

to contract many Indian habits, and there kept till they arrived to manhood; but I have never seen one of those but what was an Indian in every respect after he returned. Indians must and will be Indians, in spite of all the means that can be used for their cultivation in the sciences and arts.

One thing only marred my happiness, while I lived with them on the Ohio; and that was the recollection that I had once had tender parents, and a home that I loved. Aside from that consideration, or, if I had been taken in infancy, I should have been contented in my situation. Notwithstanding all that has been said against the Indians, in consequence of their cruelties to their enemies—cruelties that I have witnessed, and had abundant proof of—it is a fact that they are naturally kind, tender and peaceable towards their friends, and strictly honest; and that those cruelties have been practised, only upon their enemies, according to their idea of justice.

The "Walking Purchase": A Delaware Complaint and an Iroquois Response

Between 1630 and 1767, the Delaware or Lenni Lenape Indians of New Jersey and Pennsylvania signed nearly eight hundred deeds of land to colonists. In 1734, Thomas Penn, the son of William Penn, first governor and proprietor of Pennsylvania, claimed to have found a copy of a deed made in 1686 in which certain Delaware chiefs agreed to grant his father and his heirs lands "as far as a man can go in a day and a half," and from there to the Delaware River and down its course. Thomas Penn and the colonial authorities were eager to measure out the lands, and a number of Delaware chiefs reluctantly agreed. The Pennsylvanians violated the spirit of the agreement, however, by clearing a path and, on the day appointed for the "walk" in September 1737, they produced not a single person to walk the distance but a team of three runners. The point at which the third man collapsed exhausted at noon on the second day, about sixty-five miles from the starting point, was taken as the distance a man could walk in the time allotted.

The infamous "Walking Purchase" deprived the Delawares of the last of their lands in the upper Delaware and Lehigh valleys in Pennsylvania. The Indians made many complaints to the colonial authorities, but to little avail. In the petition of November 21, 1740, Delaware chiefs admitted selling certain tracts of land but denied ever having sold any land to William Penn or his sons. The governor of Pennsylvania complained against the Delawares' "Rudeness & ill Manners" on the issue and solicited the support of the Iroquois during a council in Philadelphia in the summer of 1742. After due deliberation of the evidence, the Onondaga Canasatego delivered a stinging rebuke to the Delawares, in which he asserted Iroquois dominance over the Delawares and their lands and ordered them to move to where the Six Nations could keep an eye on them. In 1756, the Delaware chief Teedyuscung was still fuming over the fraud, and in the early years of the American Revolution the Delaware chief White Eyes openly and defiantly rejected Iroquois claims to hegemony over his people or their lands.

The main interpreter at the 1742 conference in Philadelphia, as in many conferences between the Iroquois and Pennsylvania in the mid-eighteenth century, was Conrad Weiser (1696–1760). Weiser had lived with the Mohawks in his youth and had learned their language. He had a long career on the frontier as a farmer, a magistrate, a soldier, and an Indian agent.

DELAWARE INDIANS

*Complaint against the "Walking Purchase"**November 21, 1740*

To Mr. Jeremiah Langhorne¹ & all Magistrates of Pennsylvania

We pray that You would take Notice of the Great Wrong We Receive in Our Lands, here are about 100 families Settled On it for what Reason they Cant tell. They tell them *that Thomas Penn has sold them the Land Which We think must be Very Strange that T. Penn Should Sell him that which was never his for We never Sold him this land.* The Case was this. That When We Were With Penn to treat as usual with his Father, He keep begging & plagueing us to Give him some Land & Never gives us leave to treat upon any thing till he Wearies us Out of Our Lives but What should We give Penn any Land for We never had any thing from him but honest Dealings & Civility. If he lets us alone We will let him alone. The Lands we do Own to be Ours, Begin, at the Mouth of Tohickon Runs up along the said Branch to the Head Springs thence up With a strait line [to] Patquating thence with a strait Line to the Blew Mountain thence to a Place called Mohaining thence along a Mountain called Neshameek thence along the Great Swamp to a Branch of Delaware River So along Delaware River to the Place where it first began.² All this is Our own Land Except Some tracts We have disposed off. The Tract of Durham The tract of Nicholas Depuis The Tract of Old Weiser³ We have Sold *But for the Rest We have Never sold & We Desire Thomas Penn Would take these People off from their Land in Peace that we May not be at the trouble to drive them off for the Land We Will hold fast With both Our hands not in privately but in Open View of all the Countrey & all Our Friends & Relations That is the Eastern Indians & Our Uncles the five Nations & the Mohikkons & the twitways Shawanahs Shawekelou*

