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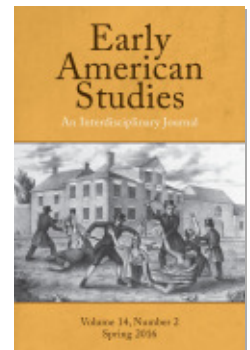
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# “Sometimes bad people take the liberty of stragling into your Country”

The Struggle to Control Mobility during Pontiac’s War

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**ABSTRACT** This essay examines the extent to which struggles among Natives and colonizers to control mobility both influenced and were influenced by Pontiac’s War. It argues that mobility was a fiercely contested issue of empire in areas falling within the overlapping spheres of influence of distinct Indian, colonial, and imperial powers. It also contends that Pontiac’s War marked a pivotal moment in a longer history of conflicts over mobility on the North American continent: events before, during, and after the war significantly altered the ways different groups attempted to regulate the movement of people, goods, and information across physical spaces.

In February 1764 Matthew Smith and James Gibson printed a remonstrance in which they attempted to justify the Paxton Boys’ attacks on Conestoga and Delaware Indians allied with the Pennsylvania government during Pontiac’s War. They accused their victims of “living amongst us under the Cloak of Friendship” and secretly assisting Ohio and Susquehanna Delaware warriors with their attacks on Pennsylvania farmers. “To this fatal Intercourse between our pretended Friends and open Enemies,” they wrote, “we must ascribe the greatest Part of the Ravages and Murders that have been committed in the Course of this and the last *Indian War*.”

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Paxtonians insisted that the government remove all Indians from the colony. “Experience,” they argued, “had taught us that they are all Perfidious, and that their Claim to Freedom and Independency puts it in their Power to act as Spies, to entertain and give Intelligence to our Enemies, and to furnish them with Provisions and warlike Stores.” When officials refused to yield to this and other demands, the Paxton Boys marched to Philadelphia, threatening to unseat the government and kill the Indians living under its protection. Though support for the rebellion eventually faded, fear about the concerns it raised did not. The Paxtonians’ actions were extreme responses to a common problem—how to control the movements of potentially dangerous people—that bedeviled Indians, British officials, and colonists throughout North America. As such, they raise important interpretive questions about the extent to which a broader struggle to control mobility influenced and was influenced by the contests collectively known as Pontiac’s War.<sup>1</sup>

Seeking to answer these questions, this essay examines this struggle over mobility in four geographic areas: the central Great Lakes, the Niagara Falls region, the upper Ohio River Valley, and the Susquehanna River Valley. To be certain, this struggle played itself out in distinct ways and with diverse outcomes in each area. Nevertheless, two broad patterns emerged, which provide a useful framework for analysis. The first involved the numerous conflicts along transport spaces such as rivers, lakes, paths, and roads, as well as transport hubs like villages, settlements, towns, trade posts, and military installations. Rather than study them individually or in the context of military campaigns, as other historians have, this paper treats them as incidents occurring within regional systems of movement and exchange over which Indians and colonizers tried to exert authority.<sup>2</sup> The second, less well

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1. James Gibson and Matthew Smith, “To the Honourable JOHN PENN, Esquire, Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, and of the Counties of New-Castle, Kent and Sussex, on Delaware; and to the Representatives of the Free Men of the said Province, in Assembly Met,” in John R. Dunbar, ed., *The Paxton Papers* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), 106, 108; emphasis in original. For the most thorough treatment of the Paxton Boys, see Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

2. For general studies on Pontiac’s War, see Richard Middleton, *Pontiac’s War: Its Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2007); David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac’s Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and*

studied pattern concerns the efforts of Indians and colonizers to control the movement of people, goods, and information. Many of these attempts were undoubtedly influenced by the exigencies of war. But they also reflected economic, political, and cultural practices that had created long-standing tensions over who determined where and how freely people could travel and what could pass through shared transport spaces.

Careful examination of the struggle to control mobility shows that it was a fiercely contested issue of empire at places falling within the overlapping spheres of influence of distinct Indian, colonial, and imperial powers. As such, it provides meaningful insights into the origins, course, and outcomes of Pontiac’s War, amending interpretations that have presented it as a theme of significantly lesser importance than disputes over land, changes in trade practices, tensions created by diplomatic failures, or religious revivalism. Furthermore, recent scholarship on Native Americans and the Atlantic world, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of early modern communities, has proven that mobility was engrained in the social, economic, political, and cultural practices of Native villages, colonial societies, and imperial administrations.<sup>3</sup> When viewing Pontiac’s War in this light, and as the first

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*the Indian Uprising* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947). Dowd’s work, in particular, offers a sustained analysis of the ways that Natives targeted communication lines to and from Fort Detroit and Fort Niagara, as well as a triangular area of western Pennsylvania and Virginia bordered by Braddock’s Road, Forbes’ Road, and the Virginia Road. See Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 131–47.

3. The literature for these fields is vast; what follows are texts that have helped shape my analysis. For Native American exchange networks and practices, see Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (1996): 435–58; Helen H. Tanner, “The Land and Water Communication Systems of the Southeastern Indians,” in Gregory A. Waselkov et al., eds., *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, 2nd ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 27–42; Jon Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods: Iroquoia, 1534–1701* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), esp. xxvii–xlix; Angela Pulley Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Alejandra Dubcovsky, “One Hundred Sixty-One Knots, Two Plates, and One Emperor: Creek Information Networks in the Era of the Yamasee War,” *Ethnohistory* 59, no. 3 (2012): 489–513; Joshua Piker, “‘White & Clean’ & Contested: Creek Towns and Trading Paths in the Aftermath of the Seven Years’ War,” *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (2003): 315–47. For the Atlantic world and colonial North America, see John J. McCusker, “The Demise of Distance: The Business Press and the Origins of the Information Revolution in the Early Modern Atlantic World,” *American Historical Review* 110, no. 2 (April 2005): 295–321; David J. Hancock, “Commerce and Conversation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic: The Invention of Madeira Wine,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary His-*

major challenge to British imperialism after the Seven Years' War, one sees that it marked a critical moment in a longer history of the struggle to control mobility in North America; events before, during, and after the war illuminate significant changes in how people understood and experienced mobility.

#### THE CENTRAL GREAT LAKES

Pontiac's War in the central Great Lakes region revealed the ways in which struggles over mobility played out in areas where the imbalance of power greatly favored Indians. Here Native groups always influenced, and in most places dominated, the movement of people, goods, and information. Acting either independently or as parts of a broader coalition, Native peoples demanded that Britain and its allies respect trade, travel, and hunting rights along land paths and water routes stretching east to Niagara, south into Ohio, west to Lake Michigan, and north to Lake Superior. The vast majority of this transport system was unused by British travelers, a reality that Natives fought to preserve in 1763 and 1764. The main hub in this shared network, at least from the British perspective, was Detroit. Whereas Britons viewed it as an indispensable foothold on the edges of their empire, Detroit-area Indians considered it squarely situated within lands shared by Potawatomis, Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Wyandots. Consequently, most colonizers knew that they had to tread lightly when trying to expand their influence. Natives had ceded to Britain control over French settlements and military posts, while also promising traders and military personnel access to land and water routes. But Britons quickly learned that "Indians did not like their new establishments, the building of new Forts giving them great cause of Suspicion."<sup>4</sup> Pontiac's War shattered this delicate compromise; its outcome produced few but meaningful changes within a broader struggle over mobility in the region.

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tory 29, no. 2 (1998): 197–219; Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675–1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Katherine Grandjean, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); and David Dauer, "Colonial Philadelphia's Interregional Transportation System: An Overview," Regional Economic History Research Center, *Working Papers* 2 (1979): 1–16.

4. "Answers to some Questions proposed by him [Johnson] to the interpreters & some Intelligent Persons residing at D'etroit," in James Sullivan et al., eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols. (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1921–1965) (hereafter cited as *WJP*), 3:502.

Natives demonstrated their power to the British shortly after France’s capitulation at Fort Detroit. At peace talks in Detroit in September 1761, representatives from multiple tribes met with Sir William Johnson to discuss terms of Anglo-Indian coexistence.<sup>5</sup> Huron and Ottawa diplomats applauded Johnson’s opening speech and Britain’s efforts to make “the roads & Waters of our Lakes smooth & passable which were before rough and dangerous,” but they also reminded the British of their obligations to the region’s Native peoples. The Huron chief Anáíása set an unmistakable tone when he opened his speech by rewarding Johnson with a belt of wampum for his “compliance with the Customs” of Huron condolence rituals, an otherwise common gesture. He later offered the following advice: “never forget the Words which you have now made use of, but that you will send us a plenty of goods, & that at a Cheaper rate than we have hitherto been able to procure them.” In response to the movement of British troops into the region, he proclaimed that maintaining peaceful relations depended on their willingness to “look upon and treat us as Brethren.” Explaining that the Hurons “had been frequently illused . . . by the Soldiers,” he encouraged Johnson to “prevent them from so doing for the future.” Unfazed, Johnson addressed each concern in turn, showing in the process a little backbone but also considerable flexibility. While admitting to being “charmed with the speech[es]” Johnson gave, Huron and Ottawa diplomats demanded that Britain back up his words with actions.<sup>6</sup>

Knowing how important it was to appease his new allies, Johnson drafted instructions for officers commanding the forts at and around Detroit while the negotiations were still unfolding. One of his first edicts demanded that soldiers be prevented from “rambling abroad amongst them [local Indians], as that often creates disputes & Quarrels between Soldier, & Indian.” He next encouraged fort commanders to maintain a “Correspondence as well as possible with the Officers of the next posts, as also with the Commandt of Detroit,” which would enable them “to act uniformly, and have good

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5. Sachems and chiefs representing the Wyandots, Hurons, Ottawas, Chippewas, Potawatomis, Saguenays, Kickapoos, and Twightwees held multiple talks with British officials and their Delaware, Shawnee, and Six Nations allies between September 4 and 15.

