

Captain William Trent, an Indian Trader.

BY HON. CHARLES I. LANDIS.

In writing this sketch, I make no pretense of ploughing in original ground. Concerning its subject, the late Mr. Hensel, in Volume 16, page 142 of our own records, has copied a page or two from Cooley's Genealogy of Trenton and Ewing, which, in a brief way, refers to his life. That article is, however, neither full nor in all respects accurate; and, considering the important positions which Captain Trent occupied and the busy life he led, his story has not I think been adequately told. At several periods, he was a resident of Lancaster Borough, and this is my excuse for now presenting his almost forgotten name to my hearers. For a long time, he was intimately connected with the Indian trade and Indian traders. These activities, in the early days of the province, radiated from the old borough, and goods were carried by the traders to what was then the far west, beyond the Ohio.

William Trent was a son of Judge William Trent. The latter was a judge in this province and chief justice in New Jersey, and he was the founder of the city of Trenton. The subject of this article was born on February 13, 1715, but his biographers are not uniform as to the place of his birth. In Christopher Gist's Journal, by William M. Darlington, at page 249, it is said that he was born in Chester County; in Egle's Notes and Queries, Vol. 2, first series, at page 4, that he was born in Chester, subsequently Lancaster County; and Cooley, in his Genealogy, states that he was born and educated in Philadelphia. All, however, concur in saying that he was a native Pennsylvanian, and I am disposed to believe that the claim that he was born in what was then Chester County is correct.

The first reference I find anywhere to William Trent is the recitation in a deed, made to him on May 2, 1745, by which George Croghan conveyed the undivided half of a tract of 171 acres of land and allowances situated on the Conodegwinet Creek, in Pennsboro Township, which was then in Lancaster County. On October 7, 1745, William Walker and Elizabeth, his wife, conveyed to him and George Croghan a tract of 354 acres and allowance on the same creek and in the same township, and on December 24, 1745, the grantees gave a mortgage on this property for £200, to Abraham Mitchell, Hatter, of the City of Philadelphia. On July 4, 1746, William Trent, by two indentures, conveyed his undivided interest in both of the above mentioned tracts to George Croghan, in consideration of £70 and \$150 respectively. In the mortgage, the residence of both William Trent and Croghan is recited as

being in the County of Lancaster, but in the later conveyances William Trent is stated to be "at present residing at the City of Philadelphia."

Some time in the year 1746, an expedition was projected by the English Government and the Provinces against Canada. Of the forces raised, Pennsylvania furnished four companies. Of one of these companies, Governor Thomas appointed William Trent the captain. Hence came the title by which he was subsequently generally known. While the enterprise failed in its objects, yet the troops under his command were detained in New York for eighteen months, and they were only discharged in December, 1747. A vote of the Assembly conveyed to him its thanks for his conduct in this expedition.

On October 20, 1748, he wrote a letter from Mr. Croghan's to Richard Peters, which was, on November 1, 1748, read in Council, as follows:

"Last night came here from Alleghany one John Hays, who informs us that the night before he left it, the Indians killed one of Mr. Parker's hands; it was owing to ill usage Mr. Parker & his hands gave them that day, & his being a Maryland trader, who the Indians don't care should come amongst them. Mr. Parker had a large quantity of Liquor up with him which he was tying up in his goods in order to send to the lower Shawna Town, and the Indians kep pressing into his house & he unwilling that they should see what he was about, some he turned out, & others as they were coming in he pushed the door in their faces, upon which they were determined to take his Liquor, unless he would let them have it at the price settled at the Treaty. They brought him wampum, and offered to leave it in pledge, but he refused to let them have it, upon which they took a quantity from him, a great many of them got drunk, who then insisted upon revenge for the ill treatment he gave them, and accordingly took Parker prisoner and tyed him, and determined to scalp him, but the rest of the whites who were in the Town rescued him. He immediately went of about two miles from the Town, where some of his people lay, & got a horse, & rid that night thirty miles bare-backed to the Logs Town. The Indians imagined he had gone into his house, one of them layd wait for him at the door with his gun, at last one Brown, one of Mr. Parker's hands, came out with a white Matchcoat round him, which the Indian took for Parker (as he was in his shirt at the time they had tyed him) & shot him down. This happened at Coscaske. Mr. Croghan sends Wm. Brown, the lad from Carolina, off directly by a waggon to be delivered according to your directions. Mr. Croghan gave him a shirt and a cap, which comes to 12 s. 6 d. Mr. Croghan & myself set off the latter end of next week for Philad'a."

