

## HIDDEN GEMS

### *The Map That Reveals the Deception of the 1737 Walking Purchase*

In the summer of 1737 four Delaware sachems agreed to give the Pennsylvania proprietors land west of the Delaware River that could be traversed by a walker in a day and a half. When the Walking Purchase, as it became known, was executed in September, the young men hired as walkers by the proprietors traveled faster and further northwest than Delawares assumed they would. Delawares documented the events of the Walking Purchase, but their version of the story was quickly buried under the considerable weight of the official narrative—a tale based on actual events but with significant details skillfully obfuscated by the Penns and their agents.<sup>1</sup> What actually happened would remain obscure if not for the existence of a fragile map that can be found in the Chew Family and the Penn Family Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> When examined in light of Delaware accounts, this map reveals how the Pennsylvania proprietors deceived the Delawares so they would agree to the purchase.

James Logan, the Penns' primary representative, invited Delaware sachems to Stenton, his estate north of Philadelphia, for August 1737 negotiations relative to the proposed purchase. The sachems were well versed in their history of land transactions with Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> Manawkyhickon acknowledged the Delawares' satisfaction with William Penn, stating, guardedly, "he should be sorry if after this mutual Love and

<sup>1</sup> For Delaware versions of these events see "Weshaykanikon's Account of the Walking Purchase of 1686" (1:81), "Petition of Delawares Regarding the Walking Purchase, Nov. 21, 1740" (2:24), "Petition of Delawares Regarding the Walking Purchase, Jan. 3, 1741" (2:25), "Moses Tatamy's Account of Delaware Claims, c. Nov. 1756" (3:163), and "Moses Tatamy's Account of Indian Complaints, c. Aug. 1757" (3:296), all in Alden T. Vaughan, general ed., *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws, 1607-1789*, 20 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979-2004).

<sup>2</sup> This map, included with an affidavit by James Hamilton, William Allen, and Richard Peters on the matter in 1762, can be found in three places at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The map pictured here is from box 42, folder 2, Chew Family Papers. Copies can also be found in series 9 of the Penn Family Papers in NV-003, p. 103 and NV-004, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Weshaykanickon's Account of the Walking Purchase of 1686, NV-004, p. 61, ser. 9, Penn Family Papers.

Friendship any thing should arise that might create the least Misunderstanding.” Offering a belt of wampum, he explained that the Delawares were hesitant to agree to terms because they were not sure exactly how much land Penn’s sons were asking for.<sup>4</sup>

Neither the Penns, Logan, nor William Allen, the foremost investor in the land in question, wanted the Delawares to comprehend the vastness of the acreage they sought—the entire greater Delaware and Lehigh Valleys north of Wrightstown, Pennsylvania. Logan was especially anxious since he and Allen had conspired with surveyors and scouts to identify the finest land in the coveted upper Delaware and Lehigh Valleys. By the time he met with the sachems at Stenton in August 1737, Logan had already sold several parcels and desperately needed to clear Delaware claims in order to satisfy paying customers.

Thus, when Manawkyhickon expressed the Delawares’ willingness to come to terms if the amount of land sought by the Penns could be clarified, Andrew Hamilton, an agent of the proprietors, created a map “to shew and explain to the Indians the Boundaries of the said Land, and the Course of the one and Half Day’s Walk, which was to determine and fix the Extent or Head Line of that Purchase to the Northward.”<sup>5</sup>

