

## *Historic Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*

**T**HIS is a preliminary report. The writer is in the midst of a study of Pennsylvania's Indian trails, undertaken at the request of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and under the special direction of S. K. Stevens, State Historian. The examination of source materials, which are far more abundant than was supposed when the project was initiated, has not yet been completed. Much remains to be done in the field and in libraries and manuscript repositories such as The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, the Archives of the Moravian Church, and in the Land Office at Harrisburg, although in each of these places the writer has already spent much time.

In research work of any magnitude, it is well at times to pause to get one's bearings—to see what has been accomplished, what still needs to be done, and what methods have proved themselves best to carry the work through to completion. To the writer himself, this report has already served its purpose. To others who may be interested, it is hoped that its materials, incomplete though they are, may help to a better understanding of Indian trails and the events in Pennsylvania's history that depended upon them.

It is impossible here to name the hundreds of persons in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina who have generously assisted me in this work. It is a great fraternity, this Brotherhood of Indian Trail Followers. To them all I say, "Thank you. May your moccasins always be dry, and your path free of logs and briars."

### I

The Indians of Pennsylvania have left no monuments in stone like the palaces and temples which make the ruined cities of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas amazing even in the present age of mechanical

wonders. Our Indians engineered no mountain-piercing aqueducts. They built no roads like the wide stone highways of the Incas, which spanned gorges with suspension bridges, traversed high mountains, and cut galleries out of solid rock to fend off avalanches. An authoritarian government could do things like that on a gigantic scale, because it could commandeer the labor of great masses of people. But such autocratic methods were unthinkable to the Indians in this part of the Western World.

The Lenni Lenape or Delawares, who were the most populous nation of Indians in Penn's Woods, were a fiercely independent people. They had little national cohesion and no conception at all of labor organized on the scale necessary for the construction of public works of any size. Their society was "atomistic,"<sup>1</sup> broken up into many small, autonomous communities, each family possessing its own fields and its own hunting territory—this latter being a tract of land, it might be, extending as far back into the woods "as one walks in a day and a half." The Five Nations of New York, who were recognized to have sovereignty in Pennsylvania, possessed greater political unity and had leaders of high caliber, but their numbers were too small (about fifteen thousand men, women, and children comprising their total population even in the days of their most brilliant political and military successes<sup>2</sup>) to permit anything like the material achievements of the Mayas, Incas, or Aztecs. The genius of the Five Nations was shown in their political concepts. Of their Confederacy, John Collier writes, "I think no institutional achievement of mankind

<sup>1</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Woman, Land, and Society: Three Aspects of Aboriginal Delaware Life," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, XVII (1947), 1-35.

<sup>2</sup> George T. Hunt, in *The Wars of the Iroquois* (Madison, Wis., 1940), 6, puts their number at twelve thousand: "Yet after only thirty years of intermittent warfare the Iroquois proper [the Five Nations as distinct from their language kin, the Hurons, Susquehannocks, etc.], probably the least numerous of the tribes, never numbering more than twelve thousand, were in sole possession of the region east of Lake Michigan. . . ." See Frederick W. Hodge's *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (Washington, D. C., 1907), 619: "About the middle of the 17th century the Five Nations reached their highest point, and in 1677 and 1685 they were estimated at about 16,000. In 1689 they were estimated at about 12,850, but in the next 9 years they lost more than half by war and desertions to Canada. The most accurate estimates for the 18th century gave the Six Nations and their colonies about 10,000 or 12,000 souls. In 1774 they were estimated at 10,000 to 12,500." See also William N. Fenton, "Problems Arising from the Historic Northeastern Position of the Iroquois," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, Vol. 100, p. 231: "Mooney (1928) credits the whole Iroquois with only 5,500 in 1600, which Kroeber (1939, p. 140) accepts, but considers too low (p. 133)."

exceeds it in either wisdom or intelligence.”<sup>3</sup> Their so-called “empire” was no tyranny. They exercised authority over their wards, such as the Delawares of Pennsylvania, with tolerance and restraint. While they denied their “nephews” the right to declare war, they allowed them home rule and full freedom to enjoy their own language, religion, and whatever else contributed to their distinctive way of life. The Five Nations had no thought of drafting the manpower of subject peoples to produce monuments for future ages to wonder at. There were, in consequence, no roads in the Five Nations empire comparable to those which bound Cuzco, the Inca capital, with its outlying provinces.

Yet it is unfair to our Indians, and false to history, to belittle their achievements as road makers. To compare their highways with those of the Incas, whose population was measured in millions, or with our modern superhighways, is pointless. What ten million, or one hundred and fifty million, Iroquois might have done under the leadership of Deganawidah and Hiawatha (founders of the Five Nations Confederacy) might be an interesting matter for speculation. It would be more profitable to compare Pennsylvania’s Indian highways of three or four hundred years ago with European roads of the same time. The differences will not be found excessive. If we examine the roads of a small, mountainous, but civilized country like Scotland in the time of John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots, we may be surprised at what we find. In Queen Mary’s Scotland there were no carriages and very few carts. Most of the roads were no more than cattle paths. Travel was on horseback, in horse-litters, or on foot. If we consider the fact that the horse was not native to America and that in Pennsylvania there were neither draught animals (the llama, beast of burden for the Incas of Peru, was not found so far north as this) nor wheeled vehicles, we shall have to grant that our Indians’ footpaths were as well adapted to the needs of the people they served as were the roads Mary Queen of Scots traveled when she made a “progress.”

Our Indian highways were good of their kind, good for the uses to which they were put and for which they were intended: the transport of moccasined men and women. That they were well located is attested by the fact that, even in the broken, mountainous country of this state, where the road problem is complicated as much by the

<sup>3</sup> *The Indians of the Americas* (New York, 1947), 199.

presence of innumerable springs as it is by the hills that induce them, the Indians' paths served the white man's needs for a hundred or more years after his arrival—and, indeed, with some adaptations, are still serving them.

It should be remembered that the white man, on his arrival in the Americas, did not reject the Indian's culture, but in large measure adopted it: adopted his agriculture (today it is estimated that one half of all the world's agricultural products are from plants first domesticated by the Indians—what would we do without our corn and potatoes?); adopted his tobacco, cocoa, quinine; his hammock, canoe, toboggan, lacrosse; his military science, his democratic outlook, and his highways.

The evolution of the Indian trail into the bridle path, wagon road, and motor highway has been a slow, continuous process. The courses of most Indian paths were so well chosen that, until the invention of the internal combustion engine, there was little occasion for any but minor changes in their routes. In fact, we are discovering today, through the discomfort occasioned by road surfaces frost-broken during the months of February and March—in certain places, that is, where our highways have forsaken the Indian's ridge routes to serve mill towns in valleys whose slopes are gushing with springs—how good a road engineer the Indian was. Motorists using the Horseshoe Pike know what South Mountain springs, freezing in January and thawing in March, do to the subgrade. Undoubtedly, the Horseshoe Pike was a convenience to settlers in the Swatara region behind Paxtang, but, from the viewpoint of the highway engineer, its location was not to be compared with that of Peter Bezaillon's Indian route from Downingtown to Bainbridge, a road that was dry, level, and direct.

Those words, *dry*, *level*, and *direct*, give the key to the principles of Indian trail location. Paths were dry, for the most part, because they followed river terraces above flood level, or—especially in the soft-coal country—because they followed well-drained ridges. It must be understood, however, that the ridges used were not mountain spines like the Kittatinny or Blue Mountain along whose summit the Appalachian Trail (no Indian path, but a white man's sportsway) pursues its course through Pennsylvania, but modest elevations in the middle of wide valleys overlooked by mountain ranges on either

side. Such valley-ridge paths are often followed today by modern roads: as, for instance, by Pennsylvania Highway No. 25 in the Lykens Valley between Hegins and Sacramento, flanked by the Mahantango and the Broad Mountain; by Pennsylvania 23 in the Conestoga Valley between Churchtown and Morgantown, flanked by the Welsh Mountains and Turkey Hill; and in Lebanon Valley by U.S. 422 (the Benjamin Franklin Highway) between Lebanon and Hummelstown, and by the Chambers Hill Road between Hummelstown and Harrisburg. In western Pennsylvania, where much of the country is cut up into a jumble of hills and glens without discernible pattern, the Indian paths followed the highest ridges because they alone offered a continuously level course. Such were the Big Level in McKean and Elk counties, and the ridge followed by the Great Warriors Path between Brant Summit and Nettle Hill in Greene County.

It was not, of course, everywhere possible for the traveler to keep his moccasins dry. Rivers and creeks had to be forded. Here and there were marshy places, as at Edmund's Swamp on the Raystown Path in Somerset County and on the Venango Path in Crawford and Erie counties. In springtime, with the frost coming out of the ground, the trails were all soggy. If horses were used on them, the mud was likely to be so churned up that foot travel was next to impossible—a condition not unfamiliar to those who remember what Pennsylvania's side roads were like before Pinchot "brought the farmer out of the dirt." Conrad Weiser warned against travel in the spring before the ground was dry and the rivulets were shallow.<sup>4</sup>

Here a word of caution may not be out of place. Old journals refer so frequently to swamps that we may be tempted to picture Pennsylvania in its primitive state as a low, spongy desert. Nothing could be farther from the fact. The "Great Swamp" to which John Ettwein refers in his 1772 journal,<sup>5</sup> comprised the greater part of Sullivan County's *mountains*. The English word *swamp*, as used by our travelers, like the German word *Schwamm*, did not necessarily indi-

<sup>4</sup> Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, Mar. 15, 1754, Correspondence of Conrad Weiser, I, 44, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania; see also Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia, 1945), 77.

<sup>5</sup> "Rev. John Ettwein's Notes of Travel from the North Branch of the Susquehanna to the Beaver River, Pennsylvania, 1772," ed. by John W. Jordan, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (PMHB), XXV (1901), 208-209.

cate the waste of stagnant waters which the modern word so readily calls to mind. The old swamps, so-called, were often lands fat and productive like "the very rich Bottoms commonly called Swamps" mentioned in Hutchins' journal of 1760.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes they were mountain lands—on the Pocono plateau, for example—where the ground was saturated by subsurface water, and so heavily overgrown with laurel, hemlock, and white pine that it was the blackness above rather than the moisture below that troubled the traveler. Such places were often called the "Shades of Death." We find the name covering a tract twenty miles long on the Wyoming Path in Monroe County and another on the Frankstown Path at Shade Gap. Edmund's Swamp was at the headwaters of what is still called Shade Creek.

