

Christian Frederick Post and the Winning of the West

CHRISTIAN Frederick Post, although a relatively minor historical figure, has developed an almost mythical character in Pennsylvania's colonial history. But he did exist—he was born in 1710 in Conitz, East Prussia, emigrated to America in 1742, and died in Germantown in 1785.¹ Throughout his eclectic career of missionary work, Post labored under the banners of the Moravian and Anglican churches, and as an independent in such diverse areas as New York, Ohio, Labrador, and the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua.² His major contribution was his much discussed role as a diplomat in the withdrawal of the western Indians from the French interest in 1758.

The assessment of his activities on the frontier has had an energetic existence in colonial historiography for the past 100 years. The main questions that underlie this debate are: what part did Post play in the mission of 1758; how effective was it in coercing the western Indians to be neutral; was Post sincere or a tool of governmental designs; and how significant was the role of Indian participation in the success of General John Forbes' campaign against Fort

¹ Post died on Apr. 23, 1785, and was buried in Hood's Cemetery, located in Germantown's Old Burial Grounds on Germantown Ave. and Logan St. Edward W. Hocker, *Germantown, 1683-1933* (Germantown, 1933), 74, 75. There is no complete biographical treatment currently available on Post, although there are references to him in many of the histories of the Moravian Church and in the printed archives of Pennsylvania. The best concise synopsis of Post's career is in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, while a good account of his later career can be found in Harry H. Humrichouse, *Reverend Christian Frederick Post and Peter Humrickhouse* (Haegerstown, Md., 1913).

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² See Andrew S. Becky, ed., and Selina Schultz, tr., *The Mosquito Coast and The Story of the First Schwenkfelder Missionary Enterprise Among the Indians of Honduras from 1768 to 1775* (Norristown, Pa., 1953).

Duquesne and in ultimately the winning of the western frontier for the English colonists?

Post was chosen to deliver Pennsylvania's message of peace to the Ohio Indians. John G. E. Heckewelder, a contemporary, recalled that the government had searched for a suitable white messenger who spoke the Delaware language, eventually selecting Post, a "cheerful . . . man of undaunted courage and enterprising spirit."³ Another closely associated colleague, Charles Thomson, thought Post was "not a Scholar," which was certainly correct.⁴ From these primary records the impression is inferred that Post was a simple, sincere, God-fearing soldier of Christ.

This approach is altered somewhat by modern interpretations, but generally the consensus remains that Post was a "true Knight of the Cross." C. Hale Sipe, a dedicated Butler County, Pennsylvania, lawyer-historian of the 1920s and 1930s, wondered whether had it not been for Post "Would the Anglo-Saxon have the ascendancy in the Western World today? Would America be speaking English today?"⁵ Others see Fort Duquesne as "literally handed over by Post," that he "singly and alone broke up" the French-Indian alliance.⁶ Another distinguished early twentieth-century historian of Pennsylvania, George P. Donehoo, after drawing gruesome pictures of "unburied skeletons" and "disfigured bodies" from earlier British campaigns against the Forks of the Ohio, concluded that it is "almost certain" that Forbes would have shared the same fate "had not these Indian allies been kept away from the scene by the efforts of Post."⁷

Perhaps the most eminent personage who became involved in the Post controversy was Francis Parkman, the dean of American nineteenth-century historians. Parkman was unequivocal in his

³ John G. E. Heckewelder, *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, from its Commencement, in the Year 1740, to the Close of the Year 1808* (Philadelphia, 1820), 54, 55.

⁴ Charles Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and the Shawanese Indians* (London, 1759), 130.

⁵ C. Hale Sipe, *Fort Ligonier and Its Times: A History of the First English Fort West of the Allegheny Mountains . . .* (Harrisburg, 1931), 81-107.

⁶ Albert G. Rau, "Moravian Missions and Colonial Politics," *Moravian Historical Society Transactions*, II (1934), 143; Richmond E. Myers, "Moravian Missionary Saved British," *Bethlehem Globe-Times*, Dec. 15, 1955.

⁷ George P. Donehoo, "Christian Frederick Post's Part in the Capture of Fort Duquesne and in the Conquest of the Ohio," *The Pennsylvania-German*, XIV (January, 1913), 5.

approbation of Post and described him as "calmly prepared to place himself in the clutches of the tiger."⁸ However, in 1963 Francis Jennings, a diligent ethnohistorian, squarely locked horns with the Post myth. Jennings traced its source to Post's "tendency to exaggerate his own status" and to Parkman's dissemination of this bombast.⁹ He found Post's part in the fall of Fort Duquesne and the withdrawal of the western Indians grossly overblown. Credit belonged instead, he believed, to the attempts of the Ohio Delawares to gain peace and especially to one of their chiefs, Pisquetomen, elder brother of the "Kings," Shingas and Beaver. To Jennings the vital peace message originated with the western Delawares, was carried to Philadelphia by Pisquetomen, and was brought to the Ohio by him in Post's company. In this interpretation, Post became merely a notary public to verify the message, as well as a spy to send information to General Forbes. Jennings believed that Parkman extended the myth by continually viewing Post's mission as an "heroic, single-handed venture against all odds."¹⁰ Emphatically disagreeing with this, Jennings stated:

The diplomacy of the Indians themselves, epitomized in the Easton treaty which they organized and managed from first to last, was the crucial factor in bringing peace to the Ohio. Beside this, the personal influence of Frederick Post was gossamer.¹¹

And he went on to lament the relative treatment by the American Council of Learned Societies, publishers of the *Dictionary of American Biography*, of Post and Pisquetomen. The former "is recognized under his name, as the emissary of Pennsylvania to the Ohio Indians, the man who swayed them to peace. Pisquetomen is not to be found."¹²

Jennings' analysis was diametrically opposed to that of Richmond E. Myers, who wrote in 1955 that Post deserved "at least a statue in Westminster Abbey."¹³ Although Jennings' account was more

⁸ Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (Boston, 1884), II, 144.

⁹ Francis P. Jennings, "A Vanishing Indian: Francis Parkman Versus His Sources," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXVII (1963), 314.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 323.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Myers, *Bethlehem Globe-Times*, Dec. 15, 1955.

scholarly than previous efforts, Post is still considered by many as a genuine American hero of the second tier, one capable of performing superhuman deeds in a simple, religious manner. This school of thought would agree with the earlier assessment of Frank Cowan, poet laureate of southwestern Pennsylvania, in his conclusion to his poem "Christian Frederick Post."

For the Man of Peace their track had crossed
An hour before in Frederick Post! . . .
For the Man of Truth had come with the frost
That shook the leaves in Frederick Post! . . .
But the man of Faith availed them most,
Who had gone before, in Frederick Post! . . .
But the Man of Prayer, and not of boast,
Had spoken first, in Frederick Post!
At length the Army stood amazed
Upon a vacant plain,
And pitched their tent in wonderment
On the ashes of Duquesne!
The formidable Frenchman, gone!
And the Redman come, in sport,
The peace-pipe to light, in the gathering night,
With a brand from the burning fort!
For the Man of God with a mightier host
Had gone before, in Frederick Post!¹⁴

Myths like this, with such a strong foundation in popular folklore, are difficult to debunk no matter how contrary the evidence.

Attempts at establishing peace between the hostile Indians and Pennsylvania occurred before Post became involved.¹⁵ Charles Thomson, later a co-messenger with Post, wrote in January 1758 that Teedyuscung, the chief of the eastern Delawares, had in 1757 sent his son to the Ohio on a peace mission.

¹⁴ Frank Cowan, *Southwestern Pennsylvania in Song and Story* (Greensburg, Pa., 1878), 56, 57.

¹⁵ The eastern branch of the Delawares under the leadership of Teedyuscung negotiated a peace with Pennsylvania in 1756. But the western branch of the tribe was still hostile during 1757 and 1758, even though attempts were made to bring them to the conferences at Lancaster and Easton in 1757. Their reason for not attending was that "neither the Belts sent, nor the Persons that carried them, were proper on that Occasion." Thomson, *An Enquiry*, 106.

The week before last Teedyuscung's Son returned from thence and brings the News that he had been at Venango and Several other Towns on the Branches of the Ohio, that the Indians were much pleased with what was done and declare a willingness to join and be Friends. The Chief Man has Kept the Belt that he may invite others to join in the League and he says if he has any further Encouragement he and his People will come and hold a Treaty with the Government. Whether they will receive any encouragement from the Government is uncertain.¹⁶

Thus the crux of the issue, was the deliverance of further assurances of peace to the already receptive western Indians. A sign of good will was absolutely necessary before they would commit themselves.

The number of messengers coming to and from the Ohio increased. On February 15 ten Ohio Delawares arrived at Fort Augusta (present-day Shamokin) on their way to Philadelphia on a peace mission. Heavy snow detained them, but on March 6 they arrived at Fort Allen (present-day Weissport). Five of them left for Bethlehem the next day carrying "four Great bealts" of wampum on "a Pertikuler message to Tikiuskon," who wintered with the Moravians.¹⁷ A few days later Teedyuscung set out for Philadelphia with three of the Ohio Indians.¹⁸

There a conference between Governor William Denny, Teedyuscung, and the Ohio Indians was convened on March 15.¹⁹ Teedyuscung spoke of the western Indians' hope that the government would continue efforts to gain a peace: "They have seen us Hold Councils together, and they press us on to Execute what we have begun."²⁰

¹⁶ Charles Thomson to William Franklin, Jan. 2, 1758, American Indian Collection, vol. 48, Folio 121, American Philosophical Society (hereinafter cited as APS).

¹⁷ See Captain Jacob Orndt to Timothy Horsefield, Mar. 7, 1758, Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series* (Philadelphia, 1852-1854), III, 350 (hereinafter cited as PA1); Col. James Burd to Orndt, *ibid.*, 351; and Gov. William Denny to [James Abercromby], Mar. 24, 1758, Alexander Flick, et al., eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany, 1921-1962), II, 787, 788.

