

## THE QUAKER PEACE POLICY

1681-1734

Three quarters of a century of peaceful relationship between the whitemen and the Indians was characterized, in turn, by land purchase under William Penn, by the peace policy of his successors, and by the growing importance of conferences towards the end of the period.

William Penn's Personal Influence-- 1681-1701.

The Stuarts owed Admiral Sir William Penn some £ 16,000 for money loaned and services rendered. He died reconciled to his son's Quaker nonconformity and bequeathed to William Penn this asset along with the rest of his ample estate.<sup>1</sup> Having had some experience in provincial matters as one of the trustees of West Jersey,<sup>2</sup> and desiring to provide a refuge for Quakers from "those many and great sufferings we have sustained by the execution of Laws made against us to the Ruin of many Industrious Families,"<sup>3</sup> Penn petitioned King Charles II for a grant of land in the New World in which he might found a colony, where "every person that doth or shall reside therein,

<sup>1</sup>Penn, No Cross, No Crown, 1668, in Works, I, 332. His father died in 1670, but William W. Comfort, William Penn, 1644-1718, A Tercentenary Estimate, p. 75, says "He greatly expanded this thirteen years later." See also Clarkson, Penn Memoirs, pp. 38-9.

<sup>2</sup>Bonamy Dobree, William Penn, Quaker and Pioneer, pp. 100-119. Hereafter, Dobree, Penn, Quaker.

<sup>3</sup>Penn, "Petition to Commons" 1678, Works, I, 117.

shall have and enjoy the Free Profession of his or her Faith and Exercise of Worship toward God . . . ."<sup>4</sup> Charles gave him the land, calling it Pennsylvania, after his father,<sup>5</sup> but defined boundaries which conflicted with other grants, which resulted in a century of boundary disputes. Penn wished that his new colony might be based on justice and humanity, and was particularly considerate of the Indians who then inhabited the area. He instructed the agents he sent ahead of him to treat them well,<sup>6</sup> and he himself sent them a now-famous letter, in which he expressed his friendship for them and his intention of treating them fairly.<sup>7</sup>

And so he did, by his own lights, in the eyes of his countrymen and successors, and in the memory of his name treasured by generations of Indians whose ancestors he befriended.<sup>8</sup> But was he gratefully remembered by the Indians

<sup>4</sup>Penn, "First Constitution," 1681, Works, I, 122.

<sup>5</sup>". . . Pennsylvania; a name that the King would give it in honor of my Father." Penn to Robert Turner, 5th, of 1st Mo., 1681. Cited in Dobree, Penn, Quaker, p. 120.

<sup>6</sup>Dobree, Penn, Quaker, p. 127.

<sup>7</sup>Penn, "Letter to the Indians," 1681, Works, I, 121-22.

<sup>8</sup>The white attitude is most famously expressed by Voltaire, in his Essai sur les mœurs . . . (supra, p. i, f.n. 1). See also Fernow, N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XIII, Intro., vi. The Indian memory of Penn is frequently the subject of introductory speeches at conferences, e.g., "The Conestogoes say, that William Penn made a League with them to last for three or four Generations; That he is now dead, and most of their

for the things he and other Europeans felt justified the gratitude? Penn felt he was doing right by raising the price of land to settlers "so that he might pay a fair price to the Indians for it."<sup>9</sup> His contemporaries applauded him for this.

This wise and truly pious ruler and governor did not, however, take possession of the province thus granted without having first conciliated, and at various councils and treaties duly purchased from, the natives of this country the various regions of Pennsylvania. 10

The Indians called upon the memory of the great "Onas"<sup>11</sup>

ancients are also dead, but the League still remains . . ."  
Philadelphia Conference, July 12, 1720. Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania (Colonial Records), III, 94. Hereafter, C.R. "They rejoice that there is a Governor, here from England that loves the Indians as William Penn did." Philadelphia Conference, May 20, 1723, C.R., III, 217. "I remember what has passed in discourse and Conversation among your Old Ancient People, especially about Governor Penn; what he said to the Indians is fresh in our minds and memory, and I believe it is in yours. The Indians and Governor Penn agreed well together;" Teedyuscung at Easton, Nov. 9, 1756, C.R. VII, 317. "Between the years 1770 and 1780 they could relate very minutely what had passed between William Penn and their forefathers." "Never will the Delawares forget their elder brother Miquon, as they affectionately and respectfully call him." Heckwelder, Indian Nations, pp. 107, and 66.

