

Death on the Juniata: Delawares, Iroquois, and Pennsylvanians in a Colonial Whodunit

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The fourteen men fanned out, their eyes sweeping the woods, hills, and rivers for clues. Having spent days traveling to this spot, they now had no way of knowing when they would be able to leave. The forest stretched as far as they could see; how could they possibly find what they were seeking? With their breath visible in the chilly damp air of the early spring, the men began to disappear into the woods. The budding trees had not leafed out completely, making it a bit easier to scan the underbrush for the bodies.

This group of nine Pennsylvania colonists and five Indians had begun to search for the corpses of John Armstrong, a trader, and his companions James Smith and Woodworth Arnold, along the banks of the Juniata River in what is today south-central Pennsylvania. The journey that brought these men into what was then “Indian country” began about sixty miles to the east in the colonial settlement of Paxton, now Harrisburg. Word reached that settlement in February or March, 1744, that Armstrong, Smith, and Arnold had disappeared, probably murdered by Indians. How should they proceed? Chase down the rumor to its source? Strike out for the traders’ last known location? The rumors hinted that a Delaware Indian had committed the triple murder, so the nine colonists resolved to travel about sixty-five miles north to Shamokin, one of the Delaware and Iroquois Indians’ principal settlements in Pennsylvania. There at the forks of the Susquehanna River, the nine men obtained a meeting with Olumapies, a Delaware chief, and Shickellamy, an Oneida diplomat representing the Six Nations Iroquois. The two leaders arranged for eight Indians to join the colonists’ search for the victims. The night before the entire group was to leave, however, three of the eight Indians ran away. This proved to be only the first crack in the hastily-formed partnership.¹

Once the search party arrived at the victims’ last known “sleeping place” by the Juniata River, the men scattered throughout the steep hillsides. James Berry clambered over a forest floor strewn with rocks, brambles, and fallen trees. He noticed a white oak with three notches cut into the trunk, slowed his pace, and began to scour the area more closely. A human shoulder bone lay nearby. John Armstrong’s? Berry hurried back to the rendezvous spot, calling out to the others. Several of the men gathered around; first the colonists gazed at the bone and then handed it to the Indians. A remarkable thing happened when one Delaware Indian grasped the bone—as soon as he touched it, blood poured from his nose. He quickly passed the bone to someone else.

James Berry and the others then followed a path for three or four miles to the Narrows of the Juniata River, a spot where the waters had cut particularly steeply through one of the area's long parallel ridges. After deliberating at the water's edge for a time, the colonists decided to probe further downstream and got the Indians to do likewise on the opposite bank. Perhaps the crunch of feet on leaves, the snap of branches broken by legs and torsos, and the din of voices calling out disturbed other ears, for soon the colonists saw bald eagles and other birds in the sky. Could they be scavenging human remains? The colonists then lost sight of the Indians but immediately found the corpse of James Smith. Amid this confusion and activity, they heard three gunshots from somewhere off in the woods. Thinking this a signal from the Indians, the colonists fired three shots in return to announce their discovery. As the men continued downstream, they saw more bald eagles a quarter mile away; when they reached the spot, they discovered Woodworth Arnold's body lying on a rock. Having their fill of this grisly sight, the party turned around and began a somber trek back to their rendezvous with the Indians.

The colonists saw none of the Indians en route and found none waiting for them. The ashes of a fire indicated that the Indians had recently cooked a meal, but now the men could find no other sign of them. During the night, however, the colonists began to worry because their dog barked incessantly, odd because the animal had been silent so far on the trip. Suspecting that the Indians had returned with evil intentions, the men spent a tense and uncomfortable night crouched behind trees with cocked guns at their sides. Morning found the tired men unharmed and alone. When they returned to the bodies of Smith and Arnold after breakfast, they saw once again how the bodies had been mutilated, the heads slashed and deeply cut by something akin to a tomahawk. The men looked upon this scene for as long as they could stand it, their heads spinning with outrage, grief, and exhaustion. In the end, they buried the bodies as best they could and returned to Paxton by way of the Allegheny road, a route chosen to avoid those who the colonists suspected of murdering John Armstrong, James Smith, and Woodworth Arnold.

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The deaths of three white traders during the winter of 1744 and the subsequent discovery of their bodies serves as a useful point of entry into two complex worlds: that of the historian and that of Indian-white relations in colonial America. Understanding this incident on the banks of the Juniata River involves understanding the process by which a historian questions, judges, and interprets 250-year-old evidence. By tagging along and peeking over the historian's shoulder, as it were, the reader can join in the investigation and begin to develop his or her own theories about why the killings took place.² In

so doing, the reader will also come to understand better the larger context of Indian-white relations at that time. The initial cooperation between the nine colonists and the five Indians speaks to the long-standing connections European settlers and Native Americans had forged throughout North America. Yet the fears and suspicions each group felt towards the other was by no means limited to the Pennsylvania frontier. Exploring why John Armstrong, James Smith, and Woodworth Arnold died illuminates the connections and divisions that existed between Indians and whites during the early-eighteenth century. Furthermore, this incident reveals the awkward, imprecise, and inadequate nature of categories such as "Indian" and "white." We must distinguish between Iroquois and Delawares (and even among the Delawares), and between English and French if we hope to understand the larger cultural interactions between these groups.³ Finally, this social and cultural perspective helps us understand the local, regional, and international contexts of the period—a time preceding the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution.⁴ The deaths on the Juniata River, therefore, provide us with a way to examine one of the most important and formative periods in American history.

I. Reading the Evidence

The account of the nine colonists who found the traders' bodies comes from a deposition sworn before a justice of the peace in Paxton, Lancaster County. On April 19, 1744, Alexander Armstrong, Thomas McKee, Frances Ellis, John Forster, William Baskins, James Berry, John Watt, James Armstrong, and David Denny appeared in court, the clerk recorded their sworn testimony, and that document has been preserved (and appears in the Appendix). This document immediately raises questions about the nature of Indian-white relations at this time.

Consider, for example, the testimony surrounding James Berry's discovery of the shoulder bone. According to the deposition, Berry "found a Shoulder Bone, (which these Dep[onen]ts does Suppose, to be John Armstrong's, And that he himself was Eating by the Indians)" How might a historian interpret this testimony as recorded by a clerk of the court? Did the Pennsylvanians really mean "eating by the Indians," or could they have meant "eaten?" The different words conjure up sharply different images and interpretations of Indian-white relations. "Eating by" could signal that Armstrong and the Delaware Indians coexisted or cooperated, while "eaten by" implies cannibalism. Which image might the colonists have been trying to convey in their deposition? Did they want to suggest a history of coexistence, or did they say "eaten," with all the images attached to that word, merely to have the court clerk mishear the testimony and write "eating" instead? If these men sought to rouse the colonial government to act on their behalf against the Delawares, they might have intentionally fostered the image of a savage Indian enemy.⁵

The testimony tells us about other Indian actions, but also raises further questions of interpretation that the historian must confront. The deposition states that James Berry handed the shoulder bone “to a Delaware Indian, who was Suspected by the Dep[onen]ts, and they Testify & Say, that as Soon as the said Indian took the bone in his hand, his Nose Gushed out with Blood, & he directly handed it to Another.” To what degree do we believe this testimony? Even if one were presented with the evidence of one’s crime, could a nose bleed so suddenly and profusely?⁶ Although we may be skeptical about the occurrence of this sudden nosebleed, we may still feel confident knowing why this incident, if it ever happened, appeared in the testimony: the blood signified to the Pennsylvanians the Indian’s responsibility for Armstrong’s death.⁷ Similarly, the deponents note that when they found the other bodies down by the Juniata River, “they Never Saw the Indians any More.” How might the colonists, who already suspected one or more of the Indians for the murders, interpret their partners’ disappearance? Their disappearance spoke more loudly than any confession. Finally, the men, with their nerves already tense, listened to their barking dog, which “had not Barked all the time they was Out till that Night, nor never since.” We will never know what caused that dog to bark, but through the colonists’ interpretation of the event we can see how suspicious and wary they had become about their erstwhile allies.

The ambiguous nature of Indian-white relations emerges from this testimony. On the one hand we see cooperation: recall that the colonists began by going to Shamokin (obviously expecting some assistance from the Indians on this matter) and that Olumapies and Shickellamy arranged for eight men to accompany the colonists. On the other hand, fear and suspicion caused this cooperation to vanish (according to the testimony) by the end of the expedition. What we conclude about Indian-white relations also depends on how we judge the strengths and weaknesses of this form of evidence. In the absence of any time machine that can transport us back to 1744, we must depend on eyewitness accounts from people who were present and regard their testimonies as some of the most reliable evidence available. After all, who could better describe what happened than someone who took part in the action? Yet historians must tread carefully and not trust any single piece of evidence too much. Eyewitness accounts can be notoriously unreliable.⁸ The “white” perspective of the deponents and the court cannot be balanced by comparable Indian testimony. We have no way of knowing what the Indians members of the search party were thinking, or if they would confirm the occurrence of the nose bleed, or why they left before the final rendezvous. Without such evidence, the historian cannot get much closer to knowing the “truth” of what “actually” happened. Finally, remember the intensely personal nature of this incident. Would it make any difference to historians, for example, that the testimony given by the search party to find John Armstrong’s body contained statements by Alexander and James Armstrong, brothers of the deceased trader?⁹

II. The Larger Contexts

Why should historians care about the death of three traders in the middle of nowhere? What insight does it offer into the broader patterns of Indian-white relations during the colonial period? The importance of these three deaths on the Juniata River becomes clear when we place this event within several larger contexts.

