeus, who was invigorated by a fall in which he touched mother earth; he explained, "if this could be the case with our permanently wandering Giant the sooner he is at the lowest the better."[9] In the same vein, Elias Boudinot complained, "the President is to adjourn Congress on the 12th Novr. to Annapolis. So that we are to be in the future wandering Stars . . . I augur great evil from this measure and cannot help thinking of Rome and Constantinople."[10]

Although the western war had largely ended in 1782, isolated attacks

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[7]John Montgomery to William Irvine, July 26, 1783, ibid., VII, 235.

[8]Richard Peters to Charles Thomson, October 20, 1783, ibid., 343.

[9]Ibid., 344.

[10]Elias Boudinot to Robert R. Livingston, October 23, 1783, ibid., 347.

continued along the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontier.[11] The British had assured Washington that they were working to keep the tribes peaceful, but he doubted the complete faithfulness of this assertion.[12] Congress had taken no steps towards consolidating their victory over Britain among the tribes, and this is but one example of their diminishing ability to handle national affairs. General Washington and Philip Schuyler, two men who had been among the most influential in the Indian Department during the war, felt that Congress should act quickly to profit from the British defeat.[13] President Dickinson urged the Pennsylvania delegates in Congress to impress upon their colleagues the necessity for action.[14]

Finally Congress was ready to move. In April, 1783, a restructuring of the Indian Department occurred, although it seemed principally to recognize changes already made. A committee composed of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Samuel Osgood, Oliver Ellsworth and James Wilson recommended that the "general superintendance of Indian affairs under Congress be annexed to the Department of War."[15] Since 1779 the Board of War had been directing Indian affairs, and this change only recognized the situation. A slight change of structure was also suggested. Four "agents" -- "commissioners" was written but marked out -- were to be

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[11]Lt. John Cummings to President John Dickinson (of Pennsylvania), March 29, 1783, P. A. X, 22.

[12]George Washington to Sir Guy Carlton, September 8, 1782, Washington Writings, XXV, 138.

[13]George Washington to Philip Schuyler, October 2, 1782, ibid., 230.

[14]President Dickinson to Delegates in Congress, April 4, 1783, P. A., X, 25.

[15]J. C. C., XXIV, 264.

appointed for the old Northern, Middle and Southern departments -- now called districts -- and a new one was added, an Eastern District for all Indians under the general denomination of Penobscot.[16] Finally, the committee urged Congress to send agents to the tribes to tell them of the peace and to declare that all hostilities by American citizens would cease.

On May 1, 1783, again at the urging of Pennsylvania,[17] Congress authorized the Secretary of War to take the most effectual means to inform the Indians of the provisional peace treaty and the impending British evacuation of the Northwest posts[18] -- wishful thinking on the part of the Congressmen. The agents were to suggest that the United States was inclined towards peace, but also to "inform the hostile Indian nations that unless they immediately cease all hostilities against the citizens of these United States, and accept these friendly offers of peace, Congress will take the most decided measures to compel them thereto."[19]

Secretary Lincoln sent John Joseph Bull, Ebenezer Allen and Ephraim Douglass[20] to deliver these messages. Douglass, messenger to the important

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[16]In fact, throughout the war years John Allen had worked among the Indians in the Maine-Nova Scotia area. He was appointed an Indian agent by Massachusetts, and carried on extensive correspondence with the Continental Congress. His activities are recorded in Frederick Kidder (ed.), Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia During the Revolution Chiefly Compiled from the Journals and Letters of Col. John Allen (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1867).

[17]President Dickinson wrote the delegates that at least forty citizens had been killed in spring raids, and he repeated his opinion that much would be solved if Congress forcefully told the Indians of their victory. President Dickinson to Delegates in Congress, April 29, 1783, P. A., X, 45.

[18]J. C. C., XXIV, 219.

[19]Ibid., 319-320.

[20]Randolph C. Downes, Council Fires on the Upper Ohio (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1940), 286.

posts at Detroit and Niagara, sent back a report which was less than encouraging.[21] He went to the Delaware villages on the Sandusky, hoping to call a general conference of the Indians there. Informed that Sir John Johnson had called a general meeting for the same time at Detroit and that all the Indians would give this meeting precedence, he went on to Detroit. Colonel DePeyster, the commander of the post, received him courteously, but would not allow him to tell the Indians anything beyond the fact that the British and Americans were no longer at war. This refusal was based on lack of instructions from the royal government. Prohibited from carrying out his instructions there, Douglass went on to Niagara. Reaching that post on July 11, 1783, he had no better success. General Maclean would not let him call the Indians together even when he promised to delete from the message anything that might be offensive to the British, though the commander promised that he would keep the Indians peaceful. Although his mission had thus accomplished little, Douglass was able to report that the red men seemed fully tired of war and disposed to peace.

