

Colonial Pennsylvania and the Paxton Massacre, 1763



[James Claypoole or Henry Dawkins?], "The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs," [Philadelphia], 1764, (Historical Society of Pennsylvania Large Graphics Collection (#V65))

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BY JOHN McNAMARA AND RON NASH (CREATED IN 2019, REVISED IN 2024)

John McNamara worked for more than thirty years as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and district supervisor of social studies, K–12, in New York City and New Jersey. Ron Nash taught high school history and special education in New Jersey for more than thirty-five years. They are project consultants for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: Four 45-minute class periods

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual primary sources as well as sources that combine elements of primary and secondary sources. These skills will enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate documents and other resources of historical significance.

The four lessons in this unit explore a massacre in colonial Pennsylvania in which the Paxton Boys—immigrants from Ulster, Northern Ireland—murdered twenty Conestoga people. Students will examine the form and scale of the murders, how the Paxton Boys explained their actions, and the ways in which internal disputes between Quakers and other groups shaped unfolding events. Most of the primary sources referenced here are available in Digital Paxton (digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/index), which collects in one open-source repository surviving pamphlets, broadsides, political cartoons, and correspondence related to this event and its consequences. You will assess students’ understanding through a mock news conference staged by the students.

Students will be able to

- Analyze both primary and secondary source documents using close-reading strategies
- Interpret, analyze, and demonstrate understanding of visual materials
- Draw logical inferences and summarize the essential message of a work of art
- Compose summaries of the major points in written primary sources
- Compare and contrast the viewpoints and perspectives of different writers
- Explain the significance of an important historical event (e.g., the Paxton Massacre)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What did the Paxton Boys do in 1763?
- What was the central debate between Pennsylvania colonists on Native American policy? Who was on which side?
- How did the Paxton Boys' political rivals respond to pleas, demands, and threats?
- Why is the Paxton Massacre historically significant?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on . . . topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

MATERIALS

- Source 1: Historical Background: "Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 1" by Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Activity Sheet 1: Analyzing an Essay
- Source 2: [James Claypoole or Henry Dawkins?], "The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs," [Philadelphia], 1764, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Large Graphics Collection (#V65). Available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/the-german-bleeds-and-bears-ye-furs?path=political-cartoons.
- Source 3: Henry Dawkins, "The Paxton Expedition, Inscribed to the Author of the Farce, by HD," Philadelphia, ca. 1764, Library Company of Philadelphia. Available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/the-paxton-expedition?path=political-cartoons.
- Activity Sheet 2: Details, Description, and Decision
- Source 4: Historical Background: "Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 2" by Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Activity Sheet 3: Analyzing an Essay
- Summary Organizer 1: Excerpts from Anonymous, "The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers Addressed to the Candid & Impartial World" (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 9–10, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The complete manuscript is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/apology-of-the-paxton-volunteers.
- Summary Organizer 2: Excerpts from Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of the Province, by Persons Unknown. With Some Observations on the Same* ([Philadelphia], 1764), pp. 12–14 and 25–27. The complete pamphlet is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-narrative-of-the-late-massacres.

- Summary Organizer 3: Excerpts from Franklin's *Narrative of the Late Massacres*
- Projector, Smartboard, or similar device
- Source 5: Historical Background: "Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 3," Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Source 6: Excerpts from *A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, Presented by Them to the Honourable the Governor and Assembly of the Province, Shewing the Causes of Their Late Discontent and Uneasiness and the Grievances under Which They Have Laboured, and Which They Humbly Pray to Have Redress'd* (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 10–12 and 15–18. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-declaration-and-remonstrance.
- Source 7: *A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot; About the Killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster*, [1764]. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-dialogue-between-andrew-trueman-and-thomas-zealot.
- Activity Sheet 4: Analyzing a Pamphlet
- Activity Sheet 5: The News Conference

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

PEACEABLE KINGDOM LOST

by Kevin Kenny, New York University

Part 1

The “Paxton Boys,” a mob of frontier militiamen from western Pennsylvania, struck Conestoga Indiantown at dawn on December 14, 1763. “Fifty-seven Men, from some of our Frontier Townships, who had projected the Destruction of this little Commonwealth,” Benjamin Franklin wrote in his *Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County*, “came, all well-mounted, and armed with Firelocks, Hangers [a kind of short sword] and Hatchets, having travelled through the Country in the Night, to Conestogoe Manor.” Only six people were in the town at the time, “the rest being out among the neighboring White People, some to sell the Baskets, Brooms and Bowls they manufactured.” The mob killed these six and burned their settlement to the ground.

The Conestoga people lived on a 500-acre tract, which William Penn had set aside for them seventy years earlier, near the town of Lancaster, one hundred miles west of Philadelphia. By 1763 only twenty Conestoga people were living there—seven men, five women, and eight children.

After the murders, local magistrates removed the remaining fourteen residents to the Lancaster jail and workhouse for their safety, but on December 27 the Paxton Boys rode into that town to continue the attack they had started two weeks earlier. Fifty men, “armed as before, dismounting, went directly to the Work-house and by Violence broke open the Door,” Franklin reported, “and entered with the utmost Fury in their Countenances.” Within a matter of minutes they had slaughtered the fourteen individuals sheltering at the workhouse, including the eight children.

The Paxton men were fully aware of the symbolic and political significance of their actions. They murdered unarmed, peaceable Conestoga people to make the point that all Indians were the same. And they slaughtered the Conestogas on government property in broad daylight. In perpetrating the massacres, they repudiated the settlement policy of William Penn.

Inspired by Quaker principles, Penn had founded his colony in 1682 as a “holy experiment” in which Christians and Indians could live together in harmony. He drew the model of his colony from the “Peaceable Kingdom” envisioned in the Book of Isaiah in the Bible. That dream proved surprisingly resilient. In fact, the nineteenth-century Quaker artist Edward Hicks produced a series of paintings of the Peaceable Kingdom in which he always included Penn’s legendary meeting with the Delaware peoples under the elm tree at Shackamaxon, in present-day Philadelphia. In pursuit of his vision, William Penn treated the Native peoples in his province with uncommon respect.

Yet for all his popularity, Penn’s holy experiment always rested on colony-building foundations. There would have been no Pennsylvania, after all, had he not received a gift of 29 million acres from King Charles II in 1681—a gift that made him the largest individual landlord in the British Empire. Within this immense territory, Penn purchased land from Native peoples and, by his understanding, fairly. But he did so because he needed to get clear title to their land so that he could sell it to settlers and try to make a profit from his colony.

