

Abby Kelly Foster Charter Public School Teaching American History Grant
*Citizenship, Property, Identity, and Representation: the Historical Journey of Southern New
England's Native Peoples*

Summer Seminar July 14 – 18, 2008

Thursday July 17, 2008

Thursday, July 17 *Eighteenth-Century Issues of Peace and Conflict through the War of Independence: Wilderness, Warfare & Conquest; Conflict, Gender & New England Indians; Samson Occom, New England Indians & Eighteenth-Century Evangelization; Native Voices, Indian Writing; and, Native Americans in the American Revolution.*

Participating Teachers Present: John Daly, Phil Hureau, Kelly Davila, Mike Penny, Andrea Bien, Nora Werme, Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Ann Weeks, Nancy Clark, Jen Connors, Sarah Kaye, Henry Zussman, Rosemarie Ward, Ed Belbin, Tim Gervais

Presenters and AAS: Jim Moran, Michelle Renihan, Thomas Doughton, David Silverman, Hilary Wyss

9:00-10:30 David Silverman, George Washington University, The Brothertown Community & issues of race

- The Brothertown community emerged out of a multi-tribal Christian community that originated in the Long Island and moved to upstate New York (Oneida Iroquois territory) after the American revolution, then on to Wisconsin in the 1820's
- This indicates a certain "common cause" among native groups during the 18th century.
- Indians in the Long Island region made this common cause, or reinvented themselves, in order to cope with the challenges of the era.
- The Brothertown community used Christianity to create this Indian identity which was different from the pan Indian resistance movement under Pontiac (Pontiac's revolt 1760's uniting Indians in the Ohio region against white expansion) because it was non-violent.
- Historians often associate pan-Indianism with violent response to white expansion (see also Tecumseh's revolt).
- Why was Brothertown different? What brought these remarkably literate people together?
- Narragansett, Pequot, Mohigans, Western Niantics, Tunxets (Farmington) Indians & Montauks (from Long Island) came together for this experiment.
- After King Philip's war the Narragansetts were devastated (many fled to Canada or upstate New York) some fled to the Eastern Niantics (who over time took on the name Narragansett). Pequots also made their way back into their ancestral homeland--with diplomatic help from Narragansetts and Mohicans who wanted them as compliant allies. (*Robert Cassassinamon, Pequot sachem, made alliances with John Winthrop, Jr---Cassassinamon was something of an antinomian Mystic (not well loved by the Puritans) who was also a doctor—Winthrop Jr. helped him bring*

his people back to their old homeland (maybe due to hostility to his own father who had destroyed the Pequots in the 1637 war)

- There was a great deal of inter-marriage and movement between all these communities.
- In the 18th century there was widespread Indian conversion to evangelical Christianity—Indians having resisted evangelization to Puritanism during the 17th century.
- In the first part of the 18th century a number of tribal groups/families began to welcome some Christian missionaries....(perhaps somewhat half-heartedly)...this changed with the Great Awakening when a much more personalized and intense form of Christianity broke onto the scene (very different from the legalistic and intellectualized Christianity of the Puritans).
- Revivals in the 1740's (George Whitefield) had a tremendous impact—often reaching thousands of people at a time. (George Tenant—New Jersey; James Davenport—Yale trained) preachers welcomed all kinds of people to (open air) gatherings of thousands (Blacks, Indians, as well as whites are welcomed). Salvation was dependent of the personal response of the sinner to Jesus—not dependent on education or class. Ministry was not limited to the educated elite, sermons were given without notes, fervor was very important.
- Among Indians itinerant (native) preachers began to travel between tribal groups (mentioned above) and establish native parishes (as Indians began to feel unwelcome in white congregations after the first flush of conversions abated).
- Samson Occom (a Mohegan) became a 'super-star' preacher among the Indians). Occom realized that education was extremely important and went to Eleazar Wheelock to become educated—Wheelock educated him but due to poor eyesight Occom could not handle the rigorous requirements at Yale. Occom went to Montauk as a teacher and preacher and continued to draw the attention of white missionary leadership.
- Colleges were being founded by those who favored the Awakening and those who opposed it—a general spirit of mission developed.
- As the imperial wars between Britain and France reached their crescendo in the 7 Year War (French-Indian War) many English came to the conclusion that it was extremely important to send missions to the Iroquois to convert them to Christianity and to cement political ties between the two groups.
- Occam's school was effective in producing missionaries to the Iroquois which had some success among the Oneida. (Pontiac's rebellion would blunt this mission for a while, but then it resumed).
- Occam went to Britain and was something of a popular sensation. He raised £12,000- £13,000 for Indian mission. But when he returned, his former mentor, Eleazar Wheelock used the money to found Dartmouth College in New Hampshire—ostensibly for Indians, but in reality for whites (though some Indians went there) because he believed that most Indians were not trustworthy (falling back to paganism or having serious limits in their abilities to truly adopt Christianity). Occam was devastated and stated that "*Alma Mater*" (our mother) has become "*Alba Mater*" (white mother). Dartmouth became a school for well to do whites in part because the move to New Hampshire was a move away from the center of native communities. This was upsetting to whites who had contributed to Occam, too, because it was obviously a literal move in the wrong direction.
- Occam seems to have believed that Christianity transcended color but now saw that his mission must become focused on Indians.
- Among the Narragansetts splits over the sale of land by sachems divided the community—Christians were part of the majority who opposed the land sales by Uncas and others—but were not supported by the English, who though Christian, wanted land. This further alienated Indian Christians from white Christians.
- The idea of moving away to form a Christian community in upstate New York was partly a response to the alienation of land in New England, & Long Island.

