

## PICKAWILLANY: FRENCH MILITARY POWER VERSUS BRITISH ECONOMICS

R. DAVID EDMUNDS

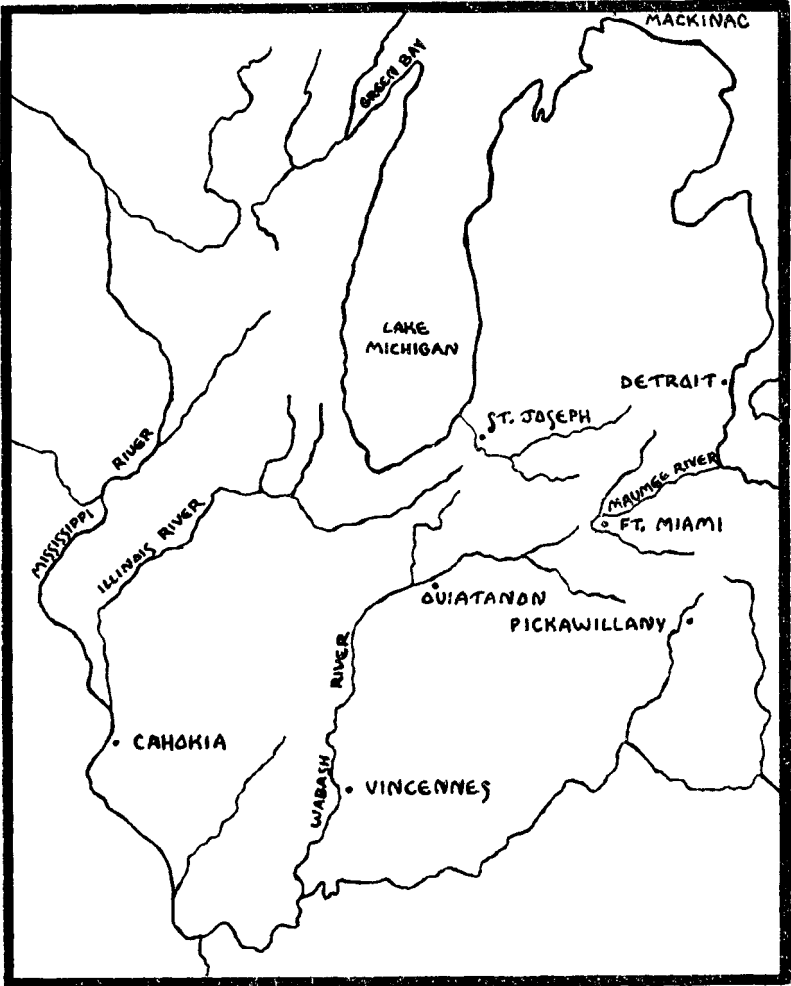
**I**N the two decades preceding the French and Indian War, Great Britain and France engaged in a struggle for the allegiance of the Indian tribes of the Ohio Valley. This contest reflected the strengths and weaknesses of both sides. Although the region north of the Ohio and west of the Appalachians was nominally controlled by France, tribes living within this area were the targets of British economic penetration. Since British traders could furnish the Indians with large quantities of relatively inexpensive trade goods, such traders became the vanguard of British political aspirations in the region. Colonial officials in Pennsylvania and Virginia believed that once the tribes were drawn within the British trade network, they soon would develop political ties to the British colonies.

New France was unable to meet this challenge upon British terms. French trade goods were consistently more expensive than were those of the British, and French traders had difficulty in supplying the growing demands for trade goods among the tribes of Ohio and Indiana. To counter the British economic offensive, the French relied upon their military strength in the west. French military posts controlled the navigable waterways between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, and New France maintained close political and military ties with the powerful tribes of the Detroit region. The French depended upon the Michigan tribes — the Ottawas, Potawatomis, and Chippewas — for assistance in preserving order in the west. These tribesmen also aided the French in keeping other Indians loyal to New France and in repulsing the growing British trade offensive in the Ohio Valley.

