THE ACCOUNT BOOK OF GENERAL JOHN NEVILLE Edited by JAMES H. MOON

Account of the sales of lands at Pittsburgh in the State of Pennsylvania, under the direction of Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the North Western Territory, & George Wallace Esq^{*}., pursuant to the 8th Section of the Act of Congress, passed on the 18th of May 1796, entitled "An act providing for the sale of the lands of the United States, in the Territory North West of the River Ohio, and above the mouth of the Kentucky River."...

THE process involved in the identification of a manuscript can seem analogous to a situation wherein one is given an unfamiliar piece of a jig-saw puzzle, and then is asked to reconstruct the entire puzzle solely from that piece. This is an exaggerated analogy, of course. Nevertheless, it is indicative of some of the problems attendant in research recently undertaken on a late eighteenth century manuscript of which the introductory statement is the running caption title. It was my responsibility, as sometime history cataloger for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, to provide this manuscript with an author entry, various subject and added entries, and finally to classify it. Before this could be done, however, as much as possible had to be discovered concerning the document in hand. Certain clues were immediately patent from the title.

The initial step taken in the inquiry was an examination of a work, compiled and edited by William Henry Smith,¹ in which a

 $Mr.\ Moon$ is presently employed by the University of Pittsburgh in the Hillman Library.—Editor

¹ Arthur St. Clair, The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1882), 2 vol.

reference to the Wallace² name was found. In a letter addressed to St. Clair from Oliver Wolcott³ and dated August 12, 1796,⁴ it was specified, among other things: (1) that the date of the sale was set for October 24; (2) that Wallace was appointed by the President to be a superintendent of the sale; and (3) that John Neville was to be "Receiver of moneys." The mention of Neville's name in this instance corresponded to a column in the manuscript which was headed "Amount paid to John Nevill." In another letter dated August 30, 1796,5 St. Clair acknowledged the receipt of Wolcott's letter of the 12th instant which included copies of two advertisements (not found) respecting the sale of the lands. Wolcott, supposedly, had them published, according to the law, in the only newspaper printed in the Territory at Fort Washington.

Since no further references were forthcoming from the St. Clair papers and the Library's card catalog contained no reference to the Wallace name, attention now centered on the second lead provided by the title.

An approach made through the subject heading, "U.S. Territories," revealed a work, compiled and edited by Clarence E. Smith,6 which contained several items of immediate bearing. First, the sixth section of the Act of May 18, 1796,7 specifically stated what lands were to be sold:

Be it further enacted, that immediately after the passing of this act, the Secre-Be it further enacted, that immediately after the passing of this act, the Secre-tary of the Treasury shall, in the manner hereinbefore directed, advertise for sale the *lands remaining unsold in the seven ranges*⁸ of townships, which were surveyed in pursuance of an ordinance of Congress, passed the twentieth of May, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-five, *including the lands draum by the army* by the late Secretary of War, and also those heretofore sold, but not paid for; the townships which, by the said ordinance, are directed to be sold entire, shall be offered for sale at public vendue *in Philadelphia*, under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury in quarter townships reserving the four centre so the Secretary of the Treasury, in quarter townships, reserving the four centre sections, according to the directions of this act. The townships, which by the said ordinance, are directed to be sold in sections, shall be offered for sale at

- 2 President of the first Court of Quarter-Sessions in Allegheny County. 3 Secretary of the Treasury, 1795-1800. Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Scribner, 1937), XX, 443 ff.

- Arthur St. Clair, II, 403.
 Arthur St. Clair, II, 406.
 U.S. Dept. of State, *The Territorial Papers of the U.S.* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1934), 2 vol. *7 Ibid.*, II, 555.
- 8 A map of the Seven Ranges is provided as a ready reference, see p. 355. Further information on the ordinances of 1785 and 1796 is to be found in:
 (1) Ohio Cooperative Topographic Survey, Original Ohio Land Sub-divisions (n.p., 1925), II (map), III, 38-50, 110 ff.; and (2) Payson J. Treat, The National Land System, 1785-1820 (New York: Treat, 1991) 1910), 66-100.

public vendue, in Pittsburg, under the direction of the Governor or secretary of the Western Territory, and such person as the President may specially appoint for that purpose, by sections of one mile square each, reserving the four centre sections, at Pittsburg, in the manner and under the regulations provided by this act, for the sale of fractional townships.

