



# 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



“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...

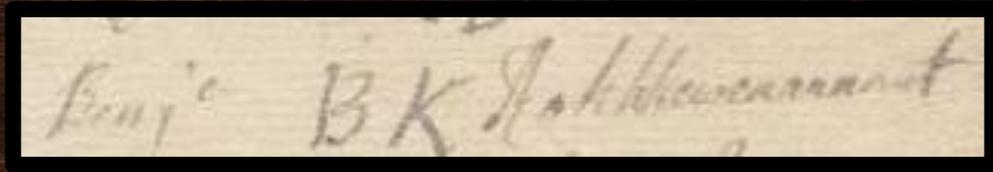
Your petitioners have been and still are disturbed and wronged in several instances respecting their land which in all humility we would lay before the Honourable Court. When your petitioners had accomplished more than one hundred days' work in cutting timber and creating fence on said land, your petitioners 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 Pophnehonanwoh (John Konkapot), Benjamin Kokkewenaunuote  
David Naunauneekkaunuck, Isaac Wohuaumep  
Solomon Waunaupaugu, Jehoiakim Yokun  
26 September 1750

1759 Letter from  
Benjamin  
“King Ben”  
Kokhewaunaunt

Read by Judy Hartley,  
descendant



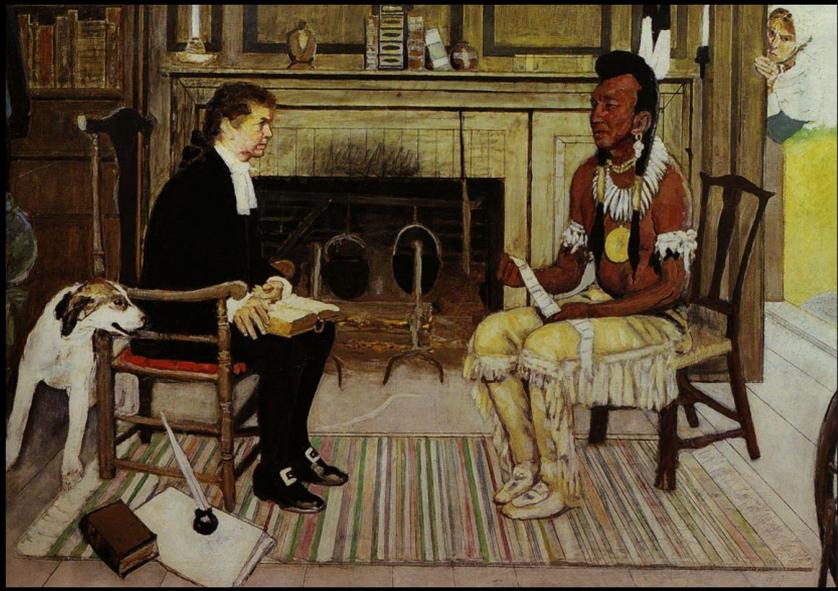
In 1759 “King Ben” and his son and others encountered Israel Williams surveying land south of Pittsfield. Ben challenged the work, and Williams said it was part of a grant. King Ben replied:

“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.

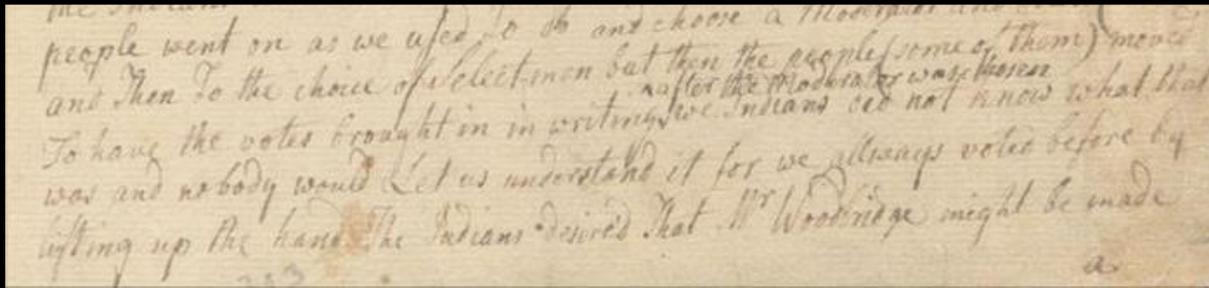
King Ben lived a half mile west of the village on the plain, and is said to have lived to age 104.



Rockwell's final painting, unfinished, of  
John Sergeant and sachem Konkapot

# 1763 petition from Konkapot, and others

Read by Marie Collom,  
descendant



people went on as we used to do and chose a Moderator  
and then to the choice of selectmen but then the people (some of them) moved  
to have the votes brought in in writing <sup>after the Moderator was chosen</sup> we Indians did not know what that  
was and nobody would let us understand it for we always voted before by  
lifting up the hand. The Indians desired that Mr Woodbridge might be made

a

“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

from and goodnes now to do it and your duty bound ever pray.

John <sup>his</sup> Konkopot <sub>mark</sub>  
 Mohh-Quawauweest David ND Naunauneekeauuck  
 Schannis Mtohksin Benj<sup>e</sup> BK Kokhewenaununt  
 Daniel Quans Jacob Cheeksaunkun  
 Solomon Ukhau Nauwaunmut

- John Pophnehonnuhwoh (Konkopot)
- Mohhhowwauweest
- David Naunauneekeauuck
- Johannis Mtohksin
- “King” Ben Kokhhewenaununt
- Daniel Quans
- Jacob Cheeksaunkun
- Solomon Ukhau Nauwaunmut

Ephraim Punmpkhaunhum  
 Tushunt <sup>his</sup> <sub>mark</sub>  
 Notongshun <sup>his</sup> <sub>mark</sub>  
 Peter Naunausoot  
 John Peethous  
 Isaac Paushkaumppoh

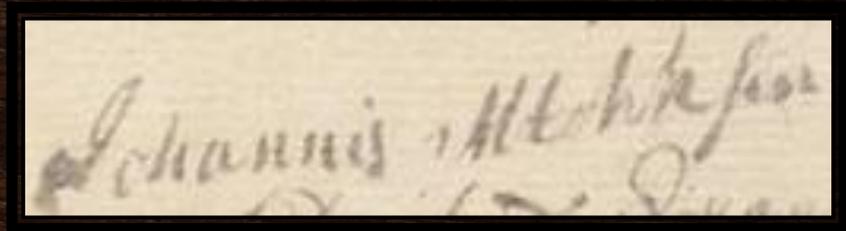
- Ephraim Punmpkhaunhum
- Tushunt
- Notongshun
- Peter Naunausoot
- John Peethous
- Isaac Paushkaumppoh

Ephraim <sup>his</sup> Waunaunqueen <sub>mark</sub>  
 Jonas Etaweocan  
 John Naunauphtaunh  
 Daniel <sup>his</sup> Poopunhseet <sub>mark</sub>  
 Joseph <sup>his</sup> Muwhuttaunh <sub>mark</sub>  
 Hendrick <sup>his</sup> Popunhseet <sub>mark</sub>  
 Josiah <sup>his</sup> Muhhuttaunh <sub>mark</sub>  
 Abraham <sup>his</sup> Naunauphtaunh <sub>mark</sub>  
 Wauwohum <sup>his</sup> <sub>mark</sub>

- Ephraim Waunaunqueen
- Daniel Poopunhseet
- Jonas Etaweocan
- Josiah Muhhuttaunh
- John Naunauphtaunh
- Wauwohum

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 Mtohsin, 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

10  
all my own affairs & my family. for the sake of peace, & this  
last time have gone from home, better than eleven months  
& have gone through a hazardous journey and have suffer-  
ed with sickness & hunger; and have left my counsellors with the  
nations who are for peace... to promote peace, and forward every  
means of peace while I am absent... not only so, but I have been  
pleading & justifying the conduct of these people... for which they  
were well received at their arrival at Miamia. Notwithstanding of  
all this, they brought my name at naught... the occasion of my  
speaking this fort... because of many evil & false reports sounded  
in the ears of my friends... and I am ready to answer anything  
that may be asked respecting to the different tribes of the In-  
dians.

Hendrick Aupaumut.

“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



Rev. Jeremiah Slingerland (Mohican) returning in 1879 for Laurel Hill Association dedication of Burying Ground Monument. *Photo on display this afternoon in Stockbridge Library.*

# 1809 burying ground deed from John Metoxen, and others

Read by Jeff Vele,  
descendant

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



Papscanee Island, Mohican village along Hudson River

# 1834 Memories of John Metoxsen

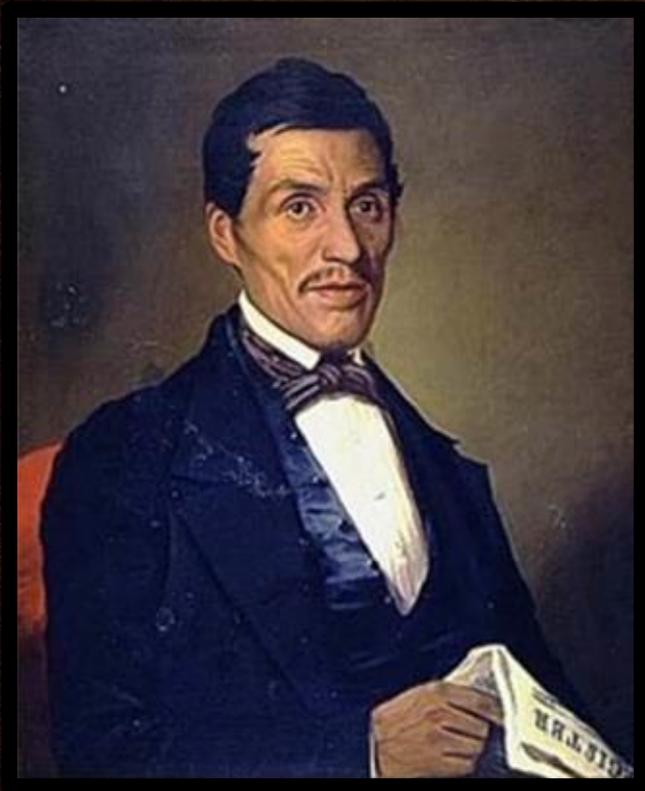
Read by Bradley Pecore,  
descendant

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

Source: Cyrus Byington, “Stockbridge Indian Mission,” *Ohio Observer*, 28 August 1834



# 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 Naunauneeconuck of Stockbridge on his mother's side