6. “Proceedings at a Treaty held at De’troit by Sir Willm Johnson Bar[one]t with the Sachems, & Warriors of the several Nations of Indians,” in *WJP*, 3:487, 483, 485, 486, 487. For instances of Johnson’s complying with Indian trade demands and promising to inquire about the conduct of soldiers and traders, see *ibid.*, 492, 498, 499.

intelligence and knowledge of those Nations of Indians in whose Neighbourhood they are posted.” He also sketched a plan for trade regulations, on which he would later elaborate in a document for Detroit’s commanding officer, Captain David Campbell. “[A]ll Traders,” he declared, had to “strictly adhere to the regulation made for that purpose, on pain of being banished.” No one could trade or carry goods “to any Nation or Place to the Northward, or Westward of the Detroit, except where there is a Garrison & an Officer Commanding,” and anyone hoping to trade first had to “produce his passport for that purpose.”<sup>7</sup> Johnson’s instructions articulated a rigid plan for regulating the mobility of British soldiers and traders, one that compelled them to conform to guidelines formulated in response to Detroit-area Indians’ demands. More important, his instructions, along with his actions during the talks, also established Detroit as Britain’s principal trade and military hub in the central Great Lakes.

Frustrated by Britain’s unwillingness to honor Johnson’s agreements and wary of its intentions in the region, Ottawa, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Wyandot, Miami, Kickapoo, Piankashaw, and Wea warriors answered Pontiac’s call two years later, in May 1763, to “exterminate from our lands this nation which only seeks to destroy us,” and then “stop up the ways hither so that they may never come again.” In addition to inviting warring parties “to fall on the English wherever they found them,” Pontiac and his allies devised multiple schemes for capturing British forts. Pontiac’s allies easily overwhelmed the British at Sandusky, St. Joseph’s, Miami, Ouatanon, and Michilimackinac, asserting control over posts and paths along Britain’s trade, military, and communication infrastructure. The only significant challenges to their actions came from local Indians who, though unwilling to provide military support to their British allies, feared the long-term consequences of the war.<sup>8</sup>

Pontiac and his allies found it more difficult to accomplish their primary objective of forcing Major Henry Gladwin to surrender Fort Detroit. When their various stratagems failed because of internal conflicts, inadequate resources, or British maneuverings, Pontiac’s forces targeted enemy vessels

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7. “Instructions for the Officers Commandg at Michilimackinack, St Joseph & ca relative to their conduct with the Indians,” in *WJP*, 3:473.

8. Milo Milton Quaipe, ed., *The Siege of Detroit in 1763: The Journal of Pontiac’s Conspiracy and John Rutherford’s Narrative of a Captivity* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1961), 22, 24; Deposition of Mr. Clermont, Detroit, May 11, 1764, quoted in Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 70. For an account of Natives’ successes at smaller Great Lakes forts, see Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 75–76, 91–96.

moving along the Detroit River. Such skirmishes both limited Britain’s efforts to restock the fort and provided warriors with valuable goods and military supplies. In June, a force of “1500 strong . . . attacked the Brig coming down the Detroit River, wounded the Master, and lodged a great many Shot in the Vessel.”<sup>9</sup> Over a month later, reports from Niagara confirmed another clash: “When the Schooner returned [to Detroit] from Niagara, with a Reinforcement of Men and Ammunition, she was attacked in the River of Detroit by the Savages, who had entrenched themselves; but on the Firing of six or seven Guns they abandoned their Works.”<sup>10</sup> A third assault—this one major—followed about five weeks later, when “3 or 400 Indians, in Canoes, went off to attack our Schooners, that was coming up the River from Niagara, with Provisions.” Britain’s ability to fend off most Indian attacks led officials to conclude, “The Indians were so roughly handled, that they have declared they never will attempt to attack the English by Water any more.”<sup>11</sup> Britain’s naval advantages, combined with timely assistance from Indian, French, and British informants, helped them maintain a degree of control over movement into and out of Detroit.<sup>12</sup> Such

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9. Letter from Fort Pitt, dated June 26, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 7, 1763.

10. Extract of a letter from Niagara, dated July 21, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 11, 1763.

11. Letter from Detroit, dated September 9, 1763, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 13, 1763. For analysis of the conflicts near Detroit, see Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 65–82.

12. To survive Pontiac’s siege of Detroit, fort officials relied on the frequent and timely arrival of provisions, reinforcements, and intelligence. Lieutenant Jehu Hay kept a journal in which he noted, among other things, the movement of officers, soldiers, informants, merchants, and traders to and from the post. Support came both by land and by water. Though winter storms limited traffic of larger vessels for significant portions of the year, when the ice broke four ships—the schooners *Gladwin*, *Boston*, and *Victory* and the sloop *Charlotte*—made monthly circuits to and from Detroit. The fort also received bateaux and canoes, the arrival of which was less affected by poor weather conditions. Troops and provisions also arrived by land, as was the case on August 27, 1764, when Bradstreet reached Detroit with 1,200 soldiers and assumed command of the fort. Hay’s journal similarly shows a complex process of information gathering involving interactions between the fort’s officers and a number of Indian, French, and British informants. Hay’s communications pertained mainly to Anglo-Indian relations in and around Detroit, but they also included news from throughout North America. The intelligence gathered as a result of such encounters, though it often mixed half-truths and lies with reliable intelligence, helped the garrison defend Detroit against assaults both imaginary and real. Jehu Hay, Journal, May 1, 1763–June 6, 1765 (during which time Hay served as a lieutenant in the 60th, or Royal American, Regiment), Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.



capabilities also reflected a pattern that would appear in other regions: namely, that though Indians could and did disrupt movement to and from major forts, they could never fully negate Britain's claims over or access to its main hubs and transport lines.

Britain's attempts to reestablish authority throughout the region, however, met with mixed success. Gladwin's earliest efforts included small-scale raids on Indian villages and fortifications, the goal being to weaken Pontiac's position rather than subdue his forces. In July James Dalyell arrived with orders to engage Pontiac's forces along the road leading to Detroit. His attempt, known to history as the Battle of Bloody Run, proved disastrous, revealing that though Britain could control the Detroit River, the area's roads belonged to Pontiac's forces. Even after Pontiac lifted the siege on Detroit and offered reasonable peace terms that Gladwin was forced to reject, officers acknowledged that their "enemy are still masters of the country." Britain's fortunes did not turn in a meaningful way until the following spring, when General Thomas Gage ordered Colonel John Bradstreet to march through the Great Lakes region with two thousand men. Instructed to secure the loyalty of friendly Indians, subdue any Native or French resistance, and restore British control at forts as far afield as Michilimackinac, Bradstreet spent much of his time pursuing diplomatic solutions. His actions led to a fragile peace at Detroit, but they did little to ease tensions in Ohio and Illinois. Bradstreet had shown that Britain possessed a formidable military. He had also demonstrated that it still failed to negotiate on terms many Natives found acceptable. Consequently, Bradstreet's expedition managed to secure Detroit but reclaim only a portion of Britain's former influence over mobility in the region.<sup>13</sup>

Treaty talks at Detroit a year later indicated that Britain still showed deference to Detroit-area Indians, but that it was also prepared to exploit its more permanent standing in the region. The change was evident even in the symbolic discourse about roads. When addressing Indian emissaries, Britain claimed responsibility for opening the road but "charged them to keep [it] open through their Country" and "preserve that Road good and pleasant to Travel upon." The discussion became less one-sided when diplomats broached more practical matters. When addressing the establishment

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13. For detailed analysis of British military actions at and around Detroit, see Middleton, *Pontiac's War*, 72, 104–8, 123–28, 149–65. The quote is attributed to Gladwin, though other officials stationed at Detroit, including Lieutenant Jehu Hay, recorded similar phrases. Henry Gladwin to Sir Jeffery Amherst, September 9, 1763, quoted in Middleton, *Pontiac's War*, 124.

of forts, Wabash, Ottawa, Chippewa, Potawatomi, and Wyandot Natives reprimanded the British for assuming they possessed any rights to the land. The chiefs reminded British delegates that the French never conquered or purchased the lands; rather, they were given “liberty to settle for which they always rewarded us.” “If you expect to keep these Posts,” they added, “we will expect to have proper returns from you.” Having said that, however, they agreed to sell part of their lands to the British “to carry on Trade at,” but only if they were compensated and guaranteed hunting rights. Acknowledging their claims, Britain’s lead diplomat, George Croghan, expressed his sorrow at seeing Natives “dispersed thro’ the Woods,” and his desire to see them return to their “Antient Settlements . . . [and] promote the good work of Peace.”<sup>14</sup>

Subsequent discussions about how the two sides might ensure this peace shed additional light on how the struggle to control mobility affected the negotiations. On this point, Croghan was the one making demands: “Sometimes bad people take the liberty of stragling into your Country, I desire if you meet any such people to bring them immediately here [to Detroit].” St. Joseph and northern Ojibwa Indians hoped to absolve themselves of what they referred to as their “past follies,” claiming that “evil reports & the whistling of bad birds” had gotten “the better of our foolish young Warriors.” Croghan, unimpressed with their oratory, stressed that Britain would “forgive them as we had the rest of the Tribes, & forget what was past provided their future conduct should convince us of their sincerity.”<sup>15</sup> Though certainly posturing, he was nevertheless negotiating from a stronger position than that of either Johnson in 1761 or Bradstreet in 1764.

