JACOB EYERLY’S JOURNAL, 1794:
The Survey of Moravian Lands in the Erie Triangle
Translated and edited by
PAUL A. W. WALLACE

To understand the significance of Jacob Eyerly’s journal of 1794 it is necessary to know not only why he undertook the journey, but also the dangers which confronted him on the way. The one calls for some familiarity with the Moravian mission to the Indians; the other, for a reminder of our country’s border history during the months preceding Anthony Wayne’s victory over the Miami Confederation at Fallen Timbers.

One of the most hopeful experiments in race relations ever undertaken on this continent was the Moravian mission to the Delaware and Mahican Indians of Pennsylvania and Ohio during the latter part of the eighteenth century. In seeking to save these Indians from the frustration and degradation brought upon them by the uprooting from their homelands which they had suffered at the hands of an aggressive white population, the Moravians used modern methods, placing education on an equal footing with evangelism. Their aim was not merely to win recruits for another world, but like the Good Samaritan to help people here and now. Without any parade of humiliating condescension, they set about revitalizing the Indian’s total personality. They restored his morale by, among other things, teaching him how to meet the white man’s furious (and, to the Indian mind, unsportsmanlike) competition without resorting to suicidal violence. The missionaries taught their charges to read and write, gave them some understanding of the white man’s business methods, showed them improved ways of farming and cattle raising. So successful was their work that the non-Christian Indian world watched the experiment closely and with admiration. In 1771 chiefs

Dr. Wallace, Associate Historian of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, author and lecturer, is one of our foremost authorities on the Moravians and the Indians of Pennsylvania.—Ed.

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of the renewed Delaware nation west of the Allegheny Mountains invited the Moravians to come among them and establish in the Muskingum Valley model Indian towns such as had proved successful in eastern Pennsylvania. Distinguished Indian leaders, men such as White Eyes, Glickhican, Killbuck, and Echpalawehund, saw in Christian living, as demonstrated by the Moravians, the best hope for their people.

But "the muddy frontier backwash of the Revolution," in the words of Dr. August C. Mahr,¹ all but destroyed the experiment. When at Gnadenhutten on the Tuscarawas River, March 8, 1782, a body of American militia massacred ninety Christian Indians, most of them women and children, the non-Christian Indians turned in revulsion to less peaceable solutions of the race problem. A nativist movement, culminating in the career of Tecumseh and his brother, the Shawnee Prophet, became dominant in Indian politics, its aim being, not co-operation with, but the removal of the white man.

After the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, both American and British authorities, deploiring what had happened at Gnadenhutten, did what they could to compensate the Moravians for that disaster and to encourage them in their work. The United States Congress in 1785 and the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1791 made grants of land to the Moravians. The British followed suit in 1792 at Fairfield (Moraviantown) on the Thames River in Upper Canada.

The Act under which the Commonwealth granted lands to the Moravians, passed the House, April 9, 1791. Its terms, as recorded in The Statutes of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801 (Harrisburg, 1909), Volume xiv, are illuminating, giving as they do an explanation of the importance of the Moravian Indian mission and a fair account of the difficulties confronting it.

An act to grant five thousand acres of land to the Society of the United Brethren, for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen.

Whereas the propagation of the gospel, and the erecting and supporting schools among the Indian nations of America, are of the first importance to the citizens of this and other of the United States, and may, by the blessing of God, be conducive to the peace and

security of the inhabitants and settlers of our frontiers, and by living examples of the missionaries and converts, the savages may be induced to turn their minds to the Christian religion, industry and social life with the citizens of the United States; and whereas the United Brethren have sent missionaries and schoolmasters to the Indian nations, and without intermission have continued their labors among them since the year one thousand seven hundred and forty, and notwithstanding the increase of expenses and other difficulties, are resolved to pursue and support this commendable work, and for this purpose have formed a society, the directors and other members whereof are incorporated by a law of this commonwealth, enacted the twenty-seventh day of February, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight, and made a body politic, under the name of "The Society of the United Brethren, for propagating the gospel among the heathen;" and whereas the said society have represented to the legislature, that they have no other fund than the charitable contributions of the members of their church, to accomplish their desire in that blessed work; and whereas the sending and maintaining preachers and schoolmasters, and providing books for the better educating, instructing and civilizing the children of the converts and others among the nations who shall be desirous to commit their youth to the care and instruction of the said missionaries are very expensive, which have induced the society to pray for public aid; and whereas the legislature of this commonwealth is disposed to encourage all pious and charitable institutions:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That the quantity of five thousand acres of land together with six per centum allowance for roads, to be located, set out and surveyed, be, and they are hereby, granted to the directors of the said society for propagating the gospel among the heathen, to have and to hold the same to them, and their successors forever; and the said quantity of five thousand acres of land shall be located, set out and surveyed in two tracts, one tract of two thousand five hundred acres on the river Conneough, near the northwestern corner of the state, and one tract of two thousand five hundred acres on the heads of French Creek . . .

