FOR most of this three-year assignment in western Pennsylvania (1778-1781) Colonel Daniel Brodhead was the commandant of Fort Pitt in charge of the Continental Army's war effort in the Western section. The top priority and ultimate objective of Brodhead's military strategy was to "reduce Detroit." The Continental Congress, its Board of War, and the commander-in-chief, General George Washington, had concurred in those instructions to the commandant at Fort Pitt. From the time he arrived on the frontier in September, 1778, until he departed in September, 1781, Colonel Brodhead focused on that British post three hundred miles away as a guiding star—a veritable lure. In the light of that objective, the commandant measured the adequacy of his resources—manpower, provisions, munitions—at Fort Pitt; he cultivated his Indian relations with a view to making the route to Detroit safe and winning Indian support for his campaign. Colonel Brodhead's major intelligence efforts were directed at obtaining an understanding of the strength and layout of the British position at Detroit.

Historians have generally overlooked or minimized Daniel Brodhead's place in the Revolutionary War strategy. They have

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1 Daniel Brodhead, a Berks County farmer and grist miller, and Pennsylvania deputy surveyor, had joined the early protest movement against England's Coercive Acts in 1774-1775; in 1776 he entered Pennsylvania's military service as a lieutenant colonel. He was transferred to the Continental Army late in 1776 when his unit joined General George Washington's forces fighting to save New York city from the British. By his courage, Daniel Brodhead earned promotions of rank and position in 1777. Taking charge of the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment, Colonel Daniel Brodhead became well-known in the battles in defense of Philadelphia. He gained a reputation as a martinet for military discipline. To many of his fellow officers, Brodhead seemed to be unusually ambitious, eyeing the positions of his superiors enviously. Brodhead was a native of New York; but had been reared at Dansbury (now East Stroudsburg) where his family were pioneer settlers.
praised George Rogers Clark for preparing an expedition and
daring to strike out for Detroit; and have tended to blame Daniel
Brodhead for Clark's failure. James A. James, a biographer of
George Rogers Clark declares that "Clark's project was defeated
because of the covert opposition of Brodhead."2 Professor Thomas
P. Abernethy accuses Daniel Brodhead of malice in withholding
from Clark's forces a regiment of soldiers which General Wash-
ington had pledged to the Clark expedition. Abernethy goes
farther by insinuating that Brodhead "had used his influence
in other ways to hamper Clark."3 Solon and Elizabeth Buck,
although less severe in their judgment, charge that Daniel Brod-
head "gave only grudging cooperation" to George Rogers Clark.4
John A. Caruso, in a more recent account of the Clark project,
accepts the earlier writers uncritically and adds a note of double-
dealing to the arraignments against Brodhead: "Seeing an op-
portunity to win laurels for himself, [Brodhead] grew jealous
of Clark and kept Gibson's regiment in Pittsburgh and all the
while he continued to convey his assurance of cooperation to
Clark."5 On the other hand, an unpublished Master's degree
thesis by Elizabeth M. Fullerton denies that Brodhead's opposi-
tion to releasing more of his forces to Clark was an evidence of
jealously. Brodhead needed all available manpower to defend
the frontier against Indian threats. In the face of a growing
Indian restlessness and an imminent wave of savagery, Brodhead
was justified in declining to share more of his forces with the
Clark expedition.6

Colonel Daniel Brodhead's failure to launch a drive against
Detroit should not obscure his preoccupation with that objective.
He spent nearly three years managing the base from which the
Congressional strategy against that British post was to be di-
rected. Throughout that period Colonel Brodhead labored at
the preparations for his special assignment to capture Detroit.

3 Thomas P. Abernethy, *Western Lands and the American Revolution*
(Charlottesville, 1937), 254.
4 Solon J. Buck and Elizabeth H. Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in
Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1939), 196.
5 John A. Caruso, *The Great Lakes Frontier, and Epic of the Old North-
west* (Indianapolis, 1961), 80.
6 Elizabeth Mary Fullerton, "Colonel Daniel Brodhead" (unpublished
It is the purpose of this essay to underscore the high importance which Brodhead's superiors attached to this project; to describe the spectrum of Brodhead's activities in preparing for the Detroit campaign; and to note the inhibiting circumstances which prevented the Colonel from playing the decisive role.

