

By order Henry Bouquet Commanding His Majesty's
 Forces in the Southern district. Permitted as there by
 granted to Alexander McKee Agent for Indian
 Affairs in our words Bards upon Land at the Mouth
 of Chartiers Creek on the South side of the Ohio
 in consideration of which he is to pay Five Shillings
 yearly if demanded and lies to be subject
 to such Regulations as His Excellency the
 Commander in Chief may order for the good
 of His Majesty's Service

Henry Bouquet Col. &c.

COL. HENRY BOUQUET'S LAND GRANT TO ALEXANDER MCKEE
 ON CHARTIERS CREEK. NOW THE SITE OF MCKEE'S ROCK,
 PENNSYLVANIA

The manner in which you described her death, the horrid ingratitude of a barbarous husband, shocks me to the greatest degree. He never showed the least respect for any of the Family and in this last conduct has given too cruel a proof of his even want of regard for her which it seems he has not had prudence enough to hide from her in her last moments.

This with the distress it must occasion you and the poor Family to labor under, loads me with the heaviest affliction.

I pray God may grant you patience enough to support yourself and them through this trying loss.

The only thing I can recommend to your assistance, is the comfortable assurance of her enjoying greater felicity than she ever did or could in this unhappy world.

This goes by Mr. Speer by whom I would have responded sooner, but am detained for want of horses.

I am etc. & etc.

ALEXANDER McKEE

Early in June, 1765, Deputy Agent for Indian Affairs George Croghan and his party of friendly Shawanoes (Shawnees) were set upon by members of two other tribes and robbed. Several of the Indians in his party were killed and wounded. Then remorse, growing out of fear of the consequences, overtook his captors. In simple language with an economy of words he relates in his July 13th, 1765, letter what transpired, then appraises the situation and gives his instructions to Alexander McKee, who must have been next in command.

Ouiatanon *July 13, 1765*

D^r Sir,

You will have heard from the Six Nation Indians that made their Escape, of my being taken Prisoner & Plundered by a Party of the Kecapoes & Musquetons Nations Eighty in Number the eighth of June at daybreak they killed two of my Men & three of the Shawanese Deputies, The Big Hole, Wapecawpa & another that spoke a little English, called John & Wounded Nimwha in the Thigh. Smallman & I was Wounded, but are now very well. They made Nimwha, Lawoughgue, &c Delaware Woman Prisoners with us, but afterwards set them at Liberty, the Big Hole's Son and Waguethy I had sent by Land the day before to the Illinois from Wabash with an account of my being come there.

This Party brought me to this Post where they have a Village and since the return of some of their Chiefs from the Illinois where they had gone to meet me I have had several Meetings with them, at first I thought this affair would prove very unhappy, but am now persuaded it will turn out well for the good of his Majesty's Indian Interest; for there is nothing those Nations dread more than a War with the Six Nations, Delawares & Shawanese which they fear will be the consequence of their Rashness, they now beg of me in the most abject manner for forgiveness, and Yesterday delivered me in Council four Council pipes Requesting that I would send them to the Shawanese, Delawares, & Six Nations with the enclosed Speeches & use my Interest with those Nations for a Reconciliation & that they would become True and faithful Allies to the King and his Subjects & has offered to go with me to Fort Pitt & Conduct the Troops to the Illinois. There is five Nations living on this River the Waweough-tenoes, Pionkishaws, Twightwees, Kecapoes, and Musquetons, all which are now well Reconciled to us; more thro fear than Love, as they have been Thought to hate the English. I set off in two days for the Illinois to meet with the Indians there, and hopes to Settle matters with them as those Chiefs goes with one.

At the time I was taken Prisoner there was one Mr. Sinnott a Deputy of Mr. Stuart's & one Mr. La Gutarie at the Illinois on the same business I was going on. I had a Letter from Mr. Sinnott since I came here & before he knew of my being Prisoner at that time he writes me everything was doubtfull ; but since that I hear from the Chiefs that was there, they made him a favourable Answer as soon as the two Shawanese Arrived, these which I sent from the Wabash ; but something happened since which I can't learn for its certain those two Gentlemen has been obliged to make their Escape by night from the Illinois.

I send these four Pipes & the Speeches to you by Cornelious the Delaware Indian and desire you will deliver them to some Chief of the Shawanese Explaining the Speeches to him or if there is non there send them that they may be delivered that Chiefs of that Nation, Delawares & Six Nations. It will be proper the Shawanese have them first as their people was killed, & let them acquaint the other Nations, and Keep a Copy of the Speeches to acquaint the other Nations of yourself when you have an Oppertunity. If you find the Shawanese disposed to make War on those people I would have you desuad them from it till their people that is here return with us.

You will Pay Cornelious Ten Pound in Goods & give him a hunting Saddle & Bridle and use him well, but don't believe every thing he says as he will Stretch upon occasions. And if there be any Letters for me at Fort Pitt that I should have by Express send him back with them to the Miamies or here as I shall return this way as soon as possible. I have wrote the General and Sir William Johnson by the way of Detroit, as these Letters will come to hand sooner that way. by the first of Sep^r expect to see you at Fort Pitt. till then pray believe me with sincere regard.

Your Friend & Well Wisher

GEO. CROGHAN

True Copy from the Original }
Alexander McKee }

To Alex^r McKee

In his next letter Croghan tells with some elation how he has contrived to turn his misfortune of robbery and capture to good account, and because of it obtained the cession of lands that would otherwise have been kept by the Indians. A faint note of perfidy echoes in his dealings with the great chief Pontiac, whose friendship he sedulously cultivates while plotting to overreach him with his own people. Croghan cannot be blamed, for this typifies the attitude of the whites, excepting rare men like Penn who paid for what he obtained.

Miamies Aug^t 3^d 1765

Dear Sir,

Since I wrote you from Ouiatonon by Cornelious I set off for the Illinois as I wrote you, but on the way was met by Deputies from the Nations there ; with the Six Nations, Delawares, and Shawanese which accompanied Mr. Fraser & me down the River, & Pondiac, so that we returned to Ouiatonon, where we had a great Council and Settled matters with those several Nations to my Satisfaction ; they have agreed to our taking Possession of the Illinois ; and all the other Posts that the French had Possession of formerly. Had I arrived Safe at the Illinois it would not have been in my Power to have carried this Point ; for tho' Mr. Sinnott and Mr. Gutare had used every means in their Power & given large Presents to them they received a flat denial, and Mr. Sinnott was obliged to make his Escape in the Night or he would have been killed. So that my Success is entirely owing to my Misfortune in being taken and Plundered.

The French was informed at the Illinois from New Orleans, of Mr. Sinnott's coming up the River, & my coming down, the beginning of last March, which was unlucky as it gave them time to form a Number of Idle Stories to infuse in the Indians' Heads, and collect the

Indians most disaffected to the English Interest to that place, to oppose any Measures Mr. Sinnott or I should take which they succeeded in, and nothing at this time but their killing the people with me, would have brought them to reason. Everything being now settled the Chief of those Nations is with me going to Detroit to Confirm it Council where I expect to meet the St. Joseph's Indians, who are as yet very Refractory. Pondiac and I is on extreame good terms & I am Mistaken if I don't Ruin his Influence with his own people before I feast with him.

I shall set off Tomorrow for D'troit, where I will make no Stay longer than the Necessity of the Service requires, which I hope will not be long, but if it should be longer than I expect Write you from thence.

I am

Yours &c

GEO. CROGHAN

A true Copy from the Original)

Alexander McKee)

Mr. Alex^r McKee

The letter of instruction that follows, from George Croghan to Alexander McKee clearly shows the narrow bounds of authority between which he was supposed to operate. Even with the rank of captain and the title of Assistant for Indian Affairs, he was obliged first to obtain a major's approval before making any presents to the Indians. Needless to say, if this limit on his authority were sensed by the Indians, his influence with them would suffer.

5, Jan. 1766

To Mr. Alexander McKee, Assistant for Indian Affairs. By Order of his Excellency Major General Gage, Commander in Chief of all his Majesty's Forces in North America, &c, &c.

INSTRUCTIONS

Sir,

You will immediately proceed to Fort Pitt & there use your utmost endeavours to promote the Good of his Majesty's Indian Interest with the several Indian Nations Residing thereabouts.

His Excellency General Gage, has wrote to Major Murray to condole with the Shawanese and other Indians who has had some of their Chiefs killed when with me last summer ; & you are to assist him in performing the Cerimonic agreeable to their Customs & Manners. Major Murray will give you orders for such things as he thinks will be necessary on that occasion and Certifie your Accompts.

You are to do every thing with the greatest frugality & put the Crown to as little expence as you posibly can on this occasion or any other, & give nothing to any Indian but such as Major Murray shall think absolutely necessary for the good of His Majesty's Service.

You will keep a Journal of all your transactions with the Indians, & procure all the Intelligence you can of their future intentions, and transmit me a Coppy from time to time of every thing material that comes to your knowledge, that I may acquaint his Excellency General Gage and Sir William Johnson with it.

I am Sir Your Most Humble Servant

GEO. CROGHAN

To Mr. Alexander McKee

No correspondence for the years 1766 and 1767 has come to my hands, so that we must bridge this hiatus by noting how events and individuals stand early in 1768. Some whites murdered and scalped ten Indians in January, 1768, or perhaps late in 1767. Even though Captain Alexander McKee is visibly apprehensive of the possible consequences, he obviously is without authority to make any commitments to the Chiefs. Moreover, they know this, for they ask if any word has come from Sir William Johnson, General Gage, or the Governor of Philadelphia ; in the meantime they await the arrival of George Croghan to reach some understanding.

Fort Pitt February 13, 1768

Sir

Since I wrote you last of the 27th Jany, the affair of Stump and his servants having murder'd ten Indians near Middle Creek, and scalping them, is known to all the Indian tribes in this Country.

The Indians are very much alarmed at it. I have spoke to them on the occasion, and used every argument in my power to make them easy on that head they were jealous enough of us before, and very discontented but this affair of Stumps, has made the Warriors of the different nations outrageous—as they say—' the English are certainly determined to make War on us, or otherwise, they would not Scalp our people '. The scalping those Indians is worse than murdering them. They come here from all parts of the country enquiring whether I have heard from Sir William Johnson, the General, or Governor of Philad^a. or whether you are coming up soon. I shall continue to do everything in my power to keep them quiet till you come up—and the sooner you come, the better. The warriors of these tribes have sent Belts to the Lake Indians, to press them to come to the plains of Scioto, to hold the intended Council of their own, next month—and they have stop'd three parties of Six Nation Warriors at Venango some of whom pass'd this Post some days ago returning home from War against the Cherokees.

The traders here are very uneasy, and are about sending to bring their Goods from the Indian villages—it was very imprudent in them to take them there, and I fear the consequences may be dangerous in this bringing them away at this time—as it may confirm the Indians in their suspicions, that we want to make War on them.

Some of the lower Shawanese inform me that the Tribes living on the Ouabaihe seem very much incensed against the English for having fixed no trade in their Country and threaten to plunder next Spring—and the Indians that went with Wm. Thyn, and are now returned confirm the Account the Shawanese gave me—and should those Accounts prove true, the communication down the Ohio will be shut up.

I have nothing more at present to inform you of, but that most of the Shawanese and Delaware Chiefs are here—and propose waiting hereabouts to see you. They say they will stay till the middle of March—but then, they say, they must attend their own meeting with the Western Nations.

I am — Sir

Your most Humble Servant
Alex^r McKee

To George Croghan Esquire

More than three years later we find Alexander McKee deep in Indian affairs still, as his detailed report, following, so clearly shows. The complaint of the Indian chiefs about

the sale of spiritous liquors to warriors is warmly echoed by him, and although he used liquor in apparent moderation himself, I have noted several animadversions upon the point among his many letters. Even as late as 1793 a postscript contained in a June 29th, 1793, letter from R. G. England to Alexander McKee, included among the Simcoe papers, says : " P.S. I use every means in my Power and take much pain to prevent any Rum getting to your neighbourhood, and yet much fear that I have not succeeded. R.E."

Fort Pitt, April 20th 1771

Left this Post accompanied by several Shawanese Chiefs, to attend a Meeting by order of the Commanding Officer & George Croghan Esq^r, held by Thomas King with the Western Nations at the Plains of Scioto.

May 6th. Arrived at the Mingoe Town, where we met Twenty-Six Nation Warriors returning from the Southward. Were detained here several days on account of the Council called by the Shawanese, with the Indians of this Place & the Six Nation Warriors. The Shawanese here gave the Indians of this village an Invitation to remove & settle amongst them at the Plains of Scioto, informing them at the same time that they knew their Situation so near the White People was Dangerous, especially as they were always complaining of their bad Conduct, & they had often heard them threaten to cut off their Town here ; therefore now out of the sincerest regard for them, they ask'd them to remove where they would be secure from the designs of the White people against them.—The Answer they returned was, that they had not long since received a Belt of Wampum in the Name of the Chief of the Six Nations, desiring them to sit here, & take care of a Council-fire kindled at this place, between them & the Cherokees ; which they had undertaken to do : But as they had now out of regard to them, cautioned them to remove from danger, they would first acquaint the Six-Nation Chiefs with what they had heard from them, & next Fall hoped to be able to take their advice.

May 11th. Proceeded from hence down the River, & met on our way several parties of Warriors & hunting Indians ; was informed by the latter that some^d of the Parties of Warriors had murdered three white Hunters for their Guns upon the Head of Sandy Creek.

May 14th. Encamped at the mouth of Muskingum, where I found a Number of Delawares Drinking, & was informed that they had murder'd four White-men the same day, & robbed them of a Canoe loaded with Rum, Flour &ca which I understood they were then dividing. The morning following found they were pretty sober, when I sent the ¹Corn Stalk (being then the only Chief with me, the others having pass'd us in the Night) to know whether the White men were really murder'd, as I had been informed ; but he returning without any satisfactory answer, I went to their Camp, to endeavour to find out the truth myself from them ; they first told me that if the White men were killed, it was what they deserved, for one of their Relations had been lately innocently murder'd at the place they came from (meaning Red-Stone) & besides, the time fixed for all the Nations to Strike the White people was not far off, so that I need not think much of this, for I might expect soon to hear of a great deal of Mischief. I told them then, that with respect to the Indian Designs against the White People, it was well known before I left Fort Pitt, & that the Six Nations had discovered it, & deny'd having anything to do with it, & this put the English upon their Guards, so that I believed what they talk'd of cou'd not happen so soon as they expected, or any mischief be done except by such rash people as themselves ; that I was certain their Chiefs would condemn them for what they had done, if any dependance could be put in the fair Promises they had made before I left Fort Pitt ; & that I was greatly surprised to find that any of their Nation would presume to be the first

¹ Corn Stalk later commanded the Indian forces at the Battle of Point Pleasant, afterward became a warm friend of the Americans, and for his pains was murdered by them while on an errand of friendship and mercy toward them.

disturbers of the Peace that subsisted, particularly when they ought to consider that the Shawanese & them, met with more indulgence from the English than any other Indian Nation, being furnished with Traders in their Towns to supply all their wants, which I thought ought to be a material reason for inducing them to preserve the Peace & tranquility of the Country. They then informed me, that they had not put the White Men to death as was reported, but had only frightened them away, & taken their Goods ; that as they were now convinced they had done wrong, they would be willing to pay for everything they had taken, which they begg'd I would make known to the White People.