Jacob Eyerly's journal records the surveying of these two tracts. Warrant for survey was dated May 28, 1791. The tracts were patented, April 14, 1795, to Bishop John Ettwein, President of the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen.
To survey these lands was no simple matter. This grant, like that of 1785 before it, was of lands the title to which was still in dispute. When John Heckewelder\(^2\) crossed the Alleghenies in 1788 and again in 1789 to arrange for a survey of the lands granted to the Moravians in the Muskingum (Tuscarawas) Valley, it was made plain to him that the Indians would resist with force any such attempt, and he returned without accomplishing his mission.

The situation was no less dangerous following the grant of these new lands on Conneaut and French Creeks in the vicinity of Presque Isle. Indians, it is true, had signed a deed of surrender for the Erie Triangle in 1789, but the validity of the deed was questioned by some of the Six Nations. Even a confirmation deed signed on February 3, 1791, by the Seneca chiefs Complanter, Halftown, and Big Tree, was challenged.

The government of the United States had good reason to be disturbed. For some years past, the western boundary of the United States had been in dispute with the Indian nations on the borders. Violence erupted all along the frontier, and American armies, despatched to force a settlement, were beaten and humiliated. On November 4, 1791, Little Turtle and his Miami confederates administered an overwhelming defeat to General St. Clair. It was evident that, if the still-powerful Six Nations of up-state New York should be driven to join the hostile Indians in the west, the young republic would have its hands full.

It was the part of wisdom for the United States to prevent the junction of the Six Nations with the northwestern federation. It was not, however, clear what was the wisest way of doing this. To put up a military roadblock, interrupting Six Nations communications with the west, was one way. At first it looked easy, and Pennsylvania impulsively decided to garrison a fort and lay out a town at Presque Isle (Erie). This, it was argued, would block the Lakeshore Indian Path, the last remaining highway south of Lake Erie by which the Six Nations maintained contact with their western dependencies.

and allies. To this end, commissioners were appointed, surveyors were engaged, and a detachment of soldiers under Captain Ebenezer Denny was despatched to cover the operation.

The action was over-hasty and came near to producing an effect quite contrary to that intended. It angered the Six Nations, who saw a threat to their own safety in this breaking of their line of communications with the west. Forbidding rumors spread through the forest. Indians were seen with their faces streaked with black war paint. Something near panic seized the settlers and townspeople in the northwestern reaches of Pennsylvania.

By the month of May, 1794, when Jacob Eyerly\(^3\) came north to survey the Moravian lands in the Erie Triangle, Indian relations were approaching a climax. Anthony Wayne, at the head of an army, was maneuvering on the Maumee in preparation for what was to be, a few months later, the decisive engagement of Fallen Timbers. Meanwhile it was of the highest importance to the United States that peaceful relations with the Six Nations, poised as they were at Anthony Wayne's back, should not be disturbed.

When a white man, Andrew Robertson, at Fort Franklin on May 1, 1794, murdered a friendly Indian of the Munsee-Delaware tribe (a people whom the Six Nations regarded as under their protection), it was feared that this might be the spark to set off the explosion of an Indian war.\(^4\) As it turned out, the Indians controlled themselves and the matter was accommodated. But the warning was unmistakable. Without the strictest control on both sides, the Pennsylvania border would run with blood.

Federal authorities took action. From the War Department, May 24, 1794, General Knox wrote to Governor Mifflin of Pennsylvania: "The President of the United States, on mature reflection, is of opinion that it is advisable to suspend for the present the establishment at Presque Isle. That independent of certain other considerations of delicacy and moment, which at no distant day will be better appreciated, the high probability of an immediate rupture with the Six Nations, if the measure be persisted in, countenanced by the late information, and increased by the recent murder of one of their people, appears to him a solid reason for a temporary suspension."\(^5\)

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\(^3\) John Jacob Eyerly, Jr.—1757-1800: A prominent citizen of Northampton County, Pa., and member of the Moravian Church. Elected to the Pennsylvania legislature in 1789, he was active in getting the grant of lands on French and Conneaut creeks for his church's Indian mission.

\(^4\) See Penna. Archives, Second Series, VI, for full coverage of this incident.

\(^5\) Ibid., 668.
Mifflin, accordingly, directed the commissioners "to suspend all proceedings," and added, "I shall direct Cap' Denny's detachment to remain at Le Boeuf" — half a day's march from Presque Isle.

It was in the midst of the uncertainty and excitement caused by these events that Jacob Eyerly took the Indian path from Pittsburgh to Franklin and Le Boeuf for the purpose of running a survey of the lands near Presque Isle. His journal accurately conveys the feeling of apprehension felt by all men in those woods. He shows also the dilemma in which Indians such as the Missisaugas, Standing Stone, found themselves. They were torn between two loyalties: loyalty to their American friends whose lives were at stake, and loyalty to the people of their own race whose whole way of life was threatened. The conflict which placed them on the horns of this dilemma was not resolved until Wayne's victory of August 20, 1794, at Fallen Timbers on the Maumee, and the Treaty of Greenville which followed it on August 3, 1795, settled the Indian boundary.