¹⁸ William A. Hunter, "Provincial Negotiations with the Western Indians, 1754-1758," *Pennsylvania History*, XVII (1951), 217, 218; Horsefield to Denny, Mar. 9, 1758, PA1, III, 351.

¹⁹ Thomson to Franklin, Mar. 12-16, 1757, American Indian Collection, vol. 48, Folio 122, APS; Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser, Mar. 14, 1758, Conrad Weiser Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereinafter cited as HSP).

²⁰ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Mar. 23, 1758; Indian conferences at Philadelphia, Mar. 11-15, 1758, Samuel Hazard, ed., *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1851-1853), VIII, 29-34 (hereinafter cited as CR).

Combined with the desire to reconcile the hostile natives was General Forbes' wish to secure intelligence: "If it could possibly be contrived to find some Intelligent Person who would venture up to the Ohio either as a Merchant or a Deserter, and would bring Us Intelligence what was going on in those parts, I should certainly reward him handsomely."²¹ What was thus required was a messenger to convey Pennsylvania's desire for peace and to act as a spy.

Governor Denny realized the vital importance in choosing the right person:

I agree with you that there are bad Birds in almost every Bush . . . yet the Traveller, who is intent on getting to the end of his Journey, will not hearken to them. . . . This chirping of Birds must not discourage Messengers sent to and fro; only let us take care that we send Men who are faithful and love to speak truth. . . . And a great deal depends on the characters of the messengers. . . .²²

The bad birds to whom Denny referred were the flying rumors which abounded in the spring of 1758. Because of the dearth of Indian auxiliaries and his fear of a repetition of the Braddock debacle, Forbes had secured support from the Cherokees, traditional enemies of the Delawares. A rumor arose that these southern Indians intended to exterminate the Delawares rather than fight the French.²³ Another chirping bird was the belief, mostly held by the Senecas, that the building of houses in Wyoming by the Pennsylvania government at the request of Teedyuscung was actually "the beginning of an English fort and town in Indian territory."²⁴ For peace negotiations and spying operations to continue such stories had to be stilled, and the only way to achieve this was by the use of faithful agents who would set the record straight.

On April 10 Teedyuscung reappeared with another Indian messenger, Daniel, to replace the long absent James who had apparently

²¹ Forbes to Denny, Mar. 20, 1758, *ibid.*, 60.

²² Denny to Indians at council in Philadelphia, Mar. 22, 1758, *ibid.*, 46.

²³ Denny to George Washington, Mar. 25, 1758, Flick, *Johnson Papers*, II, 797.

²⁴ Denny to John Hughes, Edward Shippen, James Galbreath and Francis Tomlin, May 4, 1758, Thomas Balch, ed., *Letters and Papers Relating Chiefly to the Provincial History of Pennsylvania, with Some Notices of the Writers* (Philadelphia, 1855), 117-119.

failed in delivering a peace message to the Ohio.²⁵ But other problems developed to ensnare these nascent negotiations. Not only was Daniel lethargic but a new wave of raids occurred, mostly in Lancaster County. On April 14 Richard Bard's plantation on South Mountain was destroyed and several of his family murdered by a band of marauding Indians. Bard, who finally managed to escape, described his experience.

In conversation with the Indians during my Captivity, they informed me that they were all Delawares, for they mostly all Spoke English, one spoke as good English as I can. The Captain said he had been at Philadelphia last Winter, and another said he had been at Philadelphia about a year ago; I ask'd them if they were not going to Peace with the English? The Captain answered, and said they were talking about it when he was in Philadelphia last Winter, but he went away and left them.²⁶

Could negotiations continue when Indians supposedly inclined to peace continued their attacks? Teedyuscung did not think so, nor was he pleased with Daniel, "supposedly they bring news of peace from Ohio but yet more whites die."²⁷ Daniel, at this time, was giving Captain Orndt at Fort Allen nightmares; he simply was in no hurry to leave its comfortable security. Orndt had literally to push the messengers out of the fort, but "they came back again towards Evening, telling the Captain they would not carry the Message; one of them said he had dream'd that two Indians had poisoned them, and they would die if they go."²⁸ With time now a factor, the need for more reliable envoys became urgent.

On May 5 Teedyuscung suggested "if you desire it, you may send a white man with my Indians, who will see and Judge for himself."²⁹ At this juncture Post became involved, albeit in a circuitous manner. The government was engaged in its controversial program to build houses for Teedyuscung. Toward this end it sent Isaac Zane to assist in the construction. On his way to Wyoming he asked Bishop

²⁵ Council with the Indians in Philadelphia, Apr. 12-13, 1758, *CR*, VIII, 86-96; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Mar. 20, 1758; Robert Strettell to Timothy Horsefield, Apr. 14, 1758, Horsefield Papers, II, 421, APS.

²⁶ Richard Bard's deposition, May 12, 1758, *PAI*, III, 396, 397.

²⁷ Horsefield to Denny, Apr. 19, 1758, *CR*, VIII, 84, 85.

²⁸ John Edwin to Denny, Apr. 23, 1758, *ibid.*, 98.

