

Redeeming the Captives: Pennsylvania Captives among the Ohio Indians, 1755–1765

HE EXPERIENCES of Anglo-American settlers abducted by Indians have captured the imagination of general readers and scholars alike from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries.¹ Most of these captives lived in seventeenth-century New England or the nineteenthcentury West. However, between 1755 and 1765 Indian raiding parties from the Ohio Valley descended upon the frontier of Pennsylvania and adjoining colonies and returned to their homes with nearly two thousand captives. The experiences of these captives are particularly significant. The sheer number

¹ There has been an abundance of recent scholarship on the interaction between Native Americans and Europeans in the upper Ohio Valley and on the Pennsylvania frontier. See, for example, Michael N. McConnell, A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724–1774 (Lincoln, Neb., 1992); Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815 (New York, 1991); Eric Hinderaker, Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800 (New York, 1997); James H. Merrell, Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier (New York, 1999). For a broader discussion see also: John Putnam Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (New York, 1995); June Namias, White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993).

THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY Vol. CXXV, No. 3 (July 2001)

of them, taken over such a short period of time, makes the captivity experience of these mid-eighteenth-century Pennsylvanians of particular consequence. More importantly, the distribution of such a large number of captives among a relatively small number of Ohio Indians made them crucial agents of cultural change.² In addition, the Ohio Indians' attitude towards their captives was in many ways markedly different from that shown by other Indian peoples. While adopting their captives into their families, the Ohio Indians also sensed the importance of these captives in applying diplomatic pressure on their Anglo-American neighbors. The captives became, in effect, a "human shield" to protect the Ohio Indians against attack. Finally, the number of captives also meant that their return became a central issue both for their families and for imperial and provincial authorities. Redeeming the captives became a central issue of diplomacy between Pennsylvania and the Ohio Indians that would dominate all discussions between 1758 and 1765.

In the summer of 1755, at the start of the Seven Years' War, the rout of British General Edward Braddock and his army left the Pennsylvania frontier dangerously exposed. Until General John Forbes captured Fort Duquesne in the fall of 1758, raiders from the Ohio Valley repeatedly attacked the Pennsylvania frontier. During this period the Ohio Indians seized almost one thousand captives on the Pennsylvania frontier (and many hundreds more along the colonial frontier from the North Carolina line to New York). During "Pontiac's War" (1763–64) raiders seized several hundred more captives, making the total number of whites taken approximately two thousand.³ During this period raiding parties penetrated

² The Indians who participated in the raids on the Pennsylvania frontier came from across the entire Ohio Valley and much of the Great Lakes region. The raiders included diverse people such as the Hurons, Ottawas, and Miamis. However, the largest number of raiders came from the upper Ohio Valley, particularly the region between the Scioto and Allegheny Rivers, and consisted of Delawares and Shawnees. Where possible I have used the specific ethnic identity of individuals, such as Huron, Shawnee, and Delaware. When a specific ethnic identity is not possible I have referred simply to the "Ohio Indians." As most of the Ohio villages, and most of the raiding parties, were multi-ethnic this is the term I have used most often. Richard White refers collectively to the Indian peoples of the Ohio Valley as the "Algonquians" because many of the people inhabiting the Ohio Valley spoke one of many Algonquian languages and shared common cultural traits. However, there were also many Iroquoian peoples, most notably the Hurons, and some members of the Iroquois themselves. For a discussion of many of these issues, see White, *Middle Ground*, xi.

⁵ Some general sense of the number of captives can be gathered from the numbers released, particularly in 1764, but for a more detailed picture there are many different sources. In the Conrad Weiser papers there are several collections of estimates of casualties, in particular: "Memorandum of Persons Killed and Captured on the Frontier of Lancaster County," "List of People Killed or Captured

162

July

163

almost at will into the thickly settled parts of Pennsylvania. Governor Robert Hunter Morris wrote to Sir William Johnson towards the beginning of the conflict in April 1756, "You cannot conceive . . . what a Multitude of Inhabitants, of all ages and both sexes they have carried into Captivity; by Information of several of the Prisoners who made their Escape from them, I can assure you that there are not less than three hundred of our People in servitude to them and the French, on the Ohio, the most of them at Shingas' Town, called Kittanning, about thirty Miles above Fort Duquesne."⁴ In June 1756 one raiding party alone returned to Fort Duquesne with over sixty captives. By August of the same year French officials on the Ohio were estimating that the Algonquians had taken over three thousand captives. While this figure is almost certainly too high, it is suggestive of the very large numbers of captives seized.⁵

Many of the captives had lived on isolated frontier farms, but others lived in more highly settled parts of the colonies, for raiders pressed deep into the settled parts of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland. In Pennsylvania, raiders penetrated as far as Reading, only forty miles from Philadelphia. The greatest number of captives, however, lived on the exposed "western" frontier, in particular in Cumberland County, with smaller but still substantial numbers of captives being taken in Lancaster, Berks, and Northampton counties, and less significant numbers taken in York County. Many captives were seized in their homes, others while attempting to flee, and yet others when the blockhouses to which they had fled for protection surrendered to the raiders. The largest prizes came with the fall of exposed provincial forts that the Ohio Indians began to target in early 1756. In July

⁴ "Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania" in *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania*, ed. Samuel Hazard (hereafter, *Col. Recs. Pa.*) (16 vols., Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1838–53), 7:97–98.

⁵ "Abstract of Dispatches received from Canada, June 4, 1756," "Abstract of Despatches from America, Aug. 30, 1756," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York;* Procured in Holland, England and France, (hereafter, NYCD) ed. Edmund B. O'Callaghan, and Berthold Fernow (15 vols., Albany, 1853–87), 10:408, 484.

in Bethel Township, Lancaster County," "List of People Killed or Captured on South-West side of Schuylkill," "List of People Killed or Captured eastwards of River Lecky," "List of People Killed or Captured in Berks County," "List of People Killed or Captured in Heidelburg Township," Conrad Weiser Papers, 2:89, 107, 109, 115, 117, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter, HSP). The Pennsylvania Gazette and Maryland Gazette also provide firsthand accounts of the frontier raids. For a broader discussion, see also Matthew C Ward, "Fighting the 'Old Women': Indian Strategy on the Virginia and Pennsylvania Frontier, 1754–1748," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (1995), 297–320.

1756, for instance, raiders gained perhaps their biggest prize of the war with the capture of Fort Granville in Cumberland County.⁶

The raiders seized men, women, and children. In many ways these captives were typical of those sought by any Indian raiding party, whether attacking white settlements or other Indian villages. A majority of the captives were children who could easily be adopted into Indian families. On the Pennsylvania frontier, the Ohio Indians captured more men than women. Unlike the New England frontier, the practice of targeting adult males to trade to the French does not seem to have been a major consideration. For the most part, raiders returned to their villages with their captives and traded comparatively few to the French at Detroit or Fort Niagara. Male captives were probably simply easier to obtain than women.⁷

The popularity of captivity narratives meant that most Pennsylvanians captured had lurid notions of the fate that lay in store for them. These accounts informed colonists in detail of the "barbarous and shocking Manner" in which the Indians put their prisoners to death. Such atrocities were quite common, the colonial press assured readers, for "they roast a Prisoner out of every considerable Party that they take," and these captives "lived for some Days under their Torment" before they died. What was still worse any "Women are allowed a full Moon, to chuse the Embraces of an Indian or a Tomahawk."⁸ In reality, however, death or rape were not the fate that awaited most captives. Because a primary goal of the Ohio Indians was to adopt their captives into their families, and because they did not know which captives would become their family members, they scrupulously avoided any sexual contact with their captives. This goal also meant that the Ohio Indians were hesitant to torture their captives and consequently only

⁶ Maryland Gazette, April 8, 1756; Pennsylvania Gazette, April 8, Aug. 19, 1756; Col. Recs. Pa., 7:77. ⁷ James Axtell, in particular, has suggested that more women were captured than men. While it is true that more women were returned by the Ohio Indians in 1764–65, a close examination of provincial records reveals that substantially more men than women were seized. Alden T. Vaughan and Daniel K. Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide: Indians and New Englanders, 1605–1763," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 90 (1980/81), 53–62; James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly 32 (1975), 58; Matthew C. Ward, "La Guerre Sauvage': The Seven Years' War on the Virginia and Pennsylvania Frontier" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992), 455.