Secondly, the eighth section of the Act stated:

Be it further enacted, That the Secretary of the Treasury and the Governor of the Territory northwest of the river Ohio, shall, respectively, cause books to be kept, in which shall be regularly entered an account of the dates of all the sales made, the situation and numbers of the lots sold, the price at which each was struck off, the money deposited at the time of sale, and the dates of the certificates granted to the different purchasers. The Governor or Secretary of the said Territory shall, at every suspension or ajournment, for more than three days, of the sales under their direction, transmit to the Secretary of the Treasury a copy of the said books certified to have been dully examined and compared with the original.⁹

Thirdly, in a letter addressed to Wallace and dated July 15. 1796,10 Wolcott informed him that the President had designated Wallace to perform, in conjunction with the Governor of the Territory, the services mentioned in the eighth section of the Act.

Fourthly, in a letter addressed to John Neville and also dated July 15, 1796,¹¹ Wolcott informed him that he (Neville) had been appointed "Receiver of the monies," pursuant to the above-mentioned 8th section. In this same letter Wolcott stated that notice of the time of sale would be set as soon as the law would allow,12 and that the last section of the Act required a bond of security for the Receiver.13

Finally and most importantly, a second letter from Wolcott, addressed to Neville and dated October 5, 1796,14 provided specific instructions for the preparation of a book in which the sales were to be recorded. The most pertinent aspects of the letter's contents follow:

You are to cause a Book to be prepared, ruled according to the form marked (D)¹⁵ which is to contain a record of the sales. When a sale has been made, you are to receive the sum bidden one twentieth part in money, and thereupon to issue a certificate according to the form marked, A. Blank certificates of this

- 10 Ibid., II, 562. 11 Ibid., II, 563-563.
- 12 Notice of the date of sale was sent to the Governor and to the Secretary of the Territory, August 12, 1796, see p. 346.
- 13 The amount of the bond was \$30,000. For a summary of the bond, see p. 349, item 2.
- 14 U.S. Dept. of State, II, 580-582.
 15 This and the other forms (A, B, C, E, and F) have not been found. However, by the same post (Oct. 5), Wolcott in another letter not contained in the Territorial Papers but found among the Neville papers, explained their purpose. See p. 356.

⁹ U.S. Dept. of State, The Territorial Papers of the U.S. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1934), 2 vol., II, 556.

form will be transmitted which are to be carefully and accurately numbered in progressive order and filled up as sales are made by a good Clerk,¹⁶ within the marginal checks, the principal particulars of the Certificates are to be inserted. When a Certificate for a deposit agreeable to the form A has been issued, a record thereof is to be made in the Book, D. In recording Certificates of the form A — only the first eleven columns of the Book D will be used.¹⁷ If a sum officient between the set of the good between the set of the sufficient to complete a moiety of the purchase money is not paid within thirty days after the sale the deposit is to be considered as forfeited to the public and the sale void. The sum deposited is then to be extended into the twenty first column of the Book, D...¹⁸ If at the end of the thirty days a sum sufficient to complete a moiety of the purchase money shall be paid, a Certificate is to be issued according to the form, B, to be signed by the Superintendants of the sales. On issuing a Certificate according to the form B, a record is to be made in the Book D, from the twelfth to the twenty first column inclusive . . .¹⁹ If within thirty days from the time of the sale the Purchaser of a lot or section shall elect to make payment of the whole purchase money, he will be entitled to a deduction of ten p. Centum on one moiety; and on payment thereof is to receive a Certificate, agreeable to the form, C, to be signed by the Superintendants of the sales. The record to be made in the Book D in this case is . . . from the fifteenth to the twenty first columns of the said form, D. The form E is that of an account to be kept of the fees demandable under the eleventh section of the Act directing sales;²⁰ these fees become payable, on issuing the Certificates B or C, the second Column²¹ refers to the number of the Certificates on which the fees accrue. When the sales have been completed, or if they should be suspended for more than three days,22 the Superintendants of the sales are to examine the records in the Book D, and to certify the same, and are to cause a copy of the said Book with their Certificate to be transmitted to this office. With the Copy of the Book D, and the account of fees received E you are to transmit an Account Current according to the form F,23 in which will be credited agreeably to the principle proposed, all the monies which you shall have received.