May 18th. Arrived at the Big Canhawa, where we were again informed, that some White People who had settled here, were kill'd by the Six Nation Warriors passing from the Southward—found a small House with a Quantity of Corn which had belonged to them, but nothing of their Bodies w'ch was said to be lying here.

May 22nd. At the Mouth of the Scioto was informed of Several Robberies being committed by the Indians upon white Hunters, between this & the Frontiers of Carolina.

June 5th. Arrived at the Lower Shawanese-town when I was informed Thomas King & his Party had been gone upwards of a month before to the Southward, & had delivered his Speeches to the Shawanese, Wyandotts, Ottawas & Chipawas (the other Nations not having come in ; he left directions however for them to be made acquainted with everything, as soon as they did arrive. He was accompanied from hence by a number of Shawanese who went as spies (I am informed) upon his conduct with the Cherokees. I find the Respectable manner in which he spoke of the English & Six Nations, with their Alliance, has given the Western Indians great umbrage, & the Ottawas had threaten'd before he left this to put him to death for the bold manner in which he delivered his Speeches in, disputing whether he came w.th sufficient Authority from the Six Nations to speak as he did. He has assured them that whatever nation would dare to disturb the Peace of the Country might depend on being severely chastis'd for their Insolence by the English & Six Nations, and that the Wawcaughtenoës & Kecapoes had need to take care the Stroke did not first fall upon them ; for that their past folly had long deserved it. He then told them that he would recommend all their Conduct for the future to be such as to Merit the Pity, rather than the resentment of so great a People. He likewise informed them, that the above two Nations, with the Stragglers of the Six Nations who lived in this Country, & the Delawares, must be excluded from that Notice in the Chain of Friendship as formerly, until their good Behavior would deserve otherwise. This is a matter that has thrown the Western Nations into great confusion. Finding by this that the People whom they looked upon to be the mouth of the Six Nations, & whom they had all their Councils from, were dispersed & thrown off for bad behavior, it has left them at a loss how to act, or what to say. However, in the meantime, they say his speeches were mixed with good & Bad, threats & friendship ; they will take hold of such parts as they think good. The rest they will leave until such time as they can enquire into the truth of everything he has said.

June 15th. Was informed that forty Kecapoes were gone to cutt off any English Boats passing up or down the Ohio.

June 20th. A Party of Twightwees & Putiwatimies arrived here, & informed the Shawanese that they were come to attend the Council, in the name of the Wawcaughtenoës, Kecapoes & the rest of the Wabash Indians, & that the reason of their not coming themselves was owing to their being called to the Illinois Country. The Shawanese told me privately, that the Cause of their not attending this meeting was that they were gone to Strike the English there.

From 21st June to 1st July, several Meetings were held between the Shawanese, Twightwees & Putiwatimies, in which Thomas King's Speeches were delivered to them. The Shawanese took an opportunity after of upbraiding the Wabash Confederacy with all their past breaches

of Friendship, & that tho' they had injured them in a most particular manner, by murdering several of their Chiefs with Mr. Croghan, yet their goodness of Heart & love of Peace had induced them to forgive them, as well as to prevent the Stroke they were now again threatened with from falling upon them, & that they could not help looking upon them as the Original Cause of the Present Confusion, desiring them to consider the Dangerous Situation their Evil conduct had brought them & their friends into; and that it would now require their utmost address and interest, as well as those Nations good Behaviour, to recover for them any respect in the Chain of Friendship. Their whole design, I found, was to make themselves as great a People with the English & Six Nations as they could, in order to raise their Consequence with those Nations by which they maintain a kind of superiority over them. The Twightwees answer'd that as to themselves, no Nation in this Country desired more to live in Peace & friendship than they did, nor committed fewer Breaches of it; but on the Contrary did every thing in their power to Preserve it. As to the Wabash Indians, whom they came to Represent, they could not Justify their Conduct, or deny it had been very bad, which they often advised them against; but they were sorry to say to no purpose, for they were not able to bring them to reason. As to what had been now said, they would faithfully deliver it to them, but did not doubt they would despise it, as well as all other good Advice. The Chief of the Putiwatimies said as to his Part, he came with an expectation of hearing nothing but good, & as he did not rightly understand the meaning of their Present council, he would decline having any thing to do with them. As to threats, he & his Confederacy despised them. When Peace was the Subject of their Councils they would listen to them. When they thought otherwise, they were ready to do the same. That as to what the Six Nations said, they never depended much upon it, & Wonder'd other Nations did, having been so often deceived by them, & that he did not believe Peace would be long enjoyed in this Country, which would be destroy'd by their Instigation: however, he said they would be prepared for them. I understood afterwards that he insinuated by this, the Forts the French are building for themselves and the Indians.

July 4th. A Private Council was afterwards held between them, in which it was determined for the Shawanese to send off a deputation to the Six Nation Country, in order to find out whether Thomas King had been charg'd with the messages he delivered, & whether it is the real sentiments of the Six Nations or not, & that till then they will let every thing rest, hoping to find out the truth of the matter.

July 6th. I acquainted the Chiefs of the Shawanese that I purposed setting off to Fort Pitt & they told me they would speak to me the morning following.

July 7th. Met a Number of Chiefs of the Shawanese, when they addressed themselves to George Croghan Esq' & the Commanding Officer as follows:

Brethren

At our parting, it was mutually agreed between us that no idle Stories should be listened to on either Side. Many, we understand have been reported to you, and we hope you have not believed them. We do assure you we have done everything in our Power since we came Home to promote Good, agreeable to your Advice, and we hope you have done the same. We sent you a Message a few days ago, Requesting the Traders to be sent back, who we understand are frightened away by evil Reports. We promise to take Care of them; let what will happen, they need not be Affraid.

Brethren

We beg your most serious Attention to what we say to you on this Belt. During our Stay last Winter at Fort Pit, we had several meetings with you, and the Commanding Officer; when we flattered ourselves everything which tended to preserve Peace, and Tranquility, was

settled, which we hoped would be punctually observed on both sides. Our chief Complaint was that your Traders brought too great Quantities of Rum amongst us, which has been the Cause of the Death of many of our dearest Friends and Relations, as well as the Reason of our foolish young men abusing your Traders ; though they themselves are to blame for all the Mischief it produces, it gives us great uneasiness, and we expected you would have done something to put a Stop to it before this. As to our parts, the Measure we intended to take was to Stave all that was brought amongst us ; but we fear this would not answer the end we expected, for we find in the Execution, Mischief must undoubtedly happen, & probably draw on what we are endeavoring to avoid.

Brethren,

You have laws and Government amongst you—it is You that make the Liquor, and to you we must look to stop it. We find it is out of our Power to do it.—But you are wise & have that constantly before you, to assist you in being so ; therefore beg you will Consider it a matter of too much Consequence to be longer neglected. If you can do nothing we must address ourselves to Sir William Johnson, and the rest of our great men in whose power it certainly must be to remove this Grievance. It has been a subject we have spoken to you long upon, without your Seeming to listen to us. We desire to hear from you as soon as possible, as the Time draws near for the Traders to be Coming out, and if no Method can be fallen upon to prevent their bringing Rum into the Country, the Consequence must be dreadful. All the Western Nations fear it as well as us, and we all know well that it is in your great Men's Power to Stop it, and make us happy, if they thought it worth their trouble. We desire this Belt and Speech may be sent to Sir William Johnson, and the great War Captain by a Messenger on Purpose, that it may not be denied hereafter, when Mischief happens, that we, as Chiefs, have done our duties in giving you proper & timely Notice.

A Belt of White Wampum

Sir,

Above I have given you in as Concise a manner the Head of what has occurred to me in my Journey to the Plains of Scioto, with the several Chiefs who^d accompanied me, as I am capable of ; together with the Transactions that happen there, between the Shawanese & other Nations, so far as is worth your Notice, & then would offer a few observations upon their Several Conducts.

During my Stay there, I made it my Business to talk to the Principal Chiefs, and Warriors, as well as Men of any Note amongst the different Tribes, on the Subject of the Plot discovered that they had formed against the English. This I did in the most serious manner, when I shewed them the folly of endeavoring to pick a Quarrel with the English who were their only friends, and who had always supplied them with every necessary they wanted by an Open and free Trade through their Country, and had always Pittied their Necessities likewise, and made them handsome Presents, whenever they met together in Council to Renew their Friendship. All this they acknowledged and indeed made no Scruple of Acknowledging the Design that had been formed against the King's Subjects. The Shawanese layed the whole blame upon the Six Nations, and the other nations upon them for Carrying the Six Nation Belts through the Country to all Nations.

I told them they must be Convinced by Thomas King's Speeches, which had been sent to them before their Plot was discovered, that the Six Nations had not Intended any such thing, to which they, One and all (as I spoke to them separately) declared that they had the Belts from the Senecas, who had always been the Mouth of the Six Nations, and from whom they have always received the Speeches of that Confederacy ; and that this was not the first time they had been deceived by them,—that now they would send off two Chiefs to Chenuskio to

know the truth, whether the former Speeches sent them from thence, was the Sense of all the Six Nations, or those sent by Thomas King, that when they knew the Reality of the matter, they would then know how to Conduct themselves. By all I could learn the Shawanese ever have been the acting Persons, and I believe it will admit of no doubt that they were employed by the Senecas. As to the other Western Tribes, it does not appear to me that they seem anyway afraid of the Six Nations, but on the contrary rather appear desirous and bent upon Mischief, and I further believe it would have happened before now, had not this Plot been discovered, and Thomas King made such Speeches as he did, for which he undoubtedly is entitled to Merit. The Discovery, and his Councils, have put a Stop to their Designs for the present, and thrown them into great Confusion ; — the Shawanese in particular who always have had a great deal to say with the Western Nations, now plainly see that they can no longer carry a Ballance in Council between the Western & Northern Indians. The Western Nations having united together after they had heard Thomas King's Speeches to defend themselves against the Six Nations, or any other People. The Wabash Indians speak very Cold, — charge the English with neglecting them and their Council, tho' they never Struck them during the late War, — and boast the French, their old fathers were Building Forts round all three Villages to Secure them from any Enemy whatsoever, and told the Shawanese (who informed me) that when they left home there were Parties of their People Setting off to War against the English at Fort Chartre. —The Twightees seem to be the best disposed People towards the English, of all the Wabash Indians,—and the Delawares seem to have had but little Share in all the Plots, and Designs formed against the English :—but had the Plan succeeded, no doubt, both those Nations would have acted against us.

The large Quantities of Spiritous Liquor Carried into the Indian Countrys by the English Traders is most certainly a General Complaint with all Nations, as you will see by their Speech on a large white Belt, which they have given me in Charge to request you would send it to Sir William Johnson by a Special Messenger.

I have now given you my sentiments of the Temper & Disposition of the several Nations, as far as I am capable to judge from the Intercourse I have had with them, & am

Sir

Your most Obedient Servant

ALEXANDER MCKEE

Captain Charles Edmonstone

Commanding at Fort Pitt

By 1760 there were more than two hundred buildings surrounding Fort Pitt, constituting Pittsburgh, but, time and again, warring Indians had attacked the little settlement, until in 1770 when George Washington passed this way there were only some twenty dwellings remaining. Then, to the surprise of local officials and the consternation of residents, General Gage in the summer of 1772 ordered Fort Pitt abandoned, stating that 'no government can undertake to erect forts for forty or fifty people'. The letters that follow comment on this order and the effect of its execution, although Alexander McKee did rather cleverly undertake to turn even a fort's abandonment to advantage, by suggesting this as a mark of white amity towards the Indians.

September 21, 1772

Sir

Being informed that Your Excellency has given Orders for Demolishing the Works at this Place, I am under the Necessity of taking the Liberty to acquaint Your Excellency, That

when I was formerly appointed in the Indian Department at this Post, I made application to Captain Murray the then Commanding Officer, for Quarters, and it was thought expedient to allot a small Brick Work on the outside of the Fort for this Purpose, That the Visits or Meetings with the Indians might not interfere with the Rules of the Garrison ; and as the said Work was looked upon as partly useless to the Defence of the Fortification from its situation, I was permitted to make necessary Repairs for rendering it convenient to see the Indians, which I have done at a considerable Expence ; and as my present Appointment here as Sir William Johnson's Deputy, since Mr. Croghan's Resignation, makes this House the more usefull to me for the Transacting of Business with the Indians ; I have to pray Your Excellency to give Captain Edmondston the necessary Directions to this End.

I have the Honor to be, with the greatest Respect

Your Excellency's most Obedient

& most Humble Servant

ALEXANDER MCKEE

Fort Pitt

Sep^r 21st 1772

His Excellency

The Hon^{ble} General Gage

November 26, 1772

Sir

In Consequence of Your Excellency's Orders for demolishing the Fortification at this place, it was Thought expedient for me to go into the Indian Country, in order to acquaint the principal Villages as far as Scioto thereof, as well to prevent their gathering in too great Numbers to this place, as to remove any Evil Impression they might conceive on this Occasion.

Yesterday I returned from this Service and I take the Liberty to acquaint Your Excellency with what pass'd between them & me.

I first informed them, That they cou'd not be ignorant of every measure in our Powers being taken to convince them how sincerely we desired to renew That Friendship between them and us which formerly subsisted, when their Minds were filled with Hunting and an amiable Trade with their Brethren the English, That now the Fort which had been built in the Quarrell between us and the French was to be destroy'd, which singular Mark of our Sincerity cou'd not fail of exciting their utmost Endeavours to preserve the Peace & Tranquility of this Country, which greatly now depended upon their good Conduct as well as good Government of their Foolish Young Men, in which I was sorry to observe they had been deficient for some Years past, from the Irregularities committed by their bad People against His Majesty's Subjects ; That now it behoved them who were Chiefs in a most particular manner to give us every Testimony of their future Good Intentions.

