

TRADERS ON THE OHIO: 1730

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THE REMOVAL of Delaware and Shawnee Indians from eastern Pennsylvania to the Ohio in the 1720's naturally drew white fur traders to the same region. The Indian hunter and trapper and the white trader were in business together; the Indian collected furs and exchanged them for the European goods to which he had become accustomed; the trader supplied these goods and marketed the furs.

The Delaware Indians from southeastern Pennsylvania—known later as Unamies, and headed at the time of which we write by Alumapees (or Sasoonan)²—had by this date experienced two or three generations of normally peaceful relations with white settlers. They had learned something of British legal procedure;³ an appreciable number of them spoke English as well as their native language; a few had even made some slight progress in the art of reading and writing;⁴ more sig-

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² The term Unami (Wenami) first appears in Pennsylvania provincial records in 1757 (Provincial Record, Q:14; *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 7:665). Teedyuscung defined the name as that of "a distinct Tribe of Delaware Indians . . . Alomipees was formerly the King of That Tribe" (Provincial Record, Q:89-90; *Colonial Records*, 7:726). Alumapees is first mentioned in 1709, with other Delaware chiefs (Provincial Record, D:217-218; *Colonial Records*, 2:489); he died in 1747 at Shamokin (Sunbury). During his lifetime, his followers were identified in the records as "Schuylkill Indians" or, later, as "Delawares of Shamokin."

³ Discussion of the Indians' status and experience in provincial courts is, of course, beyond the scope of this article. Note, however, the case of Checochinican, who in 1726 obtained judgment against Nathaniel Newlin (Provincial Papers, 3:78; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:239-240). Although Newlin apparently did not abide by the court's decision, the plaintiff's son, Nemacolin, who moved to the Ohio, talked as late as 1763 of going to Philadelphia to obtain justice (*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 37:44-45, 176, 193).

⁴ Quakers encouraged education of the Indians, with uncertain success. A white prisoner adopted by Ohio Delawares in 1756 relates that his Indian brother "told me that he had been taught to read when he was young but that he had almost forgot it. I believe he was telling me the truth, for he knew all the letters and figures" (John McCullough in Archibald Loudon, comp., *Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives, of Outrages, Committed by the Indians in their Wars with the White People* . . . 1808 edition, 1:305). Illiterate Indians commonly adopted the practices of unlettered whites. Of the Delawares who signed the letter of April 30, 1730, mentioned below, Shawannoppa drew a turtle; three others made crosses; one (Quowahaune) made an awkward Q; but "Tolles," with no accompanying mark, may be a signature. In comparison, two of the white traders who signed the petition of May, 1730, also mentioned in the text, wrote their names, while Henry Baly printed an H.

nificant, they had become accustomed to use European goods; and, like the wandering Shawnee who had joined them, they had abandoned their aboriginal mode of life for an economy oriented—literally—toward that of Europe. Paradoxically, these Delaware emigrants from eastern Pennsylvania, and the traders who accompanied them, were the forerunners of European settlement on the Ohio. Unlike the homeless and evasive Shawnee, unlike other Delawares forcibly evicted after the “Walking Purchase” of 1737, these Indians and the white traders went to the Ohio voluntarily, in search of richer hunting grounds.

The participants in this Ohio venture have left us no adequate account of themselves. A handful of documents, however, afford us glimpses of their lives and activities, and supply the names, at least, of some of the leaders among the Indians and the traders. The depositions, preserved in the Public Records Division, Harrisburg, and previously unpublished, which conclude the present article, add a few more details to an interesting but sketchy picture.

