

porary village of about fifty to a hundred persons. When the soil was exhausted and firewood was used up, they simply moved the village to another site.

In one of these villages--which one is unknown--Tamanend was the sachem or trusted spokesman. But each village ordered its own affairs in a very democratic and independent manner. Everyone had some part in any important decisions and these were made by consensus. The English exaggerated the position of sachems and called Tamanend the King of the Delawares. Tamanend was nothing of the sort; he could not give orders like a king or feudal lord and the Lenape Indians had no over-all tribal government.

However so great was the power of Tamanend's personality that Indians and English settlers remembered him for a hundred years. Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary and lifelong friend of the Lenape Indians, wrote about Tamanend years later:

He was an ancient Delaware chief who never had an equal. He was in the highest degree endowed with wisdom, virtue, prudence, charity, affability, meekness, hospitality. . . . He was supposed to have had intercourse with the great and good Spirit.

William Penn was greatly interested in the Indians and even before coming to America, he had established a policy of making honest agreements of peace and consent with the Indians. King Charles II had made Penn the absolute owner of the entire province, but Penn did not agree with the king that "the savages" had no more right to the land than did squirrels and rabbits.

In 1682 Penn arrived in America and quickly made it his business to get to know the Indians well. He even learned to speak the Lenape language and liked the melody of its words. The Indians called him Miquon, the word for quill in their language or Brother Onas, using the Iroquois word. Penn entered into cordial negotiations with more than twenty sachems because no single leader could speak for the Lenape people and that is how Penn got to know Tamanend.

TAMANEND AT PERKASIE, MAY 1683

In May 1683 Penn mounted his white horse and rode north to an Indian village called Perkasio, the present site of Silverdale in Hilltown Township, Bucks County. There Tamanend and his son, Yaqueekhon, received Penn with great hospitality at a feast of venison, roasted acorns, and boiled hominy. A short vigorous man of 39,

Penn joined the young men in leaping and dancing to Indian singing and the beating of the drums.

Penn began by winning the trust of the Indians for his purpose of establishing a league of peace and amity. Then he laid the groundwork for buying tracts of land. He wanted to make sure that all Indian claims to land were settled before he would take the next steps of surveying parcels of land and selling them to European immigrants. And Penn reserved to himself exclusive rights; no settler was permitted to buy land from the Indians as they did across the river in New Jersey.

Penn's ideas of land as property for exclusive and personal use and the Indian concepts of the land as our mother were worlds apart. Furthermore Tamanend's people knew nothing about the English legal system of written deeds of sale and legal title to permanent land ownership.

For Europeans personal ownership of land was an intense and lifelong concern. The possibility of owning a big tract of land was the magic of America. Buying land was the way for a European to gain personal liberty, to accumulate wealth and status, and to insure security in old age.

The Lenape Indians, however, already had liberty and security in their communal society where individual wealth was of little importance. To sell land was as incomprehensible to Tamanend as it would be to sell a bushel of tomorrow's sunshine.

Penn held many other meetings with Indians such as the one with Tamanend at Perkasio. At these councils Penn must have given broad assurances to the Lenape Indians. For example, Indians remembered that they had been promised a strip one mile wide on each side of the Brandywine for hunting. However, when they complained of mill dams stopping the migration of fish, the government officials could find no written records of the old agreement. Some historians conjecture that Penn's heirs may possibly have destroyed such records of promises made by William Penn in those councils with the Indians in the first years.

At any rate, Tamanend understood that sale of land to Penn did not mean driving the Indians out. And Penn instructed his surveyor never to disturb any of the few, widely scattered Indian farm plots and villages. So Tamanend had good reason to believe that his people could go on hunting for game and raising corn and beans as before. There seemed to be plenty of room for Indians and whites. And William Penn was confident that Indians and Europeans could live together in peace.