The Indians were only half of the frontier problem, however, for on August 12 Congress attempted to deal with the other troublesome sector, the settlers. Aware of the westward movement, the following proclamation was issued:

> RESOLVED, That all persons of whatever description be strictly enjoined against making purchases of or settlements on lands claimed by Indians or receiving any cession or gifts of lands from any nation of Indians situate and being without the bounds of any particular state till the further order of Congress shall be known.[22]

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[21] The full report is found in, Report of Ephraim Douglass to the Secretary at War, August 18, 1783, P. A., X, 83-90.

[22] J. C. C., XXIV, 503.

These were the preliminaries; the question of a peace-time Indian policy remained as yet unanswered. But Congress was precluded from ignoring the Indian situation for too long; the future of the national government was, in many ways, tied to the west. Most Congressmen knew that western settlements were inevitable, and they saw this trend as the one bright spot in a dim future. If Congress could establish its authority over the western territory -- especially the Old Northwest -- it could profit from land sales and so avert the spectre of financial disaster. Another compelling responsibility was the granting of bounty lands in the west that had been promised to repay citizens for military service.

The area desired had been confirmed to the Indians at the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix, and the tribesmen were determined to maintain that agreement. War with the Indians was out of the question for financial reasons, and yet General Washington reported hostilities against the red men that would surely precipitate such a conflict if Congress did not act.[23]

With his western lands interests and military experience, George Washington was something of an authority on Indian affairs; his opinions would not only influence Congress, but probably fairly represent the tone of that body's own thinking. In May he noted the outbreak of hostilities on the Pennsylvania-Virginia frontier and explained that the Indians would always be troublesome neighbors and must be removed a good distance from the settlers. Removal, he felt, could be accomplished by purchase or

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[23]Far from denying mistreatment of the Indians, Washington suggested that the acts were committed with the approbation, if not the authority, of the states and added "I confess, my Mind revolts at the Idea of those Wanton Barbarities which both sides have in too many Instances been the unhappy Witnesses to." George Washington to President of Congress, April 4, 1783, Washington Writings, XXVI, 284.

conquest, although "which of the two will be adopted by Congress I know not. The first, I believe would be cheapest and most consistent perhaps with justice, the latter most effectual."[24] As the summer passed and Congress took no definite steps, he put down his thoughts on the Indian situation in a long letter to James Duane.[25] He supported any policy that would allow the government to take speedy command of the west; it was foolish, he said, to allow "land jobbers, speculators and monopolisers", or even scattered settlers, to take possession of the land. This would cause Indian war and secure the speculators everything and the government nothing. He suggested that a just policy would be to (1) require return of all prisoners of every age and sex (2) inform the Indians that the British, in the provisional peace treaty, had ceded all lands to the United States (3) hold out the Indian hostility during the war as a just reason to require them to move beyond the Lakes. Having established their claims, the United States could then generously waive so harsh a punishment; rather they should redraw the 1768 boundary line to acquire needed territory and agree that neither Indian or white should cross into the other's lands except for trading, treating or exceptional cause. He advised the government not to try to grasp too much or too little by such a line. When established, he suggested it be made a felony for anyone to settle or survey Indian lands. Any Indian agents -- the General was evidently unimpressed by the Continental commissioners -- should have only limited duties and these accurately defined. Finally, he urged purchase of needed lands as a last resort; war was to be strictly avoided. "In a

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[24]George Washington to Chevalier De Chastellus, May 10, 1783, ibid., 419.

[25]George Washington to James Duane, September 7, 1783, ibid., XXVII, 133-140.

word, there is nothing to be obtained by an Indian War but the Soil they live on and this can be had by purchase at less expense and without the bloodshed and those distresses which helpless Women and Children are made partakers in all kinds of disputes with them."[26]

In October Congress finally began feeling its way toward a policy. The Congress accepted a committee report[27] that began with the premise that the western lands must be opened. The report listed several compelling reasons for this policy: pledges of bounty lands to the army must be honored, the obvious increase in domestic population and immigrant arrivals, the justified belief of public creditors that the west would be improved into a fund for security and payment of the national debt all demanded such a policy.[28] The lands could be obtained in three ways, Indian war, purchase, or voluntary cessions by the Indians. The alternative of war was discarded. Repeated victories might drive the Indians from part of their lands, but these could only be settled with the protection of an expensive establishment of troops and garrisons. Even if the Indians could be completely driven out of the Ohio country, this course was to be avoided for they would repair to Canada and, nursing their resentment, deny any part of the fur trade to the Americans.[29] The most likely alternative was purchase, but it was ruled out because "the public finances do not admit of any considerable expenditure to extinguish

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[26]Ibid., 140.