<sup>9</sup>Penn letter to Benjamin Furly, No. 9, quoted in Hull, William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania, p. 333.

<sup>10</sup>Pastorius, Description of Pennsylvania, 1700, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>The Iroquoian word meaning "plume" or "feather," hence, Penn. The Delaware (Algonquin) word, meaning the same thing, was Miquon.

of their fathers, but they did not emphasize this aspect of his character. They were impressed by what he said to them, by his actions and behavior, and by the very fact that he was interested in them and treated them as equals. They were flattered and moved by him. This made a far greater impression than the amount of goods which he paid for a given area of land.<sup>12</sup>

It is true that he gave them more than they had theretofore received,<sup>13</sup> but he reaped the benefit of being the first big purchaser in the area. His heirs had to compete with their father's prices, and whether they seemed to pay more or less well than he had could only redound to his fame in the eyes of

<sup>12</sup>"They remembered that William Penn did not approve of the methods of treating the Indians as Children, or Brethren by joining Hands, for in all these cases, accidents may happen to break or weaken the ties of Friendship. But William Penn said, We must all be one half Indian & the other half English, being as one Flesh & one Blood under one Head." Chief of Ganawese to Governor Keith, Philadelphia Conference, May 20, 1723. C.R., III, 217.

Ganwese or Ganawense is the name frequently used during this period for the Conoy. See Hodge, Handbook, II, 1055.

<sup>13</sup>"Wee, Sospanninck and Wicknaminck, the naturall inhabitants of this Province of New-Jersey, &c., doe declare to have Sold for o<sup>r</sup> selves and o<sup>r</sup> heirs vnto Mr. Edmund Cantwell & Mr. Johanes Dehaes, o<sup>r</sup> Creeke or Kill. . . . ffor w<sup>ch</sup> we doe Acknowledge to have rec<sup>d</sup> one-halfe Ankor of Drinke, two Match.coates, two Axes. two barrs of Lead, four hand-fulls of powd<sup>r</sup>, two knives, some painte... 8<sup>th</sup> of ffeb<sup>r</sup>, 1673, . . ."

"These are to Certifye all whom it may concerne, y<sup>t</sup> on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1672, I did give and Grant unto Cap<sup>t</sup>ne: Edmund Cantwell & M<sup>r</sup>. Jo: Dehaes a tract . . . conteyning 700 acres, vpon Condicon y<sup>t</sup> they should purchase y<sup>e</sup> same from the Indians and settle it,." Pennsylvania Archives, Series 1, I, 32-33. Hereafter, P.A. This is typical of five such small

the Indians. The Great Treaty at Shakamaxon, for which he is best remembered, concerned no sale of land at all, but merely affirmed friendship, called for harmony, and said that land purchases made before his arrival by his agents met with approval.<sup>14</sup>

The white man assumed that he could purchase Indian land, as he might land belonging to another European. Having paid the Indian in white man's goods, he expected the Indian to observe his property rights. The Indian at first did not understand that the sale would harm his hunting, and later counted on special clauses permitting him to continue to

entries prior to 1682.

Penn's first set of deeds may be found on pp. 47, 62-68, 91-93, 95-96, 116-17, and 124-25 of P.A., Ser. 1, I, all before 1700. All are with a chief or a number of chiefs, representing whole villages. There are but two examples of a single Indian's lands being purchased. The pay consists of great numbers of items, viz. "Three Hundred and ffifty ffathams of Wampam, Twenty white Blankits, Twenty ffathams of Strawd waters, Sixty ffathams of Duffields, Twenty Kettles, fflower whereof large, Twenty Gunns, Twenty Coates, fforty Shorts, fforty payre of Stockings, fforty Howes, fforty Axes, Two Barrells of Powder, Two Hundred Barres of Lead, Two Hundred Knives, Two Hundred small Glassas, Twelve payre of Shooes, fforty Copper Boxes, . . ." etc., etc.

