Intermittent conflict resulting in considerable loss of life occurred between Indians and whites for possession of territory in the upper Ohio Valley and the Old Northwest from 1750 to 1814. At first the Indians principally supported the French against the English and their colonists and then during the American Revolution the tribesmen generally aided the English against the Americans. Although the Treaty of Paris in 1783 gave the United States title to the Old Northwest, the Indian problem remained critical until Anthony Wayne’s defeat of the tribesmen at Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794.

The Indians, unfortunately, were not a party to the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Conflict between them and the Americans continued during and even after the time when this treaty was negotiated and ratified, but such conflict ebbed in the mid-1780’s. Following the Revolution various tribes attempted to maintain the Ohio River as the boundary between them and the advancing American frontiersmen. Gradually, however, the United States obtained cessions of land and frontiersmen began to settle in the eastern and southern portions of present-day Ohio. Because conflict flared anew in the late eighties and early nineties there were several unsuccessful American campaigns against the Indians including those of General Josiah Harmar (1790) and General Arthur St. Clair (1791). These ineffectual efforts stung and irritated the Indians without defeating or severing them from their British ally, who still retained garrisons on the American side of the Canadian border. These disastrous campaigns also gave the Indians increased confidence in their ability to blunt the American advance, especially since they hoped for military help from the British in the event of serious conflict.

By early 1792 the United States faced a major crisis in its relations with the Indians of the Old Northwest. Although
an enlarged military effort against the Indians seemed essential, the United States had a very limited capacity to wage war. The government was faced, moreover, with mounting opposition by farmers in western Pennsylvania to a new excise tax on whisky and troubled by uncertainty whether a major effort against the Indians would result in conflict with the English. During 1792 and 1793 the United States attempted to negotiate a peaceful solution with the tribesmen, but at the same time also prepared for a major military effort under General Anthony Wayne should force become necessary.¹

In April of 1793—while peace or war hung in the balance—a meeting of Pennsylvania and New Jersey Quakers at Philadelphia drafted an appeal to the Indians to preserve peace and come under the sway of civilization and Christianity. Since Philadelphia was then the federal capital, the Quakers who drafted this message were presumably well informed about Anglo-Indian affairs in the Old Northwest. Quakers from Philadelphia were involved in unsuccessful negotiations with the Indians of the Old Northwest during 1793,² but it is not known whether the message from the Philadelphia meeting was used in these negotiations.

The 1793 Quaker appeal to the Indians, however, was used during the summer of 1795 in the negotiations preceding the Greenville Treaty of this year. Its use is indicated by a letter from Wayne and by the minutes of the proceedings at Greenville. Although Wayne's letter states that the appeal “appeared to make a happy impression” on the Indians, the minutes of the Greenville negotiations indicate the message was not communicated to the assembled tribesmen until near the end of the negotiations.³ By this time, the Indians had already been defeated at Fallen Timbers, they had been deserted by their British ally, and the Greenville Treaty had been largely concluded.


² One of these Quakers, who had also been named as a messenger by the Philadelphia meeting, kept a journal of his expedition to Detroit in connection with the Indian negotiations. Jacob Lindley, “Expedition to Detroit, 1793,” Michigan Historical Collections (40 vols., Lansing, Mich., 1877-1929), XVII, 565-666.

³ See pages 53-55 which follow for Wayne's letter and a relevant extract from the minutes of the Greenville Treaty negotiations. The extract is included in Footnote 4, p. 54.
The first of the two documents which follows is Wayne's letter of September 5, 1796, explaining his delay in acknowledging the Quaker appeal and the accompanying presents. The second document is the 1793 appeal itself. This Quaker message is mainly important in indicating and illustrating the traditional friendship and concern of the Quakers for the Indians in the colonial and early national era.

Head Quarters
Detroit 5th September 1796

Respected Friends

Altho' at a late period—yet I fondly hope that it will not be displeasing, or altogether out of time, to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging letter of the 25th of the 5th Mo. 1795 enclosing "a copy of an address to the Indians in the year 1793 with something in addition, to the several tribes who attended the late Treaty at GreeneVille" accompanied by a small present of goods, committed to my charge for their uses.

It is however a duty which I owe to you, as well as to myself, to offer some apology & explanation for this seeming neglect?—expecting to visit Philadelphia in the course of last winter—and which I accordingly did early in February,—I purposely declined the acknowledgment of that letter with its enclosures—until I cou'd have an opportunity to deliver you the receipts for the goods in person, & to inform you Viva Voce of the mode & manner of their distribution;

Upon my arrival in that City—I discover'd that the necessary papers & vouchers were—thru' mistake or neglect—left at GreeneVille in the hands of Colo. Meigs, the Com-

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1 This letter written by Anthony Wayne is in the Wayne Papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and is published with the permission of that society. The Quaker appeal appears in the Minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings, Philadelphia, April 18, 1793. A copy, certified as a true one by John Drinker, one of the appeal's signers, is in the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. This copy is published with the permission of the Friends Historical Library. In this transcription the original documents have been followed except for a few minor changes in punctuation and spacing. The repetition of quotation marks in the right margin within a quotation has been omitted and superior letters in abbreviations have been lowered. Flourishes at the ends of sentences have been interpreted as periods. Throughout, the original spelling and capitalization have been retained. In the few instances where it is not clear whether letters are capitals or not, the editor has been guided by the writing of the letter in other parts of the same document.