They appear'd exceedingly well pleased with the Demolition of the Works here, and said, Provided it was generally done throughout this Country, and all the sharp edg'd Tools taken away it wou'd be the Strongest Proof of Friendship that cou'd be given them and what they long wish'd to see executed ; For whilst Those Weapons were constantly before the Eyes of bad People it was hard to prevent them from doing mischief ; from a Suspicion the same was intended against themselves ; That now it gave them Great Pleasure to hear what I had told

COLONEL ALEXANDER McKEE

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them, And that as soon as their Hunts were over, they would visit their Brethren at Pittsburg to testify to them their Satisfaction upon this Head & return their unfeigned Thanks.

There is the greatest reason to expect a very large body of Indians here early in the Spring upon this Business, tho' very ill provided for their Reception on Acco^t of Provision &ca as those delivered by the Dep^t Commissary are entirely unfit for any Use except 1542 lb^s. w^t. Pork. I have to begg Y^r Excellency's Ord^{rs} relative thereto.

I have just received Sir William Johnson's Directions to notify to the several Nations of Indians this Way His Majesty's Intentions of forming a New Colony upon the Ohio, and in a few Days shall be under the Necessity of setting out upon that Business; Shou'd Your Excellency be pleased to direct any Orders this way I shall not fail of Executing them in the most faithfull manner.

I have the Honor to be with the Greatest Respect
Your Excellency's Most Obedient
& most Humble Servant

ALEXANDER McKEE

Pittsburgh the }
26th Nov^r. 1772 }

To His Excellency The Hon^{ble}. Lieut. General Gage

While we have become rather acutely aware of the Indian Agent's peculiar position as liaison officer between the British settlers with its protecting troops and the several Indian tribes, we have seen that he very often feasted the chiefs at their councils. In the foregoing letter, Alexander McKee makes it perfectly clear to Gage that an approaching conference will require provisions he does not have. Gage neatly avoids approving his requisition, on the ground that Fort Pitt no longer exists! Apparently, he entertains the subconscious hope that the problem which necessitated the Fort in the first place, will also thus vanish. His wholly unresponsive and uncooperative reply to a junior officer's appeal for reasonable assistance seems inexcusable.

New York 17th February 1773

Sir

I am to acknowledge the Receipt of your Letter of the 26th November 1772 and I think the Speech you made to the Indians was very Proper, and am glad to find that they were so well pleased with the Demolishing of Fort Pitt.

All Provision Matters belong to Mr. Leake Commissary General's Department which his Deputy must settle with him, but as Fort Pitt is now Demolished, and the Garrison removed, I can have Nothing to do in ordering more Provisions to be sent there.

I am

&ca

Mr. Alexander McKee
Fort Pitt

The next letter seems to emanate from Sir William Johnson, and is obviously a step in preparation for war with the American colonies. There is nothing to show that Alexander McKee complied with the instruction.

Then in June, 1776, Alexander McKee signed a note for £1154, to cover £577 that he borrowed locally ; the note could be discharged for half its face if paid on time. As this was almost two years before his flight to Detroit it seems improbable that the funds so obtained had any connection with it.

Boston 12th September 1775

Sir,

I am to desire you will on the receipt of this, use every influence in your Power, to procure as many Indians as you can, to Join a Force early in the Spring, which are to be raised by the Earl of Dunmore on the Frontiers of the Provinces of Quebec and Virginia. You are to make the Indians the Customary presents, drawing on Colonel Guy Johnson, from whom you will hear on this head. The particulars of this Expedition you will know more of from Persons sent to you by Lord Dunmore, and you will Obey such Orders as his Lordship shall give you.

I am with Regard,

Sir,

&ca

Mr. Alexander McKee

Indorsed :

Copy to Mr. Alexander McKee
Deputy Agent of Indian Affairs
at Boston 12th Septem^r 1775
Sent under cover to Lord Dunmore

Next, we find Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton's congratulatory letter to Alexander McKee concerning his escape from Pittsburg, written before he even reached Detroit. Also, from his letter to General Carleton a couple of days later we are informed that one of Simon Girty's brothers was in the party from Pittsburg, along with Matthew Elliot and Robert Surplfit. This was most likely George Girty.

LIEUT. GOV. HAMILTON TO CAPT. McKEE

Detroit, April 23, 1778

Sir,

I heartily congratulate you on your escape, and shall be happy to see you here, where you may be sure of finding friends and sincere ones.

The sooner your convenience can admit of your coming to this place the better, as I wish to confer with you on several points 'tis impossible to touch upon in a letter. The newspapers you sent were very acceptable. They shall be forwarded to Sir Guy Carlton whom I have made acquainted with your happy release. The Council to be held at this place and which I expect to be very full will meet on or about the 15th of May, till when matters will remain as they are—nothing can exceed the good temper and tractable behavior of all the Indians. The bearer is a very spirited young fellow, is trusty and I hope by good behavior will deserve to be put on a good footing.

The Six Nations are more than ever attached to government and zealous in the cause against the rebels—considerable reinforcements expected to Canada this year.

I am, sir, your very humble servant

HENRY HAMILTON



KNOW all Men by these Presents, That
I Alexander M. Kee and

Held and firmly bound unto Joseph Simon & John Campbell
of Pittsburgh Messrs Attorneys
in the Sum of One Thousand One Hundred & Fifty four

Pounds Six Shillings
Lawful Money of Pennsylvania to be paid to the said
Joseph Simon & John Campbell or their certain Attorney, Execu-
tors, Administrators, or Assigns. To which payment well and truly to be made,
I do bind myself my Heirs, Executors and Administrators,
jointly by these Presents. Sealed with my

Seal, Dated the Fourth Day of June
in the Year of our L O R D, One Thousand, Seven Hundred and
Seventy-Six

THE Condition of this Obligation is such, That if the
above-bounden Alexander M. Kee His

Heirs, Executors, Administrators, or any of them, shall and do well and truly pay,
or cause to be paid, unto the above-named Joseph Simon & John
Campbell or their certain Attorney, Heirs, Executors, Administrators,
or Assigns, the just and full Sum of Five Hundred and Seventy

Seven Pounds Six Shillings
Lawful Money aforesaid, at or upon the fourth Day of November
next with Lawfull Interest

without Fraud or further Delay, then the above Obligation to be void, or else to be
and remain in full Force and Virtue.

Sealed and Delivered }
in the Presence of }

J. W. Anderson
Robert Campbell

LIEUT. GOV. HAMILTON TO GEN. CARLETON

Detroit 25 April 1778

"April 20"—Edward Hazly (who had undertaken to carry a letter from me to the Moravian minister at Kurshayhking) returned having executed his commission. He brought me a letter and newspapers from Mr. McKee who was Indian agent for the Crown and has been a long time in the hands of the rebels at Fort Pitt at length has found means to make his escape with three other men two of the name of Girty (mentioned in Lord Dunmore's list) interpreter and ¹Matthew Elliott the young man who was last summer sent down from this place a prisoner.—This last person I am informed has been at New York since he left Quebec, and probably finding the change in affairs unfavorable to the rebels has slipped away to make his peace here.

23rd—Hazly went off again to conduct them all safe through the villages having a letter and wampum for that purpose. Alex. McKee is a man of good character, and has great influence with the Shawnee is well acquainted with the country and can probably give some useful intelligence. He will probably reach this place in a few days. In his letter to me dated Kurshayhking April 4 he mentions that no expedition of any consequence can be taken by the Virginians from Ft. Pitt through the Delaware villages upon French Creek (Riviere au Boeuf) and that he had information from some Delawares that six hundred men were to set out on that design the 8th of April but that the savages being forewarned their scheme must fail.

In 1778 the two great frontiersmen Simon Kenton and Daniel Boone were captured by Indians in the Ohio country and brought to Detroit. This was very evidently the party led by Alexander McKee, Simon Girty, and Matthew Elliot, for three times the Indians were about to burn Kenton at the stake and three times he was saved by the intervention of Simon Girty. Kenton escaped from Detroit, and Daniel Boone at Chillicothe when the Indians were taking him back into the Ohio country.

Early frontier histories, published in the opening years of the nineteenth century, uniformly confirm what we can also deduce from the warpath conduct of Indians, that uncontrived escapes were practically non-existent. A prisoner was tightly tied and closely guarded, if the savages genuinely wished for some reason to keep him a prisoner. Otherwise, they killed him or permitted him to escape. Ransom was about the only acceptable reason for preserving a white prisoner in captivity, and neither Kenton nor Boone offered much prospect of a ransom. The chances are excellent that Alexander McKee arranged through

¹ Matthew Elliot was a native of Ireland who came to America as a young man in 1761. He served in Bouquet's expedition for the relief of Fort Pitt in 1763. For many years thereafter he was engaged in the Indian trade or the government service, or both, with headquarters at Pittsburgh. By the opening of the Revolution he was conducting rather extensive trading operations, and had acquired much influence over the Indians of the Ohio Valley. Probably by reason of his government employment, Elliot remained loyal to the king, and in the autumn of 1776 set out with two or three followers and a considerable train of goods for Detroit. En route his goods and slave were seized by the Indians, but Elliot himself reached Detroit in safety. There, however, he incurred the suspicion of disloyalty and was arrested and sent down to Quebec by Governor Hamilton. On being released, he made his way back to Pittsburgh, where he associated with other loyalists and became known as a dangerous character. On March 28, 1778, Elliot again sought refuge at Detroit, in company with Alexander McKee and Simon Girty. This time he won the confidence of the British authorities and was soon employed in the Indian Department. Throughout the remainder of the Revolution he was an active leader of Indians in the warfare in the West, participating in almost every important expedition in the Ohio region during the war. He led 300 Indians in the defeat of Colonel Crawford's expedition, aided in the slaughter of the Kentuckians at the Blue Licks, served with Hamilton on the Vincennes campaign, and with Bird on his invasion of Kentucky in 1780. In 1781 he conducted the Moravian Indians from Sandusky to Detroit, and in 1783 conducted the American peace commissioners, Douglass and McCully, to the same place. Prior to the American occupation of Detroit, Elliot withdrew to the vicinity of Amherstburg

Simon Girty or Matthew Elliot to bribe the guard so that Kenton, who seems to have been in great danger, could be spared and then escape, and that Boone could get away from his captors later.

It is evident that Captain Alexander McKee soon left Detroit with the Governor on a trip to Fort Vincent, as disclosed by his expense account. In addition, it supplies a faint clue to his other activities in the period it covers.

	The Crown for Sundry Expences incurred in several Journies into the Indian Country to promote His Majesty's Interest from 1778 to 1780 To Alexander McKee	} Dr.
1778	Paid for four Hogs died and lost upon service in the enterprize to Fort Vincent with Governor Hamilton & in returning ..	£187 0 0
1779 July 3 ^d	Paid for a Beef to a Delaware Indian killed by the Warriors preparing to join Captain Bird to go against the Enemy ..	16 0 0
Oct ^r 4th	Paid for a Beef Killed for the Use of Our Pris ^{rs} released out of the hands of the Enemy and for sundry Indian Chiefs ..	26 0 0
	Paid for two Horses purchased to Conduct Pris ^{rs} taken by the Indians to Detroit	36 0 0
	Paid for two Hogs for the Use of Indians	9 10 0
Nov ^r 29th	Mr. Dawson's Acc ^t . for Corn & Rice pones delivered by him to the Indian Chiefs on their way to Sandusky	6 0 0
	Delivered 10,000 Wampum at several Meetings and to sundry Chiefs	54 0 0
	To Mess ^{rs} Maisart Acct. paid sundry Acct ^s & drafts drawn by me for Expences made in the Indian Country & this place from June 1778 to the 29th November 1780 ..	549 17 4
		<hr/> 835 5 4 <hr/>

(Footing seems incorrect.—R.W.M.)

The first documentary notice that Captain McKee was restless in the Indian service comes in Major DePeyster's March 10, 1780, letter to General Haldimand. In Captain McKee's interest he invokes Lord Dunmore's offer of two years earlier of a lieutenant-colonel's commission, and mentions his service record of twenty-two years. The latter confirms his entering military service as an officer *circa* 1757, supposed to be about the date his only known portrait was painted.

MAJOR DEPEYSTER TO GEN. HALDIMAND

Detroit, 10 March 1780

Sir,

By the last express I acquainted you that, Capt. McKee was desirous of going to Europe when he could obtain your excellency's permission. Seeing that the King's service must suffer

much by the absence of so valuable a man I have prevailed upon him to return into the Indian country, and assist in the intended enterprise and promised that I would represent his situation to you. He has now been two and twenty years in the service and had lately the offer of one of the Provincial battalions to be raised by Lord Dunmore in the neighborhood of Pittsburgh, but the commissions and instructions were intercepted by the rebels. He observes that should he be so unfortunate as to be taken by the enemy, he has no rank to protect him from insult. Mr. McKee appears to be a sensible man, and much of the Gentleman. His influence with the Shawnee nation is beyond conception. They solely confide in him. As this gentleman's losses are very considerable, could something be done for him to induce him to continue in the service ; it would be a very great advantage. I flatter myself you will not think me troublesome in writing upon the above subject, as I can have no other view, than the real good of His Majesty's service in so doing. I have the honor to be with great respect, sir

Your excellency's most humble & obt. ser.

S. DEPEYSTER

Again we are enlightened somewhat as to his employments in 1780 by the expense account he rendered. It indicates that a pound commanded two and one-half dollars, even though it contains some arithmetical errors, but does leave a novice wondering the size of the 'strings of corn' constituting the last item, each of which cost a little over 50 cents.

The Crown for Sundry Expences incur'd in the Indian Country By Alexander McKee Deputy Agent for Indian Affairs. } Dr.

1780			
April 15th	Paid for a Beef Kill'd by a Party of Hurons on their way to join Captain Bird's Expedition ¹ 4 Dollars	£16	0 0
25th	Paid for one Beef 45 Dollars One Hog 10 Dollars delivered at a Council of the principal Warriors of the several Nations ..	22	0 0
May 15th	Paid for 2 Hogs 20 Dollars & one Beef delivered to the Indians for War feasts	28	0 0
June 2d	4 Hogs purchased & used upon the Expedition with Captain Bird afterwards delivered to Captain Hare on going to join him 170 Dollars	68	0 0
July 7th	Paid for Fat Cow Kill'd by the Hurons who accompanied C. Hare	24	0 0
Septemb ^r 11th	Paid for One Beef 40 Dollars upon my arrival ware assembled	16	0 0
Oct ^r 19	Sundry Expences to redeem Prisoners furnishing them with necessaries & sending them to Detroit from time to time ..	163	0 0
22 ^d	Paid for sundry Cornfields Used by the Indians drove by the Enemy	93	4 0
Nov ^r 20th	Paid for a Horse delivered to a Shawanese Chief going to head a Party towards the Enemy to make discoveries ..	26	0 0
Dec ^r 29th	Paid for the Hire of two Horses sent with a Party employ'd to gain Intelligence & watch the Enemy, said then to be on the way	16	0 0
1781			
January 26th	Purchased 1000 Strings of Corn and 3 Strings P ^d Dollars	213	6 8
		<hr/>	
		£675	10 8

¹ The original document clearly reads 4 dollars, but it has been converted to £ as 40 dollars. The footing is incorrect by £10, also.—R.W.M.

