ARTHUR ST. CLAIR
Western Pennsylvania's Leading Citizen, 1764-1818
By ELLIS BEALS

INTRODUCTION

To the average individual, the name of Arthur St. Clair brings to mind only the story of "St. Clair's Defeat" in 1791. One more familiar with his career recalls the evacuation of Ticonderoga and the resulting court martial, and may, too, remember that he was at one time the Governor of the Northwest Territory. But the most obscure of all, even to Pennsylvanians, is the period of his life and services in Western Pennsylvania, services that should be known and appreciated by every inhabitant of this part of the Commonwealth. It is unfortunate that any man should be remembered for his failures and mistakes to the exclusion of his worthwhile accomplishments, but such seems to be the case with General St. Clair.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to justify St. Clair's evacuation of Ticonderoga, it is not to prove that he was in no way responsible for the disastrous Indian defeat, nor to show that he always followed the wisest policy as Governor of the Northwest Territory, but it is to present to the reader in as straight-forward and accurate a manner as the capabilities of the author allow, the story of St Clair as one of Western Pennsylvania's foremost citizens and benefactors of colonial times. It is a story of devotion to the welfare of the early settlers and to the interests of the Province. He gave of his time, energy, and wealth that the people might be able to live in peace and prosperity. If this narrative gives to the reader a greater realization of the worth of St. Clair and a greater appreciation of his services, its purpose will have been fulfilled. But it is hoped, too, that the reader will experience, at least, a slight feeling of shame and regret on behalf of the State and the Nation for the treatment accorded St. Clair in his declining years. It is a blot that should be erased by adequate, if belated, recognition.
Arthur St. Clair

CHAPTER I.

Beginning of Life in Western Pennsylvania, 1764-74.

Arthur St. Clair was born in Thurso, Caithness, Scotland, in the year 1734. He was educated at the University of Edinburgh and later studied medicine at London under the celebrated Dr. William Hunter. By 1756, both of his parents had died and he was lured from his study of medicine by the prospects of a military career. Through the influence of friends he secured a commission in the Sixtieth or Royal American regiment, which bears the date of May 13, 1757. The next year he came to America with Admiral Boscawen's fleet, arriving on May 28, 1758 and began service under General Amherst. He was present at the siege and capture of Louisburg and participated in the famous battle with Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham.

After the capture of Quebec, St. Clair obtained leave to visit Boston, taking with him some dispatches to Gen. Gage, who was his relative. While there he met Phoebe Bayard, whose mother was a half sister of James Bowdoin, Governor of Massachusetts. This friendship progressed successfully and they were married on May 15, 1760, his wife receiving a legacy of 14,000 pounds, which was no inconsiderable sum in those days. To this union were born seven children, Daniel, in 1762; John Murray, in 1764; Margaret, in 1766; Elizabeth, in 1768; Arthur, Jr., in 1771; Louisa, in 1773; Jane, in 1774. All of these died in comparative obscurity.

St. Clair rose to the rank of Lieutenant in the British army, but at the close of the war he sold his commission in 1762. He entered into trade but not succeeding well he threw up his business and after being buffeted about by fortune for some time, moved to Western Pennsylvania.

There is uncertainty regarding St. Clair's first years in the western part of the Province. It seems that he secured employment as a surveyor and agent for the Penns to look after their interests, as later events show. There is a possibility, also, that he was put in command of Fort Ligonier. A correspondent of the Pittsburgh Chronicle
(1881) claims to have seen in the Land Office at Harrisburg, a record stating that St. Clair commanded at Fort Ligonier in 1769. Mr. Alexander Johnson and other friends of St. Clair in Western Pennsylvania were of the opinion that he assisted in repelling the Indians from that section in 1763, the year the articles of peace were signed and that he commanded for a time at Fort Ligonier, in which service he received the title of Captain. It is certain that he resigned from the British army in 1762, and if he served in Western Pennsylvania it must have been under a different commission. Fort Ligonier had been established near the Loyalhanna creek by General Forbes on his return from the expedition to Fort Duquesne in 1758 and named for Lord Ligonier, the commander of the British armies. (8) Some think that St. Clair was appointed by General Gage to take command of the forts in Western Pennsylvania, but the only documentary evidence of this is a letter written by St. Clair in 1785, in which he says that certain lands about Fort Pitt had been granted to him by General Gage. (9)

We know that St. Clair lived at Bedford for a time, but later moved to Ligonier Valley where he had secured large tracts of land. The amount which was given him by the King for his services in the French and Indian War is not known, but the records of the Land Office at Harrisburg show that previous to the Revolution he had received by application 1,930 acres. (10)

At this time Cumberland County included the western part of the State and on April 5, 1770, St. Clair was appointed surveyor for the county (11) and the next month he, with William Crawford, Thomas Gist, and Dorsey Penticost, was appointed a Justice of the Peace by the Proprietary Government. (12)

