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For Peace and Prosperity: The Defense, Trade, and Expansion Policies of Governor Alexander Spotswood

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FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY:
THE DEFENSE, TRADE, AND EXPANSION POLICIES
OF GOVERNOR ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Frances Susan Mazur
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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Approved December, 1990

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To My Mother
Marjorie Mazur

And In Memory Of My Father
John Mazur
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. FEUD: SPOTSWOOD AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. INDIAN POLICY AND EARLY DEFENSE</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III. LAND, TOBACCO, THE ECONOMY, AND REVENUES</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV. WESTWARD EXPANSION</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION: SPOTSWOOD'S FINAL STRATEGY</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ABSTRACT

Alexander Spotswood was the royal lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1710 to 1722. During his twelve year tenure he faced opposition from the colony's general assembly and Virginia's gentry as he strove to improve Indian relations, defense strategies, and the colony's economy. Spotswood convinced the general assembly to establish two counties in Virginia in 1720, prior to their actual settlement, to bring about much needed economic, Indian relations, and defense reforms through westward expansion after failing to do so permanently with earlier legislative attempts: the Tobacco and Indian Acts.

The Tobacco Act had provided for the revitalization of Virginia's sagging tobacco-based economy and for increased revenues from duties on the crop and slaves as well as from quitrents collected on newly patented land grants. The Indian Act created a government regulated fur trading company that curbed abuses of Indians at the hands of unscrupulous traders, revamped the business, improved Indian relations, and formed a buffer defense using friendly Indian tribes to protect eastern counties from potential attacks by the French, Spanish, and hostile Indians. Although the Tobacco and Indian acts proved to be effective, they temporarily reduced fur trader and tobacco growers' profits. In 1717 the general assembly's agent, William Byrd II, successfully appealed to Britain's Board of Trade for the repeal of the Indian and Tobacco acts on the basis that both acts created monopolies and illegally restricted free trade. Following the demise of his reform bills, Spotswood formed a new strategy and turned to westward expansion. The establishment of Spotsylvania and Brunswick counties inaugurated Virginia's progression into the golden era of prosperity and marked a positive change in the heretofore antagonistic relationship between the governor and the general assembly.
FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY:
THE DEFENSE, TRADE, AND EXPANSION POLICIES
OF GOVERNOR ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD
INTRODUCTION

From the moment King James I issued the charter founding Virginia in 1607, politicians and entrepreneurs alike strove to populate the country and make it prosper. As settlers arrived they chose fertile land close to rivers and streams which provided easy access to coastal towns. Thus they began a development trend. Settlement spread quickly along riverbanks, and only later as communities grew, residents constructed roads to connect waterways and settle the interior. The result was an uneven population distribution. People often lived far from county courthouses and churches, so they demanded their own local governments and parishes requiring the colonial General Assembly to create and subsequently divide counties.¹

This remained the standard formula throughout most of Virginia's history. But in 1720 the colony's royal executive, Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood, broke tradition. For the purpose of encouraging expansion onto the frontier, he convinced the Assembly to establish two counties, Brunswick and Spotsylvania. As an incentive to purchase land, buyers

would receive ten year exemptions from paying land taxes. Spotswood reasoned that the counties were necessary for precipitating migration to the north and southwest, a trend he hoped to encourage in order to secure the frontier against foreign invasion and induce economic growth. It was the first time in Virginia's history that official political establishments became magnets for settlement, making it one of the first development projects in America. As a comprehensive plan formed after ten years of failed experimentation, it became Spotswood's triumph.

Spotswood arrived in Virginia in 1710 as the newly appointed deputy, or lieutenant governor. Because of his prowess as an army officer and his qualities as a leader, he attracted the attention of his superior, George Hamilton, the Earl of Orkney, Governor and Commander in Chief of Virginia. Orkney exercised his right to select officers, who handled all official duties, throughout his forty year term. Since he never personally performed an act of government, colonists generally thought of and addressed his deputies as their governors. Thus in Virginia they referred to Spotswood as Governor Spotswood.²

Unfortunately for the governor, his name did not always invoke feelings of loyalty and patriotism. Spotswood lacked diplomatic finesse in dealing with the people and the General Assembly, arousing antagonism during his entire tenure. One

source of discord was Spotswood's position itself; he ruled as a royal appointee whose duty it was to protect the Crown's interests. He answered not to the people of Virginia, but to Britain's Board of Trade. Meanwhile the General Assembly grew bolder throughout the eighteenth century and struggled to attain greater authority in Virginia's political arena. Although the Crown also officially appointed men to the Virginia Council, members of this upper chamber united with burgesses in protecting Virginia's interests, or more often those of the landed gentry. When conflicts arose between Virginia's elite and the Crown, Spotswood remembered his duty and bore the brunt of the Assembly's outrage. During the twelve years he governed Virginia, Spotswood constantly battled the legislature while working to defend the colony and make it prosper.

Certainly Spotswood was not the first Virginia governor to incur the wrath of the people. Not long before he arrived, historian Robert Beverly commented upon the colonial temperament. According to Beverly, the people feared no enemies but occasionally "An insolent and oppressive Governor, who is pleased to abuse the Queen's Authority, by perverting it into Arbitrary Power and to exasperate the People by their barbarous Treatment."³ Such enduring hostility periodically

made the governor's job very nearly impossible. To ensure a full comprehension of this relationship and how it influenced Spotswood's political decisions requires a brief study of the opposition he faced in matters related to trade, taxes, defense, and expansion. He needed the colonists', and therefore the Assembly's, support to carry through economic and defense reforms.

Spotswood clearly understood the exigency of securing what Virginians called the Piedmont and Southside. The term Piedmont generally included territory north and west of the James River. Fertile land with navigable rivers and other natural resources provided an ideal region for migrating farmers. The Southside was a vast region stretching along the southern Virginia border below the James River, west of the fall line, and east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was thinly populated and vulnerable to attack from the French, Spanish, and hostile Indians. Spotswood's first attempt to remedy this situation included the establishment of a fur trading company and construction of a military outpost called Fort Christanna where the company conducted all transactions. The fort occupied a site that later fell within the boundaries of Brunswick County. Spotswood staffed Christanna with rangers, and friendly tributary Indians served as a buffer against all hostile incursions. Because of the Assembly's unrestrained efforts to disband the company, the Board of Trade pushed Spotswood to abandon the fort and his defense
strategy. The conflict embittered Spotswood. In his view the General Assembly forced the conclusion of a policy intended to provide for defense of the Southside, invigoration of the fur trade during a long economic slump, and pacification of tributary Indians.

Spotswood was not defeated. Within two years of his plan's demise, he had developed another with far reaching consequences. The second solution led to Virginia's expansion beyond the Blue Ridge and Alleghany Mountains, thereby securing the frontier for Great Britain. This was his Brunswick and Spotsylvania County project. Indeed, Brunswick and Spotsylvania's formation benefitted Virginia and the Crown in many ways. Spotswood believed the key to Virginia's safety and prosperity lay in protecting its western reaches from foreign invasion and preserving its wealth for British exploitation. He finally reached this conclusion following ten years of brave economic and defense reform initiatives that failed to endure in the face of opposition.

Spotswood's tendency to create sweeping solutions for complex problems reached its pinnacle with Brunswick and Spotsylvania Counties. Spotswood believed that Virginia's tax, economic and defense problems, and Indian relations were inseparably linked because they all affected Virginia's welfare, and therefore, that of the Crown. Furthermore, by 1720 he reasoned that westward expansion could solve many of these problems. In order to appreciate the complexity of
Spotswood's dilemmas and the simplicity of his solution, each issue and early reforms must be thoroughly examined.

Creating a political division to stimulate expansion, economic growth, and strengthen defense rather than satisfy an established population was certainly a novel approach in 1720. Spotswood's initiative showed creativity and great promise. But it did not come easily. He fought the General Assembly throughout his administration as it attempted to block his reforms. Yet eventually Spotswood triumphed with a plan born after ten years of contemplation, aggravation, experimentation, and finally inspiration.
CHAPTER I
FEUD: SPOTSWOOD AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

From his arrival in 1710 until 1714 Spotswood benefitted from a relatively peaceful relationship with Virginia's General Assembly. He arrived after Virginia's Council had ruled the colony for four years exercising exclusive privilege in all political affairs following the death of Governor Edward Nott.1 Virginians were relieved when Orkney reestablished executive authority by appointing Spotswood as his new lieutenant governor, resulting in the return of their bicameral legislature. Perhaps they had grown weary of an overbearing Council. In 1712 Spotswood called for an Assembly election, but upon meeting the new burgesses he was not as thrilled as were the people. He expressed disappointment in the quality of representation and was no more satisfied with the second session than the first. But he never dreamed that these men would prove the most cooperative of all burgesses he faced before the end of his tenure.2

Out of arrogance, Spotswood complained that the burgesses came from a class no better than the people they served. He

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discovered their propensity for thrift as the House repeatedly denied his requests for specific reforms because of expense. The burgesses represented a populace struggling under bleak economic conditions, and "because of the depression they measured all issues by one standard: economy."³

Disputes over money forced Spotswood to abandon many projects including one of his first, an upgrading of the militia and Virginia's defense strategy. Militia laws demanded much from the poor in terms of time and supplies but relatively little from the rich. Spotswood hoped the wealthy would assume a larger share of the burden as soldiers and financiers. He also wanted to sufficiently train all troops and restock supplies, but the House rejected his plan as too costly. He never secured any reform legislation for the militia. Dismayed by the burgesses' enduring frugality, Spotswood condemned them for being overly concerned with popularity among an impoverished constituency and negligent of their duties to the Queen.⁴

Money was not the only source of contention between Spotswood and the burgesses. They argued over political control itself. As elected representatives of the people, the burgesses grew increasingly influential in the eighteenth century, and during the first quarter, Spotswood unwittingly gave them a certain advantage. He frequently quarreled with

³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 177.
the Council, and although he and the councilors both quarreled with burgesses, they each sought House approval when they themselves clashed. In this way Spotswood inevitably courted the patronage of the men he disdained by vying for their sympathies against the Council. Thus the burgesses became arbiters of political disputes.5

One historian, Jack P. Greene, believes the opposition Spotswood faced resulted from a mounting "struggle between local and imperial interests for primacy in the colony's political life."6 Virginia leadership shifted from the councilors to the burgesses in provincial matters. The era was an exciting time for the colony's politicians, but the restructuring of power left Spotswood in a difficult position. Struggles within the General Assembly often rendered negotiation impossible in securing the passage of bills. As assemblymen fought one another they accomplished little. Nevertheless they usually joined forces to promote the interests of Virginia in opposition to the Crown, thus forcing Spotswood to assume the role as protector of the royal prerogative.7

5Ibid., p. 188.


By law the governor called for new elections when a reigning monarch died. Queen Anne's death in August, 1714 necessitated another election in Virginia, whereby Spotswood lost a relatively friendly Assembly and gained a hostile one the following year.  

Fortunately for Spotswood he had enough foresight to predict the probable outcome of the 1715 election and to secure the passage of a bill before the previous Assembly adjourned, "An Act for the Better Regulation of the Indian Trade by Empowering the Commissioners Therein Named to Manage the Same for the Sole Use, Benefit and Behoof of the Publick," known as the Indian Act. At Spotswood's behest the Assembly also approved an "Act for Preventing Frauds in Tobacco Payments and for the Better Improving the Staple of Tobacco," referred to as the Tobacco Act. These two bills served as the cornerstones of the governor's economic and defense policies. Unfortunately these laws also benefitted the Crown at the expense of Virginia fur traders and tobacco planters by restraining free enterprise with the imposition of highly inconvenient government regulations.

Three of Spotswood's most formidable enemies in the Council led the opposition against the Tobacco and Indian acts. James Blair, Philip Ludwell, and William Byrd II successfully lobbied for the repeal of both acts following the election. The Blair, Ludwell, Byrd alliance grew out of

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mutual interest in each other's affairs, for all three were interrelated through marriage. Blair and Ludwell were brothers-in-law, and Byrd married Ludwell's niece, Lucy Parke. Other sympathetic councilors belonging to the family were Benjamin Harrison II, Blair's father-in-law, William Bassett and Edmund Berkeley who married Joanna and Lucy Burwell respectively—Ludwell's nieces—and Robert "King" Carter whose daughter Elizabeth married Nathaniel Burwell. Together these seven councilors, some of the wealthiest and most influential men of the colony, comprised an undefeatable adversarial team.9

Spotswood' first serious trouble with the Blair, Ludwell, Byrd faction came when he criticized Byrd as receiver general and Ludwell as auditor of the revenue in 1714. With the Tobacco Act's imposition of a new quitrent collection system, Byrd's responsibilities as receiver general increased, but his pay did not. According to regulations tobacco growers were to pay quitrents to their local sheriffs, who received a small commission as payment for their services, and were allowed a five per cent discount for payment prior to March 31 each year. But if tobacco growers paid the receiver general directly, the Tobacco Act allowed an eight per cent discount. Byrd complained of having to collect quitrents because he

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believed collection duties were the right and responsibility of sheriffs.¹⁰

The Tobacco Act also mandated a more detailed record of quitrent payments than Byrd had ever kept. Each tobacco grower's tax and payment were to be recorded in a book specifically set aside for the purpose. Byrd had heretofore listed a gross total of all money received from quitrents annually in Virginia. Spotswood confronted Byrd and declared Byrd's traditional record keeping method afforded too many opportunities for tax fraud. Byrd resented the insinuation and thought it unfair to increase his work but not his salary and refused to comply with regulations. Since Byrd had been in London since 1713, his duties fell to Deputy Auditor Philip Ludwell.

Ludwell, in support of Byrd, also refused to comply with regulations. Enraged by Byrd and Ludwell's attempt to obstruct the collection of quitrents, Spotswood appealed to the Board of Trade and requested Ludwell's removal from office. The governor charged Ludwell, Byrd, and their sympathizers of conniving to thwart justice in order to retain more quitrents to finance councilors' salary raises to one

hundred pounds. Subsequently the Board dismissed Ludwell but replaced him with Ludwell's son-in-law, John Grymes.\textsuperscript{11}

Opposition to the Tobacco Act had farther reaching effects than just the removal of Ludwell as deputy auditor. From twenty one out of twenty five counties in Virginia came petitions against the Tobacco Act. Tobacco growers objected to restraints on production and sales of lower grade tobacco as well as to expensive and inconvenient requirements of packaging and transporting tobacco to warehouses for inspection. The outcry was so strong that Virginia's newly elected Assembly felt justified in demanding the Tobacco Act's repeal.

