Paxton Boys

In 1760, Scots-Irish frontiersmen in western Pennsylvania petitioned for weapons and soldiers to protect them from Native American raids, but were denied by the pacifist Quaker government. A group of these men, known as the Paxton Boys, took matters into their own hands and attacked the nearby Conestoga tribe, who had not been involved in the raids. After the attack was finished, the Boys had killed 20 natives.

The men marched onward, trying to attack another group of Native Americans, but found that they had fled to Philadelphia and were protected by the government. This sparked debate, preserved mostly through a pamphlet war.

When and where did this happen? What was going on during this time?


Who took a stand during this event? How and why did they take their stand?

Journal of Settlement at Wright’s Ferry on the Susquehanna River by Rhoda Barber [Am.012]

The first Indian massacre in the valley of Wyoming...1763 An address delivered...July 3, 1889 by Isaac Hollister and Henry William Eagle [F157.W9 E46x]

Apology of the Paxton Volunteers (unpublished draft) [Am.283]

The Paxton Papers by John Raine Dunbar [V.111]

Paxton Boys narrative of the massacres of the Conestoga Indians [Am.5491NOS]

Questions to consider: How many different perspectives are there to this event? How and why did each side take a stand? How did the pamphlet war illustrate the various points of view?