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The Indians delivering up the English Captives to Colonel Bouquet, near his Camp at the Forks of Muskingum in North America in the year 1764.

Gettysburg Historical Journal

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Letter from the Editors

The *Gettysburg Historical Journal* embodies the History Department's dedication to diverse learning and excellence in academics. Each year, the *Journal* publishes the top student work in a range of topics across the spectrum of academic disciplines with different methodological approaches to the study of history. In the words of Marc Bloch, author of *The Historian's Craft*, "history is neither watchmaking nor cabinet construction. It is an endeavor toward better understanding." In the spirit of this maxim, our authors strive to elucidate the many facets of human societies and cultures. Whether these young scholars' research is focused on politics, religion, economics, environmental history, or women, gender, and sexuality studies, and the editorial staff is consistently proud of the diverse subject matter we select for publication.

With the assistance of the *Cupola*, Gettysburg College's online research repository, and the distinguished college faculty, our authors' work has received both serious scholarly attention and national accolades. Past authors have also gone on to publish follow-up work in refereed journals, and to present their work at undergraduate and professional conferences. *The Historical Journal* is primarily a student-run organization, and as such, it provides undergraduate students with a unique opportunity to gain valuable experience reviewing, editing, and organizing academic articles for publication. In all cases, authors and editors have also

had the opportunity to apply these skills to their future careers, or to their work as graduate students.

This fifteenth edition of the *Historical Journal* continues the tradition of scholarly rigor of past volumes, while broadening both the diversity of historical perspectives and the methodologies employed by each author. Each of the following works selected for this edition exemplifies the varied interests of the History students at Gettysburg College. In her article, "'Where We May Oftener Converse Together': Translation of Written and Spoken Communication in Colonial Pennsylvania," Jenna Fleming examines the impact of language barriers and translation difficulties on the relationships between Native Americans and European colonists on the Pennsylvania frontier.

Ryan M. Nadeau's article "Creating a Statesman: The Early Life of Prince Clemens von Metternich and its Effect on his Political Philosophy" sheds light on Prince Clemens von Metternich's formative years and how his early life shaped his Metternichian principles.

In "Virtus in the Roman World: Generality, Specificity, and Fluidity," Kyle Schrader explores the evolving definition of the Roman concept of *virtus* through the Roman Republic. He argues that, over time, the definition of *virtus* shifted from a concept with many loose definitions of morality and character to one that was exclusively used to define those who were successful.

In his article, "The Desperate Rebels of Shimabara: The

Economic and Political Persecutions and the Tradition of Peasant Revolt," Jake Farias examines the Shimabara Rebellion in Tokugawa Japan, building a narrative connection between Christian resistance to the Tokugawa government and the strife of Japan's impoverished peasants. Through his examination, he explores the causes of the rebellion and seeks to contextualize it among other rebellions of the era.

In "'Under the auspices of peace': The Northwest Indian War and its Impact on the Early American Republic," Melanie L. Fernandes analyzes the influence of the Northwest Indian War on early American policy, arguing that the conflict led to reforms which, ultimately, strengthened the federal government's power. Collectively, these articles not only show the hard work and careful research of our student authors, but they also exemplify the diverse interests of our students and the many research opportunities available to them at Gettysburg College.

The General Editors,

Melanie L. Fernandes
Ryan M. Nadeau
Sophia D. Vayansky

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**"Where We May Oftener Converse Together":
Translation of Written and Spoken
Communication in Colonial Pennsylvania**

**By
Jenna Fleming**



During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, systems of communication between Europeans and Indians in North America remained in their formative stages. As members of both groups attempted to gauge each other's motives, learn about cultural practices, and establish mutually beneficial relationships, they faced many obstacles to understanding. The most evident of these were differences in language, as the vastly inconsistent backgrounds and structures of European and Indian languages made basic communication difficult for the earliest interpreters. In addition to problems of language learning, translation, and contextual usage that accompanied spoken conversation, written forms of dialogue presented other equally formidable challenges to the peoples of early colonial America. The unique environment of Pennsylvania, established under and governed by Quaker religious ideals, presented a setting in which interactions between Indians and Europeans evolved differently than in other colonies. From William Penn's founding of the

colony and first contact with the area's Indians in 1682, negotiation rather than dominance was instituted as precedent in native relations.¹ While both sides consistently touted aims of peaceful coexistence and enthusiastic cooperation, attainment of these goals was often incomplete at best.

From its seat at Philadelphia, the Pennsylvanian government continually attempted to extend its influence and territorial claims outward. Contact, conflict, and the need for cooperation with different Indian groups posed major challenges in communication, too great for the legislature to handle. Likewise, Indian peoples faced similar difficulties in regard to tribal affiliation, land ownership, and the development of trade with colonial societies. In these situations, specialized representatives acted as messengers, translators, interpreters, negotiators, or in any combination of these roles.² Individuals had an important position within the greater narrative of relations between colonists and Indians, whether they were professionals sponsored by officials or happened upon their duties by chance. English or native, each possessed a singular experience, skill set, and personal views and helped to simultaneously complicate and ease the delicate process of communication between and within their societies.

On every level, perceptions of language played a major part

¹ James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 61.

² *Ibid.*, 56.

in creating the general structure and course of negotiations in colonial Pennsylvania. Personal prejudices, conversational misunderstandings, deft omissions, honest mistakes, and willful mistranslations all functioned as manipulations of language, which intentional or not, had an impact on the people who experienced them. The importance of language is evidenced in a multitude of instances. In 1750, Conrad Weiser's companion Christian Daniel Claus, unable to understand an Indian religious ritual and trusting his own assumptions, made an inaccurate record of the ceremony in his travel journal.³ Though this failure in communication could have proved harmful only to Claus within the context of his education about Indian negotiations, if passed on to others the misunderstanding could have had more widespread negative effects.

The study of communication in colonial Pennsylvania is complicated by two factors: translation and availability of primary sources. Residents of the colony came from a wide variety of backgrounds and spoke many different languages of European and North American origin. Though many prominent negotiators and even some regular citizens had experience in two or more languages, levels of proficiency varied and the lack of standardized forms complicated the situation. While different Indian groups

³ Christian Daniel Claus, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser: A Journey to Onondaga, 1750*, trans. and ed. Helga Doblin and William A. Starna (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1994), 47.

were connected by language stocks, many dialects existed, each with their own particularities. The transfer of Indian languages, which did not have a written form prior to European contact, from spoken word to paper, served as another form of translation.

Though it presented a significant contemporary challenge, translation is still an issue for historians of the era, as they attempt to work with sources written in languages they may not be familiar with or in a mixture of dialects. In any context, a translated piece is a step away from the original, and in an historical sense the relationship between the two can be even more intricate. The translations recorded for present-day use were made at different times – some by primary recorders and others years later – and in different circumstances, some rushed and haphazard, others methodical and purposeful. The historian's task is to recognize and consider these factors while evaluating a source for its content.

The general lack of primary written sources left by Indians creates a problem for almost any study of Native American history. The most complete records of Indian communications come from the colonial perspective, through official accounts of treaty negotiations and government councils or personal diaries. Any report of Indian words, documented by white colonists, includes supplementary descriptions and judgments of Indian behavior and conduct. Though these sources can be helpful in providing more information about colonial perceptions and relations between the two groups, it can also be challenging to proceed given the lack of

evidence from the Indian voice.

In spite of these challenges, there is a strong foundation of scholarship on the subject. Some authors have focused on the process of negotiation itself and the people who took part in it, considering their identities and functions within the structure of colonial government.⁴ Others study the importance of oratory and the ways in which it was regarded and utilized by both colonists and Indians.⁵ Studies of specific instances of communication, such as land purchases and trade agreements, also contribute to scholarship on the use of language in colonial America.⁶ As it was a widely influential and pervasive issue, information on communication can be found in many secondary sources on the early history of Pennsylvania.

The fragility and flexibility of language, revealed in a long and complex series of interactions, influenced the course of exchange in early Pennsylvania. Inhabitants of the colony during

⁴ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*; Margaret Connell Szasz, ed., *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

⁵ Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'A Friend to go between Them': The Interpreter as Cultural Broker during Anglo-Iroquois Councils, 1740-70," *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1988), JSTOR.

⁶ Colin G. Calloway, *Pen & Ink Witchcraft: Treaties and Treaty Making in American Indian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); James H. Merrell, "'I Desire All That I Have Said . . . May Be Taken down Aright': Revisiting Teedyuscung's 1756 Treaty Council Speeches," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (Oct., 2006), JSTOR.

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had a wide variety of perspectives on language, its abilities, and its proper uses. A significant cultural gulf separated Indians and colonists, yet they remained connected through the vast number of opportunities for communication available to them. At their most fundamental level, these methods of interaction can be divided into two categories: nonverbal and verbal. The first encompasses such diverse themes as behavioral cues, vocal intonation, performance practices, and the creation, distribution, and interpretation of wampum — an especially prominent characteristic of contact between Indians and colonists, and one that functioned as both an asset and a challenge to those involved.⁷ These nonverbal forms of communication, while significant, represent a largely separate, distinct topic with its own background of research, scholarship, and implications. The second, verbal category of communication involves the use of the spoken and written word, allowing for a more concrete examination of the disparities and parallels between native and English cultures, languages, and constructions. Issues of translation, speech, and text revealed and in some cases caused points of contention between the two peoples of early Pennsylvania. Though colonists and Indians attempted to find common methods of communication, with varying degrees of success, differences added up, contributing to the difficulty of

⁷ Hagedorn, ““A Friend to go between Them,”” 66.

maintaining positive relations between the two groups.

Colonial Pennsylvania was a region of mixed populations and identities: cultural, social, national, religious, and linguistic. Residents came from a variety of backgrounds and were divided along lines much more intricate than those which simply separated Indian and European peoples. Colonists came primarily from England, in a reflection of the colony's founding heritage, but significant German and Scots-Irish populations were also present. The historical establishments of New Netherland and New Sweden accounted for a small but enduring populace of Northern European origins.⁸ Each of these groups naturally possessed its own linguistic tradition, distinguished from European forms of language and influenced by North American interactions. Indian residents of the area experienced a similar diversity of languages. While most native Pennsylvanian languages were derived from one of two major language stocks, the Algonquian or Iroquois, the many differences between individual dialects meant that languages of the same stock could still be mutually incomprehensible. Even when conversing among themselves, Shawnees, Delawares, Piscataways, Nanticokes, and members of the Iroquois Confederacy would likely need translators.⁹ Language was, therefore, a concern that

⁸ Joseph E. Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 28.

⁹ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 57.

residents of the region that became Pennsylvania had coped with long before the arrival of William Penn, or indeed any European colonist. By the time of England's conquest of New Netherland in 1664, the Dutch colonists and Delaware Indians in the area had already created the "Delaware Jargon," a pidgin dialect of their respective languages used to further trade and diplomatic relations between officials of the two groups.¹⁰ From his arrival in North America in 1682 onwards, the colonial proprietor William Penn made an effort to establish clear and candid systems of communication with native residents.¹¹ For those who did not share in Penn's benign goals or have access to his resources, translation proved an even greater challenge, placing a significant early demand on those who were proficient in languages.

The role and identity of the translator was a multifaceted and delicate concept, singular to each individual who took on the significant responsibility of mediating between cultures. This position, which James H. Merrell comprehensively examined in *Into the American Woods: Negotiations on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, demanded a high level of linguistic and social skill, a great deal of commitment, and exceedingly good judgment,

¹⁰ William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 19.

¹¹ *Articles of Agreement with the Susquehanna Indians* (1701), in *The Papers of William Penn*, vol. 4., 1685-1700, ed. Marianne S. Wokeck et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), EBSCOhost eBook Collection, 51.

especially under pressure. Rarely could a person serve in the capacity of a translator alone; inherent differences between European and Indian languages meant that basic, literal translation between the two often produced an unsatisfactory result. Therefore, when moving between languages, translators were required to interpret messages, even on a rudimentary level.¹² Interpretation was a more involved practice than translation, requiring an understanding not only of words' definitions, but also their meanings, connotations, and implications.

The individuals responsible for interpretation consequently required a greater familiarity with their contemporary political and social environment than was possessed by the average citizen. Translators, whether of Indian or colonial origin, were frequently in close contact with their community leaders and kept well-informed of relevant economic changes and military operations.¹³ For most, travel was an innate part of their occupation, as they journeyed within and beyond the colony's established borders to gather information, deliver messages, attend councils, and in some cases prevent misunderstandings that could lead to potential diplomatic disasters. Records of these journeys, such as Christian Frederick Post's account of his 1758 trip from Philadelphia to the

¹² Hagedorn, "'A Friend to go between Them,'" 64.

¹³ Nancy L. Hagedorn, "Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent": Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1722," in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 1994, 49.

Ohio River and Conrad Weiser's report of his 1750 expedition to Onondaga, emphasize how often the translator or interpreter was called upon to act as a negotiator, whether or not that title had been part of his original job description. Often functioning as the sole speaker or the head of a small party representing his own government and society, the translator faced the difficult responsibility of creating a balance in communicating messages. While accuracy and truthfulness were crucial, professional messengers often took or were given license to edit, alter, and generally improvise in delivery, even and especially in cases of "delicate and inflammatory topics."¹⁴ When dealing with replies from the opposite side and formulating their own responses, mediators were forced to make compromises and concessions, increasing their personal participation in the process and attempting to build their reputations as honest and dependable envoys. Those who worked directly with language translation found their roles and duties expanded as they were eventually identified, subliminally or explicitly, not only as translators but also as interpreters, messengers, negotiators, representatives, and diplomats.

In consideration of language and translation on the Pennsylvanian frontier, one must ask upon what occasions and in what areas specific languages were utilized for cross-cultural

¹⁴ James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 200.

communication. Government business, land and trade negotiations, military encounters, and more casual contact between civilians all represented very different situations in which a European language, an Indian language, some conglomeration of the two, or an entirely separate method might be chosen as the medium of interaction between two or more individuals. Geography might likewise have a part in determining linguistic habits, with native languages dominating in Indian-controlled or more rural areas and European languages taking precedence in more heavily-settled areas under colonial governance.¹⁵ However, each interaction between Indians and colonists possessed its own unique character and qualities, making generalizations about language usage difficult to determine. The primary governing factor in exchange was the language abilities of those participating in a given conversation; this detail was clearly variable, making the particulars of any interaction dependent upon not only its social or geographical circumstances but also the individuals involved.

Record-keeping, or lack thereof, presents a similar challenge to an analysis of language use. Instances of unofficial or non-governmental relations between natives and colonists would frequently have gone unrecorded, if only due to the prevalence of low literacy rates.¹⁶ Even in cases of military or economic negotiations, cross-cultural conversations and especially the details

¹⁵ Pencak and Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies*, 108.

¹⁶ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 194.

of such were largely seen as so mundane as not to merit documentation. Except in influential, extraordinary, or somehow otherwise important cases, exchanges between Indians and colonists were not remarked upon. This absence of documentation nevertheless provides some information regarding the popular attitude towards issues of language in colonial Pennsylvania. Difficulties in communication, attempts to find common languages, and employment of translators were so common as not to typically draw comment. These challenges, then, can be understood as facts of life for those living on both sides of the Pennsylvania frontier.

Even when documented, references to language are not always easily understood. In his 1758 diary recounting his diplomatic mission to the Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo Indians at the Ohio River, Christian Frederick Post described interactions with individuals of many different cultural backgrounds, who presumably spoke a variety of languages. Post himself was fluent in or at least comfortable with several languages of European and Indian origin. However, he only occasionally made note of the languages he utilized to communicate with his friends, enemies, and counterparts. On August 10, about one month after his party set out from Bethlehem, Post recorded that “we met three Frenchmen, who appeared very shy of us, but said nothing more than to enquire, whether we knew of any English coming against

Venango.”¹⁷ Just two days later, on August 12, he wrote of a conference with Tamaqua, the brother of his associate Pisquetomen and another Shawnee ally: “In the evening king Beaver came again, and told me, they had held a council, and sent out to all their towns, but it would take five days before they could all come together. I thanked him for his care.”¹⁸ It is probable Post would have needed to deviate from his typical English to communicate with the French or Shawnee, and it is even possible that another translator could have aided in these interactions. However, the author did not find a description of the linguistic path the conversations took relevant to his account of their occurrence, a demonstration of how the content of messages was often prioritized over methods of communication in colonial Pennsylvania. Conrad Weiser, a contemporary of Post who served in a similar capacity, generally provided even fewer details about language when documenting his work. In reference to negotiations with the Iroquois in September 1750, Weiser recorded only that “I Informed them of my Business . . . I told them of the letter I had from the Governor of Carolina about the Catabaws. He [the Oneida

¹⁷ Christian Frederick Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post, from Philadelphia to the Ohio, on a Message from the Government of Pensylvania to the Delaware, Shawnese, and Mingo Indians, Settles There*, in *Early Western Travels*, vol. 1, *Journals of Conrad Weiser, 1748; George Croghan, 1750-1765; Christian Frederick Post, 1758; Thomas Morris, 1764*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: A.H. Clark Co., 1904), *Early Encounters in North America*, Alexander Street Press, 2015 (accessed October 14, 2015), 192.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

representative] told me that the Cat. would never sue for a peace.”¹⁹

It was not only professional negotiators who did not feel the need to explain details of conversations on Pennsylvania’s frontier. Christian Daniel Claus, a young German immigrant who accompanied Weiser in 1750, offered an interesting perspective in his account of the trip. Claus, who was as unfamiliar with his surroundings as he was with Indian customs, functioned more as an objective outsider than an involved participant like Weiser. At the beginning of his journal, he noted his hopes to “to pay good attention — as it recently became evident — to the name of the kingdom or empire wherever he happens to be . . . its regents, statutes, laws, liberties, prerogatives, pretensions, code of arms, ethics, mores, habits, language, commerce and income.”²⁰ His lofty intentions notwithstanding, Claus neglected to record the language of conversation when meeting with representatives of the Mohawks, Oneidas, and other nations. Like the more experienced messengers, he focused on the substance and subject of a communication rather than the features of its delivery. Even, or perhaps especially, in a sensitive and potentially serious situation, when learning of the death of an important ally, Claus said little about the actual communication of the information, writing only “we met an Indian hunter with the message that Canasatego, the

¹⁹ Weiser, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 11.

²⁰ Claus, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 6.

chief of the 6 Nations, had grown pale in death a few days ago. Mr. W. was alarmed and considered our long journey in vain because in such a case no council would be assembled.”²¹ Once again, the absence of the details illustrated the lack of importance they held for Weiser and Claus; their main concern was obtaining the facts, regardless of how they might be conveyed, and formulating a response that was both respectful and pragmatic.

For men like Post and Weiser, accustomed to communicating in different languages and writing primarily to keep track of their diplomatic successes and failures, actual methods of conversing were secondary in importance to the messages being passed back and forth. They were both in the employment of the provincial council of Pennsylvania and kept mainly English records, though Weiser was the more apt to stray from this convention, occasionally writing about personal matters in his native German.²² When English was clearly not the original language of a speech, both men typically provided a silent translation or interpretation, always keeping in mind the ultimate purpose of their records as reportable to the colonial government.

During the latter half of 1758, Post and his Indian associate Pisquetomen were once again called upon to deliver a message to several groups of Ohio Indians. While conferring with the Shawnee and members of the Five Nations, they encountered

²¹ Ibid., 42.

²² Weiser, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 4.

several western Cherokee Indians, whom they likewise informed of the Pennsylvanian governor's offer of peace between the nations. Post later wrote in his journal that "the Cherokees answered and said; 'they should be glad to know how far the friendship was to reach; they, for themselves, wished it might reach from the sun-rise to the sun-set.'" ²³ Though it is doubtful that Post delivered the message in its original English or received the reply in the same, he felt no need to make note of the perhaps multiple translations that were necessary before the parties achieved a mutual understanding. Only in exceptional cases did casual observers or experienced mediators explicitly mention linguistic issues or identify situations in which translation occurred. One example is found in the *Observations* of John Bartram, a naturalist who joined Weiser and his Oneida partner, Shickellamy, on a trip to Onondaga in the summer of 1743. Awakened in the middle of their first night at the Indian settlement by a disturbance outside the home in which they were staying, Bartram, essentially a tourist accompanying the diplomatic mission, was curious as to its cause. He recalled:

I ask'd Conrad Weiser, who as well as myself lay next the alley, what noise that was? Shickalamy the Indian chief, our companion, who I supposed, thought me somewhat scared, called out, lye still John, I

²³ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 239.

never heard him speak so much plain
English before.²⁴

The mysterious noise turned out to be nothing more than a customary Oneida ritual, but Shickellamy's response is notable for its brevity, as it was evidently the longest English speech Bartram had ever heard the Oneida leader make. Whether Bartram was in truth "somewhat scared," or not, the situation was sufficiently fraught to cause Shickellamy to break his own linguistic habits, drawing from Bartram a rare comment on speech.

Post had a comparable experience early on in his first diplomatic trip of 1758. Finding themselves lost, the party fortunately "met with an Indian, and one that I took to be a runagade English Indian trader; he spoke good English, was very curious in examining every thing."²⁵ Post's considerable surprise at encountering an English-speaking Indian in the mountains twenty miles from Fort Duquesne merited his making a record of the incident. He must have regarded this individual as potentially important, perhaps thinking that he could be an asset to Post's own mission or to Pennsylvanian diplomacy in general. Conversely, the English-speaking Indian and others like him could pose a threat to the colony's interests, should they choose to ally instead with foreign forces.

²⁴ John Bartram, *Observations on a Visit to Onondaga, July – August 1743*, in *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744 with Related Documents*, ed. James H. Merrell (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 93.

²⁵ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 192.

Weiser typically remarked upon the translation process when he felt that it could be especially relevant to the results of a discussion. Speaking on behalf of the Pennsylvania government at the 1750 council at Onondaga, he was forced to rely upon a Six Nations interpreter. Eager to clarify the particulars of the situation as a way to explain any possible errors, irregularities, or miscommunications, Weiser introduced his customary account of his speech by noting, “the speaker at my request and by my direction spoke again to the following purport and in my behalf.”²⁶ He repeated the qualifying statement several times in his description, later writing that he “gave a Belt of Wampum and desired the speaker to speak as follows.”²⁷ His choice of the word “desired” in this passage is significant, as it indicates the uneasiness and uncertainty he felt, as well as makes an attempt to excuse him from responsibility for a potentially faulty translation. Surely Weiser, who was a prolific and successful interpreter, appreciated the difficulties and complexities of the job his Indian counterpart took on. At the same time, he expressed reservations about allowing someone other than himself to translate his message.

In context, Weiser’s hesitance is understandable; the basic differences between Indian and English modes of speech made

²⁶ Weiser, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 18.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

interpretation a difficult task even under the best of circumstances. A major, fundamental disparity between languages of European and North American origin is their utilization and subsequent connotations of figures of speech. For the majority of English-speaking colonists, metaphors functioned as linguistic embellishment and were mostly used in literary settings rather than ordinary, day-to-day conversation.²⁸ They might also carry spiritual overtones, as the strongly Protestant population of Pennsylvania would have been familiar with Biblical proverbs through religious education and church attendance. Conversely for Indians, figures of speech operated as a standard of language, used in a variety of situations including discussion of mundane matters.²⁹ Indians' tendency towards metaphor drew comment and response from colonists on several occasions and ultimately influenced the language of diplomacy between the two.

This feature of Indian speech was documented from the earliest instances of English contact. In 1682 at a treaty signing with William Penn near Philadelphia, the Delaware chief Tammany expressed his hopes that the two nations would "live as brothers as long as the sun and moon shine in the sky."³⁰ Significantly, the records of this meeting indicate Tammany's use of English when speaking with Penn – a notable occurrence,

²⁸ Calloway, *Pen & Ink Witchcraft*, 15.

²⁹ Virginia Irving Armstrong, ed., *I Have Spoken: American History Through the Voices of the Indians* (Chicago: The Swallow Press, Inc., 1971), 13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

especially so early on in the colony's existence. The chief's willingness and ability to translate his words himself, rather than employing a third party as became customary into the eighteenth century, demonstrated his desire to communicate openly with Penn. However, his words also provide information regarding methods of translation. Rather than attempt to convert Indian metaphors into conventional English phrases, Tammany and other interpreters favored a literal method of translation. The result was a message that came closer to the original Delaware words than a broader translation might have done, but one that required a greater deal of analysis on the colonial side.