Thus far, the sources which were available had provided im-

- 16 There were two Clerks, Dudley Woodbridge and Samuel Peoples, the firstnamed also being a purchaser. This fact may account for the two different styles of handwriting in the manuscript. Woodbridge and Peoples were paid \$37.50 and \$96.00 respectively for their services. The sale was conducted in the home of William Morrow for which service he was paid \$24.00. See Account Current, entries Nov. 9, Dec. 12, and Dec. 29 re-
- spectively, in Account Book, p. B-1.17 See Fig. A, p. 358. The supplied numbering of the columns is in Roman numerals. All information pertaining to any given purchaser is to be read
- across the page. 18 See Stephen Abraham entry, *et al.*, in Account Book, 2-3. 19 See Fig. B, p. 358. The information provided in Fig. A, pertaining to any given purchaser, is continued here in Fig. B and is again to be read across the page.
- 20 ". . . for each certificate for a tract containing a quarter of a township, twenty dollars; for a certificate for a tract containing six hundred and forty acres, six dollars; and for each *patent* for a quarter of a township, twenty dollars; for a section of six hundred and forty acres, six dollars: and the said fees shall be accounted for by the receivers, respectively." U.S. Dept. of State, II, 557. 21 Columns XIV and XV in Account Book?
- 22 There are three lacunas in the dating which suggest that adjournments took place. The first was a brief one of two days from Oct. 28 through 29. The second was much longer, from Nov. 8 through 24. The third was a brief one lasting from Nov. 27 through Dec. 2.
- 23 See Account Book, A-1 to B-2.

portant evidence with regard to both the author and form of the manuscript in hand. In order to complete the present research and provide further verification, an examination of all references connected with the name of Neville was made.

Fortunately, the Pennsylvania Division of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh contains a considerable bulk of Neville manuscripts. Some have been calendared, others have not. Among the manuscripts and of vital interest was the Neville Letter Book²⁴ which contained copies of his correspondence addressed to Oliver Wolcott, among others, in regard to the progress and problems of the sales. The pertinent correspondence took place between the period of mid-August 1796 to mid-February 1797. In many instances the mutilated condition of the Letter Book added to the difficulty of deciphering the handwriting. In the interest of brevity only the essence of each letter's contents follows:

Pittsburg 19 August 1796

... your letter of the 12th instant with ... came safe to hand. I have not yet sent forward my bond ... probably will not return in time to send it by this post but [it] shall be sent by the next. Your other directions respecting the Advertisements etc. shall be shortly complied with.²⁵

NLB, 12.

Handwritten copy of Neville's bond as Receiver of monies in the amount of \$30,000 and dated 23 August 1796. Other cosigners to the bond were Presley Neville, Isaac Craig, John Woods and Matthew Ernest. NLB, 12-13.

Pittsburg 14 October 1796

Sir:

Received your letter of the 5th instant with several documents and two packages of books, in which your instructions are very clear.²⁶ NLB, 17.

Pittsburg 28 October 1796

Sir :

... there has been exposed to sale ... hundred and 61

²⁴ Hereafter referred to as NLB.

²⁵ See p. 346. Evidently Wolcott also communicated with Neville concerning the advertisements, however, the letter has not been found.

²⁶ See p. 347, and pp. 356-357.

lots, out of which . . . enty nine have been sold as you will see by . . . Copy of the Book from the form D. I apprehend but few sales will be made when the fractional parts are once got over, but in this I expect the Superintendants can give you a more satisfactory account. NLB, 18.

Pittsburg November 4 1796

Sir :

The Superintendants have gone through the first 5 ranges once and in some parts twice out of which 44 lots with several fractional parts annexed have been sold. A number of people are now exploring the country. Some have returned and have purchased in townships that had been passed over, but from every account we get I believe there is a very large proportion of bad land in these seven ranges. NLB, 18.

Pittsburg 11 November 1796*

Sir:

The whole of the lots in the seven ranges has been twice exposed to sale and some three times out of which 52 lots with several fractional parts have been sold. The Superintendants have adjourned to the 1st of December, of course there will be no more sales. I have sent you a copy of what has been sold, certified by the Superintendants. It will differ in a few instances from the two other returns I sent you owing to transfers being made from the first bidder to other persons. This was by the orders of the Superintendants which has given me some trouble in making out the accounts again agreeable to the copy now sent you. NLB, 19.

