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*The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors
from European Contact through the Era of Removal*

NEGOTIATORS ON THE
PENNSYLVANIA FRONTIER

*Into the
American Woods*

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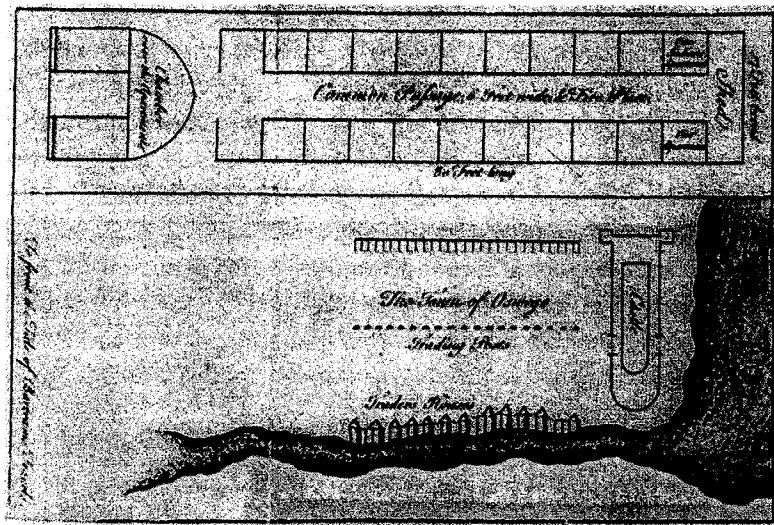


Figure 9. Sketch of the Town of Oswego and an Iroquois Longhouse, by John Bartram, shows the sleeping arrangements at Onondaga in the summer of 1743.

From John Bartram, *Observations on the Inhabitants, Climate, Soil, Rivers, Productions, Animals, and other Matters Worthy of Notice. Made by John Bartram, In his Travels from Pensilvania to Onondago, Oswego and the Lake Ontario, in Canada . . .* (London, 1751), frontispiece. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

with *Assaryquoa*, their aides opposite, the travelers' hosts divided the party differently, placing *Our Apartment* (as Bartram labeled it) opposite *Our Indians Apartment* (Figure 9). No one thought this worth comment; the very silence speaks of the gulf that left drowsy Indians on one side of a fire, weary colonists on the other.

CHAPTER V

“A Good Correspondance”:
Conversations

The killings along the Shenandoah in 1742, like Jack Armstrong's death beside the Juniata soon thereafter, helped make Shickellamy and Conrad Weiser famous. But the real foundation of their partnership, and of the peace that their partnership nurtured, was a less spectacular routine of visits to one another. At Weiser's Tulpehocken home, at Shickellamy's Shamokin lodge, and at farmhouses, hunting cabins, and mills in between, the Oneida and the German met to smoke a pipe and “talke a great deal.” Matters large and small came up, from a mysterious black wampum belt making the rounds to a Delaware's stolen peltry, from battles over the mountains to the clash of armies and empires beyond the seas. One winter night in 1746, when the two “sat down to discourse” by the headman's fire, was typical: over dinner the Iroquois asked “what news accured among the white people”; the Pennsylvanian, answering, went on and “asked what news accured among the Indians.”¹

Such quiet chats, through many seasons and many years, were the essence of what everyone from Weiser to Shawnee headmen to William Penn himself called “a Kind Correspondents” or “a Good Correspondance” between peoples.² To be sure, not every encounter between colonist and Indian was really “Correspondance.” Pennsylvania traders who headed out in search of customers or Indians who trooped into a colonial settlement to peddle their wares; Moravians setting up a model farm in Indian country or coaxing natives to live in a model town on Bethlehem's outskirts; a colonial farmer who fed a passing war party or let an Indian family camp in his field—these people needed no go-between to write the script and direct the actors.

But those contacts did require the congenial climate that a negotiator helped sustain. As the calamities in the late 1720s and early 1740s attest, that climate was prone to sudden squalls. Rumors of war put colonists or Indians to flight. Missionaries, too, carefully scouted Shamokin, Onondaga, and Philadelphia for signs of trouble before sending the Lord's servants to live among natives. And colonial settlers only appreciated how much their lives had depended on what Iroquois called "frequent Opportunities of conferring and discoursing with their Brethren" when after 1754, conversation having stopped, peace disappeared beneath a torrent of blood and fire.³

The conversations that kept trouble at bay for so long were not as formal as a treaty conference, but they were indeed formal. The man doing the talking was a "Public Person" conducting "publick Negotiations"; message in hand, he was to "travel that Road between us and you, . . . [in order to] speak our Minds & your Minds to each other truly & freely."⁴ Part of the assignment was, as native metaphor had it, to "clear . . . every Grub, Stump & Log" in the road between peoples, "that it may be straight, smooth & free for us and you."⁵ Peace, like a road, required constant upkeep. Just as thoroughfares could succumb to fallen trees, overgrown bushes, and tall grass, so friendship was prey to the chaos and darkness that accompanied all human endeavors. Calling the work road maintenance may seem to belittle it; but what clearing metaphorical trails lacked in glamour it more than made up for in importance.

Keeping paths open was easier said than done. That evening at Shickellamy's house in 1746 was in fact made possible by a remarkable series of negotiations that got people past their linguistic and cultural differences. Like travel, talk was difficult, dangerous, thankless—and largely forgotten. But eavesdropping on the murmur of conversation, like following go-betweens into the woods, can offer a new angle of vision on the frontier experience, can reinforce the combination of concord and discord that recruitment and travel uncovered. On the one hand, negotiators, prodded by a general consensus on the need for regular contact, developed an eclectic yet powerful set of tools—pieces of paper and strings of wampum, along with linguistic dexterity and a knack for improvising—that got messages across. On the other hand, however, those beads and those pages also pick up, in the lower registers, a deepening unease and distrust. By midcentury, wampum and writing, made

marvelously complementary in go-betweens' hands, became increasingly contentious as it appeared that people did not always speak (or write) "truly and freely." While negotiators became more conversant with channels of communication, the woods' static became more pronounced until, after 1750, frontier war ended Penn's "Kind Correspondence."



"A Good Deal of News Going Backwards and Forwards" *Topics of Conversation*

Indians and colonists always found plenty to talk about. The hottest topics, of course, were Sawantaeny, Armstrong, and other casualties of frontier friction. As at Conestoga in the 1710s, clashes were common wherever and whenever Pennsylvanians became the natives' neighbors. Indians killed a colonist's hogs, beat him up, stole his horse. Pennsylvanians assaulted an Indian woman, took apples from an Indian orchard, barged onto Indian land. Provincial fur traders toted too much rum to Indian towns; natives broke into a trader's storehouse and made off with some of that rum.⁶ When a Delaware smashed a colonist's windows, the victim went after him "with a piece of Iron." Retaliating was proper, Indian leaders allowed, but "the white Man shou'd have beat him with his Arm only, it was too much to strike him with Iron."⁷

Although a mediator was often called upon to work out such moral calculations, he devoted most of his time to more routine matters. Distant Indian nations dispatched messengers to Penn's Woods in order to strike up a conversation. Other tribes, friends already, sent emissaries to arrange a treaty—or, sometimes, to postpone one, in which case an envoy would visit Philadelphia to apologize and explain, "lest the Delay should be misinterpreted or taken ill."⁸ From that city, meanwhile, officials launched messages into Indian country "to establish & improve an amicable Correspondence." They reaffirmed ties to nearby groups. They kept in touch with Shawnee and Delaware emigrants to Ohio, assuring them that Penn's people still considered them friends, "tho' att Such a far Distance." They put out feelers—first north into Iroquoia, later toward the Great Lakes—to make new friends.⁹

The bulk of a negotiator's conversation was the swapping of information that Weiser and Shickellamy raised to an art form. When Teedyuscung observed in 1758 that "[t]here is a Good Deal of News going backwards and forwards," he could have been talking of 1738 or 1718 as well. Ever since William Penn's day, Pennsylvanians and their Indian neighbors had pledged to "be as . . . one Eye & Ear; . . . what the one saw the other should see, and what the one heard the other should hear."¹⁰ When one of the Penns died or a new governor arrived, when the colony signed a treaty with other native nations or sent surveyors across the Susquehanna River, provincial officials dispatched someone to broadcast the news. Similarly, when natives learned of defections to the French or Iroquois plans to visit Delawares, they let Philadelphia know.¹¹

Part of a negotiator's job was not just to carry those messages but also to gather information. Natives would show up "to hear what was doing," and a colonist in Indian country "would be glad to hear what News was passing among their several Tribes."¹² Some go-betweens had what amounted to standing orders to keep eyes and ears open. In 1694 the province, at once valuing and mistrusting Jacques Le Tort, ordered the French trader to "acquaint the governmt with all matters hee can hear of or observe concerning the Natives & the enemies of the countrie." A generation later, during the dark days of 1728, another nervous colonial official reminded Madame Montour of her pledge "to be industrious in procuring all the certain Intelligence she can, of all affairs transacted amongst the Indians that relate to ye Peace of this Province, & transmitt an acct of them to me."¹³ Collecting and spreading news acquired the force of habit.



"No Confidence Can Be Placed Any Where"

Interference

Pack up and head out, listen in and report back—the art of intercultural converse sounds simple, but it was in fact a dauntingly complex transaction. The first and most basic obstacle was language; a simple hello, not to mention a chat, required people to remove the language barrier. With Indians insisting that formal talks be in their tongue, that

chore usually fell to colonists.¹⁴ Natives believed that having an interpreter gave them "more dignity," one Pennsylvanian explained, just as use of "proper grammatical language" lent "their words . . . greater weight and effect . . . , while some are afraid of committing mistakes when speaking in an idiom not their own." Capturing and conveying an Indian talk's finer points demanded great skill. "Particularly when they have a joke to pass, a hint to give, or a shrewd remark to make, they wish it to have all the advantages of a good translation, and that their wit may not be spoiled by a foreign accent, improper expression, or awkward delivery."¹⁵

The trick was finding a good translator, for Indian languages were notoriously hard to learn.¹⁶ A student of Iroquois discovered "that they have various modes of speech and phrases peculiar to each age and sex"—a hungry man announced his hunger with one word, a hungry child with another—"which they strictly observe." Similarly, Delaware had ten terms for *bear*, depending on the animal's age and sex, and *to eat* varied according to whether the food required chewing. Those trying to figure out such nuances had to cope with the fact that some native speakers habitually dropped syllables, much depended on the right accent, and Indians sometimes were reluctant teachers. To acquire what one native called "an Indian ear" was a long and difficult apprenticeship.¹⁷

Colonists developing that ear had to contend with a discourse riddled with "Peticular Iddoms or Diction" that "were very Peculiar," patterns of speech "adorned with noble images, strong metaphors, and . . . allegory." In this highly figurative world of words *a day* could mean *a year*. Kinfolk (brother and sister, father and uncle), anatomical features (eyes and ears, mouths and hearts), landscape (paths and roads, trees and stumps), and the heavens (sunshine and clouds, darkness and light) had expansive metaphorical meanings that left novices "at a loss."¹⁸

The sense of being lost got worse if the language gap required more than one translator. Even toward the end of the colonial era, makeshift arrangements could be found. An August 1761 meeting in Philadelphia heard Seneca George speak Seneca to Kanak't (Last Night), a Conoy, who converted the words to Delaware so that Isaac Stille could, finally, bear them across to waiting colonists. "When we met at Easton [earlier this month]," Seneca George said at that talk in the provincial capital,

"we did not fully understand one another, we are therefore come here now, that we may understand each other more clearly." With Kanak't and Stille at his side, poised to haul his words over two linguistic spans, the Seneca's confidence seems misplaced.¹⁹

It did not help that Indians were known for obfuscation. Raised in a culture that discouraged open confrontation—"[a] person might be among them 30 years and even longer," wrote Conrad Weiser, "and not once see two sober Indians dispute or quarrel; when one of them has a deadly hatred to another, they endeavor to smother their anger"—natives often resorted to indirection to avoid unpleasantness.²⁰ They can "express themselves with great clearness and precision" when they want to, one observer noted, but they were also masters of the "art of dissembling." "If they intend to speak in an obscure manner, they can speak so cleverly and with so much circumstance that even Indians must puzzle out the true sense of their allusions."²¹

Communication problems were compounded by the rumors that flourished in the frontier's volatile atmosphere. Colonists picked up "various and Contradictory" stories from Indian country; natives might get good news from Penn's people, then bad news, then good once again.²² The French, Pennsylvanians heard, are massing on the frontier. No, Indians had been told, they are sailing up the Delaware. The Iroquois are about to sweep down on the province and its native friends. Virginia is poised to invade the Susquehanna Valley.²³ Unnamed war parties are about to strike. Pennsylvania is plotting "to cutt off the Indians" by sending them poison blankets or luring them to Philadelphia in order to enslave them.²⁴ Rumors ran rampant, keeping everyone on edge.

The best (or worst) stories had a chilling specificity. Those French fur traders send mysterious letters, wrapped in blue linen, to "strange Indians." A Conestoga man being dragged off by other strangers yells to his wife that everyone should "be upon their Guard." A wampum belt, on its face a red tomahawk, is going from one village to the next.²⁵ Indians, just back to Conestoga from a trip southward, have brought in "several p[ar]ts of women's attire, viz: a Petticoat, White silk hood, Lace, &c.;" another party has returned with scalps of a suspiciously light hue.²⁶


"Ugly talk" like this did "a World of Mischief." Natives are "easily alarmed . . . by plausible storys," colonists fretted; ultimately it mattered little whether a tale were true, for "Indian Fears" about an im-

pending conflict can "have as bad consequences as if they were in actual War." Colonists, too, felt "the Effect of fear," as the Winter brothers, or those families that rumors of war drove off the farm in 1743, could attest.²⁷

So pernicious were "flying reports" that everyone tried to weaken the power of news traveling "under the Ground." William Penn's 1701 treaty with Susquehanna Indians sought to counter "evil minded persons and sowers of sedition" who went around spreading "Unkind or disadvantageous reports." Thereafter, colonists and natives repeatedly urged one another to ignore "Idle Tales or Lies" and the "Chirping" of the "bad Birds" perched "in almost every Bush."²⁸

But which tales were idle? Which birds sang false? Jack Armstrong's killing was at first but a whisper, after all, and Sawantaeny's fate reached Philadelphia as "an imperfect relation." How to distinguish them from a tale about Indians stockpiling snowshoes for a winter raid on Penn's province? ("Shickellamy laughed at that" one.) From the story about torchbearing Indians creeping toward a farmstead on a nighttime raid? (The lights turned out to be fireflies.)²⁹ This was the hard part. "[N]o confidence can be placed any where," sighed Richard Peters as he sorted through conflicting reports from the interior; "the Indians tell so many Stories & the Traders are so sens[e]less & credulous." At a Susquehanna Indian town in 1760, an exasperated Christian Frederick Post heard so many wild tales that he finally stopped bothering to record them in his journal, "as the Indians have their own peculiar Policy in relating one Thing at the same Time thinking & acting quite the reverse."³⁰

Indians were not the only ones given to spinning yarns. As Canasatego and other Iroquois came through Pennsylvania en route to Philadelphia one summer, "We enquir'd who" had murdered the Onondaga's nephew. But colonists, Canasatego went on, "told so many odd and different Stories that the People who gave the Accounts seem'd to us Like Drunken Men, and we could not tell what to believe. Indians, it is true, are apt sometimes to speak untruths," Canasatego admitted, "but white People . . . can utter falsehood fully as readily as Indians." The only way to cope with rumor and gossip was to send someone out (or call someone in) to "sift" stories, "to enquire and find out the Truth of the matter, and of every other thing that passes." Enter the go-between, "our true Corespondent."³¹


 "Right Understanding of One Another"
 Getting Through

"In Form"

The Basics of Conversational Etiquette

Those trying to converse amid rumor mongers and frontier frictions had powerful assistance, for an accepted code governed correct communication between peoples. Indians and colonists alike expected to be spoken to "in form," in a "regular manner." If protocol were ignored, Indians would say that "heretofore they had only heard from the English as a Noise in the Woods unintelligible"—and might even insist that they had heard nothing at all. Colonists, too, dismissed messages improperly sent as "only a transient discourse."³²

"[R]ight understanding of one Another" meant not only finding "some suitable Person in whom we can place a Confidence" but also conforming to Indian custom. This, in turn, meant striking a passive pose that left the locals to invite you here and there, telling you where to wait and when to leave. On approaching his destination the wise messenger went along with the custom of firing guns in salute, and he learned to wait as a delegation of important men came out to greet him, to smoke a friendly pipe with him, and to escort him into town amid more gunfire. Similarly, a Delaware or Iroquois emissary approaching a colonial city was often "received . . . according to the Forms in use with Indians."³³

Once a traveler was in the village, the Condolence began. Even if one side had already condoled the other immediately on hearing about the death of an important person—each time Shickellamy lost a son, Pennsylvania sent a gift to dry his tears, and in the spring of 1749 Weiser headed to Shamokin yet again, this time to console the Oneida's children at the death of their father—no message got through until hearts were healed "according to old Custom."³⁴ Indians insisted that "they cou'd not see the Road [to Philadelphia] nor hear what the Governor . . . had to say to them till that Ceremony had been done."³⁵ With tears dried and broken hearts mended, conversation could commence.

To pursue those talks, go-betweenes surmounted the language barrier. It helped that, whatever the native tongue used in formal dis-

course, more and more Indians picked up some English—enough, at least, that they might serve as a check on a translator's accuracy. Watch what you say around the Iroquois here, a negotiator would warn a colonist visiting an Indian camp during a treaty; "most of them understand English."³⁶ English speakers were common in the Ohio country, and even Shickellamy knew some English. "[L]ye still *John*," the Oneida "called out" to John Bartram when that False Face paid them a call in Onondaga. "I never heard him speak so much plain *English* before," the astonished naturalist remarked.³⁷ Neither did anyone else, apparently; no other colonist so much as mentioned the Oneida's knowing English. But Bartram was not the only colonist surprised when familiar words came from foreign mouths. "[T]hey mostly all Spake English," a Pennsylvanian said of Delaware warriors who captured him in 1758, and "one spoke as good English as I can."³⁸

Colonial mediators, meanwhile, were not only more fluent in the Indian languages, they also had a surer grasp of native metaphor. So comfortable was one woodsman that, filling Pennsylvania officials in on Shawnee politics, he lapsed into Indian phrasing: "they have had a Tast of the Friench," he wrote, "and finde them Sweet in the Mouth and bitter in the Heart." Having heard this sort of talk for so long, those officials had come to know "the meaning of these Indian Expressions" well enough that translators bothered less with the usual parenthetical explanation of, say, "a clear & open road . . ." (by this meaning a friendly communication).³⁹ Thus Indians and colonists, driven by a powerful urge to communicate, enrolled in a vast, diffuse, and unnoticed educational experiment. But learning to let Indians lead and picking up the jargon was only the first course in the curriculum of the woods.