Captain McKee signed a joint report to his superior, Major DePeyster, in the summer of 1781 that indicates contact with an arm of General George Rogers Clarke's Expedition. Curiously, James McKee, a distant cousin of Alexander's, was very probably serving under General Clarke on that expedition.

Transcript of the following item from the Sir Henry Clinton Papers, was courteously supplied by the Clements Library, University of Michigan : A. Thompson and Alexander McKee to Arent Schuyler DePeyster, 29 Aug., 1781.

Camp near the Ohio Augt. 29th 1781

Sir

The 26th you had inclosed an Account that Captain Brandt and George Girty with the Indians advanced upon the Ohio, had taken one of Clarke's Boats after having passed down the River in the Night ; not thinking themselves in number sufficient to Attack him, and having found by his orders to Major Craiggcraft that more Troops were to follow under the Command of a Colonel Lochry, lay in wait for them, attacked and took the whole, not allowing one to escape. Agreeable to a Return it appears there has been Thirty Seven Killed amongst whom is Lochry their Commandant with some other Officers. This Stroke with Desertions will reduce Clarke's Army much, and if the Indians had followed advice and been here in time, it is more than probable he would have been now in our possession with his Cannon. The Prisoners seem to be ignorant of what his intentions are, perhaps loss may oblige him to change his measures—however we shall endeavor to keep the Indians together and watch his motions. His first Intention was to penetrate to Sandusky through the Indian Country from whence the Troops from Fort Pitt were to return home and he to Kentucky.

We are with great respect

Sir

Your most Obedient & humble Servant

A. THOMPSON

ALEX. McKEE

To Major DePeyster

Indorsed :

Kentucky
Intelligence
from Detroit.

The following brief note to his brother surely discloses the fine character of Alexander McKee, as well as his growing awareness that others may have taken advantage of his adherence to the Crown.

Detroit, February 10th, 1783

Dear Brother

The arrival at this place of some messengers from the United States of America brings me the satisfactory account of your welfare, and that of the Family, and I am happy to hear thro the blessing of God you have been permitted by Prudence and Industry to conduct yourself and them through the calamities of the times. And I flatter myself that the blessings of Peace will again renew the amity of Friends who have been placed by political opinion in different

situations. I would have been glad to have sent Robert Surphlit with this but must wait a more favorable opportunity, which I hope will present itself ere long ; in the meantime if it is consistent, let me hear by the Bearer, who I understand is to return here, how my affairs are situated which I am informed some individuals have taken ungenerous and dishonest advantage of, and let me know also if Mr. John ¹Anderson, formerly of Pittsburgh has paid any money into your hands on my account.

I am with duty and love to the rest of the Family

Your very affectionate Brother

A. McKEE

Mr. James McKee

“ Paid to Alex. McKee as deputy agent for Indian Affairs 200 pounds sterling per annum ”.

(Report of Gen. Haldimand 24 Feb. 1783)

I have found nothing to show that Captain Alexander McKee ever actually received the appointment discussed in the following letter, but it shows the esteem in which Hamilton held him.

Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton
to Lord Sydney

Quebec, 29th August 1785

My Lord,

It gives me very real concern on various accounts to have to inform your Lordship of the death of Lieutenant Governor Hay, a person whose experience, judgement and moderation qualified him to be eminently serviceable at such a time particularly as this, when the conduct of the Americans, the Indians, the French inhabitants, the traders at Detroit and its dependencies requires the vigilance and capacity of so faithful a servant of the Crown as Mr. Hay had proved himself in the course of 29 years.

As a person of influence with the Indians is in my humble opinion most proper (all points considered) to fill this station, as a competent knowledge of their language, as well as of their customs, tempers and interests, is not to be attained very speedily, I had upon mature deliberation considered Mr. Alexander McKee as the properest person to supply the place of Lieutenant Governor Hay, consequently should have recommended that gentleman to your Lordship humbly stating my reasons for so doing which are briefly as follows : Mr. McKee was possessed of very considerable landed property (as I am told to the value of ten thousand pounds sterling) of which he was in the earliest period of the late rebellion deprived on account of his conspicuous attachment to the cause and interests of Great Britain. He, to my knowledge, influenced several useful and active persons to follow his example. He was personally active and ever forward to do his duty which was sometimes laborious and fatiguing, at other times hazardous and difficult, but his firmness, moderation and knowledge of the Indians, enabled him to acquit himself to my entire satisfaction while he acted under my direction.

Being a native of America and having had a liberal education, he has acquired a knowledge of the country with an acquaintance of the views and interests of the Southern States and has

¹ John Anderson was a witness to Alexander McKee's note dated June 4, 1776.

been a sufficient time resident at Detroit to have gained a competent knowledge of private character in that settlement.

However approving this gentleman from private character, as well as for his notable services and conduct, I have thought it advisable to consult with Colonel Hope and I shall defer coming to a decision on a point of this importance till the arrival of Sir John Johnson, whose approbation or objections as well as those of Colonel Hope I should wish to draw every advantage from before I made a temporary appointment.

Signed : H. HAMILTON

The reader may recall that James McKee, a brother of Alexander McKee according to his pleading, filed the following Petition on August 19th, 1779, seven years earlier than the letter from Alexander to James that follows immediately after it. A typewritten copy of this petition was courteously supplied to the author by Mrs. Eleanor Guthrie Reed, which includes a parenthetic note 'original in County Archives, Lancaster, Pennsylvania'. The original document has now been found and I have obtained a photostatic copy of it, although the search was for some reason long and arduous :

To the Honorable the Supreme Executive Council
of the State of Pennsylvania

The Petition of James McKee of the
County of Lancaster in the said State.

Humbly Sheweth

That Thomas McKee your Petitioners Father being seized in fee of a Plantation in Lancaster County died intestate, leaving your Petitioner his only lawful surviving Son, and Heir at Law.

That the Plantation aforesaid is directed to be sold on the 24th of this Month, as the Property of Alexander McKee a Natural son of your Petitioners Father. Your Petitioner has hitherto been prevented by sickness from laying in his Claim before the Chief Judge and the Absence of his Honor now renders it impossible before the early day advertised for the Sale of said Plantation. The Prayer of your Petitioner is that the sale may be put off, untill the next Supreme Court to be held at the Borough of Lancaster, and an opportunity given to the only Lawful Son & Heir of the deceased Intestate to assert his Right & Title to said Plantation by due course of Law.

Your Petitioner trusting to the Justice of his Claim hopes the Prayed for Indulgence. And he will ever Pray as in Duty bound, etc.

JAMES McKEE

August 19th 1779

Several solutions to this legal anomaly, as well as the relationships involved, deserve some speculation, although the true answer may already have been obtained by an earlier investigator. The matter presents itself thus to the present author :

1. Captain Thomas McKee died intestate in 1769, and his estate was administered by his eldest son Alexander McKee, with the consent of the latter's mother Mary McKee.
2. Alexander McKee's petition to the Orphans' Court dated August 4, 1773, states that his intestate father Thomas McKee died leaving six children, one of whom was a minor. This

To the Honorable the Supreme Executive Council of
the State of Pennsylvania

The Petition of James M. Kee, of the County
of Lancaster in the State of

Humbly sheweth,

That Thomas M. Kee your Petitioner's Father
being seized in Fee of a Plantation in Lancaster County died
& testate, leaving your Petitioner his only lawful surviving son,
and heir at law.

That the Plantation aforesaid is advertised to be sold on the
1st of this month, as the Property of Alexander M. Kee a Natural
son of your Petitioner's Father in your Petitioner has hitherto been
prevented by sickness from laying in his claim before the Chief Judge
and the Absence of his Honor now renders it impossible before the early
lay advertisement for the sale of the Plantation. The Prayers of your
Petitioner is that the sale may be put off, untill the next Supreme
Court to be held at the Borough of Lancaster, and an opportunity
given to the only lawful son & heir of the deceased & testate to
assert his right & title to the Plantation by due course of Law.

Your Petitioner trusting to the Justice of his Cause hopes the
Council will be indulgent. And he will ever stand as in Duty
bound.

James M. Kee

August 23 1771

would be James, who was born in 1755, if this James was indeed Thomas' son, which he probably was.

3. The only land mentioned as being contained in the estate of Thomas McKee was described in Alexander McKee's petition of December 6, 1769, to the Orphans' Court as 'a certain plantation and tract of Patented Land on Eastward of the River Susquehanna in Upper Paxtang Twp. commonly called New Providence, containing 469 acres'.

4. This land was sold by order of the court dated August 27, 1773, to the extent of a 200 acre parcel, to William Dunbar, for £215. Later Alexander McKee bought it from Dunbar. Thus, by all the rules of English and American jurisprudence the matter became *res judicata*, in the absence of collusion and fraud. Also, it should be observed that Alexander McKee did not *inherit* the property, but purchased it from a third party Dunbar.

5. If James McKee was actually a son of Captain Thomas McKee the same as Captain Alexander McKee was, we should note that his father, a trader, pioneer, and interpreter was 60 years of age in 1755 when James was born. While this is not, shall we say, extraordinary, it is certainly unusual. This statement is, I realize, repetitive, but there are so many odd facets to the problem that it troubles me until we know the solution.

6. It is possible that if James was Alexander's son, they misrepresented the relationship as that of brothers, so that James might conjure some of Alexander's escheated properties out of the state. This would have been virtually impossible if the authorities knew they were father and son.

7. If, however, we agree that they were half-brothers as James states, then we are again led to wonder if they did not privately arrange matters between themselves so that James might contrive to get part of Alexander's escheated properties by 'proving' he came by them illegally in the first place as a bastard not entitled to inherit. This would be defeated by the facts related in paragraph four, though; Alexander did not inherit, but purchased from a third party who was an owner in due course.

8. Alexander's letters to James about his tangled affairs supply no clue that he was aware James had by some means got title to the Chartiers Creek land on which McKee's Rocks now stands, but this seems to be what actually happened. The exception to this statement is the language in the following letter 'I do not wish to leave it in the power of the world to say that I have made any charges (to the British government for recompense for escheated lands.—R.W.M.) of property which you or the family have benefited or (are) in possession of and likely to hold'.

Mrs. Eleanor Guthrie Reed has mentioned in one of her letters to me that the Chartiers Creek property passed from Alexander McKee to James McKee by open sale, and that she has documents in her possession to prove it. She has been unwilling to permit her original documents to be sent to the nearby Clerk of the Court's Office at Chambersburg to be photostated, however, so the particulars are not available.

Alexander McKee's fundamental views concerning the American settlers' ever-increasing claims to more and more tribal lands, and the natural consequences of such rapacious conduct, are epitomized in a single sentence in the warm family letter that follows: '*..... it is much to be feared that the extravagant claims to the Indian country will be the cause yet of much trouble*'. These were prophetic words.

Detroit, Sept. 22nd 1786

Dear Brother

I am lately returned to this place from Canada where I went early in the Spring in order to prefer an account of losses which I sustained during the late war to the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to investigate the claims of Loyalists, but as their inquiries will be very particular, I could do no more for the present than give in a general state of property which I considered myself entitled to at the beginning of those troubles, to be hereafter regulated by such necessary proofs as I may be able to procure by next Spring, the time appointed for the arrival of the Commissioners in Canada ; have therefore enclosed you a copy of the mode in which this business must be transacted. It will require your proceeding with prudence and circumspection, as I do not wish to leave it in the power of the world to say that I have made any charges of property which you or the family have benefited or (are) in possession of and likely to hold. The first step to be taken will be to procure authentic copies of the Law or Proclamation if any are passed by which I am proscribed within the States, for this will have great weight. I once understood that the commanding officers had offered a reward for taking me ; as of this you can be informed at Pittsburgh, as well as of any other proceeding which has been carried on against me in Westmoreland County or County adjacent, either by committees or Courts. Attested accounts of those things will be absolutely necessary.

In the County of Lancaster I should prefer Mr. Yates being employed if he can be prevailed upon to undertake it, not only as a man of honor and probity well acquainted with the nature of this business, who can give the best advice, but from my having received some friendship which encourages my reliance upon him. I shall take the earliest opportunity of sending you a draft of fifty pounds on a gentleman at New York to defray the expense attending this business. I think you will find amongst my papers many bills of sale for lands taken up in other names which may assist in searching the records, particularly for three hundred acres lower part of Sharties Tract adjoining, to special order in my name, and I am confident must be prior to any other claim that can be alleged to it.

I understand that you intend to settle at Pittsburgh. I sincerely wish the peace of that Country was better established, but it is much to be feared that the extravagant claims to the Indian country will be the cause yet of much trouble.

The bearer, John Clark is now returning home. It is a long journey for a man of his age. He seems to wish to make an establishment here but we have not as yet received any orders for this purpose. I think a man so far advanced in years is exposed to many hardships in traveling to so remote a country if it can possibly be avoided. His son remains here ; I wish they had both a little more prudence.

Tom is in Canada at School and is a promising young man ; has the esteem of all who know him, a certain proof of a young man's merit. My love to the family and believe me

Your very affectionate

Brother

A. McKEE

Mr. James McKee

The letter that follows certainly contains a hint that James had consistently ignored his brother's pleas for simple assistance in gaining reimbursement for his escheated properties. If any of James' letters survived, I have not seen them. One suspects he rarely if ever wrote.

