1.2 Petition from the Paxton Boys, 1764
A Declaration and Remonstrance Of the distressed and bleeding Frontier Inhabitants
Of the Province of Pennsylvania, Presented by them to the Honourable the Governor
and Assembly of the Province, Shewing the Causes Of their late Discontent and
Uneasiness and the Grievances under which they have laboured, and which they
humbly pray to have redress’d (Philadelphia, 1764).

IN as much as the killing those Indians at Conestogo Mannor and Lancaster, has
been, and may be the Subject of much Conversation; and by invidious
Representations of it, which some, we doubt not, will industriously spread, many,
unacquainted with the true State of Affairs, may be led to pass a severer Censure on
the Authors of those Facts, and any others of those like Nature, which may hereafter
happen, than we are persuaded they would if matters were duly understood and
deliberated: We think it therefore proper thus openly to declare ourselves, and render
some brief Hints of the Reasons of our Conduct; which we must, and frankly do
confess nothing but Necessity itself could induce us to, or justify us in; as it bears an
Appearance of flying in the Face of Authority, and is attended with much Labour,
Fatigue and Expence.

OURSSELVES then, to a Man, we profess loyal Subjects to the best of Kings, our
rightful Sovereign GEORGE the THIRD, firmly attached to his Royal Person, Interest
and Government: And of Consequence equally opposite to the Enemies of his Throne
and Dignity, whether openly avowed or more dangerously concealed under a Mask of
falsly pretended Friendship, and cheerfully willing to offer our Substance and Lives in
his Cause.
THESE Indians known to be firmly connected in Friendship with our openly avowed imbittered Enemies; and some of whom have, by several Oaths, been proved to be Murderers; and, who, by their better Acquaintance with the Situation and State of our Frontiers, were more capable of doing us Mischief, we saw with Indignation cherished and caressed as dearest Friends — But this alas! is but a Part, a small Part of that excessive Regard manifested to Indians beyond his Majesty’s loyal Subjects, whereof we complain: And which together with various other Grievances have not only enflamed with Resentment the Breasts of a Number, and urged them to the disagreeable Evidence of it, they have been constrained to give, but have heavily displeased, by far, the greatest part of the good Inhabitants of this Province.

SHOULD we here reflect to former Treaties, the exorbitant Presents, and great Servility therein paid to Indians, have long been oppressive Grievances we have groaned under. And when at the last Indian Treaty held at Lancaster, not only was the Blood of our many murdered Brethren tamely covered, but our poor unhappy captivated Friends abandoned to Slavery among the Savages, by concluding a Friendship with the Indians and allowing them a plenteous Trade of all kinds of Commodities, without those being restored, altho’ a spirited Requisition was made of them; how general Dissatisfaction those Measures gave, the Murmers of all good People (loud as they dare to utter them) to this Day declare: And had here, infatuated Steps of Conduct and a Manifest Partiality in favour of Indians made a final Pause, happy had it been; we perhaps had grieved in silence for our abandoned, enslaved Brethren among the Heathens. But matters of a later Date are still more flagrant Reasons of Complaint. When last Summer his Majesty’s Forces under the Command of Col. BOUQUET marched through this Province and a Demand was made by His Excellency Gen. AMHERST of Assistance to escort Provisions &c. to relieve that...
important Fort, Fort Pitt, yet not one Man was granted, altho’ never any Thing appeared more reasonable or necessary, as the Interest of the Province lay so much at stake and the Standing of the Frontier Settlements in any manner, evidently depended, under God, on the almost despaired of Success of his Majesty’s little Army, whose Valour the whole Frontiers with Gratitude acknowledge as the happy Means of having saved from ruin great part of the Province. But when a Number of Indians falsely pretended Friends, and having among them, some proved on Oath to have been guilty of Murder, since this War begun, when they together with others known to be his Majesty’s Enemies and who had been in the Battle against Col. BOUQUET, reduced to Distress by the Destruction of their Corn at the Great-Island, and up the East Branch of Susquehanna, pretend themselves Friends, and define a Subsistence they are openly caressed, and the Publick, that could not be indulged the Liberty of contributing to his Majesty’s Assistance, obliged, as Tributaries to Saves, to support those Villains, those Enemies to our King and our Country. Nor only so, but the Hands that were closely shut, nor would grant his Majesty’s General one single Farthing against a Savage Foe, have been liberally opened, and the publick Money lavishly prostituted to hire, at an exorbitant Rate, a mercenary Guard, to protect his Majesty’s worst of Enemies, those falsely pretended Indian Friends, while at the same Time hundreds of poor distressed Families of his Majesty’s Subjects, obliged to abandon their Possessions, and flee for their Lives at least, except a small Relief, at first, in the most distressing Circumstances, were left to starve neglected, save what the friendly Hand of private Donations has contributed to their Support; wherein they, who are most profuse towards Savages, have carefully avoided having any Part. When last Summer the Troops raised for Defence of the Province, were limited to certain Bounds, nor suffered to attempt annoying our Enemies in the Habitations, and
a Number of brave Voluntiers, equipped at their own Expence, marched in September up the Susquehanna, met and defeated their Enemy with the loss of some of their Number, and having others dangerously wounded, not the least Thanks or Acknowledgement was made them from the Legislature for the confessed Service they had done, nor any the least Notice or Care taken of their wounded, Whereas, when a Seneca Indian, who, by the Information of many, as well as by his own Confession, had been through the last War an inveterate Enemy had got a Cut in his Head last Summer, in a Quarrel he had with his own Cousin, and it was reported in Philadelphia that his Wound was dangerous; a Doctor was immediately employed and sent to Fort Augusta to take care of him and cure him if possible. To these may be added, that though it was impossible to obtain thro’ the Summer or even yet any Premium for Indian Scalps or Encouragement to excited Volunteers to go forth against them, yet when a few of them known to be the fast Friends of our Enemies, and some of them Murderers themselves; when these have been struck by a distressed, bereft, injured Frontier, a liberal Reward is offered for apprehending the Perpetrators of that horrible Crime of killing his Majesty’s cloaked Enemies: And their Conduct painted in the most atrocious Colours, while the horrid Ravages, cruel Murders and most shocking Barbarities committed by Indians on His Majesty’s Subjects are covered over and excused under the charitable Team of this being their Method of making War.