¹Jeremiah Langhorne was Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

²Tohickon is Tohickon Creek; the Blue Mountains are the Kittatinny Mountains; Mahoning Creek is a tributary of the Lehigh River.

³Old Weiser was a German immigrant, John Conrad Weiser, father of Conrad Weiser.

Tuskeroroes & the Takkesaw⁴ the last. These all shall be by & hear us Speak & We Shall Stand at Our Uncles Breast When We Shall Speak. Now Gentlemen & all others We Desire some of Your Assistance in this Affair for We have lived in Brotherly Friend Ship So We Desire to Continue the same if So be We can be Righted any Manner of Ways So We Remainz Your Friends

Wrote in the Margent of the Letters: The Indians Acknowledges this to be done by their Direction.

[*Forwarding note*] This is a Copy of a Petition Sent by the Indians Some-time ago so hoping his Excellency May look Over it & take it into Consideration.

⁴The twitways were the Miamis; the Shawanahs Shawekelou probably refers to the Thwaegila division of the Shawnees; the Takkesaw were probably Nanticokes. (Kent, *Pennsylvania Indian Treaties*, 473 n. 30.)

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CANASATEGO

Response to the Delawares' Complaint

July 12, 1742

At a Council held at the Proprietor's, July 12. 1742
Cousins,

Let this Belt of Wampum serve to chastise you. You ought to be taken by the Hair of the Head and shaked severely, till you recover your Senses and become sober. You don't know what Ground you stand on, nor what you are doing. Our Brother *Onas's*¹ Cause is very just and plain, and his Intentions to preserve Friendship. On the other Hand, Your Cause is bad; your Heart far from being upright; and you are maliciously bent to break the Chain of Friendship with our Brother *Onas* and his People.

¹*Onas* means "feather" or "quill" and was thus an Iroquoian pun on Penn's name. The Iroquois used it to refer to William Penn and his successors as governors of Pennsylvania.

We have seen with our Eyes a Deed sign'd by nine of your Ancestors above *Fifty* Years ago for this very Land, and a Release sign'd, not many Years since, by some of yourselves and Chiefs now living, to the Number of fifteen or upwards. — But how come you to take upon you to sell Land at all: We conquered you; we made Women of you; you know you are Women, and can no more sell Land than Women; nor is it fit you should have the Power of selling Lands, since you would abuse it. This Land that you claim is gone through your Guts; you have been furnish'd with Cloaths, Meat and Drink, by the Goods paid you for it, and now you want it again, like Children as you are. — But what makes you sell Land in the Dark. Did you ever tell us that you had sold this Land. Did we ever receive any Part, even the Value of a Pipe-Shank, from you for it. You have told us a blind Story, that you sent a Messenger to us to inform us of the Sale, but he never came amongst us, nor we never heard any thing about it. — This is acting in the Dark, and very different from the Conduct our *Six Nations* observe in their Sales of Land; on such Occasions they give publick Notice, and invite all the *Indians* of their united Nations, and give them all a Share of the Present they receive for their Lands. — This is the Behaviour of the wise united Nations. — But we find you are none of our Blood: You act a dishonest Part, not only in this but in other Matters; Your Ears are ever open to slanderous Reports about our Brethren; you receive them with as much Greediness as lewd Women receive the Embraces of bad Men. And for all these Reasons we charge you to remove instantly; we don't give you the Liberty to think about it. You are Women. Take the Advice of a wise Man, and remove immediately. You may return to the other Side of *Delaware* where you came from: But we do not know whether, considering how you have demean'd yourselves, you will be permitted to live there; or whether you have not swallowed that Land down your Throats as well as the Land on this Side. We therefore assign you two Places to go, either to *Wyomen* or *Shamokin*.² You may go to either of these Places, and then we shall have you more under our Eye, and shall see how you behave. Don't deliberate; but remove away, and take this Belt of Wampum.

