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COLONIALISM AND THE DISCURSIVE ANTECEDENTS OF *PENN'S TREATY WITH THE INDIANS*

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On an autumn day in 1682, the legend goes, William Penn met leaders of the Lenapes to settle a unique treaty of peace and amity. According to the story told and retold during the subsequent centuries, the Native people quickly lost their initial fear when they met Penn and his unarmed company in the diffuse midmorning light. They supposedly stepped from under an “elm tree of prodigious size” shading their huts at the edge of the forest and stood or sat before Penn and his entourage, who were “all dressed in the plain habit of [their] sect.” Gathering beside “each other under the widely spreading branches” of the tree, several Lenapes examined Penn. In front of him, “spread upon the ground,” were “various articles of merchandise, intended as presents to the Indians,” and the Quaker proprietor “held in his hand a roll of parchment, containing the confirmation of the treaty of purchase and amity.” Benjamin West, who vividly portrayed the meeting in his 1771 painting, described the event as representing “savages brought into harmony and peace by justice and benevolence” and “a conquest that was made over native people without sword or dagger.”¹ Penn has exemplified religious and ethnic toleration ever since.

Although the story of Penn's Treaty enjoyed widespread prestige as historical fact well into the twentieth century, most contemporary historians

suspect that the meeting may never have occurred, at least not as traditionally described. Some historians have come to regard Penn's reputation as exaggerated, but others still identify Penn's relationship with the Lenapes as "exemplary," "kind," "benevolent," or "altruistic"—even when they admit that Penn also sought profit or condescended to the indigenous people. Historians still praise Penn through quotations of his writings, through references to his practice of buying, rather than expropriating, Indian land, and through the contrasting example of James Logan's less scrupulous real estate deals with Lenape and Susquehannock leaders in the 1730s.²

The story of Pennsylvania's benevolent origins is an allegory of colonialism propagated by Penn and later colonists that has obscured the significance of both the severe disruption of Lenape life that Pennsylvania created and the resistance of some Lenapes to that disruption. Within the wary, wondering, and studying gaze that Benjamin West gave many of the Lenapes is a hint of the consciousness that challenged Pennsylvania in the 1680s and 1690s, a perspective that was informed by experience with European colonists dating back to the 1620s and 1630s when Holland and Sweden attempted to colonize the Lenapes' homeland.³ From their experience with the Dutch and the Swedes, Delaware Valley Native people had come to expect that colonial expansion would be modest and manageable, and that often it might fail completely. European immigration remained slight throughout the period of the absorption of New Sweden into New Netherland in 1655 and the English conquest of 1664. Colonists and Lenapes had developed a pidgin dialect of the Lenapes' Unami language—the "Delaware Jargon"—and the trade it facilitated fostered personal relationships between a small group of Dutch and Swedish interpreters and Lenape leaders. Perhaps most important, long before Penn arrived in the valley, these interactions shaped discursive conventions for diplomatic councils in which Natives and Europeans covered everyday problems and conflicting expectations with a rhetoric of a unity, brotherhood, and friendship that, while keenly felt, was also tactical. Inside and outside of councils, misunderstandings remained frequent, especially when they involved the contrasting gender, leadership, and land-use practices of Lenapes and colonists.⁴

The Quaker colonization of the Delaware Valley benefited from the personal relationships already established by Swedish and Dutch colonists and Lenape willingness to allow Europeans to live on the land. But Quakers



Figure 3 Benjamin West, *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, 1771. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison (The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection).

also began a period of determined effort to transform the region both materially and culturally. After Penn's founding of Pennsylvania, compromise was increasingly a Lenape obligation, and brotherhood and friendship increasingly required Lenape subordination. Penn hoped to alter Lenape society fundamentally by bringing thousands of model colonists to live among them. Those colonists placed unprecedented pressure on Lenape gender, leadership, and land-use practices, forcing tough decisions. Some Lenape bands chose to leave the Delaware Valley and others chose to stay and adjust. In either case, Lenapes continued to use the discourse of brotherhood and friendship in councils and to seek affirmations of future justice and security from rapidly growing Pennsylvania, thus contributing their own voices to the archive that would form the myth depicted in Benjamin West's *Penn's Treaty with the Indians*.⁵

European colonization had begun sporadically. In the summer of 1634

a man on the western shore of Delaware Bay observed a ship and its scouting shallop sailing toward the shore. According to Thomas Young, the English captain of the vessel, the man ran along the coastline calling to the shallop's crew. When the boat landed, four other men came out of the woods, but only one was willing to go with the crew to the larger ship waiting in the bay. Young wrote that he "entertained" the unnamed Lenape man "courteously," giving him food and querying him about the bay. Young's interpreter and the Lenapes were probably already communicating through an early version of the Delaware Jargon.⁶ The jargon simplified Unami grammar, emphasizing terms useful for trade, such as those dealing with weather, environment, time, trees, fruits, animals, and household goods. Communicating through this imperfect medium, Young gathered that the people of the Delaware Valley were already familiar with European trading and exploration vessels, which periodically visited the area. In fact, Lenape and Mahican men and women had probably traded for European goods as early as 1609. The Dutch had built settlements and forts along the Delaware River in 1623, 1624, and 1632, though all had been destroyed by the Lenapes or abandoned by the colonists.⁷

The jargon worked well for simple trade, but it was poorly suited for more complicated ideas, such as sovereignty, property, and the gender dynamics of social authority. It expressed concepts that were new to the Lenapes through the creation of compound words. One version of the Delaware Jargon created terms for "God the Father," "God the Son," and "God the Holy Ghost" through various combinations of Unami words for "spirit," "father," "son," and "dance." European colonists showed little interest in learning Lenape concepts clearly; thus a word for spirit was often translated as "devil."⁸ With complex ideas such as these at stake, misunderstandings were endemic.