BUT to recount the many repeated Grievances whereof we might justly complain, and Instances of a most violent Attachment to Indians, were tedious beyond the Patience of a Job to endure. Nor can better be expected nor need we be surprized at Indian Intolerance and Villainy when it is considered, and which can be proved from the publick Records in a certain County, That some time before Conrad Weiser died,
some Indians belonging to the Great-Island or Wyaloosing assured him that

_________ (an ancient Leader of that Faction, which for so long a Time have found
Means to enslave the Province to Indians) together with others of the Friends, had
given them a Road to scourge the white People that were settled on the purchased
Lands; for that ONAS had cheated them out of a great deal of Land, or had not given
near sufficient price for what he had bought. And that the Traders ought also to be
scourged; for that they defrauded the Indians by selling Goods to them at too dear a
Rate, and that this Relation is matter of fact, can easily be proved in the County of
Berks. Such is our unhappy Situation, under the Villainy, Infatuation and Influence of
a certain Faction that have got the political Reigns in their Hand and tamely tyrannize
over the other good Subjects of their Province! And can it be thought strange, that a
Scene of such Treatment as this, and the now adding in this critical Juncture to all our
former Distresses, that disagreeable Burden of supporting, in the very Heart of the
Province, at so great an Expence, between One and Two Hundred Savages, to the
great Disquietude of the Majority of the good Inhabitants of this Province, should
awaken the Resentment of a People grossly abused, unrighteously burdened, and
made Dupes and Slaves to Indians? And must not all well disposed People entertain a
charitable Sentiment of those, who at their own great Expence and Trouble, have
attempted, or shall attempt, rescuing a labouring Land from a Weight so oppressive,
unreasonable and unjust? It is this we Design, it is this we are resolved to prosecute,
tha’t it is with great Reluctance we are obliged to adopt a Measure, not so agreeable as
could be desired, and to which Extremity alone compels.

GOD Save the King.

February, 1764.
To the Honourable JOHN PENN, Esquire, Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, and of the Counties of New-Castle, Kent and Sussex, on Delaware; and to the Representatives of the Free-Men of said Province, in Assembly met.

We Matthew Smith, and James Gibson, in behalf of ourselves, and his Majesty’s faithful and loyal Subjects, the Inhabitants of the Frontier Counties of Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Berks, and Northampton, humbly beg Leave to remonstrate, and to lay before you, the following Grievances, which we submit to your Wisdom for Redress.

1st. WE apprehend, that as Free-Men and English Subjects, we have an indisputable Title to the same Privileges and Immunities with his Majesty’s other Subjects, who reside in the interior Counties of Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks, and therefore ought not be excluded from an equal Share with them in the very important Privilege of Legislation. Nevertheless, contrary to the Proprietors Charter, and the acknowledged principles of Common Justice and Equity, our five Counties are restrained from electing more than ten Representatives, viz. Four for Lancaster, Two for York, Two for Cumberland, One for Berks, and One for Northampton; while the Three Counties (and City) of Philadelphia, Chester, and Bucks, elect Twenty-six; this we humbly conceive is oppressive, unequal and unjust, the Cause of man, of our Grievances, and an infringement of our natural Privileges of Freedom and Equality, wherefore we humbly pray, that we may be no longer deprived of an equal Number with the Three aforesaid Counties to represent us in Assembly.

2ndly. WE understand that a Bill is now before the House of Assembly, wherein it is Provided, that such Persons as shall be charged with killing any Indians in Lancaster
Country, shall not be tried in the County where the Fact was committed, but in the Counties of Philadelphia, Chester, or Bucks. This is to manifestly deprive British Subjects of their known Privileges, to cast an eternal Reproach upon whole Counties, as if they were unfit to serve their Country in the Quality of Jury-Men, and to contradict the well known Laws of the British Nation; in a point whereon Life, Liberty and Security essentially depend: Namely, that of being tried by their Equals in the Neighbourhood where their own, their Accusers, and the Witnesses Character and Credit, with the Circumstances of the Fact are best known, and instead thereof, putting their Lives in the Hands of Strangers, who may as justly be suspected of Partiality to, as their Frontier Counties can be of Prejudices against Indians; and this too in favour of Indians only, against his Majesty’s faithful and loyal Subjects.

Besides it is well known that the Design of it is to comprehend a Fact committed before such a Law was thought of. And if such Practices were tollerated, no man could be secure in his most invaluable Interests. We are also informed to our great Surprize, that this Bill has actually received the Assent of a Majority of the House, which we are perswaded could not have been the Case, had our Frontier Counties been equally represented in Assembly: However, we hope, that the Legislator of this Province will never enact a Law of so dangerous a tendency, or take away from his Majesty’s good Subjects, a Privilege so long esteemed sacred by English Men.

3rdly. DURING the late and present Indian Wars, the Frontiers of this Province have been repeatedly attacked and ravaged by Skulking parties of the Indians, who have with the most savage Cruelty, murdered Men, Women and Children, without distinction; and have reduced near a Thousand Families to the most extream Distress. It grieves us to the very Heart, to see such of our Frontier Inhabitants as have escaped from savage Fury, with the loss of their Parents, their Children, their Husbands,
Wives, or Relatives, left destitute by the Public, and exposed to the most cruel Poverty and Wretchedness; whole upwards of One Hundred and Twenty of the Savages, who are with great Reason suspected of being guilty of these horrid Barbarities under the Mask of Friendship, have procured themselves to be taken under the Protection of the Government, with a view to elude the Fury of the brace Relatives of the Murdered, and are now maintained at the public Expence: Some of these Indians now in the Barracks of Philadelphia, are confessedly a part of the Wyalusing Indians, which Tribe is now at War with us; and the others are the Moravian Indians, who living amongst us under the Cloak of Friendship, carried on a Correspondence with our known Enemies on the Great-Island. We cannot but observe with Sorrow and Indignation, that some Persons in this Province are at pains to extenuate the barbarous Cruelties practiced by these savages on our Murdered Brethren and Relatives, which are shocking to human Nature, and must pierce every Heart but those of the hardened Perpetrators or their Abettors. Nor is it less Distressing to hear others pleading, that altho’ the Wyalusing Tribe is at War with us, yet that part of it which is under the Protection of the Government may be friendly to the English, and Innocent. In what Nation under the Sun was it ever the Custom, that when a neighbouring Nation took up Arms, not an individual of the Nation should be touched, but only the Persons that offered Hostilities? Who ever proclaimed War with a part of a Nation, and not with the Whole? Had these Indians disapproved of the Perfidy of their Tribe, and been willing to cultivate and preserve Friendship with us, why did they not give Notice of the War before it happened, as it is known to the Result of long Deliberations, and a preconcerted Combination amongst them? Why did they not leave their Tribe immediately, and come amongst us before there was ground to suspect them, or War was actually waged with the Tribe? No, they stayed...
amongst them, were privy to their Murders and Ravages, until we had destroyed their Provisions, and when they could no longer subsist at Home, they came, not as Deserters, but as Friends, to be maintained thro’ the Winter, that they may be able to scalp and butcher us in the Spring.

