A NY THOROUGH study of the colonial westward movement must take into account the Ohio Company of Virginia, and any study of that company results in bringing to light the great rivalry that developed between the company and Pennsylvania, particularly in the western region around the Forks of the Ohio. This contest started in 1748 with the organization of the company and was concluded only with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. It seems a peculiar commentary that the site of Pittsburgh, now one of the most important urban centers in all Pennsylvania, was at the time of the outbreak of the French and Indian War controlled by Virginia, and that only through great agitation was Pennsylvania brought into co-operation with the Old Dominion in attempting to regain it. At least part of the reason for this circumstance lies in the story of the Ohio Company.

In 1748 a group of Virginians headed by Colonel Thomas Lee and Lawrence Washington, older half brother of George, organized the

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1 Based upon a recently published work by the same author, entitled, The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement, 1748–1792 (The Arthur H. Clark Company, Glendale, California, 1939). Dr. Bailey is a member of the history department of the University of California at Los Angeles. Ed.
Ohio Company for the purpose of securing a portion of the valuable Indian trade west of the Alleghenies, a trade that had hitherto been controlled by Pennsylvania traders. In their petition to the Crown for land west of the mountains, made through Sir William Gooch, lieutenant governor of Virginia, the company’s members stated that they also planned to build forts, establish settlements, and keep the French from obtaining the region. On March 16, 1749, the Privy Council ordered Gooch to make the grant to the Ohio Company of “two hundred thousand acres of land lying betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo’s creek on the south side of the river Alligane otherwise the Ohio, and betwixt the two creeks and the Yellow creek on the north side of the river.” In general terms, then, the grant was to be made in the vicinity of the Forks of the Ohio, and was specifically declared to be within the colony of Virginia. The company was to be required to build a fort at its own expense, and it was also made a condition of the grant that no settlers who were already paying quitrents to the British government be allowed to move onto company property. It was further stipulated that as soon as the company should construct its fort and settle its grant with two hundred families, an additional grant of three hundred thousand acres, adjoining the earlier grant, was to be made. The grant was made by Sir William Gooch on July 13, 1749, as he had been instructed.

It will be remembered that this was the period of the “Second Hundred Years’ War,” and that King George’s War between France and


3 Sir William Gooch to the Board of Trade, November 6, 1747, June 16, 1748, in the Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office 5, vol. 1326, folio 547, 554, and vol. 1327, folio 7; draught of additional instructions to Gooch, December 13, 1748, Colonial Office 5, vol. 1327, folio 63, 64. The records in Colonial Office 5 will be cited hereafter as PRO, CO 5 with the volume and folio numbers. There are transcripts in the Library of Congress of the records cited here.

4 Order of council approving the draught of the additional instruction proposed by the board, March 16, 1749, PRO, CO 5, 1327: 93–96.

5 Minutes of the council, July 12, 1749, PRO, CO 5, 1328: 333.
England had just been concluded. It was apparent, however, that peace was to be only a period wherein both powers could recuperate sufficiently to continue the conflict. Few of the problems were settled by the war, especially those which pertained to America, and therefore both nations began to prepare for a resumption of hostilities. In America it was the region of western Pennsylvania that was the most important section in the impending conflict: the nation that controlled the Forks of the Ohio would be in a strategic position. Further, France had since the days of La Salle planned a chain of forts crossing western Pennsylvania and connecting the Mississippi with the lake region. This chain was intended to be used as a means of confining the English to the region east of the Alleghenies. One of the purposes of the Ohio Company was to combat this plan, and most of its organizers could be classed as public-spirited individuals who desired the success of British imperialism and at the same time hoped to gain monetary rewards for the parts they played in the venture.

A part of what today is western Pennsylvania was in 1748 a disputed region between Pennsylvania and Virginia. This controversy arose out of the respective charters of the two colonies. Virginia’s now famous sea-to-sea charter had been granted in 1609: this charter stated that Virginia’s boundary extended from Old Point Comfort two hundred miles both north and south, and westward to the South Sea. Her northern boundary thus fell on the line of 40° 25’ north latitude. Along this line it extended westward until the western boundary of Pennsylvania was reached, thence northwest.6

Pennsylvania’s western boundary was limited to five degrees of longitude west from the Delaware River. By 1748, however, it had not been determined how far west this limit actually was to be; it depended entirely upon selection of the point on the Delaware where the measurement was to begin. Three interpretations existed as to the location of the point from which the five degrees were to be measured. The measurement might be made from the head of the Delaware River; from a point on the lower bends near Newcastle; or from a line run parallel to the entire river. The western limits of the colony could thus

vary about one degree of longitude, depending upon from which point the measurement was begun. When it is realized that the Forks of the Ohio could thus be in either Pennsylvania or Virginia, depending upon the above-discussed point of measurement, and when the strategic importance of the Forks in colonial history is realized, then it is easy to understand that ill-feeling and controversy would naturally result in the disputed section.