²⁹ Teedyuscung in council at Philadelphia, May 5, 1758, *ibid.*, 114, 115.

Spangenberg, "the cheef man among ye Moravians, for gides, he recommended frederick post . . . but he was gon to fort Allen to get loogs." At Fort Allen, Zane found Post "who redily agred to go wt us" to Wyoming.³⁰

On June 6 Post was in Philadelphia preparing to return to Wyoming with Charles Thomson and messages for Teedyuscung, one from the Governor and one from General Forbes.³¹ The General described his role in this transaction:

I have just now fixed with the Governor to send a solemn message among the Delawares and Shawanese to beg a meeting with them where they chose to appoint, when I hope to persuade many of them at least to remain neutralls for this Campaign. This message was absolutely necessary as there has been great art used to fright those people at the Cherokees, and to incense the Senecas at our building a few houses at Wiomin.³²

Post and Thomson set off on their mission,³³ meeting first with Teedyuscung fourteen miles from Wyoming, where the issues of the Cherokees and the Wyoming houses were adjusted to everyone's satisfaction.³⁴ The talk then turned to negotiations with the Ohio Indians: "Of Essoweyowallund or Daniel, he [Teddyuscung] said he had not yet heard any thing; but the other Messenger, Willemighink or James, he heard was on his way down, as he expected him at Wyoming in three Days."³⁵ When Post and Thomson hinted at their availability to continue to the Ohio, Teedyuscung commented that many of the western Indians had often asked "why none of the English accompanied the Messages sent to them."³⁶ But after some

³⁰ Isaac Zane, "Journal of Isaac Zane to Wyoming, 1758," ed. by Joseph H. Coates, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XXX (1906), 418-421.

³¹ Denny to Post and Thomson, Instructions for Journey, June 6, 1758, Personalia Post, Box 219, Folder 8, no. 2, Moravian Archives (hereinafter cited as MA), Bethlehem, Pa.; Certificate of Post and Thomson by Gov. Denny, June 6, 1758, *ibid.*, no. 1.

³² Forbes to Maj. Gen. James Abercromby, June 7, 1758, A. P. James, ed., *Writings of General John Forbes* (Menasha, 1938), 109. For Forbes' preoccupation with intelligence see Forbes to Pitt, June 17, 1758, G. S. Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt* . . . (New York, 1906), I, 280.

³³ See William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758* (Harrisburg, 1960), 252.

³⁴ *PAI*, III, 415, 416; Thomson to Richard Peters, June 10, 1758, *ibid.*, 422.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 416.

³⁶ *Ibid.*,

contemplation, he decided that it would be too dangerous for them to travel westward. This rather abrupt change of heart was motivated by selfish considerations. One of his sons was currently negotiating with the western Indians and Teedyuscung hoped peace would be concluded without English interference. After delivering their messages, Post and Thomson returned to Philadelphia on May 16.³⁷

Post was immediately urged to take back to Wyoming a message from the Cherokees to the Delawares.³⁸ There, he reported, "Teedyuscung shewed me two Chiefs and several other Indians from Allegheny, who purposed to go down to Philadelphia but the idle Reports which they had all along heard had made them suspicious and afraid."³⁹ These chiefs, Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung, "complained strongly that they never had heard any Satisfactory Account of the Peace made at Easton [in 1757], nor any Treaties that had been held, nor received any Belts 'till now lately."⁴⁰ Kutaikund, an aged Delaware chief, beseeched Post to urge the Governor to send "somebody with them at their return Home, for it would be of great consequence to them, who live above Allegheny, to hear the Governor's mind from their own Mouths."⁴¹ Post, Pisquetomen, and Keekyuscung then traveled to Philadelphia, where another conference was convened.⁴²

At this council, which was completed on July 12, negotiations emphasized the urgent need for reliable messengers to carry the peace belts to the Ohio.⁴³ While Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung were in town, they were "very closely examin'd" by Richard Peters, cleric, provincial secretary, and a major political figure in Pennsylvania. "They say that they come from the Ohio of their own head

³⁷ Capt. John Bull to Samuel Dupui, June 14, 1758, *ibid.*, 423.

³⁸ See "A Message from Techtama and . . . the Wolf King, the Two Chiefs of the Cherokees, to the Delawares . . .," June 20, 1758, *CR*, VIII, 135-137; Denny to Post, *ibid.*, 138-139; and Memoranda of Israel Pemberton to Post, June 1758, Box 219, F. 8, no. 3, MA.

³⁹ See Post's journal, June 20-30, 1758, *ibid.*, F. 2; *CR*, VIII, 142-145.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴² *Ibid.*; Hunter, "Provincial Negotiations," *Pennsylvania History*, XVII, 219.

