

WIESER'S MISSION TO LOGSTOWN, 1748

The Delawares and Shawanese Indians had settled on the Ohio prior to 1730, among whom were French emissaries, and persons disaffected with English rule, who had been for several years endeavoring to detach them from the English interest. Among them was Peter Chartier. He owned at one time a large tract of land, the present site of New Cumberland, Cumberland county, Pa. At this place the Shawanese Indians had a town about 1700-20. It was for many years the landing place of Peter, an Indian agent, and an individual of some notoriety. He owned at one time six hundred acres of land, bounded by the Yellow Breeches creek and Susquehanna river.

In the spring of 1744, April 18, at the head of four hundred Shawanese, well armed with guns, pistols and cutlasses, he surprised and took prisoners two Indian traders, James Dinnen and Peter Tostee, on the Allegheny river, and robbed them of all their effects, to the amount of £1,600.

Sometime afterwards a few of the seduced Shawanese returned again to the English, and acknowledged they had been misled and had carried on a private correspondence with the French, [Notes, Assen. Iv. 13, Prov. Rec. K. 347, L. 362, 420, 437.]

Governor George Thomas, in his message to the Assembly, April 25th, 1745, says: "I have just received information that Peter Chartier, after disposing of his effects in this government, is gone to the enemy (French). His conduct for some years past has rendered him generally suspected; and it seems my reprimanding him for some very exceptional parts of it is made use of, amongst other things, to excuse his infidelity. Had he been punished as he deserved for the villainous report he spread two years ago, among the black inhabitants, in order to spirit them up against the Six Nations as should happen to travel through those parts of the country, he would not have been at this time with the enemy; but an apprehension that the Shawanese, whose perfidious blood party runs in Chartier's Veins, might resent upon our traders any severities to him, restrained me from making use of such, and induced me to use the gentle method of reproof which his brutish disposition had construed into an affront.

"I am likewise informed that he has persuaded a considerable number of the Shawanese to remove from their old town to a greater distance upon another river, and it is not to be doubted but that a savage person of his temper will do us all the mischief he can. If you think it worth while, I will send a messenger to persuade those Shawanese to return to their former place of abode, or I will take any other method you advise; though it is my option, the advantages of trade excepted, the further these people remove from our borders the better it will be for us.

"I have written letters from time to time to the Shawanese chiefs, inviting them down to Philadelphia, and particularly a very kind one last fall, which Peter Shaver tell me he delivered; but that I have of late received no answer, may be imputed to Chartier's influence over them; and it is, too, probable that he will make use of it to defeat any future attempts we shall make to receive the friendship with us." [Notes, Ass. iv. 2.]

The Delawares and Shawanese were connected with the Six Nations. In 1747, some of them, on the banks of the Ohio, visited Philadelphia, "to tender their homage to the English, and invite the province to send commissioners to a council fire," at Logstown, in the present county of Beaver, at which the neighboring nations were to be present.

Impressed with the importance of such a conference, the council at Philadelphia invited the governments of Maryland and Virginia to send their agents, and to unite in preparing a suitable present. On the part of Pennsylvania, goods were provided to the amount of one thousand pounds, and Conrad Weiser, the Provincial Interpreter and Indian Agent, was sent with instructions from the Governor. Weiser, in obedience to his instructions, proceeded to Logstown; and executed with his wonted fidelity the object of his mission.