



*We “Now Have Taken up the
Hatchet against Them”:
Braddock’s Defeat and the
Martial Liberation of the Western
Delawares*

IN 1755 WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA became the setting for a series of transforming events that resonated throughout the colonial world of North America. On July 9, on the banks of the Monongahela River—seven miles from the French stronghold of Fort Duquesne—two regiments of the British army, together with over five companies of colonial militia, suffered a historic mauling at the hands of a smaller force of French marines, Canadian militia, and Great Lakes Indians. With nearly one thousand casualties, the defeat of General Edward Braddock’s command signified the breakdown of British presence on the northern Appalachian frontier. This rout of British-American forces also had an immense effect on the future of Indians in the Ohio Country, particularly the peoples of western Pennsylvania referred to as the Delawares.

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From late October 1755 through the spring of 1756, Delaware war parties departing from their principal western Pennsylvania town of Kittanning and from the east in the Susquehanna region converged on the American backcountry. There they inflicted tremendous loss of life and cataclysmic destruction of property on the settlements of Pennsylvania and Virginia. In November, Governor Robert Morris of Pennsylvania commented that the “unhappy defeat” of Braddock had “brought an Indian War upon this [Pennsylvania] and the neighbouring provinces.”¹ Morris added that to his “great Surprise,” the Delawares and Shawnees of the Ohio “have taken up the Hatchet against us, & with uncommon Rage and Fury carried on a most Barbarous & Cruel War, Burning & Destroying all before them.”²

In answer to questions as to why the Delawares, once the favored Indian people of William Penn and the subsequent proprietors, launched such destruction against Pennsylvania, three provincial officials, Robert Strettell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader, delivered a report to the governor. Their account offered a revealing explanation for the circumstances that led the Delawares to the warpath against a colony that had once sustained peaceful relations with its Indian population. According to the three:

They [the Delawares] attributed their Defection wholly to the Defeat of General Braddock, and the increase of Strength and reputation gained on that Victory by the French, & their intimidating those Indians and using all means by promises and Threats, to seduce and fix them in their Interest; and to the seeming weakness & want of Union in the English.³

Strettell, Turner, and Cadwalader not only attributed the “seeming weakness” of the British military and the failure of the American colonies to unite at Albany in the summer of 1754 as determining reasons for the recent violence, they concluded that the attacks were also due to the lack

¹ Governor Robert Hunter Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, ed. Samuel Hazard et al. (Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852–1935), 4th ser., 2:528.

² Governor Robert Hunter Morris to William Shirley, Philadelphia, Dec. 3, 1755, in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan et al., 14 vols. (Albany, NY, 1921–65), 2:368.

³ Report of Robert Strettell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader to Governor Robert Morris, Philadelphia, Nov. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government*, in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Harrisburg, 1838–53), 6:724–28.

of British support for the Delawares' attempts to protect themselves. Amid the increasing French presence on the periphery of the Pennsylvania backcountry, British officials "had constantly refused to put the Hatchet into their [the Delawares'] hands"—to let them defend their homeland on the Ohio against the incursions of the French and their western Indian allies. The commissioners claimed that their report outlined the "true and sole Cause of [the Delawares'] Defection."⁴

The "put the Hatchet" reference is no doubt the most relevant and yet complex of the reasons given by the three commissioners. The phrase holds a deeper nuance than Delaware concern regarding British military ineffectiveness or American indifference to frontier defense, for it also suggests that the Delawares, not content with their restrictive role within their alliance with the Iroquois, wanted the Six Nations to release them from their designation as women noncombatants and allow them to pursue the masculine prerogative of war making. The perceived frailty of the British military and the Delaware belief (culled from past experiences) that the Six Nations would not or could not offer a defense of the Ohio, led the western Delawares to assert themselves as "men." As Frank Speck argued many years ago, the Delaware raids of 1755 demonstrated the "vehement masculinity of men rearmed"; they "cast aside the metaphorical petticoats and cornpounders" and set the American frontier on fire.⁵

The course taken by the Delawares served as a bloody testament that they were making a drastic cultural and political shift. As the French and British squared off for dominance on the western Pennsylvania frontier, the Delawares confirmed through their devastating attacks that they were not passive tributaries of the Great League of Iroquois but an independent people who could defend themselves and their homeland. The emerging political and military challenges of the Pennsylvania backcountry allowed the Delawares of the Ohio both to reevaluate their relationship with a weakened British military and to reject the military restraint placed upon them as women in the structures of the Iroquois League and Covenant Chain. Braddock's defeat had revealed chinks in the stability and power of the British-Iroquois alliance and thus became the determining catalyst that launched the Delawares of the Ohio on a trajectory

⁴ Ibid., 6:727. While the report listed several causes, the commissioners viewed this last one as the final straw and the most crucial reason for the Delawares' attacks on Pennsylvania settlements.

⁵ Frank G. Speck, "The Delaware Indians as Women: Were the Original Pennsylvanians Politically Emasculated?" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 70 (1946): 388.

as a new people with the liberated identity of “men.” For the Delawares of the West, “taking the hatchet” became the phrase of preference, for it proclaimed the attributes of strength, power, and independence. The hatchet metaphor empowered Delawares to pursue a new identity in the western reaches of the Ohio—one more conducive for survival on a frontier of unrest.

The history between the Delawares and Iroquois offers an insight into an eighteenth-century dichotomy found within the Indian world: a polarity between strength, as expressed through martial assertion, and weakness, as defined through passive compliance. Such a dichotomy also served as the framework for British and American colonials to understand—or, in many instances, misinterpret—the relationship between the Delawares and the Iroquois Confederacy. As it pertained to the Delawares of the Ohio, the events of 1755 turned the polarization of assertive strength and submissive restraint on its head.

In the early 1600s, the Delawares (Lenapes comprised of the Turtle and Turkey phratries, or large clans, and Munsees, who contained the Wolf phratry), then consisting of scattered, decentralized villages of independent, kin-based bands along the Delaware River watershed, including New Jersey and northeast to the Hudson River region, struck an association with the Iroquois.⁶ Delawares joined the political configuration of the Iroquois Confederacy as props of the League Longhouse, a relationship structured around an accord of responsibilities and obligations between both parties. In exchange for the protection and security offered by the League of Iroquois, the Delawares were obligated to metaphorically fortify the rafters of the Longhouse by providing their support and loyalty. The Iroquois believed that the addition of props fulfilled the vision of the Peacemaker, Deganawidah, to spread the White Roots of Peace throughout the forests of North America by tactful persuasion as opposed to brutal conquest. Placed under the Iroquois Great Tree of Peace as a younger relative of the then Five Nations, the Iroquois consid-

⁶ On location of early Delaware groups, see William A. Hunter, “Documented Subdivisions of the Delaware Indians,” *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of New Jersey* 35 (1978): 20–39; Ives Goddard, “Delaware,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15, *Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, DC, 1978), 213–21; Melburn D. Thurman, “The Delaware Indians: A Study in Ethnohistory” (PhD diss., University of California at Santa Barbara, 1973), 106–16; and *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs, of the Indian Nations, Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States*, by the Rev. John Heckewelder, with Introduction and Notes by the Rev. William C. Reichel, new and revised ed., *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* 12 (1876): 50–51.

ered the Delaware entrance as a support to buttress the power of the Longhouse.⁷

In doing so, the Delawares relinquished their masculine privilege of war making unless such actions were sanctioned by the Iroquois. The eighteenth-century Moravian missionaries David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder, well versed in Lenape history, used the information they received from tribal elders and presented the Delawares in a favorable light regarding their role as noncombatants in the association. Heavily influenced by his Delaware informants, Zeisberger concluded that the Delawares willingly received the symbolic woman's role with the understanding that "No one should touch or hurt the woman." He noted that when the council of the Five Nations made the pact with the Delaware leaders, they "adorned them with ear-rings, such as the women were accustomed to wear." They also anointed them with oil and medicine, dressed them in the garments of women, and gave them a "corn-pestle and hoe," the symbols of a woman's rank. However Zeisberger was quick to point out that as women, or peacemakers, the Delawares held prestigious positions as councilors within the alliance. He also cautioned:

One must not however, think that they actually dressed them in women's garments and placed corn-pestle and hoe in their hands. . . . the women's garment signified that they should not engage in war, for the Delawares were great and brave warriors, feared by the other nations. . . . The calabash with oil was to be used [for the Delawares] to cleanse the ears of the other nations, that they might attend to good and not to evil counsel.⁸

⁷ Susan Kalter, ed., *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations: The Treaties of 1736–62* (Urbana, IL, 2006), 7–8; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 274–75. On the philosophical construct of the White Roots of Peace, see Paul A. W. Wallace, *The White Roots of Peace: The Iroquois Book of Life* (1946; repr., Santa Fe, NM, 1994). According to Anthony F. C. Wallace, a contemporary (1946) Cayuga informant named Chief Alexander General (Deskaheh) told him that under Iroquois supervision Delaware leaders could give an opinion regarding League policy but could not participate in the decision making. Delaware representatives, placed under the direction of the Cayugas, asked permission to speak, and when they did so the topic had to be restricted to only those issues relative to Delaware concerns. We can only speculate on the reliability of this source since we have little colonial documentation to verify this assertion. See Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Women, Land, and Society: Three Aspects of Aboriginal Delaware Life," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist* 17 (1947): 21–22.