The largest of these contexts involves the competing interests of the English, the French, and the Iroquois (or the Six Nations) in North America. Tensions rose during the 1720s and 1730s as the French tried to monopolize the fur trade in Canada and the Great Lakes region and as the English expanded their settlement westward over ever-larger chunks of territory. Neither side sought armed confrontation at first, but their competing imperial needs led to the outbreak of King George's War in March, 1744. Both sides sought the support of Indians in Pennsylvania, for each wanted the profits from Indian trade and the security afforded by a military alliance. The Iroquois, in turn, felt uneasy about both forms of European expansion. Even if they had not been trying to dominate and secure tribute from neighboring Indian groups, the Iroquois could not have fended off the French or the English by themselves. The Iroquois governing council, however, realized that the Six Nations could survive and even prosper if they could play one European rival off the other. Therefore, by adopting "a state of deliberate indecision," the Iroquois held the balance of power between England and France in North America.¹⁰

English imperial concerns in North America also can be seen within the more narrow context of Pennsylvania. During the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the Delaware Indians enjoyed a fruitful relationship with their neighbors, seeing the English as "brothers" and the Iroquois as "uncles." But during the 1730s and 1740s, the land-hungry English (with the help of the Iroquois) pushed the Delawares out of eastern Pennsylvania and as far west as the Ohio Valley. Pennsylvanians then worried that the Delawares would join with France and squeeze their citizens from that direction.¹¹ Therefore, the Pennsylvania government sought a treaty with the Iroquois, the dominant Indian group in eastern North America, and in 1731 recognized Iroquois authority over all Indians in the colony, including the Delawares. This treaty, formalized in 1736, allowed the Iroquois to gain greater control over their tributary groups and helped the government of Pennsylvania obtain general stability on its frontier. As with most colonial-Indian treaties, it stipulated the terms of trade, colonial access to Indian land, and judicial relations between the two sides.¹²

Such security, however, could be strengthened if Pennsylvania finalized additional treaties within the region. Conrad Weiser, a German immigrant who learned Mohawk, worked as an interpreter and mediator for the Pennsylvania government and helped negotiate many land transactions and

treaties. In 1743, he helped defuse hostilities that arose after a group of Virginians attacked an Iroquois raiding party heading south to fight Catawbas. These discussions led the following year to negotiations for the Lancaster Treaty between Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Iroquois. The colonies benefited because the treaty would extend Pennsylvania's "chain of friendship" with the Iroquois farther south and prevent recurrences of what contemporaries called "the late unhappy Skirmish in Virginia," thereby hampering French plans in the west and giving southern colonies an Indian ally that could help protect their borders. Since the Iroquois also claimed domination over so many other tribes, including ones nominally under French influence, the Lancaster Treaty would chip away at French power in the western regions of North America.¹³

The Iroquois benefited from the treaty as well. Not only did they receive compensation for the Virginians' attack in December, 1742, but they would also receive compensation for colonial settlement on lands to which they had questionable claims. Warriors of the Six Nations would obtain free passage through Virginia as they sought to subjugate other Indian tribes. They would make new allies in the colonies, augmenting their prestige among tributary Indians. They would increase their power relative to the English (who acknowledged that they needed the Iroquois) as well as the French (who now had to worry about this alliance). Finally, they would continue to hold the balance of power between the European empires in eastern North America.¹⁴ The treaty's actual effect on other Indians, however, is harder to determine. The Delawares, for example, ostensibly fell under Iroquois control and therefore were allied with Pennsylvania. But when the colonists drove the Delawares out of eastern Pennsylvania, some who relocated to the Ohio Valley had moved out from the influence of the Iroquois-English alliance. The exact pattern of power relationships, therefore, did not always follow what one would predict from the treaty.¹⁵

These regional, continental, and international contexts help us see Indian-white relations in more complex ways. Clearly, the simplistic categories of "Indian" and "white" present a misleading picture of colonial North America. No single "Indian" perspective existed because different groups held different views: the Iroquois developed certain kinds of economic, political, and diplomatic relationships with the English while the Delawares resisted both the Iroquois and the English. In fact, the fragmentation goes even further because, as we shall see later, no single Delaware view existed at this time either. Similarly, we cannot speak of a single "white" perspective because the English and French worked at cross purposes in North America. Furthermore, the goals of certain individuals (such as bereaved relatives and friends who threatened acts of revenge) often clashed with those of the imperial regimes.¹⁶ Therefore, the complex relationships between these different Indian and

colonial groups provided the wide range of contexts—the clash of interests, the desire for land, trade, prestige, and frontier security—that makes the killings at the Narrows of the Juniata River so important. The Pennsylvania government worried about the deaths of Armstrong, Smith, and Arnold for good reason. The incident might have exacerbated the dispute between the Iroquois and the Delaware, started a bloody confrontation between these Indians and the colonists living in frontier settlements, upset the negotiations over the Lancaster Treaty, and undermined England's position in eastern North America.

III. Delaware and Iroquois Perspectives

One week after Alexander Armstrong and the other men gave their deposition before the Lancaster County justice of the peace, Shickellamy had captured two of the three Delaware Indians suspected of killing John Armstrong, James Smith, and Woodworth Arnold. He had Mushemeelin and John, son of Neshalleney, delivered to the courthouse in Lancaster, but the latter was released en route. When Governor George Thomas received this news, he ordered Conrad Weiser to meet with Shickellamy, the Iroquois diplomat who administered the Six Nations' policy for Pennsylvania from Shamokin. The two men knew each other well, having worked together numerous times since 1731 on matters that concerned both the Iroquois and the Pennsylvania government. They had taken arduous trips together, stayed in each other's home, and shared the praise of their respective leaders.¹⁷ Weiser, as the Governor's and the Provincial Council's representative, was supposed to praise the leaders for capturing the killers but chastise them for allowing John to escape. Weiser was to demand that all of the suspects be turned over, that the bodies be decently buried, and that John Armstrong's goods be recovered and distributed to his family. Finally, the Governor and Provincial Council ordered Weiser to pass along a threat:

If this Instance of Avarice, Cruelty and Murder, be not severely revenged on all the Parties concerned . . . all Commerce and Confidence is at an end with Indians, and from the moment a Murderer or an accessory to murder is protected, or any Goods stolen by the Murderers are detained, and not honestly and entirely return'd; from this moment, the Indians of honest, upright, and faithful Friends and Allies, become the Friends and Protectors of Villains, Enemies to Justice, and Confederates with People under the Influence of Evil Spirits, as all murderers are.¹⁸

Conrad Weiser made these demands on the morning of May 2, 1744, delivering the words in the Mohawk language and having them translated into Delaware. He recorded Olumapies's reply of that afternoon. (See

Appendix). "It is true," Olumapies said, "that we the Delaware Indians, by Instigation of the Evil Spirit, have Murdered James [John] Armstrong and his Men. We have transgressed, and we are ashamed to look up." He agreed that the Governor's demand for the trade goods was "very just. We have gathered some of them. We will do the utmost of what we can to find them all." He also assured Weiser that "The dead Bodies are Buried; . . . Our Hearts are in Mourning, and we are in a dismal condition and cannot say any thing at present."¹⁹ It remained for Shickellamy to tell Weiser what happened ("what Shickellamy declared to be the Truth of the Story," according to Weiser) between Mushemeelin and Armstrong, Smith, and Arnold. Such evidence that provides an Indian perspective on their relations with Europeans is generally rare. Yet here, filtered through Conrad Weiser, we find Shickellamy's recreation of the actions, conversations, thoughts, and feelings of three Delaware Indians as they moved along the banks of the Juniata River.²⁰

Shickellamy reported that Mushemeelin owed John Armstrong some animal skins. Angered about this outstanding debt, Armstrong seized Mushemeelin's horse and gun as collateral. (Consider what other tools could Mushemeelin's use to obtain the skins?) During the winter of 1743-1744, Mushemeelin met Armstrong on the Juniata River, paid twenty shillings, and offered a "neck-belt" for the return of his horse. Armstrong refused and, following his usual practice, increased Mushemeelin's debt. After some final angry words, the furious Indian returned to his hunting cabin. During a bear hunting trip later that winter, Mushemeelin led two young companions (John, son of Neshalleney, and another Delaware Indian named Jimmy) to the place where he hoped to find Armstrong. Shickellamy reported that "Mushemeelin said, 'Now they are not far off. We will make Ourselves black; then they will be frightened and will deliver up the Horse immediately, and I will tell Jack that if he don't give me the Horse I will kill him.'" Because Mushemeelin said this with a laugh, his companions thought this simply another one of his jokes. Only Mushemeelin blackened himself that morning.²¹

An hour or so after dawn, the three Delaware Indians found James Smith sitting by a fire. Smith told Mushemeelin that Armstrong could be found nearby clearing a road. John and Jimmy sat down and began talking with Smith while Mushemeelin set off and then "said something and looked back laughing, but he having a thick throat and his Speech being very bad, and their talking with Smith hindered them from understanding what he said, and they did not mind it." The men talked about capturing some turkeys and making bread for a meal they would share when they heard the gunshot that killed Woodworth Arnold.²² Mushemeelin returned and reportedly said, "Why did you two [not] kill that White man according as I bid you?" Shocked, Jimmy ran off, but Mushemeelin said to John, "How will you do to kill Catawbias, if you cannot kill white Men? You Coward, I'll show you how you

must do,' and then taking up the English Ax that lay there, he Struck it three times into Smith's Head before he died." ²³ Shickellamy reported that Mushemeelin then fetched Jimmy and said "that two of the White men were killed, he must now go and kill the third, then each of them would have killed one; But neither of them dare venture to talk any thing about it." Mushemeelin coerced the two terrified men to help him find Armstrong and as they lagged behind Mushemeelin on the path, John said to Jimmy, "My Friend, don't you kill any of the White People, let him do what he will; I have not killed Smith, he has done it himself; we have no need to do such a Barbarous thing."

Soon, Mushemeelin found Armstrong sitting on a log and the following conversation ensued:

"Where is my Horse?"

"He will come by and by; you shall have him."

"I want him now," demanded Mushemeelin.

"You shall have him. Come, let us go to that Fire and let us smoke and talk together."

"Go along then," Mushemeelin urged.

"I am coming."

"Do you go before Mushemeelin;" insisted the Indian, "do you go foremost."

When Armstrong walked ahead Mushemeelin immediately shot him in the back and then, according to Shickellamy, "took his Hatchet and Struck it into Armstrong's head and said, 'Give me my Horse, I tell you.'"