Consequently, when the Ohio Company members commenced activities in 1748, they were faced with two enemies—the Pennsylvania traders and the French. The latter acted almost immediately by sending down the Ohio Celoron de Blainville, who buried leaden plates along the way as marks of French ownership. Attempts were made by the French to keep both Virginia and Pennsylvania traders out of this region, while other efforts were directed toward winning the Ohio Indians over from their English alliances. Several English traders, mostly Pennsylvanians, were taken captive, while others were killed. These clashes increased in number and seriousness until they culminated in Braddock's defeat in 1755. But these points will be discussed briefly in a later connection.

Returning to the activities of the Ohio Company in western Pennsylvania, it is to be noted that in 1748 and 1749 the company sent out traders, such as Thomas Cresap, who hated anything pertaining to


8 For details concerning these difficulties, see State of the British and French Colonies in North America with Respect to Number of People, Forces, Forts, Indians, Trade and Other Advantages, 110 (London, 1755); Conduct of the Ministry Impartially Examined, in a Letter to the Merchants of London, 9-12 (second edition, London, 1756); Maryland Gazette (Annapolis), May 17, July 5, 1753, in Draper MSS, 1JJ6-9 (State Historical Society of Wisconsin); Minister to Duquesne, May 15, 1752, Archives Nationales, Paris, AC, F 3, 14:30-32; Dinwiddie's speech to the Assembly of Virginia, February 14, 1754, Draper MSS, 1JJ17-20; New York Colonial Documents, 6:532; Earl of Holderness to Earl of Albermarle, February 24, 1752, in Theodore C. Pease, ed., Anglo-French Boundary Disputes in the West, 1749-1763, 27, 28 (Illinois Historical Collections, vol. 27, French series, vol. 2—Springfield, 1936).
Pennsylvania; Barney Curran (or Barnaby Currin); and Hugh Parker, to compete with the independent traders of Pennsylvania. These men opened hostilities by telling the Indians that the Pennsylvanians always cheated in their dealings with the red man whereas the Ohio Company traders would sell at reasonable prices.

Virginia and Pennsylvania had worked together at the Lancaster Treaty in 1744 and at the Logstown Treaty in 1748, and had secured considerable trade advantages at the expense of the French; but their achievements only made them the more interested in the possible remuneration that might ensue therefrom. Each now set about to increase its own advantages at the expense of its English rival. In viewing the methods used by both the Virginians and the Pennsylvanians in this controversy, it is apparent that the traders were not concerned with the interests of Great Britain. Each group tried its utmost to induce the Indians not to trade with the other. Both resorted to atrocious lies and insidious propaganda—so much so, in fact, that their activities nearly resulted in a French victory in the region. Pennsylvania traders told the Indians that the Ohio Company intended to settle the Indians' hunting ground and to open a road that would allow the Catawba, the southern enemies of the Six Nations, to make an easy entrance into the Ohio country. The Ohio Company agents retaliated by promising the Indians to sell merchandise “much cheaper than the Pennsylvania Traders sold them; and notwithstanding the People of Pennsylvania always told them they were Brethren and had a great Value for them, yet this...

Cresap was born in 1702 at Skipton, in Yorkshire. He came to America in 1715 and settled near present-day Havre de Grace. In 1742 or 1743 he established his residence at Old Town, Maryland, a place that shortly became the most famous of all frontier posts. Besides his work for the Ohio Company, he served Virginia and Maryland in various ways. His hatred of Pennsylvania extended back to the years 1732–37 when he had been a leading figure in the Maryland-Pennsylvania boundary dispute. He spent one year in prison in Philadelphia, charged with a murder resulting from the border difficulties, and he was therefore glad of an opportunity to renew the battle on another frontier. Barnaby Currin was a former Pennsylvania trader who had for a time been in partnership with George Croghan. In 1753 he was with George Washington on his mission to the French. Hugh Parker was a former Maryland trader who for many years had made his headquarters in Kuskuski.