It was only the next year that Bedford County was formed from Cumberland and St. Clair, along with John Frazer, Bernard Dougherty, William Crawford, James Miligan, Thomas Gist, Dorsey Penticost, Alexander McKee, William Proctor, Jr., John Hanna, William Lochry, John Willson, Robert Chiggage, William McConnell, and Thomas Woods, was appointed a Justice of the Peace of the new county on March 11, 1771. (13) He was later made prothonotary recorder of deeds, register and deputy register for the probate of wills. (14) The act creating the new
county provided that Arthur St. Clair, Bernard Dougherty, James Coulter, William Proctor, and George Woods should purchase a piece of land conveniently located in the town of Bedford and erect a court house and prison. (15)

In November, St. Clair, John Frazer, and Bernard Dougherty, the eldest justices of Bedford County, were appointed to hold court for the trial of Lieut. Robert Hamilton accused of murdering a fellow officer, Lieut. Tracy. It was impossible for the judges of the Supreme Court to make the long journey at this time and the prisoner was anxious for an early trial. (16)

It was not long after this that sentiment for the formation of a new county arose. The territory included in Bedford County was so extensive and the population was increasing so rapidly that the exercise of justice and the preservation of order was becoming more difficult. The lawless element, common on the frontier, had organized to resist authority and the officers sent out from Bedford to arrest the culprits were often defied and they sometimes even suffered violence at their hands. (17)

Another factor in the movement for the new county was the dispute with Virginia over the region around Pittsburgh. It was to the interests of Pennsylvania that her authority should be made more effective in the disputed area and it was to be expected that St. Clair, as the agent of the Penns, would seek means to protect their claims and he was looked up to by all of the settlers to manage the affair before the Council. He wrote that "it was to be wished that the Boundary was fixed" in order that the question be settled once and for all, but he suggested that if a boundary agreement was impossible then "it might answer a good end to divide this County and fix the County Town at Fort Pitt". (18) There was some difficulty experienced in securing the erection of new counties as the population moved westward because the action of the Council was necessary and, since the old counties dominated that body, it hesitated to relinquish power by creating new counties. (19) The persistence and convincing arguments of St. Clair and others led the Council in 1773, February 26, to form a new county from Bedford (20) to be called Westmoreland for a county of the same name in England. (21) It included what is now Westmoreland, Fayette, Washington, Greene, and parts of
Allegheny and Beaver Counties south of the Ohio river, and about two thirds of Indiana and one third of Armstrong Counties, a total area of 4,700 square miles. (22)

St. Clair, at his own request, was transferred from the offices in Bedford County to like ones in the new one. (23) By 1776 he was holding six offices in Westmoreland: clerk of the Court of General Quarter Sessions, prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas, clerk of the Orphans Court, judge of probate, register of wills, and recorder of deeds. (24)

It was generally expected that the county seat for Westmoreland would be located at Pittsburgh, as St. Clair mentions in his letter suggesting the erection of the new county, but selfish interests determined otherwise. Of the five trustees appointed, at least three favored Hannastown; Robert Hanna, because he lived there and operated a tavern, Joseph Erwin, because he kept a public house nearby, and Samuel Sloan, because he lived near. George Wilson favored Pittsburgh, but he was in the minority and could do nothing. Petitions were sent to Joseph Shippen and Governor Penn asking that the county seat not be made permanent at Hannastown. (25) When Hannastown was fixed upon as the seat of the county, the disappointment of many was keenly expressed by Aeneas Mackay of Pittsburgh to St. Clair in a letter.

"I cannot but express my surprise at the point determined in favor of the courts of law sitting first at Hanna's. Pray may I ask you the question, Where is the convenience for transacting business on these occasions as there is neither houses, table, nor chairs. Certainly the people must sit at the roots of trees and stumps and in case of rain the lawyer's books must be exposed to the weather, yet to no purpose, as they cannot presume to write". (26)

It is significant that St. Clair sought to have Pittsburgh made the county seat when he had little or no property there and when certainly Hannastown was much more convenient for him. About the only advantage possessed by the latter place was its central location. Until a building was erected for that purpose the courts were held in the house of Robert Hanna. The town came to consist of about thirty homes "some of them cabins, but most of them aspiring to the name of houses, having two
stories, of hewed logs. There were a wooden courthou\[58\]\[0\]se and a jail of the like construction. A fort stockaded with logs, completed the civil and military arrangements of the place. (27) It was burned by the Indians on July 13, 1782, though Hanna's house escaped destruction and there the courts continued to be held until the county seat was moved to Greensburg in 1787. (28)