This being interpreted by *Conrad Weiser* into *English*, and by *Cornelius Spring* into the *Delaware* Language, *Canassatego* taking a String of Wampum, added further.

²Wyoming and Shamokin were Indian villages on the Susquehanna River.

After our just Reproof, and absolute Order to depart from the Land, you are now to take Notice of what we have further to say to you. This String of Wampum serves to forbid you, your Children and Grand-Children, to the latest Posterity forever, meddling in Land-Affairs; neither you nor any who shall descend from you, are ever hereafter to presume to sell any Land: For which Purpose, you are to preserve this String, in Memory of what your Uncles have this Day given you in Charge. — We have some other Business to transact with our Brethren, and therefore depart the Council, and consider what has been said to you.

The Treaty of Lancaster

The Treaty of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was one of the most important Indian treaties of colonial times. Arranged to settle disputes between the Iroquois and various colonies, the treaty council that produced it lasted a fortnight in 1744 and brought together two dozen deputies from the Six Nations, more than two hundred other Indians, Governor George Thomas of Pennsylvania, and commissioners from Virginia and Maryland. The talks were held in the Lancaster courthouse, with Conrad Weiser acting as interpreter. With Britain and France on the verge of renewed war, the Six Nations promised to remain neutral.

The Onondaga spokesman, Canasatego, dominated the conference. Richard Peters, an Anglican clergyman and provincial secretary active in Indian affairs, described him as “a tall well-made man” with “a very full chest and brawny limbs. He had a manly countenance, mixed with a good-natured smile. He was about sixty years of age, very active, and had a surprising liveliness in his speech.” Peters was favorably impressed by the Indians’ diplomacy and said they were “superior to the commissioners in point of sense and argument.”¹

When the governor of Maryland disputed Iroquois land claims on the basis that Maryland had possessed the land for more than a century, Canasatego gave a lengthy speech in which he reviewed the history of contact between Indians and Europeans in North America. On the final day of the conference, Canasatego responded to the Virginia commissioners’ invitation to send six Iroquois youths to be educated at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Colonial governments regularly invited Indian chiefs to send their children to English schools, where they

¹Julian P. Boyd and Carl Van Doren, eds., *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736–1762* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1938), xxxvii, xl.

would receive a formal education, but Canasatego politely declined the invitation. Finally, in a speech delivered on July 4, the Onondaga orator offered the colonists some advice on the need to unite, citing the example of the ancient League of the Iroquois. Some people interpret Canasatego's words as evidence that, forty-five years later, the Founding Fathers based the United States Constitution on that of the Iroquois.

When Canasatego left Lancaster, he was wearing a scarlet coat and a gold-laced hat presented to him by the commissioners of Virginia and Maryland. Despite his impressive performance at the conference, the Treaty of Lancaster resulted in a massive loss of Indian land between the Susquehanna River and the Allegheny Mountains.²

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CANASATEGO

*Speech at the Treaty of Lancaster**July 4, 1744*

Brother, the Governor of Maryland,

When you mentioned the Affair of the Land Yesterday, you went back to old Times, and told us, you had been in Possession of the Province of *Maryland* above One Hundred Years; but what is One Hundred Years in Comparison of the Length of Time since our Claim began? since we came out of this Ground? For we must tell you, that long before One Hundred Years our Ancestors came out of this very Ground, and their Children have remained here ever since. You came out of the Ground in a Country that lies beyond the Seas, there you may have a just Claim, but here you must allow us to be your elder Brethren, and the Lands to belong to us long before you knew any thing of them. It is true, that above One Hundred Years ago the *Dutch* came here in a Ship, and brought with them several Goods; such as Awls, Knives, Hatchets, Guns, and many other Particulars, which they gave us; and when they had taught us how

²For full treatment, see James H. Merrell, ed., *The Lancaster Treaty of 1744 with Related Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008).