To the student of Indian trails and early highways, Eyerly's description of the Lakeshore Path, which followed the sandy beach west from what is now Erie to the mouth of Conneaut Creek, is of unusual interest.

The Moravian Indians never occupied these tracts in the Erie Triangle. The proximity of white men — great schemes were afoot for rapid settlement of this area — frightened them away. They remembered too well the massacre of their women and children at Gnadenhutten. Years later the Society sold these Erie County lands. Most of the converts meanwhile had made their home at Fairfield in Upper Canada, where their descendants may be seen today.

6 Ibid., 671.
Report of a Journey Undertaken by the Brethren Jacob Eyerly, Jr., and Johann Heckewalder in May and June, 1794, for the purpose of Surveying Land at Lake Erie which the Assembly of Pennsylvania Gave the Brethren's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen.7 Written by Jacob Eyerly, Jr.

The Honorable Assembly of Pennsylvania having given 5000 acres of land near Presque Isle8 to the United Brethren's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen, Inc., and there now seeming to be some hope of getting it surveyed,9 the necessary arrangements were made with the commissioners appointed to lay out a town at Presque Isle, as also with Mr. Thomas Rees,10 Deputy Surveyor for that district, and we set out on the 5th. of May for Pittsburg and reached it early on the 13th. Before we arrived there, however, we heard the unpleasant news that a white man named

7 The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen was organized at the suggestion of Bishop John Eitwein in order to promote the missionary work of the Moravian Church. It was incorporated, February 27, 1788. Bishop Eitwein was the first president.

8 Here, at what is now Erie, Pa., the French built a fort and established a town in 1753. The British occupied the post in 1760, surrendered it in 1763 to the Indians during Pontiac's War, resumed possession in 1764, and held it until 1785, when it passed into American possession. Claims to the land about Presque Isle were ceded to the United States by New York in 1781 and by Massachusetts in 1785. Indian rights to this land were sold to Pennsylvania in 1789. Federal rights in the tract were by Congress ceded to Pennsylvania in 1792. Following that, Pennsylvania appointed Colonel William Irvine and Andrew Ellicott commissioners to lay out a town at Erie. In the spring of 1794, the work was interrupted owing to the danger of Indian attack. The town was laid out in 1795.

9 Hitherto the Moravians had had no success in attempts to survey their western lands. To facilitate their mission work, Congress in 1785 granted them two tracts on the Tuscarawas River, comprising their old settlements at Schönbrunn and Gnadenhütten which had been abandoned during the Revolutionary War. Heckewelder travelled to Marietta in 1788 to arrange for the survey, but learned that the Indians forbade it. In 1789 he travelled west again on the same errand, only to learn at Pittsburgh that such a survey would be resisted since the Indians, though not hostile to the Moravians, denied the right of Congress to dispose of land west of the Ohio. Unrest in the Indian country delayed also the surveying of lands on French and Conneaut Creeks.

10 Thomas Rees, Jr., a native of Northumberland County, Pa., was commissioned Deputy Surveyor, May 16, 1792, and in that capacity visited Presque Isle in 1794. He was also an agent of the Pennsylvania Population Company, for which in 1794 he surveyed nearly 390 plots in the Erie Triangle. In 1795 he set up his tent on the shore of the bay at Erie and did business as a company agent. He was the first Justice of the Peace for Erie. He died in May, 1848.
Robertson\textsuperscript{11} had killed a Munsy at Fort Franklin and so put the Indians into a ferment.

At Pittsburg we called on General Gibson\textsuperscript{12} and Captain Denny,\textsuperscript{11} the latter of whom had been appointed commanding officer at Presque Isle. Denny confirmed the news [of the murder]. On the 15th, there came an express messenger from Fort Franklin bringing the good news that this Indian matter had been amicably settled. This encouraged us, and gave us hope of continuing our journey in safety. But immediately afterwards came another express from the scouts out in the woods with a report that 8 or 9 Indians had been seen headed for the settlements. The townspeople were much alarmed.

We had hoped to find Mr. Ellicott,\textsuperscript{14} one of the commissioners,

\textsuperscript{11} Andrew Robertson. See letter from Lt. John Polhemus to Gen. Knox, Fort Franklin, May 9, 1794: "On the first day of this month, at night, a certain Andrew Robertson killed a Muncy Indian without provocation. The Prisoner I have in confinement. . . . This creates a great uneasiness in the minds of the six Nations."—Penns. Archives, Second Series, VI, 663.

For the subsequent accommodation of this affair, see Gen. John Wilkins to Gov. Mifflin, Fort Franklin, May 11, 1794: "On the first of this month a very disagreeable affair happened at this place. A white man of the name of Robertson, killed a friendly Indian. The man was taken into custody immediately & still remains in confinement. Robertson is a young man, & perhaps was a little intoxicated. . . . The father of the young man, who is a decent old man, lives at Pittsburgh, has sent Joseph Nicholson to endeavor to satisfy the friends of the deceased. Nicholson yesterday had a counsel with all the Indians that were here, at which we all assisted & offered about one hundred dollars to replace, in the Indian way, the man that is dead. The Indians were all well satisfied with the offer. The property is to be deposited in the hands of the commanding officer until the relations come for it, if they are satisfied with it, & the young man is to remain in confinement at this place until the opinion of the relations is taken . . ."—Penns. Archives, Second Series, VI, 658.