Yet the French were hard pressed to maintain their position in western Ohio. During 1747, bands of Hurons and Miamis near the western end of Lake Erie rose in revolt and attacked French outposts on the Maumee River and near Detroit. Influenced by British traders,

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Mr. Edmunds received his Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma and is currently on a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for the History of the American Indian at the Newberry Library in Chicago.—Editor



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these Indians then fled eastward into Ohio where they established new villages near modern Sandusky and on the Miami River. Although the Hurons soon deserted their village near Sandusky and either returned to the French or fled to eastern Ohio, Pickawillany, the Miami village on the Miami River, remained outside French control. Led by a Piankashaw chief, La Demoiselle, the dissident Miamis refused French overtures to return to the Maumee.<sup>1</sup>

French officials realized that British traders had instigated the recent uprising, and they feared that Pickawillany would become a center of British intrigue in the west. French fears were well founded. La Demoiselle had been nicknamed "Old Britain" because of his previous affinity for British trade, and the old chief had picked the location of his new village with British interests in mind. Pickawillany was located on the west bank of the Miami River, opposite the mouth of Loramie Creek, near the modern town of Piqua, Ohio. The village site marked the convergence of several trading trails in western Ohio and was accessible to both British traders and western tribesmen.<sup>2</sup>

La Demoiselle quickly confirmed the French apprehensions. He soon contacted pro-British Indians to the east, and in May 1748 the Iroquois notified British officials that the newly arrived band of Miamis wished to be admitted into the realm of British trade and protection. The request struck a responsive chord among British agents in Pennsylvania. In Philadelphia, British officials were anxious to maintain the good will of the tribes upon their western border. Earlier in the spring, agents from Pennsylvania had distributed presents among the Shawnees and Delawares of eastern Ohio and had encouraged the governments of Maryland and Virginia to do the same. Therefore, officials in Pennsylvania were receptive to the Miami appeal. They were also pleased on June 23, 1748, when they received

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1 Extracts from the diary of events for the year 1747 sent by the governor and intendant of New France to the French minister, in E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, 1856-87), 10: 137-45 (hereafter cited as *N.Y. Col. Docs.*). W. Neil Franklin, in "Pennsylvania-Virginia Rivalry for the Indian Trade of the Ohio Valley," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20 (Mar. 1934): 463-80, discusses early British economic penetration of the region. A brief summary of the Huron and Miami revolt of 1747-48 can be found in Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail*, 2 vols. (New York, 1911), 2: 165-67, and in Bert Anson, *The Miami Indians* (Norman, Okla., 1970), 42-43.

2 "Loramie and Pickawillany," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications*, 34 vols. (Columbus, Ohio, 1887-1925) 17: 12 (hereafter cited as *Ohio Publications*). Kenneth P. Bailey, *The Ohio Company of Virginia* (Glendale, Calif., 1939), 92, n. 247.

a message from the Shawnees and Iroquois that these Indians were bringing some Miami chiefs from the west.<sup>3</sup>

Governor James Hamilton prepared to receive the delegation in Philadelphia. On July 16, however, he was informed that the Indians believed rumors that an epidemic had erupted in that city. The tribesmen stated that they would go no farther than Lancaster. Hamilton believed the Miamis to be "a very considerable Nation . . . which might serve of extraordinary Service, . . . a Nation of vast Importance to the French on the Lakes." Therefore, he instructed his agents to go to the Indians and to: "Enquire into the Temper and Number of Twightwees . . . whether they are really and sincerely come off from the French, . . . and in receiving any proposals from them govern Yourselves accordingly."<sup>4</sup>

The commissioners — Benjamin Shoemaker, Thomas Hopkinson, Joseph Turner, and William Logan — met with the Indians at the courthouse in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, on July 19, 1748. The negotiations lasted five days. Among the fifty-five Indians present were warriors from the Miamis, Iroquois, Delawares, Shawnees, and Nanticokes. The Miamis had delegated Scarouady, an Oneida chief, to speak for them, but he had been injured in an accident en route to Lancaster and was unable to attend the proceedings. They therefore agreed to allow Andrew Montour, a British interpreter, to act as their spokesman.<sup>5</sup>

The Miami delegation, speaking through Montour, stated that they first had requested the Iroquois to intercede for them in the

3 Speech by the Six Nations to George Croghan, May 2, 1748, in *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, vol. 5 of *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 17 vols. (Harrisburg, 1838-53), 288 (hereafter cited as *Pa. Col. Recs.*). Also see Message from the President and Council to the Assembly, May 17, 1748, in *Ibid.*, 230, and Minutes of the Provincial Council, June 23, 1748, in *Ibid.*, 289-90. British traders had penetrated the Shawnees and Delawares earlier in the century. See William A. Hunter, "Traders on the Ohio: 1730," *WPHM* 35 (June 1952) : 85-92, and Paul A. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, Friend to Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia, 1945). Weiser was an interpreter employed by Pennsylvania.

