

"... the driving of White People away from their settlements was a Matter which no Indian could with any satisfaction be concerned in, and they thought it most proper for the English themselves to compel their own people to remove from Indian Lands."<sup>151</sup>

The alarm also brought a revival of Imperial interest in Indian affairs, following on the heels of the economy movement. The result was a firmer definition of the roles the Imperial Government and the Provinces were to play in Indian affairs, with the Indian Department in a stronger position than during 1767. The major task of the Department during 1768 was the settlement of a definite boundary to the west of the Colonies, which was achieved at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix that Autumn. The new policy of the British Government entailed the settlement of this boundary, the withdrawal of troops from the frontier and their concentration on the Atlantic coast, the permanent establishment of the Indian Department, but with control only over treaties, land purchase, etc., the control of trade being given to the colonies, and finally the closure of the west to schemes for new Colonies.<sup>152</sup>

The Indians were pleased to see the army leave Fort

<sup>151</sup>Report of the Commissioners, C.R., IX, 541.

<sup>152</sup>Letter of Lord Shelburne to the Board of Trade, October 5, 1767, and Representation to the King, March 7, 1768. N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., VII, 981 ff., and VIII, 19 ff.

Pitt,<sup>153</sup> but the colonies were not pleased to be given control of trade. "We . . . are cheerfully disposed to give the utmost attention to maintaining and preserving the Peace and Friendship now reestablished with the Indians," the Pennsylvania Assembly wrote to Governor Penn in 1769, "and where our Laws for regulating the Trade with them appear to be deficient, to alter and amend them; but . . . We conceive it is not in Our Power to apply a Remedy adequate to the Occasion."<sup>154</sup>

Thus the trade relationship was left uncontrolled, and soon reverted to chaos. The Department did not fare too much better in its own responsibility of solving land matters. This was largely due to the mistaken idea of those who knew the Indians best, Johnson and Croghan, that ". . . nothing would now prevent a war but an Indian land purchase."<sup>155</sup>

In the immediate situation this may have been true, but at best the Fort Stanwix purchase only allayed the Indians temporarily. On the negative side, it made use of the Iroquois claim to be the owners of the land involved, and paid them for land from which other tribes, chiefly the Shawnee, were expelled, thus arousing more resentment among the western tribes

<sup>153</sup>Volweiller, Croghan, pp. 226-27, citing a letter from Croghan to Johnson, December 24, 1772.

<sup>154</sup>Message to Governor Penn, May 24, 1769. C.R., IX, 592.

<sup>155</sup>Volweiller, Croghan, p. 219.



at the puppet-dominion of the Six Nations. The Department under-rated their resentment: "Altho' I should have been glad that they [the Delaware and Shawnee] were present," Superintendent Johnson reported to General Gage before the treaty conference, "I can see no particular necessity for it, as the Six Nations are the undoubted Owners, and as such considered by all the rest, who at a former meeting with me promised to pay due submission to whatever the 6 Nations sho<sup>d</sup> Agree upon."<sup>156</sup> The result was soon apparent, however, for in 1770 General Gage reported to Lord Hillsborough

The Cession . . . is the Cause of all the Commo-  
tions that have lately happened, among the Indians.  
Great part of the Lands ceded, were claimed by the Six  
Nations by Right of Antient Conquest, and tho' the  
Tribes who resided near them admitted the Right, they  
felt no Inconvenience from it further than being  
forced to acknowledge a Superiority in the Six Nations.  
But now that the Six Nations have Sold the Lands as  
Lords of the Soil, kept all the Presents and Money  
arising from the Sale, to their own use and that the  
White People are expected in Consequence of it, to  
Settle on their hunting Grounds; these dependent  
Indians, are exasperated to a great Degree." <sup>157</sup>

Sir William had other troubles, such as the warfare of  
the Iroquois and the Cherokee. He tried to make use of this

<sup>156</sup> Letter from Johnson to General Gage, August 24,  
1768, William Johnson Papers, VI, 333.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from General Gage to Lord Hillsborough,  
January 6, 1770. Clarence E. Carter, Correspondence of General  
Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, I, 245, quoted in  
Downes, Council Fires, pp. 144-45.