Detroit, November 16th 1787

Dear Brother

Having wrote you last year upon my return from Canada on the subject of my Tytle to Lands within the United States to which I have received no answer as yet, and being now necessary to answer the inquiries of his Majesty's Commissioners appointed to investigate such claims who show the greatest inclination now of doing me any service in their power towards obtaining a compensation in proportion to other sufferers. I have therefore judged it expedient to dispatch the bearer Mr. Alexander Clark for the purpose of procuring certificates from such persons as are qualified from their knowledge of the Lands to put a valuation on them as well as to procure from the Land Office certificates of Decds and Warrants granted to me in my own and names of other persons. This I suppose may be done at a trifling expense to the Clerks of the different offices and the Bills of Sale I left amongst my papers will direct to find out the Warrants taken in other names. It may be also necessary to have a certificate from the Prothont Office at Lancaster of the Letters of Administration granted to me there with all other papers you may judge useful to me on the present occasion ; do not fail to transmit by the earliest opportunity. The better to enable you to proceed in this business I herewith enclose you a memorandum sent to me by the Commissioners, and as one of those gentlemen is to be in Niagara in May next I propose then meeting him there. Therefore whatever can be done in this affair should reach me before that time, as I wish to give them every necessary satisfaction. Major Smallman or any other Friend about Pittsburgh will be proper persons to assist you in valuing the lands about that place. With respect to confiscation, I have not learned that any of my Lands have been sold in that way, altho' I understand the Redoubt and land about it is held on account of the Public. It was granted to me by General Gage whose letter concerning it should be sent to me likewise. Mr. Clark will inform you of any particulars you wish to know farther. In the meantime I remain with Love to the Family.

Dear Brother

Yours Affectionately,

A. McKEE

Mr. James McKee

The Simcoe papers are peppered with letters to and from Colonel Alexander McKee, and very frequent mention of him between the men governing Canada occurs. It will serve no purpose to include more than an example of the many 'speeches' he made to assembled Indian chiefs, but from the short one that follows it becomes evident that trouble was incubating :

COL. McKEE'S SPEECH TO THE FOLLOWING NATIONS OF
INDIANS, AT THE FOOT OF THE MIAMIS RAPIDS

1st July, 1791

Mohawks	Munseys
Hurons	Mingoes
Delawares	Connoys
Ottawas	Moheekins
Pottawatomies	Nantikokes
Miamis	Moravians

Shawanese

Children,

Your Fathers, the Commander in Chief and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs have directed me to meet you here, to deliver the annual presents which your Great Father, the King of England, has been pleased to order. And his affection for his Children and his sincere wishes for their comfort and happiness has caused him to observe with much concern the troubles, which for some time past have disturbed your Country, your Families and your friends ; I am directed to consult with you what means could be fallen upon, consistent with your honour and your interest, to put an end to the fatal disputes between you and the United States.

You may believe me when I assure you, that his desire of knowing your sentiments on this subject, is for no other purpose, than that of promoting your future welfare and happiness ; therefore what I have to desire of you is to enable me to inform him, on what terms you believe it would be for Your own Interests, to restore the tranquility of this Country, consistent with your Engagements with all your Confederates ; and that if it be in your Father's power to assist in accomplishing it, he will be happy, that through his means, any misfortune to you may be avoided.

I have been here near four months, waiting for the present opportunity, to acquaint you with this matter, but the constant alarms you have been in, has prevented it sooner, and I flatter myself as the principal Chiefs of the Nations, most concerned, are now assembled, that they will take into their serious consideration, a subject of so much importance to themselves.

Be satisfied, that whatever the result of your deliberations may be, or what you Judge best for the General Welfare, shall be faithfully represented to the Commander in Chief and the Superintendent General of your affairs.

Strings of White Wampum.

Nearly twenty years before the War of 1812, the British General John Graves Simcoe, who was Lieutenant Governor of Canada, wrote to Hammond his apprehensions that an Indian war was fomenting. It is obvious that the source of irritation was boundaries being constantly advanced by the white settlers, and from some of his comment it appears that our own government was using stronger measures as advocates of our people than the British Government thought good judgment. This is borne out in considerable detail in a Quaker volume titled *History of the Shawnee Indians from the year 1681 to 1854*, by Henry Harvey ; Ephraim Morgan & Sons, Cincinnati, 1855. Among the several treaties he quoted and the various Indian speeches he included is that made by Cornplanter to George Washington, in which the great chief eloquently urges the cause of his people thus :

“ Father, the voice of the Seneca nation speaks to you, the great counselor, in whose heart the wise men of all the thirteen fires have placed their wisdom. It may be very small in your ears, and we, therefore, entreat you to hearken with attention, for we are about to speak of things which are to us very great. When your army entered the country of the Six Nations, we called you the town-destroyer ; and to this day, when that name is heard, our women look behind them and turn pale, and our children cling close to the necks of their mothers When our chiefs returned from the treaty at Fort Stanwix, and laid before our council what had been done, our nation was surprised to hear how great a country you had compelled them to give up to you without your paying to us anything for it ”

There are many other examples given of similar treatment, so many in fact that an unprejudiced reader is driven to conclude that this exploitation of the Indians was the general rule, and not isolated procedure.

KNOW

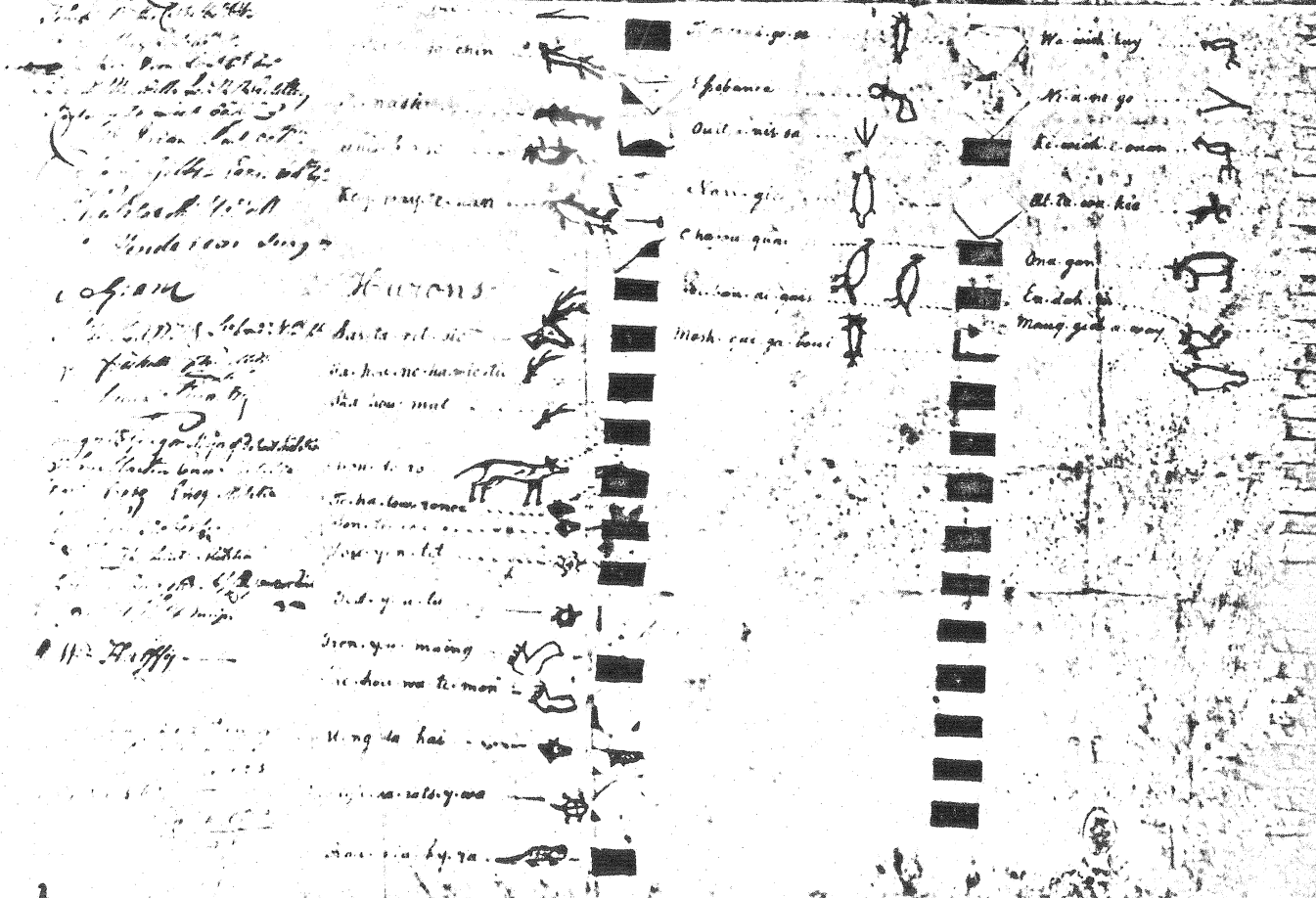
POTTERY AND IRON ... OTTOWA, CHIEF ...

GEORGE THIRD, KING of Great Britain, France and Ireland, do hereby certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the original copy of the said Treaty, as the same was presented to the said King, His Majesty's Privy Council, and His Majesty's High Court of Parliament, and that the said Treaty, as the same was presented to the said King, His Majesty's Privy Council, and His Majesty's High Court of Parliament, is the same as the original copy of the said Treaty, as the same was presented to the said King, His Majesty's Privy Council, and His Majesty's High Court of Parliament.

The said Treaty, as the same was presented to the said King, His Majesty's Privy Council, and His Majesty's High Court of Parliament, is the same as the original copy of the said Treaty, as the same was presented to the said King, His Majesty's Privy Council, and His Majesty's High Court of Parliament.

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INDIAN TREATY OF MAY 19, 1790 NEGOTIATED BY COL. ALEXANDER MCKEE

It is interesting that Henry Harvey also notes on page 54 of his fine little volume that Bancroft in his history of the United States had said :

“ Penn came without arms ; he had no message but peace ; and *not a drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by the Indians* ”.

General Simco's letter follows :

York (late Toronto) September 8th, 1793

Sir ;

As I have a favorable opportunity by Mr. Brewerton, an half pay Officer in the King's service, to communicate with Your Excellency, I am to transmit for your Information the Copies of various Papers which I have received from Colonel McKee and his information that all Negotiation between the American Indians & the United States has proved unavailing, and that our best endeavours to promote the desirable object of Peace have been to no effect.

It will appear from Colonel McKee's letter that he endeavoured to unite the Indians, and to persuade them to content themselves with the boundaries which they had formerly demanded, but to no effect, as the Western Indians *insisted* upon their requisition, as made in the speech, which I transmitted to your Excellency the last year, that the *Ohio* should be the Boundary.

Colonel McKee complains and as I apprehend with great reason of the Six Nations ; I enclose to your Excellency a letter from Captain Brant, by which it appears that those Tribes are at this moment in Council, and He says, he “ still hopes that an honorable Peace may be effected ”. Captain Brant always was of opinion that the lesser Boundary of the Ohio & Muskingum should be adopted, but that the greater one as settled by ¹Sir William Johnson should be the preliminary stipulation. On my asking him “ how such information should be conveyed to the Commissioners ”, he told me, he did not know. It is scarcely to be hoped that the Western Indians, who are disposed to consider this Chief as a Traitor, will comply with any Councils held under his auspices. His Character is very problematical, his Conduct has been very unsatisfactory to Colonel McKee—added to these difficulties on the part of the Indian Nations, the Commissioners told me that the Muskingum Boundary would never be consented to.

The Horrors of an Indian War need no explanation or comment, & I am truly distressed that they are so likely to be continued, should the Indians prove successful in the next encounter, it is to be hoped that the Government of the United States may not for a shadow sacrifice the substance but be anxious for the King's mediation, which can alone, I *am persuaded*, unite the Indian Nations and effect that termination of hostilities, which if they be suffered to continue must eventually involve this Colony in the most serious Calamities.

Colonel McKee did not deliver the Speech to the Indian Nations which I left to his discretion, as the Treaty was not concluded ; but I am happy I wrote it, as Your Excellency will perceive in it a general coincidence with the sentiments of the Commissioners of the United States, and in particular a clear statement that by the Treaty with the United States His Majesty precluded his Subjects from colonizing beyond the boundary stipulated, altho with the consent of the Indian Nations & this I thought proper to explain, as I understand it has been thrown out in popular publications, that the Indian War was fomented by the British that they might avail themselves of the event, and colonize toward the Ohio.

¹ Sir William Johnson, whom the Indians called *Warraghiyagey*, which translates “ Chief Big Business ”, was Crown Superintendent of Indian Affairs beginning in the 1740's and continuing until almost the time of the Revolutionary War. He had taken a Mohawk squaw named Molly Brant, a sister of a tribal chief named Joseph Brant. After his death both she and her brother were notorious Tory enemies of the American colonies.—R.W.M.

I enclose for your Excellency's perusal the Copy of a Report of the Officer Commanding at Oswego

(signed) J. GRAVES SIMCOE

His Excellency George Hammond, &c.

A letter from Colonel Alexander McKee to Lieut.-Governor Simcoe, that very possibly had not yet reached him when he wrote the preceding letter to George Hammond, follows. The reader will realize from it and the Indian Speech it transmits that the controversial point was Indian insistence that the Ohio should be the boundary beyond which the white settlers should not advance. It evinces the sly determination of our own commissioners to force new boundaries on the tribes or risk war. Apparently, the Indian chiefs risked war, and swiftly got it.

From Alexander McKee to J. G. Simcoe

Foot of the Rapids, 22d. August, 1793

Sir,

Our expectations of seeing a Peace accomplished between the United States and the Indian Americans are disappointed and the Commissioners departed immediately on receiving the speech of the Confederacy (marked C.) which states that a meeting would be altogether unnecessary, unless they agreed to continue the Ohio as the boundary line between the parties.

I have now the honor to enclose Copies of the various speeches, &c. which have passed from the one to the other, since I last wrote to your Excellency.

The Six Nations from below dissented from the other nations on the subject of the Boundary, and wanted the Confederacy to give up the lands to the United States on the East side of the east branch of the Muskingum, as far to Northward as the Ponds near the carrying place to Gayahaga, and from thence in an easterly direction to Venango, as had been formerly offered. But the other nations would not consent to it. All my endeavours were directed to accomplish a union on that point; and I did not expect it would be difficult, as they had heretofore agreed to make peace on these Terms.

But whether from a jealousy of the Six Nations, who are supposed by the others to be attached to the United States, or from a conviction that it would be wrong to make such an offer before the Commissioners agreed to the Ohio generally as the boundary, I did not know; they however persisted in demanding that River as the Boundary without any Limitation. The Council would have been unanimous, had they been so fortunate as not to have differed on this single Article; tho' I doubt whether it would have made any Alteration in the Resolution the Commissioners took to depart, as soon as they were informed that the Indians would not meet them until the Boundary should be ascertained.

Mr. Talbot, who will have the honor of delivering this, is able to inform your Excellency of every particular which has passed especially of the attempts which were made by the Six Nations to bring the Commissioners to a Council Fire on this River, even before the Confederacy deliberated on an answer to the speech (marked B.) and their attempts also to divide the nations by holding private councils with some of the Lake Indians; and their subsequent behaviour in withdrawing themselves to a Camp about a dozen miles below, where they said they proposed to meet the Commissioners.

