Although the first shot in the "Great War for Empire" was fired in the contest for the Ohio Valley in 1754, the British did not become dominant in this region until four years after the conflict had commenced. It was in 1758 that General John Forbes, too ill to travel other than on a sling pulled by two horses, succeeded in forcing the French to destroy and evacuate Fort Duquesne (the present site of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), which had been the symbol of French hegemony in the transappalachian region since its erection in 1754. To retain this newly acquired territory under British control, Forbes immediately ordered construction of a new fort which was completed within sight of the ruins of the French installation. Throughout the remainder of the French and Indian War and until 1772, the British maintained control of this fortress to which General John Stanwix had given the name Fort Pitt.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, and the resulting transfer of a vast expanse of territory to the British, an assessment by

Dr. Huston is assistant professor of history at the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. In the above article he has given a somewhat different concept of the material included as part of his doctoral dissertation completed at the University of Pittsburgh.—Ed.

1 Two forts were completed by the British at this location after the capture of Fort Duquesne. The first was intended as a temporary refuge during the winter of 1758-59 and is not considered here; it is discussed as Mercer's Fort in Alfred P. James and Charles M. Stotz, Drums in the Forest (Pittsburgh, c. 1958), 140-52. Construction of the second and permanent one, generally referred to as Fort Pitt and to which this study is addressed, was not begun until Sept. 3, 1759.

the victors of their future military needs in North America was imperative. In the case of Fort Pitt, the acquisition of the Ohio Valley and Canada had transformed this installation from one which had been precariously situated at the edge of disputed territory to one located safely in the center of a large British domain, with the nearest potential enemy (excluding the Indian) more than six hundred miles distant. In determining which forts were to be maintained in the peacetime empire, three reasons generally explained the decision to retain Fort Pitt. By 1772, only nine years later, all of these needs had disappeared.

First of all, the fort at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers was essential as a bulwark against Indian raids and depredations in the west. Recalling their harrowing experience in Pontiac’s Rebellion, during which only Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit had withstood the red-man’s siege, the English favored retention of certain installations until the French influence over the savage had waned. The use of British regulars stationed at Fort Pitt and other installations to enforce the Proclamation of 1763 was aimed at mollifying the Indian. The success of the punitive expedition from Fort Pitt of Colonel Henry Bouquet in 1764 greatly reduced the ability of the Indians within the immediate area to repeat their triumph of the previous year. Although some few Indians remained within the environs of Pittsburgh, there was no longer a serious challenge in this part of the Ohio Valley. As evidence of the diminution of this threat, those settlers in Pittsburgh whose homes and business establishments had been destroyed when they sought refuge within the walls of Fort Pitt during the attack of 1763, began to settle in the new town of Pittsburgh which the military commander at Fort Pitt, Lieutenant Colonel John Reed, laid out in the summer of 1765.3 At the same time the Indian trade which had been closed since the beginning of Pontiac’s Rebellion was reopened in July 1765.4 Although friction remained between the red-men and the settlers the delineation of a boundary line between the land of the two groups at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 was instrumental in improving their relations.

A second reason for retaining a garrison at Fort Pitt after 1763 was its utility as a trading post with the Indians. One of the major


complaints of the red-men allied with Pontiac had been the parsimony of the British as contrasted with the largesse of their French predecessors. Subjected to pressures from the mercantile interests of Philadelphia and desiring the trade as an inducement to wean the savages from their French allegiance, the English determined to retain Fort Pitt for its value as a trading center. In October 1766 there were at least seven trading companies operating in the west from Pittsburgh, among them the famous Baynton, Wharton and Morgan Company of Philadelphia. Among the various factors, however, which contributed to the decline of the trade at the fort after 1763 were the postwar changes in the pattern of Indian trade and the westward movement of the various tribes. In addition, the success in shipping goods via the Mississippi or the Great Lakes route, contrasted with the expensive and arduous task of transporting them via packhorse across the mountains to or from Philadelphia, had reduced the traffic in Indian goods through Fort Pitt to a mere trickle by 1772. The transfer of control of the Indian trade from the Crown to the individual colonies in 1768 cancelled the need for installations manned by Redcoats for the protection of this traffic.