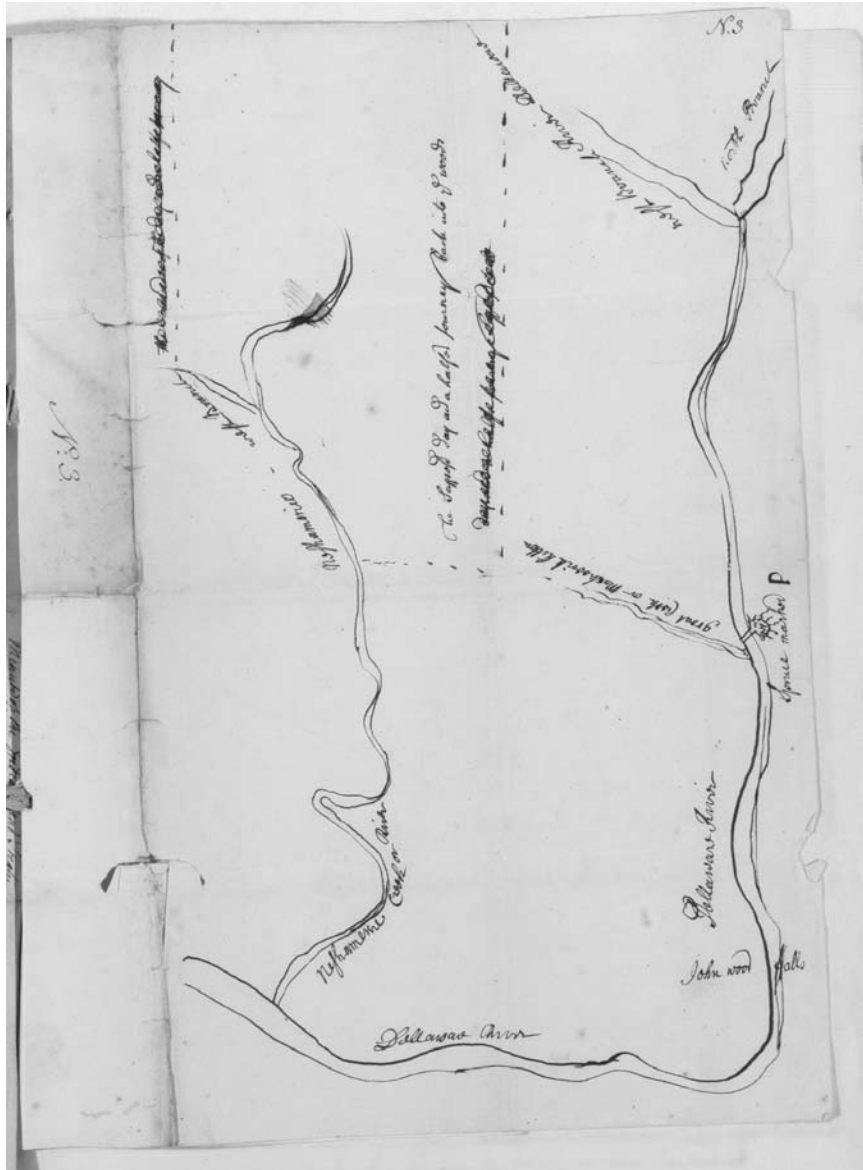
As William Allen remembered the events of August 25, 1737, after the four sachems had the map explained to them and “fully considered what had been then shewn and said to them, they declared themselves fully satisfied and convinced of the Truth thereof and that the Lands mentioned in the said Deeds had been fairly sold by their Ancestors to the said William Penn; and that they were willing to join in a full Confirmation thereof to the said Proprietaries.”<sup>6</sup> The sachems marked a document that confirmed an earlier draft deed and called for the walk to be made. The minutes of the meeting agree with this account, but they also reveal how the deceptive image disguised proprietorial intentions.

Hamilton’s map holds the key to the proprietors’ duplicity. Though a crude sketch, it was carefully crafted to miscommunicate to Delawares that all they were requested to relinquish was land south of Tohickon Creek. The map depicted the Delaware River from its west-east bend east of Philadelphia to its turn northward. It represented a spruce tree on the Delaware and Neshaminy Creek, between which the northern boundary

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Council, Aug. 24, 1737, NV-003, p. 103, ser. 9, Penn Family Papers.

<sup>5</sup> William Allen Deposition, NV-003, p. 101, ser. 9, Penn Family Papers.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



Hamilton map, box 42, folder 4, Chew Family Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

of an earlier purchase extended east to west. Further north, though greatly compressed in scale, the map showed the “West Branch Delaware River,” or the Lehigh, flowing into the Delaware. Between these two lines it purposely did not represent Tohickon Creek, the land south of which Delawares had long been willing to grant. Hamilton penned a dotted line to depict the direction the walk would take, jutting east from Neshaminy and then abruptly north toward the Lehigh River. The map’s misleading scale, the conspicuous absence of Tohickon Creek, and the dotted line parallel to the general course of the Delaware River than the actual walk caused the sachems to conclude that what the map showed as the Lehigh River was actually Tohickon Creek. And since the Lehigh (disguised as Tohickon) and the dotted line portraying the course of “the supposed day and a half’s journey back into ye woods” both ended near the top of the map, the document created the illusion that the Penns were simply asking for what Delawares were willing to grant—a fact which only becomes clear when one reads the map in light of Delaware accounts.<sup>7</sup>

The August negotiations ended with Delawares requiring the same promise from Penn’s heirs that they had required from Penn: “as the Indians and white People have ever lived together in a good Understanding, they, the Indians, would request that they may be permitted to remain on their present Settlements and Plantations, tho’ within that Purchase, without being molested.” Thomas Penn repeated earlier assurances on this point “and confirmed to them.”<sup>8</sup> These were promises he did not intend to keep. The Penns and their agents executed the infamous walk in September and began creating alternative history.<sup>9</sup> Delawares objected immediately, but their protests were dismissed. They were forced to move west or to completely assimilate. Only in the last generation have their historical voices finally been heard. Moreover, thanks to the Hamilton map, the precise nature of the deception the Penn government enacted upon the Delawares is now clear.

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<sup>7</sup> Minutes of the Council, Aug. 24, 1737, and map, NV-003, p. 103, ser. 9, Penn Family Papers.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.; Jean R. Soderlund, ed., *William Penn and the Founding of Pennsylvania, 1680–1684: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia, 1983), 160.

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of the Council, Aug. 24, 1737; and Document G, NV-003, p. 100, ser. 9, Penn Family Papers.

## *Charting the Colonial Backcountry: Joseph Shippen's Map of the Susquehanna River*

In the confusing and complex period after the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1755, the Susquehanna River acted as an important space that encompassed the competing and overlapping spheres of influence of both the British and the French in Pennsylvania. The confluence of the north and west branches of the river was also the site of the Indian town of Shamokin, where from 1747 through 1755 Moravian missionaries lived alongside Iroquois, Delawares, and Shawnees. Here the Moravians developed warm relations with such influential figures as Shikellamy, the Oneida sachem to the area's Iroquois, as well as with other native peoples who had been displaced from the area around the Chesapeake Bay.

The presence of Moravian missionaries at Shamokin might explain the existence in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, of a four-piece manuscript map of the Susquehanna River drawn by Joseph Shippen around the time the fort system was being built along the river.<sup>1</sup> The map accurately marks the route that Colonel William Clapham and four hundred troops took in July 1756 from Harris's ferry at the mouth of Paxton Creek up the eastern shore of the river to Fort Hunter, Fort Halifax, and Fort Augusta. The map also traces the water route taken by canoes and "bateaux," laden with provisions, as they tried to avoid the dangers of the rapids, falls, and riffles. To this end, Shippen's map details with great precision the numerous river islands and obstacles that such a flotilla had to navigate.

Reproduced here are two details of the map that demonstrate some of its significance to researchers. The first portion charts the main stem of the Susquehanna River from Harris's ferry up to Shipman's property on Barry's Creek. The two routes taken by land and water are clearly delineated (marked with a hash), as are the houses of settlers on both sides of the river and the names of creeks and tributaries.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The complete map, consisting of four sections, can be found at f.037.10–13, Drawings and Prints, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, PA.

<sup>2</sup> An account of Clapham's march can be found in Herbert C. Bell, *The History of Northumberland County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1891), 50–60.





The second segment depicts the positions of villages along the “Long Reach” of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River that had been inhabited up to and during this period by the extended family of the Indian interpreters Madame and Andrew Montour.<sup>3</sup> The Shippen map shows the villages at the mouths of the Muncy, Loyalsock (Ostonwakin), Lycoming (Quenischachachque), and Pine Creeks, respectively. In June 1753 Bernhard Grube, a Moravian missionary then residing at Shamokin, travelled up the West Branch to visit the members of the Montour family who were still living there. Of the place where once Madame Montour had lived, he wrote:

as I got to Ostonwakin I relaxed on the spot where earlier the Indian Town had stood, and I refreshed myself with strawberries, and thought a great deal about our dear Disciple and his dear travel company that pitched their tents here ten years ago. It is a pleasant area but now no one lives here any more. Now I could easily bathe in the Ostonwakin, the last time however it was up to my armpits and the current was very strong.<sup>4</sup>

Grube continued to French Margaret’s Town, as it is marked on the Shippen map, and provided the following description:

In the afternoon, around 5 o’clock, I arrived at the first little town on this side of Quenischachachque, where the deceased Madame Montour’s daughter Margaret and her family live. She is a very rich woman, has 30 horses, several cows, and 40 pigs. This year she planted 8 acres of Indian corn.<sup>5</sup>

Although this portion of the map is far less detailed than the representation of the main stem, Shippen accurately marks the existence of two

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of the Montours, see Jon Parmenter, “Isabel Montour: Cultural Broker on the Frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania,” in *The Human Tradition in Colonial America*, ed. Ian K. Steele and Nancy L. Rhoden (Wilmington, DE, 1999), 141–59. The Moravian missionary John Heckewelder claims that Quenischachachque is also the Lenape name for the West Branch, meaning the “river of long reaches.” See “Notes and Queries,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 11 (1887): 126.

<sup>4</sup> “Diary by Grube, April 14–July 31, 1753,” ms. 01.32.121.6, Moravian Archives (translation mine). For Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf’s account of his meeting with Andrew Montour at this same place, see William C. Reichel, ed., *Memorials of the Moravian Church*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1870), 95–97; and William C. Reichel, ed., *Count Zinzendorf and the Indians* (1742; repr. Lewisburg, PA, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> “Diary by Grube.”



villages at the mouth of the Lycoming Creek. The village on the western side of the water, the larger of the two, was Grube's actual destination. He recorded:

On the 6th of June I went to Quenischachachque and as I came into the town an Indian by the name of Thomas Freeman came up to me and said immediately "Welcome Brother! I know who you must be and I want to take you into the Lodge," and so he took me to James David's house where Christian Renatus lodged, who also came out to meet me and was very pleased. Soon several Indians arrived and asked whether this was the Brother about whom they had heard so much and they were very friendly towards me. Then I was treated to bear meat.<sup>6</sup>

Although Grube's account is rich in detail of the area, Shippen's map is not; Shippen did not travel this far along the West Branch himself, but, rather, relied on the reports of scouts who were sent forward up the Susquehanna's branches to look for hostile French Indians.

One other copy of Colonel Clapham's "March to Fort Augusta" can be found in the Pennsylvania State Archives.<sup>7</sup> The version of Shippen's map contained therein is not as detailed, but the relief drawing of the islands and steep cliffs on the banks of the river is more expertly rendered, which might lead one to believe that this is a later, more polished, version of the map. Why the supposed original of a map that was drawn for primarily colonial military interests should be in the Moravian Archives, however, is unknown. The detail and condition of Shippen's map in the Moravian Archives mark it of paramount interest to researchers focusing on the fascinating confluence not only of the Susquehanna River but also of the native and colonial settlers who lived along its shores in the mid-eighteenth century.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> [Map of Col. Clapham's March to Fort Augusta, ca. 1756, by Joseph Shippen], MG11-Map Collection, Map 105, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA. "Begins at Harris's near Paxton Creek, past Fort Halifax to Fort Augusta. Then up the East Branch of the Susquehanna to Nanticoke Town and Mamuncis[?] Town. Shows the West Branch of the Susquehanna to and past Shonemahone. Original, hand drawn in 3 colors. Laminated, 8 sections."