Mushemeelin convinced his two companions to help bury Armstrong and toss Arnold and Smith into the Juniata River. As they rode away to hide Armstrong's goods, the two companions again lingered behind and resolved to flee at the first opportunity. Mushemeelin tried to buy their silence by offering some of the trade goods, but the two refused because "as they had already sold their Skins, and every Body knew they had nothing, they would certainly be charged with a black Action were they to bring any Goods to the Town." Having first tried to purchase cooperation, Mushemeelin then turned to threats. He said, "You have agreed to betray me, but you shall fare like the White men if you intend to hurt me." Having just witnessed three murders, the two Delaware Indians certainly believed Mushemeelin would not hesitate to use violence. Upon leaving the river, the party ran into three more Indians, to whom Mushemeelin made the same proposition of trade goods or death.

Despite these efforts to cover up the crime, news of Mushemeelin's deeds began to spread. Shickellamy testified that a drunken Indian came to a house one night and said, "Some of our Delaware Indians have killed Armstrong and his Men, which, if our Chiefs should not resent and take them up, I will kill them myself to prevent a Disturbance between us and the White People our Brethren." Shickellamy and Olumapies quickly sent Conrad Weiser a letter,

delivered by four Delaware Indians, asking him "to come to Shamokin in all haste, that the Indians were much dissatisfied in mind." Weiser stayed at home, however; because he "found no particulars mentioned in the Letter, and that none of the Indians of the Six Nations had been down, I did not care to meddle with Delaware Indian affairs." With the help of "a Conjurer," Olumapies, Shickellamy, and the other leaders found out who was involved and resolved to seize Mushemeelin and his two reluctant companions "and deliver them up to the White People."

Conrad Weiser noted that Shickellamy had difficulty apprehending the killers. "A great noise arose among the Delaware Indians, and some were afraid of their Lives and went into the Woods." He went on to say that "not one cared to meddle with Mussemeelin and the other that could not be prevailed on to Discover any thing, because of the Resentment of their families." Eventually, under pressure from Shickellamy's sons and threats that the Delawares "would be cut off from the Chain of Friendship," four or five Delaware Indians captured Mushemeelin and John, son of Neshallen; however, they refused for twenty-four hours to take the prisoners to the colonial settlements "because of the Great Division among the Delaware Indians." So great was the turmoil that Olumapies himself feared for his life and sought Shickellamy's protection. In the end, Shickellamy's son Jack told the Delawares to "Deliver the Prisoners to Alexander Armstrong, and if they were afraid to do it, they might separate their Heads from their Bodies and lay them in the Canoe, and carry them to Alexander to Roast and eat them; that would satisfy his Revenge, as he wants to eat Indians." Persuaded by this argument, the Delawares convinced Shickellamy's sons to help them paddle the two prisoners down the Susquehanna River to Paxton.

Thomas Cookson, a surveyor for Lancaster county, awaited the prisoners' arrival. However, only Mushemeelin disembarked; Shickellamy's sons had decided to release John well before their arrival. Shickellamy told Conrad Weiser that they had seized John by mistake, primarily because "the Delaware Indians being then Drunk, in particular Olumapies, never Examined things, but made an Innocent person Prisoner, which gave a great deal of Disturbance amongst us." En route to Paxton, the party stopped at the house of James Berry, an old acquaintance of John's. Berry convinced the young Delaware Indian to give, at last, his account of the events, so John turned to Mushemeelin and declared, "Now I am going to Dye for your Wickedness. You have killed all the three White men; I never did intend to kill any of them." Mushemeelin angrily replied, "It is true I have killed them. I am a Man, you are a Coward; it is a Great satisfaction to me to have killed them. I will Dye with Joy for having killed a Great Rogue and his Companions." Upon hearing this, the Indian captors freed John and brought Mushemeelin alone the rest of the way to the Lancaster jail. Mushemeelin spoke in English about the entire affair to

Cookson, who summarized the tale in a letter to the Governor (see Appendix).²⁴ As a result, we have a second version of what happened two months earlier on the banks of the Juniata River, a version that differs in substantive ways from Shickellamy's report to Conrad Weiser.

Mushemeelin told Cookson that in the middle of February, he and his two young companions talked with Armstrong, Smith, and Arnold in the woods by the Juniata. John and Billy (called "Jimmy" in Shickellamy's account) planned to kill the traders and seize their goods; Mushemeelin joined them at their invitation. Two days later, the two groups met again and Mushemeelin asked Armstrong for the wampum that was due him as well as the horse that Armstrong took the previous fall. Tempers flared and suddenly Armstrong grabbed a piece of wood and clubbed Mushemeelin, who in return pulled out his tomahawk and struck Armstrong on the temple, killing him instantly. Woodworth Arnold then swung an ax but Mushemeelin managed to grab a previously-loaded gun and shoot him; to finish matters, Mushemeelin also drove his tomahawk into Arnold's head. John then killed James Smith with another tomahawk blow and the three Delaware Indians buried Armstrong and threw the other two bodies into the Juniata River. Cookson reported that upon Mushemeelin's arrival in Lancaster, Mushemeelin expected to be held until "the Indians Come down to ye Treaty, That he may be executed in their way. He thinks it very hard that the other Indian shou'd be released, & that the reason assigned by Shickellamy's Sons was not ye true reason." With these last comments, Mushemeelin provided an important insight for the historian trying to make sense of the different accounts of the killings.

IV. Analyzing the Indian Perspectives

When faced with such conflicting and complicated pieces of evidence, we would do well to remember a basic question about communication: who is saying what to whom? Keeping this in mind, the historian can try to understand *why* someone said what he did. Maybe the person merely said what the listener wanted to hear because this resolved the situation most simply or because the listener had power over the speaker. Alternatively, maybe the person merely told the truth, or what he perceived to be the truth. If so, how can we understand the different accounts of Armstrong's death? Perhaps multiple versions of the truth exist, so that both Shickellamy and Mushemeelin provided accurate stories of what happened that day on the Juniata River.

To begin, consider Olumapies's statement to Conrad Weiser (and by extension, the Pennsylvania government). "We have transgressed," he said, "and we are ashamed to look up." The Delaware chief fulfilled each of the Governor's demands—capturing the killers, returning the trade goods, and burying the bodies—and concluded by stating, "Our Hearts are in Mourning, and we are in a dismal condition and cannot say any thing at present." Perhaps

Olumapies proclaimed his true feelings, but a historian aware of the larger context of English-Delaware and Iroquois-Delaware relations would suspect a degree of deference at work here. About a decade earlier, the English and Iroquois had pushed the Delawares out of eastern Pennsylvania; would harsher words from Olumapies have led to the eviction of the remaining Delaware Indians from the region? In the presence of Shickellamy (the Iroquois representative) and Conrad Weiser (the Governor of Pennsylvania's representative), maybe Olumapies could do little more than supplicate himself.²⁵ For the past decade or more, Olumapies may have imagined he had considerable authority (claiming to speak for all Delawares and Shawnees), but actually his influence was limited. He did not lead all of the Delawares but only one band. Furthermore, many of these Indians ignored Olumapies's views by migrating to the Ohio Valley against his wishes. "Eventually," writes historian C.A. Weslager, "other members of Sassoonan's [Olumapies's] band paid little attention to him except when he returned from Philadelphia with presents to distribute."²⁶ By the time Mushemeelin and Armstrong met at the Juniata River, Olumapies's alcoholism hindered his ability to govern the Delawares at Shamokin and lowered his status in the eyes of Iroquois leaders and colonial officials. No wonder Shickellamy could attribute the mistaken seizure of John to "the Delaware Indians being then drunk, in particular Olumapies. . . ." ²⁷

When evaluating Shickellamy's report, the historian must consider the status of Iroquois relations with both the Delawares and the English. What is he saying, and to whom? First, he spoke to his old friend Conrad Weiser, and through him to the Pennsylvania government. Second, and just as important, Shickellamy spoke to his superiors, the Iroquois chiefs residing to the north at Onondaga. Concerned about the negotiations surrounding the Lancaster Treaty, Shickellamy may have tried to depict this unfortunate tragedy on the Juniata River as the work of a single lawless evil Delaware Indian rather than the product of a general and growing instability within the region. By showing that he had maintained control of the Delawares and had taken the initiative in capturing the suspects, Shickellamy tried to strengthen relations with the Pennsylvania government, help the negotiators focus on the treaty, and secure his position with his leaders.

Throughout his statement to Conrad Weiser, Shickellamy depicts Mushemeelin as the sole murderer. Mushemeelin coerced the others into joining him, chastised them for being too cowardly to kill James Smith, and threatened to kill them if they ever spoke of the day's events. Conversely, Shickellamy shows that John and Jimmy did not participate willingly and even planned "to run away as soon as the[y] could meet with any Indians, and not to hurt any body." In his desire to strengthen relations with the Pennsylvania government, Shickellamy makes his interpretation of the events a bit too transparent when he reports the drunken Indian saying, "Some of our Delaware

Indians have killed Armstrong and his Men, which, if our Chiefs should not resent and take them up, I will kill them myself to prevent a Disturbance between us and the White People our Brethren.”²⁸ One must also consider the possibility that Shickellamy faithfully reported what was told to him; he received this entire account from Jimmy, who probably slanted the account and laid all the blame on Mushemeelin in order to keep his own neck from slipping inside the hangman’s noose. As stories got twisted in one telling and twisted again in the next account, Shickellamy explained the deaths in ways both subtle and overt that would minimize the consequences to the broader Iroquois-English relationship.

Shickellamy may have wrestled with other concerns in his account to Conrad Weiser. A key passage provides a glimpse of the complex relations between the Iroquois and the Delawares as well as the factionalism within the Delawares at Shamokin.

