INCIDENT AT TULPEHOCKEN

By Francis Jennings

In 1712 Secretary James Logan became, for all practical purposes, the most powerful man in Pennsylvania. William Penn had mortgaged the province to a group of English Quakers who assumed a receivership over Penn’s real estate and appointed Logan as their resident agent. Penn himself made Logan a trustee of his will and Commissioner of Property. With these three legal powers, he acted almost as a dictator in the allotting, surveying, and patenting of Penn’s lands. Besides his controls over property, Logan dominated the Council of the province; and by means of his majority in the Council, he maintained a check on the actions of successive Lieutenant Governors. These Governors appointed all of the judiciary, and Logan’s nominees usually received their favorable attention. Except for a period during the administration of Governor William Keith, only the provincial assembly—the House of Representatives—resisted Logan’s absolute sway with any real effectiveness.

In 1712 William Penn suffered a series of strokes that disabled him; and his second wife, Hannah, became absolutely dependent on Logan to defend the interests of her family against a throng of encroachers. Lord Baltimore claimed a broad strip of land along the entire Pennsylvania-Maryland border. The Earl of Sutherland petitioned the Crown in 1716 for a grant of the Penns’ three Lower Counties of Delaware, where Lord Baltimore also maintained harassing action of various kinds. On Penn’s death in 1718, his Anglican son by his first wife attempted to break his will and seize the province from his Quaker sons by his second wife. In the succeeding emergency, Governor Sir William Keith intrigued with officers of the Crown who wanted to seize the powers of government from all Penns and convert the feudal propriety into a royal colony. Logan was Hannah Penn’s strongest

*The author is Professor of History and head of the department at Cedar Crest College.
supporter in these struggles, and the work he did was so effective that her sons eventually emerged victorious.

Yet, when Hannah's son Thomas came to the province in 1732 to exert the proprietary powers in person, he soon stripped Logan of his post as Secretary, and reorganized the Land Office to reduce Logan's control and eliminate his influence. Logan retreated in voluntary exile to his "plantation" at Stenton, from whence he emerged for public business only on occasion to consult with Thomas Penn about specific problems. Though Logan's vast experience in provincial affairs and mastery of tactics made it possible for him to recover later some of his lost standing, he never again achieved the commanding dominance of the 1712-32 decades.

The question arises, why was this champion of the proprietary family treated so shabbily by the younger Penns? On the face of it, they owed the whole of their inheritance to Logan. Even more odd was Logan's quiet acceptance of his treatment. He had never been slow to demand position and profit; he had never been bashful about proclaiming his own virtuous merit; and he had fought tooth-and-nail against every opponent. Yet Logan accepted with hardly a murmur his apparently undeserved demotion. Such conduct was wholly uncharacteristic of the man. There had to be a reason for it.

And there was. Logan had embezzled large quantities of Penn property; and Thomas Penn had caught him at it. If Penn had taken him to court, a conviction and jail term seem highly probable on the face of the evidence available even today. Penn chose instead to keep the matter quiet, writing off old losses for the sake of using Logan's knowledge and skill, under safeguards, in the future. It proved to be a shrewd decision for the Penns, if a baffling one for historians.

This paper examines the circumstances through which Logan's secret activities at a place called Tulpehocken were disclosed to the Penns, and the means which they used afterwards to render him impotent. During the first half of the eighteenth century Logan's place in Pennsylvania's public life was so prominent and influential that the province's history became for a while almost the shadow of the man. An understanding of that history requires an understanding in thorough, intimate detail of that man. The need is especially great because standard historical works, without
exception, portray him in terms of major error. Finally, Logan's scathing judgments of his opponents, which are regularly consulted and cited by historians from his surviving papers need to be re-evaluated in the light of his motives.

A fuller understanding of this incident also helps clarify the confused and controversial middle decades of the eighteenth century in Pennsylvania. The Lenape sachems who rose in arms in the French and Indian War had formerly lived at Tulpehocken. The key Quaker politicians who fought Thomas Penn so hard in the 1750's were relatives, by blood and marriage, of James Logan; and they were handicapped by their desire to expose Penn's Indian frauds without exposing those of Logan. Curiously, in attempting to protect their ancestor's memory, they incurred undeserved odium on their own names. The missing clue to the mystery of the 1750's is the man who by then had died. James Logan's ghost remained a political power for decades and still haunts our histories.

Attention must be focused on a particular tract of land and the Indian community inhabiting and possessing it. The land was a segment of the Great Valley of the Appalachians, lying between the Blue Mountain and the South Mountain. That part of the Great Valley within the basin of the Schuylkill River was Tulpehocken, "the land of the turtles." It belonged to a community of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians whose totem was the turtle and whose chieftains' lineage held a position of special importance among all the Lenape. The villages of Tulpehocken were located along a creek, likewise called Tulpehocken, which flowed through the valley from the west into the Schuylkill where the city of Reading now stands. The valley was rich and beautiful in the eighteenth century, as it is today, and the Lenape who occupied it had every intention of staying there. This was the land to which they had "retired" after selling the site of Philadelphia to William Penn.¹

Their peace was broken in 1718 when William Penn died. Penn had lived on after his strokes in 1712, and his years of senility had been used by influential Pennsylvanians to lay claims to attractive lands at the disposal of Penn's Commissioners of Property, who themselves joined in the land grabbing. As Penn's end

¹The special importance of the Tulpehocken Indians is documented in Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Interregnum," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXIX (1965), 174-198.
drew near, the land speculators scrambled to make their claims good before their plans might possibly be destroyed by Penn’s successor as Proprietor.  

