THE FRONTIER POLICY OF PENNSYLVANIA
BY GEORGE ARTHUR CRIBBS

THE DEFENCE OF THE FRONTIER.
Frontier Forts.
(Continued from the April number)

Before the French and Indian War only one fort had been erected in Pennsylvania which has the slightest claim to be considered of a public character. This is the fort, already mentioned, which was erected below the city of Philadelphia as a protection against pirates. The cost of its erection was defrayed by a public lottery.

In 1750, before the trouble with the French had become acute, the proprietors in a letter to the governor recommended that a small stone fort should be erected on the Ohio, and expressed themselves as willing to donate four hundred pounds toward its erection and one hundred pounds a year for its maintenance. (1) The governor had several private conferences with the speaker and some of the principle members of the house, but found them adverse to the acceptance of the proprietory proposal. And despite the fact that the fort was recommended by the traders and those best versed in frontier affairs, the assembly, relying upon their old method of maintaining peace with the western Indians by means of extensive presents and friendly treatment, refused to sanction its erection. (2) The governor, recognizing its utility, still hoped to gain his end, (3) but the procrastination of the assembly put it off until the occupation of the territory by the French made the project impossible.

But while the Quakers and the Quaker government at Philadelphia, secure in their distance from the frontier, rested upon the defence of justice, it was different with the backwoodsman. He knew the forest and its natives. It was he who suffered from the scalping party. It was his property which was destroyed, his wife who was murdered, and his children who were carried away while the assembly hesitated to act for fear of alienating the affection of the

2. Ibid, 547.
3. Ibid, 522.
Indians. No wonder then that before the procrastinating assembly took up the question the enterprising westerner had often worked out for himself a system of defence.

These defences might be nothing more than a log house, strongly built, with small windows and loopholes flaring on the inside to permit a rifle being pointed in any direction. They might consist of a block house with projecting upper story, or of a group of buildings surrounded by a stockade. These larger works formed the community's center of defence. (1) They were the dwelling places of the inhabitants during times of danger, from which armed parties were sent out to till the fields, (2) each workman with his entire fighting equipment. The weapons were deposited in some central place and a sentinel stationed (3) to give the alarm in case of attack. The whole company could thus be ready for combat on brief notice.

Such forts were seldom attacked by Indians alone and almost never taken. In case of attack each inmate had his assigned post and task. Each man with his rifle and as good a supply of ammunition as could be provided was stationed at a specified loophole. All axes, mattocks, and other such implements were collected within for use in case of a hand to hand encounter. The women saw that all utensils were full of water to quench any fire that might be kindled. (4)

Captain James Patterson, a trader of the Juniata Valley, adopted a very novel means of defence. He constructed a cannon from an oak log and discharged it frequently in the hearing of the Indians, (5) much to their awe and amazement. Once during the absence of her husband Mrs. Patterson frightened off a band of Indians by threatening them with this miniature cannon. He also erected a target, the center of which was shot full of holes, at some distance from his house. Whenever Indians came in sight, he would fire at it. The appearance of the target gave them so high an opinion of his skill that they did not care to trifle with him.

The earliest private fort of which we have any account was that erected upon the present site of Harrisburg. About 1705 John Harris moved westward and established a ferry over the Susquehanna at this point. (6) The place soon became important as a connecting link between Philadelphia

(1) No distinction can be made between the use of the private and the use of the public fort. The one merges into the other.
(2) Doddridge, Notes, 95.
(3) Ibid, 100.
(4) Ibid, 222-223.
(5) Collections of Historical Society of Pennsylvania, I, 64.
and the Susquehanna settlements. The original settler died in 1748 but his son, John Harris, Jr., continued in the same place, living generally on good terms with the Indians. When hostilities began in 1755, he cut loopholes in his house, provided it with a garrison of six or seven men, and determined to hold out until the last. (1) This for a time was the only place of security in the Susquehanna Valley,(2) but after 1756 it merges in with the system of forts erected by the province.

Another private fort was that erected by Benjamin Chambers on the present site of Chambersburg, Franklin County. (3) The stockade inclosed the flour and saw mills as well as the dwelling house of the proprietor. The house was of stone and two stories in height, the water from the spring running under part of it. The windows were small and particularly adapted to defence; the roof was covered with sheet lead as a protection against fire. Besides small arms, Colonel Chambers had provided himself with two four pound cannon. In this fort the Chambers family dwelt safely throughout the whole period of the Indian wars. It was also a place of refuge for many of their neighbors.

A third important private fort was that erected in 1753 at Aughwick, (4) in what is now Huntington County, by the trader, George Croghan. It was enlarged and stockaded by the government in 1756 and renamed Fort Shirley.

It may seem to be almost a digression, but the construction of the French forts was such an important event in the history of Pennsylvania, in fact of America, that I shall turn to the French viewpoint long enough to describe them briefly. The French in 1750 claimed the entire Mississippi Valley by the right of discovery. From the mouth of the river to the Great Lakes they had stretched a line of forts in witness to their claim. Now, in order to secure also the Valley of the Ohio, they projected a secondary line to the mouth of that river. As far as Fort Duquesne the line was extended: then circumstance interfered, but of that more later.

(1) Egle, History of Pennsylvania, 90. John Harris to the governor, October 29, 1755: "I have this day cut holes in my house, and am determined to hold out to the last extremity if I can get some men to stand by me, few of which I can at present, every one being in fear of their own families being cut off every hour (such is our situation.)."


(3) Ibid, XII, 350.

(4) Darlington, Gist, 180.
Fort Presqu’Isle, (1) erected in 1753, was the northernmost of the series. It was a square fort built of one thickness of logs. There was neither bank within nor ditch without. Of the two gates, one faced toward Lake Erie, the other toward Fort Le Boeuf. Four cannon were mounted in one of the bastions. The magazine was a store house covered with shingles and not sunk in the ground as was customary. There were barracks within the fort for 150 men.