It will be noted that these legal depositions do not appear to anticipate any legal action, but content themselves with a defense of the reputation of Henry Smith,⁵ a trader apparently under attack. To this end, the statements present an account of contented servants, the reported endorsement by an Indian chief, and, on a less lofty plane, the misdeeds of other traders, Smith’s competitors and presumed critics. A further peculiarity of the depositions is the absence of place names or other data identifying the scene of the incidents which they recount. As we shall see, the scene was in fact the Ohio country (the present Allegheny); but since it was uncertain how much of this region lay within Pennsylvanian jurisdiction, we have a simple explanation for the avoid-

⁵ Henry Smith appears in 1728 as a “Shamokin Trader.” On August 27 of that year, Antony Sadowsky, writing from Oley to John Petty, reported that Shawnees had hanged Smith’s servant, Timothy Higgins, and when this letter was read in Council, on September 1, Smith and Petty were sent with a letter from Governor Gordon to the Indians at Shamokin. Two days later, Smith wrote that Higgins was still alive, after a narrow escape. (Provincial Papers, 3:55, 58, 66; Provincial Record, H:96-97, 99, 112; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:227-229, 232; *Colonial Records*, 3:349-350, 352, 365). In September, 1731, Smith was sent with messages to “a Mingoe Chief” (Provincial Record, H:310; *Colonial Records*, 3:544). A few months later, he wrote a letter (also signed by John Mettox, Samuëll cussuns, William Clark, and Andrew Akins) for some Allegheny Indians who asked Governor Gordon and James Logan to accept the “twomooty Indians” as friends (Provincial Papers, 4:110); and in response the governor sent Smith, in September, 1732, with a message to “the Attamootte Indians, a Nation living back of Allegheny” (Provincial Record, H:310; *Colonial Records*, 3:545).

ance both of place names and of legal prosecution.⁶

Determination of the general scene of the story is easy enough, for we are told of incidents which took place in the winter of 1729-30, and we are given the names of several traders who were in the vicinity at that time: Smith himself, Edmund Cartlidge, Henry Baly, James Letort, Antony Sadowsky, and others. To establish the whereabouts of any of these men should be sufficient; actually, we can place all of them.

We have, first, a letter, dated April 30, 1730, sent to Governor Patrick Gordon by Mickqun, Keakeenhomman, Shawannoppa, Quoowa-haune, Lamooan, Queekockahwin, Tolles, "Cheiffs of ye Delawares att Aleegaeneing on the main Rivor." This Indian message was interpreted by James Letort, written by Edmund Cartlidge, and witnessed by Jonah Davenport. The letter tells of the accidental death, "last fall," of John Hart, one hundred miles down the river, and of the wounding of David Robeson, twenty miles from the place of writing; and in the account of the latter affair we are told that, "Henry Smith being there with rum, the Indians got drunk."⁷

The next document of interest is a petition dated May, 1730, whose signers, Edmund Cartlidge, Jonah Davenport, and Henry Baly, relate that the trade at Aleegaeneing has been chiefly in their hands for three years, but that now a worse sort of traders, "such as had been your petitioners servants and other idle fellows," have brought rum and got the Indians so in debt that they cannot pay the petitioners for goods; and they ask that this trade be controlled.⁸

The remaining trader, of the five first named, appears in another petition, of August 8, 1730. In it, Antony Sadowsky, John Maddox, and John ffisher report that in 1729 they had at Allegany goods worth £500; in June, however, Mingoes brought 14 cags of rum from Albany, and in consequence the Delawares were indebted to the traders for £100 in goods. The petitioners ask that Allommapees, Shackachtan, and "Great Hill, at Allegany," be ordered to make payment.⁹

Documents of further interest are statements made by Davenport

⁶ In 1754 the Provincial Assembly declared itself unconvinced that the recently built French forts lay within Pennsylvania's boundaries, and on this ground declined to take action against the invaders (*Pennsylvania Archives*, eighth series, 5:3677-3683).

⁷ Provincial Papers, 4:6. As printed in the *Pennsylvania Archives* (first series, 1:254-255), the text reads, incorrectly, "Aleegaeneing on the main Road." Neville B. Craig read the manuscript correctly (*The Olden Time*, 1:96).

⁸ Provincial Papers, 4:10; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:261.