References to Indian usage of figures of speech are found in a variety of colonial records. In observing a discussion between the Shawnee and Six Nations factions at Fort Duquesne in November of 1758, Christian Frederick Post noted representatives' mutual, respectful acknowledgment of gifts and appropriate ceremonies: "King Beaver [Tamaqua] addressed himself to the Cayuga chief, and said. . . . you have wiped the tears from our eyes, and cleaned our bodies from the blood; when you spoke to me I saw myself all over bloody; and since you cleaned me I feel myself quite pleasant through my whole body."³¹ This statement was a reference to the At the Woods' Edge ceremony, performed to ready travelers for diplomatic talks, but it also recognized the

³¹ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 270.

relationship between the two Indian groups.³² In his reply to the Shawnee, the Cayuga speaker made similar use of metaphor in describing the establishment of peace between his people and the colonial government of Pennsylvania. He urged his “cousins” to follow the Six Nations’ example, proclaiming, “We likewise take the tomahawk out of your hands, that you received from the white people; use it no longer. . . . when I came I found you in a moving posture, ready to jump towards the sunset, so we will set you at ease, and quietly down.”³³ The records of these conversations are incomplete and imperfect, a translated version only representative of what Post was allowed to witness and what he chose to document for personal purposes. Nevertheless, they provide evidence of communication between different native groups and the language they used, confirming that by the mid-eighteenth century, inter-Indian relations operated in similar ways as colonial diplomacy did.

Though Indians and colonists were accustomed to differing characteristics of communication, they developed a common method for conducting official business. The text of the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 exemplifies the ways in which Pennsylvanian and native officials came to a linguistic compromise, each adopting elements of the other’s speech to create a discourse somewhere between the literal and metaphorical. At the opening of the treaty

³² Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 22.

³³ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 270.

conference on June 25, Governor George Thomas addressed representatives from Virginia, Maryland, and the Six Nations, announcing to the Indians that the three united colonial governments were “come to enlarge the Fire, which was almost gone out, and to make it burn clearer; to brighten the Chain which had contracted some Rust, and to renew their Friendship with you.”³⁴ In this part of his speech, Thomas made reference to a council fire, an important feature of negotiations for Indians and one to which the Six Nations attendees would have been accustomed. Despite the absence of an actual fire at the Lancaster courthouse, the governor recognized the suggestion of one as a polite gesture towards his audience. After setting the tone for discussion, Thomas went on to describe in more concrete terms Pennsylvania’s wishes for peace between the Indians and English colonies.³⁵

The Six Nations delegation, aware of the differences between conversing with a seasoned interpreter like Weiser or Post and the colonial commissioners, made similar alterations in their methods of address. Tachanoontia, the Indian speaker, made repeated allusions to geography during his response to the Virginia coalition on June 27. He spoke of hills, mountains, and roads in a tangible sense, mixing the literal with the metaphorical tradition of

³⁴ James H. Merrell, ed., *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744 with Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008), 47.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

the Iroquois language. Describing the broken terms of an earlier treaty, Tachanoontia lamented that “We had not been long in the Use of this new Road before your People came, like Flocks of Birds and sat down on both Sides of it . . . we are now opening our Hearts to you, we cannot avoid complaining, and desire all these Affairs may be settled.”³⁶ At Lancaster in 1744, as at other councils that followed, colonists and Indians operated within an increasingly integrated system of interactions, blending elements from their own cultures to create a new type of diplomatic protocol. Linguistic features represented only part of this combined culture, which developed further into the mid-eighteenth century.³⁷

Though members of both parties generally worked towards the goal of mutual comprehension, in some situations errors were unavoidable. Whether in informal or formal settings, at times individuals did not want to understand others or to be understood themselves. The deliberate failure to comprehend was not restricted to either native or colonial representatives. There were any number of motivations for willful misunderstandings, each unique to the situation in which it occurred and the characters involved. In his account of his 1750 journey to Onondaga in the company of Conrad Weiser, Christian Daniel Claus recorded an instance in which the group, once again lost in the woods, was caught in a rainstorm with nightfall quickly approaching. Luckily,

³⁶ Merrell, ed., *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744*, 61.

³⁷ Hagedorn, ““A Friend to go between Them,”” 61.

“we finally encountered 2 Indians. . . . Mr. Weiser inquired from them whether this path led to Cornet Johnson’s but they did not want to understand any of this.”³⁸ Weiser and his group were eventually able to convince the Indians to provide directions to Fort Hunter, but their initial reluctance could have stemmed from several sources. Perhaps they were wary of the strangers and, as they were outnumbered, feared for their personal safety. They might have had previous unpleasant encounters with colonists and hoped to avoid a repeat. If they were familiar with the colonial representatives and their mission, they might have even had a greater motivation in attempting to delay negotiations in any way possible. Conversely, their confusion may have been entirely genuine, as Claus was inexperienced in communication with Indians and could have easily misjudged the situation.

Willful misunderstandings did not always ensue from chance encounters, as evidenced in Witham Marshe’s *Journal of the Treaty Held with the Six Nations, June – July 1744*. Marshe, who served as scribe for the conferences and secretary to the Maryland Treaty Commissioners, noted in his personal papers Conrad Weiser’s directions for colonists who had the opportunity to interact with the Iroquois representatives.³⁹ The interpreter advised against outward remarks on Indians’ habits, speech, or

³⁸ Weiser, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 34.

³⁹ Witham Marshe, *Journal of the Treaty Held with the Six Nations, June – July 1744*, in *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744*, ed. James H. Merrell, 108.

physical appearance, warning that the Indians would take offense since “most of them understood English, though they will not speak it when they are in treaty.”⁴⁰ The Iroquois present at Lancaster chose not to utilize their knowledge of the English language within the context of the treaty negotiations, opting instead to operate in their native tongue. They might have been hesitant about their own abilities and fearful of misspeaking, but it is likely that custom had at least some part in their decision. In Indian tradition, an appointed speaker often acted on behalf of elders or officials to communicate a ruling to the group at large. This individual might be particularly oratorically gifted or practiced in the art of speech delivery.⁴¹ Additionally, as Nancy Hagedorn noted in her study of Indian interpreters as cultural intermediaries, at a conference “Protocol entitled each party to speak in its own language so all speeches had to be translated into the language of the listeners by an interpreter.”⁴² In this way, a willful misunderstanding among Indians stemmed from traditions and served not as an obstacle but as a mark of respect for all involved and for the significance of the situation.

Just as listeners sometimes consciously chose which words they would understand, speakers could be selective about those they wanted to communicate. When interpretation was necessary,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 111.

⁴¹ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 116.

⁴² Hagedorn, ““A Friend to go between Them,”” 63.

mediators had the responsibility and opportunity to alter and edit a message for content before conveying it to the intended audience. At times like these, the linguistic and cultural knowledge possessed by those like Weiser, Montour, and Post became essential. Through an interpreter's intervention, representatives could avoid issues ranging from a simple slip in etiquette to a potential diplomatic disaster.⁴³

Putting their common interests ahead of personal gain, translators worked together under fractious conditions. Post noted this kind of cooperation in 1758 when he witnessed Tamaqua's rejection of a dispatch from an English general. The Shawnee directed that the messenger "'should go back over the mountains; we have nothing to say to the contrary.' Neither Mr. Croghn [sic] nor Andrew Montour would tell Colonel Bouquet the Indians' answer."⁴⁴ Post and his negotiator colleagues George Croghan and Andrew Montour met with colonial aggravation at their refusal, but nevertheless seemingly felt justified in their decision to do what they could in order to avert outright contention. Sir William Johnson expressed a similar outlook in a 1757 letter, writing that while he occasionally found he needed to amend exchanges, he attempted to do so "without deviating from their meaning, because I found them rather more animated than they often are, or than I

⁴³ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁴ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 283.

desired.”⁴⁵ Most often, selective communication occurred in the interest of preserving positive relations, rather than to further personal interests. The potential for abuse by interpreters did exist, emphasizing the need to identify reliable, trustworthy, and competent individuals to serve in this capacity.⁴⁶

Selectivity in translation was not a quality restricted to those in the employ of Pennsylvania. There was a strong historical basis for this practice, dating to the mid-seventeenth century in land arbitrations between the governors of New Sweden and the Delaware Indians living in what would become Eastern Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ The legacy of this diplomacy became clear as Post conferred with Pisquetomen and other native companions in preparation to depart Easton for Kuskushking on November 12, 1758. The interpreter requested the Indians’ cooperation as he attempted to portray the Pennsylvania Provincial Council and English military forces in as favorable a manner as possible. He recollected a situation in which the roles were reversed, remembering that “when I left Alleghenny I dropt all evil reports, and only carried the agreeable news.”⁴⁸ The Delaware recognized the influence a messenger could have in providing an account that

⁴⁵ Sir William Johnson to Lord Hillsborough, 1757, *The Documentary History of the State of New-York*, vol. 2., ed. E. B. O’Callaghan (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons & Co., Public Printers, 1849), 946, in Hagedorn, “‘A Friend to go between Them,’” 65.

⁴⁶ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 280.

⁴⁷ Pencak and Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies*, 19.

⁴⁸ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 246.

came from an optimistic perspective or one that merely minimized the likelihood of igniting controversy. These abridged reports were not deliberately or maliciously misleading or incomplete; rather when put in context, these were situations in which participants felt the ends justified the means. In reference to his appeal for assistance, Post recorded that his Indian allies “took it very kindly,” signifying the atmosphere of solidarity that pervaded among those in negotiating roles.⁴⁹ Regardless of mediators’ good intentions and cross-cultural efforts to ease communication difficulties, some incongruities posed even greater challenges.

A basic discrepancy between Indian and colonial cultures was their usage and treatment of the written word. The effects of this fundamental difference were pervasive, as evidenced in the organization of a 1757 meeting between Six Nations Indians and colonial officials. George Croghan, negotiator, translator, and coordinator of the conference, described his preparations to the Iroquois leaders, recalling that in order to contact Indian and colonial participants, “I dispatched Messengers up Sasquehannah, and to Ohio, and I wrote to your Brother, Sir William Johnson.”⁵⁰ This twofold planning process, while involved, was necessary in

⁴⁹ Ibid., 247.

⁵⁰ George Croghan, *Minutes of Conferences, Held with the Indians, at Harris’s Ferry, and at Lancaster, in March, April, and May, 1757, in Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations: the Treaties of 1736-62*, ed. Susan Kalter (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), JSTOR, 229.

order to properly observe the conventions of each culture, one relying upon written and the other strictly verbal communication.

Residents of Pennsylvania, descended from the Western European tradition, depended on textual records for a wide variety of purposes. While literacy was far from universal, writing had an important part in many spheres of colonial life and served as an important channel of communication.⁵¹ Authors could maintain contact with individuals and groups both near and far through mediums including private letters, public missives, newspapers, pamphlets, and books. Additionally, official messages and treaties, as well as personal accounts, journals, and letters by eyewitnesses specifically addressed issues of intercultural relations and translation between English and Indian languages.

Prior to contact with Europeans, most Indians were unfamiliar with the concepts of alphabetical texts, since oral tradition took precedence in their cultures. Indians had corresponding concerns to those of colonists, and similarly needed to keep records of legislative, organizational, religious, and familial matters, among others. Native accounts were preserved verbally, rather than in writing, and transferred between individuals through a careful and involved process of learning and memorization.⁵² It is important to note that a lack of written language did not make Indians strictly illiterate – use of this term

⁵¹ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 159.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 259.

carries a negative connotation and implies a type of inadequacy as it indicates one's inability to read and write. It is more accurate to characterize the native speakers of Algonquian and Iroquois languages as nonliterate, a term which Nancy Hagedorn uses to suggest that they simply had no need for reading or writing.⁵³

The preservation of records, messages, and news in an oral sense clearly placed a considerable demand upon one's memory. The individuals entrusted with these responsibilities were called upon to act as speakers at councils and other events when their knowledge was pertinent. At such conferences, Indian listeners placed great value on accuracy, freely expressing confirmation of facts in support of an orator or vocalizing doubts when information was disputable.⁵⁴ Colonial representatives on several occasions noted the aptitude of Indian speakers, expressing surprise and admiration at the extent of their capabilities. Claus, whose inexperience in Indian ways once again inspired a frank and informative report, noted that during the 1750 council at Onondaga:

a speaker was chosen among these councilors, who had to recite the articles mentioned before in the public assembly in the form of an oration. . . . He had to learn the different points verbatim by heart and when he had nothing further to

⁵³ Hagedorn, "'A Friend to go between Them,'" 63.

⁵⁴ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 34.

hand out, he continued to recite until all the articles were read.⁵⁵

Veteran mediators like Weiser and Post were accustomed to Indian practices of documentation, but for those like Claus it must have been somewhat jarring to observe an Indian representative deliver a lengthy recitation on detailed terms of negotiation entirely from memory. Colonists generally saw Indian nonliteracy as a sign of incompetence and questioned the accuracy of the messages they delivered. Their opinions drew different responses from Indians, some expressing reinforced confidence in their cultural traditions and others beginning to doubt the legitimacy of oral recordkeeping, especially in comparison to the advantages of written language.

In the spring of 1757, Indians attending a conference with colonial representatives from Pennsylvania and New York had the latter response. Over a month after the meetings began, an Oneida sachem named Thomas King, along with his Mohawk allies, prepared to deliver a response to the Pennsylvanian governor's proposals of the previous day. George Croghan noted that King prefaced his speech by offering an anticipatory apology to his audience, requesting their understanding if the Indians "should make any Blunders, or have forgot any Part of the Speech . . . as they could not write; therefore were obliged to keep every Thing in

⁵⁵ Claus, *The Journals of Christian Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser*, 44.

their Memory.”⁵⁶ This statement was atypical of general sentiment among Indians but shows the effects interaction with doubtful colonists had upon some of them. Susan Katler, editor of Croghan’s *Minutes of Conferences*, postulated that King’s self-deprecation stemmed from his interactions with Christian missionaries who voiced misgivings about the Iroquois’ entirely verbal methods of recordkeeping and communication.⁵⁷ Regardless of the basis for his uncertainty, King’s comments are an example of how cultural exchange, reactions, and responses on the Pennsylvania frontier shaped attitudes and habits about language use.

Mistrust of unfamiliar linguistic practices was not restricted to colonists. Native Americans, who were by the late seventeenth century largely acquainted with the concept of written English, nevertheless remained cautious regarding its reliability. Very few Indians could read, and as a result their opinions on writing were complex and easily misinterpreted, even by those as well-informed as Christian Frederick Post.⁵⁸ Twice in his 1758 journal, the interpreter remarked at the “jealousy” Indians exhibited at colonists’ abilities to read and write. However, Post

⁵⁶ Croghan, *Minutes of Conferences*, in *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations*, 238.

⁵⁷ Susan Katler, endnote in *Minutes of Conferences, Held with the Indians, at Harris’s Ferry, and at Lancaster, in March, April, and May, 1757*, in *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, and the First Nations: the Treaties of 1736-62*, ed.

Susan Katler (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), JSTOR, 254.

⁵⁸ Post, *The Journal of Christian Frederick Post*, 252.

additionally observed that when he was called upon to compose a letter to an English general on behalf of the Shawnee, “they were afraid I would, at the same time, give other information, and this perplexed them.”⁵⁹ While Post’s Indian allies may have been “jealous” of his literacy, if only because they desired to write their messages themselves, it is also significant that they were also both “afraid” and “perplexed.” This mixed response demonstrates their general wariness towards the written word and colonists’ use of it. Unable to authenticate public or private communications or legal documents on their own, Indians found themselves at a disadvantage to literate colonists as they were forced to rely completely on translators who displayed varying degrees of trustworthiness.

Consequently, despite feeling uneasy about the topic, some Indians expressed a desire to learn about and adopt written language for diplomatic purposes. During a 1742 meeting with colonial officials at Philadelphia, Six Nations delegates represented both approaches.⁶⁰ The Iroquois insisted that the agreements reached at the council be summarized in a signed document, as they felt this option was more certain than a reliance solely on colonial memory. However, in a subversive moment during negotiations, Canassatego, an Onondaga sachem, reproached the Maryland commissioners for their failure to honor a land deed

⁵⁹ Ibid., 201.

⁶⁰ Gustafson, *Eloquence is Power*, 132.

signed over fifty years previously.⁶¹ The Indian representatives clearly recognized the functions and importance of written text, but their inability to fully access or enforce its contents complicated the situation.

This conflicted attitude dated back to the first decades of Pennsylvania's existence. Indian concerns were justified, as illustrated by a conflict that arose in the spring of 1700 between colonists and native residents living outside Lancaster.⁶² In May, Shawnee leaders Connoodaghtoh and Meealloua contacted William Penn to protest the actions of colonial vigilantes in imprisoning four unidentified Indians, who were possibly runaway servants of families in New York. The Indians accused that the previous fall, two colonists "produced a paper with a large Seale and pretended ~~indeed~~ it was a warrant From the gover^r For to require them to deliver the said Indians." Suspicious of these credentials and unwilling to abandon those under his protection, Meealloua demanded further proof that Penn had given permission for the arrests. Returning later with reinforcements, including one man who claimed to be second in command to Penn, the colonists "produced another paper with a large seale and againe demanded the said Indians in the governours name."⁶³ The Indians remained

⁶¹ Ibid., 133.

⁶² Connoodaghtoh and Meealloua to William Penn, May 1, 1700, *The Papers of William Penn*, vol. 3., 1685-1700, ed. Marianne S. Wokeck et al. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), EBSCOhost eBook Collection, 600.

⁶³ Ibid., 600.

unconvinced; their continued refusal to cooperate led to an atmosphere of tension and threats of violence that inspired their appeal to the proprietor.

The contents of this source are telling, demonstrating that Indians who worried about being taken advantage of through counterfeit documents or inaccurate translations, as mentioned in Post's account, were justified in their apprehensions. However, the existence of the source itself offers an opportunity for interpretation. The fact that two native representatives chose to contact Penn in writing just two decades after the colony's establishment shows Indian recognition of the medium's consequence early on. Unfortunately, there is little evidence available concerning the composition of this message. It seems unlikely that it was physically penned by the leaders themselves, as the letter closes with a note referring to "Conodahto marke" and "The marke of Meealloua" rather than the men's signatures, suggesting that they, like most Indians, were nonliterate.⁶⁴ The clerical mistakes, grammatical inconsistencies, and lack of standardized spelling within the document hint that the writer was not highly skilled or well-practiced as a scribe.

With no direct mentions of language, it is unclear whether the English words were chosen by Connoodaghtoh and Meealloua or by an anonymous translator on their behalf.⁶⁵ Still, the pair

⁶⁴ Ibid., 601.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 601.

were aware of the immediacy of their situation and understood that alerting Penn with a written document was a viable and efficient option. They therefore accessed what resources they had in order to produce the letter. Their actions make them an example of the group of Indians who, regardless of their personal feelings about English written text, chose to adopt and employ this colonial practice for their own ends, contributing to the larger systems of linguistic exchange occurring at the time.

Indians attempted to use English writing for different reasons and with varying results. Some might have seen acceptance of the system as a way to increase their status or credibility in colonial opinion. For others, it was less a matter of choice – if they hoped to be able to fully understand English law, terms of treaties, and correspondence, they would have to assent and conform to foreign standards.⁶⁶ An example of the inconsistent situation Indians faced, as well as their varying responses, can be gathered from different accounts of the signing of the Lancaster Treaty of 1744. Within the official, published account of the conferences, the Six Nations deputies are depicted as cautious of written text and vigilant of its documentation, yet willing to invoke it in support of their cause. When the governor of Virginia made reference to a letter of several years earlier that authorized the sale of Indian land, the Onondoga delegation responded with a demand

⁶⁶ Pencak and Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies*, 105.

to see the letter itself, as well as to be provided information on its supposed authors and interpreters.⁶⁷ Though unable to read the letter, the Six Nations officials were clearly both skeptical of its origins and aware of its importance. Determined not to let a lack of information harm their chances of reaching a fair settlement with the colonies, they took what steps they could to authenticate the Virginian claims with textual evidence.

In both official and informal settings, Indians who began to make the shift toward usage of written language demonstrated engagement with texts and eagerness to understand them, tempered with a concern for accuracy in interpretation and honesty from colonial officials. Outwardly, these interests were not always apparent, as in 1744 at Lancaster. Observing a land transfer, Witham Marshe, the young Maryland secretary, commented in his journal that “several chiefs, who had not signed the deed of release . . . did now cheerfully, and without any hesitation.”⁶⁸ To casual observers like Marshe, it might have seemed as though the Iroquois did not grasp the significance of signing the deed, or that they were unconcerned with the particulars of the agreement. Behind the scenes, however, the process was more complicated, as Indians were careful to keep themselves informed and consulted with those colonists they knew well and trusted before committing to any written document. Conrad Weiser, one such individual,

⁶⁷ Merrell, ed., *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744*, 59.

⁶⁸ Witham Marshe, *Journal of the Treaty Held with the Six Nations*, 124.

described Indians' interest in physical documents in his account of a 1743 journey to Onondaga. Carrying messages from the Pennsylvanian and Virginian governors to the Six Nations, Weiser was somewhat surprised when approached by a small group of Indian leaders, who asked him to explain the messages rather than only delivering them to the council in the traditional form of presentation, so that they might better understand and form a response.⁶⁹ This exchange represented another instance in which an interpreter acted as a resource to Indians, serving not only as a translator but as a cultural mediator, in this case specifically on linguistic issues.⁷⁰

Indians increasingly expressed the desire to gain familiarity with written language into the mid-eighteenth century. A few even learned how to read and write themselves, demonstrating the extent of their knowledge of the English language. At a treaty council between Delawares and Pennsylvanian colonists held at Easton in 1756, the Indian interpreter John Pumpshire worked with Teedyuscung, the notorious Delaware representative, among others. Pumpshire, also known as Cawkeeponen, merited acclaim for his skills from both participating groups. His interpretation abilities were not restricted to the spoken word, as on July 1, he wrote a letter to an English captain at Fort Allen on behalf of

⁶⁹ Conrad Weiser, Report on the Council Proceedings at Onondaga, July – August 1743, in *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744*, ed. James H. Merrell, 99.

⁷⁰ Hagedorn, "Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent," 46.

Captain Newcastle, a representative for the Iroquois.⁷¹

By writing this letter, Pumpshire personified the contemporary cultural exchange in written language between Pennsylvania's Indians and colonists. Through his communication of the message for Newcastle, Pumpshire echoed Indian oratorical traditions that identified performance and the use of a secondary speaker as conventional symbols of respect. In his use of the English language, written text, and even the physical materials used to compose the letter such as paper and ink, the Delaware implemented elements of colonial culture, whether consciously or not. At the close of the message to the English officer, Pumpshire signed his name, while the nonliterate Newcastle provided his mark.⁷² The actions of these Indians were a tangible demonstration of the ways in which individuals, languages, and cultures converged to influence communication in colonial Pennsylvania.

This letter and the method of its composition exemplified, albeit on a small scale, the attempts at unification of Indian and European linguistic customs, written and spoken, that was taking place across Pennsylvania at the time. Both natives and colonists recognized the authority of and opportunities that a new system of communication, distinct from those that had existed previously,

⁷¹ Merrell, "I Desire All That I Have Said," 791.

⁷² Ibid., 792.

could offer. ⁷³ Despite the efforts of notable figures, respected mediators, and individuals determined to convey their thoughts and opinions to those of different cultural backgrounds, basic disparities in language created momentous challenges to the development of a common form of interaction. Motivated by necessity, residents of the colony found flawed ways to manage issues of interpreting spoken and written language. Ultimately, the incongruence between Indian and colonial methods of communication was a major contributing factor to the diplomatic difficulties these two cultures experienced.

⁷³ Pencak and Richter, eds., *Friends and Enemies*, 112.

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Creating a Statesman: The Early Life of Prince Clemens von Metternich and its Effect on His Political Philosophy

By
Ryan Nadeau



A Timeline of Key Events in Metternich's Early Life

1773: Metternich born in Coblenz, the Archbishopric of Trier, to Francis George and Maria Beatrice von Metternich.

1786: Friedrich Simon becomes his private tutor.

1788: Enrollment at Strasbourg University until 1790; Studies under Koch.

1789: Outbreak of revolution in France; Looting of Strasbourg by revolutionaries; Refugee French aristocrats take up residence in Coblenz and the surrounding Rhineland.

1790: Coronation of Emperor Francis II; Enrollment at Mainz University until 1793; Studies under Vogt.

1792: Coronation of Emperor Leopold II; Prussian army in Coblenz; Prussia army defeated at Valmy.

