

Summary

Nicholas Kann was in the Wrightsville area around 1734 at the time when the boundaries between Maryland and Pennsylvania were not well defined. A famous Maryland frontiersman by the name of Thomas Cresap lived north of Baltimore in Baltimore County. He was intent on populating what is now York County with settlers loyal to the Governor of Maryland to increase the Maryland tax revenues. There were a series of skirmishes known as Cresap's War which eventually involved both the Pennsylvania and Maryland Militia. The Boundary was finally settled in the 1760's by order of the King of England by Mason and Dixon. In the skirmishes, Nicholas Kann (Conn) was apparently captured and fined before the dispute was resolved. The following are bits of information I have found along with their sources.

Source: http://genealogy.wikia.com/wiki/Lancaster_County,_Pennsylvania

The area that became Lancaster County was part of William Penn's 1681 charter,[10] and John Kennerly received the first recorded deed from Penn in 1691.[11] Although Matthias Kreider was said to have been in the area as early as 1691, there is no evidence that anyone actually settled in Lancaster County before 1710.[12]

Lancaster County was part of Chester County until May 10 1729 when it became the fourth county in the state.[13] Lancaster County was named after the city of Lancaster in the county of Lancashire in England, the native home of John Wright, one of the early settlers.[14] Six other counties were subsequently formed from territory directly taken, in all or in part, from Lancaster County: Berks (1752), Cumberland (1750), Dauphin (1785), Lebanon (1813), Northumberland (1772), and York (1749).[13] Many other counties were in turn formed from these six.

The southern boundary of Pennsylvania, and thus of Lancaster County, was in dispute for years. Lord Baltimore believed that his grant[15] to Maryland extended to the 40th parallel[16] — about halfway between Lancaster and Willow Street. Starting in 1730, Thomas Cresap started Cresap's War by confiscating farms near Peach Bottom and Wrightsville, establishing ferries there. He started vandalizing farms, killing livestock and driving away settlers in southern York and Lancaster counties, giving those lands to his followers. When a follower was arrested, the Marylanders broke him out of the Lancaster lockup. Lord Baltimore negotiated a compromise in 1733, but Cresap ignored it, and continued his raids. When an attempt was made to arrest him in 1734, he killed a deputy at his door. The Pennsylvania governor demanded Maryland arrest Cresap for murder; the Maryland governor named him a captain in their militia instead. In 1736, he was finally arrested, and jailed until 1737 when the King intervened. In 1750, a court decided that Lord Baltimore had forfeited his rights to a twenty-mile swath of land.[16] The new Pennsylvania-Maryland border was properly established by the Mason-Dixon line in 1767.

Pennsylvania's Charter (1681) specified that the colony was bounded "on the South by a Circle drawne at twelve miles [19 km] distance from New Castle Northward and Westward unto the beginning of the fortieth degree of Northern Latitude, and then by a streight Line Westward...."[2] Later surveys established that the town of New Castle in fact lay a full 25 miles (40 km) south of the fortieth parallel, setting the stage for a boundary dispute. Maryland insisted that the boundary be drawn at the fortieth parallel as specified in the Charter, while Pennsylvania proposed that it be drawn by an elaborate method which purported to compensate for the geographic misunderstanding on which the Charter had been based. This proposal placed the boundary near 39 36', creating a twenty-eight mile wide strip of disputed territory.[3]

Because the fortieth parallel lay north of the city of Philadelphia, Maryland pressed its claim most seriously in the sparsely inhabited lands west of the Susquehanna River. By the late 1710s, rumors had begun to reach the Pennsylvania Assembly that Maryland was planning to establish settlements in the disputed area near the river. In response, Pennsylvania attempted to bolster its claim to the territory by organizing a proprietorial manor along the Codorus Creek, just west of the river, in 1722. This action prompted a crisis in relations between the two colonies, leading to a royal proclamation in 1724 which prohibited both colonies from establishing new settlements in the area until a boundary had been surveyed. However, the two sides failed to reach agreement on the location of the boundary, and unauthorized settlement recommenced within a short time.[1]

In 1726, John Wright opened a ferry service across the Susquehanna, greatly easing transportation between the disputed area and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. By 1730, a number of Pennsylvania Dutch settlers had crossed the river and taken up residence.[4] Determined to counter this development, a Marylander, Thomas Cresap, opened a second ferry service at Blue Rock, about four miles (6 km) south of Wright's Ferry.

Owing to the royal proclamation of 1724, the Pennsylvania settlers did not have clear title to the lands that they occupied. Apparently in defiance of the proclamation, Maryland granted Cresap title to 500 acres (2 km²) along the west bank of the river,[5] much of which was already inhabited. Cresap began to act as a land agent, persuading many Pennsylvania Dutch to purchase their farms from him, thus obtaining title under Maryland law, and began collecting quit-rents (an early form of property tax) for Maryland. In response, Pennsylvania authorities at Wright's Ferry began to issue "tickets" to new settlers which, while not granting immediate title, promised to award title as soon as the area was officially opened to settlement.[6]

Outbreak of hostilities

Sometime in late October, 1730, Cresap was attacked on his ferry boat by two Pennsylvanians.[7] According to Cresap's Maryland deposition, Cresap and one of his workmen were hailed by the Pennsylvanians and began rowing the two men

from the east to the west. Sixty yards into the trip, the Pennsylvanians turned their guns on the Marylanders and a fight ensued with Cresap attempting to use the oars to defend himself. After a short struggle, both Marylanders ended up in the water, holding on to the boat to keep from drowning. The Pennsylvanians tried to force Cresap to let go of the boat, and when Cresap asked if they intended to murder him, one swore that he did. Cresap eventually escaped when the boat drifted to shallow water near a large rock where Cresap was stranded for several hours until rescued by a friendly Indian.

It would become clear in later testimony that the target of the attack was actually Cresap's workman who was wanted by a Lancaster county landowner for reasons not entirely clear (possibly debts). This workman was captured by the Pennsylvanians and carried forcibly away.

Cresap was dissatisfied by the response of the Pennsylvania magistrate to whom he reported the attack. Although the magistrate eventually signed warrants that brought the two Pennsylvanians to court, he first stated that "he knew no reason he (Cresap) had to expect any justice there, since he was a liver in Maryland."; a statement that the Governor of Maryland would later key on in a letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania. Significantly, Cresap filed charges with Maryland authorities, claiming that Pennsylvania officials had conspired with the attackers and with local native tribes to drive him from the area.[8] From this point onward, Cresap would maintain that as a resident of Maryland, he was not bound by Pennsylvania law and was not obliged to cooperate with Pennsylvania's law enforcement officers.

German farmers renounce Cresap

Depositions of several Germans accuse Cresap and his relatives the Lowes of maltreatment.[7]:

Frederick Lather paid Cresap for land in 1733. In 1736, one of Cresap's workers notified Lather that the land (with improvements) belonged to Cresap and that he and his family would be speedily removed. Balsar Springler (Baltzer Spengler) built a house on the Codorus Creek in 1733 (in present day York PA). He was deprived of his land and improvements by Cresap and was forced to make provision elsewhere for support of himself and family.

Catherine Schultz testified that in March 1736, fifteen armed men came looking for her husband Martin. When they could not find him, they broke a door, stole an 80 gallon Hogshead of rum, threatened to kill a servant, stole horses and a sled and used sled to carry the rum to John Low's.

Michael Tanner settled a 200-acre (0.81 km²) tract six miles (10 km) southwest of Wrightsville in 1734. In 1735, Cresap surveyed his land to Daniel Low. Low and family dwelt in Tanner's house and Tanner was obliged to pay Low eight pounds or otherwise lose his buildings and improvements.

Several non-Germans in Chester County testified that two agents of Maryland had offered residents land formerly occupied and cleared by Dutchmen. In one case, the agents had by letter recommended the deponent to Thomas Cresap to be shown land west of Susquehanna.

Arrival of Maryland militia

Two incursions of Maryland militia into present day York County, Pennsylvania are mentioned in depositions by Pennsylvania natives.[7]:

A surveyor named Franklin accompanied by twenty Maryland militia was sighted near John Wright's plantation (near present day Wrightsville PA) on May 6 1736. When questioned, they stated they were sent by authority of Lord Baltimore. Three hundred Maryland militia went to the plantation of John Hendricks (a short distance from Wrightsville) on Sep 5 1736. The militia were under the command of Col. Nathaniel Rigby and accompanied by the Sheriff of Baltimore. On the next day, the militia broke into two groups, one returned to Maryland and the second went west with the Sheriff of Baltimore. The second group was accused by Pennsylvanians of taking Linen and Pewter from Dutchmen on the pretense of dues owed to the state of Maryland.

[edit] Arrival of Pennsylvania militia

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Cresap first obtained a patent from Maryland for a ferry at Peach Bottom, near the Patterson farm, then shot several of Patterson's horses. One of the Marylanders, Lowe, was arrested and jailed, but the other Marylanders broke into the jail and freed him.

Cresap then obtained one for "Blue Rock Ferry" and several hundred acres of land, about 3½ miles south of Wrightsville, forcibly took possession of John Hendricks' plantation at Wrightsville.[9]

Cresap was no Quaker by any means; he had previously "cleft" an assailant in Virginia with a broad-ax when clearing disputed land there.[9]

Lord Baltimore had been unwilling to entreat with Indians for what he took,[9] but in 1733, reached an accommodation with the Pennsylvanians, but by 1734, Cresap was again evicting settlers from their Lancaster and York county homes, rewarding his gang members with the properties.[9]

We find Leonard [Moser] next mentioned in 1735. He was working at the Thomas Cresap plantation on the Susquehanna River. These were tumultuous times in which land grants issued by Lord Baltimore, proprietor of Maryland, were being disputed by Pennsylvania. Cresap had been sent by Baltimore to secure and defend the disputed border. Leonard along with 6 other men working for Cresap was arrested and confined 10 days. Thomas Cresap, himself, was arrested at another time. Eventually the dispute was settled and much of the land granted by Lord Baltimore was relinquished to Pennsylvania. Cresap went on to become a prominent figure in Maryland history.
(<http://www.tracksintime.com/people/moser/Leonard%20Moser1.htm>)

The sheriff of Lancaster County brought a posse to arrest Cresap, but when deputy Knowles Daunt was at the door, Cresap fired through it, wounding Daunt. The sheriff asked Mrs. Cresap for a candle, so that they could see to tend to Daunt's wounds, but Mrs. Cresap refused, "crying out that not only was she glad he had been hit, she would have preferred the wound had been to his heart." [9] When Daunt died, Pennsylvania Governor Gordon demanded that Maryland arrest Cresap for murder. Governor Ogle of Maryland responded by naming Cresap a captain in the Maryland militia.[9]

Cresap continued his raids, destroying barns and livestock, until Sheriff Samuel Smith raised a posse of 24 armed "non-Quakers" to arrest him on November 25, 1736. Unable to get him to surrender, they set his cabin on fire, and when he made a run for the river, they were upon him before he could launch a boat. He shoved one of his captors overboard, and cried, "Cresap's getting away", and the other deputies pummeled their peer with oars until the ruse was discovered. Removed to Lancaster, a blacksmith was fetched to put him in steel manacles, but Cresap knocked the blacksmith down in one blow. Once constrained in steel, he was hauled off to Philadelphia, and paraded through the streets before being imprisoned. His spirit unbroken, he announced, "Damn it, this is one of the prettiest towns in Maryland!" [9]

Resolution

Following Cresap's arrest, Maryland sent a petition to King George II requesting that he intervene to restore order pending the outcome of the Chancery suit. On August 18, 1737, the king issued a proclamation instructing the governments of both colonies to cease hostilities.[10] Sporadic violence continued, prompting both sides to petition the king for further intervention. In response, the royal Committee for Plantation Affairs organized direct negotiations between the two colonies, which resulted in the signing of a peace agreement in London on May 25, 1738. This agreement provided for an exchange of prisoners and the drawing of a provisional boundary fifteen miles south of the city of Philadelphia. Each side agreed to respect the other's authority to conduct law enforcement and grant title to land on its own side of this boundary, pending the final action of the Chancery Court.[11]

Because Blue Rock Ferry lay well to the north of the provisional boundary, Cresap did not return to the area following his release in the prisoner exchange. In 1750, the Chancery Court upheld the validity of the 1732 agreement, which became the basis on which Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon surveyed the modern boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland in 1767. Today the conflict area is part of York County, Pennsylvania.

Cresap's son Michael played a prominent role in Lord Dunmore's War (1774).[9] For this reason some historians also refer to the 1774 conflict as "Cresap's War."

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Background on Thomas Cresap

Source: <http://www.nps.gov/archive/choh/History/People/Cresap.html>

Thomas Cresap was known in Western Maryland as a "border ruffian" and in Pennsylvania as the "Maryland Monster". He connived in the 1730's to expand the borders of Maryland at the expense of Pennsylvania and Virginia by settling German immigrants into disputed areas and surveying the source of the Potomac River as far south as possible. Only in 1746, with the arrival of Mason and Dixon from England, was this dispute finally resolved.

Cresap also was a driving force in the Ohio Company, an enterprise that sought to open an important trade route to the west. He engaged in a lengthy dispute with George Washington over property in the Ohio Valley. Cresap died in 1787, but his name lives on in Cresaptown, upstream from Cumberland, MD.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cresap

Early years

Cresap was born in Skipton, Yorkshire, England, and came to Maryland when fifteen years of age. In 1732 he gave his occupation as that of a carpenter. He settled at the mouth of the Susquehanna River, where he engaged in boat-building. In 1725 he married Hannah Johnson, whose father, Thomas Johnson, on March 24, 1725 had surveyed to himself Mount Johnson Island, at Peach Bottom Ferry. Cresap went to Virginia, but he was not there long before a dozen or more persons attempted to drive him away when he was engaged in hewing timber for his dwelling. He defended himself, and cleft one of his assailants with a broad-ax. He then returned to Maryland, and took out a patent for a ferry over the Susquehanna at the head of tide-water, which must have been at or near the terminus of the voyage of Capt. John Smith up the river in 1608. While living there he visited the rich valleys thirty miles farther up the right bank of the river, now in Hellam and Lower Windsor Townships. He reported the conditions to Lord Baltimore, who as early as 1721 had contemplated extending the northern boundary of Maryland on the west side of the Susquehanna to the northern limits of the fortieth degree of latitude.

Land disputes

Gradually a few settlers from Maryland moved to the Conojohela Valley. They were aggressive to the Pennsylvanians who settled near them. It was not Lord Baltimore's practice to purchase lands from the Indians; instead the Marylanders drove them away by force. The settlers treated the Indians on the west side of the river with cruelty; however, they had no one capable of holding the ground they had taken from the Indians or from the Pennsylvanians, who were determined to prevent Baltimore from gaining a foothold on this disputed land. Cresap came to Conojohela Valley in March, 1730, and built a block-house on the banks of the river three and one half miles below today's Wrightsville, near the site of Leber's Mill. That same year, he took out a Maryland patent for several 100 acres (400,000 m²) near the river for "Blue Rock Ferry" at same place. In 1731 Cresap was commissioned a justice of the peace for Baltimore County. After many attempts to capture him, he was finally taken on 25 November 1736, by Sheriff Samuel Smith and twenty-four armed men. His wife stood by him and fought at his side.

At this time he had at least two and perhaps three of his children with him, the eldest being about nine years of age. During his imprisonment, his wife and children lived with his cousin Daniel Lowe, who drove one of the German settlers from his home in Grist Valley (Kreutz Creek), near Codorus. Cresap's education was limited, but he became a land surveyor, and was of great service to Lord Baltimore in extending the western boundary of Maryland from the source of the south branch of the Potomac due north, which added at least one third more territory to Maryland. In 1735 he took out a Maryland patent for a group of islands at Blue Rock Ferry, called the "Isles of Promise." About 1730 Cresap again moved beyond the frontier and took up about 2,000 acres (8.1 km²) of land in Maryland along Antietam Creek, where he established a store and Indian trading post. He accumulated a large quantity of furs and pelts and shipped them to England. The vessel was captured by the French and he lost everything. In 1739, he was granted 400 acres (1.6 km²) which he named Long Meadows. Cresap is said to have erected a stone and log fort over a spring near the March Run.[1] Cresap moved farther west to within two miles (3 km) of present day Cumberland, Maryland, where he again embarked in the Indian trade until the beginning of the French and Indian War, when he raised a company of Rangers.

French and Indian War

Cresap fought a number of skirmishes with the Indians and stood his ground, assisted by his sons. He was elected a representative from Frederick County, Maryland to the Maryland legislature. When the French and their allies attempted to seize the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains from the English, Cresap and his sons at their own expense raised two companies of volunteer soldiers.

Later years

Cresap was a large landholder. He became totally blind a few years before his death. He married a second time, it is said, when he was eighty years of age. He died in 1790, at his home in Allegany County, Maryland, aged eighty-eight.

His first wife Hannah Johnson, during "Cresap's war," frequently mounted a horse and rode with the mounted militia with a sword by her side. When Cresap's stronghold was surrounded by militia from Donegal, Hannah knew how to handle a musket. She superintended the construction of a house and the building of some flatboats, in the absence of her husband,

at John Hendricks', now the upper end of Wrightsville, where forcible possession had been taken of Hendricks' plantation by Cresap. While there she saw a flatboat filled with armed men crossing the river. She mounted her horse, sounded a bugle, and rode rapidly to Cresap's fort, three miles (5 km) and a half down the river. She returned at the head of the militia.

Family

Thomas and Hannah Cresap had five children, three sons and two daughters.

The oldest son, Daniel Cresap, remained in Washington County, Maryland, and became a large landholder and a celebrated hunter as well as a farmer. He was about fourteen when the family left York County. By his first wife he had a son, Michael, who commanded a company in Lord Dunmore's War in 1774 (not so; this is the Michael named below), and was afterwards colonel of militia. By a second wife he had seven sons and three daughters: Daniel, Joseph, Van, Robert, James, Thomas, Elizabeth, Mary and Sarah. Daniel marched in his uncle's company to Boston in 1775. James was for a number of years in the Maryland legislature.

Thomas, the second son of Col. Cresap, was killed by an Indian — whom he killed at the same instant. He left a widow and one child.

Michael, the youngest son of Col. Cresap was born in Frederick County, Maryland, June 29, 1742. He was the successor to his father in the Indian trade, and owned a large trading store at "Old Town," a few miles east of Cumberland. He was an Indian fighter from his youth. In 1774 he employed several men and descended the Ohio River and was engaged in the business of erecting houses and clearing lands for the settlers. While thus engaged he received a letter from Dr. Connolly, the commandant at Fort Pitt, that there was danger of an Indian war. The settlers were alarmed. Michael and his party, anticipating an attack by the Indians, struck them first. Some of his men killed several Indians near Wheeling. Another group of frontiersmen, led by Daniel Greathouse, shortly afterwards killed the family of the celebrated Indian Logan and several others. Cresap was mistakenly accused of leading this action as well. Logan reacted swiftly, striking settlers on the frontier. This was followed by "Dunmore's War" and the Battle of Point Pleasant along the Ohio River, which brought about a treaty of peace.

Michael Cresap was held in very high esteem by his neighbors. He was the first person in Maryland to raise a company of volunteer riflemen. He marched at their head to Boston in 1775, where he fought with great bravery. He took sick (tuberculosis is suspected) and was compelled to return to New York, where he died. Michael Cresap left five children, two sons and three daughters.

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