But there were some swamps wet enough to satisfy any modern connotations of the word. Christian Dencke complained of "low, wet, and swampy places" where the path ran along old fallen trees like bridges.<sup>7</sup> On the Venango Path in 1800, John Heckewelder and his companions got into trouble in the beech swamp between Cussewago (Meadville) and Presqu'Isle, finding the bog deep and the roots of the trees spread on the ground in such a way as to trap their horses' feet.<sup>8</sup>

How the Indian paths through our mountains managed so well to "keep their level," in mountaineering jargon, is an engineering curiosity. They seized on every advantage offered by the terrain. Some mountains, of course, could not be avoided and had to be climbed, particularly by the east-west trails. Others the trails circled around, finding the long ranges not everywhere "endless," as the Indians called them. Still others went through on the stream level, where river or creek had made a gap, as at the Double Eagle (Klingerstown) in Schuylkill County, where Deep Creek cuts through the Mahantango Mountain. The Juniata, Susquehanna, and

<sup>6</sup> "Western Pennsylvania in 1760. A Journal of a March from Fort Pitt . . . to Presqu'Isle . . . of Capt. Thomas Hutchins," *PMHB*, II (1878), 152.

<sup>7</sup> See Dencke's report on the new mission to the Chippewas (September, 1802), 3, Archives of the Moravian Church (AMC), Bethlehem, Pa.

<sup>8</sup> John Heckewelder's manuscript journal, "Eine Reise von Pittsburg nach Le Beauff jenseit der French Creek . . .," Nov. 5, 1800, AMC. A microfilm copy of this journal is in the library of the American Philosophical Society (APS), Philadelphia.

Delaware rivers in eastern Pennsylvania; Pine Creek, Sinnemahoning Creek, and the Allegheny River in western Pennsylvania—these provided gateways through the Allegheny Mountains.

In addition to these easy solutions of the road problems which the hills presented, there were others less obvious. The paths were routed so as to make the best use of hidden breaks in apparently "endless" ridges—not clear-cut gaps such as those through which the streams poured at right angles to the mountain axis, but places where the high walls presented the appearance of having been bent until they buckled and broke, leaving a looped passageway scarcely noticed by the traveler until he was actually in it. Such is Cowan Gap, between Fort Loudon and Burnt Cabins, where the formidable Tuscarora Mountain, elsewhere impervious in that region, yielded a crooked corridor to the Indian path. In contrast to this is the route of the Lincoln Highway, which climbs from Fort Loudon over the very summit of Tuscarora Mountain to reach McConnellsburg in the Great Cove, using grades which, until recently, were a steaming test of automobile endurance.

The Tulpehocken Path, between Shamokin (Sunbury) and Weiser's at what is now Womelsdorf, was confronted by no less than eight mountain ridges, but it climbed only four of them; and of these only the Kittatinny (or Blue Mountain) and the Broad Mountain presented any difficulties, if we except one short, steep pitch on the north side of Shamokin Hill. Three ranges it got the best of by following river or creek valleys which opened a way through, and the other two it ascended by grades so easy as to be almost unnoticed.

Some war paths climbed boldly to achieve surprise or shake off pursuit. Logan's Path, from the West Branch of the Susquehanna near Lock Haven to Kishacoquillas (Lewistown) on the Juniata, is famous for the mountains it climbs, especially the Nittany and Seven Mile Mountain. This latter, now more picturesquely but erroneously called the Seven Mountains, was once a formidable obstacle to the traveler. The Rev. Philip Fithian was appalled, and at the same time delighted, by the sight of the vast rocks which he had to surmount: "On the Top of this—O Another!—Another, & still higher!" He reveled in "the rough romantic Prospect" from the summit, where "the highest Tops of very Tall Trees are, apparently, two or three

hundred Feet below us, & within Gunshot of us. I was indeed afraid my Horse would miss a Step, (which would be of more Consequence than miswalking a Minuet)."<sup>9</sup>

Some of the paths, like the Frankstown Path west of McAllister's Gap, turned on themselves to avoid unduly steep and rocky climbs. The surprising thing, however, is that most paths managed to keep so nearly direct a course. They were actually less winding, and therefore shorter, than the newer roads built by white men. The Indians' through-routes kept an eye on ultimate objectives and went as straight as topography would allow—for example, from Harris's Ferry to the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh), or from Muncy to Towanda. The white man's roads, on the other hand, starting out with the same objectives, turned aside to avoid farms or to pick up traffic in small towns in the valleys. To go from Muncy on the West Branch of the Susquehanna to Towanda on the North Branch by modern roads is eight or nine miles longer than by the old Indian path. The routing of the Pennsylvania Turnpike is, in this respect, a return to the Indian's conception of highway location: keep an eye on the distant terminus, and allow local feeders to take care of the side traffic. To go from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh today by the Pennsylvania Turnpike is about as short as it was to go by the Raystown Path two hundred years ago. That the modern road is no shorter than the trail, despite the advantage achieved by modern engineering in tunneling the mountains, is largely due to the fact that, while the Indian was not afraid of making an occasional sharp ascent in order to keep his course true, the turnpike is graded for high-g geared machines that must do their sixty or seventy miles an hour without interruption, to which end it makes a deep swing south through the Glades of Somerset County, sacrificing distance for speed.

The most remarkable thing of all about Pennsylvania's Indian paths was the complexity of the system they comprised and its adaptability to changing seasons and conditions of travel. Whether we view the state as a whole, or a small district like the neighborhood of the Cornplanter Tract in Warren County, we find the same convenient variety of paths.

<sup>9</sup> *Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775-1776, Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York*, ed. by Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Leonidas Dodson (Princeton, N. J., 1934), 70 (Aug. 8, 1775).

Replying to a request for information concerning the Indian path from Conewango (Warren) to Jenuchshadego (Cornplanter's Town), Merle H. Deardorff of Warren recently wrote: "Surely it can come as no surprise to you that I don't believe in this business of 'the Indian trail.' Maybe in some situations and some parts; but certainly not up here, generally. I know of seven early ways Indians used to get overland between the River about Cornplanter and the River-Creek about Warren. Hatch Run was one. . . . A path went up Indian Hollow. There were probably dozens of paths."<sup>10</sup>

The best way to grasp the complexity of the system is to consider some of the problems that confronted early travelers when choosing their routes. The first is a hypothetical case. Let us suppose ourselves to be travelers setting out from the Indian town of Shamokin at the Forks of the Susquehanna. We are going to Tioga (Athens) on the North Branch, gateway to Onondaga and the Five Nations country. We have a choice of three main trails: the Wyoming Path, the Towanda Path, and the Sheshequin Path. Perhaps we should add a fourth, the Wyalusing Path, but since this, on the testimony of John Ettwein, involved thirty-six crossings of Muncy Creek, it could not be recommended to travelers except in the warmer summer months.

The Wyoming or Great Warriors Path was in some ways the best of the three. It ran up the north bank of the Susquehanna to Wyoming, the valley now occupied by Wilkes-Barre, Kingston, and their adjacent towns. From there it proceeded to the mouth of the Lackawanna, where it crossed the river. Thence the path, after passing under Campbell's Ledge, followed the river fairly closely most of the way, past Tunkhannock (that is, if we kept the river path; there was an inland path as well), Wyalusing, and Towanda to Tioga. Along this route there were no high mountains to climb. If the traveler were in need of provisions or desired companionship, this was certainly the way for him to go. He would pass many settlements, a succession of Delaware, Shawnee, Mahican, and Nanticoke villages, besides a good scattering of individual Indian holdings—fields and cabins. Food and shelter were everywhere procurable. It was, however, a leisurely route, being many miles longer than either of the other two. Perhaps that is why Conrad Weiser, on his ambassadorial journeys to Onondaga, the Iroquois capital, did not go this way. Perhaps, also,

<sup>10</sup> Merle H. Deardorff to author, Jan. 25, 1952.

it was the certainty of company that put him off. He may not have desired to spend time "sharing his message" with the chiefs of every village, as etiquette would have prescribed.

Another way to Tioga was up the West Branch of the Susquehanna as far as Muncy, and from there by the Towanda Path over Allegheny Mountain to Hillsgrove, up Elk Creek, and over the Burnet Hills to Powell, Monroe, Towanda and Tioga. It was by far the shortest path. In the days when the Susquehannocks flourished, it was probably used by runners between their citadels at Muncy and Tioga. Why Conrad Weiser never used it is a question. Perhaps because of the hills. Perhaps because of the dangerous ford of Loyalsock Creek at Hillsgrove, where, some years afterwards, Baron Charles Boulogne, land agent of the Asylum colony, was drowned.<sup>11</sup> At Otstonwakin (Madame Montour's Town) in Weiser's day, one could count on finding a canoe and an easy crossing of Loyalsock Creek.

The Sheshequin Path was the one Conrad Weiser always took. Avoiding the low ground around Williamsport, the Sheshequin Path ran northwest from Montoursville to a point on Lycoming Creek just below what is now Hepburnville. It followed that creek to its source, and ran some distance down Towanda Creek, cutting north from this valley by one of several paths that crossed Sugar Creek to the Indian town of Sheshequin (Ulster) a few miles below Tioga. There was (except in floodtime) little climbing to be feared on this route. Its grades were easy, and, since it ran most of the way in a narrow valley, there was small danger of getting lost. The difficulties were of another kind. The Lycoming Valley being flat and narrow, with steep sides rising abruptly, it flooded easily, submerged the path, and forced travelers to attempt the cliffs. Bohemia Mountain at the head of Lycoming Creek had a reputation for gathering storms into its bosom—so bad a reputation, in fact, that it was said by the Indians an Otkan or evil spirit had residence there. Near the head of Towanda Creek, moreover, and on the cross-path to Sugar Creek, was swampland, where the soil was thin, the trees were weakly rooted, and frequent windstorms littered the ground with fallen timber. Modern maps still note a place in this neighborhood called Windfall. The ground, wrote Bishop Spangenberg of his journey through this "Dismal Wilderness" in 1745, was "so full of wood and

<sup>11</sup> T. Kenneth Wood, "French Asylum," *Now and Then*, IV (1933-1934), 255.

trees which the wind has piled up sometimes three to four logs upon one another that often one does not know how one may get through.”<sup>12</sup> Even more oppressive than windfall on the Sheshequin Path was the darkness: “This is a wilderness,” wrote Spangenberg, “where one does not see the sun all day long. The woods are so thickly grown that sometimes one can hardly see twenty paces ahead.”<sup>13</sup>

The second case chosen to illustrate the complexity of Indian paths is an actual one: Colonel Bouquet’s dilemma at Fort Loudon during the Forbes campaign. Bouquet has won well-merited praise for prospecting for the army an all-Pennsylvania route to Fort Duquesne. We should remember, however, that his achievement was not in discovering a new route through the forest, but in selecting the best one from among many. The Indians had any number of paths. What Bouquet had to do was determine which was best suited, in that particularly wet season, to an army bringing up siege artillery and needing to find fodder along the way for its horses. The reason for using the Pennsylvania route at all, instead of the road Braddock had already cut through the forest to within a few miles of Fort Duquesne, was, above all else, that such places as Edmund’s Swamp and the Clearfields offered more abundant forage for the horses of a large army than the meadows Washington and Braddock had found along the southern route. At Fort Loudon Bouquet noted three routes dispersing from that point for his thousand axemen to work on. He now wished, as he wrote to Forbes, that he had taken another route altogether, one by way of Sherman Creek. In the end, he chose (as Burd had done before him, in 1755) to go by way of Cowan Gap to Burnt Cabins.