There were disturbances in Indian territory. Shortly before Penn’s death a delegation of Conestoga, Shawnee, Conoy, and Brandywine Lenape sachems came to Philadelphia to protest encroachments on their lands. They were appeased by Governor Keith’s promises to fence off reserved tracts for their villages. In September the Tulpehocken Lenape visited Philadelphia. Their spokesman Sassoonan said they were “glad to see the Governor here to make good the Contracts that William Penn made with them,” but they were “under some trouble to think that these have not been hitherto complied with.” The meaning of this cryptic utterance can only be guessed from Governor Keith’s reference of the complaint to “W. Penn’s Agent for his Land Affairs.” That agent was James Logan. In another capacity, as Secretary, he provided us with Sassoonan’s tantalizing remark, but he left only a blank space in the minute book for the remark’s explanation. Logan placated Sassoonan with a few odds and ends of presents, and he managed to obtain a quitclaim deed from the Indians for all their land between Tulpehocken and Philadelphia. We may assume that they were given the standard promises of preservation of their homeland.

The Tulpehocken Indians do not appear again in the records for several presumably uneventful years. In 1722, however, the valley began to stir. A group of Palatine Germans then living in New York applied to Governor Keith for official sanction to remove to Pennsylvania. Keith had no legal jurisdiction over

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2 The last meeting of the Commissioners of Property before William Penn’s death was held on 18 March 1718. Their printed minutes for that date fill 22 pages of small type. Aside from the obvious impossibility of that much business being transacted in one day, the minutes show backdating of transactions in an apparent effort to validate them as of Penn’s lifetime. Papers ostensibly handled on 18 March 1718 bear individual dates as late as December, 1718 (see pp. 643, 644) and May, 1719 (pp. 651, 653). Pennsylvania Archives, 2 Series, XIX, 633-655.

3 Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, 16 vols. (Harrisburg, 1838-1853), 16 June 1718, 111, 45-47 (hereafter Council Minutes); draft minutes of Indian treaty, in Logan’s handwriting, 15 September 1718, Logan Papers, XI, 7; minutes of council with Indians, 4 June 1728, Penn-Physick Papers, VI, 25 (most of last ref. printed in Council Minutes, III, 316-326; see esp. 320-321). All cited mss. are deposited at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, unless otherwise noted.
allocation of lands—that was Logan’s domain—but Keith was not the sort to stickle at a legality if he could see a profit for himself, and the Palatines apparently used arguments fitted to his interest. While on a treaty mission to Albany in 1722, Keith consummated his negotiations with the Palatines by “inviting” them to come and settle in Pennsylvania. The first sixteen of their families floated down the Susquehanna in mid-May, 1733, and then marched a few miles overland, by Keith’s directions, to Tulpehocken. The resident Lenape, consternated but pacific, found themselves unable to cope with Palatine livestock turned loose in their crops, and vacated.⁴

Coincidentally events in England were converging on the same valley. William Penn’s daughter Letitia had married an extravagant good-for-nothing named William Aubrey—“that muck worm” in Hannah Penn’s phrase.⁵ In 1722 Aubrey’s debts piled so high that he decided to sell off Letitia’s inheritance of 10,000 acres of unlocated Pennsylvania lands. Aubrey directed his cousin in the province to survey a tract for him, and the cousin gave notice of his intention to James Logan. Though Logan correctly regarded the proceeding as “manifestly irregular,” he decided not to “meddle” with it. There was then no thought of Indian rights on Logan’s mind, though he discoursed eloquently about them at a later date. As he saw Aubrey’s impropriety in 1723, it arose entirely out of the legal snarls encumbering William Penn’s estate. At the time, Logan was in deep political trouble, being harried by both the Assembly and Governor Keith; and he was being as sweet as possible to all the Penn kin, even to Aubrey. Logan confessed with semi-candor later that he thought “it was much better to connive than oppose” Aubrey’s scheme. As things worked out, Aubrey’s cousin surveyed his acres in Tulpehocken, shortly before the Palatines arrived. For anyone but a member of the proprietary family the survey would have been worthless because it could not be patented, but it was duly forwarded to Aubrey whose vision of debtors’ prison blinded him to whatever scruple he may have had. To satisfy one of his powerful creditors, a

⁴Ibid.; James Logan to John Penn, 2 August 1731, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, II, 181.