<sup>14</sup>There is no official record of the "Great Treaty," which probably was created by tradition from a round of conferences Penn held in 1682-83. Whether it was one or several occasions, the details were generally agreed upon. The best listing of the clauses may be found in Governor Gordon's speech of May 26, 1728. G.R., III, 310-12.

traverse and use the land.<sup>15</sup>

In this purchaser-relinquisher relationship between the white man and the Indian, the white buyer usually felt that he was taking advantage of the seller, and getting a bargain. The basis of this feeling was only partially to be found in the comparative value of goods and land, although the manufactured goods given by the purchaser often cost him little enough. It was not even due to the fact that it cost considerably more to buy land which already belonged to another white man than to buy Indian land. The basis was in the white attitude toward the Indian and their relationship. Any experience with the decline of the natives in the presence of white diseases, liquor, forest-destroying farming methods, game-exterminating hunting techniques, and organized, sustained political and military pressure, soon convinced the colonists that the Indian's extinction was inevitable. They did not necessarily envisage eventual white occupation of the entire continent, but as soon as they knew there to be any white settlers in a new area, they considered the Indian's hold there doomed. Thus they saw an ever broadening horizon of potential white domain.

This attitude was particularly strong among the frontier

<sup>15</sup>Speck, "The Penn Wampum Belts," Leaflets, Heye Foundation, No. 4, pp. 11-12, quoting Indian interpretations of belts. Gordon interpreted this condition, "All paths should be open and free to both Christians and Indians," C.R., III, 311.

settlers, who during the Eighteenth Century frequently pushed beyond the area which the Proprietors had purchased from the Indians. They could not or would not pay the Penns' price and rent, so they moved to land which was empty, as far as they could judge, except for a few savage families scattered through it, not making efficient use of it and easily dispossessed. If a few Indians did claim the land, they could be easily bought off by the settlers,<sup>16</sup> and if this personal sale was discovered and disowned by the Proprietary Authorities and the sovereign Indian powers which claimed that land could be exchanged only at the highest level, they "pray'd that his Honour might suffer them to remain there until the Line should be extended and the Purchase made of the Lands from the Indians."<sup>17</sup> They took it for granted that the Indians' claim would soon be extinguished

<sup>16</sup>"Our Young Men being indiscreet and unacquainted with Publick Business, were foolish enough to hearken to them and to receive five Duffield Strowds for two Plantations . . ."  
 . . . The Six Nations have obliged themselves to sell none of the Land that lies within the Province of Pennsylvania to any but our Brother Onas, . . ." Canassatego repudiating this sale.  
 "I thank you for this piece of News. You have taken this matter perfectly right. All bargaining for Land within this Province is to be sure a manifest breach of your Contract with the Proprietors, . . ." Governor Thomas' response.  
 Philadelphia Conference, July 2, 1742, C.R., IV, 561-62. See also, Council of Proprietors, Perth Amboy, New Jersey, March 25, 1752, P.A., Ser. 1, II, 75.

<sup>17</sup>Richard Peters' Report of Removal of Unauthorized settlers in Cumberland County, at Indian request. July 2, 1750, C.R., V, 444-45.

by purchase.

This attitude made the government feel that it was getting something permanent and lasting, land, in exchange for transitory things, trade goods, which, no matter how costly, were soon used up or worn out. Furthermore, it was making these transactions with a doomed race. This had several effects on white men. It made some lean over backwards to be fair, since it was the least they could do.<sup>18</sup>

It made others advocate a policy of fairness, but for reasons of expediency. "We have always found that sincere, upright Dealing with the Indians, a friendly Treatment of them on all occasions, and particularly in relieving their Necessities at proper Times by suitable Presents, have been the best means of securing their friendship."<sup>19</sup>

It made still others irritated at the slowness of the process, and feel justified in taking advantage of the Indians and in removing them by force or pressure. "A new treaty will soon give us all their land; nothing is now wanting but a

<sup>18</sup>Letter of Penn to Henry Savell, May 30, 1683, P.A., Ser. 1, I, 69.