only come from their Mouth and not from their heart, for they constantly cheated them in all their Dealings, which he Coll° Cressap was very well acquainted with, and taking Pity of them he intended to use them in another manner, and mentioned the rates that he and Mr. Parker would sell their Goods to them at, which is cheaper than the first Cost be they any where imported."\textsuperscript{12}

Such Pennsylvania traders as George Croghan; his brother-in-law, Edward Ward; his one-time partners, William Trent and Robert Callender; and Thomas Smallman, Hugh Crawford, John Fraser, and the Lowry brothers (Lazarus, Alexander, and James) were able to make it very difficult for the Ohio Company. In the first place they were superior to the company agents in number, ability, and influence with the Indians. Cresap and Christopher Gist were the only first-class field men in these early years within the folds of the Virginia organization. True, Cresap was probably more important than any of the Pennsylvanians, with the possible exception of Croghan, but for a time it appeared that he would fail in his efforts to withstand the united attacks of the Pennsylvania traders. In fact, the opposition of the Pennsylvanians became so strong that Thomas Lee, then heading the Virginia government, wrote to the Board of Trade on October 18, 1749, complaining of the situation. He charged that because of the activities of the Pennsylvania traders "those very Indians that had encouraged them at first, had been persuaded to believe that our design was to ruin, not trade with them; and such a spirit of jealousy is raised among them that without a treaty and presents we shall not be able to do any thing with them."\textsuperscript{13}

On November 22, 1749, Lee wrote a letter to Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania wherein he accused the Pennsylvania traders of being responsible for this change. He charged as follows:

\begin{quote}
I am sorry that so soon I am obliged to complain to You of the insidious behaviour, as I am informed, of some traders from your Province, tending to disturb the Peace of this Colony and to alienate the Affections of the Indians from Us.

His Majesty has been graciously pleased to grant to some Gentlemen and Merchants of London and some of both sorts Inhabitants of this Colony, a large Quantity of Land West of the Mountains, the design of this Grant and
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Pennsylvania Colonial Records, 5:439.

\textsuperscript{13} Thomas Lee to the Board of Trade, October 18, 1749, PRO, CO 5, 1327:195, 196.
one condition of it is to Erect and Garrison a Fort to protect our trade (from the French) and that of any of the neighbouring Colonies, and by fair open Trade to engage the Indians in Affection to his Majestie's Subjects to supply them with what they want so that they will be under no necessity to apply to the French, and to make a very strong Settlement on the Frontiers of this Colony, all which his Majesty has approved and directed the Governor here to assist the said Company in carrying their laudable Design into Execution; but your Traders have prevailed with the Indians on the Ohio to believe that the Fort is to be a bridle for them, and that the roads which the Company are to make is to let in the Catawbas upon them to destroy them, and the Indians naturally jealous are so possessed with the truth of these Insinuations that they threaten our Agents if they survey or make those Roads that they had given leave to make, and by this the carrying the King's Grant into execution is at present impracticable, Yet these are the Lands purchased of the Six Nations by the Treaty of Lancaster.

I need not say any more to prevail with you to take the necessary means to put a stop to these mischievous Practices of those Traders. We are informed that there is Measures designed by the Court of France that will be mischievous to these Colonys which will in Prudence oblige Us to unite and not divide the Interest of the King's Subjects on the Continent.14

Shortly thereafter Governor Hamilton promised to co-operate with Lee in any way possible in punishing the offenders and in preventing a recurrence of the trouble. But at the same time he sent out an agent, Louis Evans, to investigate the schemes and activities of the Ohio Company, to gather information as to disadvantages or advantages under which the Virginians worked, to find out something about their merchandise and plans for trading with the Indians, and to determine, if possible, the future of the company as a competitor with the Pennsylvania traders.15

Lee's successor in Virginia, Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie, found the conditions in western Pennsylvania very unsatisfactory. In a letter of January 20, 1752, he wrote as follows:

I have been informed by letters since my arrival that many irregularities, even murders & Robberies have been committed by the Traders among the Indians, & I have reason to think these people are of great prejudice to the general Interest, & how to redress it at present I do not know, for to appoint Magestrates on the Ohio these people dispute the Authority of this Province, as most of the Traders belong to the Colonies to the Northward of us.16

16 Dinwiddie to the Board of Trade, January 20, 1752, PRO, CO 5, 1327:348.
George Croghan, however, was of the opinion that the cause of the difficulties between the Indians and the Ohio Company was the misbehavior of the company's own agents. These agents had often told the Indians of the plans of the company to make settlements west of the mountains, and this had been sufficient to cause the change in attitude; the Indians were not willing to receive goods at a cheaper price at the cost of a Virginia settlement west of the Alleghenies.  

