

COMPARING PRIMARY SOURCES

On Expansion into Native American Lands

The following passages reflect several viewpoints on the westward movement of white settlers into Native American lands.

As you read the passages, look for common threads in the arguments of the Native American chiefs and in those of the Europeans.

PASSAGE A

*Canassatego, Iroquois leader, July 1742
From The History of the Five Indian Nations
of Canada, 1755*

We know our lands are now become more valuable. The white people think we do not know their value; but we are sensible that the land is everlasting, and the few goods we receive for it are soon worn out and gone. . . . Besides, we are not well used with respect to the lands still unsold by us. Your people daily settle on these lands and spoil our hunting. We must insist on your removing them, as you know they have no right to settle to the northward of Kittochtinny Hills. In particular, we renew our complaints against some people who are settled at Juniata, a branch of Susquehanna, and all along the banks of that river, as far as Mahaniay; and desire they may be forthwith made to go off the land, for they do great damage to our cousins the Delawares.

We have further to observe, with respect to the lands lying on the west side of Susquehanna that though [the Proprietor] has paid us for what his people possess, yet some parts of that country have been taken up by persons whose place of residence is to the south of this province, from whom we have never received any consideration. . . .

[We] desire you will inform the person whose people are seated on our lands that that country belongs to us, in right of conquest; we having bought it with our blood, and taken it from our enemies in fair war. . . . [Y]our horses and cows have eaten the grass our deer used to feed on.

PASSAGE B

*Mohawk Chief Hendrick, June 1753
From New York Colonial Documents,
Conference Minutes, 16 June 1753*

Brother when we came here to relate our Grievances about our Lands, we expected to have something done for us, and we have told you that the Covenant Chain of our Forefathers was like to be broken, and brother you tell us that we shall be redressed at Albany, but we know them so well, we will not trust to them, for they [the Albany merchants] are no people but Devils So brother you are not to expect to hear of me any more, and Brother we desire to hear no more of you.

PASSAGE C

*Governor of Pennsylvania, July 1742
From The History of the Five Indian Nations
of Canada, 1755*

It is very true that lands are of late becoming more valuable; but what raises their value? Is it not entirely owing to the industry and labor used by the white people in their cultivation and improvement? Had not they come among you, these lands would have been of no use to you, any further than to maintain you. . . . What you say of the goods, that they are soon worn out, is applicable to everything; but you know very well that they cost a great deal of money; and the value of land is no more than it is worth in money.

On your former complaints against people's settling the lands on Juniata, and from thence all along on the River Susquehanna as far as Mahaniahy, some magistrates were sent expressly to remove them, and we thought no persons would presume to stay after that.