

Genesis of the Brothertown Indian

By Caroline K. Andler

“... Whilst our forefathers were blind, and ignorant yea drowned in Spirituous Liquors; the English striped them, yea as it were cut off their Right Hands; - and now we their Children just opening our eyes, and having knowledge grafted, and growing in our hearts, and just reviving, or coming to our senses, like one that has been drunk – I say that now we begin to look around and Consider and we perceive that we are striped indeed, having nothing to help ourselves, and thus our English Brethren leaves us and laugh. So now Brethren we leave the English those who have acted unjustly towards us in New England, I say we leave them all in the hands of that God who Knoweth all things, and will reward everyone according to their deeds whether good or evil.”

Joseph Johnson, Mohegan

January 20, 1774

JOSEPH JOHNSON

Joseph Johnson's family was of the oldest Mohegan stock. His Grandfather, Manahawon Johnson, in 1723 was living at Mohegan and was the Manghaughwont¹ who signed with the tribe in 1714.² In 1735, Captain John Mason, his two sons, Samuel and John, as well as Mahomet, sachem of the Mohegans and twenty-year-old Acquont (Augh Quant) Johnson sailed to England to seek Imperial assistance in a land controversy that had split the tribe into factions. In August 1736 both Mahomet and John Mason died of smallpox during an epidemic. King George paid for the living expenses and the transportation costs for the Mason brothers and Acquout Johnson to return to New England. Captain Samuel Mason and Acquont Johnson submitted a new

¹ "Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut A Mohegan-Pequot Diary" by Frank G. Speck 43d Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology 1925-1926 p 280 Personal Names – Mohegan --Manghauhont (1714), Manahawn (Johnson) (1723)

² 1714 Sequestering of Mohegan lands with the exceptions of lands called pamechauge to Capt. John Mason, Joseph Stanton, Co. William Whiting, Gurdon Saltonstall and John Eliot [includes a hill called Weequemuck]; and 400 acres to Daniel Fitch, beginning at Trading Cove Brook NW to the great swamp Wequeemuck, S to Towepuamsuck, and E to Trading Cove. Signed by Ben Uncas, Upaukes, Quaqueequeed, Weenoughawamaugwonk, Tuckochewent, Uckuchiptown, Maughaughwont, Weetontaguegon, Caughcheegont, Weemoscam, Woobenneeg, Pawpistoe, Quanumbap, Pumegegump, Chawhau, Winnahameen, Paughapum, Asupaupowitt, Wianhwhit, Weaughaugneen, Maughcaute, Quequeat, Waughunuk, Nadouch, Uppinneen, Shabinumquot, Mecoumocoith, Nesoquos, Waighush, Chipukes, Pouquond, Nunapome, Wannebouke, Mutaughmag, Queebaugh, Wumoubough, Aseebump, Qumawose, Cowequeshuk, Causseeamont, Unggusomough, Suckcummie, Pauscaughote, Pumpaimauim, Neegunukiet, Paumacowit, Ummusseen, Aun Roue, Amuctaucin, Quycough, Pauquinup, Nebinump, Caughpunas, Caughcomaush. [Two days later it was filed in New London and witnessed by Waswahmenoe, nupicke, Cheanuk, Queqoaqueque, John Uncas, Tocomwas, Skeweas, Nuanumpauk, numshum, Magusunk. [New London Land Records Vol. VI: 345] pg. 131,132

petition when they returned.³ In 1738 he was the recipient of a letter from Captain Thomas Coran of London; "*Augh Quant Johnson Otherwise Cato, of the Mohegan Tribe of Indians, a young man who came over to England with mr. Mason in the beginning of the year 1736.*"

This man, also sometimes called Augh Quant and Cato Johnson, had three sons, Zacharias, or Zachary (Arrowhamet) married to Martha Obed. was a counselor to Ben Uncas III is prominent in the records of the Mohegan tribe. Long after Ben's death in 1769, Zachary continued to do battle against the Sachem's enemies; he remained loyal to the government until his death in 1787, and in his old age was granted a pension for his loyalty. The names of the children of Zachary, and his wife Martha [Obed] are not known, other than one of Zachary's daughters married a Tocomwas.

Martha Obed married Arrowhamet/Zachary Johnson, a regent of the Mohegan tribe. The Obed's were sachems of the Niantics and her connection to the "royalty of Mohegan", were probably through Joshua (a.k.a. Attawanhood) Uncas. Zachary and Martha are described by Reverend John Tyler (Norwich Rector) as living atop Mohegan hill as follows:

"On Mohegan Hill not far distant from the old fort of Uncas was the dwelling of Arrowhamet, the warrior, or Zachary, as he was familiarly called, that being his baptismal name. Tall, erect, and muscular, he seemed to defy the ravages of time, though it is recorded that seventy winters had passed over him. His wife Martha, who with him had embraced the Christian religion was a descendant of the departed royalty of Mohegan...Zachary was arrayed with...(a) broad gold band, which had been the present of an officer as a testimony of valor, (it) was now constantly worn with his well-brushed hat and old Martha arrayed every afternoon in a plain black silk gown made in a very becoming manner..."

It is to this same individual that the following passage copied by Barber from an old Norwich newspaper, doubtless refers: "[Norwich, September 12, 1787.] *"Lately died at his wigwam in Powachaug, (Norwich,) old Zachariah, Regent of the Mohegan tribe of Indians, in the 100th year of his age. It is said, that in his younger years he was greatly addicted to drunkenness, but that for near 40 years past he has entirely abstained from the use of all spirituous liquors."*⁴

Ephraim also became a councilor of the tribe in 1742. *May 1743. "Upon the memorial of Joshua Uncas, Samuel Uncas, Zachariah Johnson and Samuel Chawchoy, Mohegan Indians, appointed by the sachem and the tribe of said Indians, to prefer said memorial, shewing that on the first day of July, A. Dom. 1742, the sachem Ben Uncas made choice of (viz: Old Wambaneage, Old Jo Pye, Joshua Uncas, Zachariah Johnson, Joshua Aukum, John Uncas, Simon Chawchoy, Samuel Pye, Samson Aukum, Ephraim Johnson and John Wamboneage, all of said tribe, to be members of his, the said sachem's, council, to advise and assist him in all affairs and matters relating to the said tribe; and shewing the said tribe do approve of said choice; and therefore requesting this Assembly to approve and confirm the said councillors, exclusive of*

³ Talcott Papers. Connecticut Historical Society Collections, Vol 4-5 . Transatlantic Encounters American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776" by Alden T. Vaughan Publ. Cambridge University Press pp162-163. History of the Indians of Connecticut" by John W. De Forest Publ. Hartford: Wm. Jas. Hamersley 1852. p323

⁴ 1752. John Warner Barber New Haven,: Durrie & Peck, 1838. Hist. Coll. of Connecticut, p. 300

*Joshua Aukum, who is since deceased: This assembly do hereby declare their approbation of the said choice, and do confirm and establish the said councillors yet living to be council to the said sachem, to advise and counsel him in the conducting and managing the affairs of said tribe, according to ancient usage and customs of said tribe, for the good and peace of the same.”*⁵

John was living in Mohegan in 1742, 1749, and 1755, when he had three children, and he fought in the French and Indian War. John, along with his brothers, Zachary, Ephraim and Joseph appear on a listing in 1750 of those swearing to be “*loving, faithful, and obedient subjects to Benj. Uncas as our Sachem, so long as he shall maintain and walk agreeable to the Articles of his father’s Last Will or Testament Concerning Sachemship.*

Zachery Johnson; John Dantuequejan (Tantaquidgeon); Ephraim Johnson; Samson Occum; Joseph Johnson; Hohn George; Samuel Pie; Moses Mazean; James Robpin (Robbin); David Occum; John Robpin (Robbin); Jacob Hoscott; Jacob Hoscott, Jr.; Jabez James; Simon Choychoy; Noah Choychoy; Chals. Choychoy; Henry Quamquanquid; Caleb Cauchegan; John Cheswonkeh; Thomas George; John Fetch; Joshua Occom; Jacob George; Samuel Ashpo; John Johnson.

John Johnson’s family is listed, with “*John deceased.*” and recorded as “*dead or captivated*” in 1757, on Zachary’s List of Mohegan Indians September 1st, 1774, a listing of Mohegan Indians agreeable to the mind of Zachary. His wife Mary Johnson, was admitted to the Groton church in 1741 and had ten children baptized between 1743 and 1752.⁶ One of this woman’s sons, John Johnson, was a frequent companion to his cousin, Joseph on his travels involving the migration of the Christian New England Indians to Oneida lands and became an influential leader and a Peacemaker in the Brothertown settlement.