to keep the western tribes subdued without involving the British Government in any commitments to support its allies,<sup>158</sup> but these attempts had broken down by 1773, when the British evaded Iroquois attempts to entangle them in the west, and the Iroquois were then forced to admit that they could not make the Shawnee and Ohio tribes obey without going to war.<sup>159</sup>

While the Government of Pennsylvania was taking no action, and the Indian Department was blundering into a series of mistakes through the force of political pressures behind it and the false assumptions of even the most experienced Indian agents, the frontiersmen were doing their part to finish off the trade. A group known as the Sideling Hill Volunteers, but supported and copied elsewhere on the frontier, waylaid pack trains going west in 1765 and 1766, and even carried on open hostility with government forces. They destroyed all goods designed for Indian gifts or trade, but permitted other things to pass their blockade. Their activities subsided in 1766, but never completely ceased before the Revolution.<sup>160</sup> As in the Stump case, neither the Provincial nor the British Government could enforce their will upon the frontier population, and the

<sup>158</sup>N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., VIII, 223-24.

<sup>159</sup>Downes, Council Fires, pp. 147-51.

<sup>160</sup>C.R., IX, 264-93.  
P.A., Ser. 1, IV, 215-41.



Volunteers were never brought to justice.

And so the Indian trade, one of the most important parts of the relationship, slowly died during this decade. The men who had been most interested in trade began to shift their activities and investments to land speculation. Despite the forbidding of settlement or colony planting beyond the frontier line, even those who made the line, such as George Croghan, plotted to be given land beyond it, or to share in one of several colonizing projects which fought paper battles over boundaries that existed only on maps during the early 1770's.<sup>161</sup> Croghan's main interest was in the Vandalia Company, and the basis of its claim was land privately purchased from the Indians by Croghan before he resigned from the Department in 1772.<sup>162</sup> These men who desired to get prior rights believed the opening of new land soon was inevitable, and brushed aside the lines of 1763 and 1768. They petitioned for land in New York, basing their claim upon a deliberate misconstruction of the settlement line proclamations. They said that they

humbly conceive that the Royal intention in said Proclamation was solely to prevent the defrauding the Indians in purchases made by Private Persons, and not to Inhibit Purchases made for the Benefit of Private Persons if made in his Majesty's Name with the

<sup>161</sup>Volweiller, Croghan, pp. 183, 216, 272, 301.

<sup>162</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

Intervention of his Governors or Commanders in chief  
and at the Expense of such Private Persons. . . 163

The purchase of land by "Private Persons," meaning Croghan, in the case of the Ohio land, was considered possible because of a legal opinion rendered in England that "a title of land granted by the natives was a full and sufficient title and rendered unnecessary the securing of a royal patent."<sup>164</sup> This meant a radical change in land purchase, if applied widely, for it meant private individuals could purchase from private individuals, and that purchase no longer had to be the result of official government dealings with officially recognized Indian groups. In fact it meant the reversion of land purchase to the situation which had existed before 1682. Although the Revolution intervened before widespread use could be made of this, the very attempt meant the end of that part of the official relationship which had existed for the transfer of land.

With trade and land purchase gone, there was little of the old relationship left in 1774. It was not until later that the United States government felt a moral responsibility to 'civilize' the Indians, a responsibility meaningless to the separate colonies. Pennsylvania's policy had been to keep peace, further trade while it was profitable, and to acquire

<sup>163</sup>Quoted in Volweiller, Croghan, p. 249.

<sup>164</sup>Volweiller, Croghan, p. 295.



land. When these ends disappeared, as did the independent action of the province, and also the Indians themselves, it was natural that the remainder of the relationship should collapse. However, the end need not have been the bloody affair it was, had the Pennsylvania government had an Indian policy of any sort. This was commented upon by a French observer of the American scene shortly after the colonies had achieved their independence.