⁸ "David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians," ed. Archer Butler Hulbert and William Nathaniel Schwarze, *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications* 19 (1910): 35. Heckewelder received his information from the Reverend C. Pyrlaeus, who contended that the Dutch arranged for this alliance at Nordman's Kill. The Dutch wanted to disarm the Delawares,

"The woman shall not go to war, but endeavor to keep peace with all. The man shall hear and obey the woman."⁹

A Lenape informant told Heckewelder that "As men [the Delawares] had been dreaded; as women they would be respected and honored, none would be so daring or so base as to attack or insult them." Delawares declared that "women" was not a label of weakness or defeat. Only a people of strength, wisdom, and influence could attain the title among Algonquian speakers of the northeastern woodlands by pursuing the ideals of peace and restraining themselves from war.¹⁰ The Delawares, with small villages and towns spread throughout eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the southern part of New York, had a military potential comparable to that of the Six Nations. But as they were without a cohesive political structure such as that of the Iroquois Confederacy, the majority of Delaware bands moved toward a course of inactivity from war, thus solidifying their identity as "women."

There has been much thought-provoking scholarship involving the meaning of the term "woman" among Indian peoples and how it was applied specifically to the Delawares. The Lenape scholar Jay Miller maintains that the adoption of this title was by Delaware consent. In the late 1670s, Delaware bands, having borne the "brunt of contact" with Europeans, desired to "minimize intercourse" in the future. The tribal status of woman became preferable to Delawares, who favored a neutral position in the escalating conflict between Europeans and Indians in the colonial backcountries. Warrior and diplomat designations appealed to the more isolated Iroquois. Miller believes that "Iroquois vanity, if not

whom they saw as a serious military threat. Zeisberger believed that this agreement came at a later date, when Penn settled in his new colony. Nevertheless he maintained that the title of "woman" meant the Delawares were highly respected and the Iroquois "recognized the superior strength of the Delawares." See Hulbert and Schwarze, "Zeisberger's History," 34. According to tradition, Delawares also recognized themselves as the prominent peacemakers and the Five Nations as the warriors in this alliance. See Daniel Brinton, *The Lenape and Their Legends; With the Complete Text and Symbols of the Walum Olum, a New Translation, and an Inquiry into Its Authenticity* (1884; repr., New York, 1969), 110, 114, 120. Richard C. Trexler contends that during this alliance ceremony of "gendered subordination," Delawares were actually dressed in the garments of women, which he calls "factual transvestism." See Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, NY, 1995), 77. Gunlög Fur, drawing upon the research of C. A. Weslager and Daniel Brinton, concludes that the gender designation of an entire people such as the Delawares was indeed unique. See Fur, *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters among the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia, 2009), 192–94.

⁹ Zeisberger's comments from George H. Loskiel's notes in Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 59n3.

¹⁰ Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 58.

superiority, would have espoused the status of men.” In accepting identification as women, the Delawares embraced an ethos of “pacifist resistance,” but they believed that they had accepted this rank within League apparatus from the point of strength and honor.¹¹ There was no conquest.

Gunlög Fur, in *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters*, has isolated the application of the metaphor “woman” into three distinctive strands. First, the term accelerated throughout the 1720s and into the 1760s and was applied to the language of diplomacy. In this context, the trope could be used to explain (in this case as applied to the Delawares, a metaphorical) conquest by the Iroquois or used as a rhetorical instrument “to shame other men” and goad reluctant warriors into military action. Second, Fur believes that the term was used to denote an “uneasy subservience and acceptance” of the circumstance that made Delawares women to the Six Nations. Many Delaware leaders, such as Sassoonan, Tamaqua, and Teedyuscung, used the metaphor to describe their plight or position—whether as a people in need of protection or as a people of honor, bound by their obligations as allies of the Iroquois. And last, Fur maintains that the term belonged within the “complimentary gender universe” wherein women nurtured the transition of strangers—whether captives or allies—into kin, thus cultivating family extensions and tribal alliances. These three expressional forms explain the “ritual, political, and military roles a woman nation might fill.”¹²

Jane T. Merritt, who has studied the language of metaphor and its function in diplomacy between Indians and whites on the Pennsylvania frontier, cautions that in the Iroquois construct the word “woman,” as it corresponded to the Delawares, meant a “restricted public role.” While Iroquois women had a degree of “economic autonomy” within domestic spheres (they owned the longhouse and controlled the resources of agriculture) and could attend treaty talks, they had “limited power to speak in

¹¹ Jay Miller, “The Delaware as Women: A Symbolic Solution,” *American Ethnologist* 1 (1974): 511. For the “pacifist resistance” comment, see Regula Trenkwalder Schönenberger, *Lenape Women, Matriliney, and the Colonial Encounter: Resistance and Erosion of Power (c. 1600–1876)* (Bern, Ger., 1991), 242–43. According to the early twentieth-century anthropologist Frank Speck, the Delaware status changed from that of the respected and revered “grandfather” to that of “woman,” signifying female captives who were taken in war. The Delawares, as women, were forbidden to go to war or act as diplomats in treaty talks. “Their entire political organization,” through this gender designation, was “deprived of masculine prerogatives” such as war making and diplomacy. See Speck, “Delaware Indians as Women,” 377–89; and C. A. Weslager, “The Delaware Indians as Women,” *Journal of the Washington Academy of Science* 34 (1944): 381–88.

¹² Fur, *Nation of Women*, 175–83.

political forums." In its application to the Delawares, the Iroquois used the term "woman" as a diplomatic tool of restraint.¹³

The metaphoric gender references found between the Iroquois and Delawares, as discussed by Miller, Fur, and Merritt fit well with the concept of a Delaware "woman nation" but fail to acknowledge the masculine dimension of such a nation. Missing from their analysis is recognition of the military constraint placed upon the Delawares—particularly those in the West, who by League design were prohibited from engaging in warfare unless so sanctioned by the Iroquois—and the increasing shame placed upon the term woman as a consequence of diplomatic intrigues between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations. The imposition placed on the Delawares may not have been the result of Iroquois conquest, but this reference of subservience to the Six Nations was ingrained throughout the colonial world of Indian-white diplomacy to take on a reality of its own. In addressing this limited role or the restraint from action placed upon the Delawares, one can better understand the cultural and political significance of taking the hatchet from the fall of 1755 through the early spring of 1756. Constraint became unbearable for Delawares on the western Pennsylvania frontier as they observed French encroachment into the Ohio, a defeated British military on the banks of the Monongahela, and an Iroquois leadership reluctant (or unable) to assert its authority as League protectors. These situations boiled over into the rage of a frontier war, making taking the hatchet an action of necessity for Delaware self-preservation in western Pennsylvania.

For the most part, the alliance between the Delaware tribes and Iroquois Confederacy was metaphoric and theoretical, with gender terms being used to communicate the cooperative relationship between the two. The relationship between the Delawares and Iroquois was based on the high ideals of respect and cooperation. However, the historical reality of King Phillip's War put this relationship to the test and gradually transformed the rapport between the two. In 1675 the English colonies faced devastating Indian uprisings in New England during King Philip's War and in Maryland and Virginia as the Susquehannock Indians raided on the frontier. In Albany in 1677, Governor Edmund Andros of New York,

¹³ Jane T. Merritt, "Language and Power on the Pennsylvania Frontier," in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830*, ed. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998), 79. See also Gunlög Fur, "Some Women Are Wiser than Some Men': Gender and Native American History," in *Clearing a Path: Theorizing the Past in Native American Studies*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York, 2002), 75–103.

together with Daniel Garacontie, leader of the Onondagas, united his colony and his Iroquois allies with other English colonies to form the Covenant Chain of Peace. This was an alliance of New York, New England, Maryland, and Virginia with the Five Nations of Iroquois, refugee Algonquian groups from King Philip's War who now resided in Andros's colony, and all Indians who were acknowledged as tributaries of the Iroquois. Since many of the Delaware bands lived within the contemporary confines of New York colony, they became part of this alliance. Delawares, alarmed at the escalating racial violence between the Susquehannocks and colonial militias on the borders of Virginia and Maryland, benefitted from the protection offered by Andros and his covenant.¹⁴

As a symbolic support beam in the Longhouse and link in the Covenant Chain, the Delawares experienced a dual status. Although they assumed an obligatory role demanding both fidelity and submission, in the ideal the role of prop was esteemed, as it was essential for the perpetuation of League philosophy as well as Covenant Chain objectives. The League, as Timothy Shannon observes, recognized "horizontal links of reciprocity and amity, rather than vertical ones of authority and dependence." In its design, these mutual interactions made the Covenant Chain durable against forces of political stress and factionalism.¹⁵ Delawares believed that both as a Longhouse support beam and as a member of the chain of alliances they enjoyed distinguished status, honor, and autonomy. A prime piece of evidence offers insight into how the Delawares saw themselves as honored props of the Iroquois Longhouse. In 1712,

¹⁴ Lawrence H. Leder, ed., "The Livingston Indian Records," in "The Livingston Indian Records, 1666–1723," special issue, *Pennsylvania History* 23 (1956): 42–45; Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain," in *The Lenape Indian: A Symposium*, ed. Herbert C. Kraft (South Orange, NJ, 1984), 90–91; Mary Lou Lustig, *The Imperial Executive in America: Sir Edmund Andros, 1637–1714* (Madison, NJ, 2002), 67–98; Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York, 1984), 160–61; Francis Jennings, "Glory, Death, and Transfiguration: The Susquehannock Indians in the Seventeenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 112 (1968): 44–45; Stephen Saunders Webb, *1676: The End of American Independence* (Syracuse, NY, 1984), 355–405. At the covenant treaty talks in Albany, Maryland colonial officials referred to the Delawares as "Mattawass Indians." See William Hand Browne, ed., *Archives of Maryland: Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1693–1697*, 69 vols. (Baltimore, 1887–1903), 5:269. For an in-depth look at the diplomatic mechanics of the Covenant Chain through the Iroquois perspective, see Timothy J. Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York, 2008), 40–44.

¹⁵ Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), 22.

Delaware headmen Scollitichy and Sassoonan, both of the Turtle phratry, presented a stone-headed calumet with a wooden shaft ornamented with feathers and thirty-two wampum belts to Governor Charles Gookin of Pennsylvania. Scollitichy and Sassoonan offered the pipe and the belts to convey the history and the scope of their peoples' role in the Delaware-Iroquois alliance. The calumet had been originally presented by Delaware chiefs to the Six Nations and served as a historical record of their "submissions" and of their obligations as tributary "subjects of the five Nations." The belts signified the ideals and philosophy of the Delaware position in the alliance, as they saw it; they chronicled such principles as the "submission" of an "Infant or Orphan," adoption into the League and the obligations entailed, "clear & free passage" as equals within the Covenant, and "obedience" and reverence between the allies. The seventh through fifteenth wampum belts presented at the council hinted at how Delawares interpreted their function as women in the alliance. These belts demonstrated the high ideals of peace, security, and the "Liberty to pass & repass in all places," along with the Delaware belief that they, as women, enjoyed a degree of autonomy from the infringement of the Iroquois. The seventh belt, for example, was sent "by a woman who Desires to be Considered according to her sex . . . that she may eat & Drink in Quiet," the eighth by one who "desires that she may make & keep fires in quiet," and the ninth "that she may plant & reap in quiet."¹⁶ Sassoonan recognized that the gender role placed on his people allowed for them to live in peace and enjoy a respected status, free from the intrusions of the League. He clearly understood that his people were constrained from the man's domain of war and diplomacy, however. In 1728 he told Pennsylvania governor Patrick Gordon that the Iroquois had always considered the Delawares to be "women only" and "desired them to plant Corn & mind their own Business." The Six Nations reassured the Delawares that they would "take Care of what related to Peace & War."¹⁷

The woman metaphor became politically distorted when Pennsylvania secretary James Logan, seeking to enhance the prestige of the colony and to protect Pennsylvania's borderlands, gave the Iroquois "an absolute Authority over all our Indians": a freedom to "command them as they

¹⁶ Delawares in council with Governor Gookin, at the home of Edward Farmer, White Marsh, Pennsylvania, May 19, 1712, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 2:571–74.

¹⁷ Sassoonan to Governor Gordon in Philadelphia, Oct. 10, 1728, in *ibid.*, 3:35; Sassoonan's additional quote in Jennings, "Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain," 93–94.

please.”¹⁸ Logan brought Pennsylvania into its own covenant with the Iroquois, an alliance referred to as the Chain of Friendship. This arrangement also appealed to the Six Nations, who needed a “strong diplomatic counterbalance” with their French neighbors to the north and English neighbors to the east; the agreement, furthermore, established an “alternative economic relationship” to offset strained relationships with New York.¹⁹ As a result of the machinations of the Treaty of Friendship of 1736, the Iroquois leader Kanickhungo took the authority to speak not only for the Iroquois Confederacy but for “all the other Indians who [were] now in League & Friendship with the Six Nations.” In concert with Logan’s maneuvering, the proprietary government of Pennsylvania and the Great Council at Onondaga established a “perfect Friendship” and became “one People.” In this alliance, the Indians of Pennsylvania were placed under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Iroquois.²⁰ The fallacious perception that the Iroquois had conquered the Delawares deepened when Logan acknowledged that the “lands on [the] Susquehanna” belonged to the Six Nations by right of their “Conquest of the Indians of that River.”²¹

The union between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations sought to remove the Delawares from all areas of the Delaware and Susquehanna River Valleys to allow for white settlement. During the infamous “Walking Purchase” affair of 1737, Sassoonan and another Delaware leader known as Nutimus voiced their opposition to the mistreatment of their people. They were dismissed as an “unruly people” and as “lewd women” and firmly reminded by the Onondaga orator Canasatego that they were forbidden to meddle in the affairs of men.²² The Six Nations

¹⁸ Quote from James Logan in Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 243; for more on the Six Nations’ entrance into Pennsylvania politics, see William N. Fenton, *The Great Law and the Longhouse: A Political History of the Iroquois Confederacy* (Norman, OK, 1998), 398–415.

¹⁹ Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 243.

²⁰ “A Treaty of Friendship,” Kanickhungo to Thomas Penn and James Logan, Great Meeting House in Philadelphia, Oct. 1736, in *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736–1762*, ed. Julian P. Boyd and Carl Van Doren (Philadelphia, 1938), 6–7; Jennings, “Delaware Indians in the Covenant Chain,” 94–95.

²¹ “Treaty of Friendship,” interpreter on behalf of Penn and Logan to Iroquois delegation, Great Meeting House in Philadelphia, Oct. 14, 1736, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 13–14.

²² See the various rhetorical exchanges in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 4:575–80; Document 10, “Treaty with Six Nations Indians at Philadelphia,” in *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, ed. Donald H. Kent, vol. 2 of *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607–1789*, gen. ed. Alden T. Vaughan (Frederick, MD, 1984), 2:28–49; Canasatego to Delaware chiefs, July 12, 1742, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 21.

continually manipulated the image of the petticoat to signify weakness rather than discipline in refraining from war. When Canasatego maligned a group of Delawares in Philadelphia in 1742, he reminded them: “We [the Iroquois] conquer’d you, we made Women of you.” Though the Iroquois speaker knew that women had an influential voice in his community, he, in concert with the proprietors, “turned the concept” of womanhood to imply a shameful and weak standing. Well aware that Pennsylvania officials were watching, Canasatego sought to elevate Iroquois status by denigrating the Delawares.²³ The Iroquois eventually altered the woman metaphor to fit the European concept of gender in which women had no legal right to land and corrupted it as a way to “delineate Delawares’ subordinate position in terms that Euramericans would clearly understand.”²⁴

The Delawares’ loss of status in proprietary Pennsylvania cost them possession of their eastern homelands in the Delaware, Brandywine, and Lehigh Valleys. The Pennsylvania-Iroquois union—which dishonored the Delawares’ position as noncombatants and portended the mistreatment of their respected headmen Sassoonan and Nutimus and the gradual theft of their traditional homeland—forced many Delawares westward across the Allegheny Mountains into the unsettled regions of the Ohio Country. As early as 1725, members of the Turtle and Turkey phratries led by Shannopin left the Susquehanna, moved west on the trail known as Frankstown Indian Path, and established communities on the banks of the Allegheny River called Kittanning (“at the Big River”); Shannopin’s Town, located on the Ohio twelve miles from the point where the Monongahela River met the Allegheny River to form the Ohio River; the more northerly settlements of Frankstown, Tioga, and Pymatuning (“dwelling place of the man with the crooked mouth”); and, eventually, a cluster of four towns in the Beaver Valley (one of which is now Newcastle, Pennsylvania) known as the Kuskuskies. Kittanning, which eventually

²³ Canasatego to the Delawares, July 12, 1742, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 35–36; Nancy Shoemaker, “An Alliance between Men: Gender Metaphors in Eighteenth-Century American Indian Diplomacy East of the Mississippi,” *Ethnohistory* 46 (1999): 239–63. Discussion of “turn[ing] the concept” in Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700–1763* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2003), 220–23.

²⁴ Quote in Merritt, “Language and Power,” 79; Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia, 2011), 40–43.

grew to a population of three to four hundred Delawares, became their western capital. The town became the residence for the prominent group of brothers, Delaware leaders from the Turkey phratry: Tamaqua (King Beaver), Pisquetomen (He Who Keeps On, Though It Is Getting Dark), Shingas (Wet, Marshy Ground), and Nenatchehan (Delaware George). At the Allegheny town, Delawares and a small group of Shawnee guests discussed diplomatic matters and trade concerns in a thirty-foot long-house. The town later served as a rendezvous point of departure for Delaware and Shawnee warriors and as a holding depot for white captives taken during raids.²⁵ Kittanning became the heart, soul, and testament of a new Delaware spirit of rebirth in the West. With this migration and other future movement to the Pennsylvania backcountry, Delawares entered a homeland that provided new economic opportunities for hunting, trapping, and commercial trade with Europeans.