By withstanding Pontiac’s siege and maintaining control over Detroit and the river that ran through it, Britain secured a permanent position in the central Great Lakes. Britons were once again writing with optimism about Detroit’s future. In 1766 Thomas Mante declared, “[Detroit] would lay the foundation for future empire.”<sup>16</sup> But Britons also knew that any expansion depended on their ability to sustain the peace forged at Detroit in 1765.

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14. George Croghan, *Croghan’s Journal, 1765*, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846*, 32 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904–7), 1:156, 157, 159, 160, 157.

15. *Ibid.*, 165, 164, 161, 164, 163.

16. Thomas Mante, “Proposal for Colonizing Detroit, 30 April 1766,” in William Legge Dartmouth, *Correspondence and Papers, 1766–1775*, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit.

Their decision to reduce the number of forts in western lands and check the pace of settlement at Detroit proved as much. Though Britons established control over and access to what they considered the hub and main avenue of the region's transport system, Natives still determined who and what moved through the vast majority of paths, posts, and villages that constituted it. This struggle over mobility, then, did not produce a clear-cut winner. It did, however, reveal that significant and enduring changes had occurred.

#### THE UPPER OHIO RIVER VALLEY

When Ohio Indians attacked British forts and colonial settlements in the upper Ohio River Valley in June 1763, they unleashed new conflicts over mobility. Unlike those at Detroit, Natives here could not claim the same power over the region's roads, rivers, and forts, or colonizers' mobility. The Delaware and Shawnee villages that supplied most of the warriors were relatively new settlements that constantly renegotiated their relations with other villages.<sup>17</sup> The British forces that Ohio Indians encountered, moreover, had entrenched themselves in ways they had not in the central Great Lakes. Here Britain had coopted and expanded on France's military infrastructure, especially the main hub of Fort Duquesne (renamed Fort Pitt) at the forks of the Ohio River. But with the support of its colonial and Indian allies in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Iroquoia, and the Ohio, the army had also built and fortified roads linking Fort Pitt to the colonies. Finally, a stream of traders, speculators, farmers, and artisans had followed the army through western Pennsylvania, creating sizable civilian populations loyal to the Crown. The stage was set for contests over mobility. But while Pontiac's War revealed that Ohio Indians and colonizers devised clear strategies for controlling the movement of people and goods, it also exposed a world in which such control ultimately remained elusive.

Britons' attempts to persuade Ohio Indians to support, or at least permit, their conquest of French forts in 1758 brought to the surface tensions that later contributed to a renewal of war. Before the Treaty of Easton in October 1758, Britain sent Christian Frederick Post to ascertain the extent to

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17. Michael McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724–1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 21–46; Amy Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 103–23; Stephen Warren, *The Worlds the Shawnees Made: Migration and Violence in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 155–207.

which Delaware and Shawnee villages would support a second British campaign against Fort Duquesne. When a favorable response reached diplomats at Easton in the form of a letter written on behalf of Ohio Indians, Governor William Denny moved quickly to secure an alliance. He began by trotting out the familiar language of opening and clearing roads. He then spoke of opening an actual path to diplomacy. He entreated emissaries to “come to us with as many as can be, of the *Delawares, Shawanese, or the Six Nation Indians,*” adding, “we desire all Tribes and Nations of *Indians,* who are in Alliance with you, may come.” He tried to assure them that they needed to “fear nothing” when traveling through Pennsylvania, that he would secure their passage and “lay up Provisions for . . . [them] along the Road.” Even the gift he included to seal his promise, “A large white Belt, with the Figure of a Man at each End, and Streaks of black, representing the Road from the Ohio to Philadelphia,” emphasized the importance he placed on establishing a real, as well as symbolic, line of communication. In return, he asked that Ohio Indians cease attacking frontier settlers and allow British forces to move unhindered through western Pennsylvania.<sup>18</sup>

Denny’s latter request spoke to an important tenet of British strategy that would generate friction for years to come: the creation of a permanent, highly fortified infrastructure connecting colonial settlements in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to Ohio Indian lands. In this particular instance, Denny was referring to Colonel Henry Bouquet’s progress along Forbes’ Road, the military highway on which Britain had rested its hopes for both securing the mid-Atlantic colonies and capturing Fort Duquesne.<sup>19</sup> Forbes’ Road represented neither the beginning nor the end of Britain’s ambition, however. In 1755 General Edward Braddock carved out a similar road through Virginia and Maryland, a road that George Washington reopened during the latter days of Forbes’s expedition. In 1758 Forbes also ordered the opening of another road, connecting Raystown and Fort Cumberland.<sup>20</sup> After seizing Duquesne and rechristening it Fort Pitt, Britain restored the abandoned forts at Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle, while

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18. “Governor Denny’s Answer to the Message of the Ohio Indians,” in Susan Kalter, ed., *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, & the First Nations: The Treaties of 1736–62* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 319; emphases in original.

19. Henry Bouquet to George Stevenson, June 3, 1758, in Sylvester K. Stevens et al., eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, 6 vols. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951–72) (hereafter cited as *PHB*), 2:27. In this letter Bouquet proclaimed, “the very being of this Province [Pennsylvania] depends” on the “Success of this [Forbes’s] Expedition.”

20. Bouquet to Sir John St. Clair, June 3, 1758, in *PHB*, 2:23.

also enhancing the roads connecting them to each other and to Lake Erie. When the dust had settled, Britain had gained access to and considerable influence over a transport system linking its eastern colonies to trade centers on the Great Lakes, Indian paths into the Ohio Country, and a river system stretching to the Gulf of Mexico. Though well aware of the limits of both the system and their authority over it, Britons were equally committed never to relinquish command over what they considered their most valuable assets: Forbes' Road, Braddock's Road, and Fort Pitt.

In the long run, Denny's declaration of goodwill rang hollow in the ears of many Ohio Indians, while Britain's infrastructural expansion proved to be as threatening as it was beneficial. Despite agreeing to peace with British officials at Fort Pitt in December 1758, Delaware diplomats probably doubted their claim that they had "not come here to take Possession of yr hunting Country in a hostile Manner."<sup>21</sup> While many Ohio Indians embraced the prospects of "a large and extensive Trade" with Britain, they also understood the threat that British occupation of Fort Pitt posed to their customary travel and exchange practices. Forbes's plan to house soldiers, as well as Britain's inability to stem the tide of civilian migration, did little to ease their concerns.<sup>22</sup> The Delaware chiefs' response to Britain's proposal was both timely and foreboding: "We recommend it to you that None of your People straggle out in the Woods as a few Indians may come here and take a Scalp without our Knowledge." Though they claimed, "No Body can come across our Country without our Knowledge," they were unable (or unwilling) to fully guarantee safe travel for British traders.<sup>23</sup> Peace might

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21. Bouquet, "Conference with the Delaware Indians," in *PHB*, 2:621.

22. *Ibid.*, 622.

23. *Ibid.*, 624, 623–24. Experience quickly proved that the Delaware chiefs' warning was prophetic. For much of 1759, Indian war parties frequently camped in the woods between Fort Pitt and Fort Ligonier seeking to "waylay the roads" and "cut off" military supply lines. Similar groups gathered along the roads connecting Fort Pitt to Lake Erie shortly after the French abandoned their forts at Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle. Stories of Indians "Robing People between Venango and Presque Isle" mounted, causing "exercise of mind & some dread." Consequently, the army often detained traders at forts until enough soldiers assembled to escort them and their cargo. Fort officials likewise required traders to obtain transit passes, in addition to their trade licenses, to ensure safe travel. James Kenny related one such experience in February 1762: "Last night a Corporal came to ask me to wait on Commanding officer to have my Pass Sign'd, so I went to Day let him know I was going no Further, & had no pass." In the uncertain conditions of a war zone, a trader like Kenny accepted such restrictions on his movement if they provided an additional measure of security. William Trent, *Journal*, 1759–1763, *Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia; James Kenny, "Journal of James

have been accomplished; but the struggle to control the movement of people, goods, and information had merely entered a new phase.

Ohio Indians’ experiences traveling along British-controlled spaces similarly contradicted Denny’s earlier claim that they had nothing to fear. Colonial agents likewise knew that Indians’ trepidations were merited. While escorting a company of Indian diplomats from Fort Pitt to Shippensburg in 1762, Post crossed paths with George Croghan, who warned him that “it would be dangerous . . . to travel [farther] as the Court was at Carlisle.” Cumberland County residents had congregated outside the court of quarter sessions to voice their discontent over the lack of frontier defenses since the start of the Seven Years’ War. Croghan knew how volatile such demonstrations could be and that the presence of Indians could trigger a riot in which settlers would attack even a diplomatic party traveling with provincial agents. Croghan himself had been dispatched to Fort Littleton to intercept a party of Susquehanna Indians and persuade them to remain at the fort “till the Court was over.”<sup>24</sup>

When Pontiac’s War reached the upper Ohio River Valley in 1763, contests over mobility and the transport structures that supported it factored prominently. Ohio Indians designed and executed a multifaceted strategy to destroy Britain’s transport capabilities. They began by attacking smaller forts at Venango, Le Boeuf, and Presque Isle and disrupting travel along roads between Lake Erie and Fort Pitt. One officer remarked, “We sent two Men with an express to Venango in the Night, but before they got a Mile on their Journey, were fired upon, and returned, one of them wounded.”<sup>25</sup> Warriors similarly assailed isolated farms, hoping not only to clear the land of settlers but also to inundate western roads with rumor, fear, and refugees. An anonymous Cumberland County resident noted that “our Accounts, in general, are most melancholy; the poor Back Inhabitants coming continually into Carlisle from their Places, having hardly any thing with them but their Children.”<sup>26</sup> Commenting on the state of affairs in the western settlements, Philadelphia newspapers explained, “Carlisle was [*sic*]

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Kenny, 1761–1763,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 37 (1913): 15, 41.