It must be admitted that the process of civilization will be long and difficult; as much from the extent of the country as from the remoteness of most of the savage people, and from their sense of independence; for most of these tribes now enjoy unhampered freedom. . . . Still another obstacle is the fact that the English of Canada, as well as the Anglo-Americans, are unjust and shifty in their dealings with the savages--a very poor policy.

I may also note that the English in Canada and the Anglo-Americans of the present-day United States can use a method to civilize the savage peoples different from the religious efforts made by the French. They can be fairer, bring them near the inhabited parts by distributing land allotments for them to cultivate in full ownership, and give them everything necessary for this. They can trade with them for the surplus of their harvest and for their furs. By the establishment of police in every village and settlement, civilization will gradually and firmly be established.

. . . West of the Ohio . . . many . . . allotments and free grants of land have been made. It would also be possible to settle some savages there, but on the contrary, they try to drive them out by buying the land the savages own and occupy. This seems unwise. 165

### The End of the Relationship: 1774-1785

The last ten years of official correspondence between the Province, later the Commonwealth, of Pennsylvania and sovereign Indian groups within its borders are years of warfare and uneasy truce, like the decade from 1754 to 1764.

The fighting broke out between the Shawnee and Virginians in April, 1774, and first ended in November of the same year. This was known as 'Lord Dunmore's War' after the governor of Virginia, who encouraged it to advance the frontier of his colony and in hopes of furthering his own western land schemes at the expense of the Vandalia Company. The Shawnee were driven to war largely as a result of the sale of their hunting ground by the Iroquois at Fort Stanwix, as had been foreseen. The war was marked by the usual atrocities, but was distinguished by its limited nature. The Shawnee were the only tribe that went to war, and they carefully limited their aggression to Virginians. The scene of action was chiefly the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, then disputed territory between Pennsylvania and Virginia. A temporary settlement had declared the Monongahela to be the dividing line, and the Shawnee were careful to stay west of this in Virginia. This was the last time Indians distinguished the citizens of Pennsylvania from any other colonists.

The battle of Point Pleasant in October was a draw, but



the Shawnee were not supported by any other tribe, and were completely cut off from supplies, so in November they sued for peace. Volweiller says that "Lord Dunmore's War resulted in keeping Kentucky open to settlement and gave peace to the frontier during the first two years of the Revolution."<sup>166</sup>

It seems more likely, however, that the truce on the frontier in 1775 and 1776 was due to the confusion of the Indians and the considerable effort made by the frontiersmen, who were now afraid of fighting the Indians backed by the English, to remain at peace. On May 16, 1775, a Committee of Correspondence was formed at Pittsburgh, and one of their first acts was to resolve that "if any person shall be so depraved as to take the life of any Indian that may come to us in a friendly manner, we will, as one man, use our utmost endeavors to bring such offender to condign punishment."<sup>167</sup>

The only influence at first which might have countered this was that of loyalists on the Ohio, and they were soon jailed. The Indians were further induced to stay at peace because early Colonial successes had temporarily stopped the flow of English trade goods up the St. Lawrence. This seriously hurt Imperial prestige among the Indians, and as it

<sup>166</sup>Volweiller, Croghan, p. 304.

<sup>167</sup>Quoted in Solon P. Buck, The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania, p. 81. Hereafter Buck, Western Pa.

declined, so did the influence of the Iroquois Confederation. This was perhaps the decisive factor in keeping the Ohio Indians neutral, if not pro-American. With the apparent end of English power, the Delaware, Shawnee, and others hoped they could shake off the galling overlordship of the Six Nations. At a conference held by the Americans at Fort Pitt on October 7, 1775, White Eyes, a Delaware chief, told the Seneca who were there that the Delawares had removed the petticoat put on them by the Iroquois, and that they held their lands in the present state of Ohio by permission of the Wyandot, not the Iroquois.<sup>168</sup> The Americans could not take full advantage of this parallel Delaware independence movement because they hoped to win over the wavering Iroquois, and did not want to offend them.