Part 2

The myth of the Peaceable Kingdom, already in decline by the time of William Penn’s death in 1718, disintegrated gradually over the next few decades. Penn’s son and principal heir, Thomas, cast off the Quaker faith and converted to Anglicanism. He and his brothers continued to negotiate with Native peoples, but they did not hesitate to use fraud and intimidation. In 1737 they swindled the Delaware people out of a huge tract of land in a transaction known as the “Walking Purchase.” For the Delaware people, the measure of this land was how much a man could walk in a day and a half. The Penns, however, sent out a team of relay runners who marked out a tract almost as big as Rhode Island. Most of the Delaware people who lived there were forced to move west of the Susquehanna River, which at that time marked the western boundary of European settlement. The “Walking Purchase” remained their primary grievance when they went to war against Pennsylvania twenty years later.

Immigrants from the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland, also posed a threat to Pennsylvania's Native peoples. These settlers began to arrive in Pennsylvania at the beginning of the eighteenth century and set up as squatters along the frontier,¹ ignoring the land rights of Native people and the Penn family alike. They claimed the land by “tomahawk right”—marking trees at a distance from one another with their axes, and declaring the territory between these trees as their own. As early as 1730, a generation before the Paxton massacres, a group of Ulster squatters temporarily occupied Conestoga Manor, declaring that it was “against the Laws of God and Nature that so much Land Should lie idle while so many Christians wanted it to labour on and raise their Bread.”²

Conflict between western colonists and Native peoples intensified during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). Expelled from their lands in eastern Pennsylvania, most of the Delaware and Shawnee peoples west of the Susquehanna River sided with the French as the lesser of two evils and launched devastating raids on frontier settlers. The colonial government in Philadelphia responded by declaring war on the Delaware people and, for the first time, establishing a militia. A handful of strict Quakers remained true to William Penn's pacifist vision, but the Peaceable Kingdom had come to an end. Frontier settlers did most of the fighting during the war and, from their perspective, both branches of the government in Philadelphia—the Quaker-dominated Assembly and executive branch run by the Penn family—seemed indifferent to their wishes.

No sooner had the British defeated the French in 1763 than Pontiac's War, the largest Indian war in colonial American history, erupted. Delaware and Shawnee peoples once again launched raids east of the Susquehanna River. Frontier settlers re-lived the nightmare of the Seven Years' War. It was in this context, in December 1763, that the Paxton men carried out their massacre.

The Paxton Boys arose directly out of a local militia created by the colonial government in response to frontier demands for defense in the summer of 1763. Colonel John Armstrong of Carlisle commanded a unit west of the Susquehanna River and the Rev. John Elder, the “fighting pastor” of Paxton Presbyterian Church, commanded a unit to the east. These two units were supposed to be strictly defensive, but Elder and Armstrong used them to launch raids against the Delaware people. When raids failed, a mob led by Lazarus Stewart and Matthew Smith attacked the Conestoga people instead.

Part 3

At the end of January 1764, a month after the massacres, reports reached Philadelphia that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Paxton Boys were marching eastward, threatening to sack the city unless their grievances were met. They also demanded the right to “inspect” 140 Lenape people and Moravian Indians³ who had been removed from the frontier and placed in protective custody. Given what the Paxton mob had done to the Conestoga people, the residents of Philadelphia could only imagine what this “inspection” might entail.

When several hundred Paxton Boys reached Germantown, just six miles outside Philadelphia, they were met by a delegation led by Benjamin Franklin, who persuaded them to write down their grievances. Their spokesmen, Matthew Smith and James Gibson, submitted a Declaration and a Remonstrance for consideration by the colonial government, and what followed was a war of words instead of a war of weapons. Presbyterian supporters of the Paxton Boys, in alliance with the Anglican faction surrounding the Penn family, battled Benjamin Franklin and the Quaker party in print. The debate, which featured more than sixty pamphlets and ten political cartoons, went far beyond the immediate issue of the Conestoga massacres to address the fundamental question of how Pennsylvania ought to be governed.

Despite Franklin's efforts, the Paxton murderers went unpunished. Nobody was investigated, let alone arrested or prosecuted. As a result, like-minded settlers on the Pennsylvania frontier felt free to behave in similar ways. The result was wave after wave of violence on the frontier, culminating in total war against Indigenous peoples during

¹ The term often used in scholarly discussion today for “frontier” is “borderlands”; however, we will use frontier here in accordance with the eighteenth-century view of the colonists.

² James Logan to John, Thomas, and Richard Penn, February 17, 1731. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, James Logan letterbooks, vol. 3.

³ [Editor]: A group of Native Americans from different tribes who had been Christianized by Moravian missionaries.

the American Revolution. In Pennsylvania, the Paxton mob's brutality was the exception as late as 1763, but during the Revolution it became commonplace.

Ironically, Benjamin Franklin and the Paxton men ended up supporting the same side in the American Revolution. But that is because there was more than one revolution going on—the familiar struggle for lofty principles of liberty and equality in the east, and a lesser-known struggle involving land and American Indians in the west. Some historians have seen the Paxton Boys as frontier democrats fighting against the privilege of the Penn family who extended their fight for democracy into the Revolutionary era. John Elder, Matthew Smith, John Armstrong, and Lazarus Stewart all rallied to the patriot cause, to be sure, but they were fighting for the same thing they had fought for in the 1760s—access to land, personal security, and vengeance against Indigenous peoples.

In their Remonstrance, the Paxton Boys had demanded greater political representation for the western counties in the Pennsylvania Assembly, but that was only one of nine grievances; all of the others concerned the “savages” in their midst. The American Revolution did more than destroy the privilege of the Penn family; it doomed the region's Native peoples. During the Revolutionary War, American patriots enacted the brutal logic of the Paxton mob on a devastating scale.

This essay, commissioned by Digital Paxton, is based on Kevin Kenny's Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment (Oxford University Press, 2009). Kevin Kenny is the Glucksman Professor of History and director of Glucksman Ireland House at New York University.

LESSON 1

MURDER OF THE CONESTOGA PEOPLE

BY JOHN McNAMARA AND RON NASH (CREATED IN 2019, REVISED IN 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will read a secondary source that provides historical background for the murder of the Conestoga people in Pennsylvania in 1763. They will then analyze two eighteenth-century political cartoons related to that event. One cartoon depicts one group of colonists' feelings of being oppressed by both Quaker leaders and American Indians. The other depicts the march to Philadelphia by the Paxton mob to continue their assault on Native peoples. The students' knowledge will be demonstrated through completed activity sheets and class discussion.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual primary sources as well as sources that combine elements of primary and secondary sources. The four lessons in this unit explore a massacre in colonial Pennsylvania in which the Paxton Boys—immigrants from Ulster, Northern Ireland—murdered twenty Conestoga people.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- What did the Paxton Boys do in 1763?