At Ligonier, some weeks later, the army was again confronted with a bewildering choice of Indian paths. West of Ligonier, still another choice had to be made. At this last Parting of the Roads, it was decided to take the northern and much longer route, by way of the present Murrysville and Universal. The reasons for the choice were sound enough, despite the fact that the lateness of the season pressed for time: Forbes desired to avoid possible ambush in the defiles of Turtle Creek through which the southern path ran. No doubt, also,

<sup>12</sup> Spangenberg’s journal, June 10, 1745, Bethlehem Diary, AMC, translated for me by Dr. William N. Schwarze, the late president of Moravian College.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

he desired to avoid the two crossings of the Monongahela, which, although they had not caused Braddock's defeat, certainly had not mitigated the disaster. Another important consideration in the choice was the necessity of keeping army transport wagons on a well-drained ridge road, such as the northern fork offered, during so exceptionally wet a month as that November of 1758.

Five years later, Colonel Bouquet was back again at the Parting of the Roads. This time he took the southern fork, for good reason. It was during Pontiac's War. Pittsburgh was besieged and almost exhausted; it could not hold out much longer. Time meant everything. Bouquet, accordingly, decided to sacrifice safety for speed, and took the more direct path by way of Bushy Run. The Indians were waiting for him—not at Turtle Creek, as no doubt he expected, since in that narrow valley they would have him at greatest disadvantage, but at Bushy Run, their forces no doubt having been disposed so near the Parting of the Roads in order to catch him whichever way he went. Bouquet, after a day and a half of fighting in as close and absorbing a contest as ever was waged between white men and Indians in Pennsylvania, broke through and reached Pittsburgh in time to save the fort.

## II

Accustomed as we now are to venture into Pennsylvania's mountains only on foam-rubber seats, we have developed exaggerated notions of the discomforts and perils suffered by people who once used to traverse them on foot. Life on the trail, we may be assured, was neither as uncomfortable nor as dangerous as readers of James Fenimore Cooper like to picture it. Nor was it as monotonous as some who descant on the "unbroken solitude" of our "pathless forests" would have us believe.

The forest was a busy place, and the traveler frequently met Indians on the trail. Whether they were engaged in hunting, trade, war, diplomacy, or simply visiting relatives across the mountain, these encounters proved them not to be the fiends early novelists collected dimes for persuading us they were. Few races on earth have had as good a record as our Indians have had for courtesies and friendship proffered to strangers. When one met a party of Indians, it was good form to sit down with them under a tree and smoke a friendly pipe of

tobacco, meanwhile exchanging the news of the day.<sup>14</sup> If the young men of the Indian party had been hunting, it was likely they would press upon the traveler a haunch of venison or a gammon of bear's meat. Hospitality was a prime virtue among these people, and they lived up to their lights.

Even without such friendly encounters, food was seldom a problem. If a traveler did not carry a supply with him, he would usually find all he wanted at villages or cabins along the way. Failing this source, if he had any kind of weapon with him, there were wild creatures in plenty to satisfy his appetite. David McClure on the banks of Little Beaver Creek, in 1772, tells of "a wonderful prospect of game. In the middle of the Creek, a small flock of geese were swimming, on the bank sat a large flock of Turkeys, and the wild pigeons covered one or two trees; and all being within musket shot, we had our choice for a supper. My interpreter chose the Turkeys, and killed three at one shot."<sup>15</sup>

Boiled rattlesnake was good fare. Turhand Kirtland, a surveyor who accompanied General Moses Cleaveland to the Western Reserve in 1796, records the killing and eating of a large rattler with fifteen rattles: "I can say with the greatest Candor I never ate better Meat."<sup>16</sup>

The problem of accommodations was not difficult. Count Zinzendorf, traveling with pack horses, took a large tent along.<sup>17</sup> Conrad Weiser, in his later years, carried a hammock. But such luxuries were unusual and unnecessary. Most travelers were content to sleep on the ground beside a spring under the open sky; boughs of hemlock and balsam made a soft mattress. In rainy weather there were Indian cabins to resort to. The Indians of Pennsylvania had no system of caravanseries such as those established at short intervals along the great highways of the Incas, but every ten or twelve miles on the more important trails in Pennsylvania were shelters of one sort or another, places indicated in old maps, journals, and surveys by such designations as "Cock Eye's Cabin," "Toby's Cabins," the "War-

<sup>14</sup> For example, the meeting with eight Shawnees, July 12, 1743, near Muncy. See John Bartram's *Observations* (London, 1751), 21-22.

<sup>15</sup> David McClure's journal, 1772, quoted by Joseph H. Bausman, *History of Beaver County* (New York, 1904), I, 23 (note 2).

<sup>16</sup> Harlan Hatcher, *The Western Reserve* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1949), 40 (note 4).

<sup>17</sup> Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 135.

riors Spring," or "Old King Nutimus," to say nothing of deserted Indian villages such as "Kickenapaulin's Old Town," "Chartier's Old Town," "Kiskiminetas Old Town," and many others that were nameless. Where there was an "Indian Field" or "Clear Fields," as so often noted on old land warrants, one would likely find good water, grass for the horse, and a cabin.

If darkness approached or rain fell before the wayfarer reached one of these shelters, it was easy to run up a small cabin for himself: four crotched sticks for corner posts, with other sticks laid horizontally across them to support a sloping roof of bark peeled from the trees. Bark walls on three sides completed the edifice, the fourth side being left open to receive the warmth of the fire kindled outside. As late as 1798 Benjamin Mortimer saw many such shelters on the approaches to Buffalo and New York.<sup>18</sup> In Pennsylvania's woods, during the eighteenth century, these shelters were common sights. Sometimes the passing traveler found bear's meat hanging over the ashes in front of some hunter's last night's cabin, and left by him as a gift to anyone in need.

The best time to travel was in the spring and fall: in the spring after the ice had broken up and floated out of the streams, but before the flies and heat of summer had set in; in the fall when the mosquitos had disappeared and the nights were crisp, but before the snow came. If one traveled out of season, it was the better part of wisdom to welcome adventures. Ice and snow, especially on the northern slopes of the hills, made the going treacherous. During the spring break-up, some fords became impassable. Today, from a bridge overlooking the ford of Slippery Rock Creek, you may watch boys in bathing trunks slide waist deep down a slippery rock chute and plunge off into a deep pool. In summer it is beautiful to look at.

<sup>18</sup> May 11, 1798, "Diary of the brethren John Heckewelder and Benjamin Mortimer, on their journey from Bethlehem in Pennsylvania to Fairfield in Upper Canada, from the 3<sup>d</sup> April to the 22<sup>d</sup> may 1798," AMC; microfilm copy in the APS. See also Francis W. Halsey, *A Tour of Four Great Rivers . . . Being the Journal of Richard Smith . . . in 1769* (New York, 1906), 38-39: "Our Indians in Half an Hour erected a House capable of sheltering us from the wet for it rained most of the Day and Night succeeding. They place 4 crotched stakes in the Earth, the Two front ones being tallest. On these are rested poles which are crossed by other poles and these are covered with wide hemloc Bark; a large chearful Fire being soon raised in the Front, they compleated our Kitchin and Bed Chamber wherein after broiling Salt Pork for supper we rested prepared by Fatigue very comfortably."

But how must this same crossing have appeared to travelers at a season when the ice was moving down?

Fords, of course, under unusual conditions could be unpleasant and dangerous at any time of year. A flash flood might turn the smallest stream into a torrent. When John Harris, ambushed at Penn's Creek, retreated across the Susquehanna, four or five of his men were drowned at the ford.<sup>19</sup> Martin Mack ran into trouble crossing the Lehigh on foot, early in April, 1745. "It was so extreemely cold," he wrote, "that at first we tho't it impossible for us to endure it. When we got about the middle, it was so deep & the Stream so strong, that I tho't every Minute it wo<sup>d</sup> bear me down, & my feet stuck between 2 great Rocks." He got out, at last, by seizing hold of a companion's coat. When he returned two weeks later, he had less trouble "because the Water was not so cold."<sup>20</sup>

Occasionally, in dry weather, forest fires provided an interlude. One does not find record in Pennsylvania of anything so dramatic as the incident in which Cooper's hero, the Pawnee Hard Heart, wrapped himself in a fresh buffalo hide and sat a prairie fire out. But two Moravian missionaries, Martin Mack and Christian Frölick, provide us out of their own experience on the path from Wapwallopen with an incident exciting enough, the more so as it happens to be true.

"The Woods were on Fire all round us," wrote Mack, on April 19, 1745, "so that in many Places it look'd very Terrible, & many Times we scarce knew how to get thro'. The Trees fell down all about, because the Fire burnt so strong. One can't easily get out of the Way, because there are such exceeding high Mountains on each Side of one. After Dinner we came between 2 great Mountains full of Rocks & the Fire burnt all round us, & made a prodigious Crackling. Before us, where we were to go, there was such a great Flame that we were a little afraid to go thro' it & we co<sup>d</sup> find no other Way, to escape it. Br. Xtian went first thro', The Flames went quite over his Head, it look'd a little dismal. He got thro' but I did not know it, because I co<sup>d</sup> not see any more for the Fire. I call'd to him, he answered me

<sup>19</sup> John Harris to Gov. Morris, Oct. 31, 1755, Du Simitière Collection, The Library Company of Philadelphia.

<sup>20</sup> "A Short Account of Br John Martin Mack's & Xtian Frölick's Journey to Wayomick & Hallobank," Apr. 20, 1745, AMC.

immediately, & said: He got safe thro'. I thought I wo<sup>d</sup> wait a little longer till it was burnt away a little more, but the Fire grew still greater. He call'd again & pray'd me to come thro', saying Our D<sup>r</sup> Sav<sup>r</sup> had promised: 'When thou walkest thro' the Fire, thou shall not be burnt; neither shall the Flame kindle upon Thee.' I ventured & went chearfully in & thro' the flame & got safe thro'."<sup>21</sup>

White men traveling on horseback and in season were seldom endangered by bad fordings, and to encounter a forest fire was rare. A more common hazard was getting lost. Phrases like "the trackless wilderness" spring to mind, and should at once be rejected. If an Indian lost his way in the woods, it was not, as a rule, because there was no path to follow, but because there were too many paths. Cooper's Indians, of course, had no need of such gadgets. As long as there was moss on the trees to serve them as a compass, what need had they to follow a trail? But we are writing about real Indians, who, with all their undoubted skill in woodcraft, had the same reason for preferring a beaten path that the motorist has for choosing to keep on the highway.