4 Minutes of the Provincial Council, June 23, 1748, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5 : 289-90; Minutes of the Provincial Council, July 16, 1748, in *Ibid.*, 298; Instructions to Benjamin Shoemaker, Joseph Turner, Thomas Hopkinson, and William Logan, esqrs., Commissrs to treat with certain Indians now at Lancaster, in *Ibid.*, 300. The British and the Iroquois called the Miamis the Twightwees. For a detailed discussion of the politics behind British attempts to secure alliances with the western tribes, see Edward G. Everett, "Pennsylvania's Indian Diplomacy, 1747-1753," *WPHM* 44 (Sept. 1961) : 241-56.

5 Report of a Treaty at the Court House in Lancaster, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5 : 307-8.

autumn of 1747, but the Iroquois had advised them to wait until the following spring. At that time the Miamis again asked the Iroquois to present them to the British. The Miamis also informed the commissioners that they had sent messages to other British-allied tribes with assurances of their sincere desire to join the pro-British alliance. The Miami delegates then presented a pipe to the commissioners and requested admittance into the realm of British friendship. They reported that they spoke for twelve villages of Indians, living west of Pickawillany, who were also interested in leaving the French and joining the British.<sup>6</sup>

The commissioners thanked the other tribesmen for conducting the Miamis to Lancaster and assured the Miamis that they would be admitted into the British alliance. The commissioners presented the Miamis with a double belt of wampum and admonished them to "no more think of Onontio and his children." The British also informed the Miamis that all their western allies would be welcome in the British camp and requested informaton about such tribesmen.<sup>7</sup>

A formal treaty was signed on July 23, 1748, and after gifts were distributed to the Miamis, the proceedings were adjourned. The British were elated over their success in enlisting the allegiance of La Demoiselle's band. They believed that their new allies not only would increase their trade but would provide a base for further British penetration of the Ohio Valley. In describing the treaty to the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly, Governor Hamilton boasted:

This must necessarily strengthen the English Interest in General among the Indians, contribute greatly to the security of our Inhabitants in time of War, and tend considerably to the enlarging of our Indian Trade, especially as we are assured by the Twightwee Deputies that not less than twelve towns in their neighborhood are equally desirous with them to become our Allies, and to settle in Correspondence with us . . . . Should this be effected, besides the advantages already mentioned the Intercourse between the French at Canada and the Mississippi would be greatly interrupted . . . .<sup>8</sup>

The British trade offensive expanded according to Hamilton's predictions. British traders, envisioning a lucrative growth in profits, increased their economic penetration of Ohio. Miami warriors also journeyed to eastern posts to market their furs to the colonists. In the months following the treaty at Lancaster, Indians from Pickawillany traveled as far east as Oswego, the British post in New York, to

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6 *Ibid.*, 308-10.

7 *Ibid.*, 313-14.

8 A Message from the President and Council to the Assembly, in *Ibid.*, 329-30.

barter their pelts for trade goods.<sup>9</sup>

The growing British threat in Ohio did not go unnoticed by the French. Roland Michel Barrin, Marquis de La Galissoniere, the acting governor-general of New France, was anxious to reassert the French claim to the Ohio Valley and to sever the growing ties between the British and the Miamis at Pickawillany. During the spring of 1748, he assembled a force of French and Indians at La Chine, a village on the St. Lawrence River. La Galissoniere planned to send this party to Pickawillany to force the Miamis to return to French hegemony. On June 15, 1749, the French force, under the command of Pierre Joseph Céloron, set out for the Ohio Valley.<sup>10</sup>

Traveling the St. Lawrence, Céloron's party of 265 men crossed Lake Ontario and the eastern end of Lake Erie. They then portaged to the headwaters of the Allegheny River and descended this stream to its juncture with the Monongahela. Turning into the Ohio, they stopped at Logstown, a village containing Indians from many tribes and located approximately eighteen miles downstream from the mouth of the Monongahela.

Céloron had been coolly received by other Indians during his descent of the Allegheny. He experienced a similar reception at Logstown. Although the Indians assured him of their good will, he cautiously kept his men alerted against a possible attack. Advising the Indians at Logstown to settle their accounts with the British, "for we will not suffer them to come here after this winter," Céloron boasted that he was leaving, "in order to whip home some of our children, that is the Twichtwees and Wayundotts."<sup>11</sup>

Céloron left Logstown on August 16, 1749. Journeying down the Ohio, he spoke with other Indians and buried several lead plates which bore inscriptions claiming the Ohio Valley for France. At the mouth of the Little Miami River, Céloron encountered a few lodges of Miamis who joined him on his journey up the Miami River to Pickawillany.<sup>12</sup>

The French party arrived at La Demoiselle's village on September 13. News of the French approach had preceded them, and most of the

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<sup>9</sup> Return of the Western Tribes who traded at Oswego, August 20, 1749, in *N.Y. Col. Docs.*, 6: 538; Report of John Lindsay, June 25, 1751, in Alexander Flick et al., eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 13 vols. (Albany, 1921-62), 9: 82.