⁴³ Indian conference at Philadelphia, July 6-12, 1758, *PAI*, III, 456-469; Indian conference, July 11-12, 1758, Sylvester K. Stevens, *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, II, *The Forbes Expedition* (Harrisburg, 1951), 187-193.

having never heard more than a General Rumour of Teedyuscung's being in Treaty with this Government about Peace." They had met the messenger "James near Wenango but he said no more than this that if they proceed to Wyomink they would hear what is doing. The very thing they proposed to do when they set out." Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung declared their preference for the English, yet hesitated in leaving the French because of a lack of correspondence with the English: "But never hearing from them nor of them and the French telling them a parcel of Lies to the prejudice of the English they could not tell what to do; but had the Peace Belts arriv'd last fall they wou'd all have chang'd Sides."⁴⁴

This theme was constantly repeated: had trusty messengers been sent out, a peace could have been arranged much earlier. Or, as Moses Tattamy and Isaac Still, two Delawares, reported: "Sever'l times in conversation they said if the English were in earnest why did they not send some of their own people with the Messages."⁴⁵ What the Indians required was a tangible sign of English sincerity. Since they possessed a nonliterate culture, other forms of communication loomed large in their traditions. For example, wampum and gifts must be exchanged in a treaty as a visible mark of good faith, and, in this instance, a white man accompanying the messages was absolutely necessary for peace to be secured.

On July 14 Governor Denny and the Assembly went to "Great Pains . . . with Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung to prevail with them to go as quick as possible to the Ohio. . . . Frederick Post was desired to accompany the Indians, and he readily consented to go."⁴⁶ Post's instructions were to secure the release of prisoners and to gather information, with an emphasis on the latter.⁴⁷ He was to send off two or three Indians with intelligence as soon as possible to Forbes. They were to be distinguished by yellow ribbons and British flags.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, IX, 47, HSP.

⁴⁵ "Journal of Moses Titamy [Tattamy] and Isaac Hill [Still] to Minisinks," June 27, 1758, *PAI*, III, 507.

⁴⁶ Council in Philadelphia, July 14, 1758, *CR*, VIII, 147, 148.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Denny to Post, Letter of Authorization, June 15, 1758, Box 219, F. 8, no. 4, MA; Denny to Post, Instructions, *ibid.*, no. 5.

⁴⁸ Peters to Weiser, June 28, 1758, Conrad Weiser Papers, II, 133, HSP.

Accordingly, Post, James, Pisquetomen, Isaac Still, and Keekyuscung left Philadelphia.⁴⁹

Post's trip from Philadelphia on July 15 to his return to Fort Augusta on September 22 is well known. But there is a need to retell certain aspects of the story to ascertain his role in the success of the mission. Upon his arrival at Fort Allen he was barred from continuing further by Teedyuscung who had received a message that his son Hans Jacob had returned from the Ohio. Teedyuscung did not want to share the glory of securing peace with the Moravian whose chances of success aroused the Delaware's jealousy.⁵⁰ Post, however, managed to continue on, his party augmented by Shamokin Daniel, an unfortunate addition as later proven by his treachery.⁵¹ Although Post had not initiated the mission, from June on he was a leading participant. Not only had earlier messengers, all Indians, not fulfilled their tasks, Daniel and Teedyuscung purposefully attempted to sabotage the mission, acts which tend to diminish Jennings' claim that the successful conclusion of the peace effort belonged entirely to the Indians and that Post was little more than an ornament and spy.

Post and his company arrived at Fort Venango on August 7 and at the important Delaware town of Kuskusky (present-day New Castle, Pennsylvania) on the thirteenth, where his little band was warmly greeted by the Beaver, head sachem of the Ohio Delawares: "Boys, hearken, we sat here without ever expecting again to see our brethen the English; but now one of them is brought before you, that you may see your brethren, the English, with your eyes; and I wish you may take into consideration." Turning to Post, Beaver welcomed him, "Brother I am very glad to see you, I never thought we should have had the opportunity to see one another more. . . . It is a great satisfaction to me."⁵² However, when Post broached the

⁴⁹ Post's Journal, July 15-17, 1758, Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland, 1904-1907), I, 185. Post's first journal, which covered July 15 to Sept. 22, 1758, will be hereinafter cited as *Post 1*, the second journal which covered Oct. 25, 1758, to Jan. 10, 1759, will be referred to as *Post 2*.

⁵⁰ Capt. Levi Trumpp to Denny, July 19, 1758, *Indian and Military Affairs of Pa., 1737-1775*, pp. 603-607, APS; Orndt to Denny, July 24, 1758, *PAD*, III, 490, 491; Teedyuscung's Message to the Governor by Zacheus and Jonathan, Aug. 9, 1758, *ibid.*, 509; *Post 1*, 186-188.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 188-189.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 191-194.

subject of prisoners the chief replied: "It appears very odd and unreasonable that we should demand prisoners before this is an established peace; such an unreasonable demand makes us appear as if we wanted brains."⁵³ Post then moved on with an escort of French and Indians toward Fort Duquesne, prudently camping across the Allegheny from the French stronghold.⁵⁴