[27]The committee that composed this report consisted of James Duane, Richard Peters, Daniel Carroll, Benjamin Hawkins, and Arthur Lee. J. C. C., XXV, 680. The report covered only the Northern and Middle Departments, since information regarding the Southern Department was lacking. Eventually it was applied to that Department also.

[28]Ibid., 682-683.

[29]Ibid., 681-682.

the Indian claims upon such lands."[30] The only solution was to draw boundary lines that would include free cessions.

An unanswered question was why the Indians should be willing to make these gifts of land. Largely, the report suggests, because they joined the wrong side in the war. Their depredations and General Sullivan's campaign constituted expenses that the victors now had a right to recoup. Explicitly they reasoned:

> A bare recollection of the facts is sufficient to manifest the obligation they [the Indians] are under to make atonement for the enormities which they have perpetuated, and a reasonable compensation for the expenses which the United States have incurred by their wanton barbarities, and they possess no other means to do this act of justice than by a compliance with the proposed boundaries.[31]

Congress accepted this report and the general policy behind it. The Iroquois and western tribes would be required to surrender all lands between the Ohio and Lake Erie east of the Great Miami and Maumee rivers.[32] For economy, they suggested that this be accomplished at one general conference and provided that the Oneida and Tuscarora were to be secured in their lands as a reward for their fidelity during the war.[33] Further, Abraham Clark, Daniel Carroll and John Montgomery were chosen to draw up a plan of trade regulations.[34] A potential trap was placed in the way of the newly announced policy by providing that "the preceding measures of Congress relative to Indian affairs, shall not be construed to affect the territorial claims of any of the States or their legislative right within

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[30]Ibid., 682.

[31]Ibid., 683.

[32]Ibid., 686.

[33]Ibid., 687.

[34]Ibid., 693.

their respective limits."[35] A mischievous provision, this was one that provincialism demanded. Nothing at this time was done about the committee's disclaimer that they did "not offer the measures . . . as a sufficient security against the increase of feeble, disorderly, and dispersed settlements . . . against the depravity of manners which they have a tendency to produce . . . or against the clamities of frequent and destructive wars with the Indians . . . and that in their opinion nothing can avert those complicated and impending mischiefs . . . but the speedy establishment of government . . . in such districts."[36]

This was a harsh policy; some 3,000,000 acres of land were to be required of the Indians. One scholar asserts "for imperial aggressiveness and outright effrontery this document takes a front rank in the annals of American expansion."[37] It seems hard to imagine, however, exactly what alternative Congress could have taken. Western lands were to be settled, with or without Congressional approval, by implacable settlers. The lands were the only ready hope of filling the national treasury, a vital demand. Payment for the lands was simply out of the question. Congress was not being economical when it demanded free cessions, it was recognizing the stern reality that the depressed state of the Continental Treasury foreclosed any expenditure for land purchases.

Even in the realm of theory, ignoring practicalities, Congressmen likely found no difficulties in supporting their policy. Years later, so stern a Puritan as John Quincy Adams spoke for them when he answered the "moralists" who questioned the right of white men to replace the

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., 693-694.

[37]Downes, 284.

Indians so brusquely.[38] "But have they maturely considered the whole subject?" he asked. "What is the right of the huntsman to a forest of a thousand miles over which he has accidentally ranged in quest of prey? . . . Shall the lordly savage not only disdain the virtues and enjoyment of civilization himself, but shall he control the civilization of a world? Shall he forbid the wilderness to blossom like the rose?" Continuing in this line, he concluded, "No, generous philanthropists! Heaven has not thus placed at irreconcilable strife its moral laws with its physical creation." This sort of pre-Manifest Destiny theory was widely held. Mr. Chief Justice Marshall later wrote it into law, holding that Indian lands had been absolutely vested in the British crown, and this title transferred to the United States in 1783.[39] This absolute title, he explained, was encumbered with a right of occupancy and usufruct on the part of the Indians, but theirs was not a vested right. A realist, the Chief Justice held that Indians were not subject to usual rules of law or morals. Differences of civilization made it impossible to assimilate them into society or to govern them; peaceful joint occupancy was likewise impossible. Civilization, then, demanded that the Indians be denied any but temporary title, revocable at will by the conqueror.

On March 4, 1784 Congress elected George Rogers Clark, Oliver Wolcott, Nathaniel Green, Richard Butler and Stephen Higgenson as commissioners to hold conferences with the tribes.[40] On the next day Congress

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[38] John Quincy Adams to Sons of the Pilgrims, December 22, 1802, quoted in Charles C. Royce, "Indian Land Cessions in the United States," 18th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), 536-537.

[39] Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh, 8 Wheaton 543 (1823).