24. Christian Frederick Post, Journal of Fredrick Post, 1762, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 1, ed. Samuel Hazard et al., 12 vols. (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns, 1852–56), 4:95.

25. Extract of a letter from Fort Pitt, June 2, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 16, 1763.

26. Extract of a letter from Fort Pitt, dated June 26, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 7, 1763.

become the Barrier, not a single Inhabitant being beyond it.”<sup>27</sup> Though Ohio Indians were successful in creating chaos, their tactics were never fully effective in stemming migration. Shortly after being driven from their homes, farmers “who had left their Places, and come into the Fort [Bedford], had returned to their Plantations again, at the Risk of their Lives.”<sup>28</sup> From the earliest stages of the conflict, then, it was clear that attempts to control who and what could move where would play a significant role.

Eventually, Ohio Indians tested their strategy on Britain’s key posts and roads. They began by laying siege to Fort Pitt. Though successful at driving civilians behind the fort’s walls and putting Britain on the defensive, warriors lacked the resources necessary to accomplish the ultimate objective of ousting the British from their stronghold at the forks. Consequently, they shifted more of their attention to Britain’s main military highways, where they intercepted supply trains and harassed smaller fortifications. Large sections of Forbes’ Road proved particularly vulnerable. Captain Lewis Ourry, the commanding officer at Fort Bedford, explained, “The nakedness of this Communication, and the weakness of the Garrisons,” left the road open to attack.<sup>29</sup> Beyond halting movement at certain places along the road, these raids disrupted the flow of essential goods and information. A letter from Carlisle dated October 6, 1763, noted that Indians had “been seen about Ligonier, and have killed one Man, and done some other Damage.” Such attacks sundered communications between Carlisle, Ligonier, and Pitt for “upwards of five Weeks.”<sup>30</sup> Fearing for their safety, civilian traders informed Bouquet, “without an Escort itt will we believe be out of our power to gett persons to Carry the necessary provision for the troops now on the Communication in the time they may necessarily be wanted.”<sup>31</sup> In addition

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27. Extract of a letter from Cumberland, in Frederick County, Md., dated July 16, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 28, 1763.

28. Letter from Carlisle, dated June 20, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 30, 1763. For detailed studies of these strategies, see Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 147–50, 156–57; and Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 143–44.

29. Lewis Ourry to Bouquet, June 1, 1763, in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Sylvester K. Stevens, Donald H. Kent, and Leo J. Rowland (Harrisburg: Dept. of Public Instruction, Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940–1943), ser. 21649, pt. 1: 119.

30. Letter from Carlisle, dated October 6, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 13, 1763.

31. William Plumsted and David Franks to Bouquet, June 4, 1763, in *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ser. 21649, pt. 1: 132.

to offering valuable plunder, then, Ohio Indians knew that piecemeal attacks offered the best strategy for taking or rendering obsolete Britain’s more valuable possessions.<sup>32</sup>

Britain’s responses, both its initial defensive position and its later offensive maneuvers, reveal the priority it placed on regaining a degree of control over mobility. Forced once again to concede losses at outlying forts, trade posts, and settlements, Britons went to great lengths to secure Fort Pitt and Forbes’ Road. They collected intelligence of Indian movements, mustered resources, and bolstered defensive capabilities at the fort and along the road. Understanding that losing Fort Pitt would be a catastrophic blow to British interests in the Ohio Valley, Bouquet was ordered to lead yet another large expedition to the forks, this time to provision western forts and secure the roads. Like the Braddock and Forbes expeditions of the Seven Years’ War, Bouquet’s march became a cornerstone of Britain’s wartime strategy. And like the preceding marches, it proved to be a logistical nightmare in which he constantly faced shortages of supplies and uncooperative settlers, traders, and provincial officials.<sup>33</sup>

The turning point of the war in the Ohio Valley occurred when the two sides’ mobility-based tactics collided at Edge Hill on August 5–6. The Battle of Bushy Run, as historians have come to call the event, pitted a force of roughly four hundred Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, and Mingos against Bouquet’s advance guard at a vulnerable point along Forbes’ Road. Like most major clashes during Pontiac’s War, Bushy Run produced partial victories for each side, but it was also a watershed moment. On the one side, Ohio Indians frustrated many of the expedition’s main goals. Although they did not stop Bouquet from reaching Fort Pitt, they did prevent him from resupplying Fort Pitt fully, reclaiming Fort Presque Isle, and sending reinforcements to Detroit.<sup>34</sup> On the British side, Bouquet’s successes proved equally significant. Eventually, Bouquet was able to recuperate and push the war into Indian-controlled lands west of the river. More important, by withstanding the largest single assault against a British position along Forbes’ Road and supplying Fort Pitt with desperately needed resources,

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32. For a detailed discussion of how Indians used roads in their military campaigns, see Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 144–47.

33. Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 134–70; Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 101–4.

34. Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 185–96; Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 109–14; Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 145–46.



Britain demonstrated an ability to sustain its most important transport structures against major Indian attacks. While Delaware and Shawnee raiders still could (and did) disrupt movement along the road after Bushy Run, they could never completely overwhelm the British.<sup>35</sup>

After shifting the conflict away from Fort Pitt, imperial and provincial officials returned to diplomacy in an attempt to reclaim political control over mobility in the region. The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued shortly after the siege of Fort Pitt ended, revealed the limits of Britain's power. Experience demanded it recognize that those parts of its "Dominions or Territories" that had not been colonized or purchased were "their [allied Indian nations'] Hunting Grounds." The proclamation also created, in theory, stricter laws for regulating land purchases, squatting, and trade in lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. Combined, these policies showed a respect for customary Native practices and an attempt to control the pace of westward expansion.<sup>36</sup> The reality, of course, was that the proclamation failed to honor Indian rights, regulate trade, or prevent colonial encroachment into Indian lands.

While subsequent treaties between Ohio Indians and Bouquet and Johnson revealed Britain's desire to restore peace rather than claim authority over mobility in the upper Ohio, they also created loopholes that colonial governments later exploited to promote expansion. In 1768 the Pennsylvania government passed a law to remove squatters and prevent settlement in lands it had not yet purchased from Ohio Indians. But the law also contained the following clause: "nothing herein contained shall be deemed or construed to extend to any person or persons who now are, or hereafter may be settled on the main Roads or Communications leading through this Province to Fort Pitt." It made similar exceptions for people who wanted to move to the already settled areas near the fort.<sup>37</sup> Despite their reluctance to encourage rapid expansion, imperial and Pennsylvania officials understood the importance of securing Ohio Valley roads and forts and promoting migration, trade, and settlement alongside them. By supporting colonists' attempts to cultivate the lands abutting Forbes' Road and Fort Pitt, officials

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35. Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 185–96; Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 145–46, 148–68; McConnell, *A Country Between*, 199–205.

36. George III, "A Proclamation," October 7, 1763.

37. "An Act to Remove the Persons Now Settled, &c., and to Prevent Others from Settling on Any Lands in This Province Not Purchased of the Indians," in James Mitchell and Henry Flanders, eds., *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682 to 1801*, 14 vols. (Harrisburg: Clarence M. Busch, 1896), 7:153.

used the transport system Natives and Britons had created as a means of furthering empire building in the west.

Postwar diplomacy did not, therefore, settle conflicts over mobility. And in the Ohio Valley, perhaps more than in any other region affected by Pontiac's War, control escaped any one group's grasp. Most immediately, colonizers and Indians continued to commit atrocities that unsettled life along roads and near military posts. As Virginians and Pennsylvanians continued to pour into the region in the 1760s and 1770s, they also competed with each other for economic and political power, their successes and failures tied in no small part to their ability to secure their holds on the Braddock and Forbes roads, respectively. Finally, as tensions mounted in the 1760s and 1770s, civilians used roads and forts as spaces in which to protest colonial and imperial decisions concerning Indian policy, frontier defense, and trade restrictions.