Colonel Daniel Brodhead had been in command of the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment for more than a year when he was ordered to lead it westward from Valley Forge in June, 1778. Having lost both New York and Philadelphia to the British (Brodhead and the Eighth Regiment had been engaged in both theatres), the Continental Congress surmised that the British were then in a position to attack the frontier. On June 11, 1778, Congress decided to shift some forces to the frontier and support a move against Detroit before the British could take the initiative. They were relying on information from Indian commissioners that an Indian war was imminent; but the British had yet to strengthen their defenses at Detroit. Among their priorities for a frontier war, Congress made the conquest of Detroit their paramount objective. This was to be "immediately undertaken." Defending the frontiersmen against Indian attacks would not suffice; nor would aggressive campaigns against selected Indian nations solve the problems of that region. To get at the root of the trouble, an expedition had to seize Detroit.

Congress specifically authorized a force of 3,000 men, appointed Patrick Lockhart to assemble the provisions, appropriated more than $932,000, and requested the state of Virginia to furnish up to 2,500 militiamen. A new commandant, Brigadier-General Lachlan McIntosh, was then en route to Fort Pitt to replace General Edward Hand. It was in this context that Colonel Daniel Brodhead and the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment arrived at Fort Pitt in September, 1778.

General McIntosh moved promptly to implement the Congressional policy. On October 1 he took 1,300 troops, including Brodhead's regiment, down the Ohio River to the mouth of the Beaver River where they constructed the first advance base on

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the way to Detroit. They named it Fort McIntosh. Going farther, they erected Fort Laurens on the Tuscarewas River in the Ohio country. Late in November, General McIntosh suspended work on the Detroit campaign trail. In the face of the impending winter, McIntosh returned to his Fort Pitt base. He left Brodhead in charge of Fort McIntosh. General Washington instructed McIntosh to plan a spring offensive into Indian country. There was no doubt about the ultimate objective as Washington advised McIntosh about the route: "I would wish you to have the country well explored between Pittsburg and Detroit by the way of Tuscarewas, and also the water conveyances to that post [Detroit] by the Sciota and other Rivers and the distance of the portage between the heads of those rivers and the waters of the Lake." He advocated batteaus and/or canoes in Ohio which could be carried from the rivers to the Lake.

Colonel Brodhead later ridiculed the McIntosh campaign program. He complained that the forces were unprepared to execute such a hazardous project. Their supplies were scanty. They would have spent their time more profitably in helping the frontier farmers to harvest their corn crop and seed the ground for the following year. Moreover, McIntosh had ignored the Congressional advice of mid-July that it was "too late to prosecute their main object."

In February, 1779, General McIntosh asked to be relieved of his command. General Washington designated Colonel Brodhead as the new commandant of Fort Pitt with full responsibility for directing the campaign against Detroit. Focusing on the Detroit objective, Washington instructed Brodhead to stockpile munitions by May 1, "by which time I hope the other preparations will be in sufficient forwardness to move." The mobilization of manpower was a somewhat different problem. Several bodies of men would have to be coordinated. "The success of the intended expedition does not depend on the progress of one body

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8 Chester H. Sipe, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, 1929), 571.
11 Ibid., 110, Brodhead to Major-General Armstrong, April 16, 1779.
of men, but on the cooperation of several, anyone of which failing in point of time may occasion the failure of the whole.\textsuperscript{12}

Preparations for the campaign did not materialize as rapidly as hoped for. By mid-October Colonel Brodhead was abandoning the project for 1779. The failure to assemble a stockpile of provisions was most discouraging. In addition, a lack of Indian trading goods was a handicap. Brodhead spoke disparagingly about this: "I conceive it to be next to an impossibility to carry on a secret expedition against that place whilst the English have goods to engage the Indians in their interest, and we have nothing but words."\textsuperscript{13} Manpower was grossly inadequate for a campaign against Detroit. Brodhead lamented that he had only five hundred men; yet Congress had originally estimated that at least eighteen hundred would be required to take the British post.\textsuperscript{14}