The next fort to the south was Le Boeuf, situated on French Creek at the head of navigation, distant about thirty miles from Presqu’Isle. George Washington, who visited it in 1753, describes it in journal as follows: “It is situated on the South or West fork of French Creek, near the water, and is almost surrounded by the creek and a small branch of it which forms a kind of island. Four houses compose the sides. The bastions are poles driven into the ground, standing more than twelve feet above it and sharp at top, with port holes cut for cannon, and loop holes for the smaller arms to fire through. There are eight six pound pieces mounted in each bastion, and one piece of four pounds before the gate. In the bastions are a guard house, chapel, doctor’s lodging, and the commander’s private store: round which are laid platforms for the cannon and men to stand on. There are several barracks within the fort for the soldiers’ dwelling, covered with bark and some with boards, made chiefly of logs. There are also several other houses, such as stables, smith’s shops, &c. Number of men supposed 200, exclusive of officers, of which (2) there are many.”

Fort Venango was the third in the series. This was a small stockade fort built on the Allegheny River at the Mouth of French Creek, and accommodating a captain’s command of fifty men. (3) The French intended to build a new and better fort at this place, but it is doubtful whether it was ever done. Samuel Hazard concludes that it was not: yet there are today remains of a second fort below the city of Franklin which seem to be of French origin. (4)

The most important of the series, both on account of the struggles which centered about it, was Fort Duquesne. It was erected by the French in 1754 after they had driven away the Virginians who were attempting to forestall them,

(3) Ibid, XII, 463.
at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, the most strategic point in western Pennsylvania. This was a rectangular fort about fifty yards long and forty yards wide, with bastions at each corner. About one-half was constructed of squared logs and the other half, which was toward the water, of stockades. This part was built of round logs somewhat over a foot in diameter and eleven or twelve feet high, with loop holes made for firing toward the ground. Split logs covered the spaces between each two round ones. Entrenchments about seven feet high were cast up all around the fort at a distance of four rods. These were constructed of wattlework filled in with earth. There were two gates, the one opening inland and the other toward the river. The first was provided with a drawbridge which at night was drawn up by iron chains. The magazine, constructed of large logs and covered four feet thick with clay, was almost entirely underground. There were no cannon except at the bastions, each of which had four. The barracks were outside of the fort; the land about it was solid and dry, but cleared of all trees and stumps for a considerable distance, so that an attacking party would have to expose himself to a direct fire. (1) About two hundred yards from this was a second fort in the shape of a square and much more strongly constructed. (2)

When the news came that the French were building these forts, the East broke into one of its periodic furies of excitement. Then came the defeat of Braddock and the retreat of Dunbar. The frontier, unprepared in spite of many representations of its condition by traders and Indian agents, lay at the mercy of the savages. The inhabitants, undisciplined and many of them unarmed, were compelled to improvise some scanty means of defence or flee from their

Ibid, XII, 357. A description by John McKinney who was held as a prisoner in the fort. 
(2) Ibid, 427. Extract from a letter from Pittsburg November 26, 1758; “On the 24th, at night, we were informed by one of our Indian scouts that he had discovered a cloud of smoke above the place, and soon after another came with certain intelligence that is was burned and abandoned by the enemy. . . . There are two forts about 200 yards distant, the one built with immense labor, small, but a great deal of strong works collected into little room, and stands on the point of a narrow neck of land at the confluence of the two rivers. It is square, and has two ravelins, gabions at each corner, &c. The other fort stands nothing so strong as the other. . . . Several of the outworks were on the bank of the Allegheny, in form of a parallelogram, but lately begun, and still unfinished. There are, I think, 30 stacks of chimneys standing, the houses all destroyed.”
homes. The assembly hesitated to act, pleading as an excuse that they feared to alienate the affections of the Indians. Very affectionate the red denizens of the forests were proving themselves.

Commissioners were finally appointed to inspect the frontier and recommend means of defence. At first they considered that the best plan would be to carry the war into the enemy’s country; but on the representations of Croghan and others better acquainted with Indian affairs, they adopted a plan of defensive operations and recommended a line of forts along the frontier. (1) Construction was begun immediately.

The forts east of the Susquehanna were erected along the line of the Blue Hills: west of that river they formed a semicircle stretching from Sunbury to the Great Cove. They were built at the principle passes through the mountains and each was garrisoned by from twenty to one hundred troops according to the importance of the place and the number of troops at the disposal of the government. (2)

East of the Susquehanna the forts were from ten to twelve miles apart. (3) The three most important were Forts Allen, Lebanon, and Henry. The easternmost, Fort Allen, was situated on the west branch of the Delaware, near the Moravian town of Gnadenhutten. Fort Lebanon was at the forks of the Schuylkill and Fort Henry, which was the most important of them all, was situated at a pass called Talihiao further to the west. The spaces between these three were filled up by block houses and smaller stockades. The garrisons consisted of from twenty to fifty men who employed themselves in ranging the woods between the posts. The chain of forts ran at times on the south side of

(1) Col. Rec., VII, 153. Commissioners to Governor, read in Council June 14, 1756: “When the Indians first began to Infest our Frontiers, the Commissioners were of opinion that the best means of Securing our Inhabitants was to carry the war into the Enemy’s Country and hunt them in all their Fishing, Hunting, Planting, & dwelling places: But having sent for Croghan & others in order to obtain their opinion and they advising that by a chain of forts the Frontier should first be in some degree secured before we acted offensively, the same was agreed to—the Building of Forts immediately set about, which took up more time than was expected.


(3) Ibid, II, 565.

(4) Report of Commission on Frontier Forts, I, 70. “It was the most important fort between the Susquehanna and Lehigh Rivers, owing to the fact that it was about equally distant from each, and also because it was on the main road to Shamokin and protected the most populous portion of the entire region.”
the mountains, at times on the north. Both sides were occupied if it seemed to be necessary. They were sometimes merely the reconstructed defences of the settlers. This is particularly true of the smaller posts. (1) A stockade thrown about a convenient farmhouse and garrisoned by a few soldiers was sufficient.