From their vantage point in Whitehall, the third and most compelling reason for retention of the bastion at Fort Pitt was its significance as a vital link in the line of supply and communication between Fort Chartres on the Mississippi and the eastern seaboard colonies. In 1763 the best way to supply the newly acquired British installations in the Illinois country was along the route which Forbes had followed in 1758, commencing at Philadelphia and then forging westward through the fortifications he had established at Carlisle, Bedford, Loudoun and Ligonier to Pittsburgh. From there the relatively inexpensive and generally dependable river transportation was available to Fort Chartres. This course promised year-round communication which the rigors of winter denied to the Fort Niagara-Fort Detroit route. Earlier attempts had been made to provision Fort Chartres from the Mobile-New Orleans region but the tedious, expensive, eight-month upstream river journey from this quarter had been discouraging. The use of Fort Pitt as a staging area for the construction of boats, the storage and transshipment of troops, supplies and traders proved the most economical and dependable route for the

5 Traders at Fort Pitt to Sir William Johnson, Oct. 4, 1766, ibid., V, 384-85.
British occupants of the area. General Thomas Gage, the parsimonious Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in North America, had indicated as early as 1767 that "Fort Pitt is absolutely necessary for a Communication with the Illinois; but if the Illinois is not guarded by Troops, is of the same use only, as the other Forts in the Indian Country." 7

Plagued with the opposition of the colonists to the Molasses and Stamp Acts and discouraged by the limited success of Grenville and Townshend in resolving the burgeoning fiscal problems of the empire, the British ministry made various requests of General Gage, after 1767, to evaluate the need for the maintenance of the multiplicity of installations in North America and to recommend the abandonment of those which could be safely eliminated.8 As Gage replied in June 1768:

With regard to Pittsburgh; the Expence of this Establishment may be likewise added to the Account of Fort-Chartres, for the greatest utility of Fort Pitt is, being situated on the Ohio, it Served for a Post of Communication with the Illinois. Independent of its use for a Communication with that Country. I should not hesitate a Moment to give my Opinion, that it ought to be abandoned, . . . and that the keeping up of Fort-Pitt should depend upon having or not having a Military Establishment at the Illinois.9

The failure of Fort Chartres to become self-sufficient and its disappointing development as a major trading post had convinced the British by 1771 that its retention was a luxury they could ill afford. As its commander was quoted in that year: "It commands Nothing nor ever did."10 The cabinet in Great Britain evidently concurred and their minutes of the meeting of December 1, 1771, recorded:

That General Gage be instructed to abandon Fort Chartres at such time as his prudence shall suggest; also to send, for their consideration, his thoughts for a permanent establishment in the Illinois, and to abandon Pittsburgh unless the contrary be absolutely necessary.11

Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Colonies, relayed this order to General Gage three days later, along with instructions to maintain communication through the Illinois country after the abandonment of Fort Chartres, by effecting necessary repairs of the existing British installations along the Great Lakes.12

---

8 See, for instance, Hillsborough to Gage, Apr. 15, 1768, *ibid.*, II, 61-66.
9 Gage to Hillsborough, June 16, 1768.
10 Gage to Hillsborough, Aug. 6, 1771, in Carter, I, 304-06.
This order to abandon the Philadelphia-Fort Pitt-Fort Chartres line of supply was not received in the New World until the end of February 1772, and Gage immediately set out to implement this directive, commencing with Fort Chartres. The destruction of this fort was accomplished in the summer of 1772 and part of the garrison descended the Mississippi River to New Orleans, from where they proceeded to Mobile, while others of the troops together with their cannon and some stores ascended the Ohio and arrived at Fort Pitt, August 2, 1772. At the same time approximately fifty men of the former garrison at Fort Chartres moved to occupy nearby Kaskaskia so that, in Gage's words, "the People should not be left on a Sudden entirely to themselves." Although the evacuation of Fort Pitt was imminent, General Gage did not reveal to the commander at Pittsburgh the exact nature of the grand plan. The commander in chief did indicate during February and March 1772 that the amount of provisions received at Fort Pitt were to be held to a minimum and that all repairs were to be "stopped directly and nothing more is to be undertaken without further orders." Even though Gage wrote on April 8, that "I shall shortly have some particular orders for the Officer commanding at Fort Pitt," he did not issue the order to evacuate that post until August 31, 1772. In this letter he included very detailed and specific instructions concerning the destruction of the installation. This was consonant with the General's handling of the situation at this locale. Unlike previous commanders in chief, General Gage, from his headquarters in New York, had maintained careful scrutiny over every aspect of life at Fort Pitt, particularly during the tenure of Captain Charles Edmonstone as commander there. This interest is partially explained by the fact that Gage's first experience in the New World had been in western Pennsylvania where he served as an officer in the Forty-Fourth Regiment with the ill-fated Braddock expedition. In addition, relations between General Gage and Captain Edmonstone were barely cordial. The Captain, newly arrived from duty in another frontier area within the empire, Ireland, had upon reaching Fort Pitt submitted an inspection report of the facilities he was to command and reported their shortcoming to the commander in chief. Gage took offense at these gratuitous suggestions from the newly arrived officer and from this point registered many complaints against Edmonstone, even though