[40] J. C. C., XXVI, 124.

directed the President to order the commissioners to be about their business as quickly as possible; in addition, all Congressional commissions as Indian agents dated before March 4 were revoked.[41] The business of collecting supplies needed for a treaty and persuading the tardy Indians to assemble was not to be hurried, however, and it was October before commissioners Wolcott, Butler and Lee met the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix.[42] The treaty, concluded October 22, was brief: (1) the United States granted peace to the Iroquois confederacy and took them under her sovereignty (2) hostages were required for the return of all prisoners (3) the Iroquois were forced to surrender their historic claim to all lands west of Virginia and Pennsylvania.[43] The Indians had hoped to maintain the 1768 line, but the Americans were relentless. "You are a subdued people . . . . When we offer you peace on moderate terms, we do it in magnanimity and mercy. If you do not accept it now, you are not to expect a repetition of such offers . . . . We shall now, therefore, declare to you the condition, on which alone you can be received into the peace and protection of the United States."[44] The Iroquois had little choice but to agree, discontented though they were. As soon as the federal commissioners were finished, commissioners from Pennsylvania and Virginia took over. Pennsylvania secured every acre of Iroquois land

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[41]Ibid., 125.

[42]All treaties between the Continental Congress and the Indian nations can be found, arranged by date, in Richard Peters (ed.), Public Statutes at Large, VII.

[43]This treaty spelled the end of the imperial rule of the Iroquois. Many of the confederacy moved to Canada, the others were eventually forced onto reservations. The unity of the Confederation was completely broken during the Revolution.

[44]Downes, 291.

within the bounds of that state.[45] New York was not so ambitions, but State Commissioners did secure the first of a series of treaties that constantly nibbled at Iroquois holdings within New York boundaries.[46]

By December 30, commissioners Lee, Butler and Clark had repaired to Fort McIntosh to deal with the Wyandotte, Delaware, Ottawa and Chippewa nations. In a repetition of Fort Stanwix, the commissioners insisted the western nations cede all lands except a reservation bounded by the Cuyahoga, Maumee and Lake Erie, and on the south by a line drawn through the central part of what is today Ohio. The Indians protested their loss of land, "but the Commissioners have answered them in a high tone; the Purport of which was, that as they had adhered during the war to the King of Great Britain, they were considered by us as a conquered people, and had therefore nothing to expect from the United States, but must depend altogether upon their Lenity and Generosity. This spirited answer it is supposed will have the Desired effect."[47] On January 21, 1785, the treaty was signed.

The third and final treaty in this series was to come from a conference held with the Shawnee, Miami, Wea, Piankashaw, Potawatomi and Kickapoo at Vincennes. Gathering discontent among the tribes over Stanwix and McIntosh caused delay. When, in January, 1786, the conference was held, the site was changed to Fort Finney at the mouth of the Great Miami, and it was attended by only a few Shawnee who had been coerced

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[45]Commissioners for Treating with the Indians to President Dickinson, November 15, 1784, P. A., X, 360.

[46]All of these state treaties and their proceedings are in Franklin B. Hough (ed.), Proceedings of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs appointed by law for the Extinguishment of Indian titles in the State of New York (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1861), 2 vols.

[47]Col. Josiah Harmar to President Dickinson, January 15, 1785, P. A., X, 395.

there by threat of war. The purpose of the treaty was to secure a ratification of the previous treaties by the western tribes. The Shawnee refused to sign until Richard Butler told them, "the destruction of your women and children or their future happiness, depends on your present choice. Peace or war is in your power. . . ."[48]

The Indians prepared to challenge Congressional policy. In 1783 they had been confused and divided. The warriors had been fighting a frontier war and had appeared to be slowly winning, when suddenly their loyal British allies told them that they must accept peace. The British had no intention of loosening their hold on the tribes, but they did accept the peace to the extent of refusing officially to support further Indian hostilities. Then came the harsh treaties of 1784-1785. The Indian answer, originating with Sir John Johnson and Joseph Brant, was a general confederacy of the Six Nations and the western tribes to present a unified front to the demands of the Americans.[49]

In July, 1784, the Six Nations sent a call to all the western nations to meet with them on the Sandusky in the fall to form a general confederacy.[50] This was the first of a series of confederacy meetings that led to the Indian War of 1790-1794. Meeting in September, the tribes agreed that land cessions would be made only by the general confederacy and that they would hold the Ohio as their boundary.[51] Hearing rumors of this

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[48]Downes, 207.

[49]February 2, 1784, Ephraim Douglass reported that Sir John Johnson was giving the Indians "presents with lavish profussion" and telling them that the King had not ceded any of their lands. He told them to put down their tomawhaks, but not to lay them far from sight since they might need them soon to protect their lands. Ephraim Douglass to President Dickinson, February 2, 1784, P. A., X, 554-555.

[50]Downes, 282.