⁵Hannah to William Penn, 27 December 1703, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, VIII (1884), 356.
Member of Parliament named John Knight, Aubrey gave him a deed for the Tulpehocken tract. By the end of 1724, then, the Lenape had departed from their valley, most of them to migrate to the Ohio; a few, under Sasquacoon, removed only so far as the village of Shamokin at the forks of the North and West branches of the Susquehanna. Tulpehocken was occupied by Palatine squatters who could not get title to their holdings but were safe as long as their patron Keith remained Governor. A paper transaction in London had given a dubious claim to the best part of the valley to a man who had never seen it and never would. In the long run, regardless of adages about possession and the law, the piece of paper would show remarkable power. For the moment, these events came together independently and by chance, and the only man acquainted with them all was James Logan.

The Aubrey-Knight deed slumbered in a desk drawer. The Penns unsnarled most of their litigation and decided that the province would become the property of the sons of Hannah, William Penn's second wife. In the process of agreeing, all the Penns had joined in a successful effort to oust Logan's enemy William Keith from office, but Keith's influence remained to harass Logan through a faction of the Assembly.

One particular supporter of Keith played a crucial role in the subsequent events. This man, Ezekiel Harlan, championed the cause of another band of Lenape—the Brandywines—and exposed to the Assembly how Logan had violated William Penn's contract with these Indians and defrauded them of their lands. Harlan spoke the Lenape language and traded in furs. It seems evident

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6 Logan to Aubrey, 6 April 1723, Logan Parchment Letter Book, 1717-1731, pp. 313-314; Aubrey to Logan, 26 October 1724, Penn Papers, Letters of the Penn Family to James Logan, 1, 98; John, Thomas, and Richard Penn to Jacob Taylor, 19 October 1731, Penn Letter Books, 1, 41; Logan to Hannah Penn, 1 January 1726, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, I, 185; Deed, 15/16 September 1724, Pennsylvania Patent Book F-2, p. 395, Department of Internal Affairs, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. (Microfilms at Philadelphia City Hall.)

7 Logan to H. Taylor, 22 August 1726, Pennsylvania Archives, 2 Series, VII, 90; Proceedings of the Assembly on Sir Wm. Keith's Coming to England, 1728, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, II, 5.

that he knew intimately, from the Indians, about Logan's own near-monopoly of the fur trade on the Susquehanna River, and about Logan's embezzlement of the Penns' lands in Conestoga Manor where Logan's trade was centered. Harlan spoke freely and audaciously against Logan as long as Governor Keith remained in office, but Keith's ouster stripped Harlan of official protection. Logan's gang moved promptly to punish him. In a court presided over by a judge who had been nominated by Logan and who had also been exposed by Harlan as a party to the Brandywine land frauds, Harlan was charged with a "notorious adultery." He fought the case, and was acquitted by a jury; but the judge invoked technicalities to impose heavy court costs and a bit of summary imprisonment. Harlan nursed his grudge. He would find yet one more opportunity to expose Logan's dealings in lands, and his revelations would materially alter the situation in Tulpehocken, but he had to wait some years for his chance.

Harlan was not the only man to feel the loss of Keith's patronage. At Tulpehocken the Palatines had established themselves as firmly as they could, but now they also had to reckon with Logan. He made it clear that money could expiate their sin; however, the difficulty of the Indian claim remained. As William Penn had obligated himself to sell his lands free of Indian claims, and the attitude of his heirs remained uncertain, all that Logan could do to satisfy the Tulpehocken parties was to refrain from molesting the Germans while putting off the Indians with vague promises and cheap presents. His temporizing worked very well. Chief Sassoonan became a sort of pensioner, and the Palatines were only too happy to be left alone. But, in 1727, Logan found reasons to press for solution of the Tulpehocken problem.

Logan wanted to have a Proprietary purchase made of Lenape lands along the upper Delaware River, and the Indian owners

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III, 1814; Petition of Silas Pryor and Ezekiel Harlan, 6 August 1730, Records of the Proprietary Government, 1664-1776, RPG 121, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg.  
refused to sell to anyone except an actual descendant of William Penn. They were in no hurry. They had become aware of the prices that Europeans could be persuaded to pay, and they were willing to let their land appreciate in value a bit before they sold it. Logan viewed their rising prices with less calm and began a campaign to induce a Penn—any Penn—to come to the province.12

The Tulpehocken issue came dramatically to public attention in the spring of 1728. Earlier disturbances among the province's Indians had prompted the arrangement by the Provincial Council of a series of treaties to stabilize affairs. Sassoonan and the Tulpehocken Lenape came to Philadelphia for their turn on the fourth of June. A tremendous crowd of 2,000 Philadelphians watched the proceedings, but there was an air of artifice about them in spite of their publicity. At first, old Chief Sassoonan was all politeness and deference. He rejoiced to see the Christians and the Indians "all as one People," and with that he was ready to conclude his remarks. Only after he was urged "that if they had anything at all on their Minds it was now a proper time to speak it" did he continue. Then he turned from Governor Gordon to speak directly to James Logan. He said that he was "grown old, and was troubled to see the Christians settle on Lands that the Indians had never been paid for. They had settled on his Lands, for which he had never received anything. . . . That this may occasion a Difference between their Children and us hereafter, and he would willingly prevent any Misunderstanding that may happen." Of all the Indian protests on record, Sassoonan's may easily have been the mildest. Far from disturbing Logan, it gave him a weapon to defend his policies and attack his enemies. He took the floor to denounce the (pro-Keith) Pennsylvanians who took "a Delight in disturbing the Peace of the Publick by any means in their Power, and . . . endeavoured even to beget an Uneasiness in the Indians." With that introduction, Logan gave a history of deeds and purchases purporting that Sassoonan's 1718 quitclaim had made over title to all Lenape lands from Philadelphia up to "the Mountains on this side Lechay [Lehigh]." According to Logan the 1718 deed included the lands of the Tulpehocken valley. Sassoonan ventured public disagreement, and he