There he presented his message of peace to an assemblage of French and Indians, estimated to be 300, on an island near the fort. The Indians appeared pleased with Post's proposals: "Being glad to hear from the English and said that they never had any difference with the English . . . but were expected by the French to war with them."⁵⁵ After Post's speech, the French invited the natives to the fort, to which most readily consented. Among those who crossed the Rubicon were Shamokin Daniel, Post's guide. After the French "presented him with a laced coat and hat, a blanket, shirts, ribbons, a new gun, powder, lead, etc.," Daniel became a changed man. Returning, he viciously confronted Post's party: "See here, you fools, what the French have given me. I was in Philadelphia and never received a farthing. . . . The English are fools, and so are you."⁵⁶

At this time Post was in grave danger. Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger, two prisoners, reported that if the French captured Post "they would roast him alive for five days." Even some friendly Indians believed "that he was destined for death."⁵⁷ A few of them returned to Post with the news that "the French insisted that I must be delivered up to them, and that it was not lawful for me to go away." Nevertheless, Post and an Indian bodyguard left camp on August 27, Post slipping away because of his privileged position as a messenger. He was literally "in the bosom" of Pisquetomen who was honorbound to protect him.⁵⁸

At Kuskusky Post dined with the notorious Shingas "the Ter-

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 200-203; Post to Forbes, [Aug. 24, 1758], Stevens, *Bouquet*, II, 371.

⁵⁵ *Post I*, 204-209; "Journal of Daniel's Journey to the Allegheny," An Account given to Israel Pemberton by Shamokin Daniel, Etting Collection, Pemberton Papers, II, 29, HSP.

⁵⁶ *Post I*, 209.

⁵⁷ *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XXIX (1905), 412.

⁵⁸ *Post I*, 210-212, 224, 225.

rible." Shingas, a wanted man with a great price on his head, was desirous of establishing peace, and only "wished he could be certain of the English being in earnest."⁵⁹ He and the six other chiefs that were present requested that "when the Governor sends the next messenger, let him send two or three white men, at least, to confirm the thing, and not send such a man as Daniel; they did not understand him; he always speaks, said they, as if he was drunk; and if a great many of them had not known me, they should not know what to think; for every thing I said he contradicted."⁶⁰ Again, the vital nature of the type and character of the messenger was repeated. And why shouldn't a messenger be important? In 1758, communication was most primitive, the only link between the 300 miles that stretched from the Ohio to Philadelphia was the messenger. An amalgamation of the Indian and the settler combined in Post fitted him perfectly for the role. He had had two Indian wives, both of whom died young, he spoke the relevant tongues, and he was known and trusted by both sides.

The Indians at Kuskusky told Post "Brother, your heart is good, you speak always sincerely; but we know there are always a great number of people that want to get rich; they never have enough; look, we do not want to be rich, and take away what others have."⁶¹ Their speech focuses on an interesting point, the separate motivations of Post and the government he represented. While there is little doubt that Post was a genuine, sincere Christian who possessed no selfish motives, can the same be said about the officials in Philadelphia?

Post, Pisquetomen, Daniel, and another Delaware Indian, Thomas Hickman, left Kuskusky on September 8 for their return trip. After an extremely arduous journey the bedraggled crew arrived at Fort Augusta where Post's journal was copied from his rough scrawl into a coherent form.⁶² Sending his journal to Governor Denny by Pisquetomen and Thomas Hickman (many key events were omitted which

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 212, 213.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 227, 228; Hunter, *Forts*, 528; Thomas L. Montgomery, ed., *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1916), II, 93; Peter Bard to Col. James Burd, Sept. 26, 1758, Shippen Family Papers, III, 207, HSP.

he would provide "bey word of maus"),⁶³ Post traveled on to Rays-town to report to General Forbes, intending later to follow the Ohio messengers to Philadelphia.⁶⁴ But meanwhile a treaty at Easton was scheduled with the Ohio Indians.

At the Easton conference, convened in mid-October, Pisquetomen delivered "the message sent from the Ohio Indians to this government." As Jennings has stressed, Pisquetomen had protected Post during their journey: "Now you, Gentlemen, who are Head Men, sent Frederick Post with me, desiring me to take and carry him in my Bosom there, and when I came there, to introduce him to the publick council; I did this, and have brought him back safe again." The message that Pisquetomen brought was one of peace: "Since I see you have digged up and revived that Friendship, which was buried in the Ground, now you have it, hold it fast." But to Pisquetomen peace would not be fully confirmed until the English notified word of it to the different colonial governments and "then you will be pl[ea]s[e]d to send it to me at Allegheny [and] . . . I will send it to all the Nations of my Colour."⁶⁵ In other words, the peace was not yet finalized. Another message must be sent to the Ohio to assure an end to hostilities.

By this time the question of Indian hostility was not really of vital importance since the western Indians were no longer capable of a prolonged campaign. But to the colonial mentality, mindful of the Braddock disaster, their neutrality appeared pre-eminent. Governor Horatio Sharpe of Maryland nearly repeated Forbes' admonitions. "I imagine the Success of his [Forbes'] Expedition depends greatly on the Issue of Your Conferences at Easton. . . ."⁶⁶ To the English there was an almost pathological need to secure a peace and thus neutralize Indian assistance to the French. Para-

⁶³ Post to [Denny], Sept. 26, 1758, Box 219, F. 7, #9, MA. Post was in error here—he mistakenly enclosed his journal in a packet to Bethlehem. This caused confusion, especially since Pisquetomen expected to use the journal as a tool to speak from. He discovered much to his chagrin that all he carried with him to Philadelphia was a letter from the commanding officer at Fort Augusta. See "Extract of a Letter from Phila., dated December 10, 1758," Thomson, *An Enquiry*, 175; and Phila. Council, Oct. 30, 1758, CR, VIII, 173, 174.