As the western part of Lancaster County lay a considerable distance from the Borough of Lancaster, where the courts of justice were held and the offices were kept, by an Act of Assembly passed January 27, 1749, Cumberland County was created. Governor Hamilton then appointed Trent one of the justices of the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the new county. How long he retained this position I cannot say. In 1750, he was engaged in the Indian trade with George Croghan, who is said to have been his brother-in-law. On January 4, 1751, Michael Teaf (or Taff) joined this partnership. Teaf resided on the Susquehanna, a short distance below Harris's Ferry.

A little prior to and about this time, difficulties arose between the French and the traders. On October 20, 1748, Trent wrote to Secretary Peters an account of a murder committed by an Indian at Kuskuskies, and on April 22, 1750, he wrote from Lancaster to the same gentleman that "Just before I left town (meaning Philadelphia) you told me that you would send some Marriage & Trading Lycenses. I'm afraid my mother has forgot. Tell me if you have sent them. Please to send to my mother for them. John Potts is just arrived from Allegheny, who says, some time before he came away, two men belonging to one, James Young, went from a place called Hochocken, about three hundred miles from Logtown, to the Twightees country (Miami) for skins. They staying longer than was expected, the master sent after them. They found the horses and saddles, all the buckles cut from the saddles, but the men were gone, either killed or taken by the French and Indians, supposed to be done by Ottoways. If this be true, as I believe it is, it would be a good opportunity (as the Indians must be at war with somebody) to make a peace between our Indians and the Carolina Indians & set them both on the French Indians. I expect to sleep at Harris' Ferry tonight. I came this morning from White Horse."

On March 5, 1751, he also wrote to Peters from Pennsboro:

"I received your letter pr John Holmes, with the money, and am very much obliged to you. You may depend upon my doing the utmost in my power for the hastening the payment of yr money.

"One of our men just come from Allegheny for Provisions says that the winter has been the hardest ever known in them parts, and Provisions so scarce that a Peck of Corn will fetch five shillings. The Indians has parted with what corn they had to spare already to the Traders, to keep their Horses alive, which makes them affraid if they part with more, they'll suffer themselves before the next crop. The Traders have lost a great menay horses which I am affraid we are no small sufferers.

"This man says that it was reported by a party of warriors that came to the Town where he was, that three of the Traders' men were taken by the French Indians. By the acc't the men and goods must be ours. He also says that it was reported that a Body of French and French Indians intended for the Twightives County to destroy the English Traders there, as soon as the season would permit.

"I understand that there's several Hundred familys intend to remove over the Hills this Spring & those that are over have no thoughts of removing.

"Mr. Miller desired I would acquaint you that he used the utmost of his power to get the widow to part with her place at a reasonable Price, but she would not consent to let it goe for less than what he wrote you."

This year, his name appears among the taxables of Middletown Township, Cumberland County, south of Carlisle, and he must, therefore, have been then living there at that time.

Early in 1752, the French built forts at Presque Isle (now Erie), LeBeouff (now Waterford), and Venango (now Franklin). Thereupon, Governor Dinwiddie took Trent into the service of that province.

In the meantime, Trent, for the Province of Virginia, had attended a council of the Ohio tribes at Logtown, in company with French Andrew (Andrew Montour). They met the heads of the Five Nations, the Picts, the Shawanees, the Owandots, and the Delawares. So wrote John Frazer, who then lived at Turtle Creek, near the ground which within two years was to be rendered famous as Braddock's Fields.

The Virginia authorities promised the Indians to supply them with ammunition to defend themselves against the French, and George Croghan, William Trent and Andrew Montour were appointed to make distribution.