Even stronger than the outcry against inconvenience and expense was the denouncement of Spotswood's political patronage. The Tobacco Act allowed the governor to appoint some forty agents as tobacco inspectors, positions that brought an annual revenue of about two hundred and fifty pounds each. Spotswood made it clear that he would reward Tobacco Act supporters with appointments. Through his patronage, Spotswood gained an edge over the act's opposition by appointing twenty seven burgesses and other prominent men to agencies. In a letter to the Board of Trade the governor hinted at his new found influence over the House; with twenty

seven friendly supporters, a clear majority, he could influence all House decisions.\(^\text{12}\)

Or so Spotswood thought. Spotswood could not remove any agent from his position without the Council's approval, and following the election the Council gained enough support from the House to appoint William Byrd II, already in London, to act as its agent in London before the Board of Trade. In addition to his complaints about the Tobacco Act, Byrd had a personal stake in repealing the Indian Act. The act restricted fur trading to men who bought shares in the Virginia Indian Company, a company created as a provision of the act. It was not Spotswood's intention to limit trading to a "clique of government favorites." On December 24, 1714 the company opened its books to sell shares to anyone who wished to buy them. But Byrd refused to purchase shares in the company until he could determine the success of the venture; by then he was too late and lost his right to conduct a business that had once proved lucrative to his family. Thus Byrd willingly accepted the position as spokesman for the Virginia Assembly. At first the Board refused to receive Byrd, and instead acknowledged Nathaniel Blackiston as the only official Virginia agent through whom grievances would be heard. The Assembly declared this ruling unjust, for, as Byrd noted, Blackiston was prejudiced in Spotswood's favor. Byrd

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\(^\text{12}\)Dodson, *Spotswood*, pp. 52-54; Spotswood, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 49.
claimed Blackiston was "the Lieutenant Governor's Solicitor, and not the country's." The Council and House needed an agent under their control to present arguments for repealing both acts and, therefore, hired Byrd over Spotswood's protests. Byrd, with the help of Micajah Perry and John Hyde, persuaded the Board to revoke both acts on the basis of their illegality in establishing monopolies which inhibited trade. Spotswood furiously continued to press his case for retention, but the Assembly had triumphed. The legislative body succeeded in overstepping traditional bounds of power by appointing its own agent, bypassing the governor, and appealing directly to the Board of Trade for assistance.

With its newly acquired strength, the Assembly attempted to have Spotswood removed from office. Early in 1717 the governor was forced to defend himself against an anonymous foe, "A. N." In a letter to the Board of Trade dated 1716, A. N. asked to remain anonymous fearing retribution from his intractable governor in Virginia and listed his exaggerated complaints. A. N. accused Spotswood of extorting money from ship captains, making judges of foreigners in the county

13Greene, "Opposition," p. 37; Mary M. Theobald, "The Indian Fur Trade in Colonial Virginia 1584-1725" (M. A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1980), p. 79; Dodson, Spotswood, pp. 86-87, for a list of twenty known subscribers see Dodson, p. 86.

courts, building forts on the James and Rappahanock Rivers to protect his private interests, illegally claiming Englishmen's patented and Indian lands for Virginia, murdering the king of the Nottoway Indians, protecting men in illegal proceedings, commanding members of the court to refuse payment of salaries to the burgesses, commanding the illegal prosecution of a woman who killed her slave while allowing his friends to maim and murder their slaves, overcharging the government for maintaining troops and rangers at Fort Christanna, demanding that Virginia troops go to South Carolina and fight the Yamasee to protect his personal interests as a stockholder in the Virginia Indian Company, calling for a standing militia of four thousand five hundred men so that he could govern by martial law, firing men holding civil and military offices, dismissing justices of the peace for handing out judgments with which he did not agree, refusing to repeal the Tobacco Act, and denying land speculators the right to purchase large tracts while he purchased twelve thousand acres and rented the land to Germans. By the nature of the attack, it is clear that the assailant had the backing of assemblymen who voiced many of the same concerns. Faced with a list of fifteen accusations Spotswood despaired in a reply to the Board of Trade,

I am charged in plain words as Guilty of Breach of Trust, breach of Oath, breach of Faith in my public Contracts, of tricking an Assembly out of £1,350, of Extortion, of Murder, of stirring up Sedition and Rebellion & c.
He appealed for justice from the Board of Trade in a long letter declaring the falsity of each point. In the end the Board dismissed all charges against him, but the animosity between Spotswood and his opponents caused his superiors in London to question his effectiveness as governor.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1718 Spotswood tried to turn the political tide in his favor. With another round of elections approaching soon, he attempted to break the Council-House alliance by wielding his influence over freeholders. In what was probably America's first campaign flier, Spotswood entreated voters to mind their consciences and elect burgesses who would follow his example and protect the King's interests above all others, no matter how expensive. The strategy backfired when assemblymen led by James Blair and Philip Ludwell seized the opportunity to use Spotswood's appeal against him. In a pamphlet titled \textit{Advice to the freeholders of the several Countys in Virginia in their choice of Representatives to serve the Approaching Assembly} they reproached the governor for cheating the people by duping them into financing an exorbitant Indian policy that they neither wanted nor needed. Voters responded by returning an adversarial House of Burgesses.\textsuperscript{16}

Spotswood carried on an antagonistic relationship with the Council as well that caused him considerable agony. During the election Byrd remained in London as the General

\textsuperscript{15}Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, pp. 189-218.

Assembly's agent, and soon afterwards he received new orders. Arguably the most heated debate Spotswood had with the Council was over his authority to appoint any judge he wished to the Courts of Oyer and Terminer, newly established to handle a backlog of criminal and civil cases. It was traditional to appoint councilors as judges, because they were members of the General Court, but Spotswood paid this tribute to speakers and burgesses. The Council objected fiercely, but Spotswood insisted on exercising his right for a good reason. The Courts of Oyer and Terminer tried criminal and all civil cases involving any amount of money under three hundred pounds. These courts therefore judged cases concerning lapses of land grants for nonpayment of quitrents, land taxes. Wealthy men often took out warrants for estates, had them surveyed to determine boundaries, and then refused to patent the acreage. By doing so, land owners were allowed to hold their estates for speculation without paying quitrents, which the sheriff collected only on patented grants. Spotswood, on behalf of the Crown, supported strict regulations on the patenting of land within six months of receiving a grant and on payment of quitrents. He enforced the law requiring land holders to forfeit grants as punishment for their refusal to pay taxes. Since seven members of the Council were related through marriage, Spotswood questioned their fairness and objectivity in all cases, including the lapsing of land grants. The Council, on behalf of the Virginia gentry, fought for the
right to retain grants even after postponing or avoiding payment of quitrents on uninhabited land. For this reason, as well as to assert the authority they believed was theirs, the councilors asked Byrd to explain their position to the Crown and demanded that Spotswood restrict all future appointments to them. In a letter to Philip Ludwell, a fellow councilor and confidante, Byrd wrote that he presented their case to the attorney general and paid him "pretty handsomely" to insure a favorable report.17 He offered the following rationale to sway the Board of Trade,

Having been convinc't by the attorney generalls, that His Majesty's governor of Virginia hath power by the royal instruction to appoint Courts of Oyer and Terminer in that colony...I humbly represented to His Majesty the danger of trusting so absolute a power to the governours at so great a distance, and humbly pray'd that such power might be restrained in such manner as His Majesty by the advice of his council learned in the law shall think fit.18

Byrd's appeal worked. The Commissioners, although recognizing Spotswood's legal right to choose anyone he pleased, strongly advised him to appoint judges from the Council alone. In obedience to the Board, Spotswood acquiesced.19


18Ibid., p. 314.

But the fight had not ended. Indeed Spotswood battled Byrd, Ludwell, and their followers until the end of his administration. For the time being, the governor rallied by petitioning the Board of Trade for Byrd's removal from his Council seat on the basis that he had been absent too long, three and a half years. Spotswood preferred Peter Beverly, a sympathetic friend who would provide the governor with a much needed ally in the chamber. Byrd appealed to the Board opposing the removal of councilors based solely on Spotswood's accusations without the benefit of a defense hearing. By "Furious politicking" Byrd convinced the Privy Council that he should be allowed to retain his post, but it ordered him to return home and "work for peace."

Spotswood celebrated Byrd's return, for his arch rival was back in Virginia where he could be watched. While in London Byrd lost no opportunity in forwarding his own campaign for the governorship. He hoped the controversy that Spotswood stirred would prompt Orkney to replace him. When the rest of the Council realized that they might serve with Lieutenant Governor William Byrd rather than Spotswood, they had second thoughts. Ambitious and irascible, Byrd could be even more overbearing than the current governor. The gentry was

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relieved when Byrd returned as a councilor only. Byrd's return and mission of peace meant that henceforth he and Spotswood would attempt to keep Virginia quarrels within the colony, thereby controlling the fight at home and preventing a scandal in London.22

Toward the end of his administration, Spotswood learned how to work with the Virginia Assembly. Repeals by the Board of Trade of the Indian and Tobacco Acts in 1717 along with the controversy over the Courts of Oyer and Terminer taught him a hard lesson. It took time for a bitter and arrogant Spotswood to acquire the tact and diplomacy necessary to gain the cooperation of the Assembly. During this interval he continued to press old arguments. One sign of diminishing strife was the Assembly's acquiescence on the governor's Indian policy. After four years of obstinate refusal to obey a decision made by the Board of Trade, councilors and burgesses reimbursed the Virginia Indian Company for expenses incurred in fortifying and manning Fort Christanna in the Southside. Subsequently the governor endeavored to introduce new legislation that would bring about the same effects as the Tobacco and Indian Acts. He faced tough opposition, for the General Assembly refused to adopt any new regulations on tobacco production or the fur trade.23 Eventually Spotswood


23 Dodson, Spotswood, p. 58.
abandoned this pursuit and planned his new strategy. He finally understood that in order to accomplish anything for the Crown, Virginia, or for personal gain, he had to compromise with the Assembly. Spotswood made many mistakes, but by 1720 he had acquired enough political savvy to convince the Assembly he was a newly reformed governor. The Assembly's cooperation enabled him to pass significant legislation that year with the formation of Brunswick and Spotsylvania Counties. But unfortunately Spotswood's metamorphosis came too late.24

Spotswood's famous reconciliation with the Assembly allowed him to work effectively with its members until his removal from office in 1722. Traditionally Blair had received the credit for instigating the governor's replacement, but it remains unclear exactly how Blair contributed to the task. For Blair the final indignity of fearing his own removal from the ministry and his offices forced him to campaign for Spotswood's demise before Spotswood could prove the illegitimacy of Blair's ordination.

The conflict began in 1719 when Spotswood inducted ministers in Essex and James City parishes against the wishes of their respective vestries. Blair argued that because parishioners paid the salaries of their ministers, they should be allowed to choose their ministers. Spotswood claimed that he, as a royal appointee, maintained the authority to appoint

24 Hemphill, Interview, 10 May 1986.
ministers in all parishes. Since Blair had accumulated several enemies among the clergy, Spotswood capitalized on the opportunity to ask Blair's opponents to question the legitimacy of Blair's ordination. The Church of Scotland, not the Church of England, ordained Blair. Spotswood also asked Blair's adversaries to back him over the controversial appointment of ministers. During the course of debate, Spotswood appealed to Britain's solicitor general for clarification of the governor's rights. Solicitor General Sir William Thompson upheld Spotswood's position. To the governor's dismay, the attorney general, Sir Robert Raymond, agreed with Blair. Upon receiving judgments from Thompson and Raymond, Bruton Parish's vestry filed a suit against Spotswood. The case was to be tried before the general court, but in the end was unnecessary.\textsuperscript{25}

Blair sailed for London in 1721, presumably on College business, while the trial pended. His timing was perfect. Tired of endless bickering between Spotswood and his enemies, the Board decided to head off a court battle between the governor and Virginia's vestries. Meanwhile Britain's prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, knew of an able candidate for the position as Virginia's new lieutenant governor: Colonel Hugh Drysdale. Blair had all he needed to oust Spotswood, sympathy from the Board and a ready replacement. Needless to

say, when Spotswood returned to Virginia in 1722 from a successful trip to New York for treaty negotiations with the powerful Five Nations, he found that he had been relieved of duty. Drysdale was now in charge. Spotswood's adversaries had finally won.26

Spotswood's tenure was certainly fraught with controversy and political strife, but he was also one of Virginia's most dynamic and progressive colonial governors. During his twelve year tenure, Spotswood managed to prepare Virginia for the onset of decades of great prosperity. The key to prosperity lay in westward expansion, inaugurated by founding Brunswick and Spotsylvania counties.

CHAPTER II

INDIAN POLICY AND EARLY DEFENSE

One of the qualities Orkney found so appealing in Spotswood was his prowess as a battle hardened army officer. In 1693 Spotswood became an ensign in the Earl of Bath's regiment and was stationed in Flanders. Three years later he attained the rank of lieutenant. During the War of Spanish Succession Spotswood served as lieutenant quartermaster-general under Lord Cadogan and was eventually promoted to lieutenant colonel. When peace returned Spotswood turned to civil service and accepted the position as Virginia's lieutenant governor.1 To govern Virginia a leader needed proven skills in military strategy to aid in the defense of the colony. The job also required both an economist's perception and a diplomat's finesse. While Spotswood performed admirably in economy and defense he failed miserably in tact. His tactlessness was his fatal flaw, for as he secured reform legislation, protected the frontier, successfully treated with Indians, attempted to revitalize the tobacco and fur trades, and prepared Virginia for defense, he bullied his way through the opposition at home, making enemies at every available opportunity.

A few of Spotswood's plans stand out as brilliant solutions to contemporary problems. The formation of the

1Dodson, Spotswood, p. 5.

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Virginia Indian Company with the passage of the Indian Act was one such plan. It was part of a comprehensive scheme created to address a stagnant fur trade, the need to repair relations with friendly and unfriendly Indians, and a potentially expensive internal defense policy during an economic depression. With this piece of legislation and all Spotswood did to make it work, he proved himself as a capable economy and defense administrator, but his lack of diplomacy led to the repeal of the Indian Act, prompted by his adversaries. With the act's demise Spotswood's early defense strategy crumbled. For a military man, he had suffered a terrible blow.