Pittsburg 11 November 1796*

Sir:

In my last letter to you I informed that the Superintendants had adjourned to the 1st of December, but upon further consideration, and before they advertised the time, they fixed it to the 23d of this month, when probably a few more sales may take place, by that time I expect the purchasers will be paying off their first moiety, which will place a large sum of

^{*} One of these letters is most likely misdated. See p. 348, footnote no. 22.

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public money in my hands, and which is known to everybody . . . 27 NLB, 20.

Pittsburg 18 November 1796

Enclosed you have the return of the last sales of lands which added to the former return makes fifty six in the whole. The lands in the seven ranges have all been exposed to sale thrice and some parts of it four times. The section no. 7 in the 2nd range and 5th township sold to Stephen Abraham has become forfeited, he has called me and acknowledged he could not pay the first moiety.28 The lot or section no. 19 and 25 in the 3d range and 3d township sold to John Woods has been relinquished by the purchaser in consequence of an error in the map which places it at the mouth of the Captena when it is at the mouth of the Sunfish ... NLB. 21.

Pittsburg 8th December 1796

Sir:

Enclosed you have a certified copy of the . . . tendants which closes the sales of the lands for . . . resent, you have an account current of what monies . . . e received for deposit moieties and fees to this date. . . . reason why I did not make out weekly returns and . . . not send the [m] forward was that very little was rec^d except the twentieth part until the thirty days were nearly expired although many had the money ready at the time of purchase and offered to lodge it with me, but not as receiver, until the time by you prescribed required payment at which period they would take out their Certificate B. They soon discovered that by taking advantage of the first thirty days which gave them a year from that time would operate more favorable in their behalf and that a benefit result therefrom with respect to making the final payment. You have observed that I desired some of the purchasers to make payment of the first moiety to you at Philadelphia which I have by no means done, but the sentiment of Gov¹ St. Clair who said it made no material difference whether paid at Phila^a or here. Some of them embraced

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Sir:

²⁷ Neville concludes the letter expressing his apprehension over the possible danger of thieves and fire with so much cash on hand.
28 Recorded in Account Book as forfeited 25 November 1796.

the opportunity conceiving it most convenient for themselves. NLB. 22.

Pittsburg 12th Jan^y 179...

Pittsburg 10 Feb^y 1797

Since my last return I have received 4881 Do . . . first moieties and fees on the following lots of land. Joseph Dorsey lot no 33 — 1st range 2d to . . . 576 dollars. Isaac Craig lot no. 7 & 13 — 5th range 2d to . . . 801 dollars. John Carpenter lot no 7 — 2d range 5th tow . . . 576 dollars. Tho^s Butler lot no. 13 - 2d range 8th township 576 dollars. Rob^t Caldwell lot no. 24 - 2d range 5th township 576 dollars. John Beaver lot no. 19 - 2d range 8th township 576 dollars. Robt Caldwell lot no. 13 - 3d range 8th township 576 dollars. Rob^t Caldwell lot no. 7 — 4th range 9th township 576 dollars.²⁹ The other four lots in the last return are forfeited viz. Bazill Wells, Sam¹ Mahon, John Mc-Collough and Absolom Martin.³⁰ By changing and other . . . I have nearly 1400 Doll in bank notes which I shall send to the Treasury in a few days by the Commissary General.³¹ If I am not directed to the contrary before he sets out, the silver must continue for further orders. Would it not save some risk in sending money backward and forward to give me directions to pay the silver to the Contractor³² and the Quarter Master General.33 They at times are both in want of money. I have been obliged to lend the Contractor 4000 dollars to purchase pork. He says he expects a large draft on me soon. I hope at least he will have one for that amount . . . NLB, 27.

Sir:

I am just able to sit up to write you a few lines enclosing the Contractor's rect for 4000 dollars advanced him. I should have sent an account current of the money rec^d by

me for the sales of lands, but by an unlucky fall I got which

Sir:

²⁹ For an alphabetical list of the purchasers see p. 359.

³⁰ See Account Book, entries dated December 3d.
31 Gen. Wilkinson.
32 James O'Hara.
33 Maj. Kirkpatrick. In the correspondence dated 13 and 15 of Feb., his rank is referred to as Colonel, q.v., p. 353.

in Woller

Almitod States with } John Nomill afe a toky 20 ah - mg

broke two of my ribs has prevented me at present . . . NLB, 30.