- The Oneida Iroquois had been somewhat open to the Indian Christian missionaries and saw the possibility of establishing the pan Indian community on the line of demarcation between white settlement and Indian land (1763 line). Christian Indians would serve as a barrier that might slow down white expansion (out of respect for people holding a common faith/religious culture—which proved not to be the case over and over again.).
- In 1775 the first immigrants from New England arrived just in time for the Revolution. As a result of the conflict a number of the Brothertown Indians withdrew to Stockbridge, MA to wait out the war. After the war they returned to New York. About 250 people migrated to New York at this time.
- The pattern of Southern New England would repeat itself. The Brothertown Christians adopted white models of behavior (villages, schools, farms, etc.)—but this didn't stop the whites from pushing them out.
- In the 1820's the community moved to the Fox River in Wisconsin (on Menomonee land). They were then moved to Lake Oneida (in Wisconsin). The federal government tried to force them on to Kansas, but the Brothertown community refused and petitioned for citizenship. Partly out of embarrassment over Cherokee removal the federal government consented and gave them land free and simple. As a result of this they lost their Indian identity (officially)—they became 'white' for legal purposes. ***This was a very unusual and brief change in federal policy.***
- The change of policy was not welcomed by the Wisconsin whites. However, Brothertown Indians were to be found in the Wisconsin Legislature within a few years. Whites were also sending their own children to Brothertown schools and attending Brothertown churches when they lived in the same proximity). In total slightly less than a thousand people emigrated to Wisconsin (followed by many relatives from New York).
- *There has been a great deal of intermarriage between Brothertown Indians with other Indians as well as with whites and blacks. There are several hundred persons who identify as Brothertown Indians. A number of these people also identify with other groups (as do many non-native peoples today). The issue of blood percentage has become a major issue due to the previous "one drop" rules...Indian-ness was considered recessive (full, half, quarter...etc.)...while Black-ness was dominant (one drop made one black—no matter how much 'white' or 'Indian' blood there was).*
- Brothertowns and Stockbridge Indians (in Wisconsin) took the Menominee 'gift' of land as a deed (using the white model) and there were many conflicts over the years about land. Cultural assimilation into the dominant community meant that many "Indian" ways were dropped. For instance, Brothertowns do not have powwows or dress like "Indians" but have maintained ***an identity through families*** for generations—continuity of community. Family gatherings have been the locus of identity. Some family gatherings were self-consciously proud of their Indian heritage—others tried to hide it.
- The Menominees, Oneidas and Stockbridges in the region today seem to be mostly supportive of the Brothertowns (half the Stockbridges gave back their US citizenship 50 years after it was 'given'—they didn't want to be white anymore—and received a reservation). Brothertowns will not receive a reservation but are looking for federal recognition.
- The Brothertowns wanted individual property rights to protect themselves from expropriation vs. communal ownership (and bad land deals)...the Stockbridges who returned to Indian status did so partly because of the burden of tax and other debt....
- Most native communities have been resistant to giving up communal ownership of property because they saw it as the final step toward dissolution (individualization, alienation, loss of identity). The Brothertowns moved in the opposite direction, establishing private land ownership and businesses on the model of the dominant community. Also, because it was a mixed community-English was the common language—it was also a very literate community.
- As the native people of Southern New England began to identify as "Indians" vs. whites they also began to identify vs. blacks. In the Brothertown community they adopted laws against

blacks, their offspring, etc. (miscegenation laws) The Stockbridge Indians did not do this and an Afro-Indian community called “New Guinea” moved out to Wisconsin also.

10:45-12:30 Hilary Wyss, Auburn University (Council Room): Case Studies of Indian Literacy

- David’s presentation “masterful” and well laid out
- Hillary Wyss is not a historian but teaches in English department and focuses on native literacy.
- Brothertown was a very literate community—not the only literate community—but one that produced a large amount of literature—in part due to Occom’s own writing.
- There is a significant body of material written by Native Americans in the 18th century which has not been examined—the works of Samuel Occom and Joseph Johnson in particular, (both associated with the Morse Charity School; Johnson had been a student there)
- Joseph Johnson married Samson (?) Occom’s daughter—and established a father/son relationship.
- Occom had gone to Eleazar Wheelock’s home to be educated when he was 19 years old—this sort of education was not unusual. Many ministers took the most promising boys in the community in to educate them—what is unusual is that Occom was an Indian. Wheelock’s interest in Indian mission accounts for this.
- Joseph Johnson went to Wheelock’s Charity School (perhaps with Occom’s help) when he was 7 years old.
- In the 1770’s Wheelock and Johnson began working intently on the Brothertown community (Johnson would die before the actual creation of the community),
- There is a sense that Occom always understood himself to be a ‘model student’ who cannot ‘mess-up’ because he is the representative of his people. As a young man he had an important role in the Mohegan community. In a sense he was a patriarch even when he was young—always trying to be the model Indian.
- Johnson, on the other hand, had no pressure to be a role model. As a child at the school he got into fights and behaved like a typical little boy.
- There was a high turn-over rate at Wheelock’s school—many Indians left after a month or so, very few stayed as long as Johnson. There were family tensions, tribal tensions, some disorder among the students.
- Wheelock had tutors for the students, even though he was often there himself (we have letters written to him by student/tutors even while he was present). David Macclure’s letter to Eleazar Wheelock speaks of a fight between boys where Wheelock’s own son, John—challenged Johnson to fight another boy named William.
- Joseph Johnson left Wheelock’s school in disgrace in 1768 (drunkenness, etc) and would attribute his actual conversion to the effect of Samuel Occom, not to Wheelock. Johnson would use his failures as a testimony to his ultimate conversion. Occom had tried to be the perfect Indian, Johnson knew that he was imperfect and used his imperfection to convince others that they, too, could change. Part of this seems to be generational—Occom was first generation and constantly had to prove himself, Johnson didn’t seem to have the same sense of a need to be perfect and freely contrasted his ‘wicked’ past with

the power of his later conversion (see Sermon of January 22, 1774—“*To Do Good to My Indian Brethren*”—p 211-217 (Laura J Murray 1998))

- In Samuel Occom’s autobiographical letter he notes that he was paid £180 for 12 years of service while another (presumably white) received that much for a year’s service in another mission or the £50 yet another untrained and young missionary received—Occom states he would have been happy to receive half that. All this points out the double standard applied to Indian missionaries. Native/Indian missionaries to their own people received far lower stipends than white missionaries to the Indians from the same missionary organizations.
- The letters of Samuel Occom indicate a man who was able to articulate his anger and pain at being misused and mistreated while keeping his own vision for the native community. Occom gives Native Americans a voice—and not a happy one—even when they were accepting Christianity. Ultimately, at Brothertown, he would claim that the Indians there were better Christians than the white Christians—a radical statement for its time because the English called themselves collectively “Christians” and referred to the Indian believers as “praying Indians” as if only Europeans were entitled to be fully Christian.

12:45-1:15 Lunch with scholars: Discussions related to the morning and other previous presentations

1:15-2:45 AAS Colonial Newspapers (Council Room)

- Participants looked over various colonial period newspapers and noted (in small groups) the way in which foreign news and news about events at a distance dominated the papers—the reason being that everyone knew the local news.
- The exception was when local news would be of great interest to subscribers (or printers) at a distance—thus Isaiah Thomas’ description of the events at Concord and Lexington in the *Massachusetts Spy*. The report of a major fire in Boston (?) would have been of interest because it described blocks of businesses damaged or destroyed—which would have been of interest to merchants elsewhere who may have been doing business with the victims of the fire.
- There were no paid reporters; printers relied on correspondances from parties overseas or took their news from other papers and reprinted in their own.
- Local news appeared mostly as business news—when ships came in and left port and what they were carrying, commodity prices, etc.
- Advertisements also gave information as to what was going on—who was selling what and for what price, but this was not news as we now know it.

3:00 – 3:45 Workshop with fugitive slave advertisements and pedagogical session on how to use this material in the classroom

- Participating teachers were broken up into small groups to read and discuss Indian fugitive servant/slave advertisements in various newspapers from North America during the late colonial period.

- What was striking was the detailed description of the clothing that the fugitives wore—indicating that it would have been hard for them to come up with an easy change of clothes to make themselves less conspicuous.
- A number of ads indicated concern on the part of the master that their servant not be harmed in the process of capture because they were valued (emotionally as well as in terms of their work)—there were some analogies to run-away children/wards.
- Servants/slaves were also often described according to their personalities, likely’—meaning likeable, etc.—and a number of ads indicated that they were well fed.
- The ads were placed in the midst of other business advertisements and indicated the part indentured servants/slaves played in the larger economy.
- Participants were asked to describe how the ads made them feel and most reported a sense of horror over the use of people as property, some reported surprise over the concern that masters had for the well-being of their servants (not simply for economic reasons), and some expressed curiosity about a world so different and yet so similar to the one we live in.

3:45 – 4:00 – Daily Feedback