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Merchants in Revolutionary America, 1740-1816**

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The University of Southern Mississippi

TRADING IDENTITIES: NATIONAL IDENTITY,
LOYALTY, AND BACKCOUNTRY MERCHANTS IN
REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA, 1740-1816

by

Timothy Charles Hemmis

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2015

ABSTRACT

TRADING IDENTITIES: NATIONAL IDENTITY, LOYALTY, AND BACKCOUNTRY MERCHANTS IN REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA, 1740-1816

by Timothy Charles Hemmis

May 2015

This project tracks the lives a select group of Philadelphia frontier merchants such as George Morgan, David Franks, and others from 1754-1811. “Trading Identities” traces the trajectory of each man’s economic and political loyalties during the Revolutionary period. By focusing on the men of trading firms operating in Philadelphia, the borderlands and the wider world, it becomes abundantly clear that their identities were shaped and sustained by their commercial concerns—not by any new political ideology at work in this period. They were members not of a British (or even American) Atlantic World, but a profit-driven Atlantic World. The Seven Years’ War destroyed the fur trade, so they turned to land speculation. These merchants looked to the British government for repartitions in the form of land grants. When they were repeatedly denied, the merchants approached the new American government for assistance. However, the unstable American government under the Articles of Confederation also rejected their land claims. Although they all failed in land speculation, the new American economy offered enhanced opportunities for them. Ultimately, these men wanted to gain personal wealth and economic stability above any national loyalty or political ideology. After the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1789, the American people still had little or no knowledge what an American was or was supposed to be. It was worse in

the backcountry—which as a middle ground had always lacked a clear political identity. Business was their true identity. Ironically, being part of the founding generation of America, these merchants did not develop a true American identity. It was their children's generation that would cultivate a new American identity and culture.

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MAY 2015

The University of Southern Mississippi

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REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA, 1740-1816

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

To: the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.

There are several people that will always be more than friends, but family and the greatest thanks are reserved for them. They supported me through my lows and highs. First, the Runkel family: Jack, Judy, and Jared you have always sustained me in pursuit of my doctorate. Either by giving me a place to stay, while I was in the Pittsburgh area or sending an encouraging note, you have been there for me. Jared has always understood my elations and frustrations of archival and graduate work. Often we commiserated about work and more importantly Pittsburgh sports.

Personally, I want to thank the Lazenby Family for treating me like their own. Cliff, Joanne, Kaci, Jeff, and Kasey: y'all will always be part of my family. Lastly, thank you to my Hattiesburg Community Church family who has always bathed me in prayer throughout tenure at Southern Miss. Without any of this help, I would have never made it—Thank You!

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A dissertation is built upon primary sources and the support of USM and the Travel Grants have really helped me finish my project. In addition to the monetary support from Southern Miss, I also received the Pennypacker Fellowship 2012-2013 at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Archives. While in Harrisburg, I want to thank Jonathan Stayer who guided me to the proper collections. Furthermore, while I was in Harrisburg, I want to thank John Miller and Sara Mears for letting me become their unofficial roommate for several weeks that summer. In addition, to my research trips, I want to thank John Hoffman and the Illinois History and Lincoln Collection at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for their support while researching at their archives. It was great to talk to someone that understood my passion for history and always encouraged me in my project. Furthermore, I want to thank Mark Stern for his help in tracking down a few obscure documents from David Franks. You have been a great help.

I want to thank Matt and Mary Ann Hood for while I researched in Philadelphia, without your assistance my dissertation would have never been finished. Moreover, there are so many people that I will list here for their individual help either by reading over portions of my project or just inspiring me to continue. Thank you for all your editing help and encouragement: Jared Runkel, Kaci Lazenby, Joel Bius, Andrew Davis, Lynne Calamia, Dan Vogel, Kevin O'Connor, Christian Pinnen, Robert Thompson, Jason Engle, Jeremy George and Charlie Wilmoth. Along the way there have been many people that have contributed and I thank you for your help and encouragement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Summer Of 1806

The summer of 1806 began much like any other summer in Western Pennsylvania; however, it ended with much excitement especially for the George Morgan family. The excitement began with a visit from George Morgan's old friend and fellow veteran Colonel Aaron Burr. Morgan, a shrewd merchant, farmer, and public servant, was pleased to hear about the arrival of his old acquaintance. In August 1806, Burr arrived at Morganza, Morgan's estate just south of Pittsburgh. And Morgan opened his home to Burr. Greeted by Colonel Morgan and his two sons, John and Thomas, they escorted the former Vice President of the United States to their homestead.

Burr was the Morgan's esteemed dinner guest and while the dinner conversation began with fond memories and shared past experiences between Colonels Morgan and Burr, it eventually devolved into Burr's vision of the future and his plot against the United States of America. At which point, Burr also brought up the topic of western expansion, and he believed that soon there would be more people west of the Allegheny Mountains than on the eastern coast. Burr believed that the western lands would eventually break away from the original states; he mentioned to Morgan's sons, that he could raise a small army and easily take Washington D.C. Burr theorized that this would happen within five years. Furthermore, the former Vice President stated, "with five hundred men, New York could be taken; and that with two hundred, congress could be driven into the Potomac River."¹ According to Thomas Morgan, his father replied to

¹ David Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr in the Circuit Court of the United States, Summer Term 1807*, Vol I, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1808, Reprint, 1969), 505.

Burr's speculation, "By God, sir with that force you cannot take our little town of Canonsburg."² Burr asked Morgan's eldest son, General John Morgan "If I thought I could raise a regiment in Washington County; or whether I could raise one with more facticity in New Jersey."³ The debate continued between Burr and the Morgans throughout the evening. After dinner Burr walked with John Morgan to his brother's house, still attempting to persuade the youngest son, George Jr. to join him on a military expedition. Burr suggested that "he should like to see . . . George at the head of a corps of grenadiers; he was a fine, stout looking fellow."⁴ Moreover, Burr attempted to also persuade Thomas Morgan to join him in the military coup. The Morgans, however, were supremely suspicious of Burr's motives against the United States of America.

The following day, their inquisitive guest probed Morgan's eldest son John, an adjutant general in the New Jersey State Militia, with questions about the military strength of the federal government and the prospect of raising troops in the west.⁵ Burr continued to suggest that "the union of the states could not possibly last; and that a separation of the states must ensue as a natural consequence, in four or five years."⁶ Curiously, Burr inquired about the residents of Washington County and if they could raise a regiment to join in his plot against the Federal government. While John Morgan, Colonel Burr, and a man named Colonel Dupiester walked about Washington,

² Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, Vol I, 505.

³ Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, Vol I, 498.

⁴ Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, Vol I, 498

⁵ Max Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 234.

⁶ Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, Vol I, 497.

Pennsylvania, Burr asked John Morgan about the insurrection known as the Whiskey Crisis.⁷ Interested in meeting David Bradford, who was the ringleader of the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, Burr questioned if Bradford remained in town. However, Mr. Bradford was no longer there; he had moved to Baton Rouge. According to John Morgan, “Colonel Burr mentioned to me, that he had met with several, who had been concerned in the western insurrection: and particularly a major in the North-Western Territory (whose name I do not recollect) who had told him, that if he were ever engaged in another business of the kind, he pledged himself it should not end without bloodshed.”⁸ Burr’s conversation concerned the young New Jersey militia officer enough that he advised his father to write to the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson.

Burr believed there were serious differences between the western people and citizens in the rest of the United States. Building upon the dissidence of the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania, Burr thought that westerners did not want and would not submit to Federal rule. The meeting between Burr and the Morgan family highlights the complex nature of national identity and loyalty in the early days of the United States of America, even among the New Republic’s merchant elite and amazingly, its former Vice President.

Background

Over the past hundred years, historians have extensively examined the revolutionary eighteenth century, specifically studying the American Independence movement. However, few scholars have focused on the merchant class and their personal

⁷ Colonel Dupiester was a friend of Burr’s whom could have been a German military adventurer, but his identity is unknown.

⁸ Robertson, *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, Vol I, 498.

and national identities during the Revolutionary era. Before the American Revolution, colonial American merchant companies such as *Plumsted and Franks*, or the *Baynton and Wharton* firm, operated amid and benefited from the emergence of the strong British Empire during the Imperial Wars such as King George's War 1740–1748 (War of the Austrian Succession) and the French and Indian War 1754-1763 (the Seven Years' War). The Imperial Wars between France and England fueled the rapid economic growth of British North America along the frontier. As the British pushed into the interior of North America, they butted against the French and Indians alike, thus starting new conflicts, but also opening new markets and economic opportunities.

Examining the business practices of colonial merchants in the backcountry highlights the extension of the Atlantic World into the interior of North America. These companies imported goods from England, continental Europe, and the Caribbean. They occasionally traded in slaves from Africa, as well.⁹ The companies obtained credit and loans from London in order to pay for their business adventures on the American frontier. For example, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* gambled on trading in the Illinois Country, because they could not effectively compete with the French and Spanish traders who operated further west. Additionally, they entrusted George Croghan with a substantial amount of money to trade with Native Americans, which he squandered on some shortsighted business decisions. Consequently, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* needed assistance from the British Crown in the form of land grants. Before the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, Samuel Wharton traveled to London to secure financial backing for their land business. The British Ministry refused to recognize their

⁹ Darold D. Wax, "Africans on the Delaware: The Pennsylvania Slave Trade, 1759-1765," *Pennsylvania History* 50, no. 1 (1983).

land memorials and with the commencement of the war, Wharton could not gain any backing and ultimately had to flee to France because of his Whig leanings.

The American Revolution was not only a definitive moment in American political history; it was also a crucial time in the lives of American businessmen. The Revolution was a period of transition and change that often took a bloody and violent form, forcing people to understand themselves in a different light. Like any conflict—especially a civil war—people had to choose sides carefully in order to protect themselves, their families, and their livelihoods. During the Revolution colonial merchants had to make important and difficult decisions about their futures and their personal identities. Ultimately, it was personal and economic relationships that determined each individual's national identity and loyalty. The goal of this project is to trace the identities and loyalties of the members and associates of several Philadelphian trading firms, such as *Plumsted and Franks* and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* through this crucial time. Each trader had a unique personal experience and economic relationships before the American Revolution that determined his allegiance during the War for Independence. Moreover, after the conflict, these men had to reconcile those personal and business decisions and had to navigate within totally new political and business worlds.

The Founding Generation

The merchants of Philadelphia during the Revolutionary period were important men who became central figures in the founding generation of the United States of America. Despite the fact that these men had little knowledge of what it was to be an American, they battled with personal choices that were made during the formation of the United States of America. Even though some businessmen, such as David Franks, tried to

remain neutral in the conflict Franks became labeled a loyalist because he had both a long-standing connection to the British Army and a brother who lived in London. Others like George Morgan of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* sided with the “rebellious” Americans. Before the Revolution, Morgan and his company had a rocky relationship with the British Army and the British Ministry. Therefore, Morgan chose to be an American patriot. As further proof of his loyalty, Morgan became an officer in the Continental Army and was a chief Indian agent for the Continental Congress. Despite this, Morgan and a few others backcountry merchants were named in an infamous loyalist conspiracy in 1777.¹⁰ Additionally, George Croghan, one of Morgan’s associates on the frontier, was another prominent figure named in the loyalist rumor. Unfortunately, Croghan’s ill health exacerbated his situation because he could not flee Philadelphia when the British captured the city in 1777. At the same time, the British brought him in as a suspected rebel and placed him under house arrest because they mistrusted him. Other merchants also had a difficult time during the Revolution. William Trent (an associate of Croghan, David Franks, and William Plumsted) had to swear loyalty to the new American government because of his previous close association with established British loyalists.¹¹ Despite their woes, these merchants were part of the founding generation of the United States of America. Although most were not the politicians or officers in the Continental Army, they were the elite citizens who were well-connected and played a certain roles in the Revolution. But they would not define what it is to be an

¹⁰ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 149.

¹¹ Sewell Elias Slick, *William Trent and the West* (Harrisburg: Archives Publishing Company of Pennsylvania, 1947), 1.

American. That was their children's generation who would take up the mantle of defining what American identity and culture would be.

Even as members of the founding generation, businessmen like Franks, Morgan, Croghan, and Trent were suspected of being spies during the war. Merchants were constantly being charged with treason because they had prior relationships in business as well as personal acquaintances with men on the other side of the fighting. Their loyalty and national identities were in flux. Ideology played a limited role in the shaping of national identity and loyalty, for these men, ultimately economic and personal relationships overshadowed the lofty political philosophy of the American Revolution. Men like George Morgan, David Franks, and others made decisions based on financial concerns and personal interests. Their children were the generation that would become true Americans in identity because they did not have worry about their economic and political futures. Whether patriot or loyalist, these men calculated political and economic risks before proceeding with their lives in the ever-changing new "American" world.

The American Revolution and the War for Independence dramatically transformed many lives. In the words of historian Gordon S. Wood, "in short, the Revolution was the most radical and most far reaching event in American History."¹² The American Revolution unleashed many unforeseen consequences that are still felt today. While the scholarship on the American Revolution continually expands, few scholars have exclusively examined the effects of the Revolution on frontier businessmen such as George Morgan, David Franks, and others. The stories of the men who traded on the frontier can tell us much about the myriad effects of the Revolution and clarify the ever-

¹²Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992), 8.

changing landscape of the Atlantic World. Furthermore, the topic of identity and loyalty is a relatively untouched area of study for this period, especially one focusing on economic figures. While some historians have examined the activities of these borderland businessmen, very few have focused on their identity and questions of loyalty, which was directly tied to economic and personal relationships.

Although there is no collective biography of these frontier traders, there have been several biographies of the individual men. In the early twentieth century, several scholars focused on the lives of colonial and revolutionary merchants. In 1932, Max Savelle's *George Morgan, Colony Builder* outlined the life of Morgan as one of the key partners of the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* trading company.¹³ Demonstrating the life and times of George Morgan, Savelle paints a descriptive narrative of the American businessman. Savelle wrote the biography to illustrate that many men, not just those considered original Founding Fathers, contributed to the creation of the United States.¹⁴ Exploring both business and frontier history, Savelle simply narrates Morgan's activities before, during, and after the American Revolution. Savelle highlights each of Morgan's financial schemes including the Illinois, Indiana, and the New Madrid adventures.

While Savelle was the first scholar to examine the life of George Morgan, more recently Gregory Schaaf wrote an updated biography of him. Schaaf's *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees* discusses Morgan's role as an agent of the Continental Congress and a diplomat to Native Americans.¹⁵ Building upon Savelle's work, Schaaf seeks to explain

¹³ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 1.

¹⁴ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, vii.

¹⁵ Gregory Schaaf, *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees: George Morgan, Native Americans, and Revolutionary Diplomacy* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing Company, 1990), 1.

Morgan's activities with Native Americans during the Revolution. Upon discovering a missing portion of Morgan's journal, Schaaf expanded the story of George Morgan and his mission during the American War for Independence.¹⁶ Although Morgan was the key personality in Schaaf's work, he only focuses on Morgan's diplomatic work attempting to win over Native American support for the new American nation, not on Morgan's life as a frontier trader or land speculator.

Recently, David Paton Dewar's *George Morgan's American Life, 1743-1810*, an unpublished University of Kansas dissertation, reexamines the life of George Morgan.¹⁷ Adding to the work of Savelle and Schaaf, Dewar attempts to place Morgan within the current historiography of the American Revolution. Dewar's biography builds upon Savelle's *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, and adds an updated literature review of the American Revolution. In addition, Dewar demonstrates that George Morgan wore many hats as a businessperson, Indian Agent, and politician. Absent in each work, however, is an examination of Morgan's political loyalty and identity during the American Revolution and in the years following.

Within current historiography, George Morgan is the merchant most thoroughly examined. There are other but fewer works on men like William Trent and David Franks.¹⁸ More mysterious, however, are men like Samuel Wharton, John Baynton, and William Plumsted—they only show up in the historiography in relationship to the other merchants. Sewell Slick's *William Trent and the West* attempted to understand the

¹⁶ Schaaf, *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees*, xxii.

¹⁷ David Paton Dewar, "George Morgan's American Life, 1743-1810" (PhD dissertation, University of Kansas 2005).

¹⁸ Slick, *William Trent and the West*; Mark Abbott Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010),1.

frontier's past through a study of strong individuals by portraying Trent's life on the American frontier.¹⁹ Slick's biographical narrative of William Trent simply describes his life as a frontier soldier, businessman, and land speculator. Additionally, all three men were members of the failed Indiana Company. Slick's book, does not focus on Trent's revolutionary activities because it is only a small part of his life as Trent passed away shortly after the Revolutionary War.

Another successful colonial merchant was David Franks of Philadelphia. Franks seemingly remained loyal to the British Crown during the Revolution. Before the conflict, Franks was a partner with William Plumsted in the *Plumsted and Franks* trading firm. The company provided the British Army on the frontier with supplies, mainly cattle and flour. Unlike Morgan, David Franks has had little written about him. Until recently there was no biography of this influential merchant. In 2010, Mark Stern published the first biography of the loyalist businessman titled *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*.²⁰ The author demonstrates that Franks was a successful businessman who was strongly connected to the British Army and government. His trading firm was regularly contracted by the Army to supply borderland forts such as Fort Pitt and Fort Ligonier.

During the Revolution, many believed Franks aligned with the Tories because of his connections to the British Military and his family in London. Ultimately, Stern's biography attempts to tell the incomplete story of Franks and his family, arguing that Franks was *falsely* accused of being a traitor and a loyalist. Stern suggests that during the war, Franks provided for the British Army simply because he was a merchant—not for

¹⁹ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 1.

²⁰ Mark Abbott Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

any political leaning. Thus, Franks was *falsely* accused of being loyal. After the war, Franks returned to Philadelphia—which Stern’s argues proves his loyalty to America.²¹

In the end, David Franks was a businessman and loyal to anyone when it suited his commercial interests. His real loyalty was to commerce. Franks honored his previous contracts with the British Army therefore he became an advocate for British Prisoners of War. Politics did not hinder his choices. If the British suppressed the rebellion, Franks would have been a wealthy man, however, the Americans won and Franks lost. He returned to America like many other loyalists because it was his home.²² During the war, Pennsylvania exiled Franks for his alleged treason. After the war, Franks returned to Philadelphia under the guise of settling his affairs with his business. However, his return to Philadelphia does not prove his loyalty to America, but his desire to succeed in business. Franks returned to America because he believed that the Indiana Company’s land memorial had a chance to be recognized by the new American government. Therefore, Franks returned because of business interests not out of loyalty to the United States.

Another elusive frontier figure who is key to this history is the Indian agent and trader George Croghan. Several biographies and monographs have examined Croghan’s career on the frontier. Albert Volwiler’s *George Croghan and the Western Movement* is one of the earliest monographs exploring Croghan’s activities.²³ Written in 1926, Volwiler presents Croghan as a proponent of western expansion and paints a positive

²¹ Stern, *David Franks*, xxi.

²² Judith L Van Buskirk. *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

²³ Albert Tangeman Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782*. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926).

image of the Irishman. Another scholarly work that examines the life of Croghan is Nicholas Wainwright's *George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat*.²⁴ Wainwright investigates the life of Croghan as an Indian Agent under the supervision of the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Colonies, Sir William Johnson. In the twentieth century, these historians hailed George Croghan as an important figure in America's expansion westward. According to Volwiler and Wainwright, Croghan's life fits nicely into Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis."²⁵ According to these authors, Croghan was an essential figure on the American frontier, which helped create the United States. Croghan encouraged the American movement westward.

More recently, some scholars have begun to reexamine George Croghan, Sir William Johnson, and the other Indian agents. For example, historian William Campbell's dissertation "Land and Diplomacy on the Fringes of Empire" and his article "An Adverse Patron: Land, Trade, and George Croghan," both suggest that Croghan was a thief and a land swindler.²⁶ Ultimately, Campbell's reassessment of Croghan sketches a more realistic portrait of a man who used the British government and his connections to *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* for his own economic advantage. Campbell shows that William Johnson and Croghan both used their positions within colonial and British

²⁴ Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

²⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, "Western State-Making in the Revolutionary Era," *The American Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1895); *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1920).

²⁶ William J Campbell, "Land and Diplomacy on the Fringes of Empire: Indians, Agents, Speculators, and the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix" (PhD dissertation, McMaster University, 2007), 3; William J. Campbell, "An Adverse Patron: Land, Trade, and George Croghan," *Pennsylvania History* 76, no. 2 (2009).

governments to amass large amounts of personal wealth from their positions of power within Indian diplomatic circles.

James Merrell's *Into the American Woods* explores the history of the Pennsylvanian Indian agents and their actions with Native Americans throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁷ George Croghan's stay as an important eighteenth-century cultural broker is key to Merrell's narrative. Croghan's life appears in many works, especially ones focusing on the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's Rebellion.²⁸ More recent scholarship highlights Croghan's illicit frontier scheming and notorious land speculation. While helpful, most these biographies highlight only the basic narrative rather than the analytical nature of these men's roles on the frontier, and none truly deal with their political identity in this age of constant change.

Most of these merchants have not had their lives documented in book-length studies of their own. While Samuel Wharton, John Baynton, and William Plumsted briefly appear in the biographies of men like George Morgan, they are not the focus. Some of these men are studied as part of the scholarship involving early American land companies. In the early twentieth century, scholar George Elmer Lewis wrote *The Indiana Company, 1763-1798*, which examined the business of land speculation on the

²⁷James Hart Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: Norton, 1999).

²⁸For examples see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*, Pivotal Moments in American History (Oxford, England; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana, A History of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Eric Jay Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010), and Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

American frontier.²⁹ Lewis proves that when the Indian fur trade declined in the mid-eighteenth century, American merchants shifted their business focus to land speculation. A group of rival businessmen including William Trent, Samuel Wharton, George Croghan, George Morgan, William Franklin, and David Franks actually worked together to create the Indiana Company.³⁰ Most of these men were members of the same socioeconomic class and associated with frontier trading firms that had recently lost money in the declining frontier trade of 1760s-1770s. They believed that while the fur and retail trade was a dead end, they could now secure sizeable profits from future land sales. The two principle trading firms that were connected to the Indiana Company were *Simons, Trent, Franks, and Company* and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.³¹ Lewis shows that the Indiana Company was formed shortly after the Seven Years' War; however, it failed to produce a profit because of several important imperial decisions made in London. During the American Revolution, the land company had to reorganize as an American company, now that its principal shareholders were Americans. The new company then appealed to the new American government for recognition. While a useful starting point, ultimately, Lewis's book only offers a narrative of the Indiana Company, never going deeper to provide any in-depth analysis of the men's identity—either business or political.

In addition to the Indiana Company, the Ohio Company was another, even earlier land company which underwent a transformation during the eighteenth century. Kenneth

²⁹George Elmer Lewis, *The Indiana Company, 1763-1798; A Study in Eighteenth Century Frontier Land Speculation and Business Venture*, by George E. Lewis (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941).

³⁰ Lewis, *The Indiana Company*, 38-39.

³¹ Lewis, *The Indiana Company*, 48.

Bailey wrote *The Ohio Company of Virginia*, which tells the story of the Ohio Company and its role in the westward movement.³² Bailey argues that the Ohio Company of Virginia “served as an intermediate step between the old proprietary type [of company] and the new more speculative” company.³³ He demonstrates that there was a shift in how land companies operated, which elucidated the emergence of a new economic system—capitalism. Bailey also suggests that the land grab for the Ohio River Valley led directly to the start of several wars, including the Seven Years’ War and the American Revolutionary War. As a result of British land gains during the Seven Years’ War and Pontiac’s Rebellion, there was a rise in rival land companies such as the Indiana Company and the Vandalia Company. These companies attempted to profit from the new speculative land market of the west. Bailey mentions most of the colonial frontier traders when discussing the birth of the Indiana and Vandalia companies but like the other historians he does not focus on the merchants themselves in any depth.

Twenty years later after Bailey’s work, Alfred James’s *The Ohio Company, Its Inner History* attempts to pick up where Bailey left off and recreate the narrative of the famous land company.³⁴ However, the author acknowledges that fire had destroyed the bulk of the company’s papers over the years. With the surviving records he found at the Darlington Collection at the University of Pittsburgh and the British Public Record Office in London, James wrote a traditional economic history of the Ohio Company, which begins in 1747 and ends during the American War for Independence.

³² Kenneth P. Bailey, *The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement, 1748-1792: A Chapter in the History of the Colonial Frontier* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1939).

³³ Bailey, *The Ohio Company of Virginia and the Westward Movement, 1748-1792*, 285.

³⁴ Alfred Procter James, *The Ohio Company, Its Inner History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1959).

One of the few recent historians to examine land speculation on the frontier is neo-progressive Woody Holton. His *Forced Founders* examines many reasons why Virginian elites joined the Whig cause during the lead up to the American Revolution.³⁵ Holton suggests that one reason for independence in Virginia was the large proportion of Virginia elites locked into investments with land companies like the Ohio Company. The men in these land companies played an integral role in the American Revolution, however, as we shall see not every member sided with or fought for the patriots during the conflict.

Exploring the economic history of the frontier, Walter Dunn wrote a series of books discussing the changing commercial activities in the American borderlands. Dunn's *Frontier and Profit*, *The New Imperial Economy*, and *Opening New Markets* discuss the eighteenth century frontier economy.³⁶ Each work looks at a different sector of the frontier economy. Dunn's works present a standard economic narrative with little or analysis. In addition to his traditional approach, Dunn does not always explain his statistical evidence. While Dunn made extensive use of the *Baynton*, *Wharton*, and *Morgan* papers to explain the larger economic history of the frontier, it is a strictly a narrative history. Furthermore, Dunn's work concentrates on the fur trade and not on the merchants themselves. Thus, despite several works on the merchant firms a hole in the literature exists about these colonial frontier merchants and the goal of this project to fill that gap.

³⁵ Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

³⁶ Walter S. Dunn, *Frontier Profit and Loss: The British Army and the Fur Traders, 1760-1764*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); *The New Imperial Economy: The British Army and the American Frontier* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001); *Opening New Markets: The British Army and the Old Northwest* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002).

One of the earlier studies of colonial merchants during the American Revolution was Arthur Schlesinger's *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763–1776*, published in 1918.³⁷ Schlesinger examined a group of Philadelphian merchants both before and during the first part of the American Revolution, solely focusing on the patriotic activities of the merchant class such as the non-importation movements. Schlesinger's work *created* the traditional narrative about the rebellious attitudes and activities of the Philadelphian businessmen on behalf of the American Revolution.

Another broad economic history of the colonial eighteenth century is Robert East's *Business Enterprise in the Revolutionary Era*.³⁸ East traces the development of American business across early America. He uses several case studies from across the colonies to track change or stability through the American Revolution era. East argues that several big business firms developed in the mid-eighteenth century and continued to expand in and beyond the Early Republic period (1780-1820). He argues that the American Revolution did not drastically change business practices of Americans. To prove his point, East focuses on several important American businessmen (including Robert Morris) and their financial activities in this era. East does not mention any frontier trading firms by name, but does suggest that these types of firms sought to maximize their profit and used an extensive credit system. East posits that these merchants created the American capitalistic society, one that continued well beyond the American Revolution. But, he also points out that a new system of incorporations began

³⁷ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1918).

³⁸ Robert Abraham East, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

with the formation of the first Bank of North America in 1792.³⁹ East argues that these new corporations began to push out small mercantile trading firms in the early nineteenth century, consolidating the market as they did so.

All of these works examine individuals, companies, or the broad economic swath of the frontier during the eighteenth century—yet none extensively examines the frontier merchants or analyzes their shifting national identity and loyalties during the Revolutionary period. By focusing on the men of trading firms operating in both the borderlands and in the Atlantic World, it becomes abundantly clear that their identities were shaped and sustained by their personal financial ties and ideologies—not by any new political ideology at work in the in period. They were members not of a British (or even American) Atlantic World, but a profit-driven Atlantic World.

Definitions

Definitions are always essential to a successful argument; however, they are sometimes complex and convoluted. The terms identity and loyalty evoke powerful and forceful meanings. They are also confusing words. Historians have established these terms as part of their analytical repertoire for analyzing groups of people. By identifying and studying a group of colonial merchants that operated on the American frontier for a collective biography, one can glean a better understanding of how personal and financial relationships, rather than simple political ideology, shaped individual national identity and loyalty on the frontier during this tumultuous period.

The American Revolution was a watershed moment in American history and it was clearly linked to the idea of identity. Ultimately, the American War for

³⁹ East, *Business Enterprise in the American Revolutionary Era*, 324.

Independence was a civil war within the British Empire. In all wars, especially civil wars, each party must define who they are both as a collective group and as individuals. The end of the Seven Years' War ushered in a transformative period in North America. When Americans began to differentiate themselves from their British counterparts is a hotly debated topic; however, the American Revolution was the culmination of those communal feelings. The outcome of the American Revolutionary War created and shaped a new nation and a new American political ideology.⁴⁰ Along with creating a fledgling nation, the people of the new state had to define themselves as Americans.

Identity is a malleable term. Since the mid-twentieth century, scholars such as Bernard Bailyn and Gordon Wood have argued that the American Revolution birthed a new political ideology based on Enlightenment and Whig-political ideals. Bailyn argues that the new American political republicanism was deeply rooted in the colonial Whig culture that came from northern England.⁴¹ Continuing the intellectual and political ideological argument, Gordon Wood suggests, "The Americans of the Revolutionary generation had constructed . . . an entirely new conception of politics."⁴² Wood expands on Bailyn's thesis and demonstrates that the American people created a new form of government based on these new republican ideals. Furthermore, historian Drew McCoy extends the intellectual argument by analyzing the views of the economy shaped

⁴⁰ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 1967; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*.

⁴¹ Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, xv.

⁴² Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, viii.

Jeffersonian America in *The Elusive Republic*.⁴³ For example, he states that industry and commerce did not fit into Jeffersonian vision for America. According to Jeffersonian logic, an agricultural economy was best for the Early Republic, not a commercial empire. Regardless of the debate, the reception of the Republicanism argument for identity is too simple and sweeping.

Another meaning of identity is associated with nationalism. One's national identity focuses on one's connection to a larger state and is less concerned with the individual's class or social standing. In contrast to Baiyn and Wood, Charles Royster in *A Revolutionary People at War*, suggests that the Revolution had been shaped and won by the soldiers of the Continental Army and not the elite politicians.⁴⁴ Some scholars, such as Sarah Purcell, suggest that nationalism and American identity were born out of the Revolutionary War. In her work, *Sealed with Blood*, Purcell argues, "Military memory, especially memory of the Revolutionary War, is really at the heart of American national identity."⁴⁵ She demonstrates that public memory and commemoration of the American War for Independence formed a special bond that emphasized a shared experience and a common identity. Another scholar who examines the development of American nationalism is David Waldstreicher. In his *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, Waldstreicher suggest that nationalism slowly developed and emerged with the rise of

⁴³Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*. (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va. by the University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

⁴⁴Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*, (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

⁴⁵Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 1.

political parties in the Early Republic.⁴⁶ Both Purcell and Waldstreicher use material culture sources such as broadsides, handbills, and newspapers to describe the development of nationalism and national identity. Just as Purcell and Waldstreicher have argued about nationalism, Carol Smith-Rosenberg argues that the people of the United States needed to artificially stitch together an American identity based on republican political ideologies.⁴⁷ Although they see different origins of national identity, both authors ultimately suggest that national identity and American nationalism became solidified after the United States “won” the War of 1812.

Gene Smith and Sylvia Hilton, in their edited collection of essays *Nexus of Empire*, define national identity as an ever-shifting term. They suggest, “Nationality was only one of the components of a personal sense of identity, and individuals might consider changing it voluntarily for many different reasons, usually connected with expectations of personal gain or self interest of some sort.”⁴⁸ According to these authors, nationality is only a part of identity. They also clearly illustrate that national identity is different from national loyalty. Smith and Hilton describe national loyalty as “the practical side of national identity, or the rational expression of patriotic solidarity.”⁴⁹ Smith and Hilton’s collection of essays argue that the concept of identity and loyalty in the southern borderlands were determined by who had authority: the population adapted

⁴⁶ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁴⁷ Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 21.

⁴⁸ Gene A. Smith and Sylvia L. Hilton, *Nexus of Empire: Negotiating Loyalty and Identity in the Revolutionary Borderlands, 1760s-1820s* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 5-6.

⁴⁹ Smith and Hilton, *Nexus of Empire*, 6.

or shifted identity as to the Imperial shifts in power occurred. As personal identity is a protean term, so is loyalty.

Some scholars suggest that identity is closely related to social standing and class. Ronald Bushman and Phyllis Hunter both argue that the root of Early American identity lies in consumerism. Bushman's *The Refinement of America* and Hunter's *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World* demonstrate that Americans used their purchasing power to create a distinct identity based on their ability to purchase goods and luxuries.⁵⁰ The social status definition of identity only partially describes how individuals saw themselves as part of a larger group. These studies focus on the individual agency of the person and not on the exclusive identification to the nation-state or empire.

Much like identity, loyalty remains a hotly-debated term. During the Revolutionary era there was a vague sense of what it meant to be an American was and what the United States of America actually was. During the war, thousands of men were forced to take an oath of loyalty to the new nation. Men like George Croghan, George Morgan, and William Trent were asked to take loyalty oaths because they were viewed as potential spies, often because of their previous connections to the British Crown and to London creditors. As frontier merchants, their loyalties were always in question because of their long history of dealing with the British and other Empires. What loyalty meant or what loyalty signified to these men is just one subject of this work.

These frontier merchants were well connected in the British trading system and with the advent of the American Revolution; they were forced to make calculated decisions based on their personal and business situations. As members of the same social

⁵⁰ Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, (New York: Knopf, 1992). Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

class, each of these men knew the others sometimes as friends and sometimes as rivals. Historians have largely ignored this group of important frontier merchants, despite the fact that over the past few decades, more scholars have started to examine the borderlands. Recently, historians have demonstrated that the Revolutionary frontier, once-thought-isolated, was instead well-connected to the larger Atlantic World. The merchants operating stores throughout the backcountry and urban areas like Philadelphia were that connection providing borderland peoples and Philadelphia customers with consumer goods ranging from fancy yarn to gunpowder. Although operating in a literal and figurative wilderness, there was no restraint on their business and market capitalism. In the mid-eighteenth century, Anglo-American settlers, soldiers, and Native Americans provided a vibrant market to these merchants. However, when the fur trade began to halt after the Seven Years' War, the trading firms switched their focus to the business of consumer goods, an effort that ultimately proved unsuccessful. As trading firms such as *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* began to experience finance troubles, they understood the need to diversify their capital. Another possible solution for these competing merchants was land speculation and in the 1770s they came together to form land companies like the Indiana Land Company. These men gambled their money in the hope of making a fortune selling the frontier one parcel at a time.

Like the rest of American society, the civil strife of the Revolution fractured the merchant class. These men lived and operated in Philadelphia and in the backcountry. However, each man's loyalty and identity was questioned because of their previous relationship to the British government and army. Any man that had business connections with the British before the war was constantly under suspicion of espionage not only

because of their previous connection but more importantly their identity and loyalties were not grounded in political ideology, but in capitalism and profit.

Method

Collective biography is one of the best ways to analyze how the question of national identity and loyalty affected a particular class amidst the rise of capitalism in the early United States. This approach provides the opportunity to tell this story while incorporating multiple perspectives. The businessmen chosen for this study were all members or associates of either trading firms or land companies that were created before the American Revolution. The men studied were also chosen because of their association with these frontier firms and their geographic base of operation—Philadelphia. Historian Jack Greene argues that the Middle Colonies such as Pennsylvania were the representative model of the British Empire unlike New England the Chesapeake, which did not fit within norm.⁵¹ Each firm had several agents working in the American borderlands, but the merchants studied here were those who were major actors on the Revolutionary frontier. These merchants were not lower class and they had a significant financial stake in society at the dawn of the American Revolution. Examining a limited number of important case studies facilitates analysis of the development of national identity, loyalty, and American capitalism. The economic and social status of each man played an important role in determining his ultimate identity. Through this analysis, it becomes quite clear that political ideology was not the driving force behind their actions,

⁵¹ Jack P Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 1.

but instead personal and economic decisions were.⁵² In conclusion, these men wanted the best for their families and businesses no matter the political situation. They ultimately believed that wealth and financial security was more important than national identity or what nation controlled the space they trade on, which made them different than other Americans.

Each of the following chapters charts the merchants' activities in business and politics before, during, and after the War for American Independence. While political ideology certainly existed in the minds of these merchants, it did not inspire them to act. Profit rather than politics was the main incentive for these early American frontier businessmen, who were in their souls, "merchants" in every sense of the word.

Chapter II highlights the Seven Years' War and the economic, political, and social consequences of the British victory in 1763. This chapter focuses on the original trading firms, especially *Plumsted and Franks* and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. It traces the activities of the members of these firms and their business activities. It also demonstrates the complex web of connections that linked these companies together. The British Army worked closely with *Plumsted and Franks* to supply frontier forts such as Fort Pitt, Carlisle and many other locales. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* operated stores that traded to the general backcountry population, including soldiers, settlers, and Native Americans. Early in the eighteenth century, the main trade commodity was fur pelts. With the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, the fur trade declined and the

⁵² Listed below are several works that suggest that political ideology drove the American Revolution. Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 1967; Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 1969; Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*.

trading companies shifted their trade more to European manufactured goods headed for the growing population of families on the frontier.

The third chapter focuses on the merchant's role in Pontiac's Rebellion and the Imperial policies that followed. This chapter will examine the transition of both the frontier economy after Pontiac's Rebellion (1763) and later changes in imperial law. Pontiac's Rebellion caused irreversible damages to the merchants, which forced the merchants to look for other options to make up for their losses. In addition to their losses, the frontier businessmen had to deal with new imperial laws, which also hurt their pocketbooks. Because of these new regulations, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* attempted to circumvent some imperial policies such as the Proclamation Line of 1763. These men attempted to regain their profits by smuggling goods to the frontier, which failed, as well. This new imperial legislation helped shape the worldviews of the merchants and their relationship to the upcoming conflict. These restrictions, along with the Stamp Act and its boycotts severely hampered the merchants of Philadelphia and the backcountry, who had to adopt to survive. Pontiac's Rebellion and its aftermath was a turning point for the frontier merchants because it forced them to look to other avenues for revenue such as land speculation.

Chapter IV concentrates on the frontier activities specifically of the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Company* in the Illinois Country. These pre-Revolutionary ventures on the frontier shaped the relationships of men like George Morgan with the British Army. In a long legal battle, Morgan feuded with Lieutenant Colonel John Wilkins over business contracts. The company ultimately failed in the Illinois, while their David Franks and the Gratz Brothers backed *Murray and Rumsey*, took over the trade in

the region. Furthermore, the failed business venture of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* forced the firm to rely solely on gaining land memorials of the newly formed Indiana Company. In addition, the financial disaster in the Illinois country and the Wilkins-Morgan feud led to a general distrust of British authority. The Illinois failure pushed *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* to be more dependent on the British Ministry, which ultimately ignored their land claims.

The fifth chapter examines the collective effort of the Philadelphia merchants to recoup their losses from the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's Rebellion by the means of land speculation. First, however, the British Ministry had to approve of their business plans. Unfortunately, the British government ignored the colonists' requests for land for the Indiana Company. Eventually, Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Wharton went to London to represent the company to the British Ministry. Franklin and Wharton merged their company with others creating the Vandalia Company and tried once again. Their words once again fell on deaf ears because of London politics. The imperial obstruction to their business plans ultimately pushed men like Morgan, Wharton, Franklin, and other into the anti-British Whig camp in the 1770s. Their financial futures now depended on the success of the American Revolutionaries. With the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Indiana Company shareholders decided to reorganize and present their claims to the new Continental Congress. Repeatedly, their requests were denied (just as they had been by the British). Yet, they still hoped that after the war, Congress would approve their claim. During the Revolution, all the merchantmen ran into trouble because of their commercial position in society. Morgan, Franks, Croghan, Trent, and other were suspected of being spies since they worked in close proximity with the enemy.

Eventually, Morgan and Croghan were found innocent, however the Pennsylvania Supreme Council found David Franks guilty of treason. He was exiled from Philadelphia and the United States. Franks fled to England for a short time before returning to America in 1783; he believed he could see refuge with his brother, Moses.

The sixth chapter focuses on the aftermath of the Revolution and business after the war. The frontier was a place of constantly shifting identities. While, George Morgan survived the war, he had to navigate a completely new world. Morgan continued to advocate for the Indiana Company and land speculation from the American government. However there was, as of yet, no sense of being American. The Articles of Confederation loosely held the nation together politically but they did not provide any sense of identity. So it should be no surprise that Morgan also offered his services to the Spanish Crown to set up the colony of New Madrid in present-day Missouri. He once again sought profit regardless of politics or its effect on his new country. Morgan wanted to provide for his family and the Spanish had a stable governmental system, where America was unstable at best and Congress had stymied his land companies. Therefore, Morgan accepted an offer to work for the Spanish. However, shortly after his departure for New Spain, the Spanish did not meet Morgan's demands and the new U.S. Constitution was ratified in Philadelphia, which also enticed him to return home. David Franks also returned to the United States because he believed the new Constitutional government would recognize their land memorials. However, politics killed any chances the Indiana Land Memorial had by the 1790s.

The final chapter, the Epilogue, briefly examines the differences between the Revolutionary Merchant generation and their children's. Despite being members of the

founding generation these frontier merchants had no real sense of American nationalism or identity. Hence, their children were members of the true first American generation. Some of them joined the American Army as officers, others became local politicians, and a few became successful philanthropists, but all became members of the new American society. As their generation grew up, it became more and more American, unlike their father's generation who were free agents in a convoluted world.

Ultimately, these backcountry merchants wanted to gain personal wealth and economic stability above any national loyalty or political ideology. After the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1787, the American people still had little or no knowledge what an American was or was supposed to be. It was worse in the backcountry—which as a middle ground had always lacked a clear identity. In the 1790s, on the Pennsylvania frontier, close to George Morgan's homestead, the infamous Whiskey Rebellion broke out as farmers openly defied the new federal government of the United States. Eventually, President George Washington raised an army of 15,000 federal troops to suppress the insurrection. This rebellion was one of the first military tests of the new federal government and it demonstrated that some people on the frontier had little or no American identity or even loyalty to their new national government. Only a decade later, Aaron Burr arrived at George Morgan's estate and attempted to coax Morgan and his two sons into joining his own rebellion. Burr had plans to wage war on the American government and to create a separate nation in the interior of North America. Yet upon the departure of Burr from his home, Morgan immediately wrote to President Thomas Jefferson inform him of Burr's malice scheme. Simply, Morgan's actions demonstrated that he was not willing to risk political chaos and war because it

would disrupt his family and business. The elderly Morgan had already experienced war and strife, thus he chose the peaceful road. For most of their lives the merchantmen were driven by profit and providing for their family. Morgan's loyalty was a logical choice for a stable and well-respected citizen. As part of the founding generation, Morgan did not have a true identity other than business. It was his children's generation that would develop a new American identity. Ultimately, business was the revolutionary merchants real identity. In the end, this project tracks the development of these frontier merchants as they navigated with the ever-changing political landscape of Revolutionary America, which was a unique experience for these early American businessmen.

CHAPTER II

A WAR FOR MARKETS

The Seven Years' War

The autumn of 1758 witnessed a change of power in the American borderlands, as the region was in the throes of the French and Indian War. The sickly British General John Forbes and his army meticulously marched towards the French Fort Duquesne at the confluence of the Ohio, Monongahela, and the Allegheny rivers. As the British engineered a road from Philadelphia to the Forks of the Ohio, the French sensed their inability to stop Forbes' Army and decided to raze and abandon the fort. Without a fight, Forbes and his troops occupied the strategic point. Forbes stated to his superiors, "I have the pleasure of acquainting you with singall success of His Majesties Arms over all His Enemies on the Ohio, by having obliged them to burn, and abandon their Fort Duquesne, which they effectuated upon the 24th [November, 1758] . . . which I took possession with my light troops the same Evening."⁵³

Forbes promptly wrote of his success to William Pitt the Elder. Forbes named the new British outpost after the senior statesman—Fort Pitt.⁵⁴ In addition, to building a new fort at the forks, Forbes also ordered the erecting of other British fortifications in the region including Fort Ligonier and Fort Bedford—to protect the road from Carlisle to Pittsburgh. These new military posts offered protection and more importantly projected British power into the borderlands.

⁵³John Forbes, "John Forbes to Generals James Abercomby and Jeffrey Amherst, November 26, 1758." *The Writings of General John Forbes*, ed. Alfred P. James (Menasha, Wisconsin: The Collegiate Press, 1938.), 262.

⁵⁴Forbes, "John Forbes to William Pitt, November 27, 1758." *Writings of General John Forbes*, 269.

By the time the British took possession of Pittsburgh, the Seven Years' War (1754-1763) had been raging for several years in North America.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the British Army, which now controlled the region, offered protection for British merchants on the frontier. In addition to providing security for trade, the Army also built infrastructure like roads, which eventually facilitated commerce. Although these new roads were built for military purposes, they also encouraged the expansion of trade. In an April 26, 1760 letter to Major General John Stanwix, Colonel Henry Bouquet discussed the importance of the Army's building of roads. Bouquet was concerned that with the closing of the conflict in North America, there would be a labor shortage, which would hamper the Army's ability to maintain the current roads to Fort Pitt—Braddock's Road and the Pennsylvania Road (Forbes Road) because the provincial soldiers would return home. Bouquet saw the potential for a political dispute between the colonies and the Crown. Nevertheless, the roads were important to the British Army and the merchants. So, he also argued that a new southerly road should be built that would facilitate the colonies of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania in communication and transportation to Fort Pitt. The Army surveyed the new route for the road and believed that it would be easier to maintain and used by more people because of its less imposing terrain. Bouquet stated, "Besides the advantages of being equally convenient to the three Provinces, (beginning in Pensilvania, & going thro' Maryland and Virginia) this Road crossing the Patowmack, and would afford an opportunity of make use of the navigation of the River, and running as far as Fort Cumberland thro' a settled Country, the Inhabitants could be obliged by Law to keep it in Repair, which can never be the Case with the Road to

⁵⁵ The Seven Years War began in 1756; however, the North American campaigns known as the French and Indian War actually started in 1754.

Bedford, the Land being too barren to be ever settled.”⁵⁶ While, Bouquet understood that his priority was to ensure ease of military movement, but he also knew these roads served a dual purpose. They connected the backcountry to the rest of the colonies. Merchants, sutlers, Indian traders and teamsters would all use these roads to transport goods and people to and from the borderlands.

The Seven Years’ War opened up new opportunities for the businessmen of Philadelphia that extend their business into the backcountry. These merchants forged personal and business relationships that would determine their futures. The Philadelphian merchants would create several different trading firms to focus on a variety ventures. For instance, David Franks and his associate William Plumsted started *Plumsted and Franks* to exclusively supply the Army at Fort Pitt. The military and the war brought new economic prospects to these men, but they also continued other business activities such as importing European goods for their stores. For example, while Franks supplied the Army, he also had ties to other companies like *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks*. He partnered with Joseph Simon, William Trent, and Levy Andrew Levy to tap into the civilian and Indian trade. The frontier offered the merchant firms a new territory to trade with Indians, soldiers, and settlers. However, these borderlands also offered American merchantmen, like David Franks, William Plumsted, John Baynton, and eventually George Morgan, a chance to get involved in the lucrative fur trade with the Indians.

The peltry exchange before the Seven Years’ War was a profitable area for economic growth, which encouraged merchants to move westward. However it was not without great risk. The Native Americans that sided with the French still roamed the

⁵⁶Henry Bouquet, “Henry Bouquet to John Stanwix, April 26, 1760,” *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet*, ed. Sylvester Kirby Stevens, and Donald H. Kent, (Harrisburg: Department of Public Instruction, Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1940), Vol IV, 542.

frontier raiding and attacking any English settlement or outpost. The threat of war remained imminent. Thus it was important for firms like *Plumsted and Franks* to supply the Army with goods and keep the forts strong. For example in a 1759 letter to Colonel Henry Bouquet, General Forbes calculated that the Army needed 80,000 pounds of flour to maintain 800 men for four months.⁵⁷ Flour was a vital staple in the diet of soldiers. In return, the Army protected the merchants because being in a forward position like Fort Pitt; the chance of an enemy siege was prevalent. The threat of being cut off from rest of colonies was a reality that reinforced the idea they these men were on the edge of the British Empire.

The World of the Merchant

By the mid-eighteenth century the port city of Philadelphia was firmly planted within the Atlantic World. Most of the business activities revolved around the wharves along the Delaware River. Many merchants owned stores located on Water Street near the wharves so they could easily import goods from England and other places. The wharves that lined Water Street were in the city's chief business district. In the spring of 1755, David Franks bought a store on Water Street to be his base of operations. While close to the ships that brought in cargo, he could sell a wide variety of clothing, household items, and foodstuffs.⁵⁸ *Baynton and Wharton* also had a store on Water Street. Scholar Sam Bass Warner argues that Philadelphia was a "town crowded next to its shore."⁵⁹ Philadelphia's "wharves and warehouse stretched a mile and a half along the

⁵⁷ Forbes, *Writings of General John Forbes*, "John Forbes to Henry Bouquet, January 8, 1759," 276.

⁵⁸ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 30.

⁵⁹ Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Growth*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), 11.

Delaware River” and the most populated area was near Market Street.⁶⁰ The Philadelphian waterfront was where trade took place and it was also close to where many merchants lived as well. A French traveller described Philadelphia’s wharves as “a convenient embarkation point, and a busy place, full of work and movement.”⁶¹ The center of commerce in Philadelphia was the waterfront. Philadelphia’s wharves harbored ships from across the Atlantic, thus it became a highly cosmopolitan and diverse public space. The metropolis of Philadelphia was a vibrant mercantile hub that had broad reaches into the Atlantic World. Ships from Europe and the Caribbean frequented the wharves on the Delaware, but the city was also well-connected to the frontier and was a way station for the fur trade. According to Steven Rosswurm, “Merchant capitalists were at the apex of Philadelphia’s economy and society.”⁶² These merchants sought out the highly profitable Indian trade. Thus, Philadelphia was situated to reap the economic benefits from trade as merchants and pioneers pushed further westward into the frontier.

Coffeehouses, stores, taverns, and warehouses lined the streets adjacent to the waterfront of Philadelphia. It was in these areas where business and politics were discussed and executed. One such place was the Indian Queen public house, which had first served as an inn. The Indian Queen became an important meeting place for merchants, politicians, and even British soldiers and officers.⁶³ Such public houses and

⁶⁰ Sam Bass Warner, *The Private City*, 11.

⁶¹ Kenneth Lewis Roberts, Anna M. Roberts, eds. *Moreau De St. Méry's American Journey 1793-1798*. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company Inc, 1947), 259.

⁶² Steven Rosswurm. *Arms, Country, and Class: The Philadelphia Militia and "Lower Sort" During the American Revolution, 1775-1783*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987),14.

⁶³ Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch & Revolution: Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 60.

coffeehouses were loud places where merchants discussed business and also conducted it sometimes. In 1763, the Indian Queen became the site where the Indiana Company was born out of the “Sufferers of 1763.”

The frontier or backcountry was the essential environment for these merchants who wanted to tap into a new market for their business. Since Frederick Jackson Turner wrote his seminal piece in 1893 on the closing the American Frontier, scholars have hotly debated the definitions of the frontier, borders, borderlands, and the backcountry.⁶⁴ While many historians have pointed out the flaws in Turner’s East-West model, they have also noted the importance of the transition and transformation of the backcountry. Scholars Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, have both wrestled with these definitions. They suggest that the frontier was “a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, their concept of the borderlands was an area where there were “contested boundaries between colonial domains.”⁶⁶ Adelman and Aron define the backcountry transitions between frontier, borderlands, and borders; however, these changes did not happen in a linear progression. For example, during the Seven Years’ War, the Ohio Country was considered borderlands between the British and French colonial domains. Once the British captured Quebec and removed France from North America, the backcountry became “bordered

⁶⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1920), 1.

⁶⁵Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999). 815.

⁶⁶Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders;” 816.

lands.”⁶⁷ For a brief moment, these bordered lands appeared as Richard White describes as the “Middle Ground,” in which the indigenous peoples living in these territories had a narrow political autonomy.⁶⁸ During wartime, the backcountry became a hostile area between Europeans and Native Americans. Many European-Indian alliances had been forged through economic means. White suggests, “The distribution of goods created obligation and established status . . . in extending alliances and social relationships” Native American leaders destroyed a social structure in their community.⁶⁹ They sacrificed their agency for goods. Therefore, Native American groups began to lose their political autonomy with the invasion of Europeans. With the Native American’s waning political autonomy, they could not dissuade Europeans from moving westward. For example, Pontiac’s Rebellion of 1763 was one of the last attempts by the Western Indians to drive back the British across the Allegheny Mountains. Even with the discontent of Native Americans rising, European-Americans, especially merchants, still saw Indians as a great market to sell their goods in exchange for furs. Peltry became the main medium of exchange for traders and Indians. The fur trade was a crucial part of frontier society. Many Indian groups turned solely to hunting as their way to gain an income, disrupting their traditional society and culture.⁷⁰

Historian Daniel Usner, Jr. wrote, “Colonial history has focused for a long time on external linkages of colonies with their home countries, to the neglect of internal

⁶⁷Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders;” 816.

⁶⁸ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 50.

⁶⁹ White, *The Middle Ground*, 101.

⁷⁰ Joshua Piker, *Okfuskee: A Creek Indian Town in Colonial America*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), 79.

relationships forged by inhabitants.”⁷¹ However, since Usner wrote those words, scholarship on the frontier economy has rapidly expanded, but more work needs to be done on the multinational borderlands. Nonetheless, frontier merchants understood these linkages between the multicultural people of North America; it was where they strove to build their mercantile empires on the western frontier. First, the merchant firms of Philadelphia looked to the Indian trade to propel their future fortunes. They believed that the end of the Seven Years’ War would usher in a new era of heightened Indian trade. However, new restrictive imperial policies hindered their industry. So next the merchants focused on land speculation in the backcountry.

Daniel Usner’s “Frontier Exchange Economy,” “describes intercultural relations that evolved within a geographical area in a way that emphasizes the initiatives taken by various participants.”⁷² Therefore, the merchants were willing participants in the multicultural Frontier Exchange Economy. They worked with various people including: French, Spanish, British, and various Native American tribes. The language of business transcended most linguistic and cultural barriers on the frontier. As the mediums of trade variety at different times, the sense of trying to provide for oneself and family was a constant. The world of the merchant extended into many different environments but the frontier and the storefront were the two main spaces for interaction.

Religion in Philadelphia Mercantile World

Religion played a vital role in lives of Americans throughout the colonial period. At first mention of religion in colonial Philadelphia people immediately think of The

⁷¹ Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*. (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 5.

⁷² Usner, *Indians, Settlers & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*, 8.

Society of Friends or the Quakers. Yet, Quakers were not the only faiths to call the “City of Brotherly Love” home. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, believed in religious toleration. Therefore, many different religions and faiths existed in Philadelphia including Quakers, Anglicans, and Jews. Pennsylvania offered the freedom of worship but still restricted certain religious groups from politics. For example, “Catholics and Jews could worship openly in Pennsylvania, but they could not hold public office.”⁷³ Although Jews could not hold office they were free to conduct business. This religious restriction to the political system placed Philadelphia inline with a similar practice in Europe.

The communal nature of religion facilitated the creation of business relationships that benefited merchants. Specifically, the Jewish identity of David Franks, Nathan Levy, and Joseph Simon seem to open up economic doors that others did not have. Using a similar ethic background, these men forged an economic relationship based on a shared religious belief. Before the French and Indian War, the largest Jewish American community was in New York City. One of the most prominent merchant families in New York was the Franks-Levy clan. The Franks-Levy families used their combined mercantile power to become one of the largest army contractors to the British Army.⁷⁴ When Franks arrived in Philadelphia there was already a sizable Jewish community emerging in the fledgling colonial city. During the war, merchants were tasked with feeding and clothing the Army. David Franks in Philadelphia benefited from his family connections and was awarded a lucrative government contract. Using the Jewish

⁷³ Oscar Reiss, *The Jews in Colonial America*, (Jefferson N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2004), 25.

⁷⁴ Jacob Rader Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951), Volume 1, 73.

community network of merchants and businessmen, Franks helped build a worthwhile trading business that included other Jews such as Joseph Simon, and the Gratz Brothers.

The Jewish identity of families like the Franks and Levys made them stand out from the rest of the non-Jewish merchants. Early in Pennsylvania, William Penn and his family were tolerant of Jews. However, the Quakers still restricted Jews from holding political office or voting.⁷⁵ Therefore, the best hope in Pennsylvanian society for young Jewish men was to become businessmen. Jewish Merchants had to operate in two worlds—the Semitic and Gentile.

David Franks

David Franks effectively navigated a narrow path between these two realms, establishing connections in both circles. On December 17, 1743, he married Margret Evans of Philadelphia, the daughter of a Pennsylvanian politician and a member of the Anglican Church.⁷⁶ Franks attended the Christ Church in Philadelphia, while maintaining his membership at the Shearith Israel Synagogue in New York City.⁷⁷ Jewish Historian Jacob Rader Marcus calls David Franks an assimilationist because he had a foot in each world.⁷⁸ In reality, David Franks used connections in both communities to attempt to make his business more successful. Franks wanted to climb the social ladder in colonial Philadelphia; therefore he would have to shed his Jewishness. His marriage to Margret Evans demonstrates his attempt to shed his Jewish Identity for a more acceptable social and economic position in Philadelphian society. However, he

⁷⁵ Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, Volume 2, 10.

⁷⁶ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 14.

⁷⁷ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant* 15.

⁷⁸ Marcus, *Early American Jewry*, Vol. 1, 10.

used his Jewishness when it had its advantages, especially in the merchant world. Therefore, Franks did not completely relinquish his membership to his synagogue in New York City. Nonetheless, his financial and family links allowed him to garner government contracts, thus creating the *Plumsted and Franks*. In the end, Franks' real religion was not of a church or synagogue but of the store. He was a businessman.

In 1720, Jacob and Bilhah Abigail Levy Franks gave birth to David Franks in New York City.⁷⁹ Born into a family with strong links to the mercantile world of the Atlantic, Franks was educated in the family business from an early age. For example, David's mother was the daughter of Moses Levy, one of the most successful merchants in New York.⁸⁰ Furthermore, Jacob Franks was also a successful merchant and a member of the New York elite. Young David was raised in the commercial world.

By 1741, David and his brother Moses Franks followed in the family business. David moved to Philadelphia to set up his own store, while Moses moved to London. In Philadelphia, young Franks entered into a partnership with his Uncle Nathan Levy, his mother's brother. Nathan became a mentor to David Franks. Levy had been a merchant in London before moving to Philadelphia. Therefore, he had an associate across the Atlantic. Quickly, Franks and his family associated with other prominent Philadelphia merchants, especially the Jewish Gratz Brothers—Michael and Barnard. Franks was a Jew, his real "religion" was obviously business.

A savvy businessman Franks participated in many different ventures including the Indian fur trade and supplying the British Army. Franks and Levy began to trade in the backcountry even before the French and Indian War. They teamed up with Joseph

⁷⁹ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 7.

⁸⁰ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 7.

Simon, a Jewish merchant in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This firm first began when David Franks and his Uncle Nathan Levy ventured into the import and export business in 1741. Levy and Franks began their business in Philadelphia and focused on trading within the Atlantic World. The 1741 partnership of “Nathan Levy and David Franks combined to form the first major Jewish Company in Philadelphia.”⁸¹ The trading firm invested in ships to transport their goods back and forth across the Atlantic.⁸² Levy and Franks found owning several ships was a perilous venture because of the constant risk at sea. By 1744, Levy and Franks owned the schooner the *Drake*, a 30-ton ship named the *Sea Flower*, and other ships named the *Myrtilla*, *Richa*, and *Phila*.⁸³ Building a transatlantic shipping business, David Franks used his connections to facilitate trade across the vast ocean. Owning ships allowed Franks to make money and ship directly to the buyers in London. Therefore, Franks’ frontier fur trade attempted to buy furs from a direct source: the Indians themselves. Franks was a smart businessman.

In addition to being a merchant, Franks also acted as an insurance broker for ship owners transporting goods back and forth from Europe and the Caribbean. During the Seven Years’ War between 1755-1760, Franks underwrote Peter Culyer and his cargo. In 1757, Culyer requested Franks to insure his cargo heading to Liverpool on the *Charming Rachel*, “if the Premium is not too great.”⁸⁴ War created a necessary need for insurance

⁸¹Edwin Wolf and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957), 27.

⁸² Stern, *David Franks Colonial Merchant*, 16-17.

⁸³ Samuel Oppenheim, “Owners of Ships Registered at the Port of Philadelphia, 1730-1775,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no 26 (1918), 235-236.

⁸⁴ Samuel Oppenheim, “David Franks As An Insurance Broker,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, no. 26 (1918), 269.

on goods coming across the Atlantic. In a note to Franks on August 14, 1758, Culyer explains that the ship his cargo was captured by the French and taken to “Luisburgh.”⁸⁵ Culyer wanted recover his losses; in the letter he writes, “ I find by the Policy the Underwriters have three months time after Proof of loss to pay the Cash. As I would rather have it paid directly and would willingly allow the customary discount which if it can be done you will please do it.”⁸⁶ Franks’ dabbling in insurance allowed him to have another source of income that he could invest in the frontier, as long as that other income did not turn into debt.

In 1753, Franks’ partner, his Uncle Nathan Levy, passed away leaving the frontier firm solely in the hands of Franks and Simon. Franks was the administrator and Joseph Simon was the agent in the field; Simon actively traveled the frontier to acquire pelts from Indians and English traders. Franks was simultaneously involved in several other business ventures, including supplying British forts with provisions, specifically cattle and flour.⁸⁷ In late 1759, Franks and William Plumsted, a future three-time mayor of Philadelphia, partnered together in the firm *Plumsted and Franks* to furnish Colonel Henry Bouquet and the British Army all of the materials required to maintain a sizeable force in a forward position.⁸⁸ General Jeffrey Amherst exclusively awarded the contract to supply Fort Pitt and the western lands to *Plumsted and Franks*.

⁸⁵ Oppenheim, “Franks Insurance Broker,” 269.

⁸⁶ Oppenheim, “Franks Insurance Broker,” 269.

⁸⁷ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 37.

⁸⁸ Oliver DeLancey, “DeLancey to Jeffery Amherst, February 20, 1760, David Franks File, Small Collection, American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In addition to delivering the British Army supplies, David Franks separately invested in the African slave trade in the Delaware River Valley.⁸⁹ Historian Darold D. Wax argues that with the Seven Years' War raging, many Pennsylvanian servants and hired hands left to serve in the war—creating a labor shortage. Due to this absence of labor, the importation of African slaves into the Delaware Valley spiked in the late 1750s and continued until the end of the war.⁹⁰ Slavery was controversial in Pennsylvania and it divided the colony's population. For example, the Quakers of Pennsylvania did not approve of the inhuman practice. However, frontier merchants saw the slave trade as an opportunity. Twenty-four merchants signed a petition to the colonial governor objecting to restrictive duties on the importation of slaves. Not surprising, one of the twenty-four signees of the pro-slavery petition was David Franks.⁹¹ Not concerned about morale implications of slavery, Franks worried more about his pocketbook and how the new importation laws and taxes would affect it. Despite the new taxes, Franks continued to partner with Thomas Riche and Daniel Rundle in 1761 to import one hundred slaves on the schooner, *Hannah*. The following year, Riche and Samuel Tucker purchased more slaves that were imported by *Franks and Plumsted's* ships. Despite the petitions of the merchants, the Quaker-controlled government of Pennsylvania passed even more restrictive laws against the importation of Africans. Eventually, *Franks and Plumsted* retired from the slave trade because of heightened government intervention. Nonetheless,

⁸⁹ Wax, Darold, "'Africans on the Delaware: The Pennsylvania Slave Trade, 1759-1765.'" *Pennsylvania History* 50, no. 1, 42.

⁹⁰ Wax, "Africans on the Delaware: The Pennsylvania Slave Trade, 1759-1765," 40.

⁹¹ "Petition from the Merchants against the Bill for Duty the Negros," Samuel Hazard ed., *Pennsylvania Colonial Records*, 16 vols (Harrisburg: Printed by T. Fenn & co, 1851), Volume VIII, 576.

his investment in the importation of African slaves demonstrates that Franks was a diverse businessman, who would try to earn a profit in any way he could.

Franks' investment in the slave trade was short-lived; his real focus was on supplying the British Army on the frontier. Franks' partnership with Plumsted supplied frontier military posts such as Fort Pitt and Fort Ligonier with food. For example, they provided cattle and hogs to the borderland garrisons among other goods. In 1760, *Plumsted and Franks* garnered a new government contract with the help of David Franks' brother Moses Franks who worked for the London supply company operated by Sir William Baker of London and Christopher Kilby, which then contracted out to the firm, *Sir James Colebrooke, George Colebrooke, Arnold Nesbitt, and Moses Franks*.⁹² With the connection to Moses Franks, *Plumsted and Franks* were awarded the contract to supply the Army on the Pennsylvania frontier. Obviously having personal and family connections to *Colebrooke, Nesbitt, and Franks* played a pivotal role in the awarding of governmental contracts much to Franks' good fortune.

In a 1760 introductory letter from Plumsted to Colonel Henry Bouquet, the astute businessmen informed the British officer that their firm had been awarded the supply contract.⁹³ This was the partnership's first experience of working with the British Army. Plumsted states, "Mr. David Franks and myself are on the Change of the Contract for provisions now Appointed Agents by the Gentlemen in London . . . And as We are in a great degree Strangers to the methods used in the supplying the Army to request if your

⁹²William Plumsted, "William Plumsted to Henry Bouquet, February 25, 1760," *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. IV, 468-469.

⁹³Plumsted, "William Plumsted to Henry Bouquet, February 25, 1760," *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. IV, 468-469.

time will permitt you may give us some instructions for our Government in the conducting itt.”⁹⁴ The trading firm quickly learned they needed to provide livestock and victuals for the soldiers. Colonel Bouquet outlined the procedures to the merchants. For example, Bouquet suggested that live cattle were best because hogs required more transportation costs.⁹⁵ Cattle only required drivers where hogs needed wagons to be moved. Furthermore, wagons were difficult to come by and the roads were not in perfect condition. In addition to requesting cattle, Bouquet did know how many troops he had for the upcoming campaign season; therefore, he had trouble ordering enough provisions.

This wartime contract played a vital role in providing *Plumsted and Franks* a steady income. Supplying British outposts like Fort Pitt became their main task. In order to accomplish their goal, throughout the early 1760s, *Plumsted and Franks* maintained steady communication with Colonel Bouquet and their messengers on the frontier. In one example, during the spring of 1760, Bouquet inquired of the merchants the general state of the provisions at the frontier forts. In a survey, made by a Mr. John Read, the Commissary of Stores and Provisions. Read calculated the British Army on March 26, 1760 had 91,196 pounds of beef cattle.⁹⁶ Additionally, Read recorded that Fort Pitt had seven live hogs weighing roughly 840 pounds.⁹⁷ Furthermore, Read’s survey includes the pounds of flour, rice, cheese, butter, barrels of pork, numbers of sheep, and milk

⁹⁴Plumsted, “William Plumsted to Henry Bouquet, February 25, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol. IV, 468-469.

⁹⁵William Plumsted, “Bouquet to Plumsted and Franks Feb, 29 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol IV. 473-474.

⁹⁶ Henry Bouquet, “General State of Provisions: Western Forts and Post April 10, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol IV. 514-515.

⁹⁷ Henry Bouquet, “General State of Provisions: Western Forts and Post April 10, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol IV. 514-515.

cows. Bouquet also requested sufficient gardens at the frontier outposts to provide fresh vegetables for the troops. For example in a letter from Captain Ourry, he told Bouquet that he sent “Garden Seeds for Ligonier & Pitts burgh, & to latter some Fruit Trees, forwarded from Conegochee.”⁹⁸ The letter goes on to list two hundred fifty apple trees, fifty peach trees, twelve cherry trees, nine plumb trees, and two pear trees.⁹⁹ The Army wanted to establish a permanent food supply and to add vegetables and fruit to the soldier’s diet.

The borderland outposts needed to have provisions supplied regularly in order to maintain their sizeable military force. Contractors like *Plumsted and Franks* worked hard to keep up with the demand of the military. This was a new adventure for the Philadelphia merchants because they had mostly worked within the civilian trade and had little knowledge of the military. However, these men became valuable members of the war effort.

The Gratz Brothers

In the mid 1754, Barnard Gratz came from London to Philadelphia. His family had come from continental Europe and moved to London.¹⁰⁰ The Gratz family came from Landendorf in southeastern Silesia.¹⁰¹ Eventually in 1750, Barnard relocated to London and by 1754 he had migrated to Philadelphia. Using his Jewish connections

⁹⁸ Lewis Ourry, “Captain Lewis Ourry to Bouquet, 6 March, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol IV , 487-488. Conococheague, present-day Williamsport, Maryland.

⁹⁹ Lewis Ourry, “Captain Lewis Ourry to Bouquet, 6 March, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol IV , 487-488

¹⁰⁰ William Vincent Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798: Papers of Interest to their Posterity and the Posterity of their Associates*, (Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1916), 9.

¹⁰¹ Sidney Meshulam Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz: Their Lives and Times*, (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994), 1.

Gratz began to work for David Franks in his Philadelphia storefront. When Nathan Levy passed away December 23, 1753, Franks and his business had a great void to fill.¹⁰²

Shortly after Levy's death Franks hired Barnard Gratz and then later Michael Gratz to fill Levy's shoes. The Philadelphia Counting House also began to conduct business with Joseph Simon in the Western Fur Trade. While working for Franks, their business began to expand westward during the Seven Years War. Gratz continued to learn how to do business in the America and especially on the frontier. Using their Jewish connections, they slowly built a mercantile network for their own interests. Barnard Gratz worked for Franks until late 1759.

In 1759, aboard the ship *Brittannia*, which was outfitted for war, Bernard's brother Michael Gratz arrived in the New World.¹⁰³ Franks employed Michael Gratz for several years while the brothers set up their own business. Franks encouraged the Gratz brothers to invest their own money into business of their own, even while he employed them.¹⁰⁴ The Franks and the Gratz brothers worked together for a mutual benefit—a larger profit. The Franks/Gratz relationship was a lasting one, which would be tested during the American Revolution.

In the summer of 1759, Barnard Gratz opened his own store near Queen's Head in Philadelphia. The older Gratz brother advertised the opening of his store in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on August 2, 1759.¹⁰⁵ Eventually, Barnard's younger brother

¹⁰² Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 21.

¹⁰³ Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 28.

¹⁰⁴ Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Barnard Gratz, "Advertising A Cargo Imported by the Last Ships from London," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 44.

Michael who also worked with Franks joined him in their financial venture. Jewish connections allowed the Gratz brothers to open a store and profit from the Seven Years War. With the advice from Franks, the Gratz brothers branched out on their own. Even after moving out, the Gratzes continued to build their relationship with Franks. David Franks acted as a friend and mentor to the Gratz brothers. Ultimately, the steady growth of Philadelphia allowed for financial opportunities of newcomers like the Gratz brothers.

The Gratz brothers imported goods from all over the world and advertised their new stock in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. The store offered to let customers purchase items on three months credit.¹⁰⁶ While seemingly a modern concept buying on credit has been around for a long time. Consumerism was not new to colonial Philadelphia. Like today, Eighteenth Century Americans fancied objects of elegance and luxury. Historian T.H. Breen argues “Americans looked at eighteenth century England with new eyes, admiring its cosmopolitan culture.”¹⁰⁷ Merchants like the Gratz, provided the public with top-end refinement for all those who could afford it. In a modern sense, these shops were department stores for eighteenth century America, because consumers could order and buy almost anything they wanted under the same roof.

Consumerism allowed these American merchants to gain a financial foothold and to extend themselves into new markets along the frontier. Franks and Gratz operated their stores in Philadelphia but they also made many outside connections and adventures. The Gratz likewise conducted business with the southern frontier of Georgia. Here in

¹⁰⁶ Barnard Gratz, “Advertising A Cargo Imported by the Last Ships from London,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 44.

¹⁰⁷ T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumerism Politics Shaped American Independence*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004),72.

1760, Barnard Gratz traded for rice and beaver skins with the help of an associate named Isaac Martin onboard the *Sloop Esther*.¹⁰⁸ In addition to trading in the Southern colonies, Martin also took goods to Jamaica and to the Bay of Honduras.¹⁰⁹ In a letter, Martin discusses how he would leave in fourteen days and the process would take three months before returning to the mainland.¹¹⁰ Building a trading business meant that merchants had to rely on ship captains to conduct their business. Martin and Gratz developed a familiar relationship with each other. Evidence of this close relationship is when Martin gives his best wishes to Gratz's wife and goes on discussing his new house and the progress of its construction.¹¹¹ Having close business relationships was good because in theory the other person was looking out for your own interests. Also, in the postscript of the letter Martin outlines the price of goods in Savannah, Georgia. These merchants found themselves actively trading in the Atlantic World including stretching into the interior of North America.

The merchants had many different customers both in the city and in the backcountry. During the eighteenth century, people living in the British Empire experienced what some scholars have called the "consumer revolution."¹¹² Historian Michael McConnell suggests "Common British soldiers grew up in the civilian world"

¹⁰⁸ Isaac Martin, "Isaac Martin to Barnard Gratz, March 20, 1760," Series I, Box 1, Folder 35. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers in the Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁹ Isaac Martin, "Isaac Martin to Barnard Gratz, March 20, 1760," Series I, Box 1, Folder 35. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers.

¹¹⁰ Martin, "Isaac Martin to Barnard Gratz, March 20, 1760," Box 1, Folder 35, Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers.

¹¹¹ Martin, "Isaac Martin to Barnard Gratz, March 20, 1760," Box 1, Folder 35, Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers.

¹¹² Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution*, xv.

that had undergone the “consumer revolution.”¹¹³ Subjects of the British Empire enjoyed the experience of buying a wide variety of goods that were once only available to the wealthy. Merchants played a key role in this new movement. They provided customers with new goods including forks, mirrors, Chinese tea sets, fashionable clothes, and many more items. The new consumerism spread throughout North America including into the interior at frontier outposts. Merchants (like the ones in this study) looked to prosper from this new materialistic movement, which is one reason they hoped to extend consumerism of the Atlantic World far into the backcountry.

In addition to being linked directly to the Atlantic World, Gratz was also well-connected with the Franks-Levy firm; they often traded goods amongst themselves. These men were good friends and sometimes even family members. For instance, Barnard Gratz married Joseph Simon’s wife’s first cousin Richea Myers-Cohen.¹¹⁴ The Gratz and Simon families grew closer in marriage and in business. The family and friends connection further helped Barnard Gratz when he arrived in Philadelphia. Franks offering him a job in his store and later when Michael arrived he did the same thing until both men could acquire equity to start their own trading company. Often these men traded amongst themselves. For example in 1757, David Franks opened a line of credit with Barnard Gratz to purchase goods.¹¹⁵ Gratz racked up a total debt of £829.19.8 3/4 in the year of 1757 to Franks. That large balance carried over to the following year. However,

¹¹³ Michael N McConnell, *Army and Empire British Soldiers on the American Frontier, 1758-1775*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 75.

¹¹⁴ Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz*, 38.

¹¹⁵ Barnard and Michael Gratz, “Account with David Franks, 1760,” Series II, Box 2, Folder 64. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers in the Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Gratz and Franks maintained a good working relationship with each other. This one account ran from 1757 to the beginning of 1760. Even though David Franks never settled the account where it appeared in Barnard Gratz's favor and the debt was forgiven by June 2, 1769.¹¹⁶ These men understood the ups and downs of the mercantile business, but did not let financial problems come between them in their personal relationships.

Joseph Simon

As the Gratz Brothers got established by using David Franks' network of friends, another merchantman to appear on the scene was Joseph Simon. He was one of Lancaster's most prominent Jewish traders.¹¹⁷ Born in 1712, Joseph Simon arrived in Lancaster around 1740 where he quickly set up shop and helped create a close-knit Jewish community. Simon became a prominent figure in Lancaster's Jewish community, helping to set up an official place of worship. Simon was also a successful merchant on the frontier in his own right. Using his Jewish connections, Simon initially teamed up with *Franks and Levy* to stock his stores in the hinterland. Simon soon became a prosperous merchant who invested in many different trades, but his most successful was the fur exchange. Eventually, Simon would partner and conduct business with Franks, Levy and even the Gratz brothers as time went on Simon would become even more invested with these men. In addition to their business connections, Simon and the Gratz families were also intermarried. Michael Gratz married Joseph Simon's daughter, Miriam Simon in 1769, which helped solidify their business and family. Eventually, Simon joined with his friends in a new company; they combined their efforts called it,

¹¹⁶ Gratz, "Account with David Franks, 1760," Series II, Box 2, Folder 64. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers.

¹¹⁷ Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 17.

Simon, Levy, Trent and Franks firm. The new firm concentrated on the fur trade. Simon was invaluable to the company because he was the key link to the peltry and Indian trade on the frontier because of his good connections with Indian traders such as George Croghan and William Trent. These men were key to the Philadelphian merchants who sought the backcountry market because they helped unlock the Indian market. As the Seven Years War ended, these men hoped for a great return of profit as business once again opened up to the Indian trade.

William Trent

William Trent, influential frontiersmen, Indian deputy, army officer, and trader in his own right, joined with Simon, Franks, and Levy in an effort to make the firm more profitable. Born in 1715, most likely in Philadelphia, William Trent grew up in formative years of colonial Pennsylvania.¹¹⁸ Born a son of a wealthy Philadelphian merchant with the same name, Trent learned early in his life the business of commerce.¹¹⁹ From his early twenties, Trent was heavily involved in trade in Lancaster. Trent was a good friend and business partner with George Croghan. During their involvement in the French and Indian War, they worked together in the firm, *Trent and Croghan*, to sell merchandise to the Indians. The war caused the firm to go bankrupt, as it could not maintain a business while also doing diplomatic and military missions. Before the French and Indian War, Trent accepted a commission from the colony of Virginia. He was responsible for Indian recruitment for the British. During the war, several times George

¹¹⁸ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 3. No records exist of the exact date and place of William Trent's birth.

¹¹⁹ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 2. His father was also named William Trent and when the family moved to New Jersey and settled in Trenton's Town in 1719. Eventually the name was shortened to Trenton and now is the State Capitol.

Washington blamed Trent for abandoning his post. The feud between Washington and Trent even sparked the Captain Trent to send his men home in protest of young Colonel Washington's orders.¹²⁰ Trent came under fire for his actions, but that did not hinder him from returning to his business.

Throughout the French and Indian War, Trent served as the Assistant Deputy Indian Agent of the Crown at Fort Pitt.¹²¹ He used his position to help his own business as an Indian trader. During Pontiac's Rebellion, Trent returned to the army; earning a field promotion for his defense of Fort Pitt. Before the attack on Fort Pitt, Trent was a Captain in the British Army. Before the first assault, Captain Simeon Ecuyer named Trent the Major Commandant of the militia.¹²² He helped prepare the outpost's defense for a siege. Fort Pitt and its garrison survived the uprising, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Although a merchant by trade, Trent did not mind military service. While living and working on the frontier during violent times, the military and civilian worlds overlapped and blended together to such a degree that Trent's commission did not hurt his business ventures.

After Pontiac's Rebellion, Trent became a minor partner in *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks* and focused on the fur trade. The firm used Lancaster as a base of operation. As an Indian diplomat, Trent had direct access to the Native Americans whom wanted European goods for their pelts. Thus, Trent became an invaluable member of this civilian firm. He also became an attorney for his fellow merchants and "Sufferers of 1763," who gathered damage claims to present a memorial to the British Crown. Trent's versatility

¹²⁰ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 59.

¹²¹ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 72.

¹²² Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 112.

was one of the reasons he was able to adapt and survive so many different situations throughout the Revolutionary period.

George Croghan

One of the most famous Indian agents and traders in the American backcountry was George Croghan. Born in Dublin, Ireland, Croghan migrated to the New World in 1741 and began his illustrious career in North America during King George's War (1744-1748).¹²³ Following the war, Croghan continued trading with the Indians along the frontier. He steadily became well known for his work with the natives. He traded furs and goods, but became active in land speculation, as well.¹²⁴

Croghan and Trent briefly came together to form a trading company with Richard Hockley. King George's War interrupted the French and Indian trade, which allowed British traders like Hockley, Croghan and Trent to pick up the slack in business. Essentially, Hockley financially backed Trent and Croghan in their scheme to make a profit in the Indian trade. As biographer Nicholas Wainwright stated "Each of the three partners put £368 Pennsylvania currency to enable Croghan to purchase some goods and horses," which would not delay them when Trent returned from London.¹²⁵ In 1749, William Trent ventured to London to purchase the goods that they would trade to the Native Americans. Eventually, Trent returned to America on the newly built ship, *Myrtilla*, which was owned by David Franks and Levy Nathan Levy. Trent brought with

¹²³ Albert Tangeman Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark company, 1926). 23-24.

¹²⁴ James Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 295.

¹²⁵ Nicholas Wainwright, "An Indian Trade Failure: The Story of the Hockley, Trent and Croghan Company, 1748-1752." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 72, no. 4 (1948), 353.

him a cargo load of “lines, nails, calicoes, Indian hoes, hatchets, looking glasses, thimbles, knives, flints, kettles, guns, vermilion, strouds, and twenty barrels of cannon and pistol powder.”¹²⁶ The men incurred a large debt with this fledgling trading firm, which was largely promised to make a sizeable return profit from peltry. However, the return was not what the men expected because of they fell on bad luck. Unfortunately, Trent contracted a disease that kept him incapacitated for much of the summer and Croghan continued to run the company into debt. However, profits gradually increased without competition from the French. Nonetheless, once the French trade returned and the Philadelphia merchants felt competition from the French and their fellow British traders from Virginia, the early Indian trading business failed because of their poor decisions, debt, and bad fortune. The lesson learned for this episode in Trent and Croghan’s life was that money could be made in the west, but they needed to have enough capital to keep the gears greased to maintain a good inventory and a steady income. Despite their shortcomings in this first adventure together, the Seven Years’ War presented a fresh opportunity to cultivate trade in the west.

During the Seven Years War, Croghan demonstrated his importance to British-Native American relations. In 1755, General Edward Braddock led an Army to the Forks of the Ohio; George Croghan led an Indian scouting party for the British.¹²⁷ In addition to leading the scouting party, Croghan also furnished packhorses to the expedition. This military excursion met with disaster during the summer of 1755 with the defeat of

¹²⁶ Wainwright, “An Indian Trade Failure,” 355.

¹²⁷ Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782*, 92.

Braddock.. Croghan survived the battle and continued on in his work as Deputy Indian Agent under Sir William Johnson, the Indian Superintendent of the Northern Colonies.

During the French and Indian War, Trent and Croghan worked closely with the British Army. Both men played an important role in the defense of the British frontier. They had a large influence over Britain's Native American allies, especially the Six Nations. In addition to diplomatic and intelligence gathering missions with the Indians Trent and Croghan were instrumental in convincing the Indians to side with the British or to remain neutral. Along with his duties as a government official, Trent entered into another business partnership this time with *Simon, Levy, and Franks*. They used Trent's Indian contacts to spur the fur trade in the Ohio Country. The financial alliance was deemed an "adventure" that allowed them to continue their other activities including Trent's military career.¹²⁸ Croghan was also a key associate with the new *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks*. Although not a partner, Croghan used the firm to procure European goods to trade with the Indians. As a government official, Croghan used the Crown's accounts to purchase this merchandise. Thus, Croghan was both an important customer and a broker for the firm.

Croghan's importance and power was demonstrated at the Easton Conference during the Seven Years' War. Beginning in 1756, Pennsylvanian diplomats met with Indians under the leadership of Teedyuscung met at a town called Easton located on the Delaware River. Here both sides agreed to nominally bring peace to the frontier. However, the peace talks did little to stop the fighting on the frontier because the western Indians, who were not at the conference, continued their raids.

¹²⁸ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 88.

By 1756, fears on the frontier grew to a fever pitch. The French and Indians continued their attacks on the British outposts, including Fort Granville. Five hundred French and Indians took the fort and burnt it to the ground.¹²⁹ In retaliation for Fort Granville's destruction, Colonel John Armstrong destroyed the Indian village of Kittanning. Bloodshed in the borderlands necessitated for another conference at Easton.

The second conference at Easton convened in November of 1756 when Chief Teedyuscung and Iroquois representatives met with Pennsylvanian authorities in the town. In attendance of this meeting were Benjamin Franklin, Conrad Wieser, and Lieutenant Governor William Denny. The Lieutenant Governor had instructions from the British government to not make peace with the Indians.¹³⁰ However, Denny allowed the Indians to state their claims and express their demands; meanwhile the Pennsylvanian Assembly passed laws for the defense of the colony. War had begun and seemed to have no end in sight.

George Croghan played a critical role in these Indians conferences because he represented Sir William Johnson and the interest of the Crown. In the spring of 1757, Croghan met with the Six Nations and their allies at John Harris' Ferry in present day Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Croghan attempted to persuade the Iroquois to join them in their fight against the French but at the very least to ease the tensions between the English and the Delaware. Teedyuscung, a Delaware chief tried to assert his autonomy from the Six Nations, but he remained agitated by the fraudulent memories of the Walking

¹²⁹ William Clapham, "Col. William Clapham to Gov. Morris August 14, 1756," Samuel Hazard ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, (Harrisburg: Printed by Joseph Severns & co, 1853), Vol II., 744.

¹³⁰ Kevin Kenny. *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 89.

Purchase.¹³¹ The Delaware King had begun to lose sway with his Indian Brethren. Even with the first few conferences at Easton, hostilities continued along the Pennsylvanian frontier. In the fall of 1758, the final and greatest conference took place at Easton. Here Croghan, Weiser, and others met with representatives of the Indian nations to discuss peace.¹³² Croghan represented Sir William Johnson who could not attend the meeting.¹³³ At Easton, the differences between the Teedyuscung, the Delaware, and the Six Nations came to a head. Eventually, Croghan used his connections with the Six Nations to bring about a peaceful settlement between the Delaware and the Iroquois.¹³⁴

This peace conference coincided with the methodical westward movement of General Forbes' Army. British forces put pressure on the western Indians to leave their French allies and come to terms with the British. After the Easton conference concluded, Croghan joined General Forbes in his road-making mission to the Fork of the Ohio. Forbes used Croghan as mediator to appease the local Indian chiefs as the British Army moved westward to Fort Pitt.¹³⁵ The series of conferences at Easton, coupled with the British capture of Fort Duquesne, played an important role in curbing the hostilities on the American frontier in Pennsylvania.

War provided an opportunity for men like Croghan to serve his Empire and his own pocketbook. His activities during the war ultimately opened the door for potential

¹³¹ Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 96.

¹³² Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 105.

¹³³ William Sir Johnson, "William Johnson to Governor Denny," *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*. Edited by James Sullivan. (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921) Vol. III, 2.

¹³⁴ Johnson, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, "William Johnson to Governor Denny" Vol III, 4. Talks about the Quaker Party who sided with the Delaware and pushed for Delaware autonomy. See Kenny for more information of this dispute.

¹³⁵ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 283.

avenues of profit in the western country. Along with his dealings with other merchants and as an Indian diplomat, Croghan also provided intelligence to British Army officers like General Forbes. For example in a letter to Johnson, Croghan discussed how the General asked him to send out two messengers to gather intelligence about the French strength at the Forks of the Ohio. According to Croghan, he suggested that Forbes was “Much att Loss for Intelegence from Ohio and Desir’d Me to Send Mesingers there for Intilegence which he would pay as this province Refuses to pay one farthing for Intilegence.”¹³⁶ As a slight toward the Pennsylvanian colonial government, Forbes offered a reward for any news of the French and their allies. While following the General’s orders, Croghan sent out messengers and they gathered the intelligence that the British Army needed. In his letter to Johnson Croghan describes the military intelligence as the following:

Agreeable to the Ginerals Desier I Sent out Mesingers & two of them are Return’d and Agree in thire Intilegence that there is a Greatt Number of Indians att Fort Duquesne and Say that ye. fort is Rainferst with 3000 Men whome I supose are those that was hovering in ye Lake when I Left ye house. Likewise they Say that the french has very Strong outt Works, all ye. Intilegence I have Received I have Sent to General Forbiss and in a few Days I Expect ye Return of two Mesingers who I Sent to Fort Duquesne and by whom I Expect a full account of ye Strength of ye Enemys Works and ye Number of Indians & french which Peice of Intilegence I hope will be of Service to General Forbiss.¹³⁷

Later on in the same letter to Johnson, Croghan expresses his thoughts on the war. He wrote, “I wish you Joy of the Success his Majestys Trups has in Euerup and Cape Breton

¹³⁶ George Croghan, “Croghan to Johnson, September 21, 1758,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* Vol III, 3.

¹³⁷ George Croghan, “Croghan to Johnson, September 21, 1758,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* Vol III, 3.

with the Distruction of Catereque and ye Shipin which Must Weaken ye Enemy on ye Lake. I hope itt will have a good Effect on ye Minds of ye. Six Nations.”¹³⁸ This little comment in the letter to his superior gives a small window into Croghan’s loyalty to the Crown. He talks about how the controlling the lake would change the mind of the Six Nations. Croghan celebrates the good news of victory believing that it will turn the tides of war in the favor of the British. Denny also wrote to William Johnson exclaiming Croghan’s work to the Crown. He stated, “Mr. Croghan has exerted himself on all occasions for the good of His Majesty's service, and it required his peculiar address to manage the Indians, and counteract the designs of a wretched and restless faction.”¹³⁹ Denny’s glowing endorsement of Croghan demonstrates how many saw the Indian trader/diplomat during the war.

Croghan’s double life as a diplomat and a merchant earned him a dubious reputation with British Army officers such as Bouquet. In 1760, while conducting business near Fort Presque Isle in present day Erie, Pennsylvania, Croghan and Bouquet disagreed over how Croghan issued rations to the Native Americans.¹⁴⁰ Croghan acted in secrecy whenever he wanted to use Army provisions as gifts to impress the Indians. Colonel Bouquet commented to General Monckton about Croghan and his men, “I never could get a Satisfactory Account of the Provisions Issued to them: There is a veil kept over the transactions of our managers which will not disappear till we get rid of them

¹³⁸ George Croghan, “Croghan to Johnson, September 21, 1758,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* Vol III, 3.

¹³⁹ William Denny, “William Denny to Johnson, October 24, 1758,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol III, 10-11.

¹⁴⁰ Nicholas B Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat.*, (Chapel Hill: Published by the University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 177.

all.”¹⁴¹ On several occasions Croghan withdrew large quantities of flour from the stores of Fort Pitt to appease the Indians that he dealt with in the surrounding areas. The officers like Bouquet saw this flour as provisions for their troops, not for trade or gifts to the Native Americans. Croghan viewed the supplies as the Crown’s provisions, which he had a claim to, as he was the King’s Agent to the Indians. Croghan worked the system to his advantage, being both an Indian official and also a trader. Thus, war provided Croghan an opportunity to serve himself, his friends, and his King.

The war provided some men like Croghan and companies like *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks* with opportunities to succeed, while it brought economic strife to others. For example, the company, *Baynton and Wharton* experienced huge losses during the war. Therefore, once peace was secured, they were willing to send out ventures in hopes of making up for lost time and money.

Business Rivals: Baynton and Wharton

One of the main rivals to David Franks and his companies was the Philadelphia trading firm, *Baynton and Wharton*. Born in 1726, John Baynton was the son of a wealthy Philadelphia merchant Peter Baynton, He followed in the footsteps of his father into the import and export business. Around 1754, John Baynton teamed up with another merchant’s son, Samuel Wharton. Born in 1732, Wharton came from a long family of Philadelphia merchants, including his cousin Thomas Wharton, who would eventually become the President of Pennsylvania during the American Revolution. Samuel Wharton would also later serve as a delegate to the Continental Congress from Delaware. Nonetheless, The Philadelphia trading company—*Baynton and Wharton*—traded many

¹⁴¹Bouquet, “Bouquet to Monckton, Dec 29, 1760,” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet*, Vol V, 218.

goods from luxurious silk to large amounts of wheat.¹⁴² Like other merchants, they owned a store on Water Street in Philadelphia. They first focused their business to the Atlantic and then sold those goods in America. The items they bought and sold varied vastly, including alcohol, hay, silk, and other luxury items.¹⁴³

The Seven Years War and the opening of new markets in the interior of the continent welcomed fresh prospects for American colonial merchants. *Baynton and Wharton* continued their efforts in the Atlantic and Caribbean worlds, but also moved to compete in the Ohio Country. The firm maintained their agents in Lisbon, Kingston, London, and Nova Scotia. However, the lure of a prospective yield to be made on the American frontier convinced *Baynton and Wharton* to invest monies into the Indian trade. *Baynton and Wharton* watched their rivals David Franks and his associates make investments in the frontier trade and they decided to follow suit. The potential profits to be gained in the fur trade allowed these Philadelphia merchants to go on to new adventures in the Ohio Country.

In 1760, *Baynton and Wharton* sponsored three separate ventures to the frontier including shops in Quebec, Detroit, and Pittsburgh.¹⁴⁴ The timing of these trips coincided with the military defeat of the French in the Seven Years War. When General Jeffery Amherst captured Quebec, the British then controlled a majority of North America, but peace did not come officially until 1763. With the end of the major fighting, the company scrambled to make some money. While, *Plumsted and Franks* supplied the British Army, *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks* started to see a return of the fur trade.

¹⁴² Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 4.

¹⁴³ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 4-5.

Baynton and Wharton to join them in the Indian fur trade. However, *Baynton and Wharton* did not have the family and government connections like that of their rivals. The Jewish firms had William Trent and George Croghan in their pocket. Therefore, *Baynton and Wharton* had trouble securing the necessary connections to compete on the frontier. The young partnership had limited resources and connections compared to their rivals. Thus, *Baynton and Wharton* struggled compared to *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks*.

Despite their shortcomings, *Baynton and Wharton* run into some luck to help get them out of their financial burdens. The *Baynton and Wharton* firm employed a young clerk named George Morgan. Born in 1743, he was a son of a wealthy merchant who had passed away when George was a young boy. As an orphan, Morgan entered a clerkship with John Baynton when he was about thirteen.¹⁴⁵ The young Morgan learned about commerce from both his mentors, especially Baynton, his future father-in-law. Morgan was not a partner of the firm until 1763. As he toiled as a clerk, Baynton and Wharton saw the potential in their young apprentice. In addition to his first-hand education as a merchant, Morgan had a sizeable inheritance from his father allowing him to finance the unstable trading house.¹⁴⁶ Baynton and Wharton convinced their young clerk to join them as a junior partner, using his sizeable fortune to invest in their company. In 1763, the young twenty-year-old Morgan joined the firm as a partner creating a new company called *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

The Seven Years War allowed some merchants to prosper like *Plumsted and Franks*, and hurt companies such as *Baynton and Wharton* who overstretched on the

¹⁴⁵Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 1.

¹⁴⁶ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 6.

frontier. The companies relied on credit from London to prop up their firms. Believing that a great profit could still be made on the frontier and they would be able to quickly pay back their debts, *Baynton and Wharton* went ahead with their risky adventures.

The Aftermath of The Seven Years' War

War allowed the merchants of Philadelphia to expand their businesses and it offered them new markets out west. Yet, it also shaped how these men saw themselves as subjects to the British Crown. Even on the edge of the empire, these men understood themselves to be British. War is a double-edged sword when it comes to trade and business. On one hand it can benefit a firm that is contracted with the Army but it also can hurt civilian trade. The capture of Quebec and the conquest of Canada by the British secured their victory over the French in North America. News of the British victory spread throughout the colonies and the backcountry, as it was an event to be celebrated. Despite the good news in Canada, the frontier remained a dangerous and volatile environment. Native Americans still were waging war against the British because the news of the French defeat had not reached them or they chose to ignore it. The British Army recognized the Indian threat and continued to maintain their forces on the frontier. George Croghan continued to observe the enemy natives and reported various rumors and intelligence. For example, on June 17, 1760, Croghan wrote about the Indians around Fort D'Troit and their designs on the British outposts. However, these early threats did not come to fruition until 1763. Despite these threats, the merchant firms needed to make up for the lost profits suffered during the French and Indian War.

After the fall of Canada, desperate for a profit the Gratz brothers began to send out their agents into the frontier and former New France. Barnard Gratz bankrolled an

adventure to Quebec selling goods to soldiers and civilians alike. February 23, 1761, Gratz's agent Preston Paine wrote a letter describing the "Extrem Bad Weather" and how it effected the goods the merchant sent to Quebec.¹⁴⁷ With some good news, Paine reported that "90 gallons of Geneva is sold at seven shilling per gallon,-- the money not yet received, though in safe hands."¹⁴⁸ However, the weather and rodents wreaked havoc on some of the goods including "Your fourteen pair of leather breeches got all wet on board the sloop, likewise much rat-eaten, so that I fear they will not fetch near the first cost."¹⁴⁹ Paine further suggests why the goods were exposed to the bad weather on the journey. He states, The reason of the breeches getting wet was on account of a sea staving in the deadlights in extream bad weather, which almost filled the cabin, by which means, I am likewise a sufferer, as my chest and whatever articles I had in the cabin were under water."¹⁵⁰ The journey was filled with peril and strife; it took sixty days and the sloop "arrived to this harbor a mear wreck."¹⁵¹ The trip to Quebec was risky but Paine believed despite the rough weather and misfortune of ruined goods, they could fetch a decent return if they sold the right items. For instance, Paine wrote, "Shoes are a most unsalable article. The Garrison has a supply sufficient to serve all Canada for two years. Neat dancing pumps would have sold well, Pumps and moccasins are wore in this place,

¹⁴⁷ Preston Paine, "Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53

¹⁴⁸ Paine, "Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53.

¹⁴⁹ Paine, "Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53.

¹⁵⁰ Paine, "Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53.

¹⁵¹ Paine, "Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761," in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53.

Summer and Winter by all except soldiers . . . As I am of the opinion it will be in my power to do business to better advantage in this place for the future on account of my becoming acquainted with the French.”¹⁵² The newly conquered French provided Paine and Gratz a new market to sell their goods. Paine’s trip to Quebec was one of the many irons that Bernard Gratz had in the fire.

Even before the official end of the war, these Philadelphia merchants were so desperate for money, they were willing to trade with their enemy: the French. The ideology of merchants like Gratz was business. If they could make money, it did not matter who their customers were. Regardless of loyalty, these merchants wanted to make money, especially since the war had nearly ruined them.

The Philadelphia merchants pushed hard to recoup their losses by moving into the war-torn frontier. They were desperate for the return of profits. One of the keys to this frontier economy was the fur trade. In reviving the fur trade, Lancaster became one of the central hubs for the business. Joseph Simon collected furs for the Gratz Brothers and then shipped them to the store in Philadelphia. In Simon’s letter to Gratz, he lays out the exact amount of skins including beaver, raccoon, and other animals.¹⁵³ The shipment of furs also included a load of “Fall skins” for *Baynton and Wharton*, as well.¹⁵⁴ In the same letter, Simon requests that Gratz acquire him certain articles including clothing,

¹⁵² Paine, “Preston Paine to Barnard Gratz, February 23, 1761,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 53.

¹⁵³ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, August 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 56.

¹⁵⁴ Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, August 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 56.

saddlecloth, linen, sugar, coffee, steel padlocks, a German flute, and blue melting pots.¹⁵⁵ Simon suggested that he could sell these items and make a “reasonable retailing profit.”¹⁵⁶ Simon is simply about making money, he even requests “1 barrel good coffee, -- buy it cheap.”¹⁵⁷

Each merchant maintained their own accounts and purchased items based on demand from their customers. The Jewish merchants worked together with each other in order facilitate their own businesses. For example, Barnard and Michael Gratz often purchased goods from David Franks especially when they started their firms. The mercantile world of Philadelphia and the frontier was a small network where everyone knew each other and sometimes was relatives either by blood or covenant. Even smaller was the Jewish contingent of merchants in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

The news of British triumph in Canada spread quickly in late 1760. Victory brought a newfound confidence in the return of trade. The merchants of Philadelphia began to reinvest by sending goods to the frontier again. More goods continued to be purchased from across the Atlantic. For example in November 1760, Michael Gratz purchased cargo from Solomon Henry to stock his store. Henry shipped the goods on Franks’ ship the *Myrtilla* and was insured for £100.¹⁵⁸ The following year the Gratzes also sponsored an adventure southward to the Southern colonies with William McKee.

¹⁵⁵ Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, August 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 56-57.

¹⁵⁶ Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, August 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 56.

¹⁵⁷ Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, August 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 56.

¹⁵⁸ Solomon Henry, “Solomon Henry to Michael Gratz, November 17, 1762,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 51.

Indebted to the Gratz, McKee chartered a sloop to send goods to Philadelphia including “25 hogsheads of tobacco, 400 bushels oats and 200, Indian corn, which I am in hopes if anything of good markets, will nearly discharge my account”¹⁵⁹ This adventure southward had some interest from the Gratz brothers and David Franks, when they saw a chance to make a profit. They even came together and chartered a sloop to have McKee go to the Carolinas with the intent of trading. However, during the summer of 1763 McKee and the sloop the *Ranger* disappeared.¹⁶⁰

Joseph Simon also received new shipments from England. He advertised the new arrivals in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in February 1762. The advertisement listed an extensive list of goods including hardware to luxury items like silver watches and seals.¹⁶¹ The articles named in the advertisement were “numerous . . . [and] too tedious to mention.”¹⁶² Retailing was a large portion of these merchants businesses. Simon had a permanent store in Lancaster where he lived, but he also supplied other stores on the frontier like at Fort Pitt and Fort Bedford. *Baynton and Wharton* also had stores on the frontier.

The war for markets did not exactly happen as envisioned by the British, but retail and the fur trade slowly returned to the frontier. Yet, the recovery occurred— just not as fast as the Philadelphia merchants wanted it to. Therefore rival merchant firms like *Baynton and Wharton* and *Simon, Levy, Trent, and Franks* came together and attempted

¹⁵⁹ William McKee, “William McKee to Barnard Gratz, July 9, 1761,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 54.

¹⁶⁰ William McKee, “William McKee to Barnard Gratz, July 9, 1761,” in Byars, *B. And M. Gratz Merchants In Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 54, in the notes.

¹⁶¹ Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1762.

¹⁶² Advertisement, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, February 11, 1762.

to recoup their losses, but that was not until after the final blow to the peltry trade occurred in the summer 1763. From the fall of Quebec to the spring of 1763, there was an uneasy peace in the western lands. The British increasingly moved westward looking for economic opportunities and the Native Americans resented that invasion. Furthermore, the Indians (in their viewpoint) did not receive fair trade from the British merchants. As most of the western tribes were former allies to the French, the British military halted certain items that the Indians could acquire such as powder and shot. Tensions rose on the frontier and dark rumors swirled but nothing major happened until the spring of 1763. In the spring of 1763, war would come again and Pontiac's Rebellion would once again heavily damage the merchant firms of Philadelphia that survived the Seven Years' War. The Indian uprising would forever change these men's future.

Summary

The Seven Years' War marked the genesis of the British Empire, which gave the merchants of Philadelphia a new sense of hope. During the war, several upstart firms such as *Plumsted and Franks* prospered economically by supplying the British Army with provisions; but their real priority was the lucrative fur trade. Unfortunately, the Seven Years' War disrupted the peltry trade. Thus, unstable firms such as *Baynton and Wharton* struggled to make any profit during the conflict. The British victory over the French brought hope and encouragement to the merchants, because they expected the frontier fur trade to instantly return to its pre-war prosperity. The reality was quite the opposite. Nonetheless, the merchants had a bright business forecast for the future within the victorious British Empire.

CHAPTER III
THE TURNING POINT

Pontiac's Rebellion

1763 started like the any other year during the Seven Years' War. Even though the French surrendered to the British in 1760, tension and terror continued in the backcountry creating an uncomfortable peace. Yet, despite the rumors and fears, life tried to return to normalcy for the traders, soldiers, and settlers on the frontier, but there was a violent storm on the horizon.

Violence erupted about 3 o'clock in the afternoon on May 28, near the Youghiogheny River 1763 just south of Pittsburgh when an unknown Native American war party attacked the residence of Colonel William Clapham. The next morning, three men from Clapham's farm arrived at Fort Pitt and informed that Clapham and several others, including two women and a child, had been killed. As Captain Simon Ecuyer described in a letter to Colonel Henry Bouquet, "the Indians killed Clapham, and pillaged and massacred everything in house."¹⁶³ Indian trader William Trent recorded the initial report in his journal: "The women that were killed at Col. Claphams, were treated in such a brutal manner that Decency forbids the Mentioning."¹⁶⁴ The gruesome murders placed the outpost on high alert. Pontiac's Rebellion had come to Pennsylvania.

Late in the evening of May 30, 1763, Ecuyer informed Bouquet of another Indian attack: this time two men working at a nearby sawmill. Both men had their scalps taken

¹⁶³ Simon Ecuyer, Ecuyer to Henry Bouquet May 29, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 193.

¹⁶⁴ William Trent, edited by A.T Volwiler, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 11, No 3, Dec 1924, 394.

and a tomahawk was left a declaration of war.¹⁶⁵ The Indians also stole four of the King's horses from the sawmill.¹⁶⁶ There were other acts of violence. Ecuyer wrote about Daniel Collet, a horse driver, who had heard that "King Beaver [of the Delaware tribe] had warned Thos. Cohoun to depart immediately with all the white men that he could take and he would give them 3 Indians to escort them; but when they reached Beaver Creek they were attacked, and he alone arrived here with much difficulty."¹⁶⁷ Collet believed that the whole party was killed "for he heard 7 or 8 death cries."¹⁶⁸ The survivor also brought news of raids at Sandusky and Detroit. This news concerned Captain Ecuyer. "I think the uprising is general; I tremble for our posts. I think according to reports that I am surrounded by Indians. I am neglecting nothing to give them a good reception, and I believe we shall be attacked tomorrow morning. With the help of God I am passably ready" stated the commander of Fort Pitt.¹⁶⁹

Believing that the enemy was at his doorstep, Ecuyer ordered all settlers, soldiers, and traders to move inside Fort Pitt. The fort, he hoped, would provide protection for them; Ecuyer also called together the militia and formed two companies totaling eighty to ninety men.¹⁷⁰ Including the militia and the regular troops, Ecuyer now had roughly 250

¹⁶⁵ Simon Ecuyer, Ecuyer to Bouquet, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 195. Leaving a hatchet, war club, or a tomahawk was a symbol of war in Native American culture.

¹⁶⁶ Ecuyer, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 195.

¹⁶⁷ Ecuyer, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 195.

¹⁶⁸ Ecuyer, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 195.

¹⁶⁹ Ecuyer, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 195-196.

¹⁷⁰ Ecuyer, May 30, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 196.

men under his command.¹⁷¹ He described his men as “all determined to conquer or die.”¹⁷²

In the express letter to Bouquet, Ecuyer relayed the efforts he took to protect the King’s subjects at Pitt. The British Army issued tomahawks to all settlers to ensure they could protect themselves because the military did not have enough firearms and supplies to arm every settler.¹⁷³ In addition to issuing weapons, Ecuyer ordered the distribution of a limited supply of rations such as flour, bread, and meat. He even ordered that settler’s cattle be rounded up and be put under the watch of the Army “so that the savages [Indians] do not profit by our cattle.”¹⁷⁴ Although undersupplied for a prolonged battle, Ecuyer and the inhabitants of Fort Pitt prepared themselves as best as they could for an attack, even improvising defensive measures with animal traps. Ecuyer ordered all the beaver traps inside the Fort to be collected and set along the rampart.¹⁷⁵

As the siege began, one of the many people who were sheltered at Fort Pitt was trader Captain William Trent. The commander of Fort Pitt praised Trent stating, “the trader Trent is great help to me, he is always ready to help me, he has much intelligence and is very much recommended, I cannot say more.”¹⁷⁶ Ecuyer even granted Trent a field promotion making him a major and placing him in command of the militia (until later when they were mixed in with the regulars).

¹⁷¹ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

¹⁷² Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

¹⁷³ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

¹⁷⁴ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

¹⁷⁵ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

¹⁷⁶ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 202.

Meanwhile, Ecuyer pleaded for more money for preparation and supplying the post. He wrote to Bouquet imploring him, “I hope that His Excellency will find it just, reasonable and necessary. My pocket is empty, nothing remains there but 10 shillings. I should like to have a little more rum to give a drop from time to time to my brave men. They know my will and say nothing . . . I have done all for the best. If I have erred, it is in ignorance.”¹⁷⁷ In response to Ecuyer’s letters, Colonel Bouquet, in communication with General Jeffrey Amherst, stated that “I am in no Apprehension for your Post where no Indians will ever dare to Attack you openly, what you are to Guard against is a Surprise, to prevent which besides the Greatest Vigilance in the Fort.”¹⁷⁸ Bouquet recommended that Ecuyer keep up constant patrols, rest during the daytime, and save the powder “as you Possibly can, till you receive a new Supply with the first Regmt that will be sent up.”¹⁷⁹ Lastly, Bouquet emphthically replied, “I wait only for the Genlls orders to Join you. . . [and] Mr. Croghan is on his way up but won’t be able to join you till he has an Escort.”¹⁸⁰ This last intelligence was key, as British leaders believed that Croghan could calm down the worsening situation on the frontier by using diplomacy, especially Indian appeasement through the giving of gifts. Unfortunately, Croghan remained in the east and could not resolve the situation before war erupted.

Throughout that summer at Fort Pitt, Trent recorded the daily activities of the uprising in his journal. While some days were quiet, others were filled with small skirmishes like on July 2 about 7 o’clock in the morning when Indians appeared on

¹⁷⁷ Ecuyer, June 2, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 203.

¹⁷⁸ Bouquet, Bouquet to Ecuyer, June 5, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 208.

¹⁷⁹ Bouquet, Bouquet to Ecuyer, June 5, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 208.

¹⁸⁰ Bouquet, Bouquet to Ecuyer, June 5, 1763, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 208.

Grant's Hill driving off a number of cattle and shooting at the livestock.¹⁸¹ Other days saw more direct conflict. Trent recalls that "in the Morning the Indians [were] seen crossing the River by Shanopin's Town on Horseback and Swimming. About half an Hour after two o'clock they fired on our People in the Garden who I had desired not to stray as I was positive they were coming down but they paid no regard to it, they got in with only one Man wounded in the Knee, soon after they began firing on the Fort and Continued it the whole day and night."¹⁸² During this skirmish, Captain Ecuyer was "wounded in the Leg with an Arrow."¹⁸³ Fighting fluctuated daily but the violence always caused trauma and made everyday life on the frontier difficult.

After the first attack at the Clapham's estate, enemy Indians continued their raids in the surrounding area. By mid-June, the enemy had attacked and destroyed the forts in the North: Presque Isle, LeBoeuf, and Venango. On June 26, 1763, the survivors from Fort LeBoeuf reached Fort Pitt. They brought news of the demise of other nearby outposts. Indian forces next besieged Fort Pitt as the British Army and settlers took shelter in the fortification. Fort Pitt was well defended and the Indians could not break the defenses, so they decided to starve out the stronghold.

Several weeks before violence broke out near Fort Pitt, on May 16, 1763, Fort Sandusky fell to Native American forces that killed all the British in the outpost. Within weeks of the destruction of Sandusky, many other British outposts were destroyed or under siege by Indian combatants. The ringleader of the uprising was an Ottawa War

¹⁸¹William Trent, edited by A.T Volwiler, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 11, No 3, Dec 1924, 403.

¹⁸²William Trent, edited by A.T Volwiler, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 11, No 3, Dec 1924, 408.

¹⁸³William Trent, edited by A.T Volwiler, "William Trent's Journal at Fort Pitt," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 11, No 3, Dec 1924, 408.

Chief named Pontiac, who had been disillusioned by the British and sought to wage a holy war against them. Pontiac and his fellow warriors tried to drive the British eastward, back across the Appalachian Mountains. Native forces overran many of the smaller outposts including Miami, Sandusky, Presque Isle, LeBoeuf, and Venango. Nonetheless, three major strongholds at Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Niagara, persisted and withstood the enemy sieges. However, they ultimately failed to eliminate the British. In August, Bouquet and his force met the enemy at Bushy Run, just east of Pittsburgh. They routed the Indians and continued on to Fort Pitt to raise the siege. When Bouquet approached Pittsburgh, he expressed his thanks to the people of Fort Pitt stating:

The Colonel takes a particular pleasure in expressing to Major Trent how agreeable his services and those performed by the brave militia under his command are to him, and returns him his sincere thanks for the ready assistance he has constantly given to the commanding officer, desiring he will inform his officers and men of the grateful sense the Colonel has of their behavior. Nothing can be more agreeable to the Colonel than to have to represent to the General the merit of the officers and men who have contributed to the preservation of this important post, which particularly curbs the insolence and pride of the faithless savages and continues an immovable barrier against the impotence of their rage and perfidy.¹⁸⁴

The Colonel's praise for Trent and his garrison demonstrated that Trent served the British Empire well as a loyal subject of the King. It was a desperate time and while Trent was a merchant by vocation, he had become a citizen soldier when called upon. War forced Trent to join the cause for his own personal survival. Other merchants, who were not present in the combat zone—continued to do business, as frontier violence was just another factor of business like a natural disaster or a change in a political regime.

¹⁸⁴Mary C. Darlington, ed., *Fort Pitt and Letters from the Frontier*, New York: Arno Press, 1971, 171.

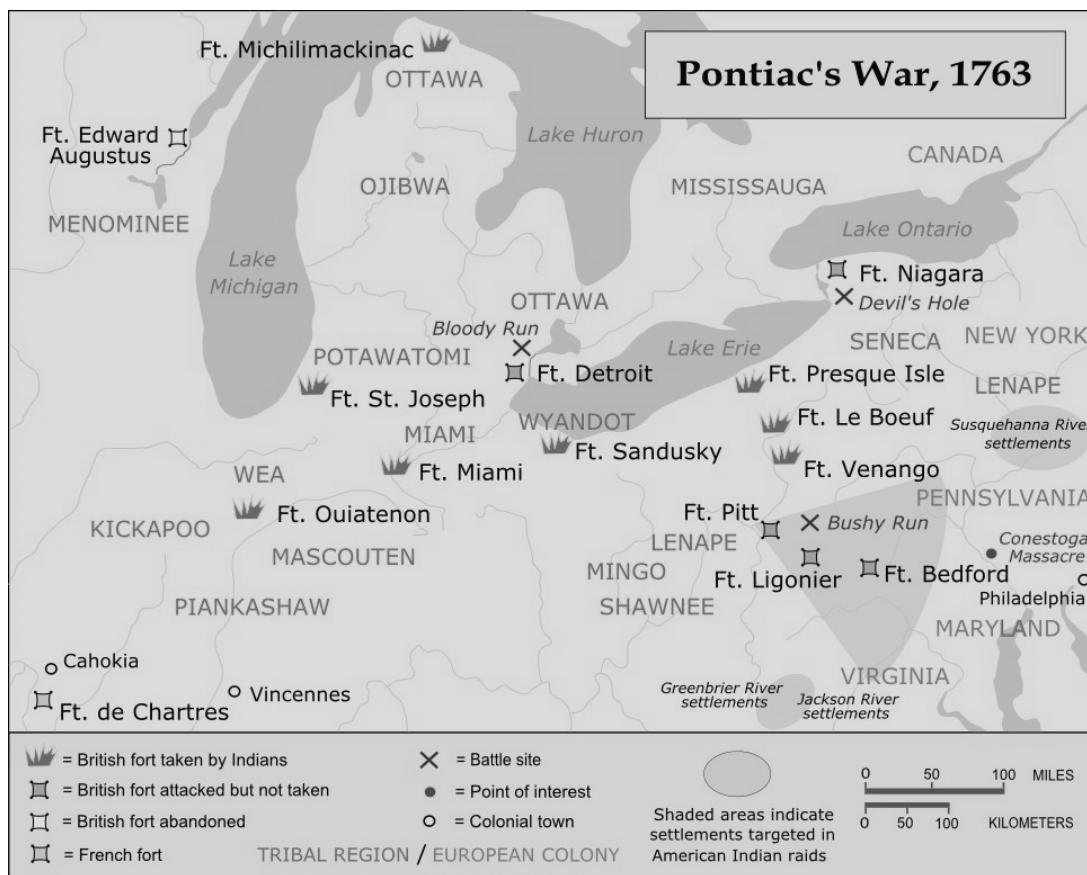


Figure 1. Map of Pontiac's War, 1763 (Public Domain, Labeled for Noncommercial Reuse).

The Business of War

As fighting rose along the frontier in 1763, the merchants worried about their own lot in life more than the military situation. Reports from the frontier remained sporadic in the early days of Pontiac's Rebellion, as much of the news was rumor. However, such melancholy news had the merchants of Philadelphia worried about their investments and properties in the west. While men like Trent and Croghan experienced the hostilities first hand. David Franks (along with Joseph Simon and William Plumsted) continued to supply the British Army with goods as well as operate their own store at Fort Pitt. In 1763, George Morgan became a partner in the new firm *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

Despite Pontiac's Rebellion, these merchants continued to trade as usual; however, they lost money because the Native American market shrank considerably with the conflict, as Indians were not able to visit the British stores. One reason for the decline in Indian business was a new religious movement. A Delaware Prophet named Neolin started the native religious revival that swept across the Ohio Country. The Delaware Prophet preached that "a rejection of dependence on the British through the avoidance of trade . . . and the gradual (not the immediate) abandonment of European-made goods" would restore order in their world.¹⁸⁵ Neolin's religious revival and ideology gained traction among the western Indians, specifically with Pontiac. The Ottawa war chief believed Neolin's vision and he attempted to wipe the British from the land. In the meantime, the traders felt the new movement in their pocketbook as many suffered greatly at the hand of the Indians' spirited resistance and boycotts.

As the war waged, the firm, *Baynton and Wharton*, began to experience a sharp decline in business. Expecting larger profits from the western trade, the firm was in financial disarray because of the conflict. The company's young clerk, George Morgan had recently inherited a sizeable amount of money from his father and became the firm's junior partner. While, he was only twenty-one years old, Morgan had learned the business well from his employers: Samuel Wharton and John Baynton. With their losses during Pontiac's Rebellion and the late war, Morgan's inheritance brought stability to the firm. Morgan's partnership was also cemented to the firm more socially, because he had caught the eye of young Mary Baynton, the daughter of John Baynton. In October 1764, Morgan took the fifteen-year-old Mary as his wife, planting himself firmly in the family

¹⁸⁵ Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992),33.

of his senior partner.¹⁸⁶ Things were looking up for Morgan and the firm; however, business was still highly unstable for most Philadelphia merchants.

The Gratz Brothers also continued trading on the frontier and in the Atlantic World network as the Indian uprising grew. Despite the low amounts of available pelts, the company still managed a few small transactions before the Indian fighting began at Fort Pitt. Working with Joseph Simon of Lancaster, the men purchased furs from Indians and trappers on the frontier. Simon wrote a letter to Barnard Gratz on May 30, 1763 asking for a variety of trading supplies, including sugar, tea, coffee, and chocolate in return.¹⁸⁷ However, Simon was worried about whether the furs that he was sending to Gratz would get there. Simon had sent 571 pounds of fur to Gratz, including 424 pounds of beaver pelts. Simon worried about the loose furs that were on the wagons. Simon instructed “always mention in [your] letters if you receive the loose skins I send you, by each wagon agreeable to my letter, as they may steal them.”¹⁸⁸ In addition to the business instructions, Simon was concerned about Barnard’s wife, as he had heard she was ill. He wished her a quick recovery.¹⁸⁹ This personal touch illuminates the close relationship and friendship these men had for each other and their families.

With furs only trickling in from the Pennsylvanian frontier, the Gratz brothers pursued other business ventures outside the war zone: in the Carolinas. They planned to

¹⁸⁶ Savelle, *George Morgan Colony Builder*, 7.

¹⁸⁷ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, March 30, 1763,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 47. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, March 30, 1763,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 47. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁸⁹ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, March 30, 1763,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 47. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

send goods to the southern colonies. David Franks also helped the Gratz in this southerly business adventure by offering them intelligence of the current situation. Franks wrote a letter to Michael Gratz explaining the disappearance of one of their agents, William McKee, and the “Good Sloop *Ranger*”¹⁹⁰ In the same letter, Franks broke the news about Pontiac’s Rebellion, “The Indians have begun a war near the Forts; killed and taken several people and traders and [Levy Andrew] Levy is a prisoner.”¹⁹¹ Surprised and worried Franks reported the rumor that the enemy had captured his relative and partner. However, Levy was alive and free, but had not communicated to his associates in some time. The Indian war on the frontier brought terror home to the merchants, but business had to go on.

Logistics and transporting goods to the outposts presented a major obstacle in the conflict. *Plumsted and Franks* quickly realized the problem it faced supplying Fort Pitt. On June 4, the merchants wrote a letter of concern to Colonel Bouquet. They believed they could not deliver a large number of cattle and barrels of flour to Fort Pitt under the circumstances. The merchants cautioned “From the Insurrection of the Indian which you have this night received that Account of We fear we shall not be able to without proper Esscort to supply that Garrison [Fort Pitt] with Provisions att any rate.”¹⁹² Without a military escort, *Plumsted and Franks* could not or would not supply Fort Pitt with provisions.

¹⁹⁰ David Franks, “David Franks to Michael Gratz, June 12, 1763,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 17. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁹¹ David Franks, “David Franks to Michael Gratz, June 12, 1763,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 17. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹⁹² Plumsted & Franks to Bouquet, “ Letter from Plumsted & Franks to Bouquet, June 4, 1763.” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume. PA State Archives: Harrisburg Pa.

In response to siege of Fort Pitt, Colonel Bouquet gathered his troops and methodically moved westward to relieve Fort Pitt. On August 5th, British forces met the enemy Indians about twenty-five miles east of Pittsburgh in area known as Bushy Run. After several days of fighting, the British dispersed the Indian force and continued onto Fort Pitt. Historian David Dixon called “The Battle of Bushy Run, the most complete victory the British ever achieved over Native American warriors.”¹⁹³ Current historiography debates the actual result of the battle. Colin Calloway does not see the British triumph as so clear-cut. He describes Bouquet’s success a “pyrrhic victory” because it was “In reality, it was a close thing.”¹⁹⁴ Regardless of the historic debate, the contemporary British claimed the victory and its news traveled fast. When David Franks heard about the triumph, he wrote a congratulatory letter to Bouquet elating, “It was with very great pleasure I heard of your Success against the Yellow Leggs, & getting safe to Ft. Pitt, May they [the Indians] Eternally meet with such a Scourge, & may all your Undertakings Answer agreeable to your Wishes.”¹⁹⁵ Franks ended the letter by saying “My Family Join in there Compl't & wishes for health & with great Esteem” to Colonel Bouquet, whom he had known personally.¹⁹⁶ Although subtle, Frank’s statement demonstrates the pride he has in the British Army because a battlefield victory was good

¹⁹³David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005),193.

¹⁹⁴ Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2006),88.

¹⁹⁵ David Franks, “ Letter from David Franks to Bouquet, August 29, 1763.” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume. PA State Archives: Harrisburg Pa. Yellow Leggs was possibly a general term for Indians.

¹⁹⁶ David Franks, “ Letter from David Franks to Bouquet, August 29, 1763.” *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume. Editor Donald Kent had prepared another volume for the Bouquet Papers to be published. However, the project was never finished and the unpublished volume is located at the Pennsylvania State Archives.

for business. In another letter, *Plumsted and Franks* echo this sentiment about Bouquet's victory. The trading company hoped "the Drubing you have given those infernals may here after prevent the roads being infested any more with them."¹⁹⁷ Until Bushy Run, *Plumsted and Franks* had continually worried about their business; they saw the victory in 1763 as a step toward reopening trade in the west.

Just as Franks congratulated Bouquet on his victory against the Indians, *Baynton and Wharton* also sent their blessings to the Colonel writing, "We embrace this opportunity, of transmitting to you and of very cordial congratulating you, on your happy and critical arrival at fort Pitt."¹⁹⁸ *Baynton and Wharton* went on, exclaiming: "with the happiest Consequences, to these Provinces But for the great assiduity, and Martial conduct, which you so conspicuously evinc'd thro' a very painfull, extensive, and hazardous March."¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, *Baynton and Wharton* stated "God Grant, That the severe, and unsimilar chastisement, which you have given those Savages, who attack'd You may be a Lesson, indelibly impress'd on Them and that they may soon, from Thence be incited to propose, such Overtures of Condescension, As injur'd Britons can receive."²⁰⁰ *Baynton and Wharton* displayed that they were good subjects of the British Empire by supporting their victorious commander; they were also happy to be making

¹⁹⁷ Plumsted and Franks, "Letter from Plumsted and Franks to Bouquet, August 30, 1763." *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

¹⁹⁸ Baynton and Wharton, "Letter from Baynton and Wharton to Bouquet, August 30, 1763." *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

¹⁹⁹ Baynton and Wharton, "Letter from Baynton and Wharton to Bouquet, August 30, 1763." *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

²⁰⁰ Baynton and Wharton, "Baynton and Wharton to Bouquet, August 30, 1763." *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

money again. The Indian War did not stop the merchants and the Colonel from conducting personal business.

The success in the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's Rebellion united the colonists under the banner of British patriotism, which was good for business. They saw their futures as tied to British imperial expansion. Despite their losses during war, the merchants believed they were entitled to reimbursement in the form of land grants. This shift from the fur trade to land speculation on the frontier was essential for the merchant's future. Pontiac's Rebellion was a turning point for these frontier merchants because it forced them to look for new avenues of revenue: land speculation. Regardless, of the situation, the merchants believed the British government would compensate them for their damages. Unfortunately, their view of the British government would quickly change in a few short years.

While, these merchantmen showed support for their country and their clients in these letters; nonetheless, they cared about making money even more. This was only made more apparent after the violence on the frontier. *Plumsted and Franks* illustrated the need for peace on the frontier. The merchants reaffirmed their desires stating, "It will give us the greatest pleasure to hear of the safe Arrival of the Convoys as the fate of Our Frontiers much depend on itt's going safe up and hope you may have your posts in such a tranquil state."²⁰¹ Peace was desirable for business. Tranquility would allow these men actively trade with Indians. The merchants wanted peace to open trade as soon as possible. So much so that, their loyalty to the British Empire was superseded by their desire to trade—even with the former enemy. Despite the hatred and bitter feelings on the

²⁰¹ Plumsted and Franks, "Plumsted and Franks to Bouquet, November 4, 1763," *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

frontier the merchants felt that as soon as peace could be established, the trading firms should again start up business with the Native Americans.

Even with the uneasy peace, the fur trade slowed down to a trickle. All Indians were still public enemies to the British frontier settlers. Many times the racist views of settlers did not distinguish between different tribes, despite the fact that some Indians were loyal to the British. The frontier colonial population did not approve of the merchants trying to trade with the Indians. Many settlers saw all Native Americans as enemies.

In December 1763, several friendly Conestoga Indians were ambushed near present day Millersville, Pennsylvania by a group of vigilantes known as the Paxton Boys. Many of the friendly Conestoga Indians were Christian and had been peacefully living with their British neighbors. These frontiersmen indiscriminately murdered several Native Americans including six adults and eight children who sought refuge in Lancaster. Eventually, these men rode to Philadelphia to challenge the colonial government because they felt they were not being protected. Benjamin Franklin met with the gang in Germantown and convinced them to stop their mob activity in the Philadelphia area. Nonetheless, the Paxton Boys and the Conestoga Massacre demonstrate the unstable nature of the Pennsylvania frontier. Not only did violence disrupt life on the frontier, the losses in commerce also damaged the east coast merchants. After the attacks, *Plumsted and Franks* had trouble acquiring a license to continue supplying the frontier outposts with cattle, flour and other foodstuffs. General Jeffery Amherst the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army restricted trade to the frontier during the Indian insurrection, which also hindered business.

As subjects of the British Empire, the merchants were just cogs in a larger global trading machine. They relied on the authority from London to continue their quest to trade and eventually to move westward. In order to move westward they needed to have a network of communication and transportation to link them to the Eastern World. All the merchants relied on the trade of the Atlantic World to provide goods to their customers in Philadelphia and in the backcountry. These men were a small part of the Atlantic World and they were responsible for pushing it further into the interior of North America.

Pontiac's Rebellion forced rival traders Franks, Trent, Croghan, Wharton, and others met at the Indian Queen Tavern in Philadelphia to draw up their next plan of action. This was the first time the merchants worked collectively to petition the King for their losses in the late war.²⁰² George Croghan and Moses Franks, David's brother, was selected to present the group's memorial to the Crown. Croghan focused his attention to his finances instead of the present conflict. Even the infamous Indian agent had shirked his duties to the Army by refusing orders to accompany Colonel Bouquet to Fort Pitt in July 1763. At the time, Croghan cited bad health for not travelling westward with the Army. While, Croghan did not go with Bouquet, he was strong enough to sail to England to present the memorial to the British Ministry. Before he left, he queried Amherst if he could take a leave of absence from his post. The Commander in Chief refused Croghan's request. Croghan relayed his feelings to Bouquet:

I have Resigned out of ye Service & will Sail for England about ye beginning of December Sir Jeffrey Amherst wold Nott give his Consent So I Made My Resignation in Writing & gave my Resons for So Doing, I know Many people will think I am Wrong Butt had I continued I could be no more service then I have

²⁰² Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 128. The Indian Queen Tavern was also believed to be the place where the Constitutional Compromises were hammered out in backroom deals. The exact location of the tavern is not known other than on 4th and Chestnut St in Philadelphia.

been this Eighteen Months past wh [sic] was None Ataul, as No Regard was had to any intelligence I sent no more then to my opinion, I hope the Indian Warr att this Time will be Luckey for his Majestys Subjects heer after provided they are Sufficiently punished, Butt itt Dose Nott apeer to Me that ye General has Trupes [troops] A Nouff to Do itt this Fall, however I am Nott A Proper Judge of that.²⁰³

He felt that his services were not doing any good and he had other business to take care of in England. Ultimately, Croghan and Moses Frank represented his fellow merchantmen as they sought a government bailout for their losses on the frontier and this petition became know as the Sufferers of 1763.

The American traders had heavily supported the British war effort; therefore, they believed they should receive concessions from the former French lands as payment. Merchants suffered losses during the Seven Years' War and expected the government to bail them out with land grants. Furthermore, the merchants of Philadelphia suggest that the recent attacks in 1763 devastated their properties, so they added the recent injuries to their claims. The merchants filed the petition, claiming, "That Contrary of all Faith and in manifest Violation of the several late Treaties of Friendship and their several Engagements to protect and afford safe Conduct unto the said Traders, The natives have most barbarously murdered many of the said Traders and seized and robbed them of their Effects and expelled The Remainder from their Country."²⁰⁴

David Franks sent a letter along with their petition "A Bill of Exchange for Two Hundred Pounds Sterlg" to help speed along the application process of their memorial.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Croghan, "Croghan to Bouquet Oct 11, 1763," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 430-431.

²⁰⁴ David Franks, Baynton & Wharton, Coxe, Trent, "A Memorial of Merchants," *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol IV, 271.

²⁰⁵ David Franks Baynton & Wharton, Coxe, Trent, "Merchants to Moses Franks and George Croghan," *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol IV, 268.

Franks sent a bribe to the British officials in the hope that it would have expedited the process of their claim. In addition, the merchants also sent petitions to various Lords, including the Earl of Halifax and Sir Jeffery Amherst, explaining their dire situation caused by the late Indian uprising. For example one memorial stated, “We or the Traders who dealt with us, have sustained [losses] by the Hostilities of the French and Indians both in the present & former Indian War.”²⁰⁶ They asked the government to grant them some of the newly land as part of their reparations. The Sufferers of 1763 would then pay off their debts with the merchants in London with the profits made from the new land deals. Alas, the colonial merchants first had to prove to their creditors just how much they lost during the conflict. This was a difficult task because the “Traffick with the Savages, being entirely in the way of Barter without the Use of Books, renders it very difficult.”²⁰⁷ Despite their troubles, if the London merchant would sign off on their scheme, it would have strengthened their argument to the Ministry. The American merchants desperately suggested that they “are [to] become insolvent, Their Families involved in the deepest Distress and your Memorialists very great Suffers.”²⁰⁸ The memorialists communicated to the Ministry and to their creditors that without the government’s help they would go bankrupt. These men understood there was no guarantee of getting a land grant from the Crown, but they believed it was the best way to

²⁰⁶ David Franks Baynton & Wharton, Coxe, Trent, “Merchants to Moses Franks and George Croghan,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol IV, 268-269.

²⁰⁷ David Franks Baynton & Wharton, Coxe, Trent, “Merchants to Moses Franks and George Croghan,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol IV, 269.

²⁰⁸ David Franks, Baynton & Wharton, Coxe, Trent, “A Memorial of Merchants,” *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Vol IV, 271.

get compensated for their losses. Nonetheless, they optimistically waited for confirmation from London.

While waiting on word about the petition from London, Trent and merchants of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* continued to look for other potential avenues for profit. In October 1763, Trent resigned his military commission to concentrate on his affairs as a trader.²⁰⁹ On December 22, 1763, William Trent entered in an agreement with *Baynton and Wharton* to speculate on land in the west.²¹⁰ The men agreed to purchase about 1,500 acres of land in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, which then they would sell to new settlers.²¹¹ This new land scheme was just another way they could earn back the monies they lost in the recent war. Trent's agreement with *Baynton and Wharton* was not his only land speculation venture.

Croghan also entered into the land speculation business with *Baynton and Wharton*. Croghan joined the Philadelphia group to speculate on land in the west. The real reason Croghan had evaded his earlier duties to Bouquet was because he had contacted his superior Sir William Johnson for his advice, asking for permission to travel to England to seek compensations for their losses. However, Johnson did not give him a direct answer but suggested that he ask General Amherst for permission. When Amherst rejected his request, Croghan resigned his position and went solely into the land speculation and trading business. While Croghan returned from London, he again assumed his position as an Indian diplomat and trader.

²⁰⁹ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 126.

²¹⁰ William Trent Papers, Agreement between Baynton and Wharton and Trent, Box 1, Folder 1. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

²¹¹ William Trent Papers, Agreement between Baynton and Wharton and Trent, Box 1, Folder 1. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Despite the return of business after the wars, British Imperial supervision caused problems with the merchants supplying the British Army on the frontier. The Crown saw that it had been over-stretched financially in the past therefore it looked at a variety of ways to reduce its budget. One was to cut the Army budget on the frontier even under constant threat of another an Indian war. Adjunct General William Amherst issued an order to reduce soldier's rations in an attempt to save money for the Crown.²¹² Furthermore, administration issued a stoppage order to halt trade from the King's Store. Confused by the stoppage orders, Plumsted asked Bouquet to approve trading with the troops on the frontier. According to the orders, Plumsted's agents had been operating illegally, because they sold items out of the King's stores to people living in the protection of the forts during the Indian Uprising.²¹³ Seemingly, the British Army officers stationed in New York City did not understand the situation on the frontier and believed they had to cut government spending at ostensibly insignificant outposts. The Empire was bankrupt from the Seven Years' War and the government needed to retrench their Imperial finances and the outposts were their first targets.

On November 1, 1763, Pontiac, the Ottawa War Chief, requested peace with the British at Detroit.²¹⁴ Therefore, the winter of 1763 brought a ceasefire and an end to the enemy sieges. Simultaneously, the Crown ordered the replacement of the British Commander-in-Chief. That autumn, the Crown recalled Lord Jeffrey Amherst, who left

²¹²William Amherst, "W. Amherst: Revised Stoppage Orders," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 432.

²¹³ William Plumsted, "Plumsted to Bouquet Oct 13, 1763," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 433.

²¹⁴Pontiac, "Pontiac to Gladwin and the Reply, November 1, 1763," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 433. Bouquet made a copy of this note, which was passed to him via the way to Thomas Gage, his superior officer in New York.

for England aboard the (appropriately named ship) *Weasel*.²¹⁵ When Amherst left, Major General Thomas Gage took over as head of the British Army in North America. The merchants who had military contracts with the Army had to establish a new relationship with the new commander and accept his orders. *Plumsted and Franks* continued to supply the remaining forts with fresh provisions because their contract had to be honored by Gage. Eventually, Franks and Gage would have a disagreement, which would hinder Franks' attempt to renew his contract.

The role of merchants also helped send news and intelligence of happenings in the colonies and abroad. The merchants kept the officers on the frontier connected to the Atlantic World and the east. Sometimes, these merchants even carried express letters and packages to the officers on the frontier, which was crucial to the maintenance of a large force way far from home. News like Amherst's departure that *Plumsted and Franks* sent to Bouquet informing him that General Gage had been named his replacement.²¹⁶ Merchants were one of the links between home and the frontier. They created a network of communication that aided both the military and their own business.

Eventually merchants developed working relationships that sometimes evolved into close friendships with soldiers and officers. These relationships sometimes would become business partners in the future. For example, John Campbell of Fort Pitt became a friend of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. While in Pittsburgh, Campbell organized

²¹⁵ Plumsted & Franks, "Plumsted and Franks to Bouquet, November 12 1763," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 456-457; Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, (New York Vintage Books, 2001), 553

²¹⁶ Plumsted & Franks, "Plumsted and Franks to Bouquet, November 12 1763," *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 455-457.

and purchased boats for the firm for their Illinois adventure. Campbell was just one member of an essential network on the frontier that connected the east with the west.

Regardless of their constant communication, *Plumsted and Franks* still worried that they did not have the proper licensure to trade on the frontier. The confusion was about the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited merchants and settlers from traveling west of the Appalachian Mountains. As a government contractor *Plumsted and Franks* could operate in the west only to supply the forts. But they did not understand the confusing law. The new year of 1764 ushered in a renewed British campaign against the western Indians. While the merchants continued to send cattle, flour, and other supplies westward, in June 1764, General Gage informed them that their contracts with the Crown had expired.²¹⁷ However, business did not stop. The firm, *Plumsted and Franks*, continued until William Plumsted fell ill and had to back out of company. In August 15, 1765, the former mayor of colonial Philadelphia succumbed to an unknown malady leaving behind his family and business.²¹⁸ At Plumsted's request, he did not have a extravagant funeral but a simple and plain ceremony at St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia. Nonetheless, Franks and the business continued despite the loss of his friend and partner.

Replacing the late Plumsted, David Franks entered into a new agreement with John Inglis to continue to supply the British Army on the frontier. Inglis was a Scottish merchant born in 1708 who lived in the West Indies before he moved to Philadelphia. *Franks and Inglis* had an arrangement with Sir Jeffrey Amherst to support the military.

²¹⁷ Thomas, Gage, Clarence Edwin Carter, "Gage to Plumsted and Franks, June 22, 1764," *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, Vol 2, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931,) 234-236.

²¹⁸ Eugene Devereux, *Chronicles of the Plumsted Family with Some Family Letters Compiled and Arranged with Notes*, (Philadelphia: SN, 1887), 39. Not much is known about Plumsted's death other than he was buried in St. Peter's Churchyard, a church he helped found.

However, his term as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army was short lived when the Knight of Bath was recalled to England and replaced by General Thomas Gage. Franks and Gage did not have a comfortable relationship; in fact the two also had a clash of personalities. The new Commander in Chief did not find the Jewish merchant as reliable and friendly as his predecessor. Despite this, Franks remained active with the trading on the frontier and he maintained his affiliation with the British Army. Although Franks still supplied the Army, his other businesses on the frontier were coupled with Joseph Simon and the Gratz brothers. The merchants had to keep their business diversified as it gave them a better opportunity to succeed. While the fur and merchandise trade an important part of Franks' business, the Army contract was his main priority.

Despite Gage's feud with Franks in 1765, *Franks and Iglis* continued as the main supplier for food to Fort Pitt. On February 4, 1765, they signed a one-year agreement to supply Gage and the British Army on the Pennsylvanian frontier.²¹⁹ Prophetically, the agreement was "sealed and Delivered in North America where no Stamp'd paper is now used," which was a larger political issue.²²⁰ However, despite the political convulsions of 1765, *Franks and Iglis* sustained the shipments of cattle and flour to the frontier.

In the fall of 1764, Croghan returned from England where he had attempted to persuade Parliament to accept their memorial for the Suffers of 1763. Croghan failed to sway Parliament. Upon his return Croghan shifted his mercantile allegiances to a new trading firm, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*: Franks' chief rival. *Baynton, Wharton, and*

²¹⁹Articles of Agreement between Gage and Franks and Iglis, February 4, 1765, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Small Collections SC-3636.

²²⁰ Articles of Agreement between Gage and Franks and Iglis, February 4, 1765, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Small Collections SC-3636. The Stamp Act Protests were in full swing in the America Colonies hence the last statement in the agreement.

Morgan looked to take advantage of their rival, with the feud between Gage and Franks. Slowly, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* took business away from their competitors; however, they did not have the political support in London as Franks did. Eventually, the connections in London would shift back to the favor of Franks and his associates, but *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* would attempt to gain advantage in the meantime.

Business competition was brutal. *Franks and Inglis* and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* understood that government contracts meant stability and prosperity. Therefore, they both tried to gain the attention of the British Ministry who awarded contracts. Franks had the upper hand because his brother, Moses Franks, lived in London and had connections with prominent people. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* believed that if they could establish a stronghold in the west they could muscle out *Franks and Inglis*. However, the contracts were again awarded to *Franks and Inglis* because of his family connections.

As the two large Philadelphia firms battled for government contracts, the backcountry business grew to new heights in the years following Pontiac's Rebellion. Franks had many commercial obligations including being a partner in a fur trading business: *Franks, Simon, Levy, and Trent*. The company had their main store in Lancaster, which was run by a fellow Jewish merchant, Joseph Simon. They sold many different goods but their main source of profit was peltry. The fur trade was a huge business during the eighteenth century. Seemingly, *Franks, Simon, Levy, and Trent* had a strangle hold on the fur business in Lancaster.

With their rivals' monopoly in central Pennsylvania, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* decided to look further west to the Illinois Country for possible business. With

the Indians seemingly pacified after Pontiac's Rebellion, trade returned to the western lands. New markets opened up in the Illinois Country for American traders at outposts like Fort Chartres, Fort Kaskaskia, and others. Samuel Wharton of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* saw this as a prime opportunity to expand their business and to finally make a substantial profit (that might make up for their previous wartime losses). In addition, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* could operate in the Illinois Country because *Franks and Inglis'* contract did not extend that far west. So the new market was ripe for the taking. The company persuaded the Indian diplomat, George Croghan to help their firm by exclusive trading with Indians in their store. However, Morgan did not see Croghan as a savior for from financial woes as his partners did. The younger partner hesitated at the scheme because he was unfamiliar with Indian trade and the Illinois Country. Eventually, Morgan warmed up to the idea of moving into the Illinois country, when he visited the area in 1766.

With George Croghan assisting the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* firm, the Philadelphia company believed their fortunes had changed for the better. Croghan had promised them great returns for their investment of £20,000 into the Illinois trade.²²¹ *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* believed that Croghan could give them some strategic advantage since he was also representing Sir William Johnson and the Crown in Indian Affairs.²²² The Illinois Country gave them new hope to build a trading empire in the interior of North America, which might successfully compete with David Franks and his companies in Pennsylvania.

²²¹ George Morgan, Affidavit, George Morgan Papers, Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 1.

²²² Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 84.

Croghan, now affiliated with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, planned a journey to the Illinois Country in the spring of 1765. Along with the goods of the firm, Croghan also brought gifts for the Native Americans who the British Army hoped might sign peace treaties during Croghan's diplomatic meetings. That spring, Croghan's caravan left Carlisle with gifts, supplies, and other merchandise including sugar, coffee, and alcohol.²²³ The partners expected a sizeable return of fur and other valuables. However, the adventure was illegal because of the Proclamation of 1763 and Croghan's deal with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* had to be kept secret because Indian agents were not allowed to work for their own interests. Croghan attempted to hedge his bets in an effort to make a fortune. The Irishman sent word to his associate, Alexander McKee, at Fort Pitt telling him of the venture; and asking that he prepare the Indians for trade.²²⁴ *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* went along with Croghan's scheme in secrecy because they thought they could beat their rivals to the Illinois Country using the Indian diplomat as a cover.

Unfortunately, the trade caravan did not even make it even to Fort Pitt before experiencing troubles. This time it was not Indian resistance but rather frontiersmen who did not want to see their government agents trading with Native Americans. These vigilantes, who painted their faces black and disguised themselves as Indians were called the Black Boys. Led by James Smith, the Black Boys did not want the British Government trading with Indians because of their raids during Pontiac's Rebellion. The angry frontiersmen confronted the convoy, but the traders refused to turn around. Shortly

²²³ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 20.

²²⁴ George Croghan, "Letter from George Croghan to Alexander McKee, December 6, 1764." *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* unpublished supplemental volume.

after, the Black Boys shot the packhorses and the teamsters surrendered to the vigilantes. The traders were allowed to leave with their lives but their goods were set ablaze by the Black Boys.

The incident provoked a response from the British Army when the released traders made their way to Fort Loudon. The Army dispatched a small squad to disperse the Black Boys and took four prisoners. But the Black Boys gang fought back and surrounded Fort Loudon, demanding the release of the prisoners. Lt. Charles Grant capitulated to the group's demands. Finally, the news of the incident reached General Gage who quickly discovered Croghan's scheme. The cagey Croghan rebuffed the allegations against him and his clients. He claimed that he only anticipated shipping the goods to Fort Pitt to be stored until trade resumed. Samuel Wharton wrote to his partners instructing them to not mention their intent to trade in Illinois but to just store the goods at Fort Pitt until trade opened.²²⁵ Regardless of his defense, Croghan and the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* violated the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Showing that these men were willing to break the law to make a profit.

The Black Boys' raid foiled and revealed the merchants' clandestine commercial scheme. They had to answer many questions from the British Command. General Gage and Colonel Bouquet suspected criminal activity on the part of the traders, but could not prove it. In a letter from Gage to Bouquet, Gage wrote, "Goods in Question belonged to Wharton & Baynton, and other Merchants at Philadelphia . . . who . . . deny any intentions to Trade, till the Trade was permitted to be opened and excuse Croghan of any

²²⁵ Samuel Wharton, "Samuel Wharton to Partners, March 15, 1765. Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 5.

design to begin to Trade or of having any concern whatever in Trade.”²²⁶ The General went on to say “It may be so, but People will Suspect Strongly from Appearances, and I believe we shall not easily get at the whole truth.”²²⁷ When approached by authorities, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* confessed their mistake to a degree in the hope of exonerating Croghan of any transgressions; even Sir William Johnson came to the defense of Croghan. Gates and Bouquet distrusted Croghan and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* and they continued to investigate the situation. Bouquet obtained depositions from witnesses associated with the transportation of the Indian goods that were destroyed in the raid.²²⁸ Colonel Bouquet quickly discovered that Croghan charged the Crown £4,000 for goods that were destroyed but there were “Eleven Thousand Pounds more, actually at Fort Loudoun, pretended to have been purchased by Croghan from Baynton Wharton & Company.”²²⁹ Essentially, Croghan was caught in the act of breaking the restrictions on civilian trade having purchased goods for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* under the guise of government business.

Colonel Bouquet still suspicious stated, “As I do not know the Extent of his [Croghan] Powers as to the quantity of Presents he was to take to Fort Pitt; I can only Say that the Sum is Exorbitant, and that Presents to that amount look as if we did purchase Peace of the Indians, in Stead of giving it.”²³⁰ Furthermore, Bouquet worried about the appearance of the trade to the settlers on the frontier. He was in charge of keeping the

²²⁶ Thomas Gage, “Gage to Bouquet,” March 21, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 772.

²²⁷ Thomas Gage, “Gage to Bouquet,” March 21, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 772.

²²⁸ Henry Bouquet, “Bouquet to Gage,” April 10th, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 780-781.

²²⁹ Henry Bouquet, “Bouquet to Gage,” April 10th, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 780-781.

²³⁰ Henry Bouquet, “Bouquet to Gage,” April 10th, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 780-781.

peace on the frontier. Croghan and the merchants were caught red-handed and Bouquet had to deal with the consequences of Croghan's exploitation of his position. Moreover, Bouquet stated, "The Country People appear greatly incensed at the attempt they imagine has been made, of opening a clandestine Trade with the Savages, under Cover of Presents."²³¹ Bouquet had a public relations nightmare however; little or nothing could be done because of the alibi of the Indian diplomat and the company. They claimed they were only delivering goods to Fort Pitt for storage until trade was again opened. As flimsy as it sounded their defense stood. Croghan and his colleagues had come under fire for their borderline illegal activities, but there was little evidence to prove them to be criminals.

Regardless of the legality of the trade, these men were willing to risk the penalties for a chance to make a sizeable profit. The adventure into the Illinois Country began on rocky circumstances with the ambush by the Black Boys and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* lost their first investment. Croghan took the responsibility for the loss and turned to his old partners for help—*Franks, Simons, Levy, and Trent*.²³² Croghan ordered replacement goods from his former firm, thus helping out his friends. Meanwhile, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* pressed forward with their attempt to deliver goods to their stores at Pittsburgh. Wharton wrote to Governor John Penn in an attempt to gain a military escort to deliver the rest of their merchandise to Fort Pitt.²³³ The company even

²³¹ Henry Bouquet, "Bouquet to Gage," April 10th, 1765, *Bouquet Papers*, Vol VI, 780-781.

²³² Stern, *David Franks: Colonial Merchant*, 85.

²³³ John Penn, *Minutes of Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, Vol IX, 303.

petitioned Sir William Johnson for help. Johnson wrote Penn to help clarify the charges against Croghan and the Company, writing:

He [Croghan] appears very much concerned at the charges insinuated against him, which he removes, confessing he encouraged the Traders to be in readiness at Fort Pitt, in case he got possession, & this was done he says by the approbation of Col. Bouquet: “When I came to Philadelphia Messengers Baynton & Wharton told me that they had a quantity of goods which they had prepared to take to the Illinois in Sixty-three, when Col. Bouquet was to go to take possession of that Country, & told me he had promised them at that time the exclusive liberty of going with him, which I know he had done, and that those goods lay still on their hands, and desired me to give them my opinion whether I thought a Trade would be admitted there, or whether they could take them to Fort Pitt, & there lodge them in the King's Store till the Trade would be opened with authority.²³⁴

Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan was awarded a military escort to finish delivering their goods to Fort Pitt. At Pittsburgh, Morgan organized the store to prepare for when the westward trade resumed. After their first failure in 1765, the firm continued to press forward the following season. When the Governor opened the trade in 1766, Morgan was the first to head to the Illinois. In addition to selling to Indians and French inhabitants, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* also believed they could get the exclusive contract to supply the British outposts, because they were building a shipping flotilla specifically for the Illinois country.

As *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* were investing in the Illinois country, the Gratz Brothers were instead looking southward to Curacao, the small island in the Southern Caribbean Sea. In 1765, Michael Gratz prepared for a trip to the island colony. In preparation for his voyage, he traveled back and forth from New York and wrote

²³⁴ Sir William Johnson, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*. Edited by James Sullivan. (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921) “William Johnson to Governor John Penn, June 7, 1765” Vol. IV, 798.

letters to friends and fellow merchants Mr. Isaac Rodríguez Miranda and his brother Elias Miranda in Curacao.²³⁵ Miranda invited the Gratz Brothers to begin trading in the Caribbean because the western markets had been shut down because of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The Miranda brothers also had a store in Kingston Jamaica, so the Gratz could supply both places with goods from Philadelphia and not worry about the Royal injunction out west. However, the Gratz did eventually bankroll a new firm, *Murray and Rumsey*, in the Illinois Country when *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* began to fail out west.

Michael Gratz set off in 1765 to Curacao with a large cargo; however Gratz did not make it to his destination. In July, Michael arrived at St. Kitts in the West Indies and wrote a short note to his brother asking him to pay some bills. Gratz stated, “My Dear Brother, Being just Shabbat, I can say no more than to enclose three sets of bills.”²³⁶ Even with his business, the Gratz attempted to maintain their religious identity as a Jew by keeping the Sabbath. Nonetheless, they still had to conduct business despite their religious traditions. Michael’s note also shows the level of importance these men placed on their business. Unfortunately, this small note was the last words Michael wrote before he was lost at sea.

On his trip to Curacao, Michael Gratz was shipwrecked. According to a letter by Isaac Rodriguez Miranda, “wee was waithing for having had the disagreeable news of your being Cart [Cast] away but thanks to the Almighty for escaping your person and

²³⁵ Isaac Rodríguez Miranda, “Letter to Barnard Gratz, July 4, 1765,” Frank Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Box 67 Folder 1765.

²³⁶ Michael Gratz “Letter to Barnard Gratz, July 12, 1765, Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, , Box 1, Folder 54. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

interest.”²³⁷ Gratz was marooned, which was a cause of his delay. Michael wanted to visit his trading partners to further secure a successful business relationship in the Caribbean. Despite the disaster, Michael made a miraculous return to Philadelphia. In early October, Michael Gratz arrived in Philadelphia to the surprise of his friends and family who feared him to be dead.

Upon returning to the City of Brotherly Love, Michael Gratz along with his brother, Franks, Baynton, Wharton, Morgan and other merchants signed the Non-Importation Agreement protesting against the Stamp Act of 1765. On October 25, 1765 the merchants of Philadelphia came together to draft the Non-Importation Agreement because “That the many difficulties they [merchants of Philadelphia] now labor under as a trading people are owing to the restrictions, prohibitions, and ill-advised regulations made in several Acts of Parliament . . . which have limited the exportation of some parts of our country produce, increased the cost and expense of many articles of our importation, and cut off from us all means of supplying ourselves with specie enough even to pay the duties imposed upon us.”²³⁸ This was the first of the Non-Importation protests, which was directed at the passage of the Stamp Act. Historian Gary Nash demonstrates that the Philadelphian reaction to the Stamp Act did not have the same pomp and circumstance as it did in Boston and New York. He argues that in the Philadelphia Stamp Act protests were instigated by the lower classes.²³⁹ Nash states, “By

²³⁷ Isaac Rodríguez Miranda, “Letter to Michael Gratz, January, 6 1766,” Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 45. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It is undetermined that Gratz was either shipwrecked or possibly held for ransom by pirates.

²³⁸ Non-Importation Agreement of Philadelphia, October 25, 1765, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Small Collections SC-3029.

²³⁹ Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 194.

early November, lower-class pressured forced Philadelphia's merchants to stop importing English goods until the Stamp Act was repealed."²⁴⁰ Regardless of motivation, the merchants joined the Non-Importation until the reversal of the tax. Eventually, there were several other Non-Importation Agreements including a large reaction to the Coercive Acts in 1774. Merchants worried about the current political policies when they had an influence on their business. However, it was only when it was pertaining to their own economic advantage. In the case of the Stamp Act, merchants saw it as another hindrance to their business because they would be burdened with another tax.

The Non-Importation Agreement further proclaimed "that the late unconstitutional law (the Stamp Act), if carried into execution in this province will further tend to prevent our making these remittances to Great Britain."²⁴¹ The merchants suggested that the new stamp tax would cause them to be unable to pay their debts in Great Britain. This demonstration of solidarity of the merchants seems to be a uniting activity among rival businessmen. Franks, the Gratzes, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* all signed the agreement along with numerous notables of Philadelphia including John Dickinson, Robert Morris, and Samuel Wharton's cousin Thomas Wharton, Jr. The Non-Importation Agreement allowed the merchants to unite with their customers to act as one political force in defense of their bottom lines.

Between 1765 and 1766 the merchants experienced a variety of political and economic hardships. However, these men continued on their path to profit and prestige. The Black Boy incident and the protests against the Stamp Act of 1765 were the first

²⁴⁰ Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 196.

²⁴¹ Non-Importation Agreement of Philadelphia, October 25, 1765, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Small Collections SC-3029.

tremors in the American Revolution, but the merchants were found on various sides of both these events. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* were partially to blame for the Black Boy incident because of their desire to illegally trade in the Illinois Country, but in the same breathe all the merchants signed the Non-Importation Agreement in Philadelphia. Regardless of their political affiliation, their motives remained economic. The frontier merchants of Philadelphia weathered the tempest of Pontiac's Rebellion, the first ripples in the Revolution, and they set on their own course in land speculation and building up their western markets.

Summary

Pontiac's Rebellion was the turning point for the frontier merchants of Philadelphia. Although the Indian turmoil on the frontier caused irrevocable damages to the firms, it was the Imperial reaction that did even more harm to the merchants. Imperial policies such as the Proclamation Line of 1763 restricted trade west of the Appalachian Mountains, and forced frontier traders to find illicit avenues for business. Furthermore, the traders collectively filed a grievance with the British Ministry in the hope of securing western land in compensation for the damages they incurred during Pontiac's Rebellion. The Sufferers of 1763 Memorial would create a paradigm shift that led the merchants from the fur trade to land speculation. Nonetheless, their economic loyalties remained with the British Empire. As their future ambitions gradually set in, the merchants were reluctant to abandon their fur interests until securing land claims. Ultimately, Pontiac's Rebellion and new Imperial policies set the merchants on a new course for future, but it would not be easy.

CHAPTER IV
ON THE EDGE OF THE EMPIRE

Frontier Business

As the Stamp Act protest of 1765 was at fever pitch in cities like Philadelphia and Boston, George Croghan and George Morgan set out on their journey to the Illinois Country. The traders built up their stores at Fort Pitt as they prepared for their westward trek. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* contracted men at Fort Pitt to build riverboats to transport goods down the Ohio River and then up the Mississippi to the Illinois.

These merchants believed that the potential return from expanding their business into the Illinois country would be great. One of the main investments the Company made were the boats that transported their goods down the Ohio and up the Mississippi Rivers. At first they bought flat and shallow vessels, but eventually, under Morgan's instructions the boats were expanded to fit more merchandise. In April 1766, Morgan began on a journey to the Illinois Country to visit Kaskaskia and Fort Chartres. By July, Morgan ventured to the Scioto River in present-day Ohio. He wrote to his partners that there was no need for Samuel Wharton to come to the Illinois because the trading season would be over by the time he arrived.²⁴² So Morgan was on his own visiting and trading in the Illinois, until the following year. Morgan also recommended to Baynton that larger boats be built to carry more supplies down the river.²⁴³ Morgan requested that the boats be

²⁴²George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

²⁴³George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

increased to forty feet long with a hull of four and a half feet deep.²⁴⁴ Morgan's new boats could hold a crew of twenty-two men. Despite the end of the wars Morgan saw it necessary to protect their business from unwanted violence. So Morgan toyed with the idea of constructing an armed schooner. This private gunboat would have "6 or Eight swivels [guns] with Small Arms & a Gunnel about three or four feet high to Shelter the Men in Case of an Attack from Indians."²⁴⁵ Furthermore, "the Cabbin also might be made for Close Quarters—In such an One, commanded by an Experienced Active Captain wth a Score of stout Seaman and ½ dozen Rifle Men or Hunters I should think myself perfectly safe to depart from Fort Pitt in February for Fort Chartres in the midst of a general Indian War."²⁴⁶ However, the building of Morgan's private paramilitary flotilla never took place; funds did not permit such a costly undertaking. Nonetheless, the Indian threat still resonated in the minds of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* especially when they entered the uncharted territory of Illinois.

These men prioritized their business and making a profit over politics in their lives because they believed that is how they were taking care of their families despite the political fervor all around them. Their business ventures would force the merchants to become more political in the near future, but during this period their economic loyalties remained with the British Empire. At the same time that the Non-Importation Agreements were being signed in the eastern port cities, Morgan was venturing to the west to set up his firm's trading empire. Nonetheless, Imperial politics did not curtail men

²⁴⁴George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3.

²⁴⁵George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3.

²⁴⁶George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3.

like Morgan. The period before the American War for Independence was a crucial time that shaped the identity of these men. The Illinois Adventure changed forever how Morgan and his partners viewed British authority. Morgan learned to distrust the British through the trials and tribulation with Lieutenant Colonel John Wilkins. It was the Illinois failure that forged Morgan's mettle as a merchant.

Even though Morgan did not want to trade in the Illinois Country at first, his ambition and love of profit drove him to change his mind by 1766. And so, Morgan continued forward down the Ohio River at thirty miles a day. He took calculated observations about how to maximize the company's cargo by examining the design of the boats. At first Morgan and his men made good time, but once they turned north on the Mississippi River their pace slowed down remarkably, to a grueling nine miles a day.²⁴⁷ The pace of going upstream changed Morgan's plan for return cargo; instead of going back the way he came, the goods would be sent down the Mississippi to New Orleans and then sent to Philadelphia via the Atlantic.

In addition to learning the physical limitation of the journey, when Morgan arrived in the Illinois he noticed that the prices that Croghan set for selling goods were lower than projected. Morgan noted, "I expected that Mr. Croghan would have fixed the Prices 1/5 higher, but his Influences with them might have been hurt by it."²⁴⁸ Croghan wanted to gain customers by keeping the prices low, however, this he had not mentioned to Morgan. Nevertheless, Morgan had to keep his rates at what Croghan had promised

²⁴⁷Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 30.

²⁴⁸George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

their consumers in order to keep their loyalty and their business. Morgan had to learn to play the trading game on the frontier.

Although Morgan was deeply concerned with business and making a profit, he wrote in a letter postscript about his family and asked how his Mother-in-law was doing, as well as the rest of the family.²⁴⁹ In many of the merchants' letters they mention their wives and family from time to time. This demonstrates that these men had strong concerns about their friends and relationships. While away from home, Morgan constantly wrote his wife Molley asking how she was doing. After all Morgan worked as a merchant to provide for himself and his family. While at Kaskaskia in September 1766, Morgan asked his wife not be worried about him because he was doing his duty. He stated, "I beg, I pray of you my dear Molley, not to make yourself unhappy during my absence, by taking it too much to heart—Providence, my Duty to you, our dear Fathers family, Gratitude to him, all unite in calling for my Stay here. Not One Day shall be lost, when I can be spared from this Place- I will travel Day Night to return to your happy Embrace never to separate again in this World, by God's Blessing- Keep up your Spirits therefore my dear Molley, let not that Afflict you which is God's Will."²⁵⁰ This letter was just a glimpse into the loving relationship Morgan had with his wife and family.

Business and family were interwoven in most merchant families like the Morgan and Baynton families. Family remained important to the merchants and they wanted to

²⁴⁹George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, July 7, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

²⁵⁰George Morgan, "George Morgan to Molley Morgan September 17, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

provide for them as best as they could. The best way to do that was to make a profit, which he had to travel westward to trade in the Illinois.

By August, Morgan made it to Kaskaskia and by September he was on his way to Detroit. But before Morgan left the Illinois Country, he and Mr. Croghan fell ill, possibly with malaria.²⁵¹ Morgan stayed in the Illinois Country to recover. During his time rehabilitating he continued setting up his stores at Kaskaskia, Fort Chartres, Cahokia, and at St. Vincent's or Vincennes. These settlements were new markets for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* that they hoped to profit from; however, the merchants were disappointed that the Native populations were not as large as they had anticipated. The Indian trade was the Company's first priority and after that came the French inhabitants that lived near these new British outposts (which used to be French forts before the war). The firm believed that the fur trade was going to grow rapidly in the Illinois. However, that did not end up being the case. Peltry was a dying trade. Eventually, their focus on the Indian fur trade was the company's downfall in the Illinois Country.

After Morgan's trip to the Illinois his business vision dramatically changed. Once he saw the untapped potential of Illinois' fertile soil and the suitable climate, Morgan saw that land was the key. Morgan stated, "The Country here might be made a mere Paradise except in the Heat of Summer & Dead of Winter both which will be far from intolerable when a number of industrious Inhabitants are once settled here & the Conveniences of Life to be had –At present even the Necessarys are Wanting."²⁵² He saw a bright prospect for settlement in the country and how it could benefit himself and his friends. In addition

²⁵¹ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 30.

²⁵²George Morgan, "George Morgan to *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, August 28, 1766" in Hopkins Means Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 2, Folder 3 .

to selling merchandise, Morgan and his partners saw a real opportunity—land speculation. The Illinois Country seemed ripe for the taking.

In the meantime, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* were supplying British outposts in the Illinois Country such as Fort Chartres. Filling a necessary supply void, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* brought in beef and other supplies for the British Army. While, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* supplied the British Army in the Illinois, they did not have an exclusive contract with the Crown. Without an official contract, the company did not have any financial security and could be replaced on a whim. However, that did not stop them. They hoped that with some help, they could acquire an official contract to supply the Regulars in the Illinois. In addition, the firm befriended several prominent people to invest in their schemes. Men like Benjamin Franklin and his son, New Jersey Governor William Franklin, assisted *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* in their business ventures in the Illinois Country. The partners believed that these prominent figures could aid in securing a government contract. Moreover, with George Croghan as a part of their trading firm, they believed they had the politic clout and connections to win a government-sanctioned monopoly. In addition to amassing new political power, the firm created a web of influential allies to help them build up their trading empire in the west.

As *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* looked west, there were many political activates going on in Philadelphia and other eastern port cities. These merchants were not involved in the day-to-day politics of the colonies, but they were well informed about the current happenings in the cities. In the letter to Dr. Franklin, Baynton congratulates him on the repeal of the Stamp Act. In this brief passage Baynton expounds on his political beliefs. The elder Baynton wrote “It was with inexpressible Joy We received your

Congratulations on the Repeal of the Stamp Act; and found the several agreeable Alterations, in the Commercial Laws. These are Events, which will undoubtedly restore the Affections of the Americans, to the Mother Country; As They clearly demonstrate On her part, An Inclination to act justly and equally, with her Children.”²⁵³ The repeal was a small victory for America. The repeal of the Stamp Act was in line with the merchants’ views of America. Baynton goes on to explain, “America has been fortunate, in having her Liberties, Rights and Commerce fully and firmly explained; And We shall ever esteem it, very Providential, That you was called to the Bar of the House of Commons, As We are convinced, Its Members were in a great Measure Strangers, to the true Interest of Great Britain, Until you so wisely and firmly delineated it to Them; For Which, both that Kingdom and her Colonies, are Under the strongest Obligations to you.”²⁵⁴ Baynton saw himself and his company as part of the British Empire and believed that Parliament did not recognize or understand the Americans perspective. Baynton felt that although apart of the Empire, the colonies are also equally separate from Britain. Furthermore, Baynton extols Franklin’s position in defending American’s liberties. Baynton demonstrated that he is siding with Dr. Franklin as a defender of America, and acknowledges there is a great divide in the colonies over politics specifically the Stamp Act and the role of Parliament in America.

The Stamp Act was a divisive law in the British colonies, and merchants like *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* all sided against the controversial law because it was bad for business. The repeal of the Stamp Act was a victory for the American colonists

²⁵³ Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, “Letter to Benjamin Franklin. August 28, 1766,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 13, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 395.

²⁵⁴ Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, “Letter to Benjamin Franklin. August 28, 1766,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 13, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 395.

including the merchants of Philadelphia who had signed the Non-Importation Agreement in October 1765. With the political win, business and life should have gone back to normal.

The repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 took place while Morgan traveled to the Illinois and his partners looked to secure an official contract with the Crown to supply the British Army, which would guarantee a stable income in the Illinois Country, the firm wrote to Laughlin MacLane, the secretary to the Earle of Shelburne, in attempt to gain the favor of an appointment.²⁵⁵ However, the request fell on deaf ears and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* never received that lucrative contract with the Crown. Instead, in the following year, 1767, the British government awarded it to the *Arnold Nesbitt, Adam Drummond, and Moses Franks* who then subcontracted the work out to David Franks, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan's* chief rival in Philadelphia.²⁵⁶ Franks and Company constantly competed against *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* again and again they had lost.

Despite the setback to their Illinois adventure, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* continued to be an important mercantile force in the Illinois. By 1767, the company was firmly implanted in the western lands along the Mississippi. At first, their largest competition did not come from Franks and his company but from Spanish and French traders out of New Orleans. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* solicited Benjamin Franklin's help in their dealings with Indians, the French, and the Spanish in New Orleans. John Baynton wrote to Dr. Franklin,

²⁵⁵Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 34.

²⁵⁶ Clarence Carter, Ed., *Correspondence of Thomas Gage*, "Grey Cooper to Thomas Gage, October 9, 1766," Vol 2, 380.

The French notwithstanding the specious Covering of surrendring New Orleans to the Spaniards, are very industrious, in making their Settlement, On the West Side of the Missisipi and have gone great Lengths, in poisoning the Minds of the Indians, against Us; But We apprehend, Mr. Croghan will now essentially weaken their Interest, As He takes with Him, such a powerfull Representation, from the Northern Tribes; Who are esteemed by those, below, as judicious Councillors and great Warriors: At the same Time, That He is treatying at the Illinois— Sir William is gone to Meet Pondiac and a Number of the Western Chiefs at Oswego. And happy would it be for Great Britain and her Colonies, if She was immediately to counteract the French; by establishing a civil Government in the Illinois Country.²⁵⁷

Baynton worried the French and Spanish were stirring up the Native Americans to cause trouble with the English. He would have liked to have a British civil government in the Illinois Country to keep the peace. Baynton wanted order and tranquility in the west, so that his company could trade unmolested. In addition to keeping the peace, the new government would encourage new English settlers to move to the Illinois and help the company flourish in building their westward empire. Ultimately, they wanted and believed that a British civilian government would stabilize the region and ripe for business.

²⁵⁷ Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, "Letter to Benjamin Franklin. August 28, 1766," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 13, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 395.

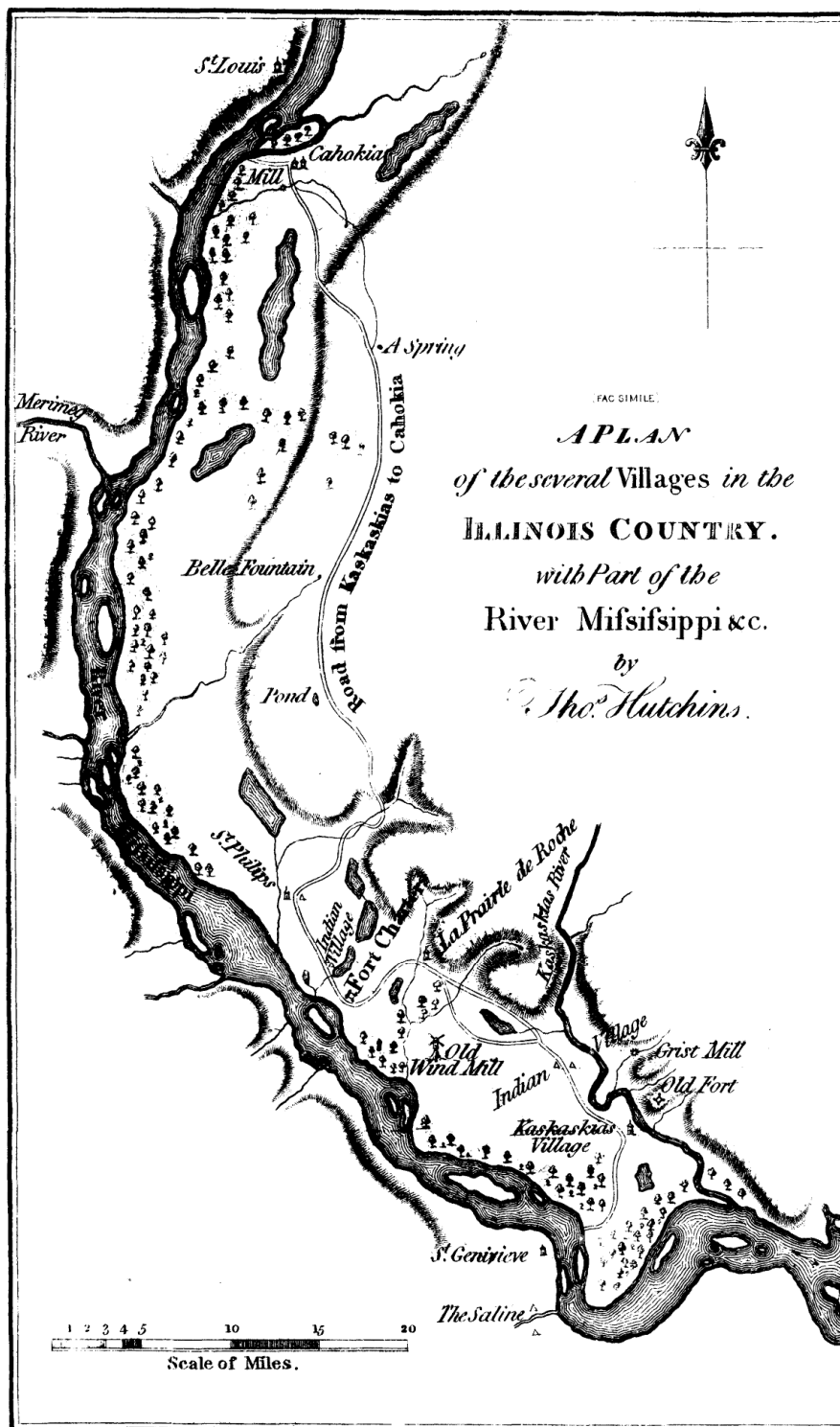


Figure 2. Thomas Hutchins' Map of the Illinois Country (Public Domain, Labeled for Noncommercial reuse).

The Illinois Country was the primary focus of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, they had too much money invested to just give up, but it was the beginning of the end for the trading company in the West. The first successful cargo, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* sent to the Illinois Country arrived in 1766. Morgan came with the merchandise to Kaskaskia, Fort Chartres, and Cahokia. When Morgan was in the Illinois Country, John Baynton remained in Philadelphia to handle their business at home. While, Samuel Wharton networked with Sir William Johnson and other political leaders like Governor William Franklin to gain political friends. Wharton along with William Trent worked to get a land grant from the Crown. Morgan remained in the Illinois and he began to build a commercial empire, but instead he created a large debt for his company.

By 1767, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* was in real financial trouble and other prominent Philadelphians understood their dilemma. Joseph Galloway heard that the firm was calling in all their creditors, which was a bad sign for the company. In a letter to William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin and Governor of New Jersey, Galloway penned, “What I feared and intimated to you on Wednesday last, respecting our Friends B.W. & M is come to pass. They are reduced to the Necessity of calling their Creditors together, and lay before them as State of their Affairs.”²⁵⁸ However after some investigating the rumor, Galloway positively reported, “It is with the Highest Pleasure, I assure you, that this gloomy Aspects is now entirely vanished, and that on a minute examination of their Debts Credits and Effects it appears that they will be able to discharge all their Contracts in a Short Time, and retain to themselves an amazing Sum, beyond the Expectation of all their Friends at least in my Opinion, £30,000 and if no

²⁵⁸ Joseph Galloway, “Galloway to W. Franklin September 6, 1767.” Clarence Walsworth Alvord, *Trade and Politics, 1767-1769*, 8.

unforeseen Accident happens double that sum so that this stoppage will be so far from reflecting Dishonour on them.”²⁵⁹ Although the recent rumors of insolvency were false, Galloway and other people were concerned with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan’s* survival because they were closely associated with them in land deals like the Indiana Company. They still hoped to get land from the Crown in order to pay the losses they had accrued during Pontiac’s Rebellion.

With the finances in a stable condition, the firm continued to look westward for land and trade. Initially, Wharton was supposed to travel to the Illinois and set up the infrastructure for the company. However, plans changed and the young Morgan was sent instead. This news was well received by friends like Galloway. Franklin and Galloway did not want Wharton to travel to the Illinois because he was vital to the effort to persuade the Crown to redistribute the lands won from the Seven Years’ War. Galloway wrote about his concerns in September of 1767, “You will know of how much Importance Mr. W’s [Wharton’s] Presence and Attention will be in obtaining a Retribution for the Indian Losses, and that no other Person for many Reasons can he [sic] negotiate that Matter with Sir W.J. [William Johnson] and Mr. C. [George Croghan] but himself.”²⁶⁰ Wharton later wrote to Benjamin Franklin responding to Lord Shelburne’s Western Policy. In the letter, he boasted about his company, “No English Merchants save Ourselves, have yet ventured to send British Merchandize to the Illinois And I dare say, None will be so rash, as to do it hereafter, --At least, not until Methods are adopted to

²⁵⁹ Joseph Galloway, “Galloway to W. Franklin September 6, 1767.” Clarence Walsworth Alvord, *Trade and Politics, 1767-1769*, 8.

²⁶⁰ Galloway, “Galloway to W. Franklin, September 6, 1767,” Alvord, *Trade and Politics 1767-1769*, 9.

gratify the Natives in Their Expectations.”²⁶¹ *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* gambled by going out to the Illinois first to corner the market on British goods. They were on the literal edge of the British Empire. Being on the periphery of the empire meant the company had to also compete with the French and Spanish who also traded in the area.

Being the only English company in Illinois, they believed they deserved to have an exclusive right to the market. The company wrote to Lord Shelburne’s private secretary Lauchlin Maclean stating, “Our Speculation has been attended with the most favorable Circumstances to his Majesty’s Interest, As we are the only English Merchants, Who have ventured to forward British Merchandize to the Illinois Country; Whereby the King’s Agents have been enabled, in some Degree, to counteract the French & Spaniards, On the opposite Side of the Mississippi.”²⁶² So the company again bragged about their being the only English merchants in Illinois and that they were the first defense against foreign powers. Thus they needed support from the Crown especially when dealing with the Indian policy. They expressed that Lord Shelburne’s new Western Policy of leaving the Indians alone would be disastrous. They asked for the government to reestablish peace with the Indian tribes of the western lands. A guarantee of peace would allow the company to trade freely with the Native Americans in the Illinois. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* also expressed their worries of a looming Indian war. Conflict would disrupt business. The partners gravely reported “All Commerce will immediately cease to the Illinois and Fort Chartres, will be infallibly abandoned, Unless very speedy Measures are taken to regain the Friendship of the Indians and Thereby keep Open the Communication

²⁶¹Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, October 4, 1767,” Alvord, *Trade and Politics 1767-1769*, 77.

²⁶²Baynton and Wharton, “Baynton and Wharton to Maclean, October 9, 1767.”Alvord, *Trade and Politics 1767-1769*, 84.

between Fort Pitt and Fort Chartres.”²⁶³ The firm did not want to lose their new venture before it became profitable to an avoidable Indian War and thus they petitioned Shelburne for peace.

Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan hoped the Crown would protect their business interests in the Illinois, which is why they feverishly petitioned to get an official government contract. In the meantime, Morgan continued to build relationships with Indians, French inhabitants, and British soldiers. He set up an extensive hunting program to get pelts and meat, including sponsoring parties to go into present-day Kentucky.²⁶⁴ In addition to these hunting parties, Morgan also supervised the construction of plantations and farms for growing produce for his stores, mills, and his distillery. Furthermore, Morgan was responsible for importing African slaves into the Illinois territory. Although, the French inhabitants did not have a favorable view of slavery, the young merchant saw it as an opportunity to make money. Morgan noted, “The Inhabitants still continue backward in purchasing of them [African slaves].”²⁶⁵ Still, Morgan found customers.

Despite Morgan’s push to import slaves, he did not have much success keeping his books balanced. Morgan relied heavily on credit to import goods, including slaves into the Illinois. Eventually he ran into trouble paying back his debts and his creditors complained to the local British officer for remittances. For example, a French inhabitant that lived near Kaskaskia named Lewis Viviate appealed to Colonel John Reed for help against Morgan. Viviate had lent Morgan money, but did not pay him back. Thus, the

²⁶³ Baynton and Wharton, “Baynton and Wharton to Maclean, October 9, 1767,” Alvord, *Trade and Politics 1767-1769*, 86.

²⁶⁴ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁶⁵ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

commander issued an arrest warrant for John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, and George Morgan for failure of repayment.

In response to his arrest warrant, Morgan offered the Frenchmen Mr. Viviate a deal on eight African slaves. He did not have the cash to pay his debts; therefore he offered him a discount on slaves. Morgan reported, “ I have offer’d him [Lewis Viviate] at 320 Dollars each in Payment of his Debt rather than remain a Prisoner in Fort Chartres Where Col. Reed has confin’d me for some time by a Stretch of his Military Power. I flatter myself that his despicable Character will prevent the least Suspicion of this being owing to the least Misconduct in me of the Want of a proper State of the Case being laid before him.”²⁶⁶ Morgan complained about Viviate and Reed, stating, “Down Right Avarice prompts him to the meanest of Actions—And a proper Fee as in this Case from Mr. Viviate would induce him to almost any Thing.”²⁶⁷ Morgan’s troubles left him with little room to work.

Morgan avoided the situation until February 2 1768, “When a Bailiff by a forceable Entry (through Ignorance) serv’d a Writ up on me.”²⁶⁸ According to the writ, the firm owed Mr. Lewis Viviate three thousand three hundred and ninety six pounds Pennsylvania money.²⁶⁹ If they did not pay Viviate, Reed threatened “to take into

²⁶⁶ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁶⁷ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁶⁸ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 4, 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁶⁹ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 4, 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

Custody the Bodies of John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, & George Morgan Merchants at the Illinois.”²⁷⁰

Morgan refused payment because he did not have any cash. The bailiff arrested Morgan and made him accompany him to Fort Chartres for court. Colonel Reed informed Morgan, “he had order’d the Prison to be prepared for my [Morgan’s] Reception but said that I should be allowed to walk the Parade & any other Indulgence in his Power, but added that he must confine me to the Fort until I satisfied Mr. Viviates Demand.”²⁷¹

Eventually, Viviate brought a suit against *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* for the amount mentioned. Morgan again continued to write his partners in Philadelphia for help.

Morgan noted: I would not choose to be actuated altogether by Resentment, but I flatter myself you will not let pass Unnoticed the many insufferable Insults I have receiv’d from Colonel Reed in this Matter. He will shortly be at Philadelphia, where I hope Our good Friend Mr. Galloway will bring him to a due Sense at his Injustice & Oppression.”²⁷²

Thus Morgan hoped his connections in Philadelphia would resolve his predicament along the frontier. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* had issues with the British Command, which was supposed to be one of their largest allies in the area. Morgan saw the first time he had been on the opposite side of the law. The British Army under Reed ruled in Viviate’s favor and Morgan learned to distrust the British authority.

Nonetheless, Morgan and his partners believed that they could turn their fortunes around with some time and investment. Even though they lost out on the lucrative

²⁷⁰ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 4, 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁷¹ George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 4, 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

²⁷² George Morgan, “Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, February 4, 1768,” George Morgan Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 1.

government contract and had trouble with Colonel Reed, they had secured an exclusive secret agreement with the new commander of Fort Chartres and the Illinois Country: Lieutenant Colonel John Wilkins. Samuel Wharton met with Wilkins and agreed to a covenant with him for special trading rights in the Illinois. Essentially, the new contract would guarantee *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* a monopoly in the Illinois. However for some unknown reason, Wharton never relayed this underhand accord to his partners, especially Morgan who had the most to lose since he was the company's representation on the frontier. The clandestine pact stated the trading firm had to pay Wilkins a tribute for favorable trading rights and special advantages in the Illinois.

The new commander of the British Illinois, John Wilkins, replaced John Reed in early 1768. General Gage assigned Wilkins to Fort Chartres to help bring order to the borderlands. Gage ordered:

As disputes must frequently happen between Inhabitants, which it may be difficult to have decided, thro' the want of proper Courts of Justice; I would Recommend it to You, to Establish a kind of Sessions, of such People whom You shall Appoint in each Settlement for the purpose: You might Select a Number of the most Intelligent People, and of the best Characters, to whom You might give Commissions of the Peace, who would not only be usefull, in Seeing the Regulations You shall be obligated to make, Published & duly Observed, but like wise keep up Order, amongst the rest of the Inhabitants, and being Assembled at Stated Times, they may decided in a Summary way, according to their own laws & Customs, differences and Disputes between the People.²⁷³

Despite not knowing about the arrangement, George Morgan fit the bill for Wilkins, and he was quickly commissioned a justice of the peace. Morgan had frequently lived in the Illinois country prior to Wilkins arrival. The merchant knew the people of the area and he

²⁷³ Thomas Gage, "Thomas Gage to John Wilkins, May 25, 1768," Gage Papers, American Series Vol 77. Original in the William Clement Library.

was also a potential ally to the new Lieutenant Colonel. General Thomas Gage had already recommended *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* as a potential partner because of their already established network in the area. Wilkins wrote, “It was with great Pleasure that I heard the General in so strong a manner yesterday recommend to me to promote and advance the Interest of yourself and partners at the Illinois in preference to any Body else.”²⁷⁴ With Gage’s backing, Wilkins assured that he would protect the British merchants from the French and other rivals. The Commander stated “I will literally and with all the Zeal in my Power carry his Excellencys Orders into Execution to suppress all the unlawful Trade which the French carry on from New Orleans and other places into His Majesty’s Territorys in the Illinois Country.”²⁷⁵ The French frequently ventured up from New Orleans to trade among the French inhabitants that lived in the area. They were direct competition to merchants like *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

With the backing of the British Army, the Philadelphian firm believed they had an advantage over their rivals. Wilkins made *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* a monopoly in the Illinois Country. According to the agreement the firm paid Wilkins a fee on five pounds per every hundred pounds that “proceeds of all our Traffic and Trade of every sort whatsoever in the Illinois Country.”²⁷⁶ Wilkins’ kickback was a tribute to keep business in favor of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. In addition, Wilkins also received a large sum amounting to 500 pounds of New York Currency after his arrival to Fort

²⁷⁴ John Wilkins, “John Wilkins to Samuel Wharton, May 28, 1768” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷⁵ John Wilkins, “John Wilkins to Samuel Wharton, May 28, 1768” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷⁶ John Wilkins, “John Wilkins Agreement with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, May 28, 1768” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 2.

Chartres and six months afterwards he obtained another 500 pounds as payment to protect *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan's* monopoly.²⁷⁷ Also Wilkins could draw personal supplies such as "Liquor, Tea, Coffee and other Articles necessary for his own uses Wear and Consumption" from the company's stores.²⁷⁸ The Illinois Country offered a great opportunity for success and the alliance between *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* and John Wilkins seemed to assure security and stability for both parties. However, this union was fragile. Shortly, the two sides would become bitter enemies tied up in a web of turmoil and greed.

Before their relationship fell into ruin, Wilkins appointed George Morgan as a civil magistrate in the Illinois Country and he believed that he had gained an ally in ruling over the French inhabitants. The French simply did not care for the British system of authority and did little to follow Wilkins' leadership. So the Illinois country was divided between British and French. The civil courts that Morgan was apart of were mostly made up of British subjects. A majority of the cases in the courts were between English and French settlers. Regularly the French were on the wrong side of the court's opinion.²⁷⁹ However, Wilkins wanted to run his district with an iron fist and most of the judges took their duties seriously when deciding legal disputes. The disagreement created friction between Wilkins and the court. Simply, Morgan was not Wilkins' puppet judge and tried to be an honest magistrate.

²⁷⁷ John Wilkins, "John Wilkins Agreement with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, May 28, 1768" in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷⁸ John Wilkins, "John Wilkins Agreement with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, May 28, 1768" in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷⁹ Colton Storm, "The Notorious Colonel Wilkins," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol 40, No. 1 March 1947, 13.

Further complicating the relationship between Morgan and Wilkins was when *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* could not fulfill their end of their agreement with Wilkins. Wilkins removed Morgan from his position and packed the court with Frenchmen who he believed would be loyal to him. Morgan became the focal point of Wilkins' anger when the company did not keep its end of the private arrangement. The personal rift between Morgan and Wilkins steadily escalated. Many like Morgan saw Wilkins' authority as overreaching and intrusive. The agreement Morgan's partners signed with Wilkins was nothing more than a bribe to Wilkins. The Lt. Colonel saw the Illinois Country as his own personal fiefdom where he had supreme authority. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* did not pay their full portion to Wilkins because Morgan did not believe that Wharton actually would agree to such a lopsided contract. When Morgan refused payment, Wilkins attempted to use his political power to crush the mercantile firm. Wharton had advanced £500 to the Colonel. However, Wilkins expected £1,000 as per the agreement but he really did not have the power to guarantee trade for the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Company. Once the contract to supply the Army went to the Franks firm instead of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, the latter began to lose money in the Illinois country. And Wilkins would continue to personally persecute Morgan until he left the Illinois in 1771.

The Still House

Before the relationship between Morgan and Wilkins collapsed, the two worked together as allies to improve their chances of making money in the Illinois country. Early in their relationship, Wilkins recommended Morgan to build a distillery. They believed

that manufacturing local liquor would cut deeply into the French alcohol trade.²⁸⁰ Morgan saw this as an excellent opportunity and he began researching the process of distilling. He had begun importing “every Kind of Grain from Pennsylvania, which may be suitable to this Climate—Particularly Fall Wheat, Rye, Buck Wheat, Spelts, Barley, Oats and Flax Seed—Several of which were never before heard of in this Country.”²⁸¹ In addition to the grains, Morgan familiarized himself with “two Useful Roots, Turnips & Potatoes—Which as well as several of the Grain, I have the Pleasure to acquaint you thrive & produce much better than even in Pennsylvania.”²⁸² These produce were vital elements in making different types of liquor. Furthermore, Morgan already “introduced and distributed among the Farmers” in the Illinois country these new agricultural crops. He also imported a “better Kind of Indian Corn” to the Illinois Country.²⁸³ The young merchant wanted to grow these items in the Illinois because it would be cheaper than to import them from Pennsylvania every season. This also allowed Morgan to experiment and expand his knowledge of farming (which later in his life would become his pastime). However, Morgan realized there was a financial risk. He bluntly informs Wilkins, “I flatter myself that with your Countenance & Encouragement, I shall yet reap some Profit

²⁸⁰George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁸¹George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁸²George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁸³George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

from the great Expences I have been at.”²⁸⁴ This business was expensive and full of peril. These agricultural investments were just a part of the process. Morgan decided that it would be cheaper to grow the produce in Illinois than it would to ship it from Pennsylvania. Essentially, Morgan established the production of agricultural foodstuff that would also be used in his distillery.

Morgan had to keep the operation of the distillery separate from the affairs of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* because the company had ran into hard times. Therefore, Morgan worked on the still at the same time but it became his own personal adventure apart for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Nevertheless, the farming operations supported the trading firm and Morgan’s personal distillery. In order to keep the distill house separate he wrote to fellow merchants back east, Thomas Lawrence and Thomas Bond, to find distilling equipment. They found that a recently deceased man named John Moore had a still in his estate.²⁸⁵ Bond and Lawrence encouraged Morgan to purchase the still through them so they could settle their previous debts. And Morgan eventually purchased the still from the estate and moved the equipment to the Illinois.²⁸⁶ Therefore, all parties were satisfied with their acquisitions.

Morgan prepared for his new scheme and he “purchased a proper House & Lott to carry on the Distillery & brewing Business in & have bought large Quantities of Indian

²⁸⁴ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁸⁵ Thomas Bond Jr and Thomas Lawrence, Jr, “ Thomas Bond and Thomas Lawrence to George Morgan, February 20 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 5.

²⁸⁶ Thomas Bond Jr and Thomas Lawrence, Jr, “ Thomas Bond and Thomas Lawrence to George Morgan, February 20 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 5.

Corn, Oats & Wheat, & have agreed for about Eighty Hhds of Cyder to carry on the Works.”²⁸⁷ However, by the time Morgan set up four stills but did not get a chance to produce anything because he was busy dealing with Wilkins’ harassment. The Philadelphian had a large amount of his money tied up in the distillery and the process of making liquor. However, he did not see any profit from it. Nonetheless, Morgan continued to pursue the distillery business even against some of the wishes of his partners. John Baynton did not see the great returns as Morgan envisioned and advised him to give it up.²⁸⁸ However, the junior partner and son-in-law maintained his course with the new exploit. Furthermore, Morgan had no knowledge of distilling and had to hire a distiller. The master distiller came but was of little use because he fell ill and could not help produce product. Thus, Morgan’s operation stood at a stand still.

In addition to his failing distillery, Morgan also set up a water mill and hired an experienced millwright. Morgan expected both his mill and distillery to be up and running by October 1770. He stated “As I expect she will grind 100 Bushels in 24 hours & shall make as good Flour as ever was sent to you from Pennsylvania.”²⁸⁹ He also explained that he had to be “so particular as to bring two Pair Mill Stones with me [him] from Pennsylvania at no small Expence.”²⁹⁰ Morgan had to import many of the important items for his businesses from Pennsylvania because there was no way to build or

²⁸⁷ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Colonel Wilkins, September 16, 1770,” in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁸⁸ John Baynton, “John Baynton to George Morgan, March 5, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁸⁹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to P. Fitzpatrick, July 27, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹⁰ George Morgan, “George Morgan to P. Fitzpatrick, July 27, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

purchase these things in the Illinois. This importation of the equipment to set up his business created a large initial debt.

When he returned to the Illinois country after a return visit to Philadelphia, the still was in the possession of former Indian Agent Edward Cole. He was the executor to John Moore's estate and did not want to give up the property that had been sold to Mr. Morgan. The merchant turned to Colonel Wilkins for help but he refused to assist, because his conflict with Morgan. After some difficult negotiations, Morgan obtained the stills from Colonel Cole.²⁹¹

Despite the delay, Morgan believed he could still reap an early reward from his investment. In the letter to Mr. Fitzpatrick, Morgan further explained his distillery business and how he "set up 4 still about 240 gallons each to distill Rye and Malt liquors."²⁹² Morgan was proud of his distillery. He intended to send Mr. Fitzpatrick "a Sample thereof in Bottles & request you will inform me wether or not I may expect to meet any Encouragement in the sale thereof at the Natchez Manchac."²⁹³ Morgan went on bragging about his liquor stating, "To Englishman One Quart of this Liquor is more agreeable than ½ Gallon of Common Rum."²⁹⁴ The businessman believed that he could make liquor and undercut the French and Spanish traders because he would make the alcohol locally. Furthermore, Morgan had grand visions of selling his booze as far away

²⁹¹ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Edward Cole, June 10, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹² George Morgan, "George Morgan to P. Fitzpatrick, July 27, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹³ George Morgan, "George Morgan to P. Fitzpatrick, July 27, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹⁴ George Morgan, "George Morgan to P. Fitzpatrick, July 27, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

as New Orleans and Natchez. He had high spirits going into his distilling business but soon that would change.

Morgan was in great debt after importing all the essential elements for building the mill and distillery and he did not earn an immediate profit from his investment. Morgan was spread too thin. Therefore, he could not pay Colonel Wilkins' demands if he wanted to appease the officer. But Wilkins continued to demand his payment from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* but they could or would not pay his outrageous demands. Eventually, the commanding officer would no longer honor the agreement between him and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Business life in the Illinois had become difficult for Morgan and his partners because of the persecution of the tyrannical Wilkins.

The summer of 1770, was a busy season for Morgan, he waited for his distilling supplies and his distiller to arrive. Before any of the stills arrived, his feeble distiller reached in the Illinois. By July 3, 1770, Morgan received two of his stills and began to set up in the distillery in the Illinois. He wrote Lawrence, "I have at last a Prospect of getting possession of our Stills— Two of them I received yesterday . . . I shall have them [the other two stills] in a Month or Six Weeks."²⁹⁵ Morgan also had the high hopes of beginning distilling in the early Fall. Working with a sick distiller, forced Morgan to do much of the labor himself. Furthermore, as the growing season had not yet produced enough distilling ingredients, so Morgan ordered some bushels of grain and "the necessary conveniences for malting brewing and etc" from Pennsylvania.²⁹⁶ The young

²⁹⁵ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹⁶ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

merchant purchased all these items on credit in hopes that he could pay his debt off with the expected profits from his distillery. Morgan states “The Expences of these Articles runs so very high that you will not be much pleased with my Acct. there of But should I be oblig’d to tarry in the Country . . . I believe will enable me to make some handsome Remittances to you.”²⁹⁷ The Illinois investment for Morgan was cumbersome. Morgan told Lawrence, “You must understand that I find it necessary to Interest a Fourth Person whom Mr. Baynton will name to you in this Concern, as I am convinced it will not be disagreeable to you & Mr. Bond—Therefore our Shares will be equal Fourths.”²⁹⁸ The distillery was becoming more of a hassle than expected and they were running out of money quickly. Morgan concerned about his profits stated “My Commission shall be according to our Success which I have hopes will be pleasing unless some particular Fatality may happen which God Forbid.”²⁹⁹ But, Morgan was apprehensive about his success with the distillery in the Illinois Country; he put “The Deed for the House Lot & I have made out in your [Thomas Lawrence] Name that you may not Labor under any Disadvantages should the Affairs of Baynton & Wharton take an adverse Turn.”³⁰⁰ Morgan wanted to keep the distillery out of the inventory of the company if their creditors came looking for a payment on *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan’s* debt. To protect the distillery, Morgan put it in Thomas Lawrence’s name. Morgan drew up “a Bill

²⁹⁷ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹⁸ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

²⁹⁹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰⁰ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

of Sale for to you [Lawrence] and I will in every other respect take particular Care, that you shall not run the least risqué from that unfortunate House, or in any other way if in my power to avoid.³⁰¹ Thus, Morgan promised his backers that he would not sully their reputation, because he believed there would be large dividends in the near future.

Morgan's distillery project experienced many obstacles including Colonel Wilkins, himself. In October, Morgan still waited to obtain the remaining stills from Cole, however, that the problems with the distill house was small compared to Colonel Wilkins' agenda against Morgan. The Philadelphia merchant reported to his partners, "My persistence in setting up the stills gives great Offence to Col. Wilkins and the New Company of Rumsey and Murray with whom the former is connected, from the appearances of our not being able to see him properly This has induced him to go so far as to declare he would not allow the Stills to be work'd."³⁰² Thus, Wilkins tried to stop Morgan.

With specific details Morgan calculated the expenses of the distillery. He wrote "As to the Profits in this Concern [the distillery], I am now able to speak with more certainty than formerly— From the within Calculation you will observe that the first Cost of the Distill House Stills we will be about £600. The Annual Expense of distilling £2,000."³⁰³ Also Morgan notes that "Bushels [of] Wheat & Rye you will observe to be

³⁰¹ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰² George Morgan, "George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, October 29, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰³ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

near £900, ” which would put their first expense to be around £1,500.³⁰⁴ Yet, Morgan was optimistic that the 6,000 gallons of alcohol could fetch upwards toward £3,600.³⁰⁵ The potential profit from Morgan’s distillery is small and had no room for errors. Morgan understood the unstable nature of this business. He observed, “ If this matter [profit] be steadfastly pursued and properly conducted and no particular Accident happens we shall reap the Advantages of [blank] dear bought experience.”³⁰⁶ Therefore the margin of profit for the first year of the distillery was pretty small, but Morgan continued to be hopeful for the future.

The Feud

Aside from Morgan’s private distilling house, the affairs of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* in the Illinois country were precarious at best. Colonel Wilkins and Morgan fell into disagreement over payments and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* also feared that they would lose their case as part of the Suffers of 1763. Morgan’s senior partner, Samuel Wharton went to London to represent their case to Ministry. However, Wharton refused to reply to Morgan’s letters while he was abroad. The disagreement between Wharton and Morgan seems to be about how to conduct business in the Illinois. However, there is no evidence why Wharton ignored Morgan. Morgan worriedly stated, “I shall not attempt to conceal from you that this Concern [land issues] is what I reserve for Mr. Baynton and myself in Case our other Affairs should turn out as bad as I fear they

³⁰⁴ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰⁵ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰⁶ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

will—I mean the Lands on which we have so long defended.”³⁰⁷ Morgan believed that *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* would not be awarded lands for the Suffers of 1763, and they were in so much debt that they needed the land speculation to bail them out from their unwise venture into the Illinois.

Wilkins dropped the agreement with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* and became associated with *Rumsey and Murray*. He also did not want Morgan to set up the stills and threatened to take them because of the lack of payment by *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* in the Illinois country employed James Rumsey when Morgan was absent. Thus, Wilkins asked him to defect to become his secretary and Rumsey soon after became partners with William Murray, who was backed by David Franks. Soon, the new *Murray and Rumsey* Firm was in business and they signed an exclusive contract with Wilkins. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan’s* Philadelphia rivals gained a foothold in the Illinois. Business became a personal feud between these men.

“We cannot pretend to be altogether blameless—One angry word begets another and that increases to a Flame,” Morgan wrote to explain his feelings on the betrayal of his old friend Rumsey. He further justified, “Poor Mr. Rumsey is to be pitied . . . I mean in his disposition—He is brought himself by his dispute with me into the lowest Contempt.”³⁰⁸ When Rumsey worked for Morgan, he had a quarrel with Wilkins;

³⁰⁷ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, July 3, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁰⁸ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, October 29, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

however “in Return of Mr. Rumsey’s calling him an Avaricious Villain [Wilkins] Accepted of his Atonement by his Tears & kneeling.”³⁰⁹

Therefore, Morgan lost another ally on his side, but he complained to General Gage and had several junior officers to back up his claims. Morgan recommended to his partner Thomas Lawrence to “The Protested Bill of Lt. Campbell’s Draft I recommend to you to send to England to be recover’d as Col. Wilkins has not, nor will not allow me to do anything therein here, under Pretense of having no Orders from Genl. Gage.”³¹⁰ Lt. James Campbell had purchased goods from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* for the Army. However, when Morgan asked for payment from the Crown, Wilkins refused to pay Campbell’s account, which he had with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Therefore, Morgan had asked his customers to pass word on to Wilkins’ superiors in order to recover their due payments. Wilkins refused to pay any of the Crown’s account if they were associated with Morgan.

The feud went further and Wilkins abused his duties as an officer and threatened to confiscate Morgan’s stills as retribution. One September 1, 1770, Morgan wrote a memorandum stating, “Set up the last of the Stills this Day but fear that Col. Wilkins will continue to persecute Me & pull the last two down as threatened.”³¹¹ The rift between Morgan and Wilkins continued to rapidly expand until a breaking point.

³⁰⁹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, October 29, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁰ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Thomas Lawrence, November 10, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹¹ George Morgan, “George Morgan’s Memorandum, September 1, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

Angry with Morgan not paying him his demands, Colonel Wilkins ordered his soldiers to take possession of Morgan's stills. "On the 3rd of September by Colonel Wilkins' Orders a Party of Soldiers enter'd my Distill House whilst I was absent & took two of them down."³¹² Wilkins took possession of the distillery which Morgan reported, "The Col. Now has them under a guard, Notwithstanding I have frequently tender'd the Money on Condition of his giving me his order or Judgment so to do for my own Security."³¹³ Wilkins then proceeded to keep the two stills under guard until he was paid, but Morgan could not since he had been tied up with other affairs of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Morgan asked his partners to report the incident to General Gage because he believed Wilkins and his soldiers were mistreating him.³¹⁴

Eventually in October, Morgan and Wilkins met up to attempt to settle their dispute. Morgan recorded their conversation as best as he could remember. Wilkins wanted Morgan to settle the accounts payable to the Crown but blamed him for the delay. Morgan responded "You know Colonel that I have drawn them out agreeable to your Desire & you have been in possession of them ever since the beginning of June."³¹⁵ The officer responded, "Very true—but you refuse to settle them." Rebutting, Morgan said "I never did Colonel—but tis impossible that I can give you a Receipt for their Amount until I am paid." Wilkins then said, "But I hope you will pay Me the Sums agreeable to

³¹² George Morgan, "George Morgan to Walter & Bartles Shee, October 24, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹³ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Walter & Bartles Shee, October 24, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁴ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Walter & Bartles Shee, October 24, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁵ George Morgan, "George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

Mr. Wharton's Engagements." Morgan quickly replied "That Colonel, We have often talk'd over as soon as Mr. Wharton arrives, we ill do every thing in our Power to serve you. I therefore hope you will no longer detain our large Demands on the Crown in your Hands on that Acct."³¹⁶ The Colonel insisted, "You have often talk'd of Mr. Wharton's arrival. I tell you he never intends to come and I do insist on his Engagements being comply'd with for I will wait no longer & if you persist in refusing to do one Justice I will do it my self & I will be no longer abused by you."³¹⁷ Morgan retorted "I do assure you Colonel that Mr. Wharton will come & must come for many Reasons." Wilkins angrily replied, "Don't tell me of Mr. Wharton's coming for I know better & I will wait no longer. I tell you Mr. Morgan you use me ill & I will do myself justice."³¹⁸ Morgan apologetically tried to reason with the disgruntled Lt. Colonel. Even more disturbed Wilkins retorted, "Don't think Mr. Morgan to coax or fool me in that Manner. I tell you you never shall have a single farthing for your Acct. against the Crown, until I am paid the Sums Mr. Wharton promised to Me—which was £2500 Annum—It was he that made the Voluntary offer & forced me to promise to accept it & gave me an obligation for £1000 Annum certain in part thereof."³¹⁹ Again Morgan declined to pay Wilkin's demand. The Colonel's temper soared and he countered, "I see Mr. Morgan you mean to deceive me but G[o]d you shall never touch a Farthing of Your Crown Acct. until you

³¹⁶ George Morgan, "George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁷ George Morgan, "George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁸ George Morgan, "George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³¹⁹ George Morgan, "George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

pay my Demands And I do insist on you doing me Justice or I will take it myself & that before you leave this Fort.”³²⁰ Morgan begged, “My Intention is to do you Justice Colonel & the same to all mankind. But I am embarrassed you know my Situation, and I am sorry you oblige me to say I cannot comply with your Demand without doing Injustice to others.”³²¹ Wilkins then bluntly stated, “Don’t think to fool me in this manner Mr. Morgan for I will bear it no longer & you shall not leave this Fort untill you discharge Mr. Wharton’s Engagements by G[o]D you shall not. And give me leave to tell you Sir, you art like a dishonest Man as you are Sir.” Morgan answered, “I must allow of that Expression Colonel where you are sole Master at the Head of your Troops but Sir, However if you mean to make me one a Prisoner give me leave to tell you, not that or all the Menaces you have or can make Use of Will intimidate me into your Measures—I have a Soul Sir that knows no Fear in a Just Cause And sooner that forfeit the Esteem of those who repose so great a Trust in one as my Creditors in Philadelphia do, I will combat with all the Evil that can befall Me. But I beg Col. You will not be angry—Mr. Wharton must now be near at Hand & if not, I have represent to our Trustees a true State of the Matter & Hope soon to have their Answer. Let that be what it may, I am determined to abide by it. And until then I beg your Patience.”³²² Again, fiercely, the Colonel demanded, “Sir, I insist on your immediate compliance with my Demands, or by

³²⁰ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²¹ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²² George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

G[o]D you shall suffer.”³²³ Agitated Morgan replied, “Threats Colonel can have no weight with Me but I beg you will not be angry with Me for declining to do what I esteem an unjust Act. Have Patience until I hear from Philadelphia.”³²⁴ Wilkins again threatened, “Think Sir of what I have said & comply with my Demand or it shall be worse for you.”³²⁵ At the conclusion of this meeting Morgan left without meeting the Colonel’s demands and dined with Lt. Fowler and Mr. Thomas Hutchins and then returned to Kaskaskia where Morgan made his Illinois residence.³²⁶

As the two enemies—Wilkins and Morgan—continued their bickering, Wharton remained in England and the Colonel’s patience slowly waned. Morgan wrote his brother Dr. John Morgan of Philadelphia about his failures in the Illinois: “Whatever our Industry may have merited this certain some of us have been over Sanguine & too much entertained with the Golden Dreams of Tagus.”³²⁷ The grand vision of great wealth clouded Morgan’s mind, therefore he made some terrible mistakes in Illinois. Morgan continues “Misfortunes and Disappointments contrary to the Effects they ought to have frequently delude the Fancy & plunge us into greater difficultys in attempting to extricate

³²³ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²⁴ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²⁵ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²⁶ George Morgan, “George Morgan Memorandum, October 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²⁷ George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Morgan, November, 10, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1. The Golden Dreams of Tagus reference to making a fortune gold mining in the Tagus River in the Iberian Peninsula.

ourselves.”³²⁸ He believed that his business was failing and in the attempt to salvage the situation he had created more problems and debt.

Morgan vented about Colonel Wilkins to his father-in-law Baynton, “The Colonels unbounded Avarice & mean Spirit has prompted to make use of every Persecution & Threat he can devise with apparent Safety. And those are many where Military Government reigns the more than King.”³²⁹ Therefore, Morgan understood tyrannical rule because he observed it under Wilkins. The feud between him and Wilkins shaped his view of the British authority and his identity as a patriot during the upcoming American Revolution. The actions of Wilkins against Morgan and his company illustrate the corrupt nature of government, which helped forge Morgan’s identity as a patriot. Furthermore, Morgan showed how Wilkins’ corruption ruined the company’s success. Morgan stated, “No Doubt the Colonel on his Part made many Declarations & Promises—But what have they amounted to?”³³⁰ According to the agreement Wilkins could draw on the stores of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* as part of his payment. And Morgan complained, “The Purchase £1200’s worth of Goods since September 1768 to this Day All of which we should have had without thanking him as he could be supplied no where Else.”³³¹ Thus, Wilkins cost the company £1200 in goods that he just took from

³²⁸ George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Morgan, November, 10, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³²⁹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Baynton, November, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³³⁰ George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Baynton, November, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³³¹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Baynton, November, 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

the stores. According to Morgan, Wilkin stole from the firm's stores and further depleted their inventories.

Wharton's agreement with Wilkins continued to put Morgan in a precarious position, which created a strain on the partners' relationship. Morgan again reiterated to Baynton, "All that can be said on this Subject may now be of no avail, but had Mr. Wharton attended to the Proposals mentioned He might have easially removed the Prejudices of any reasonable on that Head . . . It appears Strange to me when those Proposals could have been from 1768 to April 1770. Is it possible that Mr. Franks was only diverting himself whit Mr. Wharton. And after raising his Expectations let him fall under Pretext of those Proposals which it was impossible could be consid'd as for a Contract & which they must long we then have seen."³³² Thus, Morgan speculated that David Franks had put Wharton up to this idea of signing an agreement with Wilkins that they knew would ruin *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. However, this was pure speculation on the part of Morgan.

The Gratz

As *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* were setting up their Illinois network, the Gratz brothers were still working on their Curacao adventure. Even though Michael Gratz had been unfortunately shipwrecked that did not stop the company continuing to expand in the Caribbean. They pushed forward in the Caribbean because the Proclamation of 1763 had stalled their frontier business. The Gratz worked with Elias and Isaac Rodrigues Miranda to sell goods to Curacao. The Miranda Brothers were a prominent trading company in the Atlantic World with connections in New York, Jamaica, and now

³³² George Morgan, "George Morgan to John Baynton, November, 1770," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

Philadelphia. The Gratz-Miranda connection would become a vital tie especially during the early tremors of the American Revolution and the merchant-backed Non-Importation Agreements. This allowed the company to continue trading in the Caribbean while the English trade stalled. By 1770, however, the trade with the Miranda brothers declined as the Illinois country opened up. The Gratz also invested into American iron production, in attempt to gain an advantage in business.

The new American iron industry was a large gamble for the Gratz brothers. In hope of tapping into a new market, Barnard Gratz sold American bar iron in England. The American iron business was just beginning during the mid-eighteenth century. According to historian Paul Pascoff, colonial merchants began to look to ironworks because the investment was relatively low compared to other financial adventures.³³³ Pennsylvania and Maryland became the leaders in colonial ironworks nevertheless; but it remained a trivial industry in the provincial economy. Entrepreneurs like the Gratz felt they could make a sizeable return by selling iron to England. However, Gratz struggled to sell his American bar iron in England. According to a letter Gratz received from Henry Cruger, Jr, “I have yet made no progress in the sale of bar iron. The quality is not liked and the demand is rather dull.”³³⁴ By the time of the American Revolution, Gratz had given up on the American pig iron industry. Unfortunately, Gratz failed in the iron business, but new prospects in the Illinois were opening up.

³³³ Paul Pascoff, *Industrial Evolution: Organization, Structure, and Growth of the Pennsylvania Iron Industry, 1750-1860*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, 4.

³³⁴ Henry Cruger Jr, “Henry Cruger to Barnard Gratz, October 8, 1766,” Frank Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Murray and Rumsey

The Gratz brothers decided to support the upstart company *Murray and Rumsey*, after they signed a deal replacing *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* as the Army supplier in the Illinois. The arrival of *Murray and Rumsey* brought more troubles to Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan because now they had direct competition and no lucrative government contract. Eventually, Wilkins and his new friends, *Murray and Rumsey*, forced *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* out of the Illinois Country.

In 1767, *Murray and Rumsey* appeared in the Illinois country to benefit from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan's* sufferings. The new company began before the Morgan-Wilkins affair, James Rumsey worked with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* however, and he decided to switch sides and teamed up with a rival associate William Murray. Rumsey was a good friend and an associate with Morgan who ran their operations in his absence but when Wilkins demanded payment and threatened Morgan, Rumsey defected and became involved with Murray. The new company gained favor with Wilkins and with David Frank and the Gratz brothers. Backing the new firm, *Murray and Rumsey*, the Gratz Brothers look to wrestle some Illinois business away from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Soon, Wilkins had signed on with *Murray and Rumsey*. Thus the upstart company gained a political ally against their rival merchants.

Gratzes, Franks, and Simon all supported the new firm with goods. The Gratz brothers and Franks remained in Philadelphia, while Simon remained in Lancaster. However, they financially backed *Murray and Rumsey*. William Murray wrote a letter to the Gratz Brothers on April 24, 1769, from Fort Chartres explaining how he and Rumsey were setting up their stores. Murray looked to avoid the problems of *Baynton, Wharton,*

and Morgan by not focusing on Indian goods. Their main market were the European settlers in the area. Murray reiterated, “Bellytimber, checks, and coarse goods are the best articles for this place. NO INDIAN GOODS.”³³⁵ He suggested that food and simple goods would be the best articles to sell in their stores. The idea of not selling Indian goods is because Murray and Rumsey did not want to repeat what happened to *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*: bankruptcy. Therefore, where *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* failed; they looked to capitalize in the Illinois. However, Murray and Rumsey also had the backing of Wilkins therefore they had an advantage over *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

While *Murray and Rumsey* competed head to head with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, the Gratz brothers remained in Philadelphia and operated through their associates. In the summer of 1769, Barnard Gratz “left this place [Philadelphia] for England unexpectedly.”³³⁶ Gratz’s departure coincided with the Indiana Land Company proposal that was being reviewed in London. This is the same reason why Samuel Wharton was in London. Despite being rivals, they were co-investors in the Indiana Land Company. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Along with the Gratz brothers, Franks also supported the new upstart firm in the Illinois. According to the Crown and the Board of Trade, Franks and his firm was awarded the contract to supply the Army, which included the Illinois Country. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* had lost out on this opportunity and instead they focused on the doomed Indian trade. In the process of several years, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*

³³⁵ William Murray, “William Murray to The Gratz Brothers, April 24, 1769,” Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Bellytimber refers to food.

³³⁶ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to Gerrat Pendergrass, July 31, 1769,” Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

began to see the writing on the wall. With Morgan's constant fighting with the French merchants and then Wilkins, the company did not turn a profit and continued to hemorrhage money. Morgan worried constantly about the affairs of his company in so he put his distillery in other investors' names to avoid bankruptcy claims on that property. Despite, the problems in the Illinois Morgan strived to make something out of the mess. However, the Illinois Venture was a failure for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*

While seemingly sitting in the background, Franks and the Gratz associated with *Murray and Rumsey* and swooped into the scene ready to take advantage of the weakened *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* firm. Their strategy was not like their failed rivals. They did not focus not on the Indian trade, which the French and Spanish had already secured, but rather on English settlers and soldiers in the area. *Murray and Rumsey* reasoned that *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* over extended themselves not knowing the market before bringing their goods westward. The new company learned from the mistakes of their competitors.

The End of the Illinois Venture for Baynton, Wharton and Morgan

In October 1770, Morgan addressed a Court of Enquiry sitting at Fort Chartres about the attacks he suffered from Richard Bacon and James Rumsey. Morgan told the court that, "I then flattered myself that it would be the last Trouble I should give you in an Affair which those Gentlemen have carried on With as much Spleen, Malice, Ill Nature, & Envy as injustice—However I find myself again obliged to Neglect my Business to trouble You & to attend to their litigious Invectives, supported by Colonel

Wilkins.”³³⁷ The Colonel had brought charges against Morgan for his treatment of his former employees: James Rumsey and Richard Bacon. Both men left the employment of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* and became associated with William Murray a known associate of Gratz, Simon, and Franks.

Wilkins claimed that Morgan did not uphold the contract with Bacon stating, “As Mr. Bacon was . . . to be furnish’d with what he requested,” Morgan had “Breach[ed the Articles of Agreement.”³³⁸ Morgan continued to defend *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*’s actions. He argued Mr. Bacon never complained about the company’s furnishing at their plantation. Morgan wanted to settle the accounts at Bacon’s plantation, but could not until he received word from Philadelphia. “Colonel Wilkins, Mr. Rumsey, & Mr. Bacon intimate that as I have not clearly disproved every article of Mr. Bacons Accusations they must certainly remain good—How contrary this to that GLORIOUS ENGLISH LIBERTY AND HAPPY CONSTITUTION we so greatly boast Ourselves of!” Furthermore Morgan exclaims, “Were I to charge Colonel Wilkins with having unjustly injured & interrupted me in my lawfull Business & to sue him for £10,000 Damages, Would He think it right to be condem’d therein Unless I made Proofs if his having done so, Or Because he could not prove to the Contrary—Certainly Not—Nor I hope shall ever such Dispotism [Despotism] be introduced into any Part of his Majesty’s

³³⁷ George Morgan “George Morgan to Court of Enquiry, October 19, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³³⁸ George Morgan “George Morgan to Court of Enquiry, October 19, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

Dominion.”³³⁹ Morgan grew bitter towards the British Army and the unfair treatment he received from Reed and Wilkins. This relationship influenced Morgan’s ultimate decision to become an American patriot during the American War for Independence.

The court battle raged on for four days during mid-October 1770 in Fort Chartres. While, Morgan was cross-examining Bacon “Colonel Wilkins, being present in Court, reprimanded him, and told him that [he] disturbed the Court, and also said in Open Court, that he [Wilkins] was convinced Mr. Morgan was Guilty of a Breach of Articles; and that the Court had no right to give Sentence, only to give their Opinion.”³⁴⁰ Wilkins outburst in court damned Bacon’s case. “THE COURT thinks that they were Interrupted in their proceedings by Colonel Wilkins being present, And also thinks that Colonel Wilkins from what he said looks up the Gentlemen that Constitute this Court in so Cyphical, and Indifferent, a Sense as to be incapable of giving an honest and Impartial Opinion.”³⁴¹ The Court in October ruled in favor of Morgan, reversing the previous ruling that Colonel Wilkins had passed down in his own court. Wilkins and his companions, however, continued to hatch new ways to entrap Morgan and to make his life as miserable as possible.

Even after the court overturned Bacon’s claims, Wilkins continued to persecute Morgan and his firm. Morgan wanted to settle the accounts of the Crown with Wilkins

³³⁹ George Morgan “George Morgan to Court of Enquiry, October 19, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴⁰ George Morgan “Minutes on the Revisal of a Court of Enquiry on the Matters between Bacon and Morgan, October 20, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴¹ George Morgan “Minutes on the Revisal of a Court of Enquiry on the Matters between Bacon and Morgan, October 20, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

but he refused several times. On December 7, 1770, Morgan requested for the fifth time to settle them. Morgan explained, “Your Compliance will render particular obligations to the Company and to their Creditors who now wait with Patient expectation & hope of my meeting with no further Difficulty in our just Demands.”³⁴² In addition to trying to settle the accounts with the Crown, Morgan also asked Wilkins if he would take payment in goods. “You were so kind as to say you would take from me a Quantity of Goods to the Amount of £1500 or £2000—If you will be pleased to make Out a List thereof, or look Over Our Stores and lay them out to about that amount I will Charge them at the very lowest Rates and will immediately deliver them & Remain with all Possible Respect.”³⁴³ Wilkins refused and continued to hold the power of the purse over Morgan.

Furthermore, the issue over Morgan’s stills was not settled. On December 11, 1770, Morgan formally issued a public protest against Wilkins. The protest read, “All which Stills he the said George Morgan had set up in his Distill House & was preparing to distill spirituous Liquors therewith from Grain, Apples, Peaches, Plumbs, Grapes & other Fruits, when on or about the third Day of September,” Wilkins “did order & Cause Walter Elliott Serjeant with about ten private Soldiers of the said Regiment Violently & by force to enter into his this Deponents Distill House & did take down & carry from thence two of his the said George Morgan’s beforemention’d Copper Stills without assigning any other Cause.”³⁴⁴ Furthermore, the Morgan’s protest displays that Wilkins

³⁴² George Morgan “George Morgan to John Wilkins , December 7, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴³ George Morgan “George Morgan to John Wilkins , December 7, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴⁴ George Morgan “George Morgan’s Protest against Lt. Colonel John Wilkins , December 11, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

forbade Morgan from working the remaining stills, thus not making any product to make any money. It also claimed “Leiut. Col. John Wilkins has used many Menaces & Threats to extort from & induce him the said George Morgan to give . . . Lieutenant Colonel John Wilkins, large Sums of Money which he has no legal Claim to.”³⁴⁵ The notorious officer continued to insist for his payment of one thousand pounds however Morgan continued to stand resolute in his belief that Wilkins did not deserve any payment. Louis Viviate, Justice of the Peace, who once had a disagreement with Morgan, heard the merchant’s formal protest against the notorious Colonel. Viviate had replaced Morgan when Wilkins removed him from office. And Viviate ruled in Morgan’s favor.

On December 20, 1770, Morgan placed an advertisement acknowledging his departure from the Illinois and that all his business would be “transacted by Mr. Windsor Brown.”³⁴⁶ Morgan intended to return to Philadelphia. However, several days after Morgan ran this announcement, Lt. Colonel Wilkins issued an order that Morgan “be taken Prisoner in his own House at Kaskaskia by a Serjeant and Six Soldiers”³⁴⁷ Again a prisoner of Wilkins, Morgan was placed in the guard house before he could leave for his home in Philadelphia. Wilkins wanted to keep Morgan in the Illinois to extort money from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

³⁴⁵ George Morgan “George Morgan’s Protest against Lt. Colonel John Wilkins, December 11, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴⁶ George Morgan “George Morgan’s Advertisement of Departure, December 20, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴⁷ Thomas Hutchins “Memorandum of a Conversation between col. Wilkins & Geo Morgan relative to Morgan’s being placed in the guard house,” December 23, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

On Christmas Eve 1770, Wilkins forced Morgan to sign a bond that stated under the penalty of £20,000 he would not continue to distill alcohol in British Illinois.³⁴⁸ Two days later, Morgan appeared before Louis Viviate, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Colony of the Illinois, to give an account of how Wilkins was defrauding the Crown on Indian sundry accounts.³⁴⁹ Morgan suggested that Wilkins extorted "Six Hundred and Eighty one Livres" from Indian representative Edward Cole before he could attend to his business with the Native Americans in the Illinois Country.³⁵⁰ The merchant alluded:

Lt Colonel Wilkins did Order this Deponent to appropriate the aforesaid Six Hundred and Eighty One Livres to the Credit of his the said Lieut. Colonel Wilkins Private Account with Baynton Wharton & Morgan and which he Accordingly did so as will appear by their Books at that Time, and which the foregoing is a true Copy on the Entry, resolving at the same time to keep a look out for a proper Opportunity to put him in Remembrance of so unjustifiable an Act.³⁵¹

Morgan hoped to bring attention to the wrongdoings of Wilkins, even those that were directed at him. Men like Benjamin Chapman wrote to Morgan to commiserate, "I cannot help sympathizing with you as a fellow sufferer under the oppressive Mode of Government we have long groaned under—however I hope the time is now approaching

³⁴⁸ George Morgan "Geo Morgan's Bond," December 24, 1770," in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁴⁹ George Morgan "George Morgan's Deposition against Col. John Wilkins," December 26, 1770," in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁵⁰ George Morgan "George Morgan's Deposition against Col. John Wilkins," December 26, 1770," in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

³⁵¹ George Morgan "George Morgan's Deposition against Col. John Wilkins," December 26, 1770," in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 3.

when we may expect to receive if not an ample Gratification, at least some satisfaction & Atonement for the Many injuries we have received.”³⁵² Wilkins had not only abused his powers against Morgan but others who lived in the Illinois. The colonel even imprisoned employees of Morgan in attempt to continue to harass the merchant. The colonel wrote to Morgan explaining the Imprisonment of Dalton, one of Morgan’s servants³⁵³ Wilkins used anything in his power to make Morgan’s life impossible while he was in the Illinois since he did not get his payment from *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*.

The ruling of the Court of Enquiry displeased Wilkins and he informed Morgan, “You will please to observe Sir once more that I disapprov’d of the proceedings & opinion of that Court and as a man of honour & to the best of my Judgment gave my opinion thereon, which I flatter myself will ever be esteem’d by Impartial & Sensible men to be Consistent with the Strictest Equity & Justice this opinion I still abide by.”³⁵⁴ Despite his displeasure, Wilkins still had to live with the ruling and continued to ask Morgan for payment of public accounts before he left for Philadelphia. Wilkins also mentioned a demand from Mr. Dennis Crochan on the Stills belonging to the Estate of Mr. John Moore for the Sum of £536.9.5 Pennsylvania Currency which matter I must beg

³⁵² Benjamin Chapman “Benjamin Chapman to George Morgan,” December 28, 1770,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

³⁵³ John Wilkins “John Wilkins to George Morgan,” January 23 1771,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

³⁵⁴ John Wilkins “John Wilkins to George Morgan,” January 23 1771,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

you would Settle without giving me further Trouble.”³⁵⁵ Wilkins wanted to get any amount of money he could from Morgan.

By the beginning of 1771, Wilkins and Morgan were tired of the fight and wished to go their separate ways. Morgan wrote a letter on February 2, 1771 attempting to vindicate himself to Wilkins. About the Bacon situation Morgan stated, “With regard to Bacon and his Accomplices in the Villianie I have charged them with, you take a strange Method to vindicate them—I cannot but complain of these Injustices and endenvour [sic] to obtain where it is to be had.”³⁵⁶ He went on, “Whatever Malice or Ill Nature there may have been in my Remarks on the Part of your Latter respecting the Court of Enquiry it was the Truth and I shall appeal to the Gentlemen themselves whether they made the same Observations I did or not.”³⁵⁷ Morgan did not apologize for his actions in court because he believed them to be the truth.

Eventually Wilkins allowed *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* to conduct some business but it was already too late. The company had already taken huge loss because of the Wilkins-Morgan feud. Nonetheless, the fighting continued and on March 20, 1771 Lt. Colonel Wilkins brought a court martial against Morgan with fourteen charges. However, Wilkins never carried through on his threat to Morgan because the merchant left for home—Philadelphia.

³⁵⁵ John Wilkins “John Wilkins to George Morgan,” January 23 1771,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

³⁵⁶ George Morgan “George Morgan to John Wilkins,” February 2 1771,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

³⁵⁷ George Morgan “George Morgan to John Wilkins,” February 2 1771,” in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

When he arrived in Pennsylvania, Morgan immediately wrote to General Gage about his time in the Illinois and the treatment of Wilkins toward him. Morgan's affidavit to General Gage included a list of the damages inflicted on him by Wilkins and Rumsey.³⁵⁸ Gage reviewed Morgan's claims and ruled in his favor. However, Morgan had a contingency plan if Gage did not rule in his favor. He planned to publish papers related to Wilkins' threats but none of that came to pass.³⁵⁹ Morgan celebrated his victory and stated, "I have the Honour to be the Cause of Lt. Colonel Wilkins being Superseded in his Government."³⁶⁰ General Gage heard Morgan's protests and appeals; and he punished Wilkins for his tyrannical rule.

General Gage eventually resolved the Wilkins-Morgan feud. Gage removed Wilkins from his post and promoted Major Isaac Hamilton as commander of the Illinois. Although the fighting between Wilkins and Morgan ended, the company still had property in the Illinois and it was under the direction of John Finley, who represented *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. The company looked to get out of Illinois. They decided to liquidate their holdings in the Illinois because of the failed adventure. Morgan approached his rivals in the Illinois to sell them their inventory. While in the Illinois, Morgan had already begun the process by proposing a deal with David Franks through *Murray and Rumsey* to purchase their unsold goods. Morgan persuaded Murray to purchase the goods because of the Non-Importation Agreements in Philadelphia. The

³⁵⁸ George Morgan "George Morgan Affidavit to General Gage about the losses and damages caused Geo Morgan by Lt Colonel John Wilkins and John Rumsey," June 12 1771," in the Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 4.

³⁵⁹ Savelle, *George Morgan Colony Builder*, 72.

³⁶⁰ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Lieutenants Fowler and Richardson and Ensign Hutchins, August 15, 1771," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

Nonimportation Agreements of 1769 created a shortage of goods bought from Great Britain. The Nonimportation Agreements in the port cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were in protest against the Townshend Acts that limited the production and importation of a variety of goods.³⁶¹ The Nonimportation Agreements created an artificial dearth of goods, which helped firms like *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, liquidate their inventories. Morgan encouraged Rumsey that, “The Scarcity of Goods now in this Country & the Nonimportation Agreements being continued by the Colonies will be greatly in favor of such as purchase.”³⁶² As these second wave of Non-importation Agreements in 1768 hurt many merchants in Philadelphia and the rest of the Colonies, it worked in favor of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* because they were looking to shed some of their unsold merchandise. *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* agreed to sell their goods to David Franks. Morgan reported to Wharton “we have little to expect from the Illinois & what the Good there were all sold to Franks & Co. for about £10,000 which they will soon be sued for as they wanted to gain Time under divers Pretences.”³⁶³ In addition to selling the goods to Franks, the firm also looked to settle all their accounts because of continued bad business. The firm’s debts from the Illinois were “upwards of

³⁶¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776*. New York: F. Ungar Publishing Company, 1957, 131. Schlesinger argues that the Philadelphia merchants were hesitant to sign the Nonimportation Agreements proposed by Boston because their economy had not been affected as much and they only agreed to the arrangement when New York Merchants also joined the movement.

³⁶² George Morgan, “George Morgan to Rumsey, October 24 1770,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁶³ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Samuel Wharton, November 22 1771,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

Twenty Thousand Pounds.”³⁶⁴ The men of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* decided to settle their accounts and focus solely on land speculation and the upcoming Revolution.

David Franks watched *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*’s adventure into the Illinois fail and benefited from their shortcomings. Franks along with the Gratz Brothers supported *Murray and Rumsey* in the Illinois. Their new monopoly purchased the goods from the doomed *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* however; Franks delayed his payment to the troubled company. After several years of bickering, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* sued Franks for payment of the agreement in 1773. They won the suit, but Franks continued to withhold his payments. Almost a year later in a letter to his brother, Thomas Wharton wrote “We were together 4 days since pressing D. Franks for payment of the award and judgment obtained about 12 months since against him of which he has not paid one shilling though the debt is about £10,000. We told him unless he paid a considerable part this week we should be compelled to take an execution out against him.”³⁶⁵ Thus, Franks remained delinquent in his payment to *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* until it was settled in court in 1773. Nonetheless, as they were fierce rivals in business they continued to have a working relationship.

Some men’s failures in the Illinois were another’s reward, which was the case with Franks, Gratz and their associates: *Murray and Rumsey*. The business of the Illinois Country was just an example how their lives were shaped by personal feuds with British officials. Men like Morgan grew to distrust the British government, while men like Franks used their government connections to gain financial advantages over their

³⁶⁴ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Samuel Wharton, November 22 1771,” *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives, Reel 1.

³⁶⁵ Thomas Wharton, “Selections from the Letter-Books of Thomas Wharton, of Philadelphia, 1773-1783,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 33 (1909): 333.

opponents. Thus, their identities were forged in heated business battles between each other and the Crown. Some men prospered and others failed, but one thing united these men together, their hope in land speculation.

Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan lost large amounts money in Illinois, which made them more dependent on the success of the Indiana Company and its land memorial. The events in the Illinois helped forge the identities of these merchantmen especially Morgan. The relationships and trials they faced in the duty of business would teach them valuable lessons that they would care for the rest of their lives.

Summary

In 1765, the Illinois Venture looked promising for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Unfortunately, for the firm their schemes were doomed from the start. Since the British government restricted travel westward, the company along with George Croghan schemed to smuggle their illicit trade goods into the Illinois Country. Unluckily, a group of disgruntled frontiersmen stopped the trader's caravan and burnt their proscribed merchandise. Coming under fire, Croghan and *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* defend themselves by claiming they were only going to Fort Pitt to store their goods. At least their flimsy defense satisfied General Thomas Gage. The following year, Samuel Wharton worked with the new commander of the Illinois Country, Lieutenant Colonel John Wilkins to procure a secret covenant to be the sole British trading firm in the region. When Wharton left for London in hopes of gaining favor for the Sufferers of 1763 Memorial, he never informed George Morgan of the agreement's terms. Poor communication led to many problems for Morgan in the Illinois. Eventually, Wilkins arrested Morgan for failing to meet the terms of the agreement. Over the next several

years, Wilkins harassed Morgan and his firm, which ultimately led to the firm's failure in the Illinois Country. The disaster of the Illinois venture proved to Morgan that the British could not be trusted; instead Morgan's financial future rested with the approval of their land claims. Eventually, these merchants believed they had a better chance of their land scheme to get recognized by the British if they worked together. So men like George Morgan, David Franks, Samuel Wharton, and the Gratzes created the Indiana Land Company. With the help of other investors like politically savvy and connected Benjamin Franklin, William Franklin, and Joseph Galloway, they firmly believed their claims and schemes would get Royal approval. Despite their optimism, the new British Ministry soon tabled their hopes. New Imperial ambitions and policies hampered the Philadelphia merchantmen's land schemes. Overall, these men still remained economically tied to the British, but soon that would change because they continually blocked the merchant's land speculation on the edge of the Empire.

CHAPTER V

CHARTING A NEW COURSE

The Business of the American Revolution

The merchants of Philadelphia suffered under the new imperial policies imposed in the 1760s, especially in the frontier west. Still reeling from the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's Rebellion, the merchants wanted restitution for their financial losses. They believed their compensation should be exclusive land grants in the borderlands given by the British Crown. However, their demands were largely ignored by the British, which ultimately compelled many of the shareholders to join the Whigs as the American Revolution neared. The desire for compensation in the form of western lands and the lack of action from the British Ministry eventually pushed a majority of the shareholders of American trading firms to support independence of the colonies. These merchants charted a new course, because they believed the new American government would recognize and grant their western land claims. It was not political ideology that galvanized these men toward American independence, but rather their business needs and desires.

In December of 1763, the merchants, who had suffered losses on the frontier, came together in Philadelphia at the Queen Tavern to draft a memorial to ask for land compensation in land from the Crown. At the meeting, William Trent and Samuel Wharton were assigned to gather claims from the other frontier merchants, so they could make a collective petition and memorial. The "Sufferers of 1763" presented their appeal to the Crown and the Board of Trade to obtain a settlement for their losses, because they firmly believed they were entitled to just compensation.

Using political connections, these merchants networked with powerful men like Benjamin Franklin, his son Governor William Franklin of New Jersey, Joseph Galloway, and Indian Superintendent Sir William Johnson. Governor Franklin demonstrated his willingness to back the traders and their memorials because he also had a stake in land speculation on the frontier. In 1765, William Franklin wrote to his father, Benjamin Franklin, stating, “The commercial Advantages which must result to Great Britain, by our Traders having free Access to so extensive a Country, inhabited by numerous Indian Nations, are too obvious to need mentioning . . . [and] to settle a Boundary between them and us, and to make Retribution for the Damages they did our Traders by their late Hostilities.”³⁶⁶ Even in 1765, Indian violence still threatened business and the colonists looked to the English government for peace. The first diplomatic hurdle was the establishment of a permanent boundary with the Native Americans. The boundary line was not settled by the Proclamation of 1763 because it was a vague and poorly written law that remained virtually unexecuted in North America. Therefore, a permanent boundary line would have allowed merchants to purchase land and promote their own businesses in the western lands.

The Franklins were well associated with the merchants in Philadelphia, especially *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Dr. Benjamin Franklin was the company’s main advocate, and he also represented Pennsylvania and other colonies in London. These merchants put their faith in land speculation and hoped for a substantial return on their investment once the Crown decided the permanent boundary line with the Indians. Samuel Wharton reminded Franklin, “all I now intend, is from unquestionable Facts to

³⁶⁶ William Franklin, “William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin. December 17, 1765,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 12, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 403.

evince, That the Future Peace of those Colonies, actually depends On the King's Orders being expeditiously transmitted, for the purchase of it [a boundary line]."³⁶⁷ Wharton like the rest of the speculating merchants patiently waited for the Crown to settle the western boundary.

As Franklin anticipated hearing good news from London, William Trent continued to gather a list of traders affected and their damages. As the attorney for *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* and the Indiana Company, it was Trent's responsibility to gather depositions and the accounts of losses to help the merchants' memorial that Franklin advocated in London. Trent and his fellow merchants slowly built a case to prove their need for reimbursement from the Crown.

The Boundary Line

The merchants who signed the memorial believed that there would be a speedy response from London. However, this was not the case. Perceived Indian threats greatly hindered the approval process. Wharton had asked Franklin for an immediate response because they still suffered constant Native American threats on their cargo shipments westward. Wharton describes one such attack to Franklin, "That Our Factor at Fort Pitt had sent from Thence, in July last, Two large Batteaus, With Cargos to the Amount of about Three Thousand pounds Sterling (near to the Falls of the River Ohio,) one Devereaux Smith, who was coming up That River, saw one of Them, near to the East Side it, And upon examining her, found no Person On Board . . . the Cargo was mostly

³⁶⁷ Samuel Wharton, "Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. September 30, 1767," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 257.

destroyed and part scattered, for several miles along the River Side.”³⁶⁸ The merchants assumed renegade Indians attacked the shipment, but little evidence was produced and it could have also been an accident. Regardless, the incident fanned the flames of rumors. Furthermore, Wharton proclaimed, “This Loss is very severe upon us and Especially when added to the vast Sum, we lost the last Indian War; And no Retribution received for Them.”³⁶⁹ Given his mounting losses, Wharton pressed Franklin for a prompt response from London, “all Trade must cease from hence to the Illinois, as it will be impossible for any Persons to carry it On, Unless some speedy and efficacious Measures are taken, To pacify the Indians.”³⁷⁰ Wharton was clearly concerned not only the land dealings and the boundary line, but also the lack of order on the frontier, specifically along the Ohio River. However, Wharton believed, since his company already had a head start in Illinois, they could convince the Ministry of the dire need to settle the boundary issue. Both *Baynton*, *Wharton*, and *Morgan* and the Indiana Company needed the boundary-line issue settled to make sure their speculation materialized. Even fellow Philadelphian Joseph Galloway wrote to Franklin, urging him to press the British Ministry for action. Galloway implored:

I make no Doubt, but you are well acquainted with Indian Affairs. That their Jealousies of and Discontent with the Conduct of the English towards them have not been as yet radically removed. That our People notwithstanding all the Governments can do are carrying their Settlements over the Boundaries of the

³⁶⁸ Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. October 4, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 272.

³⁶⁹ Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. October 4, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 272.

³⁷⁰ Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. October 4, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 272.

Lands purchased of the Natives and that in their Journies to war against each other many of them have been killed by the White People.³⁷¹

Galloway believed that a boundary line would bring peace. He wrote, “That to remove the like Mischiefs in future the Indians have requested that a Boundary may be settled between them and the English and have offer’d to dispose of all the Lands contiguous to our settlements on this Side the Boundary.”³⁷² They believed a boundary would slow the violence and hostilities on the frontier and peace would usher in the return of business.

Furthermore, Galloway addressed the boundary line issue, “Under these Circumstances it is greatly to be dreaded That the Delay in the Settlement of this Boundary and completing the Purchase, will be attended with the most Serious and Mischievous Consequences to the colonies, unless some speedy Measures are taken to Prevent them.”³⁷³ Joseph Galloway worried about the slowness of establishing the boundary line, which would prevent Indian war and benefit the fledgling Indiana Company. Peace and stability in the western lands would bring settlers west for the Indiana Company. However, in London Franklin ran into some problems. The Ministry ignored Franklin’s requests because Sir William Johnson had failed to articulate the boundary agreement. Franklin reported, “My Lord [Clare] knew nothing of the Boundary’s having ever been agreed on by Sir William, had sent the letters to the Board of Trade, desiring search to be made there for Sir William’s letters, and ordered Mr. Mc.

³⁷¹ Joseph Galloway, “Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin. October 8, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 273.

³⁷² Joseph Galloway, “Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin. October 8, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 273.

³⁷³ Joseph Galloway, “Joseph Galloway to Benjamin Franklin. October 8, 1767,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 273.

Lean to search the Secretary's office, who found nothing."³⁷⁴ The agreement made by William Johnson had not arrived or was never sent to London. Franklin did not believe there would be movement on the issue in the Ministry until the British citizenry elected a new Parliament. Franklin wrote to Galloway:

The present Ministry it is now thought are like to continue, at least 'till a new Parliament; so that our Apprehensions of a Change, and that Mr. Grenville would come in again, seem over for the present. He behaves as if a little out of his Head on the Article of America, which he brings into every Debate without Rhyme or Reason, when the Matter has not the least connection with it: Thus at the Beginning of this Session on the Debate upon the King's Speech, he tired every body, even his Friends, with a long Harangue about and against America of which there was not a Word in the Speech.³⁷⁵

While Morgan was in the Illinois Country setting their trading networks, Wharton dealt with both Franklin and Sir William Johnson. They looked to Johnson as an ally to secure land from and trade with the Indians. If the merchants could simply get Johnson to finalize the boundary line with both the Indians and the Crown, the merchants would be in a great position to prosper. However, Johnson had little sway with the Ministry in London. In 1768, Lord Hillsborough replaced Lord Shelburne, who had been a great friend to the American merchants. Franklin wrote to Galloway stating, "that some changes have taken place since my last, which have not the most promising aspect for America."³⁷⁶ Lord Shelburne, their political ally, had been stripped of his office. Franklin believed Lord Hillsborough was not an enemy to America, but he doubted

³⁷⁴ Benjamin Franklin, "Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin. November 25, 1767," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 322.

³⁷⁵ Benjamin Franklin, "Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway. December 1, 1767," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 14, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, 329.

³⁷⁶ Benjamin Franklin, "Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway. January 9, 1768," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 16.

Hillsborough's commitment to American interests. Unfortunately, the changes in the British Ministry caused an upheaval in the efforts of Franklin and the land company.

The Ministry's failure to delineate the boundary line fueled unrest and distrust in the colonies. The lack of action upset men like George Croghan, who wrote, "I am much Surprized, what could be the Kings Ministers Reasons for ordering Sir Wm. Johnson to treat with the Indians, for this Boundary and then to suffer it to lie so long unsettled. Surely it cannot be the Expence? For to my Knowledge, it has absolutely cost the Crown within the two last Years, as much in presents . . . Besides it is a necessary and preparitory Step to be taken, before we Ever can pretend to form any Colonies either at the Illinois or Detroit."³⁷⁷ Croghan argued that it was in the best interest of the Crown to quickly settle the boundary line, because it would save them money; however, the Crown did not agree with Croghan's assessment. Nevertheless, Franklin reported to his son, "The purpose of settling the new colonies seems at present to be dropped . . . There seems rather to be an inclination to abandon the posts in the back country as [they] more expensive than useful."³⁷⁸ London politics trumped American business. Ultimately, Franklin confirmed the delay by the Ministry; it left the American colonists bewildered and confused.

Franklin relayed the mixed messages from the Ministry to his associates in America reporting:

I am much surpriz'd that the Ministry should think of abandoning the Posts in the Back Country, and leave them to the Colonies to garrison and keep up . . . a War will soon be the Consequence. I am glad, however, that the Ministry have at

³⁷⁷ George Croghan, "George Croghan to Benjamin Franklin. February 12, 1768," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 42.

³⁷⁸ Benjamin Franklin, "Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin. March 13, 1768," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 74.

length sent over Orders for compleating the Boundary, as I think it will be attended with great Benefit to the Publick, as well as be a Means of procuring some Retribution to the Sufferers by the late Indian Depredations.³⁷⁹

The Ministry reluctantly agreed to the boundary line, but decided to abandon the British outposts along the frontier, thus making the borderlands less secure. The Ministry wanted to turn the role of protection over to the American colonies because it cost the Crown a sizeable amount of money.³⁸⁰ By 1772, General Thomas Gage ordered the withdrawal of all British Regulars from the western forts except small garrisons in Detroit, Kaskaskia, and Michilimackinac.

On May 24, 1768, Joseph Galloway wrote to William Johnson stating that “I rejoice much to hear from Dr. Franklin that Orders are transmitted to you for immediately [Settl]ing the Boundary Line.”³⁸¹ The good news brought new hope to the members of the Indiana Company and the “Sufferers of 1763.” After hearing about the Ministry’s order for Johnson to settle the boundary line, Wharton decided to pressure Johnson and traveled to visit him. Thus, instead of going to Illinois to help Morgan, Wharton journeyed with William Trent to see Johnson in New York. They ventured to Johnson’s estate in New York, but found him instead residing in poor health in New London, Connecticut. Once, Wharton and Trent arrived in New London, they spent several weeks with the Baronet Johnson. Wharton explained to Franklin, “As soon as I heard, That Sir William Johnson had received the King’s Orders to settle the Boundary with the Six Nations, I set off with Captain William Trent [The legal Attorney of the Traders, who

³⁷⁹ Benjamin Franklin, “Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin. May 10, 1768,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 120.

³⁸⁰ Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, 353.

³⁸¹ Joseph Galloway, “Joseph Galloway to Sir William Johnson, May 24, 1768,” in *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Volume VI, 231.

suffered, as well by the Encroachments of the French in 1754, as by the Indians in 1763] for the Mohocks Country, But on our arrival at Albany, we receiv'd a Letter from him, informing Us, That his bad state of Health, had required his going to New London, for a change of air and Diet."³⁸² Johnson was the key to the settlement with the Iroquois because of his diplomatic status. However, his poor health seriously crippled the process. Wharton and Trent remained with Johnson until September 1768 in hopes of helping Johnson back to the bargaining table with the Iroquois.

Their summer trip was not a complete failure, as their journey back took them to Fort Stanwix, exactly at the time of an important conference on Indian affairs. Wharton and Trenton accompanied Johnson to the Indian Conference at Fort Stanwix. Wharton described the scene thusly, "By the best Estimation, There were, about three thousand four hundred Indians collected, and much fewer Women and Children, than I ever saw at any Treaty before."³⁸³ The meeting in upstate New York lasted for several days. Eventually, the accords were settled and they established a permanent boundary line with the Iroquois.

The Treaty of Fort Stanwix

The sole purpose of the conference at Fort Stanwix was to permanently settle the boundary line issue. Historian Richard White suggests the two main parties—The British and the Iroquois—represented people, the Algonquians and the British settlers, that they could not control.³⁸⁴ Therefore, each party had their own commercial motives to

³⁸² Samuel Wharton "Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. December 2, 1768," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 275.

³⁸³ Samuel Wharton "Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin. December 2, 1768," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 15, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972, 275.

³⁸⁴ White, *The Middle Ground*, 351.

finalizing the boundary-line deal. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix allowed British merchants to purchase land from the Iroquois Nations for the first time. However, in reality the Iroquois ceded land that was not their own—land they had no legal right to give away. The treaty therefore set the stage for a string of future hostilities. Regardless of the legality of the peace accord, the merchants viewed the Fort Stanwix Treaty as a clear victory. They hoped that Franklin could convince the British Ministry that everything was now settled on the frontier and to uphold the new treaty. This new hope for the Indiana Company only lasted for a short while. The British Ministry once again maintained their original position and ignored the requests of the American merchants for financial redress through land concessions.

The continued failure in London put the American businessmen in a precarious position. They had trusted Benjamin Franklin could convince the British Ministry to approve their memorial, but he failed even when new ministers came into power. At the conclusion of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, it became imperative for Samuel Wharton, Bernard Gratz, and William Trent to travel to England to help Franklin in his efforts to persuade the Ministry to honor their land grant memorials, especially those of the Indiana Company. They hoped this venture would change their fortunes. The traders believed that the Treaty of Fort Stanwix granted them roughly “Seven Million, 200,000, Acres . . . So as to form ye whole under One Government.”³⁸⁵ The traders emphatically declared that they were entitled to free western lands for compensation of their losses during the Seven Years’ War. In an effort to ensure that their business goals came to fruition,

³⁸⁵ John Baynton, “John Baynton to the Indiana Company, May 5, 1770,” in the Correspondence of John Baynton, in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

Samuel Wharton and Barnard Gratz decided to travel to England to assure the British Ministry heard their application and appeals.

Barnard Gratz hastily left for London to represent Croghan's interests in the company. In the summer of 1769, Michael Gratz began to invest in William Murray and his business in the Illinois. These activities made the Gratz brothers direct rivals with *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* on the frontier. Anxious over the outcome of the land grants, Michael wrote his brother about various topics including a rumor that they "were informed that B.W. and Co. have had lands granted."³⁸⁶ The Gratz brothers depended on the Ministry's decision. Similar to the hopes of the *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*, settling the boundary issue would benefit the business of the Gratz brothers. If the Indiana land grants were approved, Gratz fretted about his own land dealings with Croghan. He hoped that Croghan's dealings would also soon be approved.

Wharton, Trent, and Dr. Franklin all worked together to have the Indiana Company's claim recognized by the Ministry. However, they failed to persuade the government. The British Ministry did not approve the actions of Sir William Johnson at the Fort Stanwix Conference and they also hesitated to approve the Indiana land grant. Under the recommendation of Lord Camden and Franklin, the merchants of the Indiana Company decided to combine their efforts with a larger company under the leadership of a British nobleman named Thomas Walpole. The new bigger land company was called the Walpole Company or the Grand Ohio Company. On December 27, 1769, the present members met in London to merge the firms—the Indiana Company and the Grand Ohio

³⁸⁶ Michael Gratz, "Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, August 9, 1769," in the Michael Gratz Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Company—and to propose the creation of a new colony called Vandalia. The new land company became known as the Vandalia Company after their proposed colony.

Vandalia Company

The London contingent of Wharton, Trent, and Franklin kept their fellow shareholders in the dark about their intentions with the Vandalia Company. Frustrated, Morgan constantly blamed Wharton for all of his problems in Illinois. While Morgan continued to fight Lt. Colonel John Wilkins in Illinois, Wharton and Trent waited in London for good news. As rumors swirled in America about the confirmation of the land grants, Baynton and Morgan became even more frustrated with Wharton and his lack of communication back home. Baynton and Morgan needed to hear from their partner because of a secret deal Wharton had reached with Lt. Colonel Wilkins. However, Wharton was embarrassed about losing control of the situation so he kept his partners in the dark about his dealings. A letter from Trent to Croghan sheds some light on Wharton's attitude. Trent remarked, "You know Mr. Wharton's Complexion well, You know the Character He always supports in Pennsylvania & the point of Light He stood in & You know the Love & fondness he has for his Wife and Children Therefore the very thought of not succeeding is enough to drive Him to despair."³⁸⁷ Regardless of his motives, Wharton's silence ultimately hurt the company's Illinois venture, as Wilkins harassed Morgan for not honoring Wharton's secret agreement. Furthermore, the lack of communication caused a rift between the partners, and it eventually led to the pecuniary death of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. Despite all of these miscommunications in

³⁸⁷ William Trent, "William Trent to George Croghan, June 11, 1769," in Kenneth Bailey, *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753-1817: Being Primarily Papers of the "Suffering Traders" of Pennsylvania*, (Los Angeles: Sons of the Revolution Library, 1947), 231.

1769, the Indiana Land Company officially merged with the British Grand Ohio Company to increase the odds of Royal approval of their numerous appeals for land.

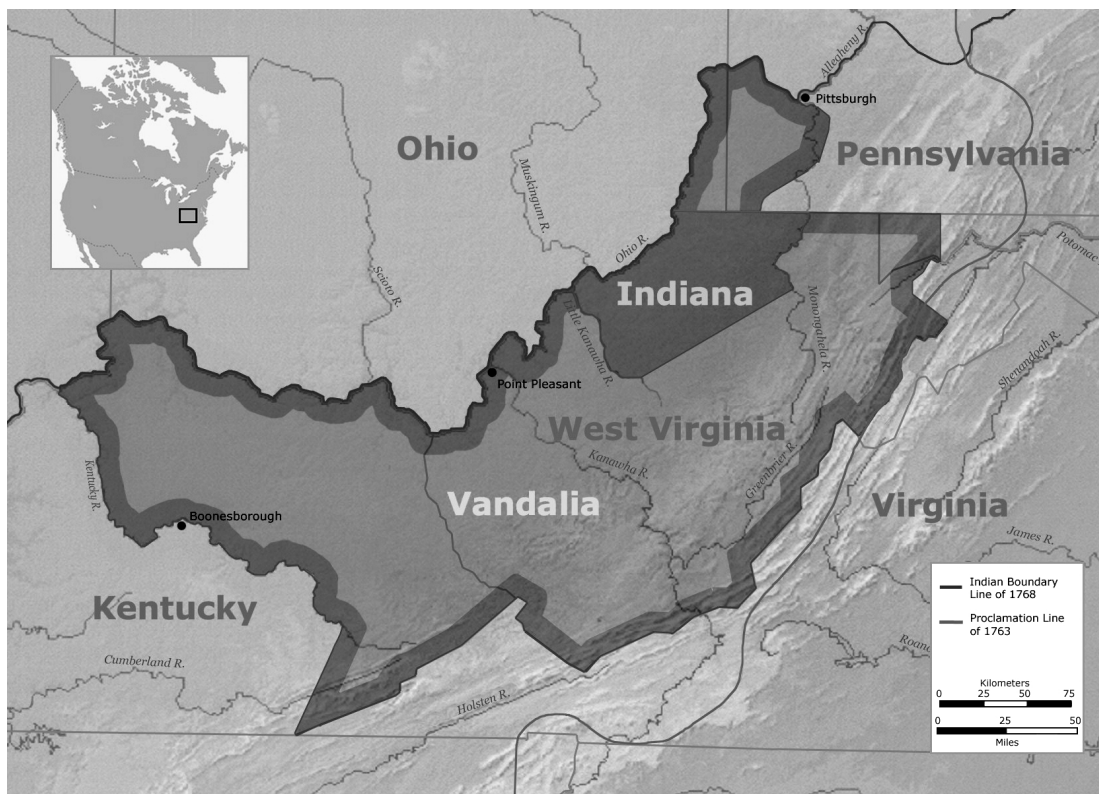


Figure 3. The Proposed Vandalia and Indiana Claims. (Public Domain, Labeled as Noncommercial reuse).

The new Vandalia Company had a much better chance to secure a Royal approval from the British Ministry than the smaller Indiana Company because its shareholders were not exclusively American colonists. On January 4, 1770, Wharton, Franklin, and Walpole presented their new plan to the Ministry.³⁸⁸ Their new proposal was to buy an even larger tract of land from the Fort Stanwix cession than under the previous Indiana plan.

³⁸⁸ Benjamin Franklin, "Petition to the Treasury from Franklin and Others for Grant of Land, January 4, 1770," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 17, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 8.

According to the company's plan, this new land grant would become the colony of Vandalia. However, the Ministry continued to stall on their decision, which caused more anxiety for the merchants. The Ministry delayed their decision because they had to hear competing petitions for land grants that overlapped the Vandalia memorial. Again, the slow and plodding nature of British politics thus eventually became the death knell for the Vandalia Land Company. The company continued to exist until the American War for Independence began in 1775.

The slow failure of the Vandalia proposal was a painful process for the merchants. The delays further damaged *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. The partners of the Philadelphia firm hotly debated the company's expenses. The company lay in insolvency and Baynton and Morgan could not afford to send money to Wharton in London. Wharton chose to believe that his partners did not want anything to do with the Vandalia project. In response to Wharton's thoughts, Baynton responded, "why GM [George Morgan] & myself are not interested in ye Shares his reasoning thereon will do him everlasting Dishonor; if ever exposed to ye Notice of ye Publick amongst others above Matters on his Head, He alleges that Mr. M [Morgan] or myself, are excluded therefrom is by our not providing him with Money for that Purpose Thereby believe that such another tantalizing insult was never afforded."³⁸⁹ Honor and reputation were on both men's minds, because these were important values in the eighteenth century. Wharton's reputation in London meant he had to keep an appearance of a wealthy gentleman, which was a costly venture. Meanwhile, Morgan concentrated on his reputation as a solvent businessman, which meant he had to be frugal. Historian Joanne Freeman defines

³⁸⁹ John Baynton, "John Baynton to Wharton, May 14, 1770," in the Correspondence of John Baynton, in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

eighteenth century honor as, “A man of good reputation was respected and esteemed; a man of honor had an exalted reputation.”³⁹⁰ The rift between Wharton and his partners widened and both sides blamed each other.

Morgan took the insult personally because he was imprisoned on the account of Wharton’s secret deal. The Illinois venture left the company in shambles and Morgan had no money to send to Wharton in London. Simply put, Wharton had started to ignore his partners in America, which actually made Morgan’s problem with Wilkins much worse in the Illinois Country. In August 25, 1771 Wharton wrote to Morgan about the situation in London. On November 22, 1771, in his first letter since 1768, Morgan responded to Wharton. He informed Wharton about their concerns with the Vandalia land project. Morgan also updates Wharton on the company’s debt. Morgan notified Wharton of the deal to liquidate their Illinois goods, which was for £10,000 but the company remained in “Debt due to B.W. & M to upwards of Twenty Thousand Pounds.”³⁹¹ Their company remained hopeful for better news from London. The land dealings in London had a profound effect on the men who remained in America. Their futures depended on Wharton’s diplomatic success; but Wharton ignored his partners. All the members of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* were out of money, including their lawyer and friend William Trent. Despite their situation they continued to hope for a positive response from Lord Hillsborough and the British Ministry.

³⁹⁰ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, xx.

³⁹¹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Samuel Wharton, November 22, 1771, “in the Correspondence of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

Lord Hillsborough, however, opposed the land promoter's claims in North America. Franklin exclaimed his thoughts about Lord Hillsborough and the Ministry's actions. Franklin stated, "The Scripture saith, 'By their Work shall ye know them. 'Soon after the Conclusion of the last War; it became an Object with the Ministers of this Country to draw a Revenue from America. The first Attempt was by a Stamp Act . . . The Americans determined to petition their Sovereign, praying his gracious Interposition in their favour with his Parliament, that the Imposition of these Duties which they considered as an Infringement of their Rights, might be repealed."³⁹² Franklin continued his rant against the British Ministry for their failures. After yet another disappointment, the merchants began to split from their British brethren. Franklin expounded:

Bad Ministers have ever been averse to the Right Subjects claim of petitioning and remonstrating to their Sovereign . . . When Subjects conceive themselves oppressed or injured, laying their Complaints before the Sovereign or the governing Powers, is a kind of Vent to Grievances that gives some Ease to their Minds; the Receiving with at least an Appearance of Regard their Petitions, and taking them into Consideration, gives present Hope, and affords time for the cooling of resentment . . . The Secretary for America therefore seems in this Instance not to have judged rightly for the Service of his excellent Master.³⁹³

Franklin angrily denounced Lord Hillsborough's refusal to see their petitions including the Vandalia memorials. The land memorials continued to fall on deaf ears, and little or nothing could be done. The failure of the land companies left the merchants to look for other business options and they truly came to believe that their financial woes were the fault of the British government.

³⁹² Benjamin Franklin, "On the Conduct of Lord Hillsborough, August 1772," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 19, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 216.

³⁹³ Benjamin Franklin, "On the Conduct of Lord Hillsborough, August 1772," *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 19, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 216.

The Non-Importation Agreements

While Wharton, Trent, and Franklin were in England, revolutionary fervor began to increase in North America. These men did not live in a vacuum solely focused on their own activities. The colonies had enacted the Non-Importation Agreements in protest of the taxes and other legislation passed by Parliament on the colonies. After their failure in the Illinois Country, *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* sold their goods to rival merchant David Franks. This transaction allowed Franks to have a new supply of goods that did not require breaking the Non-Importation Agreement. Nevertheless, Franks hesitated on payment, creating a conflict with his rival merchants.

Many of the merchants in Philadelphia had confidence that the Ministry and Parliament would break from self-inflicted embargoes of British goods. Therefore, many merchants speculated that business profitability would return. However, Michael Gratz, much like his contemporaries in Philadelphia, was disappointed about the news that the Ministry did not confirm the Indiana land grants. The Gratz brothers, Simon, and Franks all still hoped that they could recover compensation from their losses on the frontier. They intended to use their remuneration to purchase more goods to sell. However, Michael Gratz's confidence quickly faded with the arrival of the Townsend Acts that taxed a multitude of items. Historian T.H. Breen writes, "the Townshend Program did not ignite the kind of street violence that had greeted the Stamp Act, the colonists . . . rejected out of hand the notion that Parliament could tax them without their consent."³⁹⁴ The Townsend Acts met stiff resistance including the renewal of the Non-Importation Agreements. These agreements stifled merchants like the Gratz brothers. Michael Gratz

³⁹⁴ Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*, 239.

issued instructions to his brother, “An no doubt the difficult Acts will be on their repeal before you leave England; so that I would not omit bringing some goods, even if they were to be stored here for a little time till we have account of the repealing of those Acts . . . However, I would do nothing in case there is no prospect of the Acts being repealed, which you are the judge, as you are on the spot.”³⁹⁵ The Non-Importation Agreements injured the merchants, as they were willing to break their oath to bring goods into the colonies even if they did not sell them. Business for the Gratz brothers was important, and they would readily disregard political ideals to support their families and company. In a letter to his associate William Murray, Michael Gratz wrote, “on account of Non-Importation, concluded on by the different cities this way, which yet continues, though I am in hopes it will soon be over. However, let it be or not, I am gathering a cargo for you on our joint account.”³⁹⁶ Therefore, the Gratz brothers still determined to get goods to the Illinois despite the Non-Importation Agreement. On April 4, 1770, the Gratz sent Murray a shipment of goods, but they apologized for the lack of future shipments because of the scarcity of goods. They recommended to Murray “while we can obtain of our worthy friend, Mr. Franks leave of batteaving some kind of goods, to be forwarded you on our joint accounts, if no dry goods are to be had. We cannot say how it will be, as we have no account of the Acts being repealed.”³⁹⁷ Therefore, the Gratz brothers relied on Franks for supplies since their inventories were barren. They did not like the Non-

³⁹⁵ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, August 21, 1769,” in the Michael Gratz Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

³⁹⁶ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to William Murray, December, 28 1769,” in the Michael Gratz Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

³⁹⁷ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to William Murray, April 4, 1770,” in the Michael Gratz Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Madeira Wine was smuggled in from the Spanish Colonies.

Importation Agreements of the taxes. Furthermore, Michael Gratz apologized, “I was sorry I could not assist my dear friend this time with a little good, red Port wine, which I tried hard for between this and New York, but it was not to be had at either place. So you must make the best of the cask of Madeira wine this time.”³⁹⁸ Even with the scarcity of goods, the merchants were still able to get some Madeira wine. The Gratz brothers like other merchants of the time still wanted to provide a product for their customers; so much so that they (might have) resorted to smuggling. Furthermore, their behavior showed how concerned the Gratz brothers were with the potential business in the Illinois.

While waiting for the repeal of the Townsend Acts, Barnard Gratz dealt with land speculations through his friend William Trent. Barnard Gratz was authorized to sell George Croghan’s 9,050-acre tract of land in the Mohawk Valley. Moses Franks, the brother of David Franks, was named the power of attorney for Michael Gratz, which allowed the sale to continue in London.³⁹⁹ The Gratz, like other merchants during this time, were hurting for money. As such, they were willing to part with large tracts of land to compensate for their shortcomings. As British policies increasingly crippled the colonists businesses, times grew tough.

The economy came to a grueling halt after the passing of the Non-Importation Agreements. However, Barnard Gratz received some good news from an English friend, Andreas Henry Groth, who wanted to settle an account with Gratz. Groth also provided insight into contemporary political events in England. He stated, “I am in hopes that

³⁹⁸Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to William Murray, April 4, 1770,” in the Michael Gratz Letterbook in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

³⁹⁹Michael Gratz, “Barnard Gratz to William Emerton, October 3, 1770,” Series I, Box 1, Folder 57. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers in the Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

matters will soon be made up with Spain and not come to extremity, but above all that the Colonies may keep firm in their resolutions, so as not to give away their freedom and become like the Irish.”⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, Groth an English merchant sympathized with the Americans in their efforts against the British Ministry. Nonetheless, the American merchants were hurting from the economic protests against the British. The American merchants continued to hemorrhage money because of the hostile political atmosphere in North America. Many still hoped that land speculation would fix their financial losses from the latest war and their troubles from the Non-Importation Agreements.

Still reeling from the near bankruptcy wrought by the Seven Years’ War, the British Ministry looked for ways to save money and to collect revenue to fill their coffers. One cost-cutting measure involved closing forts and reducing the size of the British military in North America. For example, the British Army abandoned Fort Pitt in 1772. These cuts had adverse effects on men like David Franks, who supplied the Army at Fort Pitt. Furthermore, General Thomas Gage sought a cheaper supplier to the Illinois country. With General Gage’s attempt to lower costs, Franks’ insulation from the financial hardships of the Non-Importation Agreements was tenuous at best.

One way Franks endeavored to get around the Non-Importation Agreements was to purchase the surplus goods from the bankrupt *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan*. However, Franks hesitated to pay the insolvent firm the price they demanded. Franks claimed a portion of the inventory was ruined and non-saleable, and the two parties went to court in 1773. Eventually, they settled, but only after a long, tenuous legal battle. In

⁴⁰⁰ Michael Gratz, “Andreas Henry Groth to Barnard Gratz, October 24, 1770,” Series I, Box 1, Folder 18. Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers in the Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

time, Franks lost the fight and had to pay the amount due. Most of the merchants were under extreme amounts of stress due to the heightened political climate.

In addition to the political turmoil sweeping across the colonies, men still had to deal with personal issues. As Wharton remained abroad in England, John Baynton remained sickly in Philadelphia. Morgan angrily blamed the dire economic situation on Wharton. He stated, “Mr. Baynton lies at the Point of Death & attributes the Cause to your ill Usage of him.”⁴⁰¹ Faced with the declining health of his father-in-law and senior partner, Morgan experienced stress and anxiety. He worried about his family and business. Morgan inquired, “How far or what Shares you have interested him in your expiated Acquisitions in England. As this is the only Recompense you can now make to this much injured Family, let me beseech of you to do it immediately & without further Hesitation.”⁴⁰² Morgan continued to accost Wharton for his dealings in London. However, Morgan implored Wharton to finish his business in London because it was the only way to help the family and business.

The passing of John Baynton in 1773 left the company in an even more precarious position. With Wharton still in London, Morgan was the only partner in Philadelphia. The emotional stress of losing a relative, mentor, and business partner was especially hard in a time of such political and economic strife. Morgan continued to agonize about Wharton’s role in the passing of Baynton. However, he apologized to Benjamin Franklin for dragging him into the conflict between Wharton and himself. Morgan still vented his

⁴⁰¹ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Samuel Wharton, May 5 or 6, 1773, “in the Correspondence of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

⁴⁰² George Morgan, “George Morgan to Samuel Wharton, May 5 or 6, 1773, “in the Correspondence of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

rage against Wharton, stating, “It would take up too much of your Time to descend into the Particulars of Mr. Wharton’s Treatment of Mr. Baynton Who was himself a Stranger to Deceit.”⁴⁰³ Morgan blamed Wharton for the death of his father-in-law. He stated about Baynton’s death, “This aggravated from the Consideration of Mr. Wharton’s Ingratitude, which can only be equal’d by his Vanity & Cunning, I pray of you Sur to excuse this Warmth of Expression. They are serious Truths & I feel most sensibly the Effects thereof, in the Loss of one of the best of Friends.”⁴⁰⁴ This emotional angst coupled with financial troubles only made life more difficult.

Lord Dunmore’s War

1773 brought new political and economic struggles to the colonies. Parliament repealed the majority of the Townsend Acts except for the Tea tax. Furthermore, Lord Hillsborough and the Ministry continued to refuse the approval of the land memorials of the merchants. While most of the merchants focused on the memorial situation in London, George Croghan was on the frontier dealing with purchasing the Indian lands. By 1773, not knowing the fate of the Vandalia Memorial, Croghan had already secretly purchased roughly 1,500,000 acres of land surrounding Pittsburgh.⁴⁰⁵ The area around Fort Pitt was in constant political flux. For example, the British government had recently abandoned Fort Pitt because they believed it would save them money. However, the Colony of Virginia decided to take possession of the strategic fort. Thus, the Virginia

⁴⁰³ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Benjamin Franklin, July 8, 1773, “in the Correspondence of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

⁴⁰⁴ George Morgan, “George Morgan to Benjamin Franklin, July 8, 1773, “in the Correspondence of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan in the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers at the Pennsylvania State Archives, Real 1.

⁴⁰⁵ Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat*, 280.

Militia controlled the largest military outpost on the frontier beginning in 1772. This occupation created a political stir between the colonies of Pennsylvania and Virginia, which forced Croghan in the middle of Lord Dunmore's War.

Since the founding of Pennsylvania as a colony in 1681, the western border had never been clearly defined. Thus, Virginia and Pennsylvania both claimed ownership of Pittsburgh and its surrounding area. Croghan and his land schemes became entangled in the struggle for control for Pittsburgh. Believing the Vandalia land proposal failed again in the British Ministry, the Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore moved to claim Pittsburgh for his colony. In the summer of 1773, Governor Dunmore visited Pittsburgh to assess the situation on the frontier. Dunmore appointed Dr. John Connolly as his agent and representative on the frontier. In 1774, Connolly officially claimed Pittsburgh for Virginia.

That year violence and conflict erupted in Pittsburgh. Connolly's paramilitary occupation of Pittsburgh met strong resistance from a former British Army officer named Arthur St. Clair. However, Connolly's actions coincided with new Indian hostilities. This new violence created a situation that forced St. Clair and Croghan to put aside their differences and come together to raise a company of men to fight the Indians, which angered Connolly because it diminished his authority in the region. Connolly and St. Clair became bitter enemies. The political climate surrounding Pittsburgh was one of civil war. Settlers were divided into two factions; and they had to deal with Indian attacks. The fighting continued because of undefined borders and the undecided fate of the Vandalia memorials in London.

The conflict between the two parties became a central contention in Lord Dunmore's War. The Governor of Virginia called for war against Native Americans, but his real aspiration was to take Pittsburgh for his colony. However, Croghan wanted to avoid an Indian war so he met with the chiefs in an attempt to calm the hostilities. Croghan wanted peace in order to proceed with his land schemes. However, Lord Dunmore's War created chaos on the frontier, and Croghan was caught in the middle of it. Furthermore, the news of the death of Sir William Johnson put more weight on Croghan's shoulders. The fighting continued between settlers and Indians, but Croghan and the Vandalia members needed peace to continue their plans to purchase western lands. Hence, the backcountry conflict destroyed any chance of approval of land memorials, which forced Croghan to secretly purchase lands.

Furthermore, Croghan and Wharton also surmised that the British Ministry would continue to stall, therefore Wharton encouraged Croghan to purchase lands straight from the Indians by utilizing diplomatic and political leverage. However, the chaos on the frontier continued as the Revolutionary fervor elevated in the east. St. Clair and his Pennsylvanian followers arrested Connolly and his faction, which effectively suspended the border dispute until war returned to the area within a year.

"The Shot Heard Around the World"

By early 1775, the political climate in the colonies reached a fever pitch and swept the members of Vandalia Company into the confusion. In April, the American Revolutionary War erupted on the commons of Lexington and Concord. There was little chance returning to peace and each man was caught in the web of war. The land memorials were dead in the water, and the merchants had to assess their situation.

At the outset of the American War for Independence, the company of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* almost ceased to exist, except on paper. In 1773, John Baynton passed away. The remaining senior partner, Samuel Wharton continued to advocate for the approval of the Vandalia Company in London. Wharton continued his support of the Vandalia Company until it was no longer viable because of the war in 1775. Eventually, Wharton pledged his support for the United States to his good friend Benjamin Franklin. Wharton offered his services to the patriot cause: “I was convinced of the indispensable Propriety, and Necessity of the Colonies asserting their Independence, and Therefore I have faithfully and zealously endeavoured as far as was in my Power, To countenance, and support it, And May I add, That I shall be happy, While I remain in Europe (Which will be for a few Months) to dedicate my poor Abilities, If you think They may be usefully employed, To the service of our Country?”⁴⁰⁶ Loyalty to his family, home, and the failure of his business with the British government motivated Wharton’s commitment to American cause. Wharton stated that he had been swayed because the British government was corrupt. He wrote to Franklin:

But I have been long convinced of the arbitrary System and sad Depravity of this Court and People, and That if the Liberties of America were to be saved and Perpetuated, It must be done by the Americans Themselves, and Not by any Man, or Set of Men of this Country; And Therefore I have been inexpressibly rejoiced, in Perusing the new Forms of Government in the several American States, and especially That of Pennsylvania, because it communicates equal civil, and religious Liberties to all, and particularly establishes an Equality of Representation in all the Counties, on a broad and fair Basis;⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, December 21, 1776,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 23, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 61.

⁴⁰⁷ Samuel Wharton, “Samuel Wharton to Benjamin Franklin, December 21, 1776,” *The Benjamin Franklin Papers*, Vol 23, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 61.

George Morgan also championed the patriot side in the conflict. Before the war began Morgan had worked with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Baynton, to open a new store in Philadelphia. This new company called *Baynton and Morgan* operated and profited from selling groceries and hardware.⁴⁰⁸ While living in Philadelphia, Morgan rubbed shoulders with some of the social elites of the city. In addition to his social life, Morgan also took the responsibility of raising a family. Furthermore, he cared for his widowed mother-in-law and her younger children. Family became the most important part of his life. Along with the rest of the city of Philadelphia, he monitored the events in Boston and its surrounding areas. When the shooting war began, Morgan decided to help defend his home from the British.

Morgan joined a light infantry company in the Third Battalion under the command of John Cadwallader.⁴⁰⁹ His friends and fellow associators elected Morgan as a First Lieutenant, and he later became a Captain.⁴¹⁰ In addition to joining the militia, Morgan was elected to the Philadelphia Committee of Correspondence, a group of men including Thomas McKean, Benjamin Rush, and several other prominent men of the city.

However, Morgan's service in the militia and the Committee of Correspondence was short. On April 19, 1776, the Continental Congress approached Morgan asking him to represent them in the western lands, specifically with regard to Indian affairs. Several

⁴⁰⁸ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 126.

⁴⁰⁹ Savelle, *George Morgan, Colony Builder*, 128.

⁴¹⁰ "Notes and Queries" Mary Morgan to Mrs. Anne Cole, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol 10, No 4, (Jan 1887): 480-481.

days later, he accepted and offered his services to the Continental Congress.⁴¹¹ Morgan wrote, “I will strictly observe & that my Attention, as I have now no other Business to the Westward, shall be devoted to the public Service.”⁴¹² The financially strapped Morgan accepted the Continental Congress’ offer as a chance to continue his work on the frontier. First, Morgan was stationed in Carlisle and then moved toward Fort Pitt where he worked as an Indian agent for the Continental Congress and was commissioned a Captain. He was eventually promoted to the rank of Colonel. For Morgan, his service to the patriotic cause was a way to protect his family and to get a new start in his business endeavors.

Another Philadelphia merchant who was drawn into the conflict was David Franks. When the war commenced, David Franks continued to operate his business. Franks seemed to be a neutral businessman who still had connections with the British government, but he saw an opportunity to make money by offering his services where they were needed. Accordingly, Franks offered to supply the Patriot troops. On December 2, 1775, the Continental Congress conferred “That it be an instruction to the Committee appointed to contract for the supplying the prisoners, that Mr. D. Franks of this city [Philadelphia], be permitted to supply the troops who are prisoners in the Colony, with provisions and other necessaries, at the expence of the crown, and to sell his bills for such sums of money as are necessary for that purpose, and that the committee confer Mr. Franks, and know of him where he will also undertake, on the same terms, to

⁴¹¹George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Hancock, April 22, 1776,” 233, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 180); State Papers, 1775–91; Letters from General and Other Officers, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴¹²George Morgan, “George Morgan to John Hancock, April 22, 1776,” 233, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 180); State Papers, 1775–91; Letters from General and Other Officers, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

supply the prisoners in the other colonies.”⁴¹³ Edward Shippen wrote, “Mr. David Franks had engaged to supply the Troops with Provisions” but the Barrack-Master did not know how to pay for the goods.⁴¹⁴ Feeding and clothing prisoners became Franks’ main duties during the war. However, Franks did so on the promise of future payment. Credit was key to Franks’ operations.

Franks still had to honor his contracts with the British Army, as well. General George Washington received a letter in Boston about the limits of David Franks’ contract with the Crown. It stated, “Inclosed is a Letter for David Franks Esq. from Mr. Chamier in Boston upon the Subject of victualing such of the King’s Troops as may be provisions within the limits of his Contract.”⁴¹⁵ Surprisingly, Washington passed this information to Congress and implored them to deliver it to Franks. The lines of loyalty and conduct were blurred especially with merchants, and General Washington honored Franks’ obligation even if he did not like it. As Franks continued his operations; he straddled a thin line between both sides.

In the meantime, the Gratz Brothers, Joseph Simon and Levy A. Levy remained focused on the frontier trade and the Indiana Company. Simon and Levy started their own merchant business, *Simon and Levy*. These men stationed in Lancaster and focused on the fur trade. Additionally, the Gratz brothers moved their families from Philadelphia

⁴¹³ *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), 3: 398-399.

⁴¹⁴ Edward Shippen, “Edward Shippen to John Hancock, December 21, 1775,” 46, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 83); State Papers, 1775-91; Pennsylvania State Papers, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴¹⁵ George Washington, “George Washington to President of the Continental Congress, February 14, 1776,” 487 of Item 153, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 186); Letters from General George Washington, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

to Lancaster because of the war. Michael Gratz wrote “Our dear family are all at Lancaster, safe moored for six months, though may God send peace that we may be able to bring them down again here.”⁴¹⁶ The Gratz brothers worried about their families and wanted to protect them from the violence of the cities. Michael also instructed, “Try to gather in all you can get of our debts up there [Pittsburgh].”⁴¹⁷ The merchants worried because the war created economic instability. Both Simon and the Gratz called in their debts so they would not be overextended during the turmoil of war. They hoped they could remain neutral during the hostilities of war, as they expected it would quickly pass.

William Trent, like Wharton, was in London when the fighting broke out in New England. Hopelessly, Trent continued to focus on the Vandalia Company but by the spring of 1776, he returned to America. He returned broke and in financial ruin. Land speculation was the only way Trent could get himself out of debt. As Wharton continued his efforts in London, Trent worked on the other side of the Atlantic to rekindle the land speculation venture. As the Revolutionary War progressively became more violent, Trent and his fellow shareholders in the Indiana Company again refocused their attention on the Indiana Memorial. Trent, Wharton, Morgan and others believed that the Indiana land memorial was still a valid option even amidst a civil war. Yet, if the British would not recognize their claims, there was a chance the new American government would. Thus, the reorganization of the Indiana Company became one of the main priorities for the merchantmen.

⁴¹⁶ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, July 24, 1776,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 55. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴¹⁷ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, July 24, 1776,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 55. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The Indiana Company Reorganized

On January 19, 1776, the members of the Indiana Company called a meeting to discuss their reorganization.⁴¹⁸ Trent remained the company's attorney and the group finalized its leadership with Joseph Galloway becoming president. Thomas Wharton, Samuel Wharton's first cousin, was selected as vice president. Also, the company assigned George Morgan to be the secretary. Of the twenty-two shareholders, only sixteen members attended the restructuring of the Indiana Company.⁴¹⁹ However, the hope of a prosperous reorganized company during the America War for Independence seemed bright in the minds of the shareholders.

The business meetings of the Indiana Company coincided with other important political activities of Philadelphia during the summer of 1776. Eventually, these men's financial futures would be tied to the political actions that happened only a few blocks away in Independence Hall. Thomas Wharton became heavily involved in Pennsylvania politics, and in September 1776, he supported the new state constitution.⁴²⁰ Eventually, the Revolutionaries elected Thomas Wharton as the first President of Pennsylvania. Thus, the members of the Indiana Company were some of the most prominent men in Philadelphia and the surrounding area. Despite the popularity of the reorganization of the Indiana Company, Joseph Galloway did not side with the patriots.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas Wharton, "Indiana Company Papers," in the Wharton Family Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴¹⁹ George Elmer Lewis, *The Indiana Company, 1763-1798*, (Glendale CA: The Arthur H Company, 1941), 190.

⁴²⁰ The relation between Samuel and Thomas is vague. Some sources say they are brothers and others claim they were cousins. I tend to believe they were first cousins.

As the Indiana Company reorganized, it ran into several obstacles including the adamant people of Virginia and the debate over who controlled Pittsburgh. Eventually, the two sides worked out a compromise that left Pittsburgh and the surrounding area to Pennsylvania. However, the new state of Virginia also claimed the same lands that the Indiana Company had declared as their own. The previous conflict with Virginia created a legal battle for the land company, which would continue in the wake of the American Revolution.

Merchants at War

While the Indiana Company continued to have problems getting its tracts legitimized, individual members had other responsibilities and duties during the war. George Morgan accepted the appointment of Indian diplomat in the western lands. Historian Gregory Schaaf reports about Morgan's diplomatic activities as he "established an elaborate intelligence network from Canada in the north to the Gulf Coast in the South, and from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic seaboard."⁴²¹ Using his mercantile connections, Morgan networked with a variety of people on the frontier. His mission was to either gain the support or to pacify the Native Americans on the frontier. Working in Pittsburgh, Morgan represented the Continental Congress to the Indians surrounding the outpost of Fort Pitt.

George Morgan ran into several complications because of his former connections to the British and his friendly disposition toward the Indians on the frontier. In 1776, the Continental Congress commissioned Morgan as a Captain and placed him in charge of Indian affairs in the western territories. In the summer of 1777, Morgan attempted to gain the support of the Delaware Indians at Fort Pitt; however, he failed because of racial

⁴²¹ Schaaf, *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees*, xx.

tensions between whites and Indians. Furthermore, General Edward Hand, who commanded Fort Pitt, treated the Indians around the fort poorly, especially the Delaware, because he saw them as enemies of the state. In addition to Hand's Indian policy, white settlers on the frontier continued to indiscriminately murder Native Americans, which forced Morgan to stop inviting the Delaware and other Indians to Fort Pitt. Ultimately, Morgan's job was to either gain support or to pacify the Indians on the frontier, but the brutality on both sides curtailed his efforts. The brimming hostilities exceeded his control.

Eventually, because of his friendship and relations to the Delaware, Morgan came under suspicion of treason. Rumors swirled in the summer of 1777 that even "Captn George Morgan had been lately taken up with a commission in his pocket from General Howe."⁴²² These allegations were serious. General Hand had Morgan put under house arrest. Eventually, the General investigated Morgan and found that he was innocent of treason. Hand stated, "I must declare in Justice to him [Morgan] that every proceeding of his, that came to my Knowledge, either as Indian Agent or Commissary, appeared to me, to be that of zealous and faithful serv[ant] to the United States. I should have made early mention of his Arrest but as it is on a groundless Assertion, I wished to have it buried in Oblivion."⁴²³ The Continental Congress opened its own investigation and suspended Morgan indefinitely until it was concluded.

⁴²²Margret Stedman, "Excitement in Philadelphia on Hearing of the Defeat at Brandywine, A letter from "Miss Stedman to EF", *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 14 No. 1, (1890): 66.

⁴²³ Edward Hand, "Edward Hand to Committee of Congress, December 21, 1777," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol 40, No 4, (1916): 467.

Finally, in March 1778, Congress finished its findings and exonerated Morgan of all charges. Henry Laurens the President of the Continental Congress wrote Morgan notifying him of the findings of the investigation. He reinstated Morgan to be the Commissary at Fort Pitt. Thus, Morgan continued his admirable service to the United States in the west. Working with a Delaware Indian named White Eyes, both of them attempted to maintain peace between the whites and the natives. Furthermore, Morgan had rare vision of Indians and whites living in harmony and as equals to one another.⁴²⁴ However, this was not the vision of the majority of Americans, who saw Indians as an inferior species that did not deserve their rights. Morgan's Indian diplomacy largely remained an enigma because many were focused on the larger political motives. Morgan saw friendly Native Americans as potential allies and as a market for selling merchandise and land. Following in the footsteps of his colleague and fellow Indian agent George Croghan, Morgan worked diligently to win the friendship and support of Native Americans for the patriot cause. Nonetheless, this was a tough row to hoe.

As Morgan took up the responsibility of representing the American Indian Affairs, George Croghan, his old friend and associate, retired from public service. Advanced in age by the time of the American Revolutionary War, Croghan's public usefulness had run its course. Nonetheless, his friends and business partners, the Gratz brothers, still needed help getting their lands approved by the Virginia government. However, the dispute between Virginians and Pennsylvanians halted the process of getting their land grants recognized. Nonetheless, Croghan was not a major factor on the frontier during the American Revolution. Despite being a non-factor in the conflict,

⁴²⁴ Gregory Schaaf, *Wampum Belts & Peace Trees: George Morgan, Native Americans, and Revolutionary Diplomacy*, (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1990), 201.

General Edward Hand suspected Croghan to be a spy or conspirator by passing letters to Alexander McKee and others. Hand had told Croghan to stay out of Pittsburgh and remain in Philadelphia.

Croghan resided in Philadelphia for only two weeks until the British took the city. The old Indian agent was bedbound and could not leave. British General William Howe summoned Croghan to his presence. The General ordered his soldiers to watch Croghan closely because the Indian trader was a member of the Committee of Correspondence in Pittsburgh. Eventually, the British burnt Croghan's Philadelphia residence to protect their lines from the advancement of the Continental troops during the Battle of Germantown. Thus, Croghan became a prisoner of sorts to the British while they occupied the City of Brotherly Love. Trent lamented to Barnard Gratz, "I am sorry the people were so foolish as to use Colonel Croghan so ill as to force him to go to Philadelphia. I am of opinion he neither could be of any injury to the country, nor would be, if he had it in his power."⁴²⁵ According to Trent, Croghan did not have the physical strength or even the desire to be a spy. Nonetheless, Croghan became a British prisoner in his own house.

During the occupation, Croghan recovered from his sickness and remained under British observation. In the summer of 1778, the British Army evacuated Philadelphia and Howe ordered Croghan to leave with them, but he remained in his hometown. As control of the city changed hands, so did Croghan. Similar to George Morgan, Croghan had been linked to suspected loyalists Simon Girty and Alexander McKee. The State of Pennsylvania asserted that Croghan "knowingly and willingly aided and assisted the enemies of this State [Pennsylvania], and the United States of America, by having joined

⁴²⁵William Trent, "William Trent to Barnard Gratz, November 10, 1777," in the Etting Collection at the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Box 67, Folder 1777.

their armies at Philadelphia.”⁴²⁶ Croghan was guilty by association because of a situation he could not control.

As in Morgan’s situation, the evidence against Croghan never materialized. However, Croghan believed that he was mentioned in this case because of his support of the Virginians in the border dispute a few years earlier. Nonetheless, in an effort to clear his name, Croghan wrote to Pennsylvanian statesman Thomas McKean asking for his help. Eventually, Croghan had to take an oath of allegiance to the United States and had his day in court. Finally in November 1778, Croghan defended himself in court and was cleared of high treason.

Croghan’s loyalty, like that of other merchantmen, seemed to always be in question. The Indian diplomat and trader wanted to eventually return to Pittsburgh to check on his properties in the west. Croghan sent his friend and clerk, Thomas Smallman to check on his lands. However, rumors swirled on the frontier about Smallman’s disloyalty and General Hand had him arrested. At the same time, Hand had also suspected George Morgan of being a traitor. Pittsburgh and the surrounding area was a firestorm of confusion. While Croghan was on trial; he heard false reports about how the General had Smallman executed for his treachery.⁴²⁷ Nonetheless, those claims were unfound and eventually Smallman was cleared of charges, as well. These rumors demonstrate how chaotic and unstable American society was during the War for Independence.

⁴²⁶ *Pennsylvania Packet*, June 17, 1778.

⁴²⁷ Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat*, 303.

Additionally, another associate of Croghan and the Philadelphia merchants, John Campbell, was also arrested and suspected of treason. Hand wrote, "John Campbell, who some years ago came here in the employ of Alexⁿ Ross, then contracting com for this garrison, & has since acted as Manager for Mr Croghan at this place, went from here after my arrival, & accompanied Mr Croghan to Philadelphia, & left that city in Dec[ember] last, came here the beginning of ye month, [I] apprehended & examined him, his account not satisfactory, & awaits the pleasure of Congress concerning him."⁴²⁸ Alexander Ross of Pittsburgh was a known loyalist. Furthermore, Campbell's visit to Croghan in occupied Philadelphia also raised suspicions on both men. Even their enemies and friends scrutinized their loyalties.

Eventually, Croghan avoided punishment for his connections to questionable men. Croghan's influence waned because of his deteriorated age, yet he still wanted to clear his name so he could continue to pursue his land business. In the four intervening years between clearing his name, Croghan constantly fought his failing health until his demise on August 31, 1782. He quietly passed away in Philadelphia, where he is buried today in St. Peter's Cemetery. His influence from politics had largely disappeared by the time of his passing because he had become a relic of the past empire that was no more.

Unlike Croghan, the Gratz Brothers continued their business activities during the Revolutionary War. They owned and operated stores on the frontier like the one at Fort Pitt. In many of their letters, they communicated about wartime activities on the battlefield along with their business priorities. On May 3, 1776, Michael Gratz lamented about the high prices caused by the war. Gratz wrote, "There is nothing to be purchased

⁴²⁸ Edward Hand, "Edward Hand to Horatio Gates, May 14, 1778," in the *Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio*, Editor Louis Phelps Kellogg, (Madison: 1916) 50-51.

under four and five hundred per cent higher than usual, and everything very scarce . . . I cannot supply any of the above-mentioned articles under those prices, and some expect they will be higher still.”⁴²⁹ Despite the high prices, the Gratz continued to supply the frontier with what they had in stock. For example, their store supplied George Morgan with blankets to help win over the Indians with gifts.⁴³⁰ Thus, the Gratz’s loyalties leaned toward the patriot cause because of their willingness to supply Morgan with goods for his Indian diplomacy.

Despite the war, the Gratz tried to maintain their business the best they could. Gratz purchased goods for Patrick Rice, who was David Franks’ clerk who was the advocate for the British Prisoners of War. Therefore, the Gratz tended to work in the neutral ground between the two sides. However, in the same letter, Abrahams gives Gratz an update of the war. He stated, “On Saturday last, the post brought the disagreeable news of our people being obliged to Evacuate Long Island, with a Considerable loss on both sides . . . The number of the slain is unknown.”⁴³¹ Even with this news, the Gratz had to continue their commercial work, because the economy was terrible.

Another instance of the economy affecting the merchants was Joseph Simon’s need to sell his stock of rifles to pay off his debts. Simon wrote, “I have about 120 new

⁴²⁹ Michael Gratz, “Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, May 3, 1776,” in the Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³⁰ Aeneas MacKay, “Aeneas Mackay to Barnard Gratz, September 19, 1776,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 32. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³¹ Alexander Abrahams, “Alexander Abrahams to Michael Gratz, September 2, 1776,” in the Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 67, folder 1776.

rifles by mw which I wanted sell. The price is £6:10 each.”⁴³² Simon wanted to sell his rifles to Virginia to help support the war effort, however, first he had to pay off his own debts. Simon complained, “I want to pay off the butchers and bakers. I owe them a good deal and must have some money up.”⁴³³ Therefore, the wartime economy had been hard for Simon and his fellow merchants of Pennsylvania.

Simon openly supplied Franks and Rice with goods for the British Prisoners of War. Early in 1777, Simon wrote to Franks talking about business and his accounts. Rice had paid Simon £1600 for goods for the British Prisoners of War. Therefore, Simon and Franks continued to business despite the war. Since Simon and Franks had been partners earlier before the Revolution it was only logical for them to help each other out during the war. These connections were good for trade even during difficult times.

The close relationship between Simon and Franks continued despite the allegation of treason. For example, Simon wrote Franks stating, “I congratulate you on your Safe Return from New York hope you are well and found your family the same. . . Provisions are high and dayly Rising our farmers will Fearfully sell their Chattle and flower, I shall be Obligated to Charge for the Present.”⁴³⁴ Thus, Simon had to pass on his charges to Franks who bought from him. However, Simon still needed to purchase these items. Simon talked about the butchers and bakers. He stated, “The Butcher from Philadelphia

⁴³²Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, April 4, 1777,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 47. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³³ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to Barnard Gratz, April 4, 1777,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 1, Folder 47. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³⁴ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to David Franks, January 13, 1777,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Riding through our country gives great Prices for Beef, and I can assure you Our butchers and Bakers are so much Employ'd for the Militia that they seem indifferent for my customs. I hope it will not be so long.”⁴³⁵ Thus, the war had preoccupied the people in Pennsylvania including the butchers and bakers. Therefore, Simon had to wait for his orders, which he purchased for Franks and the British Prisoners of War.

The simple economic laws of supply and demand wrought havoc on merchant men like Franks, Simon, Morgan, and the Gratz brothers. In Pennsylvania, the price of beef and flour skyrocketed because of the demand from both armies. Because both sides needed to feed their soldiers and prisoners, the conflict allowed the farmers, butchers, and bakers to make a profit. However, for the middlemen like these merchants, the war created a difficult time to conduct business due to the limited supply of goods. Simon reported, “I am not at liberty to say against their charge, as they have not nor can they Get, to supply the Militia & Continental Troops, the Coming here give any Prices for Beefe.”⁴³⁶ Thus, whoever had the supply of beef had the leverage to demand any price they wanted. The Gratz also ran into the same problem with hyperinflation and price gouging. In a letter from Alexander Abrahams to the Gratz, he stated, “Drygoods in general very high, from 800 to 1000 per cent on the first cost from Europe.”⁴³⁷

Furthermore, Abrahams suggests that the prices shifted daily. He wrote, “the prices vary

⁴³⁵ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to David Franks, January 13, 1777,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³⁶ Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to David Franks, March 21, 1777,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴³⁷ Alexander Abrahams, “Alexander Abrahams to Michael Gratz, June 2, 1777,” in the Etting Collection at the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Box 67, Folder 1777.

Daily, they may rise to day & fall the next Day.”⁴³⁸ Thus, the economy in America was extremely unstable because of the war, but the merchants had to deal with these conditions.

Another example of how the war affected the economy was when Trent had surplus of goods in Philadelphia, but since the British occupied the city, he could not get them unless he put his life in danger. Trent wrote to Gratz, “As to the goods, I can give you no answer at this time, Nothing prevents my going to see after them but the enemy being in possession of Philadelphia. As soon as we drive them away, or as I am more ready yet to believe, as soon as we make them all prisoners, unless they run off, I will see you at Lancaster, at which time I will be able to talk to you fully on the subject of the goods.”⁴³⁹ This quote demonstrates Trent’s loyalty to the patriot cause and his bravado. He believed that Washington could capture Philadelphia. Even with this zeal for the United States, Trent still worried about his goods he had promised to his friend and colleague Barnard Gratz. Business and family trumped political loyalty and identity.

Nonetheless, the business benefits did come with some risks. Simon worked for Franks in providing goods for the prisoners; however, many times the merchants had to extend themselves in the hope of getting reimbursed. For example, Simon, acting as commissary for the British prisoners under the direction of Franks, had to purchase many goods on credit and hope for payment. Franks was responsible to pay for the goods and Simon provided them to him. As the two men were linked in friendship and business,

⁴³⁸ Alexander Abrahams, “Alexander Abrahams to Michael Gratz, June 2, 1777,” in the Etting Collection at the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Box 67, Folder 1777.

⁴³⁹ William Trent, “William Trent to Barnard Gratz, November 10, 1777,” in the Etting Collection at the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Box 67, Folder 1777.

Simon ran into issues with the Continental Congress. The Continental Congress called Simon, the Deputy Commissioner of British Prisoners, in front of the Board of War to answer some questions. Apparently, Franks paid Simon in Continental money. Simon wrote, "I am blamed for receiving Continental money from you . . . If it don't suit you to furnish me with specie, I shall be obliged to decline acting as Commissary for the Prisoners."⁴⁴⁰ Thus, Simon did not want to be paid in paper money but in specie. Simon did not trust the Continental money because there was no specie to back up the cash, thus he asked for hard currency.

Simon received orders from the Continental Congress about how to conduct business. Simon often took orders from Franks, but beginning in 1778, Simon began to feel pressure from the Board of War and the Continental Congress. Simon wrote to Franks, "I waited on the Board of War and acquainted them with the inconveniences I labor under. I have often-troubled them and prolonged time still, expecting to hear from you. . . I am blamed greatly for not adhering to the resolves of Congress."⁴⁴¹ Furthermore, if Simon did not settle the accounts for the prisoners, Congress was going to remove him from his position. Therefore, Simon needed to be paid in specie to pay off the debts. In addition, Simon worried about the humane conditions of the prisoners. He stated, "And I shall be very sorry and fear the prisoners will be neglected and not

⁴⁴⁰ Joseph Simon, "Joseph Simon to David Franks, April 9, 1778," in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁴¹ Joseph Simon, "Joseph Simon to David Franks, May 12, 1778," in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

supplied with the usual necessities they received from me.”⁴⁴² Simon also wrote to General Washington about the situation because Franks had not responded to Simon’s previous communications. Therefore, Franks was busy dealing with issues in New York, neglected his correspondences with Simon, which put his friend and deputy in a curious position with the Continental Congress.

The Franks Incident

Franks, as the British Commissary of Prisoners, fell into trouble as he still tried to straddle the fence between the American and British sides. Nonetheless, he was a prime choice because of his previous connections to the King’s Army as a merchant supplier. Franks’ responsibilities included feeding and supplying the British Prisoners of War. Franks’ clerk, Patrick Rice that helped him in supplying the Prisoners of War. Both men had to work under constant supervision of the Continental Congress because of their closeness to the enemy. Franks wrote Congress “praying for liberty for himself, and Patrick Rice, his clerk, to go to New York, to lay his receipts and vouchers for the provisions furnished to the British Prisoners, in this department, before the commissary general for his inspections, to be passed by him order to procure certificates to be presented, and signed by, the general of the British forces, otherwise he cannot be reimbursed.”⁴⁴³ Franks wanted the Crown to settle their overdue accounts. The men were allowed passage to New York and to meet with the British officials, however, they

⁴⁴² Joseph Simon, “Joseph Simon to David Franks, May 12, 1778,” in the Gratz-Franks-Simon Papers, Series I, Box 3 Folder 129. Library Company of Pennsylvania at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁴³ *JCC, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), Thursday Oct 24, 1776, 6: 901-902.

swore to “not give any intelligence to the enemy, and that they will return to this city [Philadelphia].”⁴⁴⁴

Franks continued to do his duty for the prisoners and worked with the Congress. Simon was also a key part of his operation. His old friend was his deputy Commissary of British Prisoners in America. Simon and Franks worked together until 1778. When Franks was arrested he stopped communicating to Simon about payment of accounts, when the Continental Congress asked for settlement of debts. These debts were to be paid in specie. Thus, the two men had a falling out with the Continental Congress and they subsequently came under heavy scrutiny.

However, on a sanctioned trip to British-occupied New York in 1778, David passed a letter to his brother Moses Franks through the British command. This news reached the Continental Congress, which then issued an arrest warrant for Mr. Franks. Ironically on October 21, 1778 Congress ordered “That General [Benedict] Arnold be directed to cause the said David Franks forthwith to be arrested, and conveyed to the new gaol in this city, [Philadelphia] there to be confined till the further order of Congress.”⁴⁴⁵ Thus, the Americans suspected Franks of passing information to the British. However, Franks maintained that he was innocent. While he was imprisoned, Franks wrote to the President of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens. Franks stated, “As it is my Misfortune to labour under Censures of Congress, as having manifested ‘a Disposition and Intentions inimical to the Safety and Liberty of these united States,’ and as this

⁴⁴⁴ *JCC, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), Thursday Oct 24, 1776, 6:902.

⁴⁴⁵ *JCC, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), Wednesday Oct 21, 1778, 12: 1032-1033.

Censure is said to be grounded on a Letter of mine to my Brother, which I had written in great haste upon Business, I am sure was never intended to the Injury of America.”⁴⁴⁶

However, the Continental Army detained him and brought him to trial.

The trial was held at the state level and not the national level. Therefore, the State of Pennsylvania was responsible for prosecution. Franks also had several enemies in Philadelphia because of his closeness with the British. The *Pennsylvania Packet* outlined Franks’ case stating, “Last week Mr. David Franks, late Commissary for the British prisoners, appointed by General Clinton, who had been confined by Congress in the new goal in this city, for writing letters of an improper nature and dangerous tendency to the enemy, being delivered up to the civil authority was brought before the Supreme Court and after a hearing admitted to bail; himself bound 5000 £ [pounds sterling] and Mr. Joseph Simons of Lancaster and General Cadwaladers becoming sureties for in 2500 £ each.”⁴⁴⁷ Simon even sponsored Franks’ bail money to get him out of trouble.

As Franks was arrested for passing a letter to his brother, Simon continued to work as deputy Commissary to the British Prisoners. With Franks suspended from his position, Simon had to ask the Continental Congress for instructions. Simon wrote:

I beg leave to inform your Honorable Board that Mr. David Franks who is the present British Commissary of Prisoners, has directed me, as his agent, to stop issuing provisions, etc. to said prisoners on the 10th insta. Agreeable to a resolve of Congress for discontinuing his acting in said office. I would in consequence thereof, in the meantime, beg of the Honorable Board some information respecting the further supply of said prisoners with provisions, wood, straw, tobacco, soap, candles, etc., there

⁴⁴⁶ David Franks, “David Franks to Henry Laurens, October 28th 1778,” 189 of item 78, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 95); Misc Letters to Congress 1775-1789, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁴⁷ David Franks’ Arrest Coverage, *Pennsylvania Packet*, November 17, 1778.

present numbers being: Fort Frederick 140 odd men; at Fredricktown, 50; at Winchester, about 30; Lancaster, about 40; and at Easton, about 25. If your Honors please to appoint me to said business at those different places, I am well convinced of my being able to give satisfaction and on as good terms as any other person whatever.⁴⁴⁸

However, Simon did not get the appointment he desired from Congress. Instead, they chose John Beatty. Simon's connection to Franks deterred his selection to his friend's old post.

Furthermore, Franks' family in Philadelphia did not make things better, during the British occupation of the city; Becky Franks befriended several Tory families. One of her best friends was Margret "Peggy" Shippen, the daughter of Edward Shippen (a patriot), who was courted by General Benedict Arnold. During the occupation, Franks' daughter, Rebekah attended many loyalist social events in the city. Therefore, her close relationship with the enemy did not help her father's situation as a suspected loyalist and spy. The Franks family had many connections with the British that further hurt his case in court.

The Trials of David Franks

Frank's day in court came November 9, 1778. In the December 22, 1778, the *Pennsylvania Packet* reported the court's findings: "a Bill of Indictment was preferred against David Franks, for High Treason, and returned by the Grand Jury Ignoramus."⁴⁴⁹ The court could not try him for high treason because they did not have enough evidence for a successful case. When released, Franks returned to his work. Despite his acquittal, Franks continued to be watched by the patriots, who had deemed him a traitor. However,

⁴⁴⁸Joseph Simon, "Joseph Simon to Board of War, November 5, 1778," Volume S-1, 335 in item 78, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 105); Misc. Letters to Congress, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁴⁹ David Franks' Arrest Coverage, *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 22, 1778.

even Franks' British supporters began to question Franks. The company of Nesbitt, Drummond, and Franks dropped Franks' contract as a supplier for the British Prisoners. In a sense, David Franks was fired from his position as British Commissary. This stroke of bad luck further pushed Franks down a lonely road. Even his brother's own company in London could no longer pay Franks' bills in America. He ran into financial ruin.

Despite the failure to prosecute Franks for high treason, the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council again sought to arrest Franks. This time it was for a lesser charge: misprision of treason. The lesser charge would stick to Franks. The Franks trial became a public spectacle for the people of Philadelphia and the details were published in the newspapers. One newspaper writer suggested, "For had this letter been wrote from General Washington's camp, the writer would have been hanged as a spy, and we would all have approved the sentence."⁴⁵⁰ Thus, the opinion of the newspaper writer and the public was one that Franks was guilty as charged.

Early 1779, the David Franks' trial commenced in Philadelphia. On April 29, 1779, the *Pennsylvania Packet* published Franks' letter to his brother, which highlighted his nefarious activity. Although on the surface it seemed innocent, Franks made some questionable statements including talking about what the French are paying the Americans for rations and how his friend Billy Hamilton was treated when he was tried for high treason. Franks stated, "People are taken and confined at the pleasure of every scoundrel. Oh what a situation Britain has left its friends."⁴⁵¹ These statements damned Franks. The court charged Franks with "that sundry persons of a disaffected character,

⁴⁵⁰ David Franks' Trial Coverage, *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 29, 1779.

⁴⁵¹ David Franks, "David Franks to Moses Franks, October 18, 1778," published in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 29, 1779.

have lately been to the Enemies lines, and have held intercourse with divers persons from New York, and there is great reason to believe very illegal practices, and such as dangerous to the Interest and Liberties of America have been carried on, and especially in the Transportation of Effects of an unknown Nature.”⁴⁵² The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled, “That the said David Franks . . . do depart this State with fourteen days from the date hereof, and that they give security, each in the sum of £200,000 to go within the enemies lines, and not return again to any of these United States during the continuance of the present war.”⁴⁵³ Simply put, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania convened and exiled Franks from Pennsylvania. He remained in a jail and then was released. He also had to endure the confiscation of a majority of property, including his house in the in city of Philadelphia. In the eyes of the court and the public, Franks was a loyalist even if he did not consider himself one.

Despite being imprisoned, tried several times, and let go from his British contract, Franks continued to also look toward the Indiana Company. In between his trials, Franks called for a meeting of the Indiana Company for April 5, 1779. Acting as the new company president because in 1777, Joseph Galloway did not show up to the meeting—because he evacuated with the British in 1778, Galloway left a large void in the company because of his knowledge of the legal system and his political contentions; nonetheless, Franks tried to fill his shoes. Despite the legal troubles, Franks continued to focus on his financial future.

⁴⁵² The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, *The Pennsylvania Archives Provincial Records*, Volume XII: 199.

⁴⁵³ The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, *The Pennsylvania Archives Provincial Records*, Volume XII: 499.

The Indiana Company decided to reorganize and attempted to get recognized by Virginia and eventually Congress. The company remained in limbo, as its members were actively involved in the war. Morgan spent his time dealing with Indian affairs and defending his self against allegations of treason. Furthermore, Franks had to defend himself against treason. Samuel Wharton remained aboard. For the merchantmen managing the Indiana Company, misfortune lurked around every corner. Despite the setbacks, they still had a glimmer of hope with land speculation. The merchants put their company's fate in the hands of William Trent. They asked Trent to go and present their case to the Virginians. Morgan had printed up pamphlets on the Indian titles, which he gave to Trent to distribute to "each of the Members of Assembly which I look on as a very important matter to Us & to Coll. Croghan."⁴⁵⁴ Their attempts to persuade the Virginia Assembly met resistance from several prominent members of the Assembly including George Mason. The failure of Trent to persuade the Virginia Legislature was another major blow to the land company. Mason was a member of the Ohio Company of Virginia, which was the rival land company. Therefore, it was not a surprise that the Indiana memorial fell on deaf ears in the Virginia Assembly.

With Franks exiled from Pennsylvania and Wharton still abroad, the Indiana Company continued to lose its members as casualties of politics. Trent, Morgan, and Simon remained to fight for the approval of the memorial. In September 1779, Morgan and Trent decided to seek the help of new United States Congress. Morgan presented the memorial of the Indiana Tract to Congress on September 11, 1779. Again the memorialists expanded on the suffering of the Seven Years' War and Pontiac's

⁴⁵⁴ George Morgan, "George Morgan to William Trent, Undated" in the *Ohio Company Papers*, 316-317.

Rebellion. Furthermore, Morgan and Trent argued that the land they claimed was now under the country of the national government of the United States and no one single state. Therefore, they were trying to play to the national view of Congress. Furthermore, Morgan and Trent continued to represent their company even with heavy resistance from Virginian delegates. Eventually, Congress recommended the suspension of the granting of lands for the duration of the war with Britain.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, Congress tabled the Indiana and Vandalia Memorials until the conclusion of the war.

The War for Independence raged on for several more years until Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781. Franks and Morgan ended up on different sides of the conflict even though they started on a similar trajectory. Previous relationships with the British as merchants brought the loyalty of both men into question by the Continental Congress and Army. Despite similar circumstances, Franks was found guilty of treason and Morgan was acquitted. Franks had a closer connection to the enemy, specifically visiting the enemy lines in New York. He even sympathized with them. Therefore, although he wanted to remain neutral in the conflict, the war eventually forced him to choose a side.

As the dust settled from the conflict, the men wondered about their futures. When the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania exiled Franks, he went to occupied New York City. Franks had family in the area, but still wanted to return to Philadelphia. For several weeks he was allowed back to Philadelphia to tie up loose ends including enlisting Tench Coxe as his attorney while he was in exile. When he returned to New York, Franks boarded a ship and sailed to England. Once he arrived in England, Franks filed a petition with the British government for a loyalist pension. However, the process was long and

⁴⁵⁵ Lewis, *The Indiana Company*, 230.

drawn out. Nonetheless, Franks remained hopeful for his return to America, especially on the news of the Indiana Company's memorial to Congress in March 1781.

The Resurrection of the Indiana Company

The remaining members of the Indiana Company continued to appeal to Congress for approval even though the war still raged on. Morgan, still working with Native American affairs, also continued to petition Congress as a representative for the land company. Morgan and his fellow memorialists were anxious for a decision. He stated, "That your Memorialists are willing and anxious, to have the Question, respecting the Property of the said Tract of Land, decided by Congress, by whom alone, it is presumed, a proper and competent Decision can be made."⁴⁵⁶ Morgan and his colleagues wanted Congress to hear their case before individual states could make their own claims. Morgan implored, "Your Memorialists therefore beg leave to solicit this Honorable House to appoint a Day for hearing the Parties interested in this Question so that it may be fully explained and consider'd, and a just and impartial Determination of it may be obtained, as speedily as the Nature and Circumstances of the Case and the Situation of public Affairs will admit."⁴⁵⁷ However, they did not immediately get their voices heard because of Virginian opposition in Congress. Despite numerous setbacks and staunch opposition, the Indiana Company continued their campaign to get recognized.

⁴⁵⁶ George Morgan, "George Morgan to the United States Congress, November 30, 1780," 206 in item 77, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 89); Memorial Claims to Pennsylvania and Connecticut, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁵⁷ George Morgan, "George Morgan to the United States Congress, November 30, 1780," 206 in item 77, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 89); Memorial Claims to Pennsylvania and Connecticut, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

In 1781, Samuel Wharton's pamphlet, *Plain Facts*, was published to sway Congress that Indians had a legal right to sell their lands hence making the Indiana Company's claims legitimate.⁴⁵⁸ Essentially, Wharton argues that the State of Virginia has no legal right to claim lands west of the Appalachian Mountains, which belonged to the Indians who then sold their deeds to the Indiana Company. Wharton argued, "The glorious revolution of these states was not made to destroy, but among other things, to protect private property; and as the grant to Messengers Franklin & etc, [Vandalia] would have passed under the British government, can it be supposed, that the Congress of America so famed for wisdom fortitude, and liberality, will be less sensible to the influence of justice, than the King of England war? Forbid it virtue; forbid it equity."⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore, Wharton goes on to explain the importance of honoring contracts. Eventually, Virginia gave up its claims to the western lands northwest of the Ohio River, but this did not stop the Indiana Company from pestering Congress for action.

The brutal War for Independence continued and peace was not in sight. In the minds of the merchants, there was a new nation—The United States of America. All of these merchantmen were placed in difficult positions because of war. They had to choose for themselves where their economic loyalties laid and they did not have strong political ideals. The merchants wanted to protect their investments and families so these factors often motivated their decisions. Even as they participated in their daily activities during the war, these men became members of the Founding Generation of America. The idea of

⁴⁵⁸ Wharton, Samuel, *Plain Facts Being an Examination into the Rights of the Indian Nations of America, to Their Respective Countries; and a Vindication of the Grant, from the Six United Nations of Indians, to the Proprietors of Indiana, against the Decision of the Legislature of Virginia; Together with Authentic Documents, Proving That the Territory, Westward of the Allegany Mountain, Never Belonged to Virginia*. (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by R. Aitken, bookseller, in Market-Street, three doors above the Coffee-House, 1781),1.

⁴⁵⁹ Wharton, *Plain Facts*, 162.

being an American was still not really understood by these men, they just understood what was best for their business and families. Ultimately, their true identities were their businesses not political ideology. For them, the Indiana or Vandalia Company was their best hope for fame and fortune. However, others had the same ideas and threatened the Philadelphia merchants' plans.

Summary

As the future remained uncertain in the world of American business, the frontier merchants of Philadelphia set their hopes and dreams upon acquiring a western land grant from the Crown. They believed that they were entitled to such grants as compensation for their losses during Pontiac's Rebellion. The founding of the Indiana Company better organized their claims, which they hoped the British Ministry would recognize. Unfortunately, the British Ministry had their own agenda and ignored the Indiana Company's claims. Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Wharton journeyed to London to present the company's case for restitution. However, they were ignored because of London politics and disdain for the colonies. In a desperate move, Franklin, Wharton, and a few others acting as proxies for the company merged with a London-based firm called the Walpole Company (or the Grand Ohio Company) to create a new, larger land company called the Vandalia Company. This new company proposed to create a new frontier colony called Vandalia. Many shareholders believed this was the best way to secure Vandalia's approval. Unfortunately, British politics once again stymied the process. As the Revolution intensified in North America, the shareholders began to believe their claims would never be approved. The inaction of the British Ministry spurred many of these merchants into rebellion on the American side. War erupted in

1775, and it forced these men to take action in the conflict. Yet, war did not stop their business ventures and speculative aspirations. In 1776, the Indiana Company reorganized in Philadelphia in hopes that the new American government would approve their proposals when peace returned. The merchants' economic loyalties began to switch to the American cause because their true motivation was business and not politics.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLUTIONARY AFTERMATH

A New Nation, Same Problem

On October 19, 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington and the Continental Army at Yorktown, Virginia. After seven long years of bloodshed, the major conflicts in North America finally ended on that fall day. Even before the surrender at Yorktown, many people already believed that a new nation had been created called the United States of America. While many citizens comprehended the importance of this event, the full consequences of the American Revolution were not realized. It created a wave of economic, political, legal, and cultural change. Particularly, many people did not understand what it was to be an “American.” Some of the pivotal transformations occurring at the time were obscured from the view of the average citizen, since families focused their energies on their own basic needs and economic livelihoods. The aftermath of the Revolution would take years, in some cases decades, to settle itself out. However, it took much less time for backcountry businessmen to gain an understanding of the new economic situation. In the end, the frontier merchantmen of Pennsylvania were part of this unsure founding generation that helped shape the young United States of America.

A fresh opportunity to make a fortune on the frontier had presented itself and the proprietors of the Indiana Company were ready, in the face of fears that it would not be an easy fight for their company and claims to gain legitimacy. Appealing to a brand new United States Congress (under the Articles of Confederation) gave men like George Morgan, William Trent, and David Franks new hope to make their fortunes, despite the steep slope they had in front of them. The American Revolution gave these men a new

chance to make a fortune selling and buying land on the frontier; however, there were many who stood in their way, such as George Mason of Virginia. Mason and others had their own interests in land speculation that competed with the Indiana Company. And some, such as Mason, held a greater level of political power in the new national government compared to Morgan, Trent, and Franks.

In fall of 1779 the initial Indiana Memorial failed to gain traction in Congress. Mason and the Virginians continued to block the Indiana plan, which stalled the company's strategies. A disappointed Morgan returned home where he mainly focused on building his estate in Prospect, New Jersey (located today on Princeton University's campus. Although George Morgan continued to represent the company, he concentrated his energies on his family, expanding his properties, and completing agricultural experiments including his studies on bee-culture. However, Morgan never lost hope that the Indiana Company Memorial might one day succeed. Over the next few years, Morgan and William Trent presented their claims to Congress on a regular basis, but under the Articles of Confederation, the prospects of the Indiana Company's land speculation fell on deaf ears in Congress. The State of Virginia did not want to cede its claim to the western lands, which is where the Indiana Land Company had their own claim. Therefore, the Virginia delegation continued to block the Indiana claim. The members of the Indiana Company were severely disappointed and had to turn to other opportunities to earn money.

New Jersey Land Society

With the failure of the Indiana Company, George Morgan had an opportunity to join a new land company in 1788. He represented the New Jersey Land Society, which

wanted to purchase land in the Illinois Country. Morgan made a proposal to Congress for the Land Memorial of the New Jersey Land Society: the New Jersey Land Society wanted to purchase the land containing the settlements of Kaskaskia and Prairie du Rocher. The company proposed to create a new state called Louisiana in the Illinois Country. They proposed to Congress “We will pay at One third of a dollar per Acre” and dispose of any Indian claim that existed on the land.⁴⁶⁰ The proposal was a good deal. Congress accepted the proposal with one small change: Congress increased the price to two thirds of a dollar per acre, which caused the New Jersey Land Society to rethink the deal.

Morgan was not satisfied with Congress’ counteroffer and the New Jersey Land Society abruptly ended its attempt to purchase land in the Illinois. In addition to the price increase, Congress did not want to include the lowlands near the river in the purchase, which was land that Morgan and the New Jersey Land Society claimed could be used for the grazing of their livestock. The lowlands were also crucial to having free access to the Mississippi River. Furthermore, Morgan and his colleagues suggest that “The extreme unhealthiness of this Country arises from Lands being unimproved: the richest parts of them being Swamps, & Ponds; which being stagnant, corrupt the Air & produce malignant Distempers . . . having it in their power to drain these Lakes & Marshes [was necessary] for their own advantage.”⁴⁶¹ Additionally, Morgan and the company also

⁴⁶⁰ George Morgan, “Memorial to Congress for the New Jersey Land Society,” Volume 6, p. 510 of item 41, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M247, roll 51); Memorials Addressed to Congress, Record Group 360; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁴⁶¹ George Morgan, “Reasons why it will not suit the New Jersey Land Society to make the proposed Purchase,” Volume 6, p 514 of item 41, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*.

opposed Congress' proposed land reserved for the French Inhabitants.⁴⁶² Morgan believed that Congress had given the French Inhabitants some of the best lands in the region. Because of these Congressional stipulations, the New Jersey Land Society abruptly ended their attempt to purchase land in the Illinois. Despite the "approval of Congress," Morgan immediately left the New Jersey Land Society and never pursued that claim again. Without the leadership of Morgan, the New Jersey Land Society quietly fell into ruin. However, this setback did not stop Morgan's plans; he had another promising iron in the fire.

New Madrid

Although Morgan served the American cause, that did not stop him from pursuing other business activities in foreign lands. About the same time the New Jersey Land Society Purchase fell through, Morgan and Don Diego de Gardoqui of Spain began discussing a new opportunity on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. The two men met in New York City in 1788. Gardoqui opined that the new United States was on the verge of failure because the citizens had an uncontrollable hunger for land. He states this point clearly in a letter, "The country has decayed so much lately that the people to escape their miseries and get something to eat are emigrating in hundreds from the Northern Atlantic States to the banks of the Mississippi and Ohio."⁴⁶³ Gardoqui believed the Spanish could take commercial advantage of the American appetite for land. Gardoqui sought out Morgan because his influence and expertise would be indispensable to the

⁴⁶² George Morgan, "Reasons why it will not suit the New Jersey Land Society to make the proposed Purchase," Volume 6, p 514 of item 41, *Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*.

⁴⁶³ Don Diego de Gardoqui, "Gardoqui to Floridablanca, April 18, 1788," in the Don Diego De Gardoqui Papers in the Special Collections of Tulane University. These letters were translated and typescripted by researchers for Theodore Roosevelt.

new Spanish colony on the Mississippi. Gardoqui also knew that convincing Morgan to join the Spanish cause would be a major coup since Morgan had lived and worked in the Illinois before the Revolution and was a prominent businessman. Gardoqui saw this as a way to lure other well-known Americans to the Spanish lands.

With the delay of the Indiana Memorial and the New Jersey Land Society Plan tabled, Morgan decided to entertain to the Spanish offer. Gardoqui and Morgan wrote back and forth about the creation a new colony in the west. The Spanish diplomat was well aware of Morgan's problems in Congress. Gardoqui played to Morgan's financial situation and his duties as a father. The Spanish envoy stated:

I am sorry to hear of your sufferings & losses of Lands by the State of Virginia. It is but just that every man shou'd endeavor to retrieve them & provide for his family & friends thro' the honest & laudable mean you intend & you may depend that my assistance shall not be wanting. In hopes therefore of further lights whenever it suits you I subscribe myself sincerely. ⁴⁶⁴

Yet, Gardoqui was not in any hurry for Morgan's help. He was quite willing to let Morgan continue his business with the New Jersey Land Society. Morgan decided against pursuing the New Jersey Land Society's memorial to take up the Spanish offer. Morgan wrote, "although Congress offered the lands, but the terms were not such as he wanted. He [Morgan] asks would Spain admit in her American possessions the entrances of some thousands of vassals, farmers, mechanics, and these accustomed from infancy to habits of industry, with freedom of religion?"⁴⁶⁵ It is clear from this question that, Morgan did not

⁴⁶⁴Don Diego de Gardoqui, "James Gardoqui to George Morgan, September 17, 1788," in Reed Collection in Illinois-Lincoln Historical Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Box 1, Folder 13 .

⁴⁶⁵George Morgan, "Morgan to Gardoqui, August 30, 1788," in the Don Diego De Gardoqui Papers in the Special Collections of Tulane University.

want to give up the newly won freedoms and rights of an American citizen, but the potential of a sizable profit and a significant status in Spanish society enticed him. If Gardoqui promised Morgan a vast tract of land in Spanish Louisiana just west of the Illinois country; he would promote the settlement of the area with American emigrants to New Madrid. Morgan and the emigrants would be obliged to swear an oath to the King of Spain if he honored their civil liberties. The proposal would allow Morgan to live out west with a stable government that guaranteed him a firm income, which would allow him to provide for his family. Thus in 1788, Morgan entered into an agreement with Don Diego de Gardoqui. Morgan had a list of demands, which Gardoqui had to the present to the Governor of Louisiana, Don Estevan Miro. Morgan's request needed royal approval, but Gardoqui accepted Morgan's terms, before his superiors approved them.

With approval in hand, Morgan was tasked with setting up a Spanish colony on the western side of the Mississippi River in present-day Missouri. One of the first things he did was to name the colony New Madrid and he required the land be recorded with surveyors and geographers. Morgan brought with him experience from his previous projects and lessons he learned second hand from others. He applied this to his work in New Madrid. The Pennsylvanian demanded a variety of concessions, but after his experience in the Illinois Country several decades earlier, Morgan wanted full authority over the new colony.

In addition to being in charge of the colony, Morgan asked for a commission in the Spanish Army equal to his previous American rank during the American War for Independence. He requested "to be commissioned a Colonel in the Spanish Army but not

to received any salary for the position unless it was wartime.”⁴⁶⁶ Morgan believed the King of Spain would appoint him the military commander of New Madrid. Furthermore, Morgan wanted a land grant of at least 1,000 acres; his children and wife to be placed under protection of the Spanish King; and a sizeable yearly salary. He wrote, “All my children . . . shall be under the immediate Protection of the Spanish Majesty.”⁴⁶⁷ Morgan who wanted his older son John to come to New Madrid with him, asked for a commission for him, as well.⁴⁶⁸

Additionally, Morgan requested that his daughters be educated at a religious school in New Orleans until they were married or brought back home to New Madrid.⁴⁶⁹ It is clear that Morgan wanted his family taken care of if he committed himself to the Spanish cause. Moreover, Morgan included public education in his plan for New Madrid. He wrote that, “The education of youth remains a matter of importance everywhere, and particularly in a new establishment.”⁴⁷⁰ Morgan recommended that the Spanish government reserve land for the school. One of Morgan’s main objectives was to entice

⁴⁶⁶ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789. Contribución al estudio de las primeras relaciones históricas entre España y los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1949), 246.

⁴⁶⁷ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 246.

⁴⁶⁸ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 247.

⁴⁶⁹ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 246.

⁴⁷⁰ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

emigrants to settle this new colony. Building a school would help attract whole families not just opportunistic businessmen to New Madrid. Thus, education was important to Morgan and his new colony.

As the frontier was still seen as a wild place, Morgan needed to plan for the defense of the new colony. He wrote, “As the Mississippi will always be a frontier particularly this part of it, where our neighbors can [be] irregularities.”⁴⁷¹ Morgan believed that the new colony needed to have its own militia. Thus he explained, “I will be able liked by enlisting His Majesty’s one, two or more companies to make them see that their new vassals stand determined to sustain his government.”⁴⁷² Thus, Morgan believed that companies of militia should be constructed from the settlers to New Madrid. Joining the militia companies would create a patriotic connection to New Madrid, plus it would protect them from enemies: the British, Americans or Native Americans. The defense of New Madrid would help create a sense of community that would strength the new colony. Additionally, Morgan wanted to have an armed flotilla on the Mississippi River to protect trade. Morgan opined, “[It] will be necessary to build a strong, and establish some armed boats on the River, which will be useful for various purposes.”⁴⁷³ On paper, Morgan had developed the military organization of New Madrid, which would protect trade and his interests on the frontier.

⁴⁷¹ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

⁴⁷² George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

⁴⁷³ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

One of the greatest draws about moving to New Madrid was free access to the Mississippi. Morgan's proposal was a few years before Pinckney's Treaty (The Treaty of San Lorenzo, 1795) that would grant Americans the free navigation of the Mississippi River and the right to trade in New Orleans without duties. Furthermore, Morgan promised the Spanish "Like many men of some wealth who are in the United States, become the vassals of the Spanish Majesty. If these proposals are accepted, [you] will convenient[ly] authorize me to grant passports for their purposes, or the proceeds of them in flour, Wheat, Flax, Hemp, Iron, Tobacco, Indigo, or other merchandise that will be able to carry New Orleans, the via of Ohio River."⁴⁷⁴ Morgan believed that free trade on the Mississippi would be perhaps the most important incentive for emigrants.

Morgan promised land grants to new settlers, but he reserved the mineral rights of gold and silver for the Spanish Monarch.⁴⁷⁵ Morgan believed that the economic pull of land would entice Americans to migrate to the new Spanish colony. Morgan stated, "We have heard that Spain's policy does not grant his subjects in America the use of their property and [the freedom of] moving from one place to another without the permission of the Government, if it is wise to do so it will be an exception in favor of the establishment" of New Madrid.⁴⁷⁶ Morgan wanted free movement of property including

⁴⁷⁴ George Morgan, "Translation of Colonel Morgan's Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi." In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

⁴⁷⁵ George Morgan, "Translation of Colonel Morgan's Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi." In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 244.

⁴⁷⁶ George Morgan, "Translation of Colonel Morgan's Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi." In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 246.

slaves in New Madrid. Thus it also shows that Morgan wanted to eliminate any tyrannical polices that would hinder the commercial achievement of New Madrid.

Morgan wanted as many incentives as possible to increase migration to the new settlement. Therefore, Morgan thought it would be a good idea for the Spanish government to lend prospective families the money for their journey westward. Morgan requested “there are thousands of industrious families, and singles of good character and conduct, but in such circumstances what they are unable to undertake the voyage, if they wish.”⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, Morgan wanted as many incentives as possible to increase migration to the new settlement. This shows that Morgan believed that economic success and stability was stronger than political and national loyalty (as it was with him) and the list of incentives he proposed bore that idea.

Gardoqui and Morgan continued to negotiate about the potential colony, but by the fall of 1788, the Colonel was ready to put his words into action. In October 1788, Morgan began to publish handbills that advertised the new Spanish settlement.⁴⁷⁸ He highlighted “All Persons who settle with me at New Madrid and their posterity, will have the free Navigation of the Mississippi, and a Market at New Orleans, free from Duties, for all the Produce of their Lands.”⁴⁷⁹ Morgan played to the international and domestic problems that existed for the farmers on the American frontier. He appealed to many settlers to immigrate to the new lands. He appealed to the economic but restricted

⁴⁷⁷ George Morgan, “Translation of Colonel Morgan’s Plan for the Establishment of a Colony of population on the Mississippi.” In Navarro Latorre, José, and Fernando Solano Costa. *Conspiración española? 1787-1789*, 247.

⁴⁷⁸ George Morgan, “Handbill of the Settlement, October 3, 1788,” in Savelle, George Morgan; *Colony Builder*, original in the Happer Collection that is missing to history.

⁴⁷⁹ Morgan, Handbill, October 3, 1788, in Savelle, *George Morgan: Colony Builder*, 206a.

significance of the Mississippi River, which was a major issue before the ratification of Pinckney's Treaty in 1795. However, Morgan began his scheme without royal confirmation of his plan.

Hastily, Morgan began his expedition in winter of 1788-1789, leaving Fort Pitt sailing down the Ohio River. Gardoqui wrote of Morgan stating, "I am nevertheless persuaded that what appears a serious forestalling proceeds from a desire to avail himself of the present state of this country and from his natural efficiency and perhaps from some little ill-will against this government from which he parted in disgust."⁴⁸⁰ Thus, Morgan was upset with the United States government. He had little faith in Congress under the Articles of Confederation, especially since it never recognized the Indiana Memorial or the New Jersey Land Society Memorial. Therefore, Morgan plunged head first into the Spanish plans even if he did not have final royal approval, which was a huge risk

Gardoqui was involved in many schemes on the American frontier to dislodge it from the United States and to construct barriers of protection between New Spain and the Americans. The Spanish planned to use the unstable political conditions in the United States to their advantage, drawing new subjects to their settlements. As mentioned earlier, Gardoqui sponsored Morgan's plans to build New Madrid because he saw it as an opportunity to draw Americans to the Spanish side of the Mississippi. He supported Morgan's early work to set up New Madrid, writing, "In view of the fine probability of his project, I believe that if H.M. (His Majesty) should be pleased to agree not a moment should be lost in giving orders to the Governor at New Orleans not to impede nor

⁴⁸⁰ Don Diego de Gardoqui, "Gardoqui to Floridablanca, December 24, 1788," in the Don Diego De Gardoqui Papers in the Special Collections of Tulane University.

disconcert him and so cause the chance to fail.”⁴⁸¹ The mercantile and agricultural prospects of New Madrid were promoted as the major attractions for American immigrants. Gardoqui suggested, “no doubt Your Excellency will detect the allusions to my efforts to get these people [Americans] to place themselves under the protection of the King, impressing upon them the mercantile advantages that must result.”⁴⁸² Gardoqui felt that he persuaded one of the most important Americans to his side to create a new colony in the interior of North America. Morgan’s popularity would be an essential draw to entice new American settlers to New Madrid. Gardoqui reported that, “I understand that the prudent people begin to fear the results of Morgan’s project and the good that will accrue to those who settle among us.”⁴⁸³ Gardoqui bragged that “Many are those who have told me in confidence I have known how to avail myself of the occasion to secure one of the most important and best liked men of the country; so that, without vanity, I may be the acquisition of this person I am permitted the honor of serving H.M. (His Majesty) with many thousands of vassals who by God’s help will serve as a barrier to defend his just rights.”⁴⁸⁴ Gardoqui did his best to persuade the King to see the value of New Madrid and Morgan.

This was only one of the many irons in the fire for Gardoqui. The Spanish favored western sectionalism and disquiet on the American frontier, because it created a barrier to protect their own interests in Louisiana. Gardoqui secretly wanted Morgan and other entrepreneurial Americans to give up their citizenship to create a new colony on the

⁴⁸¹ Don Diego de Gardoqui, “Gardoqui to Floridablanca, December 24, 1788,”

⁴⁸² Don Diego de Gardoqui, “Gardoqui to Floridablanca, December 24, 1788,”

⁴⁸³ Don Diego de Gardoqui, “Gardoqui to Floridablanca, December 24, 1788,”

⁴⁸⁴ Don Diego de Gardoqui, “Gardoqui to Floridablanca, December 24, 1788,”

frontier, which would bolster Spanish claims in North America. Gardoqui also had dealings with the proposed frontier state of Franklin, which was an independence movement of the area of Kentucky and Tennessee.⁴⁸⁵ However, that new state never materialized. Furthermore, the Spanish also had memorials and plans from the infamous General James Wilkinson to seize Kentucky for the Spanish. James Wilkinson was an American General who fought during the American War for Independence, who gave up his citizenship in the hope of fame and fortune.⁴⁸⁶ In 1787, Wilkinson sailed to New Orleans with a plan to hand over Kentucky to the Spanish, because he believed that Kentuckians were disillusioned with the new American government.⁴⁸⁷ Thus, George Morgan was not the only American citizen and businessman, who had doubts about the economic and political stability of the American national government. However, Morgan and Wilkinson somewhat had competing plans that sought the favor of Governor Miro in New Orleans. Both men wanted to enrich themselves at the expense of the Spanish. Seemingly, Wilkinson had an advantage, so Morgan did not wait for Royal approval to start New Madrid, which created friction among the Spanish officials in the New World.

As Morgan started his expedition westward down the Ohio River, he heard rumors of Wilkinson's plan for Kentucky and John Connolly's attempt to take New Orleans with the help of Great Britain.⁴⁸⁸ Morgan reported to Spanish authorities about

⁴⁸⁵ Kevin T. Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin: America's First Secession*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 146.

⁴⁸⁶ Arthur Preston Whitaker, "James Wilkinson's First Descent to New Orleans in 1787," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol 8, No.1 (February, 1928), 82.

⁴⁸⁷ William R. Shepard, "Wilkinson and the Beginnings of the Spanish Conspiracy," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (April, 1904), 498.

⁴⁸⁸ Andro Linklater, *An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Double Life of General James Wilkinson*. (New York: Walker, 2009), 97. Linklater states Connolly and Wilkinson had met in Kentucky

John Connolly's plans to take New Orleans for the British. Morgan wrote that Connolly's "purpose is to stir up a rebellion and to invade the dominions of his Catholic Majesty on the Mississippi and the city of New Orleans, the key to navigation of the western waters."⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, Morgan said, "Connolly insisted that Canada had authorized his to make preparations and had promised that arms, munitions, and every kind of assistance would be furnished them."⁴⁹⁰ Thus, Connolly's scheme seemed to be a real threat to the Spanish in New Orleans. Morgan even offered, "If I decide [sic] it is necessary I will sacrifice my own affairs in New Madrid, go to the country of Kentucky and remain there for some time, trying to circumvent the nefarious plans of the said Senor [Connolly]."⁴⁹¹ Furthermore, Morgan stated, "If necessary, I will deceive Connolly and take him to New Orleans."⁴⁹² These serious statements from Morgan show his loyalty to the Spanish cause. He took his business serious; he was willing to stop his affairs in Missouri to stop Connolly. Morgan was now a pawn in a larger international scene in the interior of North America.

The American frontier in the 1780s was turbulent, filled with competing empires vying for control of it. The people of the frontier had to determine their own identity and loyalty. Morgan believed in Gardoqui's promises of American-like civil liberties coupled

and Wilkinson to discuss the loyalties of western Canadians, but in reality Connolly wanted to sway Wilkinson to the British side.

⁴⁸⁹ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Gardoqui, December 19, 1788," in the Spanish Archival Transcripts, Volume 3, Reel 405 in the Mississippi State Archives.

⁴⁹⁰ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Gardoqui, December 19, 1788," Mississippi State Archives.

⁴⁹¹ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Gardoqui, December 19, 1788," Mississippi State Archives.

⁴⁹² George Morgan, "George Morgan to Gardoqui, December 19, 1788," Mississippi State Archives.

with the economic potential of the Spanish to continue on his mission. The idea of economic freedom and opportunity was the principle promise that enticed many of Morgan's followers to New Madrid. Morgan was willing to move himself and his family to Spanish New Madrid for the promise of economic stability and the chance to make it big on the frontier.

On February 14, 1789, Morgan and his party arrived at the mouth of the Ohio near present-day Cairo, Illinois. Morgan wanted to get the colony planted because he took the proposal seriously. Under the pretense of approval, Morgan commenced with the building of the colony. However, his dream did not last long. The Spanish and Morgan quickly had a falling out possibly about his salary and or more likely his authority in New Madrid. In July 1789, Morgan traveled to New Orleans to meet with the Governor, to discuss his authority at New Madrid. Miro distrusted Morgan and so he appointed a new military commandant at New Madrid: Pedro Foucher. Morgan did not approve of the young French officer and he saw it as a personal slight. By the end of the month, Morgan set sail for Philadelphia and never returned to New Madrid. Additionally, when he arrived in Philadelphia, the new U.S. Constitution had been ratified, which gave Morgan new hope for the Indiana Land Company. The new government in America coupled with the falling out with the Spanish; put Morgan on a familiar path. Nonetheless, by the end of 1789, Morgan had abandoned the Spanish and the new colony at New Madrid to return to Prospect, New Jersey.

Morgan did not write directly about the reasons he left the Spanish, but he did leave a clue in a letter to the Spanish minister in Philadelphia, Don Diego de Gardoqui. Morgan stated: "Our love of Liberty Civil and religious is our ruling Passion: Give us

these & all Princes or Rulers & all Countries are alike to US: but they must be given as our Right & not as an Indulgence which we may be deprived of at Pleasure by any man or Sett of Men whatever. If Spain does not adopt this Idea in regard to forming her Settlements on the Mississippi She will have no Settlements there six Months after the first Dispute between her and the U.S.”⁴⁹³ George Morgan had realized that without the political ideals and right guaranteed by the American Revolution, the Spanish colony of New Madrid could not last, because no American would want to move to a tyrannical Spanish colony. Economic incentives led to political actions. One could speculate that Morgan’s business interests now aligned with his new political ideals of the American Revolution. Morgan wanted to reap the profits of western movement into the Spanish lands, but not without being able to exercise the new American political rights.

The Passing of William Trent

While George Morgan worked for the Spanish, William Trent remained retired from public life after the American Revolution. He returned to Trenton, New Jersey where he eagerly waited to hear about the Indiana Memorial. By 1784, Trent moved his family from New Jersey to Philadelphia, where he stayed for the rest of his days. Trent had many accounts come due during this time and had to pay off debts. He used his land as collateral and sold many tracts to pay his debts, but still hoped for the best with the Indiana Memorial. In January 1784, Trent gave Samuel Wharton the power of attorney for his lands and estate. Therefore, Wharton could control Trent’s estate and his shares of

⁴⁹³ George Morgan to Don Diego de Gardoqui, 24 Feb, 1791. Happer Collection, quoted in Max Savelle, *George Morgan Colony Builder*. 228. The Happer Collection is a private collection that I am currently attempting to track it down. This is the only record of the quote available at this moment.

the Indiana Company if he was indisposed.⁴⁹⁴ Trent was also owed many debts and his creditors needed to be looked after. For example, George Campbell owed Trent money and slowly paid off his accounts. Later in 1784, Trent made his last will and testament. He appointed Wharton to be one of his executors. However, little is known about the last three years of Trent's life because no records were kept. Even Trent's death is marked with obscurity; the exact date is not even known, some time in the spring of 1787.⁴⁹⁵ He died still deep in debt, while hopelessly waiting for the approval of the Indiana Memorial by United States Congress. Trent's legacy was the building of the United States and its frontier, but as the Revolution passed, others took over his place in society. Thus, Trent's legacy was one of debt and credit.

Credit and Debt: Samuel Wharton

During the American Revolution, Samuel Wharton remained in Europe, first staying in London until he could get transportation to France. By 1780, Wharton was in France with Benjamin Franklin. While in Europe, Wharton ran up his credit with various merchants including Richard Neaves in London and Dr. Jan Ingen Housz of the Netherlands. Therefore, Wharton remained an elusive character from his creditors. Wharton did not want to pay his creditors, so he never responded to their letters. At one point, Wharton was assumed to be dead according to a newspaper, the Dutch Ingen Housz wrote his friend Dr. Franklin about the character of Wharton. "The perusal of the inclosed [letter] will furnish you an idea of my situation and particular interest in Mr. Wharton's honesty, of which I should very much like to have your opinion for my own

⁴⁹⁴ William Trent, "William Trent, Power of Attorney, January 29 1784," the William Trent Papers, in the Gratz, Franks, Simon Collection in the Library Company of Philadelphia located in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 1, Folder 29.

⁴⁹⁵ Slick, *William Trent and the West*, 175

tranquility. I am sur you can not approve of his behavior towards me. I am not rich enough to bear such a great loss, if mr. Wharton should prove to be a dishonest man, Which I can not believe, tho mr. Coffyn still to suspect him to be soo.”⁴⁹⁶ Previously before the Revolution, Wharton attempted to get money from his partners of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* but the company went insolvent and had no cash to send. Thus, Wharton ran up a large amount of debt while he lived in Europe and he never settled the accounts before returning to the new United States. Wharton’s debt made him even more reliant on the approval of the Vandalia and the Indiana Memorials.

Before Wharton set sail for America, Franklin and Wharton drafted a memorial in Passy, France to be read in the Continental Congress. Both men argued that the American Vandalia shareholders suffered great losses of their time and money in Great Britain and that they should have their memorial approved to compensate them for their damages.⁴⁹⁷ Wharton had been abroad for more than eight years, which cost him a dear amount of money and time away from his family in Philadelphia. The petition read in Congress in March of 1781 stated:

Dr. Franklin and Mr. Wharton also represented that as the United States had succeed to the Sovereignty of the territory, which they had contracted for, they confided that they wou’d think it just and reasonable to considered the said territory, as subject to such contracts and dispositions as were made concerning it, while it confessedly belonged to the British crown and that they might bot suffer to great an injury by a change of sovereignty as to be deprived of their equitable right to the said lands; and lastly they prayed, that the lands might be granted to them, and to their heirs and assigns (in trust for themselves and associates) upon the terms and conditions of their contract, and of the order of the privy council (under

⁴⁹⁶ J. Igen Housz, Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, June 12, 1782,” in the Benjamin Franklin Papers, Vol 37, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 467.

⁴⁹⁷ Wharton, *Plain Facts*, 160-162.

the great seal thereof⁰ or upon such other terms, as may be convenient to the interests of the United States, and not injurious to them.⁴⁹⁸

Thus, Wharton and Franklin argued that the United States Congress should approve the Vandavia Memorial because it was in the process of being approved by the Crown. Nonetheless, their argument fell on deaf ears of Congress, because members of the Virginia delegation had interest in the same lands. Wharton still remained hopeful for the approval of the memorial. Wharton returned to the states in 1780. Shortly after his return, he took an oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania on February 9, 1781. Even Benjamin Franklin sponsored Wharton by saying “that Samuel Wharton Esqre of Philadelphia, hath during his Residence for many Years in London, comported himself as a good and faithful Citizen of the United States, and been very serviceable to their Cause.”⁴⁹⁹ Because Wharton had missed almost the whole War for American Independence abroad, he had to take an oath of loyalty. Back in the US, he still dodged creditors and continued to hope for the approval of land grants.

Within a year of his return in 1782, Wharton was elected to the Continental Congress as a delegate from Delaware (although he resided in Philadelphia). Wharton had run for election in Delaware because of his mercantile connections there and he hoped that once elected he could use his influence to change the tide of Congress in favor of his land claims especially the Indiana Memorial.⁵⁰⁰ Wharton served two terms representing Delaware. Wharton’s plan of using his Congressional seat to support the

⁴⁹⁸ Wharton, *Plain Facts*, 162.

⁴⁹⁹ Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin’s Certificate for Samuel Wharton, March 16, 1780, unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁰⁰ John A. Munroe, *The Philadelphawareans, and Other Essays Relating to Delaware*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004,) 98.

Indiana Memorial failed as the Virginians, led by George Mason again tabled the discussion of the claim. Eventually, Delawareans decided that Wharton and other Pennsylvanians like John Dickenson and Thomas McKean who represented Delaware, did not embody their interests and they elected their own delegates.

Wharton, while in Congress and after, remained in debt and continued to dodge his creditors. He also continued to work on the merits of the Indiana Company and represented his friends like William Trent. Wharton remained connected to his merchant friends in Philadelphia, while avoiding his European creditors. In March 1786, Jan Igenhousz wrote to Benjamin Franklin requesting him to ask Wharton about the money he owed him. IgenHousz wrote, "I mak no doubt but you will have employed your good offices in my behalf in persuading Mr. Samuel Wharton to deliver what he owes to me, . . . I can not but think, that the wight of your honorable station and that of your authority will be a farther incitement to him to fulfill his duty very soon."⁵⁰¹ Nonetheless, Dr. Franklin became involved between Wharton and Igenhousz. Franklin even wrote to Igenhousz, "If in such a case Mr. Wharton could not pay, having perhaps nothing or pretending to have nothing, would I be in danger of being put to great expenses in paying lawyers and other people to be employed in such transactions? I hope you will have been able to prevail by this time Mr. Wharton to finish the business."⁵⁰² The cagey Wharton had delayed his payments to Igenhouz, which put Franklin into the middle of the situation.

⁵⁰¹ Jan Igen Housz,, "Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, March 8, 1786," unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁰² Benjamin Franklin, "Benjamin Franklin to Dr. Jan Igenhousz, January 1, 1787," unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>. There is little or no evidence that Franklin had to hire him a lawyer.

Wharton's position with his Dutch creditor continued to grow into a disaster for him. However, Wharton offered Igenhousz land in compensation for his debt. Land in North America was not what the Dutchman wanted in return. Igenhousz wrote, "As Mr. Wharton offered a thousand acres of land for security, could he not be obliged by this very proposition to force his son to make up his accounts, and to give afterwards that security or to pay the balance by selling that land?"⁵⁰³ Land did not mean anything to the Dutch creditor. Igenhousz wanted money. Furthermore, he stated that "Mr. Wharton has still in hands belonging to me the sum of 9407 Livres besides the profits of the sales, interest of the capital, and also the profits of the sale of goods of the adventure, in which he and I were only concerned, and of which adventure he sent me the capital sum, being eight thousand Livres, which passed thro your hands."⁵⁰⁴ In addition to Igenhousz's problems with Wharton, other Americans had also not paid him. But Wharton was one of the most egregious defaulters.

Wharton delayed his payment to Igenhousz on the account that he lent money out and his investment had not been returned yet. Dr. Igenhousz continued to write his dear friend Franklin about the situation and even stated, "If Mr. Wharton should pretend to have no Contant money, he can borrow it on his land security, which he has all ready proposed to engage for it."⁵⁰⁵ However, Wharton simply could not pay his debts. By

⁵⁰³ Jan Igen Housz, Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, May 20, 1787, unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁰⁴ Jan Igen Housz, Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, May 20, 1787, unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁰⁵ Jan Igen Housz, "Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, September 28, 1787," unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

1788, Wharton was in terrible health and his family was in shambles and bankrupt. In a letter to Igenhousz, Franklin reported:

S. Wharton himself has been very unfortunate Situation. His Son that was with him in France shot himself in the Passage hither. Another Son, who had the management of your Goods, is become an incurable Sot being constantly drunk with Rum and thus incapable of any Business for the little time he probably has to live. The poor Father by an apoplectic or paralytic Stroke, is almost reduced to a State of Imbecility, his Memory gone, and his Speech hardly intelligible or consistent. This is what I hear of them. In the Distress he has the Addition of being a Bankrupt, and it is said will not be able to pay a Shilling in the Pound⁵⁰⁶

Wharton had become destitute and his health was in deplorable condition. Dr. Igenhousz gave Samuel Vaughn the power of attorney to deal with the Wharton situation. Igenhousz demanded, “tho I should not like to spend much money with little or no hope to recover what is due to me. I wanted two things. Viz. the account of what is still du to me of the sale of the marchandises belonging, for one third part, to me and, of the parcel which Mr. Vaughan wrote me was found still in Mr. Wharton’s warehous marked as a parcel belonging to me and not yet sold.”⁵⁰⁷ Therefore, Igenhousz understand the situation was a wash and if he could recover anything from Wharton he would be satisfied. Eventually the dealings with Igenhousz were closed and Wharton remained in poor health and poverty. Before his death, the Indiana Memorial would once again fail to materialize in Congress. By 1788, Wharton retired to a country estate outside of Philadelphia and lived in poor health until he passed away in March of 1800.

⁵⁰⁶ Jan Igen Housz, “Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, February 11, 1788,” unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

⁵⁰⁷ Jan Igen Housz, “Igen Housz to Benjamin Franklin, August 9, 1788,” unpublished in the Benjamin Franklin Papers located at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin//framedVolumes.jsp>.

The Success of the Gratz

Unlike the unfortunate happenings of Samuel Wharton, the Gratz brothers found success in their business ventures following the American Revolutionary War. Their merchandise business flourished, although their land speculation with the Indiana Company failed—but they had other options. The Gratz brothers had a diversified portfolio when it came to business. Shortly before the war broke out, the Gratz were invested in land speculation in both the Indiana Company and buying parts of George Croghan’s tracts in New York. However, the brothers also purchased shares in several sloops and began shipping merchandise to the Caribbean and other locations. Furthermore, the Gratz had more business interests in Virginia and the southern frontier. Their diversity kept them from bankruptcy and depending on the approval of land memorials in Congress. The Gratz brothers had made smart business decisions compared to some of their friends.

During the American War for Independence, the Gratz Brothers had various business connections in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. The company was not just a store but also lent out monies to people. On August 22, 1779, Edmund Randolph drew £850, who promised it to be paid back in Virginia.⁵⁰⁸ Furthermore, Gratz invested in shipping with Richard Graham. They purchased shares in several ships including the *General Mercer* and the *Neptune*.⁵⁰⁹ The war disrupted shipping, which damaged profits.

⁵⁰⁸ Edmund Randolph, “Edmund Randolph to Barnard Gratz, August 22, 1779,” in the Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁵⁰⁹ Richard Graham, “Richard Graham sell Michael Gratz an Interest in the General Mercer, September 7, 1779,” William Vincent Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798 Papers of Interest to Their Posterity and the Posterity of Their Associates*. (Jefferson City, Mo: Hugh Stephens Print. Co, 1916,) 186.

However, it was not the success that they had anticipated. Nonetheless, the Gratz attempted to gain a sizeable return on their investment, but it failed.

While, the Gratz continued to look to Virginia for some business, they still had hoped to make profits in Lancaster. In the fall of 1779, Michael Gratz wrote to his brother, "I expect to get about £1,000 by them [goods] if they come and are according to direction, good in quality."⁵¹⁰ Thus, Michael believed that as the war moved southward away from Pennsylvania, the economy would rebound in Lancaster and the frontier. The Lancaster business began to have some success. Levy Andrew Levy wrote to Michael Gratz about the supplies they had in Lancaster, but that the weather had delayed the shipment. Therefore, the Gratz still had a foothold in Lancaster because they were willing to send goods there if they had them. The Gratz had a wide variety of business ventures going at the same time.

In another example, the Gratz established a business with merchant John Gibson at Pittsburgh. They supplied Gibson with merchandise to sell in his store. Gibson's main customer was George Rogers Clark and his raiders. On December 20, 1782, Barnard Gratz petitioned the State of Virginia for payment of the George Rogers Clark's account with Gibson. The payment of the account was delayed. In 1783, Michael Gratz petitioned the Assembly of Virginia for the settling of Clark's account for his expedition. On June 26, 1783 the Assembly awarded Gratz and Gibson payment.⁵¹¹ Gratz had to fight the State of Virginia for payment but he won the case. With the expedition of Clark, the

⁵¹⁰ Michael Gratz, "Michael Gratz to Barnard Gratz, October 4, 1779," in the Gratz, Franks, Simon Collection in the Library Company of Philadelphia located in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁵¹¹ Michael Gratz, "The Virginia Record of the Petition of Michael Gratz," in Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 215-216.

Gratz slowly moved into the region of Kentucky. They looked to purchase land and speculate on a new land rush. Furthermore, the Gratz helped support John Campbell and Joseph Simon in their business in Louisville. Additionally, Barnard Gratz also joined Patrick Henry and George Washington, in the attempt to drain the Great Dismal Swamp to sponsor the major internal improvement of Virginia. This business venture was another investment that might have had a large return if it worked because it would have created a canal and new settlements. Unfortunately, the costly internal improvement project failed to gain traction.

In 1779, Barnard Gratz who was a member of the Illinois Company that helped supply *Murray and Rumsey*, came together at a meeting in Philadelphia. The meeting held March 26, 1779 proclaimed the merger of two companies that owned land out west. This merged enterprise became the Illinois and Wabash Company. At the meeting Barnard Gratz was named secretary of the new company. David Franks, Robert Morris, James Rumsey, William Murray, and John Campbell all became shareholders in the new Illinois and Wabash Company. The purpose of this new venture was to settle the Illinois and Wabash areas by creating new cities in the west. The company drew out a detailed plan to create towns and to import families from the east.⁵¹² They appointed William Murray to be their agent in the Illinois Country. The United Companies of the Illinois and Wabash claimed the same lands that the Indiana and the Vandalia Companies.

As the Gratz Brothers were familiar with Virginia, Barnard Gratz traveled to Williamsburg in 1779 to petition the Virginian Assembly about settling the border

⁵¹² *United Illinois and Wabash Land Companies*, Clarence Walworth Alvord, and Cyrus H. McCormick. The Illinois-Wabash Land Company Manuscript. (Chicago: Private print. by C.H. McCormick, 1915, 32-33.

dispute between Pennsylvania and Virginia. Furthermore, Gratz informed the Assembly about the Indiana Company's petition to Congress and he had no idea how that would effect the Illinois and Wabash Company. Additionally, the Gratz petitioned in 1780 to bring suit against George Croghan. In return for their monies they were owed, they received land from Croghan's vast estate. However, the Gratz continued to take care of Croghan even giving him food and a place to live.⁵¹³

Hedging Bets: The Indiana Land Company and the Illinois-Wabash Company

Men like Gratz and Franks were shareholders in both land companies because they believed they had a better chance of succeeding with at least one of them. The United Companies were made up on Pennsylvanians who hoped that they could also make a fortune like the Indiana Company. However, eventually they both ran into problems with the national government recognizing them. Nonetheless, that did not stop men like the Gratz and Franks from investing their profits and their future into these doomed land companies.

As the Indiana Company and the Illinois and Wabash Company jockeyed for position in Congress, the Gratz and Franks believed that one of their companies would win favor with Congress, which would make them a sizeable profit. Levy Andrew Levy, wrote that "I am glad to hear the Indiana Company are pushing their claim before Congress, I hope it will be confirmed."⁵¹⁴ If Congress approved the Indiana claim, these

⁵¹³ Nicholas B Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, at Williamsburg by the University of North Carolina Press, 1959. 303-304.

⁵¹⁴ Levy Andrew Levy, "Levy Andrew Levy to Michael Gratz, October 17, 1781," in the Gratz, Franks, Simon Collection in the Library Company of Philadelphia located in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

men would have won their bet. However, this was not the case. Nonetheless, they remained optimistic about their prospects.

In addition to the Indiana and United Illinois and Wabash Companies, the Gratz brothers were also close friends with George Croghan. The former Indian diplomat had acquired many tracts of lands in various areas including Pennsylvania, New York, and on the frontier. The Gratz became Croghan's managers, while he was deathly ill. Even before the American Revolution, Croghan was in debt and the Gratz acted as his agent to help him liquidate his property to settle outstanding bills. The New York property called the Otsego Tract was to be divided up and sold at auction. Barnard Gratz advertised the sale of the lands in the county of Tryon, New York.⁵¹⁵ Michael Gratz had purchased 9050 acres from Croghan, which became known as the Gratzburgh Tract or the Jew's L.⁵¹⁶ However, the war interrupted the larger transaction.⁵¹⁷

After Croghan's death in 1782, Barnard Gratz was one of the executors of Croghan's estate. In 1786, the New York lands that Croghan owned went to public auction, where New York land speculator William Cooper intended to purchase the Otsego tract. George Morgan's brother, Dr. John Morgan went to prevent the auction, but could not stop the event. Morgan has also purchased land from Croghan. After a bitter fight between Morgan and Cooper, the latter obtained the patent on the land.

⁵¹⁵ Barnard Gratz, "Poster Signed by Barnard Gratz, Advertising the Lands of Michael Gratz and George Croghan in the Mohawk Valley, May 26, 1773," in Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798* 131-132.

⁵¹⁶ G. William Beardslee, "An Otsego Frontier Experience: The Gratzburg Tract, 1770-1795," *New York History*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (July, 1998), 242-243.

⁵¹⁷ Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995,) 51. William Cooper was also another entrepreneur that wanted to create his personal fortune on selling land in New York. Historian Alan Taylor wrote the Pulitzer Prize-Winning Biography of Cooper and shows how the land rush in New York was short lived and demonstrate how the Gratz were on the outsiders in this local scheme.

However, Michael Gratz believed that he still owned a portion of the land because Croghan sold him the 9050-acre tract before the Revolution. Gratz claimed that the land was his, meanwhile; Cooper had acquired the deed from the sheriff. Gratz believed he was entitled to some sort of compensation for the use of *his* land. On April 15, 1796, Richard Edwards representing William Cooper wrote to Simon Gratz, the son of Michael Gratz, expressing that “Mr. Cooper has said to me that he has purchased all your father’s right in the land in question.”⁵¹⁸ Michael Gratz had owned land in New York and he sold the lots to farmers.

Eventually, the Gratz family gave up their claim to the Gratzburgh Tract in New York because Simon and Hiram (Michael’s sons) took over the business from their father and uncle. In 1798, Barnard retired to Baltimore to be closer to his daughter, and Michael remained in Philadelphia, where he is buried in the Mikveh Israel Cemetery. Barnard passed away in Baltimore in 1801 and Michael Gratz survived until September 8, 1811. However, they had been out of the merchant business since 1798.

The Return of Franks

Similar to other merchants, Franks also looked to the west for the hope of his future. But he remained exiled in England. While in England, Tench Coxe controlled Franks’ estate and dealings with the land companies like the Indiana Company. Furthermore, Franks continued to petition for his loyalist claims, but the future looked bright with land speculation in America. Franks petitioned to return to Philadelphia to his family. Eventually in June 1788 Franks was granted permission and set sail shortly after. Thus, Franks returned to America to help with the Indiana Company and the

⁵¹⁸ Richard Edwards, “Richard Edwards to Simon Gratz, April 15, 1796,” in the Etting Collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Illinois Wabash Company, which both still needed to gain support by Congress. Again, the memorials of the merchants fell on deaf ears of the American government. However the new government under the Constitution offered new hope for the land company.

Even before the completion of the legal battle to get the Indiana Memorial approved, in the fall of 1794, the feeble David Franks remained in Philadelphia during the Yellow Fever Epidemic. Dr. Benjamin Rush treated Franks in October for the disease and by October 14, 1794, David Franks had passed away. He was buried at Christ Church under his wife's plot because he was retained his Jewish identity but could not be interred in the Jewish Cemetery because he married a Christian woman. Franks left behind his estate and his daughter. However, the Gratz had to deal with the passing of their friend and business associate in 1794. Even before his demise, Franks relied heavily on the Gratz for loans when he returned from exile in 1788. Although Tench Coxe was left to be the executor of Franks' estate, Joseph Simon was also believed by many to be an executor. Simon wrote to Michael Gratz concerning the sale of Franks' estate, Donegal Place. Simon stated, "I have received from Mr. Lowery a letter with a copy of an advertisement for the Donegal Place, and which I will not have printed until I receive your answer to this. I have now to request you to call on the person who has the power to settle the affairs of the estate of David Franks."⁵¹⁹ Franks passed away in debt, which he owed several people. But Franks the merchant remained an enigma of history for quite sometime. He was a merchant with loyalist leanings but desired to live in American because it was where his immediate family lived. Franks became a casualty of war because of his brother was firmly a loyal subject to the King of England, while David

⁵¹⁹ Joseph Simon, "Joseph Simon to Michael Gratz, January 24, 1794," in Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 246-247.

attempted to remain neutral in the conflict serving both sides. However, his connections with his brother forced him to be a loyalist. Hence, family and business had stronger bonds for Franks than political ideology.

The death of Franks was one of many during the Yellow Fever Epidemic of the 1790s in Philadelphia. The spread of the exotic disease was a mystery to many of the people of the temporary Capitol City. Dr. Rush attempted to figure out the source of the epidemic but his incorrect conclusion was the disease came from rotting coffee from the Arch Street Wharf near Water Street.⁵²⁰ Rush's theory seemed silly by today's standards, but germ theory was not discovered in the late eighteenth century. Nonetheless, Rush was one of the leading scientific minds on the United States at the time. The disease ran wild through the streets of the Nation's capital, which forced the closure of several offices including the Supreme Court. During the epidemic, many prominent figures of Philadelphia left the city during the high sick days during the summer and fall. But, Franks refused to leave the city. No one knows why he refused to leave, but he chose poorly.

The passing of Franks left his friend and associate Joseph Simon mourning. However, life went on. The famous Jewish merchant of Lancaster also had many irons in the fire. In 1773, he joined the Illinois Company, which would later be merged into the United Illinois and Wabash Company. Also, Simon was a member of the Indiana Company. In 1776, Thomas Wharton wrote to Simon about the state of affairs of the Indiana memorial. However, with little or no progress on those land companies, Simon

⁵²⁰Benjamin Rush. *An Account of the Biliious Remitting Yellow Fever, As It Appeared in the City of Philadelphia, in the Year 1793*. (Philadelphia: Printed by Thomas Dobson, at the Stone-House, no 41, South Second-Street, 1794),145.

continued to focus on his business in Lancaster. The familial and business relationship between the Gratz and Simon remained strong. Furthermore, Simon joined the suit against Croghan in 1780 because Croghan owed Simon £2,259.⁵²¹ In return, Simon received “a track of land on Raccoon Creek containing Ten Thousand, Five Hundred and Sixty Acres.”⁵²² Thus, Simon was compensated with land for the debts owed by Croghan.

In addition to his business in Lancaster, Simon also helped John Connelly purchase land near the Falls of the Ohio in Kentucky, however, Connelly abandoned the project leaving Simon and Campbell with a large debt. The Assembly of Virginia announced that Joseph Simon and John Campbell became the new shareholders of the Connelly’s land. And quickly, the property in question became the city of Louisville. Thus, Simon, Campbell and the Gratz brothers heavily invested in the development of the frontier lands in Kentucky. Simon like his son in law Michael Gratz was well diversified in his business ventures. If one of them failed he was not hurting like Samuel Wharton or George Morgan. All these men wanted to provide for their families and they used their connections to do so. However unlike Morgan, Simon and the Gratzes had no problem with the new American system because their businesses were succeeding and they were not solely reliant on land speculation for their future.

Simon wrote his last will and testament on October 26, 1799. He passed away in January 24, 1804 at the age of 92. Simon left many things to his family and friends. Simon wanted to leave his family with a stable footing. He left his shares of the Indiana Company to his daughter Shinah. Furthermore he left Michael Gratz with money owed

⁵²¹ Memorial of Bernard and Michael Gratz, Joseph Simon, and Edmond Milne to the Virginia Assembly” in Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 196.

⁵²² Memorial of Bernard and Michael Gratz, Joseph Simon, and Edmond Milne to the Virginia Assembly” in Byars, *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, 196.

to him. Simon also left land to other family members and friends. Lastly, Simon left many religious artifacts, including a miniature ark, to the Kadosh Mikveh Israel Synagogue in Philadelphia. Both Simon and the Gratz embraced their Jewish identity because they were heavily involved in their synagogues and left them many religious artifacts. Furthermore, they were entombed at Jewish cemeteries, which also demonstrates their identity was much more than their political and financial identity.

The Last of a Revolutionary Merchant Class

By 1805, many of the Philadelphia men in this study had passed away, leaving their life's work to their families. Only Michael Gratz and George Morgan survived past 1805. After the failed Spanish colony of New Madrid, Morgan returned to his Prospect Estate in New Jersey. Upon his return, Morgan focused his energies to his agriculture and intellectual dealings. Even before his adventure to the other side of the Mississippi, Morgan studied the effects of the Hessian fly. Morgan experimented with different types of wheat including the yellow bearded wheat. He determined that this type of wheat resisted the Hessian fly. Morgan even wrote to several prominent politicians including President George Washington and Thomas Jefferson about the effects of the Hessian fly. Morgan, the president of the Philadelphia Agricultural Society, was one of the first to name the insect: Hessian fly.⁵²³ He became the expert of the Hessian fly. Even George Washington was intrigued by Morgan's finding. Washington wrote "With much concern I have heard of the ravages of the Hessian fly on the wheaten Crops in the States East of the Delaware and of the progress of this destructive insect Southerly; But I congratulate

⁵²³ George Morgan, "George Morgan to Sir John Temple, 26 August 1788," copy in Thomas Jefferson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress Washington D.C. (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mtjhtml/mtjhome.h>)

with you sincerely on your successful endeavors in the management of your measures &c. to counteract them.”⁵²⁴ Interestingly Morgan also wrote to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* about the Hessian fly. He wrote:

As a lover of my country, and a friend to the farmers of the middle states, I am further induced to declare, from experience, and a thorough investigation of the matter, that their absolute reliance (under Providence) must be on the yellow bearded wheat, not the white, nor the red bearded wheat, the sowing of which, by mistake, has occasioned much disappointment. That this declaration may have its full weight with all who know me, I give my name. GEORGE MORGAN, of Prospect, New Jersey. New York, June 24th, 1788.⁵²⁵

Morgan letter to the newspaper is filled with many observations. He wanted to appear as loyal member of the United States even though at the same time he had deep discussions with the Spanish about setting up the colony of New Madrid. However, he still remained interested in trying to fight the Hessian fly, which threatened his livelihood of farming. Nonetheless, Morgan portrayed himself as a “lover of my country,” while he negotiated with Don Diego de Gardoqui. Why would Morgan give up his life in America for a promise of the Spanish? Morgan did care for his country but he understood that the American economy was shambles and without a stable government, Morgan realized that the potential to make a fortune would be with the Spanish and not the Americans. Nonetheless, Morgan’s Spanish adventure failed and by the end of 1789, he returned home to Prospect and his agrarian life, where he continued to experiment with wheat, bees, and other agricultural improvements.

⁵²⁴ George Washington, “Washington to George Morgan, August 25, 1788,” W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series*, vol. 6, January-September 1788 (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia, 1997), 474-75.

⁵²⁵ George Morgan, *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 16, 1788.

After his return from the Spanish adventure, the Indiana Company announced that it would petition the new federal government their petition for their land claims. However, before the petition was sent to Congress, the company decided to present it to the Virginia Assembly. The Assembly never received the Indiana Company's petition. In 1790, Morgan decided to present the petition in person; however, he was not allowed. Nonetheless, the company again filed their memorial in 1791 and the Assembly defeated it. The following year, the Indiana Company sought legal counsel and proceeded to present their claims to the United States Supreme Court. By 1793, the Supreme Court saw the suit but the court adjourned early possibly because of the Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia. During the session, Virginia refused to show up because of a legal battle. The delegates were confused if an individual could sue a state, which they believed Morgan was doing. Thus, Virginia abstained from the session. In 1796, the members of the Indiana Company tried to bring Virginia back into court to get a final decision. Nonetheless, the Indiana Memorial suffered another setback that was the final blow. The Supreme Court could not force Virginia into court, which led to the ratification of the Eleventh Amendment to the United State Constitution. Attorney General Charles Lee, who probably wanted to stop the Indiana Memorial in favor for his states own rights, sponsored the new amendment.⁵²⁶ Furthermore, the Eleventh Amendment and the Supreme Court killed the Indiana Memorial, which traced back to compensation for the losses during Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763. By the time of the ruling, a majority of the shareholders had already died and this time the Federal Government of the United States

⁵²⁶ Lewis, *The Indiana Company*, 289.

had passed over those men again. This defeat was the death knell for the Indiana Company. However, by this time few of the merchants had any hope of its approval.

As the Indiana Company died in 1796, George Morgan's brother Dr. John Morgan, also passed away, leaving George Morgan land in western Pennsylvania. He decided to move westward and focus his life again on farming. The venerable merchant and statesman, with the help of his sons built their house and estate which they named Morganza. He did not stop his experimenting and investigation of agriculture. The elder Morgan planted a wide variety of crops where he could send his surplus to the market in Pittsburgh. In addition to his planting of crops, Morgan also raised horses and cattle. Breeding experiments seemed to fascinate Morgan.⁵²⁷ He wanted to create some of the best racing horses from his prize colt. Nonetheless, retired life remained quiet and rarely undisturbed until the summer of 1806.

In August of 1806, Aaron Burr sent George Morgan a letter asking to meet up with him for dinner. Burr and Morgan had been friends since the late war. However, this meeting was not of nostalgia. Burr wanted to recruit Morgan for his own devious purposes. The former Vice President believed that he could raise a force to break the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains away from the United States. Burr probably knew about Morgan's discussion with the Spanish. Only a few years earlier Morgan's plans competed against James Wilkinson's own plans for Kentucky. Therefore, Burr believed he was going to find Morgan friendly to his designs. Burr tried to entice Morgan's sons to join him, as well. George's eldest son, John Morgan was a former general in the New Jersey Militia, and really worried about Burr's intentions. He urged his father to inform the federal government about Burr. The older Morgan tired and

⁵²⁷Savelle, *George Morgan Colony Builder*, 232.

worried about an impending war near his home wrote to President Thomas Jefferson warning him of Burr's intentions.

Heeding the advice from his sons, Morgan informed President Jefferson, warning him of Burr's desires. His communication to Thomas Jefferson and willingness to testify in court against his old friend demonstrates his new loyalty to the United States of America. On September 19, 1806, President Jefferson responded to Morgan's letter about Burr's intentions. Jefferson stated, "I thank you for the information [About Burr], which claims the more attention as it can coincide with what has been learned from other quarters. . . Whatever zeal you might think proper to use in this pursuit, would be used in fulfillment of the duties of a good citizen, and any communications you may be so good as to make to me on the subject shall be thankfully received, and so made use of as not to commit you any further than yourself may think proper to express."⁵²⁸ Morgan's intelligence on Burr's activities helped protect his sons and his property.

Even though Morgan dabbled in the Spanish colony of New Madrid, he returned to the United States probably because the ratification of the new Constitution and the new found hope of the approval of the Indiana Memorial by Congress. However, the true reasons of his abandoning the Spanish project will be forever a mystery. But upon his return, Morgan became more and more a "lover of his country."

The merchantmen of Philadelphia like Morgan, Franks, Gratz, Wharton, and others were practical people who wanted the best for their families. They were willing to invest in risky adventures in the hope of a large return that would provide for their families. These entrepreneurs prioritized their family and businesses before political

⁵²⁸ Jefferson to Morgan, Sept 9, 1806, LC MSS Jefferson Papers, No. 273.
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib016490>.

ideology or their governments. They relied on the government for their futures like the approval of the Indiana Memorial. The opportunity came about to change the government, like during the American Revolution when some were willing to fight for that change. Others like David Franks who tried to remain neutral were caught up in the whirlwind of the war. He became a loyalist by default. Where some others like Joseph Galloway refused to give up on the British. Regardless of the political identities, these men did what was best for themselves on the account of finances and their own families. Thus, that summer evening visit from Burr did not sit well with Morgan because it had the potential of creating another war, which would have disrupted his life and family now living at Morganza in western Pennsylvania.

Conclusion

Often in our modern world, society as a whole neglects the events of the past. In particular, little thought is given to the people, events, and conflicts that created the American national identity. The period between the American War for Independence and the War of 1812 was one of the most crucial times for shaping an American identity. In order to understand the full effects these wars had on American society one must study the periods not just of conflict, but also before and after the fighting. It is now clear that American Revolutionary War did not drastically alter the development of these merchants' identity. The backdrop of war created a fluid economic environment, which allowed the merchants to freely conduct business that fit their commercial desires. The merchants of the founding generation did not have a clear political identity. Even after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1789, the founding generation had little or no knowledge of what it was to be an American. The first American identity came to fruition

with the next generation. George Morgan's sons were part of that first American generation. They had more to lose from Burr's infamous plot; therefore, they urged their father to warn President Jefferson. Additionally, Burr's rebellion would have brought war and strife to Morgan's business and his family. Thus, it was in his best interest to stop Burr.

Early in 1807, the Federal government caught up with Burr and brought charges against him for treason against the United States of America. The government brought Burr to Richmond, Virginia for trial. Taking place in the Eagle Tavern, the treason trial quickly became one of the most famous court cases in the Early Republic. The Federal prosecutors brought in key witnesses like George Morgan and his sons against Burr.

The first Morgan to testify was former General John Morgan of the New Jersey Militia. John Morgan resigned from the armed forces and moved to his father's estate in Pennsylvania to help the family farm. The officer recalled his first meeting of the former Vice President:

Sometime in August last, about this time twelve-month, my father put a letter into my hand signed Aaron Burr, in which he said that himself and Col. Dupiester we dined with him the following day. My father requested me and my brother to go and meet with Col. Burr, which we did about seven miles distant. After a few words of general conversation Colonel Burr observed to me that the union of the states could not possibly last and that a separation of the states must ensue as a natural consequence in four or five years. Colonel Burr made many inquiries of me relative to the county of Washington, particularly the state of its militia, its strength, arms accouterments, and the character of its officers these conversations continued for some time besides other things which I cannot recollect because I did not expect to be called upon in this way. After traveling some miles we met some of my workman a well-looking young man Colonel Burr said he wished you had ten thousand such fellows.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁹ David Robertson, Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr in the Circuit Court of the United States, Summer Term 1807, Vol I, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1808, Reprint, 1969), 497.

John Morgan did not care for Burr's conspiracy and he believed that it would disrupt his world. Therefore, he urged his father to write to Jefferson.

As witnesses against Burr, the Morgans presented strong circumstantial evidence of Burr's treason. In George Morgan's testimony against Burr, he describes how Burr talked about the difference between the people of the west and the east. Morgan stated, "He [Burr] said, 'keep yourself on this side of the mountain and you'll never be disturbed.' By which I understood that there was an attempt to be made, to effect a disunion."⁵³⁰ Colonel Morgan feared that Burr's intention was to foment an insurrection similar to the Whiskey Rebellion. Ultimately, Morgan wanted to protect their property and family from war.

Morgan returned to Morganza after the Burr Trial in 1807. Again he returned his focused to his true love: farming. His last few years, Morgan stayed at his estate just south of Pittsburgh. By the time of his death, Morgan was a relic of time gone by. His son, John reported in 1807 about his father, he was "old and infirm, and like other old men, told long stories and was apt to forget his repetitions."⁵³¹ Nonetheless, Morgan remained a well-rounded gentleman that kept up with his studies of science, farming, and politics. At Morganza, he surrounded himself with his family and friends, which included his slaves. The elder merchant and land speculator had lived a good life filled with many trials but somehow he made it. George Morgan passed on March 10, 1810 and

⁵³⁰ *Reports of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*, 503.

⁵³¹ *Report of the Trials of Colonel Aaron Burr*. 183.

was buried at his homestead Morganza. Of the merchants of this study Michael Gratz only surpassed him in life. Gratz passed away in the following year in 1811.

Michael Gratz lived in Philadelphia until his death September 8, 1811. He had retired from public life since 1798, when his sons took over the Gratz Brother's business. Sometime in 1801, Michael Gratz became an invalid probably because of stroke or some other malady. In a letter from Fanny Etting she writes about her father, "How pleasing are my sensations, occasioned by the wishes of my dearest Father to see me, and yet oh how agonizing the idea of his situation, yet unchanged. . . Gracious God grant him health and tranquility."⁵³² Despite his health, Michael Gratz from still had nominal control of many different land titles including lands in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, New York, Indiana, and Illinois. His sons Simon and Hyman took care of the business. Nonetheless, Michael Gratz became one of the last surviving members of the generation of merchants who helped shape the United States because it was in the best interest of their business and families. They were members of the founding generation even if they had not signed important documents like the Declaration of Independence.

These men were part of the founding generation of the United States, but they did not have a true American identity—they wanted what was best for the business and families. Many of these merchantmen had most of their wealth tied up in land and other investments. Therefore, they were rich men on paper but some like George Croghan or Samuel Wharton really had nothing but just paper deeds. Their fortunes were tied to hope in the government honoring their claims. Their loyalty and identity was not because of strong patriotic feelings, but rather which group would give them the best livelihood

⁵³² Fanny Etting, "Fanny Etting to Rebekah Gratz, June 28, 1801," in the Etting Collection in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

for them and their families. When the Articles of Confederation started to fail as a framework of government, George Morgan was willing to abandon his current prospects and move his family and business to Spanish lands west of the Mississippi River. However, when his proposal was not accepted and with the ratification of the new Constitution, Morgan decided to return to the United States. Little thought was given to his loyalty and his political identity because he was unsure of the stability of the new nation. However, when Aaron Burr came to ask him to join him in fighting the United States, Morgan refused and warned President Jefferson because the new government created a stable economic and political environment under the new Constitution. Even without a true national identity during and after the American Revolution, these men operated as agents of their own destiny. They carved out a life for themselves and their families, while they were doing so they helped create a new nation for their children.

Ultimately, the Early Republic was the most imperative period in shaping American identity and loyalty. In the case of Aaron Burr, the meeting at Morganza started one of the highly publicized treason court cases in the Early Republic, one that helped define a new American identity. Burr and his schemes crossed the invisible boundaries of American identity and loyalty by challenging the sovereignty of the United States and by trying to create his own nation in the western territories. While Burr was ultimately acquitted of treason, his actions of rebellion helped solidify a new American identity and loyalty in many people in the very region Burr believed had no such political loyalty. Fortunately, Morgan's sons were economically and politically loyal to the United States and they pressed their father to warn Jefferson.

In conclusion these merchants of the founding generation understood the importance of commerce. The Revolutionary period was a trying time for all, but these men were stuck in limbo because they were still trying to operate under the old system. The American Revolution created a fluid commercial atmosphere, where merchants could freely choose their own course of business. Furthermore, when they solely relied on land speculation for their chief source of income they failed. Hence, those men who succeed had to remain flexible with their investments. These men fought for the opportunity to get a fresh start with the grand hope of being rich in land schemes. Their appetite was not politically motivated but solely economical. The merchants were willing to live under certain rules if those laws favored them, but when the economic opportunity arose they took the chance to become apart of the founding generation of the United States. Despite being part of the founding generation, the merchants still saw themselves as independent agents, because they had no sense of American nationalism. In the end, it was the next generation that would become truly American.

CHAPTER VII

EPILOGUE

The first decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a passing of a generation of Revolutionary merchants. In 1810, George Morgan died and was buried at Morganza. In the following year, 1811, Michael Gratz slipped away into the next life. These men were some of the last merchant generation of the Revolution. Political ideology was not the driving motivation for these men. Their true identities were their business and families. Although their generation was part of the American Revolution, they were not authors of the American identity that duty fell to their children's generation. The children's generation was the group that created the American identity and culture. Unfortunately, many of the merchants' children did not make it to adulthood. Much like today, the stresses of life took their tolls. However, those who survived became a part of the first true American generation.

The children of *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* had to overcome the failures of their fathers. The oldest partner, John Baynton, had eleven children at his death in 1773. Peter Baynton, his oldest son born in 1754, had already started to learn the merchant business by following his brother George Morgan into the Illinois. For a short time, he studied law, but later became a postmaster in Philadelphia during the American Revolution. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania Militia. After the war, he returned to try his hand at the family business and set up a store in Philadelphia. Peter continued to be active in Pennsylvania politics and in 1797 he was elected to be the State

Treasurer.⁵³³ During his service as treasurer, he was also selected to be an Adjutant General in the Pennsylvania Militia in 1799. Unlike his father, Peter became a prominent figure in Pennsylvania politics.

During his short tenure as a general, Peter Baynton had the opportunity to suppress a small uprising known as Fries Rebellion. The armed tax revolt threatened the authority of the new American government. On March 20, 1799, Governor Thomas Mifflin at the request of President John Adams called out the Pennsylvania Militia.⁵³⁴ Baynton as the Adjutant General had the responsibility to muster the Militia for this military action. A few months later the uprising was squashed in 1800, Peter Baynton retired from the Militia and returned to his job as a State Treasurer. Peter's position in the Pennsylvania government cemented his loyalty and identity to the new American nation.

Peter's younger brother John Baynton, Jr, also followed in his father's footsteps into the merchant world. However, during the late war, John became a deputy paymaster general for the Continental Army on the frontier. The younger John Baynton was stationed at Fort Pitt under General Edward Hand. After the war, John continued to live in Philadelphia and he worked in the Port of Philadelphia. He served honorably in the army. In 1785, John Baynton was chosen as a Tonnage Officer for the city's port. Little is known about his life after his stint as a Tonnage Officer.⁵³⁵ Regardless, John Baynton, remained an active member of American society.

⁵³³ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and United States. *Guide to the Microfilm of the Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan Papers in the Pennsylvania State Archives (Manuscript Group 19)*, (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1967), 16.

⁵³⁴ W. W. H. Davis, *The Fries Rebellion, 1798-99*. (Doylestown, Pa: Doylestown Publishing Co. Printers, 1899),76.

⁵³⁵ Townsend Ward, "The Germantown Road and Its Associations." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol VI, No. 1. (1882): 18. After the turn of the century, there is a John Baynton

George Morgan's sons played an integral role in the Aaron Burr trial in 1807. John, Thomas, and George Morgan Jr. witnessed Burr's attempt to persuade them to join his cause. However, even before the Burr incident, George's sons grew to love the United States. George Morgan's eldest son was John Morgan. Born in 1770, John Morgan attended Princeton University and in 1790 he joined the United States Army. The eldest son was commissioned as an Ensign in the 1st United States Regiment. Ensign Morgan was assigned to Fort Harmar in January of 1791. He missed General Josiah Harmar's embarrassing defeat at the Battle of the Pumpkin Field, but Morgan joined an army that was influx. Eventually, he became an aid to General Richard Butler. Morgan's experience in the Ohio Valley was one that would change his life.

The following year, 1791, General Arthur St. Clair wanted to punish the Indian forces that embarrassed Harmar's Expedition. St. Clair called out the militia and hastily organized his troops to fight the Indians. John Morgan was assigned as an aid to the second in command General Richard Butler. On November 4, 1791 enemy Indians ambushed St. Clair's troops. The disorganized US Army suffered the most humiliating defeat in American military history, losing about half its strength in the battle.⁵³⁶ After the massacre, St. Clair regrouped what was left of his army and retreated. Someone had to answer for this humiliation and St. Clair wanted to avoid the embarrassment. During the ambush, General Butler fell and St. Clair pinned the loss on him, which brought dishonor to the deceased officer. Morgan defended Butler; he sent Secretary of War Henry Knox a letter explaining St. Clair's deception. Impulsively, Morgan then wrote a

that moved to Natchez Mississippi from Philadelphia. He worked at the Planter's Bank and then was elected to city mayor of Natchez.

⁵³⁶ Alan Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness: Anthony Wayne's Legion in the Old Northwest*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 1.

letter to Butler's wife explicating his letter to Knox. Angry at St. Clair's actions against Butler, Morgan included at the end of the letter "You are at liberty to make such use of it as you think proper."⁵³⁷ Morgan clearly wanted to exonerate Butler because in the letter to Knox he wrote, "I submit to you, Sir, the publication of this letter, as justice due to General Butler's memory—to his family—to his friends—and to the public."⁵³⁸ Morgan tried to avoid scandal, but it quickly spiraled out of control. Mary Butler swiftly sent Morgan's letter to be published in the local newspaper. In response Morgan wrote ". . . least it may be supposed to intend a crimination of Governor St. Clair's veracity permit me to add, that is not my intention but to undeceive him, you and my country."⁵³⁹ Morgan's attempt to defend Butler's honor and avoid a cover-up backfired, and St. Clair charged him with mutiny.

The battle between St. Clair and Morgan grew out of control. In response to his arrest, Morgan published more letters that defamed St. Clair's actions in the late campaign. Congress investigated the incident and Morgan became a key witness to the disaster. During the interrogation, Morgan accused St. Clair of falsifying his report of the battle because it was "written with *intentional error and mediated malice*."⁵⁴⁰ Morgan went on to berate his commander, "Your attempt to assassinate the character of the dead, was no doubt pleasing to you in contemplation."⁵⁴¹ The Ensign blamed St. Clair for the lost including these causes: "Your [St. Clair's] want of military abilities—This defect led

⁵³⁷ *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, February 29, 1792.

⁵³⁸ *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, February 29, 1792.

⁵³⁹ *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, February 29, 1792.

⁵⁴⁰ *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, April 18, 1792.

⁵⁴¹ *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, April 18, 1792.

you into the following errors . . . Deficient and bad arrangements . . . your supercilious insolence and disrespect to your principal officers and disregard of their opinions [and lastly] Your ignorance and torpidity during the battle.”⁵⁴²

Despite Morgan’s attempt to rectify the situation, his court-martial continued. Morgan asked to have his case moved to Philadelphia to be closer to his family. Unfortunately, the court-martial remained at Fort Washington (present-day Cincinnati). The case looked in favor of Morgan, but St. Clair pushed to ask if Morgan had written the letter that Mary Butler published. There was little evidence against Morgan, but he confessed to writing the letter in question, which condemned him. The Legion of the United States cashiered Morgan on December 31, 1793.

Morgan served honorably and stood up for his country and friends against a possible cover-up. He even gave up his Army career for honor and loyalty. He returned to Prospect, New Jersey and worked the family farm. Eventually he joined the New Jersey Militia and in 1803 they elected him Adjutant General. He retired from the post in 1804 and to his father’s estate, Morganza, near Pittsburgh. In 1806, Burr visited the Morgan estate looking for help in his plot against the federal government. Luckily, the Morgans inform the President of his ill-intentions. Even throughout his troubles with St. Clair, John Morgan remained loyal to the United States.

His brothers also stood by him in defense of their nation. Thomas and George were the younger brothers of John. George Morgan Jr. studied at Princeton and became a successful farmer. After being a witness in the Burr trial, the youngest brother, Thomas studied law in Pittsburgh and opened practice in Washington County in 1813. In 1814, Thomas was elected to State Legislature for a short term and then he was a prothonotary

⁵⁴² *Carlisle Gazette and the Western Repository of Knowledge*, April 18, 1792.

from 1821-23.⁵⁴³ Eventually, Thomas became involved in the Franklin Bank. George and Thomas Morgan both became a stalwart in their community.

The Gratz Brothers had several children but one became a prominent figure in the Early Republic. Rebecca Gratz, the daughter of Michael and granddaughter of Joseph Simon, became a Jewish educator and philanthropist in Philadelphia. In 1801, she set up the Female Association for the Relief of Women and Children in Reduced Circumstances.⁵⁴⁴ This organization helped support families of veterans of the American War for Independence. In 1815, she served the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum. She also helped open the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, which was to support and educate young Jewish women. Furthermore, Rebecca opened up the Hebrew Sunday School Society, which was modeled after the Evangelical American Sunday School Union.⁵⁴⁵ Gratz's Sunday School provided free education to help immigrants learn the English language. She was also heavily involved in the Mikah Israel Congregation in Philadelphia. Rebecca's involvement in the community through religious based services present Rebecca as an example of how women shaped American identity and displayed loyalty to their communities after the war.

Rebecca's brother, Hyman Gratz also was a prominent Jewish figure in Philadelphia. Hyman was a banker and philanthropist in Philadelphia. Hyman and his brother Simon sold life insurance, in addition to owning a store in the city.⁵⁴⁶ With their

⁵⁴³ Boyd Crumrine, *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania: With Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*. (Philadelphia: H.L. Everts & Co, 1882), 223.

⁵⁴⁴ Dianne Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz: Women and Judaism in Antebellum America*, (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997,) 93.

⁵⁴⁵ Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 140.

⁵⁴⁶ Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 16.

wealth they helped fund the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. However, his greatest accomplishment in life was he set up a trust for the foundation of Gratz College, which was dedicated to the education and preservation of Jewish traditions.⁵⁴⁷ Benjamin Gratz served as a second Lieutenant in the War of 1812 and after the war returned to practice law. He eventually moved to Kentucky became a trustee of the Transylvania University and married Maria Gist, Henry Clay's niece.⁵⁴⁸ These were just a few of the many Gratz offspring. The Gratz became a well-respected family in Philadelphia and in Early America.

Not all the children were deeply loyal to the United States. John Baynton's youngest son, Benjamin Baynton, was the exception to the rest of the family. In 1776, Benjamin joined the British Navy and became a loyalist. Benjamin volunteered for a mission in the Gulf of Mexico. He was with the British when they stormed the Spanish position at Pensacola. Despite attempts by his brothers, Benjamin remained in the King's Navy, even after he survived several wounds during the attack at Pensacola.⁵⁴⁹ Benjamin Baynton was the odd one of the family because he was dedicated to his duty as a member to the British Navy. Unlike his father, Benjamin's loyalty was to the British King, not to business. Benjamin's naval service did not stop him from writing to his brothers, Peter and John. He became a Lieutenant in the Loyalist Navy, and served with valor. However, one could speculate they did not want their younger brother fighting for the

⁵⁴⁷ Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 21-22.

⁵⁴⁸ Ashton, *Rebecca Gratz*, 17.

⁵⁴⁹ Benjamin Baynton, "Benjamin Baynton to Peter Baynton, Pensacola, 2 February 1781," *Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan* Collection in the Pennsylvania State Archives. MG-19.

British. After the war, Benjamin petitioned the British Crown as a member of the loyalist forces.

Much like Benjamin Baynton, David Franks' youngest daughter Rebekah, was a loyalist socialite during the British occupation of Philadelphia. She attended the Meschianza (a welcome party) that was thrown in honor of General William Howe, when the British captured Philadelphia in 1778.⁵⁵⁰ She later married Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Johnson, who received a baronetcy for his service. So later in life Rebekah became Lady Johnson.⁵⁵¹ Despite the loyalist few, most of the children of the forgotten founding generation remained in America, and became respected members of American society. The merchant's children played important roles in their communities and had a stake in America. Unlike their parents, they had more of a role in the formation of American culture and identity.

The goals of the founding merchantmen were basic, they wanted to provide a better place for their family and business was a means to that end. Therefore, business interests trumped grand political ideologies. Unfortunately, the forgotten merchant generation has been relegated to the margins of today's historical memory. Most of today's society does not know the names or histories of these men, but they are using their lands for their own success.

Today, there is a small blue roadside marker on Morganza Road in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania that represents the legacy of Colonel George Morgan. However, thousands of people pass by that marker without batting an eye. Furthermore, only about one hundred yards away there is a monument built from the stones of Morgan's homestead

⁵⁵⁰ Wolf, *The History of Jews in Philadelphia*, 88.

⁵⁵¹ Wolf, *The History of Jews in Philadelphia*, 92.

that honor his memory. Locals built the monument in 1928 to remember the Morgan. Ironically, today the monument is located in a backyard of small middle-class neighborhood on the edge of the new Southpointe Industrial Park. In the twentieth century, Canonsburg and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania constructed a hospital and school for mentally challenged children on the former lands of Morganza. The area still bears the names of Morgan, but few understand the life of the man. In the last decade, new development projects have destroyed the old hospital and build a new industrial park where Consol Energy, Ranger Resources, Purple Land Management and many other energy based companies are headquartered on the former estate of Morganza. Ironically, Morgan's land is now home to the new land companies of the twenty-first century: Oil and Gas Companies. Furthermore, the new Southpointe Park is home to many up-and-coming entrepreneurs that live in luxury. So in a twist of fate, Morgan's land is the new home for modern-day American land speculation, which he helped to start.

The modern world has passed by the memory of these frontier merchants. For example, the Gratz and Franks' homes have become part of the inner part of Philadelphia. Many of their shops and homes have been razed for either an interstate highway or several high-rise buildings. Luckily, there are a few reminders of the merchants today. For example, the Naomi Wood Trust has preserved David Franks' home, The Woodford Mansion. Today, it is a local museum. Also Gratz College, which bears the family name was built in honor of Michael Gratz' daughter—Rebecca. Nonetheless, their legacies (although most are hidden) still remain in our modern society.

It is important to highlight the lives of these Revolutionary merchants because they played an important role in our nation's past. The Revolutionary Era was a world of

great transition, which these businessmen had to carefully navigate. These merchants solely focused on business, but when they deemed it necessary to change political allegiances they did so. During the Revolution, the merchantmen believed the new American government would have supported their land claims. Therefore, these men became patriots, not out of deep political conviction, but for commercial advantages. Even though they fought and helped forge the new nation, the frontier merchants did not truly understand the meaning of what it was to be an American. This forgotten founding generation remained active in the daily activities of business and life until their physical health no longer would allow them to contribute. As the founding generation, they created a new nation, however many of the important questions about American identity did not get answered until their children fashioned the new cultural identity of the United States. Nonetheless, the merchants of Philadelphia were vital to the new world they had helped create, even though they did not fully understand the consequences of their actions.

APPENDIX A

A FRONTIER TRADING COMPANIES OF PHILADELPHIA

Company Name	Partners	Dates in Operation
<i>Plumsted & Franks</i>	David Franks, William Plumsted	1754-1764
<i>Baynton and Wharton</i>	John Baynton, Samuel Wharton	1757-1763
<i>Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan</i>	John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, George Morgan	1763-1776
<i>Morgan and Baynton</i>	George Morgan, Mary Baynton	1773
<i>Franks, Simon, Levy, and Trent</i>	David Franks, Joseph Simon, Levy A. Levy, and William Trent	1760-1776
The Gratz Brothers	Bernard, Michael Gratz	1759-1800
<i>Murray and Rumsey</i>	William Murray, James Rumsey – Agents for The Gratz Brothers	1768-1776

APPENDIX B

FRONTIER LAND COMPANIES

The Company Name	Prominent Shareholders	Dates in Operation
<i>The Ohio Company of Virginia</i>	George Mason, George Washington, and others	1748-1772
<i>Indiana Land Company</i>	David Franks, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, George Morgan, William Trent, Joseph Galloway, George Croghan, Benjamin Franklin	1768-1769, 1776-1796
<i>Vandalia Company</i>	David Franks, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, George Morgan, William Trent, Joseph Galloway, George Croghan, Benjamin Franklin with London Backers	1769-1776
<i>New Jersey Land Society</i>	George Morgan and others	1787
<i>The United Illinois and Wabash Company</i>	The Gratz Brothers, Franks, Robert Morris, James Rumsey, William Murray	1779-1784

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