"Without Wampum Nothing Is to Be Done"

The Language of Beads

Tradition has it that Hiawatha, when he helped found the Great League by convincing the Iroquois nations to unite, was the first to place shell beads on a string.⁴⁰ Ever since that distant day, these seashells—harvested on the beaches of Long Island Sound, then drilled to make beads before being placed on strings or woven into belts—had great spiritual power in Indian America. Offered to propitiate the dead and other beings, wampum linked the visible and invisible worlds; passed to the living to patch up differences or ease the minds of the be-

reaved, it mended the torn social fabric of a town or clan; arranged in patterns and kept to recall formal conversations, it connected past to present.⁴¹

Use of wampum reached beyond clan or town to embrace strangers; it became a filament connecting disparate peoples across Indian country. Though Hiawatha's Iroquois heirs might claim pride of invention, many native groups considered shells "potent medicine."⁴² The Shawnees' insistence on speaking (and being spoken to) with six strings of wampum is divinely ordained, their headmen once informed Pennsylvania; "when God spoke first to us . . . he gave six things [strings] and told us we must believe what he said" (Figure 10). Ohio Indian leaders, though "new beginners" in sending "Messengers to Indian Towns & Nations," already knew enough about diplomacy "to get Wampum to do the Business."⁴³ So vital was wampum as a medium of communication that no frontier negotiator could hope to succeed unless he knew the language of beads.

In diplomacy, wampum worked its magic in various ways. Indian messengers would say that it served to "confirm" or "enforce" their words, it guaranteed that "we speak truth" and ensured that a speech would "have Credit with you," would "have its full Effect on" the listener's "Mind."⁴⁴ Natives might even have thought strings and belts more powerful still, so powerful that the shells themselves held the message. Thus an Iroquois or Delaware council spoke words directly into a string or belt as we would into a tape recorder; then a messenger, reaching his destination, merely turned the beads on and became their mouthpiece. So animated, a belt took on a mind and life of its own. The wampum, Indian envoys might say, "has been leading us by the arm." One Iroquois go-between even talked of how "this day a Belt of Wampum (black) came to Shamokin from Oneida from the Six Nations," as if it had floated down the Susquehanna on its own.⁴⁵

The delicate beads, then, carried heavy freight in formal conversation. "Without Wampum," one colonist observed, "Nothing is to be done Amongst the Indians."⁴⁶ The number of beads needed to conduct diplomacy was staggering. Some messengers had just a string or two in a pocket or pouch, but others crammed a bag or "casket" with ten, twenty, even thirty or more belts, each bearing part of a talk, each containing anywhere from several hundred to ten thousand beads that, woven into a belt, might be a foot wide and six feet long.⁴⁷ "It is amazing to think what a Quantity of Wampum this Journey will take in

Strings & Belts," Richard Peters grumbled as he prepared to dispatch messengers into the Indian countries. Demand at midcentury was so great that Philadelphia merchants asked contacts in New York City for 100,000 beads, and a "wampum maker"—a Delaware or Philadelphia woman, James Sympson in New York, or one of the Montour women on the Pennsylvania frontier—was kept busy.⁴⁸

Wampum's value as a communications medium stemmed in part from its versatility. Just as it had many uses within a town, so between peoples one string might mark a messenger's status while another sanctioned part of a speech and—carefully stored in a "Counsel Bagg," then regularly pulled out for rehearsal of its message—kept words alive far into the future.⁴⁹ Better still, wampum could take many forms. A large belt or long string meant something important. White shells denoted peace, "black" (actually purple) ones war, though words of war also came in as scalps tied to a white belt, red paint splashed across it, or a hatchet woven into its face.⁵⁰

Other patterns, their message less self-evident, nonetheless helped wampum be read and reread (Figures 11–12). Friendship might appear as people holding hands or as a row of dark beads running down a white belt to connect nations, themselves depicted as squares or diamonds, hands or human figures.⁵¹ Some belts told a more specific tale. One, sent from Iroquoia to Susquehanna Indians in 1722 to urge that they dump rather than drink rum, bore a small circle for the keg and a hatchet denoting its destruction. Senecas wove one that had six human figures, five of them branded with two hearts, to say that Senecas alone, with but one heart, were true to the English. A belt Teedyuscung spoke on in 1756 was equally elaborate: an armed man posted at each end, with lines leading to an empty square in the middle, told of natives' determination to keep their country free of both British and French armies pressing upon it.⁵²

However clear the message, making belts talk was an art. Pulling them out, a messenger would set them "in order on the Table," then pick up each one in turn and hold it while speaking its words. Wampum virtuosos had a certain flair. During the war an Onondaga messenger named Ogaghradarisha, to mark how far up the Susquehanna his people wanted Pennsylvania to build a fort, left a wampum belt folded in half to designate the road to Shamokin; then, at the right moment, he opened it full length to stretch, metaphorically, all the way upriver past Wyoming. Sometimes an Indian made a point of "turning . . . the

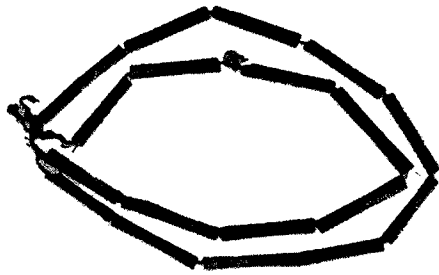


Figure 10. Wampum Strings.

Go-betweens used such strings as credentials or for less important parts of their messages. Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum (negative #S4-142742).



Figure 11. The Penn or Great Treaty Wampum Belt.

Given to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania by a descendant of William Penn, this belt is said to represent the friendship the Founder forged with the Delaware Indians at the legendary treaty of Shackamaxon in 1682 or 1683. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Figure 12. "Path" Wampum Belt.

Iroquois belt of unknown date, perhaps depicting friendship (the long double row of beads) between peoples (the squares at each end). Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Museum (negative #NC35-12972).

belt" when halfway through his talk, by which, one impressed colonist remarked, "it may be as well known . . . how far the speaker has advanced in his speech, as with us on taking a glance at the pages of a book or pamphlet while reading." Having finished, a messenger would then return the belt or string to the table, tie it to a stick, drape it over a pole laid across the rafters of a longhouse, or pass it to his listeners.⁵³

If an envoy bearing an unpopular message tried to hand over the belt, his hostile audience kept it "talking" in equally dramatic fashion. Indians might refuse to touch a belt if they opposed its words. When one party of "war messengers" trying to recruit more men draped a belt over the shoulder or thigh of a headman, the recipient, "after shaking it off without touching it with his hands, . . . with a stick, threw it after them, as if he threw a snake or a toad out of his way." Peace belts might get the same cold treatment, as natives using tobacco pipes or sticks "threw them on one side."⁵⁴

Figures of speech so rich in expressive possibility and so thoroughly embedded in native life were bound to sweep colonists into their embrace. Pennsylvania was born too late for the frenzied days when wampum was money in New England and New Netherland, but Indian use of belts and strings in early conversations with the English along the Delaware quickly taught the newcomers its importance. The colony soon started dispatching messengers with the beads as a "Credential," and in 1700 William Penn himself was handing wampum to visiting Iroquois "in token of amitie & friendship wt ym."⁵⁵

So thoroughly steeped in wampum culture did provincial leaders become that when Satcheecho returned in August 1722 from his second trip to Onondaga on the Sawantaeny business, Governor William Keith pronounced himself "surprised to see you bring no Credentials with you," and later returned to his disappointment that the Cayuga emissary had "brought no Belt or any other Token to confirm" the Iroquois reply. Thereafter, provincial officials felt confident enough to set Indians straight on wampum protocol. Some of these native visitors "were so hard put to it for an Excuse to come down" for a council, sneered Richard Peters in 1761, "that they laid before the Governor a Belt given for the Confirmation of ye peace three years ago as [if it were] a Belt given to invite them to a Treaty. In this," Peters concluded smugly, "they were set right."⁵⁶

Colonists on the frontier, too, knew the spell wampum cast. Pennsylvania troops raiding an Indian village in 1756 systematically de-

stroyed houses and burned crops, but they knew enough to bring the town's "Council Belts" back to Philadelphia. Whether the looters took the wampum because of its spiritual and historical significance to Indians—knowing its loss would be a blow to native morale—or because it would fetch a high price in a capital always needing more shells, they appreciated beads' importance.⁵⁷

By the close of the colonial era, Pennsylvanians had grown so attached to the new medium that they sent wampum belts to Iroquoia explaining the Stamp Act crisis. From this confidence came a desire to experiment with form; some Pennsylvania belts bore decidedly non-native designs as colonists added touches of their own. Instead of hands or diamonds, belts might display the Penn family crest or a provincial fort. Instead of paths or hearts, they sported dates or initials immortalizing everyone from King George (*G.R.*) and Teedyuscung (*D.K.*, for Delaware King) to a provincial army officer (*W.C.*, for William Clapham).⁵⁸

Whatever their design and their message, shells were a go-between's stock in trade. He advised wampum makers on the size, color, and pattern of belts, kept beads on hand just in case, and, before setting out with a message, packed hundreds, even thousands of the shells among the "nessecarys . . . to Facilitate the Success of his Journey." To run short or run out was to court disaster. Weiser fretted that one emissary bound for the Indian countries "was without wampum for accidents," and in February 1760 Teedyuscung, preparing for another trip, complained "that he has not got Wampum enough" to carry Pennsylvania's words of peace.⁵⁹

Making their way through the Susquehanna Valley with Teedyuscung and those words of peace that June, Christian Frederick Post, John Hays, Isaac Stille, and Moses Tatamy met just the misfortune Weiser had dreaded and the Delaware leader had predicted: they ran low on beads. To Post's relief, local Indians, testifying to their desire for an end to war, "Laid Down A Blanket and Preaclemed A Publick collection[,] and for Joy the Wemen and Girels and children throd in wampom till There Wase 14 fathem for to helpe For strings on our Jorney." That women and children tossed beads onto the blanket suggests how each finished string or belt represented large segments of a community, including not just the messenger delivering it or the council sending it but also those who obtained and strung the shells. For Post and the rest that day, it meant the chance to resume "our old Buisiness of Belt makeing," which

had already occupied much of their time during three days of bad weather on the road from Philadelphia.⁶⁰

"A Letter . . . Is Considered a Very Important Thing"
The Power of Pen and Paper

While the others in that 1760 embassy continued "to Make Ready Belts and Strings and Speeches," Post sat down to write out those speeches "in a Large Hand that Isaac Still might Read them" at Indian councils farther west. A few days later, as the emissaries went on with their preparations for a push deeper into Indian country, the Nanticoke headman of a nearby village sent them "a Letter and Belt and string and Very Agreeable Speeches." At the time, no one thought either Post's scribbling or that Nanticoke message remarkable, for by then envoys routinely had paper in one pocket and wampum—tagged and numbered to correspond to particular written speeches—in the other.⁶¹ While Pennsylvanians learned beadwork, they taught natives how writing, too, encouraged conversation.

Some Indians refused to go along, sending messages on wampum and insisting that "This is my Letter, Being I don't understand writing." But many embraced the new way of talking.⁶² Like colonists learning about wampum, natives proved quick studies, and in Lasse Cocke's day Indian messengers joined their colonial counterparts to negotiate the borderlands with both letters and strings.⁶³ In 1715, Sassoonan, trying to dam the river of rum drowning his people, asked the governor for written permission to "stave all the rum that came amongst them." When that campaign failed and Shickellamy launched another Susquehanna temperance crusade, he made sure, before confronting provincial liquor dealers, to bring along a copy of the Pennsylvania law against selling alcohol to Indians.⁶⁴ Together the Oneida and the Delaware went after other colonial miscreants with writing, in 1733 sending a letter to John Harris that warned him off Indian land.⁶⁵ Similarly, warriors and ambassadors traveling through Pennsylvania, like Jonnhaty's band in 1742, made a point of getting passports from local magistrates in order to head off trouble with colonial settlers.

Jonnhaty and the rest demanded a document not just because it carried weight among colonists; in Indian country, too, the black scratches on paper took on an aura of authority. "A letter," wrote David Zeisberger, "especially if it is sealed, is considered a very important thing" among Indians; one that arrived in Onondaga generated such excite-

ment that “[t]he whole town was full of it,” and on hearing it read aloud natives “Suck’d in every paragraph.” With writing acquiring talismanic power, Indian raiders who during the war lugged off French, German, and English Bibles from frontier settlements might have acted on impulses akin to their Pennsylvania counterparts who stole a town’s council wampum: keenly aware of the objects’ potency, they sought to capture it for themselves.⁶⁶

Warriors hauling Bibles out of a burning farmhouse, townsfolk enraptured by a letter—these suggest the respect Indians had for the written word. Some scholars, reading that respect as awe, have posited an unbridgeable gulf between colonial and Indian media.⁶⁷ Turning page upon page of merchants’ account books, hefting the stacks of correspondence and council minutes European colonists bequeathed us, one can glimpse a vast chasm between a European world built on writing and a native American universe confined to word of mouth. But the frontier was not so simple. Its means of expression had no obvious divide between literate and oral, but rather a spectrum—anchored at one end by thoroughgoing mastery of a curriculum of books and paper, at the other by immersion in oral culture—with negotiators, like almost everyone else, arrayed at various points between.⁶⁸

The complexity and the confusion about where people stood arises not just because some Indian mediators like Isaac Stille could read and write while some colonists could not, but because of the frontier’s eclectic jumble of skills and media. Many literate Pennsylvania go-betweens were far from accomplished authors; indeed, in penmanship, grammar, and spelling, some of their letters resemble the few surviving Indian writings. At the bottom of one colonist’s report from Indian territory in 1738, a different hand advised: “This being wrote in the Woods by some Indian [i.e., colonial] trader only, we must be content with the sense of it.” The arrogance here is unmistakable, but so is the frustration. It is hard not to sympathize with colonial officials forced to puzzle out the meaning in letters addressed “To the farist his Magesteis Commanden Offeverses,” or doggedly deciphering a messenger’s journal, written “So gud as I coud du in dies critical teim” when he “hed no fridom to reid as I Pliest I onley most stiehl mey teym bey neyt it med hef bin rod a gud del mor.”⁶⁹

Doubtless most readers were delighted that such informants refrained from adding “a gud del mor.” The people penning such fractured prose were in some ways closer to most Indians than to most colonists

in their preferred forms of expression. While some fur traders kept meticulous records of every skin bought and every gun sold, others, as steeped in oral culture as their native customers, relied on memory. Around 1800 Alexander Lowry, an old Susquehanna trader summoned to court for a long overdue debt to a merchant, showed up at the hearing with neither papers nor account book. The authorities were about to call off the proceedings until he could produce the necessary documents; but then Lowry recited full “details of the payment of money, or other transactions, between the parties, and named the Spring or log where they occurred, in the western wilderness, through a period of forty years, all of which” the astonished creditor, consulting his ledger, pronounced correct. One of Lowry’s contemporaries in the trade, John Hart, surprised another audience by reading a hatchet native callers had left for him, along with a sketch depicting a sunrise, the moon, and a man with a belt of scalps around his middle and seven lines above his head. Not only did Hart get the picture, he left a reply by drawing a heart shape and a pipe.⁷⁰

Hart and other woodsmen who had learned to speak in pictures would have scoffed at the notion that natives could neither read nor write. Indian country was littered with evidence to the contrary. Beside the path stood those “archives,” those “Indian histories” where natives chronicled their adventures taking deer and scalps, while at home in the village a “Jurnal” recounting a man’s exploits sat on his bed (Figure 13). All of these depictions are “as intelligible to them,” one colonist admitted, “as a written account is to us.”⁷¹

For an Indian handy with picture-writing, pen and ink in some ways was no radical departure. Men who once had issued threats by “Marcking on a Board Certain Indian figures” began to put, in “a little Book,” “the Picture and Marks of an Indian Warriour with his Gun and Spear.”⁷² Other natives cushioned the shock of the new by directing it into customary channels, drawing parallels between marks made on paper and figures made from shells (Figures 14–16). Like wampum, paper brought an author into direct contact with his audience, however many miles actually separated them. “[W]e look on” the belts you sent “as if we had seen your Kings in Person,” Cherokees assured the Six Nations in 1758, just as in a letter Indians would say that “We now Speak to you, and we speak as in your presence, even face to face.”⁷³

Like belts and strings, too, papers went into a council bag for safe-keeping. At first natives thought the object itself more important than

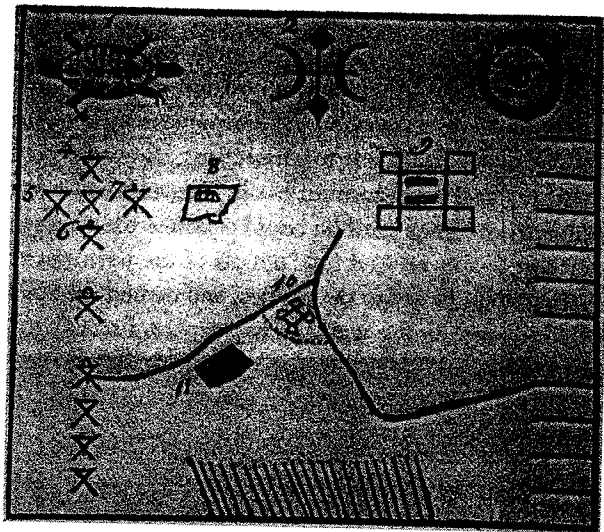


Figure 13. Warmarks by a Delaware, Wingimund, c. 1760s.