13 Gage to Maj. Isaac Hamilton, Feb. 24, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
14 Hamilton to Gage, Aug. 8, 1772, ibid.
16 Gage to Hamilton, Feb. 24, Mar. 16, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
17 Gage to Capt. Charles Edmonstone, Apr. 8, Aug. 31, 1772, ibid.
the Captain was retained as commander and was able to secure a major's commission during the evacuation of Fort Pitt. Among the complaints of Gage against Edmonstone were: failure to deal properly with the Indians; excessive expenditure for Indian supplies; relinquishing command to those not qualified; failure to keep the commander in chief properly advised; failure to provide proper vouchers for payment; excessive stockpiling of provisions; failure to carry out orders; being too indulgent towards the Indians and in general with careless supervision of activities. The result was that Captain Edmonstone was continually on the defensive in his relations with General Gage and the latter continued to express his distrust of Edmonstone by his supervision of much of the minutes of operations at Fort Pitt.  

The orders issued by Gage to evacuate the installation specifically required that all ordnance and other supplies which were considered valuable enough, were to be hauled across the mountains to Philadelphia. Items which would not bear the expense of transportation including the remaining ordnance, shot, gun carriages and mortar beds, were to be destroyed. Since the General felt there was no impending danger which required retention of the fort he ordered: "You will raze the defense of the Fort in such manner as it shall afford no defense for an Enemy. You will be careful that the Bastions are totally mined." Three or four of the garrison were to be retained at Pittsburgh to maintain the boats which were to be utilized, if necessary, for re-instituting communication with the lower Ohio Valley. Such services as the garrison had provided for the Indians including those of interpreter and blacksmith were to be discontinued. Captain Edmonstone was directed to explain to the Indians the reasons for the British evacuation of the area.

Upon receipt of the notice to destroy the fort and withdraw from the area, Edmonstone set his troops at their assigned task. The sale of stores not worth transporting was advertised at Bedford and Ligonier, although Edmonstone, who did not have an exalted opinion of the


19 Gage to Edmonstone, Aug. 31, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL. Surprisingly, these troops remained at Pittsburgh until 1775. See Hamilton to Maj. Thomas Moncrieffe (Gage's secretary), July 2, 1774, ibid., referring to them as still at Pittsburgh. See also statement of George Roots, Frederick County, Va., Oct. 23, 1775, "that they were very lately gone to join their regiments," mss, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

20 Gage to Edmonstone, Aug. 31, 1772.
frontier inhabitants (which they fully reciprocated), despaired of the Crown ever being paid for any materials sold. By October 11, it was reported that two of the five bastions of Fort Pitt had been defaced and that the brick from them had been sold. The commander at Fort Pitt estimated the weight of the stores and equipment to be transported back along the Forbes Road to be approximately fourteen tons and he anxiously awaited the arrival of wagons so that the arduous trek east could be begun before the onset of winter.

An interesting facet of the evacuation and destruction of this fort was the request of the province of Pennsylvania for the return of ordnance loaned to the Forbes expedition fourteen years earlier, which the Pennsylvanians optimistically requested be returned to Philadelphia upon the evacuation of the western site. The documents do not indicate whether or not this material was still usable or whether it was transported by the British forces to the Quaker capital, although General Gage responded favorably to Lieutenant Governor Penn's request for its return. This is an interesting commentary on the shortage of ordnance and arms in the colonies on the eve of the American Revolution as the pacifist Quakers sought to recover from the wilderness the material which they had furnished more than a decade previously.