<sup>10</sup> A. A. Lambing, ed., "Céloron's Journal," *Ohio Publications* 29: 336.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 325-59; Speech of a French Officer to the Ohio Indians, in William H. Egle et al., eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd ser., 19 vols. (Harrisburg, 1877-96), 6: 66 (hereafter cited as *Pa. Archives*).

<sup>12</sup> Lambing, 359-71.

British traders who had been active at the village had fled. Céloron found only two such individuals in the Miami village. He immediately ordered them to leave the camp.<sup>13</sup>

Although Céloron was able to overawe the British traders, he made little impression upon the Miamis. To the Frenchman's dismay, he found that the population of the village had increased and that his party was insufficient to force the Miamis to return to the headwaters of the Maumee. Therefore, Céloron attempted to persuade the Miamis to move back to their old villages in Indiana. He reminded them of their ancestors buried in Indiana "who call you back to your village" and promised them that the French had forgiven their past actions. La Demoiselle replied that the Miamis had "none other but good answers" for the French. He assured the French commander that the Miamis would return, but he stated that they could not possibly leave Pickawillany until the following spring. Céloron was dubious of such procrastination and ended the conference by warning the Miamis:

Be faithful then to your promise. You have assured him [the French governor-general] of this, because he is much stronger than you, and if you be wanting to it, fear the resentment of a father, who has only too much reason to be angry with you, and has offered you the means of regaining his favor.<sup>14</sup>

Céloron then attempted to persuade La Demoiselle to accompany him to the Maumee to prepare for the return of the village during the next spring. He was unsuccessful. The chief was determined to remain at Pickawillany. On September 20, the French party left the Miamis and started for the Maumee. Céloron's disillusionment over the failure of his mission was evident. He later commented:

All that I can say is, that the nations of these localities are very badly disposed towards the French, and are entirely devoted to the English . . . . If our traders were sent there to traffic, they could not sell their merchandise at the same price as the English sell theirs, on account of the many expenses they are obliged to incur.<sup>15</sup>

Céloron's appraisal was correct. Less than two months after the French had left Pickawillany, the Miamis warmly received a large number of British traders into their village. Led by George Croghan, a trader and Indian agent employed by Pennsylvania, the British

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 372.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 372-76.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Pierre Boncompagni, *Account of the Voyage on the Beautiful River in 1749, Under the Direction of Monsieur de Céloron*, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland, 1897-1901), 59: 187; Randolph C. Downes, *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio* (Pittsburgh, 1940), 53-54.

quickly erected a fort and trading post at the Miami village and entered into a brisk trade with the Indians in the area.<sup>16</sup>

French officials in the west realized that their show of military strength had failed. La Demoiselle had no intention of returning to his former home and sent runners to other tribes urging them to leave the French and to join him at Pickawillany. The French futilely ordered La Demoiselle to send the British away and offered a reward for Croghan's scalp, but the Miami chief was firmly committed to the British and refused the French demands.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the British trade offensive increased. During the spring of 1750, La Demoiselle accelerated his attempts to recruit Indians from other villages. Miamis from Pickawillany, advocating British trade goods and political alliances, ranged as far west as Illinois. Other runners were sent to the Weas, Piankashaws, Kickapoos, and Mascoutens in the Wabash Valley and to several tribes in Michigan.<sup>18</sup>

The Piankashaws and Weas were particularly susceptible to La Demoiselle's machinations. Both tribes had been allied long with the Miamis, and both had nurtured recent grievances against the French. The Piankashaws had been ravaged by an epidemic during the winter of 1749-1750, and they superstitiously blamed their suffering upon French "bad medicine." A delegation of Wea chiefs, just returned from Canada, complained that they had been insulted by French officials. In May 1750, the French commander at Fort Miamis learned that 300 Piankashaws and Weas, led by the Wea chief Le Comte, had left the Wabash Valley to visit Pickawillany.<sup>19</sup>

16 Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1959), 30-31.

