

“Ye Land Affair Which Is Dirt” Teedyuscung's Struggle for a Homeland

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Abstract

"Ye Land Affair Which Is Dirt" offers a glimpse into the life of Teedyuscung, a self-proclaimed King of the Delawares, as he pursued a land grievance against Pennsylvania's proprietary government in the 1750s.



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On November 12, 1756, during a treaty council in Easton, Pennsylvania, Governor William Denny asked Teedyuscung, self-proclaimed King of the Delawares, "Have we, the Governor or People of Pennsylvania done you any kind of injury?" Teedyuscung's famous reply was, "This very ground I Stand on was our land & Inheritance, and is taken from me, by Fraud." This reply dredged up the Walking Purchase of 1737, gave one possible explanation for Delaware violence against the British during the previous year, complicated peace negotiations, and changed the course of Teedyuscung's life. What factors led to Teedyuscung's answer? What pressures came to bear on him, inducing him to pursue a land grievance against Pennsylvania's proprietary government instead of simply suing for peace? The three principal components leading Teedyuscung to answer the way he did were a desire for autonomy, substantial support from the Quakers, and the truth of his claim.¹

By resurrecting a land transaction in which the Iroquois had betrayed the interests of the tributary Delawares, Teedyuscung was asserting Delaware autonomy. Allowing the dominant Iroquois to represent them in relations with the Proprietary government had not served the Delaware Indians well in the past, and by negotiating directly with Governor Denny regarding land, Teedyuscung was trying a new strategy which he hoped would better provide for his people. Another factor in Teedyuscung's choice was the knowledge that he had the support and encouragement of the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures (a Quaker organization) for his petition. There is ongoing debate among historians as to the extent of Quaker influence on Teedyuscung's actions, whether they were instigators or just assistants, but there is no doubt that they played a vital role in furthering (and complicating) his cause. The amount of emphasis placed on Quaker interference at the time of negotiations, in the official records of proceedings, and by historians for generations afterward has deemphasized perhaps the most important reason behind Teedyuscung's answer, namely, that it was the truth. The Delawares had their land fraudulently purchased out from underneath them in the Walking Purchase of 1737, and when their complaints were finally attended to at a council in Philadelphia in 1742, the Iroquois used it as an

¹ Quotation in the title from Paul A.W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 257; also in Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives* [1st Ser.] (Philadelphia, 1852-56), 3:257; Alden T. Vaughan and others, eds. *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws 1607-1789* (Washington D.C.: University Publications of America, Inc., 1979), 3:146 and 3:149.

opportunity to reassert their dominance over the Delawares, again betraying them. This encounter stayed with Teedyuscung, to be brought forth at Governor Denny's request for a "full Answer" regarding "any just Cause of Complaint."²

The importance of these three factors is borne out in the outcome of Teedyuscung's petition for justice over the land fraud. The Iroquois reacted vehemently, forcing Pennsylvania to recognize their dominance over the Delawares; the fighting between Quaker Commissioners and the Proprietary government eclipsed Teedyuscung's cause; Teedyuscung eventually capitulated his land fraud lawsuit, hoping, in return, to receive a deed to the Wyoming Valley so that he and his people would have a permanent, untouchable homeland. Unfortunately, in April of 1763 this dream, too, went up in smoke.

Leading to the Accusation

Teedyuscung sought autonomy for the Delaware Indians so that they wouldn't be at the mercy of the Iroquois in negotiations with Pennsylvania's proprietary government. The precise history of the subjugation of the Delaware Indians to the Minquas, Susquehanna Indians who were part of the Iroquois, is unknown. As early as 1638 Minquas sachems were present for a land transaction between the Delaware chief, Minuit, and the Swedes. The exact nature and reason for their status as overlords is unclear, but it was understood at the time by European observers that the Delawares were tributary to the Minquas. The Six Nations also used the Delawares and Shawnees as buffers between themselves and the Catawbas, their enemies to the south, and in return provided stable supervision, protection, and dominance. Joseph Deedemy complained to Conrad Weiser in 1756 that "The Minquo Indians have from the Beginning cheated our Nation, and got our Forefathers to call them Uncles, by Deceit and Art, and at last said they conquered our Forefathers," but begrudgingly or not, in 1712 the Delaware sachem Sassoonan acknowledged that the Iroquois "had subdued them."³

² Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:146.

³ C.A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, N.J.:Rutgers University Press, 1972), 119.; Jane T. Merritt, *At The Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 201; Joseph Deedemy quote from Memorandum, taken at Fort Allen, November the 26th 1756,

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However vague the origins of Iroquois dominance were, its effects were not. Delaware sachems Nutimus and later Teedyuscung had to contend with a two-headed enemy: the British and the Iroquois. The proprietary government of Pennsylvania was able to use the Iroquois to enforce the removal of the Delawares from their home at the Forks of the Delaware. James Logan, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the proprietary government, first tried to manipulate Delaware sachem Nutimus into signing the Walking Purchase contract at a conference in Pennbury in May of 1735. Finding the sachem better informed and more determined against the contract than he had expected, Logan resorted to intimidation tactics.⁴

Teedyuscung was present at the confrontation and recounted that Logan told Nutimus that if he complained about the lands, it would obstruct their relationship, “and added, “He did not value Newtymas, but look’d upon Him as the little Finger of his left Hand; but that He himself was a great, big man; at the same time Stretching out his Arms.” Nutimus refused, however, to relinquish the Forks of the Delaware to James Logan in 1735, so Logan went behind his back, sending Conrad Weiser to the Iroquois to solicit their signatures on two documents: one outlining the Delawares’ inability to sell land, and another one releasing all claims to land along the Delaware River and its tributaries. When Nutimus’ disputations over the title to some of the Walking Purchase lands resulted in a conference in Philadelphia in 1742, he unhappily discovered that the Iroquois had allied with the proprietary government against the Delaware Indians. As though this betrayal were not enough, he was further demeaned by the Iroquois’ response to his complaints.⁵

While Teedyuscung looked on, Iroquois chief Canassatego told proprietary officials (including James Logan), “We see with our own Eyes that [the Delaware Indians] have been a very unruly People, and are

Pennsylvania Archives, Historical Society of Pennsylvania as cited in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 464.; Sassoonan quote from *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Jo. Severns & Co., 1852), 2:546, 3:334, as cited in Steven C. Harper, *Promised Land: Penn’s Holy Experiment, The Walking Purchase, and the Dispossession of Delawares, 1600-1763* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2006), 26.

