

Fort Du Quesne & a great many have Cabbins near & about Venango. There are fifteen Cannon eight of them 12 Lbrs mounted at Du Quesne & Nine Cannon of a less Size are mounted in Venango. This last place is not very defensible at present but the Enemy have been busy all the Summer in collecting Materials for building a very strong Fort there next Spring. About 200 French Families & some Germans have been settled between Venango & the Head of Buffeloe River to raise Corn for the Garrisons, & a considerable Tract of Arable Land is cleared also at a small Distance from Fort du Quesne for the same purpose. The Description he gives of Fort Du Quesne differs little from what we have heard from others but I find they have built a Magazine just without the the Fort & finished the Ditch & Covert Way that they were making on this Side the Fort from One River to the other. This Iohnson it seems was sent out the Beginning of last Month with a Detachment of 160 French & Indians from Fort Du Quesne to make a Descent on our Frontier Inhabitants, or if it should be thought practicable to attempt the Reduction of Fort Cumberland; When the Detachment came near the Fort, Himself & ten others were ordered to advance & make what Discoveries they could & then to return to the Rest of the Detachment. The fellow had accordingly concealed himself behind some Logs that lay opposite to the Fort on the Bank of Wills Creek & had remained there near three hours when he was discovered by two Men & a Woman that came down from the Fort to the Creek's Side. Apprehending the Soldiers would otherwise fire at him he immediately crossed the Creek & pretended to them that the Indians had contrary to his Inclination detained him Prisoner & that he joyfully embraced that Opportunity of escaping from them. He said not a Word of the Detachment or Officer that had ordered him thither, & by what I can learn was received & treated by Colo Steven who commands there as other persons have been that have made their Escape at times & retired thither for Protection. It happened that a party of Men from Fort Frederick were at that time at Col<sup>o</sup> Cresap's Plantation & as the Fellow seemed to be pretty well acquainted with the late Transactions of the French in this part of the Continent & their Strength On the Ohio Col<sup>o</sup> Steven delivered him up to them with a Letter acquainting me with his reasons for sending him hither. On his Way to Fort Frederick he acknowledged to the Officer of the Party that he had been sent to Fort Cumberland by the Enemy on the Errand abovementioned & upon being strictly examined by Capt Dagworthy on his Arrival at our Fort he confessed the several particulars that I have been relating & I do not perceive that he has on his Examination before us varied in any one Circum-

Letter Bk. I.

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