#### THE NIAGARA FALLS REGION

The outbreak of war near Niagara Falls unveiled a different struggle over mobility. More than they had at Detroit, Natives and Europeans had long considered the land around the falls a vital link in regional, continental, and Atlantic exchange networks. Though the landscape was dotted with valuable forts and villages, its principal asset was the portage bridging the impassable stretches of the Niagara River. Despite ceding nominal authority over the portage to France early in the 1700s, the Iroquois Confederation, and particularly local Senecas, maintained significant sway over it before the Seven Years' War. After capturing Fort Niagara in 1759, Britain identified the portage and its environs as indispensable lifelines for trade, military supply, and expansion. Though Senecas were willing to concede certain powers to Britain, they responded forcefully to attempts to curtail their customary travel, trade, and hunting rights. What ensued were relatively fewer but at times exceptionally more violent contests over the portage.<sup>38</sup>

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38. For studies of Niagara's history as a main conduit in local, regional, and Atlantic exchange networks, see Marian E. White, "Late Woodland Archaeology in the Niagara Frontier of New York and Ontario," in David S. Brose, ed., *The Late Prehistory of the Lake Erie Drainage Basin: A 1972 Symposium Revisited* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1976), 115–16; Brian Leigh Dunnigan, "Portaging Niagara," *Inland Seas* 42 (Fall 1986): 177–83, 216–23; Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 97, 99–100, 179–81; and Daniel Ingram, "A Year at Niagara: Negotiating Coexistence in the Eastern Great Lakes, 1763–1764," in Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart, eds.,

The Iroquois, and particularly the Senecas, held long-standing claims to and influence over the portage. For much of the pre- and early postcolonial period, they had used the area to trade and hunt, establishing practices consistent with customary notions of fluid movement and reciprocal exchange.<sup>39</sup> They began to assert formal political authority over the straits when the Confederation expanded westward during the mid-1600s. French colonization of Niagara altered Iroquois influence but did not undermine it. Different nations held separate negotiations with the French in the early 1700s, in the process preserving their traditional rights and obtaining new economic opportunities. These new friendships proved especially fruitful for western villagers. Europeans commented on the opportunities Iroquois gained from the French trade: “they earn money by carrying the goods of those who are going to the Upper Country; some for mitasses, others for shirts, some for powder and ball, whilst some others pilfer; and on the return of the French, they carry their packs of furs for some peltry.”<sup>40</sup> By 1750 travelers could in one day observe “above 200 Indians, most of them belonging to the Six Nations, busy in carrying packs of furs . . . over the carrying-place,” each of whom netted “20 pence for every pack” he hauled.<sup>41</sup>

French officials understood the power the Iroquois held over the portage. Louis-Antoine Bougainville noted, “we sustain ourselves only by the favor” of the Indians, adding that it was “essential to employ” them in the carrying

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*Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700–1850* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 1–34. For a study of Niagara’s importance during the Seven Years’ War, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 87–92, 330–39.

39. For examinations of the importance of spatial mobility to Iroquois world-views, particularly as they relate to motifs such as water, travel, exchange, community, and reciprocity, see William N. Fenton, “This Island, the World on the Turtle’s Back,” *Journal of American Folklore* 75, no. 298 (1962): 283–300; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 9–11, 31–32, 39; and Parmenter, *The Edge of the Woods*, xxxvi–xxxvii, xlvi–xlix.

40. *Memoir on the Indians between Lake Erie and the Mississippi*, 1718, in E. B. O’Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1853–87) (hereafter cited as NYCD), 9:885.

41. Peter Kalm to a friend in Philadelphia, September 2, 1750, quoted in Frank Hayward Severance, *Studies of the Niagara Frontier* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1911), 326.

trade.<sup>42</sup> More important, they knew they must ensure the Iroquois’s traditional land use rights. And for the most part, Indian trade and travel remained unhindered, as did access to hunting grounds near and to the west of the river. When the Iroquois suspected the French of abandoning these accommodations during the Seven Years’ War, they were quick to protest: “When we were coming from war we had the Niagara portage; ’twas promised us that we should always possess it; ’tis now made by horses; we beg you to preserve that resource to us.”<sup>43</sup> They reminded the French of their obligations a year later, when they “spoke of the establishment of carts at the Carrying place of Niagara as being prejudicial to them, inasmuch as formerly they did the transportation over that Carrying place themselves.”<sup>44</sup> The Chenussio Senecas, given the proximity of their lands to the falls, were especially affected by these changes. And they felt even more threatened by the restructuring of relationships that occurred after Britain replaced France as the dominant European power in 1759.<sup>45</sup>

Britain wasted little time trying to assert authority over Niagara’s transport structures and regulate movement along them. Diplomacy represented the first step in this process. Johnson’s uneven distribution of gifts reflected his plan to reward Britain’s allies while punishing western villages for their close ties with the French. He gave few gifts to the Senecas who supported the French, instead demanding that they recognize British control of the falls.<sup>46</sup> Equally significant were the changes Britain made to the portage and the hauling of goods across it. Officials widened the portage, established warehouses, and replaced Indian porters with oxen and wagons.<sup>47</sup> General

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42. Louis-Antoine Bougainville, “Memoir of Bougainville,” in *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1854–1931), 18:183.

43. Conference between M. de Vaudreuil and the Indians, December 13, 1756, *NYCD*, 10:503.

44. “An Account of the Embassy of the Five Nations,” April 24, 1757, *NYCD*, 10:559.

45. For studies of Iroquois–French diplomacy concerning Niagara, see Timothy J. Shannon, *Iroquois Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier* (New York: Viking, 2008), 65–66; and Ingram, “A Year at Niagara,” 9–13.

46. Michael McConnell, *Army and Empire: British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758–1775* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 15–17.

47. Dunnigan, “Portaging Niagara,” 182–83. Britain’s takeover did not exclude the Senecas from the carrying trade entirely. Evidence exists to suggest that fort commanders had occasion to hire out Seneca resources. Johnson’s 1759 account of Indian expenses included an authorization for a payment of seven pounds “To some

Jeffery Amherst tried to push further. Acting on his own authority, he granted colonists permits to settle at Niagara. Though later forced to “put a stop to any settlements on the carrying place” in order to avoid conflict with local Senecas, he never abandoned the idea that permanent settlement, “particularly at such a spot as that of the carrying place at Niagara,” offered the best chance of securing western posts, promoting free trade, and supporting “those whose affairs require them to pass and repass” the straits.<sup>48</sup> Though Britain’s earliest efforts to establish authority met with limited success, they indicated awareness that controlling mobility along the portage was crucial to the short- and long-term development of British America.

Seneca resistance to British changes underscores the importance they too placed on securing a measure of control over mobility at Niagara and throughout the eastern Great Lakes region. Chenussios provided some of the first and most active opposition. Shortly after France’s capitulation of Canada, they spread across the Great Lakes a call for a pan-Indian alliance to remove Britain from the region.<sup>49</sup> When their calls went unanswered, they focused their efforts closer to home. When Pontiac’s War began, they did not join in attacks against Detroit, but they did participate in the destruction of forts in the upper Ohio River Valley.<sup>50</sup> Bringing the war to Niagara, they unleashed a series of raids targeting vulnerable points along the portage. A July 25, 1763, report from Niagara related two events. The first involved “a Man, of the New-Jersey Provincials, belonging to this Garrison, [who] was scalped within a Mile and a Half of the Fort [Niagara], as he was going Express to Fort Schlosser.” The report further described how the termini could be as dangerous as the path. “Two Sailors, belonging to Commodore Loting,” the report read, “have also shared the same Fate [as the New Jersey man], at the Mouth of Lake Erie, where they had gone to embark for Detroit.”<sup>51</sup> In a matter of days, Chenussios showed how easily they could disrupt the flow of people, goods, and information along the portage.

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Chenussesas for the use of their horses to Carry Artillery &ca at Niagara”; Johnson’s “Account of Indian Expenses,” November 1758 to December 1759, in *WJP*, 3:174.

48. Sir Jeffery Amherst to Mr. Sharpe, October 20, 1762, in *NYCD*, 7:509.

49. For documents detailing the Chenussios’ attempts to form anti-British alliances, see *WJP*, 3:448–51, 460–67.

50. Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 271–72, 287.

51. Letter from Niagara, dated July 25, 1763, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 25, 1763.

The most emphatic Seneca denunciation of British attempts to control mobility at the portage, the attack at Devil’s Hole, was Britain’s worst defeat of the war. On September 14 a party of roughly three hundred warriors engaged a detachment of British soldiers guarding a supply train headed by John Stedman. Shortly after learning of the attack, two companies of British regulars rushed to the scene. The Chenussios easily outmanned and outmaneuvered the British soldiers. Johnson forwarded to the Lords of Trade news of what transpired next: “the Enemy who are supposed to be Senecas of Chenussio, scalped all the dead, took all their cloaths, arms and ammunition, and threw several of their bodies down a precipice.” Johnson then explained that the attack made it “impossible to get any necessaries transported over the carrying place for the remainder of this season,” a result the Chenussios and their allies certainly intended.<sup>52</sup> Attacks on British positions at Niagara continued in the months following Devil’s Hole, but they never reached the same level of intensity or effectiveness.<sup>53</sup> Still, by exerting pressure on every part of the portage and inhibiting the actions of traders, messengers, and soldiers, Chenussios showed that they still possessed an ability to determine who and what could travel along shared transport routes.

Despite their military successes, Chenussios knew that their ultimate goal of expelling Britain from Niagara was unrealistic and that diplomacy was again necessary. Subsequent treaties reveal their ability to adjust their strategy. The British, for their part, acknowledged Chenussios’ concerns and accommodated them. Doubting Amherst’s effectiveness to lead and fearing his desire to remove all of Niagara’s Iroquois population, but particularly the Chenussios, Britain authorized Johnson to broker a peace instead. When Johnson decided to treat with Senecas separately, rather than the entire Iroquois Confederation at once, he found the former willing to deal. Johnson knew Britain’s changes to transport along the portage, particularly denying Indians a part in the carrying trade, had helped spark Seneca resistance.<sup>54</sup> He also understood that Senecas considered Britain’s attempt to settle civilians at the portage a threat to their ability to hunt and trade freely. Finally, he was aware of Britain’s tenuous position in the Great Lakes generally and the need to “establish and secure their [Indians’] affections

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52. Sir William Johnson to Lords of Trade, September 25, 1763, in *NYCD*, 7:562. Many historians have described the Battle of Devil’s Hole. For examples, see Francis Parkman, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (New York: Collier, 1962), 322–23; Middleton, *Pontiac’s War*, 119–21; Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 137.