Joseph, Sr., married to Elizabeth Garrett, had children, Joseph,⁷ Amy, and Patience who all went to Wheelock’s school and Hannah, baptized⁸ in 1748 by Eliphalet Adams. Joseph is listed in 1754 as having four children. Joseph, Sr. had been a captain of Indian scouts in the French war, and he is doubtless the soldier in Captain Nathan Whiting’s company who died September 4, 1758, as his death occurred about that time.⁹ At Fort Edward on August 2, 1757, he was commissioned by Lieutenant Colonel John Young at the Royal-American Regiment: “*Whereas, Daniel Webb Esquire, Major-General of his Majesty’s Forces, hath authorized me to send a Detachment of our faithfull Indians, And being well assured of the Fidelity and Courage of*

⁵ Hoadley, Charles J. Editor. The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut from October 1735, to October 1743, inclusive. Hartford : Press of the Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1874. 517.

⁶ "Black Roots in Southeastern Connecticut 1650 - 1900" by Rose & Brownp 214 Johnson, Mary, Indian, was baptised and admitted to the church 29 Nov. 1741. Groton 1st Church. Children of Mary Johnson: David - bpt. 7 Aug. 1743; Elizabeth; Eunice; Jane; John; Mary; Anna; all baptised same day as David. Abigail - bpt. 7 Sept. 1747; Lucretia - bpt 28 May 1749; Jane bpt. 14 June

⁷ BAPTISMS BY Eliphalet ADAMS The Later History of the First Church of Christ, New London, Conn. S. Leroy Blake Press of the Day Publishing Company New London 1900 1751 Jun 3 At Mohegan Joseph JOHNSON’s child in right of his wife Elizabeth GARRET, Joseph

⁸ BAPTISMS BY Eliphalet ADAMS The Later History of the First Church of Christ, New London, Conn. S. Leroy Blake Press of the Day Publishing Company New London 1900 1748 Apr 20 At a lecture at Mohegin, Ben UNCAS’s child, Esther (and) Betty GARRET’s, alias JOHNSON’s child, Hannah

⁹ “Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England” by W. DeLoss Love. Publ Syracuse Univ. Press 1899. P65

Joseph Johnson, I hereby authorize him to chuse out of the Indians now in our Camp, to the number of Six and Twenty; whom he is to command, and who are to obey him, not only upon the present Scout, but upon any other he maybe employed [on] during the Course of this Campaign (if so long a Time is necessary) But that the said Joseph Johnson and his Party, shall be at full Liberty to return to their respective Companies and Habitations, either after the present expedition, or when the Time of their present engagement is expired. Given under my Hand, at the Camp by Fort Edward, this Second Day of August 1757. John Young, Lt. Col. Royal American Reg't"

An educated, Christian Indian, he wrote to his wife from Fort Edward on Aug 19, 1757 – *"Dear and loving wife, I received your letter, dated the 9th day of this month. I am glad to hear you are well and all my friends. I am not so well, as I have been: I am afraid going to be sick with the camp distemper. But I pray God to preserve me from all evil, from sickness, and from the danger of the enemy, and, if it is to be his will, return me safely to you and my friends. Should be glad you would send me a letter by the post, and tell me if you have received a five-shilling bill and two pistareens, which I sent in my last letter. Solomon Cheebucks is sick. I am afraid he will die with it. The French have taken our fort at Lake George and killed and carried captive a great many Indians. But none of our Connecticut are taken this time. I remain your loving husband, Joseph Johnson.... I hope you will find two dollars and one six penny piece, which I have sent in this letter, which I got for a deer skin, that I killed yesterday, I went out with my party and we killed three deer. I hope you will send me a letter by the post, and tell me how much money you have received, since I came from home. Joseph Johnson."*

Joseph, Jr. was sent by his mother at age seven, to the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock's Indian Charity School at Lebanon, after the death of his father. *"While at school he was a bright, mischievous boy, quick to learn but not very fond of study,"* according to Dr. Wheelock. He still had contact with his family siblings and mother in Mohegan. Joseph was sent as a schoolmaster to the Oneidas, west of Albany, New York, *"in the third month of his fifteenth year."* Joseph Johnson kept David Fowler's school until his return after his marriage. Samuel Kirkland writes a letter wherein Johnson is mentioned. *"Johnson will tarry as Usher to David until next Spring, when I think best for Moses to take his Placed, if he will answer for an Interpreter."* A cold winter passed - *"...In the Spring Kirkland was obliged to go to Lebanon for money and supplies; but he at once returned to his post. Soon it became evident that there was to be a famine in the land, more severe even than those of previous summers. Kirkland anticipated the emergency, and, to diminish the force needing maintenance and to advise Doctor Wheelock, he sent Jacob Fowler and Joseph Johnson home to Lebanon." "...Jacob Fowler and Joseph Johnson were detained at Lebanon until the autumn, when they came again. Johnson taught at Old Oneida until 1768, he was then only a youth eighteen years old..."*¹⁰

His sister Amy left the Indian Charity School early in 1766. She lived in various families, and was employed at Captain Bull's tavern, the "Bunch of Grapes," in Hartford, when David Fowler contemplated making her his wife. Later she returned to Mohegan. David Fowler wrote to Wheelock on May 2, 1765, from Hartford; *"I have determined to have Amy for my companion: I shall marry her as soon as I return from Onyda..."* Amy perhaps had other thoughts as David

¹⁰ "Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England" by W. DeLoss Love. Publ Syracuse Univ. Press 1899.pp112-113.

once again writes to Wheelock on May 13, 1766 saying he has written “a large letter” to Hannah Poquiantup, “which will either spur her up or knock her in the head.” “If she won’t let her bones be joined with mine I shall pick out my rib from your house.” Rejected again, he married Hannah Garret, daughter of Benjamin Garret, in Charlestown, R.I. around July 26, 1766.

Joseph Johnson, since leaving the Oneidas in New York, in the autumn of 1768, had been teaching school in the winter following at Providence. Then he went on a whaling voyage- “wandering up and down in this delusive world.” He visited the West Indies and other distant parts. At last he returned to Mohegan, being then only twenty-one years of age. Here he worked for a year on the lands of his uncle, Zachary Johnson, with whom his sister, Amy also was living. Once again surrounded by Christian family members, he renewed his faith. At Mohegan in those dark days was a revival among the Indians. He was one of the first to be awakened in this religious interest. Meetings were held in other Indian settlements. Rev. Samuel Ashbow, himself, restored to a sober life, was a prominent exhorter in them- preaching with vigor on “*The voice in the Wilderness,*” and “*inviting all to set their minds heavenward.*” Some of the converts were old pupils in the Lebanon school. On the thirteenth of November, 1771, Joseph tells us, he turned anew to the Scriptures and began to call on the name of the Lord. So he returned to the life he had been taught to live in the Indian Charity School.

He entered with zeal into missionary work among the Indians. In the hut of Solomon Mossuck, the foremost in such matters, he held services at many an evening hour. On the 15th of November in 1772, Joseph began teaching school at Farmington, west of Hartford, Connecticut among the Tunxis Indians. He taught in a small log house situated on the Indian lands then known as the “*West Woods.*” A number of Indian children were at once gathered. Every Sunday he assembled the tribe for worship.

On December 2nd. 1772, **he** was married by Rev. Ephraim Judson of Norwich to Tabitha, the daughter of Samson Occom, and they established a home among the Tunxis Indians. ¹¹

As the Indians who had converted to Christianity in New England as a result of the Great Awakening, the religious movement of the 1740’s, tried to live Christian lives, they found it difficult to resist the pressures from whites around them who encouraged them to abuse alcohol, give up farming and sell their lands. By 1771, when Joseph began teaching at Farmington, they were poverty stricken, decimated by wars and disease. They were struggling to survive both economically and culturally. The condition of his people became the impetus for forming a new community, a grand plan for removing some of the Christian Indians of the seven Praying Towns to fresh country where they might live amicably together.