As read by another Delaware warrior and a colonial fur trader, Wingimund's sketch told "the history of his whole warfare. The resemblance of a Turtle on the left hand is the emblem by which his Tribe or Nation is known. The Cross and the two Halfmoons are the Characters by which he is personally distinguished among his nation. That figure on the right hand is the Sun. Those strokes under it signify the number of men he had with him when he made this mark, their leaning to the left signifies that they have their backs towards the Sun and are bound to the Northward. Those marks on the Lefthand under the Turtle signify the number of scalps and prisoners he has taken and of what sex. Those marked thus X are scalps, those \tilde{X} men prisoners and those marked thus \tilde{X} women prisoners. The rough sketches of Forts in the middle are what he has helped to attack," including Fort Pitt and Detroit. *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777* (London, 1925), 110-111. Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

the scratches on its surface, for some Indians kept a document even after "it was so defaced that" a colonist "could not read any more of it than a word here and there." Puzzled looks from Pennsylvanians unable to make out the faded ink taught natives to shield the pages from wear and tear. At Shamokin in 1748, Shickellamy brought out an old letter of recommendation from the governor of Pennsylvania and listened, "much pleas.d," as a colonist read it aloud.⁷⁴

Paper so carefully preserved took its place beside wampum in the

conversation between cultures. Headmen who got a letter inviting them to meet with Pennsylvania would keep it, sometimes for years, so that when they finally did come in they could return it to their host as they would an "invitation string" of wampum. That done, the visitor might pull out an old letter or treaty and pass it around as proof "that we have always been your fast Friends" or, clutching it in his hand, "speak on it" as he would a belt of beads.⁷⁵ Shawnees once went farther still, hauling out an old "Certificate of the renewal of our Friendship" and trying to get colonial officials to sign the document "afresh" as an endorsement of continued good relations. The startled governor and councilors declined the honor, but the request itself, with an Indian pushing a quill pen into a reluctant colonial hand, suggests how far native peoples had gone in making this medium their own.⁷⁶

"Make Such a Speech . . . As You Think Proper"
Improvisational Arts

Wampum and writing helped keep clear the paths between peoples. They could become more useful still when the men carrying them were given a free hand in recasting them, for negotiation often required a mediator to change words, to change course, as circumstances warranted. While Indian councils tended to keep their intermediaries on a short leash—"we are only messengers, and cannot say much," envoys from Indian country would explain; if something "has not been given us in Charge by our Council," we can "have nothing to say to that"—colonial councils were less strict.⁷⁷ A novice might get detailed directions, but experienced hands like Weiser, Croghan, and Montour had considerable leeway in deciding how best to get a message across. Take this money, buy some presents, "and make such a Speech or Letter . . . as you think proper," Peters told Weiser when Shickellamy's children needed attention.⁷⁸ Formal business like invitations to treaties might generate instructions, and sometimes the draft of a speech, but even so it was left up to a go-between to "put this [message] into such a Dress, as will be most agreeable to the People it is carried to," to make sure that "if any Expression be omitted necessary and usual on such occasions, . . . supply it."⁷⁹

Indian emissaries recruited by Pennsylvania enjoyed similar freedom. In November 1755 Governor Robert Hunter Morris apologized to Scarouady and Montour for even giving them detailed directions, since "You so well understand what you are going about . . . [that] there

COMBINING COLONIAL AND INDIAN SYMBOL SYSTEMS

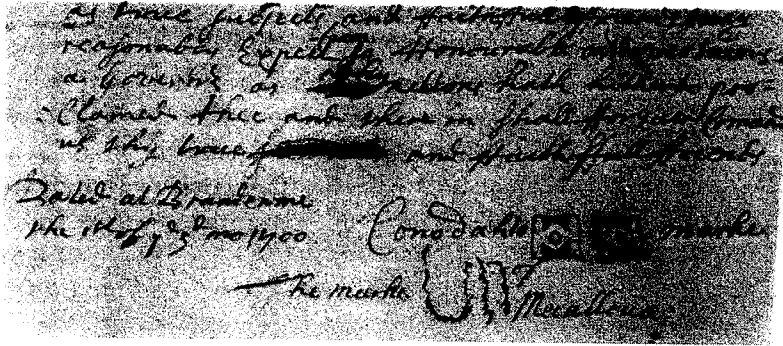


Figure 14. Marks of Conodahto and Meealloua on their letter to William Penn in 1700 regarding Sylvester Garland's misbehavior.
Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

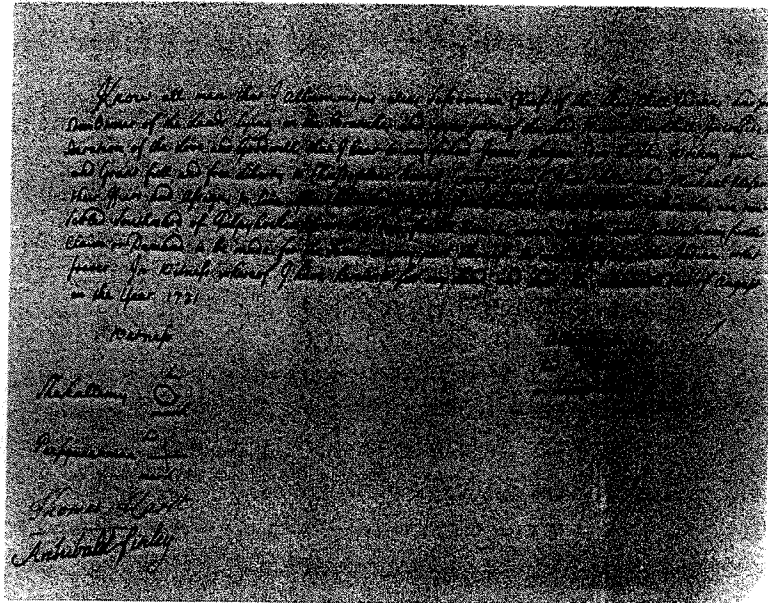


Figure 15. Marks of Sassoonan, Shickellamy, and Pisquetomen on a 1731 deed of sale.
Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

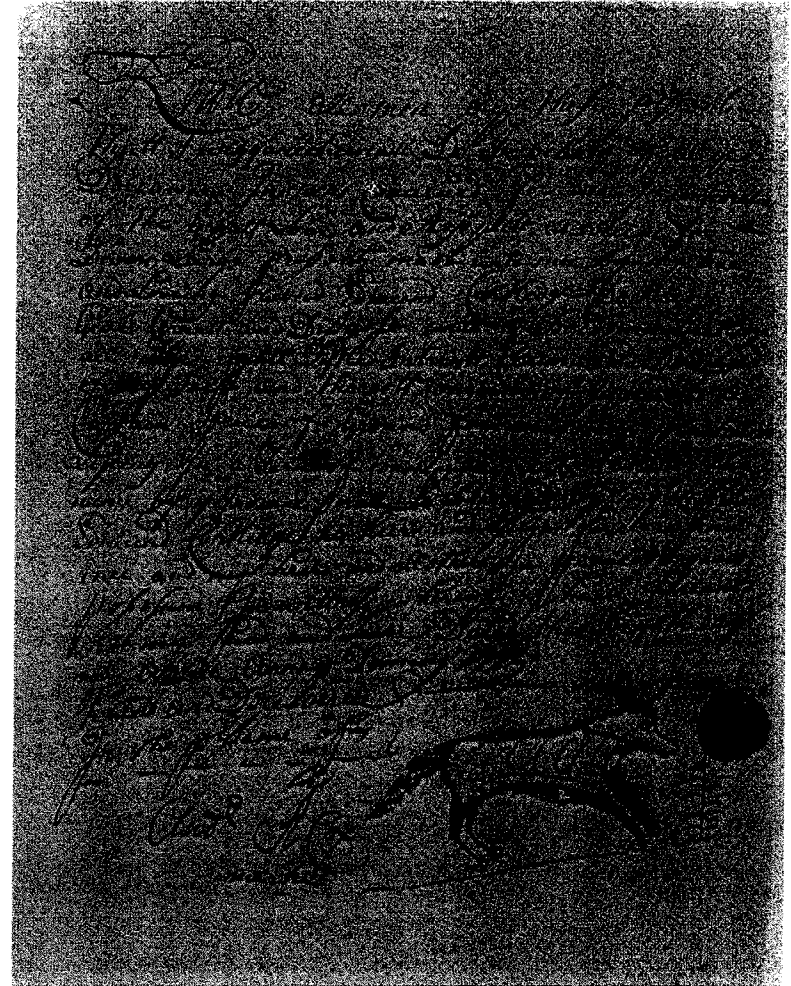


Figure 16. Mark of Wiggoneekeenah, Delaware Indian, on a 1725 land deed to the Pennsylvania fur trader Edmond Cartlidge.
Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

was little occasion for it." Six months later Morris dispatched Newcastle and other Indian messengers to enemy towns on the Susquehanna River with wampum, a speech, and instructions to "adopt the several articles to Indian Customs, retaining the Spirit and Substance of them."⁸⁰

Invited to improvise, the negotiator had a better chance of carrying on conversation even on the most delicate and inflammatory topics. Newcastle, before embarking on that embassy to the enemy in the spring of 1756, had promised provincial officials that he and his companions "do Remember very well the words the Governor hath put in our mouths, and will deliver them faithfully." On reaching enemy territory, though, they quickly changed their minds. We were "Obliged to go off[f] a little from the Governor's Instructions," they admitted on their return to Philadelphia: the speech we delivered on your behalf said nothing about repatriating colonists the enemy had taken—a cardinal point in the provincial council chamber—because "some particular Friends among the Indians" there deemed it too early to discuss such matters.⁸¹

No messengers departed farther from the script provincial authorities handed them than another party bound for the upper Susquehanna a few years later. In September 1761 a colonist had killed a Delaware; soon the dead man's brother, Tenohwangogue, had recruited two other warriors and was heading toward Pennsylvania, "in . . . a furious temper," to take his revenge. At one Susquehanna Valley town en route, Moravian Delawares, learning of Tenohwangogue's mission, plied the three with 22,500 black wampum beads, convinced them to await a response from Philadelphia, and dispatched two villagers, Tongocone and Secomus, to the capital with the bad news.⁸²

Grasping at once the gravity of the situation, Governor James Hamilton consulted his advisers, then drew up a reply and sent the two Delawares back, in the company of the Quakers Isaac Zane and Isaac Greenleaf. On the way north, the party picked up Isaac Stille and Teedyuscung, along with two more Moravian Delawares.

The Delaware envoys were so worried about the warriors awaiting them that the devout "Tongocone said it would be well for us to employ our hearts in constant prayer to our Maker to soften & turn the minds of those wicked men with whom we were going to do business." That business would not be easy, especially since Pennsylvania had sent ill-chosen words. When, en route, Zane rehearsed the governor's mes-

sage, Tongocone "after a short pause . . . said it would not answer the end proposed"; the colonists had to promise to consider revisions before the Delawares would agree to proceed with the mission.⁸³

Two days later the party paused to go over the message again; time had not improved it. The governor cleared eyes and ears at the outset, true, and at the end he offered perfunctory condolences.⁸⁴ But in between was a long, stern lecture: the alleged killer will be tried and justice done, but he pleads self defense, insisting that the Indian, armed with a scalping knife, was about to slaughter his family. Tenohwangogue is "much too hasty, and greatly in the wrong" to think of vengeance; go home, the message ordered, "and think no more of satisfying an unjust revenge on persons in no wise guilty of, or accessory to the death of your Relation."

The Delawares, on hearing Zane and Greenleaf read this, must have started praying harder. There are "but six words in it that would be useful . . .," Tongocone fumed; "if we were to read it as it was to them[,] they would go out of the house before it was half done." Give me your wampum, he instructed the colonists, "& then he could tell better what to say."

The Delawares' revision, unveiled two days later, bore little resemblance to the original. Gone was all that talk about the crime and the accused, trial and justice, self defense and going home. In its place was the cadence of condolence, couched in the soothing metaphor and repetition designed to comfort the bereaved: *Now Brother, . . . Now Brother, . . . Come Brother listen to me, . . . Come brother listen to me. . . . I will clap my hands to your eyes, because the tears are always filling up your eyes. Now brother I wipe the tears from your eyes.* It is impossible to say whether the governor's speech would have been the disaster Tongocone predicted. But the words he and the other Delaware go-betweens substituted—along with 10,000 more wampum beads, and a new shirt, coat, and hat—did persuade the bereaved man "to go home in quiet, & Contented and set my self down in peace."⁸⁵

Was jettisoning a speech unusual? Or was Zane just more candid than other mediators because his journal was never intended for a provincial official's eyes?⁸⁶ We are left to wonder how many other messages carefully drafted in Philadelphia were quietly set aside or reconfigured in the woods. But with Zane, Tongocone, Stille, and the others, we glimpse some of a go-between's conversational gambits. Literally and figuratively making it up as they went along, some fashioned belts while

others scribbled revised messages, some calculated the correct length of a string while others prayed. However earnestly they sought divine guidance, go-betweens relied more on accumulated wisdom and wiles, dexterity with shells and quills, to get a message across—and, more, to carry correspondence forward.



"Nothing but Nonsense"
Conversation Garbled and Stifled

"I Have Informed the Indians of What I Thought Was Proper"
The Craft of Editing

The general desire to promote trade and avoid war pushed peoples in and around Penn's Woods to find frequencies on which they could get through to one another. Building on that impulse, go-betweens gifted in languages, versed in the ways of wampum and writing, and able to think on their feet proved to be brilliant conversationalists with a dramatic impact on the frontier. When Isaac Zane, at the end of his 1761 mission, noted how "cheerfulness appear'd in every countenance, & the affair which before this appear'd so dubious had now another face," he caught the sense of relief a go-between could deliver.⁸⁷ Getting the governor's letter "has eas'd our minds," Delaware leaders had said in 1728. Another message from Philadelphia after the Virginia-Iroquois skirmish in 1742 had a similar soothing effect: "When . . . Conrad arriv'd with your Message, the Clouds were dispell'd, the Darkness ceased, and we now see as clearly and as well as ever."⁸⁸

Minds eased, frowns erased, clouds lifted, darkness banished—the transformations suggest something of negotiators' power. But the work was neither as easy nor as successful as these dramatic contrasts suggest. Intercultural communication was plagued by ignorance and folly, fraud and mistrust, cupidity and arrogance; indeed, as time wore on, the interference got worse rather than better. A closer look reveals that not even Shickellamy and Weiser were as devoted to truth as they appeared; if these two putative paragons fell short of the ideal, imagine how far short others fell. All were human: they made mistakes, both honest and dishonest, and their agendas clashed as often as coincided. Even when interests did coincide, conversation lagged because colonists and Indi-

ans remained far apart on issues as fundamental as what part of a speech was most important, and which medium—paper or wampum—should have primacy.

The best place to begin exploring conversation's darker side is just where things looked brightest—the fireside chats Shickellamy had with Conrad Weiser. However open and free the Pennsylvanian's reports made these exchanges sound, in fact he never told his Indian friend all "the news" that "accured among the white people"; at one colloquy in the summer of 1747, for example, Weiser only "informed the Indians of what I thought was proper both from Europe & America," meaning by *proper* whatever put Britain and its dominions in the most favorable light.

At the same time, however, Weiser's superiors expected him to "demand from" Shickellamy and other headmen, "by virtue of the Treaties subsisting between this Province and the Indians, all that they know or have heard." Did colonists really expect complete candor? Weiser's asides in his reports—"This is what Shikelamy . . . assures to be true"; "he says we may depend upon the truth thereof"; "I dare say the man is true & Honest"—suggest doubt, as does colonial skepticism of "Indian stories." Certainly Pennsylvanians asking the Oneida "to open himself freely . . . , to tell his whole knowledge . . . and his thoughts" never got their wish; Shickellamy shaded the truth in ways that served Iroquois interests, and his own.⁸⁹

The shading began with the Oneida's arrival at the Susquehanna Forks in 1728, when he asserted that "He is Sett over the Shawanah Indians" by the Six Nations, who "have," Pennsylvanians were led to believe, "an absolute Authority over all our Indians, & may command them as they please." The claim was far from the truth—Shawnees, Delawares, Conestogas, and the others had for years done pretty much as they wished—but Shickellamy made it his business to bring rhetoric closer to reality by weakening any rivals.⁹⁰

His first target was the obstreperous Shawnee and fur trader, Peter Chartier, a man of influence among Susquehanna Shawnees. Neither Chartier nor his people accepted Iroquois claims of hegemony, and Chartier went out of his way to mock Shickellamy's pretensions to authority. In 1733 the Oneida, using as his excuse a Pennsylvania-Iroquois treaty article requiring "that if either they or we heard any ill News, Care should be taken to make it known to each other," came to the cap-

ital to proclaim Chartier a “wicked and proud” fellow, a rum monger who flouted colonial law and flirted with the French. “[H]is Behaviour is such as gives just Apprehensions,” Shickellamy declared ominously, that “some Mischiefs may happen if he is not called away from these parts.” Called away or not, Chartier was soon gone for good: disgusted with Pennsylvania’s land schemes, tired of Iroquois overseers, he spent more and more of his time west of the mountains.⁹¹

With one rival out of the way, Shickellamy turned on Sassoonan, the Delaware leader at Shamokin, who had a similar independent streak. In the late 1720s Sassoonan, not Shickellamy, had spoken at councils in Philadelphia, and during the early 1730s the two men worked together. But after 1740, as age and illness sapped the Delaware headman’s strength, Shickellamy—again under the auspices of treaty agreements with Pennsylvania calling for regular exchange of news—set out to undermine the old man’s authority. That Delaware is near death, the Oneida announced; he is out of his head; he has been on a binge for years, selling his people’s council wampum to keep rum flowing into his cup; he is so unfit for formal meetings that “whenever a council fire was kindled he p——d into it.” The province should appoint someone to rule in his place, since—another lie—he “has no Successor of [among] his Relations.” It was no coincidence that during these years Sassoonan’s nephews Pisquetomen, Shingas, and Tamaqua (Beaver), along with many other Delawares weary of Iroquois arrogance and interference, followed Shawnees down the westward trails toward the Ohio.⁹²

Whatever Sassoonan’s Delawares or Chartier’s Shawnees thought of the “news” Shickellamy spread about them, Pennsylvania was happy to accept it as true in order to further the colony’s ambition to rule or remove its native neighbors. Only when those disgruntled emigrants to Ohio began to speak with an independent voice in the late 1740s was Shickellamy’s skewed version of the truth fully exposed, for only then did Onondaga’s agenda come to clash with Pennsylvania’s. Appalled that the axis of alliance running, through him, from Philadelphia to Onondaga was in danger of being replaced by a new chain of friendship stretching west from the provincial capital, Shickellamy stepped up his disinformation campaign by frantically concocting stories. “[T]he Journey to Ohio wou’d avail but little,” he told Weiser in March 1748 on learning that his Tulpehocken confidant was soon to head west to be-

friend peoples out there; those groups cannot speak for themselves, because they are “altogether subject to the Six Nations.” Stalling Weiser by claiming that Onondaga would soon send a delegation to Philadelphia “to treat about some Business of Consequence,” Shickellamy looked the fool when no Iroquois showed up. By the end of August the string had run out, the fiction of Iroquois rule was exposed. The Oneida’s old comrade was at Logstown on the Ohio River to raise the Union Jack, joining Indians in a toast to King George and new friends. “He is not altogether pleased with my Journey to Ohio,” Weiser reported, in something of an understatement. The diplomatic scaffolding that Shickellamy’s conversations put up over the past two decades had come crashing down.⁹³

*“They Ought Not Thus to Treat”
Lost in Transmission*

Weiser and Shickellamy were as attuned to one another as any two men in the border country, yet their talks fell far short of the treaty rhetoric about honest exchange. With them, however, we have only begun to plumb the depths of deceit, to glimpse how much words went astray as they crossed the frontier.