\textsuperscript{12} Colonel John Gibson—1740-1822: An Indian trader at Fort Pitt; captured by Indians in 1763 and released in 1764. He was commandant at Fort Laurens (near Bolivar, Ohio), 1778-1779, and at Fort Pitt, 1781-1782; Secretary of the Western Territory, 1800-1816.

\textsuperscript{13} Ebenezer Denny—1761-1822: During the Revolutionary War he served as an ensign under Anthony Wayne in the Virginia campaign and was present at Cornwallis's surrender. Commissioned lieutenant, he was adjutant to General Josiah Harmer on the Maumee campaign of 1790 and aide-de-camp to General Arthur St. Clair on the expedition that ended with the disastrous defeat of November 4, 1791, at the hands of Little Turtle and his Indians. He was commissioned captain later that year. In 1794 Captain Denny commanded the detachment assigned to protect the commissioners in the proposed laying out of the town of Erie, in reward for which service he was commissioned major. In 1816, on Pittsburgh's incorporation as a city, he was elected the first mayor.

\textsuperscript{14} Andrew Ellicott—1734-1820: A member of the Society of Friends. In 1778 he joined the Continental forces and was commissioned major in the Elk Ridge Battalion of the Maryland militia. In 1784 he was appointed to mark the boundary between Virginia and Pennsylvania; in 1785 he ran the western boundary of Pennsylvania from the Ohio River to Lake Erie. He was commissioned by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in 1786 to run the northern boundary of the State; and in 1790 he began
in Pittsburg. He is a good friend of the Brethren and had promised to get a surveyor for us in case Mr. Rees should not be available. But we found neither Ellicot nor any other of the commissioners. There was no definite news of Mr. Rees, either, so we thought it best for Brother Heckewelder to wait in Pittsburg for Mr. Ellicot, who was expected any day, and then to come on at once either with Ellicot himself or one of his surveyors.

It so happened that a surveyor with a party of 9 men was on the point of leaving Pittsburg in order to survey some land about 30 miles from here on the way to Fort Franklin. I, Brother Eyerly, decided to go with him. So on the morning of the 16th, I set off in company with Adolph Jorde and two other Germans, Michel and George Vetter.

About noon on the 18th, we arrived at Fort Franklin. A few miles from here we met 5 Indians, the first we had seen on our journey. One of them I think I had seen a few years ago in Philadelphia.

At Fort Franklin we found 30 of Mr. Rees's men. They had been waiting a week for him here, expecting him any day from Presque Isle. They themselves had come straight through the woods from Northumberland. Mr. Rees, however, had gone on from Presque Isle to Genesee for a council with the 6 Nations and to tell them he proposed to survey land in his district, for he had promised them to make no surveys without their knowledge and consent. As it turned out, the Indians had assembled for a con-

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surveying the District of Columbia. He also surveyed the southern boundary of the United States from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Jefferson appointed him Surveyor General of the United States.

15 Fort Franklin, now Franklin, Pa. This was formerly the Indian town of Venango, situated at the junction of French Creek with the Allegheny River. Here the French built Fort Machault, 1755; the English, Fort Venango, 1760. The latter was burned by the Indians during Pontiac's War, 1763. The Americans erected Fort Franklin at the ford of French Creek, half a mile from its mouth. The town was laid out in 1795 by William Irvine and Andrew Ellicott. Joshua Sharpless, the Quaker, described it in his journal of May 13, 1798, as containing "perhaps 10 or 12 log houses."

16 The Great Shamokin Indian Path from Shamokin (now Sunbury)—which is just across the Susquehanna from Northumberland—ran by way of the Great Island (Lock Haven) and Bald Eagle (Milesburg) to Chinklaca-moose (Clearfield). From here branches of the path ran to Kittanning, Venango (Franklin), and Le Boeuf (Waterford). The Old State Road, laid out by William Irvine, George Wilson, and Joseph Ellicott in 1796 and completed in 1804, connected Northumberland with Le Boeuf. There was no road but only a path to Franklin from the east until the turnpike was opened for traffic in 1824.

17 The Six Nations had not yet relinquished all claim to these lands.
ference with the English at Buffaloe,\textsuperscript{18} and so he was obliged to go on to that place. That is why he was not at Presque Isle as early as the time agreed on when we discussed the matter together in Philadelphia.

My having to wait for him here gave me an opportunity to have a good look at this part of the country. We found many Seneca\textsuperscript{19} Indians here. They come and go all the time, the reason being that while they are here they are provided with food at government expense. There are three stores here where the Indians sell their furs, usually for liquor. They are often so drunk one can hardly sleep at night for the noise. My landlord told me he was daily expecting an Indian chief from Conneought Town and very much hoped he would come while I was here because he thought his mediation could be of great assistance to me.