There was no expectation that all of any tribe or in any settlement would remove, only those individuals who had been drawn together by Christian influences. The earliest idea seems to have been to improve their own condition by a removal from the corrupting influences about them. The prospect of new homes was very inviting. They had sold most of their lands as compensation for debt and they were only able to hold on to small parcels, not large enough or of a decent quality if they were going to depend on agriculture. Joseph Johnson, Samson Occom,

¹¹ “Annals and recollections of Oneida County” by Pomroy Jones

and Jacob and David Fowler were familiar with the Oneida country, having been sent there by Wheelock to preach and open schools. They had no doubt that lands could be had for the asking from their Oneida friends.

The movement began with a general meeting of representatives from the seven Indian towns at Mohegan, March 13, 1773. The “*great Company of Indians*” met to confer over Joseph Johnson’s great project for the emigration of the New England Christian Indians to new lands in Oneida. The carrying out of this plan would fall almost entirely on Joseph Johnson. “*He was young, had an extraordinary energy, and could easily travel about the countryside, awakening interest in the subject and perfecting arrangements. Withal he was a natural diplomat, exhibiting great tact in treating with the Oneidas and in unifying the relations of the New England tribes.*” After considerable consultation, over several days, it was decided to send representatives, one from each settlement, to look up a suitable tract of land in the Oneida country. Because of their spring work this proposed visit was delayed, but Johnson sent a messenger to Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to seek his advice, and received encouragement from him. That summer, Sir William Johnson, was in the east at the seashore and there nine of the Indians waited upon him and received his promise to secure for them lands among the Oneidas, which was to be effected on his return to Johnson Hall in the autumn.

At Farmington, on October 13th, 1773, Joseph Johnson sent letters to the seven Indian communities describing the status of the project and urging others to join:

“This once more, we of the Tribe at Farmington send greeting to all our Indian Brethren at Mohegan, Nihantuck, Pequitt, Stonington, Narragansett and Montauk, Brethren. We love you, and wish your well-being both in this Life and that which is to come. We ask your Serious Attentions a Moment. Dear Brethren, with humility we undertake to write you, begging that ye would remember the Affair of which we so earnestly talked last Spring at the town of Mohegan. We beg that ye would this once more take this Affair under your deliberate Considerations, let it not drop through since we have encouragements on every side. We have encouragement from His Honor, Sir William Johnson, Baronet, and thing look promising. Let us take Courage friends and let us step forward like men. We beg that ye would by all means Send a Man out of Each Tribe, that they may go with us, and Seek a Country for our Brethren, is it not worth while. Surely it is. be so good as to show yourselves me, for General Johnson Expects us at his house [the] last of this month, and if we do not make our appearance, he will think that we are only talkers, and not worthy of Notice. how foolish shall we feel if we be despised by General Johnson. But dear Brethren, we will not multiply words, seeing that ye are men, and it is to be hoped wise men. Consider of things, and do that which is right, by no means be discouraged, but dear Brethren, let us put our trust in that God who ruleth in the Armies of Heaven, and doeth his pleasure among the Inhabitants of this lower World – if God be for us this is Enough, he can comfort us Even in a Wilderness. let us consider of our Condition, let us think of our Children, let us think of time to come. We mention these things to put you in Remembrance.

Brethren, if the men chosen last spring be backward to go to the Mohawk Country be so good as to Send others in their room, and Encourage one another. if Money is scarce, let us try to carry little provisions in our Packs, which will be of considerable help, let the men that go try to get the good will of the Women and let the kind women make little Yoke-hegg.¹² We will try to

¹² New England Indians grew a type of large kernel corn, which was parched in hot ashes, and pounded very fine with a stone pestle in a wooden mortar. Tightly woven bags of soft hemp or leather, worn at the waist, held the

help them with little Provisions when they go from here. our kind Women send a word of Encouragement and say that they will make a little yoke hegg to give to the travelers.

So we must End. Wishing you all well: and we would beg that those men shall go, come to our town be sure by the 23d day of the Month, as we purpose to Set of from here the 25th of October, or of this month.

Let all Christians pray for us every Day. So farewell.

We whose Names are underneath are united in those things that are contained in this Letter.

Joseph Johnson, Scripsit

Samuel Adams; Andrew Corcemp; Charles Wimpey; Moses Sanchuse

Thomas Corcemp; Solomon Mosuck; Daniel Mosuck

At the time appointed, the only messengers who went were Joseph Johnson and Elijah Wampy of Farmington. A rumor of the impending war in that country discouraged the others from going. Five Oneidas met them at Johnson Hall in October, and in behalf of their tribe made a gift of lands to the New England Indians. These messengers returned in November, and Joseph Johnson himself carried their answer through the Indian settlements.

On October 15th, 1773, five Onoidas arrived at Johnson Hall with an answer to Sir William Johnson's Message sent to them by Saghaugarat one of their chiefs about ten days ago, concerning the New England Indian's intentions of removing to this part of the Country provided the Six Nations would give them a tract of land to live on, of about ten Miles Square. To which they Answered that at a full Council of all their People, and Warriors &c:¹³ they agreed to what Sir William had proposed, and begged that he would tell such of the New England Indians as were expected soon here, that as their young men were now going on the Hunt, and would not return 'till after the New Year, they should return from hence, and acquaint their People that the Onoidas were ready to comply with their Request, and would be glad to see them in their Nation on their Return from Hunting, when they would show them a place to settle on, which if they did not like, they would give them liberty to chuse a place that might be more agreeable. They then concluded telling Sir William that the Chiefs, and Warriors begged his Advice in the Affairs,

parched maize called yokeg, a food "so sweet, toothsome, and hearty, that an Indian will travel many days with no other food but this meal, which he eateth as he needs, and after it drinketh water."

¹³ "Treaty of Canandaigua 1794 200 Years of Treaty Relations between the Iroquois Confederacy and the United States" edited by G. Peter Jemison & Anna M. Schein Publ. Santa Fe, New Mexico 2000 pp98-101 "On the eve of the American Revolution, during 1773 and 1774, a clear example of the adoption of an entire group occurred. At that time, a refugee people known as the Brothertons were brought into the Confederacy as a whole people, not as individuals. This event also demonstrates the Haudenosaunee concept that any lands not occupied as a town were Woods and therefore were under the authority of the entire Confederacy, not simply of one of the Nations. More than a decade of negotiations with East Coast Algonquins from New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts preceded a more intense discussion by the Grand Council in 1773 and 1774. Then, in January and February of 1774, the Haudenosaunee Grand Council gave permission to one of the member Nations, the Oneidas, to grant land to refugee New England and Long Island Indians. Haudenosaunee spokesmen carrying appropriate wampum belts of authority first delivered the terms from the Grand Council-which included, of course, Mohawk representatives-to both the Algonquin refugees and English officials awaiting them at Johnstown, New York. Then the English drew up a written agreement based on the Grand Council's intent. In this agreement, the Grand council and the Oneidas specifically excluded these refugee New England Algonquin Indians, soon to be known as the Brothertons, from participating in the beaver trade with the following restrictive clause: The said Oneidas do grant to the said New England Indians, and their posterity without power of Alienation, the aforescribed Tract...Also full liberty of hunting all sorts of Game throughout the whole Oneida Country, Beaver Hunting only excepted."

which he promised to afford them when they met in the winter.

*Ordered them ammunition, Provision, and a little Cash to carry them back.
Delivered a Belt and three Strings of Wampum in Return.*

A true Copy from the Extract, which I received from the Honorable Sir. William Johnson Baronet, at Johnson Hall. October 27th, 1773. Wrote by me Joseph Johnson, an Indian of the Mohegan Tribe, at Dartmouth College this twenty third day of August AD 1774, at the desire of my Honored Patron, the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock, D.D. and President of Dartmouth College.¹⁴

Once again, Joseph wrote a letter beseeching “*To the Indians Concerning Oneida lands – To All, Who are truly Engaged in the Mohawk Affair,*” to consider the cause seriously. It was again signed by several Tunxis Indians also.

Farmington, December 24th, AD 1773

Our dear, & well beloved Brethren, we wish you all well, your good, as well as our own, lies near at heart, and we wish you, and yours the same Prosperity, as ourselves.-

But not to be tedious in our Introduction. We will let you know our Design and desire. In Sending to you this once more. Our dear Brethren, seeing that the time is nigh at hand, that those chosen men, or others in there room, should go forth into the Western Country, according to the appointment of his Honor Sir William Johnson, Baronet, and the desire of the Onoida Indians. We say that the time is almost Come. Seeing then it is so nigh, we thought proper, to send to you our dear Brethren this once more, humbly, and earnestly desiring that ye would consider of things, and by all means Let one out of each Town, or Tribe go up to the Mohawk country, what can we say more. We have used all proper means yea we have been much concerned concerning you our dear Brethren, and we are Sorry, to See, So much Coldness, Lukewarmness, and indifferency, amongst you. As ye have discovered, since last march, 1773. What shall we think of you. If you do not send one out of each Town, or Tribe. Yea, what will General Johnson think of you, and what will the Indians under his Special Inspection think of you, who hath, by the Great Influence of his Honor Sir William given to great and unexpected Encouragement. We pray you to consider of things Seriously.