1793: Fall of Mainz; Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette executed in France; Beginning of the Reign of Terror; Metternich to Brussels; Capture of Valenciennes.

1794: Mission to Great Britain; Fall of the Austrian Netherlands; Fall of Coblenz; Relocation to Vienna.

The nineteenth century in Europe was a period defined politically by competing empires and revolutions of political thought, characterized by brilliant statesmen whose influence could be felt across the continent and changed the course of nations. One of these statesmen was Prince Clemens von Metternich, who the historical record remembers as one of the Austrian Empire's greatest diplomats and one of Europe's most infamous archconservatives. Fulfilling both of these roles, Metternich is the man most frequently viewed as the chief facilitator of the Concert of Europe – the system of international cooperation and negotiation following the Napoleonic wars designed to maintain the European balance of power and to uphold the integrity of the continent's monarchies. These principles defined his nearly fifty-years of policy making. Having entered Austria's diplomatic

service as a young man at the dawn of the century, he quickly made a name for himself during the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars due to his central role at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, where he helped redraw the borders of Europe and re-establish the old monarchical order. Throughout his long career, he established himself as a committed opponent of revolutionary activity, liberalism, and nationalism, always working to maintain the strength of Europe's traditional empires – especially in his adopted home of Austria. His career concluded in 1848 when Austria, like Europe as a whole, faced liberal uprisings on a scale which could only barely be contained, signaling the end of Metternich's age of conservatism.

Despite his illustrious career, under no circumstances did Metternich simply spring from the ground, destined to guide the progression of history. He was instead entirely the product of his society. His family was one of prosperous Rhenish nobles well-integrated into the imperial mechanisms of the Holy Roman Empire and strongly influenced by aristocratic French culture. His education focused on history and science, and occurred concurrently with the French Revolution, the excesses of which Metternich bore witness to on more than one occasion. Most Metternich biographers pay little attention to these formative years, instead spending far more time studying the man that he would become and his political legacy. This, however, minimizes the importance of a crucial stage of development in humans: the early

and formative years, in which frequently lie the seeds of future actions. A study of Metternich's background and early life can help to explain the development of his later philosophies as natural developments of the cultural, intellectual, and political forces which surrounded him.

To understand how exactly the past defines the future, however, a firm grip must be held on what exactly the future entails, or in this case, Metternich's political philosophy. With broad strokes, his doctrines can be divided into three key principles: the balance of power, legitimacy, and conservatism, each one explaining and reinforcing the others. Self-evident as per its label, the balance of power principle dictates the need for a political and military equilibrium among between European nations, designed to prevent the domination of any single state over any other. The desire to conquer and rule Europe as a hegemon was a very real ambition for European leaders prior to the Congress of Vienna. Wars of containment had been fought against rising powers for centuries: first against the Habsburg dynasty in the Thirty Years' War, then against Louis XIV's France, and finally against Napoleon. According to Henry Kissinger, "[The balance-of-power system] was meant to limit both the ability of states to dominate others and the scope of conflicts. Its goal was not peace so much as stability and

moderation.”⁷⁴ Ultimately, this was Metternich’s goal, as not only would a non-Austrian hegemon naturally rival his empire, but war, as he saw it, was uncontrollable. He expounded on this point in 1821, writing that “once it [had] begun laws are no longer imposed by the will of man but by force of circumstance.”⁷⁵ A balance of power thus kept wars in Europe under control and maintained societal stability, avoiding the catastrophic situations which had characterized the past two-hundred years.

Rounding that principle out are the principles of legitimacy and conservatism, which can be seen as nearly inseparable. The first demands support for the monarchical regimes of Europe, no matter the circumstances. The second opposes sweeping liberal political reform in the style that the French Revolution had aimed for. According to Metternich, monarchy was the very symbol of law and order in Europe from which all laws emanated. As such, he believed in supporting them not because of a divine right, but because failing to do so would undermine the entire continent’s social order, leading to chaos. Revolutionaries and reformers that would severely limit the power of monarchs or overthrow them altogether were thus to be rigorously opposed by all European states for that very reason. If revolution seized control of a monarchical state, then European monarchs were to intervene to

⁷⁴ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 1994), 18, 57-59, 70-72, 75-77.

⁷⁵ G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1962), 69.

restore order, as a protection of their very own legitimacy.⁷⁶ Thus, the three principles of Metternich's philosophy were rooted in the fundamentally pragmatic goal of maintaining the rule of law and keeping Europe generally in order by maintaining both international and domestic stasis.

Historians disagree on how these principles and motivations reflect upon his personal character, though undertaking research on Metternich's life and philosophy in the English language is a problematic task. Several influential studies of his life and character, such as Heinrich Ritter von Srbik's 1925 biographical masterpiece *Metternich der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, remain untranslated from their original language. Additionally, while Richard von Metternich's *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, a compilation of his father's uncompleted autobiography and letters remains a valuable first-hand account of the statesman's life, it is by no means a complete collection of Metternich sources, with numerous letters and documents remaining untranslated. Commenting on this situation, French biographer Guillaume de Bertier de Sauvigny remarked that "the historiography on Metternich in English is markedly less plentiful than that in French and still less than that in German. The English edition of the *Memoires et Documents* of the prince de Metternich

⁷⁶ E. L. Woodward, *Three Studies in European Conservatism: Metternich, Guizot, the Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1963), 39-41.

is only half the size of the German and French editions.”⁷⁷ While much English biography has emerged utilizing superior French and German resources, until greater interest is taken in translating the entire collection of Metternich documents from their native languages, scholarship on him which relies solely on English sources will lack the full breadth of resources that could be available. Such is the predicament faced by this very study of Metternich’s early life—though not one which will diminish the validity of the conclusions drawn through available resources. Generally, English sources can be divided into three broad categories: those written before the First World War, those written in the interwar period, and those written following the Second World War, which reflect the changing views of Metternich’s character over time.

Published in 1888, Colonel George Bruce Malleson’s *Life of Prince Metternich* was one of the earliest Metternich biographies available in English. Written only eight years after Richard von Metternich’s published his *Memoirs*, Malleson’s biography relied heavily on it as a resource. In many places, he simply rephrased and restated the account of Metternich’s early life as recorded within the *Memoirs*, making little effort to analyze the events of that period.⁷⁸ The later biographer G. A. C.

⁷⁷ de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times*, xi.

⁷⁸ G. B. Malleson, *Life of Prince Metternich* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1888), 4-14.

Sandeman wrote little more on the subject, despite the greater length of his text overall.⁷⁹ Both ultimately shared the same eventual conclusion on Metternich as well: that he was a deeply flawed individual with an overall negative impact on European history. For his part, Malleson portrayed Metternich as the architect of “velvet-gloved despotism,” who single-handedly kept nationalism subdued for decades. Sandeman, however, took the opposite stance, arguing that Metternich in fact was little more than a political opportunist whose success entirely rested upon his personal charm rather than on any concrete political ideology, and thus to see him as a Machiavellian schemer is foolish.⁸⁰ As pre-war authors, both Malleson and Sandeman were emblematic of the hostility still maintained toward Metternich on principle. Liberalism and nationalism were the popular ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and thus very few had any desire to give serious consideration to the ultimate opponent of both.⁸¹ It thus seems reasonable to conclude that both authors were deeply influenced by this universal hostility, finding little value in understanding the development of a man whom they only saw in a negative fashion.

With the First World War, however, came a reassessment of Metternich. Many viewed the war’s destruction as a product of

⁷⁹ G. A. C. Sandeman, *Metternich* (London: Methuen & Co. LTD., 1911), 12-26.

⁸⁰ Malleson, *Life of Prince Metternich*, 1-3; Sandeman, *Metternich*, 335-346.

⁸¹ Enno E. Kraehe, ed, *The Metternich Controversy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 2.

nationalistic thought. With alternatives to liberalism concurrently growing in popularity, Metternich's legacy and character began to be looked at differently. Nostalgia for the peaceful days of the Concert of Europe almost seemed to be propagated, inverting the old negative views, as this was the period in which von Srbik's 1925 biography became the most radically revisionist and positive view of Metternich since his death. In it, von Srbik discarded the old characterizations and portrayed Metternich as a brilliant and coherent statesman worthy of respect.⁸² In English, Algernon Cecil followed von Srbik's lead, and while he gave a much more positive treatment than previous authors, he was once more not one who possessed a highly insightful view into Metternich's formative years, going little further than imaginative and unresolved speculation on the effect they may have had on the statesman. Perhaps the currents of revisionism went too far, with historians of this time now too interested in praising Metternich's supposed genius rather than determining from whence it came. Still, interwar historians were able to break the stigma surrounding his legacy, allowing future historians to study him seriously, rather than writing him off as a dead and buried political boogeyman.⁸³

It is perhaps only since the Second World War that historians have regarded Metternich more objectively rather than

⁸² Ibid, 2.

⁸³ Algernon Cecil, *Metternich 1773-1859: A Study of his Period and Personality* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 11-22.

through lenses tinted by political dispute. The year 1959 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of Metternich's death, yet not a single one of the Empires that he had tried to balance remained, with imperialism grossly out of style. These developments reflected how far the world had come since the days of Metternich and benefited historians detaching themselves personally from the statesman's ideas without the clouding effects of national pride or political grudges. In 1952, Constantin de Grunwald seriously questioned the role of Metternich's teachers on his political development, delving into details on their scholarly specialties from the *Memoirs* that previous biographers had virtually ignored.⁸⁴ Much later, in 1991, Desmond Seward paid deep attention to Metternich's often glossed-over early career as an assistant to his father, the imperial envoy to the Austrian Netherlands, and that experience's effect on his own career.⁸⁵ Even earlier, and perhaps at long last, Alan Palmer's 1972 biography had finally come to admit the need to understand Metternich's early life on a more than superficial level in order to fully understand the man that he would become.⁸⁶ Furthermore, all three authors offered nuanced analyses of his character that captured both the good and the bad inherent in a man as dynamic as Metternich had been, demonstrating a level of biographical

⁸⁴ Constantin de Grunwald, *Metternich* (London: The Falcon Press, 1953), 7-17.

⁸⁵ Desmond Seward, *Metternich: The First European* (New York: Viking, 1991), 9-19.

⁸⁶ Alan Palmer, *Metternich* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 4-24.

sophistication that is perhaps only obtainable with sufficient temporal distance from the subject, especially with one so controversial. As such, it is these modern biographies that are most useful in understanding the early life of Metternich, and whose even-handed, honest, and detailed investigation of their subject is best followed in future studies such as this.

Ultimately, all Metternich biographers must start at the very beginning, whether they delve deeply into the implications of it or not: the circumstances of his birth. Metternich was born in the Rhenish city of Coblenz on 15 May, 1773, to Francis George von Metternich and his wife, Maria Beatrice von Kagenneck.⁸⁷ At this time, Francis was a highly active diplomat in the service of various Holy Roman states and their Habsburg overlords, holding, at various points in his life, titles such as chamberlain to both the Archbishops of Trier and Mainz, minister at the imperial court, and imperial ambassador to the Rhenish electorates and Austrian Netherlands.⁸⁸ Time spent in the Austrian capital of Vienna as a young man in the 1760s had won him the attention of both the legendary state chancellor Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz as well as the Empress Maria Theresa. The two ultimately helped negotiate his marriage to Maria Beatrice, a vivacious noblewoman in the Empress's favor who hailed from Austria-controlled Bohemia.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁸ Sandeman, *Metternich*, 9.

⁸⁹ Palmer, *Metternich*, 7-8.

The Metternichs themselves were, by this point, already a distinguished family, having produced several archbishops of both Mainz, where the Counts von Metternich had traditionally served as hereditary chamberlain, and Trier, under whose authority the family estate at Coblenz lay. As Mainz and Trier were members of the imperial electorate well connected to the Austrian hegemony, the Metternichs' own connections to them ensured they remained a relevant, if minor, family.⁹⁰ By Metternich's own words, it was the courtly machinations of both his parents which led to his engagement to his first wife, Eleonore von Kaunitz, the granddaughter of the state chancellor.⁹¹

Despite ending his career in professional disgrace due to his untimely oversight of the Austrian Netherlands at the time of their fall to revolutionary French forces, Francis von Metternich left a profound legacy on his son. Cynically dismissive of the revolutionary political upheaval of the time, he maintained the firm belief that "this business will work out one way or another, like everything else," a phrase which Metternich himself could have uttered in reference to revolution and his unshakable faith in the authority of monarchy. Francis won the trust of the Habsburg emperors with his honesty and loyalty, securing his family's position in their favor even after the destruction of his diplomatic

⁹⁰ Sandeman *Metternich*, 4-9.

⁹¹ Clemens Wenzel Lothar, Fürst von Metternich, *Memoirs of Prince Metternich: 1773-1835*, vol. 1, ed. Richard von Metternich (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1880), 21-22.

career.⁹² While physically described as being “as heavily German as the Hanoverian Georges,” by Palmer, it seems more fair to borrow a phrase from Cecil, that “not the light beer of Vienna but the sparkling wine of the Rhineland ran in the veins of the Metternichs,” upon reflecting on his personal behavior.⁹³ Francis was a figure emblematic of the “French social life and moral laxity which characterized the smaller German States,” in Metternich’s own words.⁹⁴ The phrases stately, prim, pleasure-loving, frivolous, and spend-thrift have all been used to describe the elder Metternich, and conjure images strikingly similar to those associated with the French aristocrats themselves on the eve of the Revolution. His amiable dismissiveness of revolutionary forces only completes the comparison.⁹⁵ Maria Beatrice, while hailing from the east of the imperial lands, helped enforce these French overtones. Profoundly ambitious, she piled her affections and attention onto young Clemens, raising him to become a master of “the art of pleasing,” the French language, and “the graces which the old society of France and the parts of Europe adjacent had brought to perfection.”⁹⁶ He was the child upon which the family’s hopes were poured, and so he was to perfect the traits which had

⁹² de Grunwald, *Metternich*, 11; Enno E. Kraehe, *Metternich’s German Policy, vol. 1: The Contest with Napoleon, 1799-1814* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 13-14.

⁹³ Palmer, *Metternich*, 7; Cecil, *Metternich 1773-1859*, 11.

⁹⁴ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 3.

⁹⁵ Sandeman, *Metternich*, 9.

⁹⁶ de Grunwald, *Metternich*, 12; Cecil, *Metternich 1773-1859*, 12.

brought his parents success. These are the very traits which brought him diplomatic success later in life.

Certainly, surrounded as he was by Rhenish society, Metternich's development as a charming aristocrat in the French style was to be expected. In 1773, the Elector and Archbishop of Trier, Clemens Wenzeslaus was both the uncle of King Louis XVI of France and the man for whom Metternich would be named. His appointment as archbishop was designed to solidify the new alliance between the French Bourbons and Austrian Habsburgs.⁹⁷ At this time, however, Trier was more commonly known by its French name of Treves—strongly telling of where the archbishopric leaned culturally.⁹⁸ “Cosmopolitanism,” states modern Rhineland expert Michael Rowe, “acted as an antidote to the stifling localism and bigotry” of the region,” where there was a craving for news on foreign improvements which might be applied locally,” where there was perhaps no more cosmopolitan state than nearby France. France's influence was felt in numerous tangible fields, such as the adoption of French economic practices, social club structure, and political and social journals.⁹⁹ The Rhineland thus served as a veritable melting pot of German and French influences, politically tied to Germany and the Habsburgs, but with

⁹⁷ Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-14; Palmer, *Metternich*, 6.

⁹⁸ Palmer, *Metternich*, 7.

⁹⁹ Rowe, *From Reich to State*, 18, 24.

its heart held by France, a description which fits Metternich just as well as the region itself. That Metternich became such a staunch enemy to the Revolution is then entirely unsurprising, for the goals of the Revolution called for the destruction of this courtly culture which he had grown up with. One could ascribe Metternich's philosophical development to a visceral self-defense of his way of life, and while that may be sufficient explanation if one is to assume that he was motivated entirely by personal reasons, it seems unable to completely account for the consistency of Metternich's principles and the question of why they formed specifically as they did. To find the answer to that, one must turn to a new facet of Metternich's early development: his education.

Metternich's education, while rarely commented on by the man himself, was incredibly diverse. Befitting his status as a nobleman in the Rhineland region, which boasted the highest literacy in Europe during the late eighteenth century and served as a center of the Catholic Enlightenment, he received comprehensive instruction from several tutors and leading universities.¹⁰⁰ Among his tutors, whom Metternich pays special attention to in his *Memoir*, was Friedrich Simon, a disciple of the educators Johann Bernhard Basedow and Joachim Heinrich Campe, pioneers of the philanthropist school of education that was "in vogue" at the time of Metternich's childhood.¹⁰¹ Philanthropism called for a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 23-27.

¹⁰¹ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 3-4.

“natural” education, where children were to be engaged as children rather than small adults, with emphasis placed on the teaching of “natural” subjects, such as chemistry, natural science, history, and commerce.¹⁰² After joining Simon in his native city of Strasbourg in 1788, two years into his tutelage, Metternich’s education was supplemented by lectures from the city’s university.¹⁰³ It is here that he received instruction from a man only recorded today as “Professor Koch,” a lecturer on German law who specialized in the study of the Treaty of Westphalia.¹⁰⁴ Attendance at the University of Mainz¹⁰⁵ later in his life brought him to study under Nicolas Vogt, the official historian of the Empire, who became one of Metternich’s “most zealous friends.”¹⁰⁶ In lectures inspired by philosophers such as Leibniz, Wolff, and Vattel, Vogt argued that the “greatest goal of a truly enlightened society is the education of all men as to the importance of the maintenance of [the] balance among both nations and individuals,” language later found in Metternich’s own ideas.¹⁰⁷ The scientific studies Metternich likely received from Simon never left him: as late as 1796, Metternich

¹⁰² Frank Pierrepont Graves, *Great Educators of Three Centuries: Their Work and its Influence on Modern Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 116-118.

¹⁰³ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Palmer, *Metternich*, 13.

¹⁰⁵ Fittingly translated as its French name, “Mayence,” in modern editions of the *Memoir*.

¹⁰⁶ de Grunwald, *Metternich*, 13; von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 11.

¹⁰⁷ James R. Sofka, *Metternich, Jefferson, and the Enlightenment: Statecraft and Political Theory in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2011), 28.

firmly believed that his “particular vocation seemed to me to be the cultivation of knowledge, especially of the exact and physical Sciences, which suited my taste particularly... The diplomatic career might certainly flatter my ambition, but during all my life I have never been accessible to this feeling.” “Man and his life seemed to me to be objects worthy of study,” he went on to write in reference to his diligent attendance of lectures on geology, chemistry, physics, and medicine in Vienna in 1797.¹⁰⁸

These quotes, curiously, have gone almost completely ignored by Metternich’s biographers in English, despite the fact that they provide essential windows into the mindset he must have formed. The greatest scientist of the eighteenth century, of whom Metternich must have read, was Isaac Newton. Newton, even as an Englishman, dominated German scientific thinking in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁹ It was Newtonian physics which gave birth to Newtonian optimism, a staunchly conservative moral-scientific philosophy which supplanted mathematical rationality upon hypothetical realities, arguing that a logical and reasonable God had created a world which obeyed unbreakable logical rules. As such, the world was one which functioned in obedience of a natural order, with the most optimistic thinkers believing that as the creator God certainly obeyed the same rationality of the world he

¹⁰⁸ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 23.

¹⁰⁹ Thomas P. Saine, *The Problem of Being Modern: or, The German Pursuit of Enlightenment from Leibniz to the French Revolution* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997), 29.

created, then the world known had to be the best of all possible worlds. A world which was not the best would be illogical to create, after all.¹¹⁰ This is the sort of thinking most often associated with the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz—a philosophical inspiration for Metternich’s friend and mentor, Professor Vogt. Koch, meanwhile, was a Westphalian expert. The Treaty of Westphalia was that which had created the concept of equality and sovereignty among nations, resolving the great European conflict of the seventeenth century which had been, in many ways, caused by both political and religious power imbalances within the Holy Roman Empire.¹¹¹

These are the factors which gave birth to Metternich’s substantive belief in the necessity of a balance of power. Historical evidence suggested that an imbalance would lead to war and ruination. The concept of states as solidified political entities fully in control of their own affairs made the idea of balancing them off each other that much more logical, as they could be understood as concrete units rather than the quasi-sovereign ones interconnected among a strange hierarchy previously active in the Holy Roman Empire. Philosophically and scientifically, as per the reasoning of the day, a natural order seemed to exist within the world which made it the best of all possible worlds: why then could the same

¹¹⁰ John Henry, *A Short History of Scientific Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 188-189.

¹¹¹ Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe’s Tragedy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 754; Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 56-58.

principle not be applied to the political world, where a balance of forces would bring about peace, and thus prosperity? Henry Kissinger himself admits to the Enlightenment connection of the balance of power philosophy in European politics, with that legendary Metternich expert von Srbik himself viewing Metternich as a “systematizer of the state and social order” who had an “exceedingly strong impulse to search beyond the phenomena of the mental and physical world for lawlike regularities and then in the factual realm to test them empirically and experimentally and prove them right.”¹¹² Metternich and his career can thus be viewed, perhaps, as the last great hurrah of the proponents of natural social order, whose political goals stemmed from the desire to bring rational harmony to a disorderly world.

Thus, Metternich was given the intellectual backing for his emotional opposition to revolution. The final question that must be asked, then, is what events codified his association between natural order, peace, and monarchy—and in the inverse, between revolution and chaos? The answer can be largely derived from his own mouth. In 1790, Metternich was present in Frankfurt for the coronation of Emperor Leopold II, which he would remember as “one of the most impressive and splendid spectacles in the world. Everything, down to the most trifling details, spoke to the mind

¹¹² Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 21; Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, “Statesmen of Philosophical Principles,” in *The Metternich Controversy*, ed. Enno E. Kraehe (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 34-35.

and heart through the force of tradition...” Comparing this to the reports of violence already pouring out of France, where revolution had broken out the year before, Metternich only saw “with all the force of youthful impressions, the contrast between the country contaminated by Jacobinism, and the country where human grandeur was united with a noble national spirit.” The contrast was set even deeper only two years later, at the coronation of Francis II, which Metternich also attended, when violence in France had escalated even further. By that time, war had been declared on Austria, with the violent excesses of the Reign of Terror just on the horizon.¹¹³ Shortly after, while curiously silent in regards to Louis XVI’s 1793 execution, the execution of Marie Antoinette later that year brought forth Metternich’s first political writing. In an open letter, he furiously condemned the action, angrily declaring to the Empire’s citizens that “the blood of your immortal [Maria] THERESA, the blood of AUSTRIA herself, [has been] spilled upon a scaffold!!!” “Ruin fall upon the heads of those impious murderers, murderers of their kings and of their Fatherland,” he further elaborated, with a measure more of self-control.¹¹⁴ As a loyal servant of the Empire, whose parents and family had made their fortune in the service of the Habsburg emperors, and whose concept of tradition and order was firmly tied to imperial dignity, his anger was certainly justified.

¹¹³ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 7-8, 12; Rowe, *From Reich to State*, 48.

¹¹⁴ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 339.

Furthermore, the Revolution would not stay a distant enemy, for Metternich's Rhineland lay directly within its path. From the outset of France's troubles in 1789, aristocrats fleeing for their lives poured over the border into the empire's principalities, establishing courts in exile in the Rhineland with a center at Coblenz—Metternich's own home city. While tensions ran high between the French and local citizens, Metternich fully immersed himself within their society, proclaiming that he had “learned to estimate the difficulty of erecting a society on new foundations, when the old are destroyed,” from the exiles, likely only fully reinforcing his previously established aristocratically inclined sensibilities.¹¹⁵ By 1792, Coblenz and the surrounding cities and towns¹¹⁶ also became the staging ground for the Prussian counterattack against French aggression.¹¹⁷ From then on, the Revolution, in all its fury, consumed the major locations of Metternich's youth. Strasbourg, where he had studied under the care of Simon and Koch, had already been plundered by revolutionary forces in 1789—an event he had been present to see. Mainz, where he had studied under Professor Vogt and which hosted, in Metternich's words, the most luxurious court in all of Germany, fell in the opening months of 1793 after the Prussian

¹¹⁵ Rowe, *From Reich to State* 44-45; von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 7-8.

¹¹⁶ Including, very fittingly, the village of Metternich, today an incorporated part of the city of Coblenz.