It was at Hannastown that justice was first dispensed according to the rules of the white man west of the Allegheny mountains. St. Clair was very active in the affairs of the county, recording deeds and for a time he performed all the business of the courts. As justice of the peace, he heard cases before him at his home in Ligonier, and he sometimes sat on the Common Pleas bench at Hannastown. Once in a while he conducted a case in the absence of an attorney. James Bryson was appointed as his office clerk. (29)

The first session of the Westmoreland court was held at Robert Hanna's house on April 6, 1773. William Crawford and two associates sat on the bench and organized a court of Quarter Sessions. The first business was to divide the county into eleven townships. A grand jury was then called and John Carnahan made foreman. A number of constables were appointed and put to work, for several of the jurymen failed to respond to the summons. Erasmus Bockavus, John Barr, William Elliott, George Kelly, and Joseph Erwin were authorized to sell liquor. The rates to be charged by the tavern keepers were fixed. Whiskey, per gill, was to be four pence; West India Rum, per gill, six pence; Toddy, per gill, one shilling; one bowl of West India Rum Toddy in which there was to be one half pint of loaf sugar, one shilling six pence; Cider, per quart, one shilling; Strong Beer, per quart, eight pence; Grain, per quart, two and one half pence; Hay and Stabling, per night, one shilling; Pasturage, per night or twenty four hours, six pence. (30)

The jail was made of round unhewn logs one story high with only one room, where men and women, whites and blacks, and Indians, were confined together. It was mainly for the purpose of confining prisoners until their trial. The punishments were usually fines, whippings, standing in the pillory or stocks, cropping the ears and
branding. The whipping post stood in front of the jail and consisted of a low platform on which the culprit stood, with uprights supporting a frame with openings in it through which his head and hands projected. At common law, every passerby might cast one stone at the projecting head. The stocks were also a rude framework on which the culprit sat, his legs projecting through openings in front. When no regular stocks were at hand, the custom was to lift the corner of a rail fence and thrust the legs between the two lower rails.

The punishments administered seem to a modern extremely severe. In October 1773, James Brigland was convicted on two indictments for larceny and fined twenty shillings and given thirty lashes. On next January, William Howard, for a felony, received thirty lashes “well laid on” and was made to stand one hour in the pillory, the first sentence to the pillory in Westmoreland. In October 1775, Elizabeth Smith was convicted of stealing small articles from James Kincaid, to whom she was indentured, and was fined and given fifteen lashes on the bare back. Kincaid complained that he had lost four days of her services and had gone to considerable expense in prosecuting her, so the court ordered her to serve her master for two years after the expiration of her indenture. On April 1782, James McGill was whipped, sentenced to stand in the pillory, have his right ear cropped, and be branded in the forehead. In April 1783, John Smith, for felony, was fined twenty shillings, received thirty-nine lashes, stood in the pillory one hour, and had his ears cut off and nailed to the pillory. Though some of these may have been exceptionally severe cases, still they serve to illustrate the general type of punishment inflicted upon the offenders of those days. It was not a policy of reform.

St. Clair, owing to his thorough education, his military service under the romantic Wolfe, and to his prominence, was, without doubt, the most distinguished man west of the Allegheny mountains. The inhabitants expected him to be their representative before the Provincial government and to seek redress for their grievances. He owned a good farm and a grist mill at Ligonier besides his large tracts of wild lands.
David McClure, on his itineraries, frequented the home of St Clair at various times and at least once held a religious service in his house. St. Clair reported to McClure that there were about one hundred families in Ligonier Valley, (August 16, 1772) principally Scotch and Irish, and he expressed the wish to obtain a permanent clergyman. These settlers in Southwestern Pennsylvania came from two directions largely. The Scotch from the Cumberland Valley and other settled posts of the Province made their way westward along the Forbes military road and settled along its course. These settlers were, in general, loyal to Pennsylvania and held their lands under the Provincial government. Other Scots came from the south, principally from Virginia, and crossed the mountains by Braddock’s road and occupied lands along the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers. They believed their settlements to be within Virginia, and this situation gave rise to the famous controversy over the region about Pittsburgh. It is an interesting probability that the large number of Scotch families settling in southwestern Pennsylvania was an added inducement for St. Clair to become a pioneer.

CHAPTER II

Defense of Pennsylvania’s Claims, 1774.

In the controversy with Virginia over the region about Pittsburgh and west, St. Clair was the chief champion of the Pennsylvania claims. However, the fact that he lived at such a distance from the center of activity explains why he was not personally involved in the trouble to the extent that was his antagonist, Dr. John Connolly. Ligonier, as well as Hannastown, was out of the disputed area, but St. Clair made frequent trips to Pittsburgh in his efforts to thwart the incursions of Virginia and to protect the citizens.

