As soon as the French military threat had disappeared in the area south of the Great Lakes, General Sir Jeffery Amherst, the British commander in chief in North America, imposed severe measures of austerity that included reductions in all forms of support to the Indians. Begun in 1761, this policy was one factor that led to Pontiac's War two years later. Many formal discussions, classified by contemporary writers as treaties, were undertaken with the Indians to soften the message. To ease the discussion process an effort was made to erect structures that would serve as sites for speeches, as well as to lodge Indian leaders and their entourages during the often lengthy negotiation periods. Providing physical pleasures like this paid off well as they induced the chiefs to compromise demands they had intended to make on behalf of their people. Although little evidence remains of such structures, it is clear that the Pennsylvania provincial government had cabins built at Lancaster to accommodate negotiating Iroquois and Delaware spokesmen.1 The document printed below is evidence of such a structure at Fort Pitt. During a research trip in March 1982 it was found in a British Treasury Miscellanea series at the Public Record Office in Kew, Richmond, Surrey.2

Geo Croghan Esq' To Sam' Young
For Building a Counsal House For the Indians a' Fort Pitt

For Hewing Logs .......................................................... £4 0 0
Raising the House .......................................................... 4 10 0

2 Treasury Miscellanea Various, Treasury 64, bundle 21, Public Record Office.
Laying the upper floor .................................................. 3 10 0
the Lower floor D° ..................................................... 2 0 0
Sash Lights ...................................................................... 1 0 0
two sash Frames ............................................................. 15 0
Cutting out the Logs .......................................................... 6 0
one Door Case .................................................................. 12 0
two Window Shutters .......................................................... 10 0
one Door .......................................................................... 10 0
hewing the Joyce ............................................................... 1 5 0
making Stairs & Closet ...................................................... 2 0 0
making a petition ............................................................... 1 10 0
the petition Door & moldings ............................................... 10 0
the Rafters and Cupling ...................................................... 1 10 0
Studs & Clap Boards ........................................................ 1 10 0
the Shingles & Shingling .................................................... 6 10 0
Sawing the Laths ............................................................... 1 5 0
Boards ........................................................................... 1 5 0
to making a Closet & Door ................................................ 1 0 0
Carrying the Boards from the saw mill .................................. 1 2 6
for helping the Logs Down the River .................................... 15 0
For Worke Don at the Smith Shop 2000 Shingles ................. 8 0 0
Lathing & Shingling .......................................................... 2 0 0
a mantle piece for the Shimney ............................................ 5 0
holling the Logs for the Councl house ................................. 3 10 0
to Bottowing them Down the River ..................................... 1 15 0
to the measons for Worke ................................................... 11 10 0

£64 5 6

Fort Pitt Oct' 12th 1762

Received of George Croghan Esquire the Contents of the above
Account. Pr SAM'L YOUNG

[In Henry Bouquet's hand] I do Certify that in the Summer 1762
Mr Croghan had a House built at this Post, intended for Conferences
with the Indians

Fort Pitt 11th October 1762 H. BOUQUET

[Endorsed] Samuel Youngs Acc' and Receipt for £64 5 6

George Croghan, the flamboyant deputy of Britain's Indian agent
for the northern colonies, Sir William Johnson, arranged many of the
negotiations in 1762 and aggressively sought to mitigate Amherst's austerity. The council house may have been used as the site for talks at Fort Pitt with some Iroquois, on December 9-14, 1762, and with Shawnee chiefs on January 27, February 12, and April 16-18, 1763.\(^3\) Samuel Young, who subcontracted the construction, can be partially identified as a western trader. He was present in Pittsburgh in September 1762 to testify in a financial dispute involving merchandise.\(^4\) He appears in the records of the Fort Pitt trading post in 1766,\(^5\) and, both as an individual and as Samuel Young and Company, in the records of the Baynton, Wharton and Morgan Company at Fort Chartres from 1766 to 1768.\(^6\) On business somehow related to George Morgan he traveled down the Mississippi to New Orleans and in February 1768 was planning a return along the coast to Philadelphia.\(^7\) Managing construction of the council house was an event merely incidental to his mercantile career.

It is not clear where the council house stood in relation to the fort. Unless the structure was converted to some other use and renamed, or was much farther from the fort than "at this post" suggests, no other reference to it is available. It is likely, therefore, that it was destroyed either in the flood that damaged the fort and the lower town on March 9, 1763, or during the burning of the buildings surrounding the fort, on June 2, 1763, as the Indian siege of Pontiac's War was beginning.

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7 Samuel Young to George Morgan, Feb. 18, 1768, General Correspondence 1759-1787, *ibid.*, roll 5, frames 1172-74.