¹¹⁷ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 13-14.

defeat at Valmy.¹¹⁸ Mainz's fall then meant that his education there was at an abrupt end, and so he traveled to Brussels, where his father served as imperial minister. There, he witnessed the 1793 capturing of the French border city of Valenciennes by coalition troops. Though he would ultimately earn a reprieve from the chaos surrounding him with a visit to Great Britain on behest of his father's government, he would not return to the Netherlands, for they too would fall in the revolutionaries' counter-attack while he remained abroad – and with them fell Francis George's political career.¹¹⁹ The worst was yet to come, however, and did in October of 1794 when revolutionary forces seized Coblenz itself, and with it, the Metternich family estate.¹²⁰ And so the entire world which Metternich had known in his twenty-one years thus far was swept away by men who, in his mind, seemed intent on destroying both his society and his way of life. "I cannot bear the idea of seeing my home in the hands of those rogues," he would write in a letter in December of that year. "According to my way of seeing things, everything has gone to the devil; and the time is come when everyone must save from the wreck what we can."¹²¹

With Coblenz and the Austrian Netherlands gone, the Metternich family moved to take up residence in Vienna as exiles – marking the first time he had actually seen the imperial capital.

¹¹⁸ Kraehe, *German Policy*, 12-13; von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 13.

¹¹⁹ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 15-16, 20-21; Kraehe, *German Policy*, 14.

¹²⁰ Kraehe, *German Policy*, 17.

¹²¹ von Metternich, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 350.

And while it would be several years before his first permanent appointment as an official of the Austrian diplomatic service, Metternich's philosophy and mindset was sealed. Here was a man who had grown up the model of a diplomatic and cosmopolitan aristocrat, surrounded by imperial traditions which served to uphold order within the world he knew, forced to bear direct witness to the violent overthrow of that entire system and the physical world that embodied it. Thus, while the intellectual origins of Metternich's philosophy can be clearly traced to the influences of the men who educated him, it was the Revolution itself which defined them and gave them direction. The principle of the balance of power can be seen as the desire to restore natural order to the world, for the Revolution and its wars had thrown Europe out of balance, resulting in lawlessness, destruction, and chaos, which he bore witness to. Only a return to a political balance would allow for a return to order and lawfulness, in Metternich's approximation. The principle of legitimacy was reflected in the same way, for with the overthrow of the French monarchy had come chaos, death, and war, while the staunchly-imperial Holy Roman Empire remained a bastion of tranquility, as symbolized in its coronations. And the principle of conservatism is the insurance that none of this would ever happen again, for as long as the coronations occurred as they should, order would be maintained. Synthesizing all of this information, it becomes more surprising to entertain the thought that Metternich *would not*

become the diplomat that he did under these circumstances than to reflect upon the fact that a minor Rhenish noble such as he rose so high into the halls of history.

While studying in Mainz, Professor Vogt gave Metternich a piece of advice which, by the man's own admission, he would hold dear for the rest of his life. Almost prophetic in the image it conjures, one must wonder if Metternich remembered it apocryphally. Allegedly, Vogt told Metternich that:

Your intellect and your heart on the right road; preserve therein also in practical life, the lessons of History will guide you. Your career, however long it may be, will not enable you to see the end of the conflagration which is destroying the great neighboring kingdom. If you do not wish to expose yourself to reproaches, never leave the straight path. You will see many so-called great men pass by you with swift strides; let them pass, but do not deviate from your path. You will overtake them, if only because you must meet them on their way back!¹²²

This is the image of Metternich that should be constructed as he moved out of his youth and into his professional career: that of a

¹²² Ibid., 11-12.

man boldly walking forward, not deviating from his path even as great men passed him (Napoleon, perhaps), for soon enough he would be overtaking them. Metternich, as has been stated, was not a man who made up the rules as he went along in the political game. He knew who he was and what he believed in, and based his politics on such. His development as a politician is easily traceable by closely examining his early life. It is by recognizing this development and by learning just what this past was that one can come to see him as a very human figure. He was not one sinisterly bent on subjugating Europe, nor an immaculate genius, but rather a man who sought to restore and preserve a world that he firmly believed to be a good and natural one and that was, in his mind, completely opposed by the revolutionary movement.

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Virtus and the Roman World: Generality, Specificity, and Fluidity

By
Kyle Schrader



I. Introduction

Scholars frequently debate the meanings of classical words that do not necessarily have direct modern language parallels. Words like the Greek *othismos* and the Latin *virtus* are poorly understood, and modern scholars strive to provide these words with specific definitions. The Romans saw their *virtus*, a term often inadequately translated as the English word “virtue,” as a major factor in their conquest of the Mediterranean. In this context, the Romans focused on their military *virtus*, a term that includes numerous intricacies of Roman combat ideology but can be simplified by the translation “martial courage.” However, the Romans also used *virtus* to describe men, women and objects off the battlefield, and in these cases *virtus* can also exhibit the adjectival qualities of the English word “excellence.”

These two uses of the term *virtus* are oversimplifications though. Donald Earl presented *virtus* as a word defining a

multitude of complex physical and moral ideas and practices.¹²³ While many more modern scholars oppose Earl's view, it is clear that the term *virtus* does not necessarily define anything specific. Instead, the context gives *virtus* its meaning. The multitude of times *virtus* appears in the Latin lexicon, as well as the numerous different connotations and situations the word is found in, suggest a more broad usage of the term than modern scholars care to admit.¹²⁴ From the literary sources available, three primary uses of *virtus* appear: a more general one meaning "excellence," and two more specific meanings revolving around the battlefield and aristocratic competition in the Roman Republic.

II. *Virtus* as a General Term

Virtus was often used in military histories, accounts, and other such documents to describe a soldier or general's actions on and recently off the battlefield. *Virtus* is also frequently found in poetry, theatre, and philosophical writings. One of the most famous of the non-military uses of the word *virtus* is in Cato's *De Agricultura*, where Cato claims that the best land has natural *virtus*.¹²⁵ Some scholars contribute this usage of *virtus* to Greek

¹²³ Donald Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 20.

¹²⁴ Myles McDonnell, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 5.

¹²⁵ Cato, *De Agricultura*, (Harvard: Loeb Classical Library, 1934), Book I, Chapter I, 3.

influence over the Latin vocabulary.¹²⁶ If this was true, *virtus* should have lost, or at least changed, its original, more military meanings based on Greek influence as well, which, with evidence from later and contemporary military documents, is certainly not the case. Myles McDonnell, a modern proponent of the Greek-influence theory, suggests that all uses of *virtus* in Roman plays are simply mis-translated versions of the Greek term for excellence, ἀρετή.¹²⁷ Further, the other uses of *virtus* in this way (such as Cato's usage in *De Agricultura*), according to McDonnell, can be attributed to a similar blending of the two different words that may have occurred during the Pyrrhic War.¹²⁸ McDonnell uses these arguments to attempt to explain away these general uses of *virtus*, and yet, even if the linguistic blending did occur, these uses still existed.

There is another possibility to explain these usages of *virtus*: perhaps these Roman writers were simply speaking metaphorically or with a sort of hyperbole. Classical scholars often see the word *virtus* and assume it is being used literally; in comedic theatre it is more likely the word would have been used ironically, and in other writings, such as Cato's, the word *virtus* may have appeared so that a more general audience could understand the meaning. Ancient sources cannot always be

¹²⁶ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 73.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

translated verbatim, no more than any modern languages can be translated fully into another language due to metaphors, euphemisms, idioms, and other cultural and linguistic tools.

The Roman comedies of Plautus frequently use *virtus* in both military and non-military contexts. In Plautus' *Asinaria*, a slave recounts his own *virtus* involved in his acceptance of his position in life, including his courage in enduring his master's beatings.¹²⁹ Modern scholars, such as Myles McDonnell, tend to argue that this instance is parody, and that a slave with *virtus* would have been a humorous concept to the Roman audiences of Plautus.¹³⁰ However, the Romans themselves would have also seen the slave in question as exemplary, a slave who accepted his place under his master was preferred to one who rebelled or disdained his job.¹³¹ In that context, *virtus* could be used to define an exemplary, or "excellent," slave, and so maintain the general meaning of "excellence."

Another example of a somewhat odd usage of *virtus* comes from a later source: Cicero. While Plautus sometimes gave women the descriptor of *virtus*, Cicero is better known for describing his own wife's *virtus*.¹³² Myles McDonnell mentions this instance as well, but simply glosses over it as a late Republican conception of

¹²⁹ C. Stace, "The Slaves of Plautus," *Greece and Rome* 15, No. 1 (1968): 68.

¹³⁰ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 24.

¹³¹ Roberta Stewart, *Plautus and Roman Slavery* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 26.

¹³² McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 169.

the word. Plautus' use of *virtus* to describe clever women, as well as Cicero's wife's *virtus* of excellence and competence as a wife and mother, show a continuity of the usage of the word from the middle Republic to the late Republic in that specific context.

Regardless of the linguistic origins of *virtus* being utilized in this general way, it appears frequently enough that the general meaning has to be a part of the overall definition of *virtus*. There are so many examples of land having *virtus*, women having *virtus*, slaves having *virtus*, and other non-Roman-male's having *virtus* that a less specific meaning of *virtus* had to have existed in the Roman vernacular, and therefore in Roman writing.

III. Battlefield *Virtus*

Jeremiah McCall, a modern scholar with an emphasis on the Roman aristocracy and military, claims that “*virtus* could only be demonstrated on the battlefield.”¹³³ While the term “only” certainly raises contention, the Romans did frequently use *virtus* used as a battlefield term. McCall discusses the role of the aristocratic cavalry in the army of the Republic and how each member of a cavalry unit was expected to exhibit *virtus*.¹³⁴ This specific *virtus* included the ideals of martial courage, single combat, and other ideas based on one's position on the battlefield

¹³³ Jeremiah McCall, *The Cavalry of the Roman Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 83.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 83.

and Roman social hierarchy.

For the rank and file soldiers, *virtus* meant courage. These classical warriors may have believed courage was based on the ideals of “single combat,” or dueling, as J.E. Lendon argues.¹³⁵ These virtues would have been inherited from the classical stories in the *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, two Greek stories, along with older Latin tales. The Romans frequently translated and told the story of Othryades, the Spartan warrior who stayed on the battlefield even after all of his comrades had perished, and claimed victory as the two remaining Argive soldiers retreated to inform Argos of their victory.¹³⁶ This story involved the champions of Sparta and Argos in combat with one another, with the Spartan Othryades continuing to fight and stay on the battlefield despite the loss of his unit and his own sustained wounds. This act of bravery would have inspired many Roman soldiers to emulate such acts in their own military careers.

Nathan Rosenstein takes the Greek connection further, arguing that, instead of emulating the *Illiad*, the Roman soldiers saw *virtus* as a code similar to the Spartan’s own military

¹³⁵ J. E. Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts: A History of Battle in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 2005), 174.

¹³⁶ E. H. Warmington trans., *Remains of Old Latin*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 78.

Besides the cited reference, this story is also mentioned by Livy, Cicero, and Seutonius, meaning it was a well-known story at least by the end of the Republic.

tradition.¹³⁷ This code included the sacred duty “not to flee” battle and to hold formation.¹³⁸ Rosenstein suggests the Romans would have adopted this code from early experiences with the Greek city-states in southern Italy, and to an even larger extent from emulation of Pyrrhus during the Pyrrhic War.¹³⁹ This explanation of *virtus* would further explain why the story of Othryades was so popular among the Romans. The Roman manipular formation, however, leant itself far more to a mobile and flexible style of combat, meaning the rigid formation code of the Spartans would not have worked well when integrated into that battle formation.

Lendon extrapolates the single-combat aspect of *virtus* in soldiers to the formation the Romans adopted in the middle Republic.¹⁴⁰ The traditional explanation for the Roman maniple is that they abandoned the phalanx in favor of a looser, more flexible formation in order to fight the Samnites and other peoples in Italy. Lendon, however, argues that the ideal of *virtus*, his definition focusing on single combat and competition, lent itself to a looser formation in which individual soldiers could have their duels with opposing soldiers.¹⁴¹ This is an interesting argument, and one that is not in conflict with the definition of Roman soldiers’ battlefield

¹³⁷ Nathan S Rosenstein, *Imperatores Victi: Military Defeat and Aristocratic Competition in the Middle and Late Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 96.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 96.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 97.

¹⁴⁰ Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts*, 182.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 185.

virtus. Each individual soldier sought their own glory in their service to the Roman state, and the Roman maniples provided them an excellent outlet to show off their military prowess to their comrades, fostering competition and brotherhood as well.¹⁴²

The aristocratic elements of the Roman army viewed *virtus* differently from their lower-class compatriots. Though single-combat was also a major factor in their battlefield *virtus*, the aristocracy did this specifically because they wished to acquire *spolia opima*, or “noble spoils.”¹⁴³ These spoils would be stripped off an enemy that they had slain, generally an aristocrat of the opposing side. In addition to the *spolia opima*, pure exhibitions of courage, such as putting oneself in more danger than the call of duty would require, could be rewarded with military accolades.¹⁴⁴ Either of these, the *spolia opima* or a military award, would launch an aristocrat’s political career forward, and enable them to begin the long ascension in political offices known as the *cursus honorum*.¹⁴⁵

IV. *Virtus* and the Aristocracy

A Roman aristocrat aspired to ascend to a political or military position wherein they would be awarded *imperium*, or the

¹⁴² Ibid., 186.

¹⁴³ Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts*, 175.

¹⁴⁴ McCall, *The Cavalry*, 84.

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Lintott, *Imperium Romanum: Politics and Administration* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 45.

right to command troops. These positions included the praetors, consuls and dictators, though the dictatorship was never actively sought by Republican aristocrats until the end of the Republic, as it only served as an emergency position.¹⁴⁶ In numerous Latin accounts from Livy, Cicero, Cato, and others, men who had obtained *imperium* via the *cursus honorum* automatically had *virtus*. Cicero specifically stated that a man with *imperium* had “singular *virtus*.”¹⁴⁷ This commonality between accounts suggests that *virtus* was not necessarily a moral trait achieved by great men, but an omnipresent trait intrinsic in great men who obtained the highest powers and honors in Roman society. The specifics of this trait changed throughout Roman history on the basis of who the top men in the Republic were and how they achieved their victories on and off the battlefield.

Aristocratic males were born under their *pater familias*, the head of the family who was usually the oldest male, and were actually owned by him until either his death or their entrance into Roman public life. The aristocratic *pater familias* was generally a successful patrician, and often a senator who had done his military service and at least part of the *cursus honorum* to earn himself a seat in the Senate upon his retirement. A *pater familias*’s primary duty to their male children was to provide them education and an

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 25.

¹⁴⁷ M. Tullius Cicero, *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, translated by C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1856), 2.

entrance into public life; this training would have included military exercises and moral behavior lessons. The indoctrination of Roman patriotism and *virtus* began at a very young age.¹⁴⁸

Once in the military, an aristocrat would either join the cavalry (if his family had a certain amount of wealth) or become captain for one of the infantry maniples. Once on the battlefield, the aristocrat could search for his single combat or great act of bravery to get himself noticed by their commanders and the Senate. Once the battlefield *virtus* had been established by achieving one of these two goals (or simply through longevity of decent military service), public office was assured for that aristocrat.¹⁴⁹ Often, high-status (born into more noteworthy families) aristocrats would skip a few of the early offices and go straight to quaestor, tribune or a local magistrate, offices not far away from major roles that held *imperium*.

When off the battlefield, an aristocrat could still display *virtus*. This more philosophical ideal of *virtus* included loyalty to the Roman state and “general excellence” as described previously. Competency in their role in public office, an accumulation of wealth, or even just a prestigious family name could contribute to the Senate’s consideration of an aristocrat’s *virtus*. Examples from later Roman literature display these trends; such as Cicero’s claims that Cato had *virtus* more for his public and administrative deeds

¹⁴⁸ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 172.

¹⁴⁹ McCall, *The Cavalry*, 85.

than for his military successes.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, even later commentators, such as Seneca, claimed that Cicero should be commended for having superior *virtus*, though he had no military successes to speak of.¹⁵¹

V. *Virtus* and *Imperium*

Eventually the Roman aristocrat would achieve a successful military career, a productive decade in public offices, become a praetor, consul or dictator, and receive the Roman power of *imperium*. Once *imperium* was achieved, the definition of *virtus* in such a man with *imperium* changed immensely. In fact, the meaning of *virtus* itself changed frequently depending on the man with *imperium* and his degree of success. From roughly 390 BC to the Punic Wars, the Romans preferred an offensive foreign policy due to a national paranoia that took hold after the Gallic sack of Rome in 390 BC.¹⁵²

The case of the Dictator Fabius Maximus perhaps best exemplifies this view of *virtus*. During the Second Punic War, Hannibal of Carthage invaded the Italian peninsula and managed to penetrate deep into the Roman lands of Latium, Campania,

¹⁵⁰ Cicero, *The Orations*, 12.

¹⁵¹ Gary D. Farney, *Ethnic Identity and Aristocratic Competition in Republican Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 225.

¹⁵² Veit Rosenberger, "The Gallic Disaster," *The Classical World* 96, No. 4 (2003): 365.

Samnium, and other southern Italian regions.¹⁵³ The Romans sent out their consuls and praetors, the first line of Republican military defenses, and their armies in an attempt to stop Hannibal from burning the Italian countryside. These consuls and praetors acted with the standard meaning of *virtus* during the time: aggressive attacking strategies, despite tactical disadvantages and numerical inferiority.¹⁵⁴ Their rash actions, done in an attempt to prove their *virtus*, led to the disastrous battle at Lake Trasimene in 217 BC.¹⁵⁵

Lake Trasimene represented one of the most catastrophic defeats in Roman history up to that point. The Roman Consul Flaminius went up against Hannibal's forces with a small consular army when Hannibal invaded Etruria in 217. Hannibal knew that the Roman generals were culturally expected to act aggressively, and so he moved his army around the fortified Roman position and instigated a fight south of Flaminius' favored ground.¹⁵⁶ Flaminius, attempting to avoid looking like a coward, advanced quickly to meet Hannibal's numerically superior forces, at an area around Lake Trasimene. As Flaminius advanced, "No sort of reconnaissance" was performed, according to Livy, which was an unnecessarily risky maneuver.¹⁵⁷ Flaminius was overconfident in his presumed victory, and a poorly calculated attack (if successful)

¹⁵³ Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage* (London: Phoenix, 2000), 167.

¹⁵⁴ Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts*, 200.

¹⁵⁵ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 181.

¹⁵⁶ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 185.

¹⁵⁷ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, translated by Aubrey de Selincourt (New York: Penguin Group, 1972), Book XXII, section 4, 98.

would not only greatly boost his political career and reputation, but would also display his *virtus* as well.

Unfortunately, Hannibal expected the Roman consul to act in an overly aggressive and rash manner. His army had hidden in wait on the hillside, and when the Romans marched past, he signaled his troops to attack. Livy describes the outcome best: “Down they came from the hills, each many by the nearest way, taking the Romans totally unprepared.”¹⁵⁸ This battle resulted in the entirety of the consular army being enslaved, killed, or otherwise disbanded, as well as the death of consul Flaminius himself.¹⁵⁹

In response to this catastrophic loss, the Roman Senate elected Fabius Maximus as Dictator. With a dictator in charge, all other positions that normally held *imperium*, such as the praetors and consuls, had to give their armies over to the dictator, who had supreme military control. Fabius had previously held the consulship three times, and had military prestige from his victories over the Ligurians in the 230s.¹⁶⁰ The situation that Fabius presided over was very bleak. Roman morale was low due to repeated defeats and Carthaginian ravaging of the countryside, and his armies were incredibly fearful of engagement with the ever-

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 188.

¹⁶⁰ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 191.

victorious Hannibal.¹⁶¹

In order to raise his soldiers' morale, Fabius chose a new strategy in waging the war. Instead of following Hannibal and attempting a direct confrontation, he chose merely to shadow Hannibal and perform minor assaults on the Carthaginian baggage train and light infantry. Polybius claims Fabius wished to "incur no danger and not to risk a battle, but to make the safety of his men his first and greatest object."¹⁶² For a few months, this strategy worked quite well. The morale of both the army and the Senate rose quickly while under Fabius' leadership.¹⁶³

Unfortunately, while the Romans suffered no major defeats with Fabius' strategy, the Senate and Fabius' subordinates did not see any massive victories either. The Master of Horse, Fabius' second in command named Minucius, believed that Fabius had become too timid, and so he began leading small bands of troops into direct conflict with Hannibal's army. Minucius, according to Livy, established the meaning of *virtus* as it pertained to him and the Senate: "Rome's power grew by action and daring – not by these do-nothing tactics, which the faint-hearted call caution."¹⁶⁴

In conjunction with Minucius' denouncement of Fabius, the Senate and army showed their displeasure as well. While the

¹⁶¹ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, Book XXII, section 14, 110.

¹⁶² Polybius, *Histories*, translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh (New York: Macmillan, 1889), Book III, section 89, 146.

¹⁶³ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, Book XXII, section 15, 111.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Senate merely berated Fabius, his army was highly mutinous and did not follow Fabius' orders.¹⁶⁵ In fact, it seemed that "Had the matter been put to a general vote, there is little doubt that the army would have declared a preference to serve under Minucius rather than Fabius."¹⁶⁶ Fabius was seen as cowardly precisely because he was attempting to protect his army from destruction, rather than aggressively pursuing the enemy as previous generations had done to grow "Rome's power."¹⁶⁷

As a result, when Fabius' term as dictator ended, he was not asked to return in any form to an office with *imperium*, and he retired in relative disgrace compared to how most at least partially-successful generals did.¹⁶⁸ Immediately after, two new consuls were assigned to lead the Roman armies in a more aggressive strike at Hannibal. The Battle of Cannae occurred, resulting in the total annihilation of the Roman military yet again.¹⁶⁹ The Senate received their wish of two *imperium*-wielding generals that exhibited the aggressive aspects of *virtus*, and their reward was another catastrophic loss.

VI. A Fluid *Virtus*

The Roman army had been defeated handily at Lake Trasimene and Cannae. Further defeats, caused by the aggressive

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., Book XXII, section 14, 109.

¹⁶⁶ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, Book XXII, section 15, 111.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts*, 202.

¹⁶⁹ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 197.

and rash decisions of Roman generals wishing to prove their *virtus*, were still to come. Eventually, though, the Senate learned its lesson. Fabius Maximus was brought out of retirement, and entrusted with the task of keeping Rome's morale high, as well as orchestrating any necessary defense of the city.¹⁷⁰ For the remainder of the conflict with Hannibal, a more cautious strategy was allowed, and even the Roman soldiers accepted such leadership without mutiny. Fabius himself gained "the reputation of an outstanding commander" and was loved by his contemporaries as well as future Romans.¹⁷¹

This shift represented a large change in Roman military culture. Up to the time of Fabius, preemptive strike and an aggressive military stance had been the normal mode of *virtus* for Roman generals.¹⁷² Modern scholars, such as Lendon and McDonnell, contend that the aggressive *virtus* continued full-force past this point, all the way up to Augustus and the tragedy with Varus and his legions along the Rhine.¹⁷³ The Senate and aristocratic conceptions of *virtus*, however, seem to have been more pragmatic than that.

Not only was the Senate willing to allow a massive shift in military policy after the relative success of Fabius' strategy, future

¹⁷⁰ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, Book XXIII, section 21, 194.

¹⁷¹ Frontinus, *Stratagems*, in Campbell, Brian, edit., *Greek and Roman Military Writers* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.3.3, 118.

¹⁷² Lendon, *Soldiers & Ghosts*, 201.

¹⁷³ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 385-386.

strategic decisions of its like were also allowed.¹⁷⁴ The Senate praised future generals, not only for their aggressiveness if they had that trait, but also for their shrewd cunning in achieving victory. Frontinus remarks that the Senate “turned back to Fabius and his strategy” numerous times after the Punic Wars.¹⁷⁵

By the time of the early Principate, there was certainly admiration for generals who used more strategic means to achieve victory. Livy claims that Fabius used “wise delaying tactics” and further criticized the Senate and soldiers under Fabius for having ever held “contempt” for their commander.¹⁷⁶ Suetonius, a Roman biographer of the middle Principate, credited Augustus with saying, “a cautious general is better than a bold one.”¹⁷⁷ While Suetonius’ comment would not necessarily represent what was thought during the early Principate/Late Republic, it at least shows that by the time of the second century A.D. there was a significant cultural shift in seeing *virtus* more as a path to victory, regardless of exactly which path is taken, rather than a specific virtue.

The alternative view of many scholars focused on the rigidly aggressive and martial courage definitions of *virtus*, such as McDonnell, is that, by the time of the Principate, *virtus* had lost most of its original meaning due to Greek influences and

¹⁷⁴ Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage*, 196.

