

WASHINGTON'S JOURNAL OF HIS TOUR TO THE FRENCH POSTS ON
THE ALLEGHENY

"I was commissioned by the Hon. Robert Dinwiddie, Esq., Governor, etc., of Virginia, to visit and deliver a letter to the Commandant of the French forces at the Ohio, and set out on the intended journey on the next day. The next, I arrived at Fredericksburg, and engaged Mr. Jacob Van Braam to be my French interpreter, and proceeded with him to Alexandria, where we provided necessaries. From thence we went to Winchester, and got baggage-horses, etc., and from thence we pursued the new road to Will's creek, where we arrived on the 14th of November.

"Here I engaged Mr. Gist to pilot us out, and also hired four others as servitors – Barnaby Currin and John McQuire, Indian traders, Henry Steward and William Jenkins, and in company with these persons left the inhabitants the next day.

"The excessive rains and vast quantities of snow which had fallen prevented our reaching Mr. Frazer's, an Indian trader, at the mouth of Turtle creek, on Monongahela river, till Thursday, the 22d. We were informed here that expresses had been sent a few days before to the traders down the river to acquaint them with the French general's death,* and the return of the major part of the French army into winter quarters.

"The waters were quite impassible without swimming our horses, which obliged us to get the loan of a canoe from Frazer, and to send Barnaby Currin and Henry Steward down the Monongahela with our baggage, to meet us at the forks of the Ohio, about ten miles below, there to cross the Allegheny.

"As I got down before the canoe, I spent some time in viewing the rivers and the land at the forks, which I think extremely well situated for a fort, as it has the absolute command of both rivers. The land at the point is twenty-five feet above the common surface of the water, and a considerable bottom of flat, well-timbered land all around it, very convenient for building. The rivers are each a quarter of a mile or more across, and run here very nearly at right angles. Allegheny bearing northeast, and Monongahela southeast. The former of these two is very rapid and swift-running water; the other deep and still, without any perceptible fall. About two miles from this, on the southeast** side of the river, at the place where the Ohio Company intended to erect a fort, lives *Shingiss*,† King of the *Delawares*. We called upon him to invite him to a council at *Logstown*.

"As I had taken a good deal of notice yesterday of the situation at the fork, my curiosity led me to examine *this* more particularly, and I think it greatly inferior, either for defense or advantages, especially the latter. For a fort at the fork would be equally well situated on the Ohio, and have the entire command of the Monongahela, which runs up our settlement, and is extremely well designed for water carriage, as it is of a deep, still nature. Besides, a fort at the fork might be built at much less expense than at the other place.

"Nature has well contrived this lower place for water defense, but the hill on which it must stand, being about a quarter of a mile in length, and descending gradually on the land side, will render it very difficult and very expensive to make a sufficient fortification there. The whole flat upon the hill must be taken in, the side next to the descent made extremely high, or else the hill itself cut away; otherwise, the enemy may raise batteries within that distance without being exposed to a single shot from the fort.

"*Shingiss* attended us to *Logstown*,‡ where we arrived between sunset and dusk, the twenty-fifth day after I left Williamsburg. As soon as I came into town I went to *Monacatoocha*§ (as the Half-King was out at his hunting cabin on Little Beaver Creek, about fifteen miles off), and informed him by John Davidson, my Indian Interpreter, that I was sent a messenger to the French general, and was ordered to call upon the sachems of the Six Nations, to acquaint them with it. I gave him a string of wampum and a twist of tobacco, and desired him to send for the Half-King – which he promised to do by a runner in the morning – and for other sachems. I invited him and the other great men present, to my tent, where they staid about an hour, and returned.

"According to the best observations I could make, Mr. Gist's new settlement (which we passed) bears about west northwest twenty miles from Will's creek; *Shanopin*'s, or the forks, north by west, or north -

* This probably refers of the Marquis de la Jonquiere.

** Southwest side (?).

† Various spelled.

‡ Logstown is variously located by different writers; some affirming it to be on the right and some on the left bank. Hon. James Veech says there were two, one each side of the river.

§ Various spelled.

northwest about fifty miles from that; and from thence to the *Logstown* the course is nearly west about eighteen of twenty miles; so that the whole distance, as we went and computed it, is at least one hundred and thirty-five or one hundred and forty miles from our back inhabitants,

25th. – Came to town four of ten Frenchmen who had deserted from a company at the the *Kuskuskas*, || which lies at the mouth of this river. I got the following account from men: They were sent from New Orleans, with one hundred men and eight canoe-loads of provisions, to this place, where they expected to have met the same number of men from forts on this side of Lake Erie, to convey them and the stores up, who were not arrived when they ran off.

“I inquired into the situation of the French on the Mississippi, their numbers, and what forts they had built. They informed me that there were four small forts between New Orleans and the Black Islands, garrisoned with about thirty or forty men and a few small pieces each. That at New Orleans, which is near the mouth of the Mississippi, there are thirty-five companies of forty men each, which a pretty strong fort mounting eight carriage-guns; and at the Black Islands there are several companies and a fort with six guns. The Black Islands are about a hundred and thirty leagues above the mouth of the Ohio, which is about three hundred and fifty above New Orleans. They also acquainted me that there was a small palisaded fort on the Ohio, at the mouth of the *Obaish**, about sixty leagues from the Mississippi. The *Obaish* heads near the west end of Lake Erie, and affords the communication between the French on the Mississippi, and those on the lakes. These deserters came up from the lower *Shannoah*† town with one Brown, an Indian trader, and were going to Philadelphia.

“About three o’clock this evening the Half-King‡ came to town. I went up and invited him with Davidson privately to my tent; and desired him to relate some of the particulars of his journey to the French Commandant, and of his reception there; also to give me an account of the ways and distance. He told me that the nearest and levellest way was now impassable, by reason of many large, miry savannahs; that we must be obliged to go by way of Venango, and should not get to the near fort in less than five or six night’s sleep, good traveling. When he went to the fort, he said, he was received in a very stern manner by the late commander, who asked him, very abruptly, what he had come about, and to declare his business; which he said he did in the following speech:

“Fathers, I am come to tell you your own speeches, what your own mouths have declared. Fathers you, in former days, set a silver basin before us, wherein there was a leg of a beaver, and desired all the nations to come and eat of it – to eat in peace and plenty, and not to be churlish to one another; and that if any person should be found to be a disturber, I here lay down by the edge of the dish a rod, which you must scourge them with; and if your father should get foolish, in my old days, I desire you may use it upon me as well as the others.

“ ‘Now, fathers, it is you who are disturbers in this land, by coming and building your towns, and taking it away unknown to us, and by force.

“ ‘Fathers, we kindled a fire a long time ago, at a place called Montreal, where we desired you to stay, and not to come and intrude upon our land. I now desire you may be dispatched to that place; for be it known to you, fathers, that this is our land and not yours.

“ ‘Fathers, I desire you may hear me in civilness; if not, we must handle that rod which was laid down for the use of the obstreperous. If you had come in a peaceful manner, like our brothers, the English, we would not have been against your trading with us as they do; but to come, fathers, and build houses on our land, and to take it by force, is what we cannot submit to.

“ ‘Fathers, both you and the English are white; we live in a country between, therefore the land belongs neither to one nor the other. But the great Being above allowed it to be a place of residence for us; so, fathers, I desire you to withdraw, as I have done our brothers, the English; for I will keep you at arm’s length. I lay this down as a trial for both to see which will have the greatest regard to it, and that side we will stand by, and make equal shares with us. Our brothers, the English, heave heard this, and I come now to tell it to you; for I am not afraid to discharge you off this land.’

|| Kaskaskia, at the mouth of the Kaskaskia river, in Illinois (?).

* This probably refers to “Poste Vinciunes,” located on the Wabash, about forty miles from the mouth. The location of the Black Islands, as given by Washington, is near Rock Island.

† Spelled by the French “Coonanons” – a *Shawnese* village.

‡ The “Half-King,” of Tanicharison, was a good friend of the English, but he died at Harrisburg, in October, 1754. His advice would doubtless have been of great value to the British in the subsequent campaign, and his death was a serious loss to them.

“This, he said, was the substance of what he spoke to the General, who made this reply:

“ ‘Now, my child, I have heard your speech; you spoke first, and it is my time to speak now. Where is my wampum you took away with the marks of towns on it? This wampum I do not know which you have discharged me off the land with it; but you need not put yourself to the trouble of speaking for I will not hear you. I am not afraid of flies or mosquitoes, for Indians are such as those. I tell you that down the river I will go, and build upon it, according to my command.

“ ‘If the river is blocked up, I have forces sufficient to burst it open, and tread under my feet all that stand in opposition, together with their alliances; for my force is as the sand upon the sea shore; therefore, here is your wampum; I sling it at you! Child, you are foolish; you say this land belongs to you, but there is not the black in my nail yours.

“ ‘I saw the land sooner than you did, before the *Shannoahs** and you were at war. Lead† was the man who went down and took possession of that river. It is my land, and I will have it, let who will stand up for or against it. I will buy and sell with the English (mockingly). If people will be ruled by me they may expect kindness, but not else.’

“ The Half-King told me he had enquired of the general after two Englishmen who were made prisoners, and received this answer:

“ ‘Child, you think it is a very great hardship that I made prisoners of those two people at Venango.‡ Don’t concern yourself with it; we took and carried them to Canada, to get intelligence of what the English were doing in Virginia.’

“He informed me that they had built two forts, one on Lake Erie§ and another on French creek, near a small lake, about fifteen miles asunder, and a large wagon road between. They are both built after the same model, but different in size – that on the lake largest. He gave me a plan of them of his own drawing.

“The Indians inquired very particularly after their brothers in Carolina gaol.

They also asked what sort of a boy it was who was taken from the South Branch, for they were told by some Indians that a party of French Indians had carried a white boy to Kuskuska|| town, towards the lakes.

“26th. – We met in council at the long-house, about nine o’clock, where I spoke to them as follows:

“ ‘Borthers, I have called you together in council by order of you brother, the Governor of Virginia, to acquaint you that I am sent, with all possible dispatch, to visit and deliver a letter to the French Commandant, of very great importance to you brother, the English, and, I Dare say, to you, their friends and allies.

“ ‘I was desired, brothers, by your brother, the Governor, to call upon you, the sachems of the nations, to inform you of it, and ask your advice and assistance to proceed by the nearest and best road to the French. You see, brothers, I have gotten thus far on my journey.

“ ‘His Honor likewise desired me to apply for some of your young men to conduct and provide provisions for us on our way, and be a safeguard against those French Indians who have taken up the hatchet against us. I have spoken thus particularly to you, brothers, because his Honor, our Governor, treats you as good friends and allies, and holds you in great esteem. To confirm what I have said, I give you this string of wampum.’

“After they had considered for some time on the above discourse, the Half-King got up and spoke:

“ ‘Now, my brother, in regard to what my brother, the Governor, has desired of me, I return you this answer:

“ ‘I rely upon you, as brother ought to do, as you say we are brothers and one people. We shall put our heart in hand, and speak to our fathers, the French, concerning the speech they made to me; and you may depend that we will endeavor to be your guard.

“ ‘Brother, as you have asked my advice, I hope you will be ruled by it, and stay until I can provide a company to go with you. The French speech-belt is not here; I have to go for it to my hunting-cabin. Likewise, the people whom I have ordered have yet to come, and cannot until the third night from this; until which time, brother, I must beg you to stay.

* *Shawanese*, also spelled *Shawanos*.

† Having reference, on doubt, to the leaden plates of Celoron.

‡ John Trotter and James McLaughlin.

§ One of these forts was at Presq’ Isle, and the other at Le Boeuf, now Waterford.

|| This place is located, on an old map, on the west side of Beaver creek, one mile below where the Shenango and Mahoning unite.

"I intend to send the guard of *Mingoes*,* *Shannoahs*, and *Delawares*, that our brothers may see the love and loyalty we bear them."

"As I had orders to make all possible dispatch, and waiting here was very contrary to my inclination, I thanked him in the most suitable manner I could, and told him that my business required the greatest expedition, and would not admit of that delay. He was not well pleased that I should offer to go before the time he had appointed, and told me that he could not consent to our going without a guard, for fear some accident should befall us and draw reflection on him. 'Besides,' said he, this is a matter of no small moment, and must not be entered into without due consideration; for I intend to deliver up the French speech-belt, and make the *Shannoahs* and *Delawares* do the same.' "

"And accordingly he gave orders to King *Shingiss*, who was present, to attend on Wednesday night with the wampum, and two men of their nation to be in readiness to set out with us the next morning.

"As I found it was impossible to get off without affronting them in the most egregious manner, I consented to stay.

"I gave them back a string of wampum which I met with at Mr. Frazer's, and which they sent, with a speech, to his Honor the Governor, to inform him that three nations of French Indians, namely, *Chippewas*, *Ottoways* and *Orundaks*, had taken up the hatchet against the English, and desired them to repeat is over again. But this they postponed doing until they met in full council with the *Shannoah* and *Delaware* chiefs.

"27th. – Runners were dispatched very early for the *Shannoah* chiefs. The Half-King set out himself to fetch the French Speech-belt from his hunting-cabin.

28th. – He returned this evening, and came with *Monakatoocha* and two other sachems to my tent, and begged (as they had complied with his Honor the Governor's request in providing men, etc.), to know on what business we were going to the French. This was question I had all along expected, and provided as satisfactory answers to as I could, which allayed their curiosity a little.

"*Monakatoocha* informed me that an Indian from Venango brought news, a few days ago, that the French had called all the *Mingoes*, *Delawares*, etc., together at that place, and told them that they intended to have been down the river this fall, but the waters are growing cold and the winter is advancing which obliged them to go into quarters, but that they might assuredly expect them in the spring with far greater numbers: and desired that they might be quite passive, and not intermeddle unless they had a mind to draw all their forces upon them; for that they expected to fight the English three years (as they supposed there would be some attempts made to stop them), in which time they should conquer; but that if they should prove equally strong, they and the English would join to cut them all off, and divide the land between them; that though they had lost their general and some few of their soldiers, yet there were men enough to re-enforce them and to make them masters of the Ohio.

" 'This speech,' he said 'was delivered to them by one Captain Joncaire, the interpreter-in-chief, living at Venango, and a man of the note in the army.'

"29th. – The Half-King and *Monakatoocha* came very early and begged me to stay one day more; for, notwithstanding they used all the diligence in their power, the *Shannoah* chiefs had not brought the wampum they ordered, but would certainly be in to-night; if not, they would delay me no longer, but would send it after us as soon as they arrived. When I found them so pressing in their request, and knew that the returning of the wampum was the abolishing of agreements, and giving this up was shaking off all dependence upon the French, I consented to stay, as I believe an offense offered at this crisis might be attended with greater ill consequences than another day's delay. They also informed me that *Shingiss* could not get in his men, and was prevented from coming himself by his wife's sickness (I believe fear of the French), but that the wampum of that nation was lodged with *Kustalogo*, one of their chiefs, at Venango.

"In the evening, late, they came again, and acquainted me that the *Shannoahs* were not yet arrived, but that it should not retard the prosecution of our journey. He delivered, in my hearing, the speech that was made to the French by *Jeskakake*, one of their chiefs, which was giving up the belt the late Commandant had asked for, and repeating nearly the same speech he himself had done before.

"He also delivered a string of wampum to this chief, which was sent by King *Shingiss*, to be given to *Kustalogo*, with orders to repair to the French and deliver up the wampum.

"He likewise gave a very large string of black and white wampum, which was to be sent up immediately to the *Six Nations* if the French refused to quit the land at this warning, which was the third and last time, and was the right of this *Jeskakake* to deliver.

"30th. – Last night the great men assembled at their council-house, to consult further about this journey, and who were to go; the result of which was, that only three of their chiefs, with one of their best hunters, should be our convoy.

“The reason they gave for not sending more, after what had been proposed at council the 26th was, that a greater number might give the French suspicions of some bad design, and cause them to be treated rudely; but I rather think they could not get their hunters in.

“We set out about nine o’clock with the Half-King, *Jeskakake*, *White Thunder*, and the *Hunter*, and traveled on the road to Venango, where we arrived the 4th of December, without anything remarkable happening but a continued series of bad weather.

“In this old Indiana town, situated at the mouth of the French creek, on the Ohio,* and lies near north about sixty miles from *Logstown*, but more that seventy the way we were obliged to go.

“We found the French colors hoisted at a house from which they had driven Mr. John Frazer, an English subject. I immediately repaired to it to know where the commander resided. There were three officers, one of whom, Captain Joncaire, said that he had the command of the Ohio, but there was a general officer at the near fort, where he advised me to apply for an answer. He invited us to sup with them, and treated us with the greatest complaisance.

“The men, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely.

“They told us that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio, and by G – d they would do it; for that although they were sensible the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew their motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking of theirs. They pretend to have an undoubted right to the river from a discovery made by one La Salle sixty years ago; and the rise of this expedition is to prevent our settling on it, or the waters of it, as they heard of some families moving out in order thereto. From the best intelligence I could get, there have been fifteen hundred men on this side Ontario Lake.

“But, upon the death of the general, all were recalled but about six or seven hundred, whom were left to garrison four forts, one hundred and fifty or thereabout in each.

“The first of them is on French creek, near a small lake, about sixty miles from Venango, near southwest; the next lies on Lake Erie, where the greater part of their stores are kept, about fifteen miles from the other; from this it is one hundred and twenty miles from the carrying place at the falls of Lake Erie, where there is a small fort, at which they should lodge their goods in bringing them from Montreal, the place from whence all their stores are brought. Their next fort lies about twenty miles from this, on Ontario Lake. Between this fort and Montreal there are three others, the first of which is nearly opposite to the English Fort Oswego. From the fort on Lake Erie to Montreal is about six hundred miles, which, they say, requires no more (if good weather) than four week’s voyage, if they go in barks or large vessels, so that they may cross the lake; but if they come in canoes, it will require five or six weeks, for they are obliged to keep under the shore.

“December 5th. – Rained excessively all day, which prevented our traveling. Captain Joncaire sent for the Half-King, as he had just heard that he came with me. He affected to be much concerned that I did not make free to bring him before. I excused it in the base manner of which I was capable, and told him I did not think their company was agreeable, as I had heard him say a good deal in dispraise of Indians in general; but another motive prevented me from bringing them into his company. I knew that he was an interpreter, and a person of great influence among the Indians, and had lately used all possible means to draw them over to his interest; therefore I was desirous of giving him no opportunity that could be avoided.

“When they came in there was great pleasure expressed at seeing them. He wondered how they could come so near without coming to visit him; made several trifling presents, and applied liquor so fast that they were soon rendered incapable of the business they came about, notwithstanding the caution which was given.

“6th. – The Half-King came to my tent quite sober, and insisted very much that I should hear what he had to say to the French. I fain would have prevented him from speaking anything until he came to the Commandant, but could not prevail. He told me that at this place a council-fire was kindled, where all their business with these people was to be transacted, and that the management of the Indian affairs was left solely to Monsieur Joncaire. As I was desirous of knowing the issue of this, I agreed to stay, but sent our horses a little way up French creek to raft over and encamp; which I knew would make it near night.

“About ten o’clock they met in council. The king spoke much about the same as he had done before to the general, and offered the French speech-belt, which had before been demanded, with marks of four

* From this it would seem that the Allegheny was known as the Ohio.

towns on it, which Monsieur Joncaire refused to receive, but desired him to carry it to the fort to the commander.

“7th. – Monsieur La Force, commissary of the French stores, and three other soldiers came over to accompany us up. We found it extremely difficult to get the Indians off to-day, as every stratagem had been used to prevent their going up with me. I had last night left John Davidson (the Indian interpreter), whom I brought with me from town, and strictly charged him not to be out of their company, as I could not get them over to my tent; for they had some business with *Kustalogo*, chiefly to know why he did not deliver up the French speech-belt, which he had been keeping; but I was obliged to send Mr. Gist over to-day to fetch them, which he did with great persuasion.

“At twelve o’clock we set out for the fort, and were prevented arriving there until the 11th by excessive rains, snows, and bad traveling through many mires and swamps. These we were obliged to pass to avoid crossing the creek, which was impassable, either by fording or rafting, the water was so high and rapid.

“We passed over much good land since we left Venango and through several very extensive and rich meadows, one of which, I believe, was nearly four miles in length, and considerably wider in some places.

“12th. – I prepared early to wait upon the commander, and was received and conducted to him by the second officer in command. I acquainted him with my business, and offered him my commission and letter, both of which he requested me to keep until the arrival of Monsieur Reparti, captain at the next fort, who was sent for and expected every hour.

“The commander is knight of the military order at St. Louis, and named Legardeur de St. Pierre. He is an elderly gentleman, and has much the air of a soldier. He was sent over to take command immediately upon the death of the late general, and arrived here about seven days before me.

“At two o’clock the gentleman who was sent for arrived, when I offered the letter, etc., again, which they received, and adjourned into a private apartment for the captain to translate, who understood a little English. After he had done it, the commander desired I would walk in and bring in my interpreter to peruse and correct it; which I did.

13th. – The chief officers retired to hold a council of war, which gave me opportunity to take the dimensions of the fort, and make what observations I could.

“It is situated on the south or west fork of French creek, near the water, and is almost surrounded by the creek, and a small branch of it, which form a kind of island. Four houses compose the sides. The bastions are made of piles driven into the ground, standing more than twelve feet above it, and sharp at the top, with port-holes cut for cannon, and loop-holes for the small guns to fire through. There are eight six-pound pieces mounted in each bastion, and one piece of four pounds below the gate. In the bastions are a guard-house, chapel, doctor’s lodging, and the commander’s private store, round which are laid platforms for the cannon and men to stand on. There are several barracks without the fort, for the soldiers’ dwellings, covered, some with bark and some with boards, made chiefly of logs. There are also several houses, such as stables, smith’s shop, etc.

“I could get no certain account of the number of men here; but according to the best judgment I could form, there are a hundred, exclusive of officers, of whom there are many. I also gave orders to the people who were with me, to take an exact account of the canoes, which were hauled up to convey their forces down in the spring. This they did, and told fifty of birch bark and a hundred and seventy of pine, besides many others which were blocked out, in readiness for being made.

“14th. – As the snow increased very fast and our horses daily became weaker, I sent them off unloaded under the care of Barnaby Currin and two others, to make all convenient dispatch to Venango, and there to wait our arrival, if there was a prospect of the river’s freezing, if not, then to continue down to *Shanapin*’s town, at the forks of the Ohio, and there to wait until we came across the Allegheny; intending myself to go down by water, as I had the offer of a canoe or two.

“As I found many plots concerted to retard the Indians’ business and prevent their returning with me, I endeavored all that lay in my power to frustrate their schemes, and hurried them to execute their intended design. They accordingly pressed for admittance this evening, which at length was granted them privately, to the commander and one or two other officers. The Half-King told me that he offered the wampum to the commander, who evaded taking it, and made many fair promises of love and friendship; said he wanted to live in peace and trade amicably with them, as a proof of which he would send some goods immediately down to the *Logstown* for them. But I rather think the design of that is to bring away all our straggling traders they meet with, as I privately understood they intended to carry an officer, etc., with them. And what rather confirms this opinion, I was inquiring of the commander by what authority he had made

prisoners of several of our English subjects. He told me that the country belonged to them; and that he had orders to make every person prisoner who attempted it on the Ohio or the waters of it.

"I inquired of Captain Reparti about the boy that was carried by this place, as it was done while the command devolved on him, between the death of the late general and the arrival of the present. He acknowledged that a boy had been carried past, and the Indians had two or three white scalps (I was told by some of the Indians at Venango eight), but pretended to have forgotten the name of the place where the boy came from, and all the particular facts, though he had questioned him for some hours, as they were carrying him past. I likewise inquired what they had done with John Trotter and James McLaughlin, two Pennsylvania traders, whom they had taken with all their goods. They told me they had been sent to Canada, but were now returned home.

"This evening I received an answer to his Honor the Governor's letter from the Commandant.*

"15th. – The Commandant ordered a plentiful store of liquor, provisions, etc., to be put on board our canoes, and appeared to be extremely complaisant, though he was exerting every artifice which he could invent to set our Indians at variance with us, to prevent their going until after our departure; presents, rewards, and everything which could be suggested by him or his officers. I cannot say that ever in my life I suffered so much anxiety as I did in this affair. I saw that every stratagem which the most fruitful brain could invent was practiced to join the Half-King to their interest, and that leaving him there was giving them the opportunity they aimed at. I went to the Half-King and pressed him in the strongest terms to go; he told me the Commandant would not discharge him until the morning. I then went to the Commandant and desired him to do their business, and complained of ill-treatment; for keeping them, as they were part of my company, was detaining me. This he promised not to do, but to forward my journey as much as he could. He protested he did not keep them, but was ignorant of the cause of their stay, though I soon found out. He promised them a present of guns, etc., if they would wait until the morning. As I was very much pressed by the Indians to wait this day for them, I consented, on a promise that nothing should hinder them in the morning.

"16th. – The French were not slack in their intentions to keep the Indians this day also. But as they were obliged, according to promise, to give the present, they then endeavored to try the power of liquor, which I doubt not would have prevailed at any other time than this; but I urged and insisted with the King so closely upon his word that he refrained, and set off with us as he had engaged.

"We had a tedious and very fatiguing passage down the creek. Several times we had liked to have been staved against rocks, and many times were obliged all hands to get out and remain in the water half an hour of more, getting over the shoals. At one place the ice had lodged and made it impassable by water; we were, therefore, obliged to carry our canoe across the neck of land, a quarter of a mile over. We did not reach Venango until the 22d, where we met with our horses.

"This creek is extremely crooked. I dare say the distance between the fort and Venango cannot be less than one hundred and thirty miles, to follow the meanders.

"23d. – When I got things ready to set off I sent for the Half-King, to know whether he intended to go with us or by water. He told me that *White Thunder* had hurt himself much, and was sick and unable to walk, therefore he was obliged to carry him down in a canoe.

"As I found he intended to stay here a day or two, and knew that Monsieur Joncaire would employ every scheme to set him against the English, as he had done before, I told him I hoped he would guard against his flattery and let no fine speeches influence him in their favor. He desired I might not be concerned, for he knew the French too well for anything to Engage him in their favor, and that though he could not go down with us, he yet would endeavor to meet at the forks with Joseph Campbell, to deliver a speech for me to carry to his Honor the Governor. He told me he would order the *Young Hunter* to attend us, and get provisions, etc., if wanted.

"Our horses were now so weak and feeble, and the baggage so heavy (as we were obliged to provide all the necessaries which the journey would require), that we doubted much their performing it. Therefore myself and others, except the drivers, who were obliged to ride, gave up their horses for packs, to assist along with the baggage. I put myself in an Indian walking dress, and continued with them three days, until I found there was no probability of their getting home in reasonable time.

"The horses became less able to travel every day, the cold increased very fast, and the roads were becoming much worse by deep snow, continually freezing; therefore, as I was uneasy to get back, to make report of my proceedings to his Honor the Governor, I determined to prosecute my journey the nearest way

* Washington used this and *commander* indiscriminately.

through the woods on foot. Accordingly, I left Mr. Vanbraam in charge of our baggage, with money and directions to provide necessaries from place to place for themselves and horses, and to make most convenient dispatch in traveling.

"I took my necessary paper, pulled off my clothes, and tied myself up in a watch coat. Then, with a gun in hand and pack on my back, in which were my papers and provisions, I set out with Mr. Gist, fitted in the same manner, on Wednesday, the 26th. The day following, just after we had passed a place called Murderingtown (where we intended to quit the path and steer across the country for *Shanapin's Town**), we fell in with a party of French Indians, who had laid wait for us. One of them fired at Mr. Gist or me, not fifteen steps off, but, fortunately missed. We took this fellow into custody, and kept him until about nine o'clock at night, then let him go, and walked all the remaining part of the night without making any stop, that we might get the start so far as to be out of the reach of their pursuit the next day, since we were well assured they would follow our track as soon as it was light. The next day we continued traveling quite after dark, and got to the river about two miles above *Shanapin's*. We expected to have found the river frozen, but it was not, only about fifty yards from each shore. The ice, I suppose, had broken up above, for it was driving in vast quantities.

"There was no way for getting over but on raft; which we set about making, with but one poor hatchet, and finished just after sunset. This was a whole day's work. We next got it launched, then went on board of it and set off; but before we were half-way over we jammed in the ice in such a manner that we expected every moment our raft to sink and ourselves to perish. I put out my setting pole to try to stop the raft, that the ice might pass by, when the rapidity of the stream threw it with so much violence against the pole that it jerked me out into ten feet of water; but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the raft logs. Notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not get to either shore, but were obliged, as we were near an island, to quit our raft and make to it.

"The cold was so extremely severe that Mr. Gist had all his fingers and some of his toes frozen, and the water was shut up so hard that we found no difficulty in getting off the island** on the ice in the morning, and went to Mr. Frazer's. We met here with twenty warriors who were going to the southward to war, but coming to a place at the head of the Great Kenawha, where they found seven people killed and scalped (all but one woman with very light hair), they turned about and ran back, for fear the inhabitants should rise and take them as the authors of the murder. They report that the bodies were lying about the house, and some of them much torn and eaten by the hogs. By the marks they left they say they were French Indians of the *Ottoway* nation who did it.

"As we intended to take horses here, and it required some time to find them, I went up about three miles of the mouth of the Youghiogany, to visit Queen *Aliquippa*,† who had expressed great concern that we passed her in going to the fort. I made her a present of the watch-coat and bottle of rum, which latter was thought much the better present of the two.

"Tuesday, the 1st of January, we left Mr. Frazer's house, and arrived at Mr. Gist's, at Monongahela, the 2d, where I bought a horse and saddle. The 6th we met seventeen horses loaded with materials and stores for a fort at the fork of the Ohio, and the day after, some families going out to settle. This day we arrived at Will's creek, after a fatiguing journey as it is possible to conceive, rendered so by excessive bad weather. From the 1st day of December to the 15th, there was but one day in which it did not rain or snow incessantly, and throughout the whole journey we met nothing but one continued series of cold, wet weather, which occasioned very uncomfortable lodgings, especially after we had quitted our tent, which was some screen from the inclemency of it.

"On the 11th I got to Belvoir, where I stopped one day to take the necessary rest; and then set out and arrived in Williamsburg the 16th, when I waited on his Honor the Governor, with the letter I had brought from the French Commandant and to give an account of the success of my proceedings.

"This I beg leave to do by offering the foregoing narrative, as to contains the most remarkable occurrences which happened in my journey.

"I hope what has been said will be sufficient to make you Honor satisfied with my conduct; for that was my aim in undertaking the journey, and chief study throughout the prosecution of it."

* This name is variously spelled: Shanopin, Shanapin, Shannapin, etc.

** According to Mr. Neville B. Craig, this was undoubtedly Wainright's Island.

† Queen Aliquippa was a Delaware.