The fact that Lenape sachems submitted themselves and the land to the simultaneous and sole sovereign authority of three different and competing colonial powers during the 1630s indicates the extent to which key ideas were lost in translation. When the Lenape spokesmen Mattawiraka, Mittotscheming, Peminaka, and Mahamen met the first Swedish colonists in 1638 and made their marks on a deed transferring most of the Delaware River valley to Sweden, they began a long argument with colonists about the meaning of the councils that produced such documents. Europeans were buying one idea—absolute and inalienable right and sovereignty over the land and people—but the Lenapes appear to have been selling another,



the right to use restricted areas for settlement, trade, and agriculture. For Lenapes, the political authority Europeans imputed to the term *sovereignty* was associated primarily with kin groups, not with the land or with a suprafamilial state.⁹ And the relational significance of trade for Lenapes—distinct from European thinking about commodity accumulation—could easily be missed or misunderstood, if not ignored. Lenapes desired manufactured goods, but they likely also sought to establish an alliance, not subordinate themselves to a foreign power.¹⁰

During the early 1640s, these competing principles of control contributed to several crises. In 1648, for example, Mattawiraka and another Lenape named Wassiminetto played the Swedish and Dutch against each other. Upset that the Swedes had settled on the banks of the Schuylkill River on land never intended for their occupation—despite the fact that the 1638 deed Mattawiraka had signed supposedly represented a transfer of the entire valley to them—the headmen approached the Dutch and asked why they did not build on the river as the Swedish had done. Fearing that the Swedes would gain control of the river and block them from the fur trade with the Susquehannocks, the Dutch accepted the Lenape invitation and built a trading station near the Swedish post.¹¹ The Lenapes planted the flag of the prince of Orange and ordered the Dutch to fire three shots to notify the nearby Swedes of their presence. Dutch representatives took these acts as “a sign of possession” because they wanted to believe that Native people supported their claim. The Lenapes, however, probably used the ceremony to assert their sole authority to determine which limited portions of land their trading partners could occupy. When the Swedes came to protest, the sachems took the opportunity to demand by what right they had settled in this and several other areas in the first place. They expressed wonder that the Swedish colonists attempted to prescribe laws for them and tell them what to do with their own possessions, people, and land.¹²

Between 1648 and 1654, no ships arrived from Sweden at all. The Swedes were not supplied well enough to expand their territorial claims; the Dutch showed no resolve to seize control of the Delaware; and the Lenapes, wanting trade with the colonists in order to facilitate diplomacy with interior tribes, were not inclined to destroy the colonial settlements. A long, slow cross-cultural chess game of deeds, claims, counterclaims, forts, and threats thus ensued among the three parties.¹³

This imperial rivalry soon revealed important distinctions in how Euro-

peans and Lenapes gendered property rights. In 1651, the Dutch met with the sachems Peminaka and Mattawiraka and convinced them to sell a tract of land on the eastern bank of the Schuylkill. The Swedes, in turn, appealed to a “widow” named Notike, along with her son Kiapes, to challenge Peminaka’s right to give the land to the Dutch. According to Notike and her kin, Peminaka had been given only the right to hunt on the lands south of the river by Notike’s deceased husband. He had no right to sell.¹⁴ Mattawiraka and Peminaka spoke for matrilineal groups centered on women such as Notike. As the principal institution of the Lenape political, social, and economic order, such kin groups gave Notike and other women considerable influence. A Lenape individual derived identity and position within the community from his or her matrilineage. Men inherited the right to be considered for political office through their mother’s line, but the actual choice lay with the community’s elder women, who were also often responsible for brokering peace with rival communities. Women also produced more than half the community’s food as well as surplus corn and tobacco for trade with the colonists and derived much of their influence from the distribution of these goods and the planting grounds that produced them.¹⁵

The importance of these intercommunity gender dynamics for land transactions with Europeans, however, appears to have been lost on the Swedish and Dutch. The Swedish translation of Notike’s position as “widow” separated her from the extended kin group that was the source of her position within her community and placed her instead within a patrilineal and patriarchal model in which women had no property rights beyond those derived from their husbands. How closely Notike and other female and male leaders in the Delaware Valley Lenape communities could follow matrilineal kinship rules in an era of new pressures from an aggressive and patriarchal colonial power is difficult to determine. The colonists clearly showed a predisposition to regard the male sachems as the sole authority with whom they had to negotiate, and the women may therefore have lost some of their customary authority. But even when men traded furs for agricultural implements, they were exchanging the products of male hunting for the tools of female horticultural production. Throughout the seventeenth century, Lenape women must have had a fundamental influence on community decisions, a role elided from most of the documentary record.¹⁶

When Sweden sent new supplies and a new governor, Johan Rising, in

1654, Lenape leaders—probably all men—quickly proposed a council. If earlier meetings revealed distinct land-use and gender practices, the record of this meeting reveals significant cross-cultural complexities and pitfalls in communication itself. The new governor believed that the Lenapes desired to “come to a pact of friendship and alliance” in which he would be expected “to present them with gifts.”¹⁷ In council the governor thanked them for their friendship and expressed a wish for their relationship to remain “friendly,” an intention “to treat them well,” and a desire to “damage neither their people nor their plantations and possessions.” He urged them to make a firm alliance with him and to confirm earlier Swedish land purchases. To all this, the headmen politely answered “Yes.” Nachaman, a spokesman from the western bank of the Delaware, praised the Swedes and chastised Lenapes who refused to “see what good friends these are that bring us such gifts.” In the past, said Nachaman, Lenapes and Swedes had been as “one body and one heart,” and “so should they hereafter be.” He promised the Lenapes would maintain a “firmer friendship . . . which he extolled with words, images, gestures and grand airs,” at which the Swedes “had to marvel.” Nachaman’s choice of words seems particularly significant. He glossed a recent history of tension and disagreement with statements of perfect unity and friendship, a tactful and diplomatic misrepresentation of the recent past in the hope of a better future. And importantly, this snippet of council discourse is virtually identical to later statements describing William Penn.¹⁸

