



“Warn them of their Danger; press them to Unite.”

July 1754

BENJAMIN JONES
 Alexandria, Virginia

LETTER TO JOHN JONES
 Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

For each colony, defending its western lands against the French and Indians (and Spanish) presented unique challenges. In Pennsylvania, the challenge was the pacifism of the Quakers, the founding sect and politically dominant group. Because they opposed the use of violence, even in self-defense, the colony had no militia of citizen soldiers to protect the frontier settlers. In a letter to a Pennsylvania relative, a Virginia colonist berates the Pennsylvanians for failing to oppose the Quakers' position and allowing themselves to be "bullied by a Thousand vagabond, dirty, pilfering, rascally Frenchmen and Savages." The recipient soon published the letter as a pamphlet. What influence might the letter have had on Pennsylvanians?

To the Printer, &c.

SIR,

I just received the following Letter from my Relation [relative] in Virginia, and cannot better comply with his Desires than making it Publick; I therefore request a Place for it in your Paper, which will oblige, Sir,

Your constant Reader, &c.

JOHN JONES

Swetara Township, Lancaster County
 [Pennsylvania], July 31st, 1754.

Dear Cousin.



U DOUBT not but you have long since heard That several hundred regular Troops, by Order of the *French King*, have actually taken Possession of and are now Settling the Lands *West* of *Philadelphia* within the Limits of Mr. *Penn's* Charter, and have there erected several strong Fortifications. And to remove these bold Invaders, a small Party of our King's faithful Subjects of the Colony [Virginia] and that of *Carolina*, went forth under the

Command of Major [George] *Washington*, but (unhappy News for us) on the third Instant¹ came to an Engagement [battle] and were defeated; tho' with great Loss on the Part of the *French*.

While all this is doing, as I am informed, the People of your Province [Pennsylvania] are as dull and unconcern'd as if they lived in the remotest Part of the Earth, and, that altho' we all perish or become Slaves, yet they, by some peculiar (tho' undeserved) Hand of Providence, are to continue Secure, tho' Storms and Tempests rage ever so great. But this must be the Consideration of the unthinking few; it cannot certainly be the Voice or Language of the greater Part of your People who cannot but now know That, altho' we have hitherto been blessed with Peace and Plenty in this Country, the Scene is changed, and in the room of Peace — War; instead of Plenty — possibly Famine. Certainly Battle and Murder are at our Doors.

Our back [frontier] Settlements and Plantations are daily forsaken by their Inhabitants, and our Substance liable to be pillaged, not only by these *French* Invaders but by a horrid, cruel and merciless Band of *Savages* with them. Wherefore speak with your Countrymen, 'tis the joint and common Cause of every *Englishman* on the Continent. Warn them of their Danger; press them to Unite, come forth and join us their Neighbours and Fight like Men for their Religion, Property and Liberty; or they (and if not they, assuredly their Posterity [descendants]) must be content to submit to the slavish, papal, tyrannical Yoke, become Beasts of Burden, their most excellent and pure Religion changed by the vilest Idolatry and Superstition;² their Properties confiscated and their Liberties subverted. As an *Englishman* and Protestant, 'twere better, far better, honourably to die than to behold so melancholy a Change.

By all Accounts from your Province, I am well informed, the People are very numerous, wealthy, and most of them willing, but can take no Measures without the Aid and Orders of the Government. Your Assembly (I understand) is chiefly composed of the People called Quakers, whose religious Principles (they pretend) direct them against the Defence of themselves or their Country. And, under this Pretence, will not grant any Money for this most desirable Purpose. I fear the People with you are too Remiss.

Have you asked the Assembly? Have you earnestly besought them? Have you represented to them your Dangers and Distresses in a proper Manner? If you have, and they Neglect your Petitions, hard indeed is your and our Case; but if you have not thus address'd them, pray do it immediately; represent to them the Danger of Delays. Time is precious and ought not to be lost. While we deliberate, the Adversary gains Ground, grows stronger, and Strength is added to Strength, Forts built and others building, Fields planted with Corn and near ready for Harvest, the Sheep and Oxen of our back Settlers liable daily to be plundered and driven away, and their Families murder'd, or they must leave their Habitations. The *Indians* (perhaps well disposed towards us) are afraid to join with us. They tell us, We *Virginians* are but Younger Brethren with them. They knew us not in Treaty till very lately, and they cannot trust themselves under our Direction while they behold their Elder Brethren (for so they call the People of your Province) look on unconcerned, from whence they conclude we must be in the Wrong or you would join us.

Oh! that the Gentlemen of your Assembly could hear the bitter Cries and Lamentations of the Mothers over their poor helpless Infants in these Remote Settlements. Could they see the dejected, sorrowful Countenances of the poor Fathers, miserable in the Reflection that they cannot afford that Protection to their Young, which the Laws of God and Nature require at their Hands. Surely it would move them to Grant such an Aid and Supply as would dry up those Tears and dissipate the dismal Sorrows and Apprehensions these poor People now Labour under. The Season, I apprehend, is not yet too far spent. The Work may yet be done if vigorous and speedy measures are taken; but if you still deliberate and delay, certainly much more Men and Treasure must be lost and spent to avert the impending Danger, or the whole Country yielded up, when they please to require it from us.

¹ third Instant, i.e., third of this month.

² i.e., the Roman Catholicism of the French.

Shameful Reflection! to think his Majesty's *British Colonies in North America* should be thus bullied by a Thousand vagabond, dirty, pilfering, rascally *Frenchmen* and *Savages*. Has our Royal Master and dear Sovereign no Men inspired with *English Hearts* in your Colony? I trust he has, and as good and faithful Subjects as any in *England*. Rouse, rouse then your *English Spirits*, I earnestly beseech and invite you to come forth, meet and join with us your Brethren, fellow Subjects, Protestants and Countrymen, for the Support of the common Cause and Interest, and, with God's Assistance, we will give the Flesh of these *French Vagabonds* to the Birds of the Air and the Beasts of the Forest.

I shall Shortly Write to you again. In the mean time favour me with an Answer, what Assistance we may expect from your Province. *I am,*

*Your affectionate Cousin,
and humble Servant,*

BENJAMIN JONES.

*Alexandria in Virginia,
July 17th. 1754*