2 This letter has not been found.

* Here, and in two other places which follow, a question mark appears to be the punctuation mark intended although its meaning is not clear.
missary General of Indian goods, & which I have but recently obtained from him, and now enclose for your information & satisfaction of your society; & which I trust will also demonstrate the early & particular attention paid to your requisition;

Your address to the Indians was prefaced by an Exordium deliver’d in full Council to the several tribes—who afterwards participated of your bounty—and which appeared to make a happy impression Viz

[''] Children,

"I have received a letter from your ancient friends & brothers—the people called Quakers—with a message to all the Nations here assembled—

"The Quakers are a people who merit the esteem of all peaceable, Virtuous & good men—I who know the purity of their minds—and the sincerity of their hearts—love & venerate their principles?—listen then to their voice—and let their words sink deep into your hearts,"["""] (Here I deliver’d your address & caused it to be fully & clearly interpreted & explained as also the invoice of the goods intended for them) after an interesting pause—I thus proceeded:

["""] Children—

["""] The Present accompanying this address may probably appear small—but the motive which produced it—is of the last importance—it is presented with the benevolent view of promoting the peace and happiness of mankind;—hence it's value is great indeed;—they however wish it to be consider’d & received merely as a token of their regard—and as a testimony of their brotherly affection & kind remembrance

"An exordium is an introductory part of an oration or discourse.

The quotation which follows in Wayne’s letter is the exordium he used to introduce the Quaker appeal to the Indians. A different version of this exordium is contained in the minutes of the negotiations which resulted in the Greenville Treaty, 1795. According to the entry for August 2, 1795, in the American State Papers, Indian Affairs (2 vols., Washington, 1832-1834), I, 579:

"The General arose and spoke as follows:

YOUNGER BROTHERS:

I have received a letter from your ancient friends and brothers, the people called Quakers, with a message to all the nations here assembled. The Quakers are a people whom I much love and esteem, for their goodness of heart, and sincere love of peace with all nations; listen then to their voice, and let it sink deep into your hearts.

[Here the General read the address of the people called Quakers, and the invoice of their present.]

Their present, you perceive, is small, but being designed with the benevolent view of promoting the peace and happiness of mankind, it becomes of important value. They wish it to be considered merely as a token of their regard for you, and a testimony of their brotherly affection and kind remembrance of you." The brackets in the preceding quotation are not the editor’s since they appear in the excerpt quoted.
of you”—a soft & gentle voice, & a smile of approbation pervaded all the Nations; & your present was received with gratitude?—the receipts will show you the several tribes that participated.

And it is with very sincere pleasure that I announce to you, the fairest prospect, of a lasting peace, & friendly intercourse between the citizens [sic] of the United States, & those aborigines of America.

Under those impressions & with sentiments of true respect & esteem, I remain your very sincere friend

Ant[hon]y Wayne

To
John Parish, David Bacon, Nicholas Waln & Henry Drinker

The Paper addressed to the Indians considered at the former Sitting being transcribed as directed, was now signed by the Meeting, being as follows

To the Indians living on the northwestern & western Borders of the united States, and all others to whom this writing may come.

Brothers

Hearken to the Speech which your Friends called Quakers assembled in Philadelphia from several parts of Pennsylvania & new Jersey & now send to you by their Brethren John Parrish, Wm Savery, John Elliott, Jacob Lindley, Joseph Moore & Wm. Hartshorne.

Brothers

When our Grandfathers came with Onas over the great Waters to settle in this Land more than One hundred years

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5 Presumably these men were Quakers. With the exception of Parish [or Parrish], they are listed among the singers of the 1793 appeal.

6 None of these men signed the appeal. Parrish, it is interesting to note, was also one of the recipients of Wayne's 1795 letter.

7 Onas, an Indian word for pen, was also used as a name for all the colonial governors of Pennsylvania. E. B. O'Callaghan (ed.), Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (11 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1856-1861), V, 679, VII, 61, 296. In the 1793 Quaker appeal it presumably refers to William Penn, the founder of the colony of Pennsylvania.
ago, they Kindled a large Council fire with your Grandfathers, and sat together round it in much good Will & Friendship smooking [sic] the Calumet Pipe together; and they told your Grandfathers that they were Men of Peace, & desired to live among you in Peace & Love, and that their Children might also be careful allways to live in the same Love one with another as Brothers of one Family.

This Council fire was Kept burning with a clear Flame many years, which gave a good Light all around the Country, and the Chain of Friendship which was made at the same time was Kept clean from Rust by our Fathers & your Fathers untiill about 40 years ago an evil Spirit whispered bad Stories in the Ears of some of your People, and of some of the white People; so that the light of the antient [sic] Council Fire was allmost put out, and the old Chain of Friendship was made dull & rusty.  

Brothers

Our Grandfathers told your Grandfathers that the great & good Spirit who made them & all People with a design that they might live on the Earth for a few years in Love & good Will one towards another, had placed his good Law in the Hearts of all Men, and if they carefully attended to it's inward Voice it would keep them in Love & friendship, & teach them to shun & avoid every thing that would occasion them to trouble & hurt one another.

Brothers

Do you not find that after you have been angry and quarrelsone & done any bad action, that you are made uneasy & sorrowful; and that when you are sober & serious and do good actions, that your Minds feel pleasant, easy & comfortable? it is the Law from the good Spirit, who is all Love, and placed it in your Hearts, that gives you such Peace & Comfort when you do well, but when you do evil things it reproves you & makes you feel uneasy & sad.

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8 In noting that the chain of friendship had begun to rust about forty years earlier—around 1753—the Quakers were accurate in pointing out that serious conflict had developed in Indian-white relations in the middle of the eighteenth century, a fact noted in the Introduction to these documents.
Brothers

We wish you to consider & remember that the great Spirit sees & Knows all the Thoughts of your Hearts, and the have loved, served and obeyed the holy Law of the good Spirit placed in their Hearts, he will receive their Souls which are Hearts of all Mankind, and all their actions; and when their Bodies dye [sic], such Men of all colours & all Nations who never to die, and they will live with him in Joy & Peace forever; but the Souls of bad Men who have lived wickedly in this World must live, after their Bodies die, with the bad Spirit in a State of Distress & Misery.

Brothers

We make Profession of the same Principle with our Grandfathers, which teaches us to love you & all Men, and in that Love we feel our Minds drawn to send you this Speech with a great desire for your Good; and we were made glad when we heard that the sober good People among you were disposed to promote Peace & brighten the old Chain of Friendship with the white People of the united States; and that many of you have a desire that you may be instructed in tilling the Ground, to live after the Manner of the white People, which we believe you will find to be more comfortable for you & your Families than to live only by hunting; and we think it will be also good for your young People to be learnt to read & write, and that sober, honest, good Men should be sent among you for Teachers.

Brothers

We have often told some of your Chiefs when we have had the opportunity of taking them by the hand in this City, that we are not concerned in the management of the Affairs of Government, which are under the direction of the President of the united States & his Counsellors, but that we should at all times be willing to do any thing in our Power to promote Love & Peace.

Brothers

We greatly desire that the Commissioners who are now sent by the President, and your Counsellors & Chiefs may look up to the great Spirit for his Wisdom & help that you
may all be made wise & strong, to light up the Council fire and brighten the Chain of old Friendship, that all things may be settled to satisfaction, and all Logs taken out of the Road; and a lasting Peace established so that there may be no more difference & War between your People & the Inhabitants of these States.

And we desire you may receive our Friends by whom we send this Writing in Love as Brothers, who are disposed to encourage you in all good Things—And in the antient Love which our Grandfathers & yours felt for each other we salute you; wished your happiness in this Life and that which is to come and remain

Your Friends & Brothers

Philada. 4th. mo. 19th. 1793

Isaac Zane  Henry Drinker  Joseph Shotwell
James Moon  Joseph Bringhurst  John Pierce junr.
Richd. Lawrence  John Drinker  Abram. Cadwalader
Charles West  David Evans  Thos. George
James Pemberton  Thos. Walmsley  Thos. Gaskill
Samuel Smith  Benja. Mason  John Roberts
David Bacon  Saml. Clark  David Cumming
George Churchman  Owen Biddle  John Wistar
Thos. Lightfoot  Danl. Offley  James Emlen
Robt. Holiday  Mark Miller  Jesse Foulke
John Simpson  Oliver Paxson  John Boon
Simon Meredith  John Field
Nathan Coope  Calib Carmalt
Warner Mifflin  Stepn. Mendenhall
Nicholas Waln  William Wilson

And the Friends who undertake this Journey are directed to be furnished with a Copy of the written Message received by Captain Hendricks from Hopacken, that they may have an opportunity if they find it expedient to take proper Notice of it in such personal Communication as they have with the Indians.

*This Captain Hendricks was probably the Indian leader mentioned in American State Papers, Indian Affairs, I, 169, 322. As is suggested in the Introduction, "this Journey" apparently refers to a trip of Quakers in connection with the unsuccessful negotiations with the Indians in 1793.