Olumapies, Quittheyquent, and Thomas Greene, an Indian, went to him that fled first [Jimmy] and Examined him; he told the whole Story very freely; then they went to the other [John], but he would not say a word, but went away and left them. The three Indians returned to Shick Calamy and informed them of what Discovery they had made, When it was agreed to Secure the Murderers, and deliver them up to the White People. Then a great noise arose among the Delaware Indians, and some were afraid of their lives and went into the Woods; not one cared to meddle with Mussemeelin and the other that could not be prevailed on to Discover any thing, because of the Resentment of their families; but they being Pressed by Shick Calamy’s sons to Secure the Murderers, otherwise they would be cut off from the Chain of Friendship, four or five of the Delawares made Mussemeelin and the other Young man Prisoners and tyed them both. They lay twenty-four Hours, and none would venture to conduct them down, because of the Great Division among the Delaware Indians; and Olumapies in danger of being killed, fled to Shick Calamy and begged his Protections.²⁹

Shickellamy comes across as powerful and influential, a leader in control of a chaotic but critically important situation. Olumapies and other Indians consulted him first before they seized Mushemeelin. In the face of great Delaware resistance, Shickellamy succeeded in apprehending Mushemeelin and John. Many feared for their lives and even Olumapies, the Delaware chief, sought refuge in Shickellamy’s house. Those who would hear this account—the leaders of Pennsylvania and of the Iroquois—would see Shickellamy as the right person in the right place doing precisely what they

had hoped and expected of him. No one could have wanted this impression more than Shickellamy himself.

Yet this account can be interpreted in ways that highlight instead Shickellamy's lack of control over the situation. A "great noise arose among the Delaware Indians"; why did this occur? Because John, an innocent man, was seized by mistake? Although Shickellamy seems to offer this explanation at the start of his testimony, it alone does not explain why so many Indians fled into the woods for their lives. Throughout his statement Shickellamy refers to the Indian as "John, son of Neshalleney" and this family relationship seems potent. Could Neshalleney and his relatives have wielded such influence that other Delawares, fearing "the Resentment of their families" and, in Olumapies's case, the "danger of being killed," would resist the orders of this Iroquois representative? While Shickellamy's will did prevail in the end, it succeeded only through constant pressure and significant threats. Although the Delaware Indians, accompanied by Shickellamy's sons, finally took Mushemeelin and John away from Shamokin (and only after a twenty-four hour delay and further threats), Neshalleney won at least a partial victory in the end. Shickellamy stated that the Indians released John when Mushemeelin confessed to the act, thereby demonstrating the Iroquois sense of justice; but when Thomas Cookson received Mushemeelin, he reported an additional (or different) rationale at work. "Shicallamy's Sons apprehensive of the resentment of Neshalleeny's Friends ag[ains]t their Father for thus delivering up the Young Man who was in great Esteem with them, thought it most prudent to release him & deliver up Massemeelin only . . ." ³⁰ Although the chiefs at Onondaga and the politicians in Philadelphia may have agreed that the Iroquois controlled the Delawares, on the practical level they did not always have what they wished.

The persistent independence of the Delawares appears in still other ways. Shickellamy refers to "the Great Division among the Delaware Indians." The greatest division among the Delawares—between those in eastern Pennsylvania and those who removed to the Ohio River—does not seem to apply in this context. This division seems more local, with Olumapies representing one side, and the weaker one at that if he must have Shickellamy's protection. What constitutes the other side remains uncertain. Perhaps a faction opposed Olumapies and his personal habits (drunkenness) and allegiances (to the Iroquois and the English). Perhaps Neshalleney's cohort of family and friends. Conrad Weiser hints at the possible mixture of these groups when he writes that "Shikelimo told me the old people wer inclined to make Every thing Easy but they had no Comand at all over their yong man. if it Should happen that Some of them that Seized Mushamy Hillin would be Hurted, there would be sat work and may perhaps agree in Nothing then to do Mischief to the bake Inhabitants of this province." ³¹ Many Delawares, after all, had good reason to distrust the Iroquois and the Pennsylvanians. Shickellamy felt similarly

towards the Delawares. Weiser noted that "Shikelimo also Sent a Message to met the deputies of the Six nation in their way to pensilvania, to let them Know that if they should happen to hear of this noise not to be discouraged to Come, but to Come along, and take no Notice of the Storrys that would be industiously Spread among the Indians by the delawares about this affair." ³² Ignore the rumours, Shickellamy told his superiors. Sensible advice from the experienced and trusted deputy located at the forks of the Susquehanna River? Or a nervous warning from someone supposedly in control but actually somewhat worried about his position?

This latter position is reinforced when we consider what Conrad Weiser did when he heard of the incident. Shickellamy and Olumapies sent four Delaware Indians to deliver an express letter to Weiser asking him "to come to Shamokin in all haste, that the Indians were much dissatisfied in mind." When Weiser read the letter, he "found no particulars mentioned" and noted that no Iroquois had delivered the letter. Because he "did not care to meddle with Delaware Indian affairs," Weiser "stay'd at home till I received the Governor's Orders to go (which was about two Weeks after)." ³³ By interpreting the incident as a Delaware matter, Weiser acted in a way that argues against Shickellamy's claim of being in charge at Shamokin. The Delaware Indians maintained responsibility for some of their own affairs, which speaks to a degree of Delaware independence from the purported authority of the Iroquois.

How we interpret this evidence rests not just on the degree to which we grasp the larger context within which Shickellamy worked, but also the degree to which we believe Conrad Weiser and his report to the Pennsylvania government. In the midst of addressing the Mushemeelin affair Governor George Thomas, like many of his predecessors, relied on Conrad Weiser to discern "ye Sentim[en]ts of ye Ind[ia]n" as well as accurately convey the essence of his messages. "As you know Ind[ia]n Customs," Thomas wrote Weiser, "you are to deliver ye Sentim[en]ts expressed in my ltre [letter], in your own way, & either add or diminish, as you think proper." ³⁴ Here Thomas explicitly described one of the central issues that bedevil historians trying to interpret the words of people in the past. Weiser carefully chose his words when he arrived in Shamokin, but the same could be said about Mussemelin, John, Jimmy, Thomas Cookson, Shickellamy, and anyone else who said anything related to this incident. Each person decided to "either add or diminish" as he thought proper, leaving the historian to wonder about the veracity of any of the testimony. One more twist complicates the task of interpretation even further: Weiser may have taken to heart Thomas's instructions to "add or diminish" and thereby molded Shickellamy's testimony into a form that Pennsylvanians would accept. The closer we look at the documents, the farther they seem to recede from our grasp.

V. The Historian's Hand

The process of adding and diminishing to this fascinating but elusive story has continued ever since, rippling through the centuries and shaping how each succeeding generation has understood it. We can see the process clearly at work in 1851, when the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed an act "Providing for the Publication of the Colonial Records, and other Original Papers in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth." Governor William Johnston commissioned Samuel Hazard to "select for publication such of the original documents . . . as may be deemed of sufficient importance to be published."³⁵ Hazard spent ten months sifting through a mountain of documents and eventually produced "twenty-five bundles or packages of two hundred to four hundred papers each." He originally expected the collection to be larger, but soon discovered that "many [papers] are not to be found at this time." He culled the documents by identifying those that "at first sight were evidently unworthy of publication, and which resulting in the rejection of a large mass" that included "military rolls, naturalization of foreigners, marriage licenses, and some others." The documents that merited publication were "those which throw any light upon the history of the times in which they were written."³⁶ Since the time of Armstrong's, Arnold's, and Smith's deaths in 1744, different parties have acted to "diminish" the body of evidence available to later scholars. Some people lost, destroyed, stole, or misfiled certain documents, while Samuel Hazard used a range of criteria to select the materials that future individuals would, or would not, see in printed form.³⁷

Paul A. W. Wallace carried out the same process of selection in *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (1945), which contains the first scholarly analysis of Armstrong's death. Here we see how Wallace's decision to "diminish" the story and omit parts of the documentary evidence shaped his interpretation of the event. Wallace reprinted a lengthy excerpt of Thomas Cookson's letter of April 22, 1744 (discussed above and reprinted in the Appendix) but omits the section where Mushemeelin "gives this Short Account of the Tragical affair." In other words, Wallace did not address Mushemeelin's claim that he killed Armstrong and Arnold in self-defense and that John killed James Smith. This editing of Cookson's letter allowed Wallace to present a single consistent interpretation of the incident; after reprinting the deposition of April 19, 1744, sworn by Alexander Armstrong and the eight other colonists, Wallace stated that "One fact had now been established: Jack Armstrong and his two men had been murdered."³⁸ But is this an established fact? In my presentation I have tried to offer the complete documents and to remain neutral (by not using words such as "murder") regarding the motives behind Armstrong's death.

Yet I also "add and diminish" in order to narrate and analyze the event. I select from the sources just as Hazard and Wallace do; I emphasize certain

points and neglect others in ways Conrad Weiser would find familiar. Consider my opening five paragraphs, where I describe the search for the bodies of Armstrong, Smith, and Arnold. The deposition does not mention the weather or the flora along the Juniata River, yet I state that the men's breath was visible, the budding trees had not leafed out completely, and that James Berry clambered over rocks, brambles, and fallen trees. I "added" to the deposition, drawing on my several years' experience of living near and hiking through this general stretch of the Juniata River, in an effort to engage readers with this topic. A close reading of my first five paragraphs and the original deposition reveals other interpretive liberties I take: the searchers "having their fill of this grisly sight" and "their heads spinning with outrage, grief, and exhaustion." In each case, the phrases result from my understanding and interpretation of the deponents' original words. Something of the same process probably occurred when Conrad Weiser submitted his report after meeting Shickellamy.

When describing the events contained in Weiser's report, I "diminish" the account by remaining silent on some matters. I do not mention that Mushemeelin's wife "demanded the Horse of Armstrong, because he was her proper Goods, but did not get him" and that she later "pressed him [Mushemeelin] to pursue and take Revenge of Armstrong."³⁹ Furthermore, I pass over Weiser's statement that Tutelo Indians helped spread the news of Armstrong's death around and beyond Shamokin.⁴⁰ Why did I remove these matters from my narrative? Because in my judgment, including them would have detracted from my analysis more than their presence would have enhanced it. A variety of practical reasons shaped my decision. On the more mundane side, this article would have run too long, or would never have been finished, if I had pursued the dozens of leads contained in the documents. Furthermore, I risked unduly complicating the story and analysis by introducing too many variables. I decided that Mushemeelin's wife and the Tutelo Indians were not as important for the readers' understanding of the event as were the variables I did include.