12 Logan to Wm. Penn (grandson), 6 December 1727, Logan Parchment Letter Book, 1717-1731, 515-516; Logan to J., T., and R. Penn, 29 July 1728, Logan Papers, X, 45.
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was supported, strange to say, by a man who was Logan's long-
time political backer and secret associate in the Indian trade: the
interpreter Edward Farmer. Farmer said that Logan was mis-
taken. The 1718 quitclaim extended only to the hills on the near
side of Tulpehocken valley, not to the hills beyond. The valley
itself had never been purchased. Logan's wide-eyed astonishment
at this sudden geographical revelation from one of his oldest
confidential associates lacks a note of authenticity. He apologized
to Sassoonan, saying that the Germans had settled at Tulpehocken
without his knowledge, and launched a fierce denunciation of ex-
Governor Keith. Magnanimously Logan then promised that if the
Indians would be patient and refrain from violence, he would
guarantee satisfaction of their complaint.18

This was mere subterfuge. Logan had more power and money
to make satisfaction then and there than the Penns could have
scrapped together if they had all been there with him. As agent
for the provincial mortgage holders, Logan could (and when he
pleased, did) buy and sell lands freely. But Sassoonan served him
best as a complainant. Logan was building up pressure for a
Penn to come and buy the upper Delaware lands for him. He
made a point of sending John Penn the printed copy of the treaty
minutes, and he began to write ominously of a possible "breach"
with the Indians "unless seasonably prevented."19

Until late in 1729 Logan clearly thought that he could manip-
ulate the Penns as easily as he managed the Indians. With his de-
tailed knowledge of their most intricate business, he had become
indispensable. He also had powers independent of their wishes.
So long as the province remained in receivership, Logan's legal
responsibility was to the mortgage holders first of all. The moneys
that he made available to the Penns, on which they clamorously
insisted, were actually funds diverted from the mortgage holders.
Controlling the family's source of income, Logan controlled the
family. His letters to John, Thomas, and Richard Penn were
patronizing to the point of condescension while their responses
were deferential and ingratiating. But in 1729 chance provided
them with a way to get clear of his financial and legal straitjacket,

18 Treaty minutes, 4 June 1728, Penn-Physick Papers, VI, 25; on Farmer
see Jennings, "Indian Trade," 411 n.
19 Logan to J. Penn, 28 June 1728, 11 September 1728, and 13 August
1729, Penn Papers. Official Correspondence, II, 17, 21, 83.
and the disclosure of their new freedom drove Logan to new measures of his own, among them an effort to sell for himself the Tulpehocken lands that William Aubrey had earlier surveyed and conveyed.

Luck brought to London two people who could put money into the Penns’ hands without passing it through Logan’s. The first was Joseph Dickinson whose father had once bought Penn lands on a large mortgage. To the Penns’ great joy, Dickinson paid them £1,100 in March, 1729, with which they were able to discharge the last remnant of their provincial mortgage. Thus they eliminated Logan’s tightest control, for the end of the receivership meant the end of his agency for the receivers. But there were other Penn debts, and there was another Logan power. A traveling Pennsylvanian, with an eye as sharp as Logan’s for the main chance, put up some ready cash in return for enormous estates. Young William Allen, whose merchant father had left him wealth, bought up the 20,000 unlocated acres inherited by William and Springett Penn apparently as a device to secure their agreement to give John, Thomas, and Richard Penn unchallenged sway over the province. It appears that the proprietary Penns regarded themselves as financially indebted to Allen thereafter although he got negotiable deeds for lands that he sold later at staggering mark-ups.

When Allen returned to Pennsylvania to shock James Logan with the news of all these transactions, and with an order from the Penns to locate Allen’s estates wherever he wanted them, Logan had to fall back on his last independent power. Logan and three old cronies were the surviving trustees of William Penn’s will. As long as any claims against the estate remained unpaid, these trustees were legally entitled to manage the estate themselves. If they chose, they might cling to their right to withhold the estate from its heirs until all creditors were satisfied. Since it was also possible for them, in the course of their management, to incur further debt; they might argue a theoretical right to maintain their powers for life. (In fact, the trusteeship was not formally released until 1735.)