Many obstacles stood in the way of conversation. Sickness or bad weather might stop an envoy, as did a hunting or trading expedition and—among Indian messengers—a bad dream.⁹⁴ So did drink. The Pennsylvania fur traders in August 1728 who paused to slake their thirst (and spill their news) at a Philadelphia tavern had kindred spirits a generation later in Teedyuscung, who bartered his wampum for liquor, and Andrew Montour, who, having lost his dispatches, was (coincidentally?) held in Carlisle on a tavern debt.⁹⁵

Sometimes Pennsylvania traders, perfectly sober, found good reason to fail as messengers. Charles Poke and Thomas Hill neglected to carry a belt from Allegheny Indians to Philadelphia, since that wampum told provincial officials how these two traders had “abused” the very people who now sent them east to turn themselves in! A request for more English goods sent by Ohio leaders in the 1740s met a similar oblivion, perhaps because the men toting (and burying) that plea wanted to keep the trade to themselves.⁹⁶

Indians were surprised when a message given to men like Hill and Poke never got to its destination; Pennsylvania authorities were not.

Philadelphia officials eager to befriend Ohio peoples in order to expand trade and fend off the French had a hard time laying down secure lines of communication over the mountains. They bewailed the penchant of Shawnees there to send speeches "by Indian [i.e., colonial] Traders, some of which have been delivered & some not." These men are "thrusting themselves into the Carriage of Messages," one governor stormed, but they are "too partial, ignorant, and too much concerned for their own Interest" to be trusted. The council instructed one envoy to tell Indians that this is "not a becoming manner of addressing the Government"; next time, another official ordered, natives must "observe a greater Regularity in the publick Transactions."⁹⁷

Emissaries Pennsylvania chose could be every bit as bad, Indians responded, clods "who either don't remember or designedly alter your meaning . . . ; take care," they scolded, "to choose faithful and proper people." Native frustration ran deep. "You have frequently sent us Messages by stragglng Indians . . .," a Cayuga named Tokahaio complained, "upon whom there is no dependence. They sometimes lose the Belts & Messages, and sometimes drink them away, but if they happen to meet us, they are nothing but Nonsense."⁹⁸

Mishandling wampum was as common, and as annoying, as sending the wrong man. Though colonists became conversant with beads, wampum remained a foreign language in which they often made mistakes. One group of Pennsylvania envoys had to confess that they had "intirely forgot to bring any with us from Philadelphia," while others tried to talk peace holding a black belt or delivered important speeches "on small Belts and trifling little Strings." Some embarrassed colonists got off with "a general Laugh" at their ineptitude; some had to sit through a lecture. You have lost "Several of our Strong Belts" given to you before, Tokahaio said in 1758. Moreover, the English, "when they speak to us, they do it with a Shorter Belt or String than that which we spoke to them with. . . . They ought not thus to treat with Indians on Council Affairs."⁹⁹

Three years later Tokahaio, back in Pennsylvania, was no happier. In his hand were wampum belts Philadelphia had sent to Onondaga. Oneidas had brought the wampum safely through to us, he said, but the beads are mute. Beyond saying vaguely that the belts "were about the Governor's Business, they brought no Speeches with them . . .," the Cayuga concluded testily, handing them back to colonists; "you may know their meaning; we do not." Nor was this an isolated mishap.

Shortly before Tokahaio arrived, several Nanticokes had visited Philadelphia with another silent belt. It came a year ago, they explained, but all it said was that Pennsylvania's governor invited us to the capital; it did not say why. The Indians then accused the governor of handing wampum to a passing Indian, who gave it to another, "& so it goes thro' many hands, . . . but the last man knows not what was intended to be said . . . with the Belt. We think that whatever it is," the Nanticokes concluded, "that it could not have come from the Governor's heart."¹⁰⁰

This variation of the children's game of Telephone—where a message gets distorted as it travels from one person to the next—suggests how intercultural conversation could go awry. It also suggests that colonists, despite Tokahaio's indictment, were not the only clumsy ones. Oneidas bearing shells from Philadelphia that they could not read; Teedyuscung swapping a belt for a bottle; Ohioans misplacing some of their strings—Indians were not always masters of the conversational arts either.¹⁰¹

Even a sober and skilled emissary found wampum hard to handle. However long a belt was, however elaborate its design, it was not a letter that could simply be picked up and deciphered by anyone familiar with the medium. A negotiator using wampum had to tie in his mind a particular speech with a particular belt's size, color, and pattern; if not, the beads were struck dumb. Surely, then, written documents were an improvement—an open book, as it were, to any educated eye? A belt wore obscure symbols; a page—any page—bore letters, words, sentences, all awaiting a trained glance to unveil its secrets.

But a document only looked more reliable. As Indians learned through painful experience, much depended on who did the writing; some scribes penned "loose Letters." In 1739 Shawnees visiting the capital found this out when provincial officials accused them, "from your own Letters," of favoring the French. There must be some mistake, the Indians replied; that letter "was not wrote agreeable to their Minds, nor as they designed." What happened is that "being merry over a Cup of good Liquor at Alleghenny, they then said they would write to you, their Brothers [in Philadelphia], which two white Men who were in Company undertook to do." Only now do we discover that those two, for reasons of their own, "so wrote what they themselves thought proper."¹⁰²

In 1753 other Pennsylvania traders, living up to their worst reputa-

tion, strayed even farther from native intentions by slipping into an innocuous letter, marked by headmen, a paragraph in which Indians supposedly agreed to sell their lands on the Ohio River's east side to pay off trade debts. The governor and council, though always happy to buy more territory, were so amazed by this extraordinary proposal and so distrustful of the traders who penned it that they wondered if the Indians had been "in a sober, thoughtful mood" when their scruffy amanuenses took it down. Sure enough, inquiries confirmed that natives had said no such thing.¹⁰³

By midcentury the Ohio country, where Pennsylvania's ambitions clashed with those of Virginia, France, and assorted Indian nations, was particularly fertile soil for such chicanery. First came the debate over Britain building a fort there. Thomas Penn (long since returned to England to stay) and his loyalists in Philadelphia considered a stronghold "a mark of Possession" that would counter both French and Virginians; for their part, George Croghan and his fellow fur traders longed for the protection a garrison could provide. Thus in January 1751 Croghan arrived in the provincial capital to announce that Ohio Indians at Logstown "are of opinion that their Brothers the English ought to have a fort on this River to secure the Trade." Sent back that spring only to "sound the Indians in a private manner that he might know their Sentiments" about this venture, the trader surprised everyone by returning with the natives' formal request for "a Strong House." Governor James Hamilton was pleased; the Quaker-dominated assembly, opposed both to war and to spending money, was not. Imagine, then, its delight when Andrew Montour, who had been at Croghan's side throughout the Ohio visit, came in to deny that Indians had said any such thing.¹⁰⁴

Who was lying? It is as hard to tell now as it was then. Croghan, publicly humiliated, fought hard to clear his name (he even persuaded Montour to change his story), but matters never got sorted out. Wherever truth lay, this chapter in the cross-cultural concourse reveals how tangled the lines of communication were becoming as the number of players on the frontier stage grew and the stakes mounted.

Conrad Weiser, who had visited the assembly with Montour to hear the *métis* embarrass Croghan, soon found out how unpredictable a fellow Montour was, and how unfathomable the politics of the Ohio country. At Logstown in 1752, Montour pressed Indian leaders to accept the

expansive interpretation of an Iroquois land sale that Virginia and Weiser had obtained at Lancaster in 1744, a reading that would have given Ohio to the Old Dominion. But at another council Montour, reversing himself, insisted that "the Indians never Sold nor released it [the territory beyond the mountains;] If they did they were imposed upon by the Interpreter"—none other than the now "very angry" Weiser himself. Once again truth is elusive, and once again it is less important than what the dispute reveals about confusion in formal conversations.¹⁰⁵

A return visit to the banks of the Ohio in December 1758 finds truth more evident and some go-betweens' efforts to evade it more obvious. Croghan and Montour, having long since patched up their differences, stood with General John Forbes's army on the ruins of Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio, just captured from the French. It was a pivotal moment in American history. British success in taking the stronghold owed much to their messengers' ability to convince Ohio Indians that, upon ousting the French, the British army would obey the natives' demand to leave Ohio. Believing that promise, natives sat out the contest and the French fell.¹⁰⁶ Now, meeting the triumphant Forbes, Ohio leaders repeated, several times, their insistence "that he should go back over the mountains." Forbes did turn around: desperately ill, he headed east to die. But he left behind Colonel Henry Bouquet and two hundred troops to build a stronghold, to be christened Fort Pitt. Now Bouquet, unhappy with the Indians' insistence on his retreat, wanted them to "alter their mind."

When native leaders refused, Croghan and Montour stepped in. As traders and, more recently, Crown Indian agents, both were keen to see the soldiers stay. First they simply refused to "tell Colonel *Bouquet* the *Indians'* answer." Then Croghan insisted that, in private talks with Bouquet, the headmen had indeed changed their minds about the troops. When Christian Frederick Post, who was also there, expressed doubts about that story, "Mr. Croghn grew very angry" and said any other account of Indian wishes "was a d——d lie." The Ohio natives, informed of Croghan's version, "said, Mr. *Croghn* and *Henry Montour* had not spoke and acted honestly and uprightly." Honest or not, Montour and Croghan—and Bouquet—got their wish: the army stayed. Ohio leaders learned the hard way that among a go-between's tricks was making no mean *yes* and *yes, no*.¹⁰⁷

*"It Is So Difficult for Us to Understand Each Other"**Lost in Translation*

Croghan and Montour, caught by Post that winter day, offer the best example of how a negotiator could put words in someone's mouth. With Post's help, it is easy to see where, and why, something got lost in translation. But without a Post standing by at every conversation to point out where an interpreter strayed, it is harder to tell how much of what Croghan called "Indian Form" and Weiser termed "Indian Phrases" fell by the way.¹⁰⁸ It is clear, however, that even an interpreter committed to accurate translation had a difficult time getting messages through the cultural and linguistic interference, through the profound difference in agendas and customs.

Just a month after the Ohio Indians' meeting with Bouquet, one of the native leaders at that council, a Delaware named Custaloga, gave a French officer his version of the conversation.¹⁰⁹ It bore little resemblance to Bouquet's. While both accounts of the talks mentioned trade, peace, and return of colonial captives, they painted Bouquet and Britain in very different colors. Bouquet had himself boasting that "the English are . . . the most powerfull People on this Continent," insisting that the two hundred soldiers had to stay to protect traders, agreeing that the Indians must soon return their prisoners, and instructing natives to drive out all of the remaining French.

Custaloga's Bouquet was a more contrite fellow. "I . . . [am] going to be quite different from what you have seen and experienced of me up to the present," he allegedly promised. "It is," this Bouquet admitted, "unreasonable that we have come to stain your lands with blood . . . , we should have respected your lands." But fear not: we will leave soon, for "The King himself . . . forbids us to cross to the other side of the [Ohio] river, and orders us even to come away from it." Two hundred soldiers in a fort? No, only "a trading house here without a stockade." Drive away your French friend? "I shall be delighted to be door to door with him." Prisoners? Keep those "you have adopted as your relatives." But perhaps you might surrender the older ones, "who would be in the way, or of very little use to you." It is almost as if Custaloga and Bouquet were remembering different conversations.

This was hardly the first time transmission was garbled. In 1743 Oneidas told New York officials that, though the treaty minutes said

nothing about it, during the council at Onondaga Virginia had actually admitted that colonists were to blame for the skirmish with Jonnhaty's men. And in 1756 the Onondaga envoy Ogaghradarisha, recalling his visit to Pennsylvania to request a colonial fort at Shamokin and propose another above Wyoming, had the governor say "*That as he found by woe-ful experience, that making purchases of Lands was the cause of much blood having been shed, he was determined to buy no more.*"¹¹⁰

The line between true and false is harder to draw in these cases than it was with Post at the Ohio Forks. Did Custaloga consciously change Bouquet's words? Or was the Delaware offering an accurate (if not verbatim) account of the treaty, based on his own design or on a slanted interpretation by Andrew Montour? Ogaghradarisha's message begs the same questions. Was he putting words in the governor's mouth? Perhaps the fault lay in Weiser's interpretation that day, or in the gap between Weiser's Mohawk and Ogaghradarisha's Onondaga. Or maybe Ogaghradarisha mistook Pennsylvania's reluctance to accept at once his invitation to build a fort above Wyoming, so deep in Iroquois territory, as a policy statement against ever again buying native land. At this remove, one can only pose the questions; the rest is a guessing game. But it is no idle pastime. Pondering it, we approach the heart of translation's mystery, where words become malleable and imprecise, prey to the skills, schemes, and memories of those doing the talking.

Even in the best of times, interpretation is not an exact science. The equation that manufactures sentences from sounds has a host of variables, from the setting and audience to the translator's ability and sobriety or his agenda and attention span, not to mention the means of recording his work for future reference. The colonial era was not the best of times, even if an interpreter intended only the most faithful rendering of a speaker's words. Go-betweens were often tired, afraid, drunk, or bored—and sometimes all four at once. Their linguistic gifts ranged from fluency to ignorance, such as that exhibited by the Delaware Joseph Peepy, a regular translator in the last two decades of the colonial period who, near the end of his career, was said to speak only broken English. Moreover, fluency, so difficult to attain, was also easy to lose. In 1754 Weiser asked to be relieved of his duties "as a principal Interpreter" because "he is no longer Master of that Fluency he formerly had, and finding himself at a Loss for proper Terms to express

himself is frequently obliged to make Use of Circumlocution." With rusty or inept translators, one colonist lamented how much of a native's eloquence was reduced to dross by an interpreter able to distill only "the sense" of it.¹¹¹

It seems likely, then, that many an Indian speaker would have been disappointed to learn how much of his wisdom and wit were "spoiled" by a lousy accent, poor choice of words, and clumsy delivery. While we cannot measure the full extent of this impediment to understanding, we can identify elements of native speechmaking that, if not altogether abandoned by interpreters and scribes, at least received less emphasis, and therefore made less impact, than native American orators intended.

The first is repetition. Rehearsal of key words and phrases is vitally important to oral cultures intent on retaining their knowledge.¹¹² To natives like Tongocone and the other Delawares condoling Tenohwanguogue in 1761, intoning phrases over and over again was, like regular renewal of friendship at councils, the very lifeblood of conversation. Colonists saw words differently. Like a treaty that stood for all time once it was written down and marked or signed by the right people, so a phrase, once spoken and inscribed, had no need to reappear. Only colonial inconsistency in translating and recording Indian speeches—with some interpreters and scribes more prone to include everything—exposes the gap, providing occasional glimpses of what must have been a consistent Indian reiteration:¹¹³

- The Delaware leader Sassoonan, 1715 (interpreter and scribe unknown): *added to the same effect, . . . further added, . . . added, . . . Continued in the same strain, . . . repeated the same.*
- Sassoonan again, 1740 (scribe unknown, interpreter "Thomas Freeman, an Indian"): *now we are come down; we are come into your House . . . [W]e are glad now we are come; and my Uncles the Mingoes, came along with Us from Alleghany . . . I tell you again that our Friends, the Mingoes, came along with Us, and are come into your House.*
- Ohio Delawares, 1758 (Christian Frederick Post, translator and scribe): *You have talked of that Peace and Friendship which we had formerly with you . . . [A]lways remember that Friendship which we had formerly . . . [O]ur good Friendship and Peace we had formerly . . . [T]hat Friendship we formerly had . . . [T]hat Friendship with you we formerly*

had . . . [T]he Peace and Friendship we had Formerly . . . [T]he Friendship which we had formerly amongst our Fathers and Grandfathers . . . That Friendship . . . which was formerly between us . . . [T]hat Peace and Friendship which we formerly had with you.

- An Oneida named Saghughuniunt (Thomas King), 1762 (interpreter uncertain, scribe Richard Peters?): *call your Soldiers away from Shamokin. . . [T]ake away your Soldiers. . . I must tell you again these Soldiers must go away from Shamokin Fort. . . [T]here is no occasion for Soldiers to live there any longer. . . [W]e must press you to take away your Soldiers from Shamokin.*

Having skimmed these lines, the reader may now, perhaps, be readier to forgive colonial translators and scribes who usually saved their breath and their ink, even if that meant altering the rhythms and accents of native discourse.

A second strand of speech only occasionally found its way into the record due to colonial delicacy, not colonial boredom. A native speaker's use of the body as metaphor usually enraptured colonial auditors, accustomed as they were to thinking in terms of a *body politic*. Thus interpreters conveyed—and scribes recorded—metaphors from head to foot. But amid all the body parts, private parts are conspicuously absent from surviving accounts of speeches; they come up just enough to suggest that colonists routinely bowdlerized Indian talks.

Much of this discourse centered on insults about turning men into women. Why fight Catawbas? Because, a Cayuga said (through Weiser), those southern Indians "sent us word that . . . they were men and double men for they had two P——s; that they could make Women of Us." During the war with colonists another Iroquois explained that Delawares attacking Pennsylvania had boasted that "We are Men" and shall keep fighting; do not try to stop us, "lest we cut off your private Parts and make Women of you."¹¹⁴

Two other references to private parts confirm the suspicion that colonists, not Indians, were responsible for keeping such talk to a minimum. The Pennsylvanian John Hays, with Christian Post at a council on the Susquehanna in 1760, noted in his diary that one native stood to complain about British exchange rates for furs. Prices are so high, the Indian argued, that *he got but 6 fills of a Measure for a ribboned Stroud, and it was so little that his Cock could Not Go in it, and he had But A little one.*

Significantly, polishing his grammar and spelling for the final report on their mission, Hays omitted this speech altogether.¹¹⁵

Conrad Weiser, translating for the Seneca go-between Newcastle, went in the opposite direction in his report, not away from the explicit but toward it. Newcastle says, the Pennsylvanian explained, that the Iroquois sent a message to Delawares that included talk of how those Delawares

have Suffered the string that tied your petticoat to be cut loose by the French, and you lay with them, & so became a common Bawd, . . . and as you have thrown off the Cover of your modesty and become stark naked, . . . We now give you a little Prick and put it into your private Parts, and so let it grow there till you shall be a compleat man.

The speech has attracted scholarly attention for the light it sheds on Iroquois talk of Delawares as women. But its significance also lies in how Weiser handled it. Before repeating Newcastle's message, the negotiator was at pains to say that the image was not his, but the Seneca's: I only "took down in words . . . the literal Interpretation of what Newcastle said." Weiser's skittish way with those words makes one wonder how often he and others censored an Indian speech before it ever reached colonists' tender ears.¹¹⁶

Perhaps, given all the obstacles in the way—differences in language and emphasis, a metaphorical wilderness, the temptation to censor or edit speeches—we should be surprised that native voices from colonial times come through as clearly as they do. But at the time, Indians and colonists alike were frustrated by the enduring language barrier between them. In 1748 one Indian woman befriending Moravians at Shamokin broke down and wept because she "could not understand & Speake with" them better. Leaders on both sides knew the feeling. Governor William Keith, talking to Conestogas in 1722, was aware that "many words that we send to them [the Iroquois] & they send to us may be lost by the way & never told, because the English Interpreters do not understand the Indian Language so well as you." Though in the next generation interpreters were probably more skilled, the barrier remained. "I am sorry it is so difficult for us to understand each other . . .," said Saghughuniunt at Easton in 1762, staring across the linguistic gulf at colonial leaders. "[A]s we do not easily understand one another, we are obliged to deliver you the Substance in short of what we have to say, which makes it tedious." But tedium or merely get-

ting the gist of it was, in some sense, not the worst thing happening to the good correspondence. More ominous still, Indian and colonist were coming to understand one another only too well.¹¹⁷

"This Faithfull Kind of Evidence . . . Must Be the Rule"

Writing Triumphant

The farther one goes in exploring frontier conversation, the darker the prospect appears. People lied; they made up letters and mishandled wampum; their incompetence or chicanery meant that countless words were "lost by the way & never told." Even writing and wampum, complementary as they could be in capable hands, ended up in contention as Indians came to fear the power of the pen and colonists insisted more shrilly on paper's primacy.

Contention between the two media was always there, in the weight each side accorded them. Where Indians considered written documents supplementary, colonists thought the opposite. "They were glad," Iroquois told Pennsylvania in 1722, "the Govr. sent them a Letter for that was like two tongues, and *confirmed* what the Messenger said to them." Two decades later Governor Thomas let slip the prevailing colonial view when he informed Shawnees that "I send you this not only under the Seal of our Government, but for a *further Confirmation* have added four Strings of Wampum."¹¹⁸

Like any literate people, colonists thought reliance on the spoken word a mistake. Speech, they insisted, is transitory and intangible; it lingers in the air for a heartbeat, then dies there, to be followed either by silence or by other evanescent sounds in the flow of thoughts expressed.¹¹⁹ But putting those thoughts down on paper is, it seemed to Europeans, a different matter. Here, they believed, words make an indelible mark, become tangible objects that, years hence, can resurrect the talk of men long dead. Here, on the page, lies truth, a record of deeds, of wisdom, just waiting to be revived in order to enlighten generations to come. And here, in the ink, the message comes through clearly to sustain "Kind Correspondents."

Or so European colonists wished to believe. However close colonial and Indian modes of communication might look, however adept Pennsylvanians became with shell beads or Indians with writing, colonists nonetheless thought that literacy, civilization's hallmark, set them off from their native neighbors.¹²⁰ A spectrum of communicative forms there indeed was, but at its center lay, to the European (and, in the end,

to the Indian) way of thinking, a divide separating peoples that could read and write from those that could not. While literacy is indeed a tool of communication, it is also "a mode of excommunication," a weapon that literally wrote off groups.¹²¹

On the Pennsylvania frontier these forces and ideas found expression in a war of words, wampum, and writing. Colonists conveyed to Indians a serene confidence in a document's accurate reflection of reality. "[N]o body," James Logan was said to have assured skeptical Delawares, "dared to write any thing wrong, for if any one writes any thing out of his own Head, We hang Him."¹²² If Logan were right, many a Pennsylvanian (including Logan himself) would have ended his days at the end of a rope. None did; but however far from the truth, Logan's claim captures the arrogance of the literate.

His superior, Thomas Penn, agreed that paper must have the final say. "I doubt not," the proprietor told Conestogas in 1735, "but you will believe with me that the most proper Method for this [renewal of friendship between peoples] is to read over to you here, since you cannot read yourselves, the principal of those Writings," the agreements and land cessions from years past. At Lancaster nine years later Virginia commissioners arguing a point with the Iroquois added their voice to the colonial chorus of praise for paper. Consult our earlier treaty with you, the Virginians said; it "being in Writing is more certain than your Memory. That is the way the white people have of preserving Transactions of every kind," the commissioners explained, "and transmitting them down to their Children's Children for ever; and all Disputes among them are settled by this faithfull kind of Evidence, and must be the Rule between the Great King and you."¹²³

Some Indians sounded awed, even cowed, by a document's power to carry thoughts across space or time. When I die I am going to hell, one aged Delaware solemnly told a missionary. "Ask'd . . . how he came to believe so, Said he I have liv'd with white People, (who can reed & Know many things from God), & they all Say so." In formal discourse, too, Indians might genuflect before the paper altar Penn and Logan erected for them. If we "make any Blunders, or have forgot any part of the Speech," Saghughuniunt told Pennsylvania's governor in 1757, please "excuse" it, "as they cou'd not write, therefore, were obliged to keep every thing in their Memory."¹²⁴

These two may have been putting colonists on, for alongside such obeisance were louder, more common Indian expressions of confi-

dence in their own ways of recording and recalling things. In Philadelphia an Iroquois named Kanickhungo insisted that writing was not the only way to make the past live. "We who are now here are old Men," he said to Thomas Penn, James Logan, and a crowd of colonists in October 1736, "who have the Direction of Affairs in our own Nations, & as we are old, it may be thought that the Memory of these things may be lost with us, who have not like you the Art of preserving it, by committing all Transactions to writing"; not so, Kanickhungo continued, for "we nevertheless have Methods of transmitting from Father to Son an account of all these things, whereby you will find the Remembrance of them is faithfully preserved."¹²⁵

Natives defending their own method of seeing that "succeeding Generations are made acquainted with what has passed" also came to doubt writing's capacity for capturing and conveying truth. Growing familiarity with the literate cosmos bred distrust. One reason Susquehanna Shawnees took such a dislike to Count Zinzendorf in 1742 was the Moravian's habit of holing up in a tent with his books and papers; it looked to Indians like sorcery, with the writings a tool of that malevolent craft. Around this time Canasatego, too, sounded the alarm. Waxing nostalgic for the days when Indians had the continent to themselves, the Onondaga told colonial leaders that "We are now . . . lyable to many . . . Inconveniences since the English came among Us, and particularly from the Pen and Ink work that is going on at the Table [pointing to the Secretarys]" scratching away there.¹²⁶

In the years to come, suspicions of that work grew, pushed by traders' "loose Letters," by how documents, so fixed in appearance, could be so easily misread, by deeds whose boundaries on the page diverged from native memory of an agreement. Paper's power to pluck territory from Indian hands seemed particularly sinister.¹²⁷ "They say," remarked Post, "that they have been robbed of the lands by the writing of the whites." Indians leveled the charge time and again. "[W]hen You have gott a writing [confirming a land sale] from us," Delawares complained, "you lock it up in ye. Chest & no body Knows what you have bought or what you paid for it." We have "an Uneasiness on our Minds . . . concerning our Land," an Iroquois speaker told colonists in 1754. Our elders deny ever having sold it, yet now "We understand that there are Writings for all our Lands."¹²⁸

During the war, fear of a literate world became so acute in the Indian countries that someone pulling out a book might have it knocked

from his grasp or stolen. "I Durst Not Reead But sum times When they were in A Good Umer," wrote one colonial envoy, "and Not Long at A tim." Do not even let Indians know that you have books with you, another advised.¹²⁹

Though reading was provocative, writing was worse. In the early 1760s Post warned colonists venturing into the Ohio country that "Indians are very suspicious of those white people whom they see engaged in reading and writing, especially the latter; believing that it concerns them or their territory." The go-between spoke from hard experience. During delicate wartime negotiations, he and his companions had drawn suspicious looks every time they picked up a pen. "[W]hat had they to write there?" the "very jealous" natives demanded.¹³⁰

Jealousy was compounded by natives' growing dependence on books and papers. Like a headman holding an old piece of paper or an Iroquois warrior with a passport tucked away in his pack, Indians knew and used literacy's power. At the same time, however, they could not unlock all of its secrets, could neither abandon it nor fully embrace and exploit it. The result, among illiterate messengers, was occasional embarrassment and perpetual uneasiness. In the late 1750s the Ohio Delaware Tamaqua went from village to village, papers in hand, speaking words of peace, only to be told by some fur traders that what he carried was not a peace treaty but a land agreement.¹³¹ Tamaqua's brother Pisquetomen knew the feeling. He once strode grandly into the provincial council chamber to lay belts and strings on the table, then faltered when it turned out that the accompanying paper he handed the governor did not, in fact, contain "the Substance" of that wampum; someone had given him the wrong document. Pressed to go ahead and "deliver what they had to say from their Memory," he and his companions declined; "he depended upon that Paper to Assist his Memory in what he had to say," Pisquetomen replied, "he could not do without it."¹³²

He could not do without it—yet he could not even read it. The dilemma preoccupied and infuriated natives. No colonist saw this more clearly than Post, when Ohio leaders summoned him so that they could dictate a letter. "The jealousy natural to the *Indians* is not to be described," the messenger remarked; "for though they wanted me to write for them, they were afraid I would, at the same time, give other information, and this perplexed them."¹³³

Indians thus perplexed came up with a variety of ways to master or counter writing's power. Some learned to read and write. "[T]hey had

Writers among themselves," Teedyuscung, thinking of Isaac Stille and Joseph Peepy, reminded provincial officials. But literate natives were rare, even at the end of the colonial era, so other groups adopted an educated colonist. In 1761 an Onondaga named Jenochiaada sent a messenger to Pennsylvania to say (on a wampum string) that "When I receive a Letter from you I cannot understand it, which I think very hard." Was the solution to insist on wampum, then? Not for Jenochiaada. "[W]e ought to have somebody living among us," he went on, "who can understand and interpret your Messages & the Letters you send to us." His candidate was "my [adopted] Child, James Sherlock"; please give him "your leave . . . [to] live amongst us."¹³⁴

Ironically, even Indians who accepted the triumph of writing were often rebuffed when they wanted to learn its mysteries for themselves. Colonial officials, far from welcoming such overtures, sought to shore up the barrier between bookish people and everyone else.¹³⁵ When Oneidas in 1753 asked David Zeisberger to write a letter to Conrad Weiser, the Moravian refused, "adding, that if they had any message to send to Weiser, they should do it by means of a belt, which was a much better and surer way than by letter." Similarly, when Teedyuscung nine years later wished aloud that the peace just made among the Indians at Lancaster had been written down and "signed by all of us [headmen] . . . , that we might have it always to shew to our Children and Grand Children," Pennsylvania's governor "reminded him that it was not the Custom for Indians to sign writings to one another." The natives' ambivalence about writing was matched by colonial ambivalence about their having it.¹³⁶

By then Teedyuscung was accustomed to British officials deflecting his tentative forays into the written universe. Since 1757, pressed by Moses Tatamy and Isaac Stille, he had struggled to get a clerk of his own in order to ensure an accurate account of his conversations with colonists. The contest began innocently enough at a treaty in July 1757 when the Delaware, pleading a faulty memory and a desire to "have things done regularly," asked for "a Copy of all the Proceedings." To this, provincial leaders agreed readily enough.¹³⁷

But Teedyuscung's other request created a stir. I also want, he said, speaking (of course) on a wampum string, "a Clerk to take Minutes along with the Governor's Clerk." This was a rather different matter: handing over a copy of the minutes the governor's man takes is one thing, two clerks—and therefore two versions of the same speech—

quite another. Governor William Denny, counseled by Croghan and Weiser, refused. "No Indian Chief, before you, ever demanded to have a Clerk," Denny replied, "and none has ever been appointed for Indians in former Treaties."¹³⁸


Resistance only confirmed Delaware suspicions about writing. "[H]e looked on it both unjust and unkind," Teedyuscung said, "to attempt . . . by this refusal to lead him on Blindfold and in the Dark." In the end the Indians got their wish, and Charles Thomson, headmaster of a Quaker school in Philadelphia, took a seat at the scribe's table. Croghan, in charge of keeping the minutes, was furious. "As to his having a Clerk or not having one I think it is a matter of little consequence," the old trader fumed, "but the having a Clerk was not the thing." That second scribe thrust an illegitimate voice (and pen) into official business; to Croghan, that was the crux of the matter.¹³⁹

And yet in a larger sense the secretary was indeed "the thing," because he was a teacher that could guide illiterate Indians through the forbidden recesses of the written world, a world colonial leaders wanted to keep to themselves. Looking ahead, Croghan feared worse to come. Will Thomson now sit with Indians to help draft a speech, then read it in council as colonists did? Teedyuscung, no fool, proceeded along precisely those lines, asking Thomson, a distraught Croghan reported, "to read it off as a lawyer would put in a plea at the bar." This is "very extraordinary and the most unprecedented procedure ever known at an Indian treaty," the Pennsylvanian spluttered. He managed to talk the Delaware out of it this time, but what next? Sitting over in England, Thomas Penn knew. They will not stop at getting copies of treaties or their own clerk, Penn warned. Soon any disgruntled Indian—knowing that, as that Delaware had put it, documents are "in ye. Chest" under lock and key—will demand to see our land records. Forbid it, the proprietor ordered: "if they make a charge, they should make that charge good from the evidence they have, and not be allowed to search into the Cabinets of any Persons for Causes of Complaint."¹⁴⁰

Some Indians, listening to squabbles over clerks, came to believe that there was another way, a better way, to embrace the strange new world of books while rejecting its colonial authors and authorities. In an effort to steal writing's spell for themselves, natives began to compose books of their own. "[H]e would Read Like Mad ofe it in the Morning," remarked one colonist after watching an Indian with a "Book of Pickters." Spiritual leaders began using texts to inspire others. One

Delaware "had drawn, as he pretended, by the direction of the great Spirit, a kind of map on a piece of deer skin, somewhat dressed like parchment, which he called 'the great Book or Writing.' . . . This map he held before him while preaching, frequently pointing to particular marks and spots upon it, and giving explanations as he went along." Increasingly, Indians making and reading such books counseled "total Separation from" European colonists.¹⁴¹

It had come to this, then, William Penn's "Kind Correspondence." Indians rejected a colonial symbol system that they had come to read as a tool of oppression, turning to competing books, and competing visions, as an antidote to poison pens. Other natives sought to play the game by the newcomers' rules, only to be forbidden by colonists who, insisting that Truth lay on the face of their papers, also insisted on remaining Truth's sole custodian. The conversational aids—wampum and freedom, paper and words—had spawned mistrust and contempt, had driven a wedge between Indians and colonists that went deeper than a message lost or gone astray, deeper than rumor, ignorance, or incompetence, to touch the frontier's very heart.


