

Copy of a letter to EBENEZER BOWMAN, Esq. of Wilkesbarre,
from Samuel Hodgdon and Edward Tilghman, on behalf of the
Committee of Landholders, consisting of

HENRY DRINKER,	THOMAS W. FRANCIS,
JAMES STRAWBRIDGE,	SAMUEL M. FOX,
THOMAS HARRISON,	SAMUEL HODGDON,
JOHN FIELD,	EDWARD TILGHMAN.
WILLIAM TURNBULL,	

Philadelphia, May 18th. 1801.

SIR,

YOUR letter of the 5th. of April, (by mistake for May,) to Edward Tilghman, was by him laid before the Committee of the landholders, and we are authorized to answer it.

The landholders certainly are disposed to sell their lands on terms they deem reasonable; they are not inclined to reap the fruits of any man's labor, and therefore feel a disposition to contract with those, who, from whatever motive, are seated on their lands. They wish it however to be clearly understood, that they do not affect to interpose between the government and those who have violated the law. Colonel Horne's agency is intended to carry into execution.

Those who, under Connecticut rights, have sat down on lands in Pennsylvania, since the intrusion law, must be considered as having committed a breach of that law, and amenable to public justice. It is essentially necessary to the quiet and safety of the commonwealth, that the law be unequivocally submitted to, and it is the duty of the agent to ascertain with precision the offenders against the law. But it by no means follows that the punishment prescribed by the law, should be inflicted—This rests with the government. If the law is submitted to—if the settlers under their hands and seals make an unreserved bona fide abandonment of all claim or title under Connecticut, and a declaration of their willingness to purchase the lands from those who may be entitled to them under Pennsylvania, and if their conduct proves the sincerity of such declarations, we have not the least doubt prosecutions will not be set on foot; nay further, the committee and the landholders in general, will use their utmost endeavors to prevail upon the Executive to refrain from prosecuting. They are perfectly assured, that nothing can be more grateful to the Governor

than a peaceable adjustment of the present business, and he has declared to one of us, that he shall consider the termination of it, as the greatest blessing he expects to attend his administration.

Let it be understood, that a purchase by the settlers on what they call reasonable terms, is not to be considered by them as a compromise with the government. Till a submission to the Laws takes place, the landholders will not part with their titles; when there is such submission, they will sell to the settlers, on the same terms as they sell to others, as if the lands were rough and unimproved.

The Agent will, without delay, be furnished with maps by the landholders, so that each settler may know on whose land he is seated. There need be no apprehension on the part of the settler, as to the title of the seller, for in his contract he may stipulate for a good Pennsylvania right. The landholders are well aware of the industry and activity of the settlers, and trust that when they once are invested with indefeasible titles, they will become useful members of society; at the same time they know, that in their present circumstances, their exertions cannot tend to the benefit of themselves or the community—these people cannot, must not, pretend to annex terms to their submission to the law—if they do, the consequence infallibly will be fatal to them, whereas by acknowledging the right of Pennsylvania, they will save their improvements and pay no more for the land than others who are not as unfortunately circumstanced. Many, we doubt not, and most we would fain hope, of the settlers, have been deluded by artful designing men. It is their misfortune! Should it also prove the misfortune of the landholders? Surely nothing more can be expected from them, than what they now hold out. We wish it to be known, that the execution of the law is not in our hands, and that we hope the conduct of the settlers may afford us a ground of application to the Executive in their favor. A moment's consideration of the subject, will plainly show that we cannot adopt other measures, without a sacrifice of our own rights or an injury to the rights of the commonwealth.

We heartily thank you for your communication, and request you will from time to time furnish us with any considerations that may occur to you on this most momentous business, trusting it will terminate in perfect consistency with the safety and interest of individuals, and the honor and dignity of the government.

We are, &c.

SAMUEL HODGDON,
EDWARD TILGHMAN.

E. BOWMAN, Esq.

A form of a declaration is sent to Col. Horne, who is referred to this letter for the sentiments of the committee.—Where the present occupant has not the means of purchasing, there will be no objection on the part of the landholders, to give a lease for one or more years—this hint comes from the Governor, who has seen and approves of this letter.

May 18. 1801

Letter to Bro. B. Bauman

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