Although the Lenapes invited the Swedes to build a fort and houses near their largest village, which was on the future site of Philadelphia, the apparently smooth proceedings concealed subtle misunderstandings. The sachems crouched on the floor, while the Swedes either stood or sat around a table. In the midst of the discussions, one Lenape spokesman climbed up on the table and sat directly in its center. A Swedish witness described the act as a comical sign of Indian incivility. For Lenapes accustomed in their meetings to sit on an equal plane on the floor, however, the table may have affronted protocol. By sitting on it, the speaker leveled it and turned its flat top into another floor. By not objecting to this gesture, the Swedish seemed to accept the statement. Neither side needed to understand the other to have come away satisfied with its own performance—and convinced of the incivility of the other.¹⁹

Translations revealed problems too. The interpreter at the 1654 council was a soldier named Gregorius van Dyck who had lived in the colony for

fourteen years and had served in a similar capacity at least since the meetings with Notike in 1651. Toward the end of the meeting van Dyck mis-translated one Lenape's metaphorical description of an epidemic that had spread through his community "like fire all around the ship" that seemed to bring it from Europe. The amused Swedes attributed the statement to ignorance about the effect of the salt water glistening in the sun as it sprayed from a vessel, and the governor recommended faith in God to the Lenapes. "You are crazy, you old fool," the irritated Lenape spokesman lashed out at the translator. "Before you always used to say that I lied, but now you lie." Van Dyck, in a condescending effort to correct his blunder, admitted, "You may indeed be right, I did not believe you to be so intelligent, I am in this matter not so wise."²⁰ When such simple statements as an expression of concern about shipborne disease could cause an uproar, it is not surprising that subtle cultural connotations of deeds and gifts could lead to much more serious disputes when they simultaneously signified subordination to Swedish authority, in the colonists' minds, and an alliance of equals, to the Lenapes.

In 1655, the year following the dispute over metaphors for disease, the Dutch sailed up the Delaware in force and conquered New Sweden. The population of the colony had been only about four hundred, many of whom remained under the new regime. During the transition, local access to European trade goods must have been limited, and Lenapes and Swedes probably had to obtain them through the Dutch towns of New Amstel on the lower Delaware and New Amsterdam on the Hudson. After 1664, when the Dutch lost New Netherland to the English, trade, principally with the towns now known as New Castle and New York, probably decayed further. It certainly did not expand, and the colony's total Euro-American population probably did not exceed seven hundred. In the relative absence of the exchanges and gift-giving that maintained the right of Europeans to live in the Lenape homeland, attacks on colonists appear to have increased. The English authorities claimed in 1670 and 1671 that since the conquest, Lenapes and Susquehannocks had killed at least ten colonists and taken supplies from several others.²¹

Despite, or perhaps because of, such troubles, in this period the number of Swedish and Dutch colonists who knew the Delaware Jargon and individual Lenapes at least as well as did Gregorius van Dyck, multiplied.²² Among these were interpreters such as Peter Cock and Peter Rambo. These men were not soldiers like van Dyck; they were farmers engaged in plant-



ing and in trading directly with local Lenapes for furs and hides. Their understandings and misunderstandings of the Lenapes—from pidgin to perceptions of property—became a formative influence on English Pennsylvanians' initial understanding of and approach to the local Native people. It was probably these men who taught William Penn what he knew of the Delaware Jargon. Among the most important of the early Pennsylvania interpreters was Peter Cock's son Lars. He was born in New Sweden in 1646, probably on the Schuylkill River where his father was one of eight tobacco farmers. By 1675 the younger man had long-standing relationships with Lenapes living at the future site of Philadelphia and was serving New York Governor Edmund Andros as an interpreter. Lars Cock probably translated Penn's early statements to the sachems in 1681, and he interpreted at two initial meetings between William Markham, Penn's representative, and the Lenapes in 1682. The second of these councils probably occurred at his house. An equally important interpreter, trader Israel Helme, became active as early as 1659. English colonial authorities turned to him for advice in 1671 when two Lenape men were accused of killing an English colonist. In 1675 and 1677 the Swedish colonists recommended him as an interpreter for the newly arriving West New Jersey Quakers. And he mediated a 1679 land dispute between New York and the Lenapes.²³

Although there was sporadic violence, each side appears to have made a decision to pursue nonmilitary strategies. In 1670, Israel Helme, Peter Cock, and Peter Rambo participated in a council at which Susquehannock spokesmen urged the Lenapes not to "kill any more of the Christians." The Lenapes, they cautioned "must know that they are surrounded by Christians." Moreover, "if they went to war, where would they then get powder and ball?" Later, in 1675, Lenapes participated in two councils that reformed their relations with other Native peoples and with the English colonists. As a result of the first meeting between the Lenapes, Susquehannocks, and the Five Nations Iroquois, twenty-six Susquehannock families joined the Lenapes. At the second council, mediated by Helme and other Swedish interpreters, New York Governor Edmund Andros arranged for communication and trade between the sachems and his colony.²⁴ Attacks on Delaware River colonists ceased.

With the aid of Andros and Swedish and Dutch interpreters, Quakers began moving into the Delaware Valley in the 1670s. Approximately 1,400 colonists arrived in West Jersey between 1677 and 1681, more than double the entire European population of the region during the previous half-

century.²⁵ The demographic dimensions of immigration changed too. The newcomers frequently came as families, not simply as individuals, and the expectations they brought to gender and kinship relations complicated communication with the Lenapes at the same time that their desire for land provoked hostility. "The Indians hate the Quakers on account of their covetousness and deceitfulness," claimed a Dutch traveler. Although "hate" may have been an exaggeration, clearly not all Lenapes were comfortable with Quaker colonization.²⁶