*"If We Had Been More Conversant"
Correspondence Ceases*

After 1750, peoples in and around Penn's Woods were doing more than talking, more, even, than wrangling about clerks and copies, about whose books spoke truth, about where wisdom resided and deceit lurked: they were killing each other with terrible fury. Frontier war—known ever since as the Seven Years' War or the French and Indian War—erupted because a combination of new conditions and old unhappiness proved more than even the most gifted conversationalist could handle. With so many voices clamoring to be heard, conversation lapsed into cacophony, and finally into war cries and terrified shrieks.¹⁴²

Gone, by 1750, were the days when Conrad Weiser and Shickelamy could manage most of the business between Pennsylvania and its Indian neighbors; the frontier was becoming too vast, the number of peoples involved too large, the lines of communication too long, for that. The Delaware, Shawnee, and Iroquois emigration into the Ohio country had altered the diplomatic landscape. While these groups kept

up their trade and their talk of friendship with Pennsylvania, many of them—especially Shawnees and Delawares—also remembered all too well how Penn's people had driven them away. Mingled with fond memories of amity that, one Pennsylvania governor hoped, "remain stamp'd on your Minds, never to be forgott," were unhappy recollections of land fraud and trade abuse along the Delaware and the Lehigh, the Tulpehocken and the Susquehanna. It did not help that Indians, according to Croghan and many others who knew them, were "Jealous and Revengefull[,] Never forgett & seldom forgive where they think they are Ingered."¹⁴³

And now colonists—not just Pennsylvanians but Virginians, with their newly-formed cadre of land speculators called the Ohio Company—were casting a hungry eye beyond the mountains, too, sending out surveyors to prepare, in secret, the way for further European settlement. "I took an Opportunity to set my Compass privately . . .," wrote their agent, Christopher Gist, in November 1750, "for I understood it was dangerous to let a Compass be seen among these Indians." Memories of past misdeeds were so keen that shortly before war broke out, Indians at a town beside the Allegheny River "found a Rat & Kill'd it, at which ye antians of them seem'd Concerned," saying "that ye French or English should get that Land from them, ye same prediction being made by their Grandfathers' on finding a Rat on Delaware before ye White People Came there." No wonder France, sending troops and traders into the Ohio at midcentury in order to check the English advance that threatened to cut French Canada off from French Louisiana, convinced natives that the British were up to no good.¹⁴⁴

Complicating the frontier further, to the north sat William Johnson, his influence among the Iroquois growing steadily, while the Iroquois themselves kept trying to make good their claims to suzerainty over the increasingly populous and independent Ohio peoples. Even Pennsylvania was becoming a more complicated place to do Indian business. Proprietary officials sought money for arms and other gifts to counter the French and keep natives loyal; Quaker-dominated assemblies, which controlled the purse, refused. "As these [Indian] Affairs take up more time, and give more trouble to a Government, than almost all other Business put to gether," sighed Governor James Hamilton during one "dangerous Season" in November 1753, "it is a pity they afford so little Satisfaction in transacting them." A few months later a weary Conrad Weiser, listening to the hubbub, longed for the day when "I Shall not

trouble my head any longer" about "Indian affairs. . . . [T]here is now So many Cookes in that Kitchen that the brothe is allready Spoiled."¹⁴⁵

As late as 1750, Richard Peters had boasted to his superior, proprietor Thomas Penn, of Weiser's being so thoroughly in command that "I verily believe it is in his power to turn the Indian Councils which way he pleases." Hyperbole, of course; no one ever had that much say. Yet Peters captured the look of the Pennsylvania frontier in the recent past. Beginning in the late 1740s, however, as things started to fall apart for Weiser and for the world he knew, Pennsylvania's Indian agent began talking retirement. Indians pestered him with land and trade complaints, yet Philadelphia did nothing. "I shall be sick of Indian Affairs," the German colonist had warned Peters in June 1747, "If no medium is found to do them Justice."¹⁴⁶

To make things worse, the colony's diplomatic opening to the Ohio country left Weiser overburdened and out of his depth. He was a Six Nations man, a veteran of the trail running from Philadelphia through Tulpehocken and Shamokin to Onondaga; the western paths and peoples lay beyond his ken. "I should think meselve happy if I had nothing to do in public affairs, and could turn farmer entirely," a frustrated Weiser wrote after meeting some Ohio folk in Lancaster during the summer of 1748. Then, that fall, Shickellamy died, robbing the colony of its closest Indian ally and Weiser of his best guide. The Pennsylvania agent who had handled the Shenandoah Valley and Armstrong messes was a different man from the one who, early in 1754, admitted that "I Can not force things to go as I will, but must Submit to accidents. . . . I am perplect with Indians affairs, and Can not say Such or Such is best."¹⁴⁷

Nor was Weiser alone in his perplexity. Onondaga and Ohio, Quakers and proprietary men, Pennsylvania and Virginia, not to mention France and Britain—with so many contending forces, events were spinning out of any go-between's control. The surest proof of negotiators' impotence was that though they saw war coming, none could prevent it. Beginning in the late 1740s, Scarouady, Croghan, Weiser, and Montour all warned Pennsylvania authorities that if no one answered the French offensive in the Ohio with guns and other gifts, even with troops and forts, those French would secure a foothold west of the mountains and turn Indians there against Pennsylvania in particular and Britain in general.¹⁴⁸ Quaker reluctance to finance war and British reluctance to provoke an incident worked against taking a hard line. So did squabbles

among the go-betweens themselves about how to proceed. Weiser and Croghan have a "difference of Opinion" about which nations out there should get presents, a disgusted Hamilton wrote in 1750; this, the governor observed, arose "between Two persons who are suppos'd to understand Indian Affairs the best."¹⁴⁹ And that was before Croghan fought Montour about building forts, and Montour quarreled with Weiser about which land Indians had relinquished. All these squabbles left negotiators less able to sustain the conversation.

Disputes between negotiators, between governor and assembly, between Pennsylvania and New York, between Pennsylvania and Virginia, between Ohio nations and the Iroquois, between France and Britain—in the end all of these spelled a breakdown in correspondence, a breakdown more sinister than loose letters and mislaid wampum, misapprehension and mistranslation. Some thought the communications media specifically to blame. One native messenger said that Susquehanna Indians had joined the war in 1755 because Teedyuscung lacked wampum to send Pennsylvania word of their continuing allegiance. Teedyuscung himself, meanwhile, blamed writing for the bloodshed: "Somebody must have wrote wrong," he explained, "and that makes the Land all Bloody." But Scarouady argued that the wave of fury and fear broke over Pennsylvania's frontier because of a longer, more pronounced failure of the conversation common for more than two generations. Pennsylvanians "had been too negligent of Cultivating . . . Friendship with the Indians . . .," the Oneida scolded an audience in Philadelphia in the spring of 1756; conflict might have been avoided "If we had been more Conversant with each other."¹⁵⁰

CHAPTER VI

In the Woods:
Woodstove, 1755–1758

"Heavy Storms"
Frontier War

In Shamokin, the heart of the Pennsylvania frontier at midcentury, the summer of 1755 passed much like any other (Map 5).¹ The Delaware, Iroquois, and Tutelo inhabitants went about their business, planting the river flats and hunting the uplands. A late frost that blasted young crops broke the routine, as did a sudden rise in the river that stole canoes from the banks, drunk Indians whose cries shattered the night, and an elderly Conoy's funeral. Near that burial ground on the outskirts of town sat the house and smithy of the Moravian mission, a mission now ten years old.² The three German men living there were also creatures of habit, tending their corn, mowing their meadow, speaking fractured Delaware to Indians (who might reply in broken German), savoring news or visitors from Bethlehem.³

Over the course of the summer a motley array of other visitors trooped to that town, and to that house and shop: a Pennsylvania fur trader and two Indians from out Allegheny way; a lone Englishman from above Wyoming; a Conoy bound for Lancaster; a German shoemaker from the nearest colonial settlement on the river's east side, a morning's ride over the hills; a Delaware family, back over those same hills after a shopping trip to Tulpehocken; Germans or Swiss from new farms on Penn's Creek, across the Susquehanna. So crowded did the Moravians' place get that one evening the missionaries turned away several Delawares because the house already held two colonists and seven Iroquois.⁴

59. Delaware Indians "To Mr. Jeremiah Langhorne & all Magistrates in Pennsylvania," 21 Nov. 1740, PMIA, I, 30. For the Walking Purchase, see Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, ch. 17; Wallace, *Teedyuscung*, ch. 2.
60. David Brainerd to Ebenezer Pemberton, 5 Nov. 1744, in Jonathan Edwards, *The Life of David Brainerd*, ed. Norman Pettit, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. VII (New Haven, Conn., 1985), 578, 580.
61. Spangenberg, 428; *MPCP*, IV, 581.
62. *MPCP*, IV, 574 ("transported"), 713 ("Flocks"; also 570, 572), 720 (Gachadow).

V: Conversations

1. *PA*, 1st, I, 671 ("talke"); Weiser to Peters[?], 24 Jan. 1745/6, DSP, 966.F.24 ("discourse"; see also *MPCP*, V, 136-139, 162, 167, 212, 222-223; *PA*, 1st, I, 750-751, 756-769; Weiser to [?], 15 Apr. 1746, CCW, I, 14).
2. Weiser to Peters, 27 Oct. 1754, quoted in Wallace, *Weiser*, 372. See also "Sentements of Ohio," n.d., CCW, II, 27; *PA*, 1st, I, 551; Albert Cook Myers, ed., *William Penn: His Own Account of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians, 1683* (Moynan, Pa., 1937), 87.
3. *MPCP*, III, 440.
4. *Ibid.*, 449 (also 440, 446, IV, 642); VI, 444 ("Public Person"); Post, "An Observation or Two made in my several Conversations with Indians . . ." [19 Jan. 1759], RPCEC, B9, 2075.
5. *MPCP*, III, 449 ("Grub").
6. *Ibid.*, I, 180 (hogs), IV, 413, 419-420 (assault), VI, 420, IX, 426 (land), VIII, 401 (horses); *PA*, 1st, I, 295 (woman and apples), 239-240, 271-272 (land). Indian complaints about liquor are legion. See *MPCP*, II, 33, 45, 48, 511, III, 46-48, V, 167, 676; *PA*, 1st, I, 327-328, 394-395, 425, 549-552. For natives stealing rum, see *MPCP*, I, 187-188; Gary B. Nash, ed., "The First Decade in Pennsylvania: Letters of William Markham and Thomas Holme to William Penn," *PMHB*, XC (1966), 333; *PWP*, II, 106-108; *PA*, 1st, I, 455.
7. "Minutes of what pass'd between the Proprietor & the Delaware Indians, 9th June 1733," PMIA, I, 37.
8. *PA*, 1st, I, 737, 741-743; *MPCP*, III, 507 (distant nations). For friends, see 512 (quotation; also 578; *PA*, 1st, I, 233-234, 551).
9. *PA*, 1st, I, 341 ("Distance"; and see 302-304, 327-330), 347 ("amicable"); 454, 551-552 (feelers).
10. *MPCP*, II, 553 ("Ear"), VIII, 34 (Teedyuscung). See also II, 554, 574, III, 598, IV, 568, VIII, 46, 508; *PA*, 1st, I, 211, 241-242; Speech of John Shickelamy, 7 Aug. 1760, FA, III, 503.

11. *MPCP*, III, 209-212, V, 73, 84, 98; *PA*, 1st, I, 229; Wallace, *Weiser*, 373 (word from Philadelphia). *MPCP*, IV, 747, V, 137, 167, 212, 222 (word from Indian country).
12. *PHB*, II, 198; Howard H. Peckham, ed., *George Croghan's Journal of His Trip to Detroit in 1767 . . .* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1939), 34.
13. *MPCP*, I, 436; *PA*, 1st, I, 211. "As I am settled . . . at Cheningo [Otsiningo, on the Susquehanna's North Branch]," Seneca George (Osternados) promised Pennsylvania officials in 1761, "I shall be able to give the Governor an account of any thing that is transacted in the Council of the Six Nations" (*MPCP*, VIII, 656).
14. Marshe, 180; Heckewelder, *History*, 311-312; *PA*, 2d, VI, 650.
15. Heckewelder, *History*, 311-312.
16. Some was probably pidgin, but it is doubtful that pidgin sufficed for formal talks. Ives Goddard, "The Delaware Jargon," in Carol E. Hoffecker et al., eds., *New Sweden in America* (Newark, Del., 1995), 137-149.
17. *DHNY*, IV, 435 (Iroquois); Zeisberger, *History*, 144; Heckewelder, *History*, xliii, 320. Some colonists believed that Indians were reluctant teachers (Cammerhoff, 172), but others found Delawares "mightly pleas'd that I have preferr'd thier [sic] Tongue in learning most of it so I can converse a little with them" (Kenny 1761-63, 169). Heckewelder said that Indians were glad to teach their language, but could be reluctant to answer too many questions, improperly posed (*History*, 320-322).
18. Beverly McAnear, ed., "Personal Accounts of the Albany Congress of 1754," *MVHR*, XXXIX (1953), 731 ("Diction"); *DHNY*, IV, 435 ("allegory"); *PA*, 1st, III, 467 ("at a loss").
19. *MPCP*, VIII, 655-656. See also III, 199; Cammerhoff, 174; Pemberton 1762, 319; Journal of Joseph Shippen, Building of Fort Augusta, 1756, 11 Oct., Small Books, no. 4, PSF.
20. Weiser, "Notes," 322. William Penn himself noted that "they are great Concealers of their own resentments" (*PWP*, II, 449). And see Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York, 1970), Part I.
21. Zeisberger, *History*, 143 (also Heckewelder, *History*, 150).
22. *MPCP*, VIII, 305 (also 310), 709. Gregory Dowd properly sees rumors as products of uncertainty and anxiety, or sometimes calculated attempts to discover the mood and intentions of the other side, noting that their frequency and nature vary over time ("The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier," *WMQ*, 3d ser., LIII [1996], 526-560). Rumors on the Pennsylvania frontier were a fairly constant phenomenon, while more frequent and more alarming at some times than others (and especially during the war years of the late 1750s).
23. *MPCP*, I, 299-301, 396-397, 435-436, II, 471 (French attacks), 474-475 (by sea); 145, 204, 509-510; Logan to Col. Burnet, 18 Apr. 1728, JLLB,

- III [1721-1732], 202; *PWP*, III, 451-455 (other attacks). *MPCP*, III, 500-501, 504; *MJNY*, 204 (Virginia).
24. *MPCP*, III, 501. Meeting between Gov. Hamilton and Brothers Joseph, Herman, and Rogers, 17 June 1752, MCA, 34/317/1/3. For other fears of attack, see *MPCP*, I, 157-158, 396, 448-449, II, 71, 245; Narrative of John Budd, 4 July 1694, in Penn Letters and Ancient Documents, 274, APS; Nash, ed., "First Decade," *PMHB*, XC (1966), 333.
25. *MPCP*, I, 397, II, 509-510; *PWP*, III, 452.
26. *MPCP*, II, 70-71 (clothing), 562-563, III, 500-503, 511-512, 564-565, 604-607; *PA*, 1st, I, 439 (scalps).
27. *MPCP*, II, 510 ("talk"), V, 286-287 ("actual War"), 656 ("Effect"); *Arch. Md.*, VI, 437 ("Mischief," "alarmed").
28. Edward Armstrong, ed., and Deborah Logan, comp., *Correspondence Between William Penn and James Logan, Secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania, and Others, 1700-1750*, 2 vols., HSP, *Memoirs*, IX-X (1870-1872), I, 179 ("reports"); *MPCP*, II, 16 ("sowers"), III, 501 ("Ground"; see also VI, 152), IV, 433 ("Idle"), 444, VIII, 35, 46 ("Chirping"); *PA*, 1st, I, 232; Kenny 1761-63, 155. Similar admonitions, from both Indians and colonists, are in *MPCP*, II, 245-246, 387, 471, 474-475, 516. For provincial laws against rumors, see *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania, 1682-1809*, 17 vols. (Harrisburg, Pa., 1896-1915), II, 229, 366, III, 61.
29. *MPCP*, III, 146 ("imperfect"); V, 2; Weiser to Peters[?], 24 Jan. 1745/6, DSP, 966.F.24; Wallace, Weiser, 233 (snowshoes); Nash, ed., "First Decade," *PMHB*, XC (1966), 333 (fireflies).
30. Peters to "Hond Sir," 5 July 1753, PMOC, VI, 73 (see also James Hamilton to Thomas Penn, 30 Apr. 1751, V, 135; *PA*, 1st, I, 762). Post 1760, 23 May. But Post believed that messengers were held to a different, higher standard. Indians, like colonists, sometimes lie, Post observed, but not, he insisted, in "publick Negotiations." Natives consider a messenger to be a truth teller, not only in formal speeches but "also the Words in Conversation" of a more casual sort. Colonial go-betweens, the missionary went on, too often forget this; their wild promises, when unfulfilled, foster among the natives nothing but "Bitterness & Revenge. . . The Lyes of our Traders," the missionary concluded, "often expose us to the Hatred of the Indians. But the Lyes of our Messengers will always expose us to danger from the Indians." Post, "An Observation or Two," [19 Jan. 1759], RPCEC, B9, 2075.
31. *MPCP*, V, 401 (Canasatego), VI, 152 ("enquire"), VIII, 115 ("sift"); *PA*, 1st, II, 23.
32. *MPCP*, VI, 613; VII, 48 ("in form"; also IV, 657); Peters to "Hond Sir," 5 July 1753, PMOC, VI, 73 ("regular"). "Journal of Daniels Journey to the Allegheny," PPEC, II, 29 ("Noise"). Heckewelder, *History*, 109. James Hamilton to Weiser, 27 Apr. 1751, RPP, III, 38 ("transient").

33. *MPCP*, VIII, 639 ("understanding"), IV, 568 ("suitable"). *PA*, 1st, III, 505-507; Hays, *passim* (passive). *MPCP*, II, 386, V, 349-350, 530, VI, 151 (firing). VII, 137, VIII, 150 (colonial city). An experienced go-between took Indian advice (see V, 167) and sent a runner ahead to announce his impending arrival. A man who gave no warning simply walked in, while locals piled out of houses and greeted him informally as he made his way to the headman's house (*PA*, 1st, II, 491; *MPCP*, VIII, 143-144).
34. *MPCP*, VI, 152 ("Custom"). For Shickellamy, *PA*, 1st, I, 241-242, 665-666, 673, II, 23; Indian Charges, 1744, CCW, I, 11. And see Croghan to Peters, 16 Oct. 1754, GCP, 5/19; Croghan to Maj. Gen. Monckton, 3 Oct. 1761, *ibid.*, 5/23.
35. *MPCP*, V, 474, VI, 152, 180 (quotation), VII, 47, 68.
36. Marshe, 180. See also *PA*, 1st, II, 724, III, 107.
37. Bartram, *Observations*, 43. Kenny 1761-63, 12, 18, 21, 154; Smith, *Account*, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20, 22-23, 25 (Ohio country).
38. *PA*, 1st, III, 397.
39. George Miranda Report, n.d., Provincial Council Papers, N.D. file, HSP ("Sweet"). *MPCP*, II, 600 ("friendly"), III, 319 ("Expressions"). When in doubt, colonists would ask Indians to elaborate, also furthering the educational process (VII, 209, VIII, 88).
40. Lynn Ceci, "The Value of Wampum among the New York Iroquois: A Case Study in Artifact Analysis," *Journal of Anthropological Research*, XXXVIII (1982), 102-103.
41. Lewis Henry Morgan, *League of the Ho-Dé-No-Sau-Nee, or Iroquois* (New York, 1962 [orig. pub. 1851]), 116, 120-121; William M. Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indians," New York State Museum, *Bulletin*, no. 41, VIII (Albany, N.Y., 1901 [repr. ed. New York, 1978]), 319-480; idem, "Wampum Used in Council and as Currency," *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal*, XX (1898), 1-13; Frank G. Speck, "The Functions of Wampum among the Eastern Algonkian," *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, VI (1919), 3-74; Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Wampum, The Protocol of Indian Diplomacy," *WMQ*, 3d ser., VI (1949), 596-604; George S. Snyderman, "The Function of Wampum," *Procs. APS*, XCVII (1954), 469-494; Ceci, "Native Wampum as a Peripheral Resource in the Seventeenth-Century World System," in Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation* (Norman, Okla., 1990), 48-63; Michael K. Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils," in Francis Jennings et al., eds., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1985), 99-114; Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cul-

- tural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *JAH*, LXXIII (1986), 311-328; Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 32, 47-49, 84-85, 276-277. A modern meditation on wampum's meaning that appeared after this section was written is Jerry Martin, *Shell Game: A True Account of Beads and Money in North America* (San Francisco, 1996). For colonial treatments of the subject, see Joseph-Francois Lafitau, *Customs of the American Indians Compared with the Customs of Primitive Times*, trans. and ed. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth L. Moore, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1974-1975), I, 310-312; Loskiel, *History*, Part I, 26-28; Heckewelder, *History*, 109-110.
42. Frank G. Speck, *A Study of the Delaware Indian Big House Ceremony*, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, Pa., 1931), II, 64.
43. *MPCP*, V, 358, 569-570.
44. *MPCP*, V, 537 ("Mind"), 615, VII, 156 ("confirm"); VIII, 470 ("enforce"); *PA*, 1st, I, 737 ("truth"); Seneca George to Gov. Denny, 25 June 1758, RPCEC, B9, 1947 ("Credit").
45. Foster, "Another Look at Wampum," in Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, esp. 104-106; *MPCP*, VI, 615 ("this day").
46. Information regarding Teedyuscung delivered to Spangenberg from a Delaware Indian (Augustus), 30 July 1756, PMIA, II, 98 (and see *DHNY*, II, 625). The claim of nothing ever being done is somewhat overstated. As Mary Druke has noted ("Iroquois Treaties: Common Forms, Varying Interpretations," in Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, 88-90), Indians sometimes substituted deerskins or sticks for beads, and sometimes went ahead without any item at all. The process of speaking on something was as crucial as having a tangible marker of that speech. My own findings confirm this, while suggesting that substitutes declined over time, and that Indians usually noted it when they spoke without wampum.
47. *MPCP*, II, 387 (20 belts), 546-549 (32), VI, 194-198 (10); Proceedings of the Council at Conestoga, 31 July 1710, PMIA, I, 34, in *Iroq. Ind.*, Reel 7 (26 belts, 2 strings, 31 sticks). For the number of beads, see *Journals of Claus and Weiser*, 12-13; *PA*, 1st, II, 17, III, 555; *Collections of the Illinois Historical Society Library*, XI, 21; Peters, *Diary*, 2-4, 6, 7, 9, 15, 22, 25 Oct. 1758, RPP. *MPCP*, VIII, 508 (pocket). Account of the Easton Treaty, June 1762, Friendly Association Mss., Swarthmore College Library (pouch). *PWJ*, II, 860-861 (casket or chest).
48. Peters to the Proprietaries, 15 Nov. 1755, Richard Peters Letters to the Proprietaries of Pennsylvania, 1755-1757, 17, Simon Gratz Collection, Case 2, Box 33-a, HSP ("amazing"). Israel Pemberton to Geo. Browne, 22 May 1758, FA, I, 494; Peters to Weiser, 13 7ber 1758, CCW, II, 135 (100,000). Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, 19 June 1751, PSF, I (Sympson, "a wampum maker"; it is unclear whether Sympson drilled the wampum or

- was among those who wove it into belts). Peters to Croghan, 23 Apr. 1755, RPCEC, B5, 801 (Philadelphia woman). Peters, *Diary*, 6-7 Oct. 1758, RPP (Montour). For women, see Israel Pemberton to Christian Frederick Post, 6 5 mo. 1760, Pemberton Papers, Folder 2, Haverford College Library; *MPCP*, VII, 216-218; Beauchamp, "Wampum in Council," *American Antiquarian and Oriental Jnl.*, XX (1898), 9.
49. *PA*, 1st, I, 762 ("Bagg"); Heckewelder, *History*, 186. Sassoonan allegedly selling wampum from the council bag was a sort of sacrilege, especially since his other name, Alumapees, meant "preserver of the records" (Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Interregnum," *PMHB*, LXXXIX [1965], 174).
50. *PA*, 1st, I, 741-742; *MPCP*, VI, 195, 686 (hatchets), VII, 66 (scalps). Those agreeing with a message could also "add Strength to" a belt by tying a string to it. Conference at Israel Pemberton's, 23 Apr. 1756, LP, 11/41; Minutes of a Conference at Easton, 12 Oct. 1758, RPCEC, B9, 2024; *MPCP*, VI, 685-686, IX, 47; Nathaniel Holland to Israel Pemberton, 16 Oct. 1760, FA, IV, 43.
51. *MPCP*, V, 673 (human figures). Foster, "Another Look at Wampum," in Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, 108-109; Post 1758, 264 (path). Post 1758, 270-271; *MPCP*, IX, 329 (diamonds). *MPCP*, V, 673, VII, 701, VIII, 158, 747 (figures). *MPCP*, IX, 330 (squares). *MPCP*, II, 246; Journal by Capt. Joseph Shippen at Fort Augusta, 1757-1758, 15 Feb. 1758, Small Books, no. 6, PSF (hands).
52. *MPCP*, III, 154 (1722); *PWJ*, XI, 371 (Senecas); Indians—Treaty at Easton, 28 July 1756, in a box labeled "Indians (transferred from Society Collections)," HSP (Teedyuscung).
53. Conference at Armstrong's, 10 June 1756, Between Col. William Clapham and Ogaghradarisha, PMIA, II, 92. Heckewelder, *History*, 108 ("turning"). *MPCP*, II, 387 (hang belts or strings on a line), 471 (board), VIII, 174, 179 (in order); Wallace, *Weiser*, 91 (stick); Bartram, *Observations*, 60 (pole).
54. Heckewelder, *History*, 109-110 ("snake"). *MPCP*, VII, 49, 65-66 ("thrown"). See also VI, 197-198; Post 1758, 256; Kenny 1761-63, 24; Peters to the Proprietors, 26 Oct. 1749, PMOC, IV, 245.
55. *MPCP*, I, 586 ("amitie"), II, 141, 145, 204 ("Credential"), 387, 461; Logan Account Book, 1712-1720, 99, 112, 115, 169, LP. Marshall Becker ("Lenape Land Sales, Treaties, and Wampum Belts," *PMHB*, CVIII [1984], 354) doubts that early land cessions "involved the use of formal belts or strings of wampum." However, Indians were using belts to confirm their speeches with Pennsylvania from a very early day, and Lasse Cock's 1682 charges for work on the Proprietor's behalf included money for wampum. Thomas Budd, *Good Order Established in Pennsylvania & New-Jersey, in America, Being a true Account of the Country . . .* (Philadelphia, 1685), 28-29; *MPCP*, I,

- 447-448; *PWJ*, II, 243. The story of wampum in New England is told in Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York, 1982), 147-152; Ceci, "Wampum as a Peripheral Resource," in Hauptman and Wherry, eds., *Pequots*, 48-63; Lois Scozzari, "The Significance of Wampum to Seventeenth-Century Indians in New England," *Connecticut Review*, XVII (1995), 59-69.
56. *MPCP*, III, 191-192, 198 (Keith). Richard Peters to Monckton, 15 Aug. 1761, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 4th ser., IX (1871), 440. Other observers argued that Indians handling those belts were indeed observing proper protocol (Israel Pemberton to Mary Pemberton, 5 Aug. 1761, FA, IV, 153-158). See Peters to Penn, 18 Feb. 1756 (copy), PMOC, VIII, 41; Post 1760, 27, 29 May.
57. Peters to Thomas Penn, 30 Oct. 1756, PMOC, VIII, 185.
58. *PWJ*, V, 201; XII, 75 (Stamp Act). Julian P. Boyd, "Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, 1736-1762," in idem, ed., *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762* (Philadelphia, 1938), xxvi (Penn family); Journal of Shippen, Building of Fort Augusta, 1756, 28 July, PSF (Clapham, forts); *MPCP*, VII, 701 (G.R., D.K.). For G.R. on Indian belts, *MPCP*, VII, 522; "Substance of a Conversation with Gray Eyes, a Delaware Indian Messenger," 24 May 1761, FA, IV, 123. Indians delivered lettered belts as early as 1654 (Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles," *New York State Mus., Bulletin*, no. 41, VIII [1901], 390; idem, "Wampum in Council," *American Antiquarian and Oriental Jnl.*, XX [1898], 6). In addition, initials in rings, bottles, pipes, and coins were familiar enough in Susquehanna Valley towns. Barry C. Kent, *Susquehanna's Indians*, Anthropological Series, no. 6 (Harrisburg, Pa., 1989), 209-210, 223, 225, 269, 276, 279.
59. Croghan to Gage, 22 Mar. 1765, GCP, 5/27 ("nessecarys"). For advising, Peters to Croghan, 23 Apr. 1755, RPCEC, B5, 801. For string on hand, *MPCP*, VI, 150-151, VIII, 468. Weiser to Peters, 28 Jan. 1754, CCW, I, 43 ("accidents"); *PA*, 1st, III, 701 ("Wampum enough").
60. Hays, 79, 66-67. See also 69-70, 76, 78; Post 1760, 6, 13-14, 16 May, 11-12 June. For wampum having the sanction of many people, see Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 47-48.
61. *PA*, 1st, III, 737; Hays, 68-69; Post 1760, 30-31 May (1760). For combining, see *MPCP*, III, 459, VI, 150, VII, 147, VIII, 212; Post 1758, 243; *PA*, 1st, I, 229-230, II, 193-194, III, 556; *CVSP*, I, 231; Kenneth P. Bailey, ed., *The Ohio Company Papers, 1753-1817*... (Arcata, Calif., 1947), 21; Instructions to Post and Thomson, 7 June 1758, MCA, 28/219/8/2; Joseph Shippen, Jr., to John Jacob Schmick, 28 Jan. 1768, Joseph Shippen, Jr., Letterbook, 1763-1773, 28, APS.
62. *CVSP*, I, 232 ("don't understand"); see also Weiser to Logan, 16 Sept. 1736, LP, 10/62; *MJNY*, 95; *MPCP*, III, 362). Examples of Indians sending letters

- and strings are in *MPCP*, III, 103, 504-505, IV, 656-658, V, 568-570, 691-692; *PA*, 1st, IV, 60-61. Sources suggest that some Indians dispensed with beads altogether in favor of letters, but this may be colonial scribes' decision to omit what they considered the less important wampum.
63. Peter Wraxall, *An Abridgement of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes, Transacted In the Colony of New York, From the Year 1678 to the Year 1751*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), 33; Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630-1707* (New York, 1912), 173; Logan Account Book, 1712-1720, 217, LP; *MPCP*, III, 154, 609; Council at Philadelphia, 25 and 28 Jan. 1722/3, DSP, 966.F.6.
64. *MPCP*, II, 604 (also III, 276, 581); *PA*, 1st, I, 455 (and see 425).
65. *MPCP*, III, 503.
66. Zeisberger, *History*, 145 ("very important"); *MJNY*, 212 ("whole town"); *PWJ*, IX, 407 ("Suck'd in"). *PA*, 2d, VII, 430; Smith, *Account*, 24; Kenny 1761-63, 178. They probably also knew what account books were, judging by the number of colonial fur traders whose books Indians took or destroyed during the war (Bailey, ed., *Ohio Co. Papers*, 121, 134, 138-139, 159).
67. The two major articles on Indian responses to literacy in eastern North America reflect the two prevailing strains of thought about literacy and orality in the abundant literature on the subject. James Axtell, positing a gulf between native and newcomer, chronicles the wonder and awe with which Indians greeted books and paper; more recently, Peter Wogan has stressed a continuum in media of communication, and examined how readily Indians understood, and incorporated, European ways. My own view, here and later in the chapter, tries to suggest that both are right: a continuum there was, but both Indians and colonists also detected a divide. Axtell, "The Power of Print in the Eastern Woodlands," in idem, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York, 1988), ch. IX; Wogan, "Perceptions of European Literacy in Early Contact Situations," *Ethnohistory*, XLI (1994), 407-429. For other work on native contacts, see Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequences of Literacy," *American Quarterly*, XLVI (1994), 479-512; Jane Merritt, "The Power of Language: Cultural Meanings and the Colonial Encounter on the Pennsylvania Frontier" (unpub. ms., 1994; I am grateful to Professor Merritt for sharing her work with me); David Murray, *Forked Tongues: Speech, Writing, and Representation in North American Indian Texts* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991), ch. 2.
- My thinking on literacy and orality has been shaped by the following: Keith H. Basso, "The Ethnography of Writing," in Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer, eds., *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, 2d ed. (New York, 1989), 425-432; Michael K. Foster, "When Words Become Deeds: An Analysis of Three Iroquois Longhouse Speech Events," *ibid.*, 354-367; Wal-

- lace Chafe and Deborah Tannen, "The Relations Between Written and Spoken Language," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, XVI (1987), 383-407; Robert DeMaria, Jr., and Rachel Kitzinger, eds., *Transformations of the Word* (special issue of *Language and Communication: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, IX [1989]); Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (London, 1988); Albertine Gaur, *A History of Writing*, rev. ed. (London, 1987); I. J. Gelb, *The Study of Writing*, 2d ed. (Chicago, 1963); Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, Eng., 1977); idem, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (New York, 1987); idem, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, Eng., 1968); Michael Harbsmeier, "Writing and the Other: Travellers' Literacy, or Towards an Archaeology of Orality," in Karen Schousboe and Morgens Trolle Larsen, eds., *Literacy and Society* (Copenhagen, 1989), 197-228; Eric A. Havelock, *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven, Conn., 1986); Nicholas Hudson, *Writing and European Thought, 1600-1830* (New York, 1994); Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto, 1951); Walter D. Mignolo, "Literacy and Colonization: The New World Experience," in René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds., *1492-1992: Rediscovering Colonial Writing* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1989), 51-96 (I am grateful to Karen Stolley for alerting me to this work); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York, 1982); Brian V. Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture (London, 1984); Deborah Tannen, ed., *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*, Advances in Discourse Processes, IX (Norwood, N.J., 1982).
68. Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington, Ind., 1987), 5.
69. Newcheconner to Logan, 9 Apr. 1738, LP, 11/29 ("the sense"). *PGW*, I, 105 ("farist"); Post to the Governor, 26 Sept. 1758, MCA, 28/219/9/7 ("critical teim"). For other examples of Post's prose, see *PA*, 1st, III, 742-744; Post 1758, 183-184. For woodsmen with varying levels of literacy, see *PA*, 1st, IV, 61; letters to Edward Shippen of 1 Oct. 1735 (George Miranda), 5 Aug. 1742 (George Gabriel), 26 June 1742 (Benjamin Moore), PSF, I. Even some of Weiser's prose was, Richard Peters wrote, "ill formd and ill spelld" (Peters to the Proprietors, 24 Oct. 1748, PMOC, IV, 163), and one British officer considered Croghan illiterate (Wallace, *Weiser*, 336).
70. Samuel Evans, "Lowrey Family," Lancaster County [Pa.] Historical Society, 47-48 (Lowry); U. J. Jones, *History of the Early Settlement of the Juniata Valley . . .*, 2d ed. (Harrisburg, Pa., 1940 [orig. pub. 1889]), 185-186 (Hart).
71. John Woolman, *The Journal of John Woolman* (Boston, 1909 [orig. pub. 1871]), 190-191 ("histories"); Hays, 77 ("Jurnal"); Loskiel, *History*, Part I, 25 ("intelligible"). And see Baron de Lahontan [Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce],

New Voyages to North-America, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1903 [orig. pub. 1703]), II, 510-514; Lafitau, *Customs*, II, 36-37; Gist, 28; Heckewelder, *History*, 130-131; Nicholas Cresswell, *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777* (London, 1925), 110-111. The most famous of all Indian picture-writing, the Walam Olum of the Delawares, has been convincingly proved a fraud by David M. Oestreicher, "Unmasking the *Walam Olum*: A 19th-Century Hoax," *Archaeological Society of New Jersey, Bulletin*, no. 49 (1994), 1-44.

Even as I see the distinction, I am not persuaded by those positing a vast difference between pictographic and chirographic communication. (Gelb, *Writing*, 29, 35-36; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 84, 86; Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in Goody, ed., *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, 27, 30, 34-35, 38; Murray, *Forked Tongues*, ch. 2).

72. Timothy Horsfield to Gov. Hamilton, 5 Sept. 1761, HP, II, 445; Edward Shippen to Hamilton, 29 Oct. 1763, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, 1750-1778, Shippen Papers, APS. Diplomats, too, could write: at Onondaga in 1754 a Nanticoke's speech on the evils of liquor was "accentuated by a letter, written on wood with black paint" (*MJNY*, 199-200).
73. *PWJ*, II, 861, VII, 348. On wampum having this quality, see Foster, "Another Look at Wampum," in Jennings et al., eds., *History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, 107.
74. Zeisberger, *History*, 93-94; Edmund De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger, The Western Pioneer and Apostle of the Indians* (Philadelphia, 1870), 217; *MPCP*, IX, 102 (council bag). Depositions, 1725, LP, 11/12 ("defaced"). Shamokin Diary, 28 Feb. 1748, MCA, 6/121/4/1 (Shickellamy; see also *Journals of Claus and Weiser*, 43). For other examples of documents being saved, see *MPCP*, III, 94, IV, 433, V, 316, VIII, 668-669; *PWJ*, XI, 463; *PHB*, VI, 96.
75. *MPCP*, III, 334, IV, 433 (invitation; for invitation strings of wampum being handled in this way, see III, 437); III, 599, VII, 7-9 (Conestogas pulling out documents; for the documents, see ch. VII). For speaking on paper, see Council with the Indians at Conestoga, 6 Apr. 1722, DSP, 966.F.4. Civility, speaking for Conoys in July 1720, said that Conoys "have no Writing to shew their League of Friendship as the others have, and therefore desire they may be favoured with one lest if they should transgress by Reason of Rum, . . . they may be cast off and forgotten that ever they were in Friendship with us" (*MPCP*, III, 94).
76. *MPCP*, V, 316. Shawnees at a different council again pulled out "an old Treaty" and "several Letters from Mr. Logan—and one or two from you" (Peters to Thomas Penn [copy], 18 Feb. 1756, PMOC, VIII, 41).
77. Post 1758, 239 (also 245); *MPCP*, V, 439 (also VI, 277-278, VIII, 417, IX, 541-542; *Arch. Md.*, XXIII, 427; Minutes of the Easton Treaty, 28 July 1756,

- Friends Historical Association, Mss., I, Haverford College Library, in *Iroq. Ind.*, Reel 19).
78. Peters to Weiser, 13 Apr. 1751, RPP, III, 35. And see William Logan to Weiser, 21 Oct. 1747, *ibid.*, II, 84; James Logan to Weiser, 28 Jan. 1742/3, Alverthorpe Letterbook, E, 174, LP; same to same, 18 Oct. 1736, LP, 2/58; *MPCP*, I, 187-188, V, 288-293, 449, 518-522, 570, 733, VI, 146-149, 154, 186-187; *PA*, 1st, II, 203.
79. Thomas to Weiser, 26 Feb. 1741/2, RPP, I, 73 ("Dress"); *MPCP*, V, 449, 570. See also *PA*, 1st, II, 203.
80. *MPCP*, VI, 697-699 (quotation on 699), VII, 148 ("Spirit").
81. *ibid.*, VII, 108-109, 119, 138-139, 200-201. Examples of having a free hand are in *PA*, 1st, I, 671-672; *MPCP*, IV, 779, VI, 147-149, 154, VIII, 471; *PWJ*, X, 566.
82. For these, and for the background on this encounter, see "Papunehay & o[the]rs at Quehaloosing" to the Governor, 16 Sept. 1761, FA, IV, 191; Friendly Association Trustees to the Governor on a proposed Message to the Munsee Indians, Oct. 1761, *ibid.*, 203; Papoonan to the Governor[?], 2 Oct. 1761, *ibid.*, 223; "The Governor's Answer to Papounham and the Indians at Wighalousing," 10 Oct. 1761, *ibid.*, 236.
83. Zane 1761, 14 Oct.
84. "A Message from the Governor to the Chief of the Munsey Indians at Osuntsing. Or to the Three Munsey Indians now at Wyoming . . .," 12 Oct. 1761, FA, IV, 231.
85. Zane 1761, 17-19 Oct. Another example of Indians advising colonists to revise a speech drafted in Philadelphia is Post 1760, 12 May, 1 June.
86. It is significant, though, that the governor also consulted Quakers before drafting the speech, and that he followed the Quakers' advice; Zane, in his journal, was by no means vindicating the Friends' wisdom, which Tongocone rejected along with the governor's.
87. Zane 1761, 19 Oct.
88. *PA*, 1st, I, 224; *MPCP*, IV, 651.
89. *MPCP*, III, 502 ("freely"), V, 86 ("assures"), 88 ("demand," "proper"); *PA*, 1st, I, 232 ("stories"), 748-749 ("Treaties"), 757 ("depend"), 758 ("Honest").
90. *PA*, 1st, I, 228; *MPCP*, III, 330-331; Gov. Patrick Gordon to "Gentlemen," 15 10ber [Dec.] 1731, PMOC, II, 221 (1728). Francis Jennings, "Pennsylvania' Indians and the Iroquois," in Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell, eds., *Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1987), ch. 5 (realities).
91. *MPCP*, III, 500-501. Weiser to Peters[?], 24 Jan. 1745/6, DSP, 966.F.24.
92. *MPCP*, IV, 681, V, 88; *PA*, 1st, I, 762; Cammerhoff, 175-176; Spangenberg, 430; John H. Carter, "The Moravians at Shamokin," *Proceedings of the Northumberland County Historical Society*, IX (1937), 65; Peters to the Pro-

- prietors, 11 May 1748, PMOC, IV, 93; John W. Jordan, trans., Bishop Cammerhoff's Letters to Zinzendorf, 1747-1749, IV, 22-24 May 1747, 24, HSP ("council fire"). See Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Interregnum," *PMHB*, LXXXIX (1965), 174-198. One visitor in 1745 said that, although ill, Sassoonan still had the respect of his people (Spangenberg, 430-431).
93. *MPCP*, V, 212, 222; *PA*, 1st, II, 8. See James H. Merrell, "Shickellamy, 'a Person of Consequence,'" in Robert S. Grumet, ed., *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816* (Amherst, Mass., 1996), 248-249; Wallace, *Weiser*, ch. 32.
94. *PA*, 2d, II, 653; *MPCP*, VIII, 98. For snow, see *MPCP*, VIII, 87, 92; *PA*, 2d, II, 650-654. Post 1758, 186; *MPCP*, V, 486, 599-600; R. A. Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758 . . .*, 2 vols., Virginia Historical Society, *Collections*, new ser., III-IV (Richmond, Va., 1883), I, 22, 398 (illness). Weiser to Col. Gale, [Spring 1743], RPP, II, 5 (hunting).
95. *MPCP*, III, 329 (1728); Minutes of an Indian Treaty at Pittsburgh, 18 Aug. 1760, Recs. Mor. Miss., Box 323, Folder 7, Item 1, in *Iroq. Ind.*, Reel 23 (Teedyuscung); *PWJ*, X, 148 (Montour). See also Post 1758, 185, 236; *PA*, 1st, III, 420; Israel Pemberton to Christian Frederick Post, 6 5 mo. 1760, Pemberton Pprs., Haverford College Library; Nathaniel Holland to [Israel Pemberton], 16 Oct. 1760, FA, IV, 431.
96. *PA*, 1st, I, 425 (Poke and Hill); Weiser 1748, 43, n.42; *MPCP*, V, 438 (Ohio).
97. *MPCP*, V, 293, 633, 636.
98. *DRCNY*, VII, 259 ("proper"); *MPCP*, VIII, 644 ("Nonsense"; see also 656).
99. Edward Shippen to the Governor, 26 Nov. 1757, Edward Shippen Letterbook, 1753-1761, 170, APS ("forgot"; also Logstown Treaty, 156); Israel Pemberton to Mary Pemberton, 11 May 1757, PPHSP, XII, 18 (black wampum); [Thomson], *Enquiry*, 105-106, 181 ("trifling," "small Belts"); *PWJ*, XII, 242-243 (laugh); *MPCP*, VIII, 212 (Tokahaio).
100. *MPCP*, VIII, 615 (Nanticokes), 634 (Tokahaio; the governor [640] denied having sent them). See also IX, 87-88; "Rough Draft of Message to ye Onondago Council," 14 May 1761, FA, IV, 107-112.
101. *MPCP*, V, 677.
102. *ibid.*, 293 ("loose Letters"), IV, 343 (Shawnees).
103. *ibid.*, V, 691-695, 703 ("mood"), 734; Peters to Proprietaries, 26 Nov. 1753, PMOC, VI, 133; George Croghan to "Your Honour," 3 Feb. 1754, *ibid.*, 155; *PA*, 1st, II, 119. During the 1750s British colonists accused the French of duping Indians by "reading" putative English messages plotting the conquest of Indian country (*PWJ*, II, 512; Post 1758, 252-253; *PA*, 2d, VI, 568).
104. *MPCP*, V, 514 ("sound"), 538 ("Strong House"). See Nicholas B. Wainwright, *George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1959), 35, 41-44; McConnell, *A Country Between*, 93-95.

105. Logstown Treaty, 171–172; Peters to Weiser, 6 Feb. 1753, CCW, I, 38; Weiser to [?], [1753–1754], CCW, II, 25; Peters to the Proprietor, 6 Nov. 1753, PMOC, VI, 115; Wallace, *Weiser*, 348.
106. See ch. VI.
107. Post 1758, 282–285. See David L. Ghere, “Mistranslations and Misinformation: Diplomacy on the Maine Frontier, 1725 to 1775,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, VIII (1984), 3–26.
108. *MPCP*, VII, 683; Weiser, “Observations.” See David Murray, *Forked Tongues*, ch. 3.
109. *PHB*, II, 621–626. For Custaloga, see McConnell, *A Country Between*, 102, 105, 108. Another account of the Bouquet conference is in *PA*, 1st, III, 571–574.
110. Minutes of the New York Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 14 Aug. 1743, in *Iroq. Ind.*, Reel 11 (Oneidas). *DRCNY*, VII, 197 (1756). For additional remarks on this meeting, see *MPCP*, VII, 156–160, 170–172, 182, 184; *PA*, 2d, VI, 521–522; *PWJ*, II, 488–491, 521–522. Another example is 439–440, IX, 347–383; *MPCP*, VII, 41–42, 46–47, 67, 69, 71, 106.
111. David McClure, *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748–1820*, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (New York, 1899), 59 (Peepy); *MPCP*, VI, 49 (Weiser); Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New-York in America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1958 [orig. pub. 1727 and 1747]), xi (“sense”).
112. My thinking here owes much to Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, ch. 3.
113. *MPCP*, II, 600, IV, 433–434, VIII, 188, 753. Compare Sassoonan’s speeches at IV, 307–308, 643, 680.
114. *Ibid.*, IV, 721, VII, 522.
115. Hays, 81. The interpreter was probably Post, Isaac Stille, or Moses Tatamy. Hays’s prose here is so fractured and cluttered by marginalia that, for clarity’s sake, I have cleaned it up. The original reads, with marginal additions in brackets: “he Got But 6 fulls of A Misher [for a Ribond Stroud] and it was so litel that his Kock could Not Go in it and [he had But A litel one] Said he had But A Litel one [kock] Neither.”
116. *MPCP*, VII, 217–218.
117. Shamokin Diary, 16 Jan. 1748, MCA, 6/121/4/1 (Indian woman); *MPCP*, III, 169 (Keith), VIII, 743 (King).
118. *Ibid.*, III, 189 (emphasis added); Gov. George Thomas to the Shawnees, 16 Aug. 1742, RPP, I, 93 (emphasis added).
119. This and the following paragraph owe a great debt to Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, especially ch. 3.
120. Stephen J. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991), 9–10; Harbsmeier, “Writing and the Other,” in Schousboe and Larsen, eds., *Literacy and Society*, 199–203; Goody, *Interface*.

121. Harbsmeier, “Writing and the Other,” in Schousboe and Larsen, eds., *Literacy and Society*, 203 (emphasis added).
122. *PWJ*, III, 767.
123. *MPCP*, III, 599 (1735), IV, 718 (1744).
124. Shamokin Diary, 21 Feb. 1748, MCA, 6/121/4/1 (aged Delaware); *MPCP*, VII, 521 (King). On Indian awe, on writing as sacred, see Loskiel, *History*, Part I, 23–24.
125. *MPCP*, IV, 84 (see also II, 574).
126. Wallace, *Weiser*, 141 (Zinzendorf); *MPCP*, IV, 708 (Canasatego).
127. See Goody, *Interface*, xv; Hudson, *Writing and European Thought*, 162–163; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York, 1974), 296–300.
128. Wallace, ed., *Travels of Heckewelder*, 64 (Post); Moses Tatamy, Declaration, [1757], FA, I, 405–408 (Delawares); *MPCP*, VI, 74 (Iroquois).
129. Hays, 80 (knocked; “Durst Not Reead”); Smith, *Account*, 28 (stolen, though he also noted—3, 24, 39—that Indians sometimes let him read); Wallace, ed., *Travels of Heckewelder*, 64 (hide books).
130. Wallace, ed., *Travels of Heckewelder*, 64 (“suspicious”; see also Post to Israel Pemberton, 8 Aug. 1761, FA, IV, 167). Post 1758, 252 (see also 226–227, 247; “Journal of Captain Thomas Morris, Detroit, September 25, 1764,” in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748–1846* [Cleveland, Ohio, 1904], I, 322).
131. *PA*, 1st, IV, 96. Andrew Montour was once so unwilling to trust his wampum that he asked Virginians if the message he bore from Onondaga to Williamsburg could be “set down in paper, to assist his memory and prevent mistakes.” H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1752–1758* (Richmond, Va., 1909), Appendix, 515. Other examples are *MPCP*, VII, 137, 199; Peters to Thomas Penn[?], 1 June 1756, PMOC, VIII, 95. In July 1756 Teedyuscung and Kos Showweyha (Newcastle) sent a message to the governor, and insisted, “for to remember the Words accompanying this String,” that colonists “wrote them Down from the Kings mouth” (“At Timothy Horsfields,” 18 July 1756, FA, I, 147).
132. *MPCP*, VIII, 174.
133. Post 1758, 201.
134. *PA*, 1st, III, 343 (Teedyuscung). *MPCP*, VIII, 630, 632, 638–639 (1761). And see Meeting with Killbuck, 10 5 mo. 1771, FA, IV, 419; his official visit is in *MPCP*, IX, 735–742.
135. Jane Merritt and I have, independently, come to this conclusion, and come to it using the same examples. Merritt, “The Power of Language,” 26–27.
136. *MJNY*, 179 (Zeisberger); *MPCP*, IX, 8 (Teedyuscung).
137. *MPCP*, VII, 652–655. For the clerk fight, see Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 342–345; Theodore Thayer, *Israel Pemberton, King of the Quakers* (Philadel-

- phia, 1943), 140. The debate can be found in *MPCP*, VII, 648–665, 689–690, VIII, 30–31, 47, 50; Charles Thomson to the Governor, 23 Aug. 1756, Charles Thomson, Correspondence, Gratz Collection, HSP; *PA*, 2d, VI, 570–571; *DRCNY*, VII, 322–323; Charles Thomson to William Franklin, 13 Mar. 1758, Papers of Benjamin Franklin, B:F85, v. 488, f. 122, APS; Peters to Penn, 19 Mar. 1758, Lardner Family Papers, HSP; *PWJ*, III, 766, 771–773.
138. *MPCP*, VII, 664. Colonial officials often tried to monopolize secretarial duties to prevent conflicting accounts or (their enemies claimed) to keep the truth hidden behind a screen of misrepresentation and omissions. *PWJ*, IX, 743–744; Thomas Walker and Andrew Lewis to Lord Botetourt, 14 Dec. 1768, encl. in Botetourt to [?], 24 Dec. 1768, in *Iroq. Ind.*, Reel 29.
- Croghan and Weiser were convinced that Quaker foes of the proprietors were behind this demand, that Israel Pemberton and other Friends had put Teedyuscung up to it as a means of turning the Delawares into a weapon for flaying the proprietors' men (see ch. VII for this dispute). Certainly Friends favored the move (*MPCP*, VII, 656–657), but it was probably not their idea. Moses Tatamy said that he had suggested it some time before, when Teedyuscung and other leaders were complaining about how paper always seemed to favor colonists. Play their game, Tatamy advised; get a scribe of your own to keep the English honest. "Moses Titamy's Accot. of Indian Complaints &ca.," n.d., and Tatamy, Declaration, [1757], FA, I, 65, 405–408. See also Papers of the Friendly Association, 23 June 1762, Swarthmore College Library, where Stille insisted, again, that Teedyuscung's desire for a clerk and papers came from the Delawares themselves, and from Teedyuscung's fear that "there was Some people wanting to blind him."
139. *MPCP*, VII, 656 (Teedyuscung); *PA*, 2d, VI, 570–571 (Croghan).
140. *PA*, 2d, VI, 570–571; Penn to Peters, 14 Nov. 1757, RPP, IV, 122.
141. Hays, 76–77 ("Read Like Mad"); Heckewelder, *History*, 291–293 ("great Book"). Kenny 1761–63, 171, 173, 175 ("Seperation"); Zeisberger, *Diaries*, 25.
142. The literature on the coming of the war is vast. The most detailed account (though one that neglects the Indians' point of view) is Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution*, 15 vols. (New York, 1958–1970). More recent treatments that pay greater attention to Indians include Stephen F. Auth, *The Ten Years' War: Indian-White Relations in Pennsylvania, 1755–1765* (New York, 1989), ch. 2; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, Part One; Donald H. Kent, *The French Invasion of Western Pennsylvania, 1753* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1954); McConnell, *A Country Between*, chs. 1–6; White, *Middle Ground*, chs. 5–6; Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in*

the Ohio Valley, 1673–1800 (New York, 1997), 41–45, and ch. 4. The fullest, if outdated, account of the attacks on Pennsylvania can be found in C. Hale Sipe, *The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania . . .* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1929), chs. 7–10.

Indian explanations for their actions, which usually focused on land grievances, can be found in *MPCP*, VII, 51–52, 70–71, 431–432, VIII, 197–198; *PA*, 1st, II, 776–778, III, 45, 46, 57, 548–550; Beverley W. Bond, Jr., "The Captivity of Charles Stuart, 1755–57," *MVHR*, XIII (1926–1927), 64–65; "Journal of Daniels Journey," PPEC, II, 29; "Titamy's Accot.," FA, I, 65; Peters, Diary, 16 Jan. 1756, 2, 9, 12 Oct. 1758, RPP; [Thomson], *Enquiry*, 81–82; Chew, 315–317; William West to [?], 12 Jan. 1756, PMOC, VIII, 13.

143. *MPCP*, III, 311 ("stamp'd"). Croghan to Franklin (copy), 2 Oct. 1767, GCP, 5/29 ("Jealous"; see also Croghan to Gen. Monckton, 26 July 1761, GCP, 5/23; *PWJ*, III, 964–965; *PHB*, VI, 137–138).
144. Gist, 9–10; Kenny 1761–63, 45.
145. Hamilton to the Proprietary, 26 Nov. 1753, PMOC, VI, 139 ("a pity"); *MPCP*, V, 696 ("dangerous Season"); Weiser to Peters, 28 Jan. 1754, CCW, I, 43 ("Cooks").
146. Peters to Penn, 28 Sept. 1750, PMOC, V, 57 ("pleases"). *PA*, 1st, I, 751 ("sick"; see also 758–759, 761–762, II, 15, 23–24; *MPCP*, V, 87–88).
147. *PA*, 1st, II, 12 ("happy"); Weiser to Peters, 7 Feb. 1754, Berks and Montgomery Counties, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 1693–1869, 55, HSP ("perplects"). In November 1747, he wrote that "my Commission for the Transaction of Indian Affairs did not extend to Ohio" (*MPCP*, V, 138). For an example of the mistakes his ignorance caused, see Weiser 1748, 43, n.42.
148. For examples of the warnings, see *PA*, 1st, II, 144, 173–174, 2d, VI, 548–554 (Croghan); *MPCP*, VI, 46 (Montour); Wallace, *Weiser*, 372–373; Weiser to [?], [1753–1754], CCW, II, 25; *MPCP*, V, 147, VI, 589–590.
149. Hamilton to Thomas Penn, 18 Nov. 1750, PMOC, V, 89.
150. Information regarding Teedyuscung delivered to Spangenberg . . . from a Delaware Indian (Augustus), 30 July 1756, PMIA, II, 98 (wampum); *PWJ*, III, 767 ("wrote wrong"); Conference at Pemberton's, 19–23 Apr. 1756, LP, 11/41 (Scarouyady).

VI: In the Woods, 1755–1758

1. Events in Shamokin can be followed in Shamokin Diary, April–Sept. 1755, MCA, 6/121/7/1. At the end of this journal is a section entitled "Br. Rösler's Relation von sein u. seiner Brr. Philip Wesa, u. Marcus Kiefers