Also Weiser, letter to Peters, June 21, 1747, P.A., Ser. 1, I, 751, where he says, "I have informed the Government several times of the mischief some of our people, from time to time, did to the poor Indians. But I don't remember that ever anything Effectually was done for their relief. . . . I shall be sick of Indian Affairs if no medium is found to do them Justice.

<sup>19</sup>Message of Isaac Norris, Speaker of the Assembly, to Governor Hamilton, August 21, 1751, C.R., V, 547.

pretence to pick a quarrel with them."<sup>20</sup>

On the whole, the Proprietors of Pennsylvania had "ever been strictly careful to avoid granting any lands that were not first duly purchased of the Indians, nor would they ever suffer them to be putt off from any lands on which they were settled, even where they had fully sold all their Right till they would voluntarily remove."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, "The Proprietaries of Pennsylvania have never forced a purchase of Lands from any of their Bretheren, the Indians, since they have owned this Province."<sup>22</sup>

The one case where they did not do this was the infamous "Walking Purchase." Part of the land involved in this was deeded to William Penn by the Delawares in 1686, but the crucial distance, "back into the Woods as far as a man can goe in one day and a half"<sup>23</sup> was not then walked-out, partly because only the nearest land was likely to be settled soon, but chiefly because the above phrase was the common Indian means of describing distance. The Indians felt that when the time came for the

<sup>20</sup> Heckwelder, Indian Nations, p. 336. Quoting frontiersmen.

<sup>21</sup> Speech of Richard Hill, Proprietary Agent, to Delawares at Philadelphia Conference, June 5, 1728, C.R., III, 325.

<sup>22</sup> Answer of Governor Harrison to Six Nations at Lancaster, Conference, August 26, 1762, C.R., VIII, 763-64.

<sup>23</sup> Indian Deed for Lands on the Delaware, August 25, 1737, P.A., Ser. 1, I, 540-43.

Proprietors to need a definite line, the distance would be walked in Indian fashion so as to give the boundaries that both original parties had intended.

However, by 1735, Thomas Penn had already sold lands beyond the limits understood by the Indians, so he needed a new construction of terms of sale which would show that he was within his rights. He brought out the old treaty, procured Indian agreement as to its wording, and then had the distance walked by three young men noted for walking, attended by government observers mounted on horseback to carry provisions, along a trail especially chosen and cleared for the purpose. Instead of the thirty miles the Indians expected, the one walker who lasted all the way went eighty-two miles. The disgusted Indian observers had given up early the first day, saying to the white men, "You already have all the good land and can go to the Devil for the bad."<sup>24</sup>

Having ignored two of the principles which normally guided them, by construing terms so strictly as to cheat the Indians and by selling and settling land before its title had

<sup>24</sup>This general discussion of the 'Walking Purchase' is from: Wilbur R. Jacobs, Diplomacy and Indian Gifts, Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763, p. 92. Hereafter Jacobs, Indian Gifts.

Uhler, Indian Relations, pp. 108-09.

Wallace, Teedyuscung, pp. 18-30, 268-69.

been acquired, the Proprietary party then tried to remove the Delawares who were living on the ill-gotten land. Since the latter refused to leave, five years later Governor Thomas asked the Iroquois, whose suzerainty over the Delawares had been recognized by all concerned,<sup>25</sup> to "cause the Indians to remove from the Lands in the forks of the Delaware, and not give any further disturbance to the persons who are now in possession."<sup>26</sup> Canassatego, Chief of the Onondagas, was pleased to show his authority, severely criticized the Delawares in front of the assembled dignitaries, and ordered them to move.<sup>27</sup>

The Delawares moved west, as ordered, but returned twelve years later, when war broke out for the first time in Pennsylvania history. They conducted the first frontier raids on the land which the Province had acquired by abandoning all the aspects of its old policy. This would seem to justify the viewpoint of those who claimed that the fair policy was also the wise policy, and cheaper in the long run. However, the

<sup>25</sup>On July 22, 1707, the Nanticoke and Conestoga were taking nineteen belts as "Tribute" to the Iroquois, C.R., II, 387. On August 8, 1722, Governor Keith went to Albany for a conference at the same time Governor Spotswood of Virginia did, thus tacitly acknowledging Iroquois control over the Indians in those provinces, C.R., III, 193-203.

