

25 August 1737 Deed - "The Walking Purchase"

Essentially all the land purchased from the Lenape through various deeds by William Penn (died 1718) had been resold and settled by the late 1720's. The vast majority of Pennsylvania was Indian territory. New settlers and investors were seeking land grants, especially up the Delaware River beyond the tract conveyed in July 1682. By law, only the proprietors - Penn's sons - could purchase land from the Lenape. Unfortunately, Penn's sons were deeply in debt due to extravagant lifestyles and had no means by which to procure additional land. In 1735, Penn's son Thomas claimed to have found among his father's papers a copy of a 1686 deed by which his father had purchased land bounded by a man's walk of a day and half from a point on the northwest boundary of the July 1682 deed near Wrightstown. Lenape sachems initially unanimously discounted the bogus 1686 deed but were eventually coerced into signing and agreeing to an updated version. Among the plows used by the Penn's and their primary agent, James Logan, was a map produced by them at the request of the sachems showing the extent of land ceded to the proprietor in the 1686 deed. The map's composition and dimensions strongly suggest that the Lehigh River, then known by the colonists as the West Branch of the Delaware, was Tohickon Creek, land below which the Lenape were willing to concede. The deed was signed on August 25, 1737 and the day and half walk commenced at sunrise on September 19. The path of the walk had been surveyed and cleared some weeks before. Three walkers took part. One, Edward Marshall of Bustleton, made it from start to finish near today's Jim Thorpe mid-day on the 20th. A total of about 60 miles had been traversed. To compound the charade, the boundary line connecting the end point to the Delaware River was constructed at right angles to the walk line rather than due east. The area covered was over 1,200,000 acres or 1875 square miles. The Lenape sachems refused to recognize the transaction, to no avail.

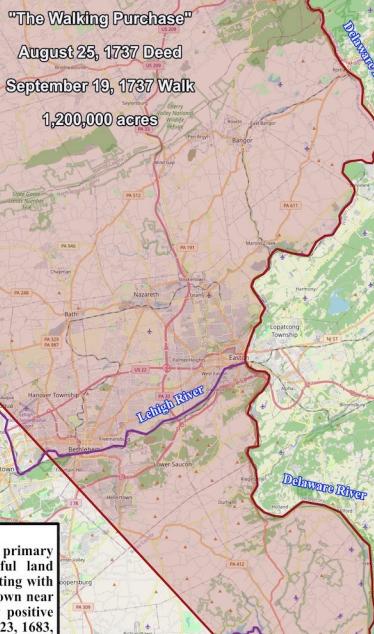
Selected Lenape Deeds

"The Walking Purchase"

August 25, 1737 Deed

September 19, 1737 Walk

1,200,000 acres



23 June 1683 Deeds

William Penn arrived in Pennsylvania in late October 1682. Among his primary goals was meeting with the indigenous Lenape to secure peaceful land conveyances. Letters and other documents indicate that his initial meeting with the Lenape took place on or about May 24, 1683, at Perkasie Indian Town near current Hilltown in Bucks County. There he reportedly had a very positive meeting with Tamanen, and other Lenape sachems or chiefs. On June 23, 1683, numerous Lenape sachems, including Tamanen, signed deeds conveying land lying between Pennypack and Neshaminy Creeks to William Penn.

"We, Tamanen and Metamequah this 23d day of the 4th month, called June, in the year, according to the English account, 1683, for us our heirs and Assignes doe freely Grant and dispose of all our Lands Lying betwixt and about Pennapecka and Neshaminy Creeks and all along Nesheminch Creeks to William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of Pensylvania, &c; his heirs and Assignes for Ever for the consideration of so much Wampum and other goods as he said William Penn shall be pleased to give unto us, and our Parcell being much smaller than Essepenaile and Swannepe Hereby for us our Heirs and Assignes renouncing all Claims or Demands of any thing in or for the Premises for the future from him his heirs and Assignes In Witness whereof we have hereunto sett our hands and Seals the day and year first above written."