Main paths, unless they had fallen into temporary disuse, which happened when the Indians were first evicted from any territory and the forest had taken over before settlers arrived, were well trodden and easily followed. As anyone who has been much in the woods knows, it takes only a few persons walking a trail every summer to keep a track open. Most of the paths we are discussing had been traveled for centuries, even for thousands of years, by the Indians, to say nothing of the buffalo, elk, and bears that in certain places had preceded them. There were, of course, "blind paths," paths neglected and so overgrown with underbrush as to be difficult to trace; and—chief nuisance to the traveler—there were paths obstructed by windfall.

Storm played havoc with the trails. When the wind came up and the distant roar of falling trees could be heard, horses stopped dead and refused to go on until the danger was past. It was then that the great white pine—"which pierces the sky and reaches the sun," as the Iroquois said when they chose it as a symbol of their Confederacy

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* These extracts are printed by permission of the Archives Committee of the Moravian Church, and may not be reprinted without express permission from them.

—transformed the energy with which the wind seized its top branches into a slow, graceful, but irresistible motion transferred down the length of its two-hundred-foot trunk. A tree that could not take that tremendous leverage crashed, involving others in its fall and littering the ground with a tangle of trunks and branches.

It was then the traveler's worst troubles began. After the storm, it was often found easier to go round than over fallen timber. In consequence, during the passage of years, as the fir giants flanking a trail laid themselves down one by one, the path slowly adjusted itself, now to the right and now to the left, to escape these obstacles. If a graph could be made, decade by decade, of a trail's shifting location, it would show that trail as a broad, blurred band, sometimes, in such flat country as the portage area between Presqu'Isle and French Creek, miles in breadth. There were times when the traveler found that a hurricane had leveled the trees of a whole district, and the windfall constrained him to make such a wide turn to avoid it that he found himself in wholly unfamiliar country. Such an obstacle was encountered by Benjamin Mortimer and John Heckewelder on their journey to Fairfield in 1798. Even their Indian guide became lost.<sup>22</sup> It is easy to understand why Indian war parties (*pace* Fenimore Cooper) did not care to venture into new country or off the main paths anywhere, unless they had with them someone who knew the locality.

It is a popular belief that the buffalo and deer, which were admittedly in Pennsylvania before the Indian, deserve credit for whatever skill may have been shown in the location of Indian trails. When the Indians came, as a schoolgirl has put it, "they, spying the animals' tracks, followed them when they wished to go anywhere, and in this manner the trails grew into paths." This is a pleasant doctrine for animal lovers, but not the soundest anthropology. It is true, of course, that early man did use animal tracks when he found them going in his direction. In tight places the animals, which have had many more thousands of years than man has had in which to find the best mountain passes over the Alleghenies, did frequently pioneer the way. In a report to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1815, made by "the Commissioners appointed to view the western waters," it is

<sup>22</sup> "Diary of the brethren John Heckewelder and Benjamin Mortimer," May 22, 1798, AMC; microfilm copy in the APS.

said "that the path on which the elks and bears pass over the mountains, is uniformly the best ground."<sup>23</sup>

George Croghan described Indian paths that he said followed buffalo traces, some worn five or six feet deep and spacious enough for wagons.<sup>24</sup> William Ashe, in his *Travels in America*, described buffalo paths in like fashion: "The best roads to the Onondago [a salt lake] from all parts, are the buffalo-tracks; so called from having been observed to be made by the buffaloes in their annual visitations to the lake from their pasture grounds; and though this is a distance of above two hundred miles, the best surveyor could not have chosen a more direct course, or firmer or better ground. I have often travelled these tracks with safety and admiration. I perceived them chosen as if by the nicest judgment. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

But wild animals do not harbor the same thoughts nor pursue the same objectives as men. As a boy, I "explored" untraveled woods on the shores of the Georgian Bay. It often delighted me to find a deer track conveniently going my way. Just as often it disappointed me to find, when the path veered off from my course as it always did in a few yards, that the deer and I had different concerns. So with the buffalo, as John Heckewelder learned at the price of some discomfort. Coming east from Vincennes in Indiana, he passed the great Buffalo Salt Lick. "From here," he wrote, "a great many buffalo trails lead out, and we had the misfortune to take such an one instead of the right one, our guides not being with us, but when they came back again, they led us in to the right path."<sup>26</sup>

Let us give honor where honor is due. The Humane Society will be roused to no action, I am sure, if we say that it was the Indian, not the four-footed beast (however nice the latter's judgment), who located our first thoroughfares, choosing where to follow and where not to follow the tracks of buffalo, bear, and deer.

There remains an item in the traveler's experience of two hundred years ago, which should not be neglected: the painted trees. A section

<sup>23</sup> *Journal of the 26th House of Representatives* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1815), Appendix, 34-35.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by C. W. W. Elkin, "The Indian Trails of Southwestern Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, X (No. 2), 35, from Filson Club Publication No. 13, p. 169.

<sup>25</sup> William Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in 1806, For the Purpose of Exploring the Rivers Allegheny, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi* (London, 1808), 47.

<sup>26</sup> "Narrative of John Heckewelder's Journey to the Wabash in 1792," *PMHB*, XII (1888), 174.

of the Towanda Path, where it came down off the Burnet Hills along Millstone Creek, was known among the early settlers, as it still is among their descendants, by the name of "the Painted Line."<sup>27</sup> It received this curious appellation not because Indians had painted the foliage as the gardeners painted the roses in *Alice in Wonderland*, but because of the many examples found along this path of picture writing. The Indians stripped a ring of bark from a tree and painted on the exposed surface, with red ochre and charcoal, the news of the day. We are told that these tree paintings remained visible sometimes for as long as fifty years.<sup>28</sup> All Indians of Pennsylvania, whatever their spoken language, could read these pictures, which told about war heroes or gave the latest gossip about local hunting parties. They were used for many purposes. During the Braddock campaign, the French Indians painted trees, where the English were bound to see them, with defiant and derisive symbols.<sup>29</sup> In the vicinity of some Moravian Indian towns, trees were painted with Scripture texts.<sup>30</sup> The billboard is nothing new in American advertising.

Trails differed in width and distinctness. Much-used paths were well beaten down and unmistakable. Some were wide enough for two to go abreast. Others (and these became a problem when the horse was introduced) were so narrow that, as on the Tulpehocken Path at the gap in the Second Mountain, no more than eighteen inches separated the cliff that rubbed one's shoulders on the one side from the precipice that descended to the creek on the other. A few trails were properly maintained, that is, kept free of underbrush and wind-fall. The metaphor used in diplomatic parlance to express international friendship, "keeping the road clear between us," is not likely

<sup>27</sup> T. Kenneth Wood, "On the Genesee Road," *Now and Then*, V (1934-1935), 131: "There is another such stretch of wholly abandoned road, perhaps 5 or 6 miles long. . . . It is in Bradford County, perhaps exceeding this in wild and desolate beauty, for it has a mountain torrent accompanying it down through dark and gloomy Northrup's Hollow. People are still living in there of the fourth generation who speak of this section as 'The Painted Line.' They refer to the 'Towanda Indian Path,' which preceded our white man's road and which was found by the early whites to be marked by a succession of painted trees."

<sup>28</sup> George Henry Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Indians in North America* (London, 1794), 25.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Orme's journal, June 24, 1755, in Winthrop Sargent, *The History of an Expedition Against Fort Du Quesne, in 1755* (Philadelphia, 1855), 338-357.

<sup>30</sup> "Reisebeschreibung des Br. Abraham Steiners von seiner mit Br. Johann Heckewelder gethanen Reise von Bethlehem nach Pettquottin am Huron River ohnweit Lake Erie und von da wider zurück," June 4, 1789, AMC; microfilm copy in the APS.

to have originated in a mere poetical conceit. More probably it derives from some actual work of road maintenance carried out on the more important highways. Hiawatha, among his legendary labors, is said to have cleared the rocks and trees from the Mohawk River. The ideal, personified in this Iroquois culture hero, of forwarding civilization by keeping the highways clear, was surely not limited to water communications.

The centers of Indian population in Pennsylvania, under pressure from the white man, moved westward from the Delaware River to the Susquehanna River, and later from the Susquehanna to the Ohio and Allegheny rivers. During these changes, some Indian paths were forgotten, and others were obliterated between the ruts of wagon wheels. As might be expected, it was the area around Philadelphia that first lost its Indian paths. Then, as the white population spread west and north from that center, the trails between the Delaware and the Susquehanna gave way to the pack horse and Conestoga wagon. Throughout the eighteenth century the westward movement continued, traders, missionaries, and settlers following the retreating Indian to his last Pennsylvania refuge in the Ohio-Allegheny Valley.

Trails were widened into bridle paths adequate for horses carrying two-hundred-pound packs. By the time of the Revolution, the Conestoga wagon had converted old trails into roads as far west as Pittsburgh. After the Revolution, the movement converting trails into roads continued west "towards the setting sun," into Ohio, Indiana, and beyond to the Western Sea.

### III

A word about some of the problems involved in mapping Indian paths may not be out of place. To begin with, it must be understood that the map maker, having to work without a trail gazetteer, has had to make his own choice of names for many of the paths. Names have no sanction but usage, and usage is extremely variable where trails are concerned. The Great Shamokin Path, for example, along certain stretches of its route is known as the Chinklacamoose Path, along others, as the Kittanning Path. Names are, and always have been, local. Indian paths, like all highways, are two-way affairs, and their names, if these are taken from their *termini* (as was usually the

case), are reversible. If one man took the Kittanning Path from Chinklacamoose, and another the Chinklacamoose Path from Kittanning, they would meet on the way. What was the Tulpehocken Path to Indians at Shamokin, was the Shamokin Path to Indians at Tulpehocken. Sometimes paths were named for intermediate junction points, such as the Frankstown Path or the Raystown Path. But these same paths might be named for other stations on the way. It will readily be seen in what dangers this system of nomenclature involves the geographer. He finds as many Frankstown paths as there were paths going through Frankstown, as many Kittanning, Venango, Wyoming paths as there were paths going to Kittanning, Venango, and Wyoming. The Mahoning Path west of Kuskuskies was also known as the Salt Lick Path, the Tuscarawas Path, the Sandusky Path, the Detroit Path—in fact, by the name of any place it may have led to.

As time went on, certain trails did show a tendency to settle down in possession of distinctive names. There is only one Towanda Path, Pine Creek Path, Sinnemahoning Path, Great Minquas Path. Their names are established, accepted. Such paths give the writer no trouble. But which among the many so-called Wyoming paths should alone be given title to that name, has been an embarrassing question. Localities have vested rights in names, and resent innovations. But decisions have to be made. Sometimes a made-up double name has been given, as the Venango-Chinklacamoose Path, to distinguish it from other paths competing for the Venango title. A map recording all the alternative names given to these paths by early travelers would be confusing. It is hoped that, in the attempt to simplify and regularize the nomenclature on the accompanying map, the writer has not increased the confusion.

This is an Indian map. It is, however, limited to the post-contact period. Ancient sites, unless they survived as Indian habitations, or at least as objects of special remark, into the seventeenth century, are not here indicated. A few modern towns are set down (usually in connection with Indian towns) to help anyone consulting the map to get his modern bearings. An occasional fort has been shown, when it helps to explain the course of a path. No attention has been paid to settlers' locations—with the exception of Christopher Gist's, which, with its "Indian House" (as shown on an early survey), was an im-

portant junction point for western Pennsylvania trails. A few sleeping places named after white traders have been included, such as Hart's Log and Owen's Stamping Ground, since these were as integral to the life of the trail as Tohogus's Cabins or Fish Basket Old Town.

For convenient reference, Indian names are here generally given the spelling which popular English usage has made familiar: *Buckaloons*, for instance, rather than *BoughHelloons*, *Paks-Kalunska*, or *Poquihhilleu*.

Both before and after the coming of the white man, Indians constantly changed their habitat. Towns named, for example, after Nutimus, Neolegan, or Kickenapaulin, are to be found in a bewildering number of places. On this map some indication of such changes has been attempted, as in the case of the several Kuskuskies. It was the custom, two hundred years ago, for whole villages, when the soil or the firewood was exhausted (which happened every twenty years or so), to pick up and move, sometimes considerable distances, without changing their names. Names belonged rather to whole areas than to the spot where, at any particular time, a few cabins might be congregated. There was a town at the Forks of the Delaware (Easton). But the term, Forks of the Delaware, covered all the lands now occupied not only by Easton, but also by Nazareth, Bethlehem, Allentown, and a good deal more besides. Perambulating villages are undoubtedly an embarrassment to the historical geographer. It would be useful, on such a map as this, to give the dates of each town's tenure of the site here allotted to it. But that has not been found practicable at this time.

Some famous Indian towns have been omitted from the map, Playwicky, for example. The existence of such a town is well authenticated, but its exact site is in dispute. Only a few of the many "Indian fields," which early warrant surveys refer to, have been shown here, and very few Indian cabins—just enough to remind us that they were once a common sight along Pennsylvania's Indian highways. One or two hunting cabins have been shown, a reminder that seasonal changes of habitat and occupation were as well-established an institution among our early Indians as they are among our modern vacationists.

## *A Schedule of Sixteen Important Indian Paths*

### A. FIVE MAIN PATHS FROM THE DELAWARE TO THE SUSQUEHANNA

**ALLEGHENY PATH.** One of several paths from Philadelphia to the Allegheny Valley which at one time or another have carried this name. Old Peter's Road was no doubt one of them: the continuation of that route across the Susquehanna (from York Haven to Carlisle), though often called the Conoy and sometimes the Conewago Road, is also referred to in old records as the Allegheny Road or Path. The name, to avoid confusion, is here reserved to the path that ran from Allegheny Avenue in Philadelphia, across the ford to which that roadway led below the Falls of the Schuylkill, along Montgomery Avenue, to Bryn Mawr, Paoli, Morgantown, Alleghenyville (at the head of Allegheny Creek), *die Kluft* in the South Mountain (where a branch led north to the Forks of the Susquehanna at Sunbury), Myerstown, Lebanon, Hummelstown, and, via Chambers Road, to Harrisburg and Steelton, at both of which places there were fords. Across the Susquehanna, we immediately pick up the name again, the "Allegheny Path" running through Carlisle, near which it branched into the Raystown and Frankstown paths.

The Okehocking Reservation established by William Penn in 1703 was not far from this path, which continued to provide a main route west for the Indians of eastern Pennsylvania after the lands along the Great Minquas Path had become occupied by white settlers. Even as late as the 1760's, if local tradition may be believed, Indians harbored in the Alleghenyville neighborhood. There is a legend that a few Conestoga Indians escaped the massacre of 1763 and were sheltered among friendly white people back of Alleghenyville. The mysterious "Fingal Castle," north of Morgantown, was on this path.

**GREAT MINQUAS PATH.** Also called the Conestoga Path. Named for its terminus in the country of the Minquas (Conestogas or Susquehannocks). Course: From the general area of modern Philadelphia to the Forks of the Brandywine, Parkesburg, Gap, Rockhill, Creswell, and Washington Boro.

Over this path the Susquehannock Indians yearly brought great wealth in beaver skins to trading posts on the lower Schuylkill and Delaware rivers. It was this Indian highway which laid the foundations for Pennsylvania's commercial eminence and which provides a key to much of our early history. ". . . The struggle by Holland, Sweden and Great Britain for the possession of the Delaware River was . . . to control trade with the Minquas living on the Susquehanna."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> George P. Donehoo, "The Indians of the Past and of the Present," *PMHB*, XLVI (1922), 185.

**MINISINK PATH.** Centering in the populous Minisink (i.e., Muncy or Minsi, a branch of the Lenni Lenape) settlement at Minisink Island in the Delaware River. The Pennsylvania end ran west to Lords Valley, Blooming Grove, Hamlin, Mt. Cobb, Scranton, and the Wyoming Valley. The New Jersey end ran east to Lake Hopatcong and the Atlantic coast.

The Pennsylvania path was difficult and rocky. It was used by some of the Delawares evicted after the Walking Purchase, by Connecticut settlers (a few of whom got onto the path by a branch from Milford) on their way to the Wyoming Valley, and by refugees after the Battle of Wyoming. The New Jersey part of the path was the more important, a "well beaten path, from two to three feet wide," which passed through Morristown, Madison, and Metuchen. Its main purpose was "to provide a route to the shell fisheries of the coast."<sup>32</sup>

**PERKIOMEN PATH.** Course: From Philadelphia, by Ridge Avenue and the Ridge Road, to Norristown, across Perkiomen Creek, to Trappe, Pottstown, Douglassville, Amityville, Mount Penn, entering Reading by Perkiomen Avenue. Beyond Reading it followed the Allegheny Path through Lebanon Valley to Paxtang. Between Philadelphia and Douglassville, this route is now followed by the Benjamin Franklin Highway, U. S. 422.

**WYOMING PATH.** The name has been applied to many paths leading to the Wyoming Valley in the vicinity of modern Wilkes-Barre, in particular the paths to Wyoming from Bethlehem by way of Nescopeck,<sup>33</sup> from Easton by way of the Wind Gap, from Shamokin (Sunbury) by way of Bloomsburg, and from Muncy by way of Sheshequin. On the accompanying map the name is applied to the Wind Gap route taken in 1779 by General Sullivan.

## B. FIVE MAIN PATHS TO THE ALLEGHENY RIVER

**FORBIDDEN PATH.** Also called the Tioga Path, because it followed the Tioga (now known as the Chemung) River from Tioga (Athens) to beyond Painted Post. Course: From Tioga to the mouth of Canisteo Creek, up that creek to the town of Canisteo, thence in a general southwest direction to Shongo (or near it), Elevenmile Spring, Shingle House on Oswayo Creek, Portville on the Allegheny River, and Olean, New York.

It was called the Forbidden Path because its use was long denied to white men by the Indians of the Seneca nation, to whose territory it provided a southern gateway. Christian Frederick Post and John Hays were turned

<sup>32</sup> Wheaton J. Lane, *From Indian Trail to Iron Horse* (Princeton, N. J., 1939), 16.

<sup>33</sup> See John Heckewelder, *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (Philadelphia, 1876), 333 (note 3, by the editor, William C. Reichel): "Nescopeck was an Indian settlement on the highway of Indian travel between Fort Allen and the Wyoming Valley."

back at Passigachkunk (Canisteo) in 1760. David Zeisberger, Moravian missionary, succeeded in getting through by this route to Goschgoschink on the Allegheny in 1767 and again in 1768. In 1779 General Sullivan's army entered the Seneca country by the eastern end of this path.

**FRANKSTOWN PATH.** One of the two main traders' paths from Paxtang (Harris's Ferry) to the Ohio basin. Course: Harris's Ferry, Carlisle, Roxbury, Shirleysburg, Huntingdon, Water Street, Frankstown, Hollidaysburg, Kittanning Point, Chest Springs, Susquehanna crossing (about two miles above Cherry Tree), Diamondville, Indiana, Shelocta, Kiskiminetas Old Town (below Vandergrift), Chartier's Landing on the Allegheny River opposite Chartier's Old Town (Tarentum). From Shelocta a famous branch, known as the Kittanning Path, ran northwest to Kittanning. It was used in 1756 by Colonel John Armstrong in his attack on that Delaware center.

The Frankstown Path, as compared with the Raystown Path, offered a longer but better-graded route for pack trains headed for the Allegheny Valley. Conrad Weiser used it on his way to Logstown in 1748.

**GREAT SHAMOKIN PATH.** Sometimes called the Chinklacamoose Path from the Indian town of that name at modern Clearfield. Course: From Shamokin (Sunbury) to Muncy, Montoursville, Williamsport, Lock Haven, via Bald Eagle Creek and Marsh Creek to Snow Shoe, Moshannon, Clearfield, Luthersburg, Punxsutawney (where variants appear, one keeping on the ridge north of the town), to a point on the Allegheny some eight miles above Kittanning, and thence down the river bank to Kittanning.

This path was much used by Delawares and Shawnees during their early eighteenth-century migrations to the west. In the French and Indian War, it was used by their war parties, who found it a convenient connection between two war centers, Kittanning and Nescopeck. Marie LeRoy and Barbara Leininger were taken this way as captives to Kittanning.<sup>34</sup> Ettwein and Roth used this path, bringing over it some two hundred Christian Indians, with horses, cattle, and equipment, from Friedenshütten (Wyalusing) to Friedenstadt on the Beaver River.

**NEMACOLIN'S PATH.** Some confusion attaches to this name, since it has been applied in historical literature to two distinct Indian highways. From Will's Creek (Cumberland, Maryland) the trunk path, from which the two later branched, ran west to the Half King's Rock (Washington's Spring) in Fayette County. From that point the original Nemacolin's Path continued west through the present Uniontown to Nemacolin's village (Brownsville) on the Monongahela River at the mouth of Nemacolin's (Dunlap's) Creek. According to a tradition reported to me by the late Dr. Moss of Circleville,

<sup>34</sup> "The Narrative of Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger, for Three Years Captive Among the Indians," translated by Edmund de Schweinitz, *PMHB*, XXIX (1905), 407-420.

Nemacolin's Path continued north from Brownsville for some distance along the bank of the Monongahela, and then swung east to cross the Youghiogheny at Allaquippa's Corn Field, a place once known as Crawford's Sleeping Place but now better identified as Robbins Station. From the Half King's Rock the other branch turned north onto the Catawba Path, which it followed as far as Jacob's Creek, where it turned west onto the Glades Path, following this latter to the Forks of the Ohio.

Nemacolin's Path was used by many early notables, including Thomas Cresap, Christopher Gist, George Washington, and General Braddock. Braddock's Road followed it closely, taking the northern branch from the Half King's Rock to within six miles of Fort Duquesne. The National Road follows its general course, taking the southern branch, however, to Brownsville.

**RAYSTOWN PATH.** One of the two branches (the other being the Frankstown Path) of the Allegheny Path from Paxtang. Course: From Harris's Ferry to Shippensburg, Fannettsburg, Burnt Cabins (where a variant, which had forked off at Shippensburg by way of Fort Loudon and Cowan Gap to avoid three steep mountains, rejoined the main path), Fort Littleton, Bedford, Stoystown, Kickenapaulin's Old Town (the site now flooded by the Quemahoning Reservoir), Kline's Mill, Ligonier. At the Parting of the Roads west of Hannastown, one branch went to Pittsburgh by way of what is now the Bushy Run Battlefield Park, and the other by way of Murrysville and Universal. A variant followed the Frankstown Path from Harris's Ferry as far as the Black Log, where it turned southwest to Three Springs and met the main Raystown Path near the Juniata Crossing.

The Raystown Path was a favorite with Pennsylvania's Indian traders. In time it became the main link between Pennsylvania's settlers and the West. General Forbes in 1758 followed it (with occasional variations) to Fort Duquesne.

### C. SIX MAIN WARRIORS PATHS

**CATAWBA PATH.** Also called the Iroquois Main Road and the Tennessee Path. Course: From the country of the Senecas, who held the western door of the Five Nations, to Ichsua (Olean, New York), Kane, Millstone, Corsica, Kittanning. Here the path forked, one crossing the Allegheny River and continuing down the west side of that river and of the Ohio, the other running south to Ligonier, Connellsville, and Uniontown, to cross the Cheat River and pass out of Pennsylvania at the mouth of Grassy Run.

During the period, before 1675, when the Susquehannocks held both branches of the Susquehanna River, this path was probably, as the name suggests, the principal highway used by the Five Nations when they traveled to the South. After the defeat of the Susquehannocks, however, the

Great Warriors Path, which found in the Susquehanna Valley a convenient passageway through the Allegheny Mountains, was preferred by the eastern members of the Five Nations: the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas and Cayugas.

**GREAT WARRIORS PATH.** Used not only by warriors, but also by ambassadors (e g., from Onondaga to Philadelphia) of the Five Nations. Course: At Tioga Point (Athens) it crossed the Chemung River, and a short distance below the Point it crossed the Susquehanna River to the east bank, which it followed, with certain withdrawals, past Wyalusing and Tunkhannock (with a variant paralleling it some distance back from the river) to the mouth of Lackawanna Creek, where it crossed the Susquehanna again. Continuing down the Susquehanna to Northumberland, it crossed to Shamokin (Sunbury). From that point war parties made their way south by any one of several good routes. George P. Donehoo<sup>35</sup> suggests that at first the "Virginia Road" (i.e., from Paxtang through the Cumberland Valley to the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland) was the main one. Then, as the Cumberland Valley filled with settlers, Indian war parties took their course farther west, reaching the Potomac at Oldtown, Maryland.<sup>36</sup>

**LAKESHORE PATH.** Course: Buffalo, New York, North East, Pennsylvania, Erie, Conneaut, Ohio. From Erie west, the path ran along the sandy beach<sup>37</sup> From Erie east, the lake shore being rock-bound, the path ran inland, taking a course now followed by the Buffalo Road, U.S. 20. The Lakeshore Path was for some decades the chief means of communication between the Six Nations and their allies in the West.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *History of the Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1930), 35

<sup>36</sup> See William B. Marye, "Warriors Paths," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, XIII (No. 1), 11  
 "as late as 1751 war parties of the Five Nations passed not a single white settlement on their way between Onondaga and Oldtown"

<sup>37</sup> Eine Bericht von der Reise der Brr Jacob Eyerly u Johann Heckewalder . . im May und Juny 1794," AMC, microfilm copy in APS "After we had come back to the lake [just west of the Peninsula at Erie], we had a broad sandy beach the rest of the way [to Conneaut]" Capt William Morrison of Erie, who has had long experience as a ship's captain on the lake and as a member of the Erie Harbor Commission, informs me that one may still walk (except in periods of high water) along the sandy beach from Erie all the way to Cleveland

<sup>38</sup> See letter from Isaac Craig at Fort Franklin to Lt J. Jeffers, Feb. 13, 1792, Group II-A, Letter Book, 1791-1793, Craig Collection, Pennsylvania Room, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh "Judging for the Good of the U S at large I shall say that a Fort at Cassawauga Garrisoned w<sup>th</sup> forty or forty-five Men, and another at Cunniat, Garrisoned w<sup>th</sup> about 100 Men, would be of infinite importance to the U S, my Reasons are as follows—Viz It will Cut the Communications between the bad Indians & those of the Six nations—a Fort alone at Cassawauga will not answer, as the bad Indians pass through Cunniat, whenever they go to the Six Nations—my Reasons in Establishing a Post at Cunniat in preference to Presquil is, that Cunniat is a beautiful place to fortify, & timber is plenty, at Presquil there is none for a Considerable distance, and at Cunniat there are a large Number of Mussauga and Seneca

**PINE CREEK PATH.** The valley of Pine Creek provided foot travelers with good grades and the shortest route between the Genesee country and the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Course: From Genesee, Elevenmile Spring, and other points on the southern border of the Seneca country, to West Pike, Galetton, Ansonia, through the gorge ("the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania") to Blackwell (Lloyd), Cedar Run, Jersey Mills, Jersey Shore.

This path was used by Indian war parties,<sup>39</sup> Quaker missionaries,<sup>40</sup> settlers in Potter and other western counties, and nineteenth-century lumbermen—before the railroad came—who, after taking their rafts down to Williamsport, walked back by the old path up Pine Creek.<sup>41</sup> John Peet, going from Coudersport to Jersey Shore and back with a wagon and a yoke of oxen in 1811, tells us that he crossed Pine Creek "eighty times going and eighty times coming. . . ."<sup>42</sup>

**SINNEMAHONING PATH.** Used by the Seneca Indians west of the Genesee to reach the Great Island (Lock Haven) and Shamokin (Sunbury). Later used by settlers to reach lands in what are now Potter, McKean, Clinton, and Cameron counties. Course: West from the Great Island, the path led up the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna, past North Bend and Renovo to Keating, thence up Sinnemahoning Creek to the First Fork. Here the path divided, one branch going to Canoe Place (Emporium Junction) and thence by the Portage Path over Keating Summit to Canoe Place above Port Allegany; the other going up the First Fork to Costello and thence by the Little Portage Path through Freeman Run Valley to join the main path at Keating Summit. To those who traveled by canoe, this second route offered a portage that, though very steep in places, was shorter by several miles.

**VENANGO PATH.** An important highway during the French regime, being on the main route (especially the twenty-mile portage from Presqu'-

---

Indians, who want but little flattering to become our true Friends—and should a Post be established at Presqu'il they will be cut of on the side of the bad Indians. . . ." See also Beverley W. Bond, Jr., *The Foundations of Ohio* (Columbus, Ohio, 1941), 26: "Another important east-west trail, the Lake Trail along the south shore of lake Erie, did not come into general use until just before the close of the eighteenth century."

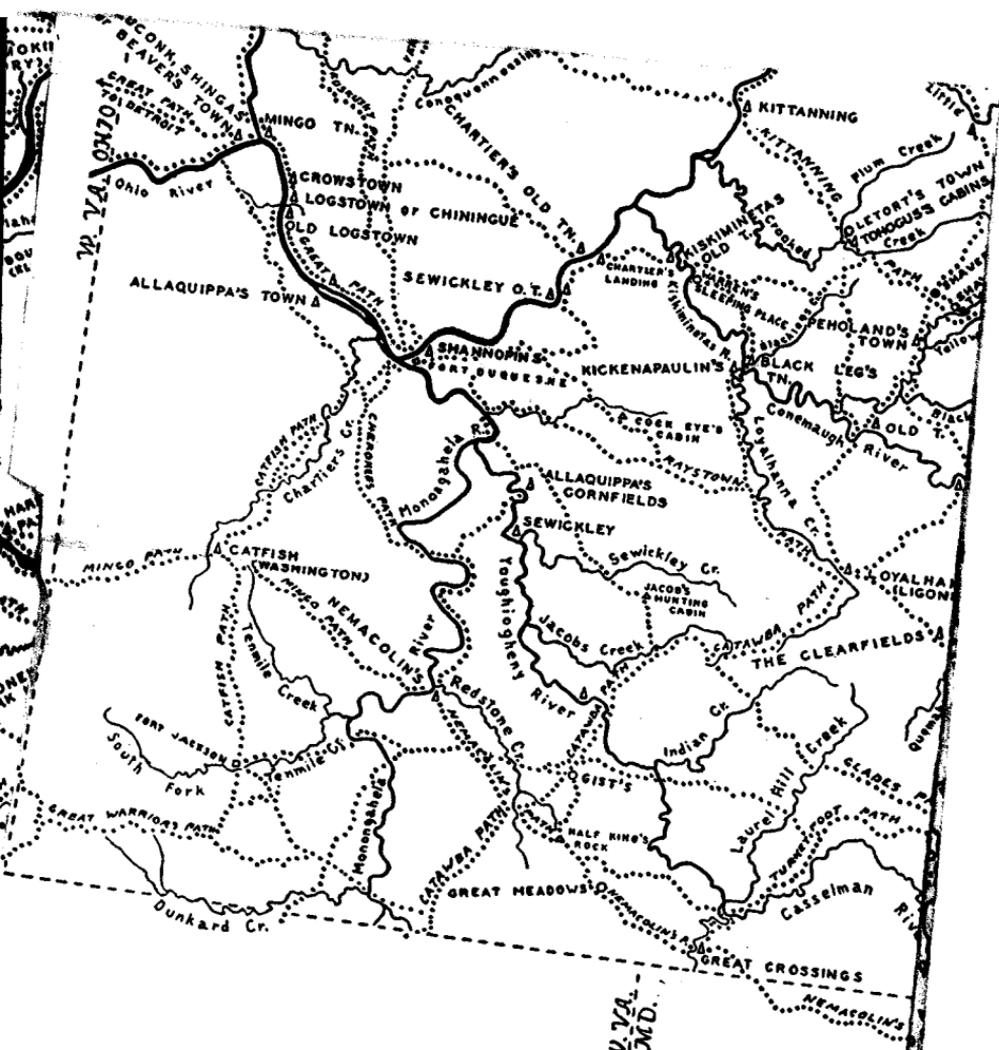
<sup>39</sup> See Maj. Moses Van Campen's journal, ed. by Lewis E. Theiss, Northumberland County Historical Society, *Proceedings*, XIV (1944), 111.

<sup>40</sup> "Halliday Jackson's Journal to the Seneca Indians, 1798-1800," ed. by Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Pennsylvania History*, XIX (1952), 339.

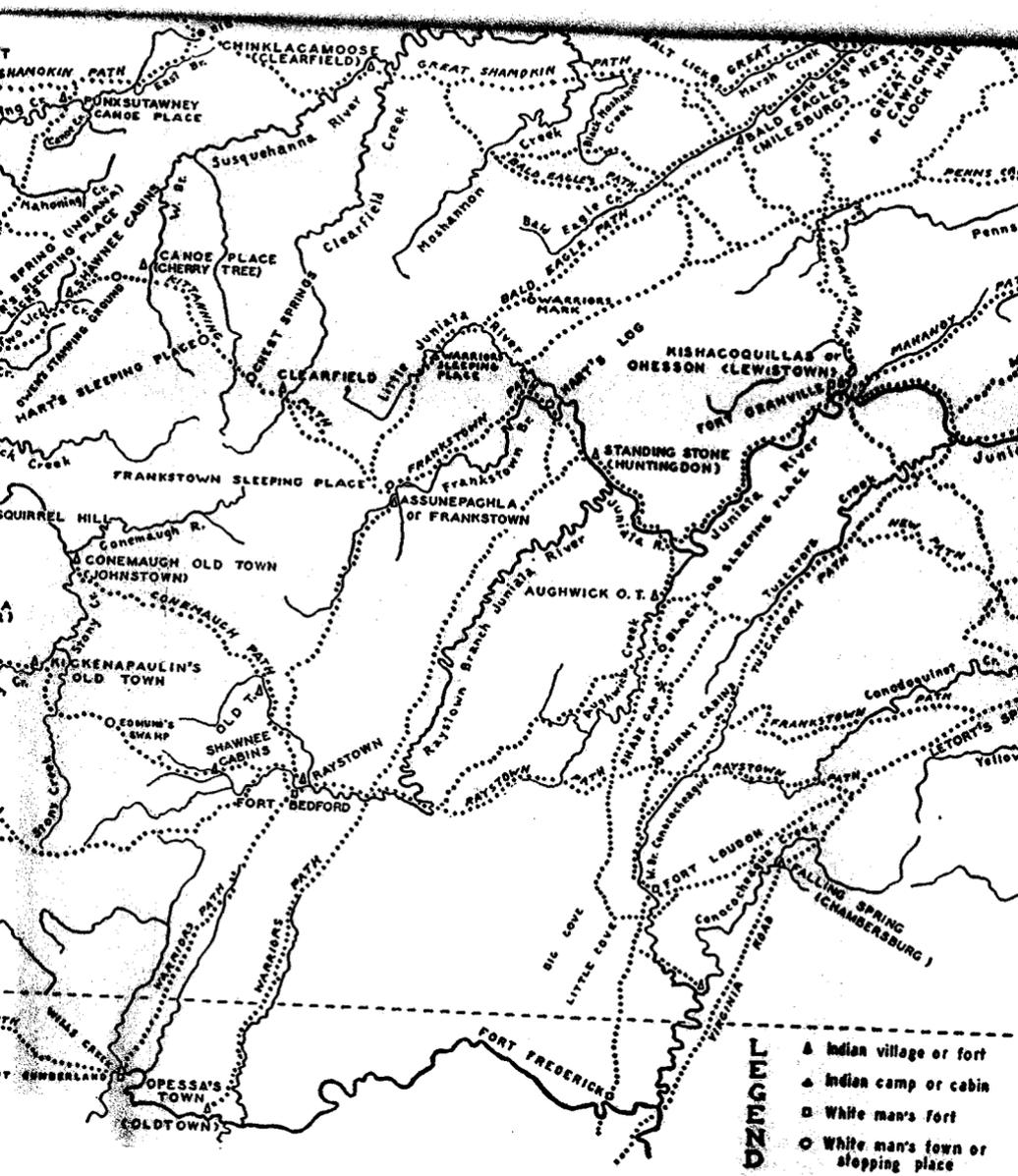
<sup>41</sup> This information was given me by William Smith (born 1862) at Wellsboro, Aug. 10, 1949. Under questioning Mr. Smith said repeatedly that the path came through the gorge "on the bottom."

<sup>42</sup> See letter from John Peet, in *History of the Counties of McKean, Elk, Cameron and Potter* (Chicago, Ill., 1890), 994.



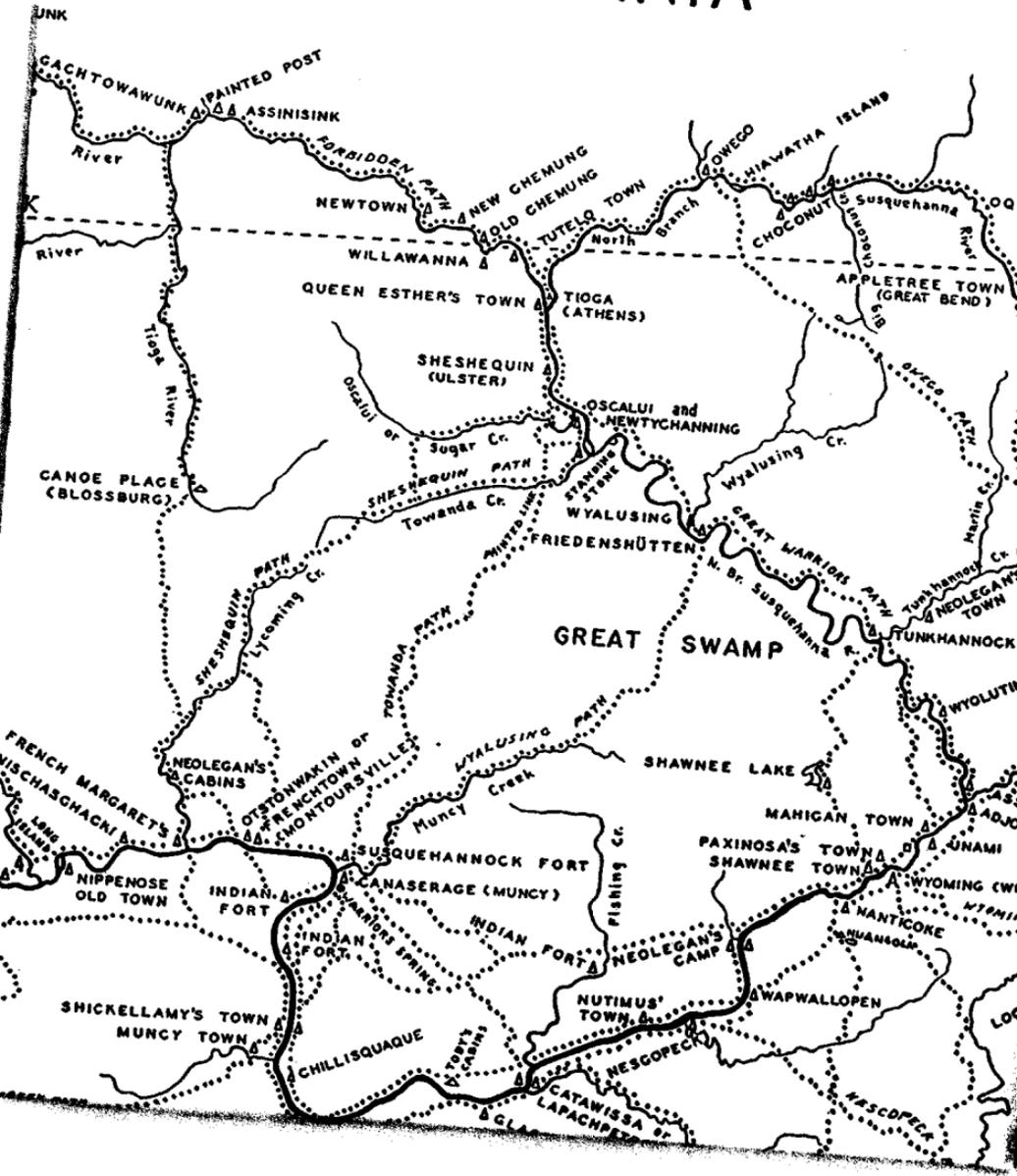


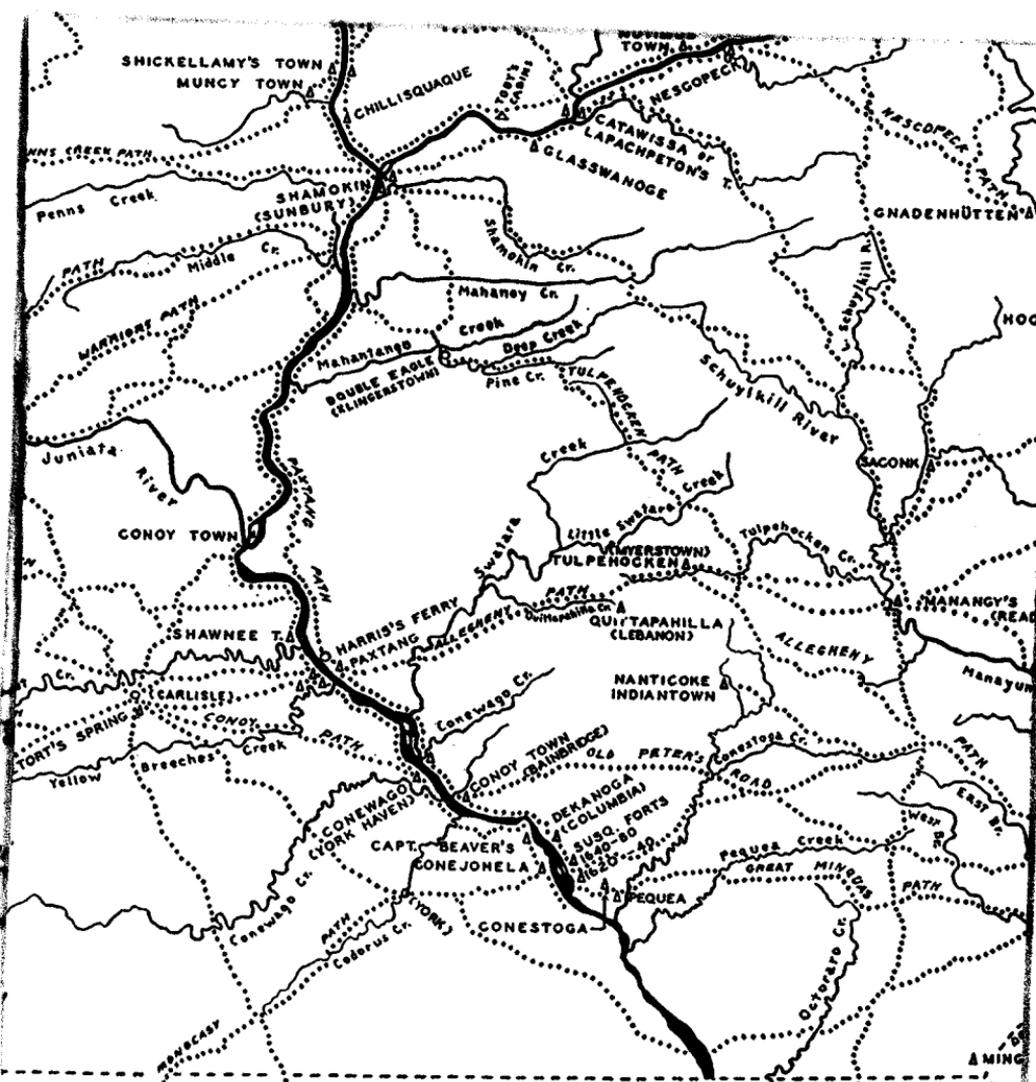




- LEGEND**
- ▲ Indian village or fort
  - ◻ Indian camp or cabin
  - ◻ White man's fort
  - White man's town or sleeping place

# OF PENNSYLVANIA



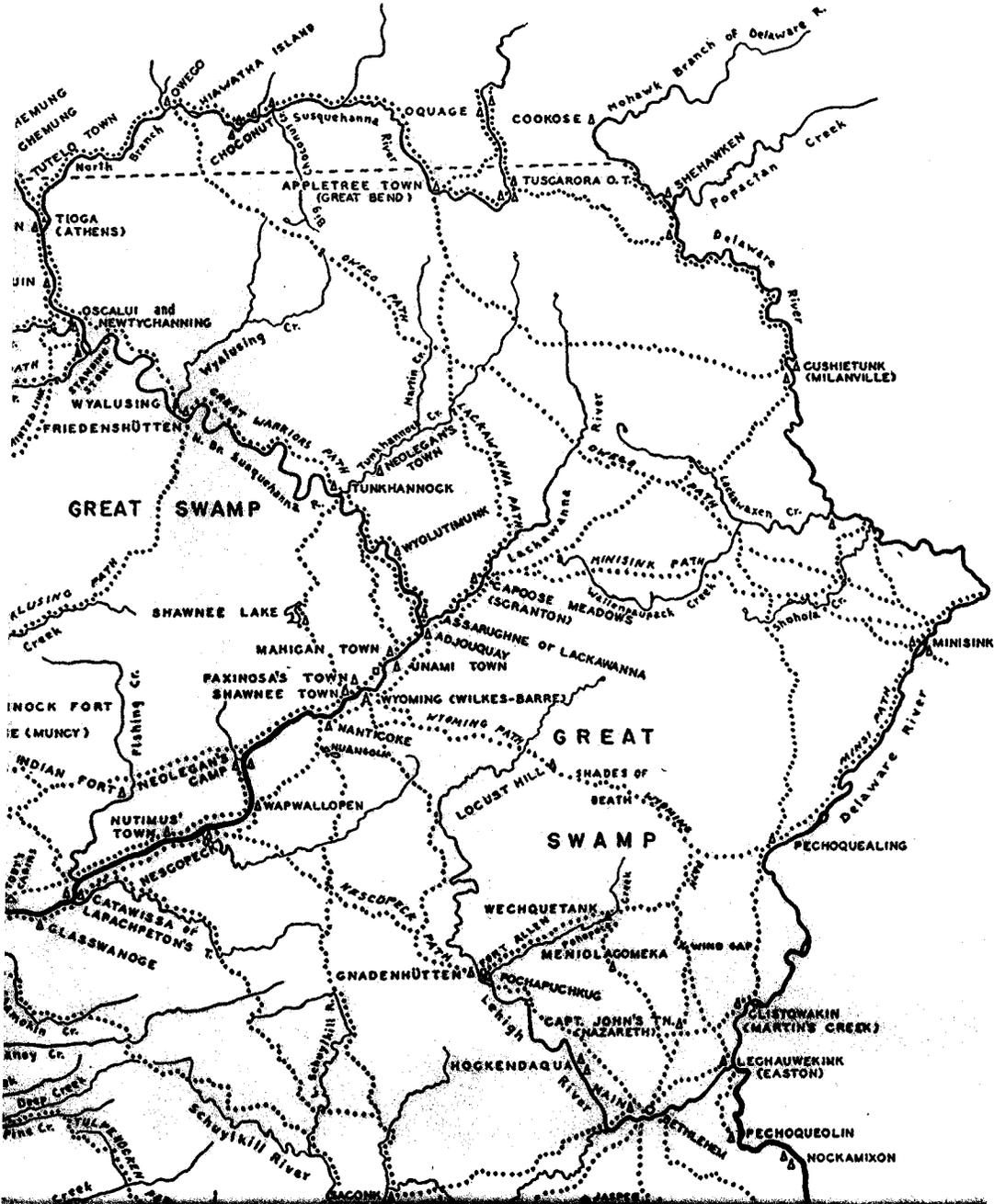
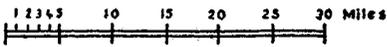


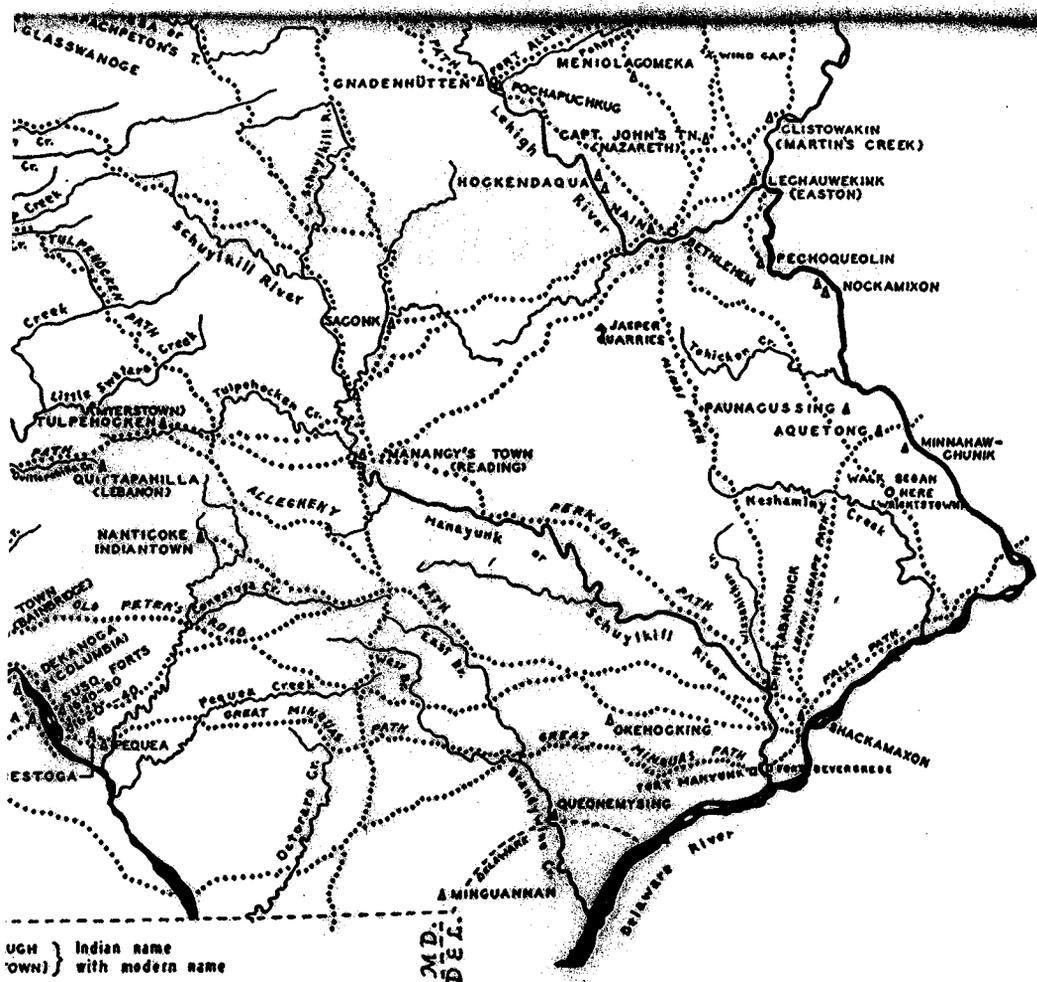
- Spring or salt lick
- X Landmark
- Indian path
- ~ River or creek

CONEMAUGH } Indian name  
 (JOHNSTOWN) } with modern name  
 T, TN. - Town  
 O. T. - Old Town

M.D. DEL.

# VANIA





UGH } Indian name  
 'OWN } with modern name  
 - Town  
 Old Town

M.D.  
 DEL.

PREPARED FOR THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM EDUCATION  
 PAUL A. M. WALLACE - 1928

Isle on Lake Erie to navigable water on French Creek at Fort Le Boeuf between Quebec and Fort Duquesne. Course: Presqu'Isle (Erie), Fort Le Boeuf (Waterford), Meadville, Carlton, Venango (Franklin), Harrisville, Prospect, Evansburg, West View, the Forks of the Ohio (Pittsburgh).

Used by George Washington (with variations south of Franklin) on his embassy to the French commander at Fort Le Boeuf in 1753. Colonel Bouquet in 1763 described the route thus: "a narrow crooked Path, difficult Creeks, & several long Defiles. . . ." <sup>43</sup> As late as 1792 the American commandant at Fort Pitt employed Indian runners over this path to Fort Franklin. <sup>44</sup>

*Anncville, Pa.*

PAUL A. W. WALLACE

<sup>43</sup> Bouquet to Amherst, July 13, 1763, Bouquet Papers, Series 21634 (Harrisburg, Pa., 1940), 215.

<sup>44</sup> Isaac Craig to Maj. Gen. H. Knox, Jan. 26, 1792, Craig Collection, Group II A, Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh.