

[1763, JUNE.

1736, JUNE.] FATE OF FORT VENANGO.

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the half-burned bodies of its hapless garrison. They now continued their journey down the Alleghany. On the third night their last biscuit was consumed, and they were half dead with hunger and exhaustion before their eyes were gladdened at length by the friendly walls of Fort Pitt. Of those who had straggled from the party, all eventually appeared but two, who, spent with starvation, had been left behind, and no doubt perished.<sup>1</sup>

Not a man remained alive to tell the fate of Venango. An Indian, who was present at its destruction, long afterwards described the scene to Sir William Johnson. A large body of Senecas gained entrance under pretence of friendship, then closed the gates, fell upon the garrison, and butchered them all except the commanding officer, Lieutenant Gordon, whom they forced to write, from their dictation, a statement of the grievances which had driven them to arms, and then tortured over a slow fire for several successive nights, till he expired. This

<sup>1</sup> On the twenty-seventh of June, Price wrote to Colonel Bouquet from Fort Pitt, announcing his escape; and again on the twenty-eighth, giving an account of the affair. Both letters are before me; but the most satisfactory evidence is furnished by the record of the court of inquiry held at Fort Pitt on the twelfth of September, to ascertain the circumstances of the loss of Presqu'isle and Le Bœuf. This embraces the testimony of most of the survivors; namely, Ensign George Price, Corporals Jacob Fisher and John Nash, and privates John Dogood, John Nigley, John Dortinger, and Uriah Trunk. All the men bear witness to the resolution of their officer. One of them declared that it was with the utmost difficulty that they could persuade him to leave the blockhouse with them.