On April 10, 1753, he wrote to Governor Hamilton: "I have received a letter just now from Mr. Croghan wherein he acquaints me that fifty odd Ottowas, Conewagos, one Dutchman and one of the Six Nations that was their Captain met with some of our people at a place called Kentucky, on this side Allegheny river, about one hundred and fifty miles from the lower Shawanese Town. They took eight prisoners, five belonging to Mr. Croghan and me, and the others to Lowry. They took three or four hundred pounds worth of goods from us. One of them made his escape after he had been a prisoner three days. Three of John Finley's men are killed by the little Pict Town and no account of himself. They robbed Michael Teaff's people near the Lakes; there was one Frenchman in Company. The Owendats secured his People and five horse load of skins. Mr. Croghan is coming thro' the woods with some Indians and whites and the rest of the white men and the Indians are coming up the river in a body, though 'tis a question whether they escape, as three hundred Ottowas were expected at the lower Town every day and another party of French and Indians coming down the river. The Indians are in such confusion that there is no knowing who to trust. I expect they will all join the French, except the Delawares, as they expect no assistance from the English. The Low Dutchman's name that was with the party that robbed our people is Philip Philips. His mother lives near Col. Johnson. He was taken by the French Indians about six years ago and has lived ever since with them. He intends some time this summer to go and see his mother. If your Honors pleases to acquaint the Governor of New York with it, he may possibly get him secured by keeping it secret, and acquainting Col. Johnson with it, and ordering him to apprehend him. If the Dutchmen once comes to understand it, they will contrive to send him word to keep out of the way. I intend leaving directly for Allegheny with provisions for our People that are coming through the woods and up the river."

In August, 1753, Montour was with Trent at the Forks of the Ohio, when the latter viewed the ground on which a fort was to be built. John Frazer wrote that Trent had been viewing the ground on which the fort projected by the Ohio Company was to be built, and that he had left for Virginia.

In September of the same year, a treaty was made at Winchester, Virginia, between Col. Thomas Fairfax and the Six Nations. Trent and Croghan were both present there and assisted. Eighty Indians attended, and they were received with ceremony.

On February 3, 1754, Croghan wrote to Governor Hamilton and his secretary, Richard Peters, urging the building of a strong log trading house or

stockade, in reality a fort, but inexpensive. He mentions that Mr. Trent has just come out with the Virginia Guards, and had brought a quantity of tools and workmen to begin a fort, and as he could not talk the Indian language, he (Croghan) was obliged to stay and assist in dividing the goods.

It seems that, in January of this same year, Governor Dinwiddie had commissioned Trent to raise a hundred men for this purpose. Trent got seventy, and with them he started a fort at the Forks of the Ohio. This was the commencement of the fort at this place. The King had sent out thirty pieces of cannon, four-pounders, with carriages and all necessary implements, and also eighty barrels of powder. Trent was familiar with this country, for he and Croghan, as partners in the Indian trade, had a store house above the mouth of Pine Creek. They had also numbers of large canoes and batteaux, and they had fenced in fields of Indian corn.

On February 17, 1754, Trent began the erection of the fort, and in the same month, he, with Christopher Gist, was at the mouth of the Red Stone Creek, building the storehouse for the Ohio Company, in order to lodge stores to be carried from there to the mouth of the Monongehela by water. This creek is about thirty-seven miles distant from where Fort Duquesne stood.

He heard that the French proposed to take possession of the country at an early day, and he therefore hastened to the nearest settlement, which was Will's Creek, to procure reinforcements. But during his absence from his command, the fort, then under the command of Lieut. Frazer and Ensign Ward, was on April 16, 1754, seized by a force of French and Indians, consisting of a thousand men, and three hundred canoes, with twenty cannon. They were under the command of M. de Contrecoeur. After the capture of the fort it was enlarged and finished by the French and was called Fort Duquesne after the then Governor of Canada. The trading post and property of Trent and Croghan were seized by the French and Indians, for on April 24, 1754, Croghan, at Carlisle, prepared an account of losses occasioned by the French and Indians driving the English traders off the Ohio, in which he states that the property seized belonged to William Trent, George Croghan, Robert Callender and Michael Teaf, traders in company.