When Spotswood arrived in Virginia his first thoughts as a soldier turned to the local antagonists: unfriendly Indians. In comparison to other colonies, Virginia suffered little at the hands of natives after 1700. As one contemporary historian remarked, Virginians had "the Indians round about in Subjection." In fact Virginians appeared to have no foes at all, for they feared "no other Enemy." Nevertheless Spotswood's military training taught him to always be prepared and to anticipate attack. For this reason he studied his potential enemies, Virginia Indians, very closely.²

Spotswood surveyed all Indians living in the colony and also in parts of North Carolina. His research revealed nine

²Beverly, History, p. 268; Dodson, Spotswood, p. 70.
petty nations comprised of approximately seven hundred Indians and perhaps two hundred and fifty warriors. The figures explain why white settlers in Virginia felt "no sort of Apprehension from them." Yet the Indians were deceptively dangerous. Some belonged to an extended network of interrelated tribes strung through several colonies. There may have been only seven hundred Indians in Virginia, but they were allied to thousands in neighboring colonies and unexplored territories. The tribes could be separated into three distinct linguistic families. The Pamunkey, Chickahominy, and Nansemond were Algonquins who remained from the once powerful Powhatan confederacy. Related to the Tuscarora in North Carolina and to the formidable Five Nations farther north were branches of the Iroquoians, the Nottoway, and Meherin tribes. The Saponi, Totero, Occanechi, and Stegarki belonged to the Siouan or Dakotan family, most of whom had fled west to escape from the hostile Iroquois. Although all these tribes accepted the status as tributaries that the British imposed upon them and respected colonial authority, they remained bound by traditional loyalties to related tribes who could pull them into warfare within Virginia or elsewhere. Just beyond the mountain chain ran the Iroquois war trail, and Spotswood realized Virginia would face
imminent danger if local Indians allied themselves with warring factions west of the mountains.³

White settlements lay scattered far apart on Virginia's frontier, thereby facilitating Indian attacks. Spotswood complained to the Assembly when natives murdered isolated settlers to the west and feared a full scale invasion could drive colonists to the coast. With support from neighboring tribes such an attack was a possibility for any of the tributaries. Keeping this threat in mind Spotswood concentrated on disaster prevention by planning a defense strategy while cultivating friendship.⁴

From the beginning Spotswood found encouragement in the successful education of Indian children in English and the Anglican religion at the College of William and Mary. Several years before Spotswood became governor, a natural philosopher named Robert Boyle endowed the College with two hundred pounds for the purpose of instructing these children. The governor's plan to bridge the cultural gap existing between the British and Indians included an attempt to convert as many Indians as possible to Christianity. He hoped to improve relations with this undertaking,

Whereby a Foundation will be laid for a more lasting friendship w'th those Indians than can be expected while they

³Dodson, Spotswood, p. 70; Spotswood, Letters, vol. 1, p. 167.

retain their savage principles and Heathenish Superstitions. 5

As the number of scholars at the College increased and could no longer be funded solely by the Boyle endowment, the governor turned to the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It was imperative that the Indians remain friendly to avoid conflict with white settlers, and Spotswood's conviction that Christianity served as a basis for friendship led him to endorse their religious education for years to come. 6

In the governor's opinion a good working relationship with Indians also might put them on better terms with colonists, and he found an opportunity to promote a mutually beneficial partnership in the fur trade. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Virginia's trading activities stretched south to the Savannah River and included tribes from as far west as the mountains in present day Tennessee. 7 Because Virginia traders had established contact with Indians on the Carolina frontier before Carolinians had, Spotswood later wrote to the governor of South Carolina to ask that South Carolina permit Virginians to continue trading there. Before 1700 traders from the Old Dominion clearly controlled


6Ibid., pp. 167, 174-178; Dodson, Spotswood, pp. 70-72.

the business. Three men dominated the fur trade near the turn of the century. Abraham Wood deserves credit for extending transactions so far west and south, but he later lost prominence to his arch rival, William Byrd. Byrd inherited the business from his uncle Thomas Stegg, expanded it, and attempted to monopolize the entire trade. Upon his death in 1704, Byrd left the business to his son, William Byrd II. Long before Spotswood arrived in Virginia, the Byrd family had amassed a fortune, much of it from fur trading profits, and William Byrd II retained a vested interest in the business thereafter. But in Spotswood's estimation the trade had foundered recently largely because of the strained relationship between these men and their native partners. To help foster harmony with the Indians, he attempted to revive the business.8

If all measures to promote peace failed, the governor would need the support of a strong militia and a practical defense policy. During the early eighteenth century, Virginia's militia rangers roamed the countryside to thwart Indian attacks, but in the event of warfare, Spotswood knew his poorly trained, ill equipped, and unorganized troops would find Indian warriors formidable opponents in battle. Requests for funding to strengthen the militia fell on the deaf ears of

an impoverished legislature. Thus he tried a new tactic; he took advantage of inter-tribal adversity and turned Virginia's friendly Indians into defenders against hostile ones.9

The status of the colony's Indian relations called for reform, and Spotswood led the way in securing it. Within eight years he formulated, adopted, followed, and finally abandoned a plan to place Virginia's Indian relations on a better footing. But he did not conceive of the plan until 1714. Meanwhile he strove tirelessly to maintain peace in Virginia and, by necessity, to promote it in the Carolinas.

At the same time Spotswood surveyed Virginia's Indians, he made an assessment of the colony's defense capabilities. He was appalled by the state of unpreparedness into which Virginia had fallen. His early plans for reinforcing military strength included a larger militia for each county, a sloop to patrol the capes, beacons for alarming the militia, agreed upon rendezvous spots in each county for the colony's troops, ten strategically placed cannons along the coast and rivers to fortify ports, impressment of men, defense lines to enclose Williamsburg, and a day of fasting and humiliation to ask for God's blessing. When he presented his suggestions to the General Assembly, members of both chambers refused to implement them because of their great expense and the colony's

extreme poverty. Soon afterward the Assembly regretted its mistake.\textsuperscript{10}

The British had colonized Virginia over a century before Spotswood arrived, but their settlements to the south were much younger. The Crown issued the first Carolina charter in 1663, and Carolina's northern territory remained under the administration of a deputy to the governor in Charleston leaving the new colony without firm guidance until the appointment of Governor Charles Eden in 1714. In 1711 Tuscarora Indians ravished the frontiers south of Virginia. As "royal governor and neighbor," Spotswood accepted responsibility for aiding in the maintenance of order in the Carolinas.\textsuperscript{11}

Without warning the Tuscaroras attacked a colony of Swiss Palatines on the upper reaches of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers, devastating the countryside. Settlers fled to towns and more populated counties to escape the massacre, but the Tuscarora followed and menaced them wherever they went. In November of that year burgesses asked Spotswood to declare war against the Tuscaroras who terrorized British colonists to the south and, surprisingly, appropriated one thousand pounds for North Carolina's defense. Without doubt, they were concerned for their own safety. On the same day the General Assembly


\textsuperscript{11}Morton, \textit{Colonial Virginia}, vol. 2, pp.428-429.
enacted a bill calling for the appointment of rangers to patrol the headwaters of the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers in anticipation of an attack.\textsuperscript{12}

Spotswood agreed that this war endangered Virginia. He responded even earlier than did the Assembly by promptly dispatching troops to the colony's southern border after receiving news of an outbreak of hostilities on September 22 in hopes of preventing Virginia's Indians from joining the Tuscaroras. This tribe had a population numbering in the thousands with about two thousand warriors. Spotswood automatically took action to insure his colony's safety. Not all Tuscaroras fought against North Carolinians; many peaceful communities were embarrassed by the more violent members of their tribes. Capitalizing on their sentiments, Spotswood encouraged them to attend a meeting at Nottoway Town. The meeting's outcome pleased him, for all the natives signed a treaty with Virginia promising to remain peaceful. As an act of faith each tribe would send two children from the most respected families of their towns to William and Mary College as hostages. The children would study English and receive religious instruction. By November the Nansemond, Nottoway, and Meherin had sent their children. Within a month the remaining tributaries complied, but the Tuscaroras reneged on their obligation.

The war progressed into the following year, and in February North Carolina appealed for additional aid. This time the request invoked a stiffer response. Spotswood hesitated to dispatch troops because North Carolina could not supply them with the necessary provisions; North Carolina lacked weapons and ammunition. But eventually he relented and began assembling a division for support. In March, before Spotswood was able to send his "reluctant militia," as he called them, Colonel James Moore of South Carolina led a force comprised primarily of Indian allies against the Tuscarora, driving them into the mountains and Virginia. The next month Spotswood entreated the governor of Carolina to secure a true and lasting peace with the Indians.\(^{13}\)

North Carolina's war reinforced Spotswood's ambition to strengthen Virginia's defense against hostile Indians. After signing the treaty with the Tuscarora and tributaries, Spotswood dealt with Virginia's natives as allies and included them in his plans to protect the colony, thus securing their confidence which he never lost. Later in 1713 the Tuscaroraras who had retreated into Virginia began harassing settlers to the west. Spotswood called on the militia to hunt them out and end the conflict. When the militia failed, he sent captain Robert Hix with a contingent of tributaries to negotiate. They returned victorious as the Tuscarora

petitioned for peace in January 1714. The Tuscarora signed a treaty with Spotswood on February 27, allowing them to settle in Virginia among the tributaries. The governor assigned them to a tract of land along with the Nottoways and Meherins, between the Roanoke and James Rivers, thereby separating them from any remaining Tuscarora in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{14}

On May 27, 1715 Spotswood wrote of a terrifying report he had received from the governor of South Carolina,

...there is a general Revolt of all the indians bordering on that Province, who have broken out in open hostility, murdering ye Inhabitants and destroying their habitations, and with such numbers as have never been known to combine together since the English were settled here.\textsuperscript{15}

Because of South Carolina's distress and urgent need of military support he requested stores of war from Britain which he would keep in the new magazine at Williamsburg and dispense to South Carolina as needed. He also sent a man of war to patrol the coast, for the colonists had fled to Charleston and had "no other way to be supplyed with provisions but by Sea."\textsuperscript{16} The situation was critical. The Yamasee proved powerful enough to nearly push the colonists out of South Carolina, and they had friends to the north. Spotswood justifiably feared that if these tribes formed an alliance


\textsuperscript{15}Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, p. 111.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 112.
they would endanger every colony on the coast as far as New York.

Spotswood immediately sought to place the North American frontier in a "posture of defense" by warning the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York of the impending threat. Realizing the danger to all of England's mainland colonies, Spotswood dispatched "without delay" one hundred sixty muskets, powder, and ball to South Carolina on board His Majesty's Ship Valuer and promised to send troops soon after. The Council approved a contingent of three hundred men to aid in the colony's struggle; within fifteen days one hundred and eighteen sailed south. By July over forty troops were prepared to go, and Spotswood filled remaining positions quickly by using thirty tributary Indians as well as white colonists. By dispatching men and supplies to South Carolina he hoped to "extinguish the flame" before it reached Virginia.

Spotswood's timely response to South Carolina's pleas for help was a main factor in preventing the latter colony's extermination. In July of 1715 he estimated that South Carolina could raise no more than fifteen hundred white men to fight a potential force of eight thousand warriors. The colony's hope lay in strategic planning combined with military

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support from neighbors. Colonists sought refuge in Charleston while the governor, Charles Craven, fortified several houses and constructed forts to secure that part of the country. Even so, South Carolinians were literally backed up to the Atlantic. Not only was the colony vulnerable to attack by the Yamasee, in its distressed state it might easily fall to the French or Spanish if either chose to seize the opportunity and invade from the south or by sea. The magnitude of the danger prompted Spotswood to seek aid on behalf of the colony, for Virginia had "not one penny in bank" to defray the cost of defending South Carolina.¹⁹

Financial concerns plagued Spotswood throughout the crisis. If South Carolina fell to the Yamasee, French, or Spanish, Virginia's defense would become extremely expensive. Although he acknowledged South Carolina's difficulty in raising funds for its own war effort, Spotswood complained to the Board of Trade in 1717 that South Carolina used artifices to "defraud" Virginia's forces sent hither in good faith. South Carolina's governor had agreed to pay Virginia troops twenty-two shillings, six pence per month in Virginia currency. He had also agreed to send three hundred slaves to Virginia as replacements for the men who fought on his behalf. But South Carolina faced severe economic hardship, underpaid the troops by using depreciated local currency, and never

provided the promised slaves. Angered, Spotswood reproached his fellow governor for failing to comply with the terms of agreement. Yet Spotswood never regretted sending aid where and when it was so desperately needed.20

When the Yamasee War ended, Spotswood could once again direct his full attention toward Virginia's affairs. Though taxing on his time, energy, and revenues, the Yamasee and Tuscarora Wars taught him two valuable lessons. First, all of the colonies depended upon cooperation and mutual stability to ensure their own security. Second, Indians could be faithful allies. Spotswood successfully treated with the tributaries and used them to defend both Virginia and South Carolina. During North Carolina's struggle with the Tuscarora, Spotswood initiated a policy of "signing defense pacts with nearby friendly tribes to act as buffers against more distant enemies."21 The tributary Indians continued in this role when they fought further incursions of the Tuscaroras in 1714 "as a guard to ye Frontiers."22

Spotswood also learned to appreciate the value of immigrants from Europe. The newly established Swiss and Germans mining iron ore in Germanna to the north offered a


"good barrier for all that part of the Country." The governor provided them with a fort, two cannons, and ammunition with confidence in their ability to defend the country against unfriendly northern Indians.23

In using the Germans, and especially the tributaries, as militia allies, Spotswood gained a reputation as an economizer. His cost-reducing defense policy saved the colony approximately one third of its budget for guarding the frontiers by replacing militia rangers with Indians on the Southside. The savings were very important to the governor, for he observed "the general humour of this Country seems to promise little for its defense." In an era of economic depression, Spotswood learned to defend Virginia very cheaply.24

Spotswood also earned a reputation for having intercolonial vision. While preparing Virginia for defense he always considered the importance of his neighboring colonies' safety as well. During the Yamasee War the Board of Trade praised him for perceiving a potential threat to the survival of all English plantations in America. Spotswood called for organized, intercolonial cooperation to divert unspeakable


disaster and helped maintain British supremacy along the Atlantic coast.\textsuperscript{25}

While Indian warfare ravaged the Carolinas, Spotswood made provisions for Virginia's defense. The colony had commercial as well as security motives for keeping the peace with its Indians, so the governor devised a plan to promote the fur trade and protect the frontier. As early as 1712 he displayed an interest in reforming the fur trade, but not until two years later did he decide to combine economics with defense.

Since the early seventeenth century, Englishmen in Virginia had worked as economic partners with local Indians in the fur trade. The English taught their partners to place a monetary value on skins for the purpose of trading.\textsuperscript{26} One of the most successful of seventeenth-century traders was William Byrd I who dealt with tribes beyond the foothills and south to the Savannah River. By the time he died in 1704, Byrd had amassed a fortune, much of it from fur trading profits. His son, William Byrd II, inherited the business and his father's fortune and continued trading into the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{27}

In 1710 a few wealthy men, and especially Byrd, dominated the fur trade, but it was not as healthy as it had been a generation before. Six years later Spotswood declared that

\textsuperscript{25}Billings, et al., \textit{A History}, p. 183.

\textsuperscript{26}Beverly, \textit{History}, p. 227.

"The trade from Virg'a with foreign Indians, has been declining for many years."\(^{28}\) He identified one of the reasons as the trade's concentration in the "hands of five or six at most, who all live on ye So. Side of James River,"\(^{29}\) He realized early in his career that an improved trading system could provide the colony with a much needed boost to its faltering economy. Unfortunately recovering the fur trade would be difficult because of misunderstandings and hostility between the Indians and Virginia traders. Traders south of the James had alienated many of their Indian partners by cheating or driving them away, offering little for skins and overcharging for British commodities in return. Even so Spotswood was not discouraged. He forged ahead with a plan to revitalize the trade and repair Indian relations. But in order to proceed he had to take control away from the few wealthy traders and place it in the hands of men he trusted.\(^{30}\)

Spotswood had no confidence in the reliability or moral characters of the men who traded with Indians. He classified most as unsavory rogues with no reverence for God. To the Governor, these men were of the lower sort, had a bad influence on the Indians, and in turn were no better

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 146.

\(^{29}\)Ibid., p. 149.

influenced by the Indians with which they kept company.\textsuperscript{31} The marked contrast in descriptions between this class of trader and the few wealthy Virginians who actually controlled the trade clearly indicates Spotswood referred to those "loose fellows" whom the wealthy hired to carry out their business transactions. Although these men often treated Indians unfairly, the natives remained their willing partners because it was easier to trade with rogues in Virginia than hostile tribes in North and South Carolina.\textsuperscript{32}

South Carolina's Yamasee War in 1715 and North Carolina's war with the Tuscarora in 1711 convinced Spotswood that the Indian fur trade affected internal defense as well as the economy. For years colonials traded guns and ammunition for skins, thereby supplying the enemy with necessities of warfare. Spotswood desperately wanted to regulate the trade, prevent further sales of arms to the Indians, and promote peace.\textsuperscript{33}

To solve problems with the fur trade, Spotswood devised a plan to establish the Virginia Indian Company. This solution would revamp the fur trade, end all fraudulent dealings and ill will between traders and Indians, and secure peace on Virginia's southern frontier. The governor spent his summer preparing new settlements for the tributaries according


\textsuperscript{32}Hemphill, Interview, 10 May 1986.

\textsuperscript{33}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, pp. 82-83.
to the 1712 treaty with them and the Tuscarora. He presented his plan to the General Assembly on November 16, 1714. That year the General Assembly passed the Indian Act.  

The Indian Act called for establishing the Virginia Indian Company which would control the fur trade and be "the Sole benefit thereof for 20 years." The company would sell shares to all interested persons. With money raised from sale of stocks the company would finance the construction of a fort, half the expense of a new magazine for arms storage in Williamsburg, roads and bridges near the fort and an Indian school, and pay salaries for an officer and twelve rangers to patrol the wilderness and Indian towns near the fort. Peaceful conditions would promote trading which the act restricted to members of the company. All transactions were to take place in a controlled, open market at the fort. Increased trade would boost the economy and raise government revenue from duties on furs. With capital raised by the company, traders were to invest, as a group, in commodities, the prices of which would be reduced because merchants would have to sell their goods to a collective body rather than to competing customers. A lower overhead would enable traders to afford higher prices on furs. Reduced tensions between

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35 Spotswood, Letters, vol. 2, p. 95
Virginians and Indians would decrease the possibility of warfare. Admittedly, Spotswood devised an ambitious plan, but as everyone later realized, it worked.36

The act was a masterpiece of colonial legislation. It provided for defense and trade reform while defining what role tributary Indians would play in Virginia's future. The governor immediately moved Saponie, Occoneechee, Stuckanox, and Totero Indians, who shared related languages, to a six square mile reservation south of the Meherin River. Later he completed the settlement process for remaining tribes. Once in place, the Indians occupied the center of his new Indian policy.37

From the start the Virginia Indian Company accomplished its objectives. Within a few months enough traders purchased shares to provide the capital needed for realizing promises. Spotswood chose a site on the Meherin River and began supervising the construction of Fort Christanna, named after Christ and Queen Anne-- his god and his sovereign.38

Confining the trade to Fort Christanna enabled Spotswood to

36 Ibid., pp. 88-91, 94-95; Dodson, Spotswood, p. 86.


"Stop all Supplys of Ammunition from ye Indians w'ch is the surest way of bringing y'm to reason,"

Still much work remained. Spotswood wrote to the Bishop of London on January 27, 1715, asking him to lobby for the Virginia Indian Company and use his influence with King George I to procure a license for its incorporation. The governor assured the bishop that the company rested on solid financial ground. Virginia's General Assembly generously entrusted Spotswood with money to complete Fort Christanna and defray expenses for an officer and guard of twelve men for two years. By December 1, 1716, the company was to assume payment for all charges in maintaining the fort by public sale. Sales got off to a slow start, but after Spotswood exerted pressure on wealthy men of acceptable stature, the company attracted several investors.

By 1716 the company had raised ten thousand pounds in subscriptions. The money went toward all the projects Spotswood promised it would support. The company paid one hundred pounds toward the cost of Virginia's new magazine; it paid for an Indian school; it constructed roads and bridges near Fort Christanna; and it hired an officer and twelve guards to patrol the area, but as the company had not yet attained a cash surplus, the governor used his initial allotment from the Assembly to settle the Nottoways and

Meherins and complete fortifications at Christanna. Since he had already moved the Siouan tribes to a tract near the fort, Spotswood chose a separate reservation for the Iroquois, Nottoway, and Meherins north of the Meherin River, still close to Christanna, but far enough away from the Siouans to allow each sufficient hunting grounds. Proud of his plan to consolidate tribes, Spotswood argued the plan made the Indians more accessible to teachers and missionaries while rendering them less vulnerable to attack.  

As soon as the Indians settled onto their reservations Spotswood hired an able and willing instructor, Mr. Charles Griffin, to whom the governor personally paid fifty pounds a year. Spotswood estimated that approximately three hundred Indians lived on the two tracts and that seventy children awaited instruction. As an incentive the governor encouraged children to take advantage of their educational opportunity by offering positions of trust with the company to those who studied at the school or at William and Mary College. The plan seems to have worked well, for when John Fontaine visited Fort Christanna with Spotswood in 1716 he remarked that Mr. Griffin had taught the children to read the Bible and Common Prayers and to write and speak English. On the seventh day of his visit, Sunday, eight Indian boys impressed him as they "answered very well to the prayers and understand what is

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As for students at the College, Spotswood reported to London that there were "several that could read and write tolerably well, can repeat Church Chatechism, and know how to make their responses in ye Church."\(^4\)

To Spotswood, religious education offered the best hope for bringing the Indians out of their savage state and, therefore, closer to British society. Initially he attempted to hire a clergyman, Reverend Mr. Alexander Forbes, but Forbes decided against taking his new bride into the wilderness. Spotswood then chose the school teacher Griffin instead, reasoning that since no congregation yet existed at the Indian towns, a teacher could assume the responsibilities of religious training for the present. The tributaries, especially the children, seemed quite pleased with Griffin. Spotswood, however, failed to understand the tributaries' position on religion. As one contemporary observed, they asked leave to be excused from becoming as we are; for they thought it hard, that we should desire them to change their manners and customs, since they did not desire us to turn Indians: however they permitted their children to be brought up our way. And when they were able to judge for


themselves, they were to live as the English or as the Indians according to their best liking. 43

Spotswood remained adamant in his conviction that the tributaries benefitted from Christian instruction and proudly informed London officials of his undertakings. 44

Although Spotswood remained supportive of Indian education throughout his administration, his primary interest in natives involved their role as defenders of the colony. In establishing reservations near Fort Christanna and later substituting militia rangers with Indians, Spotswood created a system that employed the tributaries in a southern barrier defense against all adversaries. Sympathetic to the British, confident in the governor's leadership, and ready to fight off the French or marauding tribes, they became perfect allies; peaceful themselves yet willing to defend their territory. 45

Because Spotswood worked so hard at keeping the peace with neighboring Indians, the tributaries never faced a full confrontation with hostile tribes, but they almost had a chance to defend their line because of an "accident." In 1717 Spotswood convinced leaders of the Catawbas and their related western allies to apply for peace with South Carolina and end


44Ibid.; Spotswood, Letters, vol. 2, pp. 90, 113; Dodson, Spotswood, p. 84.

the warfare that plagued Indians and colonists alike. As part of their agreement the Indians would bring eleven hostage children to study with Mr. Griffin at Fort Christanna. Upon arrival, the Indians "delivered up their Arms," as was the custom, and trusted in the British for protection. After a successful conference the visiting natives retired to nearby Saponie Town for the evening. At dawn, April 10, enemy Mohawk warriors opened fire and "killed, wounded and took prisoners about a dozen of them." Enraged, the Indian guests accused Spotswood of betrayal. What the governor lacked in tact in dealing with Virginia's gentry he made up for in diplomatic finesse with the Indians. Within hours, calm returned and reason prevailed as Spotswood convinced the tribes they were invited to Fort Christanna in good faith. He promised to obtain satisfaction for the attack and pacified the Indians with considerable presents, thus sending them away content while holding their hostages behind. Despite this disastrous affair, these western Indians remained faithful to their promise and confident that their children would live safely with the tributaries near the fort under Spotswood's protection.46

Had the Catawbas and their allies declared war on Virginia, the tributaries stood ready to aid in defense from

their base at Fort Christanna. During his visit Fontaine noted that Christanna was well fortified as

an inclosure of five sides made only with pallisades, and instead of five bastions, there are five houses which defend the one the other—each side is about one hundred yards long. There are five cannon here... (and) 12 men continually here to keep the place.47

Since the Indians lived within a "musket shot from the fort," they had ready access to the cannons and any ammunition on hand. This made them "useful instead of being (as heretofore) a burden on the Country."48

Within one year after the passage of the Indian Act, fur trading had increased and Indian-white relations improved to the point that Spotswood asked North Carolina's governor to consider regulating fur and commodity prices. Virginia traders felt confident that they could undersell those to the south and dominate the business, but Spotswood decided that encouraging North Carolina to join the enterprise would more be beneficial to all.49 Alas North Carolina refused to comply. Nevertheless the Virginia Indian Company proved to be a great success. It promoted good will, increased the volume of trade, ended fraud, provided for rangers, and secured the frontier.

47Fontaine, Journal, p. 91
48Ibid., p. 96; Spotswood, Letters, vol. 2, p. 95.
49Palmer, Calendar, p. 181.
But while Spotswood entreated North Carolina to join in Virginia's success, the Virginia Indian Company suffered attacks from Virginia's General Assembly. Burgesses and councilors who served in 1715 grew increasingly hostile toward Spotswood and his Indian Policy until their agent, Byrd, convinced the Board of Trade to repeal the Indian Act while he lobbied against the Tobacco Act in 1717. It was no accident that Byrd agreed to represent the Assembly in London, for before the Virginia Indian Company's formation he had "invested heavily" in and dominated the trade. Therefore out of personal greed, Byrd ensured the demise of a monopoly and in the process destroyed his colony's most effective defense system.50

Within three years of the Virginia Indian Company's formation, Byrd and others previously involved in the trade had gained enough support from the General Assembly to lodge a formal complaint with the Board of Trade. In London Byrd formed an alliance with wealthy merchants who feared losing money by selling their commodities to one company rather than several competing traders. They lobbied for a repeal of the Indian Act based on its potential for ruining the balance of trade. The Board ignored their complaint. Finally they changed tactics and objected to the company because it was a monopoly that disallowed private enterprise on private plantations. All plantation owners, by law, had the right to

50Greene, "Opposition," p. 36.
trade in goods on their own land, so the company illegally prohibited commerce, and thereby reduced the king's taxes. With this argument Byrd and the merchants persuaded the Board of Trade to revoke the Indian Act in July, 1717.51

Spotswood defended the company to no avail. He complained to the Board of Trade that its revocation greatly embarrassed his government and left his defense policy in chaos. The Indians had believed in the governor's promises, responded admirably to trade agreements, proved themselves loyal and capable allies, and left their children to the colony's care assured of their protection and fair treatment. Spotswood convinced the councilors of the danger involved in abruptly betraying the Indians and abandoning Fort Christanna. To Spotswood's relief, they "unanimously Agreed...to keep up the effort and Garrison till the meeting of an Assembly...the 23d of April."52 Unfortunately he was not as persuasive when appealing to the Assembly for reimbursement to the Virginia Indian Company for expenses incurred on behalf of the colony. The Board of Trade encouraged the Assembly to do so, but it stubbornly refused on the grounds that the company never did anything solely to benefit the colony and had already received

51 Theobald, "Fur Trade," pp. 82-83; Dodson, Spotswood, p. 93.

its rewards through trade. Not until four years later did the Assembly agree to pay the company its due compensation.\textsuperscript{53}

Although Spotswood gave every indication that their repeal of the Indian Act caught him by surprise, he must have feared that its end was forthcoming. On numerous occasions he wrote the Board of Trade expounding its benefits and defending his policy. He was completely convinced that his scheme proved to be the perfect solution to all of Virginia's Indian and defense problems. With the passage of the bill he prevented Indians from scouting out isolated settlers by confining tribes to reservations, ended unjust and fraudulent practices in the fur trade by establishing an open market, hence recovering a lucrative business which was almost lost to the colony, reduced the cost of defending the southern frontier by creating an effective buffer zone with the tributaries and Fort Christanna, promoted Christianity among the heathen, and provided for a safe place to store his Majesty's arms and gunpowder, thus preventing their decay and inevitable waste.\textsuperscript{54}

Despite his continued, vigorous defense of the Indian Act, Spotswood occasionally buckled under pressure from his superiors. At one point when the Board of Trade admonished him for supporting such an act, he countered by denying the


bill was his initiative. He claimed fur traders introduced the idea, but this explanation is hardly likely. More plausible is the theory that Spotswood authored the act after taking a lead from one of his predecessors, Governor Francis Nicholson. Indeed Nicholson had tried to pass similar legislation through the Assembly during his administration but failed at every attempt. Spotswood succeeded but only temporarily.

For a while, after the repeal of the Indian Act, most of the problems that expedited its passage in 1714 were under control. The fur trading business was greatly improved by the implementation of fair trading practices, and trading continued, although at a diminished rate. Virginians lived in relative peace with their tributary neighbors, and the French never invaded the colony. It is ironic that the Indian Act worked so well and solved so many of the problems that had inspired its creation that it actually contributed to its own demise.\(^{55}\)

Even with the Indian Act's repeal, Spotswood refused to abandon his defense policy. The Virginia Indian company disbanded, yet Fort Christanna continued to operate as a safe haven for the tributaries into the 1720's. In 1722, at an Indian Council meeting in Albany, Spotswood estimated that

about three hundred members of five different petty nations lived at the fort. Almost nothing can be found in colonial records to explain what happened to them afterwards. A few ended up as slaves, or dispersed themselves throughout the local population, or moved away.\textsuperscript{56} But until 1722 when Spotswood left office, the Indians remained an important factor in his colonial defense strategy.\textsuperscript{57}

Spotswood never forgot how the fur trade flourished under the Indian Act and became an integral part of maintaining friendly relations with the tributary tribes. Later during his administration, Spotswood considered expanding the enterprise west of the Appalachian Mountains. It was exhausted to the east but to the west it held great promise. The hope of reclaiming Virginia's lost Indian trade became one of Spotswood's incentives for encouraging westward migration. The way would not be easy, but Spotswood planned to push through the mountains and establish partnerships with friendly western Indians. By going through the mountains, rather than south and around them, Virginia traders could avoid South Carolina's formidable back country wilderness, competition from southern traders, and South Carolina's mandatory

\textsuperscript{56}Nicholls, "Origins," p. 16.

licensing fee and duties on furs. To Spotswood the future of the Indian trade lay to the west, so he set his hopes on frontier expansion.

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"The economic prosperity of Virginia depended upon one staple product, tobacco."¹ At the outset of Spotswood's administration a reduction in Europe's demand of tobacco contributed significantly to a downturn in the economy. Virginia had found a market for low grade tobacco in France and Spain where it was used in making snuff, a commodity enjoying considerable popularity at this time. Still, Britain served as Virginia's main purchaser of tobacco, and in 1710 she was at war. The War of Spanish Succession, also known as Queen Anne's War, raged in Europe thereby limiting the continent's access to the commodity. Foreign ports, especially those in France and Spain, were closed to British merchants who formerly reexported Virginia's tobacco. The British attempted to continue the trade during the war, but because of economic and political conditions it was "imperative that British tobacco be available for the continental market at as low a price as possible."² Low prices and equally low demand in Britain discouraged production.

Moreover Spotswood added to his list of woes that fighting in America detracted form tobacco planting as Virginians

¹Dodson, Spotswood, p.39.
traveled south to aid North Carolina in the war with the Tuscarora Indians. These problems were not at all new, for production had declined in the previous century as well. Tobacco production increased one thousand percent between 1625 and 1675. By 1700 it had slowed to "a mere doubling" and had become relatively stagnant. Despite the poor state of Virginia's tobacco economy, British merchants continued to grant planters credit against future crops. As a result Virginia became the wealthiest, yet most indebted, colony in North America. As tobacco production decreased, slave importation dropped, no one sought new land grants, and the Crown lost tremendous amounts of revenue. Economic progress in Virginia came to a virtual halt.

Some of Virginia's economic woes remained far beyond its control. Every year the competition commanded a larger share of the international market. Virginia's main rival in America was her neighbor Maryland, and together they thoroughly saturated the British market. Abroad, Holland exported millions of tons of tobacco annually, mostly to Baltic countries, but the French consumed Dutch as well as Virginia tobacco.

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5 Ibid., pp. 203-204.
6 Dodson, *Spotswood*, pp. 40-42.
Despite Britain's wartime encouragement of trade, she inhibited it by the imposition of taxes. Ordinarily the Crown collected an import duty of six and one-third pence per pound of tobacco. To allow merchants time for raising cash for payment, it suspended collection for eighteen months after importation until the importers could reexport and sell their stock on the continent. If they accomplished this, the Crown rewarded them by canceling almost all of the bond by debenture and collected the difference of a mere halfpenny a pound.

In 1711, however, Britain suffered from loss of revenue at a low point in the tobacco trade. The government then demanded full payment of duties immediately upon arrival of shipments, thus forcing merchants to dump the commodity on the Holland market, selling at any price to secure cash for duties. This practice led inexorably to a sharp drop in prices as supply grossly exceeded demand. Low tobacco prices and high duties adversely affected Virginia's tobacco production; planters turned to manufacturing to supplement their incomes. Colonial manufacturing hurt English merchants. Eventually everyone found a measure of relief. After the Board of Trade discovered that thousands of hogsheads of tobacco sold for less than their customs duties, they reinstated the traditional eighteen month grace period for payment of duties. The whole episode proved to Spotswood that Virginia's economy, based on tobacco, was highly vulnerable to depression as the result of British policies and shifts in the
European market. To his dismay—although not his surprise—the tobacco market remained stagnant for a year following the end of war in Europe in 1713 because other British regulations stifled the renewal of trade.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 28-29, 43-45; Billings, et al., A History, p. 180.}

Another factor affecting the economy fell within Virginia's control. Throughout Spotswood's administration pirates sailed the western Atlantic preying on Spanish, French, and British commercial vessels. At one point Spotswood reported that Edward Teach, known as "Blackbeard," had "virtually ended trade off the Virginia coast."\footnote{Billings, A History, et al., p. 176.} In November of 1718, Spotswood took charge and organized an expedition led by Lieutenant Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy. Maynard captured Blackbeard in North Carolina at Ocracoke Sound, beheaded him, and returned to Williamsburg with fifteen captives, thirteen of whom the courts convicted and condemned to execution, Two others received pardons. Blackbeard's capture marked the end of piracy's most perilous day, but Spotswood continued to battle with sea robbers for the next four years.\footnote{Ibid.}

After Blackbeard's death Virginia resumed shipping activities. Throughout Spotswood's administration tobacco remained the colony's primary export. Other economic
interests included the Indian fur trade, limited production of naval stores, and small scale production of pig iron at Spotswood's Germanna ironworks. Virginians also planted Indian corn for export, but successive years of drought forced the General Assembly to place an embargo on the crop, and there was no surplus to be sold. Virginia relied almost exclusively on tobacco exports to finance the importation of British goods.\textsuperscript{10} Because the colony used tobacco as legal tender, its depreciation during depressions caused a decrease in the standard of living as Virginia's buying power diminished. To rectify the situation planters readily produced large quantities of poor grade tobacco because, as currency, its worth was measured in weight, not quality. Virginia flooded the international market with "trash tobacco," thus exacerbating difficulties with low demand and prices.\textsuperscript{11}

Once again Spotswood endeavored to take charge of a deteriorating situation and introduced a bill, the Tobacco Act, which the General Assembly passed in December 1713. The act imposed regulations on the collection of debts in crops that would "improve and standardize the quality of tobacco as a medium of exchange and rid the country of trash tobacco."\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, p. 66.


\textsuperscript{12}Morton, \textit{Colonial Virginia}, vol. 2, pp. 423.
After passage of the bill planters took all tobacco to warehouses, built at locations convenient for shipping, where special agents inspected it, certified all that was of sufficient quality and destroyed the rest. Agents then stamped tobacco to identify its species. High grade quantities were acceptable as payment for debts, public and private, or held it in storage until planters arranged for exportation. Inspections ended all fraud in debt payments by destroying poor quality tobacco. With quality ensured, demand and prices were expected to rise as Virginia exported limited amounts of premium tobacco. Spotswood claimed full responsibility for authorship of the act and called it one of the most important pieces of legislation ever passed through the Assembly.13

The act also led to increased quitrent revenues. In a letter to London on May 27, 1715, Spotswood proudly claimed that as a result of his new scheme for collection of quitrents, one third of the number of acres, for which quitrents had been collected so far, already yielded a higher revenue than the total of annual returns for several years past.14 Spotswood clearly had the Crown's best interest at heart when he invented this stratagem, but unfortunately its impact on specie short Virginia planters led to a quick repeal.

The General Assembly represented tobacco planters, wealthy and poor, and soon after the passage of the Tobacco Act, they voiced their fears of increased costs in exportation. Worse, the act rendered a large percentage of each crop worthless as legal tender. Small farmers who raised tobacco on overworked land found it increasingly difficult to produce high grade crops. As a result, they continued to harvest low grade tobacco, some of which "slipped through" inspection and ended up on the European market. Not surprisingly, the Assembly called for a repeal of the Tobacco Act. It appointed Byrd to argue on its behalf in London. To the Assembly's great fortune, Byrd found many influential merchants who also objected to the bill for fear that it would reduce their profits from the sale of snuff and goods to tobacco planters. Byrd and the merchants formed an alliance that effectively pleaded for the annulment of the Tobacco Act. For the very same reason the Board of Trade disallowed the Indian Act, it demanded the repeal of the Tobacco Act: it had monopolistic features. Spotswood lost the two bills which served as the foundation of his economic recovery policy. The General Assembly thwarted his most successful and effective projects. Spotswood defended his legislation and pointed to the increase in quitrents, but the Board's decision was final; the act unfairly restrained trade.

In retrospect, the act may not have been as successful as Spotswood believed. With the evidence of low quality tobacco
arriving at British ports, the Board decided that Byrd and the merchants presented a stronger case for repeal than Spotswood did for retention. One of the provisions of the act demanded government repossession of land for failure to pay quitrents, but a careful study of land patents revealed to the governor that not one grant lapsed for this reason. Councilors, as judges for the Courts of Oyer and Terminer, rendered the mandate impotent. Spotswood's scheme to revitalize Virginia's tobacco economy lay in ruins.\textsuperscript{15}

Despite testimony by Byrd and the merchants to the contrary, the Tobacco Act had helped to revive the trade even if it had not cured it of all its problems. The quality of Virginia's tobacco improved, and limited exportation over several years combined with an increased demand for premium supplies resulted in higher prices by the middle of the decade. The rise in tobacco's value encouraged greater production, and Virginia's economy rebounded.\textsuperscript{16}

Later in his tenure, Spotswood relied on a strong tobacco economy to entice settlers westward to new, fertile land. He subsequently revised his strategy and encouraged planters to increase production by expanding the tobacco culture into the Piedmont for their benefit as well as the government's.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 267; Billings, et al., \textit{A History}, p. 185; Morton, \textit{Colonial Virginia}, vol. 2, p. 422.

When Britain founded Virginia in the seventeenth century, the government functioned for the benefit of the economy, not the economy for the government.\textsuperscript{17} As the years passed and more people settled Virginia, this relationship achieved a precarious balance as the government relied on the strength of its economy to supply revenues for all official expenditures. In 1705, historian Robert Beverly listed "The Standing Revenues or Public Funds in Virginia."\textsuperscript{18} He mentioned five: an annual rent on lands, called a quitrent; two shillings per hogshead on tobacco for maintaining the government; a duty of four pence per gallon on wine, rum, and brandy, one pence per gallon on beer, cider, and other liquors; and fifteen shillings on each servant imported "not being a native of England or Whales."\textsuperscript{19} Twenty shillings for each imported slave or negro went to the Assembly; a duty of one penny per pound of tobacco exported, but not directly to England, went to the Crown.\textsuperscript{20} Twelve years later Spotswood added these taxes: fifteen pence per ton on all ships trading in Virginia, unless owned by Virginians, six pence per head for every person brought to the colony, additional fines imposed for breach of some penal laws, and five shillings for the right to take up fifty acres of land without importing people

\textsuperscript{17}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{18}Beverly, \textit{History}, p. 249.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 250.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., pp. 249-251.
for the purpose of settlement. Spotswood relied on most of these receipts to finance his reforms, especially following the repeal of the Tobacco Act which had supplied him with revenue from tobacco inspections.

Spotswood was a dutiful royal appointee. He consistently looked after Britain's interests in financial affairs including those in Virginia. Spotswood's authorship of the Tobacco Act reveals his devotion to the Crown, for it was aimed at "preventing frauds in Tobacco payments" of quitrents. In 1715 Spotswood wrote that there must have been fraudulent practices in the payment of taxes before the Tobacco Act's passage. After the act's passage quitrents rose even though production of Tobacco dropped resulting in fewer requests for land patents. Moreover Spotswood hoped that as the act eventually improved the economy, farmers would take up more land, buy more slaves or servants, export more tobacco, and create a greater need for shipping. An expanded economy would increase government revenues. Yet the act controlled tobacco only, and because customs duties on the crop were based on volume, the Board resisted limitations on production. When it repealed the act in 1717, Spotswood lamented; the

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22Dodson, Spotswood, p. 52.
repeal affected for many of his other projects which relied on funding from taxes, including quitrents.23

On December 17, 1714, the General Assembly requested Spotswood's support of a petition to the King asking for the right to collect and keep quitrents in the colony. A decrease in tobacco production and, therefore, revenues resulted in a provincial government debt that Virginia could not meet without relief. Although Spotswood agreed that Virginia needed supplemental aid, especially during an emergency, he preferred a one-time allowance from the quitrent fund for this purpose.24 If the Crown retained the right to collect and dispense this revenue, Spotswood might persuade the Board of Trade to finance some of his special projects such as the education of Indian children at Fort Christanna and strengthening the militia, but if the General Assembly controlled quitrent revenues he could never secure funding for anything of the sort. Spotswood expressed his opinion in a letter to the Board, and subsequently quitrent collection and dispersal of revenue therefrom remained under the Crown's control. Over the next few years the General Assembly made several more requests for succor from quitrents but never


24Spotswood mentioned one such emergency as being that of Bacon's Rebellion. If the government had more money on hand at the time to pay for arms, supplies, and troops, perhaps the rebellion never would have gotten out of control. Spotswood, Letters, vol. 2, p. 116.
gained collection rights. It is ironic that this legislative body turned to the quitrent fund in times of economic hardship after fighting to avoid payment of the tax on all patented lands. Perhaps Spotswood understood this irony when he suggested a continuance and raising of duties on liquor and slaves as an alternative.  

Hard times lay ahead. With the repeal of the Tobacco Act came the return of fraudulent activity and a drop in payment of quitrents. More important to Spotswood, less revenue meant less money for reform initiatives. His major objectives as governor were to improve Indian relations and the economy, defend the colony, and to encourage westward expansion. All plans for realizing these goals required subsidies from government taxes that proved higher when the colony prospered. Because Spotswood received royal dispensations, some of which came from quitrents, he promoted the taking up of land to enrich this fund. Quitrent collection policies had heretofore reflected the Crown's tendency to ask for taxes first and worry about the progress grants later. The Crown's granting of land was "inseparably bound up with public revenue," but floundered with the "problems of frontier trade, protection and expansion." As Spotswood moved forward with

25 Ibid., pp. 92, 97, 101-102, 116-117, 270; Palmer, Calendar, pp. 177-178.


reform plans he continued to rely on government revenues. Therefore he felt compelled to do everything in his power to enhance Virginia's economic progress.

The year 1718 found Virginia's governor in despair. Angry and frustrated, he reconsidered the loss of his designs for Virginia's economic growth, the Tobacco and Indian Acts. Out of all the legislation passed during Spotswood's early years, these two had the most obvious effect on the colony's economy. Spotswood made all his plans believing that these two laws would remain in force throughout his tenure. After their repeal, Spotswood changed his strategies for economic reform out of necessity. As time passed Spotswood grew more interested in financial gains to be found through westward expansion. Unexploited resources awaited anyone who would move west and possess them. Furs, mineral wealth, forests, and virgin soil offered new opportunities to those who were dismayed at their exhaustion in the east. And Spotswood hoped to lead Virginians out to take what belonged to them.28

For several years the governor had dreamed of expanding the fur trade south and west, but the Blue Ridge and Alleghanies stood as barriers to movement. Unless Virginia traders could pass through the mountains they would be forced to trek through South Carolina's back country and pass around the southern end of the Appalachian chain. The added distance increased traders' expenses and aggravation, thereby

28 Dodson, Spotswood, pp. 236-237.
inhibiting expansion. This inhibition was unfortunate because by far the greatest potential for profit lay in reaching friendly Indians beyond the mountains.\textsuperscript{29}

There was another element to the fur trade: the French. For a hundred years the British had enjoyed a relatively lucrative partnership with the Indians as the British were able to "more plentifully" supply tribes with goods than the French. But the hundred year old trading partnership was coming to an end. To the east, traders in South Carolina had practically "abandoned y't Trade," and Virginia traders were soon to follow their lead. Low prices for skins coupled with high duties hastened the process. Spotswood feared that if the British did not quickly resume a high volume of trade with the Indians, it would be lost forever as the French were in a position to "win over" the enterprise.\textsuperscript{30} Once established the French could become political and economic rivals with the British, fighting over territory and trade.\textsuperscript{31}

Virginia's economic security was not limited to the fur trade. "Unquestionably the greatest attraction of the west lay in its unexploited land suitable for growing tobacco."\textsuperscript{32} As the French moved farther into the interior accumulating more land for possible tobacco production, Spotswood realized

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., pp. 80, 237.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 241.


\textsuperscript{32} Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, p. 227.
their presence in North America could devastate British trade, and Britain could lose her chance to claim all wealth from the frontier for herself. As Virginia colonists migrated and purchased new farms, tobacco production rose as did quitrents. The combination of increased production with a strong demand at international markets convinced Spotswood that the key to a flourishing economy lay in planting tobacco in the west. Under his tutelage westward migration and tobacco planting spread to the Piedmont and Southside.\textsuperscript{33}

During the first four years of his administration, Spotswood watched Virginians struggle with economic depression. Midway through the decade the situation improved, mostly due to peace and partially due to Spotswood's policies. Although he favored economic reform, prosperity actually turned upon the restoration of peace in Europe with the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the eventual reestablishment of an open, international trade.\textsuperscript{34} Spotswood's true merit lay in the fact that he recognized the opportunity and capitalized on it for Virginia and the Crown.


\textsuperscript{34} Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, pp. 68-69.
CHAPTER IV
WESTWARD EXPANSION

During the first half of Spotswood's administration he concentrated on defending Virginia as far west as the Blue Ridge Mountains. His Indian and defense policies recognized the dangers of potential war with hostile tribes to the north, south, and west and also with the French or Spanish, should the Carolinas fall into their hands. To secure the colony's borders he ordered the construction of two forts, one to the north and one in the south. He recruited Germans and friendly Indians as patrolling rangers, thereby creating buffer zones which shielded the east from attack. And although he repeatedly referred to western defense, he meant the unsettled stretches west of the Tidewater, the northern Piedmont and Southside country. To his relief, the mountains served as a natural barrier against western invasion.

In 1716, when Spotswood first learned of a mountain pass in the northern Piedmont, his perspective changed. To the west, the French settled more territory every year, and as England's rivals and frequent enemies they threatened British supremacy on the continent. Suddenly the French were in a perfect position to dominate the fur trade, form Indian alliances, perhaps even control tobacco production and its market, and eventually conquer all British plantations.

After Spotswood had received the edict disallowing the Indian Act in 1718, his western defense system disintegrated.
Furious, disgusted, and incredulous that no one understood the imminent danger British colonists faced, he appealed to the General Assembly and Board of Trade to forestall a crisis. Finally in 1720 they listened, but for two years Spotswood received only moral support from the Board and indignant rebukes from the assembly. These were difficult years, for the governor tirelessly campaigned against all opposition for a new solution: to secure Virginia's frontier east and west of the Appalachian Mountains by encouraging the rapid expansion of white settlement.

Virginia experienced rapid population growth during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1720, 25,099 tithables, that is, all males and unfree females sixteen years old and above, lived in the colony. Twenty-two years later the population showed a seventy-five percent increase, with a total of 43,077 tithables. South of the James the population increased one hundred and fifty percent, as new settlers moved into Prince George County and its surrounding territory. The northern Piedmont's population almost doubled.¹

By 1710 white settlements already extended northwest well beyond the fall line. Thus Spotswood's idea of westward expansion was hardly novel. Although many colonists remained

in eastern counties, as the population expanded, some chose to move west and build their futures on the frontier. But Virginians recognized in the Blue Ridge Mountains a natural border that checked migration past the Piedmont.

According to Spotswood, as people migrated they took with them all the characteristics and forcefulness of their personalities. Spotswood described them as "redemptioners" who had served their time and moved to the frontier where they reveled in "debauching and cheating the Indians." To the governor these settlers were an embarrassment. Perhaps he took comfort in their inclinations to move north and west rather than south and west to live among the tributary Indians.²

Virginia's frontier south of the James River remained sparsely populated throughout Spotswood's administration. When he visited the newly established Fort Christanna with John Fontaine, Fontaine noted the lack of white habitation. On the evening after he and Spotswood left the capital, they spent the night with a man named "Mr. Hicks." Mr. Hicks' house was "the most outward settlement on this side of Virginia which is the south side." Fontaine estimated its distance from Williamsburg to be about sixty-five miles. The next morning when he and the governor started for Fort Christanna, he remarked "We have no roads here to conduct us,

nor inhabitants to direct the traveller." They relied on Indian guides to find their way, riding almost one hundred miles into the interior.³

In the northern Piedmont Spotswood found more encouragement in the successful establishment of a mining village. A group of Swiss and German miners, artisans, and their families, approximately forty in all, settled as tenants on a 1,287 acre tract of land located on the Rappahannock River at Spotswood's invitation in 1714. The governor owned the land and mine, so he had a personal interest in its operation. He named the community Germanna, after its inhabitants, and kept it functioning throughout his life. In 1714 one of his primary reasons for inviting the immigrants to live in the Piedmont was to form a defensive buffer against hostile northern Indians. He made rangers of the Germans, and they patrolled the area near Germanna. Spotswood provided them with a fort and two cannons to aid in defense. Clearly the Germans performed their duties very well, for Spotswood hoped

the kind treatment they have found here will invite more of the same Nation to transport themselves to this Colony, w'ch wants only industrious people to make it a flourishing Country.⁴

He approved of their character and ability and rewarded them later with an exemption form paying tithes. Because the


Germans worked his iron mine he clearly had a personal motive for keeping them happy.\(^5\)

Spotswood had no such interest in the Southside, but although he never invested personally in the region as he had in the Piedmont, he recognized its potential for farming. On his trip to Fort Christanna with Fontaine, he helped his friend choose a three thousand acre plot for future development. Pleased with his new piece of real estate, Fontaine described it as one of "several fine tracts of land, well watered and good places to make mills on."\(^6\) Soon afterwards people began moving into the region near the fort, attracted by its fertile soil.\(^7\)

With so much land for the taking and so many opportunities to make it productive, Spotswood naturally turned his attention to the north and southwest. The discovery of a northern pass through the Blue Ridge Mountains by rangers in 1716 sparked his imagination and curiosity. After the governor and Fontaine returned from Fort Christanna later that year, Spotswood organized a second trip to the frontier, but this would be a longer expedition northward.\(^8\)

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\(^6\)Fontaine, *Journal*, p. 95.

\(^7\)Dodson, *Spotswood*, p. 85.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 238; *EJCC*, vol. 3, p. 428; Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, vol. 2, pp. 446-448.
Spotswood's "romantic journey" symbolized Virginia's expansion into the Piedmont. On August 20, he set out on his journey with Fontaine, at least four surveyors, fourteen rangers and guides, and some shrewd land speculators; they reached Germanna by August 29. The governor intended to explore the mountains, make military assessments regarding fortification of the pass and Virginia's territory beyond, and find suitable places for new settlements. The weather was fair and the company in good spirits. The party followed the Rapidan River and reached Swift Run Gap. When the adventurers believed that they were at the highest point they carved the king's name in a rock and named the mountain for George I. The expedition force then followed Spotswood into the Shenandoah Valley where they took the land in the king's name, celebrated with a dinner, and drank toasts in honor of King George I and the royal family. Then the majority of the party returned to Germanna leaving several rangers behind to explore.

Upon their return, Spotswood presented each of his companions with an honorarium, a golden horseshoe inscribed with "Sic juvant transcendre montes," on one side and the transmontane order on the other. Spotswood made the presentation to encourage each recipient to "venture backwards, and make discoveries and new settlements." He chose horseshoes as a symbol of the expedition's achievement because the horses used on the expedition required an
unusually high number of shoes and were shod at Germanna. Thus Spotswood and his companions are known as the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe.⁹

Above all else, Spotswood wanted to determine whether or not the Great Lakes could be reached with relative ease. When he discovered that they could, he thereafter thought of the mountain pass as a gateway to the endless stretches of land reaching north and west to the Great Lakes. And all of it lay within his domain as long as he claimed it for the British before the French claimed it for themselves.

With increasing alacrity, the French fortified strategic positions of defense along the Saint Lawrence River and south to the Gulf Of Mexico. Spotswood witnessed the events with increasing alarm. Well established in Louisiana since 1699, French forces controlled the Mississippi River and the Gulf. They strengthened their hold with two settlements in the Illinois country by 1700, Detroit on Lake Huron by 1701, Mobile on the Gulf by 1710, and New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi by 1718, only two years after Spotswood first glimpsed Virginia's northwestern territory from the Blue Ridge Mountains.¹⁰

As long as any pass remained open and unguarded the mountains would no longer serve to stave off attacks from the

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west. The French could march eastward, fortify the pass, and trap English colonists between them and the sea. This scenario terrified Spotswood, and to his horror the possibility of a French invasion doubled when he learned of a second pass through the mountains at the headwaters of the Staunton River running through the Southside.\textsuperscript{11} His immediate concern for the safety of Virginia prompted him to take action.

Spotswood studied his position. As a governor with a military background he assumed responsibility for planning Virginia's military strategy. In 1716 his defenses relied on an unorganized militia, theoretically consisting of between fourteen thousand and fifteen thousand men and boys of serviceable age; a corps of reluctant, voluntary commanding officers, of whom not one had any formal training, and two fortified outposts staffed with a mixture of British, German, and Indian rangers. These outposts would become the first battlegrounds in case of war. One of them, Fort Christanna, was home to about three hundred tributary Indians including the hostage children of several tribes who entrusted Spotswood with their care and safety, a moral obligation he did not take lightly. Although he erected forts and formed the communities to thwart invasion, a full scale assault from the French could easily destroy them, throwing the brunt of defense on the militia. For years Spotswood pleaded with

\textsuperscript{11}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, p. 245.
assemblymen to adopt reforms ensuing the proper raising, training, and equipping of troops, and because of the expense, every year the Assembly refused. To his dismay the burgesses responded to one such request saying they would prefer to wait for a crisis before changing laws. The crisis was evident only to Spotswood, who concluded that Virginia's future looked bleak unless he could avert any and all French attacks.\textsuperscript{12}

Not only did Spotswood fear French invasion from the west, but the French might easily traverse Carolina's back country and advance from the south. North Carolina had barely recovered from its war with the Tuscaroras. In 1716 South Carolinians huddled near the coast, terrorized by the Yamasee. Neither would withstand a French siege in their beleaguered conditions. Thus Spotswood considered the problem of halting French encroachment as far south as Florida. In a letter to the Board of Trade on February 1, 1720, he suggested attacking St. Mark's. From this point British forces could control all sea traffic through the Gulf of Mexico and "forme a Settlement to check that of y't Mississippi."\textsuperscript{13}

For the time being, Spotswood concentrated on the French threat closer to home. In response to a request from the Board of Trade for a summary of the French presence in North

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., pp. 202-205; Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, pp. 70, 140.

America, he stated in no uncertain terms that they were taking control of the Great Lakes. It would be to Britain's advantage, he said, to establish forts in that area which could not be "above five days March from the pass," thereby breaking communications between French enclaves to the north in Quebec and south in New Orleans. From fortified positions on the Lakes, the French connected their settlements in Canada and along the Saint Lawrence River to those along the Mississippi. Spotswood explained the "British Plantations are in a manner Surrounded." If the British allowed the French to multiply their establishments around the Great Lakes, on Virginia's own territory, and strengthen a line of defense, "they might even possess themselves of any of these (British) Plantations they pleased." The situation demanded swift action.\(^1\)

Never at a loss for ideas, Spotswood advised the Crown to allow construction of forts at the passes and on the lakes to prevent a French take-over in Virginia. In this way he could secure the colony's western frontier, and the mountains would once again serve as a protective barrier. With these forts as safeguards against invasion, Virginia could open up the Piedmont and Southside for settlement, "a vast rich country westward ... some hundred miles from the sea quite to the mountains."\(^2\) These settlements would strengthen the British

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp. 295-297.