39 J., T., and R. Penn to Logan, 9 May 1729 and 6 September 1729, ibid., II, 26, 74.
The Penns knew all this. Even before the mortgage discharge, John Penn had acknowledged to Logan that "the Surviving Trustees are the only Persons which Can have any Power of Disposing of Lands or Receiving of Rents, the Will Expressly Giving the Country to you for the Payment of Debts and afterwards to Convey the Remainder to us, Till which Time we have no Power, but the Whole liyes Intirely in You." A strange dialogue took place. Still trusting Logan, the Penns affirmed his powers so as to get some action in their affairs without the necessity of their personal presence. But those strongminded Indians on the upper Delaware did not care how great Logan's legal powers were. If Logan was to get their quitclaim and secure his investment, he would have to produce a Penn for them to deal with. In this situation he had to hedge and stall. The bewildered Penns kept trying to reassure him that he really and truly was legally competent to act. They wrote to Logan and the other trustees of the will, in September, 1729, "we have no legal right to sell any Lands or receive any rents to enable us to pay them off, and in the present situation of these Affairs cannot have recourse to any Persons but your Selves to attain the end Proposed unless you were in the proper manner to resign your Trust to us."¹

Logan's purpose remained the same, and he continued to stall.¹⁸ Later, when circumstances had changed, he would assert strongly the powers so trustingly thrust upon him by the Penns. But the theoretical power of the trusteeship was a point that Logan dared not push too far after the Penns changed their minds and opposed him. If the case were to be taken to court, Logan's accounts might be audited, and that would never do. The trusteeship gave leverage for bluff; it was useless for a showdown. This is the explanation for the curious ambivalence of Logan's post-1729 correspondence with the Penns. Haughtiness and bluster alternate oddly with long passages of whine and whimper.

It is very difficult to follow Logan's changes of mood and tactics. As his old enemy Keith had once remarked, no man living


¹⁸ Logan to J. Penn, 11 September 1728, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, II, 21; R. Hill, et al., to J., T., and R. Penn, 7 October 1728, ibid., II, 25; Logan to William Allen, 6 June 1729, Logan Letter Books, III, 240.
knew better "how to puzzle an account." One thing does emerge quite clearly, from his papers. He was stirred into jealous competition with young William Allen to grab what speculative profits he might be able to get before losing his powers completely. In a frenzy he pressed the Penns to make the Indian purchase that would secure his investment on the upper Delaware. And he finally got down to pounds and pence negotiations with the Tulpehocken Palatines. They were highly illegal arrangements on every possible count. For payment made to his own personal account, Logan undertook to provide title for lands on which he had no shadow of a claim, which had never been purchased from their Indian owners, and which had already been surveyed and deeded over to another party by William Aubrey.

In June, 1730, Logan sold 200 acres of Tulpehocken land to settlers already occupying it, and he ordered his henchman John Taylor to survey the ground. Two weeks later Logan sold 300 acres more; and he sent orders for more surveys. The price was £40 per hundred acres—so high that Logan felt obliged to remark about it to the knowledgeable Taylor. "I am really ashamed of the price that they are very free to give. I answer myself, however, with this, that I had no mind to sell, and if they will tempt me I cannot help it. But I desire thee to be entirely silent in it and to injon those concern'd, as I have done, . . . to observe the secret." Logan added a postscript. He asked Taylor to send him a draft of the survey but to give the purchasers "nothing." He continued disingenuously, "I understood when I agreed with Stump [one of the purchasers] that this Land was out of the Indian Claims. If not I must get it made easier. Pray lett me know more exactly than they can describe it how the place is situate." Then, to keep the already overwise Taylor from learning all that he was up to, Logan engaged another surveyor whom he instructed verbally to resurvey the old Aubrey tract. Particularly

10 Wm. Keith to Hannah Penn, 5 July 1722, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, I, 115.
19 Logan to J., T., and R. Penn, 16 November 1729, Logan Letter Books, III, 309-317; Logan to Thomas Penn, 18 December 1730, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, II, 145. On the Rivalry with Allen: Logan to Isaac Norris, 9 November 1730, Etting Collection, Miscellaneous Mss., I, 93; Logan to Nicholas Scull, 9 November 1730, Miscellaneous Mss. Collection, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia. For indication of one of Logan's projects in competition with Allen, see Hockanootamen's statement, 7 July 1730, Logan Papers, XI, 15.
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in the light of subsequent developments his purpose is clear. He intended to jiggle the lines of the Aubrey survey to get the lavish Palatines out of it.21

But there were still the Indians. The land Logan was selling, as he very well knew, was in the heart of Tulpehocken, and the Indian claim would have to be lifted somehow. He set out to coax his old friend Sassoonan into a special dispensation. Immediately after agreeing with the Palatines, Logan sent a letter to Sassoonan by one of the purchasers. “This honest man, Chris. Stump, having settled on the west side of Skuylkill about half a day’s journey from it, tells me the Indians say that the Land where he lives has not been purchased, but I believe he mistakes and that Allummapis [Sassoonan’s ceremonial name], being a very true honest man, will not say so, because the Indians long agoe sold the Lands on the West side of Skuylkill.” This time, however, soft words were not enough; and Logan had to tell his surveyor to defer laying out the land “for I doe not find it so clear in respect to the Indians as I supposed it.” What he meant, of course, was that Sassoonan had stuck to his rights.22