The numerous Emissaries which have been sent to this place, with a view (as the Indians suppose) to divide the Nations, was an additional inducement to the Confederacy to resolve

that they would not meet the Commissioners until the Boundary, which had been agreed to last Fall at a General Council (Vizt. the Ohio), should be first assented to by them.

The acknowledgement which the United States have at length made, that the Indian Nations possess the Property or Right of the Soil of all Indian Lands has convinced the Nations of the falsities, long propagated, that Great Britain had given away their Country at the Treaty of Peace, and left them in a much worse condition than they were before the War.

Those Nations who have not already sold their possessions will now enjoy without dispute all the lands belonging to them respectively ; and these lands will form an extensive Barrier between the British & American Territory.

However conscious I may be of having used no improper influence in the Councils of the Confederacy, so as to prevent the attainment of peace, which I again assure your Excellency, would have afforded me a most sensible gratification ; I nevertheless expect from the malevolent, disappointed & all ill disposed, to be blamed for the Opinions which the Indians have adopted for their Resolution which put an end to the Negociation. I shall not, however, lament on account of their Animadversions while I continue to be honored with your Excellency's Approbation of my conduct.

With the greatest respect, I have the honor to be,

Your Excellency's most obedient and faithful servant.

A. McKEE

ENDORSED :—A. McKee, Esq.—to his Excellency Lt. Govr. Simcoe,
Foot of the Rapids, 22nd of August, 1793.

SPEECH OF THE CHIEFS OF THE WESTERN NATIONS IN BEHALF OF THE INDIAN AMERICAN CONFEDERACY

To His Excellency Governor Simcoe.

Spoken by Captain Johnny, a Shawanese.

Father,

I now hold in my hand the Belt which accompanied your Speech in answer to what was sent you from the Glaize last fall.

Father,

In that Speech you told us, that it would always give you pleasure to afford us all the assistance in your power, in promoting peace on just and equitable terms. You also promised us, Father, to send us such writings as would assert our just claims ; and provisions for our support, during the Councils to be held, for effecting a peace upon a just & solid foundation.

Father,

Your promises to us have been faithfully complied with, and we thank you from our hearts for your goodness to us.

Father,

Always considering that your Heart is placed in the centre of the Indian Confederacy, we must expect that our great dependance is still on you.

Father,

The business here is now over and no blame can rest on us, that the Peace of the Country is not restored. You have been informed that the terms on which we proposed to meet Commissioners from the United States were the restoration of our Country & the Ohio for the boundary. We were always in hopes that the Commissioners had come to meet us with a determination to make peace and to be reasonable with us, in which case that desirable end would have been accomplished. But they insisted on keeping possession of almost our whole Country, and offered us money which is useless to us, in payment. We have proposed peace to them three times, & have at last been told, they would not consent to our proposal, so that you must be sensible, Father, the fault is not ours as we required nothing of them but our just right & peace with the United States.

Father,

We expect now to be forced again to defend ourselves & our country. And we look up to the Great God who is a Witness to all that passes here, for his pity & his help. We need not we hope, again repeat the great reliance we have on you for your advice & assistance ; and altho' many have united themselves with us at this Council fire, yet we can depend on nothing, so certainly as your protection & friendship ; of this, Father you may be well assured that at no former period have we stood in so much need of both.

Wyandots (Totem)

Delawares (Totem)

Shawanese (Totem)

Miamis (Totem)

Ottawas (Totem)

Mingoes (Totem)

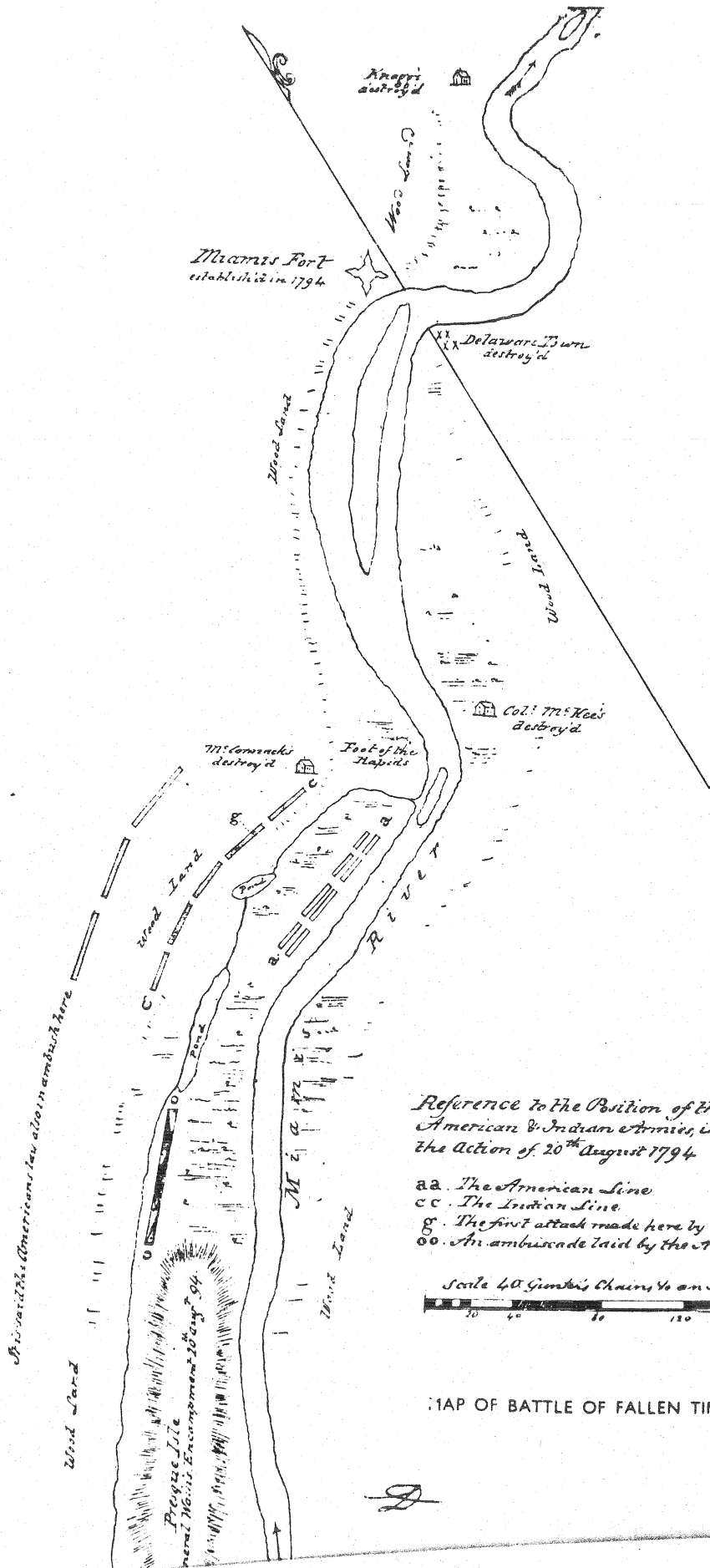
Cherokees (Totem)

Munsies (Totem)

With a Belt of White Wampum

Even though the British government had by the treaties of November 30, 1782, and September 3, 1783, agreed that the country north to the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes, including Detroit, was to become part of the United States, Britain clung to Detroit tenaciously. She felt that the latter had deliberately evaded its solemn undertaking to indemnify former Loyalist residents for their confiscated properties, which in New York alone aggregated more than \$15 million. Consequently, Great Britain stubbornly refused to surrender Detroit to the new government, so that the City on the Strait was American only theoretically.

The Indians took Britain's part in these post-Revolutionary disputes, since land-grabbers and treaty-violators were one and the same to them, and mortal enemies of their race, and because the American frontiers were being rapidly pushed westward. The British undertook to exploit this justifiable indignation of the Indians against the Americans. Alexander McKee, then Crown Deputy Indian Agent at Detroit, was appointed director of Indian warfare. He is reported to have carried out the assignment with creditable histrionics, by donning the native costume and warpaint and joining the chiefs in their meetings, in the meantime importuning them to make ruthless and bitter war on the encroaching American

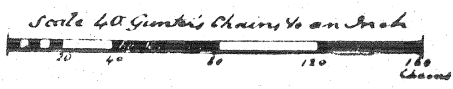


This was the American line also in ambush here

General Mifflin's Encampment 20 Aug 79

*Reference to the Position of the
 American & Indian Armies, in
 the Action of 20th August 1794*

- aa. The American Line
- cc. The Indian Line
- g. The first attack made here by the Indians
- oo. An ambuscade laid by the Americans



MAP OF BATTLE OF FALLEN TIMBERS

D

settlers. It is obvious that his task came almost as second nature to him, as he had spoken Shawanoe and many other tribal languages since infancy, having learned the former at his mother's knee according to some early historians. There is considerable doubt about this, however, as outlined earlier. In any event, he seems always to have carried out his assignments competently.

Detroit is said to have become a veritable Indian-shopper's paradise, where for nominal prices or mere friendship a brave or his squaw could acquire blankets, knives, guns, and many other articles of trade, on the tacit promise to resist the settlers.

Washington selected "Mad Anthony" Wayne, known to the Indians as "the Blacksnake" and deeply feared by them, to lead a band of hand-picked Kentucky Rangers west and terminate the intolerable *impasse* that existed with the British. This was in 1793. The Kentuckians were "long knives" to the Indians, because of their huge, heavy knives that matched a tomahawk's deadliness, and which they used so skilfully. This habit of matching steel with cold steel, and an astonishing, deliberately-paced, marksmanship with their long-rifles, made them the only enemy before which an Indian band would retreat.

On the Maumee River, known also as the *Miami of the Lakes*, the British had built Fort Miami, where the Maumee and Au Glaize rivers join. This fort was built in 1794, and hard by was the home and trading post of Alexander McKee. Wayne had orders from the president to capture and destroy Fort Miami, even though we were at peace with Great Britain.

Not far south of where Toledo, Ohio, now stands a violent storm had leveled many giant trees and piled them in great confusion, supplying an ideal battleground for the Indian type of warfare. With grim courage and consummate skill Wayne's 900 rangers vanquished 2,000 British and Indians, thus winning the *Battle of Fallen Timbers*. He burned the house and trading post of Alexander McKee, a useless gesture of bitter resentment toward a man his equal in every respect, and possibly his superior in some.

In the years from 1789 to 1799, hundreds of letters to or from Col. McKee, or else that mention him, are included among the Simcoe papers. However, only a bare minimum that are typical or significant may be included here, for want of space as well as to avoid over-emphasis on this rather fascinating American and Canadian pioneer.

The letter that follows amounts to a call to arms, adumbrating the fighting and American victory at Fallen Timbers.

Glaize 9th June 1794

At Grey Eyes Town, one of the Upper Villages of the Glaize there are 180 Chippewas & Poutawatamies, who last night heard Cannon fired at the fallen Timber & the Chickasaws came and spied them also last night.

This Morning one of each Nation went up to see the place where the firing was. They sent to us also this morning to tell us to gather what we could at the Glaize. The Shawnees, the Mingoos, the Delawares, and Miamies as they said they imagined the enemy were on their way against us. We immediately sent them back and told them that as soon as those who were sent to Spy came back, we would send down two of our Own People to the Rapids to let the Indians know what they had seen.

Brethren and Uncles the Hurons—You have now heard the news, make haste and come on & bring all the others along with you. What further news we have we shall let you know from day to day & let every party as they arrive at the rapids come forward. We are to collect immediately to know what we have to do. We may go on to the Upper Villages, but we will expect you and all the others as soon as possible.

(Signed) PAINTED TOBACCO

(Signed) A. McKEE S.I.A.

EXTRACT FROM THE UNITED STATES GAZETTE

Lichfield, Conn., July 30, 1794

On Monday last, Serjeant Lent Munson, late of the first sub-legion in Gen. Wayne's army, arrived in this town from captivity among the Ottawa Indians. Mr. Munson's intelligence, observation, and integrity entitle him to full credence.

Mr. Munson escaped by way of the rapids, Detroit and Niagara. He saw the new fort erecting by Gov. Simcoe at the rapids of the Maumee, 15 miles from Lake Erie. The party there at work, instead of quitting the place as has been reported, had later been reinforced by about 100 men. Gov. Simcoe had been there a short time before, but was at Niagara when he came through that place. A regiment, called "the first American regiment or the Queen's Rangers", was raising at Niagara, where the bounty was ten guineas. He was solicited to engage in that corps by Mr. Fanning, one of Gov. Simcoe's aids, who told him that they expected a war with this country. They are making great preparations for war, repairing their forts and arming vessels; three vessels of war were sailing on Lake Erie; two of them carried 12 guns, the other 8, and several gunboats.

The Indians have no expectation of being subdued; they say that when they have cut off two or three more armies of Americans, the United States will make peace with them. On the 4th of June the Indians received their supplies of ammunition from the King's stores.

(Printed in the Gazette of the United States of Philadelphia, 8 August, 1794)

One historian stated that Colonel Alexander McKee expected to take part in the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which took place on the Maumee River some fifteen miles from Toledo, Ohio, on August 20, 1794, and that as a consequence he made his will on the eve of that battle. It is true that his will, which follows, was dated August 19, 1794, but since *he did not participate*, and since there is no obvious reason why he should have participated at his age, I strongly suspect that the writer of that yarn invented it. It is also my strong suspicion that the James Francis McKee and Catherine McKee named in the will were illegitimate children of his son Thomas.

WILL OF ALEXANDER McKEE

Fort Miami, August 19, 1794

I bequeath to Thomas McKee the balance of an account due me by Messrs. Phyn & Ellice in London with all the real and personal estates I have about Detroit and also the balance due me by Messrs. Forsyth, Richardson & Co. in Montreal excepting the following legacies. Five

Settled - Thomas of the 17th of 1794

I beg to inform you that a Balance of an account
has been by cheque & by bill in London with the said
personal estate of the said Deceased & also the balance of
an account due on the 1st of January 1794 to the said Deceased
excepting the following Legacies, I have drawn out of the said
Trust money, which is the sum of Pounds 1000 & 10/0
the interest of the above money to make the same
whole

I enclose you herewith a Bill for
above said sum the money to be
paid to the said Deceased's executors
James Grier

~~James Grier~~
Yours obedient
Wm. Shephard
A. Stone

1794
James Grier

Hundred pounds Halifax to James Francis McKee, and One Hundred pounds Halifax to Catherine McKee, the interest of the above monies to educate the above children.

Given under my hand and seal the above date, being the nineteenth day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety four.