<sup>26</sup>Speech of Governor Thomas to Five Nations Delegates at Pennsbury Conference, July 9, 1742, C.R., IV, 575-76.

<sup>27</sup>Speech of Canassatego to Delawares at Pennsbury Conference, July 12, 1742, C.R., IV, 579-80.

change in the attitude of the Proprietary Government was not the sole cause for the deterioration of the relationship into war. One of the other reasons was a change in the Indian understanding of the sales and what they meant.

In part this change in the Indian viewpoint was due to increasing acceptance of white attitudes, whereby the Indian understood that he was being cheated, and that the white man was going to take more land. Other elements in the change were the shift from the many small purchases William Penn made to the infrequent large purchases of the mid-eighteenth century, the growing use by the Indians of their bargaining power, and the Iroquois claim on Pennsylvania.

Although Penn was careful to distinguish between the two, the Delawares and Conestoga before 1700 did not differentiate land sales from friendship-treaties. Furthermore, they soon placed implicit trust in Penn, granting their lands "to William Penn, Propriet<sup>r</sup> and Govern<sup>r</sup> of Pennsilvania, etc., his heires and assignes, forEver for ye consideration of so much Wampum and other things as he shall please to give unto me," or "at as reasonable Rates as other Indians have been used to sell in this River."<sup>28</sup> Sixty years later the Indian had adopted much of the white view about the permanence of land and the

<sup>28</sup>Deeds of June 23 to October 18, 1683, P.A., Ser. 1, I, 62-68.

impermanence of goods. "This Land you Claim is gone through Your Guts. You have been furnished with Cloaths and Meat and Drinks by the Goods paid you for it, and now you want it again, like the children you are."<sup>29</sup> He now feared that the white man would never stop taking his land and that "his children may wonder to see all their Fathers land gone from them."<sup>30</sup> The fate of other tribes was particularly exemplary.

By this Belt you tell me that the English have a Longing Eye after your Land, and desire that we may not covet any more of your Lands; and say further that we have got all the Land belonging to the Delawares, and shall serve you as we have done them.

and

By the same Belt you desire we will not think of making any more purchase of Land, or settling your Lands by Force; for if we do, we shall push you back, and leave you no Land to live or hunt upon<sup>31</sup>

Between 1682 and 1701 William Penn and his deputies made over twenty purchases of land, many of them fairly small, to cover the southeast corner of the province.<sup>32</sup> No further purchases were made until 1726 and the next major purchases

<sup>29</sup>Speech of Canassatego to Delawares at Pennsbury Conference, July 12, 1742, C.R., IV, 579.

<sup>30</sup>Speech of Sassoonan at Philadelphia Conference, June 5, 1728, C.R., III, 319.

<sup>31</sup>Governor Hamilton's answer to the Chiefs of the Six Nations at the Lancaster Conference, August 26, 1762, C.R., VIII, 763.

<sup>32</sup>P.A., Ser. 1, I, 47-146, passim; and Uhler, Indian Relations, pp. 23-39, citing "Genealogical Map."

were in 1732, 1736, and the 'walking purchase' in 1737. Some claims were bought from the Iroquois in 1742, and the Nanticokes in 1743, and the last major purchase before the French and Indian War was in 1749.<sup>33</sup> During the long period before expansion caught up to purchases in the 1730's, and even after there were no goods available except through fur trade or friendship-treaty presents. As will become apparent later, both blossomed after there were not enough land cessions to supply the Indians' wants.

When the sparse second round of sales began the Indians no longer placed implicit faith in the proprietors' offer. They discovered that the Province needed land, and could be made to pay a higher price.