\(^{15}\)Jones, *Present State*, p. 58.
defense of Virginia while promoting trade through expansion. Beyond the Appalachian Mountains, forts on the Great Lakes would secure the colony's traditional claim to the region, for Britain included in Virginia's charter much of the lake area long before the French moved in. Spotswood appealed to the "Law of Nations giving a Title to the first Occupant." The west rightfully belonged to Virginia and the British Crown. Spotswood's first step toward claiming it for the British would be to secure the mountain passes.\textsuperscript{16}

During the seventeenth century Virginians had developed a thriving business with neighboring Indians, and in Spotswood's time, the memory of its prosperity remained strong. By offering a steady stream of British goods in exchange for furs, British traders created a long-lasting partnership with the natives. By 1720 they could no longer rely on the Indians' fidelity in trade. The French had already begun trading with tribes close to the great Cherokee nation. If they succeeded in procuring an exclusive trade agreement with the Cherokee, the business would die out in South Carolina, and since mutually beneficial trade arrangements led to political alliances, the Cherokee might side with the French against the British. This alliance would endanger Virginia, for the Cherokee were the "nearest and most

considerable Body of Indians" to its southern border.\textsuperscript{17} Thus
the British courted the Indians favor as the situation grew
more dangerous in North America while the French mounted a new
colonizing effort. In a letter to Spotswood, the Board of
Trade expressed its concern over French "encirclement" of
British colonies. The Board realized the danger involved in
allowing a French-Indian fur trade to continue, and intimated
that the French, with Indian assistance, might "drive the
British out of North America."\textsuperscript{18}

Unfortunately for Spotswood, his Indian policy crumbled
upon revocation of the Indian Act. He sent word to London in
1719 that from the time of Fort Christanna's construction
until the dissolution of the Virginia Indian Company, the
colony enjoyed a peaceful existence without a single alarm
within its borders. Since then certain tribes had disturbed
the peace, for the governor complained "now the Northern
Indians and Tuscaroras begin again their usual Incursions."
That same year, Indians murdered a colonist on his plantation
in the northern Piedmont. With the return of tension and
violence between Virginians and natives, a French-Indian
alliance seemed inevitable.\textsuperscript{19}

Following the abandonment of Fort Christanna, Spotswood
found it equally difficult to protect Indian allies from their

\textsuperscript{17}Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, p. 331.
\textsuperscript{18}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, pp. 82, 101, 140.
\textsuperscript{19}Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, p. 302.
enemies to the north. The redoubtable Iroquois Five Nations in New York threatened to invade Virginia and attack the tributaries. In 1718 when Spotswood informed the Assembly they faced a frightening situation on the frontier, his lurid portrayal of the crises was "heard with indifference."\textsuperscript{20} Despite the Assembly's lack of support, Spotswood successfully negotiated a preliminary treaty with the Five Nations who agreed to roam only north of the Potomac River and west of the Alleghanies, while the tributaries would remain within these boundaries.\textsuperscript{21}

Despite threats of Indian warfare, by 1700 westward expansion of the tobacco culture was assured and fixed. Rivers draining the colony's frontier provided access to the interior which was necessary for the transportation of the crop to markets on the coast. For this reason tobacco planters moved into the Piedmont where they found river travel conducive to their business. Because the Southside's rivers flowed into Albamarle Sound rather than the Chesapeake Bay, they could not be used as waterways to Virginia markets. The rivers were also unnavigable beyond the fall line which hindered water travel within the Southside itself. Thus Southside settlement lagged behind that of the Piedmont. Nevertheless, a few planters ventured into the region and by

\textsuperscript{20}Dodson, \textit{Spotswood}, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 104, 237.
1716 had reached the area surrounding Fort Christanna where they farmed the favorite staple.\textsuperscript{22}

Fertile land enticed settlers westward. In 1717 Spotswood wrote the Board of Trade that an improvement in the European tobacco market had a wonderful influence on Virginia's production. While demand for the crop rose planters would purchase more servants or slaves and "take up more land to Work upon," for tobacco was "more plentifully produced on new Ground than old." As higher prices and demand induced tobacco growers to expand and search for larger plantation with rich soil, planters moved west wherever they found suitable land.\textsuperscript{23}

Spotswood's news of westward expansion and increased production of tobacco filled the board of trade with visions of great revenues from taxes on slaves, land, and tobacco exports. The governor proudly informed the Board in 1720 that higher revenues signified the thriving Condition of the Country," for "when so much Tobacco is Exported and such great Quantities of new Land (are) taken up for Cultivation" the economy flourishes and the government reaps the benefits.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{24}Spotswood, \textit{Letters}, vol. 2, pp. 294, 340.
Colonists and the Crown alike would continue to profit from the raising of tobacco if they maintained their primacy as North American producers and found favorable markets in Europe. Spotswood realized their position could change. He clearly understood the advantage British colonists had in supplying the French with enormous quantities of tobacco every year; the situation was ideal. But if the French expanded their possessions in North America they could readily grow all their own provisions and even meet much of Europe's demands by selling surpluses raised on the fertile Mississippi plain. If allowed to produce so much tobacco, the French might surpass the British and become "Rivals in Trade in all foreign Mark'ts," resulting in a decrease of British navigation as exports from the colonies diminished. Since the Crown relied on revenues from tobacco and shipping to support itself, a large reduction in tobacco exports from America could damage England's tax base.

If the French dominated the international market, Virginia planters, and perhaps the colony itself, would go bankrupt. Virginia's survival depended on sales of its staple crop. Spotswood desperately needed to protect the colony's interests by securing tobacco land for its inhabitants by enlarging the colony's sphere of production with its frontier. A westward move would also enable Virginians to diversify for "resources of peltry, of mineral wealth, and of forests invited exploitation." Combined with virgin soil, these
treasures beckoned settlers to the interior. To prevent the French from usurping the benefits thereof "the English needed only to move west and take possession."  

Without a doubt, Virginia colonists would move west given enough incentive, provided they could purchase land. Obviously the first requirement of purchase was to have sufficient cash or tobacco to pay for it. But requirements did not end there. Since the beginning of Virginia's colonization, prospective land owners despaired over obstacles the government placed in their way. During Spotswood's administration the Board of Trade and General Assembly removed some restrictions on land grants but not until after Spotswood made many enemies by strictly adhering to and enforcing royal policy.

The governor's superiors in Britain wished to populate Virginia's frontier just as he did. For ten years Spotswood agreed with the Crown's policy of encouraging gradual, orderly expansion. The Board wished to distribute land evenly, primarily among small farmers who would work it, make it produce, and pay taxes on their farms and tobacco. The Board discouraged sales of large tracts to land speculators because the Board believed that by purchasing and keeping land until able to resell at a higher price, speculators inhibited

settlement. If the Crown allowed these men to purchase all they wanted, small farmers would be forced to pay any price asked for any land a speculator chose to sell. For this reason the Board and Spotswood disdained speculation.\textsuperscript{26}

For some colonists, available land offered an opportunity to earn a fortune through speculation, but to many it offered the greatest incentive for migration. The government, in an attempt to increase Virginia's population, restricted land sales to those who brought settlers to the colony or paid an importation tax in its place. The law allowed anyone who chose to pay the importation fee no more than five hundred acres of land through purchase. Prospective owners could also consider buying up to fifty acres under "pretext of importation." Eventually the Crown realized that requiring land buyers to import more people or pay fines proved too inconvenient and actually deterred expansion, but for decades they enforced this policy in good faith.\textsuperscript{27}

Virginia colonists could purchase land almost anywhere they chose. One exception was the area that lay beyond the Blackwater River. Until 1714 the government forbade purchase of land west of this boundary to prevent settlement in the

\textsuperscript{26}Nicholls, "Origins," pp. 56, 73-77; Billings, et al., A History, p. 134.

southwest before Virginia and North Carolina agreed to run a
line dividing their two colonies. For the first four years of
Spotswood's tenure, until the construction of Fort Christanna,
the Crown allowed no one to move into the region he
desperately wanted to populate and defend. Understandably,
growth of the Southside lagged behind that of the northern
Piedmont. Finally the Crown gave way to mounting pressure
from those who wished to open the area. In a bill entitled "A
Proclamation enlarging the liberty of taking up land on the
Southwest Frontiers of this Government" it granted Virginians
the right to migrate to the Southside beyond the Blackwater.\textsuperscript{28}

Spotswood believed that once allowed past the Blackwater,
planters were certain to purchase land to the southwest. Land
sales in the area dragged because people feared that if they
paid Virginia for farms near the border that actually belonged
to North Carolina, they might later have to purchase it again
from North Carolina. In 1714 Spotswood despaired over finding
several farmers living north of the Nottoway River who had
only North Carolina land grants. Without a distinct, permanent
separation of the colonies, investing in tracts near the contested border proved too risky, and no one could be
assured of clear title to land.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28}Nicholls, "Origins," p. 58; \textbf{EJCC}, vol. 3, pp. 582, 599.

\textsuperscript{29}Nicholls, "Origins," p. 209; Spotswood, \textbf{Letters}, vol.
2, p. 72.
The border line dispute grew increasingly tiresome and aggravating. It appeared to Spotswood that the lack of an official boundary discouraged the settlement of respectable planters while attracting scurrilous, dishonest people of the meanest sort who owed "obedience to ye Laws of neither Province." Spotswood wanted settlers in the area, but they had to be orderly, law abiding farmers, not the rebellious riffraff. In 1715 he convinced a new and somewhat reluctant governor, Charles Eden of North Carolina, to agree on a tentative division which ran at 36° 30' North, from Currituck Inlet due west. Despite the agreement, settlers continued to arrive, recognizing no authority but their own. Two years later Spotswood complained it was "impossible to restrain people from seating themselves on Land where they live without either Religion of Government." Later he enthusiastically supported expansion into the Southside, but he planned to give it more structure by providing law and order.

Law and order were imperative. Spotswood needed land tax revenues collected from law abiding citizens who, unlike many of the colony's planters, would pay them without resistance. For ten years he tried to enforce the Crown's policy by collecting taxes of two shillings on every one hundred acres of patented land. He also supported an edict ordering owners to "seat and plant" three out of every fifty acres to prevent

large purchases for speculation only. In 1712 he softened slightly and allowed the passage of a bill that redefined "seating" to better fit the quality of estates; land that was unsuitable for cultivation was not subject to seating and planting regulations. In 1713 he rebounded by securing legislation, in the form of the Tobacco Act, that strengthened the Crown's position by reforming the quitrent collection system. Restrictions on land purchase and use, as well as on tax collection, infuriated wealthy planters who found it increasingly difficult to speculate. Spotswood's stubborn refusal to lighten regulations, in deference to the King at the expense of the gentry, contributed to an adversarial relationship between the governor and the governed.32

Not until 1720 did Spotswood revise his strict interpretation of Britain's land grant policy. That year witnessed a complete reversal of his views, for the governor realized he had to work with and not against the landed gentry and General Assembly in order to pass legislation that would pave the way for future settlement of Virginia's Piedmont and Southside.

After ten years in office Spotswood saw the need for encouraging westward migration and doing so quickly. If he

did not ease the process of taking up new tracts in the west, colonists would simply remain in the east. Spotswood wanted them to take possession of the wilderness and understood he must provide them with an impetus to do so. Therefore he changed his mind and conformed to the gentry's opinion that Virginia should sell land to anyone who could afford the purchase price and with as few restrictions as possible. A relaxation in tax collection would benefit farmers and not speculators alone. And if the government allowed these farmers to seat and plant at a more gradual rate they might be encouraged to purchase new plantations in the west. Finally Spotswood acknowledged that Virginia might lose settlers to North Carolina or Maryland where purchasing restrictions were not as severe.

It is more than coincidental that Spotswood changed his views on land policy when he decided to invest heavily in the northern Piedmont. In 1720 Spotswood announced his intentions of "becoming a Virginian" and spending his life in the colony. By the time he left office he had acquired an estate amounting to more than 85,000 acres on the Rappahannock River. He had joined his adversaries in one of their favorite pursuits, land speculation.33

Spotswood's about face was more the result of a personal "sympathetic understanding" of colonial problems involving land ownership than greed. He also concluded that "further opposition to popular will was futile." Once in 1717 he complained to the Board because people simply refused to pay their quitrents. Within three years he learned that all measures taken to protect the Crown's interests were "against the Grain" and served no other purpose than to "gain a Governor the Ill will of the people." Spotswood could not afford to antagonize Virginians any longer as he endeavored to use them in securing the frontier. He also could not forsake his responsibility in collection all revenue due the King. Therefore he revised his rationale of duty to his sovereign and convinced the Board of Trade that a reformation of tax collection laws would result in the purchase of more new farms, higher tobacco yields, promote internal security, and create fiscal stability.

Spotswood had formulated a new plan to settle the frontier by 1720. He would begin with the area immediately adjacent to Virginia's eastern communities and establish two new counties to cover the territory, one in the northern Piedmont and one on the Southside. A major factor in his plan was the temporary exemption from paying quitrents given to all

new settlers in these counties, thus providing leverage to push them west. To secure the necessary legislation Spotswood submitted to the Assembly's demand for two bills declaring that no land be forfeited for failure to pay quitrents, and land owners would have more freedom in choosing how to improve their plantations. Spotswood now officially supported the Assembly's position that fewer government regulations encouraged and did not inhibit western migration. That year the two bills passed along with the governor's act establishing Spotsylvania and Brunswick Counties.\(^{36}\)

It is all too easy to attribute Spotswood's 1720 compromise on land policy to personal greed. He became a Virginian and just like a "typical Virginian" he turned to land speculation. Seemingly Spotswood deferred to the gentry, betrayed the King, and completely reversed his stance to promote his own interests. He stopped arguing with assemblymen and adopted their views to prove his sincerity in joining their ranks.\(^{37}\) Albeit Spotswood, for the first time, made a concerted effort to please the Assembly, but his ulterior motive cannot be explained by greed alone. He finally realized that Virginia's land grant system was "inseparably bound" to quitrents on one hand and to problems

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of frontier expansion on the other. For Virginia's sake as well as the Crown's, Spotswood had to compromise. He did so by deciding that the "interest of the colony and empire could be made compatible."\textsuperscript{38}

The Piedmont and especially the Southside remained vulnerable to attack from the French. Spotswood's first step in protecting the frontier, to the east and west of the mountains, would be to encourage settlement up to the foothills and secure the passes. Once accomplished, he could then move farther west. For a man hoping to play a "stellar role" in westward expansion, remaining east of the Blue Ridge was an insufferable constraint. Spotswood capitulated and agreed to legislation that reduced the King's revenues temporarily, but in the process he could gain the "conquest of a continent," and do so in King's name.\textsuperscript{39} The General Assembly had not witnessed the birth of a provincial so much as the growth and full fledged development of a true imperialist. Yet Spotswood was not a "visionary idealist."\textsuperscript{40} He scrupulously believed that the process of expansion was just as important as expansion itself. The ends would not always justify the means. He understood that eventually the British would move westward, and the "Indians must give way" before them. But this did not mean the Indians should suffer

\textsuperscript{38}Morton, Colonial Virginia, vol. 2, pp. 422-423.

\textsuperscript{39}Billings, et al., A History, p. 193.

\textsuperscript{40}Dodson, Spotswood, p. 237.
at the hands of the British. The governor consistently treated the Indians with respect, emphasizing the importance of promoting good will and maintaining their confidence. As spotswood's ambitions turned toward settling the western frontier he made provisions whereby the British could accomplish this "without injustice" to the natives.41

Spotswood dreamed of claiming the frontier for Britain. "He was farsighted enough to see, and enough of an empire builder to desire."42 He simply needed to take the first step and soon the North American continent would be Britain's.

41Ibid., p. 110.

42Ibid.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION: SPOTSWOOD'S FINAL STRATEGY

For years Spotswood had promoted and protected the Crown's interests in Virginia. As he led the campaign for western expansion he continued to serve the King. Since it was for England that he strove to conquer a continent, he capitulated to the Virginia gentry and allowed looser land grant restrictions which he hoped would facilitate settlement rather than discourage it.

Spotswood wanted more than just a populated frontier, he wanted to spread the British culture beyond the Appalachian chain. He longed for an orderly progression of industrious farmers who would carry their laws, customs, and religions with them. Spotswood traversed Virginia's wilderness and condemned many of its frontiersmen as immoral and disobedient men and women who lived without religion or government, without respect for proper authority. If the entirety of Virginia's territory were to be preserved in the name of the King, it would only be done by insuring the people's deference to royal authority and that of the church. For this reason, simply giving planters an incentive to take up new land to the
west would not suffice in bringing Spotswood's dream to fruition.¹

The northern Piedmont had already attracted large numbers of immigrants. Population growth was imminent, and its future as a thriving tobacco producing center was enhanced by its location near navigable rivers flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. But the same could not be said for the Southside. Until 1714 the Crown prohibited settlement in the area west of the Blackwater River.² Settlers preferred northern counties while the disputed boundary line with North Carolina endangered Virginians claims to land. In addition tobacco transportation was problematic since rivers ran toward Albemarle Sound. Nevertheless Spotswood remained hopeful. He had a particular interest in the Southside's development as the tributary Indians still considered the area a safe haven, an area where they could live without confrontations with white settlers. In order to keep the peace, the governor promoted orderly expansion into the southwest to prevent the abuse of Indian rights.

Spotswood dreaded a "struggle for supremacy with New France." Although the British "colonies in America had a


great future before them," the lands "towards the high mountains are exposed to dangers from the Indians, and the late settlements of the French to the westward of the said mountains." The British needed formal settlements in the west to ensure its possession.

Spotswood anxiously awaited the session of the General Assembly in the fall of 1720. In April he had reconciled previously hostile burgesses and councilors by promising to advance Virginia's causes as faithfully as the Crown's. That year he also proposed legislation of significant importance: to hasten westward expansion by establishing two new counties, one named Spotsylvania after himself, and one named Brunswick for King George I of England and born the Duke of Braunschweig in Germany. The whole of Spotsylvania would become Saint George Parish, and Brunswick, Saint Andrew. The bill offered anyone purchasing land in either county a ten year exemption from quitrents. Spotsylvania ran between the North Anna and Rappahannock rivers west to include the northern mountain pass, Swift Run Gap. Although the governor was to draw Brunswick's specific borders later at his discretion, the county lay south of the Roanoke River, north of the disputed Virginia-North Carolina border, and west of Isle of Wight and Surry counties and included Rockfish Gap in the south. Thus Brunswick encompassed the entire Southside. The General

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3Hening, Statues, vol. 4, p. 77; Dodson, Spotswood, p. 111.
Assembly established the two counties for the express purpose of encouraging westward expansion and securing the frontier. Breaking from a tradition of erecting counties after settlement to provide inhabitants with accessible local governments, and churches, Virginia created the political and religious institutions in advance for the people to follow.⁴

On the third of December, the House of Burgesses read "An Act for erecting the Counties of Spotsylvania and Brunswick; and granting certain exemptions and benefits to the inhabitants thereof". Following three more readings the House passed the bill and sent it to the council for their consideration. The following week councilors notified the House of the bill's approval with certain amendments and returned it to the burgesses for concurrence. On the sixteenth burgesses read and accepted the bill with all but one amendment intact. They refused the provision to exempt foreign Protestants from paying tithes for ten years on the basis that they could not understand English and had to support their own ministers. The clause became a bone of contention between the two chambers; the Council's insistence on granting the exemption resulted in a deadlock with the House. On December 23, Spotswood grew impatient and called

the burgesses into the Council's chambers whereupon he consented to the bill as written including all amendments and appealed to the assembly for swift and decisive action. That day the bill was enacted and Spotswood prorogued the Assembly.5

The bill provided for western defense. The legislature appropriated one thousand pounds for distribution to each Christian tithable of "one firelock, musket, one socket, bayonet fitted thereunto, one cartouch box, eight pounds bullet, two pounds powder." Each county also received five hundred pounds to build the necessary structures of law and order, "a church, court house, prison, pillory and stocks."6

To stimulate westward migration the Assembly also passed two other bills on December 23 that would benefit large land owners: "An Act for the better discovery and Securing of his Majesty's Quit Rents," and "An Act Explaining and declaring what shall be accounted a Sufficient Seating and Improvement to Save Lands from Lapsing and for the better Recovery of Land Lapsed from persons living out of the Country." The first prevented the forfeiture of land for failure to pay quitrents. The second relaxed mandatory seating and planting regulations


6Hening, Statues, vol. 4, p. 78.
by redefining the level of improvement necessary to confirm grants. 7

Spotswood's personal investment in land and an iron mine in Spotsylvania certainly influenced his decision to exempt land owners there from quitrent payments. On the last day of the session, the Council approved Spotswood's purchase of over 40,000 acres in Spotsylvania. But the governor had no investment in Brunswick County. To the south, quitrent exemptions would result in a much needed increase of land sales to large and small planters. Because the progression of settlement in the Southside fell far behind that of the northern Piedmont, quitrent exemptions were especially helpful in promoting growth, while the same exemptions expedited an expansion process that had already begun to the north.

Spotswood hoped to fortify both passes through the mountains. 8 To convince the Assembly and Board of Trade that Swift Run and Rockfish Gaps needed to be protected, he offered the same arguments he made for raising Fort Christanna and the fort at Germanna: the need to protect the colony from invasion. 9

7 Palmer, Calendar, pp. 315-316.
8 Relying on information from fur traders, Indians, and from his 1716 expedition, Spotswood was under the impression that only two passes existed. Even though he once supported a measure to promote settlement along only one bank of the James River to ensure its spread toward the mountains, Spotswood missed the largest pass where this river crosses the Blue Ridge Mountains. Dodson, Spotswood, p. 245.

Spotswood's ambitious plan for settling Virginia's frontier reveals brilliance in innovation, but it lacked the necessary backing to bring it to full fruition. Within two years of its creation Spotsylvania County boasted a population large enough to warrant completing its organization. The Assembly formed a court system and acknowledged the county's right to elect burgesses. Brunswick County, however, until 1732 continued under Prince George County's courts.\textsuperscript{10}

One reason for Brunswick's failure to expand was that it lost its greatest patron. In 1722, only two years after the fledgling county came into existence, Orkney suddenly replaced Spotswood with a new lieutenant governor, Colonel Hugh Drysdale.

Although he cultivated an amiable relationship with the Assembly for two years, Spotswood had collected a number of enemies during the previous ten. In London the governor's superiors viewed his administration as controversial, and Spotswood blamed Orkney for succumbing to fears of losing his post by retaining a deputy who constantly aroused antagonism. Orkney hoped Drysdale would lead a quieter life.\textsuperscript{11}

Controversial as he was, Spotswood also proved to be an effective administrator with ambition and drive. During his twelve year tenure, Virginia's commerce, wealth, and

\textsuperscript{10}EJCC, vol. 4, p. 9; vol. 6, p. vii; Nicholls, "Origins," pp. 35-36.

\textsuperscript{11}EJCC, vol. 4, pp. 19-20; Billings, et al., \textit{A History}, pp. 196-197.
population grew faster than any other American colony's. And as he departed from office, Virginia prepared for the onset of her "golden age." For over fifty years, until the American Revolution, the colony would realize the profits from expansion that Spotswood envisioned. But he would not lead the way; a new governor had assumed command in Virginia.\footnote{Billings, et al., A History, p. 199; Spotswood, Letters, vol. 1, p. x.}

And indeed he had. Almost immediately upon taking oath Drysdale relentlessly pursued the prosecution of an enemy to the Crown, his predecessor. Far from supporting Spotswood's plans for the colony's future, Drysdale branded him a contemptuous thief who while in office amassed a fortune in land, in the county he named for himself, and over half of it illegally. Spotswood disputed the claim arguing that he had done the Crown a great service by importing foreign workers for his ironworks and promoting western defense, thereby attracting more settlers. Drysdale was amused by Spotswood's next dispute when he came under attack in 1726 for robbing the government of money appropriated for arms and the construction of official buildings in Brunswick County. Because the county remained thinly populated no one deemed the expenditures necessary, so Spotswood kept the allotment for future use. Eventually the Assembly exonerated him of all wrong doing, but
Drysdale continued to view his actions as governor with suspicion.\(^{13}\)

As a result of distrust, the only measure Drysdale took to encourage progress in Brunswick was to comply with the provision that he, the governor, should appoint a surveyor to determine the county's borders. Drysdale never shared Spotswood's conviction that running the North Carolina-Virginia boundary line was a primary objective in promoting Virginia's growth, so in 1723 he ordered Drury Stith to draw the county's eastern, northern, and western limits only. Brunswick now ran from the Meherin River north to a branch in the Nottoway and west to the mountains. Two years later when the Privy Council in London declared the ten year quitrent exemption for Brunswick and Spotsylvania excessive and reduced it to only seven years, Drysdale failed to realize that the change would detract from Brunswick's appeal and retard its settlement. But help would return. To the dismay of all his friends and the relief of Spotswood, Drysdale died in 1726. His successor would prove a greater benefactor to the Southside.\(^{14}\)

Governor William Gooch arrived in January the following year and none too soon. The entire Southside wasted away, and

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Brunswick supported a population with a mere one hundred and sixty tithables. Realizing what Spotswood had before him, appointed a commission to settle Virginia's southern border dispute once and for all. In so doing he removed the greatest obstacle to southern expansion.¹⁵

The next year a contingent of men including Virginia commissioners William Byrd, Richard Fitz-William, William Dandridge, and surveyors Alexander Irvine and William Mayes and their North Carolina counterparts Chief Justice Christopher Gale, Edward Mosely, John Lovick, William Little, and Samuel Swann met a Currituck Inlet and proceeded with their mission. Using Spotswood and Eden's 1715 compromise as a guide they ran the line at 36° 31' North in westerly direction to where it hit the Blackwater River. They continued it downstream to the mouth of the Nottoway and then due west.¹⁶ With the successful completion of this task speculators and planters could purchase land along the border without fearing the consequences.

This proved to be the key to Southside development and, therefore, to Brunswick's as well. In a letter to the board of trade that year Gooch explained that small farmers preferred to move near large land owners. The lack of speculation in Brunswick accounted for its low population. A

¹⁵EJCC, vol. 4, pp. 145-146.

A study of land patents supports this by revealing that in all of Prince George County, including what became Brunswick, the average farm size during this period was only three hundred sixty-nine acres. A few men purchased large tracts between one thousand and five thousand acres, but not enough to influence expansion. In contrast, the average farm in Spotsylvania was close to six thousand acres where a profusion of speculation artificially raised the figure. But upon the official designation of Virginia's southern border, land sales boomed in Brunswick County. By 1731 only three years later, its population had sufficiently increased to assure its final organization. The following year residents constructed their first courthouse between the Meherin and Nottoway Rivers in anticipation of imminent self jurisdiction.\(^{17}\)

Although Brunswick had enough people to warrant its own judicial system in 1732, they were not wealthy enough to support their parish, Saint Andrew. To remedy the situation its parishioners proposed annexing parts of Surry and Isle of Wight Counties to Brunswick; the Assembly gave its assent and passed legislation to that effect. That year the people again called upon Drury Stith to run their borders.\(^{18}\)


Despite all hindrances to settlement in the Southside the process gained momentum in the 1730's and rapidly took off rapidly in the 1740's. Brunswick County experienced the same growth rate with most of its residents coming from nearby Prince George, Surry, and Isle of Sight. Eventually the General Assembly began its subdivision so that today, out of Brunswick's original territory, eleven additional counties exist. Lunenburg, Halifax, Bedford, Charlotte, Mecklenburg, Pittsylvania, Henry, Greensville, Campbell, Franklin, and Patrick.19

Just as Spotswood had hoped colonists settled Virginia's southern and northern frontiers. They came mostly from counties to the east and brought their customs with them. Spotswood wanted an orderly progression west and he got his wish. As in the east the church and court served as major centers of community life.20 The Southside and Piedmont would suffer their share of growing pains as social discord was certain to develop on the frontier, but by and large they would become peaceful and prosperous, for "cultural and social uniformities prevail over political and environmental diversities."21 With a settled population of British


background, the Southside and Piedmont discouraged any predatory ambitions of the French. Safety was assured, Virginia flourished, and it all began with Spotswood's plan to open the frontier for expansion with the establishment of Brunswick and Spotsylvania Counties.
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