53. Ingram, “A Year at Niagara,” 19.

54. Johnson to Gage, January 27, 1764, in *WJP*, 4:308–10.

until we become more formidable in the interior parts of this Country.”<sup>55</sup> Knowing Britain lacked the power to impose its will, and that trying to do so would have disastrous consequences, Johnson compromised. Senecas exploited Britain’s weakness, avoiding punishment for past actions and securing their right to travel and trade at the portage.

The Senecas’ gains came at a steep cost. The Senecas, yielding more than they had in previous agreements with European powers, granted Britain more than nominal claim to the straits. Johnson had hoped they would “give up to His Majesty the carrying place from the Fort to Little Niagara and guarantee the peaceable possession thereof for ever.” They ceded a fourteen-mile stretch of land four miles wide on each side of river. More important, they reluctantly gave Britain control over trade along the portage and the right to build additional infrastructure. Britain began improving the portage immediately, sending John Montresor and roughly 650 men to widen the roads and build or strengthen fortifications along the path. By the end of June 1764, Montresor had finished his work, the result of which had advanced British interests significantly. Britain now held firmer control over land that Johnson believed was “of the highest importance” to Britain’s empire on the continent. It had also altered transport at the portage to conform more closely to British practices of movement and trade.<sup>56</sup> The Treaty of Niagara in August confirmed British control over the portage and added more land to the original grant. It also reaffirmed the Senecas’ right to travel, hunt, and trade in the area, showing that by conceding the portage they had preserved meaningful influence throughout the regional travel network surrounding the falls.

Conflicts over the portage and the distinct understandings of mobility it represented continued even after the Treaty of Niagara. Natives continued to attack the portage even after the main fighting shifted farther west. The British, for a time, considered reinstating Seneca porters along the portage as an appeasement strategy, but they dismissed the idea in favor of expanding civilian and military control.<sup>57</sup> By 1765 British officials and traders had reached the same conclusion about the portage that their French predecessor had years before. “Niagara,” a visiting Ralph Izard wrote, “seems to be

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55. Johnson to the Lords of Trade, January 20, 1764, in *NYCD*, 7:600.

56. *Ibid.*, 600; Dunnigan, “Portaging Niagara,” 217–18; and Ingram, “A Year at Niagara,” 21–22.

57. Ingram, “A Year at Niagara,” 26–27.

the key of all our northern possessions in America.”<sup>58</sup> Rather than work more closely with the Senecas, as the French had, he felt that Britain should spend more money to enhance its control over the portage. This mindset ensured a renewal of conflict, but it also signaled a transformation that future British and American actions would complete.

#### THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER VALLEY

When Pontiac’s War spread east into the Susquehanna River Valley, it produced conflicts over mobility not just between Indians and colonizers, but also between colonists and provincial officials. Noting that the British army was focusing its energies west of the Appalachian Mountains, Susquehanna Delawares attacked vulnerable colonial settlements on the fringes of Pennsylvania society. These attacks (and the colonial responses they prompted) had far-reaching implications for mobility in the region and throughout North America. They created in the minds of many contemporaries a racial contest between white colonists and Indians, producing the kind of rhetoric that became more prominent in subsequent decades. In that vein, frontier groups like the Paxton Boys tried to use roads, rivers, and hubs as spaces in which they could initially monitor the movements of, and through which they could ultimately remove, “His Majesty’s perfidious Enemies.” The war also divided frontiersmen and government officials, intensifying quarrels between local and central authorities over who controlled mobility within colonial society. Though Pontiac’s War resolved neither conflict, it showed that profound shifts had occurred in how the valley’s inhabitants understood and experienced mobility.<sup>59</sup>

Conflicts over mobility assumed these forms during the middle decades of the 1700s because colonial transport practices in the Susquehanna Valley began to challenge Native customs as the main determinants of movement and exchange. From the earliest years of colonization, Pennsylvania officials

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58. Diary of Ralph Izard, 1765, quoted in Severance, *Studies of the Niagara Frontier*, 345. The French, eight years earlier, had referred to the portage as the “Key of the Upper Country”; Bougainville, “Memoir of Bougainville,” 18:182.

59. Dunbar, *The Paxton Papers*, 108. For essays exploring the creation of a racialized social order in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania, see 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: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), especially Krista Camenzind’s essay, “Violence, Race, and the Paxton Boys,” 201–20.



had promoted a model of infrastructure development that facilitated trade, migration, and expansion. They had identified specific locations that, as colonists poured into them, became the market towns and county seats of Lancaster, York, and Carlisle. They had also appropriated prominent Indian trails and cut new roads in order to create a network of king's highways. They had further constructed numerous county roads, integrating larger settlements and main highways with a countryside increasingly dotted with small towns, farms, mills, taverns, and churches. Though they were little more than partially cleared paths, they embodied a formalized process of petitioning for, surveying, confirming, clearing, and maintaining official roads. Finally, during the Seven Years' War, colonial officials, working with the British army and its Native allies, had added to this civilian infrastructure a network of military roads and forts stretching northeast to the Delaware River, west to the upper Ohio Valley, and south to the Potomac River. By the 1760s Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure had become a means, and not just a symbol, of imperial expansion. Its design revealed centralized thinking, but its construction required the support of the valley's colonial and Indian inhabitants, many of whom held distinct and often contrary ideas about its purpose. As such, it provided a fitting arena for contests over the physical spaces themselves, as well as access to and authority over movement along them.<sup>60</sup>

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60. For studies on centrally directed urban planning and infrastructure development, see James T. Lemon, "Urbanization and the Development of Eighteenth-Century Southeastern Pennsylvania and Adjacent Delaware," *William and Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1967): 512–14; Judith Ridner, *A Town In-Between: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and the Early Mid-Atlantic Interior* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), esp. 12–43, 67–74. For highway and county road development, see Paul Marr, "The King's Highway to Lancaster: A Graph-Theory Analysis of Colonial Pennsylvania's Road Network," *Journal of Transport History* 28, no. 1 (2007): 1–20; John Flexer Walzer, "Colonial Philadelphia and Its Backcountry," *Winterthur Portfolio* 7 (1972): 161–73; and H. Frank Eshelman, "History of Lancaster County's Highway System from 1714 to 1760, and a Map," *Papers Read before the Lancaster County Historical Society* 26, no. 3 (1922): 37–81. For Indian trails, see Paul A. Wallace, "Historic Indian Paths of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 76, no. 4 (1952): 411–39. For military forts and roads, see Louis M. Waddell and Bruce D. Bomberger, *The French and Indian War in Pennsylvania, 1753–1763: Fortification and Struggle during the War for Empire* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1996). For Native American and European-American cultural understandings of the purpose of travel, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 140–56.

A year before Pontiac’s War, diplomats representing Pennsylvania, the Iroquois, the Susquehanna Delawares, and the Ohio Indians met to discuss the boundaries of this new transport system and the kinds of mobility it should facilitate. Their talks, collectively known as the Lancaster Treaty of 1762, opened with familiar promises of “keeping the Road open, and perfectly clear from Obstructions, for our mutual use and advantage.” Discussion quickly turned to actual roads when a Shawnee delegate named Miskapalathy asked Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton to “open a new Trade with” the Shawnees, Twightwees, Ottawas, Wawaghtawnies, and Kickapoos living in the Ohio Country. Hamilton replied by complaining that the “Charges of carrying our Goods, and bringing back your Skins, so many Hundred Miles, on Horseback, are so high that it is a great Discouragement to that Trade, and we lose a great Deal of Money by it every Year.” Instead of offering to expand trade along Forbes’ Road, he suggested asking the Iroquois’s permission to “let us go, with our Canoes, up the West Branch of the *Sasquehannah*, as far as we can, and build a few Store-houses on the Banks of that River, to secure our Goods in, as we pass and re-pass.” Hamilton, when later speaking to the Iroquois, repeatedly claimed that he represented the interests only of the Ohio Indians, and that such trade “was an indifferent Matter” to him. Yet his emphasis on monetary concerns and new trade routes divulged an obvious desire to enhance colonial infrastructure and trade. That he agreed to do so at a measured pace and only with the consent of the Iroquois reflects the limits of his colony’s control over mobility in the region.<sup>61</sup>

The Iroquois’s response to Hamilton’s recommendation likewise demonstrates that they not only saw through his claims, but also possessed the power to curtail colonial mobility on the Susquehanna borderlands. Speaking on behalf of the Six Nations, Thomas King stated, “We desire you may have no Trading Houses higher up on the *Sasquehannah* than *Shamokin*.” The Seneca warrior Kinderuntie elaborated on the Iroquois position: “You have laid out two Roads already; one you told me was a good one, the other leads from *Potowmack*, and now you want another Road to go by Water; we cannot grant it to you.” Kinderuntie and the Senecas clearly considered colonial road building a precursor to expansion: “remember you told me, when you was going to Pittsburgh, you would build a Fort against the *French*; and you told me that you wanted none of our Lands; our Cousins know this, and that you promised to go away as soon as you drove the

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61. “Minutes of Conferences, Held at Lancaster, in August 1762. With the Sachems and Warriors of the several Tribes of Northern and Western Indians,” in Kalter, *Benjamin Franklin, Pennsylvania, & the First Nations*, 367, 371, 373, 398.