Of course, I may have misjudged the situation. Perhaps I should have explored the actions taken by Mushemeelin's wife and placed them within the context of gender relations among the Delawares. That may have provided an important corrective to my emphasis on relations between Delawares and other groups. Perhaps including the Tutelo Indians would have reinforced my point that no single "Indian" perspective existed at this time in Pennsylvania. By raising the issue here, however, I hope to highlight the reality that historians make choices in the telling and understanding of history, a circumstance that puts me into the company of Shickellamy, Conrad Weiser, Samuel Hazard, Paul A.W. Wallace, and everyone else who has considered what happened on the banks of the Juniata River in 1744.

VI. The Causes of the Deaths.

In the end, who (or what) was responsible for the deaths of John Armstrong, James Smith, and Woodworth Arnold? Shickellamy told of a resentful and calculating Mushemeelin while Thomas Cookson noted the Indian's claim of self-defense; Mushemeelin certainly seemed to have committed the act, but did John and Jimmy take part as well? The Pennsylvania government certainly suspected so. At Lancaster on 28 June, Governor George Thomas informed the Iroquois that "By our Laws all the Accessories to a Murder are to be Tryed and Put to Death as well as the Person who gave the Deadly wound. . . . We therefore expect you will take the most effectual Measures to Seize and deliver up to Us the other two Indians present at these Murders, to be tryed with the Principal now in Custody." Four days later, Canasatego provided the Iroquois response. Although they believed Mushemeelin had "done all the Mischief himself," they promised "in our return [home] to renew our Reproofs, and to Charge the Delawares to send down some of their Chiefs with these two young men, but not as Prisoners, to be examined by you. . . ." About seven weeks later, John and Jimmy arrived in Philadelphia and stood before the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Governor Thomas later announced that "the Chief Justice reports to me that for any thing which appears in their Examination they were not Concerned in any of the Murders."⁴¹

On the other hand, the court found Mushemeelin guilty after a trial in October. On November 15, 1744, the *Pennsylvania Journal* noted that "Yesterday the Indian who killed Armstrong and his men was hanged." The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, however, reported the news slightly differently. "Yesterday, Mushemelon, the Indian, who murdered Armstrong the Trader, and one of his Men, was executed here according to his sentence."⁴² Armstrong "and his men," or "and one of his Men"? The difference speaks to the two versions of the event. Shickellamy argued that Mushemeelin killed Armstrong, Arnold, and Smith while Mushemeelin, speaking to Thomas Cookson, claimed self-defense in killing Armstrong and Arnold and asserted that John killed Smith. We might hope that the trial, conviction, and execution would resolve this issue, but doubts, suspicions, and questions remain.

The Delawares, Iroquois, and Pennsylvanians, however, did agree to put the incident behind them. Quidahickunt, speaking for the ill Olumapies, offered strings of wampum and bundles of skins to reinforce the Delawares' statement of regret and reconciliation. "This Murder has, no doubt, filled our Brethren's Eyes so full with Tears that they cannot see us. We desire to wipe the Tears from their Eyes that they may see us, the Sky, and every thing else, as they used to do before the Murder happened. . . . This Murder has been as great a grief to our Hearts as to Yours; it gives us great Pain when we think of it. We would, however, remove out of your Hearts the Spirit of Resentment and Revenge against Us for it. . . ." Shickellamy followed this by presenting

additional belts of wampum to the governor. "Since this unhappy Affair is now fully ended, we give you this Belt of Wampum to take away the Hatchet. . . . If the Hatchet be removed but a little way it may, perhaps, be Seen, and being Bloody give offence; We therefore bury it with this Belt deep under Ground, that it may never be seen more, nor remember'd by Us nor those who are under the Ground to the latest Posterity." Another string of wampum would "Clear the Air that was rendered foul and Corrupted" and a final string would "serve to take the Overflow of Gall out of your Entrails, for such a foul offence as this always occasions an overflow of the Gall which must be taken out." Thomas accepted these sentiments by offering strings of wampum in return and concluded, "I shall never more bear in remembrance this unhappy affair." ⁴³

While the Delawares, Iroquois, and English had agreed to bring this matter to a close, they had not addressed the larger conditions that led to the killings in the first place. The deaths of Armstrong, Arnold, and Smith were merely the most recent tallies on a record of confrontation and death that stretched back for generations. Although the circumstances of each case were unique, Conrad Weiser understood the forces that often drove Indians to violence. For years Weiser listened to Indians complain of traders who stole from or swindled them, and saw little of the relief promised by the Pennsylvania government. "I assure you, Sir," he wrote to Richard Peters, the provincial secretary, "I find it very hard sometimes to Excuse the Government, and must hear words entirely disagreeable. I am satisfied the Indians have just reason to Complain at the behaviour of some of our people." ⁴⁴ Even from a distance of three years, he remembered the fate of John Armstrong and noted that "It may happen that some of our people may be served as J. A. was, which is the only resentment the Indians use, when once satisfied they have to deal with a rogue, and cant get other satisfaction." As Weiser wrote in another letter, "John Armstrong, the poor man, had warning Sufficient to persuad him to do the Indians Justice, but Covetnous prevented him, at last he pay'd to dear for his faults." Recall that Armstrong had taken Mushemeelin's horse and gun and returned neither of them, even after the Indian repaid part of the debt. Weiser concluded, "Our people are apt to forget such Exempels." ⁴⁵

Governor Thomas spoke directly to this issue when he addressed the Assembly in July 1744:

I cannot but be apprehensive that the Indian Trade as it is now carry'd on will involve us in some fatal Quarrel with the Indians. Our Traders in Defiance of the Law carry Spirituous Liquors amongst them, and take the Advantage of their inordinate Appetite for it to cheat them of their Skins and their Wampums . . . and often to debauch their Wives into the Bargain. Is it to be wondered at then, if when they

Recover from the Drunken fit they should take severe Revenges. I shall do all that lies in my Power to prevent these Abuses by ordering a Strict Observance of the Law relating to Licenses, and the rigidest Prosecutions against such as shall be discovered to Sell Rum to the Indians.

Yet how effective would these provisions be? "But I am Sensible these will avail but little," the governor concluded, "the ill practices of these people being carry'd on in the Woods, and at such a Distance from the Seat of Government that it will be very difficult to get Evidences to Convict them."⁴⁶ Such was the mixture of both hope and reality for relations between the Delawares, Iroquois, and English in the places through which the Juniata River flowed.⁴⁷

DEPOSITION ALEX. ARMSTRONG, &c., 1744.

Paxton, April the 19th, 1744.

The Deposition of the Subscribers Testifieth and Saith, that the Subscribers having a Suspicion that John Armstrong, Trader, Together with his Men, James Smith & Woodworth Arnold, were Murther'd by ye Indians. They met at the House of Joseph Charmbers in Paxton, and there Consulted to go to Samokin, To Consult with the Delaware King & Secalima & their Council, what they should do Concerning the Affaire. Whereupon the King & Councel Ordered Eight of their men to go with the dep^s to the House of James Berry, in Order to go in Quest of the Murther'd persons; but that Night they Came to said Berry's House, three of the Eight Indians ran Away, And the Next Morning these Dep^s, Together wth ye five Indians that remain'd, Set on their Journey Peaceably to the last Supposed sleeping place of the Deceased, and upon their Arrival, these Dep^s dispersed themselves in Order to find out the the Corps of the deceased, & one of the Dep^s Named James Berry, a Small Distance from the afores^d sleeping Place Came, came to a White Oak Tree which had three Knotches on it, & Close by s^d Tree he found a Shoulder Bone, (which these Dep^s does Suppose, to be John Armstrong's, And that he himself was Eating by the Indians) which he carried to the afores^d sleeping place and Showed to his Companions, one of which handed it to the s^d five Indians to know what bone is was, & they, after passing different Sentiments upon it, handed it to a Delaware Indian, who was Suspected by the Dep^s, and they Testify & Say, that as Soon as the s^d Indian took the bone in his hand, his Nose Gushed out with Blood, & he directly handed it to Another, from whence these Dep^s steered along a path about three or four Miles to the Narrows of Juniata, where they Suspected the s^d Murther to be Comited, & where the Allegany Road Crosses the Creek. These Dep^s Sat Down in Order to Consult on what Measures to take in Order to proceed on a Discovery, Whereupon most of the White Men, These Dep^s Cross't the Creek again, And went down the Creek and Crost into an Island where these Dep^s had had Intelligence the Corps had been Throwne; And There they Met the rest of the White Men & Indians who was in company, & there Consulted to go further down the Creek in Quest of the Corps, & These Dep^s Further Saith, they Ordered the Indians to go down the Creek on the Other side, but they all Followed these Dep^s at a Small distance, Except one Indian who Cros't the Creek again, & Soon After these dep^s Seeing Some Bawld Eagles and Other Fowles, Suspected the Corps to be thereab^s, And thereab^s lost Sight of the Indians, & Imediately found one of the Corps, w^{ch} these dep^s Says was the Corps of James Smith, one of s^d Armstrong's Men, And Directly upon finding the Corps, these Depts heard three Shotts of Guns, which they had great Reason to Think was the Indians, their Companions, who had deserted from them, and in order to let him know they had found the Corps, these dep^s fired three Guns, but to no purpose, for

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they Never Saw the Indians any More, and Ab^t Quarter of a Mile farther down the Creek, they Saw More Bawled Eagles, whereupon they made down towards the Place, where they found another corps, (being the Corps of Woodworth Arnold, the other Serv^t of s^d John Armstrong) lying on a Rock, and then Went to the Former Sleeping place, where they had Appointed to meet the Indians, but Saw No Indians, Only that the Indians had been there & Cooked Some Victuals for themselves and had gone off. And that Night these Depth further says they had great Reason to suspect that the Indians was then Thereab^t, and Intended to do them some Damages, for a Dog these Dep^{ts} had with them Barking that Night. which was remarkable, for the s^d Dog had not Barked all the time they was Out till that Night, nor never since, which Occasioned these Dep^{ts} to stand upon their Guard behind Trees, with their Guns Cock'd that Night. Next Morning these Dep^{ts} went back to the Corps, which Gastly and Deep cuts on their Heads with a Tomahawk. or such Like Weapon, which had sunk into their Sculs & Brains, & in one of s^d Corps there appears a hole in his scul near the cut, which was supposed to be with a Tomahawk, which these Dep^{ts} does believe to be a Bullet hole. And the Dep^{ts}, after taking as Particular a View of the Corps as their Melancholy Condition would Admit, they Buried them as decently as their circumstances would Allow, and returned home to Paxton, the Allegany road to John Harris^r, Thinking it Dangerous to return the same Way they went Out: and Further These Deponents saith not.