On the 21\textsuperscript{st}, we learned by a special messenger that M\textsuperscript{r}. Rees had arrived at Cussewago\textsuperscript{20} and would wait for his men there. This was glad news, as it assured me that, with God's help, I could accomplish the object of my journey, and I determined to leave next morning; but I had to wait one more day, as it rained almost all day long, although up to this time we had had fine, dry weather practically all the way.

We left early on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}. French Creek\textsuperscript{21} had risen very high. In about 4 miles we came to the great Sugar Creek, which was so full and so turbulent we had much difficulty crossing it. We reached

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\textsuperscript{18} Gen. Israel Chapin, who attended this Indian conference at Buffalo, wrote to the Secretary of War advising against any attempt at settlement in the vicinity of Presque Isle at that time. He noted that the Indians did not recognize the validity of the confirmation deed signed by Cornplanter, Half Town, and Big Tree, February 3, 1791. Indian councils were held at Le Boeuf on June 26 and on July 4, at both of which the chiefs protested against the proposal to establish a garrison at Presque Isle.

\textsuperscript{19} The Senecas, who constituted the westernmost nation of the Iroquois Confederacy or Longhouse, were known as "The Keepers of the Western Door." They were at this time, 1794, the most populous and the most warlike of the Six Nations. Their original homeland had been in northern New York, East of the Genesee River, but they had spread out as a consequence of their success in wars with the Hurons, the Neutral Nation, the Eries, and the Susquehannocks. Bands of Senecas, with an intermixture from others of the Six Nations, were scattered among alien peoples in the Allegheny-Ohio Valley, and gave the Six Nations a large measure of control of this region.

\textsuperscript{20} Cussewago was a former Indian town established on both sides of French Creek at what is now Meadville, Pa. The first white settlement was made here in 1788. The town was laid out in 1793 by David Meade, after whom it was named. For some years it was a military supply depot, serving troops between Fort Franklin and Fort Le Boeuf.

\textsuperscript{21} Earlier known as Torandachkoa, Venango Creek, and Rivière aux Boeufs. George Washington called it French Creek.
Cussewago about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, wet through from a very bad thunderstorm we had run into on the way. Here I met Mr. Rees, who very kindly put himself at my service, which has meant a great deal to me since. Here, too, I met an Indian chief from Conneought Town, Standing Stone by name, who was on his way to Fort Franklin.

At first I contemplated spending another day here, Mr. Rees finding it necessary to wait for his canoes, which were on their way with provisions; but I met a man who claimed to be well acquainted with the country round French Creek and the Conneought, and who offered to show us about. We did not know the way ourselves and were anxious to look the country over, and, besides, the surveyor and his party were anxious to have no unnecessary delay.

So we left this same afternoon. It was already past 3 o'clock, but we still made about 7 miles. We had just put up our tent (one I had borrowed from the commanding officer at Fort Franklin) when it began to rain so hard we could scarcely light a fire. We slept well, however, and set off again early next morning. We did not reach Le Beauf until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, because we had nothing but a very crooked and almost indistinguishable footpath to guide us; and the heavy rains on the tiny runs had made the ground so soft, wherever there was good soil, that the horse with its pack sank in up to its belly and had to be pulled out.

Le Beauf is a small fort on the west side of French Creek. The French used to have a fort here, and the remains of it are still plainly visible. About a quarter of a mile from the fort is a small lake, half a mile wide and 3/4 of a mile long, full of fish. On Mr. Rees's order, we got some flour and pork here from the commissary at the fort.

Next day, the 27th., we went to have a look at the land on the east branch of French Creek. It rained, and when we got back to our tent at night we were tired and wet, having waded French Creek several times and walked through grass up to the armpits in the

22 Standing Stone was the son of Connedaughte (Connondochta), a Mississauga Indian and chief of the village of Conneaut near the mouth of Conneaut Creek. Standing Stone and his brothers, Flying Cloud and Big Son, befriended the white settlers in the neighborhood. See MS. by John E. Reynolds, "Indian Residents at the Time of the Early Settlement," Crawford County Historical Society, Meadville, Pa.

23 Conneaut Creek drains the northwest corner of Pennsylvania, but enters Lake Erie on the Ohio side of the state line.

24 The French built Fort Le Boeuf at what is now Waterford in 1753 as part of their line of forts on the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers.
bottoms beside the creek. On our return, we found Mr. Rees and his men busy unpacking and drying their provisions.

This gave us an opportunity on the 28th. to have a look at the land west of Le Beauf. We set off early and followed the Presque Isle road for about 6 miles, then turned and went west until we passed the heads of Elk Creek. There we turned south to strike the heads of streams flowing into French Creek. Since, however, these run a very crooked course and there was no sun shining, we were soon heading for Lake Erie; and, if the sun had not come out in the afternoon so we could see our mistake, we should have had to spend the night in the woods without food or tent. I discovered that my "pilot" (guide) was as unfamiliar with these woods as I was, so I straightway made up my mind to dispense with his services lest we be found in the case of the blind leading the blind. I set my course by the sun for Le Beauf, and we got back to our tent at night, quite worn out.