Pennsylvania’s claim to the region which is now the southwestern portion of the State, was based on the charter from Charles II in 1681, which assigns the Delaware river as the eastern boundary and then says, “said lands to extend westward five degrees in longitude to be computed from said eastern bounds”. Virginia’s claim was the rather flimsy argument that, though the region had once
belonged to Pennsylvania, it reverted to the Crown as a result of the French and Indian War and since Virginia was a crown colony she had more right to it, consequently, than did Pennsylvania. (2)

Though some trouble developed soon after 1763, the dispute did not become acute until 1774, when Dr. Connolly appeared on the scene as Lord Dunmore's agent. We find some definite evidences of dissatisfaction on the part of some of the settlers with Pennsylvania's jurisdiction in 1771. Thomas Woods, the sheriff at Bedford, testified before St. Clair that he went to exercise jurisdiction on a settlement on the Monongahela beyond the Youghiogheny river and they drove him away and warned him that any further attempt to extend Pennsylvania's authority into that region would be met with violence. (3) In the same year, George Wilson, a justice of Bedford county, wrote that resolutions were being passed around which called for opposition to "Penn's laws," but he succeeded in convincing many of the serious consequences of such action. (4) The next year, R. L. Hooper reported that a number of people in the Redstone settlement were determined to resist the authority of Pennsylvania in that region till the Western bounds were settled. (5)

Many people, including St. Clair, believed that George Croghan, the noted Indian trader, was the chief instigator of the opposition to Pennsylvania. At one time when the collector and the constable called to levy Croghan's taxes, they were driven off and Croghan himself threatened to kill them if they attempted to take any of his property, since he was "not within the Province by thirty miles". (6) Aeneas Mackay, in 1774, referring to the activities of Connolly, said that most people thought it was all due to Croghan's intrigues. (7) Croghan admitted that he believed Pennsylvania's authority did not extend to Ford Pitt and that he had always supported this belief by refusing to pay taxes levied by that Province's officers, (8) but denied that he had ever encouraged others to resist the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania, as he had few connections and little intercourse with the settlers. (9)

It is interesting to note a suspicion of St. Clair's that some Philadelphians were involved in the trouble. He wrote to Joseph Shippen in 1772 as follows:
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"If I might trouble you with a conjecture, I would say some people in Philadelphia are at the bottom of all these disturbances, a certain ambitious set who would not scruple to wade to power through the blood of their fellow citizens, have still a change of government in view; by their Emis-saries they may embroil the Province whilst at the same time by their influence on a certain party in Assembly, the bands of government may be weakened that order cannot soon be restored, but this is all a conjecture, and I am no politician; but certain I am messengers and expresses pass and repass betwixt Philadelphia and Fort Pitt too frequent-ly for any private transaction to bear the expense."  

Just what group he had in mind is not made clear.

The clash between the authority of Pennsylvania and Virginia reached its climax during the activities of Connolly, as noted above, when he arrived at Fort Pitt near the close of the year 1773 with a commission from Lord Dunmore for Pittsburgh and adjoining territory. His as-sistants were John Stephenson, William Harrison, and Dorsey Penticost.  

He found many supporters among the inhabitants, for the price of lands under the Virginia laws was considerably less than under those of Pennsyl-va.

To strengthen the authority of Pennsylvania, eight new justices were added to the group for Westmoreland County on January 19, 1774, as follows: Van Sweringen, Thomas Scott, Alexander Ross, John Carnahan, Andrew McFarlane, Oliver Miller, Devereaux Smith, and John Shep-ard  

Shortly after this St Clair proposed moving his office to Pittsburgh immediately and to move his family there as soon as he could get his farm off his hands

Connolly lost no time in pushing the interests of his Lord Dunmore and on the 6th of January he published the following proclamation and had copies posted in various places about Pittsburgh and in the surrounding country:

"Whereas, his Excellency John, Earl of Dunmore, Gov-ernor-in-chief and Captain General of the Colony and Do-minion of Virginia, and Vice-Admiral of the same, has been pleased to nominate and appoint me Captain, Commandant of the militia of Pittsburgh and its Dependencies, with In-structions to assure His Majesty's Subject settled on the Western Waters, that having the greatest regard to their
Prosperity and Interest, and convinced from their repeated Memorials of the grievances of which they complain, that he proposes moving to the House of Burgesses and Necessity of erecting a new County to include Pittsburgh, for the redress of your Complaints, and to take every other Step that may tend to afford you that Justice for which you Solicit. In order to facilitate this desirable Circumstance, I hereby require and command all Persons in the Dependency of Pittsburgh to assemble themselves there as a Militia on the 25th Instant, at which time I shall communicate other Matters for the Promotion of public Utility. Given under my Hand, this 1st day of January, 1774."