17 Report by Charles de Raymond to Pierre Jacques de Taffanel, Marquis de La Jonquiere, October 11, 1749, Theodore Pease and Ernestine Jenison, eds., *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years War, 1747-1755*. Vol. 29 of *The Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, 34 vols. (Springfield, Ill., 1903), 149 (hereafter cited as *Illinois Hist. Colls.*). Raymond was the French commander at Ft. Miamis. La Jonquiere was governor of New France from 1749 to 1752. Also see Wainwright, 31.

18 Benoist de St. Cler, Commandant of the Illinois, to Raymond, February 2, 1750, in Reuben G. Thwaites et al., eds., *The Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 25 vols. (Madison, Wisc., 1854-), 18: 58-59 (hereafter cited as *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*). Also see Reports to Raymond, March-April 1750, in *Illinois Hist. Colls.*, 29: 169; Report of Le Pian to Raymond, May 1750, in *Ibid.*, 197-200. Le Pian was a Miami who had lived at Pickawillany.

19 Report of the Nephew of the Commandant at Ouiatanon, April 2, 1750, in *Illinois Hist. Colls.*, 29: 174-75; Raymond to La Jonquiere, May 22, 1750, in *ibid.*, 207-11. Also see Report of Le Pian, in Frances Krauskopf, ed., *Ouiatanon Documents* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1955), 215.



The French reacted to the growing British threat by intercepting British traders as they traveled between Pickawillany and Pennsylvania. In November 1749, they began to seize British traders found operating in territory claimed by New France. Throughout the following months they again sent repeated warnings to La Demoiselle to eject the British traders from his village. During the summer of 1750, the French encouraged loyal Indians to roam the Ohio Country and to attack any British traders they should encounter. Jean Coeur, a French agent, was sent to Ohio to distribute gifts and plead for the Miamis to return. Yet, La Demoiselle remained implacable, and the British remained at Pickawillany.<sup>20</sup>

Reports of the French counteroffensive soon filtered back into the British colonies. The Miamis informed Governor Hamilton that they had been approached by the French but that they had refused to accept the French presents. Hamilton, while praising the Miamis for their professed fidelity, became increasingly concerned about their ability to withstand the continuing French pressure. In addressing the provincial assembly, he pointed out: "I am really of the opinion that since so large an addition is made to the Trade of the Province by their Means, it would be for his Majesties as well as the Countries Service if a small Present was sent by some Persons of Character who go to trade in those Parts." The assembly reacted favorably, and in November 1750 George Croghan was dispatched to the Ohio country with gifts for the Miamis, Shawnees, and Delawares.<sup>21</sup>

Croghan, Andrew Montour, and Christopher Gist, a trader employed by the Ohio Company of Virginia, journeyed to Pickawillany via the Shawnee towns on the Scioto. They arrived at La Demoiselle's village on February 17, 1751. The British agents found that Pickawillany's population was growing and that it had become one of the largest villages in Ohio. After meeting with the Miami leaders, Croghan spent a day unloading trade goods and supervising the re-

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20 Wainwright, 30; William Trent to the Secretary of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, August 18, 1750, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 461-62; Governor Clinton to Governor Hamilton, September 3, 1750, in *Ibid.*, 455. William Trent was a British trader. George Clinton served as governor of New York from 1743-53.

21 Message from the Governor to the Assembly, August 8, 1750, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 455; *George Croghan, A Selection of Letters and Journals Relating to Tours into the Western Country*, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, 33 vols. (Cleveland, 1904-7), 1: 90.

pair of the British stockade which had been built in the village.<sup>22</sup>

On February 21, a delegation of Weas and Piankashaws arrived from the Wabash Valley. Croghan and the British agents met with them and presented them with gifts of British trade goods. Croghan then invited the Weas and Piankashaws to enter the British political alliance. After hearing the traders' proposals, the Wabash Indians asked for time to consider their reply, and the conference adjourned for several days. Before the Weas and Piankashaws could deliver their answer, the entire village was thrown into a panic by the reported approach of over four-hundred French and allied Indians. It was soon learned, however, that the approaching party contained only four Ottawas, who had come to plead the French cause.<sup>23</sup>

The four Ottawas arrived on February 24. Carrying a French flag, they marched into the village and presented brandy and tobacco to the Miamis. The Ottawas then pleaded with the Miamis to return to the French and warned La Demoiselle that the French had become impatient and "would send for Them no more." Two days later, the Miamis delivered their formal reply. Speaking sternly, the Miami spokesman rebuked the Ottawas, reminding them of their own former conflicts with the French. Giving the Ottawas a string of black wampum, he stated:

You have often desired We should go Home to You, but I tell You it is not our home, for We . . . have been taken by the Hand by our Brothers the English, and by the six Nations, and the Delawares, Shannoahs and Wyendotts . . . and as You threaten us with War in the Spring, We tell You if You are angry, We are ready to receive You, and resolve to die here before We will go to You.