*French* away, and yet you stay there, and build Houses, and make it stronger and stronger every Day; for this Reason we entirely deny you your Request; you shall not have a Road this Way.” The Iroquois pressed further with their demands. They determined that Pennsylvanians should locate colonial transport hubs at Fort Augusta and Harris’s Ferry; requested the removal of “very often unruly” soldiers and dishonest traders; and insisted that John Harris and George Croughan oversee trade in the region because they were “very well known” and respected among the Delawares and Iroquois. Hamilton resisted these demands, to an extent. Though he agreed to review the conduct of certain traders, he refused to remove the troops stationed at frontier posts. Equally significant, despite abandoning his scheme for the upper Susquehanna, he did not ditch the idea of future development “if more Trading Houses shall hereafter be thought necessary.” Hamilton’s resolve nevertheless reflected awareness that expanding the colony’s infrastructure required the consent of his Iroquois allies: “we shall take Care to fix them [trade houses] at the most convenient Places, for the Accommodation of our *Indian* Brethren, and appoint honest Men to take the Direction of the Trade, who will deal justly and kindly with all the *Indians*.” By denying colonists the right to create trade routes, dictating where transport hubs were located, and demanding that certain people oversee trade, the Iroquois consciously pursued policy measures that contrasted sharply with the diplomatic language of opening and clearing roads.<sup>62</sup>

Still, the Iroquois, like the Delawares and Shawnees, knew they needed to concede certain powers and freedoms when negotiating mobility in the region. Their request that colonists make it easier for their warriors to move along colonized parts of the Warrior’s Path between Iroquois territory and the lands of the southern Indians, for instance, met with limited success. In addition to demanding that transport hubs provide inexpensive goods and services, they again asked for the removal of soldiers so that their “Warriors may pass and re-pass that Way, without any Molestation.” After conferring with Hamilton, the Iroquois agreed to his counterproposal that, instead of asking colonists to clear the way through lands where “White people were settled very thick,” warriors would “take the old Road” farther west “under the mountains.” Delegates also accepted restrictions on movement that were devised to ensure safe travel. Six Nations warriors, after complaining about the hostile treatment they received heading to the Lancaster meetings, agreed that when they returned home they would be escorted by colonial

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62. *Ibid.*, 386, 398 (emphasis in original), 385, 386, 400 (emphasis in original).

agents to Shamokin and refrain from “committing further violence, or from taking any Thing from the Inhabitants.” Native messengers, hunters, traders, and diplomats similarly sought written guarantees of safe travel and proper reception while moving through colonial settlements. Preparing to attend the Lancaster treaty negotiations, Tuscarora Chief Augus noted that his delegation “should be glad of a Pass, or Recommendation in Writing, that we may be friendly received on the Way, and at the Valley.” Pennsylvanian officials penned numerous such passports and letters of introduction, documents that had become increasingly necessary during the 1750s and 1760s. For Natives, then, the symbolic language of closed or dangerous roads reflected the realities of travel within colonized areas of the valley. And their acceptance of colonial safeguards exposed the many ways their mobility had been compromised before Pontiac’s War.<sup>63</sup>

Though the diplomacy in Lancaster in 1762 produced meaningful agreements between colonists and Iroquois, Susquehanna, and Ohio Indians, it also revealed tensions that contributed to and were heightened by the outbreak of war in 1763. Hamilton’s relatively cautious approach to contesting Iroquois and Delaware influence over mobility in the region proved hopelessly out of touch with the wishes of frontier settlers and therefore failed to halt colonial encroachments into the upper Susquehanna Valley. Ohio Indians and Susquehanna Delawares responded to Pennsylvanians’ incursions by destroying settlements along the west branch of the Susquehanna

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63. *Ibid.*, 387, 400, 402, 401, 359. There are many examples showing how hostility directed indiscriminately at Delaware travelers, informants, diplomats, traders, agents, and refugees passing through the more heavily colonized parts of southeastern Pennsylvania in the 1750s forced many to take precautions. At certain times travel through eastern Pennsylvania required an armed escort. Robert Strettell, writing to Timothy Horsfield in April 1758, suggested that “our Friend Daniel, the Indian Messenger, will want some Person to conduct him safely from Bethlehem, least any Accident should befall him from any of our People, who may be enraged by fresh Murders committed in Lancaster County last week”; Robert Strettell to Timothy Horsfield, Philadelphia, April 14, 1758, Timothy Horsfield Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. Officials occasionally urged Delaware parties journeying to Bethlehem to carry before them a signal, in the form a green bush, identifying them as friendly Indians; “Memorandum of what Capt. Newcastle ordered, to Capt. [George] Reynolds at Fort Allen,” June 28, 1756, Horsfield Papers. Furthermore, county justices like Horsfield required Natives traveling independent of white escorts, either individually or in small numbers, to carry written passports issued by the government. In theory, a passport promised its bearer safe passage and any resources he requested of fort commanders and county officials; “Passport for Friendly Indians,” January 9, 1757, and “Passport for Friendly Indian,” April 1757, Horsfield Papers.

River and assailing colonists in the more populated counties of Lancaster, Berks, and Northampton. As an anonymous Northampton County writer lamented, "I cannot describe the deplorable Condition this poor Country is in; most of the inhabitants of Allen's Town, and other Places, are fled from their Habitations."<sup>64</sup> Such attacks not only flooded the roads with refugees, but also disrupted daily life at transport hubs like Carlisle: "every Stable and Hovel in the Town was crowded with miserable Refugees, who were reduced to a State of Beggary and Despair; their Houses, Cattle and Harvests destroyed . . . the Streets filled with People, in whose Countenances might be discovered a Mixture of Grief, Madness and Despair." Warring parties also targeted and massacred Connecticut settlers at Wyoming on the north branch of the Susquehanna, declaring emphatically their right to determine who could and could not migrate into the area.<sup>65</sup>

Colonists likewise seized the opportunity created by war to check Delaware mobility. Their initial objective was to curb the movements of "Skulking parties of Indians." Lamenting the indifference of the soldiers at Fort Augusta, who did not "attack our Enemies in their Towns, or patrol on our Frontiers," frontiersmen formed volunteer groups like the Cumberland Boys and Paxton Boys to police the countryside.<sup>66</sup> John Elder of Paxton identified a problem familiar to anyone who lived in the valley during the Seven Years' War. Ranging parties, he noted, needed to "cover Certain Gaps in the mountain that afford the Enemy an easy Passage into the Settlements. & through which they always in the late war made their incursions on the Inhabitants." By spreading out across the frontier and establishing patrol zones, rangers reproduced the actions of similar parties formed during the 1750s. Yet the actions of some of these groups, most notably the Paxton Boys, deviated from those of their predecessors in important ways. Whereas most volunteers organized to defend colonial settlements, the Paxtonians quickly assumed a more offensive posture. They attempted to intercept warring parties on the roads and attack enemy strongholds. Motivated by rumors of collaboration between Ohio Indians and Susquehanna Delawares, as well as stories of actual Delaware violence, the Paxton Boys

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64. Extract of a letter from Bethlehem, dated October 9, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 13, 1763.

65. Extract of a Letter from Cumberland, in Frederick County, Md., dated July 16, 1763, in *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 28, 1763. For overviews of Delaware attacks on frontier settlements, see Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 126, 128–29; Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 144; and Middleton, *Pontiac's War*, 130–33.

66. Dunbar, *The Paxton Papers*, 106, 110.

pressed deeper into upper Susquehanna, threatening even allied villages and travelers.<sup>67</sup>

Lacking the manpower and resources to sustain an aggressive campaign upriver, the Paxton Boys eventually trained their sights on targets closer to home. Rumors that friendly Delawares were conspiring with the warring parties continued to spread. The Paxton Boys claimed, “cloaked enemies” like “the Moravian Indians . . . carried on a Correspondence with our known Enemies on the *Great-Island*.” They then proudly claimed to have “killed three *Indians* going from Bethlehem to the *Great-Island*, with Blankets, Ammunition and Provisions,” defending their actions by claiming they had “undeniable Proof, that, the *Moravian Indians* were in confederacy with” the colony’s open enemies. The Paxton Boys reserved their most vicious attack for the Conestoga Indians living near Lancaster, who they insisted were “known to be firmly connected in Friendship with our openly avowed Enemies,” and “who, by their better Acquaintance with the Situation and State of our Frontiers, were more capable of doing us Mischief.” Convinced that the Conestogas had facilitated attacks on colonists, the Paxton Boys traveled to Conestoga Manor and slaughtered six inhabitants.

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67. John Elder to James Hamilton, August 24, 1763, cited in Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 125. Forming ranging parties to protect settlements had a long history in the region. Extralegal civilian groups likewise flourished during the 1750s, reaching new levels of organization during the Seven Years’ War. In an address to Pennsylvania residents, Northampton County Justice Timothy Horsfield recommended that “Townships and districts select from time to time a Number of Men to range about the Mountains at such Passes or Places there as shall be thought most likely for the Enemies to come thro’”; Address of Timothy Horsfield, William Parsons, and James Martin, November 24, 1755, Horsfield Papers. These groups, common throughout the colony, were sometimes commissioned as militias, but for the most part they consisted of informal assemblies of men. Delawares living along the northern branch of the Susquehanna River and allied with the government occasionally participated in the patrols. Upon hearing about attacks in Northampton County in 1758, Teedyuscung promised “to send out a Party of his young Men to join some of our Soldiers to range our Frontiers; and, if possible, to take some of . . . [the raiding party] . . . or retake some of our people whom they have carried off”; Robert Strettell to Timothy Horsfield, April 14, 1758, Horsfield Papers. Though interracial cooperation was a more regular feature of western defenses during the Seven Years’ War, ranging parties farther east consisted mainly of white settlers. Such groups continued to roam the countryside during peacetime as well, and their zeal to defend against real and imaginary attacks led many to police more indiscriminately the mobility of their Delaware, Iroquois, and Conestoga allies. By the time Pontiac’s War began, there was a long history of vigilantism in the Susquehanna Valley. For an overview of the Paxton Boys’ tactics, see Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 125–29.