John Connolly (16)

A copy of this advertisement fell into the hands of St. Clair on the 11th and the next day he dispatched his own clerk with a copy of the offending document together with a letter to Joseph Shippen asking for instructions regarding the course to pursue in this emergency. Fearing that the instructions might not arrive before the 25th, he outlined in his letter the course he intended to follow. On the day previous to the meeting he would demand “such security of Mr. Connolly for his good behavior as he will not be able to procure, and in consequence, to have him committed; to direct the sheriff to have a sufficient number of such as can be depended upon to protect the goal, should rescue be attempted”. He went on to say that he would not resort to this expedient if a more suitable means could be found. Hesitating to assume sole responsibility for such extreme measures, he wrote to James Wilson at Carlysle to learn if there was any other way by which Connolly might be legally secured and to get his advice on methods to pursue for the preservation of peace and order. (17) The message arrived in Philadelphia the evening of the 18th and was read to the Board on the 19th. (18)

The next day Governor Penn dispatched his reply, in which he expressed surprise at the actions of Connolly, since he had received no intimation from Dunmore about the affair. He gave his sanction to St. Clair’s proposed line of action, saying that the meeting called by Connolly would be an act of a criminal nature and that they would “do right in apprehending him and some of his principal Par-
tizans after such meeting, and holding them to reasonable Security for their appearance at the next Sessions to answer for their Conduct.” He warned them to proceed with great caution as the consequences might be very serious, but he concludes as follows:

“I expect the magistrates, on this occasion, will do their duty with Spirit, in which they shall be supported by the Government; and if any of Connolly’s pretended magistrates shall presume to proceed judicially within the known Limits of the Province of Pennsylvania, I desire that proper Actions may be commenced by the Party aggrieved, not only against the Officer who executed the Process, but the Magistrate also under whose Authority he shall act; and you may be assured such actions shall be prosecuted and supported at the Expense of this Government.”

However, these instructions did not reach St. Clair until the 28th and in the meantime he had carried out his plan and arrested Connolly “on his avowing himself the author of the advertisements requiring the people to meet as a militia” and committed him to the jail at Hannastown when he refused to give bail for his good behavior till the next court. St. Clair hoped that by sending Connolly out of the way, the affair would blow over, but instead, about eighty armed persons assembled, most of them from Croghan’s neighborhood, and paraded the town to the Fort where a cask of rum was produced and the head knocked out, “a very effectual way of recruiting”. St. Clair and the other Pennsylvania magistrates held a consultation and decided to prepare a paper which they read to the people assembled.

This paper first set forth the advantages of the Pennsylvania laws and it showed that the Proprietaries had taken pains to ascertain the boundary line, and that they had petitioned the King to fix a definite location for it. The jurisdiction of Pennsylvania had been exercised in Pittsburgh for several years and the people had acknowledged this authority by applying to that province for their lands. It was emphasized that Dunmore had no right to establish a boundary line but only the King, and they were urged, for the sake of peace and order, to submit to Pennsylvania until the boundary was permanently established. They concluded by informing them that their meeting was an un-
lawful one and ordered them to disperse and retire peaceably to their homes. This was signed by eight of the Pennsylvania magistrates including St. Clair. (22) The people replied that they had been invited there, but came with peaceful intentions and would go home again without molesting anyone. They were then left alone, but soon forgot their peaceful intentions and threatened St. Clair, but he, having been warned, kept out of their way. (23)

Connolly had been in jail only a short time when he, by some means, persuaded the sheriff to release him, which he did on February 2, upon his giving his word of honor to return to the next court. (24)

In the meantime, Governor Penn had registered his complaint with Lord Dunmore regarding Connolly's activities and gave evidence to show Pennsylvania's right to Pittsburgh. He suggested that for the sake of the peace of the region he cease his activities until a temporary line could be agreed upon by commissioners appointed by both governments or until the affair could be settled by His Majesty in Council. (25) Dunmore refused to make any concessions and complained of the treatment accorded Connolly and, because of the "outrageous nature" of the act, he demanded that the fullest reparations be made and "no less can possibly be admitted than the dismissal of the clerk (St. Clair) of Westmoreland County, who had the audacity, without authority, to commit a magistrate in the legal discharge of his trust, unless he can prevail, by proper submission on Mr. Connolly, to demand his pardon of me". (26)

Governor Penn answered the charges and claims of Dunmore and then concluded:

"Mr. St. Clair is a gentleman who for a long time had the honor of serving his Majesty in the regulars with reputation, and in every station of life has preserved the character of a very honest worthy man; and, though perhaps I should not, without first expostulating with you on the subject, have directed him to take that step, yet you must excuse my not complying with your Lordship's requisition of stripping him on this occasion, of his offices and livelihood, which you will allow me to think not only unreasonable, but somewhat dictatorial". (27)

Unable to accomplish anything through correspondence, Penn sent two commissioners, James Tilghman and
Andrew Allen, to treat with Dunmore. St. Clair had received some information which he thought might be helpful to them in their negotiations and this he forwarded to the commissioners. It seemed that in the year 1764, when Fort Pitt was besieged by the Indians during Pontiac's war, Colonel Stephens, a Virginia officer, sent a detachment of the militia to take some provisions for the relief of the Fort, and for this he was "complained of to the Assembly, and censured for sending the militia out of the Government". (28) St. Clair was also asked by the commissioners to investigate a report that Dunmore had been buying land about Pittsburgh. (29) However, the commissioners were no more successful in their negotiations than was Penn with his correspondence and not even temporary lines could be agreed upon. (30)

Connolly, after his release from the Westmoreland jail, returned to Pittsburgh for a few days and then went up to the Redstone settlement, where he gathered together about twenty men who escorted him to the Virginia frontier. (31) He went to Staunton and was sworn as a justice of the peace for Augusta County, Virginia, which claimed Fort Pitt. He returned with several commissions of the peace for people around Pittsburgh. But William Crawford, on April 8th, expressed the belief that none had yet been accepted and he reported that the followers of Connolly or his militia were men without principle, and would be averse to any kind of authority, Virginia's as well as Pennsylvania's. (32) Connolly secured actual possession of the Fort and he was now equipped with both military and civil power to enforce Virginia's claims. He attempted to win adherents by appointing men to military and civil positions and by promising grants of land on easy terms. It was rumored that the militia of Augusta County was prepared to march to Pittsburgh on the shortest notice. The Indians were alarmed at seeing so many armed men patrolling the streets, not knowing but that hostility was intended toward them. (33) St. Clair and the sheriff were even threatened with arrest because they had jailed Connolly. (34)

Early in April, when the Westmoreland County court convened, Connolly prepared to fulfill his promise to return when the court next met. He did not come, however, as a
“sheep before his shearers” but he brought with him between 180 and 200 armed men. The court, which had heard rumors that they could expect a hostile visit, were adjourned for dinner when Connolly arrived. He placed sentinels before the door of the courthouse and then went inside. When one of the magistrates returned from dinner, he was not allowed to enter until permission was first obtained from their commander. Connolly sent word to the other Pennsylvania magistrates that he wished to communicate something to them and that he would wait on them for that purpose. They received him in a private room and he then informed them that they had no right to remain there as justices of the peace, but that they might continue to act in that capacity in such matters that might be submitted by the people until he heard further from Dunmore. (35) He then left while the magistrates prepared an answer in writing, which Connolly had demanded. When they were ready they sent for their visitor but he sent back word that inasmuch as he had waited on them with his message he expected them to wait upon him with their answer. They humbled themselves and complied with his request, but on approaching they were stopped by Connolly’s guard and were forced to stand outside until Connolly granted permission for them to be admitted. (36) They then read the following answer to him:

“The Jurisdiction of the Court and officers of the County of Westmoreland rests on the legislative Authority of the province of Pennsylvania, confirmed by His Majesty in Council. That Jurisdiction has been regularly exercised, and the Court and Officers will continue to exercise it in the same regular manner. It is far from their Intention to occasion or prevent Disturbances, and they apprehend that no such Intentions can with Propriety be inferred from any part of their conduct, on the contrary, they wish and will do all in their Power to preserve the public Tranquility. In order to contribute to this very salutary Purpose, they give Information that every step will be taken on the part of the Province of Pennsylvania to accommodate any Differences that have arisen between it and the Colony of Virginia, by fixing a temporary line betwixt them”. (37)

Shortly after hearing this message, Connolly departed with his men. (38)
Arthur St. Clair

But Connolly did not intend to wait for something to turn up, but became more aggressive and bold. On the way back to Pittsburgh, his men seized a Mr. Elliott of the Bullock Pen, and threatened to put him in the stocks for something which they deemed an insult to their commander. Soon after returning to Pittsburgh he arrested two men who were keeping a store for Mr. Spear, and Connolly himself seized one of the men and would not allow him time to lock up the store. Connolly was surrounded with a body guard and used all his means to obstruct the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania. (39) A few days later on April 9th he ordered the arrest of three magistrates of the Province, Aeneas Mackay, Devereaux Smith, and Andrew McFarlane, and as they refused to give bail for their appearance at the trial at Staunton court in Virginia they were sent to Staunton under arrest (40) Mackay secured permission to go on to Williamsburg where he told his story to Dunmore, to which Dunmore replied that Connolly was only imitating the Pennsylvania officers when he had them arrested. Dunmore ordered the sheriff at Staunton to release the three men and allow them to go back home. (41)

By this time Governor Penn realized the futility of contending with the Virginia leaders by force and violence, since Pennsylvania had no militia with which to back up their contentions. He therefore issued instructions to the magistrates of Westmoreland County, that, while they should continue "with steadiness to exercise the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania with respect to the disturbances and justice and punishment of vice, they must be cautious of entering into any such contests with the officers of my Lord Dunmore as may tend to widen the present unhappy breach, and therefore, as things are at present circumstances, I would not advise the magistracy of Westmoreland County to proceed by way of criminal prosecution against them for exercising the government of Virginia". (42)

The governments of the two provinces were now beginning to realize the seriousness of the situation on the Ohio and to take some action. The Virginia House of Burgesses on May 12, 1774, resolved to "recommend to His Excellence the fixing of a temporary line between this Colony and Pennsylvania, until his Majesty shall direct the
true and proper boundary to be establishd." (43) Governor Penn wrote on June 7th, that he had summoned all members of the assembly living within twenty miles of Philadelphia to meet on the following Friday to seek some immediate steps for relief. (44) He later concluded that the situation demanded the attention of the whole Assembly and it was ordered that the members convene on July 18th. (45) The matter was presented to them, but by this time the trouble with England was brewing and the attention of the Assembly was turned toward the East rather than the West. (46) The Assembly did agree, however, to finance the program of St. Clair regarding the rangers which will be referred to in the next chapter.

On June 11, 1774, St. Clair learned of a report that Connolly had been given authority by Dunmore to settle a line of jurisdiction with the Pennsylvania officers, but while he thought the report "too absurd to be believed" (47) he soon found that it was quite true and Connolly himself read to St. Clair a part of the letter which stated that he might settle on a line ten or twelve miles east of Pittsburgh or a "more convenient distance". (48) Convenient for which side was not stated, but doubtless for Virginia. St. Clair believed, that, since the prospects for a boundary agreement seemed so slight, Westmoreland County should be divided and the county seat placed at Pittsburgh. By this act, he reasoned, the people would be convinced that Pennsylvania was sure of her possession of that region and the confidence of the inhabitants restored. (49)

It was getting so warm for the Pennsylvanians at Pittsburgh that they were determined to leave the place and build a small stockade down the road, probably about Turtle Creek, where Aeneas Mackay had a fine plantation, in order that they might save their cattle and other property from the ravages of Connolly and his followers. (50) William Crawford, the president of the court of Westmoreland, had apparently deserted the Pennsylvania cause and gone over to Virginia, and with us, as with St. Clair, it is a little difficult to "know how gentlemen account for these things to themselves". (51) In October St. Clair went to Philadelphia to present the true state of affairs to the Governor and the Assembly. (52)
The following December the controversy again became acute when Connolly delivered the jail at Hannastown. On the 24th a party arrived and demanded of the jailor that he release a William Thomas. According to the jailor, Simon Girty and William Christy were members of the group, though he was not absolutely certain. Upon refusing to comply with their request they threatened to tear down the building and at this juncture Connolly appeared on the scene and he ordered his men to fire into the building and to strip off the roof. The jailor, fearing serious consequences, consented to open the door and two prisoners were released, Connolly personally dragging out Thomas. (53)

When Mr. Scott, one of the Pennsylvania officers, was arrested for exercising jurisdiction in territory claimed by Virginia, St. Clair planned to attend his trial, not to try and effect his rescue, but just to sympathize with the unfortunate man and give him what assistance he could, such was the policy adhered to by Pennsylvania at this time. St. Clair ignored the threats he received on this occasion. (54) He was criticized by Lord Dunmore because he kept the government too well informed regarding affairs in the West and he accused him of misrepresenting the situation. Apparently the cause of Pennsylvania was receiving greater support than that of Virginia. (55)

At the beginning of the year 1775, Virginia was dominant in the disputed area. The situation is well described by Robert Hanna and other leaders of Westmoreland County:

"The people in general hath already given up, and what can we do to support the Government there now being writs granted for almost every acting officer in this county and we are every day expecting confinement. In short, any person applying for justice to us may be assured to be arrested by them.—Our goal is of no use, the worst rascal is set at liberty". (56) These unfortunate conditions are not so surprising when the general character of Connolly’s followers is known. Among the group accompanying him to his visit to the court at Hannastown, according to one witness, there was not one with any property and, on the other hand, the greater part of them "were such as are under the necessity of taking shelter in this part of the country to escape punishment due to their crime". (57)
St. Clair made another journey to Philadelphia in January of 1775 where he appeared before the Board, and, among other things, reported that William Crawford had deserted the Pennsylvania cause, and the Board advised the Governor to "supercede" him. (58)

The pacific attitude of Pennsylvania even under these circumstances is reflected in the policy of St. Clair when two of the Westmoreland magistrates, James Cavet and Robert Hanna, were arrested on February 22nd and imprisoned. For nearly three months they appealed to the government of Pennsylvania for help and finally suggested to St. Clair that he should authorize a party of about fifty men to come and effect their release, not a difficult task, apparently, for there were only eighteen men in the Fort at that time. (59) But St. Clair replied that, though he believed the scheme practicable, he "would do nothing (in) without the Governor's concurrence, as it might be attended with serious consequences". (60)

Connolly claimed that his motive was to preserve Virginia's rights against Pennsylvania and to be just, but he adds that "as it was prejudicial to the pecuniary interests of some individuals in Pennsylvania, they became my enemies, among whom was a Gentleman [St. Clair], since advanced to high military rank in the American service". (61) The pecuniary motive could hardly be applied to St. Clair, since most of his land was located in Ligonier Valley far outside of the region of dispute, while, on the other hand, Connolly did hold several hundred acres in the disputed area which were eventually declared to be in Pennsylvania and later he gained lands about Pittsburgh. (62) It is reasonably safe to assume that he might have had some "pecuniary" interests in the controversy.

In the next and final clash between Connolly and St. Clair, a new element enters into affairs. The trouble with England had developed to the stage where men were being forced to take sides and it was suspected that Connolly was not in sympathy with the activities of the Colonies. St. Clair's account of the capture and detention of Connolly has been lost, but according to Connolly's own story, he was preparing to escape to Dunmore when he was informed that an express had arrived from his Lord and when the "messengers," who proved to be Pennsylvania officers, entered the house, Connolly was overpow-
erred and taken to Ligonier. He says, "I soon learned I was in the power of my inveterate enemy, the commander of the militia, and principal man of the place; who had taken this opportunity of wreaking his malice, under pretense of seizing a dangerous person and a Tory". Connolly was informed that he was suspected and that he was to be sent to Congress. (63) While at St. Clair's house in Ligonier endeavoring to procure bail, Connolly was "treated with a good deal of civility, by which," wrote St. Clair, "with the help of a cheerful glass, I got some of his designs", which was to go to England with White Eyes and some other Delaware chiefs to seek confirmation of the region around Pittsburgh to Virginia. (64)

In retaliation for this act, a group of Connolly's friends seized three of the Pennsylvania magistrates, and sent them down the river in an old leaky boat to Fort Fincastle. This was the act of a mob, however, and not of the Virginia courts. The officers of Virginia, upon learning of Connolly's imprisonment, sent a very "spirited" letter to the Pennsylvania magistrates demanding his release. Upon receipt of this letter he was immediately set free. (65) He remained about Pittsburgh for a time and then set off to join Dunmore. He was placed under arrest at Frederick, Maryland, by Continental officers in November, 1775, and with other Tories, kept confined until the winter of 1780-81, when he was exchanged. In Canada he endeavored to put into effect his expedition against Fort Pitt, but was frustrated. (66) Thus his career in Western Pennsylvania was ended.

The war was coming on and Congress issued a circular in which it recommended that the people practice forbearance and that all who were in prison for taking part in the contest should be released. (67) After the war started there was a lull in hostilities in Western Pennsylvania, but before the close of the war the boundary had been settled and confirmed by Virginia on June 23rd and by Pennsylvania on September 23rd of the year 1780. (68)

(To be continued)
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. The day and month are not known. Swank (Progressive Pennsylvania, 209) says that Albert published in the Greensburg Democrat in March 1898, that St. Clair was born on March 23, 1736 instead of 1734 as he has it published in 1882. Sir Thomas St. Clair, noted genealogical authority in England insists that St. Clair was born in 1734.


3. Notes and Queries, Volume for 1897, 55.


5. Notes and Queries, 1897, 58.


7. Notes and Queries, 1897, 55.


15. Ibid., 488.


26. Ibid., 269.

27. Rupp, Early History of Western Pennsylvania and the West. 262. (Extract from the Greensburg Argus of 1836)


32. Boucher, Old and New Westmoreland, I, 566.

33. Diary of David McClure, 119.

34. Ibid., 41, 123.


CHAPTER II

1. Craig, History of Pittsburgh, 98f.


5. Ibid., 264.

6. Ibid., 267f.


9. Ibid., 452f.

10. Ibid., 547.


14. *St. Clair Papers*, 285. There is no evidence to show that St. Clair ever did move to Pittsburgh as he proposed.
15. Ibid., 271f.
17. Ibid., 140.
18. Ibid., 140.
19. Ibid., 145f.
21. Ibid., 280.
26. Ibid., 156.
27. Ibid., 161.
29. Ibid., 313.
30. Ibid.
34. *Colonial Records*, X, 166.
35. Ibid., 167.
38. Ibid., 166.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 169.
42. *Colonial Records*, X, 171f.
43. *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia*, II, 93.
44. *St. Clair Papers*, I, 305.
45. Ibid., 320.
46. Ibid., 324.
47. Ibid., 307.
48. Ibid., 316.
50. Ibid., 550.
55. *Documentary History of Dunmore's War*, Edited by Thwaites and Kellog, 392f.
58. *Colonial Records*, X, 228.
60. Ibid., 624.
64. *St. Clair Papers*, I, 358.