Evidently, he and his partners then became financially embarrassed. A petition was presented by certain creditors to the Assembly on November 26, 1754, asking it to pass an Act exempting Trent and Croghan from arrest. On December 2, 1754, Croghan wrote to Secretary Peters: "Pray could not ye Assembly pass an Act of Bankruptcy to oblige ye merchants to take what effects we (the firm of Croghan & Trent) have to pay and so discharge us. I should be glad to know if that could be don, or in what manner to proceed." The Assembly passed such an Act, but after three years, it was disallowed by the Crown.

In 1755, Trent is said to have entered into the service of his native Province, and that for two years he was a member of the Provincial Council. His name is not mentioned in Keith Provincial Councillors, and I cannot find any record of him during that and the succeeding year in the Colonial Records.

He wrote from Carlisle, on Sunday Evening, 15th February, 1756, "Sir:

Wednesday Evening two Lads were taken or killed at the Widow Cox's, just under Parnelle Nob, and a Lad who went from McDowell's Mill to see what fire it was never returned, the horse coming back with the Reins over his neck. They burnt the house and shot down the cattle. Just now came news that a party of Indian warriors were come out against the Inhabitants from some of the Susquehannoh Towns, and yesterday some People who were over in Shurman's Valley discovered fresh tracks. All the people have left their Houses betwixt this and the Mountain. Some come to Town and others gathering into the little Forts. They are moving their effects to Shippenburgh: every one thinks of flying. Unless the Government fall upon some effectual method & that immediately of securing the Frontiers, there will not be one Inhabitant in this Valley one month longer. There is a few of us endeavor to keep up the Spirits of the People. We have proposed going upon the Enemy tomorrow, but whether a number sufficient can be got I cannot tell. No one scarce seems to be effected with the distress of their Neighbors, and for that reason none will stir but those who are next the Enemy & in immediate danger. A Fort in this Town would have saved this part of the County; but I doubt this Town in a few days will be deserted if this party that is out should kill any people nigh here. I was of the opinion the Forts, as they were built, would be of no service. I was laughed at for it, but now the Inhabitants here are convinced of it. I wrote for the Militia, and expect an answer by the Post."

About this time, he must have had his home in Lancaster, for his daughter, Ann, was born here on October 20, 1756, and his daughter, Martha, on October 24, 1759. He must have been a renter, for no real estate appears in his name. He, after Braddock's defeat, went to Wills Creek (Fort Cumberland), and assisted Washington, and he also attempted to raise a force to go against the Indians; but in this he was unsuccessful.

In 1757, he was again in the employ of Virginia, and later of Pennsylvania, and on July 27, of that year, he was secretary of Croghan at the Council with the Indians held at Easton, when the Great Treaty was entered into between the Indians and Governor Denny. On May 2, he was at Bethlehem, and on June 16, at Winchester, Virginia. From Bethlehem he wrote to Governor Denny:

"May it Please your Honor: "

"At the request of the Indians at Lancaster and Mr. George Croghan, I came with two of the Chiefs of the Six Nations. One returned from Reading, the other came here in order to bring Tedyuscung and the rest of the Delawares if arrived to Lancaster. If not, to bring what was here or their Chiefs, and leave word for Tedyuscung to follow with the rest as soon as he arrived. Yesterday, the Mohawk Sachem, who came here, delivered his speech in the presence of Mr. Horsfield & several other of the Inhabitants to the Indians here, and they have agreed that a number of their Chiefs with some women shall set off with us this morning for Lancaster, and have left the Wampum with word for Tedyuscung to follow with the rest as soon as he arrives.

"The day before yesterday, an Indian came down from Fort Allen here. He says all the Indians that were there, except Six or Seven, are gone off.

"I have heard two reasons given, one was that, as Tedyuscung stayed so long, they would goe back and Plant their Corn and then return again, unless they should meet him coming down, then they would return with him. But the Indians tell me the reason they went off was that they were afraid when they heard that there was white people killed. Here is no late accounts of Tedyuscung."

In 1758, he accompanied General Forbes in his Expedition against Fort Duquesne, and in 1759 was employed by Sir William Johnson, who was at that time British Agent for Indian Affairs in America. On October 4, 1759, he was present at the treaty made with the Ohio Indians at Fort Pitt, and also at the subsequent conference held by General Stanwix and the Western Indians in October. In 1760, he was with General Monckton at Fort Pitt.

He, with those whose signatures are appended, wrote:

"To the Honble Col. Henry Boquet, Commanding His Majesty's Troops at Fort Pitt.

"The Memorial of the Merchants Trading here Humbly sets forth:

"That by orders given out by the Honble Brigadier General Mouckton last summer (1760) and lately renewed by you, all Merchants, Sutlers, etc., trading here, were forbid under penalty of having their Houses pulled down and being dismissed the Camp, to sell, barter, or Exchange with any Indian, Powder, Lead or Spiritous Liquors, without first applying to His Majesty's Deputy Agent here for liberty for so doing, and as yesterday, Mr. McClure, in behalf of Mr. Ormsby, as well as others, did apply to His Majesty's Agent for liberty to sell a quantity of Rum to an Indian Woman, which he refused; and as the Provincial Agent has from time to time sold Powder, Lead and Rum to the Indians without liberty first obtained of His Majesty's Agent, as enjoined by the Orders, & did yesterday sell a quantity of Rum to a Delaware Woman without liberty, after several of us had applied and were refused. That we, the Merchants trading here, look upon the Provincial Agent as a Merchant in common with us, and as such subject to any orders of the Commanding Officer; that a privilege allowed to any one Merchant to brake thro' the orders, while the rest are obliged to obey them must entirely ruin the rest; which obliges me to call upon you for redress, which from your known regard to Justice we make no doubt of obtaining.

"And your Memorialists will ever pray, &c.

"William Trent
"Ephraim Blane
"Thomas Mitchell
"Thomas Welsh
"John McClure
"Hugh Crawford
"James Harris."

After the building of Fort Pitt, John Finley seems to have settled there with George Croghan, and a number of other Cumberland County traders. In a list of the inhabitants of Fort Pitt in July, 1760, not belonging to the

army, the name of John Finley is given, together with the names of Lazarus Lowry, Edward Ward, William Trent, Hugh Crawford, and more than eighty other men, the greater part of whom were traders. His name also appears in the lists of 1761.

During the ensuing years, he entered largely into the Indian trade. On May 16, 1760, William Trent, Joseph Simon, David Franks and Levi Andrew Levy entered into articles of agreement as partners in the western fur trade. The agreement, intended to last nine years, was under the "adventure" system, which did not restrict the partners in other business. Accustomed to taking daring risks, Trent, at a settlement, on January 9, 1869, was heavily in debt to his partners. To secure £4,082 he owed Joseph Simon and David Franks, he gave them a mortgage on 7,500 acres of land in what was then Cumberland County, Pa. Michael Gratz acquired a joint interest in this land. As the title of Trent passed to Joseph Simon, it was in litigation between the executors and heirs of Simon and Gratz for many years, finally reaching the Supreme Court of the United States.

Joseph Simon, as is known to all of you, lived in the Borough of Lancaster. His dwelling house was located where the Conestoga Bank now stands. His store and warehouse were on the southeast corner of East King Street and Penn Square, where the Watt & Shand store has been erected. Col. David Franks lived in the City of Philadelphia. He owned considerable real estate from time to time in Lancaster, and he was a man of wealth. Levi Andrew Levy lived in Lancaster, and was a merchant. Where he kept his store during the pendency of this partnership, I cannot now say; but on June 19, 1775, he purchased the property now owned by the Fulton National Bank.

This firm had a large trading house near Fort Pitt. In 1763, Pontiac formed his conspiracy, and with his Indians overran the western country, killing the traders and settlers, and destroying their property. Practically all the western posts were seized, except Detroit and Fort Pitt which were besieged. At Bloody Run, Captain Trent and twenty-two other traders were attacked by the Indians, and their goods were taken or destroyed. The trading house was also destroyed, and he was totally ruined. He fled to Fort Pitt for safety, and was there employed in military duties by Captain S. Ecuyer, the Commandant of that post.

A treaty was made with the Indians at Fort Stanwix in 1768. The Indians at that time made a conveyance of a large tract of land between the Kanawha and the Monongahela Rivers, about two-thirds of what is now the State of West Virginia, as compensation for these depredations. This deed was made to Captain Trent, as attorney in fact for himself and his twenty-two associate traders, who had, in 1763, suffered loss. The names of the beneficiaries, outside of Trent, were: Robert Callender, David Franks, Joseph Simon, Levi Andrew Levy, Philip Boyle, John Baynton, Samuel Wharton, George Morgan, Joseph Spear, Thomas Smallman, John Welch, Edward Moran, Evan Shelby, Samuel Postlethwait, John Gibson, Richard Winston, Dennis Crohon, William Thompson, Abraham Mitchell, James Dundas, Thomas Dundas, John Ormsby. The amount claimed by Franks, Trent, Simons & Co.,

was £24,780, 1 s. 8 p. The deed given by the Indians was in Independence Hall, in the City of Philadelphia, and probably yet remains there.

At a meeting held by the grantees of these lands, the following measures were agreed upon:

"In consideration of the great losses and damages amounting to £85,916, 10 s. 8 d. lawful money of New York sustained by sundry traders in the Spring of the year 1763, when the Shawanese, Delewares and Huron Tribes of Indians, Tributories of the Six Nations, seized upon and appropriated the Goods, Merchandize and effects of the Traders, The Sachems and Chiefs of the Six Nations, meeting at Fort Stanwix on Nov. 3, 1768, granted unto the said Traders:

"All that Tract or parcel of Land, Beginning at the Southerly side of the South of little Kenhawa River, where it empties itself into the River Ohio, and running from thence North East to the Laurel Hill, thence along the Laurel Hill until it strikes the River Monongehela, thence down the stream of the said River Monongehela, according to the several courses thereof, to the Southern Boundary Line of the Province of Pennsylvania. Thence westerly along the course of the said Province Boundary Line as far as the same shall extend, and from thence by the same course to the River Ohio, according to the several courses thereof, to the place of Beginning.

"And whereas, we understand there are numbers of Families settled on the said Lands. We do hereby give notice that they may be assured of peaceable possession on complying with the Terms of our general Land Office, which will shortly be opened for the sale of the said Lands in behalf of all the grantees, and that the purchase will be made easy."

Captain Trent visited England, to secure the approval of this grant. The minutes of a meeting held by the grantees on September 2, 1773, contain the following report:

"Mr. William Trent informs the company present that on his arrival in England, Anno 1769, being advised by Doctor Franklin, Lord Cambdin and others, that it was unnecessary to make application to the Crown or King in Council for a Confirmation of the above mentioned Grant, but that all he had to do was to return and take possession thereof, and understanding that Lord Hillsborough was determined to oppose a confirmation of the said Grant, as will appear by his Letters to Sir William Johnson, he declined making the said application for the same to be confirmed. This Mr. Trent recommends not to be made public, as it may perhaps give an unfavorable Idea of our Right to the common people; but he thought it his duty to communicate it to this Company. He further acquaints them that soon after his arrival in England, a Company of Gentlemen made a purchase from the Crown of a tract of Land on the Ohio, which includes the Grant of all the Tract given or Granted by the Six Nation Indians to the suffering Traders as aforesaid. That the said Company of Purchasers, stiling themselves the Grand Ohio Company, agreed in the minutes of their proceedings to confirm and convey to the said suffering Traders all their Right and Title to that part of their purchase which includes the Grant from the Indians to the suffering Traders as aforesaid."