The reaction of the Pittsburghers to the announced evacuation of Fort Pitt is not surprising to twentieth-century Americans who have become accustomed to the anguished cries which emanate from the myriad of local interests when the government seeks to eliminate unnecessary military installations. General Gage received petitions not unlike those directed to recent Defense Secretaries, imploring him not to destroy their only protection against disaster. Since the British government of the eighteenth century was not concerned with the impact of the reduction of the military establishment upon the local economy, the requests of the inhabitants were based on the resulting reduced defense posture once the fort was destroyed and the Redcoats (not as yet wholly despised) were removed. As a clergyman visiting the town explained it in 1772:

21 Pentagonal forts were not uncommon on the American frontier and the topography at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers was well adapted to this type of fortification. A good account of other Pennsylvania forts is William A. Hunter, *Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758* (Harrisburg, 1960).
22 Edmonstone to Gage, Sept. 28, Oct. 11, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
This [the departure of the garrison] is a matter of surprise and grief to the people around, who have requested that the fortress may stand, as a place of security to them, in case of Indian invasion.24

Reasons of personal safety no doubt motivated this plea, but it seems reasonable to assume that even though the relations between the frontier inhabitants and the British garrison had not always been harmonious, economic motives, then as now, influenced the petitioners. Governor Penn, more sympathetic to the pleas of those whom he believed to be his subjects, indicated that he understood "the alarm and fears of these Poor people to be well founded." In view of the fact that the traditionally pacifist and tight-fisted assembly of Pennsylvania was not scheduled to convene until January 1773, Governor Penn requested that General Gage, provided his instructions permitted, delay the abandonment of this western outpost until the assembly could meet and be apprised of the necessity of maintaining provincial troops on the frontier. If this was not possible, Penn requested that at least a cadre of regular British troops be maintained at Pittsburgh in the interim, after which they would presumably be supplanted by the provincial forces authorized by the colonial assembly. Otherwise the governor feared, somewhat alarmed, "the fatal consequences which will inevitably attend a desertion of that new settled country."25

General Gage, accustomed to the recalcitrance of colonial assemblies (particularly those of Quaker persuasion) to furnish troops and monies for military measures, and unimpressed by the pleas of the colonists for protection, which appeared to be uttered simultaneously with their refusal to pay taxes, was not seriously concerned for the safety of the frontier.26 He did, as a matter of courtesy upon receiving

25 Penn to Gage, Oct. 27, 1772. It is well to recall that no definitive western boundary of Pennsylvania had been determined and hence, although it was generally assumed by Pennsylvanians that Fort Pitt lay within the borders of their province, such a fact was not accepted by all others, particularly Virginians. For a proposal to determine the exact location of Fort Pitt at this time see "Scheme of David Rittenhouse and William Smith for ascertaining the Longitude and Latitude of Fort Pitt," Oct.-Nov. 1772, Burd-Shippen Papers, II, mss, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. George Croghan speculated on the location of Fort Pitt in relation to the boundaries of Pennsylvania and Virginia in Croghan to Thomas Wharton, Nov. 11, 1772, The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XV (1891), 431-32, cited hereinafter as PMHB.
26 "The People have gradually settled from the Sea into the Interior Country, without the aid of Fortresses, and it's to be hoped they will be able to proceed in the way they began, without meeting more obstructions now than they did formerly," Gage to Penn, Nov. 2, 1772.
the request of Governor Penn, modify his orders to Captain Edmonstone to provide that one non-commissioned officer and twenty-five soldiers were to be retained at Fort Pitt pending the contemplated action of the Quaker assembly. Gage did not really anticipate contacting the British commander prior to his departure from the west when he confessed: "I . . . apprehend that it is too late to write to you at Fort Pitt." 27 The modified orders did not reach Captain Edmonstone until after he and his troops had left their western outpost and Gage did not consider the request of Governor Penn urgent enough to order the return of additional British troops to the remains of Fort Pitt. Gage's sentiments were clearly expressed in his comment that "it is of no other consequence than the disappointment of my intentions to comply with Mr. Penn's request." 28 Not surprisingly the Pennsylvania Assembly did not share their governor's apprehension and refused to furnish the twenty-five or thirty troops requested by the executive. Having consulted with officials conversant with the Indian problem the legislators declined to appropriate the funds and authorize the dispatch of provincial troops to Pittsburgh with the explanation that such "warlike preparations" would be "attended with more ill than good consequence." 29