to use their Things, and we saw what sort of People they were, we were so well pleased with them, that we tied their Ship to the Bushes on the Shore; and afterwards, liking them still better the longer they staid with us, and thinking the Bushes too slender, we removed the Rope, and tied it to the Trees; and as the Trees were liable to be blown down by high winds, or to decay of themselves, we, from the Affection we bore them, again removed the Rope, and tied it to a strong and big Rock (*here the Interpreter said, They mean the Oneido Country*) and not content with this, for its further Security we removed the Rope to the big Mountain (*here the Interpreter says they mean the Onandago Country*) and there we tied it very fast, and rowlled Wampum about it; and, to make it still more secure, we stood upon the Wampum, and sat down upon it, to defend it, and to prevent any Hurt coming to it, and did our best Endeavours that it might remain uninjured for ever. During all this Time the New-comers, the *Dutch*, acknowledged our Right to the Lands, and solicited us, from Time to Time, to grant them Parts of our Country, and enter into League and Covenant with us, and to become one People with us.

After this the *English* came into the Country, and, as we were told, became one People with the *Dutch*. About two Years after the Arrival of the *English*, an *English* Governor came to *Albany* and finding what great Friendship subsisted between us and the *Dutch*, he approved it mightily, and desired to make as strong a League, and to be upon as good Terms with us as the *Dutch* were, with whom he was united, and to become one People with us: And by his further Care in looking into what had passed between us, he found that the Rope which tied the Ship to the great Mountain was only fastened with Wampum, which was liable to break and rot, and to perish in a Course of Years; he therefore told us, he would give us a Silver Chain, which would be much stronger, and would last for ever. This we accepted, and fastened the Ship with it, and it has lasted ever since. Indeed we have had some small Differences with the *English*, and, during these Misunderstanding, some of their young Men would, by way of Reproach, be every now and then telling us, that we should have perished if they had not come into the Country and furnished us with Strowds¹ and Hatchets, and Guns, and other Things necessary for the Support of Life; but we always gave them to understand that they were mistaken, that we lived before they came amongst us, and as well, or better, if we may believe what our Forefathers have told us. We had then Room enough, and Plenty of Deer, which was easily caught; and tho' we had not Knives, Hatchets, or Guns,

¹Strowds was a cheap trade cloth made from woolen rags, manufactured in Stroud, England, especially for the Indian trade.

such as we have now, yet we had Knives of Stone, and Hatchets of Stone, and Bows and Arrows, and those served our Uses as well then as the *English* ones do now. We are now straitened, and sometimes in want of Deer, and liable to many other inconveniencies since the *English* came among us, and particularly from that Pen-and-ink Work that is going on at the Table (*pointing to the Secretary*) and we will give you an Instance of this. Our Brother *Onas*, a great while ago, came to *Albany* to buy the *Sasquahannah* Lands of us, but our Brother, the Governor of *New York*, who, as we suppose, had not a good Understanding with our Brother *Onas*, advised us not to sell him any Land, for he would make an ill Use of it; and, pretending to be our good Friend, he advised us, in order to prevent *Onas's*, or any other Person's imposing upon us, and that we might always have our Land when we should want it, to put it into his Hands; and told us, he would keep it for our Use, and never open his Hands, but keep them close shut, and not part with any of it, but at our Request. Accordingly we trusted him, and put our Land into his Hands, and charged him to keep it safe for our Use; but, some Time after, he went to *England*, and carried our Land with him, and there sold it to our Brother *Onas*, for a large Sum of Money; and when, at the Instance of our Brother *Onas*, we were minded to sell him some Lands, he told us, we had sold the *Sasquahannah* Lands already to the Governor of *New-York*, and that he had bought them from him in *England*; tho', when he came to understand how the Governor of *New-York* had deceived us, he very generously paid us for our Lands over again.

Tho' we mention this Instance of an Imposition put upon us by the Governor of *New-York*, yet we must do the *English* the Justice to say, we have had their hearty Assistances in our Wars with the *French*, who were no sooner arrived amongst us than they began to render us uneasy, and to provoke us to War, and we have had several Wars with them; during all which we constantly received Assistance from the *English*, and, by their Means, we have always been able to keep up our Heads against their Attacks.