Logan turned to another device. He wrote to his brother in England to purchase for him 2,000 unlocated acres of Pennsylvania land from the heirs of William and Abraham Lloyd. The Lloyds had purchased Original Rights from William Penn, as an investment; and, like all Original Rights, these were guaranteed to be good against Indian claims, no matter where laid. Even after paying for the Lloyd rights, Logan had a very good thing in his Tulpehocken scheme. The Lloyd rights cost him £100 in sterling for 2,000 acres. The Palatines were offering £200 provincial currency for only 500 acres. Even after allowing for the differential in currency exchange, that was a sweet net.23

23 Logan to J., T., and R. Penn, 17 April 1731, Logan Letter Books, III, 337; Pa. Patent Book F-5, 269, Dept. Int. Affrs. Guarantee of freedom from Indian claims is in original indentures, 6 and 7 Feb. 1681, Gratz Collection, Papers of the Governors, Case 2, Box 35-a, HSP.
Those were eighteenth century pounds; two hundred of them would pay all of Logan's cost of living for a year, and he lived as a gentleman.  

But Logan's luck was beginning to turn bad. While he awaited delivery of the Lloyd rights from England, William Aubrey's deed for Tulpehocken was taken out of John Knight's desk drawer and sold to John Page, an old friend of the Penn family. 

Coincidentally, in the same month, Logan's enemy Ezekiel Harlan took ship for England to claim an inheritance. Harlan had not forgotten his rough treatment by Logan's judge. Manifestly he also remembered well the manipulations by Logan of Indian lands on the Brandywine and Penn lands on the Susquehanna. Apparently he knew also about Tulpehocken. Harlan must have started talking as soon as he arrived in England, for he convinced John Page to take immediate action to safeguard his Tulpehocken purchase. Page promptly hired Harlan's brother-in-law, Walter Webb of Chester, as attorney. He sent Webb the Tulpehocken deed with instructions to get a confirmatory survey made at once. Webb presented himself to Logan early in April, 1731, so quickly that he caught Logan while the Original Rights bought from the Lloyds were still in transit from England. 

Logan was thunderstruck by what he saw. Webb's survey warrant had been signed by the Penns themselves. It was dated February 15, 1731, a date with special significance, because Logan had received a separate letter from the Penns bearing the same date and ordering him to forbid all surveys under Original Rights except those warranted over the Penns' own signature. To make the point unmistakable they had enclosed an order to Surveyor General Taylor requiring him to forward to them a description of the lands recently surveyed under Original Rights. They had tied Logan's hands so tightly that he would be unable to do anything with his Lloyd rights without fully disclosing his intentions. 

27 James Steel to John Page, 4 August 1731, James Steel's Letter Book, 1730-1741, p. 29; Logan to John Page, 17 April 1731, Logan Letter Books, IV, 245-246; Logan to Jacob Taylor, n.d., Taylor Papers, XV, 3072.
It would be impossible for him to consummate his Tulpehocken plans.  

Harlan was revenged. The Penns still needed Logan and used him and compensated him well; but they ever after required him to submit proposals and reasons, and get permission, before disposing of their property. The day of his lucrative free wheeling in the Land Office was over.

Perhaps Logan did not grasp at once the magnitude of the change. He could not help understanding that something damaging to himself was occurring, but he had been too long accustomed to his own way to accept frustration of his plans, especially at the hands of so obnoxious a person as William Webb. To regain control of the situation, he raised the Indian Menace. To survey the land would be an act "of the greatest Imprudence," said Logan. And the fault was William Keith's! The former Governor's rash actions had aroused the Indians to such a pitch that no surveying could be done at Tulpehocken "in any regular method and by due Authority without highly endangering the Publick peace." Since "the Peace of the whole Province" was concerned, Logan felt constrained to refuse the execution of Webb's warrant to survey.

Writing separately to John Page and the Penns, Logan alternately raged, demanded, and whined. With Page he took a lofty, condescending tone to slur Page's choice of attorney. "Being, I suppose a Stranger to thee, [Webb] could, I conceive, be recommended to thee by none but such as have been the Troublers of our peace and of our Proprietors Affairs." Logan then described at length how fond he was of Letitia Penn Aubrey and how he had "cast my Eye upon the best Vacant Tract I know of in hopes to secure her part" of the Penn inheritance. But lack of an Indian purchase, together with Keith's settlement of the Palatines, had spoiled all; and nothing further could be done for Page until an Indian purchase should be made by one of the Proprietaries. Inconsistently Logan then asserted his trusteeship power. He suggested that final authority over Page's lands was governed by the fact that they had been Letitia's inheritance. Since that was so,

29 Logan to Jacob Taylor, n.d., Taylor Papers, XV, 3072.
the trustees of William Penn's will would have the last word, and Logan was one of the surviving three. "It still lies in our breast where we will locate the land," he said, thus neatly eradicating old surveys and proprietary orders. With a last back-of-the-hand to Webb, Logan vaguely promised to consider the matter further "when a proper person in thy behalf apply." 30