¹⁷⁵ Frontinus, *Stratagems*, 8.14.1, 140.

¹⁷⁶ Livy, *The War With Hannibal*, Book XXII, section 22, 120.

¹⁷⁷ Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, in Campbell, Brian, edit., *Greek and Roman Military Writers* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 25.4, 80.

Augustus' redefinitions of certain Roman cultural terms in order to benefit himself.¹⁷⁸ This argument, however valid in explaining the imperial definitions of *virtus*, does not explain the Senate's willingness to allow and actively promote the use of non-aggressive tactics and strategies in the wake of the Second Punic War.

VII. Conclusion

Myles McDonnell finishes his book, *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic*, with a short section on *virtus* in the Principate. In this section, he claims that the Romans of this period "could use both the martial and ethical meanings of *virtus* frequently and naturally."¹⁷⁹ By this time, *virtus* was a descriptor given to those who achieved success in any major part of Roman society, whether economic, political, military, or even religious.¹⁸⁰ McDonnell argues that this change happened swiftly, with Augustus having instituted most of the changes to the word *virtus* and its public perception between the end of the Republic and the first century AD.¹⁸¹ McDonnell also argues, earlier in the book, that men such as Cicero (from the late Republic) believed that *virtus* was the main quality "responsible for Roman greatness," and that this quality had aspects in the military, political, and economic

¹⁷⁸ McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 385.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 386.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 386.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 385.

sections of Roman society.¹⁸²

By the very nature of McDonnell's argument and Cicero's belief that *virtus* was how the Romans expanded their control over the Mediterranean, *virtus* had no single, static meaning. The Romans had not extended their territorial empire across the Mediterranean world simply through aggression and martial courage, but with a myriad of resources including diplomacy, wealth, and adept leadership. In fact, from the view of Cicero, *virtus* may as well have been defined simply as "Roman greatness."¹⁸³

Modern scholars' attempts to define *virtus* as a strictly military word, and, worse, as a strictly military word with only a single military definition, come from a modern wish to translate words into easy, exact definitions. In order to translate *virtus*, however, the context the word is used in ends up far more important than the word itself. Roman generals had *virtus* in the early Republic due to their aggressive tactics that their enemies simply could not handle. During the latter years of the Second Punic War, Fabius had *virtus* due to his successful policy of cautious, periodic combat. Cato's land had *virtus*, because a good harvest could come from its dirt. Plautus' slaves had *virtus*, because they embodied the ideal Roman slave.

Virtus defined those who attained victory and success. It

¹⁸² McDonnell, *Roman Manliness*, 2.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 2.

was not that one man had distinct “martial courage,” and hence had *virtus*, because those who exhibited such a virtue and died had no *virtus*, such as those consuls who recklessly lost their own lives and those of their men at Lake Trasimene and Cannae. There was a definition of *virtus* that was popular among the lower classes, as exemplified by Fabius’ mutinous soldiers who wanted only an aggressive general such as Minucius, but this definition was just as fluid as the more generalized usage used at the higher levels of Roman society. The ideas of the aristocracy seem to have trickled down to the lower classes, as mutinies became less common over the years and there seems to have been a general acceptance that the general’s orders were to be followed regardless of moral issues surrounding aggression and *virtus*.¹⁸⁴

McDonnell’s argument about the homogenization of the term *virtus* during the Principate is certainly valid. The homogenized use of *virtus*, however, had existed for much longer than that. And before the homogenization of usage of the word, which can be dated to the late Republican writers, the term itself was fluid with its meaning. From defining the fertility of land to the excellence of slaves to the martial courage of soldiers, *virtus* was the primary word the Romans used to describe anything they found to be successful or generally positive. If sources existed in a more vernacular version of Latin, it is likely that *virtus* may have

¹⁸⁴ Adrian Goldsworthy, *In the Name of Rome: The Men Who Won the Roman Empire* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 128.

even shown up as a more or less synonym of the modern English word “successful.” Unfortunately, without such a source to analyze, the numerous shifting usages of *virtus* in the Latin lexicon leave the scholar with only one real conclusion: *virtus* represented “Roman excellence,” and had no single translation at any one time in Roman history.

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The Desperate Rebels of Shimabara: The Economic and Political Persecutions and the Tradition of Peasant Revolt

By
Jake Farias



The Shimabara Rebellion from 1637 to 1638 remains one of the most historically divisive events in Japanese early modern history. The Rebellion threw the Shimabara and Amakusa provinces on the far south of Japanese islands into outright revolt against their lords, and, later, against the army of the shogunate itself. The cause of the Rebellion remains a popular historiographical debate into the modern day. Some contend that the sizeable, if still minority, population of Japanese Christians in these distant provinces revolted in order to overthrow a government whose public policy included the persecution, torture, and execution of Christians. Others argue that economic oppression forced the peasants into revolt against irresponsible daimyo, or local lords, with the Christian element being overplayed in historical records. Neither of these interpretations fully captures the nature of the Shimabara Rebellion. Tokugawa Japan, even after the Rebellion, maintained a long tradition of peasant resistance to the domination by the daimyo through

petitions, inactivity, and even outright violence. Economic hardship and political persecution undoubtedly pressured peasants into rebellion against their lords in Shimabara and Amakusa. However, Christian influences in these regions tied together the revolt of farmers, unemployed soldiers, and other classes. The Shimabara Rebellion was not a peasants' revolt against unjust taxation or a Christian uprising. The Rebellion was the last measure of a desperate people, pushed together by a common economic suffering and held together by a common culture marked, but not consumed, by Japanese Christianity. After the Rebellion, the Tokugawa shogunate's persecution of Christianity was a concentrated effort to cut or replace these cultural and religious ties in order to end the threat of any future powerful and unified revolts. The shogunate's reaction reveals how they recognized the multiple causes of the Rebellion and used the experience to prevent future insurrections.

In order to properly understand how the Shimabara arose, historians must be aware not just of the economic and religious environment, but also of the common practices of the peasant class. Although the Tokugawa era was characterized by administrative and government domination, the chonin, or middle to lower classes, still maintained some ability to resist unilateral domination by their daimyo. Peasants eventually submitted to social immobility and high taxes from their lords; however, they were still able to influence local policy. Often, in instances of bad

farming or famine, peasants requested exemption or lowering of the tax rate.¹⁸⁵ While the daimyo had no legal obligation to act on these peasant demands, their acceptance hinted at a local relationship more flexible than the national tax-collecting policy. Despite the heavy cost demands of the upkeep of estate, personal castle, and lavish lifestyle, daimyo were more willing to negotiate with peasants than to risk a costly revolt. Often these appeals were conducted through village headmen and the wealthy farming families who sought to retain a greater amount of surplus crop.¹⁸⁶ However, increased tax burdens most heavily affected the poorer farming families, who could be driven to starvation in years of bad harvest. As a result, some of these poor farmers threatened to abandon their land, leaving the domain's agricultural base without its primary labor force. In the pursuit for concessions, the headsman used typical honorifics and appeals to their "benevolent lordship," laced with dissatisfaction over the lord's administration. In extreme cases, peasant classes chanced open revolt when their daimyo ignored petitions and refused any concessions. Only twenty years after the bloody Shimabara Rebellion, peasants under the Kurume administration in southern Japan violently revolted when their lord refused to lower "unheard of taxes" and every

¹⁸⁵ Donald Burton, "Peasant Movements in Early Tokugawa Japan," *Peasant Studies*, 8, no. 3 (Summer 1979), accessed February 20, 2015, 62. *Historical Abstracts*.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

demand by the peasants.¹⁸⁷

As a result, typically the daimyo and the shogunate opted to appease the peasant population instead of having to crush outright rebellion.¹⁸⁸ Daimyo that lost control over their peasant population were often replaced and dishonored by their administrative failure. Through this policy of mutual responsibility, the chief concerns of the daimyo shifted from collecting as much as possible from the peasant population to maintaining peace and order in their domain. Although the exploitation of peasants through poll taxes, agricultural taxes, and more continued, daimyo made concessions and tax breaks to avoid the humiliation of a revolt. The complicity of the law was better assured when the peasants respected their lord and believed they would receive fair treatment. For example, even after the brutally repressed Shimabara Rebellion, peasants hid their rice from tax collectors in Bizan.¹⁸⁹ Efficient tax collection was easier and better guaranteed through appeasement, not force. Tokugawa era daimyo exploited the peasantry, but the peasantry retained an agency to defy absolute domination.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 67.

¹⁸⁸ Daimyo and the shogunate maintained a feudal relationship not unlike that of kings and lords in Europe. The shogunate was the ultimate military and political authority. The shogun and his advisors directed military operations on a grand scale and controlled national legislature. The daimyo received their lands by the authority of the shogun and, as such, were subservient to his demands and interests. They were expected to maintain order in their territory, collect taxes for the shogunate, and provide grand demonstrations of loyalty to the shogun through parades to the capitol of Edo.

¹⁸⁹ Burton, "Peasant Movements," 67.

Many historians have discussed the Shimabara Rebellion in detail, primarily focusing on the causes of the revolt. Older research tended to place the blame on the harsh anti-Christian policies enacted by the daimyo. Neil Fujita and Joseph Sebes both attributed the rebellion as an outburst of persecuted Japanese Christians, joined by hidden Christians who had been “forced to apostatize” through torture and intimidation.¹⁹⁰ Japanese Christians were a significant minority in southern Japan. Originally, daimyo had forced their peasantry to convert to Christianity in order to attract European ships and the goods they carried, particularly guns. Although the demand for guns significantly lessened once the Tokugawa shogunate stiffened its control over the nation, many of the peasants remained committed to their newfound religion. Reports of the Rebellion, from European and Japanese sources, detailed the rebels’ use of Christian symbols and banners. However, Fujita and Sebes’ theory relied on a much larger population of Japanese Christians than actually existed in Kyushu. More realistically, modern historians relied on the tradition and accounts of peasant rebellions to explain the Rebellion.¹⁹¹ Using research by historians such as Donald Burton and Geoffrey Parker, more recent narratives explained the

¹⁹⁰ Joshua Sebes, “Christian Influences on the Shimabara Rebellion 1637-1638,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, no. 48 (1978), 142. *Historical Abstracts*.

¹⁹¹ Fujita and Sebes are both authors and religious historians. Although their research is valuable, their interpretation is skewed with an examination of the Shimabara Rebellion through a Christian lens.

Shimabara Rebellion as a peasants' revolt against political injustice and unbearable taxation. Geoffrey Gunn explicitly described this version of events as "refreshingly modern."¹⁹² However, to simply disregard the well-documented Christian element of the Rebellion does not fully explore the origins of the Shimabara Rebellion, nor explain the harsh reprisals against Christianity following the Rebellion.¹⁹³ Recently, more historians have rejected both the Christian uprising and peasant revolt narratives, entertaining the idea that both elements substantially influenced the Rebellion. Ohashi Yukihiro, a younger and newer historian, even explored how the opposing narratives of the Shimabara Rebellion were developed by historians after concluding that multiple elements of social hierarchy and cohesion, religious persecution, and economic despotism made the Rebellion possible. Ultimately, historians have increasingly accepted that there is no singular cause, and have begun to explore how the memory of the Shimabara Rebellion was created to simplify the historical narrative and foist the blame for civil unrest on the small minority of Japanese Christians.

In Shimabara and Amakusa, economic pressures were so dire as to require these methods of resistance. Many peasants complained of heavy taxes and of difficulty living. Wealthier

¹⁹² Geoffrey Gunn, "The Duarte Correa manuscript and the Shimabara Rebellion," *Crossroads*, no. 6 (1998), 12. Found in Crossroads Website.

¹⁹³ Burton, Parker, and Gunn are historians and professors focused on East Asia and Japan. Their interpretation reflects the secularization of history and an attempt to fit the Shimabara Rebellion into a larger pattern of peasant rebellions.

farmers could not retain as much surplus and poor farmers risked starvation under the new Shimabara lord.¹⁹⁴ The previous lord, who had also burdened the population with persecution of Christianity and heavy taxes, had died suddenly, leaving his inexperienced son to continue his unpopular policies. Peasants in Amakusa suffered similarly and this heavy economic oppression irked many of the farmers, both wealthy and poor.¹⁹⁵ Duarte Correa, a Portuguese sea captain-turned-Jesuit, recorded that the peasants of Amakusa were forced to pay the annual tribute in wheat, rice, and barley as well as two additional imposts. Furthermore, Correa asserted that the peasantry was expected to serve the daimyo in every way possible, such as supplying firewood to their lord's soldiers.¹⁹⁶ While Correa's testimony is steeped in bias, as a secret Catholic missionary, these claims leveled against the lords of Shimabara and Amakusa are supported by their inexperience and youth.¹⁹⁷ Additionally, extravagant spending by the daimyo was typically expected, from the expenses

¹⁹⁴ Ohashi Yukihiro, trans. Martin Ramos, "The Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa," *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies*, no. 20 (2010), 74. *Historical Abstracts*.

¹⁹⁵ Gunn, "Duarte Correa," 7.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹⁷ Correa, as a Portuguese Jesuit, looked to avoid placing the blame of the rebellion on Christianity itself. Rather, he blamed the faulty administration of the daimyo in order to clear Christianity of most responsibility of the Rebellion. Ultimately, his efforts fell short as the Tokugawa bakufu cited the Rebellion as a major Christian uprising and banned Christianity from Japan. Correa was later imprisoned for his Portuguese ethnicity and Christian faith in Nagasaki, tortured, and burned to death.

of *sankin kotai* to the costs of maintain their castle, dress, and other status symbols.¹⁹⁸ Being inexperienced daimyo, these two lords may have been overwhelmed by their administrative and social duties and resorted to raising taxes to procure the appropriate funds. However, through the eyes of the peasants, these daimyo openly exploited their peasant class in order to enhance their own personal wealth. Most accounts claim that the Shimabara lord used most of the collected taxes in order to fund the building of his new Shimabara castle at the expense of the farming class. Furthermore, the lords punctuated these economic injustices with acts of political terror and torture. Peasants unable to supply taxes were beaten, drowned, and killed on the administration's orders.¹⁹⁹ These economic and political abuses created a highly volatile sentiment among the commoner classes, especially the farmers.

These economic and political injustices were compounded by the religious persecution enacted by both the state and local governments. Since Toyotomi Hideoyoshi's reign, the government had, at least on paper, opposed the expansion and continued presence of Christianity in Japan. In 1587, Hideyoshi declared that any lord who wanted to become a "follower of the padres (priests)" of their own volition could do so and also convert their fief, only

¹⁹⁸ *Sankin kotai* is the law of necessary expeditions to and prolonged stays at the shogunate's castle in Edo. The daimyo were expected to make this trip at least annually and maintain an impressive home worthy of their title. The intention of *sankin kotai* was to keep daimyo from building too much personal wealth and to bring them close under the watchful eye of the shogunate.

¹⁹⁹ Ohashi, "Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa," 74.

prohibiting some of the wealthier and more influential fief owners from doing so.²⁰⁰ However, in the same year, Hideyoshi also expelled the missionaries from Japan and denounced his vassals who had convinced the peasants of their fief to convert as well.²⁰¹ Christianity had first arrived in southern Japan in the mid 1500's, brought in force by Portuguese missionaries and later by Christian Dutch and British merchant companies. As evidenced in *Samurai William*, these Southern lords employed a number of methods to attract European trading company ships.²⁰² Acting independently of the daimyo, some lords converted to Christianity to attract the European merchants to their cities, or at least provided Christian missionaries with access to the countryside and peasant population. Some peasants converted upon their lord's conversion to Christianity while others were convinced by the preaching of the Christian priests. Japanese Christians never became a majority in southern Japan, but did account for a sizeable minority of the population.

Although Christianity was still, to some extent, prevalent in

²⁰⁰ Toyotomi Hideyoshi, "Limitation on the Propagation of Christianity, 1587," in *Japan: A Documentary History: The Dawn of History to the Late Tokugawa Period*, ed. David Lu (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 196.

²⁰¹ Toyotomi Hideyoshi, "Expulsion of the Missionaries, 1587," in *Japan: A Documentary History: The Dawn of History to the Late Tokugawa Period*, ed. David Lu (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 197.

²⁰² Giles Milton, *Samurai William* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2002), 182. In the case of the British East India Company, King Foyne of Hirado demonstrated his hospitality in the form of food and prostitutes provided for the crew of the Clove. King Foyne won over the British East India Company and Hirado became the location the English factory.

Kyushu in the early 1600's under the first Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the succeeding shoguns harshly condemned the foreign religion.²⁰³ During the early Tokugawa shogunate, Christianity experienced a "dramatic decline," likely due to the shogunate's increasing alienation and restriction of European influences during the Edo period.²⁰⁴ Christianity was only truly valued for the trade, specifically guns, it brought in from European merchants; with the pacification of Japan under Tokugawa Ieyasu, there was a decreased demand for guns and a significant decreased value on trade with the European Christians. Christian faith was considered a crime. This policy was not entirely unique to Christianity, as unpopular Buddhist sects and families of disloyal retainers received similar treatment. Regardless, hundreds of Christians were executed in Kyoto in 1619 and in Nagasaki in 1622.²⁰⁵ Records of Christians being imprisoned, decapitated, and burned alive characterized the shogunate's attitude towards Japanese Christians.²⁰⁶ Even more graphic executions included crucifixion, water torture, mutilation, and "suspending the prisoner head down over a pit of excrement." Many of the Japanese Christians recanted to avoid punishment while others were driven

²⁰³ Ohashi, "Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa," 73.

²⁰⁴ Peter Nosco, "Early Modernity and the State's Policies toward Christianity in 16th and 17th Century Japan," *Bulletin of Portuguese Japanese Studies*, no. 7 (2003), 12. *Historical Abstracts*.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰⁶ Fujita, "Persecution by Tokugawa Bakufu," in *Japan's Encounter with Christianity: the Catholic mission in pre-modern Japan* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1991), 175-177.

into underground groups.²⁰⁷ The Tokugawa bakufu's desire for control, stability, and order compelled it to attempt to quash Christianity.²⁰⁸ The Era of the Warring States, characterized by near constant civil war across Japan by competing warlords, was over and there was no longer any need for trade with the Europeans. To emphasize the point, two years before the Shimabara Rebellion, the Tokugawa shogunate issued an edict barring the Catholic priests from Japan, demanding that its citizenry report any found padres, and promised to put to death any Japanese returning from overseas.²⁰⁹ Christianity had outstayed its welcome in Tokugawa Japan, as the bakufu sought to consolidate its control over its population's personal and religious lives. Zen Buddhism was becoming a national religion used to encourage loyalty and subservience among the peasantry and to reinforce Tokugawa authority instead of opposing it.²¹⁰ In the eyes of the shogunate, Christianity had outlived its usefulness and had become a cause of disorder in the religious conflict it provoked.

At the local level, the Shimabara and Amakusa lords

²⁰⁷ Tetsuya Ohama, "Christianity in the Edo Period," in *A History of Japanese Religion*, ed. Kazuo Kasahara, trans. Paul McCarthy and Gaynor Sekimori (Tokyo, Japan: Kosei Publishing Company, 2001), 437.

²⁰⁸ The bakufu was the military and political government administrated by the Tokugawa shogun.

²⁰⁹ Tokugawa Shogunate, "Excerpts from The Edict of 1653 Ordering the Closing of Japan: Addressed to the Joint Bugyo of Nagasaki," in *Japan: A Documentary History: The Dawn of History to the Late Tokugawa Period*, ed. David Lu (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 221.

²¹⁰ Nosco, "Early Modernity," 12-13.

engaged in the persecution of Christians in the same manner as the shogunate. This process was very common in domains formerly controlled by Christian daimyo.²¹¹ In a later letter to shogunate forces, one rebel claimed that their only wish was to practice Christianity without repression.²¹² Although this demand was not universal for the Shimabara rebels, a significant percentage of Japanese Christians lived in constant fear of being arrested and executed for their religion. The Shimabara and Amakusa repressions of Christianity worsened an already toxic relationship between the daimyo and their peasants.

This common suffering of the Shimabara and Amakusa peasants, both Christians and non-Christians, was pushed to a breaking point by 1637 CE. The peasants of Shimabara revolted, attacking the lord's tax officials and men. The peasants, merchants, craftsmen, and unemployed soldiers of Amakusa followed, as joined the rebellion out of choice or force. These rebels converged on Hara Castle to reform and organize, appointing the 16-year old Amakusa Shiro as their "leader."²¹³

²¹¹ While many Southern lords had converted their fiefs to Christianity to garner European trade, many were replaced or forced out by the Tokugawa bakufu. The later non-Christian daimyo, eager to prove their loyalty to the Tokugawa shogunate, became unpopular in these regions because of their persecution of Christianity.

²¹² Ohashi, "Revolt of Shimabara-Amakusa," 74.

²¹³ In reality, it is much more likely that Shiro was more of a figurehead while the rebel ronin decided on tactics and war plans. Shiro's youth and the initial success of the rebellion imply that more experienced warriors planned the military aspect of the rebellion.

Hara Castle was besieged by Tokugawa forces but their initial attempts to crush the rebels failed. After almost four months, the Tokugawa forces starved the rebels of food, resources, and ammunition. Hara Castle fell and the Tokugawa forces exterminated almost all of the participating rebels. After the massacre, the shogunate issued edicts expelling and banning all Europeans, except for the Dutch at Nagasaki, and reinforcing the outlaw of Christianity in Japan. After the Rebellion, Christianity was affixed with a permanent stigma of violence, disorder, and disrespect for proper authority. The Tokugawa shogunate issued propaganda portraying Christianity as impure and inappropriate while also promising rewards to those who reported Christian practitioners.²¹⁴ Japanese Christians were forced underground to hide their religion and the Tokugawa shogunate eliminated Japanese Christianity as what they perceived as a threat.

Although historians like Fujita or Gunn argue whether economic or religious oppression was more significant in pushing the Tokugawa peasantry to revolt, the Rebellion was much more complicated. The communities of Shimabara and Amakusa were tightly knit, tied together by a common culture. Christianity had its largest base for support in southern Japan, and Japanese

²¹⁴ Tokugawa Shogunate, "Excerpts from The Five-Household Group Laws from Shimo Sakurai Village (1640)," in *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns*, ed. Constantine Vaporis (Oxford, England: Greenwood, 2012), 84.

Christians made up a significant percentage of the population. Although public acts of torture and execution were intended to horrify and scare the populace into submission, at the time, local daimyo could only safely employ it in moderation. By overusing these methods, the daimyo pushed the population past the breaking point, to where they were convinced that they were more safe revolting than continuing under the daimyo's rule. Japanese Christians and non-Christian peasants were tied together by the communal need to survive. In times of famine or bad harvests, the village headmen, regardless of their religion, campaigned for lower tax rates, tax breaks, and exemptions. Regardless of their differences in religion, wealth, or social status, the peasantry pulled together in times of extreme despotism with the intention of forcing improvement in their standard of living. In their struggle to survive, the agricultural base had created a community that relied on each other to demand concessions from the state authority.

Additionally, although only Christians were being persecuted for religious reasons, every member of the commoner class was being exploited economically and oppressed politically. In an effort to both help fund the reconstruction of Edo's walls and to build his own Shimabara Castle, Shigemasa Matsukura, the new lord, imposed heavy taxes and developed strict penalties for the farmers who failed to provide. Many of these taxes seem almost ridiculous to modern thinking, such as taxes for the death of a

family member. Families unable to pay their taxes were starved, beaten, tortured, or killed. The mothers and daughters of these families were sold into brothels. Concessions were not forthcoming.²¹⁵ The economic and political oppression unified the peasantry into a culture of suffering, one in which mutual dependence was essential.

Economic grievances played a significant role in the start of the Rebellion. The unbearable taxes and system of punishments pushed the peasantry to desperate measures. As the lifestyle became more and more untenable, the peasants turned to their own and implemented the only option left available to resist: open rebellion. At its very least, revolt attracted the attention, and displeasure, of the shogunate. In some ways, the peasant revolt can be interpreted as a Pyrrhic victory, mutually assured destruction for both the rebels and the daimyo. In previous cases, daimyo were dishonored and removed from office as punishment for failing to maintain peace in their domain. Political and economic despotism forced peasants to drastic actions. The close bonds between the community, strengthened by a common culture and common “suffering,” assured that the rebels organized, mobilized, and, largely remained loyal to each other.