Pittsburg 13th Feby 1797

By Cole Kirkpatrick you will receive fifteen thousand one hundred dollars in part of monies received for lands sold in the North Western Territory which please place to my credit. Abidjah Hunt and Elias Langham, and Abidjah Hunt and Dudley Woodbridge were to have paid you two thousand seven hundred and fifty nine dollars and forty cents [for] the first moieties on lots or sections no. 2 and 8 in the 3d range and 4th township and on lots no. 33 and 34 in the 6th range 1st township. This I suppose they have done, but I was not informed of it.

Samuel Meredith Esq^r I am respectfully yours John Nevill. Treasurer of the U.S. NLB, 31.

Pittsburg 15th Feby 1797

Sir:

By Cole Kirkpatrick you will receive an account of the lands sold at this place which amounts to forty thousand eight hundred and eighty six dollars and fifty eight cents and seven tenths of a cent.³⁴ I have remited by him to the Treasurer of the United States in bank notes fifteen thousands one hundred dollars. I have also sent you an account of the fees received on the last twelve lots sold. You have an account of the first fifty two. Before [long?] you will likewise receive an account of the lots forfeited by non payment of the first moieties. NLB, 32.

Briefly and in conclusion, the two-fold purpose of this paper-that of identification and verification of the manuscript-has been achieved through both primary and secondary sources.

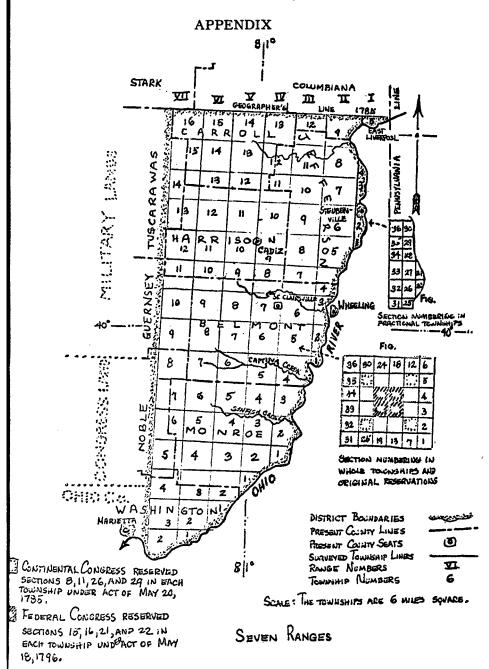
In addition the manuscript adds another distinction to the career of one of Western Pennsylvania's best known eighteenth century citizens, General John Neville.

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Sir:

³⁴ For a copy of a later Account Current, see p. 360.

A photographic copy of the manuscript is available in the Pennsylvania Division of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh for further examination and research. The original manuscript is kept in vault storage.



reasury Department Oelder 5." 1796. Fu' (Having already wrote to you very fully by this Post on the subject of the duties appointment, I have only to add thereto; that will receive here with the following dociments alluted to in my Said communication -1 ... A printed list of the lots to be sold ; signed by me and with the seal of the higadury amend thereto-1..... A Form marked D, of a Book to be prepared theft . . by you for the purpose of recording the sales. II. ... Two Books marked A. containing each Two hunded and twelve bertificates to be greed to the Burchasers of Lots on paying one twenticth part of the sum bidden. W. ... Five Books marked , B, containing each , Minchy sia birtificates to be found to purchasers of lots on paying the Moiety of the sum bidden V.... One Book marked C, containing minety sia-Contificates to be ifound to purchasers of lots, who shall within thirty days pay the whole of the sum , bidden Treasury Department October 5th 1796.