⁶⁴ Post to Spangenberg, Sept. 25, 1758, Box 219, F. 7, #8, MA.

⁶⁵ "Benjamin Chew's Journal of a Journey to Easton," Oct. 13, 1758, Julian P. Boyd, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762* (Philadelphia, 1938), 315; "Minutes of Conferences, held at Easton, in October 1758," Oct. 13, 1758, *ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁶ Sharpe to Denny, Oct. 17, 1758, *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1883-1964), IX, 227.

mount in this formula was the presence of an honest, white, bilingual messenger.

Denny's message to the Ohio Indians, desired them to "be kept at a Distance from Fort Duquesne, that they may not be hurt by our Warriors, who are sent by our King to chastize the French, and not to hurt you,"⁶⁷ and was sent by Captain John Bull who was accompanied by Pisquetomen and others, including two Iroquois representatives, "Tojenontawohy, a Cayuga chief, and the youngest Shick Calamy."⁶⁸ Meanwhile Post had been with Forbes at Raystown, where he had made a good impression: "I think he has execut[e]d the commission he was sent upon with ability and Fidelity, and deserves a proper reward." He should be "sent directly back with proper Messages . . . to the Ohio Indians to retire" Post eventually caught up with Captain Bull's party at Reading.⁶⁹

Since his primary directive was to return by way of General Forbes, he told Pisquetomen that "I will accompany you, if you will go the same way as I must go."⁷⁰ The Indians were wary of traveling through the Scotch-Irish settlements on this route, since they were the scene of many of their earlier raids. In an ironic twist Pisquetomen asked Post to hold him "in his bosom": "Brother, here is my hand, we have all joined to go with you, and we put ourselves under your protection to bring us safe through, and to secure us from all danger." The delegation arrived at Loyalhanna on November 7, where it received Forbes' message to the Ohio Indians requesting their withdrawal from Fort Duquesne.⁷¹

Post's party was protected for a time by a military escort, a detail of which upon its return to Forbes was attacked by French Indians. Four were captured and five were killed, including the squad's commander: "In the pocket of the officer, who was killed leading this small detachment, was found a letter from this officer [Post] to General Forbes."⁷² This letter was to cause Post a great deal of

⁶⁷ Easton Indian Conference, Oct. 20, 1758, Boyd, *Treaties Printed by Franklin*, 234.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Oct. 20-22, 1758, pp. 235-238.

⁶⁹ Instructions to John Bull, Esq., and William Hayes, Oct. 21, 1758, *PAI*, III, 556, 557; Forbes to Peters, Oct. 16, 1758, *Writings of Forbes*, 235; *Post 2*, 234-235.

⁷⁰ *Post 2*, 235; Hunter, *Forts*, 254.

⁷¹ *Post 2*, 237, 242-244.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 244-246; Marquis Vaudreuil to the Minister, Jan. 20, 1759, Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *Wilderness Chronicles of Northwestern Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1941), 127. For a report of Captain John Bull see *Pa. Gazette*, Dec. 21, 1758; *New York Mercury*, Jan. 1, 1759.

apprehension when the French presented it to the Indians as an example of English perfidy. In itself it was rather harmless, mentioning only that Post would not settle an agreement unless Forbes was involved and that Forbes "will hear nothing from him [Post] nor from the tribes for three weeks' time, but he hopes to meet him at Fort Duquesne."⁷³

Post, and the others under the leadership of Captain Bull, arrived at Kuskusky on November 16, but the village was deserted except for "two men, and some women," as well as a few French. The remainder were involved in skirmishes with the English.⁷⁴ However, the Ohio Delawares began to drift back, and on the nineteenth the majority of the warriors returned full of recriminations against Post because of the letter. "Post was represented as having written to the General that when he had beaten the French, he should summon the Indians to a treaty and then massacre them." The older chiefs did not believe this fabrication, but the young warriors became "suspicious so that it was a precarious time for us,"⁷⁵ relieved soon afterward by the French destroying Fort Duquesne. In the aftermath of their evacuation Colonel Henry Bouquet, Forbes' second-in-command, credited the Easton treaty and Indian diplomacy with striking "the blow which has knocked the French in the head."⁷⁶ It is little wonder then that Post became a hero of this engagement and attracted Parkman's laudatory attention.

Following the French withdrawal Pisquetomen reminded Post that for a lasting peace the English "must speedily retire to the other side of the mountains."⁷⁷ Pisquetomen hinted that if they would do so, "I will use it for an argument with other nations of Indians."⁷⁸ British withdrawal east of the mountains was now the *sine qua non* for a lasting peace.