Having thus gained time with Page, Logan turned to the Penns to protest bitterly their order against surveying Original Rights without their prior authorization. It was gross injustice, he wrote, and cited his own recent purchase of the Lloyd rights as evidence! He had already sold about a third of the 2,000 Lloyd acres, he said, after "regularly" making surveys on lands "intirely free to be taken." Then he pulled out the tremolo stops. Referring to an accident that had lamed him in 1728, he continued, "Now when I am reduced to this helpless Condition and my family requires all the Provision I can Possibly make for them, which obliges me to think very seriously of my Circumstances and interest, I must crave it as a justice of you to allow me some reparation for these abuses which are intirely owing to my tenderness or care not to give any possible handle for Censure because concern'd in your affairs which, I doe affirm, were then in all other Respects more injurious than beneficial to me." 31

In other years, the strategy would have worked, but the wind was up in England now, and neither Page nor the Penns were taken in. One thing led to another until the Penns apparently demanded a report on all their manors, insisting at the same time that their previous order to ban Original Rights surveys be both published and enforced. To eliminate "injustice" to Logan, they sent him a warrant signed by themselves for his Lloyd rights, but they put a protective clause in their warrant that made it useless for Logan's intended purpose. The warrant was drawn to apply "in one tract of Land Purchased of the indians . . . and as yet unsurveyed to or settled by any other Persons." The Tulpehocken lands had certainly not been purchased from the Indians, as Logan had constantly reiterated; they had already been once surveyed for Letitia Penn Aubrey, whose tract was now in the hands of

John Page; and they were undeniably settled by the Palatines. The Penns’ “justice” to Logan fell considerably short of his desires.32

Logan had meanwhile ferreted out the source of his trouble. He wrote a denunciation of Harlan to the Penns. That “notorious adulterer” was an enemy of the Penns, who should be given no credence. Logan demanded redress of the “crying and flagrant . . . Injustice” that denied him the use of his Lloyd rights. This letter and the Penns’ carefully drawn warrant crossed in the mails.33

Other people were also busy with correspondence. William Webb waxed sarcastic to his client. Logan, he said, was grown wonderfully fond of “those poor people, the Indians, tho’ it’s not long since he was . . . much otherwise concerning a tract of land on Brandiwine . . . James Logan obliged the Trustees [for the defunct Free Society of Traders] to take it, refusing to give them other land for it, and the Indians might go to the French or the . . . anything also, for ought he cared, tho’ the public peace was then loudly threatened.”34 John Page picked up his pen too, and wrote what must have been a scathing letter to Logan; but its tone and contents have to be surmised from Logan’s response. Affecting astonishment that Page should consider him “an antagonist to combat with,” Logan told Page in circuitous terms to go to court.35

It seems as though continued power had affected Logan’s judgment. He had come to such grand notions of his own ability and indispensability that he momentarily lost sight of the true relationships between his status and the Penns’. As his frustrations increased he became peremptory; in August, he told John Penn that there would be no more money forthcoming from either Logan himself or from his assistant James Steel until one of the Penns

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33 Logan to Penns, August, 1731, Logan Letter Books, III, 342-344. Logan’s cohort, James Steel, wrote at about the same time to denounce Harlan as a “whifling Indian sot.” Steel to Page, 4 August 1731, James Steel’s Letter Book, 1730-1741, 29; see also Logan to Page, 3 January 1732, Logan’s Letter Book, 1731-1732, 1741-1742 (bound with Dickinson’s).
34 William Webb to John Page, n.d., Records of the Provincial Council and Other Papers, boxed mss., fol. 1731-1739. This is a mutilated copy without address or signature, identifiable by its contents.
came over to the province according to demand. In view of the circumstances this seems a little lightheaded. For reasons different from Logan’s, the Penns were anxious by this time to make the journey, but the death of a kinsman and agent put a stop to their plans. They continued to placate, hedge, and restrict by mail. While they held off, Logan resorted to his Indians again in an effort to escape at least one of the Penns’ shackles. The attempt was unsuccessful, but it introduced a mysterious document into the province’s Indian records, which has led historians considerably astray. Briefly, having failed at first to wheedle that old menace, Chief Sassoonan, into compliance, Logan tried again. He found an excuse to call Sassoonan to Philadelphia, and sat down with the Indian for a friendly chat. The two of them had been brought up together, Logan said, and Sassoonan ought to give his old friend a little piece of land before the Penn family bought it all. If Sassoonan would give his friend this present, Logan would be kind to Sassoonan’s relatives as long as they lived. Accompanied by a present, it was a sort of argument skillfully adapted to Indian values and attitudes, and it persuaded the chief. As his deed was written, Sassoonan did not “sell,” but rather “gave” the 500 acres in Tulpehocken that Logan had already sold. Logan had no ostensible participation in this grant since it was made directly to the Palatines already settled on the land. Their payments to Logan thus disappeared from public record. But the deed does bear the tender sentiment that Sassoonan’s grant was made “in consideration of the Love and Good-will that I bear to my friend James Logan.” The effort was ingenious, and it would have worked if the Penns’ restrictions on surveys had not been imposed. After their ironclad warrant arrived, Logan began to realize fully the straits into which overconfidence had led him. He replied to the Penns in a chastened and bitter tone: “In the