The Moravians seated within the forks of the Delaware were obliged for the safety of themselves and their neighbors, many of whom had fled to them, to fortify their settlement with stockades and set military watches. Wishing to continue the same until the danger was over, they applied to the governor for a commission. This was duly granted them giving full power and authority to take and use arms against any Indians or other enemies of the province. (2)

The chief forts west of the Susquehanna were Lyttleton, Shirley, Granville, and Pomfret Castle, (3) erected about twenty miles apart. The first mentioned was situated on the new road which was being laid out to the Ohio at a distance of about twenty miles from the settlements. Twenty miles north of Lyttleton was Fort Shirley on Aughwick Creek, somewhat larger than the former and situated on the old traders' path to the Ohio. Next in order was Fort Granville, fifteen miles northeast of Fort Shirley at a narrow pass where the Juniata breaks through the mountains. The northernmost of the four was Pomfret Castle, situated fifteen miles from Fort Granville and twelve west of the Susquehanna River. The spaces between these were filled in with smaller forts in the same manner as east of the Susquehanna.

The building of these forts soon used up the sixty thousand pounds which had been appropriated, and more was required for the adequate defence of the province. (4) Yet the assembly carefully guarded each succeeding outlay. They, however, supplied from time to time enough money to guard the frontier in a semi-efficient way (5) and lend some assistance in driving the French from the western part of the province.

Fort Augusta, another important post, was built at the

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forks of the Susquehanna in the summer of 1756. (1) It was erected primarily to protect the inhabitants about Sunbury and serve as a connecting link between the eastern and western lines. It was here that the friendly Indians had requested the building of a fort, about which they promised to gather and assist in the protection of the frontier or in any other operations that might be made against the French.

When the Revolutionary War began and the Indians, incensed by the encroachment on their lands, embraced the English cause, one of the first districts to suffer from their depredations was that inhabited by the Scotch Irish on the west branch of the Susquehanna. These energetic frontiersmen, with the love of liberty instilled into their systems by life on the frontier, had eagerly taken up arms in the cause of independence; and although their families were often poorly provided with the necessaries of life and exposed to the mercy of the savages, they had departed for Boston in order to take part in active service. In order to protect their families, a stockade was erected at each important settlement along the river. Some were provided with troops, others were defended by the settlers of the neighborhood. (2) Fort Muncy, erected at the bend of the west branch, was the most important; while Fort Augusta acted as a rear post and distributing point for troops and supplies. It was to this fort that the settlers retreated when they had been driven out of the others.

Of the early western forts Ligonier and Pitt were the most important. The first of these was erected by General Forbes during his expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758. (3) During Pontiac’s War, in spite of its dilapidated condition, it was one of the few spots which did not fall into

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(1) DARLINGTON, Fort Pitt, 146. Bouquet to Major Gladwin, August 1756: “I also propose to build a fort at Shamokin, at the forks of Susquehanna, as soon as the season will admit a passage up the river, for the mountains north of the Kittencity are quite impassible for carriages. This is what our friendly Indians request’d of me at the late interview, and say they will collect themselves together under the protection of such a fort, and readily assist us in the defence of our frontier, or in any attempt that we shall make upon the French encroachments.”


(3) Olden Time, reprinting Arthur Lee’s Journal, II, 335.
the hands of the Indians. (1) In the Revolution it figured as a place of refuge for the settlers. (2) The Indians, however, passed it and murdered many of the inhabitants further eastward.

On account of the important place which Fort Pitt occupies in the history of Western Pennsylvania I shall relate its history with somewhat greater detail. As has already been pointed out, the proprietors in 1750 recommended that a small stone fort should be erected on the Ohio, and expressed themselves as willing to aid in its maintenance. (3) In April, 1751, George Croghan was sent with a present to the Ohio Indians. One of his speeches, prepared by Weiser, recommended the building of a fort on the Ohio. (4) This was, however, considered too strongly expressed and he was given private instructions by the governor not to make it but to sound the Indians on the point. (5) He obeyed orders and such Indians as he approached on the subject informed him that the building of a fort had been agreed upon between themselves and the Onondaga Council. They requested publicly the building of such a fort at the forks

(1) DARLINGTON, Fort Pitt, 146. Bouquet to Major Gladwin, August 28, 1763: "Ligonier, a post of great consequence to us, was defended with a handful of men by Lieut. Blane, and Capt. Ecuyer baffled all their efforts here (Fort Pitt), though the fort was open on three sides; the floods having undermined the sodwork, the rampart had tumbled in the ditch. He palisaded and raised the whole, raised the parapet all around, and in a short time with a small garrison he has made it impregnable for savages."


(3) Col. Rec., V, 515. Extract from letter of proprietors: "I think an House with thick walls of Stone with small Bastions might be built at no very great Expense, as it is little matter how rough it is within side; or a wall of that sort perhaps fifty feet square, with a small house in the middle of it, might perhaps do better. The command of this might be given to the principle Indian trader, and he be obliged to keep Four or Six men at it who might serve him in it and the House to be his Magazine for Goods. If something of this sort can be done we shall be willing to be at the expense of four hundred Pounds Currency for the building of it, and one hundred Pounds a Year for keeping some men with a few Arms and some Powder."

(4) N. Y. Col. Docs., VII, 268

(5) Col. Rec., V, 522.
of the Ohio to protect them and the English traders. (1) Croghan reported these facts but the government refused to accept the Indians' proposal and condemned Croghan for making such a report. (2) They argued that it was not the intention of the Indians but that they had been imposed upon. How far private interests could influence Croghan to draw the Indians in an underhanded manner to his viewpoint cannot be determined. The erection of such a fort would certainly have been a great advantage to him as a trader. Both the government and Weiser denied that he had any authority to treat with the Indians on the subject. (3) Croghan maintained that he had such instructions. The Colonial Records support him. (4) The fact that the Indians constantly repeated their request for the building of the fort is another strong argument against the charge that he had seduced them. (5)

The proprietors, convinced that the assembly would never do anything in the matter, instructed Governor Hamilton to assist the Governor of Virginia to erect a fort there, but under protest that such a settlement would not prejudice Pennsylvania's right to the territory. (6) On July 1, 1754, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia wrote to Governor Hamilton strongly urging the erection of a fort beyond the Alleghenies, stating that he had a force ready to cross the

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(1) Thwaites, Early Western Travels, I, 54. George Croghan to the governor, December 16, 1750: "We have seen but very few of the chiefs of the Indians they being all out a hunting, but those we have seen are of opinion that their Brothers the English ought to have a Fort on this River to secure the Trade, for they think it will be dangerous for the Traders to travel the Roads for fear of being surprised by some of the French and French Indians, as they expect nothing else but a war with the French next Spring."

(2) Col. Rec., V, 547. Assembly to Governor, August 21, 1751: "The Information of Conrad Weiser and Alexander Montour on their arrival in Town since the Governor's Message of the thirteenth Instant, we suppose have given the Governor as well as the House Reason to believe that the Request inserted in George Crogan's Journal which the Governor was pleased to lay before the House, as made by the Indians at Ohio to this Government, to erect a strong Trading House in their Country as well as the danger 'tis there said they apprehend from the Attempts of the French, have been misunderstood, or misrepresented by the Person in whom the Government confided for the Management of the Treaty."


(4) Col. Rec., V, 522, 529, 537, 547.


mountains, and inviting the cooperation of Pennsylvania. (1) Governor Hamilton urged that Governor Dinwiddie should be supported, but the assembly evaded the subject and adjourned leaving the Virginians to fight their battles alone.

The force from Virginia proceeded to the forks of the Ohio and were engaged in the erection of a stockade when they were driven off by the appearance of a French force under Contracoeur, who then erected Fort Duquesne at this point. The Virginians retreated to a place between Chestnut and Laurel Ridges, called the Great Meadows, and there erected Fort Necessity, a log breast work one hundred feet each way and partly surrounded by a shallow ditch. (2) From this they marched out to dislodge the French, but were driven back, themselves besieged, and forced to capitulate. The French, allowing the Virginians to retire and having demolished the fort, then returned to Fort Duquesne. (3)

Braddock's expedition in 1755 and its results are too well known to require any comment. General Shirley suggested that a second attempt to take the fort should be made this same year, but it was necessary to postpone it, among other reasons, on account of the backwardness of the Pennsylvania Assembly. (4) By February, 1756, however, the assembly had assumed such an attitude that Governor Morris thought that they would willingly take part in an expedition against Fort Duquesne if the northern colonies would provide entirely for the Crown Point project. (5)

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(1) Col. Rec., VI, 137. Governor Dinwiddie to Governor Hamilton, July 31, 1754: "I think the sooner we endeavor to make a Settlement and build a Fort the other side of the Allegheny Mountains the better, for if we allow them a quiet Settlement their numbers will greatly increase in the Spring. We have now three months fit for marching and action. I would fain hope our Force will be at Mills Creek before the twentieth of the month, and shall be glad if reinforced from your Colony: if you send some Companies they may safely march after our Forces over the Mountains."


(3) Col. Rec., VI, 50.

(4) Pa. Arch., 1st ser., II, 300. Governor Morris to Governor Dinwiddie, August 10, 1755: "I rec'd letters last night by Express from General Shirley, acquainting me that he had been informed that this Province, Virginia & Maryland, had given considerably towards another expedition, he thought proper to send orders to be forwarded to Col. Dunbar, to make a second attempt upon Fort Duquesne, but I am of Opinion this cannot be put in practice before next Year, from the backwardness of my assemblies in particular to do what is so Strongly in their Interest to Comply with."

(5) Ibid, 570.
eral Shirley, however, had now come to the conclusion that the reduction of Niagara and the other northern forts was more important than that of Duquesne: for if the English should get control of the Great Lakes, the southern forts would be cut off and forced to capitulate. (1) The emphasis was for some time put on the northern war, and it was not until 1758 that a second expedition set out against Fort Duquesne. The French, upon the approach of the English, destroyed their works and fled.

Near the ruins of Fort Duquesne an English Fort was then erected and named Fort Pitt in honor of the great English premier. It was surrounded by a rampart of earth, which on the two inland sides was supported by a wall nearly perpendicular, so that it presented an almost impregnable obstacle to any enemy that was likely to be encountered in those parts. On the other sides the rampart was only an incline of earth with a row of pickets about its base. Around the whole was a wide ditch which could be filled with water from the river. (2) It was garrisoned by some three hundred provincials, one half of whom were Pennsylvanians and the other half Virginians. (3)

All was quiet on the Ohio until 1763. Then, after faint mutterings of danger, the storm of Pontiac's War swept down upon the fort. It was suddenly besieged by over four hundred Indians. Captain Ecuyer, taking warning from the vague rumors, was not entirely unprepared. (5) His garrison consisted of 250 men, half regulars and half militia, in good spirits and determined to succeed. The fort was provided with sixteen cannon. Rations were low; so as many cattle as possible were collected about the fort to serve as food and prevent their falling into the enemy's

(2) *Olden Time*, I, 196.
(3) *Pa. Arch.*, 1st ser., III, 693. General Stanwix to Governor Hamilton: "The works are carried on to that degree of defence which was at first prepared for this year, so that I am now by degrees forming a winter garrison, which is to consist of 300 provincials."

(4) *Darlington, Fort Pitt*, 145.
(5) *Ibid*, 186. Captain Ecuyer to Colonel Bouquet, May 3, 1763, "I fear that the affair is general. I tremble for our posts. I fear according to the reports that I am surrounded by Indians. I neglect nothing to receive them well, and I expect to be attacked tomorrow morning. God wills it, I am passably ready."
hands. (1) We are apt to be amused as we read of Captain Ecuyer's attempt to catch Indians in beaver traps, (2) but his ingenuity and determination, together with the good will and faithfulness of his command, held the fort until it could be relieved by Colonel Bouquet.

Soon after this war the English ministry began to act upon the assumption that the colonies should protect their own frontiers. Lord Hillsborough recommended that Fort Pitt, with some others, should be left to the colonies to garrison if they considered it necessary. (3) In October, 1772, the fort was abandoned by the English and the material in it sold to Alexander Ross and William Thompson for fifty pounds. (4) The inhabitants, alarmed at the abandonment, requested the retention of a small garrison, but General Gage refused to comply. They then petitioned the assembly that, as evacuation would surely retard settlement, a garrison should be provided (5) for this post, but the assembly refused (6) to act. The fort, however, was not destroyed. It was retained by the purchasers until in 1774 it was seized by Doctor John Connelly who, (7) acting under instructions from Governor Dunmore of Virginia, planned to control the frontier. As he was soon arrested and imprisoned, (8) the fort fell again into the hands of the Pennsylvanians. Throughout the Revolution it was held by the Americans.

(1) Ibid, 128. Captain Ecuyer to Colonel Bouquet, June 2, 1763: "My garrison consists in all of 250 men, as many regulars as militia all very determined to conquer or die, our men are high spirited and I am glad to see their good will and with what celerity they work. I have little flour, the inhabitants receive half rations of bread and a little more meat, to the poorer women and children a little Indian corn and some meat. I manage as well as I can. I have collected all the animals of the inhabitants and placed them under our eye. We kill to spare our provisions, for the last resource and in order that the savages shall not profit by our animals.... I have distributed tomahawks to the inhabitants; I have also gathered up all their beaver traps which are arranged along the rampart that is not finished."

(2) Ibid, 131. Captain Ecuyer to Colonel Bouquet, June 16, 1763: "I have collected all the beaver traps which could be found with our merchants and they were placed in the evening outside the palisades. I would be pleased to send you one with the leg of a savage, but they have not given me this satisfaction."

(3) Franklin, Works, IV, 128.
(4) Olden Time, II, 95.
(6) Col. Rec., X, 71.
(7) Pa. Arch., 1st ser., IV, 477, 478, 484, etc.
(8) Col. Rec., XI, 196.
A plot by some Tories to destroy it in 1778 was detected and the leaders were punished. (1) Supplies were scarce. (2) The problem of securing food and clothing appears to have been much more difficult than that of defending the inhabitants.

After the Revolution, the fort, on account of decreasing dangers, lost its importance until in 1791 another Indian war began. A new fort, called Fort Fayette, was now erected. It stood on the bank of the Allegheny about a quarter of a mile further up than the old one, and consisted of a stockade with barracks and a block house in one of the angles. (3) Even after 1800 a small garrison was maintained (4) here.

Soon after evacuating Fort Duquesne in 1758 the French also withdrew their forces from Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presqu’Isle in order to strengthen Niagara which was being vigorously attacked by Sir William Johnson. The English were thus left in full possession of western Pennsylvania. The forts in the northwest were garrisoned and held until their destruction by the Indians in 1763. Forts Ligonier and Bedford were also for many years important in keeping open the road to the west. During the Revolution a number of new forts were erected in the West, grouped about Pittsburgh as a base. The most important were Fort Armstrong at Kittanning (5) and Fort McIntosh at

(2) Olden Time, II, 378. Daniel Broadhead to Richard Peters, December 7, 1780: “Indeed, I am so well convinced that the inhabitants on this side the mountains cannot furnish half enough meat to supply the troops, that I have risked the sending a party of hunters to kill buffalo at little Canhawa, and to lay in the meat until I can detach a party to bring it in, which cannot be done before spring.”
Ibid, 382. A letter from Daniel Broadhead to Joseph Reed complaining of the lack of clothing for the soldiers.
Pittsburg Gazette, May 19, 1792: “The fort began last winter at this place, stands on the Allegheny River within about 100 yards of the bank, on a beautiful rising ground, about one-quarter of a mile higher up than the old garrison of Fort Pitt. It is completely stockaded in, and one range of barracks built, a block house in one of the angles finished, and the remainder in forwardness.”
(4) Michaux, Travels, 72.
the mouth of the Beaver River. (1)

The construction of forts did not stop with the Revolution. A new one was erected at Venango in 1787, (2) about one mile above the mouth of French Creek. (3) It was a small fort armed with one cannon and garrisoned with one company. A third fort (4) was erected here in 1795 during the process of settling the northwestern part of the state. (5) At the same time Fort Le Boeuf was rebuilt, (6) and two companies raised to garrison it. (7) In 1794 an attempt was made to settle Presqu’ Isle but it was prevented by the opposition of the Indians, instigated probably by the British. (8) During the next year, however, two block houses were erected to protect a small garrison established to protect the surveyors who were engaged in laying out the lands.

Doddridge gives us an excellent description of one of these frontier forts. “The reader will understand by this term, not only a place of defence, but the residence of a small

(1) Ibid, 32. General McIntosh to E. V. P. Bryan, December 20, 1778: “I erected a good strong Fort for the Reception and Security of Prisoners and stores, upon the Indian side of the Ohio below Beaver Creek with Barracks for a Regiment; and another on the Muskingum, which I expect will keep the savages in awe, and secure the peace of the frontiers effectually in this quarter hereafter if they are well supported and also facilitate any future enterprises that may be attempted that way.”

(2) Pittsburg Gazette, November 22, 1788: “Fort Franklin—off French Creek, near to the post formerly called Venango, is a small, strong fort, with one cannon, was erected in 1787, and is garrisoned with one company.

This post was established for the purpose of defending the frontiers of Pennsylvania, which are exposed by the facility by which the Indians can cross from Lake Erie, either to French Creek or the Judaggue lake and the Coneawango branch, and thence descend the rapid river Allegheny.”


(4) Or fourth if there were two French forts at this place.


(6) Ibid, 2nd ser., VI, 739. Major Denny to Governor Mifflin; July 4, 1794: “Sir: I had the honor of addressing you last on the 20th ult., since which we have been busily employed in erecting a stockade fort, the plan of which will be sent you by the next conveyance. We are now beyond the power of any body of hostile Indians that may attempt to strike us, and every day we will be getting stronger, provided we can keep our men together.”

(7) Ibid, VI, 788, 806.

(8) Pittsburg Gazette, August 16, 1794, quoting a letter from Le Boeuf: “——— once a week we have people at Presq’ Isle, and the British watch the place as close as we do; and some mornings when we discharge our cannon they return the fire from their vessel, which we distinctly hear.”
number of families belonging to the same neighborhood. As the Indian mode of warfare was an indiscriminate slaughter of all ages, and both sexes, it was as requisite to provide for the safety of the women and children as for that of the men.

"The fort consisted of cabins, block houses, and stockades. A range of cabins commonly formed one side at least of the fort. Divisions, or partitions of logs, separated the cabins from each other. The walls on the outside were ten or twelve feet high, the slopes of the roof being turned wholly inward. A very few of these cabins had puncheon floors, the greater part were earthen. The block houses were built at the angles of the fort. They projected about two feet beyond the outer walls of the cabins and stockades. Their upper stores were about eighteen inches every way larger in dimension than the under one, leaving an opening at the commencement of the second story to prevent the enemy from making lodgment under their walls. In some forts, instead of block houses, the angles of the fort were furnished with bastions. A large folding gate made of thick slabs, nearest the spring, closed the fort. The stockades, bastions, cabins and block house walls, were furnished with port holes at proper heights and distances. The whole of the outside was made completely bullet proof. It may be truly said that necessity is the mother of invention; for the whole of this work was made without the aid of a single nail or spike of iron; and for this reason, such things were not to be had. In some cases, less exposed, a single block house, with a cabin or two, constituted the whole fort. Such places of refuge may appear very trifling to those who have been in the habit of seeing the formidable military garrisons of Europe and America; but they answered the purpose, as the Indians had no artillery. They seldom attacked, and scarcely ever took one of them." (1)

In June, 1756, James Young inspected the eastern forts and made a return of their condition to the government. (2) He reports that the fort at Northkill was "intended for a square abt. 32 ft. Each way, at Each Corner is a half Bastion, of very little Service to Flank the Curtains, the Stockades are very ill fixed in the Ground, and open in many Places; within is a very bad Log house for the People, it has no chimney, and can afford but little shelter in bad weather." Only nine of the fourteen men were found on

duty; and the woods were not cleared away above forty yards from the fort. Provisions consisted of flour and rum for four weeks; military supplies amounted to eight muskets, four rounds of powder and lead per man, fifteen blankets, and three axes.

Fort Lebanon, at a more important point, was reported in much better condition, well stockaded, with good bastions and one wall piece. Within was a strong house and two other houses built by the country people who had taken refuge there. Munitions consisted of twenty-eight good muskets, forty blankets, one axe, and one wall piece. There was food sufficient for a month.

The fort above Alleminga, another of the less important points, was found in bad condition, poorly stockaded and totally unfit for defence. Munitions, however, were quite plentiful; there were twenty-eight good muskets and twelve rounds of ammunition per man. Fort Allen on the other hand was well stockaded, with four good bastions and one swivel gun. The woods were cleared all around for a considerable distance, and throughout it was in good condition for defence. Within the fort there were good barracks and a guard room. Munitions consisted of twenty-seven muskets, twenty rounds of powder, and sixty rounds of lead, besides twenty rounds of filled cartridges for each of the twenty-five men.

These are only a few from the number of which he reported but they may be taken as fairly typical. The more important places like Forts Allen, Lebanon, and Henry were well constructed and highly efficient; but the smaller forts were often carelessly built and poorly supplied with food and ammunition. In fact it is almost unbelievable that these hastily constructed posts with only a few rounds of ammunition per man could have defended the frontier as well as they did. Much must have depended upon the Indian's natural fear of anything like an ambuscade or a fortification.

The same criticisms may be applied at a later date to the western forts. Major Denny in 1794 reported the condition of Fort Franklin as follows: "I am not surprised at Polhemus' alarm. The fort is worse than any frontier station you ever seen, & that for the Block House, which is far from being the best, it would be infinitely worse than nothing at all. The pickets might do to inclose a garden, and do look more like a fence than anything else. They are placed in the form of a square without anything to defend the curtain's flanks, & in the bottom of a ditch, along which
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five hundred Indians might lay perfectly secure.” (1) It was put into somewhat better condition by the commissioners who had been appointed to lay out the town at Presqu’ Isle, (2) but its position at so great a distance from the Allegheny River was still a disadvantage. (3)

But in spite of the dilapidated condition in which the forts were often found, and in spite of the insufficient garrisons with which the commanders were often forced to be contented, they were the most important element in frontier defence. They were points of irritation which drove the Indians farther and farther westward; they were places of refuge where the inhabitants in times of danger could find an almost certain security.

Ammunition and Supplies.

The equipment of a soldier was very simple. It was a distinct advantage to be lightly clad, armed, and accoutred. A watch coat, a waist coat, a pair of shoes and a blanket sufficed for bed and clothing. (4) The gun furnished him was often poor in quality and condition. Benjamin Franklin said of the arms furnished the frontiersmen in 1755: “I wish they were better; but they are well fortified, will bear a good charge, and I should imagine they would do good service with swan or buck shot, if not so good for single ball.” (5) The riflemen

(2) Ibid, 728. Andrew Ellicott to Governor Mifflin, June 29, 1794: “On my arrival there, the place appeared to be in such a defenseless situation that, with the concurrence of Captain Denny and the officer commanding at the fort, we remained there some time, and employed the troops in making it more tenable. It may now be considered as defensible, provided the number of men is increased. The Garrison at present consists of twenty-five men, one half of whom are unfit for duty, and it is my opinion that double that number would not be more than sufficient.”

(3) Ibid, 795. Report of Andrew Ellicott, December 30, 1794: “The present Fort is erected on French Creek, about one mile from the old one, which was built by the British. I have never yet (tho’ frequently made the inquiry) been able to discover the reason why the old works were abandoned and a new position taken, without one visible advantage to justify it, but, on the contrary, attended with many obvious and important disadvantages. The old work commanded the Allegheny River just below the mouth of French Creek, and the present can only command that creek, and when the waters are low, loaded boats cannot be brought within three quarters of a mile of it.”

(4) Col. Rec., XIII, 143.
(5) Franklin, Works, II, 240.
raised in 1792 refused to take the (1) muskets furnished them, but a compromise was effected by which they were furnished with rifles as their own property, the price of them to be deducted from their pay.

During the years 1755 and 1756 twenty-nine cannon, fourteen swivels, and 4789 small arms, with great quantities of powder, lead, flints, and tomahawks were purchased with the money granted for the king's use, and sent to the several parts of Pennsylvania. (2) Most of these went to the frontiers. At the close of the war 1742 muskets, with about the same number of bayonets, cartridge boxes, and gun worms were returned to the provincial government by persons to whom they had been loaned. (3)

Supplies were almost chronically lacking. Even so important a place as Fort Augusta had no definite source but the soldiers were compelled to scour the country and obtain food where ever it could be found, much to the detriment of the work on the fort and the ranging of the woods. (4) The question of ammunition was still more serious; at times there were only three pounds per man. (5) Clothing was furnished in no more abundance. (6)

According to the testimony of Arthur Lee the supplies which were provided were not always used to advantage. The powder at Fort Pitt in 1784 was found to have spoiled. "The commanding officer alleged that it was the business of the garrison to guard the stores only, and not to keep them from spoiling." (7) Soldiers, too, were obliged to go

(1) *Pa. Arch.*, 2nd ser., IV, 711. Major McCully to Colonel Biddle, March 11, 1792: "The Soldiers, being enlisted as Riflemen, refused to take the muskets, and it had liked to have caused some difficulty; however, the officers and myself agreed to purchase a number of rifles, the soldiers agreeing to receive them as their property, and giving power of attorney to stop as much of their pay as would answer for the sum."

(6) *Ibid*, 2nd ser., VI, 791. Captain Denny to Governor Mifflin, November 1, 1794: "For want of clothing, particularly shoes, there are numbers of men who are now almost useless. The term of enlistment is too long to depend upon them providing for themselves, especially when they can receive their eight months' pay before they have served one. No restraint in this case is a very great injury to the service."

(7) *Olden Time*, II, 340.
without sufficient equipment while plenty was lying in the public stores. (1)

The lack of supplies along the frontier was to a great extent due to the difficulty of transportation. Roads were bad or nonexistent. At the time when supplies were in greatest demand, the convoys were most subject to attack by the Indians. Expeditions, too, were greatly retarded by their baggage trains for which a road must often be carved through the forest. On account of these difficulties the cost of transportation was extremely high. (2) After the construction of roads had greatly lessened the difficulties, a woeful inefficiency still at times retarded shipments. (3)

Military and Scouting Expeditions.
Pennsylvania did not stand wholly upon the defensive but at various times sent out scouting or military expeditions into the enemy's country. The earliest of these with

(1) *Ibid*, 341. Reprinting Arthur Lee's Journal: "Col Harmar, who commanded the troops that were equipping for the treaty, came in; and upon my asking him if the troops were provided with what was necessary, he said no, not even with blankets. The clothier general, upon being applied to, had informed him that they must be purchased. We told him that there were thousands rotting in the public store, and directed him to go there immediately and furnish his corps, which he did. "The reason for all this is, that there is a profit in purchasing, and none in issuing out of the public stores."

(2) *Pa. Arch.*, 4th ser., II, 139. Governor to Assembly, January, 1750: "The money voted at your last sessions as a present to the Indians at Ohio has been laid to the best advantage in goods proper to the occasion. But as all the money given for this service was invested in the goods, and no provision made that I know of to pay the charge of their conveyance to Ohio, I must desire you to think of this and provide accordingly. "The sum demanded for their Transportation is Two Hundred and Fifty Pounds, which appears to me to be very high; but by all the Enquiry I have been able to make, I do not find I can get it done for less by any Persons in whom I can place a confidence."

(3) *Cal. of Va. State Papers*, I, 476. Colonel George Muter to the Governor, January 31, 1781: "The wagons are ready to start, that are to carry out the necessarys for the forces in the Western Department, and instructions with respect to the delivery of the goods they carry are wanted. I am incapable of even originating instructions, as I know no more of the matter, than that the goods are to be carried to Fort Pitt, but am entirely ignorant of anything further. I am informed that Major Quirk has said he cannot give the necessary instructions. I beg leave to add, that Mr. Rose informs me, the waggoners refuse to move, unless some spirits are furnished them and a satisfactory provision made for their being paid. These are matters I do not know what to do in, therefore have I been induced to mention them to your Excellency."
which we are concerned is that made by Conrad Weiser in 1738. In November, 1747, a delegation of Ohio Indians had visited Philadelphia and requested that an agent should be sent to them for the purpose of holding a council. They were given a promise that Conrad Weiser would be sent early the next spring. He accordingly made the journey with a considerable present from the government, and accompanied by George Croghan who as a trader was well acquainted with the country and its roads. He was instructed to learn the number, situation, disposition, and strength of the various Indian tribes, and whether they were likely to be friends, neutrals, or enemies in the impending struggle with the French. The Indians reported 780 warriors and expressed themselves as very friendly to the English.

During the winter of 1753-1754 John Pattin was sent to the Ohio Country on a somewhat similar mission. He was instructed to learn what the French were doing, their numbers and location, and what forts they had built or intended to build. He was to take account of the western roads, learn the number of the Indians and whether they inclined toward the French or toward the English, obtain the names of those who carried whisky to the Indians, learn what quantity of arms and ammunition had been sent to the Ohio Indians by the Governor of Virginia, and find out whether any measures had been decided upon for frontier defence. The trip was made, the desired information set down in a diary and delivered to the governor in February, 1754.

In 1758, in order to facilitate Forbes' expedition, the government began to lay plans to withdraw the Indians from the French interest. After some search for a suitable messenger to send to them, Christian Frederick Post was chosen. He was a plain honest man who had lived as a missionary among the Indians for seventeen years, and therefore knew their language perfectly. About the middle of July he received orders from the governor to go to the Delaware,

(1) Col. Rec., V, 290-292.
(2) Col. Rec., V, 707.
(3) Ibid, 730. Minutes of Council: "The Governor ordered the Secretary to inform the Council that Andrew Montour and John Patten were come from the River Ohio; — that the transactions with the Indians were contained in a Journal sent by Mr. Croghan and in a diary taken by Mr. Patten, which he desired might be read and sent to the House."
(4) THOMPSON, Causes of Alienation, 129.
Shawanese, and Mingo Indians on the Ohio to persuade them, if possible, to withdraw from the French interest. He proceeded west by way of Fort Augusta and the old Shamo-kin Trail, was kindly received by the Indians and protected against the French who planned to have him either killed or delivered to them as a prisoner. He was, however, unsuccessful in his mission. (1) In October he was directed to make a second attempt, following Forbes' army to the west. He arrived at Loyalhanna on the seventh of November and from there proceeded to the Allegheny where he was now wholly successful. (2)

To give accounts of the various military expeditions against the French and Indians does not fall within the compass of our task. References have already been made to Washington’s and Braddock’s expeditions of 1754 and 1755 respectively. In 1756 Colonel Armstrong, commander of the forces west of the Susquehanna River, made a successful expedition to destroy the Indians’ base of supplies at Kittanning. Forbes’ capture of Fort Duquesne has already been mentioned, as has Colonel Bouquet’s relief of Fort Pitt in 1763.

During the Revolution various offensive expeditions were made against the Indians. General McIntosh in the fall of 1778 started from Fort Pitt to destroy the Indian towns about Sandusky, but the season was so far advanced that he was forced to give up the project. (3) Colonel Broadhead, setting out from Fort Pitt on August 11, 1779, with a force of about six hundred men destroyed the Indian villages and corn fields in the Allegheny Valley. (4) At the same time General John Sullivan was engaged in a similar expedition against the Six Nations, proceeding by way of the Susquehanna Valley. He destroyed many Indian towns and laid waste their cornfields, thus embarassing all future operations against the northern frontier. (5) Further expeditions were contemplated but given up upon the recommendation of General Washington. (6)

Later Years

After the Revolution three new elements entered into the problem of defence. The first of these was the settle-

(1) THWAITES, Early Western Travels, I, 185-233. Reprinting the journal of the first journey.
(5) Ibid, 308.
ment of Ohio, the second the assumption by the general government of responsibility for frontier defence, and third the settlement of the Pennsylvania lands northwest of the Ohio and Allegheny rivers.

The Revolution had hardly closed before emigrants began to pass down the Ohio River to settle upon the new Congressional lands west of Pennsylvania. Marietta and Cincinnati within a few years were flourishing frontier towns. These settlements tended to push the Indians farther westward and thus free Pennsylvania from the danger of incursions, but at the same time they incensed the former possessors of the soil. Resistance was made during which murders were again committed in western Pennsylvania. It was only by Wayne's victory in 1795 that the western part of the state was wrested from the Indians' hands and entirely secured from Indian depredations.

During the Revolution but to a greater extent after its close the central government began to play an important role in frontier defence. This was inevitable on account of the new frontier stretching across the federal lands as well as on account of the constitutional duties of the federal government. (1) The individual states were henceforth not so much concerned as the Confederation. Thus a second element was interposed to relieve Pennsylvania of the burden of defence. Each state was still required to furnish its quota of men, but operations were directed by the Secretary of War and expenses were met by the general government.

Pennsylvania, however, took the initiative when hostilities began in 1791. The legislature appropriated four thousand pounds to provide for the immediate defence of the frontier, to continue until in the opinion of the governor the measures projected by the United States should give sufficient protection. (2) The governor was authorized to draw orders on the state treasurer for the above mentioned sum and apply the same in such manner as he should judge most proper for carrying the law into effect.

The Secretary of War instructed the lieutenants of the western counties to employ at the expense of the United States as many of the militia by voluntary enlistment or other legal method as in their judgement the protection of their respective counties required. (3) This raised several

(2) Statutes at Large, XIV, 95.
legal questions. (1) Could the Secretary of War order out the militia under a Pennsylvania law and direct them to be paid less out of the treasury of the United States than the law under which they served provided? Was not the governor of the state, and not the Secretary of War, the proper person to order out the militia? These questions tended to keep the people from acting with spirit, but they were not pushed to an issue.

The state still had, to some degree at least, the power to accept or reject the federal proposals. In January, 1792, the Secretary of War laid before the governor of Pennsylvania his plan for defensive operations. (2) This was submitted to and approved by the state assembly. In order to aid the measures of the United States the governor was then authorized to engage for six months a number of experienced riflemen from the militia, not exceeding 228, (3) and station them as in his judgement would best protect and defend the western frontier. (4) When the term of the Pennsylvania companies had almost expired, the Secretary of War considered it as politic at least to ask the permission of the governor before allowing the federal officers to recruit among them. (5)

The last problem of frontier defence which presented itself to the state was that of protecting the commissioners who were appointed to lay out the towns of Erie, Franklin, and Waterford. The survey was authorized April 8, 1793. (6) The Indians, who still maintained their claim to the northwestern corner of the state, opposed it. Governor Mifflin, however, purposed to protect the commissioners by means of a draft from the western militia and carry out the establishment in spite of any resistance that might be offered. (7) But in compliance with a request coming from the President of the United States through the Secretary of War and stating that the establishment might complicate the problem of pacifying the western Indians with whom the nation was then at war, he suspended temporarily the execution of the act. (8) All difficulties having at last been removed, commissioners were appointed to make the survey

(1) Ibid, 655.
(2) Ibid, 4th ser., IV, 216.
(4) Statutes at Large, XIV, 196-198.
(6) Statutes at Large, XIV, 395-396.
(8) Ibid, 668.
The governor on April 18 was empowered to enlist as many men, not exceeding 130, as he thought necessary to protect and assist the commissioners. If a greater force should prove necessary, he was authorized to raise at his discretion a complete company. On account of the alarming reports of Indian hostilities he considered it necessary to raise the additional men; but the survey was made and the land settled without any further Indian opposition.

CONCLUSION

(1) Statutes at Large, XV, 337-346.
(2) Ibid, 344.
(3) Pa. Arch., 4th ser., IV, 342. Governor Mifflin to Assembly: "Before the Commissioners departed from Pittsburg. The symptoms of savage hostility were so alarming, that it became expedient, as well for their protection, as for the general security of the frontiers, to augment the number of state troops, by the additional company which, in a case of emergency, I was empowered to raise. Orders were accordingly issued for that purpose, but you will perceive, on a perusal of the documents relating to the subject, that every step was taken in concert with the general government, and that no precaution was omitted to prevent an accumulation of useless expense, or a continuance of the enlistments, beyond the period of actual necessity."