This Pittsburgh conference was attended both by Commissioners from Virginia and Pennsylvania and by Commissioners sent by the Continental Congress. Thus Pennsylvania willingly began the surrender of the remainder of its authority in the sphere of Indian affairs to the central government, as it had first ceded rights to the Imperial Government twenty years earlier.

By the Autumn of 1776 the situation had changed. British trade goods were getting through again and the Imperial Government had recovered sufficiently to establish a policy of

<sup>168</sup>Buck, Western Pa., p. 183.



winning over the Indians. The Americans had retreated from Canada the previous winter, and now a renegade band of Mingo and some resentful Shawnees started raiding the frontier. In the early spring of 1777 the English at Fort Detroit, the center of their operations, began actively encouraging raids on the frontiers, hoping to involve those tribes that were still neutral. The frontiersmen saved them the trouble by murdering the Shawnee chief Cornstalk and his family, which generally turned the Indians to active war against their natural enemy.

The years 1778 and 1779 were marked by American successes in the west, of which George Rogers Clark's campaign to the Illinois country was the most spectacular. It was also the most short-lived. During this time Congressional Commissioners were increasingly active, so that in the early autumn of 1779 it was American prestige that was at its highest, rather than that of Pennsylvania, and it was to Congressional representatives that the hard-pressed Ohio tribes and Seneca made peace feelers.

The end of 1779 reversed the picture, for American power in the west collapsed due to overextension. The British reoccupied the Illinois country, and pushed the colonists to desperate measures, but both Brodhead's and Clark's expeditions in 1781 failed, and a force under Colonel Crawford's command was defeated and scattered by the Indians the following year.

This low ebb of American fortunes on the frontier, combined with the general hardships worked by the demands of the war on the east coast, and the failure of American campaigns against the Indian country, led the frontier militia to indiscriminate killing. In September of 1781 an Indian raiding party had taken the Christian Indians from the Moravian settlement of Gnadenhutten, near the Pennsylvania-Ohio border, back to Indian country with them, but in March, 1782, a number of the Christian Delawares wandered back to their old village near the white settlements to gather the corn they had planted there. On March 8, 1782, Colonel David Williamson descended upon the settlement with over a hundred militia. They found evidence sufficient to convince them that these Indians had harbored hostiles, or at least were aware of their activities, and so they slaughtered the entire band of ninety Indians, men, women, and children.

The Indians were now more convinced than ever of the white man's treachery.

. . . Foolish Moravian Indians! I say foolish because they believed the whites in preference to us. We had often told them that they would be one day so treated by those people who called themselves their friends! We told them that there was no faith to be placed in what the white men said; that their fair promises were only intended to allure us, that they might the more easily kill us, as they have done many Indians before they killed these Moravians. 169

169 Speech of Wingenund to Colonel Crawford before the latter's torture in 1782, as related in Heckewelder, Indian Nations, p. 286.



Unfortunately, England tired of the struggle in the east, now that France had come to the aid of the colonies, and in the fall of 1782 they discouraged the Indians from raiding. There were a few last raids in the spring of 1783. Although they had beaten the frontiersmen thoroughly and reduced the Ohio forts to helplessness, and were still outraged over Gnadenhütten, the Indians could not carry on the war alone.<sup>170</sup>

There is no better indication that the official relationship was ended than the fact that the Indians were ignored in the peace treaty, and all their efforts were thrown away. A writer on Western Pennsylvania has summed up the situation well.

By the provisional treaty with Great Britain of November 30, 1782, which was made definitive September 3, 1783, the claim of the United States to the territory between the Ohio and the Great Lakes was established. The Indians were astonished to learn that the country which they had successfully held against the Americans had been handed over to the enemy without any stipulation for their protection. . . . <sup>171</sup>

It remains but to relate the official end of an official relationship. In February, 1784, the Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appointed Commissioners ". . . to hold a treaty with the Indians claiming the unpurchased

<sup>170</sup>Downes, Council Fires, pp. 262-66.