36 “You write for Remittances, but I doubt in vain . . . ’tis agreed by common Consent you ought to have none till you come for it.” 17 April 1731, Logan Letter Books, III, 340. Logan repeated the refusal, 2 August 1731, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, II, 181.
37 Thomas Penn to James Steel, 1 May 1731, Penn Papers, Thomas Penn, 1730-1766, boxed mss.
38 [Shingas and King Beaver to James Logan], Kuskuskies, 6 September 1758, Indian Missions Collection: C. F. Post, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa. This unique and enlightening document was drawn to my attention by Chief Historian William A. Hunter of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.
39 Sassoonan’s Grant, 11 August 1731, Logan Papers, XI, 16.
new measures you may propose to take with this Province, before you proceed too far, I must beg you to consider if you should think fit to slight those who have always been tight to the Proprietary Interest against all opposition."

Worse still was yet to come, for the relentless John Page had secured another order from the Penns to survey Tulpehocken, and this time he bypassed Logan entirely by having the warrant directed to Surveyor General Taylor personally. Logan had run out of devices at last. All he could think of was to revive the spectre of Sassoonan the Savage. Was Page "willing to have an Indian War, and the people's throats there cutt on his Account?" But such mutterings failed to impress the Penns who had carefully provided that they were only "securing" the land to Page to be actually surveyed "as soon as we have Settled such doubts as are between us and the Indians." The Indian Menace of 1731 evaporated more rapidly than it had taken form.

The whole tangle was unsnarled in 1732. A thoroughly suspicious Thomas Penn came to the province just in time to participate in the treaty giving Sassoonan some compensation for Tulpehocken, with promises of more. Thomas came armed with powers to act in his brothers' behalf. After some quiet inquiry into the management of public and proprietary affairs, he reorganized the positions and the records in both the Governor's office and the Land Office. Logan's ill-defined and omnipresent functions as Secretary were taken away from him and split in two. To replace Logan in the keeping of the Governor's and Council's records, Governor Gordon commissioned Robert Charles as Secretary of the Province, as of March 20, 1733. To replace Logan as Secretary in the Land Office, Thomas commissioned John Georges on April 2, 1733. And to replace Logan's old henchman John Taylor in the post of Surveyor General, Thomas commissioned Benjamin Eastburn on October 29, 1733. These actions, combined with the rule that survey warrants must have Thomas' signature to be valid, served to make Logan impotent.:

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40 Logan to Thomas Penn, 9 October 1731, Logan Letter Books, III, 346.

41 Logan to Penns, 14 November 1731, ibid., III, 304. This is a postscript; body of letter begins p. 353.


43 Treaty minutes, August-September, 1732, Council Minutes, III, 447-451.

44 Power of attorney, 8 May 1732 (witnessed by John Page among others), Pa. Patent Book A-6, 170-172; Charles' commission, ibid., 167-168; Georges'
Their significance has escaped notice, no doubt designedly. There was no public quarrel or outcry; no one could afford to let all the dirty laundry come to view. Logan was permitted to keep his showy sinecure as Chief Justice, which provided a tidy income for almost no work, and he remained as a member of the Council. By all appearances he was still a most powerful man, but the substance behind appearance had changed drastically. The steward had ceased being master in the Penns' house.

There were other consequences of the incident at Tulpehocken. One of James Logan's methods of regaining some favor with Thomas Penn was to cheat Sassoonan out of the promised full pay for the valley. The pathetic old chief had neither ability nor inclination to put up a fight, but his successors felt differently. Sassoonan's nephew Pisquetomen protested repeatedly but vainly until finally, when war came to Pennsylvania in 1755, Pisquetomen led the first warrior band eastward to Tulpehocken. It was Pisquetomen also, when the time came to make peace, who arranged the negotiations, and he and his brothers made the crucial decisions.46

Certain ethnocentric assumptions of our conquering race have worked to hide from its historians the importance of the incident at Tulpehocken and others like it. If one assumes that the history of Indians is something separate from, and less important than, the history of Euro-Americans, then it is natural enough to ignore Indians until some calamity brings them to attention in the apparent form of irrational, natural or demoniac force. Such assumptions and such findings distort not only our understanding of Indians, but also the history of our own ethnic forebears. Lack of interest in Sassoonan's people necessarily entailed misunderstandings of Logan and the Penns, and these misunderstandings have obscured and distorted the actual functioning of Pennsylvania's government.

46 Logan to Thomas Penn, 16 August 1733, Pennsylvania Archives, 2 Series, VII, 145; see also Logan to Thomas Penn, 7 July 1734, ibid., VII, 168-169; Jennings, "The Delaware Interregnum," passim, and "A Vanishing Indian: Francis Parkman Versus His Sources," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXXXVII (1963), 306-323
Our generation has become conscious of appalling errors in the historical treatment of our currently largest ethnic minority, our Negro Americans; and we have discovered that the consideration of Negroes as fully human persons requires some reconsideration of those other persons who bought and sold and whipped and burned them. We need likewise review the mythology called the history of the American Indian; and we shall have to make some drastic reconsiderations there also.