[51]Ibid., 284.

confederacy, Congress had changed their instructions to hold one large meeting to an order to treat with every nation separately and at a different time and place: this could "discourage every coalition and consultation"[52] among the tribes. In December, 1786 the Confederacy met at Detroit and drafted a message to Congress. The Indians stated their disappointment in not being included in the treaty with Britain. Nevertheless, they expressed a desire for peace. This peace could best be maintained, they insisted, by carrying out all negotiations in the voice of the general confederacy. Even more pointedly they added, "especially as landed matters are often the subject of our councils with you, a matter of greatest importance and general concern to us, in this case we hold it indispensably necessary that any cessions of our lands should be made in the most public manner, and by the united voice of the confederacy; holding all partial treaties as void and of no effect."[53] This amounted to a complete repudiation of the cession treaties and an Indian call for a new conference to redraw the boundaries. The message was signed by the Six Nations, Huron, Ottawa, Twichtwee, Shawnee, Chippewa, Cherokee, Delaware, Potawatomi and the Wabash confederates.

The demand was, of course, impossible to meet. Obviously the Indian confederacy wanted to redraw the boundary to reclaim their lost lands. By March 1, 1784 Congress had accepted the Virginia cession of western lands that completed title to the Old Northwest. In May, 1785 Congress passed an Ordinance that provided for surveying and disposing of these lands for the benefit of the national government. The Seven Ranges were almost

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[52] J. C. C., XXVI, 153.

[53] Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clark (eds.), American State Papers, Indian Affairs (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1832), I, 8-9.

surveyed, and the area was already filling with settlers.[54] When the demanded meeting was finally held at Fort Harmar in January, 1789, the Indian hope was futile; had they been able to negotiate a new boundary, which is unlikely, they could not have reversed the tide of settlers who held the Indian lands beyond all hope of recovery.

Activities in the southern states were similar to those in the northern area. On May 27, 1784, Richard Beresford, Thomas Jefferson, Jeremiah Townley Chase, Richard Dobbs Spaight and Jacob Reed reported to Congress on conditions there.[55] They suggested the provisions for the northern department should be followed; again there could be no land purchases since "Congress, however desirous they may be to gratify their better feelings in acts of humanity, will not be warranted in advancing beyond the essential interests of their constituents."[56] Again the commissioners were to draw boundary lines, although the lines were not so important in the south, where Congress controlled little public lands. It was agreed that South Carolina would be called on to bear the expenses of the southern treaties -- she could deduct this amount from her yearly quota -- but Congress gloomily provided that if the state should refuse,

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[54]The problem of state cessions of western lands is carefully examined in Merrill Jensen, "The Creation of the National Domain, 1781-1784," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (December, 1929), 323-342 and "The Cession of the Old Northwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXIII (June, 1936), 27-48. Congressional government of the Old Northwest is reviewed in Theodore C. Pease, "The Ordinance of 1787," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXV (September, 1938), 167-180; Beverley Bond, Jr., "An American Experiment in Colonial Government," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XV (September, 1928), 221-235; Frederick Jackson Turner, "Western State Making in the Revolutionary Era," American Historical Review, I (October, 1895 and January, 1896), Part I: 70-87, Part II: 251-269.

[55]J. C. C., XXVII, 453.

[56]Ibid., 455.

the Continental Treasury would provide the funds.[57]

Before Congress could activate this report by appointing commissioners, chronic absenteeism caused a recess that lasted from June to October. The Committee of the States sat, but it was powerless. When Governor Martin of South Carolina wrote to inquire about southern commissioners, the Committee could only reply "the whole of this business must . . . wait the decision of Congress at their next meeting."[58] Finally, on March 21, 1785 Benjamin Hawkins, Daniel Garroll, William Peery,[59] Andrew Pickens and Joseph Martin were elected.[60] Most of the southern states possessed extensive frontier lands, and they dreaded national interference that might limit their exploitation of the Indians. Richard Spaight reported that in selecting commissioners Hawkins was elected first; the other states mistrusted this Georgia delegate and added Carroll of Maryland and Peery of Delaware to check him. "This of course gave very great dissatisfaction to the southern states," whereupon Pickens and Martin were added to balance the delegation again.[61]

Amid the clutter of state treaties, local jealousy and Spanish intrigue, the southern commissioners worked. They met first with the Cherokee at Hopewell, concluding the treaty on November 28, 1785. Following the familiar pattern, the treaty provided for restoration of prisoners, an acknowledgement by the tribe that it was under United States sovereignty, and drawing of a boundary line. Further, it was agreed that any white

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[57]Ibid., 460.

[58]Ibid., 596.

[59]Ibid., XXVIII, 83.

[60]Ibid., 84.

[61]Richard Dobbs Spaight to William Blount, March 27, 1785, L. C. C., VIII, 166.

who settled on Indian lands and remained for six months would forfeit government protection and be subject to Indian punishment. Indians committing crimes were to be delivered to United States officials for punishment, as were any whites apprehended in a crime against an Indian. Finally, it was agreed that the United States would regulate all trade with the Indians, and the treaty ended with a mutual pledge of perpetual peace. As soon as the Cherokee departed, almost identical treaties were concluded at the same place with the Choctaw on January 3, 1786 and the Chickasaw on January 10. No treaty was concluded with the Creeks who, under the influence of the Spanish and their chief Alexander McGillivray, refused to meet with the Commissioners. Indeed, far from conferring, they appeared to be on the brink of attacking Georgia.

The round of treaties was now completed. The agreements had served the purpose of securing the lands Congress desired, but drawing boundary lines had not brought the promised peace. North and south, the Indians were discontented at their loss of land. Foreign elements -- the British from their northwest posts and the Spanish operating out of Florida -- helped sustain the hostility. On May 17, 1786, Congress noted completion of the treaties and revoked all commissions as Indian agents preparatory to a "proper organization of the Indian department."[62] Congress had been without any permanent agents for two years now, and they were badly needed. On May 14, Henry Knox, the new Secretary of War, told Congress that hostilities "on the waters of the Ohio" seemed "inevitable."[63] Southern congressmen were preparing to demand 400 Continental soldiers to put an end to Shawnee and Cherokee attacks on Kentucky.[64] A permanent department was

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[62] J. C. C., XXX, 286.

[63] Ibid., 343.

[64] William Grayson to James Monroe, May 28, 1786, L. C. C., VIII, 375.

also needed to lend a continuity to Indian affairs that the weakened Congress could not provide. In the same month that all commissions were revoked, Congressman James Manning reported to his state "this is our deplorable Situation and Congress obliged this day to adjourn for want of a sufficient number of States to proceed in the necessary and most important business of the Confederacy."[65]

On June 28, Charles Pinckney, James Monroe and Rufus King reported.[66] Following the traditional division of three departments, they provided for each a professional full-time superintendent who would reside on the frontier. He would appoint deputies and was ordered to license all traders, who were required to provide bond for good behavior. The traders would be restricted to a permenant post, which was specified on their license, so they could not roam among the tribes; neither could they sell liquor to the Indians. The superintendent had power to arrest anyone violating the ordinance. Finally the superintendent was to report to and be responsible to Congress. Congress did not take the report up again until July 20, when a southern amendment was defeated which aimed at limiting the superintendent's power to negotiate with the tribes in favor of the states.[67] The next day Georgia delegates attempted to delete the superintendent's power to grant licenses to traders; again they were defeated.[68] On July 24, consideration resumed, and the southern delegates managed to tack on a disclaimer that "provided that the legislative right of any

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[65]James Manning to Governor of Rhode Island (John Collins), May 26, 1786, ibid., 366.

[66]J. C. C., XXX, 368-372.

[67]Ibid., 419.

[68]Ibid., 421.

state within its own limits be not infringed or violated."[69] It was also decided to put the department under the Secretary of War, as it had been before.[70] A new clause was added forbidding superintendents to engage, directly or indirectly, in the Indian trade, and they were to be required to give bond for the faithful discharge of their duties.[71]

As a last-ditch effort to keep the Congress out of southern affairs, the Georgia delegates moved on August 2 to postpone so much of the ordinance as might apply to southern Indians, but this motion was defeated. Three days later the ordinance was finally passed.[72] The final document provided for two departments, northern and southern, with the Ohio river as the dividing line. Each would be headed by one superintendent serving a two year term. Traders were not only to procure a $50 license from the superintendent, but they were to receive this only on presenting a certificate of good character from the chief executive of their respective states, and payment of a $3000 bond.[73]

This was the final policy decision, and perhaps the most important Indian legislation, of the Confederation period. The Indian Department again greatly resembled the imperial British pattern. The familiar division of two departments, each under a single superintendent, had been restored. As the British superintendents were under the authority of the royal military commander, so the American superintendents were under the chief military official of the confederation. A significant change was

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[69] Ibid., 424.

[70] Ibid., 426.

[71] Ibid., XXI, 485.

[72] The entire Ordinance is found in ibid., 490-493.

[73] Ibid., 492.

the increased control over traders, but this advantage was neutralized in part by the jealousy of the states. On August 14, 1786, Richard Butler was chosen northern superintendent[74] and on October 16 James White was selected for the southern department.[75]

Only one month after the Indian Ordinance was passed, the call was issued for the Constitutional Convention; the Continental Congress was now limping along on borrowed time. Yet these were crucial months. The involuntary cessions, the efforts to form a confederacy among the Indians, and settler encroachments brought the Indian discontent to a high point in 1786. Secretary at War Knox clearly saw the hopelessness of finding a just solution that would accommodate both Indian and settler when he reported to Congress:

> But your Secretary apprehends that the deep rooted prejudices and malignity of heart, and conduct reciprocally entertained and practiced on all occasions by the Whites and Savages will ever prevent their being good neighbors. The one side anxiously defend their lands which the other avariciously claim. With minds previously inflamed the slightest offense occasions death, revenge follows which knows no bounds. The flames of a merciless war are thus lighted up which involve the innocent and helpless with the guilty. Either one or the other party must remove to a greater distance or Government must keep them both in awe by a strong hand and compel them to be moderate and just.[76]

In late October, 1786, Congress had reports that the tribesmen were massing in the Shawnee towns to continue attacks on Kentucky. Troops to the number of 1,340 were raised to fight the Indians,[77] or so Congress

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[74]Ibid., 517.

[75]Ibid., 747. White proved an ineffectual superintendent. He resigned in 1788 to enter into land speculation and was replaced on February 29, 1788, by Richard Winne.

[76]Ibid., XXXII, 328.

[77]Ibid., XXXI, 891-892.

said. In fact these troops were raised to combat potential civil insurrection as the news of Shays' Rebellion reached Philadelphia.[78]

The last years of the "United States in Congress Assembled" were dogged by continuing Indian troubles. Attacks on Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia continued, although no full scale war was mounted. In July, 1787, Secretary Knox reported that only 500 troops were on duty on the Ohio frontier, and one-third of them were occupied guarding government surveyors.[79] If he had only 1,500 men, the Secretary thought he could establish a chain of posts and solve the problem, "but however dignified and important to the character and interests of the United States such a body of troops might be, it is to be regretted that the depressed state of finances will not admit of the measure."[80] At all costs, he said, he must avoid an Indian war since "the present embarrassed state of public affairs and entire deficiency of funds"[81] made the idea of financing operations "intolerable." He suggested holding further conferences with the Indians to inquire into their grievances; this was the only alternative open.[82]

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[78]Raids on the Virginia frontier and Kentucky became regular during 1786. Since Congress could promise no dependable relief, the frontiersmen took affairs into their own hands. August 2, 1786 the frontier militia officers met at Harrodsburg and voted an expedition against the northwest Indians. Chosen leader, George Rogers Clark led a large frontier force in the autumn of 1786 into the Ohio Country. Past Vincennes the Indians began to mass to do battle, and the militia refused to go any further. Failure of discipline of militia, breakdown of supply lines, and lack of Confederation aid forced the expedition to turn back without significantly punishing the tribes. For details of the expedition see, L. C. Heldermann, "The Northwest Expedition of George Rogers Clark, 1786-1787," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXV (December, 1938), 317-334.

[79]J. C. C., XXXII, 328.

[80]Ibid., 329.

[81]Ibid., 331.

[82]In July Secretary Knox also saw inevitable war between Georgia and the Creek nation. In this case the national government was completely

On October 26, 1787, Congress determined to attempt a new series of treaties. In the Southern Department, the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia were each to appoint a commissioner to act with the superintendent.[83] These commissioners were clearly told "the present Treaty having for its principal object the restoration of peace, no Cession of land is to be demanded of the Indian tribes."[84] In the Northern Department, the governor of the Northwest Territory[85] was to hold a conference in conjunction with the superintendent; again, "the primary objects of the Treaty are the removing of all causes for controversy . . . ."[86] Still, the governor was told not to surrender an acre that had been obtained at Stanwix and McIntosh, and he was to use "every exertion . . . to defeat all confederations and combinations of the tribes . . . ."[87]

The obvious grievance of the tribes was pointed out by Secretary Knox, who told Congress "the said tribes of Indians have expressed the highest disgust, at the principle of conquest, which has been specified to them as the basis of their treaties with the United States . . . ."[88] He urged Congress to offer to purchase the lands, and offered a three-year

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helpless, for those Indians lived within the state's boundaries and any Congressional action would constitute infringing the legislative right of the state. Ibid., XXXIII, 707.

[83]Ibid., 708.

[84]Ibid., 710.

[85]Arthur St. Clair was appointed Governor of the Northwest Territory on October 5, 1787.

[86]Ibid., 711.

[87]Ibid., 712.

[88]Ibid., XXIV, 125.

installment plan.[89] However, this was not the whole of the Indian grievances. The fundamental problem of the red men was not money but the loss of their homeland to a more powerful society. The Continental Congress possessed neither the wealth nor the administrative ability to assimilate the tribes into a society that did not welcome them. The Indians hoped for the Ohio as a permanent boundary. In this vain hope they were encouraged by the British, who were eager to maintain a monopoly on the fur trade and favored an Indian barrier state to accomplish this end. No answer to the problem seemed to exist.

The next month after the secretary's report, the ninth state ratified the federal Constitution; all that was expected of the Continental Congress was to hold together until it could be superseded. On August 20, 1788, Mr. Joseph Martin was appointed an agent in the Southern Department to work with the Creek and Cherokee.[90] This was the last action taken by the Continental Congress on Indian affairs. On October 2, 1788 George Thatcher reported that their meeting place was being remodeled for the new Congress "and the workmen made such a continual noise that it was impossible to hear one another speak."[91] The few members present moved to John Jay's old office to meet. After October 13, there were never enough members present to constitute a quorum, and the old Congress died totally lacking the dignity that had attended its birth.

Their Indian policy, however, did not die. The policy, Secretary at War Knox, and the Indian Ordinance of 1786 were taken over _in toto_ into the new government. Nor were the latter any more successful in making it work. Washington's administration also drew boundary lines and tried to

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[89]Ibid., 126.

[90]Ibid., 433.

[91]George Thatcher to Nathan Dane, October 2, 1788, _L. C. C._, VIII, 802.

keep the two enemies part, but it could not be done. If the westward movement had come to an end, separation might have been a reasonable solution, but the American settler had another hundred years of expansion before him, and a surveyed boundary meant nothing to the frontiersman. From 1790 to 1794 the northern confederacy made its last stand, but General Anthony Wayne and the Treaty of Greenville broke them. Sadly they acknowledged that the Old Northwest and Kentucky were lost to them forever, and they began the long trek to Canada and beyond the Mississippi.

CHAPTER VI

1775-1788: A REVIEW

> Nothing has excited more admiration in the world than the manner in which free governments have been established in America; for it was the first instance from the creation of the world . . . that free inhabitants have been seen deliberating on a form of government, and selecting . . . their citizens . . . to determine upon and give effect to it.
>
> James Madison[1]

Americans of the Revolutionary generation did think of themselves as something "new" in the world; as men of the Enlightenment, they had an optimism about and a confidence in their actions that men of the twentieth century might envy. Yet if their Indian policy were the sole criterion, this self-assessment would appear to be wrong.

No important innovations marked the Congressional control of Indian affairs. Indeed, the longer Congress worked with Indian affairs, the closer it came to an exact copy of the British superintendencies. The Ordinance of 1786 differed in little more than degree from the British system as it existed in 1763. And yet at no time was Congress able to administer their program as successfully as had Britain. During the war, Congress was able to secure only negligible aid from the Indians; rather, the tribes almost unanimously took an active part against the American cause. In time of peace, Congress was unable to control settler or Indian, and the war of 1790-1794 was the inevitable result of having a government too weak to restrain either side. Armed force seemed the only agent that

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[1]Quoted in Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), I, 231.

could fill the vacuum that Congress produced.

At the same time, these were years of transition for the Indians. The events of the Revolution made apparent a long term trend, the disintegration of the Iroquois Confederacy. The unanimity that had made the Confederacy the overlord of the northeastern United States was broken, and the humiliating Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1785 dispelled any hope for continued hegemony over the western tribes of the Ohio region. With the restraining hand of the Iroquois lifted, these tribes -- especially the Shawnee, Mingo and Delaware -- moved towards war. The western tribes lacked the knowledge of state craft and the sophisticated understanding of what was happening between the Indian and the red man that the Iroquois possessed. By the end of the Federalist Era, all Indians east of the Mississippi were in the process of being dispossessed. Some, like many Iroquois, moved to Canada. Others crossed the Mississippi and attempted to accommodate themselves to a new kind of life, one dominated by the horse and the hunt. This displacement was a process made inevitable by the policies of the Continental Congress. Unimaginative and inept administration left the Congressmen no alternative but to bow to the expediency of force.

The humanitarian record of the Congress provides no alternative to this mediocre picture. After the war Congress made no effort to provide missionaries or teachers to prepare the tribes for assimilation. Among the Six Nations and the Cherokee significant work might have been done to assist the Indians to live with the white men. These were a people already acquainted with agricultural skills and sedentary living, and they already possessed a fairly complex government. But Congress sent no instructions to the superintendents to educate their charges; rather they were to bend all efforts to keep Indians and whites apart. A vast western territory

lay open to settle and govern, and Americans were determined to do it despite, not with, the Indian. Only a few thoughtful citizens might agree with Secretary of War Knox when he vainly wrote:

> How different would be the sensation of a philosophic mind to reflect, that, instead of exterminating a part of the human race by our modes of population, we had persevered, through all difficulties, and at last had imparted our knowledge of cultivation and the arts to the aborigines of the country, by which the source of future life and happiness had been preserved and extended. But it has been conceived to be impractical to civilize the Indians of North America. This opinion is probably more convenient than just.[2]

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[2]American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, 53.

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