On the following day the Ottawas returned to the French.<sup>24</sup>

Several days later, on March 1, the British agents signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Weas and Piankashaws who had arrived during February. Croghan then invited the Miamis to attend a great council to be held at Logstown later in the spring. The Miamis assured him that they would leave for Logstown as soon as they had finished planting their corn. They then requested that a blacksmith be sent to live at Pickawillany to "mend our guns and hatchets." On

22 William Darlington, ed., *Christopher Gist's Journals* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 47-49. Gist was a British trader. Reports describing the population of Pickawillany during this period vary considerably in their appraisal of its size. Gist estimated that there were over 400 families living in the village, while other British observers list no more than 200 fighting men. See *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*, 18: 113, n. 62.

23 Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement* (Cleveland, 1926), 73; Darlington, 50.

24 Darlington, 52-53.

March 2, 1751, the party of British agents left the Miami village for the east.<sup>25</sup>

The council at Logstown, held in May 1751, was attended by delegations from the Miamis, Iroquois, Shawnees, Delawares, and Wyandots. Croghan distributed goods valued at over £700 to the Indians. Both the British and the Indians pledged their friendship to each other, and the tribes from Ohio vowed to follow the pro-British policies of the Iroquois.<sup>26</sup>

While the British were distributing presents to their new allies, the French decided to adopt stronger military measures against the Miamis. Although they still continued to seize British traders, the French spent the early months of 1751 planning a major expedition against La Demoiselle's village. During the following summer, a force of French and Indians left Canada for the Ohio country. They were to rendezvous at Detroit, join a larger party of Indians under C eloron, who had assumed command of that post, and then to march upon Pickawillany. At the Miami village they were to demand the surrender of the British and then erect a French fortress.<sup>27</sup>

The plan failed. The Indians at Detroit refused to accompany the expedition. They complained that there were too few Frenchmen in the party and that the proposed force did not have sufficient strength to attack the Miami village. The Indians preferred to wait until the following spring, when they believed their chance for success would be much greater. C eloron, therefore, decided to remain at Detroit.<sup>28</sup>

The Marquis de La Jonquiere, the newly appointed governor-general of New France, was furious over C eloron's inaction. He or-

25 Minutes of the Provincial Council, May 7, 1751, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 522-24.

This treaty never was ratified by the Pennsylvania Assembly. They believed that Croghan had acted unwisely and without proper authorization. See Volwiler, 73. Also see Darlington, 54-55.

26 Instructions to George Croghan and Andrew Montour, April 25, 1751, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 518-19; "A treaty with the Indians of the Six Nations, Delawares, Shawonese, Owendatts, and Twilightwees," in *Ibid.*, 533-39.

27 Lieutenant Lindsay's Report of Indian News, Oswego, May 5, 1751, in *Pa. Archives*, 2nd ser., 6: 88; The Examination of Morris Turner and Ralph Kilgore, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 482-84; Benjamin Stoddard to Governor Hamilton, July 19, 1751, in *Ibid.*, 549-50. Turner and Kilgore were two English traders captured by the French, who later escaped. Lieutenant Stoddard was a British military officer stationed at Fort Oswego.

28 Charles Le Moyne, Baron de Longueuil, to the French Minister, April 21, 1752, in *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*, 18: 107. Longueuil was governor at Montreal. He later became acting governor of New France. In "C eloron de Blainville in French Expansion in the Ohio Valley," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 9 (Mar. 1923): 302-19, George A. Wood describes C eloron's early military career and speculates upon his indecision at Detroit in 1751.

dered the commander to reassemble the Indians and march upon Pickawillany as soon as possible. La Jonquiere then wrote to officials in France denouncing Céloron and urging that he be removed from his command.<sup>29</sup>

Marie Francois Picote, Sieur de Bellestre, who had led the French force from Canada, was still determined to march upon Pickawillany. Although Céloron and most of the Indians at Detroit refused to join him, Bellestre led a raiding party of seventeen warriors against the Miami village. Ironically, upon their arrival at Pickawillany, Bellestre's force found the town practically deserted. The Miamis were absent on their autumn hunt. The French force was too small to attack the stockade, but they seized some British traders encountered in the village and killed a Miami man and woman. Yet the raid did not strengthen the French position in the west. A French official admitted:

The removal of the English traders, whose goods were confiscated and even pillaged by our savages, cannot but have had a good effect by disgruntling the other traders through fear of the same fate. But the murder of the two Miamis may have unfortunate results; and, in fact, I have heard that it has already caused great commotion among the rebellious nations.<sup>30</sup>

The French-inspired raid upon Pickawillany only strengthened the Miamis' ties with the British. In January 1752, the Miamis held a war council with Indians from other British-allied tribes. At this conference, three captured French soldiers were killed, and another had his ears cut off before he was sent to Canada as a warning to the governor-general. Other Miami-French clashes occurred, and the Shawnees informed the British that they planned to join the Miamis and carry the war to New France.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, the British trade offensive continued to permeate the French-allied tribes of the Wabash and Illinois valleys. Official French reports from these areas contained pessimistic appraisals of French ability to suppress the spreading rebellion. Francois Marchand, Sieur de Ligneris, the French commander at Ouiatanon on the central Wabash, stated that the Piankashaws of the Vermillion, a band that

29 La Jonquiere to Céloron, October 1, 1752, in *Illinois Hist. Colls.*, 29: 381; La Jonquiere to Antoine-Louis Rouille Comte de Jouy, October 29, 1751, in *Ibid.*, 417-19. Rouille was minister of marine.

30 La Jonquiere to Rouille, October 29, 1751, in *Illinois Hist. Colls.*, 29: 420-21; French Minister to DuQuesne, May 15, 1752, in *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*, 18: 119.

31 Copy of a Letter from Martin Kellogg to Colonel William Johnson, April 13, 1752, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 574; Message to the Governor from the Shawnees, February 8, 1752, in *Ibid.*, 569. Kellogg was an interpreter in the British Indian Service.

had previously remained loyal, had finally succumbed to the British intrigue. Armed with British muskets, during the winter of 1751-1752 they attacked French travelers upon the Wabash, killing nine Frenchmen and two slaves. The Weas refused to visit French posts, and the French accused them of guiding British traders into the Lower Ohio Valley. Even the St. Joseph Potawatomis were reported to have assured pro-British Indians that they were sympathetic to the Miamis at Pickawillany, and informants reported to Ligneris that the Illinois, Osages, and Piankashaws were planning a great anti-French council. To add to the French misfortune, smallpox swept the Wabash Valley during the winter of 1751-1752, killing many influential Miamis who had remained loyal to France.<sup>32</sup>

French officials were well aware that their position was deteriorating. After the failure of Bellestre's raid, Governor-General La Jonquiere began making preparations for a similar expedition in 1752. In March 1752, however, La Jonquiere died, and the Baron de Longueuil became the acting governor-general of New France. Longueuil was anxious to implement his predecessor's plans. He also was anxious that the plans succeed. In April, British agents at Oswego reported that the French were planning another expedition against Pickawillany. Governor Hamilton in Philadelphia discounted the information. He stated that he had received no other reports of such activities and lamented that his Quaker-dominated assembly would not send arms to the Miamis if such reports were confirmed.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately for the Indians at Pickawillany, the information from Oswego was correct. On June 21, 1752, while many of the Miami warriors were away hunting, a force of 240 French and Indians attacked La Demoiselle's village. Led by Charles Langlade, a half-blood French militia officer from the Mackinac region, the attacking force fell upon the village so suddenly that many Miami women were captured in their cornfields. Other Indians fled into the main stockade and prepared to defend themselves.<sup>34</sup>

Not all the British reached the fort. Three traders were cut off

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32 La Jonquiere to French Minister, September 25, 1751, in *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*, 18: 92; Longueuil to the French Minister, April 21, 1752, in *Ibid.*, 108-13.

33 John Mills to William Johnson, April 27, 1752, in *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 573-74; Hamilton to Clinton, June 11, 1752, in *Ibid.*, 575. Lieutenant Mills was the British commander at Oswego. Robert L. D. Davison, in *War Comes to Quaker Pennsylvania, 1682-1756* (New York, 1957), discusses Quaker reticence to furnish arms to their western Indian allies.