The new colonists received ample advice about how to deal with the Lenapes, but, however benevolent in intentions that advice may have been, it was colonial in its implicit assumptions that right order and law were absent among the Native population. Quaker theologian George Fox traveled through West Jersey in 1672 and advised Friends immigrating to that colony that "the eyes of other governments or colonies will be upon you; yea the Indians to see if you order your lives and conversations." Edward Byllynge, credited with formulating many of West Jersey's early laws—and presaging William Penn's policies—advised colonists to negotiate land acquisitions, resolve conflicts with the Indians according to "law and equity," and convict Native people of crimes only after a trial by a jury composed of equal numbers of Europeans and Indians. West Jersey Quaker colonists relied on the Swedes and on Dutch interpreters to communicate these ideas to the Lenapes. Just how such men as Helme and Jacob Falkinburg, a Dutch resident and interpreter, represented the ambitions of the Quakers is unrecorded, but through three deeds Quakers eventually claimed possession of land on the eastern bank of the Delaware extending several miles inland from the falls to the southernmost border of the former New Sweden colony.²⁷

West Jersey Quakers matched these exaggerated land claims with similarly exaggerated claims of harmony and unity in their relationship with the Lenapes, but the reality was more complicated. In 1679, colonists became concerned about rumors that the Lenapes were planning to destroy the colony before it became too populous. According to rumor, the Lenapes believed the colonists had brought "them the *Small-Pox*, with the Mach Coat they had" sold them. The colonists and Lenape headmen (with "many more *Indians*") met to discuss the problem. The English recalled what they regarded as careful purchases and complained that because they had been just, kind, and respectful, they knew no reason why the Lenapes should attack them. "Our Young Men may Speak Such Words as we do



not like, nor approve of,” one Native spokesman responded, “and we cannot help that.” But similarly, he continued, “some of your Young Men may speak such Words as you do not like, and you cannot help that.” The dispute was then buried under what had become the common discursive practice of Delaware Valley council meetings: “We are your Brothers,” the Lenape proclaimed, “and intend to live like brothers with you.” He observed “as to the *Small-Pox*,” that there had also been an epidemic in his “*Grandfathers* time” and his “*Fathers* time.” The English had not lived in the country then, and just as they had not been responsible for those epidemics, so were they guiltless in the more recent outbreak.²⁸

What had begun as a meeting to discuss a conflict over Quaker immigration and disease thus ended with affirmations of brotherhood—without actually understanding the cultural dynamics that produced the conflict. Yet the speaker’s concern about rumors and how young men might talk outside the formal council settings where discourses of brotherhood and alliance prevailed revealed how the growing number of colonists increased the frequency of disruptive everyday encounters between colonists and Lenapes. Still, these encounters did not usually produce inflammatory remarks. The 1679 travel narrative of Zeelander Jasper Danckaerts suggests that face-to-face meetings between colonists and Lenapes were common. Danckaerts, possessing little or no knowledge of the Delaware Jargon and receiving only occasional help from interpreters, communicated mostly through the exchange of objects and gestures. He frequently encountered Native people, several of whom seemed to specialize in aiding travelers like him. On one occasion, he recalled, “while we were waiting, and it began to get towards evening, an Indian came on the opposite side of the creek . . . [with] a canoe in which he would carry us over, and we might swim the horses across.” On another day, at “about three o’clock in the afternoon a young Indian arrived” at the travelers’ lodging and “agreed to act as our guide, for a duffels coat which would cost twenty-four guilder in zeewant [wampum].” On another occasion a Native man appeared to help Danckaert’s party cross still another creek: “The Indian, having made himself ready, took both our sacks together and tied them on his back for the purpose of carrying them, as we were very tired.”²⁹

When reflecting upon such encounters, colonists represented Lenape cultural practices in a way that conformed to European expectations. This was particularly common in discussions of gender. Danckaerts described one Lenape woman as the “wife” of a “king or sackemaker” and as a

"Queen" while emphasizing her domestic—not political—duties. Similarly, Gabriel Thomas, an English colonist, created a dialogue to describe "the manner of Discourse that happens between [the 'Indians'] and the Neighboring Christians . . . when they meet one another in the Woods." The dialogue is an interestingly one-sided exchange by means of question and answer in which an "Indian" man is plied for information about the commodities he owns, his "house," whether he has a "wife," and how many children he has had with her. In his effort to promote a gendered model of exchange he understood—that is, between individual, property-owning men—Thomas ignored the extended kinship relations and the matrilineal practices of the Lenapes.³⁰

Representations of gendered Lenape political roles in colonial promotional literature similarly elided other differences. *A True Account of the Dying Words of Ockanikon*, published by West New Jersey and London Quakers in 1682, portrayed its subject as if he were a proto-Christian monarch. According to the pamphlet, when Ockanikon died in West New Jersey at the house of the Dutch interpreter Jacob Falkenburg, the Lenape's nephew, his wife, a shaman, four English women, and a Quaker proprietor of the colony were present along with Falkenburg to witness the process of anointing a new sachem. *A True Account* managed to transform what would have been a matrilineal decision by Ockanikon, his "wife" Matolli-onequay, his unnamed mother, and other elder women into a male inheritance drama reminiscent of European noble families. Schoppe and Swampisse—men Ockanikon had previously desired to succeed him—had, the pamphlet explained, insulted the "King" by avoiding his deathbed. Ockanikon's brother's son, Jahcourseoe, thus became the "Intended King" in their place, when Ockanikon urged him to assume an active role in his people's councils.³¹

Whatever may actually have been transpiring in this succession drama, its gendered dimensions were misrepresented to readers of *A True Account* through an emphasis on male terminology to describe Ockanikon's relationships to his potential successors. The nephew Jahcourseoe was indeed the dying man's brother's son—but his more salient claim to inheritance was that he was the grandson of Ockanikon's mother. Nonetheless, it appears that the elderly women of the lineage to which both Ockanikon and Jahcourseoe belonged did not find the nephew an acceptable candidate, and their objections may have been behind Schoppe's and Swampisse's boycott of the deathbed scene. Two months later, when the Lenapes and William



Penn's representatives negotiated the first agreements for land to settle the Pennsylvania colony, these two men were among the Lenapes who participated. Jahcourse, the "Intended King," was not.³²

A *True Account* conveyed a portrait of Lenape religious beliefs that was just as distorted—or at least as confused—as that of the role of gender in political succession. After designating Jahcourse as his successor and instructing him to live peacefully with the Christians, Ockanikon was asked whether there was "*a great God, who Created all things, and this God giveth Man an understanding of what is Good, and what is Bad, and after this life rewardeth the Good with Blessings, and the Bad according to their Doings.*" The question reflected a central tenet of Quakerism: all individuals possess God's inner light and the ability to know his saving power. According to the pamphlet, Ockanikon answered, "*It is very true, it is so, there are two Wayes, a broad Way, and a strait Way; there be two Paths, a broad Path and a strait Path; the worst, and the greatest Number go in the broad Path, the best go in the strait Path.*"³³ For Quaker readers, this demonstrated the Lenape man's understanding of true religion and of the validity of Friends' belief in the inner light.

Yet Ockanikon may actually have been ridiculing Quakers from his deathbed. He certainly had been critical of the English before, challenging, for instance, the right of New York Governor Edmund Andros to order surveys of Lenape lands. Moreover, Ockanikon may have been extending the path metaphor used by an unnamed Lenape spokesman (perhaps Ockanikon himself) who declared to the West New Jersey colonists in 1679 that his people were "*willing to have a broad Path for you and us to walk in, and if an Indian is asleep in this Path, the English-man shall pass him by . . . and if an English-man is asleep in this path, the Indian shall pass him by, and say, He is an English-man, he is asleep, let him alone, he loves to sleep.*"³⁴ By stating in a room full of European colonists as he died that "the worst and greatest number" chose the broad path, the dying Lenape may have associated that path with the English and those Lenapes who would live like them.

The broad path had hardly led to a place of blissful slumber for the Lenapes. Even while William Penn's representatives were relying on Swedish and Dutch interpreters to establish his relationship with the Lenapes, the Founder wrote to their leaders and asserted that he was "very Sensible of the unkindness and Injustice that hath been too much exercised toward you." The colonizing peoples of Europe, Penn claimed, had too often

sought "to make great Advantages" of the Indians "rather then be examples of Justice and Goodness unto" them. These injustices had "caused great Grudgings and Animosities, sometimes to the shedding of blood," but Penn hoped that his warm regard would "Winn" them. It is easy, however, to misconstrue the Founder's sentiments. He wrote his letter "To the Kings of the Indians" only after he had secured his royal charter, sold thousands of acres of Lenape land, and dispatched the first boatloads of colonists to North America. Only later did he purchase the land from the Lenapes and then, he said, only because he "followed the Bishop of London's councill" in "buying and not taking away the natives land."³⁵ Moreover, the Lenapes were not as uniformly grudging against the Europeans as Penn believed. After all, they had so far been successful in limiting colonial settlements. Their response to Penn was consistent with earlier patterns: they made strangers into symbolic "brothers" for the purposes of trade and alliance, attempted to maintain the integrity of their land base, and connected the arrival of the shiploads of colonists with the diseases that spread among them. But the sachems could not have anticipated the influx of immigrants that would arrive after 1682.

Still, as a pacifist, Penn never intended the military conquest of the Lenapes. Penn reminded readers of his promotional pamphlet, *Some Account of Pennsylvania*, that some ancient colonizers had made colonies flourish by conquering the minds rather than the bodies of barbarians. Battling "barbarity" rather than killing people, they had "not only reduc'd but moraliz'd the Manners of the Nations they subjected." Penn hoped that the immigrants to Pennsylvania would be the agents of a similar transformation by offering the Lenapes examples of appropriate industry and civility. Colonies were "begun and nourished by the care of wise and populous Countries; as conceiving them best for the increase of Humane Stock, and beneficial for Commerce." Ideal colonists, therefore, would be "industrious husbandmen" and day-laborers, "laborious handicraftsmen," "ingenious spirits much oppressed for want of a livelihood," younger disinherited sons, and lastly, men of "universal spirits" who "understand and delight to promote good Discipline."³⁶

Two years later, after he had made his journey to the Delaware Valley, Penn compared the Lenapes with the ideal colonists he was seeking in order to demonstrate their capacity for assimilation. His *Letter to the Society of Traders* accentuated the Lenapes' basic virtue but noted several areas in which they were yet uncivil. Penn considered their language "lofty" but

"wanting in moods and tenses" and vocabulary, an observation that suggests Penn was only familiar with the limited Delaware Jargon of his Swedish and Dutch interpreters. The Lenapes' manners, he alleged, were volatile. Although great orators, they were also "great Concealers" of their thoughts and intentions due to the "Revenge that hath been practised among them." They gained their livelihood with ease. "We sweat and toil to live; their pleasure feeds them, I mean, their Hunting, Fishing and Fowling, and this table is spread every where."³⁷ As a Quaker, Penn believed Lenapes possessed the access to God's saving grace and eternal truth that made them as much God's creatures as any other person. Though not yet "civilized," the Lenapes, he believed, showed potential to be reformed. They recognized that one great God ruled the world and all things. Like Quakers, they practiced consensus politics whenever considering something of importance. Their personal appearance was very simple and functional. And they had what Penn described as "kings" who ruled the common people. Such Lenape Indians would have seemed strange to Penn's ideal colonists, but in demonstrating the potential to submit to deeds and the proprietary government, they demonstrated the potential to assimilate and presumably vanish into the "good Discipline" of the "Holy Experiment."

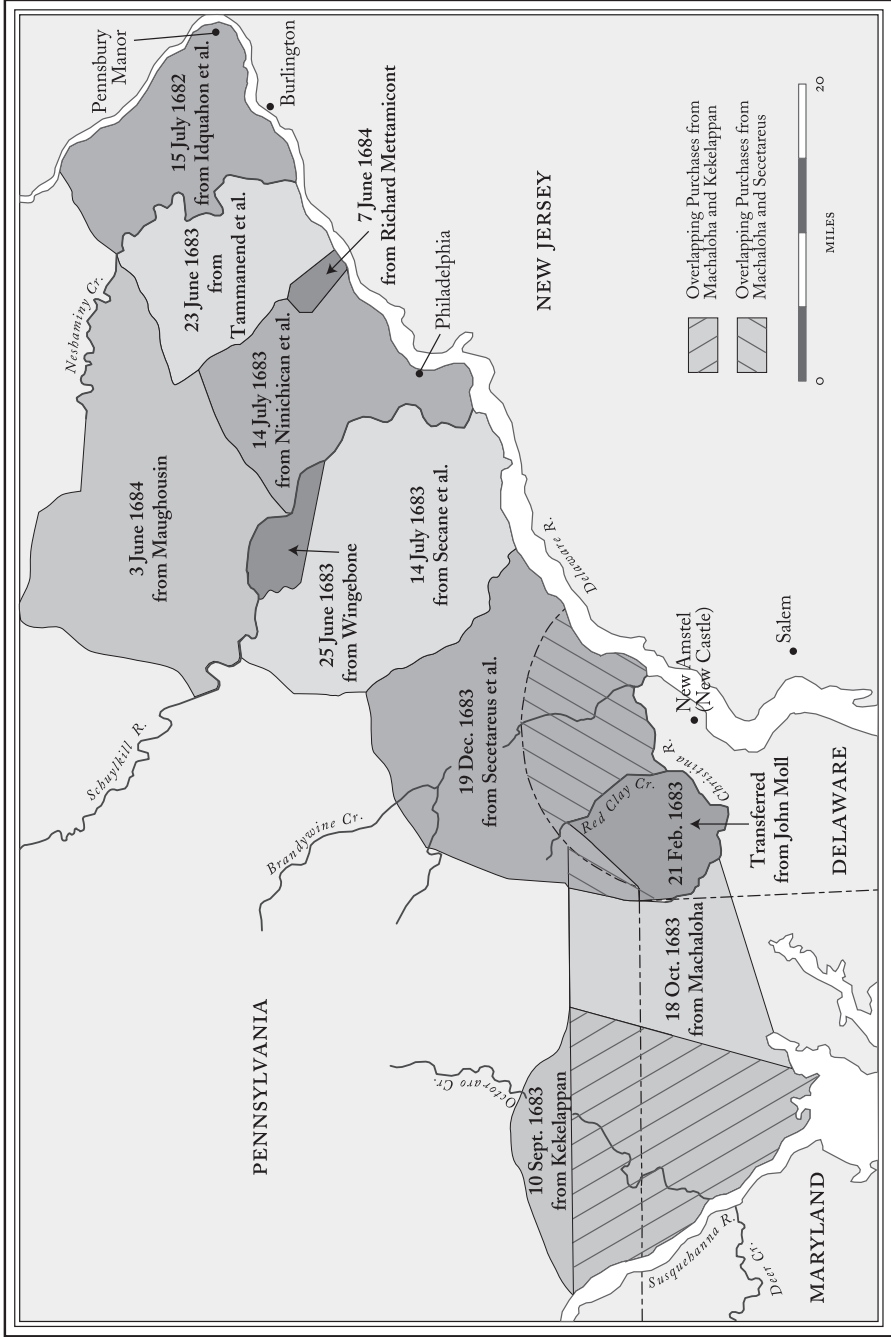
Neither Penn nor any of his contemporary Quaker colonists in Pennsylvania made serious missionary efforts among the Lenapes and Susquehannocks, perhaps mainly because they believed that it was "a moral impossibility to accept religious beliefs on other men's directives."³⁸ Penn did, however, take steps to replace the Native political and economic order, and, although as a pacifist he renounced military force, he fully endorsed the juridical claims of English political culture and expected that English law and custom would ultimately rule. Penn, his deputies, and prominent planters wrote of intentions to have trial by jury using "Six planters and Six natives." But trial by jury was an English institution not necessarily consistent with the kin-based system practiced by the Lenapes. The colonists promised to make amends for offenses of "Word and Deed" but assumed that legitimate disputes would conform to English definitions of authority as recognized by "fellow planters." Similarly, they pledged that the Lenapes would have "liberty to do all things relating to improvement of their Ground, and providing sustenance for the families, that any of the planters enjoy."³⁹ Yet the only liberties to be enjoyed were those defined by English standards. Such Native rights as that of granting overlapping

prerogatives to use the land under the control of different matrilineal families whose leaders—men and women—managed resources for a community of kin would not be recognized.

At first the Pennsylvania colonists were tactful and compromising with the Lenapes, whose spokesmen were cautious but persistent in seeking clarity from the colonists. Although the first deed that Penn's agents negotiated with the help of Lars Cock purported to give the land to Penn's "Heires and Assignes forever," it had to be renegotiated when leaders of other local or kin groups appeared with claims to some of the same land. Several signers of the first deed also signed the second deed, which stipulated more carefully how payment should occur and added various memoranda that attempted to clarify the relationship between colonists and Natives. These urged each side to share intelligence of possible attacks by European and Indian enemies and affirmed a desire for peaceful conflict resolution. They called for freedom of travel, which would protect traders' access to the inland Susquehannocks and Five Nations, on the one hand, and Lenape access to fishing and hunting resources, on the other. And the memoranda called for "a Meeting once every year" to read the stipulations of the agreement—and presumably for the sachems to receive ceremonial gifts from the Quaker colonists.⁴⁰

Penn's recruitment of the colonists he hoped would be examples for the Lenapes to emulate resulted in population increase in Pennsylvania that greatly outpaced the growth in West New Jersey, putting unprecedented pressure on the Lenapes' gendered patterns of land use. An estimated ninety ships carrying 7,200 people arrived in Pennsylvania between 1682 and 1685. By 1700 there were approximately 3,500 colonists along the eastern bank of the Delaware and 20,000 in Pennsylvania. By 1683 game had become so depleted that Lenape men began charging English colonists prices twice as high as what they had formerly charged the Swedish and Dutch. The European influx also resulted in the unceremonious appropriation of fields belonging to Lenape women. Thomas Paschall wrote in 1683 that he knew "a man together with two or three more that have happened upon a piece of Land of some Hundred Acres, that is all cleare, without Trees." Indeed, said Paschall, "the farther a man goes in the Country the more such Land they find."⁴¹

The competition for resources that resulted from unprecedented immigration, compounded by Penn's claim to absolute proprietorship, caused an early controversy in which the sachem who owned the site of the leg-



Map 3 Approximate boundaries of William Penn's purchases from the Indians, 1682-84. Revised with the assistance of Louis M. Waddell from Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, eds., *The Papers of William Penn*, vol. 2: 1680-1684 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 491.

endary first treaty with the proprietor renounced his “brotherhood” with the English. In 1683, Ninichican had endorsed a deed that claimed to “graunt, Sell and dispose all [his] Right, Title and Interest” to land that included the treaty site, that he had been “in hand paid,” and that the receipt had been “acknowledged” by him. Peter Rambo and Swan Swanson, Swedish colonists who had been living nearby for many years and whose families had been trading with local Lenapes since the 1650s, were among the chief interpreters. Later, in September 1683, Penn gave orders to have thousands of acres of this land—including Lenape planting grounds—surveyed. Five thousand acres were to be laid out “so taking in the low Land at Matsonk which the Indians doe plant on.” By late 1684, according to a colonist’s letter to Penn, Ninichican and “the Indians” were “Mutch displeased at our English settling upon their Land, and seeme to Threaten us, saying that William Penn hath deceived them not paying for what he bought of them.” Ninichican was particularly “out of patience” and said that “William Penn shall be his brother no more.” The writer hoped that the provincial court would be able to settle the sachems’ complaint within two or three weeks, but there is no record of a council to resolve the dispute.⁴²

A similar controversy developed after the sachem Tammanend made his mark on a deed in 1683, while Penn was still in the Delaware Valley. Within a year, Tammanend was angry about the expansion of Pennsylvania into what the colonists were calling Bucks County. The sachem insisted that he had not been paid for the territory, drove off some Euro-American colonists, and threatened to use force against colonial surveyors. Agent Thomas Holme wrote to Penn twice about the incidents, but he probably reached an agreement with Tammanend without Penn’s input and with the help of local Swedish and Dutch interpreters, who would certainly have advised compromise. When Penn did send instructions in June 1685, he told Holme to be firm with Tammanend. “I gave them many matchcoats, stockings and some Guns in earnest,” Penn wrote. “If therefore they are rude and unruly, you must make them keep their word by Just course.” Indeed, he continued, “*If the Indians will not punish [Tammanend], we will and must*, for they must never see you afraid of executing the Justice they ought to do.”⁴³ Penn wrote these words only a few months before claiming in *A Further Account of Pennsylvania* that rumors of difficulties with the Indians in Pennsylvania were spurious and that “so far are we from ill terms with the Natives, that we have liv’d in a great friendship.” The Len-



apes, he continued, "offer us no affront, not so much as to one of our Dogs; and if any of them break our laws, they submit to be punished by them: and to this they have tied themselves by an obligation under their own hands."⁴⁴

Penn actively sought to "extinguish" the "Indian encumbrance" on the land through English property law, but the Lenapes apparently expected to receive regular payments for the colonists' continued residence upon the land. In 1684, colonial petitioners complained that Penn had made no regular purchases from the Lenapes. Instead, the sachems had merely accepted gifts and given promises allowing the colonists "to sit down thereon . . . so long as the Proprietarys reciprocal Kindness continue to them in his daily gifts and Presents." This, the colonists insisted, was an unacceptable situation. The petitioners requested that the land be surveyed and that they be required to pay for it only once. In his defense, Penn asserted that onetime fee purchases were what he had always intended and negotiated with the Lenapes.⁴⁵ But the sachems clearly only intended to admit Penn to the rights of a sachem—a "brotherhood" of reciprocal obligation and shared authority—not the absolute proprietary rights that Penn and the colonists wanted. They therefore expected Penn and the colonists to give them regular gifts in order to maintain the right to live on the land.

But Penn and the colonists insisted that surveying and expansion continue, and they continued to produce conflict. In the early 1680s, colonists twice complained to the Provincial Council about Indians killing swine. In early summer 1686, the violence escalated when Lenapes living in the vicinity of Philadelphia held a dance near the house of a Zachariah Whitpain. Whitpain attended the ceremonies, then went home to bed. Later that night, several Lenapes allegedly killed the entire family of his neighbor, Nicholas Skull, sparing only a young Irish servant; the attackers may have been seeking Israel Taylor, a deputy surveyor active in the area who was staying at Whitpain's house. When the servant who escaped the slaughter at the Skulls' ran three-quarters of a mile to warn Whitpain that the Indians were "Coming with Firebrands" to burn down his house, Whitpain escaped for Philadelphia. Too afraid to flee, Taylor hid in the house all night, but the Lenapes neither burned nor broke into it. In the following weeks the sachems from above the falls held dances and reiterated a threat to kill Israel Taylor if he surveyed any land "before it be bought." With the aid of two Swedish interpreters, Pennsylvania authorities set a date to meet Swampisse and the other sachems.⁴⁶ If they had attempted to implement

Penn's instructions to punish the Natives' rudeness and disorderly conduct, they would have met with considerable resistance.

The deed that was supposedly signed on this occasion has not survived, but other conveyances from the mid-1680s sought to force the Lenapes to accept an absolute and permanent transfer of the many overlapping land rights they possessed. One such document conveyed land to "William Penn his Heirs and Assignes for Ever without any mollestation or hinderance from or by Us or . . . any other Indians whatsoever that shall or may Claime any Right Title or Interest." As Penn wrote in his 1690 *Some Proposals for a Second Settlement*, he believed that he was terminating "Indian Pretensions" to the land fairly by "purchasing their title from them, and so [to] settle with their consent."⁴⁷ In 1692, however, Tammanend again challenged Pennsylvania's expansion into the interior. This time he was one of a group of Lenapes who demanded payment for lands then being populated by colonists. Apparently unable to contact Penn, who was in England, in a timely manner, the colonial commissioners gave the sachems what they wanted, but the document that settled this and other episodes included peculiarly strident language for a deed. Tammanend, Swampisse, and others "release[d] and discharg[ed] the said Proprietor his Heirs and Successrs from any farther claims, dues and demands whatever, concerning the said Lands or any other Tract of Land claimed by Us from the beginning of the World to the day and the date hereof."⁴⁸ The willingness of the tens of thousands of Pennsylvania colonists to compromise with the Lenapes on the terms of land acquisition and use had ended.

Early Pennsylvania had a swift and unmistakable impact on the Lenapes. That English colonists drove off or weakened Native American communities has long been clear. But what has often been obscured is that it was Penn's variety of colonialism that created the disruption. The legend of Penn's Treaty bestows on the Founder and his colony a reputation for benevolence even though they forced the Lenapes to choose either to stay and submit to "good Discipline" or leave in order to preserve a measure of autonomy as a "brother" or "friend" of the colony. To be sure, diseases the colonists brought with them, such as smallpox, forced some decisions to leave; one Lenape claimed that one or even two of them died of disease for every new colonist, and twenty-four shiploads of newcomers arrived between 1682 and 1683. But disease cannot explain the choices of the Native survivors. The pressures placed on the Lenapes' gendered land-use prac-



tices must have been an important element in community debates about whether to leave or stay. Besides appropriating fallow agricultural fields that Lenape women had cleared, Pennsylvanians leveled substantial portions of the forest and depleted much of the local game, the hunting of which was a fundamental part of the economic contribution of Lenape men and the education of young warriors.

In the face of these threats, by the first years of the eighteenth century, some Lenapes chose to stay in the Delaware watershed and live in specially designated areas in West Jersey and Pennsylvania; Penn himself had set up one of the reserves on Brandywine Creek. Other Lenapes scattered through Pennsylvania's towns while maintaining altered versions of the older hunting practices, craft skills, and matrilineal kinship ties. Still others began to move well to the west and northwest as early as the mid-1680s. Swampisse, for instance, had relocated with his people some thirty-five miles inland by 1686. While some Lenapes moved, others took a harder line against new land sales. In West Jersey, sachems occasionally refused to sell at all, and both there and in Pennsylvania Lenapes demanded unprecedentedly large payments before permitting new settlements.⁴⁹ And some demanded that those payments be in wampum instead of other trade goods, in order to be able to make appropriate diplomatic gifts to the Susquehannocks and Iroquois in whose territories they intended to emigrate.⁵⁰

The narrative of Pennsylvania's founding that portrays as uniquely just this dispossession of the Delawares—the name given to the Lenapes who left their river behind—perpetuates a colonial understanding of the discourse of early treaty councils and the history they produced rather than a Lenape point of view. Even if there was a formal meeting between Penn and the Lenapes in 1682, it probably seemed to the Lenapes, and to the more experienced European interpreters, to be simply the latest meeting with European colonists in order to exchange gifts, promise brotherhood and friendship, and confirm trading alliances. A Lenape narrative of the first two decades of Pennsylvania history would likely express more bitterness, disappointment, and loss than fondness for the Founder Penn. There is no evidence that the Lenapes praised the benevolence or justice of William Penn's policies, at least not until after 1700 and after they became known as Delawares, living in mixed Iroquoian and Algonquian communities.⁵¹

By contrast, Pennsylvania's version first appeared in Penn's own writing

in the middle 1680s. Penn reflected on his recently established relationship with the Lenapes in terms of brotherhood and friendship. This language encouraged the confidence of potential colonists, resonated well with Quaker theology, and echoed council discourse. Penn's own self-approbation at a 1701 council meeting with Iroquois sachems in Philadelphia began the process of turning the council discourse into a historical narrative of unique understanding and benevolence. The "Articles of Agreement" that the meeting produced claimed that "hitherto there hath always been a Good Understanding and Neighborhood between the said William Penn . . . since his first arrival . . . and the severall Nations of Indians." If Tammamend, Ninichican, Swampisse, or any of the unnamed Lenape men and women who supported them in their resistance to Pennsylvania were present, it is not hard to imagine their discomfort. Yet Penn's account echoed the discursive convention of Delaware Valley council meetings. Penn and the Indians pledged "forever hereafter to be as one head and one heart and live in true Friendship and Amity as one people."⁵² This last statement would have been as fitting in Lenape agreements with Swedish soldiers or Dutch governors. And eighteenth-century council discourse would continue to feature such statements because for Lenapes, other Algonquians, and Iroquoians, metaphors of unity, brotherhood, and friendship carried important political meaning that was deeply resonant culturally. But such rhetoric should no longer be mistaken for a Lenape historical narrative of early Pennsylvania.

It was not the Lenapes but other Indian communities, some of which had received Lenape refugees, who in councils with colonial authorities promulgated the historical legend of benevolence. After Penn had died, when Pennsylvania's governors met with spokesmen for the Iroquois, Susquehannocks, and Delawares, they regularly described Pennsylvania's history with Indians as especially, if not uniquely, understanding. Pennsylvania governors participated in creating the legend of benevolence by eliminating the sense of a promise about the future, the "hereafter" that Penn had preserved from council discourse.⁵³ In 1727 and 1728, Governor Patrick Gordon related the myth of Pennsylvania's founding as a story about the past only. Penn, "when he first came into this Province, took all the Indians of it by the hand." He "embraced" them, said Gordon, as "his Friends and Brethren and made a firm League of Friendship with them." He "took all the Indians and the old Inhabitants by the hand and . . . took them to



his heart and loved them.”⁵⁴ A version of this story was well known in eastern Pennsylvania and to Benjamin West, who remembered an old tree customarily regarded by Euro-Pennsylvanians as the site of the legendary meeting. And it was this colonial interpretation of the Lenapes’ early history with Pennsylvania that inspired and informed West’s painting in 1771, his allegory of colonialism.