AND as to the Moravian Indians, there are strong grounds, at least to suspect their Friendship, as it is known that they carried on a Correspondence with our Enemies, on the Great-Island. We killed three Indians going from Bethlehem to the Great-Island, with Blankets, Ammunition and Provisions; which is an undeniable Proof, that, the Moravian Indians were in confederacy with our open Enemies. And we cannot but be filled with Indignation, to hear this Action of ours, painted in the most odious and detestable Colours, as if we had inhumanly murdered our Guides, who preserved us from perishing in the Woods, when we only killed three of our known Enemies, who attempted to shoot us when we surprized them. And besides all this, we understand that one of these very Indians is proved by the Oath of Stenton’s Widow to be the very Person that murdered her Husband. How then comes it to pass, that he alone of all the Moravian Indians should join with the Enemy to murder that Family? Or can it be supposed that any Enemy Indians contrary to their known Custom of making War, should penetrate into the Heart of a settled Country, to burn, plunder and murder the Inhabitants, and not molest any Houses on their Return, or ever be seen or heard of? Or how can we account for it that no Ravages have been committed in Northampton County since the Removal of the Moravian Indians, when the Great Cove has been struck since? These things put it beyond doubt with us, that the Indians now at Philadelphia, are His Majesty’s perfidious Enemies, and therefore to protect and maintain them at the public Expence, while our suffering Brethren on the Frontiers are almost destitute of the Necessaries of Life and are neglected by the Public, is
sufficient to make us made with Rage, and tempt us to do what nothing but the most violent Necessity can vindicate. We humbly and earnestly pray therefore that these Enemies of his Majesty may be removed as soon as possible out of the Province.

4thly. WE humbly conceive that it is contrary to the Maxims of good Policy and extreamly dangerous to our Frontiers, to suffer any Indians of what Tribe soever, to live within the inhabited Parts of this Province, while we are engaged in an Indian War, as Experience has taught us that they are all Perfidious, and their Claim to Freedom and Independeny puts it in their Power to act as Spies, to entertain and give Intelligence to our Enemies, and to furnish them with Provisions and warlike Stores. To this fatal Intercourse between our pretended Friends and open Enemies we must ascribe the greatest Part of the Ravages and Murders that have been committed in the Course of this and the last Indian War. We therefore pray that this Grievance be taken under consideration and remedied.

5thly. WE cannot help lamenting that no Provision has been hitherto made, that such of our Frontier Inhabitants as have been wounded in defence of the Province, their Lives and Liberties, may be taken care of and cured of their Wounds at the public Expence. We therefore pray that this Grievance may be redressed.

6thly. In the late Indian War this Province, with others of his Majesty’s Colonies gave rewards for Indian Scalps, to encourage the seeking them in their own Country, as the most likely Means of destroying or reducing them to reason. But so such Encouragement has been given in this War, which has damped the Spirits of many brave Men, who are willing to venture their Lives in Parties against the Enemy. We therefore pray that public Rewards may be proposed for Indian Scalps, which may be adequate to the Dangers attending Enterprises of this Nature.
7thly. WE daily lament that Numbers of our nearest and dearest Relatives are still in Captivity amongst the savage Heathen, to be trained up in all their Ignorance and Barbarity, or be tortured to death with all the Contrivances of Indian cruelty, for attempting to make their Escape from Bondage. We see they pay no regard to the many solemn Promises which they have made to restore our Friends, who are in Bondage amongst them; we therefore earnestly pray that no Trade may hereafter be permitted to be carried on with them, untill our Brethren and Relatives are brought home to us.

8thly. WE complain that a certain Society of People in this Province in the late Indian War and at several Treaties held by the Kings Representatives, openly loaded the Indians with Presents and that _________ ____________ a Leader of the said Society, in defiance of all Government not only abetted our Indian Enemies, but kept up a private Intelligence with them, and publickly received from them a Belt of Wampum, as if he had been our Governor or authorized by the King to treat with this Enemies. By this Means the Indians have been taught to dispise us as a weak and disunited People and from this fatal Source have arose many of our Calamities under which we groan. We humbly pray therefore this Grievance may be redressed and that no private Subject be hereafter permitted to treat with or carry on a Correspondence with our Enemies.

9thly. WE cannot but observe with sorrow that Fort Augusta which has been very expensive to this Province, has afforded us but little assistance, during this or the last War. The Men that were stationed at that Place neither helped our distressed Inhabitants to save their Crops, nor did they attack our Enemies in their Towns, or patrole on our Frontiers. We humbly request, that proper Measures may be taken to make that Garrison more serviceable to us in our Distress, if it can be done.
N.B. WE are far from intending any Reflection against the Commanding Officer stationed at Augusta, as we presume his Conduct was always directed by those from whom he received his Orders.

SIGNED on Behalf of ourselves, and by Appointment of a Great Number of the Frontier Inhabitants.

MATTHEW SMITH.

JAMES GIBSON.