

Biographical Note: William Trent

William Trent (1715–1787) was probably born in Philadelphia. His parents were Scottish immigrants who became influential in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. William Trent was a soldier, Indian trader, and land speculator. In the 1750s he participated in negotiations with Native Americans in Pennsylvania. In 1754, the governor of Virginia authorized him to build a military post at the forks of the Ohio, before the French built Fort Duquesne.

In 1760 Trent was a member of a trading firm at Fort Pitt, involved in reopening the Indian trade. His business suffered great financial loss during the French and Indian War and Pontiac's Rebellion. In the summer of 1763, Trent served as a captain of a militia company comprised of traders and settlers around Fort Pitt, to assist in defense of the fort. Trent was also a land speculator, and in 1768 he received a grant for land along the upper Ohio River from the Iroquois League. Trent was never able to obtain British or colonial rights to his land claims. He died in Philadelphia, probably in 1787.

During the summer of 1763, while stationed at Fort Pitt, William Trent kept a journal and orderly book, which together present one of the most detailed and complete accounts of the Indian siege on the British settlements.