In May, 1753, Hamilton promised Dinwiddie co-operation in building a fort in the Ohio country but stated that the Pennsylvania proprietors wished to be sure that the land upon which the fort was to be built did not belong to Pennsylvania.

Some attention should now be given to the actual activities of the Ohio Company in western Pennsylvania. In 1750 the company sent out Christopher Gist to explore the lands west of the Alleghenies, to find suitable land for its two-hundred-thousand-acre grant, and to invite the Indians to a conference at Logstown. On October 31 of that year Gist set out on his journey from Thomas Cresap's home at Old Town on the Maryland side of the Potomac. He kept a fine journal of his explorations but it is far too extensive to discuss here in any detail. Briefly, his trip from Old Town to Shannopin's Town near the Forks of the Ohio took him twenty days, thirteen of which were spent in idleness either because of bad weather or of sickness. After spending four days studying conditions at the Forks, he set out on November 24 for Logstown, where he arrived the next day. Logstown was located just about eighteen miles from Shannopin's Town and at that time was a very important Indian village. Gist then made his way slowly and with numerous stops to Pickawillanee, thence back to Virginia via present-day Kentucky and North Carolina.

The next year the company sent Gist out again. This trip was primari-

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18 *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 5:629, 630.
19 Christopher Gist was born in Baltimore County, Maryland, between 1705 and 1708. In 1745 he failed in business and removed to the Yadkin River in northern North Carolina. It was from there that he was called in 1750 by the Ohio Company.
20 William M. Darlington, ed., *Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical and Ethnological Notes*, 32–66 (Pittsburgh, 1893). Pickawillanee, at the site of the present Picqua, Ohio, was one of the chief centers of the Miami Indians.
ly one of exploration in western Pennsylvania; its most important feature was Gist’s discovery of a short, easy route from the Potomac to the Monongahela River, a trail that later became the road over which Braddock marched in his fatal attempt to retake the Forks of the Ohio.

In June, 1752, the conference, of which Gist had repeatedly spoken to the Indians, took place at Logstown. At this conference it was the plan of the Ohio Company to secure an agreement with the Indians concerning the possibility of constructing an English fort on the west side of the Ohio and of establishing a settlement there. The Virginia commissioners at the treaty were Lunsford Lomax, Colonel Joshua Fry, and Colonel James Patton; Gist represented the Ohio Company; and Andrew Montour acted as interpreter. George Croghan was present as an unofficial representative of Pennsylvania.

The English did not gain all they hoped for at this conference, but were promised the right to make a settlement in the district directly to the east of the Forks. Unfortunately for the Virginians, however, much of the apparent success of the treaty was nullified a year later when the Indians repudiated the agreement.

The company was next confronted with the need of building a road from the Potomac to the Monongahela. In 1752, Cresap, Gist, and the Delaware Indian Nemacolin began construction of the road, the route for which Gist had found in 1751. The road, as finally constructed, started from Wills Creek, crossed successively Wills, Savage, and Meadow mountains, then descended into the Little Meadows. It next crossed a tributary of the Youghiogheny River, from which point it passed to and over Briery Mountain, dropped into the Great Meadows, thence northwest over Laurel Hill to the Monongahela via Redstone Creek. In 1753 William Trent widened the road so that it was possible for pack horses to pass.

21 Darlington, Gist’s Journals, 74–79.
Also in 1752 a storehouse was erected by the company on the right bank of Redstone Creek, near its juncture with the Monongahela River. William Trent was the man most responsible for its construction. The new storehouse also was to serve as a military fort. It was to Redstone Old Fort that Ensign Edward Ward took his men after being driven from the fort at the Forks. The storehouse was burned in 1754 by the French.

After the Logstown conference in 1752 Gist, who was appointed official surveyor of the Ohio Company, decided to make his home on company property. He chose as a suitable site for his house a spot now known as Mount Braddock, no more than ten miles from Redstone Old Fort. In 1754 eleven other families were persuaded by Gist to move out on the frontier with him. These settlements also were destroyed by the French in 1754.