34 *Wisconsin Hist. Colls.*, 18: 128-29, n. 67.

and sought sanctuary in a cabin near the stockade walls. Their comrades shouted encouragement to them, and the three men were amply supplied with arms and ammunition, but they refused to defend themselves. They surrendered the cabin without firing a shot. Fearing for their lives, these men readily informed the French that there were only twenty fighting men in the nearby stockade. The French and Indians, therefore, occupied cabins near the fort and poured a steady fire upon the British and Miami defenders.<sup>35</sup>

Yet the Miamis and their allies were well protected by the fort, and the intruders' gunfire met with only limited success. Therefore, the French informed the Miamis that if they would surrender the British, the invaders would withdraw from their village. Inside the stockade, the defenders agreed to the proposal. Some of their men had been wounded, and they already had exhausted their water supply. They answered that they would surrender the fort and all trade goods if the French and Indians promised not to harm the traders. The French agreed.<sup>36</sup>

Both sides failed to honor the agreement. There were seven traders in the fort. The Miamis surrendered five of them. The other two, Thomas Burney and Andrew McBryer, were hidden inside the fort by the Miamis. They later fled and brought news of the attack to the British.<sup>37</sup>

The French and Indians reneged upon their guarantee of the traders' safety. One of the white men in the fort had been wounded in the stomach. The French Indians seized him, stabbed him to death, took his scalp, and then cut out his heart and ate it.<sup>38</sup>

La Demoiselle suffered a similar fate. He had taken refuge in the fort with the traders. The French party believed him to be the primary agent in the British trade offensive. He too was killed, and his body boiled and eaten before his cowed tribesmen.<sup>39</sup>

Gathering up British trade goods valued at £3000, the French and Indians marched for Detroit. They took the four captured traders with them. Reports of the casualties sustained by the British and Miamis vary, but the two traders who had been hidden in the fort, and who later fled to the east, stated that only six people were killed:

35 William Trent, *Journal of Captain William Trent*, ed. by Alfred T. Goodman (Cincinnati, 1871), 87.

36 *Ibid.*, 86-87; Sewell Elias Slick, *William Trent and the West* (Harrisburg, 1947), 19-20.

37 Trent, 86-87.

38 *Ibid.*, 87-88.

39 *Ibid.*, 89.

La Demoiselle, the British trader, and four pro-British Indians.<sup>40</sup>

Most of the Miamis evidently went with Langlade. A British party led by William Trent, a trader, visited Pickawillany a month after the attack and found the village deserted. A few of the Miamis, including La Demoiselle's wife and son, sought sanctuary among the Shawnee towns on the Scioto, but the majority of La Demoiselle's followers returned to French areas in the west.<sup>41</sup>

After Langlade's raid, the British trade offensive temporarily collapsed. By October 1752, the Weas and Piankashaws, "making great protestation of fidelity," reappeared at their old homes on the Wabash. The British attempted to reopen their offensive with offers of gifts to the Miamis, but they were unsuccessful. The prodigal Miamis had returned home.<sup>42</sup>

Many circumstances contributed to the eventual failure of the British economic offensive. Three closely related factors, however, accounted for the success of French arms. Although the French considered Pickawillany to be beyond the limits of their effective political control, the Miami village still was much closer to the French than to the British. Fort Miamis on the Maumee lay only 75 miles northwest from Pickawillany, and Detroit was within 150 miles of La Demoiselle's village.

In contrast, British military posts had not crossed the Appalachians and were over 300 miles from the Miami village. British officials, therefore, were forced to use economic means to further their westward expansion. British trade goods were considerably less expensive than those of the French, and British traders were lavish in their promises of political alliances. As long as the struggle for Indian loyalty was waged with trade goods or British promises and French threats, the British were successful. However, when the French abandoned threats and utilized their full military power in the west, the British were forced to retreat. Their promises of alliances

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40 Emily J. Blasingham, "The Miami Prior to the French and Indian War," *Ethnohistory* 2 (Winter 1955): 6. Also see Trent, 88. Different accounts of this action give varying estimates of the casualties incurred. Thomas Burney, one of the two traders who hid in the fort, first listed the casualties as six killed. He later stated that fifteen people had been slain in the raid. See *Pa. Col. Recs.*, 5: 599. Volwiler, Croghan's biographer, who evidently took his figures from contemporary newspaper accounts, listed the casualties as thirty. See Volwiler, 79.

41 Blasingham, 6.

42 Report by Francois-Marie Le Marchand de Ligneris, October 3, 1752, in Krauskopf, 218-19; Blasingham, 7. De Ligneris was the French commander at Ouiatanon on the central Wabash.

and protection could not be honored at such a distance. Finally, the death of La Demoiselle not only deprived the British of their primary spokesman among the western tribes, it also demonstrated their inability to protect their allies. Although the Indians had enjoyed British trade goods, they were more respectful of French military power. With few exceptions, they remained loyal to the French until after the French and Indian War.