Sir,

Having already wrote to you very fully by this post on the subject of the duties of your appointment, I have only to add thereto, that you will receive herewith the following documents alluded to in my said communication-

- I.... A printed list of the lots to be sold, signed by me and with the seal of the Treasury annexed thereto.
- II.... A form marked D, of a book to be prepared & kept by you for the purpose of recording the sales.
- III . . . Two books marked A, containing each two hundred and twelve certificates to be issued to the purchasers of lots on paying one twentieth part of sum bidden.
- IV.... Five books marked B, containing each ninety six certificates to be issued to purchasers of lots on paying one moiety of the sum bidden.
- V One book marked C, containing ninety six certificates to be issued to purchasers of lots, who shall within thirty days pay the whole of the sum bidden.

bidden. 7. A Form marked E- of an itsicunt to be kept of the Free demandable under the IT Section of the act directing Sales . A Form marked E. of an account burnent for monus T. received by you - () To the convenience of Carriage only part of the Butificates which have been prepared is new and is by this convey ance - the remainder with go by. The next sort. Endored is a Letter directed to the superinten lents of the sales, which you will be pleased to deliver Cam very restrictfully Fie Jour Most Obed " Forwant

Finnal John Nevit

VI.... A form marked E of an account to be kept of the fees demandable under the 11th Section of the Act directing sales.

VII . . . A form marked F of an account current for monies received by you.

For the convenience of carriage, only a part of the certificates which have been prepared is forwarded by this conveyance. The remainder will go by the next post. Enclosed is a letter directed to the Superintendants of the sales, which you will be pleased to deliver

I am very respectfully Sir Your Most Obed¹ Servant Oliver Wolcott

General John Nevil

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	FIGURE A FIGURE B											

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PURCHASERS

In many instances a given purchaser made more than one purchase either individually or in conjunction with several others.

Name Abraham, Stephen. Addison, Alexander. Alexander, James. Barker, Abner. Beaver, John. Biggs, Benjamin. Butler, Thomas. Caldwell, Robert. Carpenter, John. Chapline, Moses. Clark, James. Craig, Isaac. Croes, Jacob. Dorsey, Joseph. Humphreys, George. Hunt, Abidjah. Langham, Elias. McCullough, John. Mahon, Samuel. Martin, Absolom. Miller, Benjamin. Ridgely, A. Robertson, David. Ross, James. Skinner, William. Tilton, John. Wells, Bazill. Wilkins, John. Woodbridge, Dudley. Woods, Andrew. Woods, Archibald. Woods, John. Woods, Robert.

Residence Ohio County, Va. Washington County, Pa. Hartford County. Pittsburgh. Allegheny County, Pa. Ohio County, Va. Pittsburgh. Ohio County, Va. North West Territory. Ohio County, Va. Maryland. Pittsburgh. Ohio County, Va. Washington County, Pa. Ohio County, Va. Cincinnati, NWT. Berkley County, Va. Ohio County, Va. Pittsburgh. Ohio County, Va. NWT. Ohio County, Va. Westmoreland County. Pittsburgh. Ohio County, Va. Washington County, NWT. Washington County, Pa. Pittsburgh. Marietta, NWT. Ohio County, Va. Ohio County, Va. Pittsburgh. Ohio County, Va.

The Almited Mates in Account. Sittsburg in Sensylvania, funsuant to the act. Acts providing for the sales of the Lands of the Minite the mouth of Reatucky times" 1796 Do bash para Budley Monduidge for sumices 23 " halances to the paid in Theladelphia by 37. Alex: Addison esq. to complete final moin " bolance to be para in Thiladolphia by 1076 275 Abijah Hunti to complete della " bash paid James Chambers for sensices as caion pordens of this Superintendante -3 6. " pash for a blank pook and seven quie of papers for the purposes of Containing and account of public sales the for services as Clock " bash faid Milliam Moreow for the use of his house, Candles & fire at the sale f public Lands forder Superintendants ... bash pard the Treasurer, by the hands of Honble James Rofs 1.000 bash advanced Fames Ohana Contractor as Phis Receipti forwarded 4.000 bash forwarded by Majon Histopatrick 15.100 bash admander formal Mithinson forder of the Treasurer, of the United States . 15:00 To talance in the hands of John nevill as bontra 50.92 Dollars

1. Nonille, Receiver of manies for Lands sold at. profised, on the 18th day of May 1790. entitled "Ann in the Senaitory, North West of the Ainen Ohio, and above By Deposite at the fine of sales being the amounts of one fiventielly parts of the purchase money as Polumon mached A. in the accounts of sales personith sont. By amounts of payments to complete the first mointy of the purchase money as Holumon 5.521 mached B. in the accounts of sales herewith 45.0 By anorients of Fors received for Contificates of honewith sonth 330 , 911. Novimber 1797) Nolls 50 G2G 18 k