

relocation, assimilation, and intermarriage. As local indigenous peoples at Circle Legacy Center repeated during our research trips to Lancaster, “we are still here.”

Those words have served as my lodestar as editor of this volume. As the script of *Ghost River* has evolved through drafts, thumbnails, pencils, inks, and colors, our team has consulted regularly with individuals who identify as Delaware, Haliwa-Saponi, Lenape, Munsee, and Oglala Lakota. We’ve visited their meeting space. We’ve spoken on the phone. We’ve broken bread together. *Ghost River* is not a eulogy for some lost tribe; it’s an act of active and ongoing recollection sustained by and responsible to living, breathing people.

Giving voice to historical figures and contemporary survivors has demanded acts of both critical and creative reinterpretation. On a critical level, we had to look beyond the materials that researchers traditionally consult. That is, as the inhabitants of Conestoga were largely absent from the pamphlets synonymous with the Paxton debate, we had to look elsewhere. This included drawing upon contemporary scholarship (a bibliography of which is included at the back of this volume) and revisiting historical materials that were hiding in plain sight, such as Benjamin Franklin’s account of the massacres, treaty records from the Seven Years’ War, and minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania. In keeping with Marisa Fuentes’s idea of “reading along the bias grain,” I prioritized fragments — manuscript records such as letters, diaries, and account books — which speak to the lived experiences of the Conestoga people and the settlers the Paxton mob claimed to represent. Alongside dozens of pamphlets, engravings, and political cartoons, I collected more than 175 handwritten records scattered across 20 different archives and libraries. Some of those records have even been reproduced in the back of this volume, and all of the sources that we have consulted are freely available through a digital research project entitled Digital Paxton ([digitalpaxton.org](http://digitalpaxton.org)).

As important as collecting obscure or overlooked materials was to the completion of this project, it would not exist unless we asked new questions of known records. Rather than partnering with another scholar, I sought out an author and an artist with decidedly different vantage points on colonial history. To that point, this book is written, illustrated, and published by indigenous peoples: Dr. Lee Francis 4 (Laguna Pueblo) wrote the script; Weshoyot Alvitre (Tongva) brought it to life through hand-drawn and hand-painted artwork.

While Francis and Alvitre brought a wealth of experience and a keen sensitivity to this story, as members of Western tribes they needed the support

of historians and local Indigenous community members. As the convener of this project, the Library Company of Philadelphia is committed to ensuring that this narrative is faithful to both the historical materials and the recollections of living relatives: we have assembled an advisory board, which includes prominent academics and representatives from the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, and the Lenape Center; we organized research trips around Philadelphia and into Lancaster County before developing the narrative; and we have consulted regularly with members of the Circle Legacy Center as we revised the narrative and artwork. While dozens of individuals have contributed to this project, the Circle Legacy Center, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and empowering Native Americans, has proven a particularly generous partner. MaryAnn Robins (Onondaga Nation) arranged a potluck lunch for our creative team at the Lancaster Mennonite Church; Barry Lee (Munsee Nation) advised us on historical dress; Sandi Cianciulli (Oglala Lakota) arranged interviews in conjunction with programming for Jim Thorpe Sports Day in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Darvin Martin, special advisor to the Circle Legacy Center, took our team on a tour of local burial grounds and the historical site of Conestoga Manor. As a small gesture to our gratitude for this group’s expertise and hospitality, we identify the individuals with whom we consulted in the back of this volume.

In addition to the support of the Circle Legacy Center, we have relied upon both our advisory board, most especially Curtis Zunigha and Daniel Richter, as well as outside readers, including Michael Goode, Scott Paul Gordon, and Jack Brubaker. In some instances, the changes may not be readily apparent in the graphic novel. For example, Francis and I had a lively exchange about how to refer to the Indigenous People at the center of this story. Ultimately, we adopted “Conestoga” because it’s widely-adopted and draws an explicit connection to a contemporary place (Conestoga Township); however, we have preserved our discussion in the annotated script, excerpted in the back of this volume and included it in full via the digital edition of *Ghost River* ([ghostriver.org](http://ghostriver.org)). In another instance, Scott Gordon helped us to localize where Lenape were interned in Philadelphia (Province Island and the Barracks) and to identify specific individuals. While those may be small details in the context of this narrative, the context surrounding those choices is well-documented in the annotated script.

The most substantive change that we made concerned the massacre of the Conestoga people at the Lancaster workhouse. Although Francis