⁸ Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 21, 1756; for a discussion of captivity narratives, see Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973); for a discussion of the experiences of captives see Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 55–88.

164

July

165

a few were killed. Such treatment was still sufficiently common, however, and was so publicly displayed in front of the other captives, that most captives during the early stages of their captivity feared constantly for their lives. Male captives faced a much higher chance of execution and torture than women. Men of military age, and certainly any troops or militia, were generally more difficult to assimilate into Indian society. Thus their execution was less of a loss to the raiding party. Indeed, although more men than women were captured on the Pennsylvania frontier, when Bouquet received captives from the Shawnees and Delawares in 1764 and early 1765, women and children far outnumbered the men.⁹

From the moment of capture, any sign that an adult male prisoner might be disruptive and threaten the security of the raiding party would lead to his execution. Executions of captives were generally quick and without torture, usually before the party had returned to the Ohio Valley. One captive described how his captor informed him that he "looked young and lusty, [and] they would not hurt me, provided I was willing to go with them." When ordered to do various tasks, he did them with "submission." Consequently, he was treated well. Shortly afterwards the party captured another young man from a neighboring plantation. When he proved to be much more disruptive, his captors showed little hesitation in killing him "with several tomahawk blows."¹⁰

While some captives were executed, the majority were adopted into Indian families, for the Ohio Indians welcomed the opportunity to replace their population losses. During the 1750s the region had been wracked by several devastating smallpox epidemics. The acquisition of captives thus provided an easy means of maintaining tribal populations. Male captives often fulfilled an important role by hunting game while the warriors were away raiding the backcountry. Indeed, many of the captives who escaped were able to do so because their captors had treated them as full family members and had provided them with weapons for hunting.¹¹

⁹ Execution does not account fully for the disparity in the gender ratio. Men were more likely than women to escape, and men were also more likely to be returned in the earlier stages of negotiations. William S Ewing, "Indian Captives Released by Colonel Bouquet," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine (hereafter, WPHM) 39 (1956), 187–201.

¹¹ D. Peter MacLeod, "Microbes and Muskets: Smallpox and the Participation of the Amerindian Allies of New France in the Seven Years' War," *Ethnohistory* 39 (1992), 42–64; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 28, 1757; "Examination of John Baker," March 31, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:78, HSP;

¹⁰ Maryland Gazette, April 1, 1756.

July

The acquisition of captives was so important to the Indian war effort that they principally chose targets where it would be easy to obtain them, particularly lightly guarded plantations where there would be many women and children. One captive reported that his captors had told him "the best way to get Prisoners was to come below the Forts, for there they should find People enough straggling about carelessly and unarmed."12 After taking their captives, the primary goal of a raiding party was simply to evade interception and return home. If frontiersmen attempted to rescue the captives, the raiders would do anything necessary to escape. Sometimes children, the elderly, or anyone who had been wounded and could not keep up with the party might be killed. Abraham Miller, captured in May 1757 in Northampton County, described how his captors killed his mother and a girl with him because of their wounds. Mary Jemison similarly reported how her captors killed her family in order to hasten their flight. Under other circumstances, it was very unusual for raiders to kill women and children, or even the elderly, for elderly captives could be sold for a substantial ransom to the French.13

To prevent escape the Indians bound their captives and often forced them to strip. One Pennsylvanian, John Craig, reported that the Indians "immediately stripped him[,] tied a Rope around his Neck and drove him before them." When a raiding party finally stopped for the night, the raiders secured their prisoners by tying them to posts, rocks, or trees. Craig reported that whenever his party halted the prisoners "were stripp'd stark naked and their Limbs stretched out to the utmost Extent and tied to a Post and Trees."14 En route to the Ohio on a diplomatic mission for Pennsylvania, Christian Frederick Post discovered several "poles, painted red . . . stuck in the ground by Indians, to which they tye the prisoners when they stop at night in their return from their incursions."15

Maryland Gazette, March 18, 1756; "Examination of John Hochtattler," [May 5?, 1758], Louis Waddell et al., eds., The Papers of Henry Bouquet (hereafter, HBP) (6 vols., Harrisburg, 1951-94), 1:391-93. 12 Maryland Gazette, Sept. 2, 1756.

¹³ Conrad Weiser to Gov. Morris, Nov. 18, 1755, Conrad Weiser Papers, 1:60; "Depositions of those who had been taken prisoners by the Indians," June 20, 1757, Northampton County Records: Miscellaneous Papers, 1:253, HSP; Pennsylvania Gazette, June 30, Dec. 22, 1757; James E. Seaver, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (Canandaigua, N.Y., 1824), 39.

^{14 &}quot;Deposition of John Craig," March 30, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:78.

^{15 &}quot;Two Journals of Western Tours, by Charles [sic] Frederick Post," in Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (32 vols., Cleveland, 1904), 1:190.

167

After a few days, several raiding parties would assemble at a prearranged location where they would divide the prisoners between the different groups. The village of Kittanning on the Allegheny River, in particular, seems to have served as a center for the "processing" of captives before its destruction by a Pennsylvania party in September 1756. When the Ohio Delawares captured Charles Stuart and his family in the Great Cove in Cumberland County in 1755, they took them to Kittanning, where the prisoners were allocated to the various raiding groups.¹⁶ At this point, the raiders might kill and ceremonially torture some of the captives, particularly soldiers in the provincial forces or the British army. Other captives might be painted black to await execution upon their return to the Ohio Valley.

When the raiding party neared its hometown any scalps they had taken would be hung on a pole five or six feet long. The prisoners would be bound tightly and huddled into the center of the band.17 As they finally entered the village, the captives would be forced to "run the gauntlet." According to the Moravian missionary John Heckewelder, they would be lined up and shown a painted post twenty to forty yards away and told to run to the post between two lines of villagers who would beat them or force them to endure other torments.18 Charles Stuart likewise related how "on Entering into the Town we were obliged to Pass Between Two Rows of Indians Containing abt 100 on Each Side who were armd with various kinds of Weapons."19 The purpose of the gauntlet was specific: to break captives from their past lives through ritual humiliation and to force them to demonstrate their courage and fortitude. However, not all captives faced equal abuse. Heckewelder noted that if a captive "shews a determined courage, and when bid to run for the painted post, starts at once with all his might . . . he will most commonly escape without much harm, and sometimes without any injury whatsoever, and on reaching the desired point, he will have the satisfaction to hear his courage and bravery applauded." However, any captive "who hesitates, or shews some symptoms of fear . . . is treated without much mercy, and is happy, at last, if he escapes with his life."20

¹⁶ Beverly W. Bond Jr., ed., "The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755–1757," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 13 (1926), 58–81.

¹⁷ John Heckewelder, An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States (rev. and published as vol. 12, Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania [Philadelphia, 1876]), 216.

18 Ibid., 218.

19 Bond, "Captivity of Charles Stuart," 66.

²⁰ Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations, 219.