"We, Essepenaile, Swannepe, Okettarickon and Wesapoot, this 23d day of the 4th month called June, in the year, according to the English account, 1683, for us and our heirs and assignes do grant and dispose of all our Lands lying betwixt Remmepack and Neshemink Creeks, and all along upon Neshemink Creek backward of same, and to Run Two days Journey with an Horse up into the Country as the said River doeth goo, To William Penn, Proprietor and Governor of the Province of Pensylvania, &c, his Heires and Assignes for Ever for the Consideration of so much Wampum, and so many Guns, Shoes, Stockings, Looking-glasses, Blankets, and other goods, as he said William Penn shall be pleased to give unto us, hereby for us our heirs and Assignes Renouncing all Claims or Demands of any thing in or for the Premise for the future from Him, his heirs and Assignes. In Witness whereof we have hereunto sett our hands and Seals the day and year first above written."

The consummation of these deeds is thought to have been the impetus for and likely took place at the famous Treaty of Shackamaxon on June 23, 1683.

14 July 1683

In July 1683, Penn purchased land that included Philadelphia which, by then, was laid out and already partially settled. The tract's northwest boundary ran primarily along today's Edge Hill from Conshohocken to Pennypack Creek.

"We, Nemeshickan, Maleboro, alias Pendanoughnah, Neshanocke and Osereneon, Indian Shackamakers, and right owners of the Lands Lying between Manaiunk alias Schukill and Pennapecka Creeks, doe, this 14th day of the fifth month, in the year, according to the English account, 1683, hereby graunt, Sell and dispose of all our Right, Title and Interest in our Lands betwixt Manaiunk and Pennapecka, So far as the hill called Conshohocken on the sayd River Manaiunk, and from thence by a Northwest Line to the River of Pennapecka _____ unto William Penn, Proprietor and Governor of the Province of Penssylvania, &c; his heirs and Assignes, for Ever, for and in consideration of two fathom of Wampum, 15 Gunnis, 15 Blankets, 3 great Kettles, 15 Small Kettles, 15 Coats, 15 Shirts, 60 dyds, 60 fylls, 30 yds. Stroud cloth, 6 drawing Knives, 20 Gimblets, 7 pr of Shoes, 15 pr Stockins, 15 pr Sissers, 15 Combis, 15 Axes, 15 Knives, 15 Tobacco Tongs, 30 Bars of Lead, 31 Pound of Powder, 15 Awles, 18 small glasses, 10 Boxes, 6 Capps, 3 papers of Beads, A paper of Lead Read, to us in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, Heretby renouncing all Claims or demands by us our heirs or Assignes, for ever, in or to the premises. In Witness whereof, we have hereunto sett our hands and Seals the day and year first above written."

15 July 1682 Deed

William Penn received his grant for the Province of Pennsylvania from King Charles II of England in March 1681. He appointed his cousin William Markam as deputy governor in April. Markham arrived in the Pennsylvania in early August 1681. Penn himself would not arrive until late October 1682. One of Penn's primary concerns was the peaceful procurement of land from the indigenous Lenape, later known as the Delaware Indians. Markham negotiated on Penn's behalf with numerous Lenape sachems or "sachamakers" (chiefs) for land lying between the Delaware River and Neshaminy Creek in today's Bucks County. The signed deed, dated July 15, 1682, was for "All that or Those Tract or Tracts of Land lyeing and being in the Province of Pennsylvania aforesaid, Beginning at a certaine white oak in the Land now in the tenure of John Wood, and by him called the Gray Stones over against the falls of Delaware River, And soe from thence up by the River side to a corner marked Spruce Tree with the letter P at the foot of a mountayne, And from the sayd corner marked Spruce Tree along by the Ledge or foot of the mountains west north west to a Corner white oak, marked with the letter P, standing by the Indian Path that Leads to an Indian Towne called Playwickie, and near the head of a Creek called Towssinnek. And from thence westward to the Creek called Neshammonies Creek, And along by the sayd Neshammonies Creek into the River Delaware, alias Makerishkicon; And soe bounded by the sayd mayne River to the said first mentioned white oak in John Wood's Land."

The Gray Stones, where the deed survey begins and ends, are still standing at their original location near the Calhoun Street Bridge in Morrisville, PA. The "mountayne" up the Delaware from the Gray Stones is today's Jericho Mountain (near Bowman's Hill in New Hope) along the "Ledge or foot" of which the survey turns inland. The "Indian Path that Leads to an Indian Towne called Playwickie" is difficult to align with current roads. The "Creek called Towssinnek" is Jericho Creek. The survey is assumed to hit Neshaminy Creek in the vicinity of today's Wrightstown. It then continues down the Neshaminy to its confluence with the Delaware at Croydon and then up the Delaware to the place of beginning. The deed survey contains approximately 74,000 acres or about 115 square miles.