The first Governour of this Place, Onash, (that is, Governour Penn,) when he first arrived here, sent to them to desire them to sell land to him, that they answered they would not sell it then, but they might do it in time to come, that being several times sent for they were now come to hear what the Governour had to offer. 34

People tell us that the proprietors receive immense Sums for the Lands we have sold them, and that Lands are now worth a great deal of money; 35

<sup>33</sup>P.A., Ser. 1, I, 344, 494, 541, and 641; II, 33. Uhler, Indian Relations, pp. 87-129.

<sup>34</sup>Speech of Tannewannegah, "Cayoogoe" Chief, at Philadelphia Conference, July 3, 1727, C.R., III, 272.

<sup>35</sup>Speech of Canassatego at Philadelphia Conference, August 16, 1749, C.R., V, 401.

We know our lands are now become more Valuable; the white People think we don't know their Value, but we are sensible that the land is Everlasting, and that the few goods we receive for it are soon Worn out and Gone; 36

One of the chief reasons that the Indians were willing to bargain with the lands was that the bargainers were not the residents. The Iroquois had beaten the Conestoga in 1675 and assumed domination over the Delawares about 1720.<sup>37</sup> It was the Iroquois hereafter who owned the land, --

That Country belongs to Us in right of Conquest -- We having bought it with our Blood, and taken it from our Enemies in fair War; and we Expect as Owners of that Land to receive such a Consideration for it as the Land is worth. 38

They criticized the Delaware for selling lands without informing them.

But how came 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. . . . this string of Wampum serves to forbid You, Your Children and Grand Children, to the latest Posterity, for ever meddling in Land Affairs, neither you nor any who shall descend from You, are ever hereafter to presume to sell any Land, . . . 39

<sup>36</sup>Speech of Canassatego at Philadelphia Conference, July 7, 1742, C.R., IV, 570.

<sup>37</sup>Hewitt, "Conestoga," and Mooney, "Delaware," Hodge, Handbook, I, 335, 385.

<sup>38</sup>Speech of Canassatego at Philadelphia Conference, July 7, 1742, C.R., IV, 571.

<sup>39</sup>Speech of Canassatego to Delawares at Pennsbury, July 12, 1742, C.R., IV, 579-80.

The end result of combined white pressure and Iroquois usurpation was that the Indians of Pennsylvania drifted west, where there was game and freedom. The Shawnee, homeless to begin with, moved into the Ohio Valley starting about 1700, and by 1740 were moving out again, and towards the Illinois country.<sup>40</sup> The Conestoga rapidly dispersed, and the Delaware lived in their assigned villages in the Wyoming Valley, from which they started to follow the Shawnee to the Ohio in the 1740's.<sup>41</sup>

The Delawares let it be known that they, too, had adopted white man's land values, because they felt cheated. They were also shamed by the Iroquois, but that is another matter. Teedyuscung registered their dissatisfaction at the famous Easton Conference on November 10, 1756. "This very Ground that is under me (striking it with his Foot) was my Land and Inheritance, and is taken from me by fraud."<sup>42</sup> Thus, the changed

<sup>40</sup>Downes, Council Fires, pp. 16-41.  
Speeches of "Shawanese" at Philadelphia Conference, October 5, 1732, C.R., III, 461-63.

<sup>41</sup>An Account of Conferences held and Treaties made, Between Major-general Sir William Johnson, Bart. and the Chief Sachems and Warriours of the [14 Tribes] Indian Nations of North America. . . . , pp. 10-14. Hereafter Account of Conferences.  
Downes, Council Fires, pp. 42-75.  
Heckwelder, Indian Nations, pp. 78-84.  
Mooney, "Delaware" Hodge, Handbook, I, 385.

<sup>42</sup>C.R., VII, 324, et seq.

attitude of the Proprietors and the adoption of these values by the Iroquois overlords certainly were important in causing the breakdown. In the case of relationship concerning land, Pennsylvania history shows that too much agreement in values can sometimes produce as much difficulty as too much disagreement.