The King is said to have sanctioned the grant but I cannot give the date, and in 1780, a committee of the Continental Congress reported in its favor. However, the government of Virginia within whose limits it lay refused to give its approval, and the grant was thereby rendered ineffective. Trent, however, settled upon this land and remained there until the beginning of the Revolutionary War, when he returned to Pennsylvania, and accepted a Major's commission from the Continental Congress. His active service was in the western department, and, in the line of his duty, he was present at the treaty made with the Indians at Fort Pitt in 1776.

On his return from England, a quarrel arose between him and Baynton and Morgan, a firm of noted traders in the western country prior to the Revolution. They were located in the City of Philadelphia. On July 8, 1775, George Morgan published the following notice:

"Captain William Trent, lately arrived from England, having been guilty of very dishonest & dishonourable Acts to the Prejudice of my late father-in-law, John Baynton, dec'd, & having refused to give him any reason for his conduct, & still refusing to give any satisfaction therein, I do hereby announce and declare the said Wm. Trent to be an infamous lyar and a Scoundrel."

Trent made no response to these charges.

Captain Trent and certain associates organized a company to which they gave the name of the Indiana Land Company. It is so called on Hutchins's map of 1778. The Virginia Legislature, however, also refused to confirm this grant from the Indians, and the traders eventually suffered the additional loss of all they had paid for securing and protecting the same.

Another large tract, which was bounded by land of George Croghan on the south, was also bought from the Indians and patented in 1769 to Charles Reed, Thomas Wharton, William Trent, and others, and this tract was known as the Otsego Patent.

In December, 1775, the Assembly passed a bill for the relief of Trent and Croghan for a period of ten years.

At the March Term of the Court of Common Pleas of Lancaster County, in 1776, an action of debt was commenced by Alexander Lowrey against William Trent, to recover the sum of £4,026, 8 s. 7 d. Thereupon, Trent made the following defense: "That on the 22d day of December, 1768, he, together with George Croghan and Samuel Wharton, becoming jointly and severally bound to Alexander Lowrey in the sum of eight thousand and fifty-two pounds, seventeen shillings and four pence, conditioned for the payment of the sum £4,026 8 s. 7 d. within four years after the ratification and confirmation by his Majesty or other lawful authority in England, or of a certain deed or grant heretofore made by certain Indians in the said conditions mentioned, or if any other grant or confirmation of lands or other satisfaction then or thereafter to be made to or for certain sufferers in the said conditions mentioned, by the depredations committed by the said Indians in the year of our Lord, 1763, as by the said obligation and the conditions thereof, a true copy whereof is to these presents annexed, fully appears; and that he is not indebted on bond to the said Alexander Lowrey by or for any

other matter or thing whatsoever, and the said William Trent further saith that the deed or grant so as aforesaid made by the said Indians to the persons in the said conditions named, was not ratified or confirmed by his Majesty or other lawful authority in England, on the 21st day of April last past; at which time this deponent left England, nor as this deponent has been informed and verily believes, hath the same ever hitherto been so aforesaid or in any way ratified or confirmed; nor hath any grant or confirmation whatsoever been made, ratified and confirmed of any lands whatsoever to the persons in the said conditions mentioned, or to any other persons to and for the use of the sufferers aforesaid, in the year aforesaid or of any of them; nor hath any other satisfaction of any kind whatsoever been made or given by any person whatsoever to the persons in the said conditions mentioned, or to any of them, or to any other persons to and for the use of the sufferers aforesaid, in the year aforesaid, or any of them, and the said William Trent further saith that the said £4,026 8 s. 7 d. in the said conditions mentioned, nor any part thereof, is not yet due or payable to the said Alexander Lowrey by the obligors therein mentioned or any of them, according to the form of the said conditions or the true intent and meaning thereof."

The defense set forth in the affidavit was evidently considered a good one, for Col. Lowrey did not recover on this bond.

While on his way east in 1778, Trent took ill at his old home in Cumberland County, and he died there from this illness. He was buried in an old graveyard not far from Silver Spring Church Yard, if not in this identical burying ground. That Church Yard is located along the highway between Harrisburg and Carlisle, and about seven miles from the former city. This churchyard is several hundred yards from the road back of the church. Major Trent was a representative man in Provincial days, and he spent most of his life in the public service.

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