⁹ Provincial Papers, 4:14; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:265.

and Letort, October 29, 1731, which tell of affairs at Allegany during the previous four years, together with a brief account of the Indian settlements in that region; and a similar statement made by Cartlidge on December 7.¹⁰

We have ample evidence, therefore, that the traders named in our present depositions were at Allegheny in 1729-30, and that the incidents recounted in the depositions must have taken place somewhere in that area.

If we attempt to place their scene more precisely, however, we shall find the evidence less satisfactory. The data furnished by Davenport and Letort in 1731 list the settlements in the area with which the Allegheny traders were familiar; and undoubtedly we should restrict ourselves to this region. Not all of the places they name can be identified definitely,¹¹ but west of Allegheny Mountain this territory seems to include a rough triangle defined by "Connumach" (Johnstown), "Kythenning River" (Kittanning), and "Assewikales" (perhaps near the present West Newton). Presumably, but not certainly, it includes the present Pittsburgh; but such places as Venango, Kuskuskies, and Logstown, familiar a generation later, are all missing. Only one place named, "Kythenning River," is certainly on the Allegheny; but this name may refer to a scattered group of settlements rather than to a single town.

Charles A. Hanna thought that the Indian letter of April 30, 1730, noted above, was written from Kittanning; and in support of this view it may be observed that the phrase "on the main Rivor" is an acceptable translation of that place name.¹²

One other clue may be noted. According to the information given October 29, 1731, the leading Indians at "Connumach" and "Kythenning River" were "Capt. Hill Alymacapy Kykenhammo [,] Delaw^{re} [,] Sypous [,] a Mingoe." "Keakeenhomman," as we have seen, signed the Indian letter of April 30, 1730. Captain Hill appears as "Great Hill" in the petition of August 8, 1730, noted above; as "Mechouguatchugh"

¹⁰ Provincial Papers, 4:44, 46, 48, 52; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:299-302, 305-306.

¹¹ Senangelstown, where Senangel was the chief person, is said to be sixteen miles from "Connumach." Charles A. Hanna thought this might be Shannopin's Town (*Wilderness Trail*, 1:296-297), but this seems unlikely. An Indian named Sayningoe, not necessarily the same person, was with Alumapees at Philadelphia in 1738 (Provincial Record, K:66; *Colonial Records*, 4:307. For "Lequeeppees," see Note 17 below.

¹² *Wilderness Trail*, 1:29 ff. Hanna knew the letter of April 30, 1730, only in the incorrect version in the *Pennsylvania Archives*. See Note 7 above.

(Great Hill) in Governor Gordon's letter of August 20, written in response to this petition; and as "Cap^t Hill" in a letter of December 4, 1731, inviting the Indians of "Alleghening" to Philadelphia. Both "Mechegoakchuk" and "Allemykoppy" signed the Indians' reply to this invitation, August 8, 1732; and "Capt. Hill, with sundry from Ohijo," visited the Governor in August, 1740.¹³ From the circumstance that "Shawannoppan" signed the letters of April 30, 1730, and August 8, 1732, in company with Indians of Conemaugh and Kittanning, and the fact that "Shanoppins Town" does not appear in the information of October 29, 1731, we must assume that this Indian had not yet established himself near the mouth of the Allegheny, at the place long known by his name.

While the evidence is not conclusive, therefore, it suggests that the "Allegheny" of the 1730's is to be identified with "Kythenning River" rather than with the vicinity of the present Pittsburgh.

We know then, that by 1727, Pennsylvania traders, including Edmund Cartlidge, Jonah Davenport, and James Letort, along with others, were trading at the Allegheny, with headquarters probably somewhere near the present Kittanning. They did not welcome the later arrival of other traders, including Henry Smith. In a letter of April 30, 1730, they reported that Smith was selling rum, and in a petition of May, 1730, they complained of the rum traffic carried on by recent arrivals, unnamed but of course including Smith. Whether, in doing this, they were concerned primarily for trade ethics or for trade profits, we shall not undertake to determine.

