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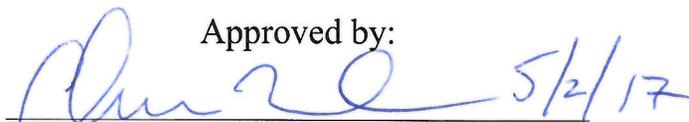
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"A Constant Cry Unheard"
Ordinary Settlers of the Susquehanna River Valley and the Struggle to Defend Thier
Communities 1760-1783

Presented to the faculty of Lycoming College in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for Departmental Honors in
History

by
Maggie I. Slawson
Lycoming College
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Approved by:

 5/2/17
(Signature)

 5-3-17
(Signature)

 5/3/17
(Signature)

 5/4/17
(Signature)

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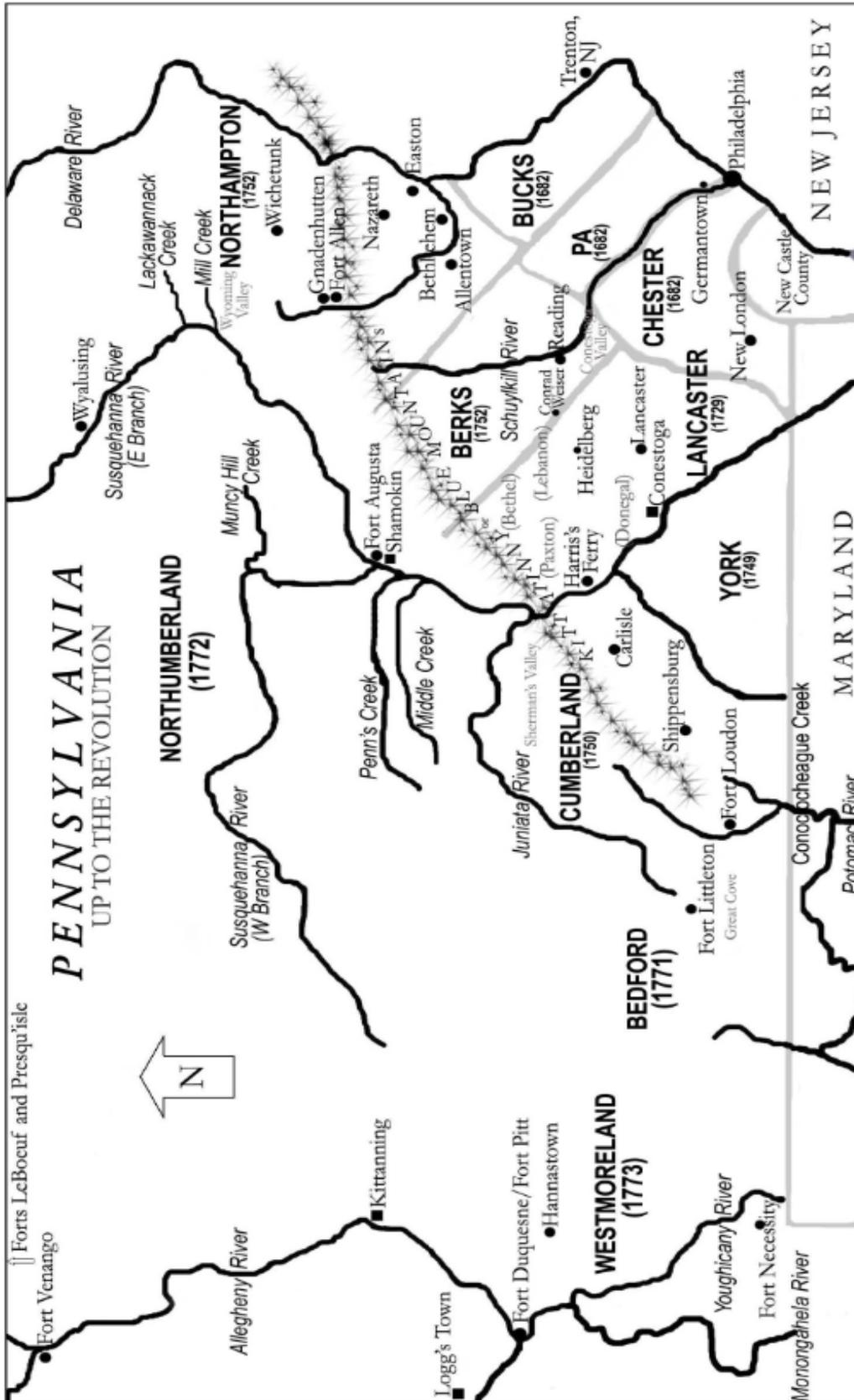
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Map 1. Pennsylvania up to the Revolution

Introduction

In the autumn of 1777, while sitting in their cabin in Loyalsock, Pennsylvania, the Brown family peered out of the window to see a large band of armed Iroquois quickly approaching their home. Two brothers, both by the name of “Benjamin,” resided next to the Browns and were also troubled by the sight of the armed Natives. The brothers, with their wives and children, fled to the Browns’ nearby cabin and “made preparations to defend themselves.”¹ The Native Americans attacked the Browns’ cabin and during the resistance, one of the brothers shot and killed one of the Iroquois Indians. Enraged, the band of Iroquois set fire to the Browns’ house. The flames engulfed the cabin and both families faced the uncertainty of whether they wanted to be consumed by the flames or surrender. In the end, the Benjamin brothers decided to submit, while the remainder of the Brown family refused. As they put it, they wanted “to meet death this way rather than fall into the hands of the enemy and be tortured.”² The brothers, and their wives and children, presented themselves to the Iroquois and one brother, while holding their young child, was killed and scalped. The remainder of the brother’s family, having watched the violent and horrific events unfold, were taken captive, and held as prisoners.³

This tragic event was the violent climax of Native American and Tory warfare transpiring along the Susquehanna River Valley. In 1777 and 1778, the frequency of massacres, much like the Brown-Benjamin tragedy, had increased and alarmed the majority of settlers residing in the valley.

¹ John Franklin Meginness, *Ot̓z̓inachson: A History of the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna* (Williamsport: Gazette and Bulletin Printing House, 1889), 487.

² Edwin MacMinn, *On the Frontier with Colonel Antes or The Struggle for Supremacy of the Red and White Races in Pennsylvania* (Camden: Chew & Sons Printers, 1900), 340.

³ Meginness, *Ot̓z̓inachson*, 488.

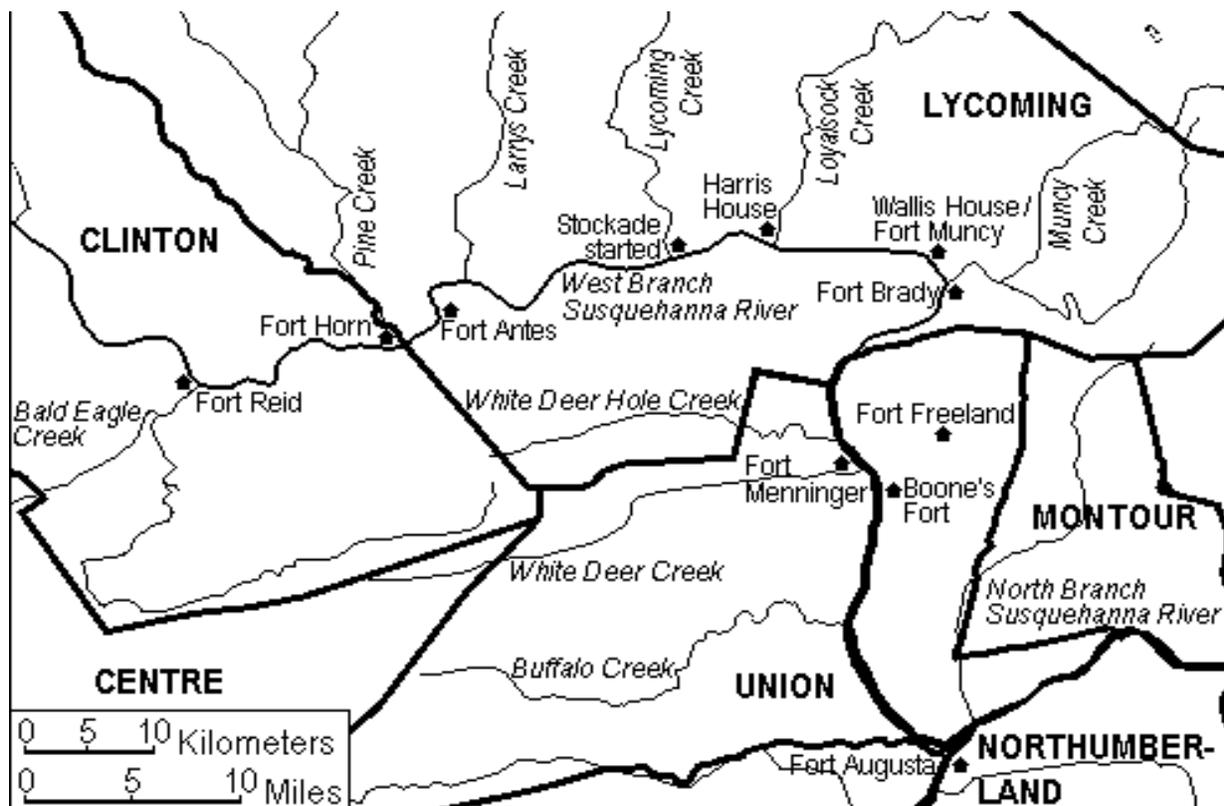
However, not all settlers experienced the consequences of the violent warfare occurring in the Susquehanna River Valley. Settlers who did not directly have their homes raided, crops plundered, or witnessed violent massacres consistently lived in a state of fear. Living in a state of fear proved not only problematic for settlers, but whole communities as an individual's fear influenced how they responded in times of adversity.⁴ With the Revolutionary War underway and the Indians having entered into a strong alliance with the British, frontier regions of Pennsylvania, predominantly the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys were defenseless, and many families were forced to find the protection and security they needed in order to survive. In times of suffering, settlers of the valley thought they could acquire that protection by pleading to the Pennsylvania government for assistance. Sadly, however, according to local historian John Franklin Meginness, no matter how much the settlers appealed to the Supreme Executive Council, "nothing comparatively, was being done for their protection; but, instead, the constant cry was for men to reinforce the Continental Army."⁵ Unable to seek the defense they needed from the government and now feeling alienated, settlers started banding together to provide protection for their families, friends, and neighbors.

Throughout the 1770s and 1780s, the danger of living within the Susquehanna River Valley forced individuals to take protective measures into their own hands. Settlers started erecting several area forts that acted as refuge for settlers whose homes were destroyed by the revolutionary violence happening along the frontier. Within Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, alone, at least nine forts, which include Forts Augusta, Rice, Schwartz, Menninger, Boone, Muncy, Freeland's, Antes, and Brady's were built, according to a Captain in the Northumberland County

⁴ For the importance of fear on the frontier, especially as it relates to Native American warfare and the development of racial tensions, see Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How the Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 482-483.

Militia, “for the protection of families and neighbors.”⁶ These forts were not what people think of as “forts” in the present context. Forts within Northumberland County were simply the homes of ordinary settlers who willingly opened their houses to provide protection against the harsh reality of the Pennsylvania frontier. Such a move, demonstrates not only their outward loyalty to their neighbors and families, but their moral obligation to protect the good of every individual in their community.



Map 2. Fortifications in North Central Pennsylvania, During the Big Runaway and Little Runaway, 1778-1779, *US Census*

The will to protect the good of the whole did not only exist within the hearts and minds of ordinary non-combatants, but also the soldiers who fought in the Revolutionary War. By analyzing pension records of soldiers living within the Susquehanna River Valley, it is clear that men

⁶ Ibid.

volunteered in the American Revolution to protect their friends, their neighbors, and, more importantly, their families from the war with the British and their Native allies. More to the point, many of those soldiers refused to join George Washington and the Continental Army in the east, preferring to stay close to their homes to protect the interests of their local communities. It was only when the Continental Army designed a western campaign to protect more communities, particularly, Major John Sullivan's Campaign, that frontier soldiers assisted the Continental Army.

Yet, the stories revealed in these soldiers' pensions leads us to ask *why* were soldiers centralizing their time in the war not with George Washington and the Continental Army, but volunteering to fight in proximity to their own homes, especially in support of Sullivan's Campaign. Like pension files, other sources such as petitions, show that men chose to stay home because of their moral obligations to their communities. Likewise, settlers who did not fight in the Continental Line and militia, informally took up arms; expressing not only their love, but their loyalty towards one's family and neighbors during times of hardship. Years of violence forced all settlers to mobilize during the American Revolution, whether formally or informally, because they believed that national independence would ultimately lead to the promotion of their own self-independence. However, settlers of the Susquehanna River Valley were far from self-absorbed. Independence for the valley inhabitants did not mean *Individualism*. Settlers understood their obligations to their communities and civil society in general as fundamentally related to neighborliness, communal solidarity, and localism. Because of that worldview, settlers believed that the war within the Susquehanna River Valley region took precedence over conventional combat that occupied much of the eastern theatre.

Between 1770 and 1783, the violence occurring within the Susquehanna River Valley forced many individuals to rely on each other for a source of protection as the government consistently

ignored the needs of frontier inhabitants. A settler's anger and frustration towards both the Pennsylvania Government and leaders of the Continental Army influenced men and women to participate indirectly or directly in protecting whole communities. Historians have not ignored specific motivations that drove an individual to fight in the American Revolution. Their approaches, however, not only fail to look at more individuals than just male soldiers, but also fail to recognize crucial principles of frontier people during the revolutionary era--communal development, moral law, and collective activity. Scholarly work on ordinary Revolutionary War soldiers and their willingness to fight has primarily lumped eastern and western soldiers together to describe "central ideological factors" of the American Revolution, that they argue show a developing nationhood or a new solidarity in whiteness.

For example, historians Charles Royster and Gregory Knouff both centralize their research around the emergence of a nationhood. Royster, through analyzing the Continental Army, studies the rise of a nationhood, and concludes that with the belief that religion, or an "evangelical call to arms" persuaded men to fight for independence, Royster also suggests that the national character of the revolutionaries formed the early foundation for their wartime allegiance.⁷ However, while still focusing on the emergence of a nationhood, historian Gregory Knouff argues that racial and territorial rivalries played an important role in persuading men to join the war.⁸ Knouff and Royster both use the experiences of ordinary soldiers to show their involvement in forging a national identity whether religiously or racially determined. Both historians fail to consider other ideological factors, aside from racism and religion, to understand why men may have fought in the American Revolution. In general, looking at settlers in the Susquehanna Valley Region of Pennsylvania, it

⁷ Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 7.

⁸ Gregory Knouff, *The Soldiers Revolution: Pennsylvania in Arms and the Forging of An American Identity* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 283.

becomes clear that these individuals were not interested in establishing a nationhood. Rather, they were interested in forging a self-independent community rooted in the lives they have come to know living on the frontier. A community that prized not only an individual's moral and social commitments to the betterment of the community as a whole, but also localism, neighborliness, and communal solidarity. These three factors, and an individuals' will to uphold their obligation and understanding of civil society, became the framework for a settlers' development of independence and understanding of the revolution.

Unlike Charles Royster, but similarly to Gregory Knouff, other historians, such as Peter Silver and Daniel Ritcher, focus on establishing a racial order in Pennsylvania. Silver suggests that racism produced a widespread anti-Indian sentiment among frontiersmen, thus creating a strong "white" national identity.⁹ Meanwhile, Daniel Ritcher analyzes the idea of race through two specific events that occurred in Pennsylvania. One, William Penn's treaty with Lenni Lenape in 1682 and two, the Paxton Boy Riots in 1763.¹⁰ Ritcher found by studying these two events, that it was easy to make various assumptions about the nature of the colony's founder and the racial intolerance of the non-Quaker elites. To further his argument, Ritcher concludes that because Pennsylvania was built on Native ground, Pennsylvania set the racial order for the new nation going forward. The anti-Indian racism that occurred so prevalently on the Pennsylvania frontier created animosities between both the Indians and settlers as both groups prepared to mobilize for war when they felt threatened.

Fortunately, other historians do focus specifically on one of the fundamental principles that drove settlers to provide protection for others in a time of war. Robert Gross, for example,

⁹ Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How the Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2008), xvii-xx.

¹⁰ William Pencak and Daniel Ritcher, *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania* (University Park: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), x-xxi.

stresses the importance of localism. Ideologically, localism is crucial for a person's promotion of self-independence.¹¹ Gross argues that the townspeople of Concord, Massachusetts, joined to fight in the American Revolution because they were motivated by their local concerns within their own communities.¹² Despite his beneficial analysis on the aspects of local community involvement and willingness to fight, Gross states that the revolution played on the self-reliance of individuals, leading to the creation of an individualistic or liberal worldview. Such an argument, while it may work for Concord, does not quite fit the Pennsylvania frontier. In Pennsylvania, local community involvement was predicated on the idea that every individual contributed to the betterment of the whole community, similarly known as *Republicanism*. Localism played an important role in the lives of settlers, but individualism did not occupy the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the valley, the good of the public, though locally defined, ruled all.

Historians have repeatedly studied the standard ideological concepts of the American Revolution, but their research does not touch on the moral philosophies that many settlers strived to uphold during the American Revolution. This thesis aims to expand on that scholarship and additionally examine how individual's social and moral obligation to their communities influenced them to partake in the revolutionary movement that occupied much of the Susquehanna River Valley. Research and analysis using the works of several legal theorists, personal correspondences between George Washington and Major John Sullivan, pension files, the Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council, and a corpus of documents from the Pennsylvania State Archives illuminate why men and women chose to band together with other members of their community to provide protection in times of distress. Not only did the people of the Susquehanna River Valley, both men and women, participate, whether indirectly or directly, in providing protection for the other settlers

¹¹ Robert Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 201.

¹² Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 193-195.

who lived in proximity to their own homes, but they also attempted to uphold the moral values that shaped their understanding of civil society.

To show the connection between the frontier people's understanding of civil society with the American Revolution, this thesis is broken down into three chapters. Chapter 1 explores roughly forty years of frontier history starting with William Penn's efforts to establish a "peaceable kingdom" between European settlers and the diverse Native population that occupied much of the colony. This chapter emphasizes the critical years of 1750-1770, as Penn's peaceable kingdom disappeared and the Susquehanna River Valley started seeing bitter contests between land ownership and animosity between settlers and the Native Americans. Chapter 2 then illustrates how that forty years of violence influenced settlers to establish a strong sense of community and how that communal identity set the framework for an individual's interpretation of civil society. This chapter pulls ideas from not only historians, but sociologists, theologians, and psychologists to understand what it means to be morally obligated to the public good rather than adhere to an individual's own self-interest in times of hardship. Additionally, instead of restricting the analysis by only looking at men from the valley, this chapter also examines how women too strived to uphold the fundamental principles of civil society. The final chapter shows the moral implications of joining the Continental Army and how it challenged frontier peoples' perception of civil society. This chapter analyzes how men were either refusing to join the Continental Line or later withdrawing because fighting in the army had severe ramifications for one's family, friends, and neighbors. This chapter also examines how men were more likely to join Sullivan's Campaign rather than the Continental Line because it helped eliminate the violence that many ordinary men and women were dealing with while living in the valley. Together, these chapters support the idea that men and women bonded together to protect the public good and allowed them to seek and offer protection during the midst of warfare.

Chapter 1

Transformations and Oppositions on the Northern Pennsylvania Frontier

What is a man when no longer connected with society; Or when he finds himself surrounded by a convulsed and half dissolved one?

He cannot live in solitude, He must belong to some community bound by some ties, however imperfect.

Men mutually support and add to the boldness and confidence of each other;

The weakness of each strengthened by the force of the whole.

-Hector St. John Crevecoeur, 1782¹³

By the end of the eighteenth century, the term “frontier” had become an indefinable phrase for the people living in the colonies, especially Pennsylvania. One’s interpretation of the word’s meaning is highly ambiguous due to the constant societal changes of the time. Some colonists defined the frontier as an area susceptible to both imperial and native invasions. Other colonists used the word frontier to explain the geography and the political landscapes they lived in.¹⁴ Moreover, the mid-eighteenth century frontier is not what we think of the frontier in present context. Our modern understanding is often predicated on the ideas of the historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who argued that the frontier was an area of “free land” influenced by the individualistic, democratic, and progressive characteristics of new settlers.¹⁵ However, while tracing

¹³ J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904), 281.

¹⁴ Patrick Spero, “Early American Frontiers,” *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 6.

¹⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (London: Penguin Books, 1891), I.

frontier historiography, Turner's "Frontier Thesis" is an inadequate explanation of frontier life. According to historian Patrick Spero, frontier regions "were not areas of active expansion, exploration, and economic opportunity; they were contingent, defensive, and prone to contraction."¹⁶ In addition, frontier regions depended solely on prominent cities, like Philadelphia and Boston, and the government for support and protection. However, if the government refused to protect frontiersmen, then many of them would bond together and revolt against their own government, demanding more militaristic and defensive policies to protect their families, neighbors, and themselves from acts of violence.¹⁷

The Pennsylvania frontier, including much of the Susquehanna River Valley, had been relatively peaceful pre 1750s. In 1681, King Charles II granted William Penn a large tract of land between Lord Baltimore's province of Maryland and the province of New York owned by the Duke of York.¹⁸ After acquiring the territory, Penn realized that several Native American peoples dominated his newly established colony. Because of the colony's diverse background, Penn had a desire to create a peaceful and inclusive colony. Penn wanted Pennsylvania to be the "seed of the nation," meaning regardless of an individual's cultural background and customs, both men and women could worship freely and participate fully in the colony's government.¹⁹ Penn's peaceful vision for Pennsylvania not only pertained to men and women from different cultural backgrounds, but also to the Native Americans who occupied much of the territory.

¹⁶ Spero, *Frontier Country*, 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸ Christine Tartaglione, "Pennsylvania on the Eve of Colonization," *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania History* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1980), 10.

¹⁹ Samuel Janney, *The Life of William Penn; With Selections from His Correspondence and Auto-Biography* (Philadelphia: Hogan, Perkins & Company, 1852), 157; Jean Soderlund, *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983), 5.

The essence of peace, Penn knew, existed in a good foundation with the Native peoples. Reiterating his commitments to establish peaceful relations with the Native population, Penn met with the Natives and signed a treaty that stated, “there hath always been a Good Understanding & Neighbourhood between Penn and Several Nations of Indians.” Therefore, “Penn, his Heirs and Successors, & all the several People of the Nations of Indians aforesaid, and that they shall forever hereafter be as one head & one heart, & live a true Friendship as one People.”²⁰ While this treaty set the groundwork for peace, Penn wanted more than just a unified relationship between the two.

Penn also sought to strengthen the bonds of friendship through trade between the Indians and colonists. Trading not only unified, but also provided significant material benefits for both the Natives and settlers. Indians were able to yield substantial amounts of fur and in exchange, colonists provided the Natives with guns and ammunition.²¹ Most Indian tribes that occupied the colony either benefited from or were negatively affected by Penn’s efforts to establish this peaceful colony, particularly those native peoples residing along the Susquehanna River Valley in central Pennsylvania.

Although Penn’s idea of peace brought either multiple benefits or negativity amongst the Natives, he realized that the Susquehanna River Valley was diverse with different Native peoples who all had different cultures, needs, and interests. At the time of his arrival in Pennsylvania in 1681, Penn found the colony occupied by the Lenni-Lenape or more commonly referred to as the Delaware Indian Tribe.²² Lenni-Lenape, meaning ordinary people, originally occupied much of north and southeastern Pennsylvania until both the German and English settlers displaced them

²⁰ Samuel Hazard, Minuets of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government in *Pennsylvania Archives* (Philadelphia: J. Stevens, 1851-1852), 3:601-602.

²¹ Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13; Spero, *Frontier Country*, 20.

²² Megginness, *Otjwachson: A History of the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna*, 12; Gregory Evan Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, The Indian Nations & The British Empire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 31.

from their homeland. In the face of this European onslaught, many Delaware peoples sought to relocate to fertile valleys particularly westward to the Susquehanna River Valley.

While the Delaware proved to be the most powerful Indian tribe at the time of Penn's arrival, the Iroquois soon claimed the Delaware as subjects, thus diminishing their power.²³ The Iroquois, also referred to as the "Five Nations," occupied the majority of southern New York and northern Pennsylvania and were subdivided into several other Indian tribes including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.²⁴ In 1722, the confederacy included the Tuscarora Indians, transforming the Iroquois League into the "Six Nations."²⁵ Each subdivision had to adhere to specific duties and had particular responsibilities as members of the Iroquoian League. The Seneca, for example, was the most powerful subdivision in the Confederacy. They not only inherited the name "keepers of the western door," but also controlled the majority of the West Branch Valley, the Susquehanna River's most western tributary in Pennsylvania.²⁶ After having subdivided into different tribes, Indians who occupied the area of the West Branch referred to the area as "Otzinachson," the people of the Demon's Den.²⁷

Although the Iroquois occupied southern New York and northern Pennsylvania, the Confederacy later gained authority over not only the tribes residing along the Susquehanna River Valley, but also the valley's territory through a "covenant chain" with the British colonies. The series of alliances between the British and the Iroquois were relatively peaceful in the beginning as both parties respected each other's power and authority and agreed to peaceful resolutions during conflict.²⁸ The covenant chain therefore, allowed both parties to unify together and form a strong

²³ Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 35, Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 17.

²⁴ Meginness, *Otzinachson*, 17.

²⁵ Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 35.

²⁶ Meginness, *Otzinachson*, 18.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁸ Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 35.

political alliance. The British believed that the Covenant Chain could not only extend their territorial rights in colonial America, but also preserve the fur trade. In return, the British promised to hear out complaints by the Iroquois and provide them with protection. However, the Iroquois did not always acknowledge their British subject hood, especially when their British counterparts referred to them as “children.”²⁹ When the aspirations of the Iroquois grew and tension arose between other Native peoples, the Iroquois relied heavily on the British for help in resolving certain matters. Due to new European settlers and other tribes seeking to settle in the Susquehanna River Valley, conflict seemed inevitable, as these new people threatened the power and authority of the Iroquois Confederacy.

William Penn’s “Peaceable Kingdom,” now occupied by the powerful Iroquois and their British Allies, fractured after his death in 1718. Penn’s three sons, Thomas, Richard, and John, although inheriting the colony of Pennsylvania, did not possess the benevolent attitude towards the Natives like their father.³⁰ Due to the increase in the number of European settlers and the Penns’ financial burdens, the brothers began selling territory belonging to the Delaware Indian tribe to pay off their debts. Thomas Penn and James Logan, the family’s land agent, convinced the leaders of the Delaware Indian tribe that in 1686, William Penn had signed a formal deed granting him the Lenape territory.³¹ The Delaware had no recollection of the deed made between Penn and their ancestors fifty years ago and deemed it fraudulent. However, despite their doubt, when it came time

²⁹ Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 19-24; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: 1992), 155-156, 160.

³⁰ David J. Minderhout, *Native Americans in the Susquehanna River Valley, Past and Present* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 98.

³¹ Minderhout, *Native Americans in the Susquehanna River Valley*, 98.

to leave their land in northeastern Pennsylvania the Delaware Indians simply refused and sought help from the ever-powerful Iroquois Confederacy.³²

Nevertheless, because the Delaware Indians were subservient to the Iroquois tribe, the Iroquois denied their requests in support of the Pennsylvania Government. In 1737, the Delaware were asked again to relocate from the lands and refused. In September of that same year, three colonial land agents and several Indians set out to survey the land that was to be sold. Not only did Penn seek out three of the fastest runners, he also, before the race, cleared a path to allow the colonists to run, not walk. Penn also re-assessed the area nearly doubling the land that was to be purchased. Having cheated the Delaware out of their land, the Pennsylvania government and the Iroquois sparked what was known as the “Walking Purchase.”³³ To make matters worse, in 1742, the Iroquois wrote the Delaware stating,

How come you to take it upon you to sell lands at all? We conquered you; we made women of you. For this land you claim you have been furnished with clothes, meat and drink, and now you want it again, like the children that you are. We charge you to remove instantly; we don't give you liberty to think about it. You are women. Take the advice of a wise man and go at once.³⁴

The Walking Purchase not only forced the Delaware to relocate to the west, specifically the area of the Wyoming Valley in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, but also forced the them to relocate cautiously. The Delaware tribe understood that the “proprietary quest for land and the Iroquois-British Covenant Chain” was shaping the geo-political order of the Susquehanna River Valley.³⁵

³² Ibid., 99.

³³ Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 37.

³⁴ *Annual Report of the Surveyor General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: State Printer, 1866), 25.

³⁵ Dowd, *War Under Heaven*, 37.

In the 1740s and 1750s, the Susquehanna River Valley, specifically Northumberland County, started to see all signs of peace dissipate. William Penn's "holy experiment," which begun seven decades earlier, had ended.³⁶ Northumberland County became an area embroiled in violent land disputes and war. As the European population increased in the Susquehanna River Valley so did their will to compete for land ownership. In 1753, settlers from not only Pennsylvania, but also Connecticut began to relocate to the Susquehanna River Valley in search for profit along the rich, untouched river plain. The population in colonial Pennsylvania, therefore, doubled every twenty years as more settlers began to seek land within the valley. The inhabitants living within the region, most of whom were still Native Americans, dominated both the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys. Northumberland County, however, stretched from the Lehigh River in the east to the Allegheny River in the west, covering the majority of northern Pennsylvania and creating the bulk of what was the Pennsylvania frontier.³⁷

The Susquehanna River dictated settlement within Northumberland County as it served as a valuable transportation method. Native Americans also established elaborate trail routes that connected much of the county and later, those trail routes were replaced with bridle paths created by new settlers. Many diverse cultures seeking to settle in Northumberland County looked towards the Susquehanna River and Wyoming Valleys. Moreover, both areas provided prosperity to some and absolute disaster to most.³⁸ European settlers were well aware of the profitable fertile soil contained by the Susquehanna River Valley and started to relocate to the valley, doubling its population. For the Native peoples, particularly the Iroquois Confederacy, the Susquehanna River Valley became a valuable hunting ground and was also strategically located between one subdivision

³⁶ Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*, 71.

³⁷ John B. Frantz and William Pencak, "Wyoming Valley," *Beyond Philadelphia: The American Revolution in the Pennsylvania Hinterland* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 134; Minderhout, *Native Americans in the Susquehanna River Valley*, 101.

³⁸ Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 134.

of the confederacy, the Seneca tribe, and the colonial powers located in Philadelphia.³⁹ Many settlers wanted to colonize the area of the Wyoming and Susquehanna River Valleys, but could not. The Iroquois, because they had control over the valley, “blocked out white expansion northward from Pennsylvania into the Iroquois country.” The valley, therefore, kept the Iroquois safe from the ever-growing population of European settlers who sought to destroy their “geo-political” order.⁴⁰ While the Susquehanna River Valley benefitted both the Natives and settlers, the settlement of the valley also caused significant hardships for both parties, specifically, the emerging European population.

The Pennsylvania frontier attracted settlers from the colony of Connecticut and other portions of the middle colonies. However, the Susquehanna River Valley secluded its people from colonial communities, thus creating problems in the political realm as members of the county were sometimes over 100 miles from the county seat.⁴¹ As more settlers continued to move to the Susquehanna Valley, the demand for local government increased and the county official of Northumberland County officially declared Sunbury (Fort Augusta) the county seat. The newly established county seat created problems for settlers living in the western and northern portions of the county, as settlers could not “ford” the Susquehanna River. The county inhabitants pushed for a new county seat that was a reasonable distance from their homes, yet the leaders in the colonial government, ever mindful of guarding their own power, refused these requests.

The creation of new colonial towns in the county of Northumberland produced high competition between many communities for the role of county seat. The residents of these newly established towns wanted to acquire a great deal of “prestige and property,” and while some towns

³⁹ Paul A. Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1986), 155-159.

⁴⁰ Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 159.

⁴¹ Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 134.

wanted it more than others did, the constant battle for the role of county seat triggered the movement towards the erection of new counties and townships.⁴² In 1772, although the county seat remained at Sunbury, settlers pushed for the creation of individual townships as the need for more local government increased. Seven townships, which included Bald Eagle, Buffalo, Penn's, Turbot, Augusta, Wyoming, and Muncy were created out of the demands of the settlers. Significantly, the creation of individual townships show that when settlers could not gain access to their government, they were more willing to take action; thus leading to the creation of not only more counties, but individual townships.

While the creation of Northumberland County proved difficult to many settlers both geographically and politically, violence occupied the settlers' daily lives well before the erection of the county starting in 1754. In June 1754, members of seven colonies met in Albany, New York, to not only develop treaties with the Native Americans, but to create several defense plans against the French. This committee, otherwise known as the Albany Congress, fought to establish a sense of inter-colonial unity amongst the colonists.⁴³ Delegates from both Pennsylvania and the Iroquois Confederacy also met during the Albany Conference to map out the fate of the Wyoming Valley. The Iroquois Indians agreed to sell two plots of land: one, to the Pennsylvania Proprietorship and the other, to the colony of Connecticut. However, Richard Peters, the Provincial Secretary of the Colony, met with several representatives from the Six Nations, and agreed to not sell "the land of Shamokin and Wyoming" because the Indians deemed that territory as their sacred land.⁴⁴

Although the Indians had refused to sell the Wyoming territory to Pennsylvania, they agreed, however, to sell the surrounding land that occupied the majority of the valley. The Pennsylvania

⁴² Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, "History of Northumberland County," *Comprehensive Plan* (Northumberland County Planning Commission, 2005), 10.

⁴³ John M. Murrin, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* (Belmont: Thomson/ Wadsworth, 2009), 120.

⁴⁴ Papers of the Governor 1747-1759 in *Pennsylvania Archives* ed. George Edward Reed (Harrisburg: State Printer, 1900), 4:2:704.

Proprietors negotiated with the Indians and signed a deed to acquire the vast amount of territory that created a boundary line “west of Kittatinny Hills on the West Branch of the Susquehanna to the established limits of the province west, and south to the southern boundary.”⁴⁵ Despite the Indians’ refusal to grant the lands of the Wyoming Valley to the Proprietors of Pennsylvania, the territory became a popular region for the settlers of the Connecticut colony. Connecticut settlers manipulated a land deal with the Indians in July of 1754 and in return, the land the Indians refused to sell to Pennsylvania, they now sold to the colony of Connecticut, thus producing years of violent land disputes and even war.⁴⁶

The Albany Congress of 1754 may have attempted to strengthen the relationships between the Indians and the white population, but the meeting, nevertheless, ultimately set the framework for a violent struggle between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over possession of the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys. Not only was there animosity between the two colonies, but also between the Native peoples who inhabited that same area. Although both the Native and European populations experienced immense adversities at the conclusion of the Albany Conference, both groups too had to also deal with the severe backlashes from with the French and Indian War in 1755.⁴⁷

With the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1755, the Indians and the settlers of Connecticut and Pennsylvania both started to see disruptions in their attempts to settle in the Wyoming and Susquehanna River Valleys. As the French and Indian War intensified, the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Great War for the Empire: The British Empire Before the American Revolution 1760-1763* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 122; William Robert Shepherd, *History of the Proprietary Government in Pennsylvania* (New York: Columbia University, 1896), 103; Roger R. Task, “Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress, 1754,” *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1960), 282-283.

⁴⁷ Timothy Shannon, *Indians, and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Paul Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence along Pennsylvania’s Revolutionary Frontier* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 20-21.

Pennsylvania frontier felt the brunt of the violence as Native Americans killed hundreds of colonists. The Delaware, outraged with the outcome of the Albany Congress, allied with the French to participate in the removing of settlers from the Susquehanna River Valley.⁴⁸ In Easton, Pennsylvania in 1758, local Indian tribes agreed to become allies with the British in favor of gaining back their hunting territory. This agreement, otherwise known as the Treaty of Easton, not only prohibited settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains, but also turned the tide of the French and Indian War; thus creating further conflict between white and Indian settlers well into the 1760s and 1770s.⁴⁹

One year before the start of the French and Indian War, Connecticut's purchase of the Wyoming Valley engulfed the area into a thirty-year land dispute with not only settlers of Pennsylvania, but also several Native tribes. Not only did Indian and colonial claimants fight each other, the colonists fought amongst themselves. Due to conflicting royal patents, the colonial governments of both Pennsylvania and Connecticut claimed title to the Susquehanna and Wyoming Valleys. By the 1760s and 1770s, more Connecticut colonists sought land within the Susquehanna River Valley while the Pennamites, settlers who were loyal to the colony of Pennsylvania, also claimed ownership of the same land. The two colonies, as well as various Indian nations, constantly clashed over rights to the land—leading to sometimes deadly consequences. In addition, the colonists of Pennsylvania had no intentions on sharing the land with their Connecticut invaders and continuously tried to push them out of the Susquehanna River Valley. Actively, the increasing violence between the two colonies had then intensified as Connecticut and Pennsylvania entered a

⁴⁸ Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 20-21.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

brutal civil war. The valley inhabitants had to endure the quarrels between the two colonies for the next ten years, making life within the Susquehanna River Valley seemingly unbearable.⁵⁰

The Pennamite-Yankee dispute originated in 1662 when King Charles II declared the Wyoming Valley as part of Connecticut's sea-to-sea charter. When the Connecticut settlers arrived in the territory however, they found the land occupied by Pennsylvanians. Seemingly, though, King Charles II of England granted not only a charter to Connecticut, but also to Pennsylvania in 1681 for the same territory.⁵¹ Violence between the two colonies, although originating in 1754, intensified in 1769. The breakout of the Pennamite-Yankee War in northern Pennsylvania produced a long contest over who would hold power over the Wyoming Valley in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. The struggle for power in northeastern Pennsylvania was not only caused by jurisdictional disputes between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, but was also fueled by quarrels between the river valley inhabitants and powerful outside officials.

To make matters worse, the inhabitants of the valley not only had to deal with the ramifications of the violent land disputes between Connecticut and Pennsylvania, but also had to deal with the royal and Pennsylvania governments. In 1763, the same year the French and Indian War ended, King George III issued a royal proclamation that established a property line between the American Indians in the west and the British colonial lands in the east. King George III's proposed line of demarcation produced problems for settlers who had claimed land in the west and for Indians living east of the line.⁵² Five years after the issuing of the Proclamation of 1763, the line

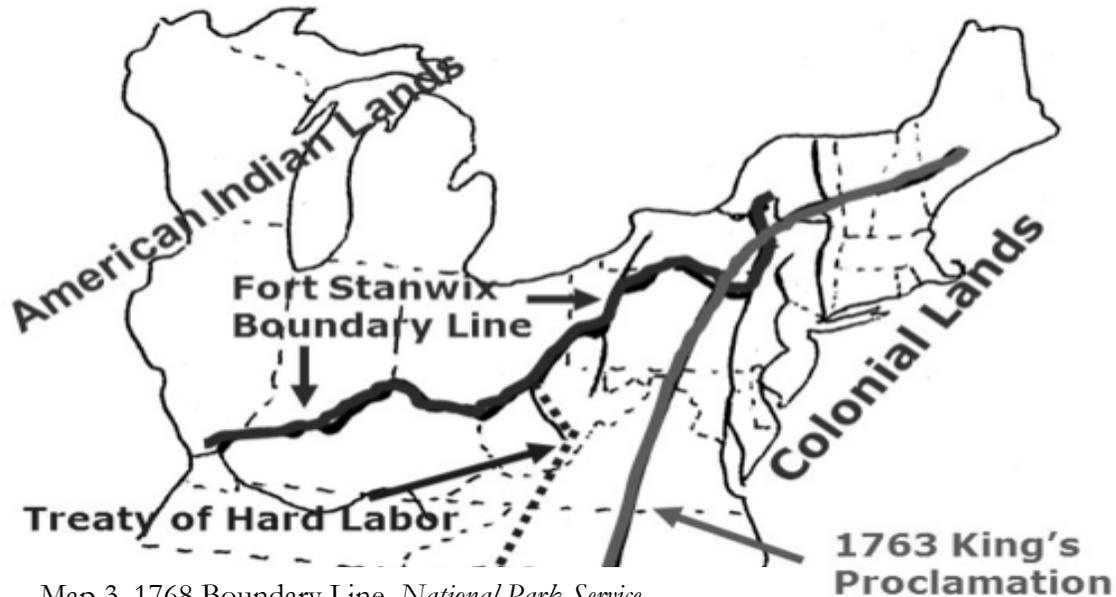
⁵⁰ Ibid., 17-18.

⁵¹ Julian Boyd, *The Susquehanna Company Papers: Connecticut's Experiment in Expansion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1903), 48.

⁵² William J. Campbell, *Speculators in Empire: Iroquoia and the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 55-58.

proposed by the King had been extended; thus, creating a new boundary line otherwise known as the Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1768.⁵³

1768 Boundary Line Treaty Map



Likewise, along with the proposal of the treaty, the Indians therefore agreed to sell Thomas Penn territory along the Susquehanna. The boundaries of this “New Purchase” extended from the West Branches of the Susquehanna River to the Tiadaghton Creek located in Northumberland County, now present day Lycoming County. The Indians, however, interpreted the boundaries differently than the settlers, making the majority of northern Pennsylvania “disputed Indian” lands. The ambiguity of the land between Lycoming and Pine creeks made it difficult for both the Indians and white settlers to establish a specific boundary line, therefore, Penn closed off settlement; making the territory between the two creeks a “no man’s land.”⁵⁴

⁵³ George D. Wolf, “Fair Play Settlers,” in *The Fair Play Settler of the West Branch Valley, 1769-1784: A Study of Frontier Ethnography* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1969), 21.

⁵⁴ Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 23; Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 134; Wolf, *the Fair Play Settlers of the West Branch Valley*, 21.

By declaring the territory a “no man’s land,” settlement became difficult to almost impossible for settlers living in the West Branch Valley. According to historian George Wolf, “no man’s land covered an area some twenty-five miles long and about two miles wide, and was located on the north side of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and extending from Lycoming Creek (present day Williamsport) to the Great Island near Lock Haven.”⁵⁵ Although difficult to estimate, almost 100 to 150 families resided in the area and they created their own community called “Fair-Play Territory.” The Pennsylvania government later declared that settlement was essentially prohibited, and any settler who refused to leave the land was “to be punished by death without benefit of clergy.”⁵⁶ Although the law of 1768 threatened the lives of all the settlers on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River Valley, authorities did not execute any residents. The settlers ignored the law, and for sixteen years the population of settlers nearly doubled within the disputed territory. The population growth gave rise to local disputes that settlers could not arbitrate through law. Without local government, the inhabitants of the Susquehanna River Valley banded together to form their own self-government known as the “Fair-Play System.”⁵⁷

Through this system, settlers resided outside the reach of the Provincial government and were otherwise referred as “outlaws.” According to John Penn, the Provincial Governor of Pennsylvania,

If any person or Persons, after the Publication of this Act, either singly or in Companies, shall presume to settle upon any Lands within the Boundaries of this Province, not purchased of the Indians, or shall make, or cause any Surveys to be made of any part thereof, or mark or cut down any Trees thereon, with design to settle or appropriate the same to his own, or the use of any other Person or Person, every such person being legally convicted thereof, in any Court of the Quarter

⁵⁵ Wolf, *the Fair Play Settlers of the West Branch Valley*, V.

⁵⁶ A Warner and Company, *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania: Including Its Early Settlement and Progress to the Present Time* (Evansville: Unigraphic, 1889), 455; Willard Epsy, *Oysterville: Road to Grandpa’s Village* (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 1992), 107-108.

⁵⁷ John Meginness, “Fair Play System” in *History of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: Brown Runk, and Company, 1892), 193.

Sessions of the County. . . for every such offense one shall pay Five Hundred Pounds, and suffer twelve months' imprisonment, without bail.⁵⁸

With Penn prohibiting any type of settlement on lands that the Indians did not previously purchase, the settlers living in the illegal territory sought to create an extra-legal form of government for all squatters residing in the area between Tiadaghton and Lycoming Creeks.⁵⁹ Through this system of government, Fair Play Men settled land disputes, adjudicated the guilt or innocence of suspected criminals, and meted out their own brand of punishment. Each March, settlers within the Fair Play Territory elected three commissioners who carried out the duties of their self-rule. If one were to disobey the laws established by the community, the fellow community pushed the person or “squatter” down the Susquehanna River in a canoe and asked them not to return.⁶⁰ There was no room for individual self-interest in such a system: the community’s will reigned supreme.

The Susquehanna River Valley, although relatively peaceful under the control of William Penn, obviously became a target for violence as conflicting interests from both the Natives and colonists coincided with each other. The violence pertaining to the continuous land disputes between the Natives and the settlers increased near the beginning of the Revolutionary War and continued even after the war. Brutal frontier violence decimated the homes of frontiersmen and not only pushed settlers to rely on each other, but influenced them to create their own communities that centered around the protection of every individual within that community; much like the Fair-Play System along the western portion of the Susquehanna River. If dealing with violent disputes between the colonists and Indians wasn’t enough, many of the Susquehanna River Valley

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government in *Pennsylvania Archives: Colonial Records* (Harrisburg: State Printer, 1852), 10:95.

⁵⁹ Wolf, *Fair Play Settlers of the West Branch Valley*, 31.

⁶⁰ John Meginness, “Fair Play System” in *History of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: Brown Runk, and Company, 1892), 193.

inhabitants also had to deal with other internal divisions, such as threats from the British and their Native Allies. These violent threats from not only surrounding settlers, but also the Native Americans and later, the British, persuaded inhabitants to open their homes to other ordinary frontiersmen, thus showing their outward loyalty to not only their families, but their neighbors as well.

People of the Susquehanna River Valley not only relied heavily on the support of their neighbors during these tumultuous times, but also decades after the start of the Pennamite Yankee Wars. The final conflict stemming directly from the wars happened in 1783, five months before the ending of the American Revolution with Great Britain. Governmental officials in the colony of Connecticut grew disinterested with the settler's desire to claim ownership of the territory in northeastern Pennsylvania.⁶¹ Due to the heedlessness of Connecticut's politicians and Pennsylvania's ever-growing lawsuits against the colony of Connecticut, Connecticut settlers left the Wyoming Valley, giving Pennsylvania ownership to the land.⁶² According to a petition sent to the Pennsylvania Assembly,

We are yet alive, but the richest blood of our neighbors and friends, children, husbands, and fathers, has been split in the general cause of their country. . . Our houses are desolate, many mothers are childless, widows and orphans are multiplied, out habitations are destroyed, and many families are reduced to beggary.⁶³

Violence between the British-allied Natives and other settlers was inevitable. In the end, the conflicts between the British, Natives, and settlers promoted a need to protect and provide for one's family for those settlers residing along the Susquehanna River Valley.

⁶¹ Frantz and Pencak, *Beyond Philadelphia*, 150.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Stewart Pearce, *Annals of Luzerne County* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1860), 80.

Through almost forty years of violence, many settlers, with their friends and families beside them, suffered in many ways. Years of war forced settlers to bond together to provide protection for themselves and their families, or for other members of their community. Pennsylvania, throughout the colonial period, was shaped by these bitter contests between land ownership and the relationships with the Indians and settlers, whether they flourished or not. Not until the revolutionary period in Pennsylvania does one start to see the devout commitments that an individual settler had towards protecting their community members and their families from the violence that accrued in years past. According to Paul Moyer, “family, kin, and locale” anchored a settler’s identity.⁶⁴ In a time when independence was well debated and pursued by the majority of colonists, independence for Pennsylvania settlers, at least for settlers residing in the Pennsylvania hinterland did not mean *Individualism*. For colonists, men and women alike, independence was rooted in the life they have come to know living on the frontier. The love and bonds between families, neighbors, and community members, set the foundation for why settlers risked everything as they bonded together to escape frontier reality.

⁶⁴ Moyer, *Wild Yankees*, 54.

Chapter 2

“For the Defense of Themselves and Neighbours”: Patriot Mobilization Along the Susquehanna River Valley

The "moral person" which was thus constituted was described "as a complete body of free natural persons, united together for their common benefit; as having an understanding and a will; as deliberating, resolving and acting; as possessed of interests which it ought to manage; as enjoying rights which it ought to maintain, as lying under obligations which it ought to perform."

~James Wilson, *Lectures on Law*, 1791⁶⁵

While violence became consistent in the Susquehanna River Valley throughout the 1750s and intensified with the start of the Revolutionary War, settlers, and soon soldiers, risked everything to protect not only their families, but also strived to uphold their commitments rooted in the protection of their own communities. In the Susquehanna Valley region, an individual's bonds with their family, friends, and most importantly their community, influenced settlers to mobilize in times of distress. Within the Susquehanna River Valley, both men and women had a shared sense of community, meaning that in the eyes of all individuals, everyone mattered. The

⁶⁵ James Dewitt Andrews, *The Works of James Wilson* (Chicago: Callaghan and Company, 1896), 329.

forty years of violence the Susquehanna Valley endured helped establish a strong communal identity among individuals living within Northumberland County, Pennsylvania.

According to Richard Sennett, a renowned sociologist from Cambridge, communal identity “is formed when a group is threatened in its very survival,” and in this case, harsh land disputes and war.⁶⁶ Communal identity, therefore, influenced settlers to take “collective action” when violence inched closer to their homes. As Sennett points out, mobilizing in a time of violence allowed settlers “to feel close to one another and search for images that bonded them together.” The concept of protecting the whole ultimately set the groundwork for the creation of a specific “civil society” for individuals living within the valley.⁶⁷

Along the Susquehanna River Valley, the essence of “civil society” existed within the good of the whole, not the individual. Civil society within the valley consisted of many people willing to protect others from immediate threats that endangered the general community. Therefore, since violence persisted in Northumberland County, many members within the Pennsylvania government concluded, “All men are obliged to unite in defending themselves and those of the Same Community.”⁶⁸ The idea of protecting not oneself, but others, originates from the Bible. The Biblical command “*To love thy neighbor as yourself,*” simply legitimized the idea of civil society within the Susquehanna River Valley.⁶⁹ The biblical phrase suggests to treat others well. That an individual “cannot choose not to respond to another’s needs because, by definition, that need is now his as well.”⁷⁰ The core of civil society suggests that an individual could not turn their backs on another

⁶⁶ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 222.

⁶⁷ Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 222.

⁶⁸ *The Petition of Remonstrance of the Committees of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia October 30, 1775*, in *American Archives* ed. Peter Force (Washington, D.C., M. St. Clair and Peter Force, 1840), 3:1781.

⁶⁹ Lev. 19:9-18.

⁷⁰ Thomas DeLeire, “Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself: Community Formation and the *Church*” in *Faith and Economics* (University of Wisconsin: Association of Christian Economics, 2010), 21.

individual in need. Even if you did not belong to one's community, the individual still had an obligation to help others in times of despair unless a person's character threatened the good of the whole community.⁷¹ According to Adam Ferguson, a Scottish historian and philosopher,

MAN is, by nature, the member of a community; and when considered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himself. He must forego his happiness and his freedom, where these interfere with the good of society. He is only part of a whole; and the praise we think due to his virtue, is but a branch of that more general commendation we bestow on the member of a body, on the part of a fabric, or engine, for being well fitted to occupy its place, and to produce its effect.⁷²

To act in a selfish manner and to put one's own needs and desires before the greater good of the community threatened the very essence of civil society. The term "*to love thy neighbor*," soon became the fundamental core of law throughout the colonies, specifically, Pennsylvania.

Although rooted in the Bible, protecting the good of the whole and not just the individual soon became a motivational driving force for legal theorists and their interpretation of the law. For example, James Wilson, a Presbyterian frontiersman, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, viewed law as the "God-created absolute standard against which individual and community acts must be measured."⁷³ Wilson's political philosophy echoed that of prominent English Theologian Richard Hooker. Central to both Hooker's and Wilson's interpretation of political theory was the idea of morality, otherwise known as natural law.⁷⁴ Wilson believed in the individual natural rights of man such as the right to own property and the right to have liberty. The right to have liberty however, was not the right to obtain individualistic freedom. The right to have

⁷¹ DeLeire, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 21.

⁷² Adam Ferguson, "Of National Felicity," in *An Essay on the History of Civil Society, 1767* (London: T. Cadell, 1782), 95.

⁷³ Mark David Hall, "James Wilson, Morality, and Natural Law," in *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson 1742-1798* (London: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 35.

⁷⁴ Hall, *The Political and Legal Philosophy of James Wilson*, 35.

liberty was to be understood within the limits of moral law.⁷⁵ According to Wilson, individuals had the right to make their own choices, and a right to “act according to his own inclination” if he “does no injury to others.”⁷⁶ The political philosophy of James Wilson not only focused on the good of the whole, but simply legitimized the biblical term “*to love thy neighbor as thy self.*” To, essentially, “do all as we would they should do to us; knowing that the rights and enjoyments of others are the same to them as ours are to others.”⁷⁷ The very essence of Wilson’s political philosophy truly mirrored civil society within Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. Settlers of the Susquehanna River Valley upheld the safety and protection of their communities and families in times of distress, showing that many county inhabitants were concerned with the interests of their community rather than their own individual interests.

Before the start of the Revolutionary War in 1775, settlers living between Lycoming and Tiadaghton creeks, otherwise known as “Fair-Play Territory,” developed their own understanding of civil society. Moreover, these settlers understanding of civil society again mirrored James Wilson’s idea of a political philosophy that existed to serve the betterment of whole communities, rather than enrich their own individualistic self-interests. According to historian George Wolf, the Fair-Play system was “organized for the mutual benefit of all living within its jurisdiction.”⁷⁸ Similarly, if one did not adhere to the laws imposed by Fair-Play leaders, then the individual would face potential consequences for threatening not only the lives of other community members, but also disrupting the very essence of civil society.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 35-40.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁷ William J. Novak, *The People’s Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 34.

⁷⁸ Meginness, *History of Lycoming County*, 193.

The consequences of disturbing or endangering the public good is clearly demonstrated in an 1801 deposition given by William King, a former member of the Fair-Play community. William King recalls the moment he purchased a claim of land near the West Branch from another Fair-Play member, Joseph Huff. An individual who wished to purchase land in Fair-Play territory must be granted acceptance from not just his neighbors, but also the majority of all the other community members. Like King, another settler by the name of Robert Arthur, who also wanted to purchase a tract of land along the West Branch, did not seek the acceptance of the community before he started to build a cabin on land already owned by an individual by the name of William Paul. Paul asked Arthur to remove himself from his land, but Arthur ultimately refused.⁷⁹

While Arthur refused to vacate the area, members of the Fair-Play community bonded together to remove Arthur and his family. According to King,

We got a keg of whiskey and proceeded to Arthur's cabin. He was at home with his rifle in his hand and his wife had a bayonet on a stick, and they threatened death to the first person who would enter their house. The door was shut and Thomas Kemplen busted open the door and instantly seized Arthur by the neck. We pulled down the cabin, threw it in the river, lashed two canoes together and put Arthur and his family and his goods down the river.⁸⁰

Fair-Play settlers valued their communities and strived to protect and provide safety for everyone that may have been living along the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna River. A community that upheld the values of civil society was predicated in the idea that every individual should possess certain communal characteristics, such as virtue, benevolence, and the will to uphold their social obligations to their community. Therefore, any laws enacted by members of a community must benefit the good of the public. The

⁷⁹ John Blair Lynn, "Indian land and Its Fair-Play Settlers, 1773-1785," in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1883), 7:4:422.

⁸⁰ Lynn, *Indian land and Its Fair-Play Settlers* 422.

process of rooting out an individual that may be a detriment to the good of the whole, much like the ejection of Robert Arthur, encapsulates Fair-Play politics. According to George D. Wolf, author of *The Fair-Play Settlers of the West Branch Valley*, “the politics of fair-play was nothing more than that—fair-play.” The Fair-Play system, nonetheless, valued each individual’s opinion and in turn, transformed the law, basing it solely on “practical acceptance” and agreements made by the majority of individuals in the community.⁸¹

Members of the Fair-Play territory not only exemplified communal characteristics when it came to politics, but everyday life. Communities that occupied the territory practiced forming special bonds with other members in their communities, even though the Susquehanna River Valley endured forty years of sheer violence. Wolf concludes that a way of life for these settlers existed in the “complexes of behavior composed of all institutions necessary to carry on a complete life, formed into a working whole” a term, what we come to know of today as “modern day republicanism.”⁸² The physical nature and harmony illustrated in the Fair-Play territory depended predominantly upon what was, Wolf stated, “best for the community.”⁸³

With the start of the American Revolution in 1775, settlers’ communal obligations were far more evident as more violence engulfed the Susquehanna River Valley. In context, the British Army sought to create strong alliances with Indian tribes that lived in or around the valley; thus further straining Indian and settler relations which had already grown tenuous before the outbreak of war. For settlers living outside of Fair-Play territory life was even more difficult. Individuals who did not live within the confines of an extra-legal governing system had limited access to government. To make matters worse, “demographic growth, geographical expansion, and economic change” later

⁸¹ Wolf, *Fair Play Settlers of the West Branch Valley*, 46.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 94.

influenced settlers to participate in the revolution as the violence relating to those societal changes threatened the livelihood of their families, friends, and neighbors.⁸⁴ Not to mention, six years prior to the start of the war, Pennsylvania entered a ten-year civil war with Connecticut concerning possession of the Wyoming Valley. Despite the hardships brought by the Revolutionary War, and although settlers ultimately dealt with the consequences of war, when it came time to mobilize, colonists did so for the good of the whole, to offer protection to their communities and their families.

Like many ordinary citizens living in Pennsylvania, individuals who lived in the Susquehanna River Valley mobilized when violence threatened the lives of their neighbors. While the colonies were on the brink of war with Great Britain, whose need for a powerful army to defeat the British increased. However, to create an authoritative army to stand up to the British, the need for men became an increasing problem for Susquehanna River Valley inhabitants.

Many settlers refused to fight in the Continental Army commanded by General Washington. Pennsylvania frontiersmen realized that once they joined Washington's Continental Army and left their frontier homes, they left their families and neighbors to experience the implications of Native American and Tory warfare. For instance, when men attached themselves to the Continental Army and dangers in the Susquehanna River Valley increased, "wives besought their husbands to return home from the army, and the people clamored for protection to the Continental Congress and Pennsylvania authorities, but no effective measures were taken for their aid and protection."⁸⁵ Simply, because settlers of the Susquehanna River Valley faced several

⁸⁴ Christopher Pearl, *Such a Spirit of Innovation: The American Revolution and the Creation of States* (Mount Vernon: The Fred W. Smith National Library at Mount Vernon, 2014), 6.

⁸⁵ William J. Heller, *History of Northampton County, Pennsylvania: The Grand Valley of the Lehigh* (New York: The American Historical Society, 1920), 1:127.

internal oppositions in relation to the Revolutionary War, both men and women stayed close to their homes to uphold their obligations rooted in their own communities and families. To understand the lengths the Susquehanna settlers went through in order to maintain a strong communal identity, one must look at the personal stories of the men and women that endured the violence along the Susquehanna River Valley.

When one considers the Revolutionary War and its legacy, it is easy to think of prominent leading figures like George Washington and the Founding Fathers. People also remember heroes of the Continental Army, but increasingly forget about ordinary male soldiers or female heroines who risked their lives to fight for their families and neighbors. Specifically, along the Susquehanna River Valley, many of the individuals who mobilized to protect each other were ordinary men and women. Therefore, like men, women too had a moral obligation to protect the greater good of the community in times of despair. Although women may have not had a direct role in politics, or fighting for that matter, they still upheld the values of civil society within the valley and their duties to protect others.

While many women participated in the revolution in some way, the deeds of several women residing within the Susquehanna River Valley exemplify the characteristics of protecting the greater good of their communities. Eleanor Brown for example, relocated to the West Branch Valley and settled in White Deer Valley with her husband in 1775.⁸⁶ Her husband, Matthew, served as an ardent patriot and a delegate to the Provincial Conference in 1776, he later contracted camp fever and died in New Jersey fighting in the Revolutionary War. With the loss of her husband, Eleanor and her eight children had to endure the hardships of living in the valley without a patriarch there

⁸⁶ William Henry Egle, *Some Pennsylvania Women During the War of the Revolution* (Harrisburg: Harrisburg Publishing Company, 1898), 26.

to protect them. However, Eleanor possessed a “heroic devotion that was truly sublime.”⁸⁷ Despite not having a husband, Eleanor protected her family and helped others flee from the West Branch Valley to Fort August until the war with the British Tories and Native Americans subsided.⁸⁸

Like Brown, other women residing within the valley strived to protect not only their families, but the whole community as well. Mercy Kelsey Cutter Covenhoven resided along the Loyalsock Creek in present day Lycoming County. Married to Robert Covenhoven, a prominent scout and spy within the valley, Mercy endured the struggles of frontier life like any other settler.⁸⁹ In 1778, when the Iroquois Indians and British Tories forced settlers residing along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River to leave their homes, Mercy, like her husband Robert, provided protection and support to the members of the communities that were affected by the violent Indian raids. Known for her “coolness and personal bravery,” Mercy spent the majority of her time “inspiring confidence among the weak and easily discouraged.”⁹⁰ In a time when it seemed likely that settlers would focus on their own individual self-interests, that was not the case for men and women residing within the valley. The safety and protection of everyone remained as the top priority.

Plenty of other selfless Susquehanna River Valley women joined the noble ranks of Eleanor Brown and Mercy Covenhoven. Rachel Silverthorne, for instance, embodied the characteristics it takes to be an altruistic individual. Rachel and her family were early settlers of Muncy Township, Northumberland County (present day Lycoming County). In 1778 however, the valley experienced an increased number of Indian raids that forced many to evacuate their homes. The rumors of an attempted massacre initiated by the British and their Native allies alarmed settlers of the valley,

⁸⁷ Egle, *Some Pennsylvania Women*, 27.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Robert Covenhoven, June 7, 1832, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, S12547.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

specifically Captain John Brady of the Northumberland County Militia.⁹¹ Concerned for the wellbeing of his community, Brady saddled his horse and asked his neighbors “who will volunteer to carry the news of danger to our friends?”⁹² Brady received no response and in a rage continued, “This very night the wily varmints may creep up when the first gleam of light shines over Muncy Hills, the scalping knife and tomahawks will again be flourished over their defenseless heads. Who will go on this errand of mercy?”⁹³ It was no man that stepped forth to sacrifice his own life, but a woman, Rachel Silverthorne.

Rachel volunteered to warn others within the valley about the danger of the British and their Native allies. She saddled a horse and helped surrounding settlers seek refuge in local forts. Rachel, therefore, earned the nickname the “Paul Revere of the West Branch Valley” along with Robert Covenhoven, Mercy Covenhoven’s husband.⁹⁴ According to a local author of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania,

Many heroic women feature in the frontier life of the state, but none excels in sheer bravery as Rachel Silverthorne. Mollie Pitcher operated a cannon at the Battle of Monmouth, in place of her wounded husband, and Margaret Corbin, another Pennsylvanian, filled the place of her husband who had been killed at the siege of Fort Washington. But Rachel Silverthorne emulated Paul Revere. . . . Rachel’s ride was to save her unsuspecting neighbors who lived along the half-beaten trail that followed Muncy Creek.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Robin Van Auken and Louis Hunsinger, Jr, *Williamsport: Boomtown on the Susquehanna* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 24.

⁹² Beach Nichols, *Atlas of Lycoming County, Pennsylvania* (Evansville: Unigraphic, 1975), 13.

⁹³ Auken and Hunsinger, *Williamsport*, 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹⁵ Katharine Bennet, *Journal of the Lycoming County Historical Society* (Williamsport: Spring, 1971), quoted in Robin Van Auken and Louis Hunsinger, Jr, *Williamsport: Boomtown on the Susquehanna* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 24.

Disregarding their own safety, Eleanor Brown, Mercy Covenhoven, and Rachel Silverthorne, all committed their efforts and time to their communities. While woman rarely directly engaged in fighting, their will to protect the whole displayed their loyalty to others.

Like the women living in the valley, men too upheld their moral obligations to protect the good of their communities in times of despair. For instance, William Reynolds joined the services of the militia to protect his neighbors and his family members. Twenty-seven-year-old William entered the service of the Revolutionary War in 1778 under Captain James McMahan of the Northumberland County Militia. Years prior, William had relocated to the Pennsylvania county with his father. The cause of service Reynolds recalled was “protecting the frontier inhabitants against the Indians.”⁹⁶ Reynolds’s experience in the Revolutionary War revolved around the safety of his community. William frequently participated in several tours “guarding the frontiers.”⁹⁷ Not only did William volunteer his time serving as a guard to the inhabitants living in the valley, but also served as “a spy against the Indians.”⁹⁸ Reynolds continued to protect the inhabitants of the Susquehanna River Valley for the duration of the Revolutionary War. Even after the war had ended, William continued his service defending the frontier and the frontier inhabitants.⁹⁹

Like William, Daniel Van Campen also joined the revolution to protect his neighbors. Thirteen-year-old Daniel entered the service of the Revolutionary War in 1776 under Captain Joseph Solomons of the Northumberland County Militia. Prior, Van Campen and his father relocated to Danville, Pennsylvania, and resided near the banks of the Susquehanna River. The

⁹⁶ William Reynolds, February 25, 1833, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, S14273.

⁹⁷ Reynolds, *Pension Files*.

⁹⁸ Reynolds, *Pension Files*.

⁹⁹ Reynolds, *Pension Files*.

cause of service, Van Campen recalled, “was to guard the inhabitants in the settlements above Fishing Creek, Danville, and other neighborhoods near the Susquehanna.”¹⁰⁰

Van Campen’s experience in the Revolutionary War revolved around the protection of the entire Susquehanna Valley population. Daniel frequently participated in scouting parties “guarding against hostile attacks from the Indians and Tories” and “had the habit of going in detachments from farm to farm to guard the inhabitants while harvesting and securing their crops.” Not only did Daniel volunteer his time serving as a guard to the inhabitants living in the valley, but he also protected the “produce and provisions of the neighborhood which were usually deposited in forts and other places of security provided for their safe keeping and the protection of women and children.”¹⁰¹ Van Campen continued to protect the inhabitants of the Susquehanna River Valley for two years. In 1779 however, Daniel volunteered in the “boat service in General Sullivan’s Indian Expedition.” For several months, Van Campen was in charge of putting provisions on boats and distributing them to the men in Sullivan’s army. After Daniel stopped working in the boat service, he continued to serve the greater good of his community by erecting fortifications for the neighborhoods in northern Pennsylvania.¹⁰²

At the same time, Peter Keister mustered for war in 1773 and volunteered until the end of the Revolutionary War. For the first couple of months, Keister served under Captain Peter Grove and later under Captain Thomas Hartley to “defend the frontier and settlements that lay within.”¹⁰³ For the duration of his time spent volunteering in the war, Kesiter stated, “they were in constant guard.”¹⁰⁴ Because of the sheer number of British and Native Americans that occupied the valley,

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Van Campen, June 7, 1832, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, S11626.

¹⁰¹ Van Campen, Pension Files.

¹⁰² Van Campen, *Pension Files*.

¹⁰³ Peter Keister, September 30, 1832, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, R5819.

¹⁰⁴ Keister, *Pension Files*.

many men chose to stay in proximity to the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna River. Keister specified, “a few of the men returned to the land to stay with their mothers and their families as a lot of them were killed by the Indians.”¹⁰⁵ Several years after in 1776, Kesiter continued to serve his commitment to his community members. He recalled that they “kept continuously marching to and from to protect the county from the enemy, which his presence was only known by his sudden burnings and murders.”¹⁰⁶ Keister remained vital for the protection of the people and property along the Susquehanna River Valley. Keister ended his service that same year and stated that his timeserving in the Revolutionary War was “an arduous service marked by individual murders and burnings by the Indians of our men.”¹⁰⁷

Throughout the revolutionary period in Pennsylvania, whether a settler was a woman or a man, one’s communal obligations took precedence over an individual’s own self-interest. Deriving from the Bible, “*to love thy neighbor,*” is exactly what settlers living in the valley did during times of hardship. Brutal frontier violence in relationship to the Revolutionary War and continuous land disputes between other settlers and Native Americans, pushed individuals to rely on each other for protection. The love one had for their families and neighbors, exemplified why many men and women, whether it be indirectly or directly, participated in some way to uphold their moral obligations to society. By bonding together as one to protect the whole, allowed settlers to escape the warfare occurring within the valley. Although one’s responsibility for maintaining the essence of civil society existed in the good of the whole and mobilizing to protect one another in times of hardship, many settlers later had to choose to serve their duties to protect the good of their own communities, or to join the Continental Army. For settlers, joining the Continental Army under the

¹⁰⁵ Keister, *Pension Files*.

¹⁰⁶ Keister, *Pension Files*.

¹⁰⁷ Keister, *Pension Files*.

command of George Washington would have left their communities in a state of vulnerability, as violence along the frontier was inevitable.

Chapter 3: Continental Resistance

*The calamities so long dreaded, and which you have been more than once informed must fall upon this county if not assisted by Continental troops or the militia of the neighboring counties, now appear with all the horrors attendant on an Indian War; at this date the towns of Sunbury and Northumberland are the frontiers, where a few virtuous inhabitants and fugitives seem determined to stand, though doubtful whether tomorrow's sun will rise on them freemen, captives, or in eternity.*¹⁰⁸

~Colonel Samuel Hunter to the Berks County Militia, 1778

During the mid-1770s, violence along the Susquehanna River Valley reached its apex. Moral obligations to protect others within their communities influenced both men and women to act, even though at the same time they were endangering their own lives. At the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, men left their frontier homes in hopes of receiving the benefits of joining George Washington's Continental Army. While more men started to mobilize to fight predominantly in the east, their willingness to leave their families and communities vulnerable fractured the very idea and understanding of civil society already established on the frontier. Some men, however, either chose not to fight in the Continental Line or later left the regular army to maintain their social and moral obligations to their friends, families, and neighbors. To recognize how George Washington and the creation of the Continental Army threatened frontier interpretations of civil society along the Susquehanna River Valley, one must first understand the origins and developments of the Continental Army.

¹⁰⁸ Colonel Samuel Hunter to the Berks County Militia, July 12, 1778 in *Otzianachson: History of the West Branch Valley*, 509.

After the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, the Continental Congress selected General George Washington to forge a strong, disciplined army that would protect the colonies and their citizens. Congress's decision to elect George Washington as commander of the Continental Army proved difficult for Washington throughout the duration of the Revolutionary War. The Continental Congress also designated specific rules and regulations which he and his army were to follow. Under Washington, all officers and soldiers were to act obediently and diligently, while also fighting for "American liberty."¹⁰⁹ In June of 1775, the Continental Congress issued the Articles of War, which established a code of conduct for all soldiers and officers serving in the Continental Army. All soldiers of the army had to not only defend the colonies, but also protect the "lives, liberties, and immunities of the Colonists."¹¹⁰ The difficulties Washington faced as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army progressed even further when significant underlying problems arose not only the Continental Army, but also the army's supporters.

Created to rebel against British rule, the Continental Army consisted of many men with little to no military experience. When Washington assumed his post as commander, the army consisted of poorly coordinated militias and ordinary citizens. In addition to these undertrained men, Washington also dealt with several day-to-day issues that preoccupied his soldiers. For example, Non-Commissioned-Officers and soldiers would withdraw themselves from guard in search for provisions. Leaders of the Continental Army lacked the supplies to provide the soldiers in times of despair, and the shortage of supplies created even more problems for Washington going forward. Under those circumstances, when supplies were low and a soldier's health started to deteriorate, Washington educated his officers and soldiers on the importance of personal hygiene. Washington stated that "the health of the Army principally depends on cleanliness and next to

¹⁰⁹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, Philadelphia, December 11, 1775.

¹¹⁰ *Pennsylvania Packet*, Philadelphia, July 17, 1775.

cleanliness, nothing is more conducive to a soldier's health, than dressing his provision in a decent and proper manner."¹¹¹ Despite the problems facing the Continental Army, Washington still endeavored to create a well-trained, disciplined, and powerful army that could defeat the British. While Washington devoted his time solely to training and recruiting men for the army, the British saw Washington's attention being dedicated to the Continental Line and the east as a chance to take over the Susquehanna River Valley, thus leading to the deaths of hundreds of settlers and their families.

As General Washington continued to train the Continental Army in the east, the British continued to suppress many of the colonists, especially the inhabitants of the Susquehanna Valley. The British turned towards the frontier, specifically the frontiers of Pennsylvania and New York, to increase their chances of winning the War for American Independence by allying with the majority of the Indians that occupied the area. By aligning with the Native Americans living in northeastern Pennsylvania, the British hoped to gain the support of the Native peoples for the duration of the Revolutionary War, not just to secure their neutrality.¹¹² According to Anne Ousterhaut, the British also sought out settlers of the Susquehanna Valley who had no interests in gaining independence and relied heavily on British power for the protection from "internal disorders and external attacks."¹¹³ Encroaching settlements, land fraud, unjust treatment, and broken treaties angered Tories, settlers who had joined the British cause. They wanted to seek revenge by destroying frontier homesteads, plundering livestock, and torturing and killing settlers.¹¹⁴ The British found

¹¹¹ George Washington, July 14, 1775 "General Orders," in *The George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress 1741-1799*.

¹¹² Anne M. Ousterhaut, "Frontier Vengeance: Connecticut Yankees vs. Pennamites in the Wyoming Valley, in *Pennsylvania History: Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 62:3:335.

¹¹³ Ousterhaut, "Frontier Vengeance," 330.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

allying with the Indians and Tories useful, but the British also used the geography of the Susquehanna River Valley to further their attempt at winning the Revolutionary War.

Furthermore, as war continued to devastate the Susquehanna River Valley, the British sought to increase their chances at winning the Revolutionary War even further by disrupting the fighting capabilities of the Continental Army. Many colonial officials, like George Washington, saw the Susquehanna Valley as insignificant and desolate, but the river proved useful to the British Army. The Susquehanna River was crucial for the transportation of supplies for the army. The river itself stretched through three states, the beginning of the river in New York and the mouth emptying out into the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, transportation was not the only advantage the Susquehanna River Valley provided to the British. The area of the Susquehanna River Valley produced a high quantity of grains and other crops that were shipped to the army for food. With the river valley serving as a key transportation system and lead producer in grain, the British sought to dominate the area to gain an advantage over the Continental Army. Not to mention, the valley also had several area forts that the British wanted to take over.¹¹⁶ While the British planned to ally with the Native Americans and destroy the frontier to further this strategy, they thrived on General Washington's lack of interest in the frontier. Washington cared little about the violence that was occurring on the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania, and because of this disinterest, both the Patriot and British armies threatened the lives of all the individuals living within the Susquehanna River Valley.

On the frontier and within the valley, while the British Army and their Native allies marched closer to the homes of settlers and their families, many men refused to join the

¹¹⁵ United States Army, *Flood Control Improvement Paxton Creek & Susquehanna River* (Baltimore: United States Army Corp of Engineers, 1977), 1.

¹¹⁶ James Albert Clark, *The Wyoming Valley, Upper Waters of the Susquehanna, and the Lackawanna Coal-Region: From the Indian Occupancy to the Year 1875* (Scranton: J.A. Clark Publisher, 1875), 48-50.

Continental Army under General Washington. According to the individuals that lived in the heart of the frontier, the core of civil society was predicated on the idea that one should not put their own individual self-interests ahead of the needs of others, especially those members of their community during times of distress. Washington's constant need for men fractured the fundamental principles of civil society in their local communities. Such a focus on their obligations to the local community put them at odds with some prominent revolutionaries who thought of the community in more universal ways, such as James Duane, a prominent lawyer from New York City who stated,

Man was made for *Society*—that society is absolutely necessary for *man*—that the *public good* ought to always be the supreme rule—that the spirit of sociability ought to be *universal*—that we ought to have the same disposition towards other men, as we desire they should have towards us.¹¹⁷

Duane's use of the word "universal" suggests that every individual within the United States, regardless of local circumstances, should strive to uphold their duties to the public good of the "universal" community. However, for the inhabitants of the Pennsylvania frontier their vision of civil society was very different; instead, civil society was far more local rather than universal. Once frontiersmen joined the Continental Army and left their frontier homes and communities, not only was their understanding of civil society undermined, but one's families and neighbors now felt the consequences.

For instance, when men attached themselves to the Continental Army, the danger in the Susquehanna River Valley increased, "wives besought their husbands to return home from the army, and the people clamored for protection to the Continental Congress and Pennsylvania

¹¹⁷ *Rutgers v Waddington, 1784*, in *Select Cases of the Mayor's Court of New York City, 1674-1784* ed. Richard B. Morris (Washington, D.C., 1935), 312.

authorities, but no effective measures were taken for their aid and protection.”¹¹⁸ Knowing that war was inevitable within the valley, ordinary settlers started to realize they needed to stay in proximity to their own communities to uphold their moral obligation to the good of the whole. Inhabitants of the valley sent petitions to the General Assembly in Philadelphia asking to remain on the frontier to protect their families and their neighbors. The settlers also expressed their grievances about why many refused to serve in the Continental Army. The people of the Susquehanna River Valley stated,

We enlisted in the Continental Service by special order of the Continental Congress for the defense of the frontiers, but contrary to our expectations, in a few months after our engagements, we were called away to join the Continental Army under his excellency George Washington, where we continued for almost two years, which was so great a trouble to us leaving our families exposed. In that time of being in the Continental Army, the enemy made an incursion, in the most barbarous and inhumane manner, killed a number of our parents and friends, and left our wives, families, and children in the most distressed situation. . . WE have continued through a series of troubles and with little help from the Continental Army.¹¹⁹

While feeling deceived, many men of the Susquehanna Valley refused to go east and fight because they were more focused on fighting close to their homes to protect their families, friends, and neighbors. Once they found themselves attached to George Washington and the Continental Army, they continued to experience frequent adversities. Colonel Samuel Hunter, the County Lieutenant of Northumberland County, stated, “the inhabitants of this county are afraid.”¹²⁰ While ordinary soldiers and their families begged for protection from the harsh reality of the frontier, Washington, the Continental Army, and even powerful colonial officials ignored their requests.

¹¹⁸ William J. Heller, *History of Northampton County, Pennsylvania: The Grand Valley of the Lehigh* (New York: The American Historical Society, 1920), 1:127.

¹¹⁹ Oscar Jewell Harvey, *A History of Wilkes-Barre Luzerne County, Pennsylvania: From Its First Beginnings to the Present Time* (Wilkes Barre: Reader Press, 1927), 1272.

¹²⁰ Colonel Samuel Hunter to George Bryan, September 10, 1777, *Colonial Records*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Harrisburg: State Printer, 1852), 11:532.

The commencement of war within the Susquehanna River Valley also infuriated settlers, particularly the men who went and joined the Continental Army, because according to historian Gregory Knouff, “they were promised that their units would be used for the protection of the frontier.”¹²¹ With the belief that they enlisted to fight in the Revolutionary War to uphold their moral obligation to society by pursuing “the people’s welfare before all else,” it is no wonder why ordinary men left for the east to fight under the Continental Line: they felt as if they had to abandon all “they held dear.” Ordinary soldiers and their resentment towards the Continental Army intensified when Generals of Washington’s army asked them to leave their communities when the “war was raging through their own doorsteps.”¹²² According to Colonel Samuel Hunter, men refused to fight under the command of General Washington because they were fighting “for their own self-preservation.”¹²³ Hunter continued to argue that no one would show up to fight for the Continental Army again because “at the present time, the inhabitants of this county are afraid of the British and Indians coming upon the frontier.”¹²⁴ Ordinary militiamen had shown outward disobedience towards their officers and as a result, the Continental Army saw a decrease in men wanting to join and fight. In a plea to Pennsylvania President Joseph Reed, a Captain in the Northumberland Militia named Philip Shrawder spoke on how it would be difficult to gather recruits for the Continental Army. The militia had “the greatest assurance from the most respectable men of these parts that they should not be taken off, but employed for the defense of this county.”¹²⁵ An ordinary soldier’s will to fight near his own community was a way he could

¹²¹ Gregory Knouff, “An Arduous Service,” *The Pennsylvania Backcountry Soldiers’ Revolution in Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 52.

¹²² Novak, *The People’s Welfare*, 46; Knouff, “An Arduous Service,” 52.

¹²³ Colonel Samuel Hunter to President Wharton, January 14, 1778 *Colonial Records*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Philadelphia: 1853), 6:175-176.

¹²⁴ Colonel Samuel Hunter to George Bryan, September 10, 1777 *Colonial Records*, ed. Samuel Hazard (Harrisburg: 1852), 11:532.

¹²⁵ Philip Shrawder to Joseph Reed, September 6, 1781, in *Soldiers Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 70.

avoid service in the east. According to Gregory Knouff, it allowed them to “prosecute what they saw as the more immediate war on the frontier.”¹²⁶

Even though settlers refused to join the Continental Army due to the lack of protection given to their communities, they also did not join Washington because war within the valley had a severe effect on the valley’s economy. Guilty of wartime profiteering, the British and Patriot Armies both relied on the valley’s natural resources to feed their troops and, additionally, make significant amounts of profit. While the violence intensified in the valley in the 1770s and lasted for almost a decade, a ban on the exportation of grain was implemented not only due to the fear of food shortages, but because the behavior of merchants “threatened the entire community, and such a threat violated deeply held beliefs about the functioning of the economy.”¹²⁷ Because the inhabitants living within the valley believed in protecting the good of the whole, and valued their moral and social obligations to the betterment of civil society, settlers also believed in a moral economy, an economy solely based on the goodness and fairness of the individual. According to William Blackstone, an eighteenth-century judge, any offense that proved detrimental to the public good was of greatest importance. Blackstone stated,

A THIRD species of felony against the good order and economy, is by idle *soldiers* and *mariners wandering* about the realm, or persons pretending so to be, and abusing the name of that honorable profession.¹²⁸

Likewise, according to historian Peter Mancall, because communities in the valley believed in a moral economy to maintain a well ordered civil society, “the valley economy needed to be

¹²⁶ Knouff, “*An Arduous Service*,” 53.

¹²⁷ Peter Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture Along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 133.

¹²⁸ William Blackstone, “Offences Against the Public Health and the Public Police or Economy,” in *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (London: A. Strahan, 1803), 4:164.

protected from marauding soldiers and price-gouging merchants alike.”¹²⁹ When men joined the Continental Army they left their community’s moral economy, one of the fundamental aspects of civil society, vulnerable to immoral merchants and soldiers. Joining the Continental Army, or the British Army for that matter, proved detrimental to not only one’s own economic interests, but also the interests of the whole community as well.¹³⁰

Violent attacks on the Pennsylvania frontier continued years after the start of the Revolutionary War. However, many men, who did not care to uphold their social and moral obligations to society “through their inimical disposition. . . in order to serve their own selfish designs,” left the frontier to serve in the standing army, which was a “very great uneasiness to the soldiers and the valley settlements in general.”¹³¹ The individuals who chose to remain close to home and fight for their families and communities considered the war within the Susquehanna Valley more important than the war that occupied much of the eastern theater. Meanwhile more concerned with creating a strong, obedient army that would work towards achieving independence from Great Britain, George Washington continuously ignored the concurrent war that took place on the frontier. However, with independence in mind, many men who did not join Washington and the Continental Army did not want their families to suffer in a poor and miserable condition. Ordinary soldiers chose to stay within the valley and looked for an alternative route that still gave them the benefits of being a soldier, but also fulfilled their moral obligations to the good of the whole while settlers continued to experience the harsh reality from the British Allied Native American warfare.

¹²⁹ Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 133.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Nathan Denison to Roger Sherman and Samuel Huntingdon in *The Susquehanna Papers, 1776-1784* ed. Robert Taylor (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 7:34.

Violence within the Susquehanna River Valley intensified in July of 1778, as a strong force of British Allied Native Americans and Tories attacked the Connecticut Yankees that settled in Pennsylvania, making the massacre the bloodiest day in Northumberland County, (present day Lycoming County) history. The attack on the settlers became known as the Wyoming Massacre, and was part of a plan to eradicate the settlements in the valleys of both the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna River. According to one local historian, on that day, “children were murdered before their parents’ eyes; husbands were compelled to witness the horrid deaths of their wives—and in turn, children were compelled to gaze upon the mangled bodies of their parents.”¹³² Unable to cope with the sheer magnitude of the onslaught, Samuel Hunter, the County Lieutenant of Northumberland County, issued a mass evacuation of troops from the West and North Branches of the Susquehanna River. In fear, panicked settlers gathered their belongings and sent them down the river. Women and children evacuated on rafts while the men protected them alongside the riverbanks.¹³³

The atrocities committed in the Susquehanna Valley encouraged local soldiers to stay near their homes to protect their loved ones, and not join the Continental Army. Meanwhile, as the Native Americans and British continued to destroy the frontier, General Washington, finally realized that he needed to defend the Susquehanna River Valley as part of a new strategy to win the Revolutionary War. Leaders of the Continental Army, including Washington, recognized that the attacks in the valley had serious economic implications and needed to stop the Native Americans and British before they destroyed all the granary the valley had to offer.¹³⁴ According to New York governor, George Clinton, soon after the massacres on the frontier, “the public had lost by the

¹³² Meginness, *Otzinachson: A History of the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna*, 554.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 510.

¹³⁴ Mancall, *Valley of Opportunity*, 138.

Destruction of these settlements some of the principal Granaries in this State from whence alone the army might have drawn supplies sufficient, at least to have prevented their present want.”¹³⁵ Failure to take action and stop the British and Native Americans from destroying the valley’s most valuable agricultural supply would have been “fatal” for the Continental Army because they depended on grain for bread. Men of the Continental Army, including George Washington, realized the need to protect the frontier not because of the horrible murders committed by the British and their allies, but to protect the valuable agricultural resources that helped fuel the Continental Army during the American Revolution. This realization reiterated why many men refused to give in to, what they perceived, as the greedy and self-interested qualities possessed by the Continental Army and its leaders.

As the British and Native Americans continued to lay waste to the frontier, General Washington developed an offensive operation to eliminate and drive out the British and Native Americans from the valley. In 1779, Washington was determined to “employ a large detachment from the Continental Army to penetrate into the heart of the Indian country, to chastise the hostile tribes and their white associates and adherents, for their cruel aggressions on the defenseless inhabitants.”¹³⁶ Washington appointed Major John Sullivan to command the expedition and ordered Sullivan to “destroy their settlements, ruin their crops, and make such thorough devastations as to render the country entirely uninhabitable for the present, and thus to compel the savages to remove to a greater distance from our frontiers.”¹³⁷ Sullivan’s Campaign became inherently important to ordinary soldiers. For example, because the Continental Army recruited

¹³⁵ George Clinton to John Jay, November 17, 1778, *Public Papers of George Clinton* ed. Hugh Hastings (Alban: 1889-1914), 4:289-290.

¹³⁶ Amos Blanchard, *The American Military Biography Containing Biographical Sketches of the Officers of the Revolution, and the Principal Statesmen of that Period. To Which Are Added the Life and Character of Benedict Arnold and the Narrative of Major Andre* (Wheeling: Wheeling F. Kenyon, 1833), 191.

¹³⁷ Blanchard, *The American Military Biography*, 192.

many of its men to relocate to the east and required soldiers to leave their families and communities behind, many frontiersmen could join Sullivan's Campaign while remaining close to their own homes. Staying in proximity to their own homes provided significant reassurance for soldiers as they fought in the Revolutionary War. Fighting in Sullivan's Campaign also helped frontiersmen adhere to the common principles of a well-ordered society. Many men viewed Sullivan's expedition as an opportunity to help with the annihilation of the forces that was leaving many of their families and their properties in ruin.

George Washington relied heavily on John Sullivan's military experience and ability to command large bodies of troops throughout the duration of the Revolutionary War. Sullivan was a member of the First Continental Congress in 1774 and at the commencement of war in 1775, Washington appointed Sullivan as Brigadier-General in the Continental Army. In 1776, Sullivan rejoined General Washington and was promoted to the rank of Major General. Able to take military matters in his own hands, in August of 1777, Sullivan, without the authority of Congress, "planned and executed an expedition against the enemy on Staten Island."¹³⁸ Achieving honorable recognition and praise from not only the members of Congress, but from the Commander-in-Chief, in August of 1778, Sullivan commanded an expedition on Newport Island. Sullivan acted in co-operation with the French fleet under the direction of the French Admiral Charles Hector, Comte d'Estaing. With the help of Marquis de La Fayette and General Nathaniel Greene, Sullivan's expedition on Newport Island essentially failed. Sullivan and his distinguished counterparts led a successful retreat back to the main and Sullivan continued to reign as an honorable commander.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid., 286.

¹³⁹ James Thatcher, *A Military Journal During the Revolutionary War from 1775-1783: Describing Interesting Events and Transactions of This Period: With Numerous Historical Facts and Anecdotes* (Boston: Cottons & Bernards. 1827), 197; Blanchard, *The American Military Biography*, 287.

Sullivan earned the respect of several Continental Officials and even the admiration of ordinary men. Sullivan found himself in command of perhaps one of the largest military campaigns that took place in the north during the American Revolution in 1779. The goal of Sullivan's Campaign was to break the Iroquois Confederacy and their Indian counterparts, which included the Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Onondaga, and the Tuscarora. Although the campaign was about eradicating the Indians settlements, Sullivan also sought to destroy any Loyalist who had supported the British Crown.¹⁴⁰ Together, the Indians and the British annihilated the settlements of ordinary soldiers and their families on the Pennsylvania and New York frontiers. Sullivan wanted to stop the decimation of frontier settlements and gain the respect of both the Continental Army and men who were willing to sacrifice their lives to stop such violence.

Furthermore, while sitting at his headquarters in Middlebrook, New Jersey, Washington developed a strategic plan that would essentially help Sullivan complete his expedition throughout northern Pennsylvania and southern New York. Washington stated that "the immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting of more."¹⁴¹ Washington envisioned a quick attack into Iroquois territory to eliminate a key British ally without weakening the majority of his forces outside of New York. Under the command of Sullivan, Washington also employed General James Clinton, Sullivan's second in command; General William Maxwell; Enoch Poor; Edward Hand; and ten other companies to be raised in the state of Pennsylvania. Major John Sullivan accepted Washington's orders and tried to convince the British Allied Natives that he had "the power to carry the war into their country

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ George Washington to Major General John Sullivan, May 31, 1779 in *The Papers of George Washington* ed. Edward Lengel (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 325-326.

whenever they commence hostilities.”¹⁴² While Sullivan had the power to carry war into Indian Territory, he realized that he lacked the support of the people to successfully accomplish the orders Washington had given him. Therefore, Sullivan continuously pushed for the backing of state officials for the completion of a successful expedition.

For the duration of the campaign, Sullivan had difficulty obtaining supplies for the men fighting in his expedition. Food quality was poor and Sullivan continuously asked for assistance, but the state officials of Pennsylvania consistently refused him. In a letter to Joseph Reed, the president of Pennsylvania, Sullivan stated that “I find the Law of your state will much impede the intended expedition, unless your Excellency will procure an order from the Executive Council empowering the Quarter Masters to impress in this county such wagons.”¹⁴³ Sullivan’s use of the word “impressment” sparked confrontation with Joseph Reed and the State of Pennsylvania because they felt that Sullivan was abusing his powers. Not only were supplies low, but Washington was concerned about delays. Sullivan’s Campaign was delayed due to the fact that Sullivan complained to the state about the lack of supplies he was not receiving. Enraged, Washington pushed Sullivan to carry out his orders without any exceptions.

Likewise, by July 1779, Sullivan and his men had yet to leave their base in the Wyoming Valley. Sullivan was still writing Washington and the members of the Board of War for supplies that his men so desperately lacked. Sullivan additionally lacked the support from Congress. However, once Sullivan left the Wyoming Valley later that month the Indians knew to evacuate their towns before the Continentals destroyed them. Due to the consistent delays, Washington again was infuriated. Washington took the initiative to recognize the violent atrocities being

¹⁴² F. C. Johnson, *The Historical Record Devoted Principally to the Early History of the Wyoming Valley* (Wilkes Barre: Press of the Wilkes Barre Record, 1889), 197.

¹⁴³ General John Sullivan to President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, May 11, 1779 in *Pennsylvania State Archives* ed. William Henry Egle (Harrisburg: State Printer, 1897), 1:7:338.

committed on the frontier, an area that Washington, at first, considered insignificant. Washington did not want to waste his time by the delays caused by Sullivan. In order to ensure that Sullivan accomplished Washington's initial orders to destroy the Indian settlements, Washington, therefore, ordered Colonel Daniel Broadhead, an officer of the 8th Pennsylvania Regiment, to leave his post at Fort Pitt in Western Pennsylvania to help Sullivan win the British base at Fort Niagara. Together, Broadhead and Sullivan burned hundreds of Indian settlements as well as their crop fields.¹⁴⁴

The destruction of the Indian settlements continued well into late August of 1779 as General John Clinton and Sullivan destroyed every settlement in the northern most portions of Pennsylvania and the Finger Lakes region in western New York. However, Loyalist John Butler and his Rangers attempted to stop Sullivan and his men at Newtown located near present day Elmira, New York. Nevertheless, in the beginning of September Sullivan destroyed the last of the Iroquois settlements near Geneseo, New York, and returned to Pennsylvania. Major Sullivan reported to General Washington and the members of Congress that there was "not a single village left of the five nations."¹⁴⁵ Washington was pleased when Sullivan reached his goals of not only waging war on the British Army, but on an entire people. Ordinary soldiers, however, many having fought in Sullivan's Campaign, continued to put the greater good of their community as top priority. Even after the campaign, men still fought in the Revolutionary War to defend the valley from the British and Native Americans. To a degree, their sense of localism increased in fear of more violence enticed by British and Native American warfare.

¹⁴⁴ General Sullivan to John Jay, July 21, 1779 in "Letters and Papers of Major-General John Sullivan: Continental Army, 1775-1779," ed. Otis G. Hammond *Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1939), 80-84; William Wait, "Sullivan's Campaign," in *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (Albany: New York State Historical Association, 1906), 84.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Major John Sullivan provided security for many individuals and their families because his Expedition not only attempted to stop the source of violence for many of the valley inhabitants, but also tried to give ordinary soldiers the benefits of being a soldier while also striving to protect the public good. Ordinary frontiersmen in Pennsylvania wanted to protect their families and their neighbors from the harsh violence of the Indian raids that frequently occurred on the frontier. It is also easy to understand why many men refused to fight in the Continental Army under George Washington as he continuously destroyed an individual's concept of civil society and refused to provide protection for settlers living in the western portions of the state of Pennsylvania. To understand why so many ordinary soldiers stayed near their homes and joined Sullivan's Campaign rather than fighting in the east under Washington, one must look at the personal stories of the settlers that endured the violence on the Pennsylvania frontier.

Like Daniel Van Campen, Peter Keister, and William Reynolds, the previous Revolutionary veterans mentioned in chapter two, Benjamin Walker also strove to uphold his moral obligation to protect the good of his community in times of despair. Walker, who lived on the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna, mustered in 1775 and volunteered until the end of the Revolutionary War. For six months, Walker served as a spy "against the Indians in the West Branch of the Susquehanna River."¹⁴⁶ The following year, Walker served as a Sergeant in a company of riflemen commanded by Captain James Morrow of the Northumberland County Militia. That same month, Walker participated in the "campaign against the Indian town, then called Tioga on the East Branch of the Susquehanna River commanded by Colonel Thomas Hartley."¹⁴⁷ Walker remained vital for the protection of the people and property along the Susquehanna River and in 1779, Walker took up arms in Sullivan's Campaign against the Indians. Walker's knowledge of the Indians and his

¹⁴⁶ Benjamin Walker, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, W14088.

¹⁴⁷ Walker, *Pension Files*.

“correct use of a rifle” influence his decision to defend the frontier until the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. According to Walker, other inhabitants of the valley, including his father “were suffering not only of property but of life by savage barbarity.”¹⁴⁸

At the same time, John Miller also upheld his moral obligation to society by volunteering in the Revolutionary War to protect the people residing along the Susquehanna River. Miller stated that the “inhabitants of that frontier were subject to the depredations of the Indians and during the summer of 1779, it was necessary to be constantly on the guard.”¹⁴⁹ Miller also joined General Sullivan’s Campaign, but volunteered for a longer tour in 1780 and 1781. Miller stated that because “after the Indian expedition of General Sullivan, the Indians were very troublesome among the frontier during the years of 1780 and 1781 as they were influenced by a spirit of retaliation for the destruction of their villages and crops by the troops under Sullivan.”¹⁵⁰ The Native people’s hostility towards Sullivan and his troops proved detrimental to settlers and their families. Such violence, Miller recalled, kept him and the other volunteers “in a state of constant readiness to repel such Indian attacks and to move to the relief of the defenseless inhabitants as occasion required.”¹⁵¹

Men like Walker and Miller all committed their efforts and time to the war, but also remained close to their homes. The Revolutionary War, for not only soldiers, but settlers as well, was not about the expulsion of the British from the colonies, but protecting their communities, families, and even their state from the Native Americans and those who remained loyal to the crown. Many men who participated in the Revolutionary War bonded together to protect the good of the whole, even if it meant putting their own lives at risk. According to James Wilson,

¹⁴⁸ Walker, *Pension Files*.

¹⁴⁹ John Miller, June, 1832, *Revolutionary War Pension Applications*, S11072.

¹⁵⁰ Miller, *Pension Files*.

¹⁵¹ Miller, *Pension Files*.

The fact that we are social beings, dependent upon one another and because we are able to avail ourselves of the essential help of others, at least in the intimate precincts of life, only on the basis of understandings that arise spontaneously out of, and necessarily govern, human relationships: the need to show some concern for the well-being of others, treat others with some minimal fairness, and honor obligations.¹⁵²

The men who chose to either leave their service in the Continental Army or to not even join at all, honored their moral obligation to society by protecting other individuals with the community. Maintaining the essence of civil society existed in these individuals will to submit to the good of the whole and their will to mobilize in times of hardship.

While many ordinary soldiers fought in Sullivan's Campaign to help with the destruction of the Indian's settlements, men of the Susquehanna Valley continued to uphold their duties in maintaining civil society even after the campaign ended. For a short period, the Indian raids along the Pennsylvania frontier were temporarily disbanded by Sullivan and the men who fought under him, but within a course of a few months, the Iroquois, and British Tories again attacked the valley well into the 1780's. As Jerimiah Fogg, a member of Sullivan's Expedition stated, "the nests are destroyed, but the birds are still on wing."¹⁵³ The Sullivan Expedition may have destroyed the Indian settlements on the Pennsylvania and New York frontiers, but it did not terminate the Indian's capability of waging war on ordinary soldiers and their families.

Major John Lee stood among the local militiamen who volunteered and risked everything to protect their community. Lee lived in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, and following his arrival in Winfield (present day Union County), Lee established one of the only taverns in the county.¹⁵⁴ Lee's Tavern was an important gathering place for settlers up and down the Susquehanna

¹⁵² James Wilson, *Moral Sense* (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 1993), 25-26.

¹⁵³ William Nester, *The Frontier War for American Independence* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2004), 268.

¹⁵⁴ Kathy K. Swope, *Massacre and Murder in the Susquehanna Valley: The Lee Massacre and Pine Creek Indian Murders* (Union County Historical Society, 2014), 4:2:34.

Valley during the revolutionary period. In colonial Pennsylvania, the tavern not only served as a place for entertainment and lodging, but it was a key establishment in the social and political realms. In rural frontier towns like Winfield, taverns were gateways to the outer world as they provided newspapers and fostered political debates. During the Revolutionary War, local governments also met at taverns to discuss both legal and political matters. In addition, when it was time to protect the community, taverns served as military stations where ordinary men of the valley voluntarily joined the ranks of the militia, which, at the time, was largely unsupported by the colonial government.¹⁵⁵

John Lee's position as a tavern owner put him into new leadership roles leading up to the Revolutionary War. Lee had not only served as the overseer of the poor in Buffalo Township, but was also elected to serve as Captain in the Twelfth Regiment with Colonel James Potter. While volunteering to defend the frontiers, Lee quickly ascended to a prominent position. John, obviously popular amongst the rest of the soldiers, he was voted in as Major, a position which he held until the conclusion of the Revolutionary War.¹⁵⁶ Lee's commitment to his community allowed him to become one of the most respectable men in the county of Northumberland. He fought to defend the frontier, but also opened his tavern to ordinary settlers, allowing them to seek refuge from the violence committed by the British and Native Americans.¹⁵⁷

John's experience in the war revolved around the protection and betterment of his community. Settlers relied on Lee for protection, but the Native Americans, aware of Lee's commitment to his community members, sought to leave a majority of the inhabitants vulnerable

¹⁵⁵ Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 75-155; Herbert Bell, *History of Northumberland County, Pennsylvania: including Its Aboriginal History and the Colonial and Revolutionary Period* (Chicago: Brown, Runk & Company, 1891).

¹⁵⁶ Swope, *Massacre and Murder in the Susquehanna Valley*, 35.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

by killing Lee and anyone who supported him. In 1782, Lee sat down to have dinner with his family and neighbors to discuss not only their daily affairs, but also troubles that affected most frontiersmen living in the Susquehanna River Valley. That night, Lee and his family were sent into a panic when a group of sixty to seventy Indians broke into their home immediately threatening the lives of not only Lee, but also his neighbors. Upon breaking in, the Indians took Major John Lee, his family, and thirteen others from the house and threatened to kill every one of them if they did not submit to the British. Lee, along with his neighbors John Walker and Mrs. Claudius Boatman, refused the Indian's demand, so their captors scalped and tomahawked them in front of their families.¹⁵⁸ The Indians then took Lee's wife and children and held them as prisoners under the British. Under total control and growing weary, Mrs. Lee and her children marched across the rugged terrain of Northumberland County. Once the Indians saw their strength deteriorating, they quickly approached Mrs. Lee, putting a rifle to her head, and blowing off an entire portion of her face. The Indians soon after went for Lee's children, seizing them by their heels, and bashing them against a tree.¹⁵⁹

The sheer violence committed by these British Allied Native Americans and Tories, persuaded settlers along the Susquehanna River Valley to band together and protect their families and neighbors. According to an account written in August of 1782 in the *Independent Gazetteer*, "parties of inhabitants hearing about the Lee affair, went to their relief. . . the scene and groans of the dead and dying people, were enough to have melted any heart of flesh."¹⁶⁰ Even settlers who were not directly affected by the massacres taking place in the Susquehanna River Valley risked their lives to help the ones who were. People were willingly opening their homes or providing relief

¹⁵⁸ John Blair Lynn, *Annals of the Buffalo Valley* (Harrisburg: Lane S. Hart, Printer & Binder, 1877), 204.

¹⁵⁹ Lynn, *Annals of the Buffalo Valley*, 205-206.

¹⁶⁰ *Independent Gazetteer*, Philadelphia, August 1782

to settlers that encountered the wrath of the British and Native Americans, thus showing their outward loyalty towards their neighbors and families.

Within the Susquehanna River Valley, many men who ended up fighting in the Revolutionary War felt deceived by George Washington and the Continental Army, as Washington tried to break the communal bond that many of these men had formed with not only their families, but also their friends and neighbors. One's communal obligation in protecting the public good took precedence over the self-interested characteristics that many leaders of the Continental Line possessed. Whether one was a man or a woman, represented different ethnicities, or came from different places, a settler's patriotism was derived from their localism. It is important to show that the Susquehanna River Valley experienced the Revolutionary War differently compared to those that fought with George Washington's Continental Line in the east. In the eyes of the men and women of the valley, everyone mattered, and it was up to them to keep a strong sense of communal identity in times of hardship.

Conclusion

As soon as we consciously perceive ourselves not as limited and isolated entities left to our own devices, but, on the contrary, as individuals integrated into a coherent and dependable whole, everything changes. We feel ourselves to be part of a harmonious whole, not only on personal, domestic, professional, social, and global levels, but also integrated on a universal level, which offers the most profound meaning. That is one for all and all for one, in natural unity.

~Jean-Marie Paglia, *The Way for Mankind*¹⁶¹

The violence that occurred in the Susquehanna Valley started to subside in the mid 1780s. According to historian John Meginness, “peace, happy peace soon spread her wings over a land that had been drenched in blood.”¹⁶² Knowledge of the signing of the Treaty of Paris reached the Susquehanna River Valley due to a public announcement given by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. The Treaty of Paris not only made the thirteen colonies free and independent states, but also sought to perpetuate peace between Great Britain and the United States. At the signing of the Treaty, however, the British never mentioned the fate of the thousands of Native Americans with whom they allied during the Revolutionary War. The Treaty of Paris established no mutual agreements between the Native Americans and the settlers living within the colonies. Without a treaty between the two, many years of violence that obliterated everything along the

¹⁶¹ Jean-Marie Paglia, *The Way for Mankind: Philosophical and Intimations on Economic and Social Issues* (France: JMP Publishing, 2008), 74.

¹⁶² Meginness, *Otzjnachson*, 665.

Pennsylvania frontier was ideally to continue, as there was no protection being given to both groups of people.

The settlers and Native Americans knew that the war with Great Britain was over and they wanted the war between themselves to end as well. After the war, George Washington, who had been more concerned about winning the war in the east rather than providing protection to the people residing on the frontier, now realized the constant state of warfare on the frontier had to end. Washington suggested that a peace treaty, much like the Treaty of Paris, should be instituted between both the citizens and Native peoples. Washington stated,

My ideas, therefore, of a line of conduct proper to be observed, not only towards the Indians but also for the government of the citizens of the western country, which is intimately connected therewith, are simply these. In establishing this line, in the first instance, care should be taken neither to yield nor to grasp at too much; but to endeavor to impress the Indians with the idea of generosity of our disposition to accommodate them, and of the necessity we are under, of providing for our warriors, our young people who are growing up, and strangers who are coming from other countries to live among us; with the line we find it necessary to establish, compensation should be made to them for their claims within it.¹⁶³

The line proposed by George Washington was known as the Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1784.

The peace treaty therefore, not only returned all American prisoners, but also reconfigured the boundary line of 1768, as all Indians surrendered their land claims stretching to the Ohio River. The Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1784 represented the first step towards establishing peace between the Natives and the American citizens. Unlike previous treaties made between the

¹⁶³ Jared Sparks, *the Writings of George Washington: Being his Correspondence, Addresses, Messages, and other Papers, Official and Private* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray and Company, 1835), 8:478.

Native population and the Pennsylvania government, the Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1784 set the foundation for the distribution of “fair” and peaceful treaties in the future.¹⁶⁴

With peace established, settlers that left their homes during the tumultuous years of the 1770s and early 1780s, and began to move back to the Susquehanna River Valley to start a new life with their families and community members. While redeveloping their communities, many individuals still wanted to uphold a strong communal identity rooted in not only the protection of other individuals, but also wanted new developments and new institutions to benefit the good of the whole, not the self-interest of particular individuals. Emerging from the harsh reality of life within the Susquehanna River Valley was an ideology that we have come to understand today as *Republicanism*. Although deriving from the Enlightenment and radical at the time of the American Revolution, Republicanism shaped an individual’s overall understanding of not only society, but also morality. According to historian Gordon Wood, the basic character shaped out of the idea of Republicanism possessed the characteristics of “integrity, virtue, and disinterestedness.”¹⁶⁵ These characteristics helped shape an individual’s understanding of what their duties were to not only other individuals living within their communities, but what it meant to uphold the fundamental principles civil society.

One of the most prominent characteristics that individuals living along the Susquehanna River Valley possessed was virtue, the will to adhere to high moral standards. In a republic, each individual was to sacrifice his or her own self-interests for the sake of the public good. According to Marilyn Michaud, “virtue signified a devotion to the public

¹⁶⁴ Joan M. Zenzen, *Fort Stanwix National Monument: Reconstructing the Past and Future* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 16-18.

¹⁶⁵ Gordon Wood, *Classical Republicanism, and the American Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago-Kent Law Review, 1990), 66:13:22.

good,” and the willingness to “surrender private interests to the good of the community not only signaled an individual’s patriotism, but also revealed their private virtues.”¹⁶⁶ During the American Revolution, it is easy to see that the inhabitants of the Susquehanna River Valley possessed virtue and valued being virtuous to their friends, families, and neighbors. At a time where violence and hardship occurred frequently, it is sometimes easy to allow ones’ own self-interest dominate. For the settlers of the valley, though, self-interest, otherwise known as *liberalism*, did not overtake the hearts and minds of individuals, the good of whole community reigned supreme.

Historians cannot overlook these ideologies that played a significant role in persuading individuals to participate in the American Revolution. Rather than limiting research to the analysis of religion, politics, and economics, an individual’s motivations and willingness to participate in the revolutionary cause needs to be looked at by analyzing settlers’ moral and social obligations to their communities. In reality, morality helped fuel an individual’s will to take extensive action in times of need. This research shares the perspectives of both men and women who either indirectly or directly participated in the Revolutionary War. The stories of poor ordinary settlers, especially women, at which society considered inconsequential or unimportant at the time, help to understand their revolutionary experience along the Susquehanna River Valley, and also the early development of modern day Republicanism on the Pennsylvania frontier. Overall, this analysis of communal identity, civil society, and moral philosophy in the Susquehanna River Valley adds to scholar’s understanding of why people were willing to participate in the Revolutionary War.

¹⁶⁶ Marilyn Michaud, *Republicanism, and the American Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 147; Wood, *Classical Republicanism*, 27-29.

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