When Washington advised Brodhead in October, 1779, that he could not yet authorize a movement towards Detroit, he observed that "the state of the force at present with you is not sufficient to authorize the clearest hopes of success and indeed to insure it." Unfortunately, Washington could not make up any of the deficiencies because of critical situations elsewhere. Washington hastened to reconfirm the high priority he attached to the capture of Detroit: "... it is of great importance to reduce it, and I shall willingly attempt it whenever circumstances will justify it." Washington then renewed his instruction to Brodhead to "turn your closest attention to the subject and make such preparations and obtain such necessary information as may be in your power, without exciting much alarm, as may facilitate the work whenever it is undertaken."\textsuperscript{15}

The tasks of securing intelligence about the strength and design of the Detroit post required imagination and entailed risks. Washington specified the information to be sought: "... the nature and extent of the works should be ascertained, whether any and what kind of bomb proofs; what aid can be drawn from

\textsuperscript{12} Writings of Washington, Vol. XIV, 195, Washington to Brodhead, March 5, 1779.
\textsuperscript{13} Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XII, 160, Brodhead to Colonel George Morgan, September 24, 1779.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Louise P. Kellogg, ed., Frontier Retreat on the Upper Ohio, 1779-81 (Madison, 1917), 101, Washington to Brodhead, October 18, 1779.
the country of men, provisions, horses, etc.; what opposition or assistance is to be expected from the Indians and prospects of supplies."  

Colonel Brodhead kept his commander-in-chief informed about the conditions in Detroit according to all available reports, rumors, and estimates. In November, 1779, Brodhead was briefed on the Detroit situation by some Delaware chiefs who were visiting him at Fort Pitt. He understood that the British had completed a new fort that was "very strong." Brodhead told Washington that he "heard" (probably from the Delawares) that the British garrison at Detroit consisted of three hundred regular troops and three hundred militiamen.  

Brodhead guessed that some of the militia would join the Americans as they approached Detroit.  

The Delaware delegation revealed that a group of Wyandots was en route to Fort Pitt. They were supposed to "have better information about Detroit than the Delawares." The British had alienated them by withholding supplies because of a treaty they had made with American colonists. Colonel Brodhead had reasons to believe that the Indian tide between Fort Pitt and Detroit could be turned in his favor. There was increasing Indian dissatisfaction towards the British. He heard that there were 2,000 Indians in the Niagara area in much distress because of British neglect. They would probably collaborate with the Americans. In addition, "Wyandottes, Tawes, Chipewas, Pooteatomies, Cherokees, and Mohicans" reportedly "[had] returned their tomahawks to the commandant at Detroit and told him he was a bad man and they were determined to make peace with the Americans." Brodhead did not seriously doubt that those living in the vicinity of Detroit were under British influence.  

General Washington commended Brodhead for his prompt-
ness, persistence, and care in gathering information about Detroit in the fall of 1779; these facts, he said, would "enable us to judge precisely of its state and force, that we may know how to regulate our measures." Washington begged Brodhead to postpone his requested furlough so that he might concentrate on "procuring information from that quarter." Washington reminded Brodhead that "our eyes are turned towards Detroit."21

Following Washington's encouragement to continue his "inquiries," Colonel Brodhead doubled his efforts to obtain an accurate picture of conditions in Detroit. From a British prisoner, recently escaped from the Wyandotte Indians, he learned that the Detroit fort had "two bomb-proofs of wood"; that its walls were "very high, fifteen feet thick and made of fascines & clay"; and the barracks were sunken so that their roofs were not visible from outside the fort's walls, albeit the fort was located on a "fine commanding piece of ground with a gentle descent each way." A ditch twenty feet wide surrounded the fort. This prisoner stated that there were 450 British regular soldiers at Detroit and 1,800 at Niagara. The latter fact suggested to Brodhead that "it is not improbable that the enemy may pay us a visit down the Allegheny River next spring."22