The Shimabara Rebellion was an incredibly costly challenge to Tokugawa authority. The rebels raided armories,

²¹⁵ Fujita, “Persecution,” 184.

killed Tokugawa soldiers, and forced a lengthy siege. More importantly, the Rebellion embarrassed the bakufu; although the peasantry was incited against their daimyo, these commoners-in-arms managed to occupy a castle, repulse, and kill trained military.²¹⁶ In short, the Shimabara Rebellion was not a mistake the shogunate could allow to happen again. To prevent another uprising of the similar nature, the Tokugawa shogunate devoted itself to the expulsion and elimination of Christianity in the domains. By foisting the blame on the Japanese Christians, the shogunate could divide the communities in southern Japan where Christians were still a significant minority.

The Tokugawa shogunate employed a more developed and systematic persecution of Christians. Propaganda was specifically designed to demonize the European Christian missionaries. In one chapbook, the Christian “padre” is described more like a goblin than human, with the intention of taking over Japan.²¹⁷ These depictions were intended to scare Japanese away from interaction with Christianity and to create a connotation between Christianity and evil. However, this propaganda piece also did much more. The Buddhist monk ultimately prevents the spread of the priest’s “screeching,” juxtaposing the wild and uncivilized image of the

²¹⁶ Sebes, “Christian Influences on the Shimabara Rebellion,” 143.

²¹⁷ Unknown Authors, excerpts from *Kirishitan Monogatari* (1639), in *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns*, ed. Constantine Vaporis (Oxford, England: Greenwood, 2012), 202.

Christian padre with the calm wisdom and loyalty of the Buddhist monk. By denigrating Christianity, this excerpt elevates Zen Buddhism which was quickly becoming the Tokugawa's influence on religion. *Kirishitan* also legitimized the reprisals of the shogunate against Christianity; in this text, the shogun has the moral right to destroy their temples and punish those that remain Christian.²¹⁸ The shogunate certainly exercised this right more frequently and publicly after the rebellion. While the previous executions had been sporadic and scattered, the shogunate enforced stricter laws ordering the population to report Japanese Christians. One set of Household Laws from 1640 includes numerous charges to investigate and report any Christian activities. All villagers were also required to report to the "pertinent temple," as Zen Buddhist temples took over the responsibility of ensuring the Tokugawa shogunate's control over its citizens' religions. Tokugawa officials assumed these laws would be followed, because if Christians were discovered by these officials, the entire village would be punished.²¹⁹ One edict ordered by the Tokugawa senior counselors in 1639 captures the spirit of this policy:

With regard to those who believe in
Christianity, you are aware that there
is a proscription, and thus knowing,
you are not permitted to allow padres

²¹⁸ Unknown Authors, "Kirishitan Monogatari," 203.

²¹⁹ Tokugawa Shogunate, "Excerpts from The Five-Household Group Laws", 84.

and those who believe in their teachings to come aboard your ships. If there is any violation, all of you who are aboard will be considered culpable. If there is anyone who hides the fact that he is a Christian and boards your ship, you may report it to us. A substantial reward will be given to you for this information.²²⁰

This memorandum was addressed to Chinese and Dutch ships. The bakufu clarified that foreigners could be Christian as long as they did not propagate. However, this edict demonstrates the bakufu's main tool in rooting out Christianity was not officials or even Buddhist temples but the civilian population itself. The threat of punishment for failing to report Christians compelled the non-Christian population to take an active role in searching out Christians within their own village or town. The promise of reward made compliance even more appealing.

The concept that everyone would suffer for the religious beliefs on one individual drove a wedge between Japanese Christians and non-Christians. These Group Laws, and the promised reprisals for disobeying them, severed the cultural ties and communal spirit that had united the Shimabara and Amakusa peasants regardless of religion. With these laws, commoners had to fear their neighbor, not support them. Edicts like these helped

²²⁰ Tokugawa Shogunate, "Exclusion of the Portuguese (1939)," in *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns*, ed. Constantine Vaporis (Oxford, England: Greenwood, 2012), 97.

the Tokugawa government root out Christianity—and prevent the disorder it could create—but also cut any ties of trust or fellowship that could unite peasant families in a revolt.

However, the Tokugawa shogunate also understood the role corrupt and incompetent daimyo played in inciting the Shimabara Rebellion. Both Matsukura and Katataka were instructed to end their lives in penance for failing to keep the peace. Future daimyo were more incentivized to treat their peasants well, rather than risk the humiliation of a revolt.²²¹ In this way, the shogunate discouraged corruption and injustice, based on its risks of agitating the populace and creating the necessary dissatisfaction for a revolt. Although Group Laws kept villages divided and fearful of one another, too much economic and political despotism would still drive the peasantry together. As one abbot Kodo told the lord of Kurume, cornered rats will even “bite the cat when driven to extremity.”²²² Kodo’s statement, whether an invention of memory or true, shows that the Tokugawa understand why peasants revolt and seek to crush the causes for their discontent in addition to their means to stage rebellions. Corrupt and incompetent daimyo threatened the stability of Tokugawa Japan as much as Christianity. In order to avoid revolt and the resultant humiliation, daimyo were pressured to practice fair taxation and law.

Later daimyo would employ a number of methods for

²²¹ Fujita, “Persecution,” 186.

²²² Burton, “Peasant Movements, 67.

quelling peasant dissent. Some lords made concessions in order to appease the peasantry. Dete Masamune in Sendai cleverly managed to both gain the peasantry's support for his rule by reducing the tax rate while also gaining more control over the surplus agricultural production and maximum revenue by broadening the tax base.²²³ In Dete's case, he avoided pushing the peasant population to desperation and his concessions in the tax rate kept the populace peaceful. Simultaneously, he also increased his control and revenue from the agricultural farmland. Other lords employed speakers like Hosoi Heishu to pacify their peasant populations. In 1783, Hosoi was hired by the daimyo of Owari to mollify the peasantry, angered by poor living conditions worsened by a bout of famine.²²⁴ Hosoi's allegorical sermon on the filial promise of a young wife to her parents-in-law was intended to remind the peasantry of their own duties to their lords and prevent any plots of dissent or rebellion against the Owari daimyo.²²⁵ The sermon was widely popular and drew huge crowds. In this manner, the daimyo were able to broadcast their messages of loyalty and moral behavior to a wide peasant population. Dete's manipulation of the tax base and Hosoi's sermons illustrate how

²²³ Burton, "Peasant Movements," 61.

²²⁴ Constantine Vaporis, ed., *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns*, (Oxford, England: Greenwood, 2012), 195.

²²⁵ Hosoi Heishu, "Excerpts from Sermon Given by Hosoi Heishu," in *Voices of Early Modern Japan: Contemporary Accounts of Daily Life during the Age of the Shoguns*, ed. Constantine Vaporis (Oxford, England: Greenwood, 2012), 198.

daimyo after the Shimabara Rebellion worked to pacify their peasant populations while also gaining more control over them.

The Tokugawa shogunate strived for control over its population. Especially in early years, with the tumultuous Warring States years still fresh in the national memory, the shogunate believed political domination and unflinching order as the only path to peace. Arguably, the violent methods they employed to subdue the peasantry and their daimyo prevented the outbreak of an even more destructive and violent war between states. Driving a wedge between the Christians and the rest of Japan, they took away the ability for Christianity to become a rallying cry for peasant revolt. Communities would remain divided by “fear of thy neighbor,” and could not organize easily or harmoniously. Furthermore, the rise of the Zen Buddhist temples as the religious arm of the Tokugawa gave them tighter control over the personal spiritual lives of its subjects.²²⁶ Soto Zen temples monitored parishioners in order to prohibit other religions independent of Tokugawa control, especially Christianity and the Nichiren Fubu Fuse.²²⁷ These temples, much like the constant codes of conduct, would advocate for appropriate behavior, knowing one’s place in the social hierarchy, and submission to the daimyo and shogunate. By demonstrating the penalty for failure, daimyo were pressured to

²²⁶ Duncan Ryuken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 23.

²²⁷ Williams, *The Other Side of Zen*, 20.

minimize corruption and punishment in their domain, or to at least formulate methods for placating or subduing the local population. Bearable taxation and living conditions deterred many peasants from resorting to open rebellion. The Tokugawa goal was to take away both the cause and means of peasant rebellion, in order to maintain peace in the realm.

Ohashi explored how memory and historical analysis influenced the evolving narrative of the Shimabara Rebellion. In early-modern Japan, Christian heresy and disruptive European influences were emphasized and the despotism of the Shimabara and Amakusa lords was placed in the background.²²⁸ This narrative justified, at least in their own eyes, Tokugawa shogunate's harsh persecution of Japanese Christians and their expulsion of the Europeans. As a result, the Christian uprising narrative dominated the early Japanese historical accounts and, subsequently, the early European historians who used their work. However, in later research, more historians recognized how the Rebellion also demonstrated a struggle between peasants and lords, on the grounds of political terrorism and economic oppression. Ohashi contended that later historians focused more on social and economic histories, though perhaps too narrowly.²²⁹ Though they had uncovered another driving cause for the Rebellion, they only reordered the causes to place unbearable taxation and punishment

²²⁸ Ohashi, "Revolt of Shimabara," 78.

²²⁹ Ohashi, "Revolt of Shimabara," 80.

as the primary cause and Christianity as a secondary. In order to accurately understand the Shimabara Rebellion, Ohashi asserted historians must stop resorting to an “either-or” binary debate.²³⁰ Instead of contesting which cause had more influence, historians should attempt to uncover the relationships between Christian persecution and economic oppression and how they compounded to explode into the Rebellion.

The Shimabara Rebellion occurred within a tradition of socially cohesive groups of peasants resisting domination by their lord. Influenced by resentment over religious persecution, outrage over harsh punishments from the daimyo, and unbearable taxation, the Rebellion was a desperate act by a peasantry left with few other options to survive. Due to the strong communal ties between the Kyushu peasantry, which included a substantial Japanese Christian population, the Rebellion survived for four months and drove the lords of Shimabara and Amakusa to humiliation and seppuku. The Tokugawa shogunate’s response shows how these influences were all vital to the Rebellion’s success, by trying to remove all these factors, including Christianity, the local cultural alliances, and the provocative corruption of incompetent daimyo. Instead of trying to simplify the Shimabara Rebellion into a single-storied narrative, historians must allow the Rebellion to exist as a complicated historical event.

²³⁰ Ibid., 80.

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"Under the Auspices of Peace": The Northwest Indian War and its Impact on the Early American Republic

By
Melanie L. Fernandes



In April, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States of America. Filled with pride for his new country and hope for its future, he spoke in his inaugural address about the prospects of the United States. Washington was clear that above all, the new government of the United States should do right by itself to preserve the nation and protect its citizens:

In these honorable qualifications, I behold the surest pledges, that as on one side, no local prejudices, or attachments; no seperate [sic] views, nor party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests: so, on another, that the foundations of our National policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality; and the pre-eminence of a

free Government, be exemplified by all the attributes which can win the affections of its Citizens, and command the respect of the world.²³¹

Washington wanted for no particular group's interests to dictate the government's policies, and he wanted to ensure that the government would always have the nation and its citizens' best interests in mind. For Washington, this was one means of working towards his main goal for the nation: that the United States as a new nation would "command the respect of the world."

In order to achieve this, Washington had numerous ambitious, but necessary, goals for the nation. He wanted to reduce the national debt, establish a strong currency, and reopen trade and renew amiable relations with the British. In short, his goals all had to do with economic and national security, which he understood to be crucial to the protection and success of the nation. Washington and his contemporaries knew that proving the legitimacy of the United States to major European powers was extremely important during the early years of the republic, as this was when it was most vulnerable. Unfortunately for these men, the process of establishing the foundation of the United States was far more complicated than they would have hoped. Along with all the pressures of establishing order and an effective government,

²³¹ Dorothy Twohig, *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1987-2015), 2:152.

managing the national debt from the Revolutionary War, and attempting to reconcile with Great Britain, the United States faced conflict with Indian tribes that threatened the entire success of the nation.

It is undeniable that the nation's early success was largely tied to Indian relations. In some sense this was because Washington and other national leaders saw the nation's success as contingent upon the opening of the Northwest Territory. The Treaty of Paris, which signified the official end of the American Revolution in 1783, extended the western border of the United States to the Mississippi River. The Continental Congress, the governing body from the Revolution until the establishment of the new federal government in 1789, planned to decrease national debt by selling this land to settlers on the western frontier.

However, the Native Americans living in this territory were not consulted when the Treaty of Paris was signed. Tension and animosity exploded as the United States attempted to assert their dominance on the lands that Native Americans still claimed. These tensions had years to build up between the end of the Revolutionary War and when Washington took office in 1789. However, until Washington's presidency the Continental Congress did not take Native American opinion into consideration when forming Indian policy. Continued violence marked the relationship between the frontier settlers and several western Native American tribes. As a result, Washington accepted his presidency just as

conflicts were reaching a climax. Frontiersmen demanded federal protection from the Indians; Indians refused to cede their lands, demanding that the borderline of the United States be moved back to its previous point at the Ohio River. Yet, with no regular army, minimal federal funds, and a government in its infancy, Washington was hardly in an optimal position to deal with this conflict. It was crucial that he deal with this issue effectively, as this was one of the first tests of the new nation's governing ability.

Washington was torn. While he wanted to come to a peaceful settlement with the dominant Northwestern Indian tribes, the Indians were not willing to make peace with the new Mississippi River land boundary and the United States was not willing to give up the Northwest Territory. Settlers were eager to move into the area, and Congress linked the progress of the nation to the acquisition of this territory. It seemed that Washington had no choice but to assert American authority and use force against the Indians. After all, simply conceding to them would make the United States federal government appear weak to Great Britain, the Indian tribes, and to the citizens of the United States. The federal government decided it would be in the United States' best interest to launch a military expedition to punish the aggressive Indian tribes.

The military campaigns sent by the United States to quell Indian hostilities in the Ohio country between 1790-1795 are collectively known as the Northwest Indian War. Historians have

noted this conflict as significant, and even critical, both in the course of Washington's presidency and the early development of the nation. However, there was no shortage of adversities for Washington to overcome as the first president of the United States, and the Northwest Indian War is often depicted as another issue on the list. Typically, this scholarship explores the Northwest Indian War in the context of overall Indian relations in the United States between 1785-1815.²³² Even Wiley Sword's *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* spends relatively little time exploring the deeper implications that these events had on the development of the United States.²³³ More recently, Colin Calloway and William Patrick Walsh have focused on the nation's response to this conflict, but neither considers its impact in defining federal powers over the West and the states.²³⁴ An examination of the papers of George Washington and his contemporaries indicates how they used the Northwest Indian War as an opportunity to strengthen the federal government. Native American relations and policy during

²³² Dale Van Every, *Ark of Empire: The American Frontier, 1784-1803* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1963); Reginald Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967).

²³³ Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985).

²³⁴ Colin G. Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 2015); William Patrick Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair, November 4, 1791: A Study of the Nation's Response, 1791-1793" (PhD diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1977).

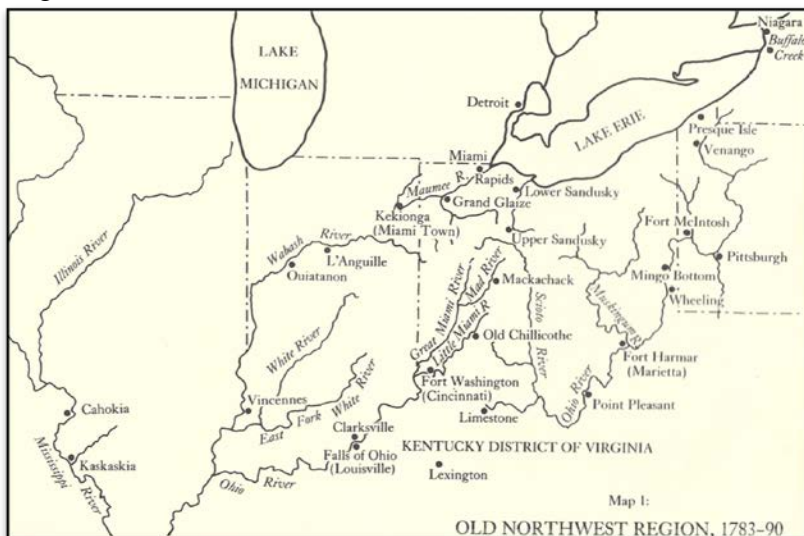
this period were instrumental in defining the roles and abilities of the federal government. In many ways, the Northwest Indian War gave the United States the opportunity to establish how the federal government would be viewed not just by its own citizens, but by dominant powers of the world.

Securing Indian Lands

A great deal of conflict occurred between the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783 and the establishment of the new federal government in 1789. This conflict defined the circumstances leading ultimately to the Northwest Indian War. During these years the United States operated under the governing body of the Continental Congress, which was established in 1774. At this time Congress set the precedent for what the United States' Native American policy would be, and the events of this period directly affected the circumstances that surrounded Washington when he entered the presidency.

At the conclusion of the American Revolution, the United States and Britain both signed the Treaty of Paris to officially establish peace between them. As a concession of this treaty, Britain ceded the land known as the Northwest Territory to the United States; the United States' western boarder was extended to the Mississippi River, which Britain permitted the United States to utilize for trade. The treaty also required Britain to remove all its soldiers from any western

Figure 1



Old Northwest Region, 1783-90 in Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 2.

forts they occupied, but the British continued to hold the forts of Michilimackinac, Detroit, Niagara, Oswego, Oswegatchie, and several others for more than a decade after the treaty was signed.²³⁵

This allowed them to protect their extensive western trade and thereby maintain influence with their Native American allies, especially as the United States pushed into western territory.²³⁶

²³⁵ "The Definitive Treaty of Peace 1783," Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp (accessed November 12, 2015); Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 19.

²³⁶ Colin G. Calloway, *Crown and Calumet: British-Indian Relations, 1783-1815* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 17.

The British presence in the Northwest Territory would be problematic for the United States in the years to come.

After the Treaty of Paris, treaty commissioners from the United States told the Indians living in the Northwest Territory that they were a conquered people, and as such were not entitled to live in the Northwest Territory. The Indians felt betrayed and abandoned by the British, who had not consulted them about the Treaty of Paris land cessions and left them to reconcile with the Americans on their own. The American federal government proceeded to develop their Indian policy around the assumption that the United States was the sovereign power in the Northwest Territory.²³⁷ The implementation of this policy resulted in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, Treaty of McIntosh, and the Treaty of Fort Finney. The United States used these three treaties to secure land from the Indians in the Northwest Territory. With each of these treaties, the United States commissioners indicated that they wanted to make peace with the Native Americans. However, when the Native American tribes arrived at the treaty meetings they found that the commissioners had little intention of actually negotiating with them.

In 1784, the United States made the Treaty of Fort Stanwix with the Six Nations of the Iroquois. The Iroquois arrived at Fort Stanwix in New York in October ready to discuss terms of peace.

²³⁷ Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair," 10.

Instead, the congressional commissioners read them the terms of the Treaty of Paris and they asked the Indians to choose a boundary line between United States and Indian land.²³⁸ As some of the Iroquois tribes had been allied with the British during the Revolutionary War, the commissioners felt justified in dominating the treaty-making process. Cornplanter, a leader of the Seneca nation, acted as a spokesman and proposed to uphold the Ohio River boundary that had been established in a former treaty, the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Cornplanter explained that the traditional role of the Six Nations was to speak on behalf of the other western tribes and such a boundary would be in the best interest of all the western Indian tribes.²³⁹ However, this boundary would have cut the United States off from much of the Northwest Territory. The commissioners told the Iroquois that they had no right to propose such a conservative boundary, as the United States was now the sovereign power in the Northwest Territory. They then offered the Iroquois an ultimatum: give up their land claims in the Northwest Territory, or face war with the United States.²⁴⁰

The 1784 Treaty of Fort Stanwix ultimately caused a divide in the Iroquois nations. With each nation on different standing with

²³⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 24.

²³⁹ Thomas S. Abler, *Cornplanter: Chief Warrior of the Alleghany Senecas* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 66.

²⁴⁰ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 25; "Treaty With the Six Nations: 1784," Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/six1784.asp (accessed November 13, 2015).

the United States it was difficult for the Six Nations to remain firmly unified and their confederacy began to deteriorate. Thus, the dominance of the Iroquois declined among the western Indians. As Cornplanter indicated in the treaty deliberations, the Iroquois had traditionally been a dominant force in the intertribal dynamic of the Northwest Territory. This gave way for the Shawnee and Miami, two tribes affected by a later treaty, to become more dominant powers in the west.²⁴¹

The Americans enacted a second peace treaty, known as the Treaty of Fort McIntosh, with the Delaware and Wyandot tribes. The signing of this treaty took place thirty miles northwest of Pittsburgh in January, 1785. As with the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, the commissioners threatened war if these Indian tribes did not give up their lands and agree to live on designated United States reservations in the northern part of Ohio.²⁴² The last of these three treaties was made with the Shawnee, Miami, Potawatomi, and various Wabash tribes. Known as the Treaty of Fort Finney, or the Treaty at the Mouth of the Great Miami, it took place at the convergence of the Miami and Ohio Rivers in January, 1786. It restricted the Shawnee to a reservation next to the designated Delaware and Wyandot reservations in the northern corner of Ohio

²⁴¹ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 26.

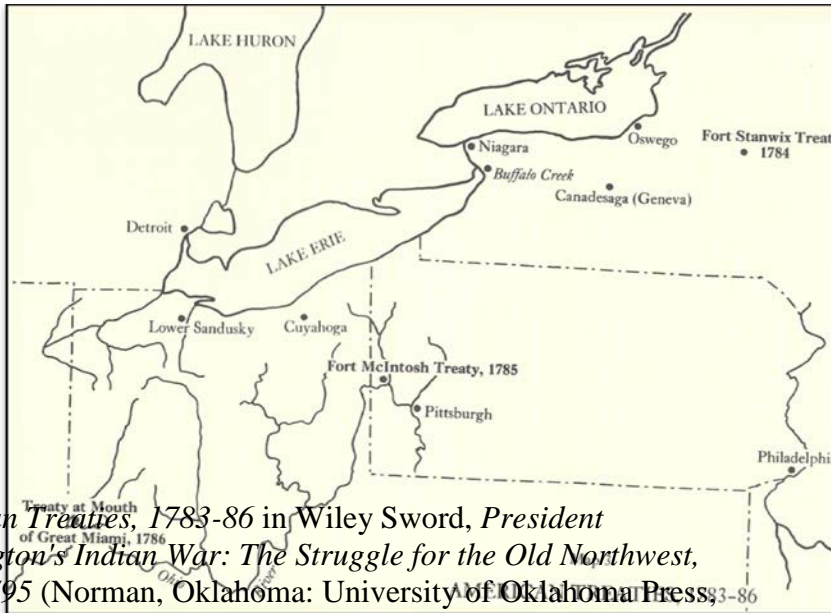
²⁴² *Ibid.*, 28.

and Indiana.²⁴³ Aware of the results of the Treaties of Fort Stanwix and Fort McIntosh, the Indians put up significant resistance at Fort Finney. The Miami outright refused to comply with the terms of the treaty and many of the Shawnee were strongly opposed to it as well. Apprehensive about making war with the Americans, however, resentful Shawnee leaders finally agreed to sign the treaty.

It was fortunate for the United States that all of the tribes they treated with agreed to their terms, for the United States did not have the military or monetary means necessary to go to war with the Native Americans. In fact, Congress' lack of funds was one of the major reasons that the United States vied for complete control of the Northwest Territory in the first place. At the end of the Revolutionary War the Continental Congress was about \$40 million in debt.²⁴⁴ Under the Articles of Confederation, the United States' first constitutional document, the government did not have the ability to impose taxes on the American people. As such, the acquisition of funds was crucial for the federal government. By obtaining the Northwest Territory, the federal government could sell tracts of land to settlers and maintain profitable trade by

²⁴³ "Treaty With the Shawnee: 1786," Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/shaw1786.asp (accessed November 13, 2015); Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 30.

²⁴⁴ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 36.



having access to the Mississippi River.²⁴⁵ Additionally, without the money to fund an army to remove the Indians, the federal government would not be able to make good on their threats to go to war with the Indians, and needed to entice them to leave through peaceful means. United States Native American policy was entirely driven by the notion that securing peace with the Indians would be the easiest and cheapest way of acquiring the Northwest Territory.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 25.