(PROVINCIAL PAPERS, 4: 13)

July the 23 1730—

The Examination of John Rey¹⁴ Indented servant to Henry Smith taken before me Thomas Edwards one of his Majesties Justices for the County of Lancaster Concerning the behaviour and Conduct of his Master towards him in the Indian Countrey Last winter and to vindicate his sd Master from false and scandalous Aspersions related against him by some of the Susquahannah traders¹⁵ and others

¹³ Provincial Papers, 4:16, 43; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:266, 303-304, 341; Provincial Record, K:171-175; *Colonial Records*, 4:432-447. The original manuscript of the Indians' reply of August 8, 1732, has disappeared.

¹⁴ Presumably the trader whose name appears elsewhere as Rea, or Wray. In 1732 he accompanied some Shawnee from Allegheny to Philadelphia (Provincial Record, H:245, 254, 258; *Colonial Records*, 3:481, 491, 496).

¹⁵ Letort and Sadowski, like Smith, had previously traded at Shamokin.

This deponent on his Corporall Oath taken on the holy Evangelist sayth, that his Master and he did Live Peaceably and Contentedly in Plenty of what that Country aforded, and did want neither Cloathing nor food that was requisite or necesarie in such an Employ and that he was very well Contented dureing their Continuance in that Countrey among the Indians, He furthe sayth that he was sent by his Master as usually to a Certaine Place to fecth some Skins and, there he met with Samuel Cozons¹⁶ and Edmond Cartleidges man and after some discourses they told him that he should Run away to the Mingoes and Leave his Master, or els that he would be in danger of his life if he Continued with his Master, for the Indians would kill his Master & him and take all the goods to themselves, but I thought it my duty to Stick to Master and when I went back to him I told him how I was advised, and somewhat Surprised, But there was an Indian Woman which was one of Cheif of Mingoes¹⁷ and I & my Master told her of the Rumor, that we should be Killed both we & the Horses and the goods taken away by the Mingoes. This mde the woman very Angry and she said that it was because master had so many skins of the Indians there abouts, that the white People were displeased¹⁸ and further that my Master would be secure & should have freedom to trade among them and to Come among them and to bring me without faile And that they would make a Road from thence to the Branches of Susquahannah,¹⁹ for my Master and

¹⁶ "Sam^l Cosins" was apparently at Shamokin in 1728 (Provincial Papers, 3:55; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:227), and his name appears on a letter written by Smith in 1732 (see Note 5 above). In a list of traders licensed in 1748, he is named as previously unlicensed (Provincial Papers, 10:41; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 2:14).

¹⁷ This was probably Aliquippa, whose settlement, called "Lequeepees" in 1731, was then said to be sixty miles from "Connumach," and to consist of "Mingoes mostly some Delawres 4 settled families but a great Resort of those People" (Provincial Papers, 4:52; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:301). In 1748, Conrad Weiser found her living on the Ohio above Logstown, at what is now McKees Rocks, and reported that on August 27 "we dined in a Seneka town, where an old Seneka woman reigns with great authority. We dined at her house, and they all used us very well" (Provincial Record, L:421; *Colonial Records*, 5:348). It seems to be generally assumed that she lived below the present Pittsburgh in 1731, but this is not certain.

The name Mingo was loosely applied to various Iroquoian groups, and has no precise tribal significance. It is most familiar, probably, as a name for the adventurers, from various of the Six Nations, who had emigrated to the Ohio. The supposition that these "Mingoes" of the Ohio derived from the "Mingoes" (Susquehannocks or Conestogas) of eastern Pennsylvania is erroneous.

¹⁸ This is of course an insinuation that the derogatory reports about Smith were inspired by envy.

¹⁹ That is, to Shamokin, from which Smith and other traders had gone to the Ohio. The statement is further proof, if any were needed, that the depositions refer to a region more remote than the Susquehanna.

would admit of no others of the White People to Come among them because of their lyes & false stories and further saith not

Sworn before me

Thomas Edwards

July the 23 1730

The Examination of Andrew Akins²⁰ another Indented servant belonging to Henry Smith taken by me Thomas Edwards one of his Ma^{sties} Justices for the County of Lancaster

This Deponent sayeth that he was with his Master In the Indian Countrey and at a Certaine time Last winter, they were at Lodging or Store after Midnight, there Came John Taylor a Servant belonging to Henry Bayly to the Store and opened the Store and took meat out of it, The deponent desired the sd Taylor not to Carry away his Masters meat for he would be displeased, the sd Taylor replied, that if he would acquaint his Master he would be his death and beat his Master in the bargain, further the sd deponent sayeth that at another time He was Intrusted by my Master with his goods at a Certaine Place when his Master was near one Hundred Miles distance there came John Burk & an Indian Man, to the store and the Indian Opened severall bundels of Skins and Pickt out of them Nine and twenty Skins, the sd deponent at the sight stood amazed John Burk told him not to speak a word to the Indian or else he the Indian would strike out all his braines, then John Burk Packt the Skins and put them upon a horse & they went away The sd Deponent further sayeth that a Certaine man belonging to James Latot,²¹ did say that he heard the white people (Which he took to be the Traders) declare that if Henry Smith would Come to their Town²² they would tie him to a Post & whip him,

The sd Deponent sayeth that his Master & his servants did Live all the time of their Expedition peacably well furnished with Cloaths & Provision Convenient and sutable to their Calling Considering how far distant they lived from Cristian settlement and further Sayth not

Sworn before me

Tho: Edwards

ENDORSED:²³ Affidavits ab^t breaking open
a Store of Henry Smith's

July & Aug^t 1730

²⁰ See Note 5 above.

²¹ James Letort, who had traded at Paxtang and Shamokin on the Susquehanna. The Provincial Council minutes of July 4, 1727, in their first reference to the Ohio trade, speak of "the remoter Parts, where James Le Tort trades (that is Allegany on the Branches of Ohio)" (Provincial Record, H:32; *Colonial Records*, 3:290).

²² It would seem, from this statement and from the Indian letter of April 30, 1730, that Smith's trading post was somewhat removed from the place (presumably Kittanning) where other traders had their headquarters.

²³ This endorsement evidently covers the following statements as well.

(PROVINCIAL PAPERS, 4: 15)

An affadavit taken y^e 19th day of August 1730 before me George Boone Esq^e: one of his Majesties Justices of y^e peace for y^e County of Philad^a: Antony Sadouski upon his oath Saith that a Certain Indian Called Kaakakacan²⁴ came to him and told him that if he would go or lend Some body with him, he had Some skins in Henry Smiths Store that were Stolen from him, and Sold to y^e S^d Smith, and that he would take them again: but Antony refused to Send with him knowing y^e evill Consequences that might attend y^e breaking open y^e Said Store. whereupon the said Indian being y^e Landlord where Edmond Cartledge lodged. applied unto y^e Said, Ed^m Cartledge, who Sent for Two of his horses, and Said unto one Burk you are as good go with y^e Indian: who went with Edm^d Cartledge horses and Indian who broke open y^e Said Henry Smiths Store and brought away Two bundles of Skins which were about forty in Number, of which bundles of Skins Ed^m Cartledge had one from y^e s^d Indian. and further Saith not.

Geo: Boone

Samuel Cosins²⁵ upon his oath Saith that Edmond Cartledge endavoured to perswaded him to do with y^e above named Indian, which he refused to go, then y^e Said Cartledge Said I will Send Burk, for he will not be called in question about it who accordingly went *and brought away from y^e Said Smith Two bundles of deer Skins*²⁶ and further Saith not

Coram me y^e 19th 6^{mo} 1730

Geo: Boone

²⁴ Possibly the Delaware chief whose name appears as Queekockahwin in the letter of April 30, 1730, and as Queekoikahwin in that of August 8, 1732, both mentioned above (Provincial Papers, 4:6; *Pennsylvania Archives*, first series, 1:254-255, 341).

²⁵ See Note 16 above.

²⁶ The words printed in italics are cancelled in the original.