True, it is, that we are under a great disadvantage, by such a great body of Snow, which is upon the face of the Earth, which Will hinder us, from making a proper observation on the land given to us, yet let not the present Snow Stop you by no means. Tho we cant see the Land as we wish we could, yet we can converse with our Western Brethren, the Onoidas, about the Land. Yea it is highly necessary that we go, and talk with our distant friends, and hear for ourselves, and See how those Indians are disposed towards us, and receive further orders or advise from our Great friend the Honorable, Sir William Johnson, Baronet. Yea we think we could do much by this Winter’s Journey, we could do so much as that we need not go up again, until we go to Settle the Land. Yea, we could have the Land Secured to us, as the Indians will think proper, to grant us, be it more or Less. Our friends, if ye had not agreed to Send one our of each Tribe last Spring, we would not have Sent to you so often, but we are hoping that ye will not be angry with us. Seeing that we have acquainted General Johnson, Several times, what we agreed last Spring at Mohegan and Sir William doth certainly expect you, or one out of Each Tribe by all means at this time, he told us when we were at his house, the Indians would think Strange if only two or three came up to the Congress, when Six or Seven were expected. General Johnson told us, that

¹⁴ “The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians” edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ. 1932 pp157-158.

he sent a word to them Indians telling them, that one our of Each Tribe was Coming to Converse with them. And they Expect us, all, by the 10th Day of January next. So how can ye help yourselves. Can ye deny that ye promised to Send one our of Each Tribe, must we let the World know that we are Indians by Nature, & by Practice, but we must End, begging, intreating, and humbly beseeking you all Our dear Brethren to do those things which are right, which are Praise Worthy. Do those things which become men, do those things which become Christians. So fare you well, we wish you well, and We expect at least Some young men from Each town, by the first day of January next. Which will be on Saturday. So on Monday, of January we purpose to set off, but with what face, can we go alone again. O friends we hardly dare to go alone again. Consider us, Consider yourselves consider of General Johnson. Consider of the Mohawks, &c.; thus much at present from us Your Brethren at Farmington.

Joseph Johnson

Solomon Massuck

Elijah Wimby

Daniel Massuck

Andrew Con Comp

Solomon Adams

David Robin

To All Indians at Nihantuck, Mohegan, Grotton, Stonington, Narragansett, and Long Island, or at Montauk.¹⁵

In the first week of January, with the ground covered with snow, only four set out for Oneida, Joseph Johnson went for Mohegans, Jacob Fowler for Montauk and Groton, Samuel Tobias for Charlestown, and Elijah Wampy for Farmington. Jacob Fowler and Samuel Tobias gave up the trek and returned home. Wampy and Joseph arrived safely at Kanawarohare, where on January 13th, 1774, Joseph Johnson and Elijah Wampy met with Sir William Johnson concerning the lands which the Oneidas had promised to the New England Indians. They were greeted with favor by Sir William and he gave them gifts to give to the Oneidas at Council.

In the council house of the Oneida, at Kanoarohare on January the 20th, 1774 Joseph delivered the following address:

“Our dear and well beloved Brethren it is with much pleasure that we see so many of you assembled together at this time and upon this Occasion. We give you our great respects, and sincere love. We look upon you at present as upon an elder Brother as a Nation, and Beloved Brethren, we pray you to consider us, and harken to us, as to a younger Brother, not only consider of us as two persons, But view us to be speaking, or acting for all our Brethren in New England, or at least for seven Towns. We pray you to consider seriously of our words, ye old men who are wise, also ye warriors, and stout hearted young men. Listen unto us, yea let Children harken, that what we say may not be soon forgotten. Brethren in the first place, we will acquaint you of the State and Circumstances of our New England Brethren, and also we will inform you of our proceedings hitherto. Brethren we in New England, or at least many of us are very poor, by reason of the ignorance of our forefathers who are now dead. Brethren ye know that the English are a very wise people, and can see great ways. But some says, that the Indian can see but little ways, and we believe that our forefathers could not see but very little ways.

¹⁵ “The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians” edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ. 1932 pp1158,159,160

Brethren, ye also know that some of the English loves to take the advantage of poor, ignorant, and blind Indians. Well so it was in the days of our forefathers in New England. But not to expose the unjust acts of our English Brethren I shall not say much more about them, lest I cast a prejudice in your Hearts against the English Brethren. Notwithstanding there are so many wicked, or unjust men, among the English, yet there are great many good, and just men amongst the English, who loves the poor Indians, from the bottom of their hearts, and wishes us all a well being in this World, and in the World to come, Life everlasting. But all I have to say about the English at present is this Whilst our forefathers were blind, and ignorant yea drowned in Spirituous Liquors; the English striped them, yea as it were cut off their Right Hands; - and now we their Children just opening our eyes, and having knowledge grafted, and growing in our hearts, and just reviving, or coming to our senses, like one that has been drunk - I say that now we begin to look around and Consider and we perceive that we are striped indeed, having nothing to help ourselves, and thus our English Brethren leaves us and laugh. So now Brethren, we leave the English those who have acted unjustly towards us in New England, I say we leave them all in the hands of that God who knoweth all things, and will reward every one according to their deeds whether good or Evil.

Brethren, we seeing ourselves in such Circumstances, began last spring to talk, and to consider together, a meeting was appointed at Mohegan that being nigh the Center, and was attended the 13th day of last March AD 1773, and there was a Vast number of People Men, Women, and Children, there we Met, and there we consulted together. There was present at this Meeting Indians of seven Towns, and it was proposed that certain men out of every town should go out and seek a Place somewhere, for us seven Towns to settle down together in Peace. Some were of a Mind to go southward as far as to Ohio, and some not so far that way. Some said we should purchase land nigher and it would not do to live so far from the English. As last it Came into our minds to try to purchase some land from some of the Six Nations. So a time was appointed by our great men, Councilors and teachers, that those Chosen men should go forth one out of every town to seek a Place for us to settle on, and as our work was coming on our headmen thought proper that hose chosen men should not go till the hurrying work was over, that is after mowing, and reaping, and as it pleased the Tribes to chuse me for one that should come into these Parts to try to get some land upon some terms. I thought proper to send to his Honor Sir William Johnson for advice, in this affair; and I wrote a Letter to his Honor Sir William and acquainted him of all our Circumstances, desires, and purposes, and it pleased his Honor in his great Condescension to take Notice of us, and sent back a word of encouragement which made many of our hearts glad, and about the time that we was to come up, his Honor Sir William Johnson was down in that part of the Country which hindered us from coming up then, and there we had an Opportunity to speak with his Honor Sir William. Nine of our Country men went to see Sir William from different Towns and he used us kindly and still gave us Encouragement, thus we have been Encouraged from time to time. His Honor Sir William appointed a time for some oif our Country men to come up in these Parts, and that was last fall, it pleased Sir William to tell us that he would help us as much as he could and advise us in the Affair. And according to the advice of his Honor some of us came to his house last fall, and to our joy He received us gladly, and shewed us great respects, only two of us came up, the reason it is supposed that no more came up to his Honors house is this, a bad News was heard in our Country. We heard that it was dangerous times, we heard that there was considerable talk of war among the Indians in these Parts, which News discouraged many of our Brethren, but when we came to Sir Williams, He informed us otherwise, also Sir William acquainted us, with your

proceedings at which good News, we were very glad and our minds was disposed to come even to this town, to converse with you more particularly-but according to your desire and the advice of his Honor Sir William we returned from his House; after he had fully acquainted us of your good will towards us in New England, at that time Sir William delivered to me a few lines, so as I might shew them to my Brethren in New England, in them few lines was contained the answer which you gave to Sir Williams Message sent to you by Saghugarat one of your Chiefs, concerning the Intentions of our New England Brethren, of removing to this part of the World if consistent with the minds of you our Elder Brothers, not only consistent with your Minds, but also with the mind, or approbation of his Honor Sir William. Yea here is, in my hand the Writing drawn from the Records of his Honor Sir William, which if you please ye may hear, so as things past may be fresh in your memory again, this Paper or Writing I carried myself thro' Six Towns of Indians in New England, and at every town I called the people together both small, and great, male, and female, and they received the good news with great joy. I did not go to the seventh town, by reason of the inconvenience of going by water; and also my business called me to be at home; so I made as much hast as possible-however they have heard of your good will: and purposed to send one from that Tribe at his time, but perhaps the wind was contrary so he could not get over to the main.-from the Town where I live at present, we sent a Young man, down to Our Brethren few days before we sat away, to stir them up, or to awoke them; and to tell them that the time is drawing nigh when we should go, to visit our western Brethren; and to discourse with them particularly; So we might be fully satisfied what to do in the next place, or how we should take the next Step, our Brethren thought it not Necessary to send great many at this time the reason is this, because there is a great body of snow the face of the Earth, which would hinder us from seeing the ground, if there was no Snow, doubtless some of our elder Brethren would now be present at this Meeting to converse with you, but my friends we hope ye will not be angry with us, because there is no more of us come to this place there was four of us that sat off together, from four different Towns, But two of our Companions gave out-the one his hip failed him, the other his Back and they returned, we know not how it is with them, But God who is good-and doeth good continually, gave us health, and strength, and prospered us by the way, and now in his own due time hath brought us safe to this place, and is allowing us an Opportunity to see your faces in Comfort, and to converse with you in Peace at this time so to God we give sincere thanks at thia time, in the presence of you all, for all his goodness towards us. We rejoice that God gave us favour in the Eyes of his Honor Sir William Johnson.-and we rejoice that God gave us favour in your Eyes, and we were glad to hear that ye found it in your hearts to pity us, or our Brethren in New England when ye heard of our Circumstances and not only we thank you, but all our Brethren in New England gave you their hearty thanks. Yea we have abundant reason to rejoice, we thought to try to purchase Land of you,-But we are exceeding glad that it is in your heart to give us land. Yea we thank you that ye have given us so much already.

Brethren this Silver Pipe was sent to me, and this tobacco Pouch with it, to dispose of them according to the advice of his Honor Sir William Johnson. Brethren with pleasure I would tell you that Sir William received us gladly at this time also, and he advised me to deliver this pipe to the Chiefs at the Meeting, and to let the Pipe be kept in the Council house Continually, so at your assemblings ye might look on it; and smoke out of it, and remember us your Brothers in New England. His Honor Sir William said also, perhaps ye would think it very odd if there was no Tobacco in the Pouch, so his Honor was pleased to fill the Pouch, and sent it by me, to you

chiefs, that this day ye might smoke out of this Silver Pipe. So now I deliver this Pipe unto you, as a Sure token from our Several Tribes in New England that we are one and sincere in what we say and do, and now our Elder Brothers, I have told you of the State, and Circumstances of our Brethren in New England, and we have enformed you of our proceedings hitherto, and all we desire at present is to know whether ye are of the same mind as ever, whether your loves, and Pity is the Same towards your Brethren in New England, So our dear friends, and Brethren, we leave these few words which I have spoken for you to consider of at present, and hereafter I shall speak few words more for you to consider of .&c&c.

The Oneidas answered Joseph Johnson on “fryday”:

Kaunoaurohaure. Jan. 21st, 1774: Brethren, we receive you in the Name of your Seven Towns, or Seven Tribes in New England. Brethren, we rejoice, that it hath pleased God, in his due time, to allow us an Opportunity to assemble ourselves together, in order to converse together, so as we might know your State, and Circumstances in New England, and so you might know our Minds concerning you our Brothers. Brethren, we are glad that we have heard, how the Case stands on your Side, and we receive you, and your words very kindly, and we are glad that we have heard so much of your minds, and Brethren, we shall consider of all your words, and give you an Answer, when we shall be ready, and Brethren, as it is an affair of Great Importance, and as it requires time for Consideration, We hope that ye will not be uneasy, or be in too great a hurry to return, but wait Patiently, and Brethren, perhaps in twenty days, you will receive an Answer from us. Your Brothers, Brethren, we would ask you a Question. We desire to know how many have a mind, to come up, in these parts to live, or how many Houses, there is in a Town, or how many families, this is all that we have to say at Present.”

On Saturday towards Evening, January 22nd, 1774, they gave a second answer, but were not ready to receive more for Consideration, because several were retired home being now almost night and the next day was the “Lords day, which he hath made, and set apart for his own Service.” “Brethren, we that are in this Council profess to be good, or Religious Men, so ye may put confidence in us, or believe what we say unto you. Be of good Courage Brethren; the Lord of this Place, would have to be of firm minds; be not discouraged for all the Inhabitants of this Place are very glad that ye are come up, in these Parts to live and now Brethren, we receive you into our Body, as it were, now we may say we have one head, one heart, and one Body, now Brethren our lives are mixed together and let us have one Ruler, even God our Maker, Who dwells in Heaven above, who is the father of us all. Brethren, we are sensible that the Devil is never idle, but is ever busy, and if the Evil Spirit stirs up any Nation whatsoever, or Person; against you, and causes your Blood to be spilt, we shall take it, as if it was done unto us; or as if they spilt the blood from own Bodies, and we shall be ever ready to defend you, and help you, or ever be ready to protect you according to our abilities...”

Another meeting was appointed for early on Monday Morning, January 24th,

“Kanoarohare, Brethren we ought all to adore God for his goodness to us from day to day and we ought to bless him, that he is allowing us this opportunity to assemble in this house, to consult together a little about the affairs of this World. Brethren, what we have further for your consideration is this, our purposes, or designs if God willing, this I know my elder Brothers, that we may consult together, and agree to do so, and so, yet if it is not the will of God all our Councils, and purposes will come to naught, or will be in vain, but if it please God, and He open

your hearts to pity us, and to receive us as a younger Brother, and help us in every deed; then will we come up and settle together in Peace, when you shall think of it, and where it will be most agreeable for us, all we desire is to live in peace, and to have things convenient.

Brethren, I am very glad that my Ears have heard, those things which I have heard from you, in your Consultations since we have been in your Town, and as perhaps this is the last Opportunity that I shall speak unto you my elder brothers at this time, be so kind as to harken to the words of your younger Brother, who would speak this once more in the Name of the seven towns in New England first my elder Brother, that ye have considered of me, or my Brethren in New England, and I rejoice that ye find in your hearts love still remaining there, and pity towards your Younger Brothers in New England. I thank you that ye have so deliberately considered of those few words which I desired you to consider, and we thank you for your kind answer which ye gave to us, and to our Brethren in New England, we thank you that ye have taken us to be your Younger Brothers; we thank you that ye look upon us to be of the same blood as yourselves, and we thank you that ye have received us into your Body, so that now we may say we have one head, one heart, and one Blood, and may God keep us united together in very deed until we both grow white headed, and may God grant, that we may set down together, in his own due time, in peace, and now Brethren we thank you, that according to our desire, ye have been pleased to assemble yourselves together this once more, and my elder Brothers, I have not few words more to communicate unto you which I beg ye would take under your deliberate consideration. Brothers, ye was pleased last fall to give us an Encouragement of ten miles square, of Land for which we all was very glad, but in our Consultations we thought that it was not quite sufficient, perhaps we should soon clear so much, or settle so much if prospered, or blessed, then we should have somewhere else to look, to put our children on, so as they may live. But our elder brothers, ye know that it is a very hard thing for Parents, and Children to separate, and we desire to live together in peace, if it be the pleasure of God our Creator, and Preserver, and Brethren, if it please you to give us Land-Sufficient for us, and our Children after us, then will we be glad indeed, and Come and set down in peace Side of you our Elder Brothers. If ye be pleased to give us more land it will gladden the hearts of many poor Indians in New England. We are glad Brethren that ye have so much at your disposal. But thus much I have to say for your present Consideration delivered Jan 24th Wrote by Joseph Johnson at Johnson Hall. 1774¹⁶

The third answer of the Oneidas was given on Monday, January 24th, 1774 at Kaunoaurohaure:

“Brethren, since we have received you as Brothers, we shall not confine you, or pen you up, to Ten Miles square; We have much Land at our disposal, and you need not fear but that you shall have Land sufficient for you, and for your Children after you. We would have you to fix your Minds here, and here alone, and when ye come to live up here, we desire that ye would not harken to the invitations of other Nations, who may invite you, to go further back. Brethren, we say let your Minds be at ease, be not troubled but come, and settle down in Peace, and live in peace forever.”

Farmington May 2d AD 1774

¹⁶ “The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians” edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ. 1932 pp160-167

To the Rev'd Mr. Eleazer Wheelock, D.D.

My kind and Honored Benefactor, with love and gratitude in my heart, and much humility would I once more attempt to write to your worthy Person. ...

And Rev'd Sir methinks, that it is not for want of Gratitude, or love, that I have not visited you, my kind Benefactor, but to speak the truth, it is Poverty. I have always been poor, as all my Brethren are likewise, yet I have lived somehow hitherto. And Rev'd Sir perhaps I can give good reason for my Poverty, I would tell you in the first place that I have kept School, here, at Farmington since Nov'r 15th 1772. First ten weeks I had six pounds this ten weeks I was as it were upon trial. Afterwards I went to Boston being well recommended by the Rev'd Mr. Pitkin, who is my kind and wise Overseer, and when I was at Boston the Gentlemen, was pleas'd to give or offer L20 per Annum for my Encouragement, I thought it too little Wages, but I concluded, saying, I would go to Farmington and see what more the Indians would give, and if they give me proper Encouragement, I would continue keeping the School. The Indians after I saw them offered four pounds more which made 24L per Annum So I have kept and so keep still. Well I believe I could Live very comfortably with L24 per Annum if I spent my Money only for myself, but now I am going to tell you the Reason for my Poverty. I have been seeking the good of my poor Indian Brethren, for this some time, for the good of the Indians in particular that Live in these seven Towns—Farmington, Nihantauk, Mohegan, Pequot or Gretton—Stonington, Narragansett & Montauk and notwithstanding I am Master of a School yet I have traveled much in the run of one year I have even hired another Master in my room whilst I was absent. I have been the foremost all along even to this Say. I have been to the Hon. Sir Wm. Johnson twice, one in Oct. 1773 and again in Jan. 1774. At that time I went even to the Onoida Village where the Rev'd Mr. Kirkland preaches – And I have the pleasure to tell you that his Honor Sir Wm. Is well pleas'd with the grand design which I have in my view and his Honor Sir Wm. Has favor'd us New England Indians very highly and he has done us much good, we have as much land as we shall want, given to us New England Indians by the Onoidas and we have had invitations from Nations 600 Miles back of Sir Wm. It is strange to me that we meet with such good success. I humbly hope there is Providence in this, and O! what a pleasing prospect, sometimes opens to my View, who knows what is in the Womb of Providence, but what I am after to tell you, that in all my travels up and down the Country, I have been at my own Expense, which is owing to the great poverty of the Indians. I have Rec'd only 3 dollars from the Indians since I have been in this service. But I blame them not, for Indians are truly poor, I have been at great Expense sometimes, especially last winter I was gone six weeks hired a Master all the Time, and when I came down from Onoida, after I had tarried there Eight days there was several of the great men, Lords & Warriors came down to Sir William's with me, in order to confirm their words at Sir Wm for said they there is the only place to have all things done well, strong & sure, there was twelve that came down with me, and I bore all their Expenses even to Sir William's or till we got to Sir William's and I believe it is about 100 Miles. So have I spent my Money and this is it what makes me now so poor, that I have not one penny Clear, no, I am now in debt, for provision and little Cloathes, and I can't come up to you very soon, or at least till I can get money to pay my debts, and bear my expenses to your Residence. I want to see you very much once more. I must go up to Sir William's again in September the first part I don't know how I shall go through all what is before me, unless Kind Providence doth provide for my necessities unexpectedly. I know not where to go for help, if my kind Benefactor was nigh I verily believe you would relieve me greatly & even Encourage me but I end leaning upon the Lord. I am your well-wisher & pupil Joseph Johnson

Joseph continued teaching at Farmington until the summer of 1774. Many of the Tunxis Indians felt his influence. Converts were made under his ministry and the Tunxis continued to be the strongest supporters of his great plan of migration to Oneida lands.

He was ordained at Hanover, N.H., on the twenty-fifth of August, in the expectation of undertaking a westward mission. Many of the Tunxis Indians felt his influence. Converts were made under his ministry and the Tunxis were the strongest supporters of his great plan of migration to Oneida lands.

“On the memorial of Joseph Johnson, a Mohegan Indian, shewing to this Assembly that he has been at considerable expence in making the necessary preparations for the removal of sundry tribes of Indians out of this Colony, in which undertaking he has the countenance and encouragement of Sir William Johnson and others; praying this Assembly to grant him such sum of money out of the Colony treasury as they shall think fit, as per memorial on file : Resolved by this Assembly, that the said Joseph Johnson shall have six pounds allowed him out of the treasury of this Colony, and the Treasurer is hereby ordered to pay the same accordingly.”¹⁷

On October 4th, 1774 Guy Johnson’s sent a letter to the Oneidas affirming their grant of land to the New England Indians:

By Guy Johnson Esqr. Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department of North America &c &c –Whereas the Indians of the Mohegan Narraganset Montock, Pequods of Groton and of Stonington, Nahantick, Farmington, Inhabiting within the New England Governments, Did Last Year represent that they Were Very Much Streightened and Reduced to Such small Pittance of Land that they could no longer remain there and did through the channel of Sir William Johson Bart, late Superintendent Apply to the Six Nations for some lands to Live on Which was at Length agreed to in my Presence at the last Treaty and a Tract allotted them by the Oneidas, And Whereas Some of them have since in Company with the Oneida Chiefs view’d the said lands and Determined on its boundary as followes desireing a Certificate of the Same and that it might be Entered on the Records of the Indian Affairs, Viz. Beginning at the West End of the Scaniadaris, or the long Lake which is at the Head of One of the Branches of Orisca Creek and from thence about twelve Miles Northerly or so far that an Easterly Course from a Certain point on the first Mentioned Course Shall Intersect the Road or Path leading from Old Oneida to the German Flatts Where the said Path Corsses Scanindowa Creek Running into the Lake Oneida. Then the Same Course Continued to the Line Settled as the Limits between the Province of New York and the Indians at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, thence Southerly along the said Line about thirteen Miles or so far as that a Westerly Line from thence keeping one Mile South of the Most Southerly Bend of Orisca Creek Shall Reach the Place of Beginning so as to comprehend the Lake first Mentioned – I Do therefore in Compliance With the Joint Request of the said Oneidas and New England Indians Declare that the Said Oneidas Do Grant to the said New England Indians and there Posterity for Ever Without Power of Alienation to any Subject the Afore Described Tract with its Appurtenances in the Amplest Manner. Also full Liberty of Hunting all sorts of Game throughout the Whole Country of the Oneidas, Beaver Hunting only Excepted. With this Particular Clause or Reservation that the same shall not be Possessed by any Persons Deemed of the said Tribes Who are Descended from or have Intermixed with

¹⁷ The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut [1636-1776] p 314

Negroes and Mulattoes.

*Given under my Hand and Seal at Arms at Guy Park, October the 4th, 1774.*¹⁸

In the Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut:

*“On the memorial of Joseph Johnson, a Mohegan Indian, shewing to this Assembly that he has been at considerable expence in making the necessary preparations for the removal of sundry tribes of Indians out of this Colony, in which undertaking he has the countenance and encouragement of Sir William Johnson and others; praying this Assembly to grant him such sum of money out of the Colony treasury as they shall think fit, as per memorial on file : Resolved by this Assembly, that the said Joseph Johnson shall have six pounds allowed him out of the treasury of this Colony, and the Treasurer is hereby ordered to pay the same accordingly.”*¹⁹

On the 4th day of October, 1774, the Oneidas transferred to them by a deed of gift, so called, a considerable tract land of land lying west of the "Property Line".

The great practical difficulty of securing sufficient funds to carry forward the emigration had yet to be met. Joseph Johnson had already contracted personal debts in the cause. He wrote to Wheelock again on Oct 17th, 1774, that he had returned *“from the Onoida Country, and I have met with all the Success that I could possible expect, There is now secured to these Seven Tribes, Mohegan, Narragansett, Montauk, Grotton, Stonington, Nihantuck, and Farmington, a very large Tract of Choice good Land.- and it is expected that a considerable number from these parts will go up early next Spring, that is, in first of March next if nothing happens more than common before then.-“* *“Colonel G. Johnson is exceedingly friendly, their seems to be a door opening for Great good to the Western Nations. It is very likely that there will be a loud Calls for several Schoolmasters among the Six Nations soon who have received us into their Body, Joseph Brant said, that he should, at the Grand Congress to be held at Onondaga soon, recommend to them learning, he said that he should say much about learning, he seemed, as well as the Onoidas to be much pleased with our design of having a School, soon as possible, in our proposed new Town, whence some, at least two likely youth from each Town, or Tribe, might be instructed &c: that they might have teachers of their own Tribes or Indian Brethren...”* Joseph thought it quite likely that he could master the Indians language in six months, while living among them and then probably could preach at Onondaga, their principal Town. He begged Wheelock, *“I want Assistance much, or more than ever I did, have I not been well employed for a long time, deserved I no encouragement, surely, I believe there is but very few, who would put themselves so much out of the way, to bring about such a Noble Design, as poor me hath already done, for it not customary now days for any to go a warfare at their Charges, but have I, yes, verily, and I have reduced myself very low, tho I have abundant reason to rejoice that the Lord hath hitherto appeared for my help in times of great difficulty. My last Journey has been long, and very expensive, the whole of the burden seems to lie upon me providentially and I had money Just enough to bring me hungry home-&c: my debts remain unpaid, and I can not get any money from those Indians, as yet, who are in debt to me, and I am in great strait, my Clooth are worn out, and I am ashamed to run for this in debt, and I am fit for no employ at all at present being*

¹⁸ Brothertown Indians' Superintendents' document, #80559, c. 1774-1805; Sir William's Johnson Papers, Sir William's Passing 1774, Proclamation dated October 4, 1774.

¹⁹ The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut [1636-1776] p 314

so ragged...” He solicited funds from several sources. He went to the Indians of the seven towns and showed them the deed to the Oneida lands and crusaded for the emigration. He wrote Dr. Rodgers, the Presbyterian Minister, thus of his success: “They are engaged to go on in prosecution of the design which I made know to you and we purpose to set off from hence [Mohegan] or from these parts the 13th of March next. I believe that there will be upwards of 60 young men from the several tribes who will go as first settlers of land granted to us by the Oneidas. However, there is 58 able working men on whose word I believe we can rely. From Mohegan 10. From Narragansett 20. From Montauk 13. From Nehantic 5. From Farmington 10 = 58, & there are other tribes so deeply in debt that they cannot go this season, but fully intend to go soon as possible, that is Grotton & Stonington...” It was thought the best way to move to Oneida would be for the hardiest men to go first and prepare some shelters and try to plant some gardens for food, then the families could move up and finally the aged men and women who could rely on their sons. Dr. Rodgers thought that if Joseph asked Wheelock for a recommendation, that perhaps he could petition the Board on his behalf to give him “fifty Pound Sterling per annum.”

Once again, he pleaded with Wheelock on December 4th, 1774, when Wheelock continued to ignore his pleas for assistance, was he still harboring ill will towards Joseph for his leaving the school at Oneida, and wandering the world for a few short years, before he settled down once again at Farmington. Joseph begged him *“to give me an Answer, so as I might know what to depend upon.- now I am betwixt hope, and Despair.- and I know not which way to turn, the time is very short before I must be obliged to go to take Possession of the Land granted to us New England Indians – there are some going out of every Town, to whom the Land is granted.-that is out of Seven Towns.-there is nine from Mohegan that is going next Spring to take Possession.- things look very Encouraging.-my Debts remain unpaid and I do not know how I shall get along this winter. I have nothing to live on hardly...”*

“When the spring opened - and it may have been on the thirteenth of March, as they had planned - the first company of emigrants set out for their new home. How many there were, and what their fortunes were on the way, we cannot tell. Joseph Johnson, David Fowler and Elijah Wampy were among them, as were John Skeesuck, James Shattocks and Samuel Tallman. They arrived safely in the Oneida country, and immediately set about building log huts in that wide expanse of wilderness, making gardens and planting corn-fields. All might have gone as they had planned had it not been for the war-cloud which burst in all its fury that spring over the New England colonies. These Indians heard the sound of the patriot's gun, though they were far away.”²⁰

The Revolutionary War was coming and “one of the most serious concerns which faced the colonies in the early days of the Revolution was as to the attitude of the Six Nations. Many have known that the Oneidas remained faithful to the Patriots, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts which were made to alienate them; but no one has ever given credit to the Christian Indians of New England for this, to whom it belongs no less than to Samuel Kirkland. They had reached Oneida at the opportune time, and their voices were at once raised in behalf of their white

²⁰ “Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England” by W. DeLoss Love. Publ Syracuse Univ. Press 1899. P225

friends.”²¹

“It was they who inspired the "Declaration of Neutrality," which was carried to the four New England Provinces dated June 19, 1775. We think, indeed, that one of their number wrote it. They certainly carried it eastward. It begins thus: *“As my younger Brothers of the New England Indians who have settled in our vicinity are now going down to visit their Friends, & to move up Parts of their Families that were left behind, with this belt by them I open the Rode wide, clearing it of all obstacles that they may visit their Friends, & to return to their settlement here in peace.”* At that date Joseph Johnson was on his way to New York, where he presented a petition to the provincial Congress on the twenty-first and received L10 New York currency. In this he states that some had already returned to new England and three more were to follow him to New York for whom he requested a passport. These were John Skeesuck, James Shattocks and Samuel Tallman, and some days afterwards they joined him. Possibly they were the bearers of the *“Declaration of Neutrality”* which contained the welcome news.”²²

In Provincial Congress, New York on June 22nd, 1775 a passport was issued to Joseph Johnson and his three friends: *To All Officers in the Service of the Colonies, Members of Committees, and Others the Friends of American Liberty.*

*Know ye that Joseph Johnson, an Indian of the Mohegan tribe and a licensed Preacher of the Gospel amongst the New England and Onoida Indians, having applied to this Congress for a Passport for himself and three other Indians his Companions, now here on a Journey from the Onoida Country to New London, Connecticut: We well convinced of the friendly Disposition of said Joseph Johnson to the Inhabitants of the American Colonies, and of his intentions and good Offices to preserve and maintain peace and harmony between them and the Indian Nations, DO Requesat and desire you to afford all necessary aid and Protection to the said Joseph Johnson and his three Indian Companions, being James Shattock, John Skesuck and Sam Tallman; and to permit them to pass freely and safely to their Journey to New London aforesaid.*²³

We do also request the said Joseph Johnson in our name and on behalf of the whole Colony of New York, to assure the Onoida Nation, and all other our old Friends and Allys of the confederated Indian Nations, that we love and esteem them as our Brethren; that we desire to maintain with them the old friendship which Subsisted between us from the Time of our forefathers, and that the path between us may be kept free and open at all times; and that we desire That they do not give Ear to any false Reports to the Contrary-

*By order & on behalf of the Provincial Congress.*²⁴

²¹ “Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England” by W. DeLoss Love. Publ Syracuse Univ. Press 1899 pp225-226

²² “Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England” by W. DeLoss Love. Publ Syracuse Univ. Press 1899 p226

²³ “Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England W. DeLoss Love, PH.D., 1899 Chapter XIII Indian Friends at Stockbridge 1734-1783 pp. 226 “Annals and recollections of Oneida County” By Pomroy Jones “On the 22d of June, 1775, the Colonial Congress of New York granted a pass to Joseph Johnson, "a Mohegan Indian, and licensed preacher among the Brotherton and Oneida Indians, and his three friends, James Shattuck. John Skesuck and Samuel Tallman, to New London, Connecticut, and back" to Brotherton.”

²⁴ “The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians” edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ.pp191-192.

Johnson and his Companions went on to Mohegan and on the seventeenth of July set out back to the Oneidas to deliver the message from the Provincial Congress. Again he was in New York August twenty-sixth and on the eleventh of September received a pass from the Committee of Safety:

“The bearer Joseph Johnson an Indian Preacher of the Mohegan Tribe having given Proof of his attachment to the Cause of American Liberty, We do therefore recommend him to the favor & Protection of all the Friends of American Liberty.”

On January 16th, 1776, Joseph Johnson received a Commission:

Rev. Sir

With this you have our general Recommendation which we shall be rejoyc'd to hear may prove of any Service to you in the Course of your Travels-We are very sensible that is of the greatest Consequence to us to retain in Friendship the Indians on our Frontiers, especially those of the Six Nations among whom you have for several years past been a Missionary whose Alliance We wou'd heartily wish by every prudent Measure to retain firm & unshaken, and We beg Leave earnestly to request that you wou'd use your utmost Endeavours to brighten the Chain of Friendship which has for many years past subsisted between Us & them-that you would on your first Arrival among them present our cordial Love & Regards, and let them know how highly We respect them for their wise & prudent Conduct-that when they have been so pressingly solicited by our most cruel, unnatural Enemies to take up the War Hatchet against Us, They, judging the dispute between Great Britain & America to be a family Difference determined not To intermeddle in the quarrel hoping We might soon be reconcild, & expressing the warmest Wishes to that purpose-which is an Example of the noblest kind & ought to raise a Blush upon our Faces, when we, who profess a Religion of peace and to teach it to other Nations, find ourselves outdone by those who are but as Infants in ye same Religion-We would further recommend to You Sir, that you exert yourself by all means to preserve & cultivate a good Understanding between us & the said Indians watch all opportunity to prevent a Breach thereof.

That you would also enlighten them into the Nature of the Dispute between our parent State & the Colonies, being an unjust Claim set up by wicked and designing men who have persuaded our Sovereign to infringe upon, if not, to strip the Inhabitants of the Colonies of their native Rights & privileges, and thereby to take as much of the produce of our Lands, our Trade and Fishery from Us, as they on the other side of the Great Waters may think proper without our consent-And if at any time there should appear the Least Danger of a Rupture from the base Intrigues of our Enemies to give the earliest advice possible to some of the Colonies-

Wishing you health, an agreeable Journey and safe Arrival at your designed Abode-We rest your assured Friends-

Colony of New Hampshire Exeter 16th January 1776²⁵

In the House of Representatives

VOTED-That the above Letter be presented To the Rev'd Mr. Johnson as the Sense of this house, & that the same be signed by the Speaker of this house and the President of the Council-Sent up to the Honorable Board (P. White Speaker)

²⁵ “The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock’s Indians” edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ pp194-195

*In Council, Eodem Die, read & concurred-
M Weare-President*

Testimonial of the Colony of New Hampshire to Joseph Johnson

Colony of New Hampshire – To all Christian People to whom These presents may come-The Council and Assembly of the colony of New Hampshire send Greeting-

The Bearer of this the Rev'd Joseph Johnson who has for several years past been employed as a Missionary among the Western Tribes of Indians having in the Course of his Travels come through this part of the Country & made a short Tarry with Us, in which Time he has by his Conversation, prayers & preaching approv'd himself to Us; We readily embrace the Opportunity to recommend him, not only as a Friend to the Cause of American Liberty, but as a modest, discreet, sensible Man whose influence among the Indian Nations has been & may be very serviceable to the Colonies- that he appears well calculated by Birth & Education to itinerate & preach the Glad Tidings of the Gospel among those our Brethren; an Alliance & Friendship with whom We ought undoubtedly by ev'ry prudent Measure to retain firm & unshaken-

And as Mr. Johnson's Dependance for present Support in his Mission has been interrupted by the unhappy contest between Great britian & the Colonies, which necessarily reduces him to great Indigence, We woud further recommend him to the Benevolence and Charity of all his Christian Brethren upon whom he may occasionally call in his Travels.

In the House of Representatives Jan 16th 1776

VOTED That the above & foregoing be Delivered to the rev'd M. Johnson as the Mind of the general Assembly of this Colony-and that the same be Sign'd by the Speaker of this house & by the President of the Councill-Sent up for Concurrence

P. White Spraker

In Council Eodem Die, Read & Concurred

M. Weare President²⁶

Indian participation in the Revolution was less restricted by law than for the Blacks in Connecticut. Many of Connecticut's Indian Soldiers were from the Mohegan tribe which resided in New London County. Joseph Johnson was no exception. He traveled with the objective of promoting the Rebel cause. He tried to mediate between the rebel colonies and the Oneidas and their "Six Nations" allies. The climax of these efforts came on February 20, 1776, when he met with, "His Excellency General Washington" at his Cambridge, Massachusetts headquarters, and offered to undertake a mission to what he called the "Back Nations," that is, to tribes beyond the colonies' frontiers. General Washington gave Johnson a letter:

February 20, 1776

Sir:

"I am very much pleased to find by the strong recommendations you produce, that we have amongst our Brothers of the Six Nations a person who can explain to them the Sense of their Brothers on the dispute between us and the Ministers of Great Britian. You have seen apart of our Strength, and can inform our Brothers, that we can withstand all the force, which those who

²⁶ "The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians" edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ p196

want to rob us of our Lands and our Homes can send against us.

You can tell our friends, that they may always look upon me, whom the Whole United Colonies have chosen to be there Chief Warrior, as their brother. Whilst they continue in Friendship with us, they may depend upon mine and the protection of those under my command.

Tell them that we don't want them to take up the hatchet for us except they chuse it, we only desire that they will not fight against us. We want that the Chain of Friendship should always remain bright between our friends of the Six Nations and us. Their attention to you, will be a proof to us that they wish the same. We recommend you to them, and hope by your Spreading the truths of the Holy Gospel amongst them, it will Contribute to keep the Chain so bright, that the malicious insinuations or practices of our Enemies will never be able to break this Union, so much for the benefit of our Brothers of the Six Nations and of us.

And to prove to them that this is my desire, and of the Warriors under me, I hereto Subscribe my name at Cambridge this 20th day of February, 1776."

*G. Washington.*²⁷

Written by a secretary and signed by George Washington.

Joseph Johnson was asked to carry "*messages of peace to the Indians.*" Joseph was still at home in Mohegan with his wife, who was giving birth to his second son, Joseph, when he wrote a letter on March 19th AD 1776 saying he '*would proceed as soon as providence may permit. I can not think it my duty to leave her, while she is in such poor condition...*' On June 3 a merchant advanced him two dollars for the support of Tabitha, William and the just born, or soon to be born, Joseph. Johnson was then on his way to Oneida. He stopped by Gov. Turnbull at Hartford, seeking reimbursement for the merchant and further support for himself. Christopher Leffingwell wrote to Jonathan Trumbull at Norwich on the 3rd of June 1776: "*The bearer Mr. Joseph Johnson, an Indian Missionary: Being Strongly Recommended by the congress of New York, & New Hampshire as Also by his Excellency General George Washington Having purposed to Return to his Mission among the Indians to the Westward Some time ago But being detained at Mohegan by Reason of his Wifes Sickness until now and having spent all his Money Applied to me for Some to Leave with his Family for their Support in his Absense. I Take the Liberty of Recommending him to your Honour & the Hon. General assembly as a person that at this Time might be Very Serviceable to the Common Cause of America and advised him to Apply to your Hon & the Assembly for Assistance and have Supply him Two dollars to Bear his Expences to Hartford...*"²⁸

Johnson knew he was in danger, he had already asked the New York Congress to provide for Tabitha and had requested a gun to protect himself from "*silly and wicked Men.*" These were certainly dangerous times, in particular for an Indian traveling with sensitive documents.

²⁷ "The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians" edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ p198

²⁸ "The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians" edited from the Originals by James Dow McCallum. Publ. By Dartmouth College Publ p199

Johnson was carrying out his mission, somewhere in Iroquois territory during the early months of the Revolution, when on some unknown day, this remarkable young missionary, then only twenty-four years old, died. His death occurred on some unknown day, after August 14, 1776 and before May 8, 1777, when David McClure wrote to Wheelock that *“The Churches this way who had a taste of Mr. Johnson's ministerial Gifts feel for the public in the loss of that zealous, pious and very promising Indian Preacher.”*

So ended the life of that pupil in the Indian Charity School, who was thought at one time to prove the futility of attempts to educate native missionaries. David McClure had written to Rev. Wheelock; in July 1776, on the occasion of Joseph Johnson *“coming this way was as welcome as it was unexpected. I receive him as my old acquaintance but very happily made more valuable by distinguishing grace-the good affects of which are very manifest in him. He preached twice in this place to very good satisfaction & I rejoice that the pious & benevolent mission in which he is engaged has met with encouragement here...I feel a pleasure, Rev. Sir, in the joy it must afford You, that this your pupil, whom once, if I mistake not, you were ready to weep over as lost is now walking in the truth.”*