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The Tories of the Upper Ohio

by

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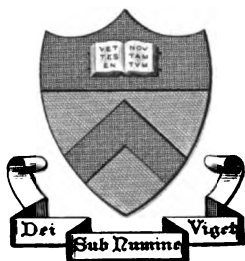
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The Tories of the Upper Ohio.

By PROFESSOR WILBUR H. SIEBERT,
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Unlike Carleton Island and Oswego at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, Niagara at the western end, and Detroit at the head of Lake Erie, Fort Pitt did not become a permanent center of Tory and Indian operations against the neighboring settlements during the Revolutionary War. This was due, however, to the prompt action of the frontiersmen of the upper Ohio rather than to the absence of Tory leadership at Pittsburgh. Lord Dunmore, of Virginia, like other provincial governors, was a firm adherent of the Crown, and happened to be actively concerned in the early seventeen seventies about affairs at Pittsburg, on account of the boundary dispute between his colony and Pennsylvania. In order to settle his dispute he determined to take forcible possession of Fort Pitt, and sent Doctor John Connolly, captain commandant of the militia of that region, to carry his plan into effect. At the end of January, 1774, Connolly with about 80 militiamen seized the fort, and "usurped the entire government of Pennsylvania" in and about that place. The name of Fort Pitt was changed to Fort Dunmore, and a new county was organized with this post as its judicial seat. While many of the old residents of Pittsburg sided with Connolly, a large number of others resisted the new order of things, and was severely treated by the commandant. Thus, Dunmore's assertion of Virginia's claims to the upper Ohio must be regarded as "part of the unjust assumption of the government of Great Britain that brought on the War of the Revolution" in the back country. The situation was only aggravated by the depredations against the Indians committed by Connolly and his adherents. Such conduct afforded cause for added complaint on the part of the inhabitants of Pittsburg and for retaliation on the part of the savages. Dunmore now found it necessary to invade the Ohio country with the militia of the frontier counties, in order to suppress the Indians and restore peace.¹

At the close of this expedition, known as Dunmore's War, Connolly decided to support British authority in America, and was directed by the Governor to disband the troops returned from the Indian Country, and

¹ Proceedings of the Am. Antiq. Soc., Oct., 1909, 1-18.

to try to induce the Indians to espouse the royal cause. As he was placed in command of the garrison of Fort Dunmore at this time, that post continued to be the center of loyalist activity a little longer, as it was also the scene of an Indian council in June, 1775, at which the commandant, according to his own testimony, sought to win the redmen for the King. In his narrative Connolly says that he "had the happiness to succeed in this dangerous and critical undertaking." He also relates how he brought together a group of his friends—"most of them either officers in the militia, or magistrates of the county" [of West Augusta]—who entered into a secret compact by which they agreed to assist in restoring constitutional government, if he could procure the necessary authority to raise men.²

In the early weeks of July, Connolly disbanded the garrison under his command, in compliance with the orders of the Governor. Dunmore, indeed, took this way of depriving the colonists, most of whom were opposing him and his agent, of the means of defensive and offensive action. The colonists, however, were not to be outdone in this manner, especially as Connolly had taken his departure from the post on July 20th, on his way to visit his patron in Virginia. They promptly seized the post, and changed its name back to Fort Pitt. Fort Blair, which stood near the mouth of the Kanawha and had been evacuated at the same time as Pittsburg, the Americans did not recover, for it was burned by some of the Ohio Indians during the summer of 1775.³

Connolly found Dunmore a refugee aboard a man-of-war at Norfolk. There he remained with the Governor for a fortnight discussing and completing plans for future operations. He was then sent to Boston to lay his plans before General Gage. According to these plans, Connolly was to proceed to Detroit, where the Canadians and Indians were to be encouraged to join him, while Captain Hugh Lord and his garrison, transferred from Fort Gage on the Illinois, was to be placed under his command. Here also he was to be supplied with the artillery, stores, and provisions necessary for his expedition against Fort Dunmore. Connolly believed that with such an equipment and force and with a commission as lieutenant colonel commandant he could, on reaching the upper Ohio, increase his army by enlisting a battalion of loyalists and some independent companies, and obtain the co-operation of the Ohio Indians. The support of the Indians he hoped to win by liberal presents to their chiefs and

² Proceedings of the Am. Antiq. Soc., Oct., 1909, 12, 15-17; Thwaites and Kellogg, Rev. on the Upper Ohio, 17, 18; Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., Oct., 1888, 313-317.

³ Thwaites and Kellogg, Rev. on the Upper Ohio, x, xi, 20; Am. Archives, 4th Ser., iv, 201; Proceedings, Wis. Hist. Soc., 1909, 126, n. 4; Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., Oct., 1888, 321, 323.

that of the militia of Augusta County, Virginia, by the assurance that those taking up arms would be confirmed in the titles of their lands and be granted 300 acres each in addition. Strengthened thus by reinforcements whose loyalty was to be generously rewarded, Connolly was to destroy Forts Pitt and Fincastle, should they offer resistance. He was then to penetrate Virginia with his troops and Indian auxiliaries in order to form a junction with Lord Dunmore at Alexandria, thereby severing the Southern colonies from the Northern and turning the scale in favor of the royal cause in the South.⁴

Meanwhile, loyalist traders were busy in the Indian villages, arousing the suspicions of their inhabitants against the "Long Knives," whose hostility was represented as being directed against their neighbors of the woods, as well as against the King. But the committee of correspondence of West Augusta County was equal to the emergency: it took the initiative in bringing about a conference between commissioners representing Congress and the Western tribesmen. This conference was held at Pittsburg in September and October, 1775, and was attended—we are told—by "the largest Indian delegation ever seen at this frontier fort—Ottawa and Wyandot from the neighborhood of Detroit, Mingo, Shawnee, and Delaware from the Ohio valley; Seneca from the Upper Allegheny," all of whom united in a treaty of peace and neutrality with the new American nation.

After a prolonged stay in Boston, Connolly returned to Virginia, and received his commission as lieutenant colonel commandant from Lord Dunmore. On the night of November 13th, he started on his overland journey for Detroit in company with Allen Cameron and Dr. John Ferdinand Dalziel Smyth, both staunch loyalists. Cameron had been an agent in the Southern Department for Indian Affairs, under Colonel John Stuart, and was to be given a lieutenancy in the loyalist battalion to be raised by Connolly. Smyth had been a resident of Maryland, and was familiar with the lower part of that province, through which Connolly intended to pass. He was to be appointed a surgeon in the proposed battalion. The travellers journeyed on without molestation until they got a few miles beyond Hager's Town, where they stopped at an inn on the evening of November 19th. Here Connolly was recognized as a suspicious character, and was soon reported to the colonel of the Minute Men in the village five miles back. Before daylight next morning the slumbers of the three loyalists at the inn were broken by a body of troops, and

⁴ Proceedings of the Am. Antiq. Soc., Oct., 1909, 17-20; Thwaites and Kellogg, Rev. on the Upper Ohio, xiv, 136-143; Papers read before the Lancaster Co. Hist. Soc., vol. vii, no. 6, 120, 121; Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., Jan., 1889, 407-411.

Connolly and his companions were carried back to Hager's Town to be examined by the committee of safety. The committee did not determine the matter after the first hearing, but decided to hold a further examination at Frederick Town on the following day. At Frederick Town Connolly experienced the misfortune of having his visit to Boston disclosed by a colonel who knew him, and had just returned from Washington's headquarters at Cambridge. A few days later a copy of Connolly's "proposals," which had hitherto been overlooked, was discovered. Having all the evidence it required, the committee of safety communicated the capture of Connolly and his companions to Congress, and asked for instructions. Congress ordered that the prisoners be escorted to Philadelphia under guard.⁵

On the night of December 28th, that is, the night before their departure for Philadelphia, Dr. Smyth made his escape from Frederick Town, bearing with him letters from Connolly to his wife and Alexander McKee at Pittsburg, to Captain Lord at Kaskaskia, and Captain Lernoult at Detroit. The two latter were urged to "push down the Mississippi and join Lord Dunmore." Smyth relates something of his experiences on this flight in a memorial, which he presented to Parliament, January 1, 1784. He says that he travelled 300 miles through a hostile country and over the Allegheny Mountains, encountering the perils and hardships of a journey in the depths of winter. He admits being recaptured, though he does not tell us that he was taken on January 12, 1776, by a party from Pittsburg. Although the letters intrusted to him by Connolly were found on his person, Smyth asserts that he effected the purpose for which he had risked his life. He adds that he was "dragged in triumph 700 miles, bound hands and feet, to the Congress," after which he suffered captivity for eighteen months. This was in Philadelphia, whither Connolly had, in the meantime, been conducted. But once more Smyth escaped, going this time to New York, where he joined General Howe in 1777. Here he was given a captain's commission in the Queens' Rangers, for which he raised—if we may believe his own statement—a corps of 185 men at his own expense, in addition to others in such number that his recruits composed the greater part of the regiment. However, the only men accredited to Smyth by the muster rolls of the loyalist corps were 61 in number, with whom he and Lieutenant James Murray joined the British army at Philadelphia in October, 1777.⁶

⁵ Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., Jan., 1889, 411-417; Proceedings of the Am. Antiq. Soc., Oct., 1909, 19-21; Papers read before the Lancaster Co. Hist. Soc., Oct., 1909, vol. vii, no. 6, 121, 122.

⁶ Pa. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., Jan., 1889, 417; Proceedings of the Am. Antiq. Soc., Oct., 1869, 21, 22; Thwaites and Kellogg, Rev. on the Upper Ohio, 138, n. 43, 139, n. 44; Memorial of John Ferdinand Dalziel Smyth; Rev. W. O. Raymond's abstracts of the Muster Rolls (unpublished); Simcoe's Journal, 1843, 18.

After Connolly reached Philadelphia about January 5, 1776, he was committed to jail with Cameron on the charge of treasonable practices against America. Almost a year after this (that is, in December, 1776), Smyth and Cameron tried to abscond from their Philadelphia prison by means of a rope made of blankets and fastened to the roof. Cameron, who was first in undertaking the descent, broke both ankles by a fall of 50 feet, the rope having given way. He was found in an apparently dying condition, but on his partial recovery obtained his release in the winter of 1778, and went to England. Early in July, 1780, Connolly was permitted to go to New York. Arrangements for his exchange were completed in the following October, under a resolution of Congress. In New York his "irrepressible loyalism" manifested itself in the submission of a plan to Clinton for attacking the frontier outposts, seizing Pittsburg, and fortifying the Alleghenies, and in an attempt to raise a Tory regiment. As neither of these schemes proved feasible, Connolly was appointed lieutenant colonel commandant in the Queen's Rangers and sailed with that regiment to Yorktown in December. Soon after his arrival in the South he was given the command of the loyalists of Virginia and North Carolina on the peninsula formed by the James River and Chesapeake Bay. In September, 1781, he was again taken prisoner, but was permitted by the Governor of Virginia to go to Philadelphia, where he arrived, December 12. Here he was kept in jail until the following March, when he was paroled and allowed to go to New York, on condition of his sailing to England. This condition he promptly fulfilled.⁷

The discovery and suppression of Connolly's plot by no means terminated Tory machinations in the upper Ohio country. During the summer of 1777 the British authorities at Detroit sent out raiding parties against the frontier. These parties made a practice of leaving proclamations signed both by Sir Guy Carleton, governor of Quebec, and Henry Hamilton, lieutenant governor at Detroit, beside the bodies of the slain victims. Such documents were found, for example, near Kittanning, Hannahstown, and Wheeling, and promised humane treatment to all who would take refuge in the British posts, together with a land bounty of 200 acres to those serving as private soldiers in the King's defence during the war. The effect of these proclamations, coupled with the threat suggested by the dead bodies lying near them, is traceable in the Tory conspiracy that was revealed to Colonel Thomas Gaddis of West Moreland County, Pennsylvania, late in August, 1777. Doubtless, the flames

⁷ Papers, read before the Lancaster Co. Hist. Soc., vol. vii, no. 6, 126, Bur. of Arch., Ont., Pt. II, 1144-1146.

of this conspiracy were fed also by the rumor, then circulating, that an army of from 10,000 to 16,000 Canadians, Indians and British was marching from Detroit to take Pittsburg.⁸

Gaddis at once warned Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brown at Redstone Old Fort on the Monongahela that the Tories had associated for the purpose of cutting off the inhabitants; that Brown must therefore keep a strong guard over his powder magazine, which supplied all the Virginia counties west of the mountains, and also warn the friends of the American cause to be "upon their watch." Colonel Brown acted with promptness, posting a guard of fifteen men over the magazine, while Colonel Gaddis with about 100 men went in pursuit of the loyalists. But the officer who did most in uncovering and destroying this conspiracy was Colonel Zackwell Morgan of Monongahela County, Virginia. With 500 men he hastened to "Miner's Fort" in his vicinity, whence he wrote (August 29) to Brigadier General Edward Hand at Pittsburg that he had been forced to raise all the men possible, unenlisted as well as enlisted, to put a stop to what he called "this unnatural unheard of frantic scene of mischief * * * in the very heart of our country." Morgan said that he had already taken numbers who confessed to having sworn allegiance to the King, with the understanding that some of the leading men at Fort Pitt were to be "their rulers and heads." He declared further that such of his prisoners as had made confession agreed that the English, French, and Indians would descend on Pittsburg in a few days, when the loyalists were to embody themselves and Fort Pitt was to be surrendered with but little opposition. Morgan added that he had been astonished at some of the persons taken into custody, but that he was determined to purge the country before disbanding his troops. The conspiracy proved to be shortlived under the prompt measures taken by Colonels Morgan and Gaddis, although some of its leaders remained at Pittsburg until the following spring. In the neighboring country it required only a skirmish to disperse the loyalists.⁹

The rumored expedition from Detroit turned out to be only another Indian raid, which was directed not against Fort Pitt, but against Fort Henry at Wheeling. Probably not more than 200 redmen participated in the attacks—which were made on September 1 and 2—and instead of the thousands of white assailants confidently expected by the loyalists, there were only a few, if any.¹⁰

⁸ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense of the Upper Ohio*, x, 14. 21-24. 33-42, 46, 51-53, 54-68, 70, *passim*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51-53, 142, n. 8.

¹⁰ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, 54-67.

The only life lost as the result of the Tory conspiracy of 1777 was that of a loyalist by the name of Higginson or Hickson. Toward the end of October, when Colonel Zackwell Morgan and four associates were returning across the Cheat River with this man as their prisoner, Hickson was drowned. Morgan was charged with having pushed him out of the boat in which the passage of the stream was made, and the coroner's inquest found an indictment of murder against the Colonel. In consequence, the militia of Monongalia County was thrown into a state approaching mutiny, and most of the officers resigned. Fortunately, the trial, which was held at Williamsburg, resulted in Colonel Morgan's acquittal.¹¹

Meanwhile, the news of the Tory conspiracy was producing intense excitement in the Western country. Many prominent men on the Ohio frontier were suspected, including Captain Alexander McKee and Simon Girty, Colonels George Morgan and John Campbell, and even Brigadier General Hand himself. In November Congress took into consideration the disaffection arising from Carleton's and Hamilton's proclamations, and appointed a commission to investigate the growth of the movement and to find ways of checking it, as well as the Indian ravages. The case of Colonel George Morgan was referred to this commission, and the officer in question was placed under arrest, while Captain McKee was confined in his farm house, and Simon Girty was sent to the common guard house. Late in December General Hand reported to the commissioners of Congress that, after sifting the evidence against these men, he had removed Morgan's arrest and placed McKee on a new parole, and that Girty had been acquitted by a magistrate. Three and a half months later the commissioners decided in favor of Morgan's innocence, and restored to him his offices and honors. Some of those involved in the conspiracy fled to the mountains. Among these was Henry Maggee from the Perth Valley in Cumberland County, who resorted with thirty others to the fastness of the Alleghenies. Some years later Maggee made affidavit that, in conjunction with his friends, he had induced 431 men to sign for enlistment in Butler's Rangers, whose headquarters were at Fort Niagara, but that the company was obliged to disperse when one of their number turned informer. Maggee first went to Philadelphia, and in 1778 to Nova Scotia. It is not unlikely that William Pickard and his two sons of Westmoreland County signed Maggee's agreement, for we find them joining Butler's Rangers in 1777. Alexander Robertson, an Indian trader, who was one of those caught planning to destroy the powder magazine on the upper Ohio, also fled in the same year.¹²

¹¹ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, 142-145.

¹² *Ibid.*, 128, 143, 198, n. 70, 187, n. 59, 184-187, 250; *Jour. of Cong.* (new ed.) ix, 831, 942-944, 1018; 2d Rep., Bureau of Arch., Ont., 1904, Pt. I, 537, 538; Pt. II, 963, 964; Pt. I, 150.

The closing scene in the conspiracy of 1777 was enacted at Pittsburg, March 28, 1778, when Captain McKee, Matthew Elliott, Simon Girty, Robert Surphlitt, John Higgins, and McKee's two negroes made their escape. Captain McKee was the deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs at Fort Pitt, Surphlitt was his cousin, and Higgins appears to have been one of his servants. Simon Girty had long acted as interpreter for the Six Nations. During a considerable time both McKee and Girty had been regarded as suspicious characters and, as we have already seen, had been under arrest. Matthew Elliott was an Indian trader who had left Pittsburg in October, 1776, and gone to Detroit, where he arrived in the following March. There he soon excited the distrust of the authorities, was arrested and sent down to Quebec. At length he again appeared in Pittsburg, perhaps bringing letters with him from Canada that influenced the conduct of McKee and others. At any rate, the little party of fugitives had in Elliott a guide familiar with the road to Detroit and one eager, no doubt, to reinstate himself in the favor of the British authorities there. Conditions had become intolerable for this group of loyalists at Fort Pitt, and the alluring promises of the proclamations had certainly not been forgotten. So the party set out for Detroit, taking a course through what is now southern Ohio, by way of Coshocton and Old Chillicothe on the west bank of the Scioto (site of the present village of Westfall) and thence through the Wyandot towns of the Sandusky River to the destination. White Eyes, the Delaware chief at Coshocton said that this "flock of birds" imposed a song on his people that nearly proved their ruin. At the Shawnee village of Old Chillicothe McKee and his followers found James Girty, whom they persuaded to join them later at Detroit. Not long after this the refugees sent word of their coming to Lieutenant Governor Hamilton, and a few days later received letters by the hand of Edward Hazel, a loyalist from the States, from both Hamilton and his deputy Indian Agent, John Hay, congratulating them on their escape and welcoming them to Detroit. Shortly after their arrival McKee was appointed deputy agent for Indian Affairs, Elliott, captain in the Indian Department, and Simon Girty, interpreter and agent in the secret service. Thus, these men were afforded full opportunity to instigate and take part in operations against the frontier which they had left but recently.¹³

¹³ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, 249-255, 260, n. 14; 987, 988, 1082, 1282; Heckewelder's *Narrative*, 182; *Rev. on the Upper Ohio*, 74, 75; 2d. Rep., Bureau of Arch., Ont., 1904, Pt. II, 985, 987, 988, 1082, 1282.

Apparently, efforts were put forth at Fort Pitt to capture these deserters and others who had lately disappeared from the post. Indeed, the flight of McKee and his friends was only the most notable incident among many of the kind that had occurred at Pittsburg during recent months. In a letter of April 24, 1778, Brigadier General Hand wrote from the fort to General Horatio Gates: "Desertion prevails here to a great degree. Since the 18th of January last, 40 men have deserted from this small garrison; last night 14, the greatest number of them of the guard, went off, & took with them Eleazer Davis * * * & a party of the country people. I believe the Devil has possessed both the country & garrison. A command of 40 men & 4 officers were detached in pursuit." One of the deserters to whom General Hand referred in this letter was a Henry Butler, who arrived at Kaskaskia on the Mississippi near the close of the preceding February. In August, 1778, the little group of Pittsburg loyalists at Detroit was increased by the arrival of James Girty, who was made interpreter for the Shawnee, and nearly a year later by the appearance of George Girty, who had made his way through the Indian Country from New Orleans, where he had been a prisoner for twelve months. Like his two brothers, George Girty was at once taken into the Indian Department as an interpreter.¹⁴

The loyalist plots we have thus far considered had developed in western Pennsylvania, but the Virginia frontier had its own active loyalists, including Messrs. Price, Bane, Shull and Heavins, under whose leadership disaffection was rapidly spreading. By December, 1777, Tory tendencies had progressed so far in this region that Captain Thomas Burk and most of his company of militia, besides about 40 others in the Smithfield neighborhood, refused taking the oath of allegiance to the United States, despite the earnest efforts of Colonel William Preston. This oath was required by an act passed by the Virginia assembly in the preceding May. According to this act, all adult free male inhabitants of the State had to renounce allegiance to the King or be disarmed by the county lieutenant. Those who refused the oath were to be incapable of electing or being elected to any office in the State, serving on juries, suing for debts, or buying lands and houses. Colonel Preston complained that these penalties did not reach the people he was trying to bring to obedience, and he therefore urged that the law be amended. Nevertheless, the Colonel proceeded to enforce the oath of allegiance, under the penalty of disarming all recusants; and whatever other loyalists may have done, Captain Burk resigned his commission, February 18, 1778, rather than comply

¹⁴ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, 247, 278, 279, 286; 234, n. 98; 2d Rep., Bureau of Arch., Ont., 1904, Pt. II, 988, 1284.

with the law. He explained, however, that his action sprang from conscientious scruples, and denied any intention of defying the American government.¹⁵

But in 1779 preparations were again made among the loyalists of the upper Ohio for open defiance of those in control of the frontier. Again the report became current that part of the British force at Detroit was getting ready to penetrate to Pittsburg. Doubtless, this report originated in connection with the siege of Fort Laurens on the Tuscarawas by Simon Girty and his painted warriors in the spring and summer of the year named. But whatever the occasion of the report, it spread beyond western Pennsylvania into Virginia and Maryland. Thereupon James Fleming of Frederick County, Virginia, associated himself with Hugh Kelly of Maryland in organizing the loyalists on the upper Ohio. Kelly betook himself to the Red Stone settlement near Pittsburg, where he raised 175 men, while Fleming enlisted 75 at Kittanning. These details are gathered from the formal statement of their services and losses submitted by Fleming and Kelly to the authorities in London about 1782. That these preparations came to naught was due primarily to the fact that the King's troops did not make the anticipated expedition, and to the further circumstance that Kelly, together with his officers and men, was apprehended. Kelly asserts that he was condemned to be hanged but was saved by a dispute between the civil and military authorities, and that he managed to escape to New York in 1781 (apparently in June). Up to this time Kelly had paid out—if we may accept his own statement—no less than £1,240 (Pennsylvania currency) in meeting the expenses and fines of himself and others in forming associations counter to those of the revolutionists. Among his helpers in this work, besides Fleming, had been Adam Graves, John George Graves, and Nicholas Andrews, all of Maryland. The operations of these men had extended from Maryland into the adjoining States on the north and south, with the result that up to June 1781, nearly 1,300 loyalists (so Kelly and Fleming claimed) were bound by oath to serve in the Maryland Royal Retaliators, when called upon.¹⁶

The provisional enlistment of this corps formed part of a new plan to invade the frontier along the upper Ohio, and at the same time to release the large numbers of British prisoners who were confined in Winchester, Strasburg, Leesburg, Sharpsburg, Fort Frederick, and Frederick Town. The sea coast was to be molested by the privateers of the Asso-

¹⁵ Thwaites and Kellogg, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, 169, 170, 203, 204; Hening, *Statutes*, ix, 281-283.

¹⁶ Report on Am. Mss. in the Roy. Inst. of G. Brit., III, 46, 47; I, 20; IV, 241.

ciated Loyalists of America, whose board of directors was commissioned by Sir Henry Clinton in February, 1781; the Tories of Somerset and Worcester counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland were to be aided, should their petition meet with favor, by an expedition to be sent by General Leslie from Portsmouth to the Chesapeake; General Johnston was to operate with a large force in the neighborhood of Pittsburg, and Colonel John Connolly was to return from the region north of the James River in order to cooperate with Johnson. This extended plan, as it happened, broke down at two points: the appeal of the Eastern Shore Tories to General Leslie was intercepted, and the papers revealing the project and names of the loyalist leaders of Frederick County were delivered by mistake to an American officer in Frederick Town, instead of the British officer in disguise for whom they were intended. Thus, Leslie, and probably Connolly also, remained in ignorance of the proposed plan, and no time was lost in placing the conspirators of Frederick County under arrest. According to Kelly and Fleming's account, 170 of their associates, including officers and men, were apprehended at this time. Of these Adam and John George Graves, Nicholas Andrews, Peter Sueman, Yost Plecker, Henry Shell, and Casper Fritchie were tried before a special court, on July 25, 1781, and found guilty of high treason for enlisting men and administering an oath to them to obey the King's officers when called on. Judge Hanson, who presided at the trial, sentenced these men to be hanged on the gallows at Frederick Town, and then to be drawn and quartered. We learn that three of the seven were executed, but whether they underwent the horrors of the full sentence does not appear. At least three of the remaining four, namely, Andrews and the two Graves brothers, were fortunate enough to get out of their predicament in some unknown manner, and went south to join Cornwallis, whither Fleming had also escaped. The turn that events took at Yorktown, sent Fleming in haste to New York. Andrews and the Graves, however, did not succeed in effecting so prompt a departure from the scene of Cornwallis's misfortune; they were seized and imprisoned, part of the time—according to their own testimony—with the coffins intended for them in the place of their confinement. But again the unexpected happened. They were soon reprieved on the condition of being transported to France. Accordingly they were sent on board the *Romulus* in York River. Awaiting a favorable opportunity, they found a way of escaping and reaching New York City in their turn. Meanwhile, the general court at Annapolis rendered the judgment of outlawry against about 100 leading loyalists, some of whom were from Baltimore County, and at later periods against about 80 others from various localities in the

State, including Frederick, Charles, Kent, Montgomery, Somerset, and Worcester counties.¹⁷

When now we come to examine this series of Tory conspiracies extending from the beginning of January, 1774, to the close of July, 1782, we can scarcely doubt that the most formidable of them was Connolly's plot. Historians seem to be agreed that this was a well planned and not impractical enterprise, fraught with "grave consequences for the back country and for the American cause in general." Fort Blair had been evacuated and destroyed during the summer of 1775, thus leaving Fort Pitt as the only American fortification on the long frontier stretching from Greenbrier in southwestern Virginia to Kittanning on the upper Allegheny, and for a brief period even this post was without a garrison. The militia of the neighboring counties supplied the only protection to the inhabitants, large numbers of whom were reported to be wholly defenseless. If the colonial authorities had been less alert than they were, Connolly's plot might have succeeded, and the whole territory of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys been evacuated, only to revert to Indian occupation. As it turned out, the frontiers remained "free from any general participation in the War" for two years after the capture of Connolly and his companions. This was partly due, no doubt, to the success of the Americans in making peace with the neighboring Indian tribes in October, 1775. While this peace did not prove to be lasting, it nevertheless served a double purpose during the time of its continuance; it both averted attacks on the part of the savages, and interposed the barrier of a neutral zone between the British post at Niagara and Fort Pitt, thus preventing the threatened descent of Butler and his Tory Rangers upon the latter.¹⁸

Late in August, 1777, the danger of a loyalist uprising on the upper Ohio was again menacing. In the preceding March Hamilton at Detroit had been empowered to raise as many royalists and Indians as possible to send out against the frontier; but his enlistment of a corps of loyalists progressed slowly, and it was not until Simon Girty, Mathew Elliott, and Alexander McKee arrived about May 1, 1778, that the Detroit Volunteers, Indians, and other contingents of this northwestern post gained leadership.¹⁹ Pittsburg had been freed from its dangerous element by the flight of McKee's party and those of like sympathies, to be sure, but numbers of the Tories still remained in the neighboring region and looked

¹⁷ Report on Am. Mss. in the Roy. Inst. of G. Brit., III, 6, 47; IV, 241; 2d Report, Bureau of Arch., Ont., Pt. I, 55, 56; Scharf, Hist. of Maryland, II, 366-368.

¹⁸ Thwaites and Kellogg, Rev. on the Upper Ohio, xiv.

¹⁹ See my article "The Dispersion of the American Tories" in the Mississippi Valley Hist. Rev., Sept., 1914, 189.

for a formidable expedition from Detroit to help them restore the King's authority on the frontier. However, the only force that appeared was the band of Indian raiders, which attacked Fort Henry at Wheeling on September 1st and 2nd; and by that time many of the local royalists were themselves in the toils of Colonels Zackwell Morgan and Thomas Gaddis and their force of 600 patriots.

Again in 1779, it was the alertness of the revolutionary party in western Pennsylvania, and the failure of the authorities at Detroit to send an expedition sufficient and instructed to take Fort Pitt that once more belied the hopes of the Tories on the upper Ohio. Instead of assisting in the conquest of Pittsburg, for which the adherents of the Crown had organized at Kittanning and Red Stone, these men had to content themselves with the news that Simon Girty and his savages had compelled the Americans to abandon the unimportant post of Fort Laurens on the Tuscarawas, in August, 1779.

However, the Tories of the frontier continued to organize themselves for the conquest of Pittsburg and the neighboring country and to look abroad for the assistance that would make this possible. Kelly, Fleming, Andrews, and the rest scoured the western parts of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, in order to secure recruits for the Maryland Royal Retaliators, and by June, 1781, had 1,300 men sworn to support an invasion. Large numbers of British prisoners were to be rescued from various towns in these parts, thus strengthening the Retaliators, while Colonel John Connolly, formerly in control at Fort Pitt and now in command of the Virginia and North Carolina loyalists on the peninsula north of Richmond was to return and cooperate with General Johnston and his troops in reducing the Pittsburg region. It was the most elaborate scheme devised by royalists since the time of Connolly's plot for the re-establishment of the King's authority on the upper Ohio. It collapsed through being accidentally revealed at Frederick Town, before the outside assistance necessary to its success had been secured. One hundred and seventy of its promoters were promptly arrested, and a few of the ring-leaders were executed about August 1, 1781. But even if this scheme had not collapsed at that time, it was nevertheless doomed to do so speedily, for the whole royal cause fell in final ruin with the surrender of Cornwallis three months later.

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