

LOUIS-ANTOINE DE BOUGAINVILLE (1729–1811)
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September 6. With the enemy so well positioned and strong, and so few of us . . . I think it will be impossible for us to undertake any considerable action against troops three times more numerous than us, solidly entrenched everywhere, and with good forts. We make do with harassing them constantly, and so have recently been taking prisoners from as far away as Boston and have readied ourselves to resist them if they should attack us . . . We have about 180 Indians . . .

September 12 & 13. Nothing new. A few Indians reconnoitering on the lake. We have 600 Indians now. We're holding council with them to send a detachment of them out, but getting them to make up their minds is a whole long operation, costing brandy, supplies, food, &c. A constant, bothersome detail.

September 16. Indians finally made up their mind to set out. Left from Monsieur de Contrecoeur's post about 6:00 this evening. 100 Canadians and 400 Indians under the command of Monsieur de la Perriere, Captain of the Colonial Militia. 34 canoes, sheltered behind a point of land, waiting for sunset. Indians decide when we move, when we halt, where we spy; and in this kind of warfare, we have to go along with them.

September 17. At daybreak the nations' war chiefs held a council, and when they broke up, twenty-five Indians were sent out with three Frenchmen. Their orders were to separate into two parties after a certain distance, one going along the shore, the other through the mountains. The Indians can see a long way for spying out the islands where the enemy is said to be entrenched. [The scouts find little to report.] After they came back, a herald walked along the beach summoning the nations' chiefs to a council. All went to the campground of the Iroquois, who, being the most numerous in this detachment, took charge without even asking advice from the French commander. Their bodies covered with blankets and their spears in their hands, the chiefs advanced gravely, took their seats, and smoked the council pipe. The orator reviewed the detachment's mission and repeated the reports of the scouts. They deliberated at great length over what the orator said, always in the presence of a French interpreter. The result is that two canoes of scouts are being dispatched to search the islands. They leave at nightfall and will camp two leagues up-lake on the south shore. This they have now done. Anyway, the Indians act imperially toward us. They make laws for us that they don't follow. People are suspecting the Iroquois of double dealings.

September 20. The Indians had 17 prisoners. They had already clubbed some to death. A detachment of one lieutenant and 30 men was ordered to bury the two dead men. The cruelty and insolence of these savages appall and darken the soul. It's an abominable kind of warfare. The reprisals are frightful, and the air a person breathes infects him with the habit of not caring.

Taken from Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, "Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's Journal of the Seven Years' War, 1756," in *Interpreting a Continent: Voices from Colonial America*, eds. Kathleen DuVal and John DuVal (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 278–283.