Thirteen days later they traveled to Lancaster to execute the Conestogas held under the protection of the colonial authorities. During the intervening days, the party traveled along county roads, stopping at taverns to gather support for their cause. Emboldened by popular discontent over the government's unwillingness to remove all surviving Natives from the colony, the Paxton Boys marched toward Philadelphia, threatening both Delaware refugees and the government that harbored them. Though the Paxton Boys did not accomplish their goal of purging Natives from the colony, their relentless vigilance and brutality enabled them to lay claim to much of the valley's transport system, which further restricted Susquehanna Indians' mobility.<sup>68</sup>

Public debates over the Paxton Boys' actions laid bare an additional conflict over mobility in the Susquehanna Valley. This one pitted frontier settlers against provincial officials in a struggle over which interests, local or central, determined who could travel where and what could pass on public spaces. Despite differences between the governor and the Assembly, the government's position was relatively straightforward: as the legitimate authority in the valley, it established laws and treaties regulating roads, travel, trade, and expansion. Hoping to avoid more bloodshed, it chose to support the colony's Delaware allies. It sought to restore order in the wake of the Conestoga massacre by openly condemning the Paxton Boys' actions. The Paxtonians, claiming to speak on behalf of local interests, refused to relinquish the extralegal power they had amassed. They organized protests along inland roads, at times hauling corpses in wagons and laying them at doorsteps of county and provincial officials.<sup>69</sup> They also issued multiple pamphlets accusing the government of endangering colonists by "concluding a friendship with the *Indians* and allowing them a plenteous Trade of all kinds of Commodities" before the war, and then by sheltering "part of the Wyalusing Indians, which Tribe is now at War with" the colony, at barracks in Philadelphia during the war. "[I]t is contrary to the Maxims of good Policy and extremely dangerous to our Frontiers," the Paxtonians admonished, "to suffer any *Indians* of what Tribe soever, to live within the

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68. Dunbar, *The Paxton Papers*, 106–7, 107, 101; emphases in original. For descriptions of the actions of the Paxton Boys, see Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), 177–90; Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 123–39; Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 191–200.

69. For descriptions of Paxton protests, see Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 75–76, 77–78.

inhabited parts of this Province, while we are engaged in an *Indian* war.” Finally, they accused the government of turning a blind eye to colonists who “not only abetted our *Indian* enemies, but kept up a private Intelligence with them.”<sup>70</sup> By openly condemning the government’s refusal to take measures they believed would protect colonists, the Paxton Boys both articulated an unofficial policy of regulating Indian mobility and declared themselves ready to enact it if the government would not.

Though the government eventually quelled the Paxton protests, it continued to face opposition from settlers who assumed the power to regulate the movement of people and goods on western roads. In 1765 a group of men in blackface led by James Smith harassed traders and military officers who attempted to reopen the Indian trade in the Ohio Valley after Pontiac’s War. His gangs frequently stopped and inspected wagons and packhorses along the roads to Fort Pitt, deciding for themselves what was acceptable freight and what were “Warlike Stores, or any Article that” could “Enable the Indians to point their Arms against the Frontier Inhabitants.” In a deposition dated June 2, 1765, Ralph Nailer described what happened when Smith’s men encountered shipments they believed contained goods that were too dangerous for the Indian trade. Nailer accused the “Black’d men” of shooting his horses, whipping his drivers, and stealing his property. Like the Paxton Boys before them, Smith’s “Black Boys” pursued a brand of frontier justice that bucked British and provincial authorities and insisted that local authorities determined who and what could pass on western roads: “the Commanding officer’s pass was no pass, and that no Military Officer’s pass would do without a Magistrate’s pass.” They demanded that traders use roads to meet the interests of soldiers and settlers only, and not those of potentially hostile Indians. Smith went further, declaring that Fort Pitt “was not a King’s Fort, nor this [Forbes’ Road] the King’s Road.” The Black Boys thereby claimed authority over the roads and movement along them, repeatedly demonstrating a willingness to violently resist British and provincial rule.<sup>71</sup>

The formation of extralegal groups like the Paxton Boys and Black Boys

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70. Dunbar, *The Paxton Papers*, 102, 106, 108, 109; emphases in original. Though Dunbar notes that the individual referred to in the last quotation was Israel Pemberton, the document also issues a broad plea that “no private Subject be hereafter permitted to treat with or carry on a Correspondence with our Enemies”; Dunbar, *The Paxton Papers*, 109.

71. *Pennsylvania Archives*, ser. 1, 4 (1853): 224, 225, 221. For an overview of the Black Boys, see Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 254–58.



shows how Pontiac's War had transformed the regulation of mobility in the Susquehanna and Ohio River Valleys after violence had replaced diplomacy and the rule of law. In the absence of sustained government support during the war, vigilantes used inland pathways to articulate, gain support for, and execute unofficial policies of Indian marginalization, removal, or annihilation. Although British and provincial officials condemned the methods employed by these vigilantes, over the next few decades they would come to embrace the groups' central goals: to assert colonial control over the valley's transport system and to limit Delaware and Iroquois mobility.

#### CONCLUSION

At the Detroit peace talks of 1761, Delaware diplomats spoke the following words to Wyandot, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi delegates: we set off to help you to make this road of peace, and as far as we have come we have "thrown such Logs as you did not see off it, so that it is now smooth and pleasant to travel, and by this belt we desire it may be made clear & pleasant to the very place where the Sun goes down, thro' all Nations[,] that we & our Brethren the English may travel it in peace to visit our Brethren, & they us, that our Children unborn may enjoy the good of this peace."<sup>72</sup> Roughly two years later, warriors from those tribes answered Pontiac's call to exterminate the British living in the central Great Lakes region and prevent any others from entering their lands. Less than eight months after that, and over five hundred miles toward where the sun comes up, the Paxton Boys massacred an entire village of Conestoga Indians and then tried to force elected officials to remove all other Indians from Pennsylvania.

The optimistic rhetoric of 1761, on the one hand, and the bitter violence of 1763 and 1764, on the other, were antithetical manifestations of a struggle to control spatial mobility that rent the North American borderlands during Pontiac's War. Others, like those witnessed in Niagara and the upper Ohio River Valley, fell, often like their geographic locations, somewhere in between. At stake was control over both the physical spaces of transport and the movement of people, goods, and information across them. Though no two conflicts were the same, each reflected a fundamental tension between Natives' and Britons' understandings of the roles mobility played in their shared worlds. Native groups, increasingly forced to adapt to colonial encroachment, embraced what they considered useful European technologies and practices while preserving traditional customs of movement and

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72. "Minutes of the Proceedings of Sir William Johnson Bar[one]t with the Indians on his Way to, and at the Detroit in 1761," in *WJP*, 3:470.

exchange that varied from region to region, village to village. Britons, aware of the need to accommodate their Indian allies and enemies, incorporated what they considered necessary or valuable Native practices while constructing an increasingly uniform and regulated system of transport and trade.

Understanding the variety and importance of these conflicts illuminates the many ways mobility both influenced and was influenced by the origins, course, and outcomes of Pontiac's War. Failures of Britons and Indians to honor their post-Seven Years' War agreements to respect one another's rights to travel and trade on their own terms both exacerbated tensions and became more magnified when other important points of diplomacy broke down before 1763. During the war, roads, rivers, outlying posts, and main hubs provided many major sites of conflict, while attempts to control the movement of people, goods, and information both determined military strategy and were irrevocably affected by it. Finally, because regional conflicts over mobility persisted into and influenced postwar negotiations, they helped determine whether a region became more or less stable, the extent to which different parties gained or lost influence, and the different ways in which Britons and Natives continued to share the worlds they inhabited.

Emerging from this tangle of causes and consequences were subtle yet significant shifts in the ways Indians, Britons, and western colonists experienced mobility. By the end of the war, Britain had established nearly unshakable control over the rivers, roads, and forts it considered most important to the immediate and future growth of its empire. Conversely, all Indians, even those nations that maintained almost absolute control over their own lands, their traditional exchange centers, and the movement of Europeans and other Native groups within these spaces, recognized the need to redefine their authority in ways that focused it on spaces Britons deemed peripheral. While participating in the war, the Paxton Boys and Black Boys seized the opportunity to assert, both with arms and words, their authority over the roads, towns, and fortifications they appropriated, created, and helped sustain during a series of conflicts that predated Pontiac's uprising. This development, though relatively slight in the grander scale of the war, was arguably the most enduring of any to come out of the conflict. It foreshadowed episodes of removal and racialized warfare, as well as local resistance to centralized authority. In other words, like similar contests over land, trade, diplomacy, and sovereignty, the struggle to control mobility—who and what could travel where along shared spaces—was a major issue of empire on the North American continent, one that Indians, British officials, and colonists alike contested.