A. McKEE (Seal)

Signed, sealed and
delivered in presence of :

George Ironside
William Shepherd
R. Macdonell

The above will was sent under the following direction :

¹Lieut. Selby, 5th Regiment.

To be opened on Colonel McKee's arrival in Detroit or sooner if necessary.

The American troops under General Anthony Wayne won a battle with an Indian force on August 20, 1794, which is mentioned in the following despatches ; this was the famous *Battle of Fallen Timbers*, as previously mentioned, fought on the Maumee River near Fort Miami, later Fort Wayne.

In October following this August defeat, Blue Jacket who had commanded the combined warrior-forces of the Potawatimies, Delawares, Shawanoes (Shawnees), Chippewas, Ottawas, and Senecas in the engagement, finally agreed with another famous chief, Little Turtle of the Miamis, that they should seek peace from General Wayne. However, the British general Simcoe, Colonel Alexander McKee, and the Mohawk chief Captain John Brant who was accompanied by one hundred and fifty Mohawk and Messasagoe warriors, arrived at the rapids of the Maumee River, and invited the chiefs of the combined army to meet them at the mouth of the Detroit River on October 10th. Blue Jacket assented, as he was eager to learn what these British officers had to propose. General ²Simcoe urged the Indians to continue in their hostility toward the United States, on the ground that they had suffered nothing but countless encroachments on their land. Simcoe said to them :

“ Children, I am still of the opinion that the Ohio is your right and title. I have given orders to the commandant of Fort Miami to fire on the Americans whenever they make their appearance again. I will go down to Quebec, and lay your grievances before the great man. From thence they will be forwarded to the King, your father. Next spring you will know the result of everything that you and I will do ”.

He then suggested that they at once obtain a cessation of hostilities until the spring of 1795, when the British would be ready to attack the Americans, drive them back across the

¹ See Prideaux Selby's letter dated January 10, 1799, to James McKee.

² During the Revolution, when General Simcoe's men were quartered at Kensington, where the great elm tree stood beneath which Penn negotiated his famous treaty of 1682 with the Indians, the British general posted a sentinel beneath it with orders that it remain untouched, even though his troops were cutting down every other tree for firewood. It was finally blown down in 1811.

Ohio River, and regain their Western lands for the several Indian tribes. This counsel delayed the final peace until the following summer.

Extract of a letter from Thomas Duggan to Joseph Chew,
Secretary of Indian Affairs.

Detroit 22 Aug., 1794

I am sorry to inform you that an express at this moment arrived from the foot of the Rapids with account of the Indians being defeated by Wayne's army in the Plains on this side Col. McKee's place of residence. We are informed that great numbers were killed on both sides and that Wayne was advancing with his army close to Ft. Miamis and were surrounding it. Col. McKee is come to Point du Chien at the mouth of the river and the Indians fetreated about six miles on this side Ft. Miamis. The militia do duty here at present.

Extract of letter from Duggan to Chew

Detroit 23 Aug., 1794

12 o'clock at night

In my letter of yesterday I mentioned to you that the Indians were defeated at the same side and below Col. McKee's Place of Residence at the ¹Miamis Rapids. Before I began this letter I drew something like a Sketch with a Pencil to Contradict my Account of yesterday which was owing to hurry.

The Militia do duty here and I am just going the Rounds, so shall leave this unfinished until my return. Half after twelve. I am just returned from my rounds, nothing Extraordinary, all is well at Present. God knows how long it will be so, as there are a great Number of disaffected persons here. It is reported the Americans have surrounded Fort Miamis and intend to Attack it. The Sketch above mentioned you will find by Turning over this.

I am informed Colo. McKee's house is about 2 miles above the Fort & Kings about 2 miles below it—the distances of the other Places I am not able to ascertain.

J. C.

A tradition that came down through the family was that when the American troops were reported by Indian scouts to be nearing Colonel McKee's residence, the Colonel being absent from home, his wife instructed the household negroes to put the silverware into bags and sink it in a swamp behind the house. It was never recovered. The vagueness with which the haze of nearly two centuries has clothed this family memory makes it impossible to localize the incident positively. Colonel McKee's principal residence was for many years at Detroit, but later on the Thames in Ontario. Near the latter, General Harrison fought a decisive engagement with Tecumseh's warriors in October 1813, vanquishing them and the British troops who opposed him. Tecumseh was slain in this engagement. The incident probably occurred at his residence on the Maumee, after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, as it was this home of Col. McKee's that General Anthony Wayne demolished.

¹ Rapids of the Miami of Lake Erie.

Amongst memoranda by Lieutenant William Mayne on the Expedition to Detroit, Turtle Island, Fort Miamis, &c., is the following entry on September 26th, 1794 :

“ Captain Elliott, who is under Colonel McKee in the Indian Department, and whose house and possessions with Colonel McKee’s had been laid waste at the foot of the Rapids by the army of the U.S. under the command of one Wayne, had knocked up a temporary hut in which he had provided for us a sumptuous dinner ”.

“ This evening Col. McKee, the Governor, Captain Elliott and myself encamped in the bottom under the Fort. Bad rainy weather ”.

Then on October 3rd, 1794, he observes :

“ Proceeds on our journey and after a very tedious ride of twenty miles of very bad road (nothing particular occurring) we arrived at the mouth of the Detroit River at the Huron Village, where we dined on some excellent provisions which that most excellent companion, Colonel McKee, had snug in his servant’s saddlebag ”.

As a Christmas present on December 25, 1794, Lord ¹Dorchester appointed Colonel McKee to the honorable and coveted post of Deputy Superintendent General and Deputy Inspector General of the Indians of Canada. The formal document is as follows :

¹ Lord Dorchester.

Belfast Telegraph, Sept. 3, 1957.—Guy Carleton, the first Lord Dorchester, was born at Strabane on September 3, 1724, the third son of Christopher Carleton, a native of Newry and his wife, Catherine Ball from Donegal. When her husband died young, Catherine married Rev. Thomas Skelton of Newry.

Her son’s eminence in the world, it is said, was largely due to the care his stepfather took in his education.

As an officer in the British Army, young Carleton was rapidly promoted, and after twelve years, he was a lieutenant-colonel. In 1758, at the age of 34, he was Quartermaster-General for the British troops in America. During the following year, he was wounded at the battle for Quebec, a city of which he later became governor.

He narrowly escaped capture when the Americans landed at St. Johns. Disguised as a fisherman, he passed by the enemy ships in a whaleboat.

After his defence of Quebec for several months, he took the offensive when British reinforcements arrived and succeeded in driving the Americans from Canadian soil.

As a reward for his services, he was created Baron Dorchester in 1786. The name of Guy Carleton stands high in Canada, for his humane treatment of the French and British settlers in Quebec, and his efforts to solve their problems of language and religion.

Belfast Telegraph, Sept. 5, 1957.—Sir, I was particularly interested in your reference to Guy Carleton, for last week I received from Los Angeles a photostat of a commission signed by Lord Dorchester to a kinsman of mine, Colonel Alexander McKee, appointing him Deputy Superintendent and Deputy Inspector General for the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and the Frontiers thereof, of Indians and their allies. Alexander McKee acquired Ontario for Britain (for tin kettles, laced hats, and rum).

Lord Dorchester was Lieutenant-Governor of Canada 1766–70, Governor 1775–8, Commander-in-Chief of America 1781–83, and Governor of Quebec, etc., 1786–96. He married, 1772, the daughter of the 2nd Earl of Effingham.

His grandfather, Lancelot Carleton, of Rossfad, was High Sheriff of Fermanagh. His great-grandfather, also of Rossfad, near Enniskillen, was slain in the service of Charles I.

His great-grandmother was an Irvine of Castle Irvine, Fermanagh. Guy Carleton was a very great Irishman.

Yours,

H. MALCOLM McKEE,

Bangor

December 25, 1794

Guy Lord Dorchester, General and Commander in
Chief of His Majesty's Forces in British America

To Alexander McKee, Esquire

Reposing especial Trust and confidence in your Loyalty, fidelity and ability, I do by these presents, appoint you the said Alexander McKee, Esquire, to be Deputy Superintendent General and Deputy Inspector General of the Indians inhabiting the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, and the Frontiers of the said Provinces, their allies and confederates, and of their affairs during pleasure : To do and fulfill all such business as appertaineth to the said office, and you are to observe and follow such orders and directions as you shall receive from me, the Officer in the chief military command for the time being or the Superintendent General and Inspector General of Indian Affairs, and all other your superior Officers.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at the
Castle of St. Lewis in the city of Quebec, this
twenty fifth day of December, in the thirty fifth
year of His Majesty's reign and in the year of our
Lord, one thousand, seven hundred and ninety four.

Dorchester

By His Excellency's Command

Some reference has already been made to the incident of a runaway slave, to which the following letter has reference. Let us hope he contrived to remain free, and perhaps to found a line of his own.

Detroit 14 Sept. 1795

Dear Brother,

Having this moment heard that the bearer was going to Pittsburgh I sit down hastily to inform you that Bill Hannah's son ran away to General Wayne's camp while I was lately in Lower Canada. I have since heard he intends to go to see his mother in Pittsburgh. I beg therefore if you can find him that you will take him to be sold if you can get a good price for him at some considerable distance from Pittsburgh or this country. Be perfectly on your guard and do not trust to one word what he may say. He was left in charge of my house here on my going to Quebec and took the opportunity of my absence to go off with many things belonging to me.

I have lately been very ill of Rheumatic Fever but hope am now quite rid of it. I am my dear brother

Affectionately yours

A. McKEE

Capt. Elliott says his compliments to you.



my Lord Dorchester & under
Comand of His Majesty's Forces in North America Y. Y. Y.

To Alexander McKee Esquire.

Having special Trust and confidence in your Loyalty fidelity and
ability, I do by these presents appoint you the said Alexander McKee Esquire to
be Deputy Superintendent General and Deputy Inspector General of the
Indians inhabiting the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada and the Frontiers of
the said provinces their allies and dependencies and of their affairs during
your absence; to do and fulfill all such Duties as appertaineth to the said Office, and
you are to observe and follow such Instructions as you shall receive from
the said Office and Inspector General in the time being of the Superintendent
General and Inspector General of Indian affairs and all other your superior
Officers.

Given under my hand and seal at arms at the Office
of J. Lewis in the City of Quebec this twenty fifth
day of December in the thirty fifth year of His
Majesty's reign and in the year of our Lord one
thousand seven hundred and ninety four.

By His Excellency's command,

Dorchester

As has been hitherto mentioned, the Simcoe, Russell, and Askin papers contain hundreds of letters to, from, and mentioning Colonel Alexander McKee. There can be no doubt that he rose high in the councils of Canada, and Canadians regard him with affection and esteem. No fair minded appraiser can say otherwise than that he was a great man, and one of whom our clan can be uncommonly proud. His eventful and useful life came to a close early in 1799. One account, in Selby's letter, says on January 5th, another fixes the date as January 13th, and yet another as January 15th, January 5th seems most probable, as Selby's January 18th letter mentioning despatches on the 10th and 12th from Colonel McKee very possibly was a loose manner of noting the date of their arrival.

In the January 14, 1799 letter, from Peter Audrain that follows we are, as mentioned in the first part of this chapter, given the benefit of a contemporary's estimate of the man—'the old virtuous Colonel McKee'. That simple phrase embodies the standing he had in the community and all we can learn about his probable age.

Excerpt from a letter dated at Detroit January 14, 1799, from Peter Audrain, to James May at Cincinnati. The letter contains center headings of 'Wednesday—16th' and 'Thursday 17th'. Under the latter heading the following paragraph is contained :

"the old virtuous Col. McKee died at his Seat on river Thames the day before yesterday (this would fix the date of Colonel Alexander McKee's death as January 15, 1799.—R.W.M.) after a Short illness, his remains have been interred (interred) this afternoon with great pomp, at the Seat of his Son Tom, at petite Cote. All the british Grandees attended, even Col. Maisonville. This Evant will probably damp the rejoicings of Tomorrow evening, being the Queen's birth ; a grand bal pare is to be at Mr. Roe's over the River, and the brave Tom was one of the Managers with Jacques Baby. You must announce to the World through the Medium of the Cincinnati Gazette this memorable death. Great Britain have lost a great Support, the Indians a tender parent, and the United States the most inveterate and unnatural Enemy. It is now Currently Reported that he was married about 10 years ago to the Squaw mother of Capⁿ Tom who will of course inherit the Estate ; but Mr. Abbott told me that he was far from being a rich man. Rich or poor he is gone".

The letter that follows, from the custodian of Colonel Alexander's will, actually fixes the date of his death as January 5, 1799. This I believe to be correct.

Sandwich, Upper Canada

10th January 1799

Dear Sir :

Little did I expect when we parted last year that I should have the misfortune to commence a correspondence on the subject of a dreadful calamity which hath befallen us both public and private and which I hope and trust your Religion and fortitude will enable you to support and that the energy of your mind will receive the shock of the first impression under a full conviction of the absolute impossibility of resisting the Divine will and of the necessity of submitting to it

¹ "Colonel William Claus grandson of Sir William Johnson enjoyed the confidence of the Iroquois, and on June 13, 1796, he was appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Niagara. On the death of Colonel Alexander McKee, in 1799, Claus succeeded him as Deputy Superintendent-General and Deputy Inspector-General of Indian Affairs" *Burton Historical Records, John Askin Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 350. Detroit Public Library.

with patience and resignation. The lamentable information which I feel it a duty to communicate to you is the death of your Dear Brother which happened about one o'clock on the morning of the Fifth Instant, after a short illness. This sir is a dreadful blow to all his friends in the number of whom I was proud to class myself for he was assuredly an honour and an ornament to human nature ; the confidence he always honored me with added to the open, generous and manly conduct he uniformly observed, have left on my heart deep impressions of his excellence and of esteemed gratitude and love, which neither time nor situation will ever efface from my memory. His disease seemed to have been either the gout in his stomach or Rheumatic fever ; he did not speak for the whole day preceding his death and went off without any apparent pain or sensibility.

I must now sir state the situation in which his affairs are left after minutely examining all his papers in the presence of Mr. Shepard and Mr. Duff nothing like a will was to be found ; but opening a sealed paper directed to me and left under my care that proved to be his will dated 19th of August 1794 and executed on the morning of the last engagement between the Indians and the American Troops under Genl. Wayne. By this instrument which is witnessed by Mr. Shepard, Mr. Ironside and Mr. McDonald he has conveyed all his real and personal property this part of the world and also the balance of Monies in the hands of Messrs Phyn & Co. London and Mess. Forsyth & Co. Montreal to Captain Thomas McKee except a legacy of 500 sterling to James Francis McKee and 100 sterling to Catherine McKee for the purpose of their education. If therefore he had any estate real or personal elsewhere you sir become entitled thereto as Heir at Law.