<sup>171</sup>Buck, Western Pa., p. 199.

territory within the acknowledged limits of this State. . . ."172 But the State was not really claiming any right of independent action, for the President of the Assembly wondered if they should do this, even to extinguish claims, ". . . if any circumstance should prevent Congress from holding a convention with the Indians residing in the northern and middle departments, as such a separate treaty must be attended with a very great expence to this Commonwealth, and the measure involves considerations of much moment."173 The papers and Indian deeds necessary to consummate the purchase were gathered, £3,375 were appropriated to pay for goods, and on October 23, 1784 the Commissioners made the purchase which was officially announced in December, although even in this step, care was taken not to interfere ". . . with Foederal measures. . . ." and to ". . . support the National faith and honor."174 Final arrangements were made to satisfy the Ohio Indians in January, and on February 24, 1785, the President and the Supreme Executive Council sent the following message to the General Assembly:

Gentlemen:-We have the pleasure of informing you

172Minutes of February 23, 1784, C.R., XIV, 40. This last land did not include the Erie Triangle (Ft. Presque Isle) which is now part of the state, but was not considered so then.

173Minutes of March 1, 1784, C.R., XIV, 46.

174C.R., XIV, 54, 186-87, 261-62, 271, 273.



that . . . the Commissioners on the part of this Commonwealth have purchased from the said Indians, all the territory within the acknowledged limits of the State that had not been before bought from them.

These conveyances completing the sale of all the lands in this state, thus happily finishing the transactions of a century on that subject, having been obtained at public treaties, agreeably to ancient custom, with the approbation of the United States, the Indians acknowledging themselves "kindly" and "generously" dealt with, declaring that "Pennsylvania has never deceived or wronged them, and thanked her, not only from their lips, but from their hearts." We are persuaded that such a fair equitable, and honorable confirmation of the public interest . . . must be exceedingly agreeable to the good people of Pennsylvania. 175

The relationship was ended, and the government of the state could convince itself that it had ended happily. But men more expert in Indian affairs than the elected officials of a state that no longer cared have shown similar lack of understanding. As thorough and favorable a writer as Heckewelder could not explain the course of Indian behavior over an entire century.

Instead of following the obvious course which reason and nature pointed out; instead of uniting as one nation in defence of their natural rights, they gave ear to the artful insinuations of their enemies, who too well understood the art of sowing unnatural divisions among them. It was not until Canada, after repeated struggles, was finally conquered from the French by the united arms of Great Britain and her colonies, that they began to be sensible of their