Colonel Brodhead turned to his Moravian missionary friends in the Ohio Indian country for help in learning more about the set-up at Detroit. "I am very anxious to know the strength of the garrison at Detroit," he told the Reverend David Zeisberger. He wanted to ascertain "the strength of the works, . . . particularly whether there are any bomb proofs and of what construction, whether they are arched with Brick or stone, or wood, and whether the Bombproof are only for the safety of the Enemy's provision and military stores or whether they are for the security of the men." Brodhead stated that he would be willing to pay a spy "eighty bucks or one hundred if eighty is insufficient." He requested Zeisberger to select a reliable spy for this mission. Brodhead confided that he intended to dispatch a spy to Niagara "to gain similar intelligence."23
Two weeks later Colonel Brodhead wrote to Zeisberger that a mutual Indian friend—a Christian convert—named “Joshua” was willing to attempt an espionage mission against Detroit. Brodhead asked Zeisberger to interview Joshua and make a final decision about his candidacy for the task. In any case, Brodhead hoped that by the time this letter reached Zeisberger a spy (if not Joshua, then someone else) would already have been sent on his way—someone, he emphasized, who “can be relied on for his integrity as well as his ingenuity.” Brodhead reiterated his promise of “a very suitable reward for his trouble.”

When spring arrived in 1780, Colonel Brodhead learned that Joshua had not carried out his mission even though Zeisberger had selected him. The “excessive cold weather” of the winter was the reason. Brodhead did not renew his espionage proposal. However, he invited Zeisberger to “afford me every interesting intelligence.” Meanwhile, Brodhead explained to Washington how he was working with “the Moravian missionaries who have it in their power to send very intelligent Indians of their congregation to Detroit.” In fact, Brodhead confessed that, having “tried every method to obtain the necessary intelligence from Detroit,” he found the Moravian missionaries to be his “principal reliance.”

In the spring of 1780 Colonel Brodhead was receiving conflicting and disparate information about conditions at Detroit. Estimates of the armed forces there ranged from 200 to more than 400. In view of this confusion, Brodhead determined to open other channels of information. He called upon Captain Samuel Brady to lead a scouting party of five white men and two Delaware Indians; they were to make their way to the vicinity of Sandusky where they might capture a British prisoner. As an alternative, Brodhead offered some Delaware warriors “fifty hard dollars worth of goods for one British soldier. . . . Should an intelligent one be brought in I intend to offer him

24 Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XII, 196, Brodhead to Zeisberger, December 12, 1779.
25 Ibid., 221, Brodhead to Zeisberger, April 15, 1780.
26 Ibid., 222.
some indulgence upon his giving me the most perfect intelligence in his power.”

A month later, Captain Brady’s party returned from their mission to Sandusky. They had captured two squaws, one of whom escaped after six days on the march. The effort yielded no new information about Detroit. Nevertheless, Brodhead felt that Brady’s “perseverance, zeal & good conduct” had earned the scout a promotion; he so recommended this to Washington, noting that the sheer heroism of going six days without provisions and bringing his party safely home was worthy of honor.

Colonel Brodhead instructed Colonel Geoffrey Lanctot, then travelling in the Delaware country around Cooshocking to “endeavor to excite them [Delawares] to remain steady in their alliance with us and encourage their warriors to bring in British prisoners by which I may gain proper intelligence of the strength of Detroit.”

Planning strategy and assembling supplies for an expedition against Detroit had to go on simultaneously with the espionage activities. The Indian tribes between Fort Pitt and Detroit were a factor to be dealt with. Either win them as friends or defeat them as enemies. The keys to winning Indian friends were trade and gifts. Brodhead lamented the shortage of goods by which he might outbid the British for Indian friendship. He reportedly appealed to the Board of War, General Washington, and anyone who would listen, for Indian trade goods and gifts.