By 1754 rivalry between France and Virginia in western Pennsylvania had become intense: Presque Isle, Le Bœuf, and Venango were the sites of new French forts. To protect the interests of both Great Britain and the Ohio Company, Dinwiddie sent George Washington as an English emissary to warn the French to leave the Ohio country. Washington’s trip, while interesting, was neither particularly eventful nor successful. The French refused to comply with Dinwiddie’s orders and insisted instead that the English were the intruders.

But a “warning” was not the only weapon that Dinwiddie planned to use: he now intended to act. One of the conditions under which the Ohio Company was given its grant was that a fort be constructed in the region of the Forks of the Ohio. Before construction could be begun it was necessary to secure the consent of the Indians. This had been one of the main reasons for the Logstown Conference in 1752. After receiving this consent and after determining that Pennsylvania did not intend

26 Memorial of the Ohio Company to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 20, 1778 (Virginia State Library, Richmond); Olden Time, 1:10 (January, 1846).
27 George Washington, Writings, 1:23–30 (edited by John C. Fitzpatrick—Washington, 1931); Darlington, Gist’s Journals, 80–86; Maryland Gazette (Annapolis), March 7, 28, 1754; Dinwiddie to the Board of Trade, January 29, 1754, PRO, CO 5, 1328:95–107; Dinwiddie to the French commanding officer, PRO, CO 5, 14:117, 118.
to build, the Ohio Company set about laying plans for the construction of its fort. In July, 1753, at a meeting of the company’s committee at Stratford, it was determined that “tis absolutely necessary that the Company should immediately erect a Fort for the security and protection of their Settlement on a hill just below Shurtees [Chartier’s] Creek upon the south east side of the river Ohio.” William Trent, by this time the company factor, was placed in charge of construction. Near the fort a town was to be built which was to include more than two hundred acres of land.\(^8\)

Between July, 1753, and the time of the actual beginning of construction, the plans as to the location of the fort were changed considerably, for when the building was started, it was at the Forks and not on Chartier’s Creek. George Washington has often been accredited with deciding on the Forks as the ideal location for the company’s fort, but as he had never seen this strategic point until his journey to the French posts and had not had time to make his report before the company made its decision as to the new location,\(^9\) it is probable that either Trent, Cresap, or Gist was responsible for the change in plans as each knew that section of the country well.

In January, 1754, while busy building the storehouse at Redstone Old Fort, Trent received instructions to raise a force of two hundred men to erect a fort and to drive the French from the region of the Forks of the Ohio.\(^10\) Acting as soon as possible, Trent arrived at the Forks on February 17, where he was met by Gist and additional workmen. Construction of the fort was begun at once with the aid of the Half-King and some other Indians.

Various Indians brought in reports to Trent of a large force of French and Indians a short distance up the river, and of their avowed intention of descending the river to the Forks, from where they planned to drive the English.\(^11\) These reports proved to be only too true, for on April 17, while the fort was still in the process of construction, the

\(^8\) Darlington, *Gist’s Journals*, 236, 237.
\(^10\) *New York Colonial Documents*, 7: 269; Dinwiddie to William Trent, January 26, 1745, PRO, CO 5, 14: 147–150.
\(^11\) *New York Colonial Documents*, 7: 269; *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis), March 14, 1754; Ensign Edward Ward’s deposition, May 10, 1754, PRO, CO 5, 14: 393–396.
French arrived. Trent was away at the time trying to raise a bigger force and in his absence Ensign Edward Ward was in command. Ward was given only one hour to decide whether to fight or capitulate. As defense was impossible, Ward, after failing in his attempt to delay negotiations long enough for Trent to return, was left with no alternative but to leave the fort, which he did the next day. He made his way via Redstone Old Fort to Wills Creek where the reinforcements that he had needed so badly were waiting for him.32

It was while trying to recapture the company's fort that Washington was defeated at Fort Necessity; in this way the Ohio Company served as the immediate cause for the French and Indian War. The events in western Pennsylvania, while not of great importance in themselves, nevertheless acted as the spark that kindled the most extensive war in the history of the world to that date.

In the early months of the French and Indian War the conflict was waged around Ohio Company lands, and the company's property was badly damaged. Nemacolin's road, Gist's settlement, Redstone Old Fort, and Wills Creek were all scenes of early campaigns. On July 5, Gist's home and the surrounding houses were burned by the French, and on the following day the same fate befell the storehouse at Redstone Old Fort.33 The company's buildings at Wills Creek were taken over by the British army.34 In an attempt to take Fort Duquesne and regain the ground lost by Britain and the Ohio Company, in 1755, Braddock received his fatal defeat. Even in this expedition many of the Ohio Company members took an active part.

After Braddock's defeat, and prior to the Forbes expedition, the Ohio Company's activities in western Pennsylvania were few indeed. As a


34 Dinwiddie, Official Records, 1:270, 297, 305.
matter of fact, Braddock’s failure really sealed the company’s doom. During the remainder of the war the company could do nothing, and after the war, England had little need for the Virginia organization. Nevertheless the company members did not give up easily.

With Forbes’s successful expedition in 1758, the war on the Ohio was to all practical purposes at an end; the English were in control. The task now remaining to the British government was that of conciliating and pacifying the Indians. First at the Treaty of Easton and later in Colonel Henry Bouquet’s proclamation of 1761, it was stated that no settlement could be made west of the Allegheny Mountains without the consent of the Indians.\textsuperscript{35} The Ohio Company, therefore, decided that the best way to circumvent such rulings was to gain the support of Bouquet. To secure his backing it was determined by the members of the company to offer him stock in their organization. Thomas Cresap made the first of these offers on July 24, 1760, when he expressed to Bouquet the willingness of the Ohio Company members to give him a share which would amount to twenty-five thousand acres when the entire grant was made. Bouquet’s answer to Cresap was intended to draw Cresap out further as to the actual plans of the company. The next offer came to Bouquet from George Mercer, a personal friend, who offered him one share of stock at the price of five hundred pounds. After much questionable delay Bouquet finally came out against the Virginia organization. In a letter to General Jeffery Amherst on April 1, 1762, Bouquet accused Cresap of attempting to bribe him and stated that his delay in giving an answer to the Ohio Company was due to his desire to learn more details of the company’s plans.\textsuperscript{36}

Soon after Bouquet’s proclamation of 1761, the British ministry, in keeping with the principle of the Treaty of Easton, issued the proclama-

\textsuperscript{35} Pennsylvania Colonial Records, 8:174–223; Pennsylvania Archives, first series, 3:571–575; Samuel Wharton, \textit{Plain Facts: Being an Examination into the Rights of the Indian Nations of America, to Their Respective Countries}, 56 (Philadelphia, 1781); Bouquet Papers, Additional Manuscripts, 21656:7, 8 (British Museum). This collection will be cited hereafter as “Add. MSS.” with the volume and folio numbers.

\textsuperscript{36} Note letters from George Mercer to Bouquet, Add. MSS., 21645:340, 341; 21648:160, 161, 307, 308; Cresap to Bouquet, July 24, 1760, Add. MSS., 21645:163; Bouquet to Cresap, September 12, 1760, Add. MSS., 21653:24, 25; Bouquet to Amherst, April 1, 1762, Add. MSS., 21634:112, 113.
tion of 1763, which prohibited any further settlement of Indian lands west of the mountains. While this decree was intended to be only a temporary measure, it was in effect long enough to check the activities of the Ohio Company. The company's original grant had lapsed, and the renewal petitioned for in 1754 had not been granted. The remainder of the life of the company was spent in attempts to secure recognition of its grant through legal action and in trying to make surveys in present-day Kentucky rather than in western Pennsylvania.

In concluding this article, certain facts should be pointed out in regard to the importance of the Ohio Company to the colonial westward movement generally and to western Pennsylvania in particular. The company was the first important organized group that had for its purpose the settlement of the region west of the Alleghenies, particularly western Pennsylvania, and the history of the company is worthy of study because of the role it played in the exploration of that region, notably in present-day western Pennsylvania, western Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and West Virginia. The company was also significant for its relationship to the Virginia-Pennsylvania boundary dispute; and although time was to prove that the Forks of the Ohio belonged to Pennsylvania, it must be admitted that the Ohio Company of Virginia was the first organization fully to understand the strategic importance of this point. Again, the significance of the company in its relationship to British Indian policy should be noted. Lastly, is the importance of the part played by the company in the outbreak of the French and Indian War, and it should be remembered in this connection that the company was given its grant by the British ministry because that body saw in it a means of defeating the French in the West. Certainly the rapid westward movement that took place after 1763 owed much of its inception to the Ohio Company.

37 Petition of the Ohio Company, April 2, 1754, PRO, CO 5, 1328:155-159.