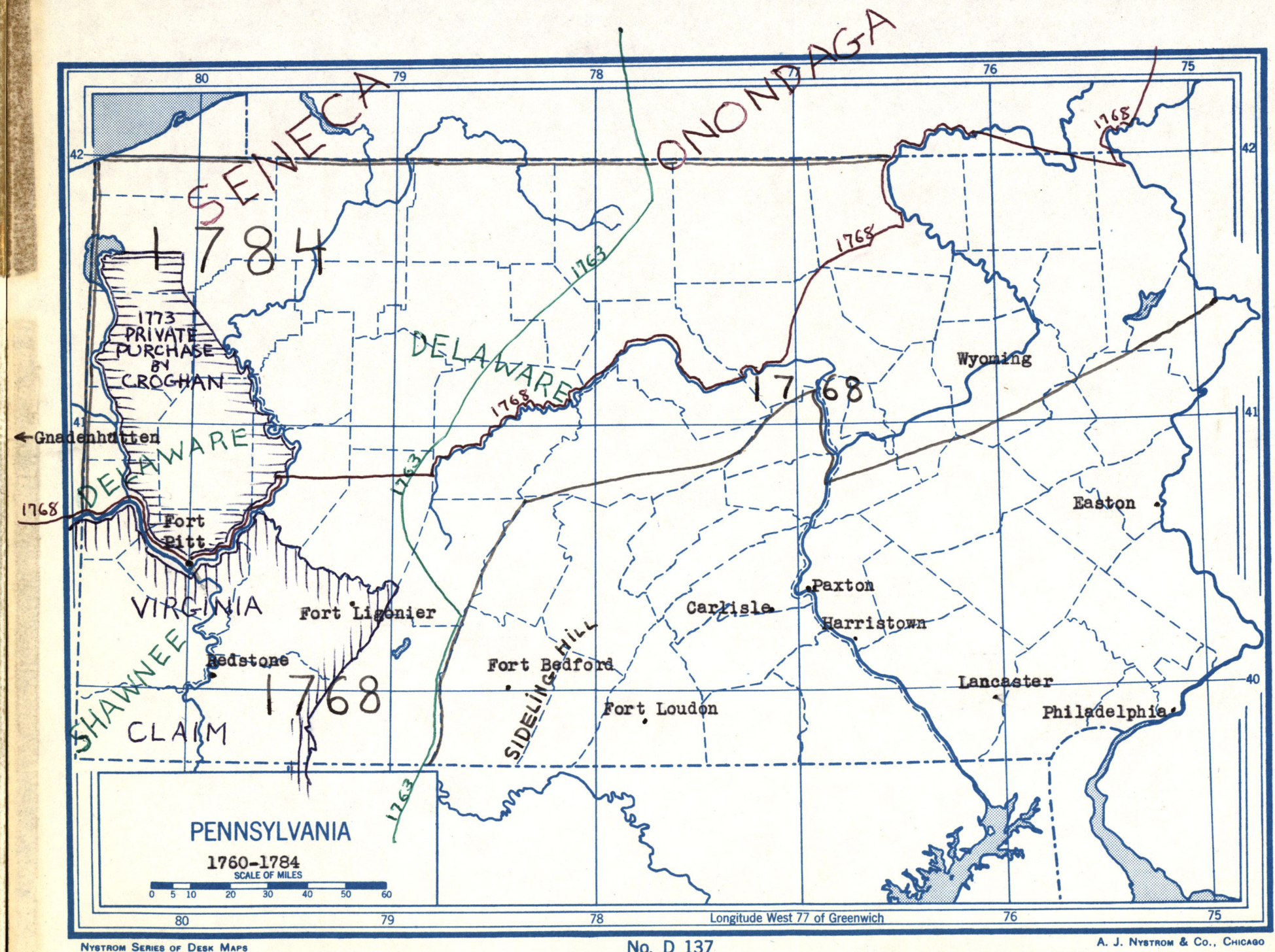
175 C.R., XIV, 366-67.  
P.A., Ser. 4, III, 1020-22.



desperate situation--this whole northern continent being now in the possession of one great and powerful nation, against whom it was vain to attempt resistance. Yet it was at this moment that their prophets, impelled by ambitious motives, began to endeavour by their eloquence to bring them back to independent feelings, and create among them a genuine national spirit; but it was too late. The only rational resource that remained for them to prevent their total annihilation was to adopt the religion and manners of their conquerors, and abandon savage life for the comforts of civilised society; but of this but a few of them were sensible. 176

Throughout the relationship the Indians had failed to do what to even a sympathetic observer seemed "the only rational resource that remained," and certainly the Indians had understood the white men no better. Yet each side had acted in ways which seemed wholly rational to it. The only conclusion can be that the white men and the Indians differed in their very perceptions of what was "rational."

176 Heckewelder, Indian Nations, p. 290.





## MAP V

LAND PURCHASES IN PENNSYLVANIA THROUGH 1784, THE LINES OF  
1763 AND 1768, AND THE PLACES IMPORTANT IN THE 1760's  
AND THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR ON THE FRONTIER

Sources:

Buck, Solon P., The Planting of Civilization in Western Penn-  
sylvania, p. 165.

Downes, Council Fires, pp. 368-69.

Morgan, Iroquois, Frontispiece, taken from "Wilderness  
Chronicles," 1765.

Volweiller, Croghan, Frontispiece, and p. 255.

Wallace, Weiser, p. 78, "The Onondaga Trail," based on Claude  
J. Southier's Map of New York Province, 1776.

Notice that the settlement of 1768 corrects the hasty  
and arbitrary line of 1763 by protecting land further east  
than the Allegheny divide in Iroquois country, to the  
north, but yields lands further west in Shawnee territory  
to the south.