For those Indians whose friendships Brodhead did not expect to win, military power would deter their hostilities. This would facilitate the advance on Detroit. In the summer of 1779, while General John Sullivan was marching from Easton to the Wyoming Valley against the Iroquois, Colonel Brodhead was striking at their Seneca associates in northwestern Pennsylvania. Both the British and the Indians suspected—erroneously—that Sullivan and Brodhead were closely coordinating their campaigns; and might be headed for Fort Niagara or even Detroit. In truth, Brodhead had this in mind on the eve of his campaign into Seneca country. He proposed to Washington: “Should
I succeed against the Senecas I beg your Excellency will do me the honor to permit me to reduce Detroit and its dependencies." In view of the widespread destruction he inflicted on that area, the Indian resistance appeared to have been broken. For this month-long punitive expedition, Daniel Brodhead received resolutions of thanks from Congress and letters of commendation from General Washington and many other officials. Newspapers publicized the feat prominently.

It was generally agreed that the late summer harvest time was the most propitious occasion for an effective attack on hostile Indian communities. More debatable was the choice of season to launch the campaign against Detroit. To Brodhead, the hazards of winter practically cancelled out any chances of success. However, General Washington looked at it differently. He believed that during the winter "when the lake is frozen... appears to me to be the only season when an effectual blow can be struck...." So confident of this was Washington, that he alerted the Board of War to the possibility that "Colo. Brodhead may be enabled to undertake something against Detroit in the course of the winter." After learning Washington's viewpoint, Brodhead revised his earlier position on winter campaigning: "Winter campaigns usually result in great losses of horses and cattle," he said, "but the British garrison and shipping will be a full compensation for every loss of that kind & indeed every difficulty we can meet in obtaining it...."

Colonel Daniel Brodhead lent himself to General Washington's leadership in planning a campaign against Detroit. He was ready to assemble provisions, Indian goods, and munitions for a winter expedition. Washington kept a close measure of

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31 Ibid., 147, Brodhead to Washington, July 31, 1779.
33 Writings of Washington, Vol. XVI, 482, Washington to Board of War, October 18, 1779.
34 Kellogg, Frontier Retreat, 112, Brodhead to Washington, November 10, 1779.
the preparedness at the Fort Pitt base by requesting from Brodhead a report on "what military stores and artillery will be necessary . . . and whether they could be supplied at Fort Pitt or what part of them." To save time, Washington instructed Brodhead to apply to the Board of War directly for his supplies. He need not first obtain Washington's "concurrence." Whereupon, Brodhead immediately dispatched to the Board of War an order for "some supplies and trinkets for the Indians." These, he explained, "will be essentially necessary to engage the Indians to aid us." An unconfirmed report came to Colonel Brodhead in the late autumn of 1779 announcing a second, and seemingly competitive, project against Detroit. The State of Virginia was supposed to have reinforced an expedition under the leadership of George Rogers Clark—the hero of Kaskaskia and Vincennes—and started it on the way to Detroit. Clark's activities in the West were of a feature of Virginia's own war on the frontier. Clark had captured Detroit's Henry Hamilton on the banks of the Wabash and had taken him a prisoner to Williamsburg. Virginia was a sovereign state fighting for her charter rights that encompassed the vast territory north of the Ohio River.

Colonel Brodhead's initial reaction to Virginia's independent focus on Detroit was one of resentment. The capture of Detroit was his top priority assignment from the United States Congress and the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces. General Washington, a Virginian, and accustomed to the multiple sovereignties waging the war, tried to put the Virginia project into perspective for Brodhead. "Colonel Clark is not an officer in the Continental Line, nor does he act under my instructions. He is in the service of the state of Virginia. I make no doubt, however, that the instructions he received are calculated to promote the general good, and from the character he seems justly to have acquired, I should suppose he will act with caution and prudence, and do nothing that will not be promotive of it."

