Words of Our Ancestors

REVISITING INDIANTOWN

2018 MOHICAN HISTORY SEMINAR
1735 letter from Konkapot & Umpachenee

Read by Michael Lenz, Konkapot descendant
A conference was held on Jan 19, 1735 among 150-200 Mohicans to weigh the decision to move to Stockbridge and accept the missionary John Sergeant. The decision to approve this was not unanimously supported. Shortly after the meeting, two Mohican men died and many others lay ill. To opponents of the mission, the deaths revealed the dangers of associating too closely with the English:

“The Captain and the Lieutenant both say that they was poisoned by the other Indians...this being the Captain and Lieutenant’s letter and written by their desire I shall set their names to it...the Indians, many of them that was here upon the treaty,...they betrayed themselves for [they] would say to these Indians [Konkapot and Umpachene] what makes you so much like the English; and they hate us for what we have done, but we don’t intend to give out.”

-Captain Konkapot and Lieutenant Umpachene, Feb. 5, 1735
Letter to Rev. Nehemiah Bull, through interpreter Ebenezer Poohpoonuc
*Adapted to make more suitable for reading
1750 petition from King Ben, David Naunaneekkanuck and others

Read by Brent Michael Davids, descendant
“The grant the Town was made to you petitioners excepting to our Minister and Schoolmaster each a Sixtieth part and provision made for four English families a committee appointed by the general court who had orders to settle the quantity of their land and to lay out their settling lots...your petitioners object to the said Committee that they laid out such large tracts of land for the English families in the center of Town or near the meeting house that the Indians could not be accommodated...

Your petitioners have been and still are disturbed and wronged in several instances respecting their land which in all humility we would lay before the Honourable Court. When your petitioners had accomplished more than one hundred days’ work in cutting timber and creating fence on said land, your petitioners were ordered very much to their surprise to desist from going on with their design for no other reason than your petitioners can possibly conjecture then that said land lay adjoining the said Williams land and is good and therefore is more proper for him then for your petitioners... Another large tract of land the said Williams has taken up lying near our Settlement containing two hundred and forty acres, which is over and above his proper right...

Your petitioners have been much disquieted at these wrong and unjust proceedings....”

-Aaron Sonkewenaunkheek (Aaron Umpachenee), James Wohiohukco, John Pophnehonanwuh (John Konkapot), Benjamin Kokkewenaunuote David Naunauneekkaunuck, Isaac Wohuaumep Solomon Waunaupaugu, Jehoiakim Yokun

26 September 1750
1759 Letter from Benjamin “King Ben” Kokhkewaunaunt

Read by Judy Hartley, descendant
In 1759 “King Ben” and his son and others encountered Israel Williams surveying land south of Pittsfield. Ben challenged the work, and Williams said it was part of a grant. King Ben replied:

“Very pretty...the Government pretends to give the Indians a township if they will come and settle together, and pay the claimers with the Indians’ own land.”

-Benjamin Kokhkewaunaunt (“King Ben”)
Massachusetts Archives, 56:327-328

Further survey work was forbidden. King Ben lived a half mile west of the village on the plain, and is said to have lived to age 104.
1763 petition from Konkapot, and others

Read by Marie Collom, descendant

Rockwell's final painting, unfinished, of John Sergeant and sachem Konkapot
“We Indians did not know what it was, and nobody would let us understand it for we always voted before by lifting up the hand...

That Elijah Williams...with others has acted as unreasonable...as soon as he had the things writ for Issuing a precept the Indians, Many of them being out of Town immediately with the other aforesaid Pretended Selectmen called a meeting but never gave notice to the Indians of the meeting but a few hours before...

...The said Williams now pretends to be chosen a representative. I believe he is none for we [know] not what he means by being chosen in the way he was, for he brought in many strangers to vote for him and we always used to choose our own representative ourselves but many voted for him that we know nothing about. Many were poor fellows that we never heard had any business in this Town...’

-May 31, 1763 Signed by Konkapot and 16 other petitioners
Massachusetts Archives v.33 pg 265-268
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Pophnehonnuhwoh</td>
<td>(Konkapot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohhhowwauweet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Naunauneekauuck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannis Mtohksin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;King&quot; Ben Kokhhewenaununt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Quans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Cheeksaunkun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Uhhaunnauwaunmut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephraim Punmpkhaunhum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tusnunt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notongshun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Naunausoout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Peethous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac Paushkaumppoh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephraim Waunaunqueen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas Etaweocan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Naunauphtaunh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Poopunhseet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Muhhuttauwoh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wauwohummook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1783 letter from John Mtohksin, & others

Read by Linda Mohawk-Katchenago, descendant
“To the Senators and Wise-men of the Commonwealth of the Massachusetts who are about to smoke their Pipes together in doing the Great Business of the State- We the Chiefs of the Moheakonnuk Tribe of Indians residing in Stockbridge this day met together beg you to listen to us a few words.

Brothers. We remember we were once great and you were small when you first came on this Island but afterwards we became small as you became great and now we are very small and you are very great.

In this late War we have suffered much, our Blood has been spilled with yours and many of our Young Men have fallen by the Side of your Warriors, almost all those Places where your Warriors have left their Bones, there our Bones are seen also. Now we who remain are become very poor.

Now Brothers. We will let you know we have been invited by our Brothers the Oneidas, to go and live with them. We have accepted their invitation. Brothers. We now tell you what we desire of you. We wish you in your Wisdom, to make some Laws that will protect and guard us while we remain or hereafter have Occasion to come into your Government. We wish you to appoint a few of our Neighbors, whom we believe to be our Friends to have Power to take Care of the little Interest of Land we have in this Town...

We wish to have them described carefully to examine into all our Bargains for land that White People have made with us and see that we hant been cheated and endeavor to do so justly...that when we are ready to remove, we may feel well towards all our Neighbors...”

Stockbridge Sept 2, 1783
Johoiakim Mtohksin, Joseph Shauquethquot, Hendrick Aupaunmut, Johoiakim Hannuphtonk, Joseph Quinauquant
Stockbridge Library Historical Room
1791 narration by Hendrick Aupaumut

Read by Molly Miller, descendant
“Since the British and Americans lay down their hatchets, then my nation was forgotten. I lost many lives in your defense: I stood by you in all your troubles...But I had no territory to fight for, nor had I to fight for liberty, for liberty I have always possessed. But my friendship, pure friendship, induced me and my nation to join you. But sometimes I feel sorry, and shame, that some of my great brothers have forgotten me--that all my services and sufferings have been forgotten, and that I- my nation- remain neglected. What are the reasons I cannot say. Perhaps I am too small to be regarded. My friendship however is strong; my friendship I do not forget.”

-Aupaumut, a Short Narration, 1791
Published in Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1827
A history from Hendrick Aupaumut

Read by Shannon Holsey, descendant
“The Sachem is looked upon as a great tree under whose shade the whole nation is sit. His business is to contemplate the welfare of his people day and night--how to promote their peace and happiness. He also takes pain to maintain and brighten the belt of friendship with other allies. When he find any business of public nature, he is to call his counselors together to consult with them; and then they will determine what is good for the Nation. The Sachem must be a peaceable man--has nothing to do with wars--he is at times go from house to house to exhort his people to live in unity and peace.”

-Aupaumut, Date unknown
1809 burying ground deed from John Metoxen, and others

Read by Jeff Vele, descendant

Rev. Jeremiah Slingerland (Mohican) returning in 1879 for Laurel Hill Association dedication of Burying Ground Monument. Photo on display this afternoon in Stockbridge Library.
This is the last deed signed by the Stockbridge Mohicans for land in Massachusetts. By this time, the tribe was living in New Stockbridge, New York among the Oneida. Four tribal leaders journeyed back to Stockbridge to ensure the protection of our last remaining land holding, the Burying Ground, placing it in the hands of Dr. Oliver Partridge:

...In consideration of ten dollars in certain services rendered our tribe by and the trust and confidence we place in our friend Oliver Partridge of Stockbridge aforesaid we do for ourselves and for our whole tribe hereafter relinquish to him our right to a certain piece of land lying in Stockbridge there called the Indian Burying Ground lying west of the Town Square there so called and is fully described on their Town records reference thereto to be had which ground never has before by any of us or our forefathers been sold or any ways relinquished. That he may fence the same, that he may in every way prevent the soil from being removed, that the bones of our Ancestors may there lie undisturbed, that he may plant trees round and over the same which trees are ever to be considered as the property of said Oliver his heirs or assigns and improve the same in any way except tilling or breaking up the sod or turf....

-Joseph Shauquethqueat, Solomon Hendrick, Joseph Quinney, John Metoxen

8 February 1809
1834
Memories of
John Metoxsen

Read by Bradley Pecore, descendant

Papscanee Island, Mohican village along Hudson River
Our people were “poor and much scattered. Some lived along the Hudson River, between Schodack and Stillwater, and some on the Housatonuck, and some between these rivers. Their wigwams were made of bark and their garments of skins. They subsisted chiefly by hunting. The missionaries came and made an offer to set up a school, to teach their young men how to work on the land, and the young women how to sew and spin. They did not tell us much, only a little. They did not let us know all their plans at first. Our older people said they wanted time to think about it, and talk about. The older people said this was the first offer they had ever had of the kind, and they did not see any harm in it. It would do them no hurt, and they were willing to try. The next morning, they told the missionaries that they were willing to try, etc. The missionaries went back to Boston. Old Stockbridge was pitched upon as the place for the school. Soon the people began to settle there. My grandfather carried my mother from Schodack to Stockbridge, on his back, and put her in school, when she was five years old.”

-John Mtohksin/Metoxen (1770-1858)
Succeeded Hendrick Aupaumut as sachem
1854 speech from John Quinney

Read by Coral Cook, descendant
“My friends, being invited to come here as a Muh-he-con-neew, and now standing upon the soil which once was, and now ought to be the property of this Tribe, I have thought for once, and certainly the last time, I would shake you by the hand, and ask you to listen for a little while to what I have to say...

Where are the twenty-five thousand in number, and the four thousand warriors, who constituted the power and population of the great Muh-he-con-neew Nation in 1604?... It is curious, the history of my tribe, in its decline during the last two centuries and a half. Nothing that deserved the name of ‘purchase’ was ever made... Let it not surprise you my friends, when I say, that the spot on which we stand has never been purchased or rightly obtained; and that by justice, human and divine, it is the property now of the remnant of that great people from whom I am descended. They left it in the tortures of starvation and to improve their miserable existence...

These events are above our comprehension--and for wise purposes. For myself and my tribe I ask for justice. I believe it will sooner or later occur. And may the Great and Good Spirit enable me to die in hope.”

- John W. Quinney
July 4, 1854 Reidsville, NY

Grandson of Joseph Quanaukaunt, sachem (1777) in Stockbridge on his father’s side, and grandson of David Naunaneecunuck of Stockbridge on his mother’s side