⁴ William Cornelius Reichel, *Memorials of the Moravian Church* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1870): 225, <http://books.google.com/> (accessed 2-12-2011); Anthony F.C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), 37; Harper, *Promised Land*, 56.

⁵ James Sullivan, ed., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: University of the State of New York in association with New York Division of Archives and History, 1921-65), 3:767; Harper, *Promised Land*, 59, 80.

altogether in the wrong in their Dealings with You. We have concluded to remove them....” He then turned to Nutimus and his Delawares and “chastize[d]” them saying, “You ought to be taken by the Hair of the Head and shak’d severely till you recover your Senses and become Sober; you don’t know what Ground you stand on, nor what you are doing.” Canassatego then clearly defined the limits of Delaware power by scolding, “But how came you to take upon you to Sell Land at all? We conquer’d You, we made Women of you, you know you are Women, and can no more sell Land than Women.” In the end, Canassatego dictated to the Delawares the two places they would now be permitted to live— “either to Wyomin or Shamokin.”⁶

Canassatego labeled the Delawares with the metaphoric status of “women,” but according to historian Jane Merritt, he “used a European notion of women” because he “spoke as much to the English present as to the Delawares.” The Iroquois spokesman was making it very clear to the Pennsylvania government who was in authority, and the proprietors were thrilled to have the validity of their Delaware land purchases from the Iroquois confirmed. Historian Paul Wallace contends that Canassatego’s words didn’t actually change relations between the Delaware Indians and the Iroquois because the Six Nations knew that the Delawares had no more lands left to sell when they forbade them to sell any more land. Wallace notes that, though it may not have changed the Delaware Indians’ status, it definitely changed their mood. Not only did it cause resentment, but it also raised expectations among the Delawares that the land “assigned” to them by the Iroquois was theirs to keep as compensation for what had been so harshly taken from them.⁷

Whatever the significance of the 1742 conference in Philadelphia may have been for Pennsylvania’s government and Indians in general, for Teedyuscung, the bitter memory of it was lasting; he never forgot watching his sachem and uncle get “taken by the hair of the head and shak’d” or figuratively dressed as a woman, in petticoats. Peppering Teedyuscung’s petitions for justice in his land dispute from 1756 on are references to the feminizing of 1742, indicating that this humiliation

⁶ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: State of Pennsylvania, 1851), 4:579-580.

⁷ Merritt, *At The Crossroads*, 220-221. Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 132.

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sparked his ambition to declare autonomy from the Iroquois, and that he saw winning redress from the English as his ticket to freedom.⁸

For Nutimus or Teedyuscung to receive another invitation to a treaty negotiation after 1742, it was necessary for the Delaware Indians to pose a bigger threat to Pennsylvania’s security than the Iroquois did. They accomplished this through violence. The Susquehanna Delawares considered themselves allies of the English, even after the Ohio Delawares had declared war on the British at the end of October 1755. However, they were in a tight spot, surrounded by violence for which they feared they would be blamed, uninvited by Johnson to treaty negotiations in 1755, and desperately needing supplies from the proprietary government in order to join them against the French.⁹

The proprietary government, however, was distracted with arguments regarding who was going to pay for the necessary armaments and militia. The Assembly’s debate continued week after week, while the settlers and peaceful Indians on the frontiers fell victim to war raids. Indian groups on the Susquehanna were waiting in vain for a sign from the British that they were earnestly preparing to combat the French. Acting as their spokesman, Iroquois viceroy Scaroyady urged the Pennsylvania government in October to stop neglecting their Indian allies, saying “We pray Brother Onas and the people of Pennsylvania not to leave us in the lurch, but to supply us with necessaries to enable us to fight the French.” When the Assembly still refused to appropriate funds to furnish them with food, clothing, guns, and ammunition needed for a winter campaign or to build a fort for their protection and trade, some of the Wyoming Indians, including Teedyuscung, chose to fight for the more attentive French. The violence they unleashed in December made them suddenly worth appeasing, provided negotiating leverage, and gave them back the power to speak for themselves.¹⁰

In the spring of 1756, the Iroquois sent Teedyuscung a wampum belt with the message: “Leave off Killing ye white People, It is none of Your Business, You are but Women you know.” Not surprisingly, it was not this message but the diplomatic visit of his young brother-in-law, Augustus, which caused him to agree to attend a conference in Easton in

⁸ Harper, *Promised Land*, 85; Reichel, *Moravian Mission*, 225.

⁹ Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 69, 73.

¹⁰ Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 371; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 69, 73; Harper, *Promised Land*, 103.

July 1756, to “make all these things good again.” Newly appointed superintendent for Indian affairs William Johnson responded at an Onondaga conference in July by “taking off the Petticoat, or that invidious name of Women from the Delaware Nation which hath been imposed on them by the 6 Nations from the time they conquered them...and promised them I would use my influence and best endeavors to prevail with the six Nations to follow my example....” Despite Johnson’s attempts at diplomacy, the Six Nations did not release to him the power to change the status of their “Cousins” the Delawares, and made it very clear in the 1758 Easton conference that they had never supported his grandiose gesture. But early in 1756, the war caused the balance of power in Pennsylvania to change, shifting away from the Six Nations and Provincial government to reside with those negotiating for peace on the Pennsylvania frontier, one of whom was Teedyuscung.¹¹

As the Delaware Nation strengthened its alliance with the Pennsylvania government, it increasingly asserted its independence from the Iroquois. When Teedyuscung first traveled to Easton to discuss peace terms in 1756, both the Pennsylvania government and the Six Nations acknowledged the independence of the Delawares, but asked that Teedyuscung consult the Six Nations before negotiating. He was willing to join forces with the Six Nations, but he acted independently of their advice and was treated by Governor Denny as the chief negotiator for an assortment of Indian nations, including Delawares, Shawnees, and Mahicans.¹²

At the first Easton Conference in July 1756, Teedyuscung offered the proprietors an “Independence Belt,” which he said was given to him by the Six Nations to “denote” that they “have made men of us, and as such are now come to this Treaty having this Authority as a man to make Peace.” Conrad Weiser, Pennsylvanian interpreter for Iroquois negotiations, asked Iroquois interpreter Newcastle what messages had

¹¹ Message from Iroquois from May 21, 1756: Misc. MSS, Bethlehem and Vicinity, 1741-1849, p.35 Historical Society of Pennsylvania as cited in Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 440; Augustus’ relation to Teedyuscung and resulting influence with him described in Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 208-209; Johnson’s report of the Onondaga conference found in *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, VI, 453-4, as quoted in Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 444; power shifts resulting from violence discussed in Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 199.

¹² Harper, *Promised Land*, 84; Charles Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnese Indians from the British Interest* (London, 1759), 91; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 224. Merritt quotes Thomson, but her conclusions differ from his narrative. He writes that Teedyuscung “immediately agreed to” the Iroquois request to join forces, while Merritt states that Teedyuscung “refused to consult with the Iroquois.”

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actually been given with the belt by the Iroquois at Tioga, and heard a drastically different accounting. Newcastle reported to Weiser that the accompanying message included a chastisement for fighting with the French and a caution for negotiations with the English:

You have suffer'd the String that ty'd your Pettycoat to be cut loose by the French and you lay with them and so became a common Bawd, in which you did very wrong and deserved Chastisement... We advise you not to act as a Man yet but be first instructed by us and do as we bid you and you will become a noted man.¹³

Although Weiser believed Newcastle's account, and assumed from it that Teedyuscung was intentionally misrepresenting the belt to declare independence for the Delawares, he still advised the Governor to accept it at face value. As uneasy as it made him even to appear to the Iroquois to be playing a double game, Weiser realized that appeasing Teedyuscung had become vital to Pennsylvania's stability.¹⁴

Pennsylvania's recognition of Delaware independence emboldened Teedyuscung enough that, at the next Easton conference when Governor Denny pressed him for an explanation of Delaware violence against England, Teedyuscung mentioned the fraudulent land deal conducted by the proprietary government and the Iroquois in 1737. Not only was he discussing the taboo subject of land transactions, but he was accusing the proprietorship of fraud and the Iroquois of betrayal. James Logan was dead and the Delawares were seen as a threat; the time had come to seek justice again.

In addition to taking advantage of the political climate in 1756, Teedyuscung also used the support of the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures, a Quaker organization, to assert autonomy and press the Delaware land claim. The Friendly Association fought against Delaware subjugation to the Iroquois; instead of recognizing the Delaware Indians' tributary status to the Six Nations, they treated directly with Teedyuscung. This arrangement also benefitted the Quakers because their authority and influence was strengthened as the Pennsylvania Indians preferred dealing

¹³ “Taken from Captn Newcastles Mouth by Mr. Weiser 31st July 1756,” Pennsylvania Archives, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; The account from Newcastle and Weiser's resulting assumptions cited in Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 449-450.

¹⁴ Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 451.

with them over meeting with the less accommodating proprietary representatives.¹⁵

Teedyuscung had always liked the Quakers, who were respectful and generous. Describing their first encounter with him, the Friendly Association minutes recorded that, “At the Governor’s lodgings we first saw Teedyuscung, who, on our coming in, immediately expressed his regard for and confidence in the Quakers.” The reason for Teedyuscung’s favorable predisposition toward the Quakers was explained by him at their next meeting: “We afterwards called and shook hands with him at his lodgings, and he expressed great satisfaction in seeing us, and said Newcastle had told him of the Quakers, and that they would come to meet him, which he now found to be true, and that now he saw them he felt it to the point of his heart, and should not say anything to the Governor unless the Quakers were present.”¹⁶

Teedyuscung felt comfortable accusing the proprietary government of fraud in 1756 partly because he knew he had support and encouragement from the Friendly Association in his assertions. While Quaker historian Samuel Parrish, relying on the “minute-book” of the “Friendly Association,” felt that Teedyuscung’s “open confession” regarding the injustice of the Walking Purchase “was owing to the confidence [the Delaware Indians] felt, that Friends present, would endeavor to rectify the wrong committed,” Conrad Weiser, an experienced interpreter who witnessed the proceedings, saw things differently. Referring to Israel Pemberton, founder of the Friendly Association, Weiser wrote, “Israel Indeed, who prumped Teedjouskon, all along is a Politician, but Teedjouskon is not for he told so many Lies about his Right to the Land in the Forks...that he is ashamed of himself now, and so must be his Promptor, if any Shame can find Place in him as yet.” There is no doubt that Teedyuscung was relying on Quaker allies who had complicated motives for supporting him, but Weiser’s interpretation of the situation casts Teedyuscung as a puppet and Pemberton as the puppeteer, as though the Delaware sachem could have no agenda of his own. In order to understand Teedyuscung’s own

¹⁵ Ralph L. Ketcham, “Conscience, War, and Politics in Pennsylvania, 1755-1757.” *The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series* 20, no.3 (1963): 429, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1918955> (accessed 2-21-2011); Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 205.
¹⁶ Samuel Parrish, *Some Chapters in the History of the Friendly Association* (Philadelphia: Friends Historical Association, 1877): preface, 18, <http://books.google.com/>, (accessed 3-23-2011).

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motives, the motives of all the other players must be separated out of the mix.¹⁷

In the face of war, Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly resigned; they did not, however, resign from politics, but retained many of their positions as commissioners of Indian affairs. The Friendly Association, established in April of 1756 under Israel Pemberton, functioned as a tool which allowed the Quakers to dominate Indian diplomacy and trade in Pennsylvania, thereby providing an extension of their former political powers. Their reasons for supporting Teedyuscung have been interpreted in many different ways. After the November day when Governor Denny asked the question which gave Teedyuscung an opportunity to air his complaints, Israel Pemberton wrote that “The Governor delivered his speech to the Indians, and the joy which appeared in their countenances cannot be expressed, on their hearing what the Governor said....On the meeting breaking up, they hurried across the benches, to offer the Governor their hands.” From his own words it appears that the welfare of the Indians was certainly important to Pemberton.¹⁸ The Friendly Association presented a letter to William Johnson at a conference in 1762 which began, in part:

*We beg leave to Assure you that We have no other Motive in adding to what we [last evening] offer'd, but the future peace and Tranquility of the Province, which will greatly depend on the Fairness and Impartiality of the Representation of the Indian Complaints, and the Justice that shall be done in consequence thereof by the Crown.*¹⁹

Though most Quakers championed Indian rights because they felt very strongly that Delawares needed British advocates during treaty negotiations, they also used Teedyuscung's accusations to criticize and discredit their political enemies, the proprietors. They have been charged with pushing Teedyuscung into pursuing the land claim so that the Penns' land policies would be blamed for Indian hostilities, and not the Assembly's neglect and inaction. Their desire for peace and strong ties with the Indians was motivated by commercial interests that favored stability in Indian trade. Politically the Quakers wanted freedom from proprietary constraints, and were even accused of preventing a settlement

¹⁷ Parrish, *Some Chapters*, 41; Weiser's "Observations", Moravian Archive, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as cited in Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 470; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 225.

¹⁸ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 204; Parrish, *Some Chapters*, 32;

¹⁹ Sullivan, *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 3:794.

of Teedyuscung's charges of fraud hoping that the Penn family would lose its proprietorship.²⁰

These accusations are largely based on proprietary and provincial accounts which have a heavy dose of anti-Quaker sentiment in them, and overemphasize these motives. A simple example of this is found in William Johnson's official papers, where his secretary Witham Marsh scribed an account of the fifth Easton conference. He wrote, "As Teedyuscung had intimated a Suspicion that Sir William Johnson wou'd not do Him Justice, to which He must have been instigated by the false Insinuations of some evil-minded Persons...." Perhaps the Friendly Association was resented because their actions were steadfastly supportive of the Delawares' cause. They worked tirelessly to finance and facilitate treaty negotiations and the fair prosecution of Teedyuscung's claims. The Quakers weren't the only ones with multiple objectives, however; the interests of other players on the scene impacted the treatment, and portrayal, of Teedyuscung as well.²¹

Proprietary Secretary Richard Peters worked to prevent a fair investigation of the land fraud, and wrote to protect proprietary interests. Peters got so upset about Teedyuscung's accusations that he professed an inability to hold his pen to take further notes, which backfired on him when Governor Denny designated Quaker Charles Thomson the official record-keeper of the proceedings. Though Richard Peters admitted in a secret letter to Thomas Penn that Teedyuscung had been clear in his charge, using "express terms" to describe the "uneasiness" caused by the "Injustice done them, in their Sales of Lands, by the Proprietors," he also went out of his way to check Charles Thomson's minutes and attempted to purge the accusations from the official record. A close study and comparison of different written accounts (when available) of the Easton conferences reveals that Richard Peters portrayed Teedyuscung as both more aggressive and more abject than other scribes made him out to be, inflating his showmanship and softening his accusations. Though it was his job to record what was said and done at the meetings, when

²⁰ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 201; Theodore Thayer, *Israel Pemberton, King of the Quakers* (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1943), 159 discusses the commercial and political advantages of peace for Quakers; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 141, 245 discusses the political and commercial motives of Quakers, and their attempts to prevent a settlement; Ketcham, "Conscience, War, and Politics", 433 emphasizes the desire of Quakers to bar greedy proprietary agents from Indian negotiations and trade.

²¹ Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:782; Harper, *Promised Land*, 108 points out that historians relying on proprietary accounts have overstated these Quaker motives.

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accusations were made against his patrons, he used his role to shield them.²²

Conrad Weiser, interpreter for the Iroquois and proprietary government and “ambassador to all Indians,” was irritated with Governor Denny’s question and Teedyuscung’s answer because he wanted peace and the restoration of the prewar power structure and he assumed that the Indians wanted the same. He said, “It was an absurd [question] in the Indian Light, for they wanted nothing but forgiveness, and old Friendship restored.” He declared himself “a man for peace,” and did not think that rehashing the Walking Purchase would lead to peace, but would instead weaken Iroquois authority and increase destabilization.²³

Some of the Six Nations’ representatives at the second Easton conference also seemed to Conrad Weiser to be irritated with Governor Denny’s question, and they said to him in private, “Why does the Governor ask such a Question, now the Thing is made up? Will he begin to raise another Quarrel?” The Iroquois, however, stood to lose as much credibility as the proprietary government if the charges of fraudulence were upheld. Even allowing the Pennsylvania governor to negotiate with the Delawares compromised their authority, an authority they had carefully preserved through the years. Jane Merritt writes that “Iroquois had always demonized Delawares on some level, whether because of ethnic difference or as justification for their political domination. In the communities they shared, Iroquois often accused Delawares of using witchcraft or other magical powers to harm them.” The Iroquois even introduced this method in a political setting when Newcastle accused Teedyuscung during the first Easton conference of bewitching him, and then fell ill the next day. “Iroquois used these images of supernaturally dangerous Delawares to further undermine Euramerican trust in them,” Merritt affirms. The rumors of witchcraft and violence accredited to the

²² Harper, *Promised Land*, 106-7; James H. Merrell, “I Desire All That I Have Said...May Be Taken down Aright’: Revisiting Teedyuscung’s 1756 Treaty Council Speeches.” *The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series* 63, no.4 (2006): 777-826, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4491580> (accessed 2-14-2011) for an in-depth study of the manipulation of the image and words of Teedyuscung; Letter from Richard Peters to Thomas Penn [November 22, 1756] cited in Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:168; Parrish, *Some Chapters*, 35-6; Merrell, “I Desire All That I Have Said...”, 802, 804, 809, 812.

²³ Conrad Weiser’s “Observations,” Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as cited in Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 461, 406.

Delawares helped to keep them under the thumb of the Six Nations, where Iroquois delegates at the conferences intended they stay.²⁴

Without a written account in Teedyuscung's own words describing his process of reasoning, it has been left to contemporary record-keeping observers, with their own agendas, and later historians to attribute what purposes they would to his words and actions. But what did Teedyuscung himself claim as his motive? At the third Easton conference in July, 1757, Teedyuscung spoke to Governor Denny saying, "Brother: I would desire also that you look with all Diligence, and see from whence our Differences have Sprung, You may easily see they have Sprung from the Land or Earth." When asked for clarification, the translator John Pumpshire said Teedyuscung meant "The Land is the Cause of our Differences; that is, our being unhappily turned out of the Land is the cause."²⁵

Being unhappily turned out of the land by fraud caused Teedyuscung to petition a seemingly sympathetic Governor Denny for justice in 1756. When the land fraud was finally arbitrated by William Johnson in 1762, Teedyuscung attributed his pursuance of the case to a charge from his sachem, saying, "Neutimus told me to do so, when He gave me his place as Chief man of the Delawares." He then went on to give a comprehensive account of the Walking Purchase, beginning with the infamous Deed of 1686. "I, and many of our old men know that, our Fathers told us they were never paid for the Lands they agreed to Sell at the Treaty held at Pennsbury more than 70 years since, and therefore they thought it was no Bargain."²⁶

They had not been paid because the sale had not been concluded, only attempted. "The original Deed being lost, or mislaid, has occasioned the Proprietaries much trouble to prove the Reality of this purchase," William Johnson wrote in a letter to the Lords of Trade in 1762. "The proofs...are sundry Extracts from ancient Letters mentioning at that time a Treaty to be on foot for purchasing Lands above the *Forks of Delaware* from the Indians, and an account of goods paid them 21st April 1688." It was these drafts which James Logan waved in Nutimus' face as evidence of proprietary rights to a walking purchase. Teedyuscung recounted, "A

²⁴ Conrad Weiser's "Observations," M.A. as cited in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 461; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 196, 192-3.

²⁵ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:266.

²⁶ Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:778.

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paper was shewn to Neutimus, and other Chief men who were there, which they were told was the Deed our Fathers had Signed, but They knew it was not, and therefore said so; upon which they were threaten'd in the manner I told you before [referring to Logan's intimidation tactics]. I was there present, and heard it with my own Ears.”²⁷

After Logan made his threats, Teedyuscung tells us, the Minquas (of the Six Nations) also threatened the Delaware chiefs, causing some of them to go to Philadelphia and sign a deed, “soon after which, two Men walk'd over the Forks of Delaware, up beyond the Pehoqualin Mountains, by the course of a Compass, different from what was ever intended; and thus They took away our Lands, which made us very uneasy.” To Teedyuscung and the former chiefs he was representing, the intentions of the parties dictated the true terms of their agreement. By contrast, the written word was all-important to British colonists during negotiations; it captured the permanence of an agreement, invested them with the power to enforce it, and protected them in case of later disputes over the terms of the contract. The Delawares never intended to sell their land at the Forks of the Delaware, but the Proprietary government was determined to acquire it.²⁸

The Penn's and James Logan conspired to dispossess the Delawares of their land and used the transformed treaty of 1686 as well as a misleading map (which intentionally omitted Tohickon Creek) to convince the sachems in 1737 that they were signing a quitclaim to land below Tohickon, but not Forks land. The execution of the Walking Purchase was also done differently than the Indians had agreed to. Instead of a day-and-a-half's walk along the river to delineate the area included in the purchase, the proprietors cleared a straight trail and covered fifty-five miles on foot in the eighteen hours, all with the goal of making it to a point where the Forks would be included. The Indians accompanying the walkers became unhappy by afternoon of the first day and “Called out, and Say'd to them you Run, that's not fair, you was to Walk.” Their complaints were heeded neither then, nor for the following two decades,

²⁷ “To the Lords of Trade”, Aug. 1, 1762, from Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:839; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:779.

²⁸ Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:779; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 212-213 includes a more extensive comparison of Native American and European assumptions and methods for negotiations.

because (of necessity) they were made to the very people who had planned and executed the fraud.²⁹

Since the proprietary government did not officially recognize the complaints of the Delawares, they were able to claim that they had not complained, giving the impression that the Delawares were content with the Walking Purchase until Quakers or the French convinced them otherwise. Official reports perpetuated this misconception. An example of this is found in a letter written by Sir William Johnson to the Lords of Trade, giving a full account of the settlement of the land fraud accusations. He reported that the Proprietaries' Commissioners told him that, after initial complaints and the 1742 conference, "the Delawares acquiesced, and never renewed their Claim 'till the said Teedyuscung in the year 1756, made his first complaint against the Proprietors of Forgery." He referred to a 1761 conference at Bush Hill held by Governor Hamilton with Teedyuscung and his son, where "Teedyuscung declared he himself knew nothing of any fraud or cheating the Proprietors had been guilty of." The record of the actual meeting reveals that Teedyuscung wasn't even present when these words were spoken.³⁰

Isaac Stille, being asked by the Governor if he remembered what Teedyuscung said to him about the Lands in the Forks, answered that he did, very well, & then, being asked what it was, he said Teedyuscung declared he did himself not know anything of the Proprietors having cheated the Indians of their Land. That when the French & English broke out into War, the French put into the heads of their foolish Young men, that the English had cheated them of their Lands, & at the Treaty held with Governor Morris, at Easton, the foolish Young men obliged him to mention it, but for his part he knew nothing of it.³¹

We know this hearsay to be inaccurate because we have Teedyuscung's testimony in 1762 that he witnessed Nutimus' confrontation with James Logan over the Walking Purchase "about 26 years ago, in my presence," and "I am almost tired in order to make up the Breach occasion'd by Mr. Logan's Words." The proprietary government benefited from the misperception their records caused, of the

²⁹ Harper, *Promised Land*, 66; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 26; quote from Etting Collection, Miscellaneous MSS., I, 95, Historical Society of Pennsylvania as cited in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 98; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 183.

³⁰ Harper, *Promised Land*, 73; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:845.

³¹ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, 8:661.

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Delaware Indians being easily manipulated and swayed by the French to descend on the settlers on Pennsylvania’s frontiers in an inexplicable frenzy of violence.³²

Minutes of the 1756 Easton conference taken by the Friendly Association after Teedyuscung’s accusations note that, “in the forepart of the Governor’s speech this day, he attributed the attitude of the Indians, to *French influence*. If the part insisted on by the Commissioners had not been added, and notes been preserved of complaints, it might afterwards have been said, that the Indians had no grievances against the Government about lands.” Non-proprietary accounts such as these were given little credence for political reasons, but that does not negate their veracity. Charles Thomson concluded in *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Alienation of the Delaware and Shawnese Indians from the British Interest* that Delaware participation in the French and Indian War against Great Britain was caused by their being wrongfully dispossessed of their lands. Historian William Reichel, relying heavily on Thomson’s work, wrote that they “prepared for war” and “rehearsed their wrongs, dwelling...chiefly, and amid bitter denunciations, on the fraud of 1737....Wherever the white man was settled within this disputed territory, there they resolved to strike him as best they could....Each warrior-chief was charged to scalp, kill, and burn within the precincts of his birthright...until the English should sue for peace and promise redress.” The Proprietary government worked to cover up the fraudulent Walking Purchase for two decades, but it blew wide open in 1755, and no one should have been surprised when Teedyuscung pointed to it as a “kind of injury” he had suffered at the hands of the “People of Pennsylvania.”³³

Teedyuscung learned from the Walking Purchase experience not to trust the spoken words of white people and that, to have any hope of negotiating on equal footing with them, he would need to be able to navigate the world of written documentation. Unlike his predecessors, he relied both on Indian oral history, with its accompanying wampum belts, and on the written word. He used treaty conferences to make sure his version of events made it into the written record, and when complaints against the proprietaries were not recorded accurately by their secretary, Richard Peters, Teedyuscung insisted on having his own clerk to take

³² Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:767; Harper, *Promised Land*, 73.

³³ Parrish, *Some Chapters*, 38; Thomson, *An Enquiry into the Causes*, 44-48; Reichel, *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, 192; quoted parts of Governor Denny’s question as cited in Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:146.

additional notes. Having learned the significance of the written word to the white man's government, Teedyuscung used it in his exchange with William Johnson in 1762. He concluded the story of James Logan trying to coerce Nutimus into compliance over the proposed Walking Purchase with "Mr. Logan added, 'that no Body dared to write anything wrong, for if any one writes anything out of his own Head, We hang Him.'" Teedyuscung then said to Johnson, "Somebody must have wrote wrong, and that makes the Land all bloody." The Walking Purchase fraud resulted in resentment among the Delawares which, during war, led to acts of violence targeting those on their stolen lands, and, during peace negotiations with Governor Denny and William Johnson, led to Teedyuscung's accusations of proprietary impropriety.³⁴

The Outcome of the Accusation

The Six Nations were resentful of Teedyuscung's assertions and determined to put him in his place. At the first three Easton conferences, the Iroquois allowed Teedyuscung to speak for himself, and "only came to hear him," but on August 5, 1758, Eyendeegen, a Seneca, announced that they would be attending the next Easton conference and "Now when we come we will speak for ourselves fully." And they did.³⁵

On October 11, 1758 the Indian chiefs communicated to the governors that after two days of deliberating amongst themselves in council they would speak with them in the afternoon. When Seneca chief Tagashata presented his wampum belts, intending to speak, Teedyuscung jumped in and asked to be heard first. He referred to the negotiating he had done directly with Governor Denny in past conferences, probably hoping that Governor Denny would acknowledge his authority to do so again, in the presence of these determined Iroquois chiefs. However, as soon as Teedyuscung's words had been interpreted into the Six Nation language, Tagashata arose and ended the council for the day. The Iroquois would negotiate on their terms or not at all.³⁶

³⁴ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 210, 213, 224; Parrish, *Some Chapters*, 77; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:767; Merrell, "I Would that All my Words..." , 825; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 182.

³⁵ *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, From the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government* (Harrisburg, State of Pennsylvania, 1852), 8:151.

³⁶ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:431.

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Two days later, Mohawk chief Nickas “spoke for some Time with great vehemence, pointing to Teedyuscung, and Mr. Weiser was ordered to interpret it.” Conrad Weiser, as well as Andrew Montour, refused to interpret the sharp words in public and convinced Nickas to pursue the chastisement in private. Governors Denny and Bernard were present two days later at the private conference where one by one a chief from each Iroquois nation present stood and addressed them, saying, “We do not know who has made Teedyuscung this great man over Ten Nations, and I want to know who made him so.” Onondaga chief Thomas King added, “We, for our parts, intirely disown that he has any Authority over us, and desire to know from whence he derives his Authority.” Governors Denny and Bernard reaffirmed for the record that Teedyuscung had treated with them as a Nephew of the Six Nations, representing the Delawares, but only as a messenger for the Iroquois. Thus, in one fell swoop, the Iroquois and the proprietary government retrospectively denied the Delawares the autonomy and political independence previously acknowledged. Delawares again assumed tributary status to the Iroquois and Teedyuscung’s power as a leader diminished from that point on.³⁷

Israel Pemberton and the Quakers continued to support Teedyuscung in his petition for justice over the Walking Purchase land fraud, but their support ceased to be helpful. Although Governor Denny chose to cooperate with the Friendly Association in order to take advantage of their status with the Indians and their generosity with gifts, in a letter to Conrad Weiser he ordered “that no Persons be permitted to confer with the Indians.” By 1757, Governor Denny had soured on the Friendly Association and sent them a letter forbidding them to present gifts to Indians, to concern themselves with treaties regarding Indians, or to attend a treaty as a group.³⁸

In response to Teedyuscung’s accusations, the King’s Ministers ordered that the Walking Purchase be carefully looked into, and the findings presented before “some Person no ways concerned in Interest.” The Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the north, Sir William Johnson, was appointed as the disinterested party to examine the evidence and then present the whole before the crown, and Commissioners were assigned to investigate the purchase, among them secretary Richard Peters. Two years

³⁷ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:439-441; *Minutes of the Provincial Council*, 8:190-194; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 235.

³⁸ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 205, 227; Samuel Hazard, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives* [1st Ser.] (Philadelphia, 1853), 3:18.

before Teedyuscung even went before William Johnson to discuss the land fraud case, Johnson received a letter from Richard Peters that sought to turn him against Israel Pemberton and the Quakers . Peters wrote “That the Indians said with a Sneer on a like former occasion ‘Governor Pemberton gives us everything, but Governor Denny has it not in his power to comply with any of our Demands.’” Johnson concluded from this that the “handsome sum” the Quakers had voted to contribute for presents at Johnson’s upcoming negotiations with Teedyuscung in 1762 “seems to be with some other view than for obtaining the delivery up of Captives, & cannot but greatly influence the Indians in their favour at the Ensuing Meeting when they find they receive no presents from anybody else.”³⁹

At the June, 1762 Easton conference, Teedyuscung asked to be allowed his own clerk, but William Johnson flatly refused. Johnson had the Walking Purchase documents and Commissioner’s Report read aloud only in English, which required four hours to accomplish, then had an interpreter explain what had been read, and took Teedyuscung’s satisfaction with it as acquiescence. The next day Teedyuscung gave Johnson a letter which said that his refusal to let him have a clerk made him fear that he “did not intend to do Justice.” The letter warned that if Johnson did not supply him with “all those Papers”(meaning the Walking Purchase documents and commissioners’ report which had been read aloud) “that I may have time to Consider them,” then “We shall Complain to King George, who We are Sure is our Friend; and...will do us Justice.”⁴⁰

William Johnson was affronted by this note, “but did not believe what was Contain’d in that paper came from [Teedyuscung’s] own Heart, and therefore desired He wou’d tell, who put it in his head.” William Johnson went on to accuse Teedyuscung of inconstancy, but Israel Pemberton stood and defended Teedyuscung, which provoked Johnson into countering that “He plainly saw thro what Channel Teedyuscung conducted his Business, and had taken Notice that He was constantly nurs’d and Entertain’d at Pemberton’s, or at the Lodgings of the Committee of Assembly’: to which Israel reply’d, that Teedyuscung was as much with Sir William, as with Him.” Other members of the Friendly

³⁹ Julian P. Boyd, *Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1938), 199 contains a report of the royal response to Teedyuscung’s complaints; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:765, 744.

⁴⁰ Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:769, 771.

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Association joined in Teedyuscung’s defense at this point, and the debate escalated until Pemberton showed Johnson a newspaper which contained “the King’s proclamation” wherein “His Majesty...shew’d his paternal Regard and Affection for the Indians, and called Them His Allies.” Johnson decided to tolerate the interruptions no longer, stood up, and terminated the conference session. The power struggle between the provincial government and the Quakers had eclipsed Teedyuscung’s cause. William Johnson spent more time trying to prove that Teedyuscung “never should have troubled the Proprietiers about these Lands had he not been instigated so to do by the Quakers,” than he did investigating Teedyuscung’s accusations of fraud.⁴¹

It must have been clear to Teedyuscung that the support of the Friendly Association was turning William Johnson against his petition. Two days later Teedyuscung decided to “deliver up the Lands” to Johnson and offered to sign a deed for them. Along with his capitulation, Teedyuscung also offered Johnson a letter which contained the clearest, most complete account we have from him regarding the land fraud. Even after giving up, he wanted to be rightly understood.⁴²

There were various reasons for Teedyuscung to give up the charges against the proprietary government of fraud. By 1760, the war was over in eastern Pennsylvania and the eastern Delawares no longer had the leverage which would have made justice possible for them. As early as 1757 there were indications that not all Delawares supported Teedyuscung’s pursuit of the land claim ahead of settling for peace. At the Easton conference that year Conrad Weiser heard a Delaware Indian named Lapachpiton interrupt Teedyuscung’s address to the governor to angrily ask him, “Why did you bring us down? We thought we came down to make Peace with our Brethren the English, but you continue to quarrel about the Land affair, which is Dirt.” Teedyuscung also knew that the conference with William Johnson in June, 1762 had been his last hope of obtaining redress, and when he saw Johnson’s reaction to his Quaker allies, he knew it was a vain hope. Most importantly to Teedyuscung, he conceded his Walking Purchase land suit hoping that, in return, the

⁴¹ Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:772-775, 847.

⁴² Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:777.

provincial government would help protect his current homeland, a settlement at Wyoming, from the incursion of New England settlers.⁴³

The Hope Behind the Accusation

Teedyuscung used the Walking Purchase land claim as a tool to try to shame the proprietors into giving him a homeland for a Delaware settlement in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania. The Six Nations had claimed the area of Wyoming by right of conquest since 1675, because of its geopolitical importance to them. Instead of occupying it themselves, they requested displaced Indian peoples to occupy it in their name in order to prevent white settler expansion northward from Pennsylvania into Iroquois territory, and to protect the diplomatic trails from Shamokin to Onondaga, the center of the Iroquois government. After selling Delaware land to the proprietary government in 1737 and ordering the Delawares to remove from it in 1742, the Iroquois told them to settle in Wyoming. Teedyuscung, who was 37 years old at the time of the Walking Purchase treaty, and had already been moved off his homeland once, knew that having a permanent right to land was essential to securing the Delawares' political and social stability. He chose to leave the Moravian mission at Gnadenhütten and, with his followers, settle at Wyoming. He explained his decision at the 1761 Easton conference, saying, "The Reason why I complied with your first Request was, because I thought you would give me the Lands at *Wyoming*, in the Room of some of our Lands you had sold the *English*."⁴⁴

At the third Easton conference in July, 1757, Teedyuscung officially petitioned for a tract of land to be set aside for the Delawares forever, stating, "We intend to settle at Wyoming, and we want to have certain Boundaries fixed between you and us." He was not excluding all colonists from being involved in his settlement, though: he asked for help and instruction from them in house-building, religion, teaching the children to read and write, and setting up trade. In the spring of 1758, a group of Moravian and Quaker laborers helped Teedyuscung build a more

⁴³ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:492; Hazard, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 3:257; Harper, *Promised Land*, 122; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:790.

⁴⁴ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 225; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 48-9; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 224; Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:582.

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permanent settlement of cabins in the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, and the Delawares planted their crops.⁴⁵

At the fourth Easton conference in 1758, after the Iroquois made their power play by disavowing Teedyuscung’s authority, he formally capitulated to Iroquois dominance in an Indian council, and then, with the proprietary governors and council present, humbly petitioned for a homeland.

Uncles:

You may remember that you have placed us at Wioming and Shamokin...Now I hear since, that you have sold that Land to our Brethren, the English. Let the matter now be cleared up in the Presence of our Brethren, the English.

I sit here as a Bird on a Bow; I look about and do not know where to go; let me therefore come down upon the Ground, and make that my own by a good Deed, and I shall then have a Home for Ever; for if you, my Uncles, or I die, our Brethren, the English, will say they have bought it from you, and so wrong my Posterity out of it.⁴⁶

The land sale which Teedyuscung was referring to was perpetrated by a representative of the Susquehanna Company of Connecticut named John Henry Lydius, in 1754. He negotiated the land deed outside of open council in Albany, getting a few Iroquois leaders on their own; then, plying them with alcohol and money one at a time, he obtained their signatures. Lydius hid the details from colonial officials and the leadership of the Six Nations, both of whom condemned the deed as invalid. Connecticut settlers of the Susquehanna Company, however, used the deed in 1760 as an excuse to begin settling in Teedyuscung’s Wyoming Valley.⁴⁷

Teedyuscung’s entire focus at the next treaty conference in Easton during August, 1761, was to get a deed from either Pennsylvania’s new proprietary governor, James Hamilton, or the Iroquois, for Wyoming. He threatened to stay in Wyoming, despite the fact that “My

⁴⁵ Boyd, *Indian Treaties*, 196-7; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 185-188.

⁴⁶ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:449.

⁴⁷ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 257.

Uncles, the *Seven Nations*, that sit here now, desire me to leave *Wyoming*, for Fear.” Then later he threatened to leave Wyoming, saying:

*It is about three Years ago that I desired my Uncles would give me a Deed for the Lands at Wyoming, but as they have not done it, I believe I shall get up and leave it; for you know, according to your Custom, you hold all Lands by Deeds, and if our Uncles had given us a Deed, our Children would enjoy them after us: If they had given me a Deed, my Children and Grandchildren would live there as long as the World lasts; but as that is not done, I believe I shall leave it.*⁴⁸

Teedyuscung was trying to goad the Six Nations into protecting their land from Connecticut settler incursions, or to goad the governor into protecting Pennsylvania’s interests by authorizing the Delawares (with a deed) to keep the New Englanders off their land. The Friendly Association Report of this conversation mentions that Teedyuscung “informed the Governor that the Onondaga Council had refused to confirm the Wyoming lands to him and the Delawares and had Advised him to Leave those lands, as soon as the English came over the Mountains to settle them; While he was speaking this The Onondagoes Slipped away from the Council, which gave us cause to think They intended to countenance the New England Men in their incroachments.” Governor Hamilton was sympathetic to Teedyuscung’s request and agreed that the land had been reserved by the Iroquois for the Delawares in the 1740s; however, he only encouraged Teedyuscung to pursue it further with the Iroquois. He would not step in by providing the Delawares with deeds or legal title to the land.⁴⁹

Due to Teedyuscung’s complaints of New England settlers in his valley, Governor Hamilton did issue a second official proclamation on September 16, 1761, “Strictly requiring & enjoining in his Majesty’s Name, all and every person and persons already settled, or residing on the said Lands, immediately to depart & move away from the same.” Teedyuscung issued warnings both to the Pennsylvania proprietary government, and to

⁴⁸ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:569-570.

⁴⁹ Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:569-570; “Friendly Association: Report on Easton Conference, 1761” in Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:585-6; Governor’s response in Vaughan, *Early American*, 3:580; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 259.

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the Connecticut settlers, that he would not countenance their presence in the Wyoming Valley. The settlers threatened him in return.⁵⁰

In the spring of 1762, one hundred people from the Susquehanna Company of Connecticut began to cut a road from Chushietunk to Wyoming. Escalating complaints from a rising number of Indians caught William Johnson’s attention and he wrote to George Croghan on May 15, 1762 that “The Indians are all very uneasy at the Connecticut peoples intentions to settle on a Large tract on the Susquehanna River, which Lydius pretends to have formerly bought at Albany.” Johnson further reported to the Lords of Trade after his meeting with Teedyuscung in June, 1762, “I cannot my Lord close this Report without mentioning Teedyuscungs complaint That the people of the Colony of Connecticut were coming to settle at Wioming on the River Susquehanna...It being of the utmost consequence to prevent any such Attempt, as In all probability the effects will be very fatal.”⁵¹

The Iroquois insisted that they hadn’t legitimately sold the land and that Connecticut was an English colony, therefore it was the proprietary government’s job to evict the settlers. Neither Pennsylvania nor Connecticut was willing to do more than issue proclamations forbidding settlers from Connecticut to settle in Wyoming, because they didn’t want to regulate a private investment company. Although all recognized the precariousness of the situation, no one would claim responsibility for stabilizing it, and the Delawares were left to deal with the settlers on their own.⁵²

William Johnson’s words ended up being prescient. The effects of the Connecticut settlers’ attempts to invade the Wyoming Valley were fatal. Teedyuscung was burned to death while asleep in his home at Wyoming on April 19, 1763. The arsonists burned the twenty surrounding homes as well, though some of the owners were able to flee to safety. Two weeks later, when a dozen New England families arrived in the valley to build their homes and plant crops, they found it conveniently emptied. The perpetrators of Teedyuscung’s murder were never discovered, though a variety of theories were proposed. He had received death threats both from whites and Indians beginning in 1756, and elaborate Iroquois conspiracy theories have been suggested, but most of Teedyuscung’s

⁵⁰ *Provincial Minutes*, 8:663-4; Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 224.

⁵¹ Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 238; Sullivan, *William Johnson Papers*, 3:741, 3:850;

⁵² Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 259-260.

contemporaries assumed that the Susquehanna Company of Connecticut had arranged his death. His son Captain Bull apparently blamed them, as evidenced by the unusually brutal attack he led on their Wyoming settlement in October, torturing nine men and one woman to death, killing and capturing all but three or four of the New Englanders. By the end of 1763, the valley was entirely emptied of white settlers; however, “the landlust of the Yankees was not to be stayed,” and six years later the New Englanders returned to establish townships. Teedyuscung’s dream for a stable homeland ended in ashes and blood.⁵³

The factors which compelled Teedyuscung to accuse the proprietary government of fraud in 1756 were manifest in the results of his petition for justice. Teedyuscung hoped to establish Delaware autonomy, and although he was able to treat with Pennsylvania’s government independently for a couple of years, the Iroquois used the Easton conference of 1758 to force them back into a subservient role. Teedyuscung hoped by taking advantage of support from his English allies, the Quakers, he would be able to receive redress for the wrongs his people had suffered. Unfortunately, hostility within the proprietary and provincial governments toward Quaker interference ultimately hindered his cause more than furthering it. Although the Walking Purchase was fraudulent, as Teedyuscung had claimed, he gave up his suit in hope of protection and support for his settlement in Pennsylvania’s Wyoming Valley. His focus in treaty conferences from 1757 on centered on getting a deed for his lands at Wyoming so that the Delawares would have a permanent homeland. As the war and negotiations for peace shifted westward after 1758, Teedyuscung no longer had the leverage needed to induce committed support from the Iroquois and Pennsylvania government in achieving his goal. He and the Susquehanna Delawares received no help removing Connecticut settlers when they illegally invaded the Wyoming Valley, until it was too late.

⁵³ Anthony Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 258-264 for an account of Teedyuscung’s death, theories of culpability, and Captain Bull’s revenge; Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 260-1; quote found in Edward F. Hanlon, *The Wyoming Valley* (USA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1983), 23.

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