July

Having "run the gauntlet," captives would be divided between the various families in the village. American Ranger commander Robert Rogers reported that "It is the prerogative of the owner of the cabin to determine their fate, tho' very often it is left to some woman, who has lost her husband, brother, or son, in the war; and, when this is the case, she generally adopts him into the place of the deceased, and saves his life."²¹ If villagers felt that any of the captives were not suitable for adoption—if for example they were deemed too old—they might choose to ransom them to the French or in some cases execute them. When the Ohio Delawares captured Charles Stuart and his family, they separated Stuart and his wife from their children. They took the two adults to Detroit where they sold them to a French missionary who arranged for their transport to France, from where they finally sailed back to Pennsylvania.²²

Any male captives who had been selected for execution and painted black, often captured soldiers, would now be singled out. Such captives were still often adopted into families and might even be referred to as "uncle" or "nephew" before being ceremonially tortured and killed. John Cox witnessed the execution of one prisoner who was "made an example." Calling "all the Prisoners to be Witnesses to this Scene," they beat him "for half an hour with Clubs and Tomahawks, and afterwards fastening him to a Post, cropt his Ears close to his Head; after which an Indian chopt off his Fingers, and another, with a red hot iron, burnt him all over his Belly." Eventually they "Shot him full of Arrows, and at last killed and scalped him."²³ Peter Lewney reported a similar experience when his captors tortured one of the Virginia rangers they had captured. "They roasted [him] alive and tormented [him] for a whole Night before he expired, cutting pieces of Flesh off of his Body,

²¹ Robert Rogers, A Concise Account of North America (London, 1765), 234.

²² Bond, "Captivity of Charles Stuart," 58-81.

²³ Maryland Gazette, March 18, Oct. 7, 1756; Pennsylvania Gazette, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, 21, 1756; "Deposition of John Craig, March 30, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:78; John Ingles, The Story of Mary Draper Ingles and Her Son Thomas Ingles (Radford, Va., 1969), 10; Col. Recs. Pa., 7:241–45; Yves Goddard, "Delaware," in Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, D.C., 1978), 213–39; Charles Callender, "Shawnee," in Handbook of North American Indians: Northeast, 622–35; for a discussion of the treatment of captives among the Iroquois see Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Long-House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), 35–36, 68–72; for a more detailed discussion of the Shawnee's treatment of captives, see James H. Howard, Shawnee! The Ceremonialism of a Native Indian Tribe and Its Cultural Background (Athens, Ohio, 1981), 119–25.

2001

and eating it."²⁴ One of the fullest descriptions of Iroquois torture techniques was provided by Robert Rogers:

They first strip the person who is to suffer from head to foot, and, fixing two posts in the ground, they fasten to them two pieces crossways, one about two feet from the ground, the other about five or six feet higher; they then oblige the unhappy victim to mount upon the lower cross piece, to which they tie his legs a little assunder. His hands are extended, and tied to the angles formed by the upper cross piece; and in this posture they burn him all over the body, sometimes first daubing him with pitch. The whole village, men, women, and children, assemble round him, and every one has a right to torture him in what manner they please, and as long as there is life in him. If none of the bystanders are inclined to lengthen out his torments, he is not long kept in pain, but is either shot to death with arrows, or inclosed with dry bark, to which they set fire: they then leave him on the frame, and in the evening run from cabin to cabin, and strike with small twigs their furniture, the walls and roofs of their cabins, to prevent his spirit from remaining there to take vengeance for the evils committed on his body; the remainder of the day, and the night following is spent in rejoicings.25

The horror of such ritualistic torture had a lasting impact on all captives. Although most could expect full integration into Indian society, they often felt fear for their lives. However, while they feared for their safety, the attractions of Indian society offset this fear, and on occasion captives even refused the opportunity to return to white society. When Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger accompanied their Indian captors on a visit to Fort Duquesne, the garrison "tried to induce us to forsake the Indians and stay with them." However, doubtless suspicious that this offer of sanctuary came at a price—most of the French soldiers had not seen a white woman for many months, and in some cases several years—they declined the offer.²⁶ For the many deserters, indentured servants, and even runaway slaves who found refuge in Indian villages during the war, there were obvious attractions. For

²⁴ "Deposition of John Craig," March 30, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:78; George Mercer to John Fenton Mercer, April 15, 1756, in W. W. Abbot et al., eds., The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series (10 vols., Charlottesville, Va., 1983–95), 2:354–55; Maryland Gazette, Sept. 2, 1756; Pennsylvania Gazette, Sept. 2, 1756. Pennsylvania Gazette, July 28, 1757.

25 Rogers, A Concise Account of North America, 235-36.

²⁶ "Narrative of Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger," in *Pennsylvania Archives* (2d ser., 19 vols., Harrisburg, 1874–90), 7:406.

young women whose life in the backcountry was often one of drudgery and comparative repression, the more open and powerful status of Indian women, particularly unmarried or "hunting women," was a strong lure. For others, Indian sexual mores, the acceptance of pre-marital sex, homosexuality, and possibly abortion, provided an equally attractive lure.27 John Heckewelder reported that "women are not obliged to live with their husbands any longer than suits their pleasure or convenience."28 Likewise, Christopher Gist, travelling through the Ohio Valley in the early 1750s, described a ceremony at Lower Shawnee Town in which the men danced in a long line through the village and "as any of the Women liked a Man passing by, she stepped in, and joined in the Dance, taking hold of the Man's Stroud, whom she chose, and then continued in the Dance till the rest of the Women stepped in, and made their choice in the same manner; after which the Dance ended and they all retired to consummate."29 Such a relaxed attitude towards their sexuality and the higher social and political status of women must have appealed to some captives.

Once adopted into a family, most Pennsylvania captives lived with their captors for several years, and many would never return to their homes. During the 1750s and 1760s nearly two thousand captives lived in the Ohio villages. While many were children, the majority were adults. These captives arrived among a total Indian population in the Ohio Valley of under ten thousand.³⁰ While both population figures and figures for captives must be viewed only as very general estimates, they make clear the significant impact that the arrival of these captives had on such small populations. The presence of so many captives living in the Ohio villages served to acculturate many of the Ohio Indians into aspects of Anglo-American culture and gave them an insight into the domestic side of Anglo-American life.

There has been a great deal of recent scholarship on the interaction between Native Americans and Europeans, including many studies of the upper Ohio Valley and the Pennsylvania frontier. Most of these studies have focused on the cultural interaction between Europeans and Indians, and in

²⁷ For a discussion of some aspects of Indian sexual morality, see White, Middle Ground, 60-64.

²⁸ Heckewelder, History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations, 154.

²⁹ "An account of a Shawnee Festival at Shawnee Town February 1751," in George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia, ed. Lois Mulkearn (Pittsburgh, 1954), 122.

³⁰ Population estimates for 1768 place the total Shawnee population at only 1,800, the Delawares and Munsees at 3,500, and the Miamis at 4,000. Helen Hornbeck Tanner, ed., Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History (Norman, Okla., 1987), 66.

171

particular on the role of cultural mediators in bridging the cultural divide between Anglo-American colonists and their Native American neighbours. Richard White instigated much of this scholarship with his study of the "middle ground" in the Ohio Valley. His work has been more recently complemented by that of Michael McConnell, Eric Hinderaker, and James Merrell. These studies demonstrate the extent to which Europeans and Indians created new cultural patterns based on the merging of Indian and European cultures, and have paid substantial attention to the role of "cultural mediators" in merging these cultures. These "cultural mediators" appear in many forms, from traders to interpreters, from half-Indian half-European métis to captives.³¹

European captives living in Native American communities played a pivotal role in the creation of common cultural patterns. Not surprisingly, there have been many studies of the role of the acculturation or "transculturation" of captives. The majority of these studies, however, have examined the process by which captives became "Indianized." Indeed, Gary Nash has argued that the only case of transculture in colonial America was the Indianization of colonists. Similarly James Axtell's work has contrasted the failure of the English missionary effort to Europeanize the Indians with the success of the Ohio Indians in Indianizing their captives and the creation of hundreds of "white Indians." Only Alden T. Vaughan and Daniel K. Richter have queried whether this process of "transculture" was one-way, and in addition to demonstrating the success of the New England Indians in Indianizing Europeans have also shown how New Englanders acculturated several hundred Indians.³²

All these studies, however, make the central assumption that white captives were passive receptors of Indian culture: Indians were able to acculturate captives to their ways while captives had little influence on the culture of their captors. Such an assumption is rather strange. Richter himself has demonstrated how the presence of Huron captives among the Iroquois in the mid-seventeenth century forced the Iroquois to allow the establishment of Jesuit missions in Iroquoia.³³

³¹ See White, *Middle Ground*; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*, McConnell, Country Between; Merrell, Into the American Woods.

³² Gary B. Nash, Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early North America (3d ed., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1992), 279; Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," 55–88; for the most recent recapitulation of this article see James Axtell, Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America (New York, 2001), 189–213; Vaughan and Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide," 25.

³³ Richter, Ordeal of the Long-House, 108.

While the presence of Pennsylvania captives among the Ohio Indians did not culturally transform their captors into Europeans, the captives did exert subtle changes in their captors' culture.

Pennsylvania captives were fully integrated into Indian society. Most captives were adopted to replace deceased family members and even acquired their social status. Peter Lewney, for instance, was adopted by a Detroit headman to replace a deceased relative and was soon fully integrated into his new family. He was regarded as a respected warrior and encouraged to attend important diplomatic meetings with the French. Several captives even rose to positions of influence in their new homes. George Brown became "one of the chief Men among the Shawnese" and Joshua Renick a Miami headman. Hugh Gibson was adopted to replace a brother of Pisquetomen, an influential Delaware headman.³⁴

Their central place in the families of the Ohio Indians meant that they were able to acculturate their families into Anglo-American practices. Although captivity accounts are often very vague on the routine of the captives' daily lives, it appears that on a day-to-day level they repeatedly influenced the lives of their captors.³⁵ Captives were used in a wide variety of tasks, particularly around the home where they were in close contact with their captors. Mary Jemison reported that she was "employed in nursing the children, and doing light work about the house."³⁶ Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger were similarly employed planting crops and washing and cooking. Captives also served as teachers of English to their new families. Indeed, by the 1760s many Ohio Indians appear to have mastered the English language with a reasonable degree of fluency. On occasion, the Ohio Indians also took advantage of their ability to read. Robert Rutherford, for instance, a British soldier captured during Pontiac's War, was ordered to

³⁴ Timothy Alden, "An Account of the Captivity of Hugh Gibson among the Delaware Indians ..." in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 3d ser., 6 (1837), 142; Col. Recs. Pa., 7:341; Pennsylvania Gazette, Jan. 15, 1756, July 28, 1757; James Young to James Burd, Oct. 3, 1757, Shippen Family Papers, vol. 3, HSP. For examples of the life of captives, see Maryland Gazette, March 18, 1756; Deposition of Gershom Hicks, April 14, 1764, HBP 6:514–16

³⁵ Unfortunately, most accounts of captivity contain little information about the day-to-day events of the captive's life, for which there may be several reasons. Such information had little relevance for accounts provided for military intelligence. If the account was intended for general publication, such information was of little interest compared to the grizzly details of Indian torture. Finally, many captives may have been reluctant to reveal the extent to which they aided their captors and were integrated into Native American communities.

³⁶ Seaver, Mary Jemison, 47.

173

translate British documents for his captors.³⁷ Taken individually these instances may not amount to a dramatic cultural transformation of the lives of Ohio Indians. However, when compounded hundreds of times, with captives present in the majority of Ohio villages, and when added to the flow of captured household goods, captives served to introduce European customs into the Ohio Valley. In Mary Jemison's case, for instance, this might have amounted to no more than showing her adopted family how to use a fork seized from a colonist's plantation.

The skills of captives were important because the war brought so many new items to the Ohio Valley. Raiders bought back with them household utensils, clothing, agricultural implements, almost anything that they, or the horses they seized, could carry. Captives played an important role in showing the Ohio villagers how to use their new booty. Before the war, domesticated cattle had been very uncommon in the Ohio Valley. The Moravian missionary David Zeisberger commented that in general the Ohio Indians "do not care to keep cattle, for in that case they must remain at home to look after it [sic] and are prevented from going into the forest."38 However, captives such as Susanna Johnson, captured by the Iroquois, who reported how she spent much of her time tending cows, may have played an important role in informing the Ohio Indians about the care of such animals.39 By the early 1760s James Kenny was able to report how one Delaware headman living on the Ohio River had even constructed "several Stables & Cow houses under one Roof" and had become widely known for his skill in making butter. By the late 1760s Anglo-American travelers to the region were commenting on the numerous cattle and pigs that roamed the Ohio woods, and even on the Ohio Indians' skill in producing butter and cheese.40

³⁷ Milo Milton Quaife, The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac's Conspiracy, and John Rutherfurd's Narrative of a Captivity (Chicago, 1958), 249; "Narrative of Marie Le Roy and Barbara Leininger," in Pennsylvania Archives, 2d ser., 7:404.

³⁸ Archer Butler Hulbert and William Nathaniel Schwarze, "David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians," *Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society* 19 (1910), 14.

³⁹ While Johnson lived on the St. Lawrence, captives in the Ohio Valley may have performed a similar role. Susanna Johnson, A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs Johnson. Containing an Account of Her Sufferings During Four Years with the Indians and French (Glasgow, 1797), 34.

⁴⁰ John W. Jordan, ed., "Journal of James Kenny, 1761–1763," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 37 (1913), 21–22; "Abstract of Despatches from America, August 30, 1756," NYCD, 10:475–87; Stephen Aron, "Rights in the Woods' on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier," in Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750–1830, ed. Andrew R. L.

July

Captives may also have facilitated an even more fundamental cultural transformation. James Kenny related how in 1761 he came across a village of houses with "Stone Chimneys & several frame Buildings."41 Captives like Hugh Gibson, who was employed in producing clapboards, may have played a crucial role in teaching the Ohio Indians these new construction skills. By the late eighteenth century, many Ohio Indians had abandoned traditional building techniques and were living in clapboard houses of European style. Thomas Cape told how some Shawnees even sowed the wheat that they had obtained during raids on the backcountry and attempted to produce their own wheat and bread.42 By the 1760s David Zeisberger reported that the Ohio Indians had even begun to forge their own iron and make hatchets and axes. The adoption of European housing, forging, and agricultural techniques represents a fundamental acculturation of the Ohio Indians. Indeed, Alden T. Vaughan and Daniel K. Richter have argued that "adoption of English-style housing seems to have been one of the last steps in transculturation."43

The presence of Pennsylvania captives among the Ohio Indians not only influenced the latter's culture but also influenced their relationship with Pennsylvania. For provincial authorities, and for their loved ones who remained in Pennsylvania, redeeming the captives became a central political and diplomatic issue. However, the redemption of these captives would prove to be extremely difficult. The various attractions of Indian life meant that many captives were extremely reluctant to return to their homes. When David Boyd was returned to Virginia he was very unhappy for "he had grown fond of the wild and free life of the forest and was greatly dissatisfied by his new surroundings." He tried to escape and "had to be closely guarded for weeks before he relinquished his plan." Thomas Ingles, who returned to Virginia after thirteen years among the Shawnees, "became very restless & uneasy," and likewise had to be closely watched. A young girl whom the Susquehanna Delawares returned to the British in 1758 "was obstinate, [and] would neither tell her name nor Speak a Word, and made great resistance to her being delivered up."⁴⁴ Mary Jemison

Cayton and Frederika J. Teute (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998), 190.

⁴¹ Jordan, "Journal of James Kenny," 22.

⁴²Ibid., 32; Alden, "An Account of the Captivity of Hugh Gibson among the Delaware Indians...," 146.

 ⁴³ Vaughan and Richter, "Crossing the Cultural Divide," 36; McConnell, A Country Between, 218.
⁴⁴ Elvert M. Davis, ed., "History of the Capture and Captivity of David Boyd from Cumberland

County Pennsylvania, 1756," WPHM 14 (1931), 39; Ingles, Mary Draper Ingles, 27; Col. Recs. Pa., 8:147.

was even forced into hiding when a Pennsylvania party tried to ransom her.⁴⁵ For many captives and their captors, return to white society was a heartbreaking occasion.

To colonists in the backcountry of Pennsylvania, the reality of captive life was not at all apparent. Their perceptions of captive life were colored by the lurid accounts that appeared in the colonial press. Consequently they repeatedly pressured the colonial governments to take action to secure the "prisoners" release. Such popular demands for the recovery of captives soon forced Pennsylvania to undertake what amounted to a "rescue mission." In September 1756 John Armstrong led a detachment of the Pennsylvania Regiment in a raid on the Indian town of Kittanning, on the Allegheny River about twenty miles upstream from Fort Duquesne. The town, whose role as a center for processing captives was known, was rumored to hold a large number of prisoners who had been taken a few weeks earlier in raids that had included the capture of Fort Granville. The expedition, though portrayed by contemporaries as a great victory, was in reality closer to a dismal failure. Only seven of the reputed hundred captives in the town were freed, and Armstrong's force suffered heavy casualties.⁴⁶

With little prospect of a military victory to gain the release of captives, the only recourse was an appeal for intervention by the Iroquois and direct negotiations between the British and the Ohio Indians. In all negotiations with the Ohio Indians, a central British demand was always the return of all captives. Negotiations with the Susquehanna Delawares in 1756 were undertaken only on the specific condition that the Delawares would "send the English Prisoners to some certain place, [and] there deliver them up to the Governor."⁴⁷ Despite occasional promises to that effect, the Susquehanna Delawares did not return many of their captives. Frustrated at the Delawares' refusal to return their prisoners, the Pennsylvanians turned to the Iroquois for assistance. In 1756 many Pennsylvanians still believed that the Delawares were subservient to the Iroquois and would heed their orders, yet the Iroquois had no real power or influence over their Delaware neighbors.

2001

⁴⁵ Seaver, Mary Jemison, 67-68.

⁴⁶ James P. Myers Jr., "Pennsylvania's Awakening: The Kittanning Raid of 1756," Pennsylvania History 66 (1999), 399–420; Gov. Morris letter, Sept., 1756, Gratz Collection, case 15, box 18, HSP; Col. Recs. Pa. 7:230; Pennsylvania Gazette, May 6, 13, 27, Sept. 23, 30, 1756; Maryland Gazette, April 29, May 6, 1756; John Armstrong to Gov. Denny, Sept. 14, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:100. ⁴⁷ Col. Recs. Pa., 7:105.

July

In response to repeated requests, the Iroquois promised to place pressure on the Delawares, but there was little of consequence that they could do. As the days and months dragged on, the captives' families grew increasingly desperate.⁴⁸

Throughout 1757 and 1758, as negotiations continued, the Susquehanna Delawares made many promises to return their prisoners. Their headman, Teedyuscung, even promised that he would attempt to persuade the Indians who lived on the Ohio to release their captives.49 However, when Charles Thomson and Christian Frederick Post visited the Delawares in the summer of 1758, they discovered that any release of captives seemed highly unlikely. While Teedyuscung could make bold promises about releasing the captives, he had little power to do this. In Indian society the headman "ruled" through consensus rather than through absolute power. Teedyuscung could do little to force his fellow Delawares to return their captives. Indeed, Thomson and Post warned that it would be very difficult for the Delawares to return many captives for "all [who] are taken are looked upon as the private Property of the Captors, & are either given away to those Families, who have lost any Men in the War, or are sold to others as we do Slaves, And many of those who have been taken from us, we are informed have been sold & bought several Times."50 So complicated was the fate of the captives, that an early release seemed highly unlikely.

In 1757 and 1758 the Susquehanna Delawares sought to keep many of their captives because they had become an integral part of their families and society. This view of captives as full and participating members of society was traditional. However, as the tide of war in Pennsylvania turned increasingly in favor of the British, and as Pennsylvania authorities placed greater emphasis on the return of captives, the Delawares sought to keep their captives for new reasons, not because they were members of their society but because they could prove useful hostages. The use of so many

⁴⁸ For a discussion of the Delawares' relationship with the Iroquois, see Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginning to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York, 1984); Col. Recs. Pa., 7:212, 542, 704; "Minutes of a Council at Easton," July 29, 1756, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs, 2:97; Pennsylvania Archives, 2d ser., 2:640–45.

⁴⁹ Report of Charles Thomson and Christian Frederick Post, June 1758, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs 3:49-51.

⁵⁰ Report of Charles Thomson and Christian Frederick Post, June 18, 1758, Papers Relating to the Friendly Association, (hereafter, PRFA) 2:22, Quaker Collection, Haverford College.

177

captives as hostages was a departure from Indian custom and provided a new twist in the diplomatic struggle for their release. Governor Denny's successor, James Hamilton, later reported that during the negotiations at Easton "tho' it was not minuted in the Treaty" and after that "at sundry times to some members of the [Friendly] Association" Teedyuscung had pledged that "the prisoners would never be deliver'd up, till the Indians were satisfied about the Lands."⁵¹ This new attitude towards captives would soon spread to the upper Ohio Valley.

Until the capture of Fort Duquesne in November 1758, the British had only been able to pressure the Delawares living upon the Susquehanna River to release their captives. The arrival of the British army on the Ohio allowed the British to commence negotiations with the Ohio Indians who held the majority of the Pennsylvania captives. When Colonel Henry Bouquet, the commander of the British forces on the Ohio, met with the Indians at Fort Pitt at the beginning of December 1758, one of his first demands was that they should hand over all their prisoners.⁵²

Many Ohio Indians presumed that, with the reestablishment of a British presence in the region, some of their prisoners would have to be returned but that those whom they had adopted into their families could remain if they wished. Thus, it should have been possible for the Ohio Indians to have released some of the captives immediately. However, the Indians expected the British to compensate them for the return of any captives as the French had previously done. Unfortunately, they soon discovered that the British expected them to return not just some of their captives but all of them and, even worse, they would receive no compensation. In February 1759, several Delawares came into Fort Pitt bringing with them a young girl who had been captured in the Pennsylvania backcountry. In return for the child, the Delawares "demanded some Whiskie . . . and a Present of Goods for the Woman, whose Property it seems the Child was." The acting commander of the fort, Hugh Mercer, quickly removed any notion the Delawares might have had that the British would maintain the practices of their French predecessors. He bluntly informed the Delawares "We are not come into their Country to purchase our People . . . but to offer . . . Peace, on the Condition of every one of the Captives being brought home & delivered up

⁵¹ James Hamilton to Thomas Penn, Nov. 21, 1760, Penn Mss.: Official Correspondence, 9:184-86.

⁵² Conference with the Delaware Indians, Dec. 4, 1758, HBP, 2:621-24.

early in the Spring; otherwise there was No Peace."⁵³ Bouquet heartily approved of Mercer's action. He informed him that he was "not upon any account to give them any consideration for their Liberty . . . [in the] hope that we shall soon be able to force them to comply with their Treaty."⁵⁴ Many Ohio villagers wondered why if the British would not compensate them for the return of their captives, should they bother to return them.

Many headmen, however, were sensible that in order to consolidate peace with the British they would need to return some prisoners, and increasingly the return of prisoners became part of diplomatic protocol. When Delaware headman Tamaqua met with George Croghan in July 1759, he handed over two of his prisoners, stressing their personal importance to him by describing them as his "mother" and "sister."55 While some headmen may initially have sought accommodation with the British, many others were still suspicious of British intentions. As the British army had advanced west, General Forbes had made vague promises that it would return across the Appalachians once the French had been defeated. However, in the summer of 1759 there seemed little indication that the British intended to leave. In a meeting with General Stanwix, the Ohio Indians sharply asked "whether he designed to Build another Philadelphia on their Lands."56 Stanwix, however, refused to give any specific guarantees about British intentions, and until the British addressed this issue there was little chance that the "prisoners" would be returned.57

The autumn of 1759 saw the British capture of Quebec, and by 1760 the French North American empire was tottering on the brink of annihilation. Indian raids on the backcountry had ceased, and for all practical purposes the British seemed to have concluded a peace with the Ohio Indians. Most colonists believed that once the war ended all prisoners would be returned. However, by the beginning of 1760 there was still no sign that a general release of prisoners was close. More and more families became desperate for the return of their loved ones, fearing that they would never see them again. Perceiving that diplomacy was unlikely to return the captives, they besieged Mercer with requests to accede to the demands of some of the Indians and

⁵³ Hugh Mercer to Bouquet, Feb. 7, 1759, HBP, 3:107-108.

⁵⁴ Bouquet to Hugh Mercer, April 13, 1759, HBP, 3:240-42.

⁵⁵ Col. Recs. Pa., 8:389.

⁵⁶ Edward Shippen to Thomas Penn, Nov. 20, 1759, Penn Mss.: Official Correspondence, 9:126-28, HSP.

⁵⁷ Col. Recs. Pa., 8:433.

179

to purchase the freedom of their loved ones, but he refused to lower himself to such a "dishonourable" practice.⁵⁸

As the clamor of the frontiersmen continued, Pennsylvania Governor James Hamilton sought to by-pass the diplomatic logjam at Fort Pitt and sent Christian Frederick Post to the Ohio to visit the Indians' villages and ascertain the number of captives they still held and their attitude towards the captives' release.59 As Post prepared for his departure, his friends in the Quaker Friendly Association determined that they could also intervene to achieve the release of some of the captives. Post himself had first suggested the direct intervention of the association in the summer of 1758, claiming that it might be possible to recover some of the captives by "offering a Price for them and redeeming them ourselves."60 By the summer of 1760, the intervention of the Friendly Association, a private organization already well known and trusted by the Indians, seemed to offer the most promising course of action to secure the release of the hundreds of captives who still remained in Indian hands. Here was an activity into which Pennsylvania's Quakers could throw themselves without staining their conscience. If the British army refused to lower themselves to the purchase of captives, the Friendly Association could do it for them. At a meeting in June 1760, the association agreed to raise a fund to allow the colony's agents to compensate any Indians who might bring in captives. However, fearful that such action might encounter the wrath of Bouquet, who had specifically forbidden the ransoming of captives, they instructed that such presents should be given not for the return of captives, but instead "in consideration of their Journey in bringing them thither." In addition, the agents should ensure that they did not "do anything of this Kind in such a manner as to give the Indians cause to think, we intend to ransom the Prisoners in general."61 This compromise might encourage the return of at least some of the captives remaining on the Ohio.

Unfortunately, the reports that came back from the Friendly Association's agents on the Ohio were not comforting. John Langdale, acting for the association in Pittsburgh, reported that "there is certainly many [prisoners] among them especially children, but they do not seem to take kindly our

⁵⁸ Hugh Mercer to Bouquet, March 21, 1759, HBP, 3:213-14.

⁵⁹ Col. Recs. Pa., 8:471.

⁶⁰ Report of Charles Thomson and Christian Frederick Post, June 18, 1758, PRFA, 2:22.

⁶¹ Proposal to the Indian Commissioners, regarding the Prisoners, June 7, 1760, PRFA, 3:497.

inquisitiveness nor do I beleive [sic] they are in earnest in their promises to deliver them all up." He had managed to interview Elizabeth Coon from Virginia who had an Indian husband and child. Unfortunately, there was another Indian present at the time so she could not speak freely. However, Langdale felt certain that she wanted to return to the colonies, for when he asked her if she wanted to return to Virginia "she made a sign that she dared not answer it" whereas "if she had been willing to have stay'd with him she would have answered readily & chearfully in the Negative."⁶²

As the British extended their presence further west, they encountered more and more villages where captives were being held. However, the villagers of the west proved equally reluctant to release their prisoners. As soon as British forces occupied Detroit, George Croghan called the surrounding villagers into conference. He reminded them that their headmen who had traveled to Fort Pitt the previous summer had promised to return all prisoners. Croghan informed them that he had now been sent "to demand due performance of your Promise . . . as the only way you can convince us of your Sincearity and future Intention of Living in Friendship with all his Majestys Subjects."⁶³ Across the Ohio Valley the Indian villagers uniformly refused to return prisoners, for after several years in "captivity" they were now full members of their families and they saw no need to return them.

Even in villages where headmen sought to reach accommodation with the British, they faced a problem in demanding that their increasingly suspicious kinfolk hand over any prisoners they held. Croghan himself reported that "they have no laws to Oblige their people but by preueassion [sic] and the prisnors by Adoption is a property of the Familys they live with."⁶⁴ For many headmen forcing the return of captives was an impossibility, especially at a time when the traditional buttress of their authority, the distribution of gifts and reciprocal gift exchanges within and between clans, was breaking down because of the lack of trade goods in the west. After the arrival of the British army in the west, many Indians had expected a rapid resumption of trade and they expected to be rewarded with gifts at all conferences with the British. However, British commander-in-chief, Gen. Jeffery Amherst, had

180

July

⁶² John Langdale to Israel Pemberton, Aug. 2, 1760, PRFA, 3:499.

⁴³ Croghan: Indian Conference at Detroit, Dec. 3-5, 1760, HBP, 5:151.

⁶⁴ George Croghan to Sir William Johnson, July 25, 1761, in James Sullivan et al., eds., The Papers of Sir William Johnson (hereafter, SWJP) (14 vols., Albany, 1921–65), 10:316.

2001

determined that all gift giving should cease and he wrote brusquely to his commanders "to avoid all presents in future."⁶⁵

The return of captives was further complicated by the fact that when the Indians did "release" their prisoners, many had no desire to return to their original homes. Croghan reported from Fort Pitt in July 1761 that many of the prisoners "has been at liberty Some time and I cannot prevaile on them to go Home."66 Those captives who did wish to leave the Ohio Valley were the first to be released at the many conferences held between the British and the Ohio Indians in 1759 and 1760. By the end of 1760 most "captives" remained in the Ohio Valley because they had no wish to return to their former homes. The Detroit Hurons informed Sir William Johnson that they had freed "all such prisoners as were amongst us who were willing to return home." They added that those who still remained behind were "not Slaves with us, being at their free liberty to go anywhere, or act as they please, neither is it our Custom to Exercise any Authority over them, they having the same privileges with ourselves." They concluded that they had not "detained them a moment longer than they chose to stay."⁶⁷ Following a conference at Easton in August 1761, the Susquehanna Delawares handed over a thirteen-year-old girl as part of the proceedings. Although she "Spoke English well & remembered how her Parents were murdered by the Indians when she & her Brothers were taken captive . . . such is the influence they had obtain'd over her, that after all the assurances we could give her of her being kindly received by her uncle and other Surviving relations, She rather chose to live with the Indians." The Quakers noted that in this "she does not appear to be Singular, as most of the Children which have been restor'd to us have manifested the same Disposition."68

Unfortunately Anglo-American and imperial authorities did not understand how any white person could possibly wish to remain among the Indians. To families in Pennsylvania whose loved ones remained with the Indians, the claims that "captives" were free to return to the colonies if they wished, no matter how true, must have seemed very hollow. Isom Barnett, for instance, who had himself been captured by the Indians on Smith's River

⁶⁸ Report of the Trustees of the Friendly Association who Attended the Indian Treaty at Easton, August, 1761, PRFA, 4:151.

⁶⁵ Jeffery Amherst to Sir William Johnson, Aug. 9, 1761, SWJP, 3:515.

⁶⁶ George Croghan to Sir William Johnson, July 25, 1761, SWJP, 10:318.

⁶⁷ Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-Sept., 1761, SWJP, 3:486.

in Halifax County, Virginia, in 1758 but later released, sent an agent to the Ohio in an attempt to secure the release of his wife Sarah and son Jesse who were still living among the Indians. James McCullough petitioned Henry Bouquet to use all means possible to achieve the release of his two sons, John and James, captured in 1756. Yet despite Bouquet's efforts and the Friendly Association's offer of a £15 reward for all prisoners brought in by the Indians, few were now being returned.⁶⁹

For the British, the return of prisoners soon became a central prerequisite for any peace, and without such a return the British would not contemplate concluding peace. When in 1762 the British finally called a general conference to meet in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to finalize the peace that had been concluded on the Ohio, colonial authorities expected the Indians to bring all their remaining captives to the conference. For the Ohio Indians the confirmation of peace was the sole reason for the conference. However, when the Pennsylvanians discovered that the Indians planned to return only eighteen captives, they opened the conference with spirited demands for a return of all prisoners. The Indians were appalled at this breach of protocol. They had come to Lancaster expecting the full formalities of a peace ceremony. Delaware headman Tamaqua bluntly asked "from what you have said, I suppose this matter of the prisoners to be the principal Business for which you invited us here" not the conclusion of a general peace. 70 Failing to comprehend Tamaqua's concern over breaches of conference protocol, Pennsylvania Governor Hamilton simply replied that "you judge right, in thinking that the affair of our Prisoners was a principal reason of our inviting you here."71

The Ohio Indians were furious. Their anger grew further when Hamilton informed them that he was sending provincial commissioners to Fort Pitt to collect the remaining prisoners. Thomas King, an Oneida headman, attempted to reason with Hamilton, telling him that many of the remaining "prisoners" had been accepted into Indian society, they were wives and children of Indian families. Many others did not want to return, especially

⁶⁹ Israel Pemberton to John Langdale, Feb. 10, 1761, PRFA, 4:67; Petition of McColoch [sic], June 3, 1761, HBP, 5:525-26.

⁷⁰ Col. Recs. Pa. 8:735, 740; Minutes of Treaty of Lancaster, Aug. 1762, SWJP, 10:498; Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., "George Croghan's Journal, April 3, 1759 to April 1763," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 71 (1947), 427; Henry Bouquet to Jeffery Amherst, July 11, 1762, HBP, 6:99–100.

⁷¹ Col. Recs. Pa., 8:737.

183

as they had heard that many captives who had no family to whom they could return were being bound into indentured servitude. Hamilton brushed aside King's concerns. He reminded him that "it was a positive Engagement between us, upon re-establishing the antient Chain of Friendship, that those Nations who had taken any of our people Prisoners, should deliver them all up; and this Brethren, I must insist upon."⁷² The issue of prisoners now drove a deep wedge between the Pennsylvanians and the Ohio Indians, and the latter demonstrated their anger by abandoning all the gifts that had been presented to them at the conference.⁷³

In the wake of the Lancaster debacle the Ohio Indians refused to return any more captives to the British. Like the Susquehanna Delawares before them, they now began to view the captives, who were clearly of such importance to the provincial authorities, not only as family members but as hostages guaranteeing the future good behavior of the British. George Croghan reported from Fort Pitt that the Indians openly asserted that the British "has a Designe of Cutting them of or Else they wold Lett them have more powder & Lead & says that itts ye Rason we are So Anxious to have all ye prisners Deliverd up that they know as Soon as that is Don we will fall upon them."⁷⁴ Only the presence of the "prisoners" in their villages prevented British raids. Not surprisingly, when the Pennsylvania commissioners arrived at Fort Pitt on October 8 to collect the prisoners, the Indians bluntly refused to return any.⁷⁵

Determined to hold on to their new family members, the Indians faced a barrage of attempts to recover all "white Indians." Governor Hamilton had sent provincial commissioners to collect the captives. General Amherst had sought to secure the captives' release through the pressures of a trade embargo. Many individual white families had already sent agents and representatives to the Ohio country in an attempt to secure the release of family members. The Friendly Association still had representatives active in the region. The separate activities of these different groups and the competition between them served to cloud the issue of the release of "prisoners," and in many cases provided the Ohio Indians with a useful

⁷⁵ George Croghan to Sir William Johnson, Dec. 10, 1762, SWJP, 3:964; Joseph Shippen to Col. James Burd, Sept. 9, 1762, Shippen Family Papers, 5:207, HSP; Jordan, "Journal of James Kenny," 170.

⁷² Col. Recs. Pa., 8:737-38, 743-44, 760.

⁷³ Thomas McKee to Sir William Johnson, Nov. 1, 1762, SWJP, 3:921.

⁷⁴ Croghan, "Journal, 1759-1763," 432.

pretence for retaining them.76

The demands of the British that all prisoners should be returned provided a central element in the Indians' growing discontent with the new British regime in the Ohio Valley. Fears over British intentions to seize their lands combined with Amherst's attempts to "pacify" the Indians with a trade embargo increased animosity towards the British over the winter of 1762–63. The trickle of captives being returned stopped altogether after the debacle at Lancaster. However, British demands for the return of captives became increasingly shrill and insistent. For four years the British had repeatedly pressured the Indians to return the "white Indians" among them. At no time during this period had British negotiators shown any evidence that they understood the role of the captives in Indian society, nor had they made any genuine attempt to quell Indian fears about their long-term intentions. The role of captives was thus central in generating increasing tensions between the British and the Indians from 1759 to 1763.

The outbreak of "Pontiac's War" in the spring of 1763 precluded any further attempts by the British to recover captives. For a year the Indians descended upon the colonial backcountry seizing even more captives. By the summer of 1764, however, as the strength of British military power finally began to tell in the Ohio Valley, and as British forces prepared to advance into the region the issue of captives remained of central importance. More than any other matter, the return of captives was central to concluding any peace, and the new British commander in chief, Major General Thomas Gage, made it quite apparent that no peace would be concluded "till their Nations shall deliver up the English Prisoners, whom they have in their Hands."⁷⁷

In the summer of 1764 the British began offensive military operations in the Ohio Valley. Major General John Bradstreet advanced his forces along the shores of Lake Erie. Meeting with Shawnee and Delaware headmen at Presque Isle, he concluded a peace whereby the Shawnees and Delawares agreed to withdraw their raiding parties from the colonial frontier and return all remaining prisoners.⁷⁸ In triumph Bradstreet marched to Detroit to

⁷⁶ Governor Hamilton to Bouquet, Nov. 11, 1762, *HBP* 6:127–29; Sir William Johnson to Jeffery Amherst, Jan. 7, 1762, *SWJP*, 3:598; List of Prisoners, 1762, PRFA, 4:343.

⁷⁷ Gage to Earl of Halifax, Aug. 10, 1764, Gage Papers, English series, vol. 2, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

⁷⁸ Minutes of Treaty Held at Lake Erie, Aug. 12, 1764, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, 9:246; Col. Recs. Pa., 9:193–97; McConnell, Country Between, 200; Tanner, Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History, 51.

185

conclude peace with the local headman, Pontiac, but, upon his arrival he discovered that he had been duped. Instead of receiving peace envoys he received only news that the very same Shawnees and Delawares with whom he had just negotiated remained at war and now promised that they would never make a peace.79 British hopes lay with the army under the command of Henry Bouquet at Pittsburgh. Bouquet planned to march into the heart of the Ohio country to attack the towns and villages at the heart of Shawnee and Delaware territory and force them to come to terms. On October 2, when the dense summer undergrowth was dying back and it was easier to march through the Ohio forests, he set out for the Delaware villages on the Muskingum River. The Delawares realized that of all the British commanders Bouquet had the greatest experience in fighting guerilla warfare and had the ability to inflict serious losses on them. As his army advanced towards their towns they sent a delegation begging him to halt and allow them to gather all their prisoners to deliver them up. Bouquet refused. He replied simply that he had had enough of their false promises, adding that "they say they are sorry for what they have done, and will make Peace; that is not enough."80 He would open negotiations only when he had arrived at their villages.

Bouquet arrived at the Delaware town of Tuscaroras on October 13. Two days later a party of Delaware headmen arrived and "behaved with the utmost Submission."⁸¹ Bouquet reminded them that they had been supposed to deliver their prisoners to Bradstreet at Sandusky, but they had not. Now they claimed once more that they wanted peace, but still prevaricated in handing over their prisoners. Bouquet informed them that "You must be sensible that you deserve the severest Chastisement . . . It is . . . in our Power to destroy you."⁸² While the Delawares may have doubted Bouquet's ability to destroy them, there was little doubt in their minds that any continuation of the war would bring them few benefits. The Delawares thus quickly agreed to return all prisoners and provided Bouquet with hostages as guarantee for their actions.⁸³

79 Howard H Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (Princeton, 1947), 262.

⁸⁰ Onondaga and Oneida Indians: Speech to Bouquet, Oct. 2, 1764, HBP, 6:653-56; Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 25, 1764.

⁸¹ Bouquet to Gage, Oct. 21, 1764, HBP, 6:675-77.

⁸² Henry Bouquet: Speech to the Mingos, Delawares, and Shawanees, Oct. 19, 1764, Penn Mss.: Indian Affairs 3:108.

⁸³ Col. Recs. Pa., 9:216-23; Bouquet to Gage, Oct. 21, 1764, HBP, 6:677.

July

While the Delawares may have been prepared to come to terms, the Shawnees remained aloof. Bouquet now ordered his army to march from Tuscaroras to the Muskingum River. There he intended to receive the promised prisoners from the Delawares and to treat with the Shawnees. In case the Shawnees should continue to prove reticent about negotiations, he ordered a party to be prepared to march to the Shawnee villages on the Scioto River to destroy them. The army arrived on the Muskingum on October 25. There, at last, Shawnee headmen arrived to negotiate with Bouquet.⁸⁴ Initially, however, the Shawnees treated Bouquet with some contempt. They handed over only a small number of prisoners and claimed they would not be able to return the rest until the following spring. Bouquet was furious. He raged at them, "You have at last thought proper to come with a small part of the Prisoners & You propose to deliver up the rest Next Spring. I have for a long time been a Wittness to the arrogant behaviour of Your Nation but I did not expect that You would dare to provoke us again by this new breach of Faith." "You have now Convinced me," he continued, "that you are still the same inconsiderate & light headed People as formerly & that it is impossible to Treat with You as a Nation as there is neither Faith nor Trust in You." He was convinced that they had "been equally perfidious at all Times. I must therefore take such Measures as will Compell You to perform your Promises and put it out of Your Power to deceive us again with Impunity."85 Bouquet prepared detachments of his army to march to the Shawnee villages on the Scioto. The Shawnees were horrified. Threatened by Bouquet's army and abandoned by their traditional allies the Delawares, they knew they had to make concessions. Over two days of almost continual negotiations they gradually gave ground and agreed to hand over hostages for their good behavior and to return to their towns to bring in the prisoners immediately. The prisoners began to flood in. By November 15 Bouquet reported that he had already received over two hundred prisoners from the Delawares and expected at least a hundred more from the Shawnees.86

⁸⁴ Francis Turnbull to John Penn, Oct. 20, 1764, Penn Mss.: Official Correspondence, 9:280; Alexander McKee to Sir William Johnson, Nov. 17, 1764, SWJP, 11:474–75.

⁸⁵ Minutes: Conference with Shawnees, Nov. 12, 1764, Bouquet: Speech to the Shawnees, Nov. 13, 1764, HBP, 6:694-96, 698-99.

⁸⁶ Minutes: Conference with Shawnees, Nov. 14, 1764, Bouquet to Gage, Nov. 30, 1764, HBP, 6:700-703, 711-15.

Bouquet's demands had placed the Ohio Indians in a difficult position. With a large army in their midst they had little choice but to return all captives. Indeed, Bouquet sent agents into all Indian towns around the Muskingum forcibly to round up the captives. While the Indians were able to hide a few of their adopted family members, they had little choice but to return the majority. For many individuals this was a major calamity. Bouquet himself reported that "many of them have remained so many Years among them, that they part from them with the greatest Reluctance. We are obliged to keep Guards to prevent their Escape, and unless they are treated with Indulgence & Tenderness by their Relations, they will certainly return to their Savage Masters. The Delawares and Mingoes have not only delivered all their Prisoners, but even their own Children born from White Women."87 Bouquet even boasted to Sir William Johnson that he had "already received upwards of 200 Captives including the Children Born from White Women married to Savages which I have obliged them to give up."88 Some of the "captives" were so reluctant to return to the army that their Indian families were "obliged to tie them to bring them to us."89 William Smith, a Church of England clergyman and professor at the new Academy of Philadelphia, described the tragic scene:

Among the children who had been carried off young, and had long lived with the Indians, it is not to be expected that any marks of joy would appear on being restored to their parents or relatives. Having been accustomed to look upon the Indians as the only connexions they had, having been tenderly treated by them, and speaking their language, it is no wonder that they considered their new state in the light of a captivity, and parted from the savages with tears. But it must not be denied that there were even some grown persons who shewed an unwillingness to return. The Shawnese were obliged to bind several of their prisoners and force them along to the camp; and some women who had been delivered up, afterwards found means to escape and run back to the Indian towns. Some, who could not make their escape, clung to their savage acquaintance at parting, and continued many days in bitter lamentations, even refusing sustenance.⁹⁰

2001

⁸⁷ Col. Recs. Pa., 9:207.

^{**} Henry Bouquet to Sir William Johnson, Nov. 15, 1764, SWJP, 4:586.

⁸⁹ Bouquet to Gage, Nov. 15, 1764, HBP, 6:704.

⁹⁰ [William Smith,] An Historical Account of the Expedition against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764 (London, 1766), 29.

July

Bouquet returned to Pittsburgh victorious, accompanied by nearly three hundred prisoners. At Pittsburgh the captives were provided with clothing and shoes, and escorted back to their respective homes. Over the winter British agents traveled through the Ohio villages unearthing the few remaining captives.⁹¹ Finally, in the spring of 1765, the Ohio Indians arrived at Fort Pitt to return the last major group of captives. Most of these captives had been taken as young children. Joseph or "Pechyloothume," for instance, had been seized on the James River in Virginia in 1755 when he was aged only two. Now, unable to speak English and unaware of their families, these "captives" faced an uncertain future. For their adopted Indian relatives their return was heart-rending. A Shawnee headman begged the British to "use them tender, and kindly" for they had "become unacquainted with your Customs, and manners." He added that they would "always look upon them as Relations" and begged that they might be allowed in future to visit them.⁹² Even Sir William Johnson himself commented "it will be verry difficult to find the Freinds of some of them, as they are ignorant of their own names, or former places of abode, nay cant speak a word of any language but Indians."93

Between Bouquet's advance to the Muskingum in the fall of 1764 and the summer of 1765 over five hundred captives had been returned to the British at Fort Pitt. For their Indian families the loss of their adopted relatives was equally traumatic. Little is known about the fate of most of these returned captives, but for many of these individuals their return was a cataclysmic event and they lived the remainder of their lives on the border of Indian and white society. The captives had finally been redeemed.

For over ten years the Indians had held substantial numbers of Pennsylvania captives taken in their raids on the backcountry. Their significance was unique in American history. At no other time were so many captives held by Native American captors. However, it was not just the numbers of the captives but also their impact on the society of the Ohio Indians, and their role in intercultural politics. The Indians viewed some of these captives as friends and family, others as hostages for the future behavior of the British, a new departure in Indian attitudes. Over this

⁹¹ Henry Bouquet to D. Hay, Nov. 15, 1764, Bouquet to Gage, Jan. 5, 1765, Prisoners Delivered by the Shawnees, Jan. 5, 1765, HBP, 6:708, 744–45, 753–54.

⁹² List of Prisoners, May 10, 1765. An Indian Congress, May 9-11, 1765, SWJP, 11:720-21, 727-28.

⁹³ Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, June 28, 1765, SWJP, 11:812-14.

period, these captives had formed a prominent part of village and family life. They also played a central role in shaping the relationship between the colonies and the Indian peoples of the upper Ohio Valley. At this crucial time in the region's history, the presence of these "prisoners" served both to transform Indian culture and to shape the diplomatic relations between the Indians and the colonies. The diplomatic pressure from the Pennsylvania provincial authorities undermined the broader diplomacy between the provinces and the Indians and served as a major cause of the uprising of 1763. Equally important, their refusal to return their captives after the British capture of the forks of the Ohio was a major element feeding into the growing sense of "Indian-hating" along the colonial frontier of the middle colonies. The unredeemed captives living in the upper Ohio Valley thus played a crucial role in shaping the region's history.

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2001

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