Hostilities on the Frontier and the Miami Confederacy

Soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Fort Finney, violence emerged on the frontier. It became clear just how dissatisfied the Indians were with the treaty settlements. Henry Knox, Secretary of War under the Continental Congress and during Washington's presidency, was responsible for handling Indian affairs. In 1786, Revolutionary War veteran General Josiah Harmar wrote Knox to update him on the conditions in the Northwest Territory. In his letter, Harmar explained to Knox that land surveyors were eager to go out into the Northwest Territory and were requesting escorts from Harmar. Because settlers were already being attacked, Harmar feared that armed escorts would bring out more hostilities from the angered Indians: "The murders that have been committed lately upon the inhabitants passing up and down the Ohio, indicate great dissatisfaction prevailing amongst the Indians."²⁴⁷

In the end months of 1786, various Indian tribes organized a council in Sandusky, Ohio to discuss their dissatisfaction with the treaties made with them and relations with the United States. The Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Ottawa, Chippewa, Miami, Potawatomi, Cherokee, Six Nations, and members of the Wabash

²⁴⁷ William Henry Smith, ed., *The St. Clair Papers: The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair Soldier of the Revolutionary War; President of the Continental Congress; and Governor of the North-Western Territory with his Correspondence and other Papers* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Robert Clarke & Co, 1882), 2:14.

Confederacy were all present.²⁴⁸ As each tribe had varying experiences with the United States, there was some inconsistency among their views. Some tribes, like the Delaware, Wyandot, and the Seneca of the Six Nations were willing to promote amiable relations with the United States. Joseph Brant, leader of the Mohawk of the Six Nations, was not willing to settle for the provisions made for his tribe in the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, but was inclined to seek assistance in acquiring new land from the British in Canada rather than engage in war with the Americans. On the other hand, the Shawnee, Miami, and members of the Wabash Confederacy were adamant about fighting to protect their lands from the Americans.²⁴⁹ These tribes, along with several Iroquois tribes, the Ojibwa, the Ottawa, and the Potawatomi, formed the Miami Confederacy, or the Northwest Confederacy.²⁵⁰ The Miami Confederacy, which was united loosely under the leadership of Miami warrior chief Little Turtle, formed with the common purpose of preventing the United States from taking any lands past the Ohio River.²⁵¹

Amidst these growing tensions, the United States drafted the Northwest Ordinance in 1787. The purpose of the Northwest

²⁴⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 41.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁵⁰ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 96.

²⁵¹ Harvey Lewis Carter, *The Life and Times of Little Turtle: First Sagamore of the Wabash* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 61; Bert Anson, *The Miami Confederacy* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 105.

Ordinance was to dictate how the Northwest Territory might be organized and inducted into the United States. However, since the federal government was aware of Indian grievances, the Northwest Ordinance also affirmed that the United States would respect Indian rights in regards to assuming Indian lands. The ordinance dictated that the Northwest Territory be divided into no less than three and no more than five states. Once a piece of territory accumulated at least 60,000 free inhabitants the government would admit it into the United States on equal status with all other states.²⁵²

The ordinance also specifically stated that the "utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians" and that "their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent."²⁵³ While historians such as Reginald Horsman have asserted that the language of the Northwest Ordinance indicated a shift in Indian policy at this time, the federal government's subsequent actions do not reflect the language of the Ordinance, and it seems that there was little shift in Native American policy during this period. The Ordinance indicated willingness to

²⁵² "Northwest Ordinance," Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/nworder.asp (accessed October 21, 2015).

²⁵³ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:36; *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, Class II, Indian Affairs*, edited by Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke (Washington DC: Gales and Seaton, 1832), online, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwsp.html>, 2:9 (hereafter *American State Papers*).

negotiate with the Indians. However, rather than negotiate with the Indians, the federal government's simply tried to pay for the land that they previously asserted was conquered territory. While this change in technique certainly suggested a shift in attitude on the United States' part, their end goal of acquiring those lands by any means necessary remained the same.

Under the Northwest Ordinance, veteran of the American Revolution Arthur St. Clair became the governor of the Northwest Territory. Part of his initial instructions from Congress was to make treaties with the Indians should the situation require it. As hostilities had increased in recent months, it was clear that a treaty was necessary. St. Clair was directed to alleviate "all causes of controversy, so that peace and harmony may continue between the United States and the Indian tribes, the regulating trade, and settling boundaries." Congress authorized money specifically for the purpose of renewing a treaty with the Indians, hoping that compensation for the land would settle any animosity with the Indians. In order to protect United States interest out west, St. Clair's instructions further required him to maintain the statutes of the current treaties, "unless a change of boundary beneficial to the United States can be obtained." Such specifications indicated that the United States was not actually willing to negotiate with the Indians, but rather wanted to reaffirm their former treaties.²⁵⁴ The

²⁵⁴ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:37; *American State Papers*, 1:9.

United States' actions therefore did not necessarily match the language of their policies, and their treatment of the Indians remained essentially the same. Although members of the federal government may have thought that they were being more conciliatory in offering monetary compensation for the lands they assumed, the issue for the Indians was not just in the lack of compensation. Rather, the Indians were upset that the federal government assumed it had any right to their lands at all. The government's offer to pay for the lands actually did little to alleviate any animosity.

St. Clair met with delegates from the Six Nations, Delaware, Wyandot, Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi in December, 1788. Though invited, the aggravated Shawnee and Miami tribes refused to negotiate land cession with the United States and refused to participate in this treaty council.²⁵⁵ What the Indians desired out of this new treaty was a change in the land boundary back to the Ohio River.²⁵⁶ St. Clair refused, saying that the British had ceded these lands to the United States and that the boundaries had been fixed by the Treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort McIntosh, and Fort Finney. St. Clair concluded deliberations with the Indians by saying that the United States greatly desired peace with the Indians, but would go to war with them if necessary.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 58, 59.

²⁵⁶ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:110.

²⁵⁷ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 58; Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:110.

Although this treaty council offered the Indians another chance to speak their piece, St. Clair still offered the same ultimatum. Backed into a corner once more, these Indian tribes hesitantly agreed. In January of 1789, St. Clair signed two treaties, together known as the Treaty of Fort Harmar: one with the Six Nations, and one with the Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi. Though this treaty was another attempt by the United States to secure peace, it did nothing advantageous for either party. Rather, it simply served to reaffirm previous United States treaties and further anger the western Indian tribes.

Washington as President

As the Miami Confederacy become more organized and aggravated by the new treaties, aggressions on the frontier continued to escalate. When Washington entered the presidency in 1789, the hostilities seemed to be at their peak. Indian relations were one of Washington's top priorities when he entered the presidency. His aim was to find a way to make peace with the Indians so that American citizens could begin to settle the Northwest Territory without fear of conflict.

Washington's military career during the mid 1700s gave him experience with Indians. As such, he was regarded as somewhat of an Indian expert in the years leading up to his presidency. Washington had always advocated that maintaining peace with the Indians was crucial if the United States wanted to

settle the Northwest Territory. He believed that military action should only be taken against the Indians as a last resort, as purchasing Indian lands would be both cheaper and involve less bloodshed.²⁵⁸ Washington took this policy with him into his presidency, and with violence at its peak, he developed several initiatives to help secure peace with the Indians. Secretary of War Knox was perhaps the most influential man in regards to Indian policy during Washington's presidency. Washington and Knox worked well together developing these policies, as they were generally in agreement about how to handle Indian affairs. Both Washington and Knox agreed that all measures should be taken to promote peace and make treaties with the Indians rather than engage in war. They believed it would be morally wrong to force the Indians off their land without just cause. Knox had a particularly sympathetic view towards the Indians. In a letter to Washington, Knox expressed a desire protect Indian interests, as the Indians were the "prior occupants" of the land, and as such "possess[ed] the right of the Soil" in the Northwest Territory. He was adamant that these lands "cannot be taken from them unless by their free consent, or by the right of a just War..." To do otherwise "would be a gross violation of the fundamental Laws of Nature and of that distributive [sic] justice which is the glory of a nation."²⁵⁹

Knox, like Washington, saw great potential for the nation

²⁵⁸ Sword, *President Washington's Indian War*, 27.

²⁵⁹ *GW Presidential Papers*, 2:491.

in possession of the Northwest Territory. However, he believed that there was little need to use force to acquire vast amounts of land from the Indians: "As the settlements of the whites shall approach near to the indian boundaries established by treaties, the game will be diminished and the lands being valuable to the indians only as hunting grounds, they will be willing to sell further tracts for small considerations..." As their resources were gradually depleted, Knox continued, the Indian populations would decrease, "enabl[ing] the Union to operate against them [in battle] with much greater prospect than at present."²⁶⁰ Knox therefore asserted that making peace with the Indians was in the best interest of all, as going to war with them would hardly be worthwhile when the United States would likely be able to acquire more lands from them in the coming years.

In general, Washington's Indian policies involved strengthening the power of the federal government so that it could better handle Indian relations. One of Washington's main goals was to make sure that the federal government, not individual states, was in charge of handling all Indian relations and treaties. In a letter to Washington July, 1789, Knox confirmed his agreement that the "general Sovereignty must possess the right of making all treaties on the execution of violation of which depend peace or war."²⁶¹ Given the recent rise in hostilities on the frontier,

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 494.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 138.

Washington saw the demonstration of federal authority in Indian affairs as crucial. In his mind, centralization of federal power would enable the government to hold Indians and American citizens accountable for any violence they caused, thereby discouraging them from engaging in further hostilities.

There were, however, significant set-backs in Washington's efforts to ensure peace by promoting Indian confidence in the federal government. The federal government's failure to immediately engage in military combat with the Indians caused the citizens on the frontier to lose faith in the federal government's ability to protect them. They therefore implemented their own kind of punishment against the Indians, continuing more localized aggressions towards Indians. This in turn made the Indians question the federal government's sincerity and ability to uphold their promises of holding the frontiersmen responsible for killing Indians. Unfortunately, many of the victimized tribes were not actively hostile towards the United States. The Miami and Shawnee, two more western-based tribes, were particularly hostile towards citizens on the frontier, but angry frontiersmen generally attacked Indians indiscriminately. Governor St. Clair wrote Washington in September, 1789 explaining the situation: "It is not to be expected, sir, that the Kentucky people will or can submit patiently to the cruelties and depredations of those savages; they are in the habit of retaliation, perhaps, without attending precisely

to the nations from which the injuries are received..."²⁶² Thus, the hostilities on the frontier not only aggravated already existing animosity with the Indians, but also threatened the peaceful relations that the United States had managed to secure with more eastern-based tribes such as the Seneca.

While Washington and Knox both wanted to secure peace, neither was willing to compromise the overall well-being of the nation or the protection of its citizens. Washington had instructed St. Clair to use military force on the frontier only as a last resort, but by 1790, it was becoming increasingly clear that a last resort might be necessary to subdue the Indians.²⁶³ In a "Summary Statement of the Situation of the Frontiers by the Secretary of War" Knox explained that Josiah Harmar had given numerous accounts of the "depredations of the Indians on the boats going down the Ohio..." Knox noted the "bad effect [these hostilities had] on the public mind...The result of this whole information shows the inefficiency of defensive operations against the banditti Shawnese and Cherokees, and some of the Wabash Indians on the north-west of the Ohio." He therefore concluded that a military expedition to punish the Indians and defend the frontier was the right course of action.²⁶⁴ It was no secret that Washington wanted to build a stronger army when he entered the presidency. In his

²⁶² Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:124.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁶⁴ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:146.

first address to Congress in January of 1790, he formally proposed his goal of "of providing for the common defense." Washington was a firm believer that being "prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."²⁶⁵ He hoped that by building up the national army he could intimidate the Indians into agreeing to peace with the United States.²⁶⁶

Harmar's Defeat

Still hoping for a peaceful outcome, Congress nevertheless agreed to Washington's plan of using the army to intimidate the Indians. In 1790, Congress authorized an expansion of the army. Led by Josiah Harmar, the new army would have one thousand regulars and fifteen hundred militiamen from the states of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.²⁶⁷ By late 1790, the increasing conflict on the frontier made it clear that the Indians were not going to be intimidated into making peace, and the United States government would have to use force against them. Referring back to the Northwest Ordinance, Washington and Congress viewed this military expedition as a "just and lawful war," in which they would swiftly punish the Indians for their destruction on the frontier. In Knox's orders to Harmar on June 7, 1790, Knox stated

²⁶⁵ *GW Presidential Papers*, 4:544.

²⁶⁶ *GW Presidential Papers*, 8:360; John Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington: The Hidden Political Genius of an American Icon* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), 318.

²⁶⁷ Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 318.

that "No other remedy remains, but to extirpate, utterly, if possible, the [Indian] banditti."²⁶⁸ The plan was for Harmar to lead the main body of troops west from Fort Washington to attack Miami villages along the Maumee River, while Major John Hamtramck came from Fort Knox in the west with three hundred regulars and three hundred Kentucky militiamen.²⁶⁹

As the United States prepared for their military expedition, the federal government came to the agreement that the British should be made aware of their plans. Since the British had not actually left their western forts after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the United States did not want the British to think the military expedition was aimed at pushing them out of the Northwest Territory and risk renewing hostilities with them. As such, Knox ordered St. Clair to contact the British commander at Detroit and explain that the expedition was purely for the purpose of punishing Indians who had been aggressive towards the United States.²⁷⁰

Although the British commander assured St. Clair that they were not concerned about this, they immediately notified British traders in Miami villages, who assisted the Indians by giving them supplies to prepare for an attack from the United States. When Harmar and his men reached the Miami villages in the middle of

²⁶⁸ *American State Papers*, 1:97.

²⁶⁹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 65; Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair," 20.

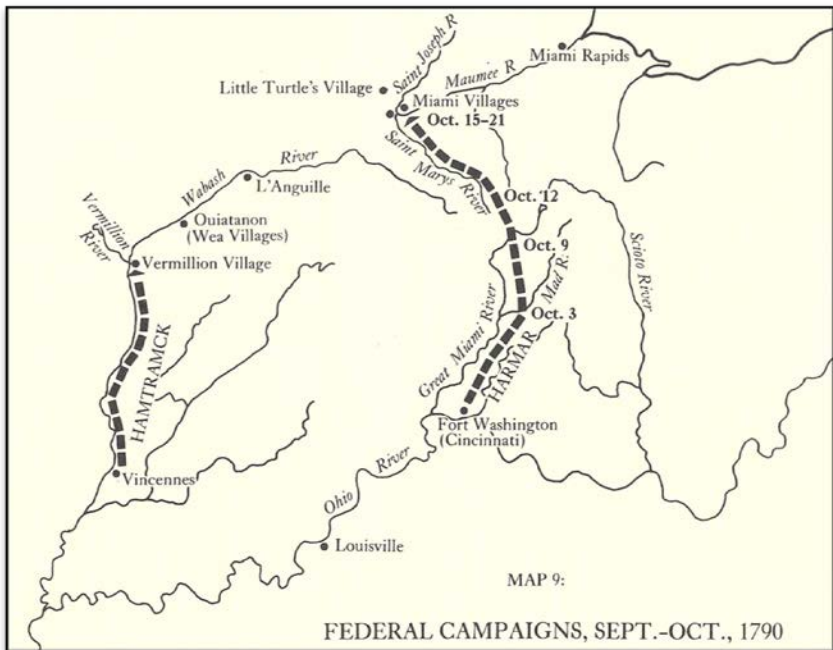
²⁷⁰ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:162; *American State Papers*, 1:96.

October, they found them abandoned, as the Indians had been warned ahead of time. The army burned the villages regardless, thinking that if they could not punish the Indians directly, they could at least destroy their homes and supplies. Meanwhile, Harmar sent Colonel John Hardin and approximately three hundred men to pursue the fleeing Indians. Instead of a swift subjugation of the Indians, Hardin found an ambush waiting for him and his men. Taken by surprise, the men lost all organization and dispersed. The militiamen fled the scene completely, leaving the regulars to fend for themselves. After a brutal attack that left almost two hundred dead and several dozen wounded, the regulars retreated back to the rest of the army.²⁷¹

Washington was extremely angered by this loss and blamed the defeat on Harmar's perceived deficiencies. In a letter to Knox, Washington accused Harmar of being both a drunkard and an ineffective leader: "I expected *little* from the moment I heard he was *a drunkard*. I expected *less* as soon as I heard that on *this account* no confidence was reposed to him by the people of the Western Country—And I gave up *all hope* of Success, as soon as I

²⁷¹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 66-67; Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair," 21.

Figure 3



Federal Campaigns, Sept.-Oct., 1790 in Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 90.

heard that there were disputes with *him* about command."²⁷² Despite Washington's fervor in his criticisms of Harmar, the responsibility of the defeat did not rest solely on Harmar's shoulders. In fact, most of Washington's assertions about Harmar's conduct were false. According to Washington biographer John Ferling, Washington was inclined to find scapegoats to blame

²⁷² *GW Presidential Papers*, 6:668.

when situations under his command deteriorated.²⁷³ Harmar was certainly the easiest man to blame in this instance, and his reputation never fully recovered.

In truth, the failure of the expedition should be attributed to a myriad of factors, the most significant being the poor quality of the militia. The militia, comprised of ill-trained men not entirely fit for military work, made up the majority of the military force of this expedition. Their haste to abandon the battle as soon as they were under attack left the regulars severely outnumbered, which essentially forced them to retreat.²⁷⁴ Moreover, the entire force was significantly weakened when Harmar authorized his troops to separate into different groups. Only a small portion of the available men were actually present during the Indian attack, as the rest had remained to burn the villages.²⁷⁵ In the planning of this expedition, Congress specifically authorized the recruitment of more men so that Harmar would be prepared should the Indians have managed to accrue a strong force of warriors against them. Regardless of the reasoning behind Harmar's failure, hostilities on the frontier increased as a result of this direct attack on the Indians. Fear among frontier settlers was rising, and they demanded that the federal government act to protect them. The federal government hastily began plans for a new military expedition.

²⁷³ Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 319.

²⁷⁴ Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair," 20-21; Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 319.

²⁷⁵ Walsh, "The Defeat of Major General Arthur St. Clair," 22.

St. Clair's Defeat

Washington and Congress knew that they had to deal with the Indian problem immediately. Many Americans had not believed the Indians capable of raising a force able to defeat an organized American army. The results of the expedition proved otherwise and frontier settlers began to panic that they would be the victims of a mass Indian attack. Knox and Washington quickly set about planning for a second expedition. They appealed to Congress for an expansion of the army to three thousand men. This time they called for twelve hundred regulars, thirteen hundred volunteer levies, and five hundred rangers.²⁷⁶ It was not too difficult for Washington and Knox to convince Congress that such an expansion was necessary, as both Harmar and Washington's administration had blamed the failure of the expedition at least partly on the inadequacy of the militia.

Harmar's failed expedition had threatened the federal government's reputation—it was now in jeopardy of being seen as incapable of protecting its citizens and ineffective in handling disputes. Yet, in some sense Harmar's defeat was advantageous to

²⁷⁶ A levy refers to a call for able-bodied men. While both the militia and volunteer levies consisted of non-professional soldiers, volunteer levies were comprised of men who joined the armed forces of their own accord, and were subject to military training. In contrast, the militia came together only when the need arose, and were not subject to the same standards as regulars or volunteers. As a separate entity, army rangers were developed by the British during the early colonial period. They were full-time soldiers trained specifically to work in frontier conditions to protect western forts against Indian raids. Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 71; *American State Papers*, 1:113.

Washington, as it enabled him to set the foundation for a reformation of the militia system. Washington's contemporaries had known his distaste for the militia since the Revolutionary War, and many had expected him to appeal for the creation of a large national army when he came into office. Although Washington avoided aligning with any particular political faction, like many of his Federalist contemporaries he desired a strong standing army to protect the nation and demonstrate the power of the federal government. However, Washington was aware of political tensions between the emerging Federalist and Democratic-Republican political parties. He did not want party alliances to divide the nation, and he avoided aligning with either party, despite his agreement with certain Federalist views. He knew that pushing for a standing army upon his entrance into the presidency would be viewed unfavorably by many citizens. Many Americans associated standing armies with martial law from their experiences with the presence of the British army during the Revolution.²⁷⁷

Washington hoped that by using more regulars and volunteers the army would be an adequately trained force to accomplish the goal of subduing the Indians. Unlike militiamen, regulars and volunteers were required to submit to traditional military discipline. These men would not only be better trained, but also act more professionally in the face of battle.²⁷⁸ Washington

²⁷⁷ Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 320.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

appointed St. Clair as major general of this new army, hoping that he would prove a better leader than Harmar.

St. Claire's plan was to leave Philadelphia in March, 1791, lead his army to Fort Washington in order to meet Kentucky militiamen, and then proceed with the attack in the Wabash Valley. However, St. Clair left Philadelphia later than planned and faced additional unforeseen delays, as he had difficulty acquiring sufficient numbers of men and adequate supplies. St. Clair did not reach Fort Washington until the middle of May, and even then not all the militia had arrived from other states. The troops were not fully convened until September, at which point it was late in the season to be embarking on a military expedition as they risked suffering through the winter months.²⁷⁹ St. Clair, however, assured Knox in a letter on September 18, 1791 "that every possible exertion shall be made to bring the campaign to a speedy and happy issue."²⁸⁰ Despite the delays St. Clair felt secure his ability to lead a successful expedition. He was certain of the superior military ability of the United States army. He felt, as did Knox and many of his other contemporaries, sure that the disjointed war tactics of the Indians would be no match for his disciplined army, even if the Indians managed to outnumber them.²⁸¹

St. Clair should have not have so greatly underestimated his

²⁷⁹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 78-83.

²⁸⁰ Smith, *St. Clair Papers*, 2:241.

²⁸¹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 108-109.

opponents; he and his men expected the Indians to be severely disorganized. But what they did not know was that the Indians, led by the Miami and Shawnee tribes, had gone to Detroit after the incident with Harmar to request assistance from the British. Blue Jacket, one of the Shawnee leaders, appealed to the British saying the United States had plans to take all their lands: "as a People we are determined to meet the approaches of an Enemy, who came not to check the Insolence of individuals, but with a premeditated design to root us out of our Land, which we and our forefathers and children were and are bound to defend, and which we are determined to do."²⁸² The commanding officers in Detroit told the Indians that they could offer no troops to support them, as they would risk getting into conflict with the United States. They did, however, offer the Indians supplies they needed to take on the American troops.

Not only were the Indians able to obtain British support, but they also managed to become much more organized than St. Clair, Knox, or Washington could have anticipated. Harmar's expedition had confirmed the fears of Indian tribes in the Wabash that the United States had the intention of usurping all western Indian lands. Other tribes, such as the Kickapoo, Wea, and Piankeshaw, who had been on the fence about combating the Americans were now convinced of American intentions and came

²⁸² National Archives (U.K.), Colonial Office Records, Class 42, 73: 37-40, quoted in Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 105.

to the aid of the Miami and the Shawnee.²⁸³ The desperate fear of losing their lands banned these tribes together. Having caught wind of the American army's plans, they made their way to the Miami villages to prepare to ambush the American army.

On November 4, 1791 as St. Clair and his men finally made their way to the Miami villages, they were met with a full-blown Indian attack.²⁸⁴ The Indians completely surrounded the American army with organization that blindsided St. Clair and overwhelmed his men. The Indians used their traditional style of warfare and their knowledge of European war tactics to their advantage. The Indians were used to fighting as individuals, and they swiftly overtook American soldiers. They specifically targeted military officers, as they knew that without leadership the American soldiers would be completely disoriented and unable to fight as a unit.²⁸⁵ Those who survived the attack retreated to Fort Jefferson on St. Clair's orders. The losses were devastating. Thirty-seven officers and nearly six hundred enlisted men were killed, while thirty-two officers and approximately two-hundred and fifty men were wounded.²⁸⁶

On November 9, after St. Clair and his men had made it back to Fort Washington, St. Clair wrote Knox to tell him of the terrible loss. Washington was furious about the results of this

²⁸³ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 106.

²⁸⁴ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 89.

²⁸⁵ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 119.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

second campaign. He was now in a difficult position and faced a great deal of criticism. How could he explain how the military expedition had failed a second time? While he was able to blame the incompetency of Harmar for the failure of the first expedition, he knew he could not blame St. Clair this time, as it would only show that he was unable to provide a capable general for this task.²⁸⁷ Similarly, the militia could not be solely to blame, as much of the militia of the last expedition had been replaced by regulars for St. Clair's expedition.²⁸⁸ Washington had to report to Congress news of the defeat, and a special committee was developed to investigate what led to the loss of the expedition.