The Delaware Indian movement westward to the northern Appalachian frontier loosened the bonds that held these Indians within the Iroquois Confederacy. Though the Six Nations held the conviction that the White Roots of Peace could reach far beyond the diplomatic centers of Onondaga and Philadelphia, Delawares of the West only partly accepted this philosophy. The fact that Indians had migrated to the West in steady droves demonstrated that Iroquois control was slowly weakening among its props. To preserve a degree of authority and thus salvage

²⁵ The migration of Delawares and Shawnees accelerated rapidly during the late 1720s; by 1731, an estimated 400 to 500 Indians moved into the Allegheny and Ohio regions to increase the population to over 1,330 people. Other Delawares followed Shannopin across the Allegheny Mountains. In two separate land dealings arranged in 1731 and 1732, the Penns purchased the rest of the lands belonging to "Sassoonan . . . Sachem of the Schuylkil Indians." Delawares of the Turtle totem, without the consent of either Sassoonan or Pennsylvania officials, eventually relocated to western Pennsylvania. More Delawares moved over the Alleghenies after being displaced by the Walking Purchase. See C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* (1931; repr., Lewisburg, PA, 1995), 42–43; Michael N. McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724–1774* (Lincoln, NE, 1992), 22, 38–39; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800* (New York, 1997), 27–28; Hunter, "Documented Subdivisions of the Delaware Indians," 32; "Number of Indians, 1731," chart in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st. ser., 1:300–302; John Heckewelder and Peter S. du Ponceau, "Names Which the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, Who Once Inhabited This Country, Had Given to Rivers, Streams, Places, &c. . . .," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new series, 4 (1834): 365; C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1972), 200–201; Goddard, "Delaware," 222; John Armstrong's Map of Kittanning, "Plan of Expedition to Kittanning" 1755, Miscellaneous Manuscripts Collection, 1668–1983, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

their self-image, the Six Nations dismissed the Ohio Indians as “mere hunters,” unimportant in the greater scope of Iroquois affairs.²⁶ But this metaphor resonated with the Ohio Indians, who saw themselves as “hunters and warriors and like our brethren the traders all wise men.”²⁷ At best, the Ohio Indians saw the Six Nations as agents of British Indian policy and believed that by acknowledging Iroquois authority, the western Delawares and other Ohio Indians would be assured of British trade goods and, if needed, British military protection. Western-migrating Delawares accepted Iroquois authority only on a pragmatic level, appreciating the necessity of staying on good diplomatic terms with the Six Nations and, more importantly, with the British and their traders.

Increasing French presence in the Ohio by the 1740s and a weakened provincial economy (given that fewer Indians could now trade fur pelts and buy English goods) altered the attitude of the proprietors and forced officials from Philadelphia to admit that they had erred in their treatment of the Delawares and Shawnees.²⁸ Pennsylvania made futile demands that the Iroquois recall their “tributaries” from the Ohio and resettle them on the western branch of the Susquehanna. Provincial officials contended, “the [Ohio] Indians cannot live without being supplied with our Goods: They must have Powder and Lead to hunt, and Cloaths to keep them warm; if our People do not carry them, others will, from Maryland, Virginia, Jersey, or other Places.”²⁹ The western Delawares did not budge, and this attitude of noncompliance may have tarnished the commanding image that the Pennsylvania proprietors embraced regarding the authoritative sway of the Six Nations. The Ohio Delawares had stationed themselves well beyond the reach of the Pennsylvania–Six Nations alliance.³⁰

²⁶ Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore, 2003), 86–87; an Iroquois leader’s reference to “mere hunters” in McConnell, *A Country Between*, 135. Jon Parmenter warns that one must not assume that the Iroquois lost control of the Ohio Indians, since they never attempted to assert power over the migrants. He asserts that the very nature of the League “relied on the persuasive authority of consensual decisions” and abhorred the use of pressure and coercion. I would argue that by the 1750s, British demands placed on the Six Nations to assert their authority altered this tolerant attitude toward the independence of the Ohio Indians. See Jon W. Parmenter, “The Iroquois and the Native American Struggle for the Ohio Valley, 1754–1794,” in *The Sixty Years’ War for the Great Lakes, 1754–1814*, ed. David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson (East Lansing, MI, 2001), 108.

²⁷ Comments of an Iroquois half-king, June 11, 1752, in Lois Mulkearn, ed., *George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia* (Pittsburgh, 1954), 62–63.

²⁸ Proprietary officials to the Six Nations in Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1736, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 10–11.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁰ McConnell, *A Country Between*, 135; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 275–77.

While the Delawares and other Ohio Indians were quite aware of “their strength,” they recognized their responsibilities to preserve the “Chain bright” and to maintain positive relations with the Six Nations.³¹ But the Ohio Indians also became alarmed at the increasing strength of the French and their Indian allies. In November 1745, during the imperial contest known as King George’s War, a large party of French Canadians and their Algonquian allies sacked Saratoga. The destroying of this British settlement forced the Six Nations and many other Indian nations from their neutral position. Reluctantly the councilors of the Iroquois had to react to the French threat in their own backyard. The consequences of this destruction reverberated throughout the colonial backcountry. Conrad Weiser, the Pennsylvania ambassador to the Six Nations, sadly concluded that up until the sacking of Saratoga, “English governments had been content that the Indians should remain neutral, which was what the French also asked of the Indians, now however, the latter have broken it in a barbarous manner. So from now on there will be no end to the killing of farmers on both sides all along our borders.”³² The Ohio Indians saw the Iroquois as representatives of British policy and grew disillusioned with the neutral stance of the leaders of the Six Nations at Onondaga, who harbored delusions that the English and French “would fight it out at Sea.” Not content to listen to the “old Men at Onondaga,” the “young Indians, the Warriors, and Captains” from the Ohio met with Pennsylvania officials at Philadelphia in November 1747 and appealed to the proprietors to furnish them with “better Weapons, such as will knock the French down.”³³ The Ohio Iroquois delegation led by Canachquasy assigned Scarouady, an Oneida half-king, to speak for the Ohio Shawnees and to “kindle a [council] fire” in the Ohio, where “all the Indians at a considerable distance” would come and unify as a body. To do so, the Ohio delegation agreed that, if needed, they would “take up the English Hatchet against the Will of their old People [Great Council at Onondaga], and to lay their old People aside, as of no Use but in Time

³¹ Reference to “their strength” by Pennsylvania official Richard Peters in Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1959), 41; Unidentified Ohio Indian in council at Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:146.

³² Conrad Weiser to Count Zinzendorf, Philadelphia, Dec. 1, 1745, in *Conrad Weiser, 1696–1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk*, by Paul A. W. Wallace (1945; repr., Lewisburg, PA, 1996), 233.

³³ Unidentified Ohio Indian in council at Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:147.

of Peace.”³⁴ At this time, the western Delawares permitted the Ohio Iroquois to speak on their behalf to the government of Pennsylvania. They believed that the half-kings (western Seneca, Oneida, and Cayuga leaders given partial authority by Iroquois leaders at Onondaga), much like themselves, were also becoming self-sufficient and that, as mediators, they would defend the interests of all Ohio Indians without compromising Delaware independence and territorial security.³⁵

Delawares moved west to experience a political independence with only minimal Iroquois interference. Establishing such authority was not an easy task. In early 1750, Virginia officials within the administration of acting governor Thomas Lee, seeking a trading foothold in the Ohio, attempted to send gifts to the Ohio Indians, who Virginians believed “were one and the same with the Six United Nations” of Iroquois. To repudiate these assumptions, Iroquois leaders reminded the Virginia government that the Ohio Indians “were but Hunters and no Counsellors or Chief Men, and that they had no Right to receive Presents that was due to the Six Nations, although they might expect to have a Share” of those gifts upon the discretion of the Six Nations.³⁶ To preserve positive relations with the British, western Delawares still acknowledged both their responsibilities as props and their political limitations within the League and Covenant Chain.

Throughout this period, British-American attention turned toward the West. Richard Peters, the provincial secretary of Pennsylvania, noted in 1750 that “many Indians [Senecas and Cayugas] have left their towns among the Six Nations and gone and settled to the westward of the branches of the Ohio.” He warned proprietor Thomas Penn that the Delawares and other Ohio tribes made a “formidable body, not less than fifteen hundred,” that kept in “appearance a sort of dependency on the Council at Onondaga” but that were, for the most part, merely mollifying the Six Nations.³⁷

³⁴ Ohio Indian delegation to Pennsylvania officials, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1747, in Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, 103–4; Document 4, “Provincial Council: Treaty with the Indians of Ohio,” Nov. 13–16, 1747, in Kent, *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, 162–67.

³⁵ Richard Aquila, *The Iroquois Restoration: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Colonial Frontier, 1701–1754* (1983; repr., Lincoln, NE, 1997), 196–97.

³⁶ “Conrad Weiser’s diary journal on a meeting in Philadelphia,” Oct. 11, 1750, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 5:478.

³⁷ Richard Peters in Wainwright, *George Croghan*, 40–41. For an insightful analysis of waning Iroquois influence among Ohio tribes, see Michael N. McConnell, “Peoples ‘In Between’: The Iroquois and the Ohio Indians, 1720–1768,” in *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600–1800*, ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse, NY, 1987), 93–112.

This increasing strength was evident during the talks held at the Indian community of Logstown on the Ohio River in June and July of 1752. It was there that the Ohio Land Company of Virginia and Virginia commissioners sought to gain confirmation of the 1744 Lancaster Treaty in which the Six Nations had relinquished to Virginia territory that bordered the Ohio River on the southeast. They wanted permission from the Ohio tribes to build a fort at the forks of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. The Six Nations leaders refused to attend and instead sent half-kings to protect Iroquois interests by supervising the affairs of the Ohio tribes.³⁸

Virginia and Pennsylvania delegates cautioned the Delawares and Shawnees at Logstown to “beware of French Councils” and to “adhere to a strict friendship” with the English colonies and the Six Nations.³⁹ Tanacharison, the Seneca half-king, sensed that the Virginia commissioners recognized the growing autonomy and influence of the Ohio tribes. Grandstanding in front of the colonial officials and traders, he asserted the rights of the Iroquois to administer the affairs of the Ohio Indians and scolded both the Delawares and Shawnees for their unsanctioned war excursions into Cherokee country after the Iroquois had concluded peace talks with the Cherokees. In what could be viewed by the Delawares and Shawnees as an allegorical reprimand by the Six Nations towards western Indians, seen as the supposed tributaries of the Iroquois League, Tanacharison stated: “I take the Hatchet from you; you belong to me, & I think you are to be ruled by me, & I joining with your Brethren of Virginia, order you to go to war no more.”⁴⁰

Tanacharison’s disdain for Delaware military activities and his assertion that Virginia also had the right to restrain Delawares from taking the warpath, much like the oratorical bullying of Canasatego a decade earlier, demonstrated that he was posturing to show an authority over the Ohio Indians in the presence of Virginia officials. On the other hand, the Delawares, who because of their status as tributaries were forbidden to go to war unless given permission, were not about to seek consent from both Pennsylvania and Virginia to defend themselves. Past experiences supported Delawares’ skepticism of the Six Nations’ likelihood of fulfilling

³⁸ “The Treaty of Logg’s Town, 1752,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 13 (1905–6): 143; Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, xiii.

³⁹ Virginia commissioners to Delawares and Shawnees, June 1, 1752, in “Treaty of Logg’s Town,” 164.

⁴⁰ Tanacharison, June 4, 1752, in *ibid.*, 165; Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers*, 61.

their obligations as warrior-defenders. Delaware sources claim that during the early eighteenth century, Shawnee war parties from the Ohio crossed the Allegheny Mountains and raided Delaware hunting camps situated in the Juniata River valley. The Delawares, as women in the alliance, could not retaliate, for the hatchet had been taken out of their hands. As “protector” of the Delawares, the Iroquois agreed to punish the Ohio Shawnees. The Delaware oral traditions cynically attest that the Iroquois “promised, as usual, that they would place themselves in the front of battle, so that the Delawares would have nothing to do but to look on and see how bravely their protectors would fight for them, and if they were not satisfied with that, they might take their revenge themselves.”⁴¹

The Iroquois failed to send a retaliatory war party, forcing the Delawares to take “exemplary revenge” on their own. As the Delawares arrived at the Shawnee towns, they discovered that the Shawnees had previously fled down the Ohio. In a “striking instance of treachery,” the Iroquois had warned the Shawnees of the incoming Delaware raid.⁴²

It was becoming increasingly difficult for the Delaware leaders at Kittanning and the Kuskuskies to maintain a relationship with a Confederacy that lacked the resolve to assert an authoritative and protective presence in the region. Indian trader George Croghan noted that the Pennsylvania proprietary was naïve to believe that the Ohio Indians would do the bidding of the Onondaga council. He cautioned them, “I ashure [you] they will act for themselves att this time without Consulting ye Onondaga Councel.”⁴³ Furthermore, the empires of Great Britain and France were preparing to contend for the Indian trade and the valuable resources of the Ohio region. In 1752 the new Canadian governor, the Marquis de la Jonquiere, reformed French policy in the West by restoring alliances with the Great Lakes tribes of Ottawas, Wyandots, Potawatomis, Miamis (known in most colonial records as Twightwees), and others in hopes that they would influence the Ohio Indians. To counter British economic presence, the French assaulted and ejected all British traders from the region. The French in 1753–54 began to establish a military presence as they constructed a series of forts—Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, Machault, and Duquesne—in the Ohio and Allegheny Valleys.

⁴¹ A Lenape elder to John Heckewelder, in Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, 70.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴³ George Croghan to Governor James Hamilton, May 14, 1754, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser., 2:144.

In mid-1754 the French and their Indian allies assaulted and gained control of Fort Necessity, George Washington's outpost at the Great Meadows in western Pennsylvania.⁴⁴ The defeat of Washington and the removal of a British presence in the Ohio Country threatened the security of the western Delawares. In the aftermath of Washington's surrender, warriors of the Wolf phratry of Delawares, residing in the upper Allegheny Valley, moved to Venango in support of the French.⁴⁵ The Turtle-Turkey groups, the core of the Delaware population base in the West, still aligned themselves with Great Britain.

There was, however, a building resentment among the leaders of the western Delawares toward the Pennsylvania government. This bitterness increased on July 9, 1754, during the Albany Conference, organized through the persistence of the British Board of Trade and colonial officials, between the Six Nations and representatives from various American colonies. The conference was intended to reinforce the Six Nations Confederacy and the Covenant Chain and foster discussion of the creation of a union of American colonies—objectives which would strengthen a British/American defensive position against French expansion into the West.⁴⁶ Six Nations leaders granted to the Pennsylvania proprietors Delaware lands and Iroquois claims “on both sides [of] the River Sasquehannah” as far east as the Delaware River and as far “Northward” as the Appalachian Mountains “as they cross the Country of Pennsylvania.”⁴⁷ The Iroquois also claimed that because of their historical covenant with the English, they had “Rights to the said Lands and

⁴⁴ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York, 1991), 209–25; McConnell, *A Country Between*, 86–88; Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988), 66–67; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 214; J. Martin West, ed., *War for Empire in Western Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA, 1993), 22–23.

⁴⁵ The French, seeking Delaware support, had sent wampum belts to various leaders. Tanacharison ordered that the Delawares bring him all the wampum belts. Wolf attachment to the French was verified when Wolf Delaware leader Custaloga (Pakanke) held the belts received by the Delawares at Venango and refused to relinquish them. Shingas feared the French military at Venango and could not coax Custaloga to give up the Delaware belts. Wolf warriors remained with the French. See *The Journal of Major George Washington: An Account of His First Official Mission, Made as Emissary from the Governor of Virginia to the Commandant of the French Forces on the Ohio, October 1753–January 1754*, facsimile ed. (Williamsburg, VA, 1959), 12–13; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 52–53, 60–61.

⁴⁶ Peter Wraxall, secretary of Indian affairs, June 15, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:62; Shannon, *Indians and Colonists*, 67–68.

⁴⁷ “Deed from the Six Nations to the Proprietors,” Albany, July 9, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:125.

Premises . . . solely in them and their Nations, and in no other Nation whatsoever.”⁴⁸

The Albany land exchange, lamented politician and Quaker school-master Charles Thomson, aggravated an already dangerous situation, for it forever altered the relationship between Pennsylvania and its Indian population. The Delawares were “violently driven from their Lands” and “reduced to leave their Country.” No doubt because of this loss of land, many Delawares eventually gave “Ear to the French, who declared that they did not come to deprive the Indians of their Land . . . but to hinder the English from settling westward” of the Allegheny Mountains. Because of the duplicity exhibited at Albany, Thomson concluded, the Delawares were thrown “entirely into the Hands of the French.”⁴⁹

A month after Albany, over two hundred Ohio Indians met at Indian trader George Croghan’s home at Aughwick, in present-day Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. The half-kings Tanacharison and Scarouady complained to Conrad Weiser, a representative of Governor Morris, that the Onondaga council had relinquished too much western land to Pennsylvania.⁵⁰ The Delawares voiced their concerns through the Turkey leader Tamaqua, who addressed both Weiser and the Six Nations. With shrewd oratorical maneuvering and a respect for traditional protocol, he reminded them of their histories and obligations and pointed out that the Delawares had lived under Iroquois protection and looked to the Great Tree of Peace for shelter. He also noted that it was the Six Nations who had forbidden the Delawares to “meddle with Wars, but [as noncombatants] stay in the House and mind Council Affairs.” Tamaqua pleaded that because of a “high Wind” rising (the French presence in the Ohio), “we

⁴⁸ “Deed from the Six Nations to the Proprietors,” July 6, 1754, in *ibid.*, 6:121.

⁴⁹ Charles Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnee Indians from the British Interests* (1759; repr., Philadelphia, 1867), 77–78. Also see H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 2000), 228–51. A New York commissioner commented that the “Colonies being in a divided disunited State” made no attempt to challenge the encroachments of the French. The English colonies at that time were believed to be “unable and unwilling to maintain the Cause of the whole.” See the comments made at the Albany Congress on July 9, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:103.

⁵⁰ Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 368–69; Sipe, *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*, 309–11; William M. Beauchamp, ed., *The Life of Conrad Weiser, as It Relates to His Services as Official Interpreter between New York and Pennsylvania, and as Envoy between Philadelphia and the Onondaga Councils* (Syracuse, NY, 1925), 101–2.

desire you therefore, Uncle, to have your Eyes open and be Watchful over Us, your Cousins, as you have always been heretofore.”⁵¹

The Ohio Indians recognized that the British-Iroquois nexus was the status quo that made trade goods possible for the Delaware people and, most importantly, offered them military protection from the French and Great Lakes Indians. When Delawares and Shawnees on the Ohio sent wampum belts to Onondaga in the spring of 1754, asking to be relieved of their status as nonwarrior tributaries, they were, in essence, also appealing to the British. In their rhetoric, Delaware leaders conjured an image of the French and their Indian allies overrunning the Ohio Country—an impression that brought great alarm to the British. Western Delawares exploited their image as helpless women to gain the sympathy of the council at Onondaga. They pleaded, “We expect to be killed by the French. . . . We desire, therefore, that You will take off our Petticoat that we may fight for ourselves, our Wives and Children; in the Condition We are in You know we can do nothing. . . . [L]et us die in Battle like Men and fear not the French.”⁵²

From the Iroquois perspective, the growing independence of the Ohio Indians, as well as French aggression into the Ohio, had a deep impact on the power and authority of the Confederacy. Sir William Johnson, then the Indian agent for the Six Nations, saw the danger in the inability (or unwillingness) of the Six Nations to assert League authority in the West. He observed: “The eyes of all Western Tribes of Indians are upon the Six Nations, whose fame of power, may in some measures exceed the reality, while they only act a timid and neutral part. This I apprehend to be their modern state.” Johnson believed that the Iroquois hoped to keep the French out of their Ohio hunting grounds but would not assert their authority; instead, they wanted to force the British to intervene in military matters in the West. By laying low and acting the “timid and neutral” observer, they could force the British into action against further French

⁵¹ Tamaqua to Six Nations delegation at George Croghan’s trading post (Aughwick), Sept. 4, 1754, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:156.

⁵² A Delaware named Newmoch conveyed the speech to Weiser, who in turn, presented it to Governor Hamilton, May 7, 1754, in *ibid.*, 6:37. For an analysis regarding the verbal shifts of the woman-petticoat metaphor, see Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 222–23; Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (New York, 2004), 109–10; Shoemaker, “Alliance between Men,” 242–43. Shoemaker considers the Delaware manipulation of the woman metaphor to be “verbal maneuvers.”

aggression in the Ohio.⁵³ This strategy put tremendous pressure on western Delawares and their push for a secure homeland in the Ohio Country. Moreover, it seems to have worked. Governor Morris revealed that the king had dispatched Major General Edward Braddock's "large Army" to America to "recover for the Six Nations what had been so unjustly taken from them by the French"—that is, to remove the French from the forks of the Ohio.⁵⁴

On the eve of Braddock's march to where the three rivers of the Allegheny, Monongahela, and Ohio met, Scarouady reminded Morris that the Delawares considered themselves to be "under the Protection of the Six Nations" and that, despite the prevailing danger of the presence of the French on the Ohio, the council at Onondaga could only ask the Delawares to be "quite easy and still, nor be disturbed." Conrad Weiser, conscious of French expansion into the Ohio, urged Thomas Penn to persuade the Iroquois to release the Delawares from their tributary obligations, remove their status as women, "give them a Breech Cloath to wear," and put the hatchet in their hands.⁵⁵

For the Delawares, the bestowal of the hatchet meant an affirmation of their independence and territorial rights. In June 1755 Shingas and a small party of his warriors met along the trail with Braddock and his command as they marched out of Fort Cumberland to assault the stronghold of Fort Duquesne. It was here that the Delawares stated a specific agenda by expressing their attachment to a new homeland and a strong sense of shared aims with the British. Shingas claimed that the Delawares desired to "Live and Trade Among the English and Have Hunting Ground sufficient to support themselves and [their] Familys." He offered his people's services to Braddock if the English general could assure the Ohio Delawares that their land would not be disturbed and their rights to the Ohio would be respected by the British. Shingas also added that if his people did not "have [the] Liberty to Live on the Land they would not Fight for it." In his much-quoted response, Braddock coldly refused the Delawares' help and asserted that only the "English Should Inhabit & Inherit the Land." Declining to acknowledge the Delawares' rights,

⁵³ Sir William Johnson, July 1754, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser., 6:215.

⁵⁴ Governor Robert Morris, in a speech to the Six Nations, Apr. 23, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:382.

⁵⁵ Scarouady to Governor Morris, Philadelphia, Mar. 31, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:342; Conrad Weiser to Thomas Penn, May 1755, in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 271.

Braddock disregarded the sovereignty of a people he disdainfully referred to as “Savages.”⁵⁶

These rejected Indians, a “smattering of Delawares,” Mingos, and Shawnees, joined the western tribes of Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippewas, and Pottawatomies to ally with the French. A combined force of 850 Indians and French left Fort Duquesne to confront Braddock eight miles from the fort, at current-day Turtle Creek. On July 9, 1755, Braddock’s army of 1,300 British regulars and colonial militia crossed the Monongahela and marched west through the deep wilderness to move against Fort Duquesne. There, in the backwoods of western Pennsylvania, the French-Canadian and Indian forces cut Braddock’s retreating army to pieces. Braddock was mortally wounded in this battle, and his army barely survived the catastrophic afternoon. Over 977 were killed or wounded.⁵⁷ On that day, Shingas and his warriors discarded the petticoat of restraint to take up the hatchet of combat.

In spite of Braddock’s rout, described by Indians as “what passed on the Monongahela,” and relentless pressure from the French, most western Delawares remained moderately committed to British interests. They were, however, also becoming increasingly desperate in their demands to be allowed to defend themselves. And, of course, the mauling of a powerful British army in the backcountry “greatly strengthened” French influence among the Indian nations of the Great Lakes and the Ohio.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁶ This is the testimony of Shingas of what happened at this meeting in Braddock’s tent. See *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, ed. E. B. O’Callaghan and B. Fernow, 15 vols. (Albany, NY, 1853–87), 7:270; and Beverly Bond Jr., “The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755–57,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 13 (1926): 63. George Croghan contended that Braddock agreed to Shingas’s proposal, but the Delawares reneged on the deal. The version of Shingas being rejected by Braddock has been accepted for the historical record. For an alternative view, see “Croghan’s Transactions with the Indians Previous to Hostilities on the Ohio,” in *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, ed. Reuben G. Thwaites, 32 vols. (Cleveland, 1904–7), 1:97–98. See Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock on the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh, 1977), 100–102 for details on those Delawares who offered to aid Braddock and his army but were turned away. In regard to Braddock’s Indian allies, there is much discrepancy. C. Hale Sipe in *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania* maintains that Braddock refused the assistance of the Delawares and Shawnees and instead Lieutenant Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia promised Braddock the support of Cherokee and Creek auxiliaries, who failed to arrive.

⁵⁷ Charles Hamilton, ed., *Braddock’s Defeat: The Journal of Captain Robert Chomley’s Batman; The Journal of a British Officer; Halkett’s Orderly Book* (Norman, OK, 1959); Thomas E. Crocker, *Braddock’s March: How the Man Sent to Seize a Continent Changed American History* (Yardley, PA, 2011); Sipe, *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*, 177–202.

⁵⁸ Sir William Johnson to the Board of Trade, Fort Johnson, May 28, 1756, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 2:724. Also see report of Robert Stretzell, Joseph Turner, and Thomas Cadwalader, Philadelphia, Nov. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:727.

Delawares, seeking reassurance that Pennsylvania would address their security concerns, dispatched a delegation to Philadelphia to “hold a Treaty” conference with officials. The delegates returned to their western towns without having received the “necessary Encouragement” from the Pennsylvania government.⁵⁹

In another meeting with Pennsylvania officials, Scarouady, in council with Morris, maintained that what happened to Braddock “was a great blow” to all Indians attached to the British cause.⁶⁰ Scarouady made an appeal before the governor, council, and assembly to support the majority of western Delawares, who he believed were not willing to join the French. He, like Weiser, hoped that Pennsylvania would exert pressure on the Iroquois to remove the Delawares’ petticoat and restore their status as warriors. Additionally, he hoped the province would provide the Delawares with more guns and powder. Scarouady told Morris that the British were “unfit to fight in the Woods” and pleaded, “Let us go ourselves, we that came out of this Ground, We may be assured to conquer the French.” He then informed Morris that the Ohio Delawares were prepared to unite—to fight by the side of “all the English Governors”—and that “One word of Yours will bring the Delawares to join You.”⁶¹ That word did not come as expected. Morris and his council deferred rearming the Delawares to the “Determination of the Six Nations.”⁶² Instead, the Six Nations’ council sent word to Scarouady at Shamokin, a multitribal town located on the forks of the Susquehanna River (modern-day Sunbury, Pennsylvania), in August 1755, “order[ing] their Cousins the Delawares to lay aside their petticoats and clap on nothing but a Breech Clout.” The Iroquois expected the Susquehanna Delawares to assist the Oneidas, who expected to be overrun by the French and their Indian

⁵⁹ Bond, “Captivity of Charles Stuart,” 64.

⁶⁰ Document 1, Scarouady in “Message to the Governor from the Assembly,” Nov. 5, 1755, in Kent, *Pennsylvania Treaties, 1737–1756*, 431.

⁶¹ Report by Scarouady to Governor Robert Morris in Philadelphia, Aug. 22, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:589–90. Also see Boyd and Van Doren, *Indian Treaties*, bix. Boyd contends that this report by Scarouady was his declaration of independence on behalf of all Iroquois tributaries. The comments regarding the place of Braddock’s defeat can be attributed to a Shawnee chief named Paxonosa to Weiser in the fall of 1755. See *ibid.*, 7:49. And yet Scarouady demonstrated the diplomatic/metaphorical maneuvering in the use of gender terms. See Scarouady to Governor Morris, Sept. 11, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:615. Here Scarouady claimed that the Six Nations, fearing a French invasion into their country, needed military support from the Shamokin Delawares.

⁶² Message of Governor Morris to Scarouady in Philadelphia, Aug. 28, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:591.

allies.⁶³ The Iroquois ignored any mention of allowing the western Delawares to defend themselves in the Ohio backcountry. In response to this lack of concern, more Delaware bands, including those in the far regions of the western Susquehanna to the Juniata Rivers, trickled over the Alleghenies into the Ohio Country towns to show their solidarity and independence. In consideration of the British failure to assert themselves in the Ohio militarily and the lack of support from the Six Nations' council and Philadelphia regarding their security, many Delawares became impatient with the diversion of a diplomatic middle course. With Scarouady's pleas ignored, or at least put on hold, western Delawares became estranged from the Pennsylvania government.

As John Heckewelder later observed, throughout the eighteenth century Delawares "had to submit to such gross insults" as displacement from their eastern homeland and continual rhetoric demeaning their noncombatant status. The Delawares, he added, "were not ignorant of the manner in which they might take revenge" on their offenders.⁶⁴ Because of this treatment at the hands of the Six Nations and Pennsylvania alliance, Delawares, in the words of Charles Thomson, "took a severe Revenge on the Province, by laying Waste their Frontiers."⁶⁵ Western Delawares disregarded the authority of the Six Nations and ripped off the petticoat—the symbol of what they once believed to have been an admirable quality of self-control. Reluctant to lose their new Ohio homeland, unwilling to become a displaced people once again, and exasperated with failed diplomatic solutions to their security problems, Delawares of the West resorted to violence by taking the warriors' path.

The peace that had existed between the Delawares and Pennsylvanians since 1682, when William Penn purportedly negotiated the treaty at Shackamaxon, ended on October 16, 1755. Delawares at Kittanning, "encouraged by the Retreat of the [British] Forces," gravitated to the

⁶³ For the reference to petticoats and a "Breech Clout," see "A message from Scarroyady to Governor Morris," Sept. 11, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:615–16; Daniel P. Barr, "This Land Is Ours and Not Yours': The Western Delawares and the Seven Years' War in the Upper Ohio Valley, 1755–1758," in *The Boundaries between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750–1850*, ed. Daniel P. Barr (Kent, OH, 2006), 30–31.

⁶⁴ Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, xxxiii–xxxiv. Paul B. Moyer also contends that the territorial concessions at Albany in 1754 gave impetus for Delaware war parties to "even the score." See Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier* (Ithaca, NY, 2007), 21.

⁶⁵ Thomson, *Enquiry into the Causes*, 47.

French, whom they saw as more powerful and a safer bet as an ally than the English.⁶⁶ The constant rumors of a large force of French and allied western Indian nations sweeping through the Ohio did much to spur Delawares into action. Scarouady warned Pennsylvania officials that over a thousand French, Ottawa, Miami, and Shawnee fighters were preparing to move east, as far as Carlisle, to kill all Delawares who remained loyal to the British. It was also rumored that these Indians “were to be followed by a large number of French and Indians from Fort Du Quesne, with a design of dividing themselves into parties to fall upon” the rest of Pennsylvania and the frontiers of Virginia.⁶⁷ In the council house at the Turtle-Turkey stronghold of Kittanning, Shingas, Pisquetomen, and the principal warriors Captain Jacobs (Tewea), a recent arrival to the Allegheny Country, and John and Thomas Hickman (Iecaseo), shouted down the moderate Tamaqua, who urged for continued restraint. They favored a preemptive strike against the Pennsylvania backcountry, which, they hoped, would discourage future British-American settlement beyond the Alleghenies. They also believed that the French could assure them security of their homeland. Shingas and Pisquetomen led a Delaware war party of fourteen, moved east into the Susquehanna River region, and entered the settlement of Penn’s Creek in modern-day Snyder County. Within three days, the Delawares devastated most of Penn’s Creek. They burned farmhouses and barns, slaughtered livestock, stole horses, and “carried off Prisoners” to Kittanning.⁶⁸ This principal Delaware town on the Allegheny River was now seen by Governor Morris as the domicile containing the “most numerous” and most warlike of western Delawares.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Governor Morris to the Pennsylvania Assembly in Philadelphia, July 28, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:438–39.

⁶⁷ Scarouady to council in Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683; Assembly of Pennsylvania to Governor Morris, Nov. 5, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:677.

⁶⁸ Barbara Leininger in Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795* (1940; repr., Pittsburgh, 1969), 75–76; Edmund de Schweinitz, ed., “The Narrative of Marie LeRoy and Barbara Leininger, For Three Years Captives among the Indians,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 29 (1905): 407–20; “Examination of Barbara Liningaree & Mary Roy, 1759,” in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 1st ser., 3:633. On Tamaqua’s political stance, see Carlisle Council with Governor Morris, Jan. 13, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:781–82.

⁶⁹ Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson, Apr. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:99.

Bands of eastern Delawares from the north branch of the Susquehanna and the Chemung Valley also perceived British military ineptitude in the Ohio backcountry; they joined their western kin and amassed warrior strength of 150 men. The war captains Shingas, Captain Jacobs, Captain Will, and Captain John Peter—and their warriors from the west and east—rendezvoused at Ray's Town (current-day Bedford) and commenced further attacks on the Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland frontiers. Delaware war parties moved against the "Inhabitants on Mahanahy Creek," a tributary of the Susquehanna River, taking captives and torching the community. One month later, Delawares and Shawnees crossed the Susquehanna and "fell upon the County of Berks."⁷⁰ By these actions, western Delawares severed all friendly ties with English whites on the frontier.

As Fred Anderson reminds us, Braddock's defeat not only "shocked all of British America" but also exposed the vulnerability of settlers in the Pennsylvania backcountry. With inadequate defense, the British frontier "simply collapsed."⁷¹ Governor Morris prophetically saw Braddock's defeat and the retreat of his army from western Pennsylvania as a disaster that would demonstrate British lack of resolve and encourage the Ohio Indians to "destroy all the back Settlements in [Pennsylvania] as well as Virginia & Maryland."⁷² A Delaware chief in council with Morris reminded him that after Braddock's command met disaster, "Affairs took another Turn." Morris grieved that Braddock's drubbing had not only aggravated an Indian war of great magnitude; the "unhappy defeat" of the British military on the Monongahela had also represented a "great Blow" to the stability of Pennsylvania. As a result of these ferocious Indian raids, colonists fled in droves from the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Most of the settlements around the vicinity of Easton were "evacuated and ruined." Many people fled to New Jersey, taking with them salvaged corn, cattle, and their "best Household Goods." Others left

⁷⁰ Bond, "Captivity of Charles Stuart," 60–61; a brief narrative of the events of October–November 1755, presented to Governor Morris in Philadelphia, Dec. 29, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:766–67; Barr, "This Land Is Ours and Not Yours," 30–31. Jane Merritt contends that these raids served as political protests about "questionable tactics for land cessions and unauthorized white encroachment" into Delaware territory. See Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 181–83.

⁷¹ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York, 2000), 108.

⁷² Governor Morris to Sir Thomas Robinson (secretary of the state), Philadelphia, July 30, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:441.

everything behind to fall into the hands of the raiding Indians.⁷³ By the spring of 1756, the warriors had killed or captured seven hundred settlers and destroyed five forts, inducing Virginia to finance the construction of twenty-seven forts from the Blue Ridge to the Allegheny Mountains. These raids forced Pennsylvania to rethink its Indian policy. In hindsight, many placed the blame for the uprising squarely on the Pennsylvania Quakers. As Dr. John Fothergill, an English Quaker and friend of Benjamin Franklin, summarized it, the emerging narrative was that “when the Delawares demanded the Hatchet” to defend themselves, the Quakers “refused and the Indians went over to the French.” As a consequence, Pennsylvania purged the pacifist Quaker assemblymen from the government for not properly funding frontier defense.⁷⁴

The violent outbreaks on the Pennsylvania frontier confirmed the Delawares’ anger against the provincial government in Philadelphia and their dissatisfaction with the failure of both the Six Nations and the British to provide territorial security. This became a frontier war “shaped by past experiences and tailored specifically to meet Delaware demands” for protection of their new homeland.⁷⁵ These eruptions also allowed Delawares to liberate themselves from their past role as passive props of the League and destroyed what was left of the Indian “tributary system” in Pennsylvania’s Chain of Friendship. Two Ohio Delawares, serving as messengers for the victorious warriors of Kittanning, visited a Susquehanna River town and announced: “We, the Delawares of Ohio, do proclaim War against the English. We have been their Friends many years, but now have taken up the Hatchet against them, & we will never make it up with them whilst there is an English man alive.”⁷⁶ Performing

⁷³ Delaware chief to Governor Morris, Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:49; Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson, Nov. 8, 1755, in *ibid.*, 6:671; Benjamin Franklin’s comments in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1756.

⁷⁴ Comments of Fothergill to Israel Pemberton, Sept. 25, 1758, in William S. Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics* (Stanford, CA, 1964), 125–26; On the purging of the Quakers from the Pennsylvania assembly see Theodore Thayer, “The Quaker Party of Pennsylvania, 1755–1765,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 71 (1947): 19–43.

⁷⁵ Daniel P. Barr, “A Road for Warriors’: The Western Delawares and the Seven Years’ War,” *Pennsylvania History* 73 (2006): 3.

⁷⁶ For “tributary system” quote, see Francis Jennings, “Iroquois Alliances in American History,” in *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*, ed. Francis Jennings et. al. (Syracuse, NY, 1985), 44–45; for “We, the Delawares of Ohio” quote, see “Report by Scarouady” to Governor Morris in Philadelphia, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683.

a celebratory war dance, they boasted: "When Washington [at Fort Necessity] was defeated We, the Delawares were blamed as the Cause of it. We will now kill. We will not be blamed without a Cause."⁷⁷

The Delaware actions against the backcountry alarmed Major General William Shirley, commander in chief of his majesty's forces in North America during the early years of the conflict. Shirley, whose own son William had fallen with Braddock on the Monongahela, bewailed that these Indians had "for a long time past lived in Friendship with the People" of Pennsylvania and bordering colonies.⁷⁸ Shirley tried desperately to reestablish the former subservient role of Delawares to Iroquois authority—a relationship he believed strengthened both imperial Indian relations and Pennsylvania border security. He complained to Six Nations leaders that they needed to get their house in order. The Delawares, he reminded them, had "always lived under your Direction. They looked upon you as their masters, and you looked upon them as Women who wore Petticoats. They never dared to do anything of Importance without your leave." He cautioned the Iroquois that they needed to punish those Delawares who raided on the Pennsylvania frontiers. If the Iroquois refused to assert their dominant status within the Covenant Chain, Shirley warned, the Delawares would "think themselves as good Men as you, and you will lose the name of being their Masters."⁷⁹ Shirley's concerns may have been too late.

This was not a total break from the Six Nations, as the Wolf phratry of Delawares aligned themselves with the pro-French faction of western Senecas. This bloc, not in step with the council at Onondaga, held political positions more akin to those of the other western Indians. There were also Delawares who saw the danger in their emancipation from military constraint. One Delaware chief believed that in order to destroy the Delawares, the Six Nations Confederacy had purposely not asserted its authority in the West—thus forcing the Delawares into a war with Pennsylvania that they could not win. This chief warned Six Nations leaders using vivid sexual imagery: "Why do you wish to rob the woman of her dress. I tell you that if you do, you will find creatures in it that are ready to bite you."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Scarouady to Governor Morris, Nov. 8, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:683.

⁷⁸ Major General Shirley to Council of War, Dec. 12, 1755, in *ibid.*, 7:21–22.

⁷⁹ Major General Shirley to the Six Nations, Dec. 12, 1755, in *ibid.*, 7:22.

⁸⁰ Unidentified Delaware leader in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of*

The frontier raids of 1755 and 1756 shed light on a transition taking place in western Pennsylvania. Delawares became attuned to a new identity, for by this time they equated the image of a noncombatant with negative undertones of passivity and vulnerability—abstractions no longer acceptable for them as they strove to establish autonomy in the West. In the aftermath of these raids, Delaware warriors used gender-specific terms about masculine rebirth and demonstrated their contempt for their previous position that had restricted them from warfare. Delaware war parties moved about the backcountry and flung sexual insults at the Iroquois they encountered. Delawares defended against accusations that they had been treacherous by reminding the Iroquois: “We are looked upon as Women, and therefore When the French come among us, is it to be wondered that they were able to seduce us.” In their rhetoric, Delawares claimed that they had “been too Long treated by the Six Nations . . . as Women but [would] now show them that they are Men.” Representatives of the Six Nations met with Delaware speakers at the Susquehanna Indian town of Otsiningo in February 1756 and scolded the Delawares “to get sober,” condemning their raids as the “Actions of Drunken Men.” The Delawares boldly responded: “We are Men, and are determined not to be ruled any longer by you as Women.” They then told the delegates to drop the matter “lest we cut off your private Parts and make Women of you as you have done of us.”⁸¹

Sir William Johnson, much to the chagrin of the Six Nations, concluded a series of talks at Onondaga by making peace with the eastern Delawares and “taking off the Petticoat or that invidious name of woman from the Delaware Nation [which had] been imposed on them by the 6 Nations from the time they conquered them.”⁸² Johnson hoped that the

New-York, 7:157; Sullivan, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 2:369; Louis Antoine de Bougainville to Marquis de Rigaud, Lieutenant Governor of New France in Montreal, Jan. 30, 1757, in *Adventures in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine De Bougainville, 1756–1760*, ed. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman, OK, 1964), 104–5; Hulbert and Schwarze, “Zeisberger’s History,” 36.

⁸¹ Report of Mohawk sachem Little Abraham to Lieutenant Governor William Denny of Pennsylvania at Lancaster, May 13, 1757, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:521–22; words of Delaware warriors in Beauchamp, *Life of Conrad Weiser*, 111. For an analysis on body parts and metaphor, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, 1999), 213–14.

⁸² Sir William Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 17, 1756, in *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. Edmund B. O’Callaghan, 4 vols. (Albany, NY, 1849–51), 2:730; Sir William Johnson to Lords of Trade, July 17, 1756, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser., 6:480–81. Also see *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 7:119; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 266.

Iroquois would follow his example and also remove the petticoat. So doing, Johnson believed, would prompt the western Delawares to leave the Ohio, return east, and solidify the Chain. Deputies of the Six Nations told Johnson that they were not “properly authorized” by their council to release the Delawares from their tributary status, but they “would make their reports & press it upon them [Onondaga Council].”⁸³

The inadequate mediation of Johnson with regard to the rift between the Delawares and Pennsylvania did not stop the intensity of the raids. In April 1756, Governor Morris complained to Johnson that Delawares living at Kittanning and farther to the west on the Ohio River were “most mischievous” and continued to “murder and destroy our Inhabitants, treating them with the most barbarous Inhumanity that can be conceived.”⁸⁴ Eastern and western Delaware war parties continued in their assaults on the frontiers of central Pennsylvania. Over seven hundred Delaware warriors came from the Ohio, while a few hundred approached white settlements from their villages on the Susquehanna.⁸⁵ Morris condemned the “cruel Ravages of these bloody Invaders” and threatened that those Indians responsible would suffer the “most fatal Consequences.”⁸⁶ Believing that the Delawares had thrown off their “Subjection and Dependency upon the Six Nations” to ally with the French, Morris ran out of options. On April 14, 1756, he declared war on the Delawares and placed scalp bounties on all Delawares, including Shingas and Captain Jacobs, who had waged war or aided the warriors.⁸⁷ The governor condemned the actions of the Ohio Delawares, who, he lamented, were looked upon by the proprietors as “our own Children,” and who had in a “most cruel manner fallen upon & murdered our Inhabitants, People whose Houses were always open to them.” He added that certain Delawares, unprovoked, had greatly damaged the “Chain of Friendship” that had historically bound them with Pennsylvania and the Six Nations. He invited peaceful Delawares to settle closer to the Pennsylvania settle-

⁸³ Sir William Johnson’s comments, Albany, July 17, 1756, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, 7:119.

⁸⁴ Governor Morris to Sir William Johnson Apr. 24, 1756, in *ibid.*, 7:98–99.

⁸⁵ Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 231.

⁸⁶ A message from Governor Morris to the Pennsylvania assembly, Philadelphia, Nov. 5, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:677.

⁸⁷ On “Subjection” comment, see Governor Morris to Scarouady, Apr. 8, 1756, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:590–91; Michael N. McConnell, “The Search for Security: Indian-English Relations in the Trans-Appalachian Region” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1983), 149.

ments in the East for their own protection against less discriminating bounty hunters.⁸⁸

By mid-1756, the alienation of western Delawares from the Covenant Chain was complete. Many were now “under the protection of the French” and would no longer honor their previous relationships with Pennsylvania or the British. Morris complained that Delawares refused to “submit to the Six Nations, to whom they owe obedience.”⁸⁹ The spirit of autonomy also spread back across the Allegheny Mountains. Delaware chiefs living near the Iroquois in the Wyoming Valley announced in the fall that “five hundred of their people would move away from the English and settle ten leagues to the west,” near the Ohio River. Western Delawares, confident in their ability to throw the frontier into chaos, challenged the Iroquois to take the hatchet against the English. In council with the Shawnees and Iroquois, the Delawares “reproached the Iroquois bitterly for their failure” to declare war against the British for their incursions into the Ohio Country. They told the Iroquois that they would no longer wear the petticoat and warned that “perhaps they would become crazy . . . [and] even raise the hatchet against their uncles, the Iroquois.”⁹⁰

Concluding that the alliance between Pennsylvania and the Six Nations “had been organized for their destruction,” Heckewelder wrote, Delawares believed that their “very existence was at stake” and abandoned their pacifist role “into which they had been insidiously drawn.”⁹¹ The defeat of Braddock revealed that the British needed to have another look at their military commitment to the western Pennsylvania region—a reassessment for which the Delawares did not have the inclination or time to wait. Instead, at the onset of the Seven Years’ War, the Ohio Delawares threw off the bastardized label of women and its preconditions for military restraint and, as Charles Thomson concluded, “forced [the Six

⁸⁸ Governor Morris to Scarouady and Andrew Montour, Philadelphia, Nov. 14, 1755, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 6:698–99; Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:528–29.

⁸⁹ Governor Morris, Apr. 15, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:92; Morris to Sir William Johnson, Philadelphia, Nov. 15, 1755, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th ser., 2:528–29.

⁹⁰ The Marquis de Vaudreuil to the Minister in Montreal, Aug. 8, 1756, in *Wilderness Chronicles of Northwestern Pennsylvania*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent (Harrisburg, PA, 1941), 95. For the “reproached” comment, see Louis Antoine de Bougainville to Marquis de Rigaud, lieutenant governor of New France in Montreal, Jan. 30, 1757, in Hamilton, *Adventures in the Wilderness*, 104–5.

⁹¹ Heckewelder, *Account of the Indian Nations*, xxxiv.

Nations and Pennsylvania] to acknowledge they were Men . . . a free independent Nation.”⁹² From the moment they picked up the hatchet and went to war against Pennsylvania, “the Delawares were turned, and became another People.”⁹³

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⁹² Thomson, *Enquiry into the Causes*, 47.

⁹³ Words of the Shawnee chief named Paxonosa, as interpreted by Conrad Weiser and conveyed to a council at Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1756, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 7:49.