We now come nearer home. We have had your Deeds interpreted to us, and we acknowledge them to be good and valid, and that the *Conestogoe* or *Sasquahannah* Indians had a Right to sell those Lands to you, for they were then theirs; but since that Time we have conquered them, and their Country now belongs to us, and the Lands we demanded Satisfaction for are no Part of the Lands comprized in those Deeds; they are the *Cohongoroutas*² Lands; those, we are sure, you have not possessed One

²A note on the original says that *Cohongoroutas* means "Potomack." (Kent, *Pennsylvania Indian Treaties*, 477 n. 38.)

Hundred Years, no, nor above Ten Years, and we made our Demands so soon as we knew your People were settled in those Parts. These have never been sold, but remain still to be disposed of; and we are well pleased to hear you are provided with Goods, and do assure you of our Willingness to treat with you for those unpurchased Lands; in Confirmation whereof, we present you with this Belt of Wampum. . . .

Brother Assaragoa;³

You told us Yesterday, that all Disputes with you being now at an End; you desired to confirm all former Treaties between *Virginia* and us, and to make our Chain of Union as bright as the Sun.

We agree very heartily with you in these Propositions; we thank you for your good Inclinations; we desire you will pay no Regard to any idle Stories that may be told to our Prejudice. And, as the Dispute about the Land is now intirely over, and we perfectly reconciled, we hope, for the future, we shall not act towards each other but as becomes Brethren and hearty Friends.

We are very willing to renew the Friendship with you, and to make it as firm as possible, for us and our Children with you and your Children to the latest Generation, and we desire you will imprint these Engagements on your Hearts in the Strongest Manner; and, in Confirmation that we shall do the same, we give you this Belt of Wampum. . . .

Brother Assaragoa;

You told us likewise, you had a great House provided for the Education of Youth, and that there were several white People and *Indians* Children there to learn Languages, and to write and read, and invited us to send some of our Children amongst you, &c.

We must let you know we love our Children too well to send them so great a Way, and the *Indians* are not inclined to give their Children Learning. We allow it to be good, and we thank you for your Invitation; but our Customs differing from yours, you will be so good as to excuse us. . . .

Brother Onas, Assaragoa, and Tocarry-hogan,⁴

At the Close of your respective Speeches Yesterday, you made us very handsome Presents, and we should return you something suitable to your Generosity; but, alas, we are poor, and shall ever remain so, as

³*Assaragoa* or *Assaraquoa* means "sword" or "big knife" and was the Iroquois title for governors of Virginia.

⁴*Tocarry-hogan* refers to Maryland.

long as there are so many *Indian* Traders among us. Theirs and the white Peoples Cattle have eat up all the Grass, and made Deer scarce. However, we have provided a small Present for you, and tho' some of you gave us more than others, yet, as you are all equally our Brethren, we shall leave it to you to divide it as you please. — And then presented three Bundles of Skins, which were received with the usual Ceremony from the three Governments.

We have one Thing further to say, and that is, We heartily recommend Union and a good Agreement between you our Brethren. Never disagree, but preserve a strict Friendship for one another, and thereby you, as well as we, will become the stronger.

Our wise Forefathers established Union and Amity between the *Five Nations*; this has made us formidable; this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighbouring Nations.

We are a powerful Confederacy; and, by your observing the same Methods our wise Forefathers have taken, you will acquire fresh Strength and Power; therefore whatever befalls you, never fall out one with another.

A Guardian System for Indian Lands

When Christian Indian communities were first established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the legislature provided that they should choose their own officials. Native self-rule became increasingly circumscribed, however.

In 1746, Massachusetts passed a law providing that three guardians be appointed for each Indian settlement. The guardians had the power "to take into their hands" the Indians' lands and then allot them to the various Indian inhabitants as they saw fit. Surplus lands could be leased to settlers, and the guardians were supposed to use the income for the support of the Indians.

The following document, written by Indians from Mashpee on Cape Cod, shows that the guardian system was open to abuse. It also shows that Indian people recognized that literacy, besides being a vehicle for the conveyance of land, could be a means of voicing discontent and lodging formal protest against encroachments on their land. The Mashpee Indians complained several times to the Massachusetts General Court. Obtaining no relief, they took their appeal to the king of England. The Crown ordered an investigation and colonial policy was changed: In 1763 Massachusetts incorporated Mashpee as a self-governing district,