These s^d Depots being legally Qualified before me, James Armstrong, one of his Majesties Justices of the Peace for the County of Lancaster, have hereunto set their hands in Testimony Thereof.

JAS. ARMSTRONG.

ALEXD^r ARMSTRONG,

THOMAS McKEE,

his

FRANCES X ELLIS

mark

JOHN FFORSTER,

his

WILLIAM x BASKINS,

mark

his

JAMES X BERRY,

mark

JOHN WATT,

Ja^s. ARMSTRONG,

DAVID DENNY,

Source: *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns and Co., 1852), 643-644.

Conrad Weiser—his Report of his Journey to Shamokin.

“Shamokin, May 2d, 1744.

“This day I delivered the Governor’s Message to Olumapies, the Delaware Chief, and the rest of the Delaware Indians, in the presence of Shick Calamy and a few more of the Six Nations, The purport of which was, That I was sent Express by the governor and Council to demand those that had been concerned with Mussemeelin in Murdering John Armstrong, Woodward Arnold, and James Smith; That their Bodies might be searched for and decently buried; That the Goods be likewise found and restored without fraud. It was delivered to them by me in the Mohawck Language, and intreperted into Delaware by Andrew, Madam Monture’s Son.”

In the afternoon, Olumapies, in the presence of the aforesaid Indians, made the following Answer:

“Brother the Governor—

“It is true that we the Delaware Indians, by the Instigation of the Evil Spirit, have Murdered James Armstrong and his Men. We have transgressed, and we are ashamed to look up. We have taken the Murderer and delivered him to the Relations of the Deceased, to be dealt with according to his works.

“Brother the Governor—

“Your demand for the goods is very just. We have gathered some of them. We will do the utmost of what we can to find them all. We do not doubt but we can find out the most part, and whatever is wanting we will make up in Skins, which is what the Goods are sent for to the Woods.

“Brother the Governor—

“The dead Bodies are Buried; it is certain that John Armstrong was buried by the Murderer, and the other two by those that searched for them. Our Hearts are in Mourning, and we are in a dismal condition and cannot say any thing at present.”

Then Shick Calamy with the rest of the Indians of the Six Nations there present, say’d: “Brother the Governor—We have been all missinformed on both sides about the unhappy accident. Mus-

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semeelin has certainly Murdered the three White men himself, and upon his bare Accusation of Neshaleeny's son, which was nothing but spite, the said Neshaleeny's son was Seized and made a Prisoner. Our Cousins the Delaware Indians being then Drunk, in particular Olumapias, never Examined things, but made an Innocent person Prisoner, which gave a great deal of Disturbance amongst us. How'er the two Prisoners were sent, and by the way in going down the River they stopped at the House of James Berry. James told the Young man, 'I am sorry to see you in such a Condition. I have known you from a Boy, and always loved you.' Then the Young man seemed to be very much struck to the Heart, and say'd, 'I have said nothing yet, but now I will tell all; let all the Indians come in, and the White people also; they shall hear it.' And then told Mussemeelin in the presence of all the people.

"Now I am going to Dye for your Wickedness. You have killed all the three White men; I never did intend to kill any of them.' Then Mussemeelin in anger say'd, 'I is true I have killed them. I am a Man, you are a Coward; it is a Great satisfaction to me to have killed them. I will Dye with Joy for having killed a Great Rogue and his companions.' Upon which the Young Man was set at liberty by the Indians. We desire, therefore, our Brother the Governor will not insist to have either of the two Young Men in Prison or Condemned to Dye. It is not with Indians as with White people, to put People in Prison on Suspicion or for Triffls. Indians must be first found Guilty of a Crime, then Judgement is given and immediately Executed. We will give you faithfully all the particulars, and at the ensuing Treaty entirely satisfie you; in the mean time We desire that good friendship and Harmony may continue, and that we may live long together is the Hearty desire of your Brethren the Indians of the United Six Nations present at Shamokin."

The following is what Shick Calamy declared to be the Truth of the Story concerning the Murder of John Armstrong, Woodward Arnold, and James Smith, from the beginning to the end, to wit:

"That Mussemeelin owing some Skins to John Armstrong, the said Armstrong Seized a Horse of the said Mussemeelin and a riffled Gun; the Gun was taken by James Smith, deceased. Sometime last Winter Mussemeelin met Armstrong on the River Juniata, and paid to about Twenty shillings, for which he offered a neck-belt in Pawn to Armstrong, and demanded his Horse, and James Armstrong refused it and would not deliver up the Horse, but enlarged the Debt, as his usual custom was, and after some Quarrel the Indian went away in great Anger without his Horse to his Hunting Cabin. Sometime after this Armstrong with his two Companions in their way to Ohio passed by the said Mussemeelin's Hunting Cabin; his Wife only being at home demanded the Horse of Armstrong, because he was her proper Goods, but did not get him (Armstrong

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had by this time sold or lent the Horse to James Berry); after Mussemeelin came from Hunting, his Wife told him that Armstrong was gone by, and that She had demanded the Horse of him, but did not get him (and as is thought pressed him to pursue and take Revenge of Armstrong). The third day in the Morning after James Armstrong was gone by, Mussemeelin said to the two Young men that Hunted with him, 'Come, let us go towards the Great Hills to Hunt Bears;' accordingly they went all three in Company. After they had gone a good way, Mussemeelin, who was foremost, was told by the two Young men that they were out of their Course. 'Come you along,' said Mussemeelin, and they accordingly follow'd him till they came to the Path that leads to Ohio. Then Mussemeelin told them he had a good mind to go and fetch his Horse back from Armstrong, and desired the two Young men to come along; accordingly they went. It was then almost Night, and they traveled till next morning. Mussemeelin say'd, 'now they are not far off. We will make Ourselves black; then they will be frightned and will deliver up the Horse immediately, and I will tell Jack that if he don't give me the Horse I will kill him,' and when he say'd so, he laughed; The Young Men thought he Joaked as he used to do. They did not blacken themselves, but he did. When the Sun was above the Trees (or about an hour high) they all came to the fire, Where they found James Smith sitting, and they sat also down. Mussemeelin asked where Jack was; Smith told him that he was gone to clear the Road a little. Mussemeelin Say'd he wanted to speak with him, and went that way, and after he had gone a little Distance from the fire he say'd something and looked back laughing; but he having a thick throat and his Speech being very bad, and their talking with Smith hindred them from understanding what he Said, they did not mind it. They being hungrey, Smith told them to kill some Turtles, of which they were plenty, and we would make some bread, and by and by they would all eat toger. While they were a talking they heard a Gun go off not far off, at which time Woodward Arnold was killed, as they learned afterwards. Soon after Mussemeelin came back and say'd, 'Why did you two kill that White man according as I bid you? I have laid the other two down;' at this they were Surprised, and one of the Young men, commonly called Jemmey, run away to the River side. Mussemeelin say'd to the other, 'How will you do to kill Catabaws, if you cannot kill white Men? You Coward, I'll shew you how you must do;' and then taking up the English Ax that lay there he Struck it three times into Smith's Head before he died; Smith never stirred; then he told the Young Indian to call the other, but he was so terrify'd he could not call. Mussemeelin then went and fetched him and say'd to him that two of the White men were killed, he must now go and kill the third, then each of them would have killed one; But neither of them dare venture to talk any thing about it. Then he pressed them to go along with him,

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he went foremost; then one of the young men told the other as they went along, 'My Friend, don't you kill any of the White People, let him do what he will; I have not killed Smith, he has done it himself; we have no need to do such a Barbarous thing. Mussemeelin being then a good way before them in a hurry, they soon saw John Armstrong setting upon an old Log; Mussemeelin spoke to him and Say'd, 'Where is my Horse?' Armstrong made answer and say'd, 'he will come by and by, you shall have him;' 'I want him now,' said Mussemeelin, Armstrong answered, 'you shall have him; Come, let us go to that Fire (which was at some distance from the place where Armstrong sat), and let us smoke and talk together.' 'Go along then,' say'd Mussemeelin. 'I am coming,' said Armstrong, 'do you go before Mussemeelin do you go foremost.' Armstrong looked then like a Dead Man, and went towards the Fire, and was immediately shot in his Back by Mussemeelin and fell. Mussemeelin then took his Hatchet and Struck it into Armstrong's head, and say'd, 'Give me my Horse, I tell you.' By this time one of the Young men had fled again that had gone away before, but he returned in a Short time. Mussemeelin then told the Young men they must not offer to discover or tell a word about what had been done for their Lives, but they must help him to bury Jack, and the other two were to be throw'd into the River. After that was done, Mussemelin ordered them to load the Horses and follow him towards the Hill, where they intended to hide the Goods; accordingly they did, and as they were going, Mussemeelin told them that as there were a great many Indians hunting about that place, if they should happen to meet with any, they must be killed to prevent their Betraying them.—As they went along, Mussemeelin going before, the two young Men agreed to run away as soon as the could meet with any Indians, and not to hurt any body. They came to the desired place, the Horses were unloaded, and Mussemeelin opened the Bundles and offered the two Young Men Each a Pacell of Goods. They told him that as they had already sold their Skins, and every Body knew they had nothing, they would certainly be charged with a black Action were they to bring any Goods to the Town, and therefore they would not accept any; but promised, nevertheless, not to betray him. 'Now,' says Mussemeelin, 'I know what you were talking about when you stay'd so far behind; You have agreed to betray me, but you shall fare like the White men if you intend to hurt me. The two Young Men being in a great danger of loosing their own lives (of which they had been much affraid all that day), accepted of what he offered to them, and the Rest of the Goods they put in a heap and covered them from the Rain, and then went to their Hunting Cabin; Mussemeelin unexpectedly finding two or three more Indians there, laid down his Goods and sayed he killed Jack Armstrong, and taken pay for his Horse, and should any of them discover it, that person he would likewise kill;

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but otherwise they might all take a part of the Goods. The Young man called Jimmey went away to Shamokin, after Mussemeelin was gone to bury the Goods, with three more Indians with whom he had prevailed; one of them was Neshaleeny's Son, whom he had ordered to kill James Smith, but those Indians would not have any of the Goods. Some time after the Young Indian had been in Shamokin, it was whispered about that some of the Delaware Indians had killed Armstrong and his Men. A Drunken Indian came to one of the Tudolous Houses at Night, and told the Man of the House that he could tell him a piece of bad News. 'What is that?' said the other; the Drunken man said, 'Some of our Delaware Indians have killed Armstrong and his Men, which, if our Chiefs should not resent and take them up, I will kill them myself to prevent a Disturbance between us and the White People our Brethren.' Next morning Shick Calamy and some other Indians of the Delawares were called to assist Olumapies in Council. Then Shick Calamy and Olumapies got one of the Tridolow Indians to write a Letter to me to desire me to come to Shamokin in all haste, that the Indians were much dissatisfied in mind. This Letter was brought to my House by four Delaware Indians, sent Express, but I was then in Philadelphia, and when I came home and found no particulars mentioned in the Letter, and that none of the Indians of the Six Nations had been down, I did not care to meddle with Delaware Indian affairs, and stay'd at home till I received the Governor's Orders to go (which was about two Weeks after). Olumapies was advised by his Council to employ a Conjurer (or ker as they call it) to find out the Murderer; accordingly he did, and the Indians met; the seer being busy all night told them in the morning to Examine such and such a one; they were present when Armstrong was killed, naming the two young men (Mussemeelin was then present); accordingly, Olumapies, Quitheyyquent, and Thomas Greene, an Indian, went to him that fled first and Examined him; he told the whole Story very freely; then they went to the other, but he would not say a word, but went away and left them. The three Indians returned to Shick Calamy and informed them of what Discovery they had made, When it was agreed to Secure the Murderers, and deliver them up to the White People. Then a great noise arose among the Delaware Indians, and some were afraid of their Lives and went into the Woods; not one cared to meddle with Mussemeelin and the other that could not be prevailed on to Discover any thing, because of the Resentment of their families; but they being Pressed by Shick Calamy's Sons to Secure the Murderers, otherwise they would be cut off from the Chain of Friendship, four or five of the Delawares made Mussemeelin and the other Young man Prisoners and tyed them both. They lay twenty-four Hours, and none would venture to conduct them down, because of the Great Division among the Delaware Indians; and Olumapies in danger of being killed, fled to Shick Calamy and begged his Protections. At last

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Shick Calamy's Son Jack went to the Delawares, most of them being Drunk, as they had been for Several Days, and told them to Deliver the Prisoners to Alexander Armstrong, and if they were afraid to do it they might separate their Heads from their Bodies and lay them in the Canoe, and carry them to Alexander to Roast and eat them; that would satisfy is Revenge, as he wants to eat Indians; they prevailed with the said Jack to assist them, and accordingly he and his Brother and some of the Delawares went with two Canoes and carry'd them off."

Source: *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania*, vol. IV (Harrisburg: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 680-685.

THOMAS COOKSON TO GOV'R., 1744.

Hon^d Sir:

Just now is brought to this place Jn°. Massemeelin, a Delaware Indian, who, having Confessed the Murder of John Armstrong & Woodward Arnold, one of his Men, And that John, a Son Neshalleeny, another of the Delawares, killed James Smith, another of J. Armstrong's Men, was (after a Council held by Shickalamy & y^e other Indians, at Shamokin,) Adjudged Guilty of y^e s^d Murders, And was Sent down with y^e s^d Indian John, by Shicallamy's sons & some other Indians, into the Settlements. But on their Coming to James Berry's ab^t forty Miles above John Harris's, on Sasquehanna, Shicallamy's Sons apprehensive of the resentment of Neshalleeny's Friends ag^t their Father for thus delivering up the Young Man who was in great Esteem with them, thought it most prudent to release him & deliver up Massemeelin only, for y^e present, in Order to be Secured & Receive his Punishm^t. He Speaks English well, and gives this Short Account of the Tragical affair; That He & Jn°, Son of Neshalleeny, with another Young Delaware called Billy, had been out a Hunting together in y^e Fall; That ab^t the Middle of Ffebruary last, Jn°. & Billy went down to a place that had been Settled by a Dutchman on Chiniotta Creek, & there Saw J. Armstrong, & his two Men, going back into the Woods with goods, & had some discourse with them; That afterwards Jn°. & Billy joined Massemeelin, & told him that J. Armstrong & two Men were going into ye Woods with Goods, And that they had a Mind to kill them, & asked him to join with the, to which he readily assented; That ab^t two days after the Indians had Seen Armstrong at ye Dutchman's Settlemen^t, they came up with them, And Massemeelin went up to J. Armstrong & asked him for some Wampum he had pledged with him, or Satisfaction for it, & also a Horse that he said Armstrong, had taken from him in y^e fall, on account of a small debt due to

him: Some hot words arose upon this, & Armstrong took up a Stake & Struck him, on which He Struck Armstrong with his Tomhawk on the Temple & he dropt dead on y^e Spot. Arnold, one of Armstrong's Men, Attempted to make a Blow at Massemeelin with an Axe, But he retired to his Gun where he had lodged it ready loaden & Shot him, & afterwards wounded him in the head with his Tomhawk. Neshaleeny's Son, with his Tomhawk killed James Smith, after which they buried Armstrong & threw the Bodies of y^e other two into Chiniotto Creek, And made a place in y^e ground to hide the Goods & Covered them up, Except 6 Strouds which Neshalleeny's Son took away, & five which Billy took. Massemeelin having got drunk made y^e discovery & was Secured. I shall Order him to be kept Safe in Our Goal here till Your Honour shall be pleased to give Some Orders about him. He expects to be kept till the Indians come down to y^e Treaty, That he may be executed in their way. He thinks it very hard that the other Indian shou'd be

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released, & that the reason assigned by Shicallamy's Sons was not y^e true reason, But this is referred to y^r Honour's Consideration. I must beg pardon for want of Accuracy in this Acco^t, not being willing to deferr y^e first opportunity which now offers by M^r. Stephens, who waits impatiently on his private Business.

I am,

Y^r Hou^{rs} most Obed^t
hu'ble Serv^e.,

THO. COOKSON.

Lancaster, 22 April, 1744.

Source: *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns and Co., 1852), 646-647.

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Notes

1. "Deposition of Alex. Armstrong, &c., 1744," 19 April 1744, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns and Co., 1852), 643-644. The following three paragraphs draw on this document as well. See Appendix for a transcription. According to C.A. Weslager, between 1727 and 1756, Shamokin "became the largest and one of the most important Indian settlements in Pennsylvania." See C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 193. Contemporaries also referred to Olumapias as Sassoonan; see Paul A. W. Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 2nd ed. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1989), 180-181. For biographical information on Shickellamy, see James H. Merrell, "Shickellamy, 'A Person of Consequence,'" in *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816*, Robert S. Grumet, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 227-257.

2. I found the following examples particularly useful for illustrating the historian at work: T. H. Breen, *Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1989); James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992); Rhys Isaac, "A Discourse on the Method," in *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 323-357; Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy*, rev. ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995); and Robin W. Winks, ed., *The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

3. For an overview of this vast literature, see Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Robert S. Grumet, *Historic Contact: Indian People and Colonists in Today's Northeastern United States in the Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Neal Salisbury, "Native people and European settlers in eastern North America, 1600-1783," in Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Native*

Peoples of the Americas, vol. 1: *North America*, part 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 399-460; Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 15: *Northeast* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978); Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 4: *History of Indian-White Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1988). For the relevant local Indian groups, see the entry "Indian Pennsylvania" in Dennis B. Downey and Francis J. Bremer, eds., *A Guide to the History of Pennsylvania* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1993); Barry C. Kent, Janet Rice, and Kakuko Ota, "A Map of Eighteenth Century Indian Towns in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, 51 (1981), 1-18; Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1986); Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*; and Weslager, *The Delaware Indians*.

4. Joseph E. Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania: A History* (New York: Scribners, 1976) explains British and French involvement in that colony. The clash of the European powers in North America receives its classic (and Eurocentric) treatment in Francis Parkman's multi-volume series "France and England in North America," especially *A Half-Century of Conflict*, 2 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1897) and *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 3 vols. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1897; reprinted in one volume, New York: Da Capo Press, 1995). For more recent treatments see William J. Eccles, *France in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Lawrence H. Gipson, *The British Empire Before the American Revolution*, 15 vols. (Caldwell, Idaho and New York: 1936-1970); two volumes by Francis Jennings, *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984) and *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988); and Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

5. Paul A. W. Wallace writes, "There survived among them [the Shawnees], as indeed among most other Indians until the eighteenth century, the practice of ritual cannibalism. The

eating of human flesh was in general abhorred by Indians, but cannibalism survived as a war custom because it was believed that the virtues of a brave enemy could be transferred by this means to his captors." See Wallace, *Indians in Pennsylvania*, 122. Dean R. Snow, *The Iroquois* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), 127-128 identifies similar practices by the Iroquois during the seventeenth century. Neither scholar, however, describes such practices during the mid-eighteenth century. Furthermore, the circumstances of John Armstrong's death do not fit those of ritual cannibalism. For the images in which Europeans often held Indians, see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978), especially Part One.

6. The recent medical literature identifies several factors that might explain such bleeding: hereditary factors such as blood clotting disorders; personal histories of upper respiratory infection; regular, high alcohol consumption, especially within twenty-four hours; and the presence of a common cold, stress, or tiredness. See M. Beran and B. Petruson, "Occurrence of epistaxis in habitual nose-bleeders and analysis of some etiological factors," *ORL: Journal for Otorhinolaryngology and its Borderlands*, 48:5 (1986), 297-303; G.W. McGarry, S. Gatehouse, and J. Hinnie, "Relation between alcohol and nose bleeds," *British Medical Journal*, 309:6955 (10 Sept. 1994), 640; and B. Petruson and R. Rudin, "The frequency of epistaxis in a male population sample," *Rhinology*, 13:3 (Nov. 1975), 129-133.

7. For an earlier related example of this type of thinking, see *Richard III*, I, ii, lines 50-61. Shakespeare, writing around 1592, echoes the popular belief that "a murdered person's wounds would bleed afresh in the presence of the murderer." See *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 708, 715 (notes to lines 55-56 for the quotation).

8. For nearly a century, psychologists, criminologists, and other researchers have studied the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. According to Daniel Reisberg, "Eyewitnesses may overlook many aspects of an event if a weapon is present or if the eyewitness is emotionally aroused. False memories can be planted after the event has occurred. Eyewitness confidence in a recollection is no

guarantee of memory veracity." See his entry, "Eyewitness Testimony," in Raymond J. Corsini, ed., *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: John Wiley, 1994), 546-548 (quotation on p. 548). See also Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), especially chapter 3; Rogers Elliott, "On the Reliability of *Eyewitness Testimony*: A Retrospective Review," *Psychological Reports*, 57 (1985), 219-226; and Elizabeth F. Loftus, "Psychologists in the Eyewitness World," *American Psychologist*, 48 (1993), 550-552.

9. In a letter to Olumapies, Alexander Armstrong wrote that "a parcel of your men have murdered my brother and two of his men" and requested that Olumapies, as "a king of Justice," "send us in all the murderers and the men that was with them, as I looked for the Corpse of my murdered brother, for that reason your men threaten my life, and I cannot live in my house: now as we have no inclination or mind to go to war with you, our friends, as a friend I desire that you will keep your men from doing me harm, and also send the murderers and the Companions." Armstrong sent a similar letter to Shickellamy. See Alexander Armstrong to Alimoppus, 25 April 1744, and to Sicalamous, same date, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 647-648.

10. Steele, *Warpaths*, chapter 8; Wallace, *Indians of Pennsylvania*, 100-101, 143-144; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 271; Snow, *Iroquois*, quotation on p. 132.

11. Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania*, 204. For Olumapies's use of "Brothers" and "Unckles" as late as 1741, see Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 343. For the Walking Purchase of 1737, the most infamous example of English seizure of Delaware land, see *ibid.*, chapter 17 and Appendix B, and Anthony F. C. Wallace, *King of the Delawares: Teedyuscung, 1700-1763* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), chapter 2.

12. Richter, *Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 274-276; Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), chapter 6; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 183-185. Francis Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 312-324, also makes a strong case that personal troubles motivated James Logan to

formulate this policy towards the Iroquois.

13. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, chapters 18-20 for Virginia; chapters 22-23 for the Lancaster Treaty; quotation on p. 145.

14. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 184-186; Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 355-363. Jennings argues that while the Lancaster Treaty may have provided the Iroquois short-term advantages, "the policies enunciated by Canasatego [an Iroquois chief] were ultimately disastrous for the Iroquois" (p. 363).

15. Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 204-207. For an earlier example of Delaware disobedience of an Iroquois request, see the Delaware rejection of an Iroquois call to attack the colonists during the mid-1720s; Jennings, *Ambiguous Iroquois Empire*, 301-303.

16. In a 15 May 1744 meeting of the Provincial Council, a message from the Assembly noted that "two Letters sent by Alexander Armstrong to the Indians caused great Disturbance, and made them apprehensive [that] the Friends of the Deceased intended to revenge themselves on the Indians; and as it may be of evil Tendency, and destructive to the Peace of the Province, for private Persons to take upon themselves to do Acts which more properly belong to the Government, we pray the Governor will be pleased to take such Measures as he shall think most proper to prevent the like practices for the future." *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* (hereafter cited as *MPCP*), vol. 4 (Harrisburg: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1851), 680.

17. On 25 August 1732, for example, the Iroquois acknowledged how warmly the Pennsylvanians had treated them and stated they were "very willing & desirous that there may be more frequent Opportunities of conferring and discoursing with their Brethren, and that these may be managed by the means of Shekallamy and Conrad Weyser, the Interpreter." Thomas Penn responded to this proposition four days later. "As to what you said about employing Shekallamy & Conrad Weyser, on which you gave the first strings of Wampum, We are very glad you agree with us in the Choice of so good Men to go between us. We believe them to be very honest, and will with Chearfulness employ them, and to confirm this we give another Stroud Matchcoat." The next day, putting the treasury behind its proprietor's words, the Pennsylvania government paid eight pounds to Shickellamy and twelve pounds plus

expenses to Weiser in order to give such "persons of Truth & Honesty . . . all due Encouragement." See *MPCP*, vol. 3, 469, 476, 477.

18. Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser, 26 April 1744, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 650-651.

19. Conrad Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 2 May 1744, in *MPCP*, vol. 4, 680.

20. Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 681-685. The information from Shickellamy in the subsequent paragraphs comes from this source.

21. Mushemeelin may have painted his face black as a way to prepare for combat and to send that message to John Armstrong. According to Patrick M. Malone, "When Indians went to war, they took great pains to look as fierce and impressive as possible. William Wood described how they painted their faces with a 'diversity of colours, some being all black as jet . . .'" See Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 25. Note that Malone and Wood refer to Indians in southern New England during the seventeenth century, circumstances that differ from Mushemeelin's.

22. The printed version of Weiser's reports in *MPCP* uses the word "Turtles," but in the manuscript version the word appears to be "Turkies," which admittedly can look like "Turtles" in Weiser's handwriting. See "Conrad Weiser: Report of Indian Conference at Shamokin, May 2," 15 May 1744, in Executive Correspondence, Papers of the Provincial Council, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, microfilm roll B2, number 377. Turkeys would certainly be more plentiful at this time of year in these Pennsylvania woods. I thank James Merrell for providing this clarification (and many others).

23. The Catawba Indians, a frequent target for Iroquois (but not Delaware) raids, lived in South Carolina. See James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

24. Thomas Cookson to George Thomas, 22 April 1744, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1,

646-647.

25. Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 680. Two years earlier at a meeting in Philadelphia, the Iroquois chief Canasatego sharply rebuked the Delawares for "continuing to Claim and refusing to remove from some land on the River Delaware." As punishment, Canasatego stated that the Iroquois "charge You [Delawares] to remove instantly. We don't give you the liberty to think about it. You are Women; take the Advice of a Wise Man and remove immediately. . . . We, therefore, Assign you two Places to go—either to Wyomin [in northeastern Pennsylvania] or Shamokin. You may go to either of these Places, and then we shall have you more under our Eye, and shall see how You behave." See Canasatego's speech, 12 July 1742, in *MPCP*, vol. 4, 578, 580.

26. Wallace, *King of the Delawares*, 11; Weslager, *Delaware Indians*, 200-207, quotation on p. 201. Conrad Weiser noted Olumapies's alcoholism in 1747: "Olumapies would have Resigned his Crown before now, but as he had the keeping of the public treasure, [that is to say the Counsel Bagg,] Consisting of Belts of Wampum, for which he buys Liquor, and has been Drunk for this two or three years, allmost Constantly, and it is thought he wont Die, so long as there is one single wampum left in the Bagg." Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, 20 July 1747, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 762.

27. Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 683.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, 684.

30. Cookson to Thomas, 646.

31. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 183.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 684.

34. George Thomas to Conrad Weiser, 28 April 1744, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 652. Like Weiser, the best interpreters who worked with the Iroquois knew how to follow appropriate customs, use particular forms and styles (like metaphors), and shade the meanings of messages in order to convey more than just a literal translations of one group's words; see Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'A Friend to Go Between Them': Interpreters among the Iroquois, 1664-1775," Ph.D., College of

William and Mary, 1995, chapters 4-5.

35. "An Act Providing for the Publication of the Colonial Records, and other Original Papers in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth," 15 February 1851, reprinted in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 14-16, quotations on p. 15.

36. Samuel Hazard to Governor William F. Johnston, 31 December 1851, reprinted in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 17-21.

37. While the published *Pennsylvania Archives* and *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania* serve as the most accessible collection of primary sources, individuals may consult the more voluminous manuscript collections at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg and at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

38. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, p. 178 for Cookson's letter, p. 177 for the quotation.

39. Weiser, "His Report of his Journey to Shamokin," 681-682.

40. *Ibid.*, 684.

41. Speech of George Thomas, 28 June 1744, in *MPCP*, vol. 4, 714; speech of Canasatego, 2 July 1744, *ibid.*, 724; speech of George Thomas, 21 August 1744 and 24 August 1744, *ibid.*, 744-745.

42. *Pennsylvania Journal*, 15 November 1744; *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 15 November 1744.

43. Speech of Quidahickqunt, 21 August 1744, of Shickellamy, 24 August 1744, and of Thomas, 24 August 1744, in *MPCP*, vol. 4, 743, 746, 747.

44. Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, 21 June 1747, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 751.

45. *Ibid.*, Conrad Weiser to Richard Peters, 14 July 1747, in *Pennsylvania Archives*, vol. 1, 758-759.

46. George Thomas, speech to the Assembly, 31 July 1744, in *MPCP*, vol. 4, 740. For a full treatment of the colonists' and Indians' relationship with alcohol, see Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

47. Those of you who have made it this far deserve to know what I think happened. For what it's worth, I believe John took an active role in the killings and escaped punishment. Of course, consult the documents and decide for yourself!