⁷³ Vaudreuil to Minister, Jan. 20, 1759, Stevens and Kent, *Wilderness Chronicles*, 127.

⁷⁴ *Post 2*, 249. For Bull's version see Colonel John Bull to President Reed, July 9, 1779, *PAI*, VII, 554.

⁷⁵ Post to Moravian congregation at Bethlehem, Jan. 19, 1759, as quoted in J. M. Levering, *History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1741-1872* (Bethlehem, 1903), 362; *Post 2*, 252, 253.

⁷⁶ "Selections from the Military Correspondence of Colonel Henry Bouquet, 1757-1764," ed. by Helen Jordan, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XXXII (1908), 450.

⁷⁷ Vaudreuil to the Minister, Feb. 15, 1759, Stevens and Kent, *Wilderness Chronicles*, 131, 132; "Nouvelles Sauvages Novembre et Décembre 1758," Henri R. Casgrain, ed., *Relations et Journaux de Différentes Expéditions fait durant les Années 1755-56-57-58-59-60* (Quebec, 1895), 175-179.

⁷⁸ *Post 2*, 274.

Post left Kuskusky for Fort Duquesne on the twenty-ninth. En route some Delaware captains "invited me to come and live amongst them; since I had taken so much pains in bringing a peace about between them and the English." These Indians wanted to "hear the word of God: but they were always afraid the English would take that opportunity to bring them into bondage."⁷⁹ "When I came over to the fort," he later reported, "the council with the Indians was almost at an end."⁸⁰ An agreement was arranged allowing 200 men to remain at the now rechristened Pittsburg. Bouquet, who commanded for the ailing Forbes, asserted that the British would remove their troops if the French withdrew: "If he retreats in entirety I will do as much."⁸¹ So followed an uneasy peace that promised trouble for the future.

His mission completed, Post all but lapsed into obscurity. He left Pittsburg on December 6 and reached Carlisle a month later, exhausted and without transportation.

I went to captain Sinclair for a horse, who ordered me to go to the chief justice of the town; who ought to procure one for me, in the province service. According to this order I went; but the justice told me, that he did not know how to get any horse; if I would go and look for one, he should be glad if I found any. But having no mind to run from one to another, I resolved to walk, as I had done before.⁸²

Such was the reward for the man who, according to some, "literally handed over" Fort Duquesne to the British. He closed his journal on January 10: "It rained all the day. I arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, in Lancaster; and was quite refreshed, to have the favour to see my brethren."⁸³

Post returned safely from "the clutches of the tiger," to quote Parkman, but did he measure up to the claims since made for him? In most myths and traditions there is a basis in truth, yet Post certainly did not singlehandedly neutralize the western Indians.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁸¹ Stevens, *Bouquet*, II, 621-624; Custaloga's report, dated Jan. 4, 1759, *ibid.*, 624-626; Stevens and Kent, *Wilderness Chronicles*, 134.

⁸² *Post* 2, 291.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Much credit belonged to James, Pisquetomen, and Keekyuscung. Also, diplomacy alone did not cause the Indian withdrawal. By November 1758 the winds of war were definitely favoring the British and the Indians realized this. The earlier destruction of Fort Frontenac by Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradstreet made it virtually impossible for the hostile natives to be supplied from Fort Duquesne. This dearth of goods contrasted with the presence of Forbes' massive army moving inexorably toward its objective. The Ohio Delawares did not need Post to realize that deserting the French was their only feasible alternative.

Despite reservations about the degree of Post's accomplishments, his services were certainly not without merit. Although undoubtedly irascible, he was an energetic and indefatigable missionary who would be laboring for his God in the Nicaraguan jungles while in his seventies. His experiences, however, brought Post to the conclusion that the worlds of God and politics did not mix, and he begged the government not to employ him as a messenger if they did not intend to fulfill their promises: "So I think that a man whose Character it is to bring Words of Goddely and immutable Truth to the Nations, ought to be somewhat more cautious than others in carrying to the same People worldly messages, as these latter are often subject to unforeseen Disappointments.⁸⁴ How true, Post also realized, that "the Lyes of our Messengers will always expose us [missionaries] to Danger from the Indians."⁸⁵

His tireless effort from May 1758 to January 1759 was motivated not by political considerations but by faith. Although most of the exaggerated claims of the importance of Post's missions were clearly absurd, for example Americans would still be speaking English today with or without Christian Frederick Post, his bravery, determination, and sheer physical resiliency cannot be overshadowed. In that sense Post really did fulfill his supporters' claim that he was a "little mentioned Hero of Pennsylvania and American History."⁸⁶

Philadelphia

WALTER T. CHAMPION, JR.

⁸⁴ Post to Gov. Hamilton, Feb. 22, 1760, *PAI*, III, 702, 703.

⁸⁵ Post's Observations on Indian Matters, January 1759, Neville B. Craig, ed., *The Olden Time* (Pittsburgh, 1845), 134, 135; Penn Papers, Indian Affairs, IV, 50, HSP.

⁸⁶ Donehoo, "Christian Frederick Post's Part," *Pennsylvania-German*, XIV, 5.