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A Biography of Colonel John Hinkson (1729-1789)

Pennsylvania and Kentucky Frontiersman

By Robert E. Francis

Introduction. John Hinkson is one of the most fascinating sons of the 18th century American frontier—and like this frontier, he has mostly vanished from our collective memory. Today, all that remains of this enigmatic figure are two waterways that bear his name: Hinckston's Run, a small stream that “comes down through the classic region of ‘Frog Hollow,’ in Millville (Johnstown, Pennsylvania) and flows into the Conemaugh”¹ and “Hinkston Creek,” a tributary which joins with Stoner Creek at Ruddles Mills, Kentucky, to form the south fork of the Licking river.

He is a bit more visible to some students of early Kentucky history. An historic marker alongside state highway 27 in Lair, Kentucky, commemorates the establishment of Hinkson's Fort in 1775. He is fleshed out a bit more in Collin's *History of Kentucky*, which reads:

“First Visitors and Improvers.-...it appears that a company of fifteen men (in after years frequently called “Hinkson's Company ”)-John Hinkson, John Haggin, John Martin, John Townsend, James Cooper, Daniel Callahan, Patrick Callahan, Matthew Fenton, George Gray, Wm. Hoskins, Wm. Shields, Thomas Shores, Silas Train, Samuel Wilson, (only 15 or 16 years old,) and John Woods-in March and April, 1775, came down the Ohio and up the Licking river, in canoes, in search of lands to improve. They landed at the mouth of Willow creek, on the east side of Main Licking, four miles above the forks (where Falmouth now is); and on account of high water and rainy weather remained two nights and a day...They proceeded on up the Licking to near the Lower Blue Licks, “where Bedinger's mill was in 1805,” thence took the buffalo trace to the neighborhood between Paris and Cynthiana-where they “improved” lands, made small clearings, built a cabin for each member of the company, named after some of the company Hinkston and Townsend creeks, and Cooper's run, and afterwards settled Hinkston and Martin's stations. John Townsend, on Townsend creek, and John Cooper, on the waters of Hinkston, raised corn in 1775, from which the latter

furnished seed to a number of improvers in the same region in 1776.”²

Hinkson is generally familiar to researchers of the pioneer outposts, Ruddell's and Martin's Forts, which were captured by the British and Native Americans on June 24 and 26, 1780. He stands out clearly amidst the dramatic events following the capture of the forts where, two days after being taken prisoner, he made a thrilling escape and was the first to bring the news of the tragedy to the nearby fort at Lexington, Kentucky. Yet, even this event, which captured the imagination of the first generations of settlers in the Blue Grass region, is now merely a faint echo of the past. Today, very few people are even aware of the horrific events that took place in the now tranquil countryside along the banks of the Licking river near the border of present day Harrison and Bourbon Counties; and fewer still know about the people who lived and died there. And what of John Hinkson, explorer and Revolutionary War hero? Only a shadow remains where once stood a bold and fearless frontiersman. This biography brings him to the light of day and, in doing so, resurrects the life and times of those brave souls—our forebears—who struggled for survival in the wilderness known as Kentucky.

Before I begin this biography in earnest, it is appropriate to give credit to a fellow researcher who shares my passion for early Pennsylvania and Kentucky history: Jim Sellars.³ Jim was the first person to actually introduce me to John Hinkson. Before meeting Jim, I was like most Hinkson descendants who had read general references to “John Hinkson, the famous Indian fighter and experienced woodsman” but did not know what this meant. This all changed in January 1998 when I received an e-mail message from Jim relating that he was the 6th great-grand nephew of John Sellers who was Lieutenant under Captain John Hinkson during the Revolutionary War. Jim wrote that he discovered Hinkson through his nine year research of Sellers; and, as he said, “everywhere I found the name Sellars,

Hinkson was close behind.” Over the next several months, he unselfishly shared all of this information with me, most of which will appear in this monograph. Thus, while my name heads this essay, the heart and soul of it belongs to Jim. My hat is off to you, Jim. Thanks!

The Early Years. The first thirty-five years of John’s life is all-but-unknown. What little we know about him comes from two sources: (1) a Lyman Draper⁴ interview with John Hinkson’s son, John, in 1845, and (2) from information concerning his half-brother, William McCune. The first reference is straightforward:

“From John Hinkson - now (1845) about 72 - born on the Monongahela. Son of Col. John Hinkson - who was a son of John (a native of Ireland) - emigrated to America a married man, died leaving John the pioneer and a sister - John (Col.) when young man went to Ireland to get some family patrimony, married Margaret McCracken, remained two years, and then returned to America, about 1765 - settled probably in Westmoreland Co. Pa on Monongahela, bringing from Ireland a store of goods... In '89, Col. Hinkson went to New Madrid to look at the country, and there died. He was probably about 58 or 60 years old...leaving a wife and nine children.”⁵

From this we can deduce that John Hinkson was born about 1729,⁶ possibly in Ireland⁷ to John Hinkson, Sr. and wife, and that he had a sister. Another piece of information from this interview provides an important clue to uncovering Hinkson’s origins, as well as introduce us to the second source of information:

“(John Hinkson) Went and settled at Mann's Lick and stayed there till '81; then moved to Haggin's Station, near Danville and about '83, re-occupied his old settlement on Hinkson's Fork. *William McCune, a half-brother of Hinkson's*, (italics mine) moved with Hinkson to Kentucky in '80, and was captured with him; and was kept nearly two years.”⁸

The second source of information involves William McCune, and by association, John Hinkson. While it is a rather circuitous route, it clearly establishes John’s relationship with some important people later on, as well as providing a backdrop for his role as a soldier and frontiersman. It is our good fortune to have quite a bit of information about William McCune. William was born about 1751⁹ to John McCune (1712-1766) and Agnes, of Hopewell Township, Cumberland Co., Pennsylvania.¹⁰

McCune’s and Hinkson’s relationship is made clearer through their kinsman, John Haggin. This is the same John Haggin listed as a member of the Hinkson expedition of the spring of 1775. In a deposition given by William McCune in 1811, we read:

“He came to this country (Bourbon County, Kentucky) in the spring of the year 1780 and settled at Ruddell's Station which stood on the bank of the South Fork of Licking, and he continued to reside at said station until it was taken by the Indians during the same year...and it was much resorted to by adventurers to this country. *John Haggin was his kinsman* and informed him at Lexington when on his way to Ruddell's Station, that he had settled a place near said station but was compelled for danger of Indians to leave it...”¹¹

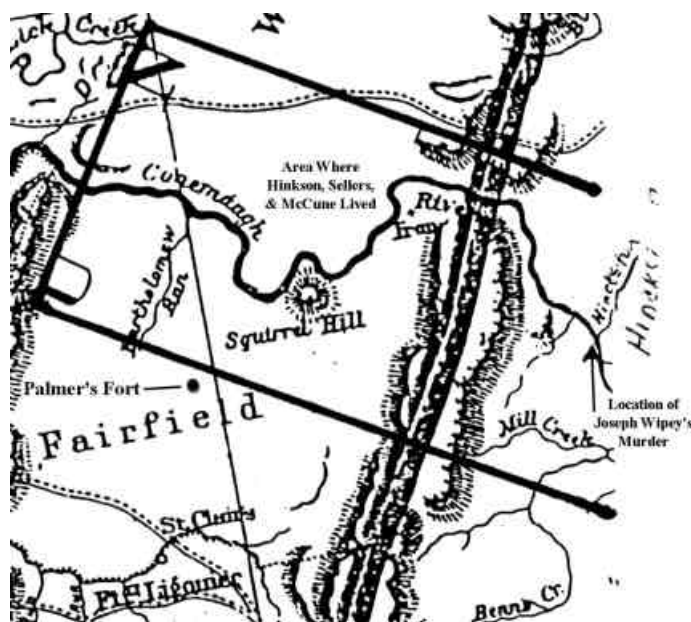
John Haggin was a kinsman of John Hinkson and William McCune through his marriage to their niece, Nancy Gibbs. Historian Reuben Thwaites refers to this kinship as he describes Haggin’s early emigration to Kentucky: “He was one of the earliest settlers of Kentucky, coming out in the spring of 1775 *with his wife’s uncle, Col. John Hinkston* (italics mine).”¹² John Haggin’s wife, Agnes “Nancy” Gibbs, was the daughter of Elizabeth Hinkson and Robert Gibbs.¹³ Nancy’s mother, Elizabeth, was John Hinkson’s full sister and William McCune’s half-sister. The will abstract of Robert Gibbs, dated March 8, 1776, provides a definitive link between these families:

“Will abstract – Robert Gibbs, yeoman, Fairfield Township, dated March 8, 1776, proved April 20, 1776; wife Elizabeth; children Agnes, Hugh, John, Samuel, Thomas and William; wife and son Hugh executors; witnesses, William McCune and David Wilson.”¹⁴

A another link between the families of McCune and Gibbs concerns Robert McCune. The above mentioned will of John McCune, Sr., mentions a son, Robert, who married an Elizabeth Gibb. While no clear relationship exists between Elizabeth and Robert Gibb, it is evident that these families were closely allied.

In summary, John Hinkson was probably born 1729 in Ireland to John Hinkson, Sr., and Agnes. He had a sister named Elizabeth who married Robert Gibbs and had a daughter (among several other children) named Agnes “Nancy.” Nancy eventually married John Haggin. John’s father died sometime before 1750 and Agnes remarried John McCune. John and Agnes McCune had several children, including William, John’s half-brother, who was born in 1751.

Life in Pennsylvania. John’s son mentioned that in 1763 his father traveled to the Emerald Isle as a young man “to collect patrimony,” marry Margaret McCracken, then stayed two years before returning with supplies for life in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. This is, in many ways, a most curious passage. Firstly, in 1763 John Hinkson



Fairfield Township

was not a young man—he was 34 years old which, by 18th century standards, was in his prime. Secondly, he went to collect patrimony, which meant that he had inherited some money or land from the death of an Irish male relative. We have no information about this family from the Old Country. This passage leads us to believe that John may have actually been born in Ireland and did not come to the American Colonies until sometime in his youth. It would explain why we have no record of him until the mid-1700's. It also explains the sudden marriage of a lass from Ireland, and his willingness to remain in Ireland for two years.

John Hinkson enters the record books for the first time in the mid-1760's. John and Margaret established their home and began raising a family in Hopewell Township (then later Fairfield Township), Pennsylvania. John settled on 200 acres of land and began clearing it.¹⁵ In 1765, the couple had their first of nine children: Robert Hinkson was born November 24, 1765, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. On April 3, 1768, John purchased land at the "Squirrel Hill Old Town" on the Conemaugh river, in Fairfield township, Bedford County (later became Westmoreland), Pennsylvania. Squirrel Hill was the site of an old Indian village. In 1771, John Hinkson and his neighbors built a road from his plantation at Squirrel Hill to neighbor Arthur St. Clair's mill, then onward to Ligonier.¹⁶

John's half-brother William, who by now had married Elizabeth McClintock and had two small

children, Nancy and John, lived in nearby Armstrong Township¹⁷ along the Conemaugh river at the juncture of Stoney Run, just west of Squirrel Hill.

Such was life for the Hinkson and McCune families along the newly developing frontier of Pennsylvania. Both men struggled daily to clear the land and eke out a living. Until the spring of 1774, John Hinkson was just another of the white settlers streaming into this part of the world; kinsmen like John Haggin who married his niece, Nancy, and bought land nearby;¹⁸ friends like David Wilson, John Sellers, John and Thomas Woods, James Cooper; neighbors such as mill owner Arthur St. Clair and Thomas Galbraith, innkeeper at Ligonier. Little did these men realize at the time that the world was about to turn on its head and they would become bound together in events which would forever change their lives and that of the country. Some of these men would become bitter enemies while others would form bonds of friendship that would last a lifetime. The event that triggered this change occurred in May 1774, when John Hinkson became a murderer.

The Wipey Affair. There is little doubt that John Hinkson, along with friend James Cooper, shot and killed an old Delaware Indian named Joseph Wipey. The murder took place, evidently, as Joseph was fishing in his canoe on or about the mouth of Hinkston's Run, "a stream which is a confluent of Conemaugh river, having its source in Blacklick, and Jackson townships, Cambria county, flowing in a westerly direction and emptying into the Conemaugh in the Fourteenth ward of the city of Johnstown, which stream—Hinkston's Run—takes its name from Hinkston, one of the men who killed Wipey."¹⁹

The first mention of the murder of Joseph Wipey comes from the pen of Arthur St. Clair, a local mill owner who, we may recall, had some dealings with John Hinkson in the building of a road through Ligonier valley:

"An affair, says he, that has given me much trouble and vexation had liked to have escaped my memory. The murder of a Delaware Indian, Joseph Wipey, about eighteen miles from this place. It is the most astonishing thing in the world, the Disposition of the common people of this Country, actuated by the most savage cruelty, they wantonly perpetrate crimes that are a disgrace to humanity, and seem at the same time to be under a kind of religious enthusiasm whilst they want the daring spirit that usually inspires. Two of the Persons concerned in this murder are John Hinkson and James Cooper. I had got information of their design some time before they executed it, and had wrote to Hinkson, whom I knew to be a leader amongst them to dissuade them, and threatened them with the weight of the Law if they

persisted, but so far from preventing them, it only produced the enclosed Letter. The Body was discovered hid in a small run of Water and covered with stones. I immediately sent for the Coroner, but before he had got a Jury together the Body was removed, so that no inquest could be taken. I have issued Warrants on suspicion, but they are so much on their Guard I doubt they cannot be executed - Your Honor will please to consider whether it may be proper to Proclaim them-It is most unluckey at this time; the letter may perhaps be made use of as Evidence.”²⁰

Clarence Stephenson—who has provided the most comprehensive treatment of the Wipey Affair to date—chronicles St. Clair’s correspondence in the coming days:²¹

“On June 12th, St. Clair again reported to Governor Penn that the country between the Forbes Road and the Allegheny River was ‘totally abandoned, except by a few who are associated with the People who murdered the Indian [Wipey], and are shut up in a small Fort on Conymack, equally afraid of the Indians and the Officers of justice.’²²

“Four days later, June 16th, St. Clair, writing to Governor Penn, mentioned being visited by Major Edward Ward, who ‘informed me that the Delawares had got notice of the Murder of Wipey and that Mr. Croghan [most noted of the traders with the Indians] had desired him [Ward] to come to me on that occasion, that he advised that they [the Delawares] should be spoke to and some small Present made to them as Condolence and “to cover his bones” as they express it.”²³

Frustrated that Hinkson might get away with his crime, on July 12, 1774, St. Clair informed the Governor that:

“Hinkston, with about eighteen men in arms, paid us a visit at Court [in Hannastown] last week, and I am very sorry to say, got leave to go away again, though there was a force sufficient to have secured two such parties. At the Sheriff’s direction I got intelligence that they were to be there and expected to be joined by a party of Cresap’s people. It is said a Commission has been sent him from Virginia; certain it is, he is enlisting men for that Service.”²⁴

On July 20, 1774, a resolution was passed from the Pennsylvania Assembly establishing a warrant for the arrest of John Hinkson and James Cooper:

“Resolved, That this House will make Provision for Paying the reward of One Hundred Pounds to any Person who shall apprehend James Cooper and John Hinkson, who, it is said, have barbarously murdered an Indian on the Frontiers of this Province, and deliver them into the Custody of the Keeper of the Gaol, within either of the



General Arthur St. Clair

Counties of Lancaster, York or Cumberland, or the sum of Fifty Pounds for either of them.”²⁵

Eight days later, Governor John Penn issued the following decree:²⁶

"A PROCLAMATION

"WHEREAS, I have received information that some Time in May last, a certain friendly Indian man, called Joseph Wipey, was barbarously murdered in the County of Westmoreland; And Whereas, there is great Reason to believe that John Hinkson, and James Cooper, of the same County, were concerned in the perpetration of the said Murder; And Whereas, it is at all Times, but more especially in the present Situation of our Affairs with the Western Indian Nations, of the utmost Consequence to the Peace of the Province, that the Perpetrators of such atrocious Offenses, not only against the Authority of Government, but in direct Violation of the Treaties with those Indians, should be brought to condign and exemplary Punishment; I have, therefore, thought fit, with the advice of the Council, to issue this Proclamation, And do hereby strictly charge and Command all Judges, Justices, Sheriffs, Constables, and other Officers, as well as all other His Majesty's liege Subjects within this Province, to make diligent Search and Enquiry after the said John Hinkson and James Cooper, and to use all lawful Means for apprehending and securing them, that



BY THE HONOURABLE

J O H N P E N N, Esquire,

Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of *Pennsylvania*, and Counties of
New-Castle, Kent and Sussex, on Delaware,

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS I have received Information that, *some Time in May last*, a certain *Stoutly Indian* Man, called **JOSEPH WIPEY**, was barbarously murdered in the County of *Westmoreland*: AND WHEREAS there is great Reason to believe, that **JOHN HINKSON** and **JAMES COOPER**, of the same County, were concerned in the Perpetration of the said Murder: AND WHEREAS it is at all Times, but more especially in the present Situation of our Affairs with the *Western Indian Nations*, of the utmost Consequence to the Peace of the Province, that the Perpetration of such atrocious Offences, not only against the Authority of Government, but in direct Violation of the Treaties with those *Indians*, should be brought to condign and exemplary Punishment, I HAVE THEREFORE thought fit, with the Advice of the Council, to issue this Proclamation, AND DO hereby strictly charge and command all Judges, Justices, Sheriffs, Constables, and other Officers, as well as all other His Majesty's large Subjects within this Province, to make diligent Search and Enquiry after the said *John Hinkson* and *James Cooper*, and to use all lawful Means for apprehending and securing them, that they may be proceeded against according to Law. AND I DO hereby promise and engage, that the public Reward of **ONE HUNDRED POUNDS** shall be paid to any Person or Persons, who shall apprehend the said *John Hinkson* and *James Cooper*, and deliver them into the Custody of the Keeper of the Goal of either of the Counties of *Lancaster, York or Cumberland*, or the Sum of **FIFTY POUNDS** for either of them.

G I V E N under my Hand, and the Great Seal of the said Province, at Philadelphia, the Twenty-eighth Day of July, in the Fourteenth Year of His Majesty's Reign, and in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-four.

J O H N P E N N.

By His Honour's Command,
JOSEPH SHIPPEN, Junr. Secretary.

G O D Save the KING.

PHILADELPHIA: PRINTED BY HALL AND SELLERS.

they may be proceeded against according to Law. And I do hereby promise and engage, the Public Reward of one hundred Pounds shall be paid to any Person or Persons who shall apprehend the said John Hinkson and James Cooper, and deliver them into the Custody of the Keeper of the Gaol of either of the Counties of Lancaster, York, or Cumberland, or the Sum of fifty Pounds for either of them.

"Given under my Hand and the Great Seal of the said Provinces, at Philadelphia, the twenty-eighth day of July, in the fourteenth Year of His Majesty's Reign and in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four.

"JOHN PENN.

"By His Honour's Command.

"JOSEPH SHIPPEN, Junr., Secretary.

"GOD SAVE THE KING."

Several depositions given to Revolutionary War chronicler Lyman Draper support St. Clair's accusation against Hinkson and Cooper. John Hinkson's son, John, mentioned the incident to Lyman Draper:

"He and James Cooper killed Wipey, who had some figure against Hinkson and threatened his life - once came with two other Indians and wanted Hinkson to go a hunting with him - Hinkson went a little distance and

knowing of Wipey's threats fell a little behind, and presenting his gun told them he knew their object and to move off or he would shoot some of them. They went off - and a few days after, with Cooper, came upon Wipey in a trail and shot him - expecting he would watch Hinkson and kill him."²⁷

Mention of the killing also appeared in other depositions such as those of Samuel Murphy and James Chambers.²⁸ Murphy seemed to favor Hinkson's action: "John Hinkson & Cooper killed Wipey in Westmoreland - made a great stir with the whites & Hinkson had a small party of rangers (8 or 10, or something like that) Cooper amongst them & were brave & useful, more so than most others. Hinkson and Girty were cronies."²⁹ John Chamber's deposition expands upon Hinkson's relationship with Girty and explains how he helped Hinkson escape from the British after the capture of Ruddell's and Martin's forts.

The reasons for John Hinkson and James Cooper killing Joseph Wipey may never be known. St. Clair saw it as a result of the growing climate of distrust amongst the whites and the Native American population during a period of great unrest, and feared that an incident of this type could catapult the region into wholesale warfare. He decried what he perceived as a attitude of "religious fanaticism" among the young men of the area (Hinkson's group) of the type that prompted hysteria and acts of barbarity. Historians like Busch and Sipes present Hinkson and Cooper as cold-blooded killers while researcher Clarence Stephenson suggests the motive may have been none other than a kind of dumb prejudice which posits that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian."³⁰ We will never know the full story. John Hinkson and James Cooper were never tried for their crime, no evidence was ever presented against them, no witnesses were ever brought forth to testify, and no legal verdict was ever rendered in a court of law. Yet, in the absence of a trial, it is fairly certain that John Hinkson and James Cooper did, in fact, murder the old Delaware Indian, Joseph Wipey.

Dunmore's War. The Wipey Affair forever changed the direction of John Hinkson's life. From this moment onward, he would choose the life of a soldier, adventurer, and woodsman. As mentioned in Arthur St. Clair's letter of July 12, 1774, John Hinkson and his group of volunteers enlisted to fight in Dunmore's War where he received the commission of Lieutenant.³¹ His company of men consisted of the following: Thomas Chenney, James Cooper, James Connell, James Dongan (?), George Finley, James Grannell, William Haskins,

William Haddin, William Anderson,³² John Jordan, John Hagen, Robert Knox, John Martin, Chris'r McMichael, John McGany (?), Hugh and Robert Porter, Matthew Sullivan, Thomas Shores, John Townsend, Thos. Tawnhill (?), Silas Train, William Worton (?) and William Wilson³³

"Dunmore's War" was one of those ugly little wars where the primary motive for fighting was greed, pure and simple. John Murray, Earl of Dunmore, known as "Lord Dunmore," and the last colonial governor of Virginia, sought to expand his holdings beyond Virginia into the Ohio Valley, including portions of southwestern Pennsylvania. To this end, in the summer of 1773 he appointed Dr. John Connolly as his lieutenant in Pittsburgh. Connolly was the nephew of George Croghan, then "Commandant of the District of West Augusta, of which Pittsburgh was the county seat."³⁴ There Connolly assumed command of Ft. Pitt, renaming it "Fort Dunmore."³⁵

Lord Dunmore encouraged settlement of the land by Virginians and, throughout the coming months, families poured into the territory. This situation did not set well with the Shawnees and Delawares whose lands were being taken without so much as a "thank you." Tensions rose and isolated incidents of brutality broke out on both sides. The atmosphere became a powder keg waiting to ignite—and Dr. John Connolly was the man holding the match. He was waiting for an event that would ignite warfare and in April 1774, the event presented itself.

Along the Ohio and Kanawha rivers near Wheeling, (West) Virginia, a group of land jobbers accused some Indians of stealing horses. Though no evidence was ever presented to substantiate this claim, on April 27, the land jobbers congregated at the fort at Wheeling, then commanded by Captain Michael Cresap, and proceeded to lay plans to kill the Indians. Within the next few hours, the jobbers killed two Indians and some traders. Three days later a group of thirty two men, led by Daniel Greathouse, an agent of Dr. Connolly, proceeded down river to Captina and murdered the family of Logan, a friendly chief of the Cuyaga. The details of the murders are particularly heinous, in that the white men tricked the Indians into believing that they were friendly and, after helping the unsuspecting victims to get drunk, proceeded to gun down, tomahawk and scalp them.³⁶

Even after the slaughter of Logan's family, Cornstalk, the chief of the Shawnees, tried to avoid bloodshed. He sent a letter through Shawnee emissaries to Connolly asking him to restrain the Virginians from committing more murders. Connolly responded by attempting to kill the emissaries. Connolly informed Lord Dunmore that war was inevitable; thus began "Dunmore's War." The "war" lasted five months and consisted of only one major battle, Point Pleasant, after

which Cornstalk, the leader of the Indian forces sued for peace.

Kentucky Expedition and Settlement: Spring, 1775 – Summer, 1776. The summer and fall of 1774 seemed to be a particularly rough time for John Hinkson. Besides having a warrant of 50£ on his head for the murder of Joseph Wipey, he and several others were charged with "riot and assault" on John Burns.³⁷ In August, 1774, John sold his land in Squirrel Hill to Ligonier innkeeper, Thomas Galbraith. Dunmore's War officially concluded in September and the soldiers returned to their homes shortly thereafter. We are not certain what took place between September 1774 and the spring of 1775; however, since several of his company accompanied him during the Kentucky expedition of 1775, we can speculate that these men decided to claim land beyond the Ohio in the wilderness of Kentucky. One can imagine the men sitting around the campfire in the evening discussing this issue. I suspect also that it was during this period that John Hinkson met and befriended Simon Girty.

Simon Girty was one of the most remarkable figures of the western frontier during and after the Revolutionary War. An Irishman like Hinkson, Girty was a hard-drinking, tough-as-nails woodsman whose name became feared throughout Pennsylvania and Kentucky as the very personification of Evil.³⁸ In his day, he was accused of every conceivable act of barbarity; yet, in truth, the actual man was a complete enigma. While it is true that at times Girty committed acts of extreme cruelty, he could also be kind and generous to a fault—especially to his friends. Girty and Hinkson were clearly friends who enjoyed one another's company. I imagine that the two men got rip-roaringly drunk from time to time and swapped stories of their various adventures. It was probably during these drinking sessions that Girty learned of Hinkson's murder of Wipey; knowledge which would prove fortunate for Hinkson in years to come.

It was in the spring of 1775 that John Hinkson entered into the history books as one of the first explorers of Kentucky. In that year John was in the prime of his life and, if we go by his son's account, he was 46 years old that year. He was a tall, rangy man, standing 6'1" with strong "raw-boned" features and dark complexion.³⁹ He dressed in the clothing of the western frontiersman of the type Joseph Doddridge describes in his *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars*: He wore a hunting shirt which hung loose and reached halfway down his thighs. The front of the shirt was open and overlapped with a pocket in the bosom

where he could keep jerked meat, or perhaps a piece of bread and a rag for wiping the barrel of his rifle. The shirt might have been made of deer skin or, more likely, linsey-woolsey—a material made from homespun combination of wool and flax. He wore “leggings,” which covered the legs to the thighs, and were fastened to a belt by strings. The belt also held a bullet pouch, a tomahawk and a scalping knife. Attached beneath his belt in front and back and extending about a yard on both sides was piece of linen or cloth called the “breech clout.” The ends of this cloth may have been embroidered, hanging down before and behind. Hinkson wore moccasins made of a single piece of dressed deer skin with a single seam along the top of the foot and another along the bottom of the heel as high as the ankle joint. Flaps were left on each side some distance up his legs and adjusted by thongs. When the weather turned cold, John would stuff the moccasins with deer hair or dried leaves to keep his feet warm. He completed his attire by wearing a coon-skin cap, with the tail dangling down behind.⁴⁰

Hinkson’s expedition was comprised partly of men from his old company during Dunmore’s War--John Haggin, John Martin, John Townsend, James Cooper, Wm. Hoskins, Thomas Shores and Silas Train. An additional seven men joined the expedition--Daniel Callahan and Patrick Callahan, Matthew Fenton, George Gray, Wm. Shields, Samuel Wilson, (only 15 or 16 years old,) and John Woods.

The group left Pittsburgh sometime in March 1775 and traveled by canoe down the Ohio river to the mouth of the Licking river (just across from present day Cincinnati), then followed the river upstream to Willow creek, about four miles above where the Licking forked. Because of heavy rain they remained there for two days, then continued upriver to Blue Licks, then overland along an ancient buffalo trace to the site of what would become “Hinkston fort.” The site is located on the south fork of the Licking river, about two miles from the present day village of Lair, Kentucky. Actually, Hinkson’s “fort” was never a fort in the proper sense of the word, but a few cabins built to sustain the men as they explored the area and established their own “improvements.”⁴¹

There is some question as to the exact location of Hinkson’s settlement. Some claim that he built his cabins on the east side of the Licking while others argue for the west side. The argument for the east side is the common assertion that in April, 1779 Isaac Ruddell “enlarged and fortified” the site of Hinkson’s abandoned settlement.⁴² Archaeological evidence shows that Ruddell’s fort was definitely located on the east side.⁴³ The argument for the west side follows the assertion that, according to the land law, in order to claim a 400

acre preemption it had to include the original improvement, which was a cabin and/or crop of corn. We know from the records that Hinkson planted corn in 1775 and 1776. John Hinkson's 400-acre preemption was located on the west side of the river. This is what George Rogers Clark wrote in his diary regarding Hinkson's "cabin:" “We parted by the Blue Lick, and the third day from our leaving the river got to Hinkston's cabin, on the west side of Licking creek.”⁴⁴

In October 1775, a humorous incident occurred at Blue Licks which gives us the only first-hand account of a verbal exchange between John Hinkson and another man. The interchange was recorded by Lyman Draper in hand-written notes taken from an interview with a Dr. Bedinger who, in turn, heard it from the famous Kentucky explorer, Simon Kenton:

“The first white man Kenton ever saw in Kentucky was at the Blue Licks—John Hinkston: On that occasion saw at the Licks what he estimated at 1500 buffaloes, who seemed rather shy (?). Kenton discovered at a short distance someone treed--& K. also took tree (both avoiding the rush of the buffaloes): Kenton hailed Hinkson with—‘Come out—show yourself’—when Hinkson replied, ‘Come out yourself’—When Kenton discovered he was a white man: they approached one another & shook hands.”⁴⁵

John Hinkson and six other men, including John Haggin, returned to Pennsylvania sometime in the late fall of 1775.⁴⁶ Hinkson and Haggin (with his family) returned the following spring along with several others, including Thomas Dunn,⁴⁷ David Wilson,⁴⁸ Thomas Moore,⁴⁹ Benjamin Harrison,⁵⁰ John Morgan, Belles Collier, Robert Keene, John Sellers,⁵¹ Eneas McDaniel⁵² and William Kennedy. The men continued to improve the land throughout the spring and into the summer. However, within a few months events took a turn for the worse. The Shawnee and Cherokee were very angry that whites had encroached upon their “happy hunting grounds” and struck back at the settlers. On July 7, 1776, John’s long time friend, James Cooper, was killed. In a report filed by John Hinkson to William Harrison (brother of Benjamin) on August 30, 1776, we read that

“... one James Cooper, and another person, a Dutchman, being on their way to a buffalo lick, were fired upon by a couple of Indians, who shot down Cooper and frightened the Dutchman's horse so that he flung him; his foot hanging in the stirrup, one of the Indians walked up to him, to tomahawk him, but although in that disadvantages situation he found means to aim his gun so well (which he never gritted) as to shoot the savage dead on the spot and seeing the other Indian walking up to him, he disengaged himself from his horse, mounted Coopers, and got clear off to the inhabitants.”⁵³

On July 14, another incident involved the inhabitants of Boonesboro. Three girls were captured by Shawnee and Cherokee Indians (this incident was the basis of James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*). Fortunately, the girls were returned after the Boonesboro pursuers chased and confronted the Indians; however, the incident generated great fear along the frontier, prompting many settlers, including John Hinkson's group, to pull up stakes and leave the area. Colonel John Floyd wrote of this from Boonesboro:

A settlement known by the name of Hinkston...is broke up; nineteen of [the settlers of] which are now here on their way in, himself [John Hinkston] among the rest, who all seem deaf to anything we can say to dissuade them. Ten at least of our own people, I understand, are going to join them which will leave us with less than 30 men at this fort. I think more than 300 men have left the country since I came out, and not one has arrived except a few cabiners down the Ohio.⁵⁴

Thus, John Hinkson and his fellow Pennsylvanians abandoned "Hinkson's Station" and returned to Pittsburgh.⁵⁵

The Revolutionary War. After returning to Pennsylvania, Hinkson and many of his old company joined in the fight against the British and their Indian allies. Responding to the call by Brigadier-General Edward Hand to muster troops and "carry the war against the Indian country west of the Ohio and Allegheny,"⁵⁶ in June, 1777, Hinkson enlisted as Captain of 3rd Company, under Colonel Alexander Barr's 1st Battalion, Westmoreland, Pa., Militia His officers included Lieutenants John Wood and John Sellers, Ensign Thomas Wood, 55 privates, and two men, Joseph McCartney and Samuel Johnston, listed for Court Martial.⁵⁷

Evidence suggests that Hinkson's company was a specially trained group of soldiers called "Rangers."⁵⁸ The Rangers had their origin twenty-two years before in the French and Indian War under the Scotsman, Major Robert Rogers. The Rangers were light infantry units equipped for rapid deployment. Trained to live off the land and fight in the guerrilla style of the Indians, the Rangers were ideally suited for the Pennsylvania frontier.

Thomas Galbraith, John Hinkson's old acquaintance in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, presents a fascinating journal account of Hinkson and his Rangers in the Fall of 1777. Following are excerpts:

"September 28, [1777] 12 o'clock an Express from Palmer's fort that George Findlay come in wounded⁵⁹ and

some more men missing. In the evening Capt Shannon with 16 Men was ready to march, but the night's being very dark thot it most advisable to wait till day break."⁶⁰

"September 29, 1777 - When day appeared the Men Marched to Palmer's Fort and were reinforc'd with 9 Men more then proceeded for Findlays about Twenty Miles distance from Ligonier. 4 Miles from Palmers we met with Capt. Hinkston & 12 Men returning from burying a Boy that the Indians had Kill'd & scalped at Findlays..."⁶¹

"October 1, 1777 - Memorand: On our return to Ligonier 4 Miles Distance we were inform'd of THOMAS WOODS being kill'd about five miles from the Town, which occasioned us to make a forc'd March after Dark into the Town to have the greater certainty."⁶²

"At 3:00 PM on October 22, 1777 two children were killed and scalped and two more were scalped alive within 200 yards of Palmer's Fort. A party pursued the Indians and a short time later the people at Palmer's Fort fired off their guns to give those persons notice who had gone to their plantations, which the party in pursuit hearing, imagined the Fort to be attacked, immediately



Roger's Rangers

quit the pursuit and returned. Ft Ligonier and it's Times.

“On November 3, 1777, as a party was returning to Palmer's Fort from a Scout about a mile from that, one of the party being a small distance behind was called on to stop - first in a low voice, a second time louder, & a third time very loud. The person made up to the party, but being dusk did not return to the place until the next morning...found the...[Here the manuscript is illegible. Probably the meaning is that the next morning the scouting party returned to the place where the voice called, and found the tracks of Indians.]”

The above incident took place near Hinkson's former plantation at Squirrel Hill. As mentioned above, Thomas Woods was Hinkson's Ensign. It must have been a sad day for the men of the 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, since Woods was a long time neighbor and old friend of many in the troop. We can conjecture that David Wilson became Ensign shortly thereafter.

In November, 1777, Hinkson's Rangers were recruited by the celebrated Colonel James Smith.⁶³ On November 8, 1777, Colonel Smith wrote a letter to General Edward Hand at Ft. Pitt:⁶⁴

From Col'l Proctor's, November the 8th, 1777
Dr General

Whereas I am persuaded that you had not heard of Wallace's fort being invaded and other damages done by the Indians near this place when you gave orders to the Bedford militia to return and whereas there is a loud call for men here at present to defend and protect this distressed frontier; I have ordered the Bedford militia to march in connection with a party of my men over Conemaugh to reconnoiter and scour the woods and if possible to annoy the enemy or drive them over the Allegheny [mountains]; and I hope sir I will be justified by you in so doing. I am sir your most obedient humble servt.

James Smith

To His Excellency General Edward Hand, Fort Pitt
N.B. my intention is to Detain those men but about ten Days; and by that time your pleasure may be known.

Years later, Colonel Smith recalled Hinkson's participation in the above mission:

“In the year [1777], I received a colonel's commission, and after my return to Westmoreland, the Indians made an attack upon our frontiers. I then raised a body of men to pursue them. We likewise took four scalps, and recovered the horses and plunder which they were carrying off. At the time of this attack, Captain John Hinkston pursued an Indian, both their guns being empty, and after the fray was over he was missing;- While we enquiring about him, he came walking back, seemingly unconcerned, with a

bloody scalp in his hand - he had pursued the Indian about a quarter of a mile, and tomahawked him.”⁶⁵

Hinkson's company joined General Hand's expedition of February-March, 1778.⁶⁶ About Christmas, General Hand learned through intelligence reports that a large cache of arms, ammunition, clothing and supplies were stored in a magazine where present day Cleveland, Ohio, now stands. The General gathered a force of five hundred horseman at Ft. Pitt, and set out on his expedition on February 15, 1778. The force descended the Ohio to the mouth of the Beaver and then ascended the Beaver to the Mahoning. By the time the force reached the Mahoning, the stream was almost impassable and General Hand almost turned back at that point. However, scouts had found some footprints of Indians on highground, and the expedition tracked the footprints to a small village, which consisted of one old man, some squaws and children. The old man and a squaw were shot, one squaw was taken prisoner and the rest escaped. The woman captive told General Hand that she had seen ten Delawares of the Wolf Clan making salt about ten miles up the Mahoning. Hand then dispatched a detachment to find and destroy the Delawares. The soldiers did as ordered; however, the Indians proved to be four squaws and a boy. The soldiers killed three squaws and the boy, and took the remaining squaw as a prisoner. The weather took a turn for the worse making further progress difficult and General Hand decided to return to Ft. Pitt. His great expedition resulted in the killing of one old man, four women, one boy, and the capture of two women. The frontiersmen derided General Hand's expedition as the “Squaw Campaign” and shortly thereafter, the good General was relieved of his command.⁶⁷

Hinkson's Rangers continued to serve in the Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, Militia for another year.⁶⁸

The Capture of Ruddell's and Martin's Forts, June 24-26, 1780. Whereas John Hinkson the explorer entered into general history in April, 1775, his reputation as a legendary Indian fighter and frontiersman was forged in June, 1780, when the British and Indians swept down upon and captured two frontier outposts in Kentucky. Before recounting the events leading up to and following the taking of Ruddell's and Martin's forts, it is important to go back to the spring of 1779. While Hinkson and his Rangers were fighting the Indians in Pennsylvania, Captain Isaac Ruddell received a commission to build a frontier fort in Kentucky. Ruddell, a native of the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, chose to build his fort on

the south fork of the Licking river where, three years before, John Hinkson had abandoned his settlement. Ruddell's fort was well built and large enough to house in excess of three hundred people⁶⁹ and had a sizable contingent of men to protect the fort.⁷⁰

Over the following months—through summer and fall of 1779 and spring of 1780—settlers began poring into Kentucky. In April, 1780, Captain John Hinkson joined a large group of settlers from Pittsburgh down the Ohio river to the Kentucky Bluegrass region. The following narrative by one of the member's of John Hinkson's group, provides a first-hand account of the journey:

"The winter proved uncommonly severe and, by suspending the operations of the sawmills in that country, procrastinated their arrangements until the first of April following. By advertisements all the adventurers in that part of the country who were bound to Kentucky were requested to assemble on a large island in the Ohio a few miles below Pittsburgh. It was proposed to remain here until a sufficient force should have assembled to pass with safety amidst the country of savage hostility which lay between them and Kentucky.

"So numerous was the concourse of adventurers to this point that in two days after his arrival sixty-three boats were ready to sail in company. A part of these boats were occupied by families; another by young men descending the river to explore the country, and the remaining portion by the cattle belonging to the emigrants.

"The number of fighting men on board probably amounted to nearly a thousand. The descending boats were arranged in an order of defense, not perhaps, entirely according to the technical exactness of a fleet in line of battle. Pilot boats headed the advance. The boats, manned by the young men sustained each wing, having the family, boats in the center and the stock boats immediately in the rear of them, and the rear guard boats floating still behind them. The boats moved with great circumspection, floating onwards, until they were abreast of a place favorable for furnishing range and grazing for the cattle, when they landed and turned them loose for this purpose. While their cattle were thus foraging in the joy of their short emancipation from the close prison of the boats, their owners kept a vigilant watch outside of their range to prevent the savages from assaulting them.

"We arrived without molestation at Limestone, now Maysville. Captain Hinkson, of our company, with three or four other families, concluded to remain here. They immediately commenced the customary preparations for rearing cabins. We tarried with them but half a day, during which time a company from our number turned out to hunt in the wild woods."⁷¹

John Hinkson's son, John, Jr., also recounts this journey:

"...(John Hinkson) moved to Kentucky in Spring of '80, four or five boats came with him with about half a dozen families, stopped at Limestone about a week, built a block-house, the first erected there, and sent a message to his old station (better known as Ruddell's) to get help to aid in moving the families over, and while waiting at Limestone the Indians stole all the horses belonging to the company - some 20 in all - At the old station there was not a sufficiency of men to share, and advised a continuation to the Falls of Ohio.

"Went down there in his boats - got horses to transport some of the property leaving the family at the Falls, and he had been at Ruddell's but three or four days when Bird came..."⁷²

It is likely that Hinkson's half-brother William McCune⁷³ was in the Hinkson party that dropped off their families at the Falls of the Ohio—the newly formed village of Louisville—and proceeded overland to Ruddell's fort. Others in the party included members of his old Ranger company: his Lieutenants John Sellers and Ensign David Wilson. John Mullin Reading⁷⁴ may have also been in the party. The Hinkson party arrived at Ruddell's fort on about June 20, 1780. In four days hence, a large force of British and Indians attacked the fort.

While a full account of the taking of Ruddle's fort by the British and their Indian allies is not possible in this short essay, it is important to provide a summary of the events leading up to, and including, the capture of the fort. Maude Lafferty provides an excellent summary of these events:⁷⁵

"One of the outstanding events of the Revolutionary War in the West was the invasion of Kentucky by the British officer, Captain Henry Bird, of the Eighth Regiment of his Majesty's forces, and the destruction of Ruddle's and Martin's Forts. Coming in the summer of 1780 with an army of more than a thousand British regulars,⁷⁶ Canadian volunteers, Indians and Tories, and bringing the first cannon ever used against the log forts of the wilderness, he captured 470 men, women and children,⁷⁷ loaded them down with the plunder from their own cabin homes and drove them on foot from Central Kentucky to Detroit, a distance of 600 miles. There they were divided among their captors and some of them were taken 800 miles farther to Mackinac and to Montreal.⁷⁸ The story of their capture, of the separation of families, of the hardships endured during the six-weeks journey and of the conditions under which they lived during the fourteen years of their captivity is one of the most shocking in the pioneer period of Kentucky's history.

"The invasion was planned by British officers at Detroit, their object being not only to exterminate the pioneer forts, but to force our western frontier back to the

Alleghany Mountains, thus bringing out in bold relief the policy of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War-to prevent the westward growth of the American Colonies.⁷⁹

"In executing their plan they waged the War of the American Revolution on Kentucky soil, for they came under the command of a British officer flying the British flag, demanding surrender in the name of his Britannic Majesty, King George III, and made official report of the expedition to Sir Frederick Haldimand,⁸⁰ the British Lieutenant General, who was then Governor of Canada."⁸¹

The actual taking of Ruddle's fort is described in graphic detail by Daniel Trabue, a brother of one of the captives, James Trabue:

"The land office was opened this spring at Wilson's Station for entering land warrents. James Trabue and I went their to make some entries, but their was so many people their we had to cast lots. And according to lot he (James Trabue) made some few entries, and it would be several days before he could make any more. And it would be several days before I could make my entries as my warrents was not on the first day.

"So we went home and James Trabue told me he would make my entries for me when he made his, if I would stay at home and attend to howing our corn planted. I agreed to it and gave him my warrents and a memorandum where my land was to be laid. It was 2,000 acres and choice land. James Trabue said he would go to licking on his commessary business. He was very much [needed] their and could be back to Wilson's Station in time to lay our warrents.

"So he went to Licking and got Ruddle's Station at night. And when morning [June 24, 1780] came their fort was surrounded by Indians; and Col. Byrd, a british officer from Detroyt, soon arrived with a cannon. He (Byrd) sent in a flag to the fort, demanding them to surrender to him as prisoners of war, etc., to which they refused. The cannon was twice fired. Done no damage except knocked one cabin log so it was moved in about six inches.

"Capt. Ruddle insisted it would be best to cappitulate. Capt. Hinkston and James Trabue insisted to defend the fort. At length Capt. Ruddle got a majority on his side and petitioned Col. Byrd to capitula[te]. The flag was sent back and forward several times before they agreed and the articles was sighned and agreed to. James Trabue was the man that did wright in behalf of Ruddle and the people in the fort. The terms of cappitulation was that Col. Byrd and his white soldiers should protect the people that was in the fort and march thim to Detroyt as prisoners, and that the Indians should have nothing to do with them, that the peoples cloathing and papers should be sicure to themselves with some little exceptions.

"The fort gate was opined. The Indeans came rushing in and plundered the people, and they evin striped their cloaths of[f] them and dividing the prisoners among the indians. In a few minuts the man did not know where his

wife or child was, nor the wife know where her husband or either of her children was, no the children where ther parrents or brothers and sisters weare, all contrary to the cappitulation. Nor they had no chance of seeing Col. Byrd, as the Indians kept them to themselves. They went and took Martain's station also."⁸²

Of all that were taken captive by the British and Indians, only two men are recorded to have escaped: John Sellers and John Hinkson. The rest were either taken into captivity by the Indians, marched to Detroit, or killed. Very little is known about John Sellers' escape. In his deposition, John Chambers made a passing comment about Sellers to the effect that "...John Sellers, another prisoner taken at Ruddells or Martins escaped a little before Hinkston - they were the only ones who did escape."⁸³

By far the most colorful tale of this tragic affair involves the escape of our subject, John Hinkson. The most oft-quoted account of his escape is from the pen of John Bradford:

"Immediately after it was decided not to go forward to Bryan's Station, the army commenced their retreat to the forks of Licking, where they had left their boats, and with all possible dispatch got their artillery and military stores on board, and moved off. At this place the Indians separated from Byrd, and took with them the whole of the prisoners taken at Ruddle's Station. Among the prisoners were Capt. John Hinkston, a brave man and an experienced hunter and woodsman. The second night after leaving the forks of Licking, the Indians encamped near the river; every thing was very wet, in consequence of which it was difficult to kindle a fire, and before a fire could be made it was quite dark. A guard was placed over the prisoners, and whilst part of them were employed-in kindling the fire, Hinkston sprang from among them and was immediately out of sight. An alarm was instantly given, and the Indians ran in every direction, not being able to ascertain what course he had taken. Hinkston ran but a short distance before he lay down by the side of a log under the dark shade of a large beach tree, where he remained until the stir occasioned by his escape had subsided, when he moved off as silently as possible. The night was cloudy, and very dark, so that he had no mark to steer by, and after travelling some time towards Lexington, as he thought, he found himself close to the camp from which he had just before made his escape. In this dilemma he was obliged to tax his skill as a woodsman, to devise a method by which he should be enabled to stear his course without light enough to see the moss on the trees, or without the aid of sun, moon or stars. Captain Hinkston ultimately adopted this expedient: he dipped his hand in the water, (which almost covered the whole country) and holding it upright above his head, he instantly felt one side of his hand cold; he immediately knew, that from that point the wind came-he therefore steered the ballance of the night to the cold side of his

hand, that being from the west he knew, and the course best suited to his purpose. After travelling several hours he sat down at the root of a tree and fell asleep.

“A few hours before day, there came on a very heavy dense fog, so that a man could not be seen at twenty yards distance. This circumstance was of infinite advantage to Hinkston, for as soon as day light appeared, the howling of wolves, the gobling of turkeys, the bleating of fawns, the cry of owls, and every other wild animal, was heard in almost every direction. Hinkston was too well acquainted with the customs of the Indians, not to know that it was Indians, and not beasts or birds that made these sounds—he therefore avoided approaching the places where he heard them, and notwithstanding he was several times within a few yards of them, with the aid of the fog he escaped, and arrived safe at Lexington. It was the 8th day after Ruddle’s Station was taken, when Hinkston arrived in Lexington, and brought the first news of that event.”⁸⁴

Bradford’s account, written October 20, 1826, already suffered from the encrustation of oral tradition. The story underwent many changes over the course of the next century, the most outrageous being the account given in Lucinda Boyd’s *Chronicles of Cynthiaana*:

“*The Hinkstons*.—Said Thomas Hinkston, of this place: My grandfather, Colonel John Hinkston, settled Hinkston Station in April, 1776. He was in command of it when Simon Girty and his Indian followers attacked it. Colonel Hinkston defended the station until his ammunition was exhausted, and then was forced to surrender—to the renegade Girty! He exacted a promise from him, before he gave himself up, that the men, women, and children should be allowed to remain in the fort in safety. The promise was given by Girty, and Colonel Hinkston was taken as a prisoner to the “broad ford,” two miles north of Colemansville. That night the Indians put their arms stacked, and their prisoners, Colonel Hinkston and a young girl, in the center of a circle the inner circumference of which was described by their heads lying side by side, and their feet describing an outer circle or penumbra, for their heads were gayly decorated with war paint and feathers, and their feet were bare and seen dimly in the starlight.

“In the night the young girl cut the bonds that bound Colonel Hinkston, hand and foot, and he seized his gun, sprang across the narrowest part of the human circle, and made for the river and jumped into it and swam safely across it amid bullets striking the water all around him. As soon as he had crawled up the bank, he entered a thicket, and after some time he found a large fallen tree that was hollow. Into that he crept to await developments. There was a dense fog along the Licking the next morning, but the Indians were on the trail. He heard turkeys gobble in every direction, but he did not leave his retreat, for he knew the Indians were imitating the familiar sound of the then wild fowls. When night came down, he made his way to Hinkston Station and removed

men, women, and children from it as soon as possible, and it was deserted for some time.”⁸⁵

As the reader can tell, there is precious little resemblance between the two tales, other than they both involve the capture of John Hinkson by Indians and his eventual escape. While the former tale adds suspenseful details to the harrowing escape of Hinkson from his Indian captors, the latter tale contains so many distortions that it is all but useless as an historical account. It’s only historically accurate statement is that John Hinkson, in fact, established a station in April, 1775. From that statement onward, the account is pure fiction. Girty was *not* in Kentucky in 1775, much less in charge of Indians on the warpath. There were no women or children in the original settlement and there was no fight. The writer confused the events of 1775 with those of 1780 while making up a fanciful tale about Hinkson and a young girl tied up and adorned with warpaint and feathers. After having the girl free Hinkson, Boyd then adds Bradford’s account to the mix, but instead of Hinkson bringing the news of the capture of the forts the hero returns to “save the day” by removing the men, women, and children from his Station!

So, how can we separate fact from fiction? Did John Hinkson actually make the dramatic and thrilling escape described by Bradford and Boyd? The answer is a very qualified “yes.” We will now explore the records and determine, as best we can, what actually happened.

I believe we should begin with the earliest accounts. Perhaps the most telling account is that of John Chambers:

“James Chambers statement continued from book _____ of Westmoreland County Pa born in 1749. Capt. Bird’s Kentucky Expedition of 1780. – Bird treated prisoners well. Chambers saw the 6 pounder at Detroit taken on Bird’s expedition of ‘80, and saw the man who drove the horse that drew it on the land part of the march. Also got acquainted with several of the prisoners taken by Bird - Capt. Ruddell and Simon Girty was with Bird. *John Hinkston* was in possession of the Indians – Girty and *Hinkston* were old acquaintances - were great cronies, and swapped clothes when he was prisoner - Girty went to Bird, and said *Hinkston* was very supple and active, and if he (Bird) did not take him from the Indians and put him under a guard of British soldiers, he would be certain to effect his escape. Bird did so - that night *Hinkston* made his escape and it was thought Girty brought about this change of *Hinkston* from the Indians to the British, in order to aid him in escaping. – John Sellers, another prisoner taken at Ruddells or Martins escaped a little before *Hinkston* - they were the only ones who did escape. Girty, too, knew of *Hinkston’s* having killed Wipey, about ‘74, who hunted on Conemaugh, and kept it

from the Indians, who, had they known it, would have killed him.”⁸⁶

Chamber’s account shows that Hinkson and Girty were friends and that Girty helped him escape to avoid being discovered by the Shawnee who—had they discovered Hinkson as the man who killed the old Delaware Joseph Wipey—would have killed him. They swapped clothing and Hinkson escaped while being transferred to the British. The British commander, Captain Bird, confirms this in his letter to Major Arnet DePeyster: “Everything is safe so far, but we are not yet out of reach of pursuit - As a very smart fellow [Hinkson?] escaped from me within 26 miles of the enemy.”⁸⁷

After making his escape, Hinkson made his way to the nearby fort at Lexington and gave the first report of the British and Indian attack upon the two forts:

“Extract upon Capt. Hinkson's narrative, who was made prisoner on the surrender of Ruddle's Fort; in Kentucky the 25th of June (1780), and made his escape on the 28th. On the 24th about sunrise, a heavy fire was begun on the fort by small arms, which continued without intermission until noon, when it was observed, that a battery of two three pounders (cannons) was erected on an advantages spot. The first discharged made such an impression on the fort, that all within were convinced they could not hold out. A flag was sent out and the terms agreed to were that the garrison should surrender themselves as prisoners, be permitted to retain their wearing apparel, and conducted safely to a settlement near Detroit, where provisions should be found there until they could raise corn for themselves.

“On the 26th the white, with a party of Indians appeared before Martin's Fort, seven miles up Licking Creek, which surrendered without resistance on the same terms as the other fort and previous were in the hands of the enemy when Capt. Hinkson made his escape; who further adds, that they consisted of a company of regulars from Detroit, under Capt. Bird, a company of Canadians, thirty Tory volunteers, and about 700 Indians from various tribes. Capt. Bird informed Capt. Hinkson; that he had taken the Governors dispatches going down the Ohio, which gave an account that no expedition would be sent into their country this summer; which seemed to elate him much. The enemy came down Stoney River (on the Great Miami) up the Ohio and Licking, without being discovered.”⁸⁸

Captain Bird received the news of Hinkson’s report and relayed this to Major DePeyster: “Capt Hinxon [Hinkson] who made his escape from us had candour sufficient to tell Col. Clarke, he and the prisoners were treated in so different a manner from what they expected, that had not his family been at the Falls, he would have preferred going with us to Detroit.”⁸⁹

The only thing we know for sure is that John Hinkson—with the help of Simon Girty—escaped his captors and reported the tragedy of Ruddell’s and Martin’s forts to the Americans in Lexington, Kentucky; as to the intricate details of Hinkson’s escape provided by John Bradford—well, that is the stuff of legend. Several writers faithfully passed on Bradford’s story as fact, each adding a bit of their own literary license as they created a myth and legend of John Hinkson.

And what of the men of John Hinkson’s party? John Sellers escaped captivity and David Wilson, John Mullin Reading, and William McCune were taken into captivity.

The Last Decade. The last decade of John Hinkson’s life is almost as great a mystery as were his early years. After his harrowing escape from the Indians, he all but disappears from history. His whereabouts over the next decade are at best sketchy and found mostly in the “paper trails” of land acquisitions, tax rolls, military promotion lists, positions of public office and the like. From this information, one gets the impression that John Hinkson the frontiersman and Revolutionary War hero began to slow down and seek the quieter life of a gentleman and public servant. Yet, one also senses that during this time Hinkson became a restless spirit who increasingly felt out of place in the “civilized” world of the new settlements being forged out of the wilderness; and it may be this restlessness that led him to go on one last adventure into the new frontier of the Spanish territory then known as Missouri. It was there, in New Madrid, that LTC (or COL) John Hinkson died in 1789. His death was as unremarkable as his remarkable life. In his interview with Lyman Draper, John Hinkson, Jr., simply states that his father “was out with Gen. Ben Harrison...on his expedition...In '89, Col. Hinkson went to New Madrid to look at the country, and there died.”⁹⁰ Following is a brief summary of the last years of his life.

Sometime during 1780, he moved to Mann's Lick in an old salt station located near the present town of Sheppardsville, KY. In April, 1781, he appeared in Jefferson County Court with John Sellers and appeared on a poll to elect delegates. In September, 1781, he moved again to Haggins Station near Harrodsburg, Kentucky. In November, 1782, John served as private in Capt. John Smith’s company on Clark’s campaign, Lincoln County, Kentucky. Between 1783-1785, John received land grants on Licking River, (in present day Harrison County), and 1783-1784, he surveyed land with John Sellers and others around Ruddles Station, moving back to that area about this time. Hinkson served in Benjamin Logan’s Campaign of 1786⁹¹ which was launched to squelch Indian forays into settled areas along the Ohio river.

John remained a professional soldier until his death and was clearly following in the footsteps of his friend and comrade-in-arms, Benjamin Harrison. Both men's recommendations and commissions to higher rank occurred on the same day in almost every instance. In September 1785, John was recommended as major and on January 12, 1786, he was commissioned as a major and Benjamin lieutenant colonel in Bourbon County, Kentucky. On August 20, 1788, Benjamin resigned his commission and on the same day John was recommended in his place as Lieutenant Colonel. John's commission was issued on November 4, 1788.⁹² To date, I have found no records verifying John's promotion to Colonel; yet, all historical references to John Hinkson list him as such. As further information is gathered, this uncertainty will be clarified.

Hinkson appears in the first Bourbon County Court book, dated May 16, 1786, in the following entries:⁹³

"A new commission of the peace dated the twelfth day of January one thousand seven hundred and eighty six to this county directed to James Garrard, Thomas Swearington, John Edwards, Benjamin Harrison, John Hinkson, Avin Mountjoy, Thomas Warring, Edward Waller, and John Gregg Gentlemen was produced and read whereupon the said James Garrard took the oath of fidelity and the oath of justice of the peace which were administered to him by John Edwards⁹⁴ Named in the said Commission And then the said James Garrard Gent. administered the aforesaid oathes to Benjamin Harrison, John Hinkson, Avin Mountjoy, Thomas Warring, Edward Waller, and John Gregg, Gentlemen who took the same respectively.

"A Commission from his excellency the Governor of this State (Virginia) to Benjamin Harrison Gent. to be Sheriff of this County was produced by the said Harrison who took the oath of fidelity and the Oath of Office and together with John Edwards and John Hinkson his securities entered into Bond for the due performance thereof according to law. Present John Hinkson Gent.

"On the motion of Benjamin Harrison, Gent. Sheriff Robert Hinkson⁹⁵ was sworn as deputy Sheriff.

"James Garrard, John Hinkson, Thomas Warring, Edward Waller and John Gregg Gent. are sworn Commissioners of Oyer and Terminer for this county."

On December 1, 1787, John was appointed High Sheriff of Bourbon County, Kentucky.

Hinkson's close friendship with Benjamin Harrison led to their last adventure together—a land speculation venture into the Spanish territory of New Madrid, (Missouri).⁹⁶ While we have no first-hand information regarding John's role in this venture, it is safe to speculate that Benjamin Harrison confided in his friend that money was to be made in the deal and that he needed a man of experience to explore the new territory. It must be remembered that in 1789 Missouri was a virgin wilderness in much the same way that Kentucky had been 14 years earlier when John first traveled up the Licking river. He must have jumped at the chance of reliving one of the Great Adventures of his life—and what better way to do so than by joining his old comrade-in-arms?

While John Hinkson, Jr., stated that his father died in 1789, Spanish records of "Anglo-Americans" residing in New Madrid lists "Hinkson, Juan" and "Harrison, Benjamin" on a ledger dated January 27, 1790.⁹⁷ If this ledger is accurate, we can pinpoint his death as taking place sometime between January 27, 1790 and March 25, 1790; the latter of which was the marriage date of John Hinkson's widow, Margaret McCracken, to Humphrey Lyon. Now, if that doesn't cause an eyebrow to raise, I don't know what would! The more likely explanation is that John Hinkson died sometime in the fall of 1789 and the fact that his name was not deleted from the rolls was a clerical oversight.. Nonetheless, it is a mystery that will no doubt remain unsolved.

In closing, it is my earnest hope that this brief biography has brought to life one of the more colorful and interesting pioneers of early Pennsylvania and Kentucky history. John Hinkson rightly belongs alongside such great names as Simon Kenton, Robert Patterson, Daniel Boone, John Floyd, and James Smith. He was a flawed man, to be sure; but this is what made him all-the-more human. His fearlessness, bravery, strength of character, charisma and sheer raw courage elevated him—during, and for almost a hundred years after his death—to legendary status. John Hinkson, the man and the legend, now emerges from the shadow and once again stands bold and fearless.

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Appendix

Draper Interview with John Hinkson, Jr.

HINKSON, JR., JOHN. Draper MSS 2S334-338 From John Hinkson - now (1845) about 72 – "...born on the Monongahela. Son of Col. John Hinkson - who was a son of John (a native of Ireland) - emigrated to America a married man, died leaving John the pioneer and a sister. John (Col.) when young man went to Ireland to get some family patrimony, married Margaret McCracken, remained two years, and then returned to America, about 1765 - settled probably in Westmoreland Co. Pa on Monongahela, bringing from Ireland a store of goods.

"In Dunmore's War, was a captain or lieutenant - probably the former, came to Kentucky in '75 - moved to Kentucky in Spring of '80, four or five boats came with him with about half a dozen families, stopped at Limestone about a week, built a block-house, the first erected there, and sent a message to his old station (better known as Ruddell's) to get help to aid in moving the families over, and while waiting at Limestone the Indians stole all the horses belonging to the company - some 20 in all. - At the old station there was not a sufficiency of men to share, and advised a continuation to the Falls of Ohio.

"Went down there in his boats - got horses to transport some of the property leaving the family at the Falls, and he had been at Ruddell's but three or four days when Bird came - Shot a cannon and knocked the corner of a house down - The station was on the east side of Hinkson's Fork, 8 miles from Paris - located on low land, with a overlooking hill, which the British occupied and from which they fired the cannon. Capt. Ruddell surrendered - Hinkson was opposed to it. Hinkson was kept and escaped the third night. Col. Bird gave him permission to stay with the Indians (who captured him) or with him, Bird chose the latter, and [Hinkson] made a bargain with one of the prisoners to run off, and the latter betrayed him and told Bird - and Bird placed an Indian guard over him, and in the night when raining, going down Licking by land (as he came with wagons - Bird's Old Trace), knocked an Indian over and into the River, at the mouth of Bank Lick Creek (some 3 miles above the mouth of Licking, west side of the river) - and himself plunged into the river and swam over, and escaped. Bird had got bewildered, came to Hinkson and told him as he was an old woodsman, that it would be better for him to tell the best route to take (they were then camped) - and Hinkson said if he must tell he

would do his best, and commenced directing and pointing when the Indians were collecting around him, he knocked the one between him and the river down the bank into the river and himself jumped in and swam over, and made his way to Bryan's Station; next morning (that night didn't go far, too dark and got into a tree top and went to sleep, and awoke in the morning within view of a camp of the Indians who took after him, but he outstripped them, but he, in running through briars got the most of his clothing torn off - and was nearly naked when he got to Bryan's.

"Don't think Col. Hinkson went on campaign of '80 - nor in '82. Did go out with Logan in '86; was an officer under Col. Edwards on the Blackberry campaign. Was out with Gen. Ben Harrison (who died at New Madrid - some children living near St. Genevieve at the lead mines - Harrison died not long (2 or 3 years) before the War of 1812.) on his expedition. Also went out scouting with parties.

"Went and settled at Mann's Lick and stayed there till '81; then moved to Haggin's Station, near Danville and about '83, re-occupied his old settlement on Hinkson's Fork. William McCune, a half brother of Hinkson's, moved with Hinkson to Kentucky in '80, and was captured with him; and was kept nearly two years.

"In '89, Col. Hinkson went to New Madrid to look at the country, and there died. - He was probably about 58 or 60 years old: 6 feet and 1 inch - raw boned, dark complexion : leaving a wife and nine children.

"He and James Cooper killed Wipey, who had some figure against Hinkson and threatened his life - once came with two other Indians and wanted Hinkson to go a hunting with him - Hinkson went a little distance and knowing of Wipey's threats fell a little behind, and presenting his gun told them he knew their object and to move off or he would shoot some of them. They went off - and a few days after, with Cooper, came upon Wipey in a trail and shot him - expecting he would watch Hinkson and kill him.

"A party of Indians came to the region of Hinkson's Station and stole horses (after '83) and wounded John McCord in the chin riding to meeting on Sunday - Hinkson raised a party of 7 or 8 and pursued the Indians, and near mouth of Locust, came upon them encamped, and Hinkson killed one, David Wilson killed another just as he was getting into his canoe - the third escaped. This occurred the same spring Kenton waylaid and killed Indians at mouth of Locust; and of these latter Kenton rescued a horse they had stolen from Hinkson.

¹ Draper, MSS15J 125.

² Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky, Vol. II.* (Covington, Kentucky: Collins & Co., 1882), p. 325.

³ Jim is a Technical Sergeant in the United States Air Force, currently assigned in Japan.

⁴ Lyman Draper is one of those rare and remarkable people for whom we owe an immense debt of gratitude. He came up

with the idea of preserving the history of the Revolutionary War period by interviewing as many veterans (or their spouses and children) as he could.

⁵ Draper MSS 2S334-338. Refer to Appendix for complete deposition of John Hinkson, Jr.

⁶ Some D.A.R. records place his birth at 1740; however, no documentation exists to verify this date. Notwithstanding, the 1740 birth date seems to fit better into the events of his life. Consider the following: (1) Childrearing: this date certainly fits his *mother's* childrearing years--though technically possible, it is hard to imagine that a 21 year span existed between the birth of John in 1729 and his half-brother, William McCune, in 1751; (2) Marriage date: in 1763, he would have only been 24 years old when he married Margaret McCracken; (3) The Wipey Affair: during the Wipey Affair of 1774 he would have been 34 or 35 years old; again, fitting St. Clair's statement about the "young men" of the region and, since St. Clair was born in 1734, he could hardly have called Hinkson "young" if Hinkson were born 5 years before him; (4) Military Rank: The 1740 birthdate also fits John's attainment of military ranking—i.e., age 34, Lieutenant; age 37, Captain; age 46, Major; age 48, Lieutenant-Colonel.

⁷ A much later biography places his birth in Belfast, Ireland. Reference for place of birth, biography of John W. Hinkson, from *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians*, Vol. III, by E. Polk Johnson, (Lewis Publishing Company: Chicago-New York, 1912), p. 1587: "Colonel John Hinkson, great-grandfather of him who initiates this interview, was born in Ireland, in the vicinity of Belfast..." This biography freely embellishes upon the earlier material and should not be taken too seriously.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bourbon County, Kentucky, Complete Record Book, p. 475; Kentucky Register, Vol. 32, p. 157; Vol. 21, p. 211. A second reference to his birth date is from an interview taken by George Mountjoy and Joseph L. Stevens, Justices of the Peace, Bourbon County, Kentucky. The recorder of the interview writes "Deposition of William McCune, aged 60 years (taken at dwelling house of James Ruddell in Bourbon County on May 11, 1811..." (Bourbon County Court Order Book, p. 265) A third reference is as follows: "William McCune, b 1750 in Pa; d Dec 6, 1830 Pike Co. Mo. His will written Nov 9, 1819 in Pike Co., Mo. and proved Dec 6, 1830, Bowling Green, Pike Co., Mo." (Pike County Will Bk. 1-p 123)

¹⁰ William and Agnes are mentioned in John McCune, Sr.'s will. (Cumberland County, Pa., Will Book A, pp. 91-92, John McCune, Sr.)

¹¹ Bourbon County Court Order Book, p. 265.

¹² Louise Phelps Kellogg, Rueben Gold Thwaites, editors, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio*, (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912), pp. 181-182.

¹³ The 1753 and 1764 Hopewell Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, tax records, list a Robert Gibbs.

¹⁴ *The Pennsylvania Genealogical Magazine*, Disk 1, Volume V, *Abstracts of Wills of Westmoreland County*. Registered at Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Broderbund Software, Inc., Banner Blue Division, February 28, 1999, p. 327.

¹⁵ Pennsylvania Tax List: Cumberland County: 1765—John Hinkson, Hopewell Township—1 horse, 2 cattle, 4 sheep, 1 servant, 200 acres unwarranted, 30 acres cleared; 1766—John Hinkson, Hopewell Township—2 horses, 2 cattle, 4 sheep, 1 servant, 200 acres unwarranted, 30 acres cleared.

¹⁶ Bedford County Pennsylvania Quarter Session Docket 1 16 July 1771. John's half-brother William, who lived nearby, was appointed supervisor of the road construction project for Fairfield Township in 1774 (Westmoreland County Court Order Book—1774).

¹⁷ Pennsylvania Tax List: Bedford County (later became Westmoreland County): 1773—William McCune Armstrong Township; 1773—John Hankston Fairfield Township.

¹⁸ John Haggin to John and Thomas Woods of Fairfield adjoining Enos McDonald, John Haggin's improvement. Westmoreland Co. PA Deed Book Volume A Part 1 1773-1784, p. 53.

¹⁹ C. M. Busch, State Printer, *Report Of The Commission To Locate The Site Of The Frontier Forts Of Pennsylvania*. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Indian Forts Commission, 1896), p. 278. Referred to hereafter as *Frontier Forts of Western Pennsylvania*.

²⁰ *Pennsylvania Archives First Series Vol. IV*, pg. 503.

²¹ Clarence Stephenson, "The Wipey Affair: An Incident Illustrating Pennsylvanians Attitude During Dunmore's War," *Pennsylvania History, a Quarterly Journal of the Pennsylvania History Association*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, October, 1956, p. 507.

²² *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, IV, 514.

²³ Ibid., 520.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 543.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 549.

²⁶ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, Vol. X, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1852, p. 199.

²⁷ Draper MSS 2S334-338

²⁸ Draper MSS 4S98-99

²⁹ Draper MSS 3S:52

³⁰ Stephenson, p. 512.

³¹ Draper MSS 2S334-338: "In Dunmore's War, he was captain or lieutenant—probably the former..." Virginia Records in Pennsylvania: John Hinkson served as Lieutenant in the Youghiegheny County, Virginia militia, commanding a company of 10-15 men.

³² William Anderson eventually married John Hinkson's daughter, Elizabeth.

³³ Archives Dept., St. Lib., Pittsburgh Rolls-- *Virginia Soldiers of 1776*, Vol. III, Louis A. Burgess, Reprint Co., North Carolina, 1973, p. 1246

³⁴ C. Hale Sipes, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1931, third reprint, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Wennawoods Publishing, 1998) pp. 488-489.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 489.

³⁶ Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars*, (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: John S. Ritenour & Wm. T. Lindsey, 1912; Fifth Reprinting, McClain Printing Co., Parsons, W. Va., 1996), pp. 172-173; refer also to Alexander Scott Withers and Reubin Gold Thwaites, *Chronicles of Border Warfare*, (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Robert Clarke

Company, 1895; sixth reprint by McClain Printing Co., Parsons, W. Va., 1994), pp. 148-149.

³⁷ July Sessions 1775. "The King vs. James Cooper, John Townsley, Sylas Strain, William Shields, William Huskins, John Hinkson, and John Palmer. Riot and Assault on John Burns and John Palmer. One of the defendants being arraigned pleads NOT guilty. Process awarded as to the rest. Issued. Enter 2 process. Enter 1 subpoena and 2 tickets. True Bill." NOTE: The wording of the court record implies that John Palmer was a complainant when, in fact, he was one of the defendants. It should read: "Riot and assault on John Burns, and John Palmer, one of the defendants being arraigned, pleads not guilty."

³⁸ Refer to Consul Wilshire Butterfield, *The History of the Girtys*, (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1890; reprint Lodi, Ohio: Log Cabin Shop, Inc., 1995) for the most comprehensive treatment of Simon Girty. Butterfield presents a balanced view of Girty and debunks many of the spurious myths.

³⁹ Draper MSS 2S334-338

⁴⁰ Doddridge, pp. 91-93.

⁴¹ An *improvement* refers to land that has undergone some clearing, the construction of a cabin, and the planting of a crop.

⁴² Nancy O'Malley, *Stockading Up: A Study of Pioneer Stations in the Bluegrass Regions of Kentucky*, (Frankfort, Kentucky: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1987; revised 1994 with Addendum), p.243.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁴⁴ (Dec 1776) Clark's Memoir from English's Conquest of the Country by George Rogers Clark, Readex Microprint Corp, 1966, p.464.

⁴⁵ Draper MSS, 1.BB 102—1775.

⁴⁶ Page 141 - I, John Woods, for 200 £ and for other good causes, sell to Thomas Galbraith, Esq., a certain location by me or for me obtained out of the Proprietary's Land Office for Pennsylvania dated Sep 3, 1769 for 244 acres called Walnut Bottom, bounded by lands claimed by John Sellars, George Brattan, Daniel McClintock, & Connemagh river, #928. Signed Dec 3, 1775 - John Woods. Wit - John Hinkson, John Sellars, Jas Pollock. Recorded Apr 15, 1780.

⁴⁷ *Fayette County Circuit Court Complete Record Book E*, p.267.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.268

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Book A, pg. 339

⁵⁰ *Harrison County Court Order Book A*, pg. 356, June 8, 1804.

⁵¹ *Harrison County Court Order Book A*, pg. 337

⁵² *Harrison County Court Order Book A*, pg. 337

⁵³ Draper 8CC2, 16J26 - Pennsylvania Gazette, Sept. 11, 1776.

⁵⁴ Draper MSS. 17 CC 172-73.

⁵⁵ Talbert, p. 26 reads: "In less than a week after the Boonesborough incident the people of John Hinkson's settlement on the South Fork of Licking River were on their way to safer regions. Those Kentuckians who had 'settled out' began to gravitate toward one or another of the three forts." William Harrison wrote, "...nine days from Fort Pitt, we have

advice; that Capt. John Hinkson, with a number of settlers, arrived from Licking Creek, near the Kentucky..."

⁵⁶ Sipes, p. 526.

⁵⁷ PA Archives 6th Series, Vol II, pp. 299-300.

⁵⁸ Sipes, p. 519.

⁵⁹ *Frontier Forts*, Note 72, p. 285, reads: "On September 28, 1777, George Findley, a nearby resident on the Conemaugh River, and his bound boy, fourteen or fifteen years of age, but large and strong, started back from Palmer's Fort, whether they fled, in hopes of recovering a lost mare that had left them and which they supposed had returned home. They kept in the woods, not venturing into clearings, but notwithstanding this they were fired upon by some Indians, the boy falling. Findley, shot through the arm and bleeding much, effected his escape, and returned to Fort Palmer, bringing back with him, however, a girl who had remained about the Rogers settlement."

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶³ PA Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. XIV, p. 693—"Officers in Service, 1777-79; Colonels—James Smith, in service November, 1778; Captains—John Hinkston, served under Col. James Smith."

⁶⁴ Draper MSS 1 U 130

⁶⁵ James Smith, *An Account of the Remarkable Occurances in the Life and Travels of Col. James Smith*, (Lexington, 1799), pg. 136. Interestingly, Wipey researcher Clarence Stephenson cites this account in support of his claim that Hinkson was a bigoted Indian-hater. Given the nature of the conflict along the frontier during this period and the fact that Hinkson and his company were Rangers, Stephenson's comments seem ill-informed. Hinkson simply used the same tactics as his enemies.

⁶⁶ Draper MSS. 3 NN 9-10: Abstract of Westmoreland Militia ordered out on an expedition to the Indian Country by Brigadier General Edward Hand, commanded by Col. Alexander Barr, from 10 Feb - 10 March, 1778, generally credited for, some to March 8: Alexander Barr, colonel 1st Battalion; John Pomroy, lieutenant colonel 1; Adam Guthrey, quarter master 1; Capt. John Hinkson & company " 18 (several other companies are listed in the original manuscript); Total Officers and men 362; Total pay and subsistence £1307. 3.6

⁶⁷ Sipes, pp. 528-529.

⁶⁸ (1) A Return of the Militia in their ranks belonging to Westmoreland County in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. (c.), First Battalion, April 25, 1778, 3rd Company: John Hinkson, Captain; John Woods, Lieutenant; John Sellers, Lieutenant; David Wilson, Ensign; Sergeants: 3, Corporal: 1, Privates: 11 (PA Archives, Series 6, Vol II, p. 307-308).—(2) Accounts of County Lieutenants, Colonel Archibald Lochery, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. Paid Capt John Hinkson for paying his company for the defense of the frontiers, October 15, 177 - 150/0/0 (pounds/shillings/farthings?)—John Hinkson, in part for pay due his company, October 17, 1777 - 100/0/0 - John Hinkson, Captain, a balance of pay due his company, October 24, 1778- 135/16/0—(3) A list of Captain John Hinkson's Company. (c.), circa 1779. John Hinkson,

Captain - John Sellers, Lieutenant - David Wilson, Ensign Privates: John Hanna, James Clifford, Robert McInoe, George Finley, High Knose, Samuel Cuning, James McDonald, Robert McDonald, William Lemmon, John Lemmon, Joseph Lemmon, Edward Burns, Wilson Buck, John Callet, Samuel Sellers, Hugh Gibb, John McMillan, Alexander Barlantine, John Burns, James McClennachan, James Staut. (PA Archives 6th Series, Vol II, pg 272.)

⁶⁹ Lafferty, p. 303.

⁷⁰ Draper Manuscript Collection. 17J:27-28 J-George Rogers Clark Papers, [papers of Col. John Bowman]

Capt. Isaac Ruddell's Pay Roll, company of militia, in Kentucky County, under command of Col. John Bowman. No date - except a few dates of enlistment are given, from July 21st to Oct 25th 1779: Isaac Ruddell, Capt.; John Haggin, Lieut.; John Machen, Ensign; Joseph, Essicks, Q.M.; John Waters, Sergt.; John Smith, Sr., Paul Fisher, Casper Brown, George Loyal, John Burger, Sr., Henry Burger, David Edderman, Edward Low, John Burger, Jr., Frederick Tanner, Thos. Machen, John Smith, Jr., George Ruddell, Wm. Scott, Stephen Ruddell, Wm. Marshall, Thos. Emery - killed 5th Oct., Patrick Ryan, Josiah Ryan, Reuben Bufuer, Moses Waters, Wm. Sandage, Henry Peslenbustle, George Hatfall, Jacob Leach Sr., Andrew Peslenbustle, Wm. Dellenger, Peter Call, Martin Tufflemier, Wm. Munger, Sr., Wm. Munger, Jr., Charles Munger, Peter Rough, Leonard Croft, Geo. Brinker, Leonard Peslenbustle, Henry Peslenbustle, Jr., John Bird, Andrew Bartle, James Stuart, Peter Loyal, George Baker, Andrew Baker, Henry Loyal, John Hutton, James Ruddell, John Cloyd, Drummer.

⁷¹ "Personal Narrative of William Lytle: 1770-1832,"

Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin, Vol 1, 1906.

⁷² Draper MSS 2S334-338

⁷³ McCune had previously sold his property in Pennsylvania: Westmoreland Co., PA Deed Book, Volume A Part 1 1773-1784, p. 146. "Jan 10, 1780: William McCune to Barnard Dougherty, 750 pounds on north side of Conemaugh; William McCune to B. Dougherty, 2000 pounds, on north side of Conemaugh bounded by David Wilson on the east. 336 acres."

⁷⁴ Reference to John Mullin Reading's journey down the Ohio river and subsequent capture at Ruddell's fort is found in letters written by his father, George Reading, Sr., excerpts of which read as follows: "I purpose sending John down to Kentucky and the falls of the Ohio, in a month or six weeks to take up and secure land. We have the most favorable account of that country. It is land to be desired, where the winter (not like Pharoah's lean kine) don't devour the summer; withal very healthy (illegible) where I hope to (illegible) my days." In a letter dated Mar. 12, 1780, he writes he has made arrangements to go down the Ohio in a craft which he had built for this purpose. In several letters he refers to the "long captivity" of his son John, and the pension records of John Mullin Reading state that he was taken prisoner by the Indians at Ruddles Station, Ky., June 15, 1780 and held until May 1783. ("The Reading Family Genealogy" by Nell Downing Norton)

⁷⁵ Lafferty, p. 297. Other references to this incident include: the above "When Detroit Invaded Kentucky" by Milo M.

Quaife; "The Horrors at Ruddle's and Hinkston's Forts" from *John Bradford's The Voice of the Frontier: Notes on Kentucky*, Thomas D. Clark, editor, The University of Kentucky Press, 1993, pp. 35-39; J. Winston Coleman's *The British Invasion of Kentucky*, Winburn Press, Lexington, Kentucky, 1951.

⁷⁶ Milo Quaife, "When Detroit Invaded Kentucky," *The Filson Club History Quarterly*, I (January, 1927), 53-57.

⁷⁷ Letter, Col. Benjamin Logan to Governor Benjamin Harrison of Virginia, August 81, 1782, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, III, (Richmond: James E. Goode, 1883), 280-83.

⁷⁸ Draper MSS, 10S81-85. The Draper Manuscripts are owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

⁷⁹ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1909), II, 102.

⁸⁰ Sir Frederick Haldimand, a British Lieutenant General, succeeded Sir Guy Carleton as Governor of Canada in 1778, serving until 1784. His papers which have been bequeathed to the British Museum, cover 232 volumes of manuscript.

⁸¹ Quaife, "When Detroit Invaded Kentucky," *op cit*, I, 53.

Captain Henry Bird's report to Major Arent S. DePeyster, British Commander at Detroit, reinforces the contention that the raid on Martin's and Ruddell's Stations constituted a British invasion of Kentucky.

⁸² "Westward into Kentucky," from Daniel Trabue's narrative found in the Draper Manuscript collection, 57J:51-63.

⁸³ Draper MSS 4S98-99

⁸⁴ Thomas D. Clark, editor, *John Bradford's The Voice of the Frontier: Notes on Kentucky*, (The University of Kentucky Press, 1993), pp. 36-37.

⁸⁵ Lucinda Boyd, *Chronicles of Cynthiana and Other Chronicles*, (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Company, 1894), pp. 29-31.

⁸⁶ Draper MSS 4S98-99

⁸⁷ Halderman Papers - July 1, 1780 - Capt Henry Bird to Maj Arnet DePeyster

⁸⁸ Draper MSS 16j82-83; S. C. Gazette, June 31, 1781

⁸⁹ Halderman papers - July 24, 1780 - Capt Henry Bird to Maj Arnet DePeyster

⁹⁰ Draper MSS 2S334-338

⁹¹ Draper Manuscript Collection 14U:110, Letter of W. Sudduth to Lyman C. Draper, May 22, 1845.

⁹² Kentucky Genealogist, "Public Officials in Kentucky 1786-1792" contributed by John Frederick Dorman, Washington, D.C., p. 12.

⁹³ William Henry Perrin, editor, *History of Bourbon, Scott, Harrison and Nicholas Counties, Kentucky*, (Chicago, Ill.: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1882), pp. 40-41.

⁹⁴ First United States Senator from Kentucky.

⁹⁵ John Hinkson's son.

⁹⁶ For a detailed overview of the New Madrid enterprise, refer to Max Seville's "The Founding of New Madrid, Missouri," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 19, pp. 30-56; refer also to Louis Houck's *The Spanish Régime in Missouri*, (Chicago, Illinois: R. R. Donnelly & Sons Company, 1909; reprint by Arno Press, 1971), pp. 275-318.

⁹⁷ Lawrence Feldman, *Anglo-Americans in Spanish Archives*, (Genealogical Publishing Society, 1991), p. 248.