Letters of administration with the will annexed have been accordingly granted by the Court of Surrogate of this District to Captain McKee and myself jointly no executor being named in the will and altho it is usually an unthankful office and attended with much trouble and inconvenience I have nevertheless consented to take my share of the burden in consideration of the high regard and affectionate duty which I owe to the memory of my deceased friend and benefactor.

Allow me to hope for the pleasure of soon seeing you or at least hearing from you and be assured that I am with great sincerity and truth.

Dear Sir

Your most obedient and humble servant

PRIDEAUX SELBY

James McKee, Esq.

Chartiers near Pittsburgh.

Descendants of Colonel Alexander McKee

We know that Alexander McKee's handfasted wife, a woman of Shawanoe ancestry, preceded him by several months when in March, 1778 he removed from Fort Pitt to Detroit. She took with her their young son Thomas, who was then only eight. Alexander McKee and his party, which as already noted included the two Girtys and Matthew Elliot, was still *en route* on April 25, 1778, but probably reached Detroit about May 1st of that year.

The John Askin papers state that Colonel Alexander McKee had only one son, but other sources suppose another son named James as well as a daughter Catherine. It could very well be that these latter were grandchildren, and their names obtained by an earlier researcher from the Colonel's will, which used this language in naming them :

" Five Hundred pounds Halifax to James Francis McKee, and One Hundred pounds Halifax to Catherine McKee, the interest of the above monies to educate the above children ".

That they were grandchildren, not children, of the testator is further buttressed by a paragraph in the will of his son Thomas McKee, dated May 28, 1801 :

" I will that the legacies left by my late Father's will shall be immediately paid by my Executors to the Legatees therein mentioned ".

Inasmuch as James Francis and Catherine were the only legatees mentioned in Colonel Alexander McKee's will, the conclusion is suggested that these illegitimate grandchildren were the object of their grandfather's solicitude, he knowing that their illegitimacy would serve to bar them from inheriting from their father.

The following is taken directly from the John Askin Papers. John Askin was the father of Therese Askin, who was married to Thomas McKee (B. 1770 D. 1815) on April 17, 1797 :

" Thomas McKee was the son of Col. Alexander McKee ; Thomas was the only son of Alexander and an Indian woman. Thomas obtained the rank of captain in the Sixtieth Regiment. Overindulgence in liquor ruined his career and entailed the dissipation of the estate he inherited from his father. On April 17, 1797 he married Therese Askin, eldest daughter of John Askin and Marie Archange Barth, and in 1799 was living at Petite Cote. Prior to this union, McKee had been the father of two natural daughters, Catherine and Marie Anne, and one son, James. The mother was Margaret, a Christian Indian, who died on the 7th of January, 1836 ; see St. John's Church records, Sandwich, Ontario. By Thomas' wife, Therese Askin McKee, he had one son, Alexander, sometimes known as ' Alexander the Younger ' . When General Proctor evacuated Detroit in the autumn of 1813, McKee and his wife found refuge in Lower Canada, where McKee died, apparently in the spring of 1815. A letter of Alexander Henry to John Askin, written May 9, 1815, states : ' Mrs. McKee suffered much while here (Montreal) with her husband, who was continually deranged with liquor ; and had he lived the government could have had no reliance on him ' . A copy of the will of (Thomas) McKee, made at Sandwich May 8, 1801 is in the Burton Historical Collection, page 376, vol. 1" .

Thomas McKee, son of Col. Alexander McKee, had three natural children by Margaret, an Indian woman :

James Francis	b. 1790	d. 1808	drowned in Detroit River
Catherine	b.	d.	m. George Ermatinger Dec. 5, 1803.
Marie Anne	b. 1796	d.	m. George Thomas Frederick Ireland in 1816. b. 1791 d. 1823.

Thomas McKee, son of Col. Alexander McKee, having as noted above married Teresa Askin 4.17.1797, had issue of one son Alexander.

Several months after the present author had constructed the Family Tree that traces the present-known descendants of Colonel Alexander McKee, the following information came to him from the files of Charles McKee of Detroit. The document is a pencilled memorandum on note paper, but from the fact that day, month, and year are all given, there is a strong implication that these data were copied from a family Bible. The spelling of the original has been retained. The reader will note that Alexander McKee, grandson of Colonel Alexander McKee, is shown to have been born some four years earlier than the date on the Family Tree would have his nativity. This is exceptionally interesting, as it discloses him to have been born before his grandfather's death in January, 1799. The reader is, however, cautioned to use all dates offered warily, because the author discovered no way to verify them :

Alexander McKee, b. July 17, 1798. m. Phillis Jacob July 25, 1823

Issue : Mary Therese McKee, b. June 13, 1824

Thomas McKee, b. June 16, 1826

Alexander Jacob McKee, b. Feb. 12, 1828

James Arthur McKee, b. Dec. 8, 1829

Ellen Phillis McKee, b. Dec. 15, 1832

Arabella Ann McKee, b. Oct. 19, 1835

Captain Thomas McKee (1770—1814)

" Thomas McKee was born in 1770, the son of Alexander McKee, Indian agent at Fort Pitt. He was commissioned an ensign in the 60th Regiment, March 29, 1791 ; promoted to lieutenant, February 5, 1795 ; and captain, February 20, 1796. He was appointed deputy superintendent for the western Indians in 1799 on the recommendation of Lieutenant-Governor Hunter, a post for which he was remarkably well qualified by his knowledge of Indian languages and customs. He resigned his commission in the army in 1805. He was elected to represent the county of Kent in the Legislative Assembly in 1800, and elected for the county of Essex in 1801. During the war of 1812 he held a commission as major of the 2d Regiment of Essex Militia. He died at the Cascades in Lower Canada on October 20, 1814, a victim of his intemperate habits".

" Whilst I was at Amherstburg with Baskwell, he pointed out to me the stump of a very large button-wood tree, which Captain McKee of the 60th regiment had cut down with one hand for a wager, between sunrise and sunset on a long summer's day. The stump measured nearly three feet-and-a-half in diameter. Captain McKee was at this time (1800) Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the District of Amherstburgh ; he was six feet four inches high and exceedingly powerful. His mother was an Indian, and he himself retained a slight tinge of the olive colour of the natives, but he was one of the best tempered fellows and most entertaining companions I have ever met with". ' *Landmanns Adventures and Recollections* '—Vol. II, p. 150.

¹ This supplies a further reason for believing that his father, Colonel Alexander McKee, had no Indian blood, for had his mother been an Indian girl, as several alleged, his son Thomas would have been three-quarters Indian and probably much dusker than " a slight tinge of olive colour " suggests.

Will of Captain Thomas McKee (1770—1814)

May 28th, 1801

In the name of God, Amen.

I, Thomas McKee Esquire of the Township of Sandwich in the Western District and Province of Upper Canada considering the uncertainty of this transitory life, and being of sound and perfect mind, memory and understanding, Do make, publish and declare this my last will and Testament in manner and form following :

Imprimis—I will that all my just debts be paid at the time of my death also my funeral expenses ; after which I will that the legacies left by my late Father's will shall be immediately paid by my Executors to the Legatees therein mentioned.

The remainder of my property I do devise, give and bequeath in the manner and form following :

My Lands and Tenements at the Petite Cote in the Township of Sandwich, I give and bequeath unto my son Alexander McKee born from my wife Theresa, which effected, then my will is, that all my household furniture of which nature shown, shall remain to my wife Mrs. Theresa McKee, to remain to her, her heirs and assigns forever—And for the remainder of my property I will that the same shall be realized and after a due re-alization, That the proceeds thereof shall be equally divided between my said wife Theresa McKee, my Son James and my Daughter Catherine, share and share alike and any produce that may arise from the realty of the said Premises I give, devise and bequeath to my said wife, for and during her life in co-partnership with my children herein before mentioned. And in case of my said wife's death then my will is that the share to her appertaining of the said Estate, shall be divided among my legatees herein before mentioned share and share alike—and I do hereby appoint, of this my last Will and Testament, In witness whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal, at Sandwich aforesaid, the twenty-eighth day of May in the year of our Lord, One Thousand eight hundred and one.

(Signed) T. McKEE

L. S.

Signed sealed published and declared by the said Testator as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us, who at his request and in his presence, have subscribed our names as Witnesses thereto.

Signed John Suth'd Sinclair, Lt. R.Aty.

Signed Richard Pollard

Signed James M. Reed

“Therese, eldest of the children of John and Mrs. Askin, married Thomas McKee, son of Colonel Alexander McKee of the Indian Department, who was one of the foremost figures on the British side in the western theater during the Revolutionary War and long one of the most influential men in western Canada. The career of Thomas McKee was ruined by drunkenness,

and although he attained the rank of captain in the Sixtieth Regiment, the marriage of Therese Askin proved more unfortunate, probably, than that of any of her brothers and sisters ”.

Burton Historical Records, John Askin Papers, Vol. 1, p. 15, courtesy of Detroit Public Library.

“ James McKee, natural son of the writer’s husband (the quotation is from a letter dated 4.28.1797 from Therese Askin McKee, wife of Thomas McKee, son of Col. Alexander McKee, to her mother Mrs. John Askin,—R.W.M.). It seems probable that James was about seven years old at the time of his father’s marriage with Therese Askin. He was drowned in the Detroit River, Sept. 3, 1808 and buried in Amherstburg ”. (This would mean he was somewhat more than 18 when he was drowned.—R.W.M.). *Burton Historical Records, John Askin Papers, Vol. 2, p. 112, courtesy of Detroit Public Library.*

“ Alexander McKee (the younger.—R.W.M.), son of Captain Thomas McKee and Therese Askin, for whom see *Burton Historical Records, Vol. 1, p. 15 and 376.* At the outbreak of the war (the War of 1812.—R.W.M.) Alexander was a second lieutenant in the First Lincoln Artillery Company. On June 8, 1813, he was appointed lieutenant in the Indian Department, and on June 25, 1814, was promoted to a captaincy. The date of his birth has not been found, but since his parents were married in April 1797, he must have been a very youthful officer ”.

Burton Historical Records, John Askin Papers, courtesy of Detroit Public Library.

“ Marie Anne McKee, familiarly known as Nancy, natural daughter of Captain Thomas McKee. Nancy was baptized in Sandwich, on March 4, 1800, and the record states that she was then three and one-half years old. A year later (July 28, 1801) Thomas made his will, but for some reason refrained from mentioning Nancy in the document. In the spring of 1815, Mrs. McKee was with the family of George Hamilton in modern Hamilton, Ontario, for a time, and in a letter home gave as a reason for delaying her return to Detroit the prospects of Nancy’s marriage to a ‘ fine young man ’, which obligated Mrs. McKee ‘ more than ever to pay her a proper attention which commands respect from others ’. Apparently the marriage did not take place, since in October 1815, Mrs. McKee expressed worry over Nancy’s financial future ”.

Burton Historical Records, John Askin Papers, Vol. II, p. 539, Detroit Public Library.

Other sources indicate that she married George Thomas Frederick of Ireland (some confusion between accounts concerning his name make it barely possible that his patronym was Ireland), with issue. He was Clerk of Peace for the Western District.

By studying the Family Trees applicable to this sept, the reader will perceive all I have been able to learn about the lines descending from *Captain Thomas McKee of McKee’s Half Falls*, and his distinguished son *Colonel Alexander McKee*, the Indian negotiator. One of his descendants, Charles McKee of Detroit, has supplied documents and letters that have pointed the way to the solution of that centuries-old enigma : the Scot point of origin of the Four McKee Brothers who fought at the Boyne Water. One of the letters was dated in 1797. It was signed by James Innes and addressed to a person in Banff. I submitted a photostatic copy to Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, whose great knowledge of Scot history, families, and traditions caused him to identify its author without hesitancy as Major-General James Innes of the Madras establishment, and the recipient as a sister. Since it concerned collaterals of Sir Thomas, Charles McKee kindly presented the original letter to him. The fact that the penned missile was in the possession of the McKee family tends to point vaguely to a feeling of interest in the Innes family of Scotland, especially because of its early date.

Another document that Charles McKee found among the memorabilia that descended



Plate 88

(Page 440)

PORTRAIT OF COLONEL ALEXANDER MCKEE

Born ca. 1720—35. Died January 13, 1799

Original is an oil portrait, artist unknown, supposed to have been painted circa 1757. Its ownership has been as follows :

	Born	Died
1. Colonel Alexander McKee to his eldest son ...	1720—34	1799
2. Captain Thomas McKee to his eldest son ...	1770	1814
3. Alexander McKee to his eldest son ...	1802	1836
4. Thomas McKee sold to his sister ...	1826	1902
5. Mary McKee (Rankin), wife of Colonel Arthur Rankin, ...	1824	1884
6. George Rankin, to his niece ...	1842	c. 1905
7. Phyllis McKee Rankin (Davenport), wife of Harry Davenport, to her daughter ...	1877	1933
8. Catherine Davenport, to her sister and brother ...	1895	1954
9. Ann Davenport ...	1903	
and		
Edward Lincoln Davenport, sold in 1957 to ...	1911	
10. Raymond W. McKee ...	1899	



Plate 89. JAMES McKEE OF SANDWICH 1829-89
descended from Col. Alex. McKee (Page 494)



Plate 90 ALEXANDER McKEE, descended from
Col. Alex. McKee (Page 494)

to him was a conveyance executed by Alexander Gordon, in which he mentioned some spurs worn by his grandfather at the battle of Calloden. There were also many other Gordon items. Again we are led to postulate a considerable feeling of interest as being fostered by the McKees in the Gordons, along with the Innes clan, and since both were for many centuries inhabitants of the northeastern part of Scotland lying between Inverness and Aberdeen, contiguous to the Forbes territory, the circumstance raises a strong presumption that this sept of the McKees came from the same general area.

The reader will have apprehended that a full research of all available correspondence to, from, and bearing on Captain Thomas McKee of McKees Half Falls and his illustrious son could generate a volume of considerable proportions. That, however, would be disproportionate to the purpose of *The Book of McKee*. I feel we have brought the two of them into reasonable focus, revealing them as the fearless, virile, honest men that they really were.

This chapter concerning Colonel Alexander McKee could hardly be more fittingly concluded than with the grave and dignified words of the great Indian Chief Crowfoot, leader of the Blackfoot Confederacy :

“ A little while and I will be gone from among you, whither I cannot tell. From nowhere we come, into nowhere we go. What is life ? It is a flash of a firefly in the night. It is a breath of a buffalo in the winter time. It is as the little shadow that runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset ”.