Although General Gage had specified in his instructions to Captain Edmonstone that the Indians of the area were to be apprised of the reasons for the withdrawal from the region, the commander in chief, continuing his policy of closely monitoring minute details at that post, wrote directly to George Croghan and asked the former Deputy Indian Agent to disseminate this information to the red-men. As a reward for his services, Croghan was to be permitted to have the use of the best of the structures remaining within the abandoned fort as living quarters, and Alexander McKee, formerly Croghan's assistant who had now assumed Croghan's position as Deputy Indian Agent, was to be given the use of a small brick house just outside the bastions of the fortress. After the British withdrawal, Croghan and McKee occupied the quarters which had been allocated for their use.10 In carrying out his part of the bargain, Croghan convoked those few Indians remaining within the immediate vicinity of Pittsburgh and told them of the impending British evacuation. Croghan summarized

27 Gage to Edmonstone, Nov. 2, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
28 Gage to Lord Dartmouth, Jan. 6, 1773, in Carter, I, 344.
29 Assembly to Penn, Feb. 19, 1773, Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 16 v., 1852-53), X, 74-75.
30 Gage to Edmonstone, Aug. 31, 1772, Gage to Croghan, Oct. 24, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
their reaction to the news when he reported to Gage: "I don't find that the Indians are any way uneasy at the troops being removed."  

McKee traveled into the interior, going as far west as the Scioto River, to bring this information to the savages and generally concurred with Croghan's analysis when he wrote:

They [the Indians] appeared exceedingly well pleased with the Demolition of the Works here, and said provided it was generally done throughout this Country, and all the sharp edged tools taken away it would be the strongest proof of friendship that could be given them and what they long wished to see executed.

The joy with which the Indians greeted the news is not difficult to explain. Although the concern of the frontier inhabitants for their future safety was not completely without foundation, the power of the Indian tribes in the upper Ohio Valley sharply contrasted with their overwhelming strength of 1763. Although George Croghan, probably the most knowledgeable observer of the Indian in this region, deplored the evacuation of the area by British regulars, there is no evidence in his correspondence that he considered that the abandonment would presage actual trouble. Nor is there any evidence that the evacuation of Fort Pitt became the signal for Indian agitation against the settlers in this part of the west. Croghan indicated that the withdrawal of the British from the area would "serve only to promote its settlement with peace & Frugality." Although the white man had been conveniently forgetful of his most solemn promises, the Indian constantly reminded the colonists of the previously contracted obligations. Hence the evacuation of this one line of fortifications was interpreted to be a partial redemption of the pledges made by the British and the colonists at the Treaty of Easton in 1758. While the British retreat meant an end of the dole to the aborigine, this type of support had so declined from the zenith of British generosity in 1758 that the Ohio Valley Indians of 1772 were no longer heavily dependent upon the Indian Agent at Fort Pitt. The Indians also rejoiced at the removal of the Eighteenth Regiment which had "been obnoxious always to them." Gage probably displayed the most callous and cynical attitude towards the move when he opined:

If the Colonists will afterwards force the Savages into Quarrels by using them ill, let them feel the consequences, we shall be out of the scrape.

31 Croghan to Gage, Nov. 25, 1772, ibid.
32 McKee to Gage, Nov. 26, 1772, ibid.
33 Croghan to Wharton, Dec. 23, 1772, PMHB, XV, 433.
34 Ibid., 432-34.
35 Gage to Lord Barrington, Mar. 4, 1772, in Carter, II, 600-01.
Although the British evacuation from Fort Pitt after fourteen years of occupation was accomplished November 7, 1772, its details are not easily separated from the bitterness and acrimony which accompanied this maneuver. The inhabitants of Pittsburgh, opposed to the abandonment from the announcement of the plan, insisted that acts attendant to the destruction and withdrawal from Fort Pitt were criminal. They complained bitterly to General Gage of the actions of Edmonstone and his garrison in their final days in the west. As Gage relayed their complaints to Edmonstone:

They complain of the manner in which you sold not only stores but also materials of buildings, land etc., not at publick [sic] but private sale, and that the Men were more employed in pulling down Private buildings than destroying the Fortifications and that the best of the former have only been unroofed and in that state sold. I am further informed that you have not only sold the Commanding Officer's House, Barracks, etc., in such state; but also disposed of Fields, Orchard, Gardens in short every spot but the Artillery Gardens and that the Bastions are little more than defaced by throwing down a little of the brickwork . . . .