We saw some tracts of very good land today, suitable for single plantations, abounding in sugar trees, maple, and the like. I saw chestnut trees, too, today, 6 or 7 feet in diameter at the butt and of an amazing height. We had no thought, however, of surveying here for the Society, for the land here is inferior in many ways to that on the East Branch of French Creek.

On the 30th. we set out with a party of 5 men for Presque Isle on the way to Conneought. We had only one pack horse, carrying our provisions. We reached Presque Isle in the evening and put up our tent on the shore of the bay, where we had a good quiet night.

Knowing we had a long way to go next day and that none of us had ever been in this neighborhood before, I gave orders that night that everything was to be ready for our departure by daybreak, with beneficial results. We got off early on the 31st. The weather was fine, and we walked for several miles along beside the lake. Directly opposite us on the peninsula we saw some Indians. We called to them, asking for directions, for we supposed they were Seneca Indians and we had an interpreter with us; but, when they came over

25 The Presque Isle Road (from present Erie to Waterford) was originally an Indian path between Presque Isle Bay and the headwaters of French Creek. It was laid out as a wagon road by the French in 1753 to provide communication with military posts to be established on the Allegheny River: Fort Machault at Venango (Franklin) and Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio.
to us, we found they were Missasagas\textsuperscript{26} and understood neither English nor Seneca. They were, however, very friendly. I gave them some bread and tobacco, and had them take me and the surveyor in a bark canoe a little way out into the bay, where they caught us a fine fish and then brought us ashore again. Without knowing our way, we had to traverse a steep hill to get from one side of the peninsula\textsuperscript{27} to the other, and on the way our horse with the baggage and everything rolled down the hill, and we ourselves had trouble enough getting back down to the shore on the other side. We had reason to be thankful no harm had been done, for the horse when it rolled down ended up with its legs under a log and we had to pull it out. We had to take off its pack and carry everything ourselves up the hill. Once back at the lake, we had a wide sandy beach all the way. That was because the lake has been receding for 3 years. The lake rises and falls regularly every 7 years.\textsuperscript{28} When it is at its lowest, the beaches are 3 or 4 rods wide. On the other hand, when the water is high, the beaches are quite covered. Then the only way to travel along the lakeshore is through the woods, which makes very heavy going.

From this point we walked all day on the sand under a clear sky. It was quite calm and the lake was very still. We had an English ship in sight almost all day long. At one time it was so close we could plainly see the people walking about the deck. We were pretty tired by evening, when, after meeting another Indian with a canoe, 

\textsuperscript{26} The Missisaugas were a sub-tribe of the Chippewa (Ojibway). Coming originally from the shores of Lake Superior, Lake Huron, and the Georgian Bay, many of them in the eighteenth century were found living in southern Ontario and northwestern Pennsylvania.

\textsuperscript{27} The predicament of the travellers, who had been using the sandy beach for convenience, is evident still today. At the westernmost corner of Presque Isle Bay, where the peninsula begins to jut out, the beach disappears, giving way to a muddy lagoon. The bank here is high and steep.

\textsuperscript{28} Local tradition still insists that there is a cycle of high and low water on Lake Erie. Some say the span is fourteen years, seven rising and seven falling; others put it at twenty-two or twenty-three. Harold Titus, in the \textit{Saturday Evening Post}, July 26, 1932, page 94, writes: "Old-timers of the region declare that levels change every seven or eleven years, but official records going back to 1860 yield no evidence of such cycles."

Whatever the truth about the cycles, the beach is at times good to walk on. In Eyverly's day it was better for travel than the rough track through the woods on the high bank above. Eyverly's journal is decisive on this point. See also Gen. Cleaveland's entry in his journal for July 10, 1796, at Conneaut (quoted by Harlan Thatcher in \textit{The Western Reserve [New York, 1949], 37:} "Went with Capt. Buckland about eight miles up the beach . . . " The late Capt. William Morrison of Erie, who was for many years a Great Lakes sailor, informed me in 1930, "When the water is low, it is easy to walk on the beach from Erie to Conneaut and even further."
from whom I received a codfish in exchange for a piece of tobacco, we came to the western boundary line of Pennsylvania, and put up our tent. Unluckily for us, one of our men was taken sick, and we had to send him back next day with our pack-horse driver. We had brought our provisions almost fifty miles on the one horse, and, there being no reason to suppose we could get any more while we were on this Conneought survey, we knew there was not a minute to lose. So Adolph Jorde and I decided to reconnoiter the land while our men baked bread.

We set off, accordingly, at daybreak next morning, June 1st, while all of the men were still asleep in the tent. We walked across the country to the other side of the Conneought, and at noon, after travelling some 10 or 12 miles through woods and glades, wading through streams and through grass half as high as a man, we came back to the tent and found a supply of very good bread which had been baked in sand and ashes. After some refreshment we loaded the horse and in the afternoon commenced our survey.

We continued it on the 2nd, and by the 3rd, had completed this tract on the Conneought. It was certainly back-breaking work, but in these parts there could be no thought of sparing ourselves.

After we had had a good night’s rest, I felt a great desire to see Conneought Town. So after breakfast we went to the mouth of the Conneought and then up along the creek to the town, which consists of three small houses and is about 1½ miles from the lake. We found old chief Bear’s Oil and young chief Big Son and a few other Indians at home, but most of them had gone to Presque Isle to fish. A trader had recently brought liquor, but fortunately it was all gone, though the old chief was not quite sober yet. The young chief was a very handsome and well-built Indian, over six feet tall. He seems to be an intelligent man and a good friend of

29 In May, 1785, Andrew Ellicott was appointed by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania to survey the west boundary of Pennsylvania from the Ohio River to Lake Erie.
30 Now Conneaut, Ohio.
31 Bear’s Oil was a chief of that section of the Missisaugas which had broken from the party hostile to the Americans. In 1791 Bear’s Oil with Conndaughte and the latter’s family fled from their home at Conneaunt to Buffalo Creek in order to put themselves under the protection of the Six Nations. "Brothers," said Bear’s Oil, "I am a Messassago chief belonging to the Six Nations, I and my people are in great danger, because I have been the entire instigation of saving the white settlers at Conyat and Cassawago..." Bear’s Oil and his people were given temporary asylum "near the village of Buffalo." Later they returned to Conneesaut, where Jacob Eyerly found them in the spring of 1794.
the Americans, as I could see from a letter he had received from the former commandant at Fort Franklin. We were able to converse with him through our interpreter, as he understood Seneca, and he told us he was expecting at any moment to see his brother, the Standing Stone I mentioned earlier, on his return from Fort Franklin. I had reason to be thankful I had not run into him. He was the person who had told Mr. Ransom at Fort Franklin that the Indians were plotting on a certain day to seize all the white people between Presque Isle and Fort Franklin and put them to death. It was this news, confirmed by a Seneca Indian, which occasioned Mr. Ransom's rushing off with his family, bag and baggage, to Pittsburg, to everybody's consternation [at Fort Franklin]. Mr. Ransom, like a good friend, gave Standing Stone 2 dollars to hunt me up in the woods and warn me to get out at once. If that had happened, it would have put us all into a panic, and you can imagine what the result would have been. But that was not the Lord's will.

We got back to our tent by noon and set out immediately on our return journey. We camped that night at the mouth of Walnut Creek, 4 miles from Presque Isle.

On the 5th. we got off to an early start, and in a couple of hours came to an Indian camp where we found more than 20 Indians, men, women, and children. Though we could not speak each other's language, we found them very friendly. They gave us a fish and some cranberries, and I gave them some bread and tobacco. We breakfasted in Presque Isle and then went on to Le Beauf, which, however, we did not reach until evening because our horse gave out, and we had to leave it in the woods a few miles from Le Beauf, and carry saddle, tent, and all on our backs, and fetch the horse again next morning.

Presque Isle is a beautiful site for a town. It has a glorious prospect, and will without doubt some day be a fine commercial town. The bay swarms with all kinds of fish. The Indians had caught a sturgeon here which they gave to Mr. Rees's men. It weighed over 50 lbs. The land about Presque Isle is excellent, the soil for the most part very rich. Sassafras, ginseng and nettles grow here

32 Daniel Ransom in 1794 had the store at Fort Franklin. Ellicott and Denny, in a letter to General Gibson, June 8, 1794 (Penn. Archives, Second Series, VI, 686), informed him that Ransom had taken all his goods and cattle to Pittsburgh because Standing Stone had told him the Six Nations were going to join the enemies of the United States. See also Ransom's deposition, ibid., 691.
in abundance, large and juicy. On the Conneought, where we ran the survey, there is very good farmland bordering the lake. Farther back towards Conneought there are splendid meadows and here and there good farmlands. The trees here are mostly shellbark, hickory, black and white oak, beech, maple, poplar, sugar maple, and ash. The Conneought is somewhat larger than the Manakosy at Bethlehem, and I think there are good mill sites on the tract we surveyed, which is a good thing because, although the land is well watered, it all comes from tiny runs that rise quickly when it rains but as quickly go down again.

We had to wait several days at Le Beauf before doing any surveying on French Creek, because Mr. Rees's surveyors were all out and he himself had business to attend to. We all badly needed rest, the horse included, having had to make the journey from Pittsburg to this place—to say nothing of the return to Fort Franklin [ahead of us]—on foot. We had only the one horse, and it had had to make the whole journey, carrying our baggage, with nothing to eat but grass. There had been so much rainy weather, our clothes were practically rotting on our bodies.

On the 10th. we began to survey the French Creek tract, and we finished it on the 12th. Except for one small patch, the French Creek tract is very good rich land, with many clearings in the bottom lands where, from all appearances, the Indians used to dwell. Where these bottoms are not cleared, they are densely overgrown with white walnut, wild cherries, and the like. I have seen hawthorns here that were from 12 to 15 inches in diameter. There are all sorts of trees on the uplands, but there is no limestone around here. The country is conspicuously free from stones. We were the more pleased, therefore, to find a good stone quarry, a kind of sandstone, on the south side of French Creek.

It would cost little to make French Creek navigable as far as Le Beauf. Even now boats navigate it when the water is a little high. I am sure that out here in the western part of the state, once we have made peace with the Indians, there will be a fine settlement, for the soil is generally good and there is easy water communication.

On the 14th. of June, having completed our business, in which

33 Jacob Eyerly was not the first to suggest making French Creek a major waterway. Several years before this, Samuel Maclay, Timothy Matlack, and John Adlum had examined and reported on a possible water route from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie by way of the Allegheny River and French Creek, with a portage from Le Boeuf to Presque Isle.
we had so richly experienced God's help and protection, we took friendly leave of Mr. Rees, thanked him for his kindness, and set out on our return journey. We reached Cussewago that evening. We found the people here in a great fright. No one slept in his own home. They all gathered at night in 2 houses and kept a good watch. We had heard a few days ago that Indians on the road between Fort Franklin and Pittsburg, and on the Alleghany as well, had on three separate occasions killed white men. It had been our intention to go straight on next day to Fort Franklin, but a party of 14 men here told us that if we would wait over for one day they would accompany us to Pittsburg. So we waited. As it turned out, I had reason to regret not having obeyed my own instinct, which was to go right on; for when a few days later we reached Fort Franklin we found a boat for Pittsburg had just left. I might have gone with it, but it was now too late, and my company lost all inclination to go to Pittsburg. They crossed the Alleghany and made a bee-line for home through the woods.

So Adolph Jorde and I were left alone here for several days waiting for what might turn up. A certain John Schmidt of this place, whose father lives not far from Colonell Strowd34 behind the Blue Mountain, proved a real friend. Our landlord had fled, and we were soaking wet (for it had rained hard today), tired out after our march, and hungry. He arranged for us to have food and lodging with the commanding officer of the fort.35 This gentleman was very friendly, had us eat at his table while we were here, and would accept no remuneration. He promised me that, if I had to go to Pittsburg by land, he would give me an escort of soldiers, for we were advised on all sides not to risk travelling alone. Here I found Mr. Ellicot and Capt. Denny, who had arrived a few days before with a company of soldiers. Mr. Ellicot and others were indignant

34 Colonel Jacob Stroud—1735-1806: A settler after whom Stroudsburg, Pa., was named. Born at Amwell, N. J., he moved as a boy with his family to the vicinity of the present Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa. He was apprenticed to Nicholas Depuy, near Shawnee-on-the-Delaware. During the French and Indian War, he served as a private. It is said that he was one of the three soldiers nearest to General Wolfe when he fell at Quebec. On May 22, 1775, Lower Smithfield Company was formed with Jacob Stroud as captain. On October 3, 1775, he was appointed colonel. He was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1781.

35 The commanding officer at Fort Franklin in 1794 was Lieutenant John Polhemus. He was described by John Adlum in a letter of August 31, 1794, to Governor Mifflin (Penna. Archives, Second Series, VI, 766) as "an active and vigilant officer, who keeps up the strictest discipline, and has made a great improvement in the works."
at not being allowed to do the work for which they had been commissioned, that is, to go to Presque Isle and lay out a town there. He assured me that, unless the work was stopped, a great many houses would be built in Presque Isle this year.\(^{36}\)

Men were busy [at Fort Franklin] improving the fort. Every day while we were here, many Indians came for a council, which I attended on one occasion. It was quite evident they were deliberating very seriously what course to pursue, and their black-painted faces boded no good. Mr. Ellicot sent an express messenger to Cornplanter,\(^{37}\) calling him in for a council. He was not, however, at home but attending a council with the English at Buffalo.

After a few days a boat came from Pittsburg, and we left on it early on the 20th. The Alleghany was very high from the heavy rains, and we travelled day and night, so that we reached Pittsburg the next morning after travelling 150 miles in 24 hours.

We set off again the following morning and, after spending the 28th, very pleasantly at Lititz,\(^{38}\) we were back in Bethlehem, safe and sound, on the 30th.

To Thee, our dearest Friend and Lord, Whose unseen hand has guided us on this journey, Whose eyes have been open day and night to watch over us, and Who through Thy dear angel hast shielded us, be honor, praise, glory, and thanks. Amen!

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\(^{36}\) It was not until next year, 1795, after the Battle of Fallen Timbers (August 20, 1794), that the town was laid out and building started.

\(^{37}\) Cornplanter—1740-1836: A Seneca chief, brother of the prophet, Handsome Lake. He fought for the British during the American Revolution, but afterwards kept his people from joining in the war for the Northwest Territory. For this friendly attitude, the Pennsylvania Legislature gave him in 1789 the "Cornplanter Tract" on the Upper Allegheny River. In 1794 Cornplanter frequently visited Fort Franklin with warning and advice.

\(^{38}\) Lititz, about eight miles north of Lancaster, Pa., was established by the Moravians in 1757. It was named for Lititz in Bohemia, where, in 1457, followers of John Huss (1373-1415) founded the Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren, now known as the Moravian Church.