MATERIALS

- Source 1: Historical Background: “Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 1” by Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Activity Sheet 1: Analyzing an Essay
- Source 2: [James Claypoole or Henry Dawkins?], “The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs,” [Philadelphia], 1764, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Large Graphics Collection (#V65). Available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/the-german-bleeds-and-bears-ye-furs?path=political-cartoons.
- Source 3: Henry Dawkins, “The Paxton Expedition, Inscribed to the Author of the Farce, by HD,” Philadelphia, ca. 1764, Library Company of Philadelphia. Available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/the-paxton-expedition?path=political-cartoons.
- Activity Sheet 2: Details, Description, and Decision

PROCEDURE

1. Introduce the Essential Question for this lesson: What did the Paxton Boys do in 1763?
2. Distribute Source 1, the first part of the Historical Background essay by Professor Kevin Kenny. You may choose to assign the reading as homework before starting the lesson, and the students can complete the Analyzing an Essay activity sheet to prepare for the class discussion.

3. You may also choose to “share read” the document in class. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).
4. Distribute Activity Sheet 1: Analyzing an Essay. Depending on the students’ experience with examining texts, you may choose to model the selection and analysis of the first phrase and, when the class is ready, the answer to the first critical thinking question. For the rest of the activity sheet, you may choose to have the students work individually, as partners, or in small groups of three or four.
5. Reconvene the class and discuss different interpretations developed by individual students or groups.
6. Distribute the political cartoons from 1764, Sources 2 and 3, along with Activity Sheet 2: Details, Description, and Decision. Students may work individually, with a partner, or in a small group.
 - “The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs”
 - o The figure on the far left is Benjamin Franklin.
 - o The first man carrying the other man is Scots-Irish.
 - o The man with the broad-brimmed black hat is a Quaker.
 - o The blind-folded man carrying the Native American is a German immigrant.
 - “The Paxton Expedition, Inscribed to the Author of the Farce, by HD”
 - o The setting is Philadelphia.
 - o Lanape and Moravian Indians have been taken into the city to protect them from the Paxton mob.
 - o The Paxton mob marched to Philadelphia demanding to “inspect” the Indigenous people.
 - o The tense situation was defused.
 - o The verse describes some of these events.
7. After the students complete the activity sheets, reconvene the class and discuss different interpretations developed by the individual students or groups.
8. Discussion: Center the class discussion around the Essential Question and the content of the two primary source images. Make sure students are using evidence from the sources to support their responses.

LESSON 2

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND THE PAXTON BOYS

BY JOHN McNAMARA AND RON NASH (CREATED IN 2019, REVISED IN 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will read two primary source documents representing opposing points of view about the murder of the Conestoga people by the Paxton Boys. While Benjamin Franklin sought to hold the mob accountable for their actions, the “Paxton Volunteers” tried to explain and justify their actions. Students will engage in the keyword strategy to develop a summary of the text and draw sound conclusions about these historical events. They will demonstrate their understanding through completed summary organizers and a written response to the Essential Question for the lesson.

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ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- What was the central debate between Pennsylvania colonists on Native American policy? Who was on which side?

MATERIALS

- Source 4: Historical Background: “Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 2” by Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Activity Sheet 3: Analyzing an Essay
- Summary Organizer 1: Excerpts from Anonymous, “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers Addressed to the Candid & Impartial World” (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 9–10, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The complete manuscript is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/apology-of-the-paxton-volunteers.
- Summary Organizer 2: Excerpts from Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of the Province, by Persons Unknown. With Some Observations on the Same* ([Philadelphia], 1764), pp. 12–14 and 25–27. The complete pamphlet is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-narrative-of-the-late-massacres.
- Summary Organizer 3: Excerpts from Franklin’s *Narrative of the Late Massacres*
- Projector, Smartboard, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute Source 4, the second part of the Historical Background essay written by Professor Kevin Kenny. You may choose to assign the reading as homework before starting the lesson or share read the document in class as described in Lesson 1.
2. Distribute Activity Sheet 3: Analyzing an Essay. You may choose to have the students work individually, as partners, or in small groups of three or four.
3. The students will engage with two primary source documents. The first is an excerpt from “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers” outlining the Paxton Boys’ grievances. You may wish to define *apology*: “Something that is said or written to defend something that other people criticize” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary).
4. Distribute Summary Organizer 1: “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers,” and display it in a format large enough for everyone to see. The whole class will go through the text-analysis process together for the first reading.
5. Share read the text with the students as described in Lesson 1.
6. Explain that the objective is to select keywords from the text and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of the text.

Guidelines for Selecting the Keywords: Keywords are very important to understanding the text. Without them the selection would not make sense. These words are usually nouns or verbs. Tell the students not to pick “connector” words (*are, is, the, and, so, etc.*). The number of keywords depends on the length of the text. This selection is 288 words, so you can pick ten to twelve keywords. The students must know the meaning of the words they select. This will give them practice reasoning out word meanings using context and advancing dictionary skills.

7. Students will select ten to twelve words from the text that they believe are keywords and circle them or write them in the Keywords section of the organizer.
8. Survey the class to find out what they selected as keywords. You can ask for a show of hands to determine the most popular choices. Based on this vote and some discussion, the class should finalize ten to twelve keywords. For example, the class could select *Indians, governed, dangerous enemies* (two words may occasionally be allowed if they convey a single idea), *spies, laws, intelligence, implements, war, source, and calamities*. Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have them write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Keywords section of the organizer.
9. The class will use these keywords to write a brief sentence or two to summarize what the author was writing about. This should be a whole-class discussion-and-negotiation process. For example, “The Indians who lived among us were not governed by our laws and were dangerous enemies and spies who gave intelligence and implements of war to our enemies (the French). They are the source of our calamities.” The students might decide that they don’t need some of the keywords to make the summary even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. Copy the final negotiated sentence(s) into the organizer.
10. Tell the students to restate their summary sentences in their own words; they do not have to use the author’s words. For example, “The Indians who lived in our area were not governed by our laws and were dangerous enemies and spies who helped the French. They are responsible for our misery and misfortune.” Copy the final negotiated sentence(s) into the organizer.
11. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. You could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.
12. Hand out Summary Organizer 2. This contains an excerpt from Benjamin Franklin’s *A Narrative of the Late Massacres*, written as a reply to the Paxton Boys’ explanations. The students may work in small groups, in pairs, or individually to complete the organizer. They should select ten to twelve keywords for this passage.
13. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. You could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.

14. You may assign Summary Organizer 3 for homework. The students may complete the whole assignment at home or only identify and circle keywords (seven to eight) so that you are prepared to engage in the negotiation process the next day.
15. Assessment: Students will use the information from the primary sources to write a short response essay that addresses the Essential Question: What was the central debate between Pennsylvania colonists regarding Native American policy? Who was on which side?

LESSON 3

THE AFTERMATH OF MURDER

BY JOHN McNAMARA AND RON NASH (CREATED IN 2019, REVISED IN 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will read the third part of the historical background essay and two primary sources, pamphlets published as part of the Paxton Pamphlet War, a set of over sixty pamphlets and political cartoons issued by those who supported and opposed the Paxton Boys' murder of the Conestoga people. Students will read and analyze excerpts from two of the pamphlets to gain insight into the political landscape of Pennsylvania a decade before the American Revolution.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How did the Paxton Boys' political rivals respond to pleas, demands, and threats?

MATERIALS

- Source 5: Historical Background: "Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 3," Kevin Kenny, Glucksman Professor of History, New York University. Commissioned for Digital Paxton.
- Activity Sheet 3: Analyzing an Essay (from Lesson 2)
- Source 6: Excerpts from *A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, Presented by Them to the Honourable the Governor and Assembly of the Province, Shewing the Causes of Their Late Discontent and Uneasiness and the Grievances under Which They Have Laboured, and Which They Humbly Pray to Have Redress'd* (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 10–12 and 15–18. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-declaration-and-remonstrance.
- Source 7: *A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot; About the Killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster*, [1764]. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-dialogue-between-andrew-trueman-and-thomas-zealot.
- Activity Sheet 4: Analyzing a Pamphlet

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute Source 5, the third part of the Historical Background essay. You may choose to assign the reading as homework before starting the lesson, and the students may complete the activity sheet to prepare for the class discussion.

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2. You may also choose to share read the essay in class as described in Lesson 1.
3. Distribute Activity Sheet 3: Analyzing an Essay (from Lesson 2). You may choose to have the students work individually, as partners, or in small groups of three or four.
4. Distribute Source 6: Excerpts from *A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants*, and Source 7: *A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot*, along with two copies of Activity Sheet 4: Analyzing a Pamphlet. Source 7 uses spelling and language that is meant to characterize Scots-Irish people from the Pennsylvania frontier, like the Paxton Boys, as backward and uneducated, and exaggerating their accent. Therefore, some of the language is more difficult than the other documents in this unit. However, if the students read the word out loud they may be able to figure out its meaning.
5. Divide the class into groups of four to six students. Within their groups they will work collaboratively to complete an activity sheet for each document.
6. Reconvene the class so the students can discuss their summaries of the texts.

LESSON 4

THE HISTORICAL IMPACT

BY JOHN McNAMARA AND RON NASH (CREATED IN 2019, REVISED IN 2024)

OVERVIEW

Students will develop a mock news conference using the primary sources from Lessons 1, 2, and 3 to deepen their understanding of the conflict. They will create questions and answers based on evidence in the texts to clarify the positions of the murderers and their opponents. They will conclude with a discussion of or written response to the Essential Question on the historical significance of this conflict in the context of the Seven Years' War, Pontiac's War, and the American Revolution.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- Why is the Paxton Massacre historically significant?

John McNamara worked for more than thirty years as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and district supervisor of social studies, K–12, in New York City and New Jersey. Ron Nash taught high school history and special education in New Jersey for more than thirty-five years. They are project consultants for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual primary sources as well as sources that combine elements of primary and secondary sources. The four lessons in this unit explore a massacre in colonial Pennsylvania in which the Paxton Boys—immigrants from Ulster, Northern Ireland—murdered twenty Conestoga people.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 1: Excerpts from Anonymous, “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers Addressed to the Candid & Impartial World” (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 9–10, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The complete manuscript is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/apology-of-the-paxton-volunteers.
- Summary Organizer 2: Excerpts from Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of the Province, by Persons Unknown. With Some Observations on the Same* ([Philadelphia], 1764), pp. 12–14 and 25–27. The complete pamphlet is available at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-narrative-of-the-late-massacres.
- Summary Organizer 3: Excerpts from Franklin's *Narrative of the Late Massacres*
- Source 6: Excerpts from *A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, Presented by Them to the Honourable the Governor and Assembly of the Province, Shewing the Causes of Their Late Discontent and Uneasiness and the Grievances under Which They Have Laboured, and Which They Humbly Pray to Have Redress'd* (Philadelphia, 1764), pp. 10–12 and 15–18. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-declaration-and-remonstrance.
- Source 7: *A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot; About the Killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster*, [1764]. The original pamphlet is available online at Digital Paxton, digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/a-dialogue-between-andrew-trueman-and-thomas-zealot.
- Activity Sheet 5: The News Conference

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the class into groups of four to six students. Each group is assigned or chooses one of the four Digital Paxton documents (Summary Organizers 1–3 and Sources 6 and 7). It is best if all four texts are chosen before doubling up on any of the documents.
2. One student in each group will take the role of the speaker and the others will take the roles of reporters at a news conference. If possible, have the students watch an actual news conference prior to this activity.
3. Hand out the News Conference activity sheet. Together the students in each group will write both the question and the answer to the question for each reporter. The questions should highlight the major issues in the document. If time permits, the students could script follow-up questions. They should be careful to use evidence (quotations) from the text in the answers given by the speaker. All students will write out a complete copy of the questions and answers, not just their own question.
4. Presentation:
 - a. The speaker reads the excerpts from the document aloud to the class.
 - b. The reporters raise their hands, and the speaker selects them one by one to ask a question.
 - c. The speaker answers the question using evidence from the text.
 - d. Continue until all of the questions have been asked, one per reporter; if time permits, they may ask their follow-up questions.
 - e. Repeat the process with all of the groups.
5. Have the class debrief the presentations: Which were the most effective? What made them effective? How could the presentations have been improved? Focus on good oral presentation skills as well as which questions elicited the most meaningful answers and whether the answers were based on evidence in the text.
6. Conclude with a discussion of the Essential Question for this lesson: Why is the Paxton Massacre historically significant? Remind them to support their answers with evidence from the documents. You may choose to have the students write responses to this question as an assessment.

Source 1: Historical Background Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 1

by Kevin Kenny, New York University

The “Paxton Boys,” a mob of frontier militiamen from western Pennsylvania, struck Conestoga Indiantown at dawn on December 14, 1763. “Fifty-seven Men, from some of our Frontier Townships, who had projected the Destruction of this little Commonwealth,” Benjamin Franklin wrote in his *Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County*, “came, all well-mounted, and armed with Firelocks, Hangers [a kind of short sword] and Hatchets, having travelled through the Country in the Night, to Conestogoe Manor.” Only six people were in the town at the time, “the rest being out among the neighboring White People, some to sell the Baskets, Brooms and Bowls they manufactured.” The mob killed these six and burned their settlement to the ground.