George Croghan, admitting that the removal of the King's troops from the fort "has made much noise through the Country," wrote to Gage describing the actions taken by the departed British forces "as I imagine that it may be represented differently through the Country." Croghan's letter appeared in partial defense of the actions of Edmonstone and his troops when he pointed out that everything had been done to raise as much money as possible "for the good of His Majesty's Service," from the sale of buildings and the desperately needed building supplies. Croghan contended, however, that the corners of the bastions had only been defaced by throwing down a little brick so that "they may be easily repaired if the occasion should require it." He gratuitously observed that the boats which were left for communication with the lower river installations were rotten and worthless to the Crown.

In defense of his own actions in the closing days of the withdrawal from the west, the now Major Edmonstone, upon reaching Philadelphia, dispatched a rather long and detailed explanation of his actions to his commander in chief.Replying to the charge that he sold certain buildings in private sales, Edmonstone indicated that some of the lead and shot had been sold in public sale, but asserted that he had refused to sell anything else in that manner because of a "combination" which had been formed by the local populace in an effort to secure the supplies at an unreasonably low price. Edmonstone took issue with

36 Gage to Edmonstone, Dec. 17, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
37 Croghan to Gage, Nov. 25, 1772.
the statements of George Croghan and the inhabitants of Pittsburgh that the former fortification had not been destroyed. The Major insisted that stockaded bastions were entirely leveled and that the stockades surrounding them had been pulled down. In every angle of the brick bastions, he asserted, six or eight men could enter abreast through the breaches which had been created. Edmonstone further insisted that the buildings adjacent to the three sides of the fort had been pulled down completely, while buildings adjacent to the other two sides had remained standing. His letter reported the demolition of some of the barracks and confirmed the disposition of buildings, as had been ordered, to McKee and Croghan for their personal use. Edmonstone admitted that the sale of public buildings had been accomplished in private. In his defense, he explained:

If they [the inhabitants of Pittsburgh] chose to purchase, why did they not apply? No, they expected that as soon as the troops were withdrawn, the strongest man would have the greatest part of the plunder.

In defense of the sale of other property, the former commander insisted that certain items such as fences were privately owned and had been erected by the officers and men around their individual garden plots. In concluding his defense, he characterized the remaining inhabitants of Pittsburgh in rather uncomplimentary terms, alluding to them as lawless, rascally banditry and indicating that only their avarice had occasioned their complaints to General Gage.

Whether or not Edmonstone acted other than in the best interests of his government cannot be fully ascertained. It seems certain, however, that Gage, never a friend or staunch supporter of Edmonstone, appeared satisfied with the explanations of the former commander, and virtually dismissed the complaints of the Pittburghers. On the other hand, General Gage was hardly a disinterested observer and mirrored the attitude of many British officials who were already becoming impatient with the colonists and their numerous complaints. The feelings of the General in abandoning Fort Pitt were clear as he wrote: "The thoughts of getting rid of two such expensive and troublesome Posts as Fort Chartres and Pitt give me great Pleasure." He reiterated similar sentiments in a letter written in April 1772 when he forecast: "I hope before Winter to throw that Fort [Pitt] in the Ohio."  

38 One of these buildings, The Blockhouse, is still standing at Point State Park in Downtown Pittsburgh and is maintained by the Daughters of the American Revolution.
39 Edmonstone to Gage, Dec. 24, 1772, Gage Papers, WLCL.
40 Gage to Barrington, Mar. 4, Apr. 13, 1772, in Carter, II, 600-03.
It appears that Fort Pitt was at least partially destroyed by the efforts of the garrison before their evacuation of the area in the month of November 1772. The brickwork of the ramparts had been partially destroyed and many of the less substantial buildings had been totally wrecked. Confirmation of the destruction of 1772 is given in a letter written by Lord Dunmore when he boasted to Gage in June 1774 that "we have quite rebuilt Fort Pitt again and put it in a better condition than it ever was." 41

How much of the fort actually remained in salvable condition even before the orders of the soldiery to demolish it in 1772 is open to question. Since its construction in 1759, a significant toll had been exacted upon this military outpost by frequent floods, Indian attacks and the penuriousness of British commanders in chief. As a result the once formidable wilderness bastion had become by 1772 but a token of its former power.

The withdrawal of the British troops under Captain Edmonstone in the first week of November marked the last appearance of British regulars in this area, and signalized the abandonment of an installation which had stood as the symbol of British supremacy in the upper Ohio Valley since 1758. The fourteen years of occupation by the British forces had furnished protection and attracted the nucleus of the population of the city which was to become the leading industrial center of this region within the next century.

41 Lord Dunmore to Gage, June 11, 1774, Gage Papers, WLCL.