As the committee sought to get to the bottom of the matter, newspapers such as the *New York Journal & Patriotic Register*, *Columbian Centinel*, *Connecticut Courant*, and *Maryland Gazette* all published accounts of St. Clair's Defeat, which stirred up a variety of public opinions.²⁸⁹ A typical reaction to St. Clair's Defeat was a desire for revenge on the murderous Indians. A Kentucky resident wrote to a friend in Philadelphia, "The news of the defeat of the troops under Gov. St. Clair by the Indians, so far from disheartening has filled every man in Kentucky with a thirst for revenge."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ *GW Presidential Papers*, 6:668; Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), 322.

²⁸⁸ Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 322.

²⁸⁹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 130.

²⁹⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, December 21, 1791.

Some members of the public were angered that the United States had attempted such an incursion in the first place, and felt that the United States was causing unnecessary problems with the Indians: "Are we not already in possession of more lands than can be settled for a century at least? ... What better right have we to march through the centre of their country, than Great-Britain would have to march a body of troops through the centre of the United States?"²⁹¹ In speaking so vehemently against the Indian expeditions, this writer, under the pseudonym "Anti-Pizaro," accused the federal government of impeding on the rights of the Indians to acquire more lands. He also raised questions about the real motivations for such an excursion: "Is it to conquer more lands, or to serve as a pretence for augmenting the standing army?"²⁹² The public was clearly questioning the government's Indian policies and motivations in the Indian war. Many worried that it was part of a Federalist ploy to give the government more power.

Another segment, this time appearing in the *National Gazette*, seconded that sentiment:

The principles of the war it is hoped,
will be thoroughly investigated, that
the revenues of the States should not
be wantonly expended in disgraceful
campaigns. Americans having just

²⁹¹ *Boston Gazette*, January 2, 1792.

²⁹² *Boston Gazette*, January 2, 1792.

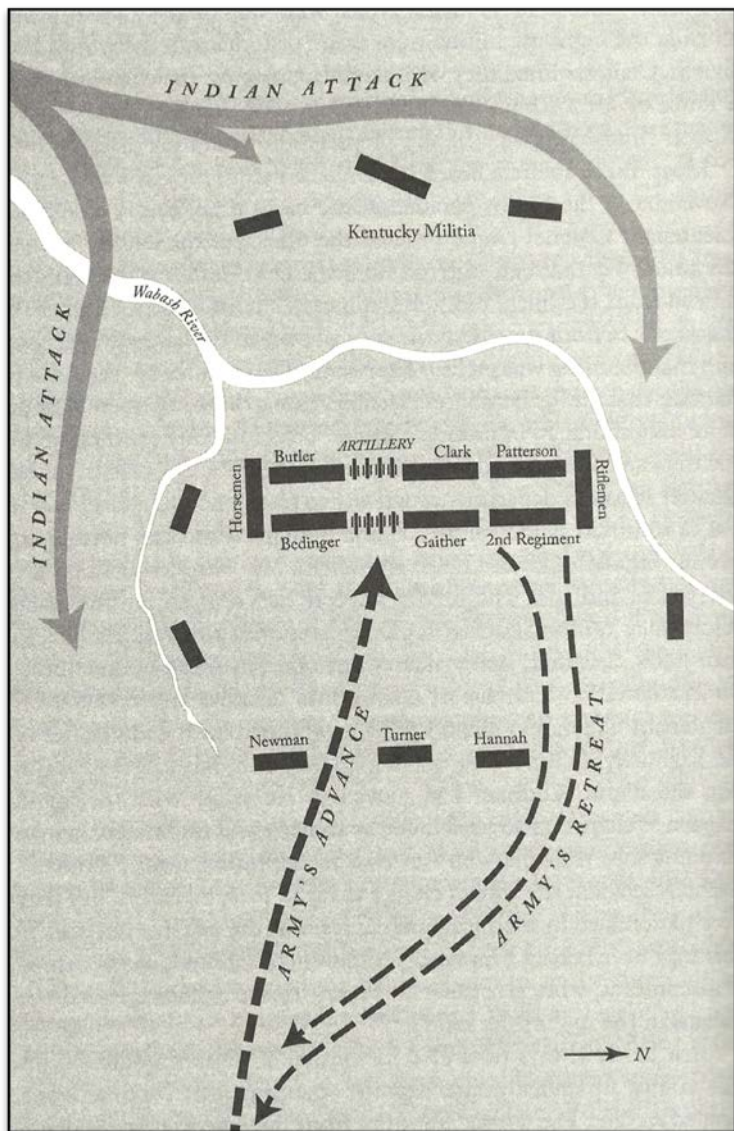
freed themselves from an expensive war, it is our interest to promote friendship and harmony with all the world, and not to sacrifice our young men and our money, to acquire territory by war, while so much land remains unsettled, and which courts our cultivation under the auspices of peace.²⁹³

This author stated that the federal government's reckless ambitions to secure the Northwest Territory were a waste of both men and money. Moreover, he implied that engaging in an unnecessary war to acquire lands painted the United States in a negative light to other nations, making the United States seem greedy and uncompromising.

Yet, there was also a portion of the public who supported Washington and his Native American policies. Rather than asserting that the United States had selfish and unjust motives in sending soldiers into the Northwest Territory, these citizens defended Washington and the federal government, assuring readers that Washington had been forced into taking military action in order to protect the nation. In one article posted in the *Connecticut Gazette* gave an explanation of how treaties were attempted with the hostile Wabash Indians, but they declined the offer and continued their hostilities: "The campaign, therefore, of the last

²⁹³ *National Gazette*, January 2, 1792.

Figure 4



St. Clair's Defeat Battle Map in Colin G. Calloway, *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 118.

and this year, were measures of necessity—The Indians had been invading our frontiers, and had killed many hundred innocent men, women and children..."²⁹⁴ Citizens of this opinion were grateful that the government had taken action to protect them.

These inconsistent views about the Northwest Indian War are representative of the larger national debate at this time. Party alliances were becoming increasingly distinct, which resulted in starkly contrasting views about what the roles and responsibilities of the federal government should be. The special committee focused on many of these issues in their investigation of St. Clair's Defeat, questioning the amount of authority the federal government should have and what the responsibilities of elected officials were. Ultimately St. Clair was pardoned from any responsibility for the defeat. Congress and other elected officials were blamed for the delay in securing adequate funds for the expedition. Although it was not overtly stated, Washington and Knox also received a great deal of blame, as they had given the orders for St. Clair's campaign.²⁹⁵ St. Clair's Defeat had brought on a great deal of criticism of the federal government.

Assertion of Federal Power and Wayne's Campaign

It was clear at this point that there was a divide within the United States about whether this Indian war should have taken

²⁹⁴ *Connecticut Gazette*, January 5, 1792.

²⁹⁵ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 136-137.

place at all. Many people were questioning the moral validity of the war as well as the creation of an army to deal with the issue. The political divide between Democratic-Republicans and Federalists became much more distinct as Congress and Washington's administration debated what course of action to take.²⁹⁶ The Democratic-Republicans thought that the federal government was out of its depth and abusing its power to take over the Northwest Territory, while the Federalists tended to support the power of the federal government. Throughout the debate Washington maintained that the federal government needed to be consistent and continue its aims to take control of the Northwest Territory.²⁹⁷ Now more than ever he felt it was essential to the federal government's reputation that they succeed.

Congress tended to agree with Washington. After two failed expeditions, it would make the United States appear weak to simply give up. The federal government sincerely needed to prove its capability to its citizens. However, America's armed forces desperately needed to be salvaged after St. Clair's defeat and Congress feared that the frontier would experience the full extent of Indian wrath while they were trying to rebuild the army.²⁹⁸ Therefore, while Washington and Knox worked on a plan for the new army, Congress authorized peace commissioners to meet with

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 135.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 139.

²⁹⁸ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 90.

the Indians early in 1792. The Shawnee and Miami attended the meeting, along with several of the tribes that allied with them. The Shawnee and Miami also managed to convince the Six Nations to negotiate as well, although they had minimal involvement with the Northwest Indian War.

It is unlikely that the federal government actually expected peace to come out of this meeting. Although it certainly would have been optimal for the United States for the Indians to concede to give up their lands peacefully, no one believed that to be a realistic outcome. British lieutenant governor of Upper Canada John Graves Simcoe indicated that he believed that the Indians and Americans commissioners had met for the same reason: not actually to secure peace, but to procrastinate. In fact, he believed that the meeting was only a way for both sides to be assured in their missions: for the Americans, that the Indians needed to be destroyed; for the Indians, that the United States must be stopped in their efforts to take Indians lands.²⁹⁹

The peace talk went exactly as expected: neither side was willing to compromise. The American commissioners attempted to assure the Indians that they wanted to make peace with them, while the Indians declared to the commissioners that if the United States did not abide by the Ohio River boundary line, there could be no peace. The commissioners held firm, saying that as the Indians'

²⁹⁹ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 147.

land had been ceded in the Treaty of Paris. The Indians responded that they had never agreed to give possession of their lands to the king of England, so it was not his land to cede to the United States.³⁰⁰ The Indians then declared that they would not leave the lands that were rightfully theirs. The American commissioners then resolved to return home, unable to make peace once more.

Meanwhile, Washington and Knox had been hard at work reforming the United States army. Now that circumstances demanded an army for the protection of the nation, Washington was able to develop a large standing army and reform the militia system, as he and his Federalist contemporaries had always wanted to do.³⁰¹ Knox developed a proposal for a new army of five thousand men to be enlisted for three years. In his proposal, Knox asserted that use of the militia for situations such as this would not be sufficient: "while it is acknowledged that mounted militia may be very proper for sudden enterprises, of short duration, it is conceived that militia are utterly unsuitable to carry on and terminate the war in which we are engaged, with honor and success."³⁰² Knox and Washington also reorganized the army from an infantry, cavalry, and artillery into four sublegions, each commanded by a brigadier general. Washington appointed General Anthony Wayne, another veteran of the Revolution, to command

³⁰⁰ *American State Papers*, 1:142.

³⁰¹ Ferling, *The Ascent of George Washington*, 322.

³⁰² *American State Papers*, 1:199.

this army.

As for reforming the militia, Congress passed two acts that changed militia regulations. The first gave the president the ability to call upon the state militias when the nation was in jeopardy. The second act required all capable free white men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to enroll in the militia. Overall, these military reforms strengthened the power of the federal government, as they gave the government much more military authority.

With this new force under his command, General Wayne arrived at Fort Washington in May, 1793 and began to prepare for the expedition. From the beginning this campaign went much more smoothly than the others. By the end of December Wayne and his men had made their way to the site of St. Clair's Defeat, established Fort Greenville, and set themselves up to remain there for the winter.³⁰³ In June, the Indians attempted an attack on the fort, but were fought off by the American army. The Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Ottawa tribes were discouraged by this unsuccessful attack and abandoned the rest of the Miami Confederacy, greatly reducing the military power of their union. The army under Wayne's command was far more prepared for frontier fighting than that of either St. Clair or Harmar. To further weaken the Indian forces, Wayne's plan was to target the Indian villages' food and supplies as he and his army made their way along the Auglaize

³⁰³ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 148; Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 99.

River. By August, Wayne and his men held the center of the Miami Confederacy at the intersection of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers.

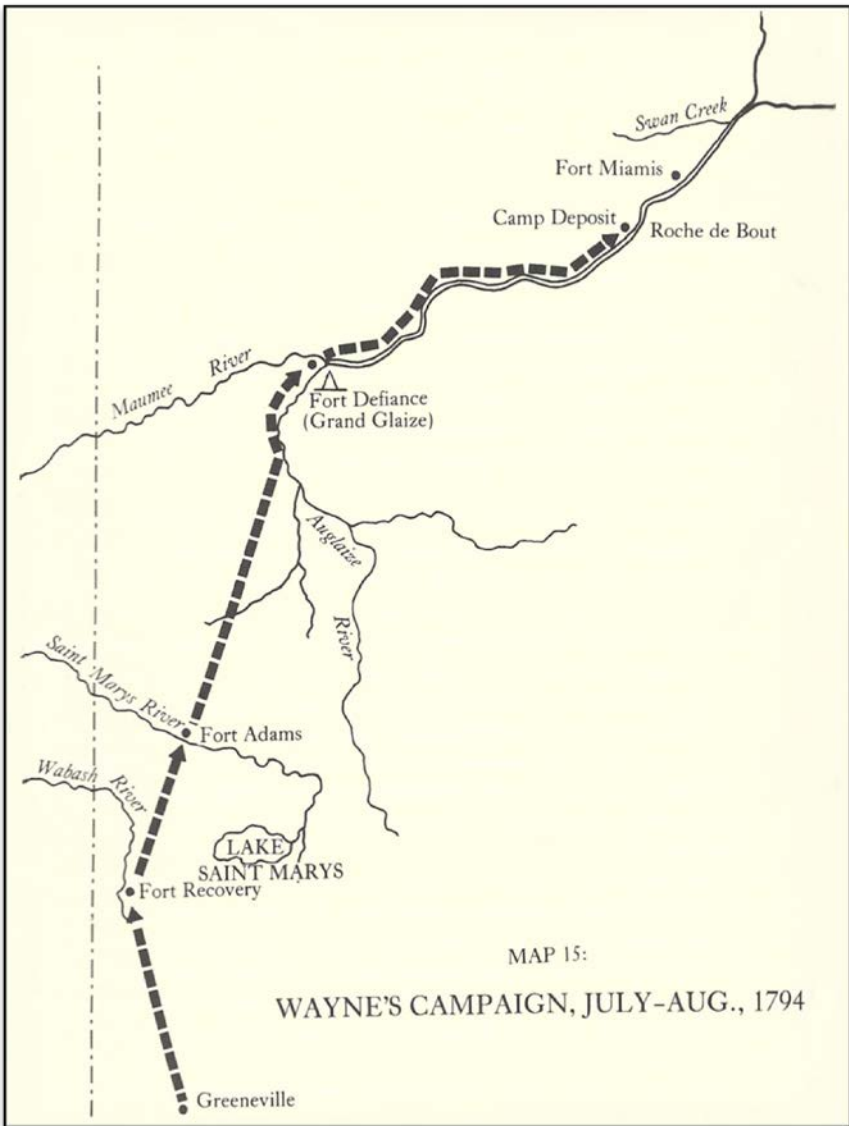
On August 19, the Indians prepared to meet the American army. The battle that came to be known as the Battle of Fallen Timbers took place the following morning. When the battle occurred, it was clear the Indians were severely outnumbered. This time the American army's organization and discipline were more than adequate to take on the Indians. The Americans quickly overtook the Indians, who retreated and sought assistance from the British at Fort Miami. The British, despite their previous assistance, were now engaged in the French Revolution in Europe and unwilling to risk conflict with the Americans. They refused to help the Indians, leaving them to fend for themselves.³⁰⁴ Thus, Wayne's army was easily able to overtake the retreating Indians. The Battle of Fallen Timbers was, finally, an American victory.

In December of 1794, Wayne met with the Indian tribes to discuss peace. They agreed to meet in June of 1795 at Greenville to set a formal treaty.³⁰⁵ That summer, the Indians officially signed the Treaty of Greenville that waived their rights to two-thirds of Ohio and some smaller pieces of land in Indiana. Leaders of the Shawnee, Wyandot, Ottawa, and Delaware all signed the document. The Northwest Indian War was finally over and the

³⁰⁴ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 150.

³⁰⁵ Horsman, *Expansion and American Indian Policy*, 99.

Figure 5



Wayne's Campaign, July-Aug., 1790 in Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 274.

federal government had demonstrated its authority. To uphold authority in the Northwest Territory, the federal government maintained a military presence on the frontier to supply forts that protected western trade.³⁰⁶ Around the same time, in November, 1794, United States delegate John Jay successfully negotiated a treaty with Britain. Jay's Treaty, as it was known, required Britain to finally relinquish its posts on the frontiers. With both treaties secured, the Americans finally had complete access to the Northwest Territory.

Conclusion

What Washington and the United States federal government failed to realize was that from the moment the Treaty of Paris was signed, conflict with the Indians was inevitable. So long as Indian policy operated under the assumption that the United States was the sovereign power in the Northwest Territory, Indian tribes were going to resist. The Indians had never recognized Great Britain as the previous sovereign power in the Northwest Territory, and thus felt the United States had no valid claim to the lands, especially since the Indians had no desire to give up those lands. The federal government wanted the impossible: they wanted the lands in the Northwest Territory and they wanted them peacefully. Their unwillingness to compromise

³⁰⁶ Calloway, *The Victory with No Name*, 151.

any of the lands in the Northwest Territory combined with their lack of respect for Indian rights to those lands set up explosive tensions that no amount of peace treaties could alleviate.

When Washington entered the presidency, his plan to secure peace with the Indians revolved around the strengthening of the federal government. Mainly, he wanted both the Indians and the individual states to recognize the federal government as the authority on Indian affairs, and to strengthen the United States' military force in order to enforce the federal government's power. As violence escalated on the frontier, the demands of citizens for protection from the federal government erupted. However, the new nation's fragile state meant the federal government had little military power or funds to accomplish this. Two failed military expeditions against the Indians resulted in a federal reform of the army and militia system, significantly strengthening the power of the federal government. Without the violence of the Northwest Indian War, the demands for protection from United States citizens would not have driven Congress to make such federal reforms.

In this way, the events of the Northwest Indian War ultimately contributed to determining the role of the federal government in the early republic. With their demands for protection, American citizens on the frontier inadvertently conceded to a more centralized, more powerful government. Much to the chagrin of many of these citizens, the desire for a government that had the strength to protect them also created a

government with a capable force to use against them. When the Whiskey Rebellion erupted in Western Pennsylvania, Washington was able to quell the violent insurrection by calling upon the state militias in July, 1794. Such a use of force served to illustrate the newfound capabilities of the federal government to enforce their laws and policies throughout the nation.

Congress was right in asserting that the fate of the nation was tied to the acquisition of the Northwest Territory; yet, it was tied in unforeseeable ways. Beyond economic security, the events of the Northwest Indian War enabled Washington to achieve some of his goals for the nation. Washington secured a stronger, more centralized government by calling for consolidation of Indian affairs under the federal government and the creation of a federal army to protect the nation. Doing so ultimately allowed the United States to finally achieve victory in the Northwest Indian War. These policies certainly sparked contention among both citizens and Indians, raising questions as to the validity and justification of the United States' actions during the Northwest Indian War, the morality of which continues to be debated. Nevertheless, such a victory proved to American citizens, Indians, and European powers looking on that the United States was not only a force to be reckoned with, but worthy of "the respect of the world."

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Editor Biographies

Caitlin Connelly '17 is a History major with a double minor in Classics and Spanish. This is her first year as part of the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* editorial board. She is also a student assistant in the library.

Julia Deros '17 is a junior with a double major in History and Environmental Studies. This is her first year as an editor for the *Gettysburg Historical Journal*. She is also secretary of the Gettysburg chapter of Phi Alpha Theta and a member of the 26th Pennsylvania College Guard reenacting group.

Melanie Fernandes '16 is a senior History major with minors in Educational Studies and Theatre Arts. She has been on the editorial board of the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* since her sophomore year, and has served as a Co-Editor-in-Chief since her junior year. Melanie is a student assistant in Gettysburg College's Special Collections and College Archives where she recently curated an exhibit on social memory at Gettysburg College. She is also a Peer Learning Associate for the Education Department. Melanie is a member of the history honor society Phi Alpha Theta and the national honor society Phi Beta Kappa. Next year Melanie will serve as the Barbara Holley intern in Gettysburg's Musselman Library, and will be attending graduate school for Library Science and History at Simmons College afterward.

Jeffrey Lauck '18 is a sophomore History and Political Science double major and Civil War Era Studies and Public History double minor. This is his first year serving on the editorial board for the *Gettysburg Historical Journal*. Jeffrey is also the Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Gettysburg College Journal of the Civil War Era*, the President of Democracy Matters, a Civil War Institute Fellow, and

a member of the Eisenhower Institute's Campus Communication Team.

Kevin Lavery '16 is a senior History major with minors in Peace & Justice Studies and Educational Studies. During his time at Gettysburg College, he has worked as a History Writing PLA and as a Civil War Institute Fellow, in which role he has served as managing editor for the *Gettysburg Compiler* blog and has collaborated on the Jack Peirs Digital History Project. In addition to his work with the *Gettysburg Historical Journal*, he is also Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Gettysburg College Journal of the Civil War Era*.

Ryan Nadeau '16 is a senior with a double major in History and Political Science. He has worked with the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* since his junior year, and served as Co-Editor-in-Chief for this edition. He also serves as a reviewer for the *Gettysburg College Journal of the Civil War Era*, a fellow at the Civil War Institute, and a Peer Learning Associate for the History Department. Ryan has also served as President of the Omega Chapter of the Phi Alpha Theta and Secretary and Compliance Officer for TEDxGettysburgCollege. He is also a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society and Pi Sigma Alpha.

Andrew C. Nosti '18 is a History and English with a Writing Concentration double major. This is his first year working with the *Gettysburg Historical Journal*. After graduation Andrew hopes to attend graduate school and pursue a degree in creative writing.

Brianna O'Boyle '18 is a sophomore with an intended double major of History and Globalization in addition to a Spanish Minor. She spent the 2016 academic Spring semester abroad in Kunming, China. This is her first year as an editor for the *Gettysburg*

Historical Journal. She is also an active member of several other extracurricular activities on Gettysburg's campus. She has served as the President of Game Club and the Treasurer of Active Minds. She enjoys sharing her love of history and her favorite time period is American Gilded Age to the Early Twentieth Century with a focus on Institutionally Oppressed Groups of People including women and minorities.

Kyle Schrader '16 is a graduating senior with a major in History and a minor in Classics. This is Kyle's second and last year as a member of the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* editorial board. He is also currently the Sergeant for the Student Patrol Program, a History Writing PLA, President of Amnesty International Gettysburg College Chapter, and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, and Eta Sigma Phi honors societies. Next fall, Kyle is excited to be attending Villanova University as he moves forward in his pursuits in the fields of Classics and History. He is extremely proud of his time at Gettysburg College, and is eager to see what awaits him in his academic future.

Sophia Vayansky '16 is a senior History major with minors in Public History and Studio Art. She has been an editor on the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* board for three years, and this year served as a Co-Editor-in-Chief. She is also a member of Phi Alpha Theta honor society and a work study student at the Eisenhower National Historical Site.

Author Biographies

Jake Farias '16 is a History major and English and Education double minor finishing his senior year. He is also the Fortenbaugh Research and Instruction and a member of Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Alpha Theta, and Phi Beta Kappa. This is the first year he has been published in the Gettysburg Historical Journal.

Melanie Fernandes '16 is a senior History major with minors in Educational Studies and Theatre Arts. She has been on the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* board since her sophomore year, and has served as a Co-Editor-in-Chief since her junior year. Melanie is a student assistant in Gettysburg College's Special Collections and College Archives, as well as a Peer Learning Associate for the Education Department. Melanie is a member of the history honor society Phi Alpha Theta and the national honor society Phi Beta Kappa. Her paper "'Under the Auspices of Peace': The Northwest Indian War and its Impact on the Early American Republic" was written for her history capstone course "Pennsylvania's Indians" with Professor Timothy Shannon.

Jenna Fleming '16 is a senior at Gettysburg College with a double major in History and English. She is a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the history honors society, and Sigma Tau Delta, the English honors society, and serves as Vice President of Sigma Alpha Iota, the international women's music fraternity. She works as a student assistant in the Special Collections department at Musselman Library, contributes to the Jack Peirs World War I Digital History Project, and served as a Brian C. Pohanka intern at the Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum through the Civil War Institute. She is a recipient of the Edwin T. Greninger '41 Award for writing in History and has published pieces in the *Gettysburg Historical Journal* and *The Mercury*. After graduating from Gettysburg,

Jenna will pursue a Master of Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives and Records Management.

Ryan Nadeau '16 is a senior with a double major in History and Political science. He is a Co-Editor-in-Chief for the Historical Journal, and serves as a reviewer for the Gettysburg College Journal of the Civil War Era, a fellow at the Civil War Institute, and a Peer Learning Associate for the History Department. His piece, "Creating a Statesman," was written for Professor William Bowman's course "Transformations in Nineteenth Century Europe."

Kyle Schrader '16 is a graduating senior with a major in History and a minor in Classics. He is currently the Sergeant for the Student Patrol Program, a History Writing Peer Learning Associate, President of Amnesty International Gettysburg College Chapter, and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, and Eta Sigma Phi honors societies. Next fall, Kyle is excited to be attending Villanova University as he moves forward in his pursuits in the fields of Classics and History. He is extremely proud of his time at Gettysburg College, and is eager to see what awaits him in his academic future.



Department of History
Gettysburg College
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325