38 Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XII, 183, Brodhead to Timothy Pickering, November 11, 1779.
39 Ibid., 177, Brodhead to Washington, October 26, 1779.
It was February, 1780, before Governor Thomas Jefferson of Virginia officially notified General Washington of the proposed George Rogers Clark campaign. Jefferson explained that while he did not desire to promote a rival expedition, he was not hopeful of combining the Clark and the Brodhead forces into a joint expedition. "It may be necessary, perhaps, to inform you that these two officers cannot act together, which excludes the hopes of ensuring success by a joint expedition." Jefferson was confident of Clark's capability; he did not know much about Brodhead. Jefferson conceded that "if you [Washington] should think Brodhead's undertaking it most likely to produce success, that you will [be] so kind as to intimate to us to divert Clarke to the other object which is also important to this state."41 Jefferson admitted that he was uncertain about the availability of resources for the Clark expedition.

In reply to Governor Jefferson, General Washington practically yielded Virginia a free hand in striking at Detroit. He sadly regretted that hitherto inadequate forces and supplies prevented him from authorizing an expedition; and he had no hope of doing so in the foreseeable future. Under these circumstances he expected that the initiative and the judgment on future moves would rest with Jefferson. In a postscript, Washington intimated that under certain conditions he might be able to contribute a measure of support to the Clark forces—"by directing a movement of part of the troops at Fort Pitt by way of diversion."42 This could not, however, be interpreted as a cancellation of Brodhead's separate assignment.

Colonel Brodhead continued to regard the conquest of Detroit to be his ultimate objective. Colonel George Rogers Clark made an overture of good-will and cooperation with Brodhead in whatever military campaign he should undertake. Brodhead was appreciative.43 He explained that he could not identify his next moves until he received further instructions from General Washington. Brodhead observed that much would depend on

"our local situation and circumstances." In a spirit of military fraternity, Brodhead acknowledged to Clark that the West was an area for joint conquest. "I think it is probable that before next winter (i.e., 1780-1781) I shall have the pleasure of taking you by the hand somewhere upon the waters of Lake Erie." Brodhead, assuming that he would lead any joint expedition, reassured Washington in April, 1780, that he would not be averse to "a junction of Col. Clarke's troops with mine."

During the autumn of 1780 Colonel Brodhead's prospects for leading an expedition to capture Detroit faded beyond recovery. Washington's preoccupation with more urgent military strategy and Governor Jefferson's impatience with the frontier stalemate combined to put the Detroit lure beyond Colonel Brodhead's grasp. Over a period of three months Washington practically transferred the responsibility for reducing Detroit from Brodhead to Clark. Washington was quite candid about it. He explained to Brodhead: "The smallness of your force will not admit of an expedition of any consequence, had you magazines; you must therefore of necessity confine yourself to partizan strokes, which I wish to see encouraged. The State of Virginia are very desirous of an expedition against Detroit and would make great exertions to carry it into execution."

General Washington gave Governor Jefferson all the encouragement he could with the limited resources and precarious circumstances at Fort Pitt. Washington frankly warned Jefferson that the stores at Fort Pitt "fall very far short of your Excellency's requisition." He stated that he was instructing Brodhead to share his supplies proportionately with the Clark expedition. "I do not hesitate in giving directions to the commandant at Fort Pitt to deliver to Colo. Clarke the articles which you request, or so many of them as he may be able to furnish" and to "form such a detachment of Continental troops as he can safely spare and put them under the command of Colo. Clarke." In deferring to Virginia's initiative, Washington did not cease to emphasize the importance of taking Detroit.

Ibid., 216, Brodhead to Clark, April 4, 1780.
Ibid., 223, Brodhead to Washington, April 24, 1780.
Writings of Washington, Vol. XX, 176, Washington to Brodhead, October 13, 1780.
"I have ever been of opinion," he told Jefferson, "that the re-
duction of the post of Detroit would be the only certain means
of giving peace and security to the whole Western Frontier,
and I have constantly kept my eye upon that object."48

Washington's instruction to Colonel Brodhead simply elab-
orated on what he said to Governor Jefferson. After enumerating
all of the equipment Jefferson called for, Washington admonished
Brodhead to "deliver to him [Clark] on his order at such time
as he shall require them, all, or as many of the foregoing articles
as you have it in your power to furnish." In addition, he was
to release a "company of artillery to be ready to move when
Colo. Clarke shall call for them." Knowing that Brodhead's man-
power was weak, Washington directed him "to form such a
detachment as you can safely spare from your own and Gib-
son's regiment and put it under the command of Colo. Clarke
also."49 Obviously, Washington desired to achieve the Detroit
objective, even if it had to be accomplished by non-Continental
Army officers. Meanwhile, Brodhead had an important function
in protecting the frontiersmen. He must not be deprived of the
men and resources to do that.

George Rogers Clark arrived in Pennsylvania on March 1, 1781,
to recruit men for his expeditionary forces against Detroit. He
set up his headquarters at the home of Colonel William Craw-
ford (present-day Connelsville). His efforts to sign up 2,000
men were not easy.50 Many Pennsylvanians publicly opposed
this recruiting activity by Virginia officials. A riot followed at-
ttempts to draft men in what Virginia called Monongalia
County. The militia of the western Virginia counties of Berkeley,
Hampshire, and Greenbrier refused to join Clark.51

Sympathetic Westmoreland County militia officers volunteered
to deliver a quota of 300 men from their county for Clarke's
forces. They would be raised by "volunteers or draft" and would
be commanded by Colonel Archibald Lochry. This goal was
much too high. The frontiersmen did not share Clark's enthu-
siasm for attacking distant Detroit. Lochry was able to register

49 Writings of Washington, Vol. XXI, 33-35, Washington to Brodhead,
December 29, 1780. Italics mine.
50 Sipe, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania, 636.
51 Ibid.
only 83 men.\textsuperscript{52} Joseph Reed, president of Pennsylvania's Executive Council, praised Colonel Lochry and "the good people of the county" for attempting to mobilize aid for the Clark campaign against Detroit.\textsuperscript{53} Two months earlier, Reed had warmly endorsed the Clark project. "We are very sensible of its importance to this state [Pennsylvania] as well as Virginia, and there is no gentleman in whose abilities and good conduct we have more confidence on such an occasion." Reed added that "it will give us great satisfaction if the inhabitants of this state cheerfully concur in it."\textsuperscript{54}

They did not "cheerfully concur in it" beyond the mountains. The Clark and Lochry recruitment experiences witness to that. Moreover, Colonel Brodhead could not support Clark's activity with undivided enthusiasm. He had his own problems of raising and maintaining armed forces. His garrisons were always under-manned even for the more limited tasks of defense. Rarely did he dare to launch an offensive against hostile Indians.

Early in 1781 Colonel Brodhead received fragments of information about British-Indian preparations for "a descent on our posts early in the spring."\textsuperscript{55} He shared this information and his concern with General Washington. Brodhead also notified the Board of War about the rising menace on the frontier. He begged for supplies and money. In fact, he sent a personal emissary to the Board of War to hurry back with the money so that he could expedite his defense preparations. Brodhead said that he was anxious to hold the present posts for protecting the settlers from "the merciless savages and their abettors." He would use the money to purchase "a considerable number of cattle & swine which might be purchased cheap for goods or specie, but without those they will be drove to market at Detroit."\textsuperscript{56}

Recruiting difficulties delayed the departure of Clarke's expedition for three months. On August 8, 1781, Colonel George Rogers Clark and his forces shoved off from their base at

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 637.
\textsuperscript{53} Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. IX, 307, President Reed to Colonel Archibald Lochry, July 23, 1781.
\textsuperscript{54} James, \textit{Life of George R. Clark}, 240.
\textsuperscript{55} Kellogg, \textit{Frontier Retreat}, 322, Brodhead to Major William Taylor, January 22, 1781.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 325.
Wheeling, floating down the Ohio River. They were to move up the Wabash River and march overland to Detroit. He had not gotten the manpower and the supplies from Brodhead that he had hoped for; and even Colonel Lochry's Westmoreland County volunteers almost disappointed him. They arrived at Wheeling a few hours after Clark left.\(^7\) They boarded boats in pursuit of the main flotilla. This was ill-fated. About twenty miles below Cincinnati a band of Indians, led by Joseph Brant and Alexander McKee, attacked the Lochry group, killing many, including Lochry, and taking the rest prisoners.\(^8\) After that tragedy, George Rogers Clark abandoned the campaign for Detroit.

While the Clark expedition was disintegrating on the waters of the Ohio River, Colonel Daniel Brodhead's command at Fort Pitt was approaching an abrupt end. On September 6, 1781, General Washington wrote Brodhead a blistering letter at the heart of which was this order: "I have now to request in positive terms that you do immediately resign your command to Col. Gibson."\(^59\) Since early spring there had been rumblings of discontent among Brodhead's subordinates at Fort Pitt. In April the auditor of that military district circulated a petition for Brodhead's removal based on a wide range of complaints, including misfeasance and malfeasance of his office. The petition was transmitted to Congress by President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania. Congress, in turn, directed Washington to investigate the Fort Pitt situation. The president of Congress suggested that Brodhead's treatment of George Rogers Clark should be added to the formal complaints. He reported that "it hath been suggested by gentlemen of character that Colonel Brodhead for some reasons is disposed to obstruct rather than aid Colonel Clarke in his present expedition to the westward and prevent his proceeding."\(^60\) Washington apparently did not take this seriously; for it was not introduced as a charge in the court-martial that followed.

\(^7\) Caruso, The Great Lakes Frontier, 80.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^59\) Writings of Washington, Vol. XXIII, 90. Washington to Brodhead, September 6, 1781.
It seemed to Washington that only through an official investigation of the facts, terminating in a court-martial could the truth be known and the command stabilized. Accordingly, Washington wrote to Brodhead on May 5, politely recommending that Brodhead resign his command until the course of justice had been pursued. Because Brodhead stayed at Fort Pitt throughout the summer, Washington bluntly ordered him to resign in September. The trial got underway early in 1782. Meanwhile, Brodhead was reassigned to the First Pennsylvania Regiment with a promotion to a brevet position of Brigadier-General. The court-martial, while ignoring the issue of Brodhead’s lack of support for the Clark expedition, had the effect of removing Colonel Brodhead from whatever slim chance he may have had for conducting his own campaign against Detroit.

The war was rapidly dissipating. Lord Cornwallis had already surrendered at Yorktown. A peace conference was in session in Paris. There was no need to fight for Detroit; for the peace commissioners were shortly to argue the British into abandoning the Detroit post without a blow.

Colonel Daniel Brodhead had spent three years on the frontier, bearing the burden of the Continental Congress directive to "reduce Detroit." When he went to Fort Pitt in 1778, Brodhead did not know that the base could be taken without a fight. Congress and the commander-in-chief were committed to a military campaign. Brodhead was to be their agent of action. On a wilderness landscape where there were few British—armed or unarmed—the Detroit post was a glittering lure to a patriotic Colonel who had self-confidence in his military leadership and who was ambitious to render a significant blow for American independence. Brodhead was persistent, patient, and hopeful that he might carry out his mission. His sources of support were always too little and too late for him to strike at Detroit; nor did these resources afford him a substantial measure of aid to Colonel George Clark who was working under similarly limited circumstances. Most of Colonel Brodhead’s financial, manpower, and supply problems were a product of the exigencies of war elsewhere in America. Neither his personality traits nor his

attitudes towards the Clark enterprise had anything to do with Clark's failure; nor with his own failure. Through three frustrating years Brodhead exhibited a quality of responsibility that sustained his superiors' confidence in his command. He retained the Fort Pitt post longer than any other commandant during the war. Colonel Brodhead's morale was strengthened in this unrewarding appointment by the lure of Detroit and a devotion to the Revolution.