The Conestoga people lived on a 500-acre tract, which William Penn had set aside for them seventy years earlier, near the town of Lancaster, one hundred miles west of Philadelphia. By 1763 only twenty Conestoga people were living there—seven men, five women, and eight children.

After the murders, local magistrates removed the remaining fourteen residents to the Lancaster jail and workhouse for their safety, but on December 27 the Paxton Boys rode into that town to continue the attack they had started two weeks earlier. Fifty men, “armed as before, dismounting, went directly to the Work-house and by Violence broke open the Door,” Franklin reported, “and entered with the utmost Fury in their Countenances.” Within a matter of minutes they had slaughtered the fourteen individuals sheltering at the workhouse, including the eight children.

The Paxton men were fully aware of the symbolic and political significance of their actions. They murdered unarmed, peaceable Conestoga people to make the point that all Indians were the same. And they slaughtered the Conestogas on government property in broad daylight. In perpetrating the massacres, they repudiated the settlement policy of William Penn.

Inspired by Quaker principles, Penn had founded his colony in 1682 as a “holy experiment” in which Christians and Indians could live together in harmony. He drew the model of his colony from the “Peaceable Kingdom” envisioned in the Book of Isaiah in the Bible. That dream proved surprisingly resilient. In fact, the nineteenth-century Quaker artist Edward Hicks produced a series of paintings of the Peaceable Kingdom in which he always included Penn’s legendary meeting with the Delaware peoples under the elm tree at Shackamaxon, in present-day Philadelphia. In pursuit of his vision, William Penn treated the Native peoples in his province with uncommon respect.

Yet for all his popularity, Penn’s holy experiment always rested on colony-building foundations. There would have been no Pennsylvania, after all, had he not received a gift of 29 million acres from King Charles II in 1681—a gift that made him the largest individual landlord in the British Empire. Within this immense territory, Penn purchased land from Native peoples and, by his understanding, fairly. But he did so because he needed to get clear title to their land so that he could sell it to settlers and try to make a profit from his colony.

This essay, commissioned by Digital Paxton, is based on Kevin Kenny’s Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment (Oxford University Press, 2009). Kevin Kenny is the Glucksman Professor of History and director of Glucksman Ireland House at New York University.

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Activity Sheet 1
Analyzing an Essay: “Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 1”

Important Phrases

Which phrases or sentences are the most informative or important in this essay? Choose three and give the reason for your choice.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Activity Sheet 1
Analyzing an Essay: “Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 1”

Critical Thinking Questions

Cite examples from the text in your answers.

1. How would you evaluate the events of December 14, 1763, in terms of perpetrator actions and outcomes?

2. Where did the Conestoga people live?

3. How did William Penn treat the Native peoples of Pennsylvania?

Source 2
 “The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs,” 1764



Historical Society of Pennsylvania

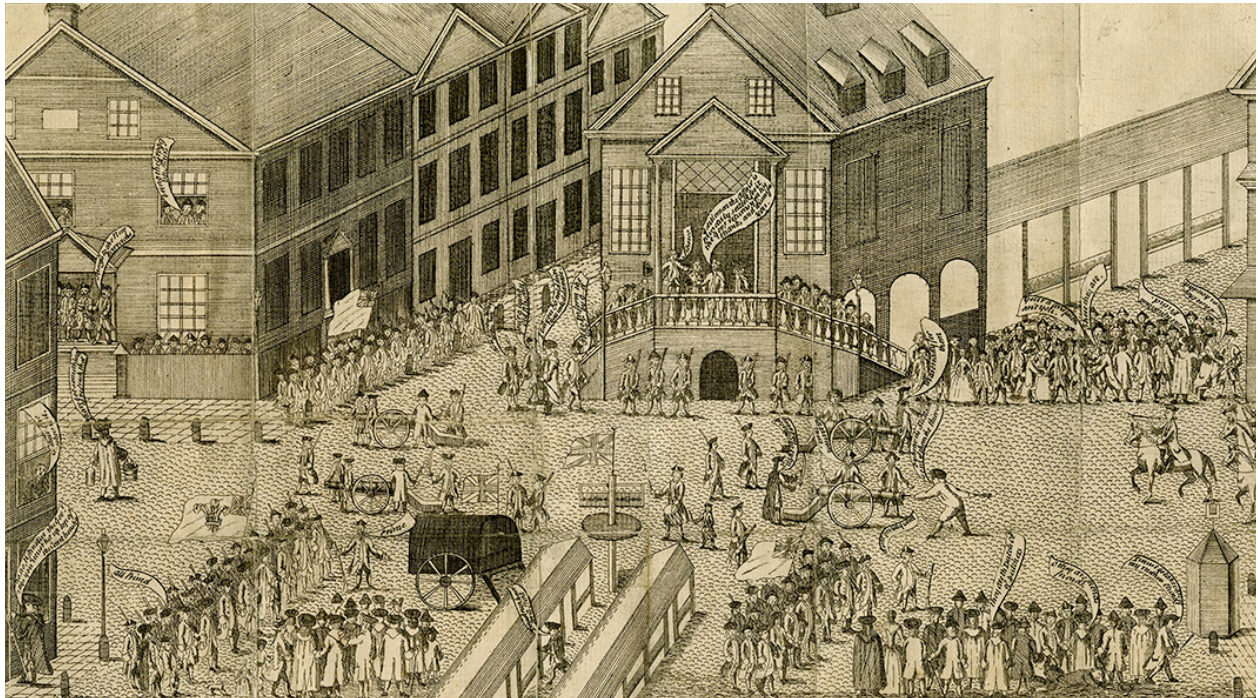
The German Bleeds and Bears Ye Furs

The German bleeds & bears ye Furs
 Of Quaker Lords & Savage Curs

Th' Hibernian frets with new Disaster
 And kicks to fling his broad brim'd Master

But help at hand Resolves to hold down
 Th' Hibernian's Head or tumble all down

Source 3
 “The Paxton Expedition,” ca. 1764



Library Company of Philadelphia

The Paxton Expedition, Inscribed to the Author of the Farce, by HD.

Come all ye Brave Delphia's, and Listen to Me.
 A Story of Truth, I'll unfold onto thee
 It's of the Paxtonians, as You shall Hear:
 Who Caused this City in Arm's to appear.

Brave P . . . n then Assembled his Council
 with Speed.
 The Inhabitants too for there Ne'er was more need
 To Go to the State House, and there to Attend,
 With all the Learn'd Arguments that could
 be pen'd.

To shew their Loyalty, some they did Sign,
 Others wav'd in their minds, but at last did decline
 For to Go to the Barrack's their duty to Do;
 Over some Indians, who never were true.

There was Lawyers & Doctors, & Children in Swarms,
 Who had more need of Nurses, than to carry Arms
 The Q . . . s so peaceable as you will Find;
 Who never before to Arm's were Inclind.

To kill the Paxtonians, they then did Advance,
 With Guns on their Shoulder's, but how did
 they Prance;
 When a troop of Dutch Butcher's came to help
 them to fight,
 Some down with their Gun's, ran away in a Fright.

Their Cannon they drew up to the Court House,
 For fear that the Paxtons, the Meeting wold force,
 When the Orator mounted upon the Court Step's
 And very Gentely the Mob he dimis'd.

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Activity Sheet 2

Details, Description, and Decision

Image Title or Number: _____

<p>People/Characters</p> <p>Details: Who are the people or other characters depicted in this cartoon?</p> <p>Description:</p>	<p>Objects</p> <p>Details: What objects are depicted in this cartoon?</p> <p>Description:</p>
<p>Action/Activity</p> <p>Details: What action/activity is occurring in this cartoon?</p> <p>Description:</p>	<p>Overall Assessment</p> <p>Decision: What have I learned about the relations in the eighteenth century between colonists in Pennsylvania and Native peoples?</p>

Source 4: Historical Background Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 2

by Kevin Kenny, New York University

The myth of the Peaceable Kingdom, already in decline by the time of William Penn's death in 1718, disintegrated gradually over the next few decades. Penn's son and principal heir, Thomas, cast off the Quaker faith and converted to Anglicanism. He and his brothers continued to negotiate with Native peoples, but they did not hesitate to use fraud and intimidation. In 1737 they swindled the Delaware people out of a huge tract of land in a transaction known as the "Walking Purchase." For the Delaware people, the measure of this land was how much a man could walk in a day and a half. The Penns, however, sent out a team of relay runners who marked out a tract almost as big as Rhode Island. Most of the Delaware people who lived there were forced to move west of the Susquehanna River, which at that time marked the western boundary of European settlement. The "Walking Purchase" remained their primary grievance when they went to war against Pennsylvania twenty years later.

Immigrants from the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland, also posed a threat to Pennsylvania's Native peoples. These settlers began to arrive in Pennsylvania at the beginning of the eighteenth century and set up as squatters along the frontier,¹ ignoring the land rights of Native people and the Penn family alike. They claimed the land by "tomahawk right"—marking trees at a distance from one another with their axes, and declaring the territory between these trees as their own. As early as 1730, a generation before the Paxton massacres, a group of Ulster squatters temporarily occupied Conestoga Manor, declaring that it was "against the Laws of God and Nature that so much Land Should lie idle while so many Christians wanted it to labour on and raise their Bread."²

Conflict between western colonists and Native peoples intensified during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). Expelled from their lands in eastern Pennsylvania, most of the Delaware and Shawnee peoples west of the Susquehanna River sided with the French as the lesser of two evils and launched devastating raids on frontier settlers. The colonial government in Philadelphia responded by declaring war on the Delaware people and, for the first time, establishing a militia. A handful of strict Quakers remained true to William Penn's pacifist vision, but the Peaceable Kingdom had come to an end. Frontier settlers did most of the fighting during the war and, from their perspective, both branches of the government in Philadelphia—the Quaker-dominated Assembly and executive branch run by the Penn family—seemed indifferent to their wishes.

No sooner had the British defeated the French in 1763 than Pontiac's War, the largest Indian war in colonial American history, erupted. Delaware and Shawnee peoples once again launched raids east of the Susquehanna River. Frontier settlers re-lived the nightmare of the Seven Years' War. It was in this context, in December 1763, that the Paxton men carried out their massacre.

The Paxton Boys arose directly out of a local militia created by the colonial government in response to frontier demands for defense in the summer of 1763. Colonel John Armstrong of Carlisle commanded a unit west of the Susquehanna River and the Rev. John Elder, the "fighting pastor" of Paxton Presbyterian Church, commanded a unit to the east. These two units were supposed to be strictly defensive, but Elder and Armstrong used them to launch raids against the Delaware people. When raids failed, a mob led by Lazarus Stewart and Matthew Smith attacked the Conestoga people instead.

This essay, commissioned by Digital Paxton, is based on Kevin Kenny's Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment (Oxford University Press, 2009). Kevin Kenny is the Glucksman Professor of History and director of Glucksman Ireland House at New York University.

¹ The term often used in scholarly discussion today for "frontier" is "borderlands"; however, we will use frontier here in accordance with the eighteenth-century view of the colonists.

² James Logan to John, Thomas, and Richard Penn, February 17, 1731. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, James Logan letterbooks, vol. 3.

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Activity Sheet 3

Analyzing an Essay

Title: _____

Author: _____

Important Phrases

Which phrases or sentences are the most informative or important in this essay? Choose three and give the reason for your choice.

Phrase 1:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

Phrase 2:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

Phrase 3:

Why is this phrase informative or important?

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Summary Organizer 1

Excerpts from “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers,” 1764

Original Text

We have long been convinced from sufficient Evidence that if Indians that lived as independent Commonwealths among us or near our Borders were our most dangerous Enemies, both in the last and present War, altho’ they still pretended to be our Friends. . . . as they murdered our Inhabitants, lead them into Captivity, were Guides to other Indians, reported our weak & defenseless State to the French together with all our Motions and Dispositions against them; and at the same Time while wearing the Cloak of Friendship, they could readily obtain Provisions, Ammunition and Warlike Implements to convey to our Enemies. Their well known Claim to Freedom and Independency put it in their Power to harbour Spies and give Intelligence. They have ever asserted and exercised the Right of making War and Peace as independent Nations, never came under our Laws, nor acknowledged Subjection to our King and Government, but they always governed themselves by their own Customs, and exercised the Power of Life and Death over their own People. . . . Mournful Experience has convinced us that no Nation could be safe especially in the Time of War, if another State or Part of a State be allowed to live among them, free and independent, claiming and exercising within themselves all the Powers of Government, the Powers of making War and Peace, harbouring and corresponding with the Enemies of the State wherein they live, receiving their Spies, giving them Intelligence, and furnishing them with the means of Support and Implements of War. No such Privilege has been granted to any Commonwealth in any civilized Nation in the World. But this has been allowed to the Indians amongst us, and we justly complain of it as the Source of many of our Calamities; as they have all proved perfidious.

Source: Anonymous, “The Apology of the Paxton Volunteers Addressed to the Candid & Impartial World,” [Philadelphia], 1764, pp. 9–10, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

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Summary Organizer 2

Excerpts from Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, 1764*

Original Text

There are some (I am ashamed to hear it) who would extenuate the enormous Wickedness of these Actions, by saying, “The Inhabitants of the Frontiers are exasperated with the Murder of their Relations, by the Enemy *Indians*, in the present War.” It is possible;—but though this might justify their going out into the Woods, to seek for those Enemies, and avenge upon them those Murders; it can never justify their turning in to the Heart of the Country, to murder their Friends.

If an *Indian* injures me, does it follow that I may revenge that Injury on all *Indians*? It is well known that *Indians* are of different Tribes, Nations and Languages, as well as the White People. In *Europe*, if the *French*, who are White People, should injure the *Dutch*, are they to revenge it on the *English*, because they too are White People? The only Crime of these poor Wretches seems to have been, that they had a reddish brown Skin, and black Hair; and some People of that Sort, it seems, had murdered some of our Relations. If it be right to kill Men for such a Reason, then, should any Man, with a freckled Face and red Hair, kill a Wife or Child of mine, it would be right for me to revenge it, by killing all the freckled red-haired Men, Women and Children, I could afterwards any where meet with.

But it seems these People think they have a better Justification; nothing less than the *Word of God*. With the Scriptures in their Hands and Mouths, they can set at nought that express Command, *Thou shalt do no Murder*; and justify their Wickedness. . . . Horrid Perversion of Scripture and of Religion! to father the worst of Crimes on the God of Peace and Love!

Source: Benjamin Franklin, A Narrative of the late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of the Province, by Persons Unknown. With Some Observations on the Same [Philadelphia], 1764, pp. 12–14.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

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Summary Organizer 3

Excerpts from Benjamin Franklin, *A Narrative of the Late Massacres, 1764*

Original Text

We pretend to be Christians, and, from the superior Light we enjoy, ought to exceed . . . in the Knowledge and Practice of what is right. . . . These poor People have been always our Friends. Their Fathers received ours, when Strangers here, with Kindness and Hospitality. Behold the Return we have made them! –When we grew more numerous and powerful, they put themselves under our Protection. See, in the mangled Corpses of the last Remains of the Tribe, how effectually we have afforded it to them!–

. . . They would have been safer, if they had submitted to the Turks; [who] for ever since Mahomet's Reproof to Khaled, . . . never kill Prisoners in cold Blood. . . . They would have been safer it seems among Popish Spaniards, even if Enemies, and delivered into their Hands by a Tempest. These were not Enemies; they were born among us, and yet we have killed them all. –But shall we imitate idolatrous Papists, we that are enlightened Protestants? –They would even have been safer among the Negroes of Africa, where at least one manly Soul would have been found, with Sense, Spirit and Humanity enough, to stand in their Defence: –But shall Whitemen and Christians act like a Pagan Negroe? –In short it appears, that they would have been safe in any Part of the known World, –except in the Neighbourhood of the CHRISTIAN WHITE SAVAGES . . . !

Source: Benjamin Franklin, A Narrative of the late Massacres, in Lancaster County, of a Number of Indians, Friends of the Province, by Persons Unknown. With Some Observations on the Same ([Philadelphia], 1764), pp. 14 and 25–27.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

Source 5: Historical Background Peaceable Kingdom Lost, Part 3

by Kevin Kenny, New York University

At the end of January 1764, a month after the massacres, reports reached Philadelphia that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Paxton Boys were marching eastward, threatening to sack the city unless their grievances were met. They also demanded the right to “inspect” 140 Lenape people and Moravian Indians¹ who had been removed from the frontier and placed in protective custody. Given what the Paxton mob had done to the Conestoga people, the residents of Philadelphia could only imagine what this “inspection” might entail.

When several hundred Paxton Boys reached Germantown, just six miles outside Philadelphia, they were met by a delegation led by Benjamin Franklin, who persuaded them to write down their grievances. Their spokesmen, Matthew Smith and James Gibson, submitted a Declaration and a Remonstrance for consideration by the colonial government, and what followed was a war of words instead of a war of weapons. Presbyterian supporters of the Paxton Boys, in alliance with the Anglican faction surrounding the Penn family, battled Benjamin Franklin and the Quaker party in print. The debate, which featured more than sixty pamphlets and ten political cartoons, went far beyond the immediate issue of the Conestoga massacres to address the fundamental question of how Pennsylvania ought to be governed.

Despite Franklin’s efforts, the Paxton murderers went unpunished. Nobody was investigated, let alone arrested or prosecuted. As a result, like-minded settlers on the Pennsylvania frontier felt free to behave in similar ways. The result was wave after wave of violence on the frontier, culminating in total war against Indigenous peoples during the American Revolution. In Pennsylvania, the Paxton mob’s brutality was the exception as late as 1763, but during the Revolution it became commonplace.

Ironically, Benjamin Franklin and the Paxton men ended up supporting the same side in the American Revolution. But that is because there was more than one revolution going on—the familiar struggle for lofty principles of liberty and equality in the east, and a lesser-known struggle involving land and American Indians in the west. Some historians have seen the Paxton Boys as frontier democrats fighting against the privilege of the Penn family who extended their fight for democracy into the Revolutionary era. John Elder, Matthew Smith, John Armstrong, and Lazarus Stewart all rallied to the patriot cause, to be sure, but they were fighting for the same thing they had fought for in the 1760s—access to land, personal security, and vengeance against Indigenous peoples.

In their Remonstrance, the Paxton Boys had demanded greater political representation for the western counties in the Pennsylvania Assembly, but that was only one of nine grievances; all of the others concerned the “savages” in their midst. The American Revolution did more than destroy the privilege of the Penn family; it doomed the region’s Native peoples. During the Revolutionary War, American patriots enacted the brutal logic of the Paxton mob on a devastating scale.

This essay, commissioned by Digital Paxton, is based on Kevin Kenny’s Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment (Oxford University Press, 2009). Kevin Kenny is the Glucksman Professor of History and director of Glucksman Ireland House at New York University.

¹ [Editor]: A group of Native Americans from different tribes who had been Christianized by Moravian missionaries.

Source 6

Excerpts from A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, 1764

1st. WE apprehend, that as Free-Men and *English* Subjects, we have an indisputable Title to the same Privileges and Immunities with his Majesty's other Subjects, who reside in the interior Counties of *Philadelphia, Chester* and *Bucks*, and therefore ought not to be excluded from an equal Share with them in the very important Privilege of Legislation. Nevertheless, . . . our five Counties are restrained from electing more than ten Representatives. . . .

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

3^{dly}. DURING the late and present *Indian* Wars, the Frontiers of this Province have been repeatedly attacked and ravaged by Skulking parties of the *Indians*, who have with the most savage Cruelty, murdered Men, Women and Children, without distinction; and have reduced near a Thousand Families to the most extream Distress. It grieves us to the very Heart, to see such of our Frontier Inhabitants as have escaped from savage Fury, with the loss of their Parents, their Children, their Husbands, Wives, or Relatives, left destitute by the Public, and exposed to the most cruel Poverty and Wretchedness; while upwards of One Hundred and Twenty of the Savages, who are with great Reason suspected of being guilty of these horrid Barbarities, under the Mask of Friendship, have procured themselves to be taken under the Protection of the Government, with a view to elude the Fury of the brave Relatives of the Murdered; and are now maintained at the public Expence. . . .

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

6^{thly}. IN the late *Indian* War this Province, with others of his Majesty's Colonies gave rewards for *Indian* Scalps, to encourage the seeking them in their own Country, as the most likely Means of destroying or reducing them to reason. But no such Encouragement has been given in this War, which has damped the Spirits of many brave Men, who are willing to venture their Lives in Parties against the Enemy. We therefore pray that public Rewards may be proposed for *Indian* Scalps, which may be adequate to the Dangers attending Enterprises of this Nature.

7th. WE daily lament that Numbers of our nearest and dearest Relatives are still in Captivity amongst the savage Heathen, to be trained up in all their Ignorance and Barbarity, or be tortured to death with all the Contrivances of *Indian* cruelty, for attempting to make their Escape from Bondage. We see they pay no regard to the many solemn Promises which they have made to restore our Friends, who are in Bondage amongst them; we therefore earnestly pray that no Trade may hereafter be permitted to be carried on with them, untill our Brethren and Relatives are brought home to us.

8thly. WE complain that a certain Society of People in this Province in the late *Indian* War and at several Treaties held by the Kings Representatives, openly loaded the *Indians* with Presents and that -----
----- a Leader of the said Society, in defiance of all Government not only abetted our *Indian* Enemies, but kept up a private Intelligence with them, and publickly received from them a Belt of Wampum, as if he had been our Governor or authorized by the King to treat with his Enemies. By this Means the *Indians* have been taught to dispise us as a weak and disunited People and from this fatal Source have arose many of our Calamities under which we groan. . . .

Source: A Declaration and Remonstrance of the Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, Presented by Them to the Honourable the Governor and Assembly of the Province, Shewing the Causes of Their Late Discontent and Uneasiness and the Grievances under Which They Have Laboured, and Which They Humbly Pray to Have Redress'd, *Philadelphia, 1764, pp. 10–12 and 15–18.*

Source 7

A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot; About the Killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster, [1764]

Andrew and Thomas

And. Whar ha' you been aw this Time, *Tom*?

T. Whar I have been! Whar you should ha' been too, Andrew, fechtng the Lord's Battles, and killing the Indians at *Lancaster* and *Cannestogoe*.

U. How mony did you kill at *Cannestogoe*.

V. Ane and Twunty.

W. Hoot Man, there were but twunty awthegether, and fourteen of them were in the Goal.

X. I tell you, we shot six and a wee ane, that was in the Squaw's Belly; we sculped three; we tomhawked three; we roasted three and a wee ane; and three and a wee ane we gave to the Hogs; and is not that ane and twunty you Fool.

Y. How mony did you kill in the Gaol?

Z. We kilt them aw, men women and weans.

AA. Did you count them?

AB. No faith! I staid in the Street, for Fear of them De'ils, the Highlandmen.

AC. Were not you frechtene to facht so mony Indians?

AD. Indeed were we: But we did no' let them fecht Us. We kilt them at the Mannor just as they getting out of their Beds in the Morning: And the Gued Folks of *Lancaster* had taken away aw the Guns, Tomhawks, and long Knives, from them, that were in the Goal.

AE. How mony were you?

AF. Not quiet fifteen hundred: But if any Body had mislested us, we would ha' been joined by five Thousand, that would ha' foucht the *Quackers*, as well as the Heathens.

AG. But did you think it recht, *Tom*, to kill the Women and the Weans?

AH. Some of us did not, as soon as auld Saunders Kent that (you know he has been an Elder this thirty Year) when he gaid about Duty, the Night before, he sung the 137 *Psalm*, where it says, "happy surely shall he be, they tender little ones, who shall lay hold upon, and them shall dash against the Stones." And he read the 15. *Chapter* of 1 *Samuel*.

AI. So you did all this in the Name of the Lord.

AJ. Aye, to be sure. We were aw *Presbyterians*. But that wild Chiel, *Charly Breulluchan* shot an Indian's Doug, while auld *Saunders*' was saying Grace till half a Pint of Whusky. I doubt he has the Pope, or the Heegh-Kirk in his Guts.

AK. I am afraid all this is wrong. I am a *Presbyterian*, you know, as well as yourself. But I would fain hope that I am a Christian also. Jesus Christ is the Prince of *Peace*, and has taught us the Doctrine of forgiving even our Enemies, as we expect that our heavenly Father will forgive us. I am afraid that you have done amiss. Many Things were permitted to the Jews because of the Hardness of their Hearts, which the Light of the Gospel has discovered to be wrong. But even the Jews paid the greatest Regard to their Treaties. And these Indians by Treaties have been acknowledged to be our Friends.

The *Gibeonites* were spared on Account of the publick Faith plighted to them, tho obtained by Fraud and Falshood. And tho *Schechem* had committed a Crime for which he ought to have suffered Death: Yet after Peace was made, we find the good old Patriarch *Jacob*, on his Death-Bed, bitterly cursing his Sons, for breaking the Peace. Instruments of Cruelty are in your Habitations. O my Soul come not thou into your Secrets, unto your Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united: For in your Anger you have slain Man, and in yourself will you houghed Cattle. Cursed be your Anger, for it was fierce; and your Wrath for it was cruel. I pray that you may not be dispersed or scattered in the true *Israel* of God.

Source: A Dialogue between Andrew Trueman, and Thomas Zealot; About the Killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster, [1764].

NAME _____

PERIOD _____

DATE _____

Activity Sheet 4 Analyzing a Pamphlet

Title: _____

Year: _____

Critical Thinking Question 1

What is the major claim being made by the author(s) of this pamphlet?

What textual evidence supports the claim?

Does the claim that is being presented appear to be based on fact or opinion? _____

Critical Thinking Question 2

What is the tone of the pamphlet? _____

How does this tone influence the effectiveness of the pamphlet?

Critical Thinking Question 3

What are the best (most convincing or most thought-provoking) parts of the text?

Cite evidence from the text to support your opinion.

Critical Thinking Question 4

Summarize, in your own words, the overall message of this pamphlet:

What evidence in the text supports your summary?

NAME _____

PERIOD _____

DATE _____

Activity Sheet 5
The News Conference

Speaker/Author: _____

Title of Text: _____

Question 1:	
Answer:	Evidence from the text:
Question 2:	
Answer:	Evidence from the text:
Question 3:	
Answer:	Evidence from the text:
Additional Question:	
Answer:	Evidence from the text: