

1995

## "A friend to go between them": Interpreters among the Iroquois, 1664-1775

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**"A FRIEND TO GO BETWEEN THEM":  
INTERPRETERS AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775**

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**A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia**

**In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

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**by  
Nancy L. Hagedorn  
1995**

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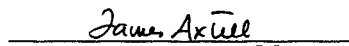
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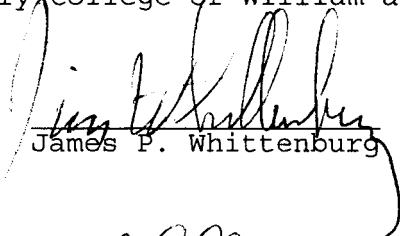
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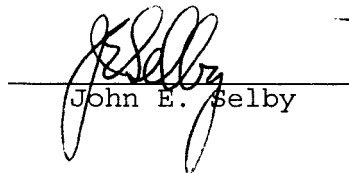
  
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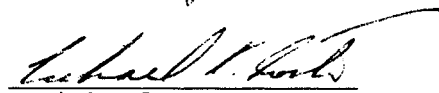
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**For my parents.**

**iii**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF CHARTS	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
INTRODUCTION	2
CHAPTER I. "AT HOME IN THEIR MANNERS AND MODES OF EXPRESSION": THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF INTERPRETERS	10
CHAPTER II. "THE CHIEF CEMENT WHICH BINDS US TOGETHER": INTERPRETERS AND THE INDIAN TRADE	48
CHAPTER III. "TO PRAY AND PREACH IN THEIR LANGUAGE": INTERPRETERS OF RELIGION	70
CHAPTER IV. "TO SUPPORT THE INTERESTS & INFLUENCE OF THIS GOVERNMENT": INTERPRETERS AS MESSENGERS, AGENTS, AND INDIAN OFFICERS	93
CHAPTER V. "ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF THE INDIANS": INTERPRETERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREST DIPLOMACY, 1690-1775	124
CHAPTER VI. "A GREAT DEAL DEPENDS UPON THE INTERPRETERS"	167
APPENDIX A	195
APPENDIX B	221
APPENDIX C	246
ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES	260
BIBLIOGRAPHY	263



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## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters in New York and Pennsylvania, 1664-1775	196
2.	Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	206
3.	Distribution of Primary Occupations among Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	211
4.	Distribution of Primary Occupations of the Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	212
5.	Frequency Table of Ethnicity vs. Occupation for Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	214
6.	Frequency Table of Ethnicity vs. Occupation for the Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	216

## LIST OF CHARTS

Chart		Page
1.	Number of Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	199
2.	Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	202
3.	Ethnic Distribution of the Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	207
4.	Trends in Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	208
5.	Length of Service of the Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775	220

## ABSTRACT

In recent years, interest in early American Indian history and an emphasis on ethnohistorical methods have led to new approaches to the study of cultural contact in colonial America. Several scholars have used cross-cultural groups such as missionaries and white Indian captives as vehicles for analysis. Another group that moved relatively freely back and forth across the cultural divide was that of interpreters. From their intermediate position between European and Iroquois cultures, these men and women interpreted more than languages. Although linguistic skills were essential, successful mediation between Indians and Europeans also required a knowledge of the culture and customs of both groups. They performed a vital role as cultural brokers during all types of intercultural exchange and helped to mediate cultural differences during contact. This study focuses on interpreters among the Iroquois under the English administration of New York, 1664-1775.

Interpreters were most visible during Anglo-Iroquois treaty conferences, and a significant part of this study deals with the development of the interpreters' formal and informal roles at such councils. The image of interpreters as translators, while important, represents only one facet of the variety of complex roles they played as go-betweens for the English and their Iroquois allies. Interpreters participated in all phases of the conference proceedings, acting as messengers, negotiators, speakers, and translators during both public and private council sessions. In addition, they frequently performed essential services for both the Indian and European participants by acting as reliable sources of information on council protocol. In fact, they were primary agents behind the development of a standardized protocol of forest diplomacy during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Interpreters were also active in informal day-to-day exchanges between the British and the Iroquois. They aided missionaries, traders, and military men. They also became the husbands, lovers, fathers, and friends of individuals on both sides of the cultural divide. These less public, less formal exchanges, while difficult to illuminate fully, allow glimpses of the many levels at which mediation and cultural brokerage occurred and indicate how profoundly interpreters and others like them shaped cultural contact in early America. They not only assumed identities and played roles on the stage that spanned the cultural divide--they helped to construct it.

**"A FRIEND TO GO BETWEEN THEM":  
INTERPRETERS AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775**

## INTRODUCTION

For more than five hundred years, Europeans and Indians have interacted with each other on the North American continent. Many historians of early America now recognize that the study of Indians and European-Indian relations is crucial to understanding early American history. In fact, "without the Indians America would not be America as we know it."<sup>1</sup> Only recently, however, have a few scholars begun to look seriously at the people responsible for mediating intercultural confrontations between the groups. This new approach to the study of cultural contact in colonial America was proposed about twenty years ago in a survey of the ethnohistorical literature on early America. James Axtell suggested that "the study of people who travelled back and forth across the cultural frontier" could provide new insights into intercultural exchange.<sup>2</sup> At the time the article appeared, a number of historians and ethnohistorians were already moving in that direction, focusing their

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<sup>1</sup>James Axtell, "A North American Perspective for Colonial History," The History Teacher 12 (1979): 558. See also Axtell, The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), viii-x.

<sup>2</sup>James Axtell, "The Ethnohistory of Early America: A Review Essay," WMQ, 3d ser., 35 (1978): 140-41.

attention on cross-cultural groups such as missionaries and white Indian captives. The approach has continued to bear fruit as new groups have come under scrutiny.<sup>3</sup>

One cross-cultural group that has recently begun to receive some attention is interpreters. Since they not only straddled the cultural divide, but moved relatively freely back and forth across it, they provide an excellent opportunity to study the interaction of Indian and European cultures in early America. From their intermediate position between European and Indian cultures, these individuals interpreted more than languages. Euro-Americans and Indians brought different cultural perceptions, expectations, meanings, and values to all their exchanges, whether across the trade counter, the communion table, or the council fire. As interpreters translated and explained disparate languages and rituals infused with culturally-based meanings and values, they acted as brokers, mediating the confrontation of European and Indian cultures.

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<sup>3</sup>See, for example, James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," WMO, 3d ser., 32 (1975): 55-88; James P. Ronda, "'We Are Well As We Are': An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," WMO, 3d ser., 34 (1977): 66-82; James Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'A Friend To Go Between Them': The Interpreter as Cultural Broker During Anglo-Iroquois Councils, 1740-70," Ethnohistory 35 (Winter 1988): 60-80; Daniel K. Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701," JAH 75 (June 1988): 40-67; and John Demos, The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).



As cultural brokers, interpreters inhabited the cultural frontiers of North America--those culturally defined places "where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other."<sup>4</sup> Of necessity they became "repositories of two or more cultures," often using their multicultural knowledge and understanding to forge bonds and build bridges across the cultural divide.<sup>5</sup> By virtue of their specialized skills, these cultural intermediaries gained prestige and influence in both worlds as long as they maintained the fine balance between the two worlds and performed satisfactorily. Their roles and sometimes even their identities shifted as circumstances demanded.<sup>6</sup>

Before 1988, work on interpreters consisted only of biographies of well-known interpreters and agents such as Conrad Weiser and George Croghan.<sup>7</sup> Recently, some

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<sup>4</sup>James Clifton, ed., Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1989): 24.

<sup>5</sup>Margaret Connell Szasz, "Introduction," in Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman, Ok.: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 6.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of the use of the concept of the cultural broker in anthropology and its emergence in the historical literature, see Szasz, "Introduction," Between Indian and White Worlds, 3-20.

<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945); and Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1959).

historians and ethnohistorians have begun to move beyond consideration of the interpreters' role as mere translators to recognize their function as cultural brokers. Most, however, have continued to focus on individual interpreters and to limit their studies primarily to the diplomatic arena and the early stages of contact.<sup>8</sup>

This study focuses on interpreters who worked for and with the British among the Iroquois between 1664 and 1775. The Iroquois--almost universally recognized as the most significant and powerful group of Native Americans in the colonial Northeast--and their relationship with the British greatly influenced the course of colonial American history. As the primary intermediaries who shaped the nature of that relationship, interpreters among the Iroquois played a prominent role in the unfolding drama of the early history of the Northeast through their vital importance to and involvement in the process of Iroquois-British interaction. Largely ignored until now, this important group of cultural brokers is given a close look here.

This study breaks new ground by collectively considering this important groups of interpreters over the

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<sup>8</sup>In addition to Hagedorn, "'A Friend To Go Between Them,'" see Yasuhide Kawashima, "Forest Diplomats: The Role of Interpreters in Indian-White Relations on the Early American Frontier," American Indian Quarterly 13 (Winter 1989): 1-14; Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent': Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772," in Between Indian and White Worlds, 44-60; and Frances Karttunen, Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

course of more than a century of contact between the British and the Iroquois. These specialized and influential cultural brokers included prominent and obscure interpreters; men and women; Indians, Euro-Americans, and métis. While the study focuses at times on the details of individual lives, it is not constrained by the boundaries of any one interpreter's lifetime or activities.

In its search to illuminate the broader contours of the interpreter's role as cultural broker, this study draws on many of the standard sources for Anglo-Indian relations. Published collections such as The Papers of Sir William Johnson (14 vols.), Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (15 vols.), Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania (16 vols.), and Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Six Nations and Their League (50 reels of microfilm), have been mined for information on interpreters and their activities both in the diplomatic arena and outside it. Private papers, travel accounts, and church and missionary records have served to round out the view of their non-governmental interpreting. The result is a composite portrait of the interpreter's role in cultural interaction under the British colonial administration of New York.

Since the aim of the study has been to examine the development of the interpreter's many-faceted role, and since it has not focused on a single individual, a topical rather than chronological approach has been adopted. The

organization is loosely chronological, however, in that it follows the evolution and increasing formalization of the collective institution of interpreting, from trade, religious, and governmental and military interpreting into diplomatic interpretation. The progression of chapters also mirrors the shift in the focus of interpreting between 1664 and 1775. The earliest interpreters were active primarily in trade and missions, but by the mid-eighteenth century their activities more often centered in the military and diplomatic arenas. Finally, the topical arrangement reflects the path many interpreters' careers followed, beginning with education and training and moving from trade and religious interpreting into governmental and diplomatic service.

The more broadly based, long-term perspective taken here offers several advantages over earlier approaches. First, the study of interpreters as a group reveals their involvement in all arenas of contact, not just the diplomatic. The roles of interpreters in trade, religious exchange, and the military are considered. Networks of interpreters, familial and trade relationships, and the connections between seemingly distinct arenas of contact also come to light. Second, the long-term view makes apparent the evolution of the interpreters' roles over time as the nature and focus of contact changed. It also reveals the crucial role interpreters played in long-term developments on the "middle ground" between the British and

the Iroquois.<sup>9</sup> The most obvious and far-reaching of these developments was the emergence of "forest diplomacy," a mutually acceptable and understood protocol for handling diplomatic encounters between the two groups. Though based primarily upon an Iroquois political and diplomatic ritual, it incorporated elements of European diplomatic methods. Interpreters, as the primary cultural intermediaries during diplomatic exchanges, played a major role in forest diplomacy's evolution during the early eighteenth century. Taken as a whole, these new insights and perspectives direct attention to the *process* of cultural interaction, rather than merely to the results, which have traditionally been the focus of studies of Indian-European relations.

Interpreters performed a crucial service for both the Iroquois and the English as they confronted each other along the cultural frontiers of the early Northeast. Their special knowledge and their mediating role also allowed them to shape cultural contact in colonial New York and Pennsylvania. Ultimately, interpreters were vital players on the middle ground of the upper Hudson and Mohawk river

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<sup>9</sup>For an explanation of the concept of the "middle ground," see Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815, Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Although White's middle ground existed in the upper Great Lakes region, the concept can be applied profitably to European-Indian relations in other areas. The Iroquois and the British, with the aid of their interpreters, forged a similar bicultural middle ground in trade and diplomacy in New York and Pennsylvania during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

valleys between 1664 and 1775. They not only assumed identities and played roles on the stage that spanned the cultural divide--they helped to construct it.

## CHAPTER I

### "AT HOME IN THEIR MANNERS AND MODES OF EXPRESSION"<sup>1</sup>: THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF INTERPRETERS

Throughout the colonial period, the delicate and important nature of relations between the Iroquois and the English required "a Friend to go between them"--a person of "Ability and Integrity" in whom both sides could "place a Confidence."<sup>2</sup> Relatively few men and women ever became such friends of the British and the Six Nations, or were able to act as interpreters and mediators between the two cultures. Mastery of the "difficult Subject" of Anglo-Indian affairs required a great deal of time, effort, patience, linguistic aptitude and cultural sensitivity.<sup>3</sup> An interpreter, one historian has concluded, "had to be a man who had lived with

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<sup>1</sup>Diary of Cammerhof and Zeisberger to the Iroquois, May-Aug. 1750, in William M. Beauchamp, ed., Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-66, Onondaga Historical Association (Syracuse, N.Y.: The Dehler Press, 1916), 51.

<sup>2</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada which are Dependent on the Province of New York, and are the Barrier between the English and French in That Part of the World, 2 vols. (London, 1747; repr. New York: Allerton Book Co., 1922), 2: 111, 188; CRP 6: 60.

<sup>3</sup>William Johnson to the Lords of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., C05/66, IIDH, reel 28, [after May 26, 1765].

the Indians, who had gone with them on their hunts, and who had become well known to them and beloved by them."<sup>4</sup>

At the most basic level, an interpreter had to command two languages, though the degree of linguistic competence necessary depended on the transaction. Formal diplomatic exchanges, for example, required much more proficiency, precision, and sensitivity than did trade negotiations. While many individuals reached levels of skill sufficient to conduct routine transactions, only a small number of interpreters achieved the linguistic proficiency and bicultural sophistication required to mediate and interpret at the most formal levels of exchange between Europeans and Indians. Still fewer who reached such levels of competence managed to combine them with the regard for the Indians that kept an interpreter from being "obnoxious" to them.<sup>5</sup> While proficiency depended largely on linguistic skill and cultural sensitivity, the nature of an interpreter's training and education in Indian and European languages, cultures, and affairs also played a vital role.

Even a rudimentary level of linguistic skill could be difficult to achieve, because Indian languages bore little

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<sup>4</sup>Wilbur R. Jacobs, Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763, Stanford University Publications, University Series, History, Economics, and Political Science, vol. VI, no. 2 (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1950), 153.

<sup>5</sup>Board of Trade to Governor Osborne, Whitehall, Sept. 18, 1753, Additional Mss. #32,732, British Library, London, Engl. IIDH, reel 15, Sept. 18, 1753.



syntactic, morphological, or phonological resemblance to European tongues. In 1644, Johannes Megapolensis, first minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Rensselaerswyck, noted the difficulty of mastering the Mohawk language when he reported that one Dutch colonist, even after twenty years among those Indians, had failed to master the subtleties of pronunciation.<sup>6</sup> Megapolensis thought that Mohawk was "a very difficult language" that cost him "great pains to learn . . . so as to be able to speak and preach in it fluently."<sup>7</sup> Other observers echoed Megapolensis' assessment of Mohawk. William Andrews, a missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), noted in 1712 that Mohawk was "Extream hard to be learnt." In fact, he felt it was "almost impossible for any to learn it perfectly except they begin with it when Children."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Megapolensis's Short Account of the Mohawks, 1644, in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Narratives of New Netherland 1609-1664, Original Narratives of Early American History series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 172-73. Sixteen years earlier, Jonas Michaëlius, another Dutch cleric, had noted similar problems with the language of the coastal Algonquians who lived nearby. Their language had "difficult aspirates and many guttural letters, which are formed more in the throat than by the mouth, teeth and lips, to which our people not being accustomed, make a bold stroke at the thing and imagine that they have learned something wonderful." Jonas Michaëlius to Rev. Adreanus Smoutius, 1628, ibid., 128.

<sup>7</sup>He noted that he could find "no Christian here who understands the language thoroughly; those who have lived here long can use a kind of jargon just sufficient to carry on trade with it, but they do not understand the fundamentals of the language." Jameson, Narratives, 172.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of

Part of the colonists' difficulties arose from the Iroquoian languages' very complex morphology. Another SPG missionary, Reverend Henry Barclay, emphasized the structural complexity of Mohawk when he lamented the difficulties of learning that language in 1741. He found the tongue

as wild and irregular as the people. Their verbs are varied but the Forms or Conjugations are as numerous as the verbs, for I could never yet meet with two varied in the same manner; The original words are very few but since our coming amongst them they have wanted more, these they have by compounding and that in such a manner that many words are compleat Definitions . . . which as you may Judge makes their Words of an Exorbitant length.<sup>9</sup>

As linguist Floyd Lounsbury has explained, the "complex morphology [of Iroquoian languages] contrasts strikingly with that of English. . . . The Iroquois word is capable of great and intricate elaboration."<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, the Iroquoian languages' assets as flexible and complex tongues made them extremely difficult for Europeans to master.

Complicating matters for potential interpreters was the great linguistic diversity found among the Iroquois.

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Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 17.

<sup>9</sup>Rev. Henry Barclay to Cadwallader Colden, Dec. 7, 1741, CCP 67: 283-84. Barclay became a missionary for the SPG among the Mohawk at Tiononderoga in 1738. He remained with them for several years and in 1741 provided Colden with comments on Indian habits and customs for his History of the Five Nations.

<sup>10</sup>Floyd G. Lounsbury, "Iroquois Place-Names," in HNAI, 147-48. According to Lounsbury, "It is often possible to express within it [an Iroquois word] as much as in a phrase or sentence of from five to ten words in English."

The Five Nations languages, although part of a common language stock called Iroquoian, differed significantly. Generally, they exhibited a pattern of mutual intelligibility along geographic lines. The Iroquois' tribal distribution from east to west (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca) approximately paralleled the relationship between their languages. Mohawk and Oneida, for example, had greater similarities than did Mohawk and Onondaga or Cayuga.<sup>11</sup> Astute contemporary observers discovered these distinctions as they became more familiar with Iroquois languages. Barclay, for example, noted that although he initially thought that the difference between the several tongues was "only a difference of Dialect," as he became acquainted with the languages, he decided they were "almost entirely different, for 'tho the Elder people understand one another the younger and children do not."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Horatio Hale, The Iroquois Book of Rites, Brinton's Library of Aboriginal American Literature, no. 2 (Philadelphia: D. G. Brinton, 1883), 25. Rev. Henry Barclay informed Cadwallader Colden in 1741 that "the Mohawk & Onide indeed are very little different." See CCP 67: 283. For a more complete, though brief, explanation of the relationship between the various Iroquoian languages, see Floyd G. Lounsbury, "Iroquoian Languages," HNAI, 334-43.

<sup>12</sup>Rev. Henry Barclay to Cadwallader Colden, Dec. 7, 1741, CCP 67: 283. Eighty years earlier, Chidley Brook and William Nicoll reported to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations that "these Five Nations speak languages something different one from the other. But no Englishman understands them." In fact, during the late seventeenth century, conversation with the Indians required a minimum of two interpreters: a Dutch woman (Hillette van Olinda) to translate from Mohawk into Dutch and then another interpreter to complete the translation from Dutch into English. NYCD 4: 181.

Those interpreters who mastered only one Six Nations language found themselves in much the same position as the younger Iroquois. If they could understand common conversation in a second Iroquois tongue, rarely could they master council oratory in it. There is, for example, no evidence that Conrad Weiser, the most prominent and respected Pennsylvania interpreter of the mid-eighteenth century, ever interpreted any Indian language other than Mohawk.<sup>13</sup> When negotiations and councils involved non-Mohawk groups, additional interpreters with the required linguistic skills joined him.<sup>14</sup> Even Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson's linguistic skills are questionable. Although he apparently could converse in Mohawk, Johnson relied heavily on interpreters for all treaty councils, regardless of the languages involved. One contemporary asserted that, at least in formal settings, the Indians considered Johnson "as an Englishman, ignorant of their language; conversing all along by an interpreter."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>For example, see WJP 3: 780.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 148.

<sup>15</sup>An Account of Conferences held and Treaties made, Between Major-general Sir William Johnson, Bart. and the chief Sachems and Warriours of the . . . Indian Nations in North America. . . in the Years 1755 and 1756, (London: A. Millar, 1756; facs. repr. Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Press, 1930), vii. In all fairness, Johnson's failure to act as his own interpreter may reflect his sensitivity to Iroquois diplomatic protocol rather than an inability to translate the formalized oratory of public speeches. Still, it is also entirely possible that he was proficient in conversational Mohawk, but unable to perform in the oratorical style required of council speakers.

The linguistic versatility of Weiser's and Johnson's contemporary, Andrew Montour, seems remarkable by comparison. Montour interpreted not only Mohawk, Oneida, and Wyandot among the Iroquoian languages but also Delaware, Miami, and Shawnee from the eastern and central groupings of the Algonquian family and was fluent in both English and French as well.<sup>16</sup>

Montour's multilingualism was rare. Interpreters among the Iroquois frequently encountered speakers of Algonquian languages, which displayed geographical patterns of tribal linguistic diversity and mutual intelligibility similar to those of the unrelated Six Nations.<sup>17</sup> Algonquian and Iroquoian languages, however, were morphologically and syntactically very different and few interpreters mastered even one language from each family. On a journey to Onondaga in 1750, Moravian Bishop Johann Christian Friedrich Cammerhof noted the disparity between the Iroquoian he and his companion David Zeisberger encountered there and the

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<sup>16</sup>Examples of Montour's interpreting during the 1740s and early 1750s are numerous. A few selected references demonstrating the variety of languages at his command are: for the Delaware at Shamokin in 1743, CRP 4: 461; from Mohawk into Delaware at Shamokin in 1744, Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 179, and CRP 4: 680; for the Twightwee or Miami and the Shawnee at Lancaster in 1748, Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 263, and CRP 5: 307; and for the Delaware at Logstown in 1748, Conrad Weiser, "Journal to Ohio, 1748," trans. Hiester H. Muhlenberg, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collections 1 (1851): 32.

<sup>17</sup>For a more complete discussion of the Algonquian languages encountered by Iroquois interpreters see Ives Goddard, "Eastern Algonquian Languages," and "Central Algonquian Languages," HNAI 15: 70-77, 583-87.

Algonquian language spoken by the Indians at Shamokin near their settlements in Pennsylvania: "Their language is much richer and more complete than the one spoken in Shomoko, which numbers many less words. Here the Indians have a much greater choice of words and phrases, and we can easily hear that their language is a more cultivated one."<sup>18</sup> Although Cammerhof's observations lack linguistic sophistication due to his ignorance of either language, they point out that the differences could be obvious even to a novice.

The learning of Iroquois languages and Indian affairs took many forms--and achieved varied results. In the early years of Dutch New Netherland, the most common method of "training" probably resulted from mere proximity as the colonists contacted and traded with Indians inhabiting the upper Hudson and Mohawk valleys. According to Lois Feister, "signs and gestures were probably the first means of European communication with the Indians."<sup>19</sup> Initially, such gestures developed through imitation and experimentation. Jonas Michaëlius, first minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, noted in 1628 that "one can easily learn as much as is sufficient for the purposes of trading, but this is done almost as much by signs with the thumb and

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<sup>18</sup>Diary of Cammerhof and Zeisberger, May-Aug. 1750, Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 51.

<sup>19</sup>Lois M. Feister, "Linguistic Communication Between the Dutch and Indians in New Netherland, 1609-1664," Ethnohistory 20 (1973): 26.

fingers as by speaking."<sup>20</sup> Such gestures, however, quickly proved inadequate in negotiating more complex and long-term trading relationships.

The next step in the development of intercultural communication was the development of a hybridized trade jargon or pidgin, probably based on one or more Iroquoian and European languages. According to one linguist, a pidgin is

a contact vernacular, normally not the native language of any of its speakers . . . used in trading or in any situation requiring communication between persons who do not speak each other's languages. It is characterized by a limited vocabulary, [and] an elimination of many grammatical devices.<sup>21</sup>

By their nature, pidgins are ephemeral phenomena that often disappear from use before they are recorded.

Indirect evidence for an Iroquois-based pidgin exists. First, since pidgins tend to develop as a result of prolonged trade contact, it seems likely that some sort of pidgin emerged, if only briefly, during the early stages of European-Iroquois interaction. Second, early observers such

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<sup>20</sup>Albert Eekhof, Jonas Michaëlius, Founder of the Church in New Netherland (Leyden, Holland: A. W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1926), 133, cited in Feister, "Linguistic Communication," 28.

<sup>21</sup>David DeCamp, in Pidginization and Creolization of Languages, ed. Dell Hymes (1971), 15. There is evidence for a Basque-Algonquian pidgin on the east coast, predating the period of French colonization. See articles by Peter Bakker in Anthropological Linguistics 31, nos. 3-4 (1989): 117 ff.; Papers of the Nineteenth Algonquian Conference, ed. William Cowan (1988), 7 ff.; and Man in the Northeast 40 (1990): 89 ff. My thanks to Michael K. Foster for bringing these references to my attention.

as Michaëlius noted the use of a simplified language that, while sufficient for trade, proved "inadequate for any but the simplest of transactions." He noted that it was "a broken language, . . . [and] even those who can best of all speak with the savages, and get along well in trade, are nevertheless wholly in the dark and bewildered when they hear the savages talking among themselves."<sup>22</sup> Most traders probably used such a pidgin, at least initially, and many never needed to learn an Indian language to any degree of competence, if at all.

After years of interaction, some individuals undoubtedly began to use a *lingua franca* known to both parties. In the case of the Iroquois this common language could have been French or possibly Munsee, Mohawk, or Mahican. Expertise in such *linguae francae* began to distinguish interpreters as individuals with special skills beyond those of the average trader or colonist. Such secondary languages could be learned in a variety of ways from formal training in French on the part of Dutch or English colonists to daily contact and experience through trade with nearby Indian groups on the part of both the colonists and Indians. In fact, in many cases, Indians were

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<sup>22</sup>John E. Reinicke, "Trade Jargons and Creole Dialects as Marginal Languages," in Language in Culture and Society, ed. Dell Hymes (New York: Harper and Row, Publ., 1964), 537. Jonas Michaëlius to Adrianus Smoutius, 1628, in Jameson, Narratives, 128.



frequently used as go-betweens, translating into French or a native language more familiar to the European traders.<sup>23</sup>

As contact between the Iroquois and the colonists increased after 1640, religious, diplomatic, and military matters began to compete with trade as the primary concern of intercultural interaction. This change required an accompanying increase in the sophistication and complexity of communication, which in turn created a need for individuals who could speak the Indians' languages with some proficiency and who were at least familiar with their cultures.<sup>24</sup> These men and women, the first true interpreters, gradually increased in both numbers and influence during the third quarter of the seventeenth century and were firmly established and much in demand by about 1700.

Most early New York interpreters were Dutch or Dutch-Iroquois métis who achieved the required levels of competence and knowledge through prolonged contact with the Indians as the result of family or business connections. Three became particularly prominent: Arnout Cornelissen Viele, Jacques (Akus or Akes) Cornelisse van Slyck, and his

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<sup>23</sup>On the use of *linguae francae*, see Feister, "Linguistic Communication," 28-30.

<sup>24</sup>Feister noted that the "use of a form of linguistic contact directly reflects the value systems and needs of the cultures involved. Furthermore, any change in the relationships of the cultures will theoretically involve a change in the forms of linguistic contact, or use of new forms." Feister, "Linguistic Communication," 25.

sister Hiletie (Hille or Hiletje) van Olinda. Viele, the son of Indian trader and Schenectady tapster Cornelis Cornelissen Viele and "Suster" (possibly a Mohawk), served as New York's provincial interpreter from 1673 to about 1700.<sup>25</sup> His interpreting career was briefly interrupted in 1690 when he ran afoul of the royal government for his support of the Leislerians.<sup>26</sup> Although "turned out" of his interpreting position, Viele was soon recalled to duty by the governor because his services remained in demand and he was trusted by the Indians.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>One historian of Schenectady, Thomas E. Burke, Jr., questions whether Arnout was actually Cornelis Cornelisse's brother rather than his son because of Arnout's dates of birth and marriage. From Burke's files on Schenectady inhabitants at the office of the Albany Social History Project, New York State Museum, Albany, New York. For genealogical information on Viele, see Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany, repr. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 142-43; Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady, from 1662-1800, repr. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 271-72; and Jonathan Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 211-12.

<sup>26</sup>Jacob Leisler led the revolt of discontented Englishmen and Dutchmen against Lt. Gov. Francis Nicholson following the demise of the the Dominion of New England and the overthrow of Governor General Sir Edmund Andros in 1689. From the summer of 1689 until the spring of 1691 he acted as the de facto lieutenant governor of New York. For his failure to surrender power to the newly appointed British governor, Henry Sloughter, he was convicted of treason and condemned to death. DAB 6: 156-57.

<sup>27</sup>For his problems as a Leislerian, see NYCD 4: 214; Jonathan Pearson, A History of the Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley, ed. J. W. MacMurray (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, Printers, 1883), 211-12; and Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 87. For the reasons

Van Slyck and Van Olinda were the métis children of Dutch trader Cornelis Antonissen van Slyck and a Mohawk woman. As children of mixed ethnic heritage, their exposure to Mohawk was probably more intense than Viele's, though Jacques left his mother's people for his father's world at an early age and seems to have attempted to live as much as possible within its boundaries. He married a Dutch woman and pursued his father's calling as a trader.<sup>28</sup> He clearly retained his ties with his mother's people, however, for in the 1670s his Mohawk nephew Wouter lived with him in Schenectady.<sup>29</sup> His sister, on the other hand, was raised among the Mohawks of Canajoharie until her teen years, when

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behind his recall, see NYCD 4: 198, 329. Finally, for further examples of his activities, see, NYCD 4: 562; David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1965), 11-13, 19, 21, 46; CCM, 26, 140; ERA 1: 72, 320, 497; LIR, 84, 87, 90, 91, 93, 109; CHM-E 2: 49, 199; and IIDH, reel 2, May 30, 1676, Dec. 20, 1677, and Nov. 9-10, 1680. Daniel Richter has noted that Viele may have owed as much of his influence with the Indians to illegal trade in alcohol and European goods as to his trustworthiness and abilities. Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1984), 270 n. 1.

<sup>28</sup>For information on Van Slyck and his activities, see for example, Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 17, 188-89, 412; Pearson, Genealogies of Schenectady, 239; ERA 1: 354, 423-24, 3: 85-86, 212, 280-81; LIR, 29, 31; and NYCD 3: 815.

<sup>29</sup>"Journal of Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter," in Joel Munsell, ed. and comp., Collections on the History of Albany, 4 vols. (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1865-1871), 2: 363. Interestingly, his nephew Wouter could speak very little Dutch, and Jacques attempted to keep it that way and "would hardly speak a word of Dutch to him, in order that he might not be able to leave him too soon, and go among the Christians and under Christianity."

she went to live with a female trader in Albany. There she learned to read, write, and speak Dutch, and was baptized. She, too, married a Dutch colonist, Pieter van Olinda, and lived her adult life among the colonists.<sup>30</sup> Although their parents apparently did not live together and they spent their early years on opposite sides of the cultural divide, both Jacques and Hiletie had frequent contact with and exposure to the culture of their absentee parent through family visits and trade.<sup>31</sup> Through a combination of casual exposure and formal instruction, each gained sufficient command of both languages to serve as interpreters.

Viele, Van Slyck, and Van Olinda had certain characteristics in common as interpreters and also in their backgrounds and training. First, all three seem to have been fluent bilingual speakers who translated frequently and well. Second, none of them pursued interpreting as a full-time occupation, despite the fact that they at times drew salaries for their services. Finally, their linguistic skills reflected this part-time mentality. All became

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<sup>30</sup>For Hiletie's own account of her upbringing, see Munsell, Collections, 2: 362-63, 370. For information and examples of her activities, see Pearson, Genealogies of Schenectady, 229; Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 183-84; CCM, 77, 97, 100, 204, 205, 210; CHM-E, 291, 327, 337, 349; NYCD 4: 364; and N.Y. Col. Mss. 36: 30, New York State Archives, Albany, in IIDH, reel 4, Feb. 25-26, 1690.

<sup>31</sup>Jacques's father was a trader, and Jacques undoubtedly observed and participated in his activities. Hiletie indicated that as a child, she sometimes "went with her mother among the Christians to trade and make purchases." Munsell, Collections, 2: 362.

proficient bilinguals almost by accident, as a result of their parentage or occupation.

Such "happy accidents" continued to provide interpreters throughout the eighteenth century, but after about 1710, government officials attempted to ensure a supply of capable, honest interpreters through other, more systematic means. The catalyst for this change in approach to the training of interpreters may have been the French and Indian attack on Schenectady in early February 1690. Indirectly, the incident served notice that the nature of intercultural relationships on the New York frontier had dramatically changed. As tensions and hostilities between the French, the English, and their various Indian allies escalated during the 1690s as a result of King William's War, diplomacy rather than trade assumed central importance in Indian affairs. The delicate negotiations required to achieve and maintain peace created a demand for interpreters with more than mere linguistic proficiency as Iroquois protocol became more important in the meetings between Indians and Europeans.<sup>32</sup>

More directly, the attack on Schenectady provided the first interpreters to fulfill these new requirements. Twenty-seven men and boys were taken to Canada as captives

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<sup>32</sup>The French had incorporated aspects of Iroquois diplomatic protocol into their conferences at least as early as the 1660s. As the Five Nations maneuvered between the French and English during the 1690s, the English apparently began to recognize the benefits and necessity of adopting similar methods. See Chapter 5, below.

after the attack, among them two youths, Jan Baptist van Eps and Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen.<sup>33</sup> Van Eps, a boy of seventeen at the time of his capture, remained with the Canadian Indians, probably Caughnawagas, for three years. He made his escape during his captors' attack on the Mohawks in February 1693.<sup>34</sup> Soon after his return, in July 1693, he swore an affidavit based on his knowledge of the Indians regarding the "marks and figure" on several clubs left at Deerfield following a murder. His testimony led to the release of two Mohawks who had been held as suspects in the case.<sup>35</sup> By 1698 he began appearing regularly in the records as an interpreter, most often employed in carrying messages and invitations into the Iroquois country.<sup>36</sup> He stopped

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<sup>33</sup>There are many accounts of the Schenectady "massacre." See, for example, W. N. P. Dailey, The Burning of Schenectady; Documentary Records and Historical Notes on the Burning and Massacre, February 8-9, 1690 (Schenectady, 1940); The Story of the Schenectady Massacre [Albany, c.1940]; Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 260-70; and NYCD 1: 283-311.

<sup>34</sup>CHM-E, 235; NYCD 4: 16. Another captive from Schenectady, the son of Arnout Viele, escaped at about the same time. He does not seem to have become an interpreter, however, possibly an indication that he failed to master the Mohawk language sufficiently. Such an example raises the question of the role of "natural" ability or talent, particularly since Arnout's father was a prominent interpreter. NYCD 4: 17.

<sup>35</sup>CHM-E, 235; Gov. William Phipps to Gov. William[?] Fletcher, Mass. Arch., 30:335a, in IIDH, reel 4, July 26, 1693.

<sup>36</sup>For examples of Van Eps's interpreting activities, see NYCD 4: 370, 494, 497-98, 499, 539, 559, 562, 569, 655, 727, 911; CCM, 133, 138, 139, 142, 148, 149, 158, 178, 183, 267, 285, 310, 323; LIR, 188, 204, 205-6, 214-15, 218-19; and IIDH, reel 7, May 30, 1711, and Aug. 17-28, 1711 (II).

interpreting for the government about 1712, possibly because he decided trading was more lucrative.<sup>37</sup> Although he held a number of civil offices, he followed no steady trade other than interpreting until after his retirement from that post in 1712.<sup>38</sup>

Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen remained with the Indians for a longer period and apparently achieved a much greater level of linguistic skill and a deeper understanding of Iroquois culture than Van Eps. Taken when only thirteen, Van der Volgen was adopted by his French-allied Indian captors (also probably Caughnawagas), who raised him to young manhood. He returned to New York society about ten years later, first appearing in the Indian records of the

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<sup>37</sup>After Van der Volgen returned from captivity, he became the primary provincial interpreter and Van Eps was apparently relegated to a subordinate status. He may have tired of his secondary role by 1712 and decided to focus his energies on trade. In any case he disappears from the official accounts until 1722, when he was arrested and prosecuted for spreading false reports among the Indians. Two years later, the Albany Common Council resolved not to grant trade licenses to seven Indian traders at Schenectady; one of those denied was Jan Baptist van Eps. CCM, 287; Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 418; and IIDH, reel 8, Sept. 4, 1722.

<sup>38</sup>Pearson, Genealogies of Schenectady, 221-23; and Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 164, 176-79. The date of Jan Baptist van Eps's death is unclear and distinguishing him from his son John Baptist, Jr. (bapt. 1713), who was trading and interpreting by at least 1740, is difficult. The elder Van Eps's youngest child, Catarina, was baptized in 1723. He may have been the Jan Baptist van Eps who signed a proposal of Schenectady inhabitants in 1744, since a "Jno. B.V. Eps Junr." and a Jacobus van Eps also signed, though he would have been quite elderly (71 yrs. old). Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 38, 221-22.

Albany commissioners in the fall of 1700.<sup>39</sup> For the next forty-two years "Lawrence Claes" was constantly employed by the commissioners and the governor as a council interpreter, messenger, and resident agent among the Iroquois.<sup>40</sup> By the sheer volume and length of his service, Van der Volgen had a tremendous impact on the conduct of Anglo-Iroquois diplomacy.

Similar captivities produced interpreters throughout the colonies. In Massachusetts, the Kellogg family of Deerfield yielded three interpreters as a result of captivities during Queen Anne's War. On February 29, 1704, the French and their Indian allies attacked Deerfield and took more than one hundred captives, including Martin Kellogg and four of his children. All but eleven-year-old Joanna eventually returned to Massachusetts and found employment as interpreters.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>There is no extant contemporary account of his return, although it appears that he did not "escape." Family legend has it that during a visit to his Dutch family--a privilege often granted to adoptees--his sister cut his scalplock while he slept. He was supposedly so ashamed he could not return to his Indian family and decided to remain in New York. See Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 174.

<sup>40</sup>The references to Van der Volgen's activities are voluminous; only a few are noted here. Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 173-74, 342; Pearson, Genealogies of Schenectady, 217-18, 222; NYCD 4: passim; CHM-E, 276, 293, 416, 524; CCM, 166, 168, 181, 195, 204-5; AIA, 223-24; LIR, 188, 191-92; IIDH, reel 11, Aug. 12, 1741.

<sup>41</sup>Timothy Hopkins, The Kelloggs in the Old World and the New, 3 vols. (San Francisco, 1903), 1: 35-36, 38. An account of the attack on Deerfield is also included on pp. 36-37. Kellogg's wife escaped during the attack, but his youngest son, Jonathan, was killed.



The first Kellogg child to return from captivity was eighteen-year-old Martin, Jr. He escaped in May 1705 after just fifteen months with the Indians.<sup>42</sup> His efforts seemed wasted, however, as he was recaptured in August 1708 while on a scouting expedition, and this time remained in Canada for several years. By 1714 he had again returned to Massachusetts and had also secured the release of his younger brother, Joseph.<sup>43</sup> The latter, then aged twenty-three, was proficient in French and familiar with the languages of many of the Indian allies of New France. Within two years Joseph was in the pay of the Massachusetts government as an interpreter and Indian officer and continued to serve in that capacity until his death during a trip to Oswego with Governor William Shirley in 1756.<sup>44</sup>

The youngest child, Rebecca, was nine at the time of the attack on Deerfield and remained with her captors (by then her adopted family) until Joseph persuaded her to leave them and return to Massachusetts in 1728. Although her linguistic capabilities were probably superior to those of her brothers due to her much longer sojourn among the

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<sup>42</sup>For an account of their escape written by participant Joseph Petty, see Hopkins, Kelloggs 1: 56-57.

<sup>43</sup>Hopkins, Kelloggs 1: 55-58.

<sup>44</sup>Joseph spent only a year with the Indians. The remainder of his captivity was spent in the employ of French traders whom he accompanied on many expeditions among the Indians, in 1710 traveling as far as the Mississippi River. He became familiar with many different Indian groups, but had the greatest knowledge of Mohawk language and culture. Hopkins, Kelloggs 1: 59-63.

Indians, her interpreting took a less public form. No doubt because of her gender and the ready availability of adequate male council interpreters like her brothers, Rebecca rarely, if ever, appeared during formal Anglo-Indian conferences and confined her activities to missionary and educational settings.<sup>45</sup>

The Kelloggs of Deerfield, like Van Eps and Van der Volgen of Schenectady, represented a new breed of interpreter that came to dominate the principal interpretive positions in New York and Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century. All acquired their special knowledge through extended periods of residence among the Indians and paid particular attention to learning not just their languages, but their methods of doing business. Concentrated exposure to and complete immersion in Iroquois culture and language in the school of captivity during the troubled years of the 1690s and early 1700s gave them a deeper understanding of the Indians' culture than their predecessors, whose knowledge was acquired primarily through more casual trade contacts. At the same time, these men and women achieved a higher level of linguistic competence and sophistication than most of their predecessors. Ironically, the hostilities that created the need for new proficiencies not only produced the individuals who possessed them and could employ them in the pursuit of peace, but pointed the way to

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<sup>45</sup>Hopkins, Kelloggs 1: 58, 62, 63.

a new type of interpretive training. The message was not lost upon the colonists, governmental officials, and Indians of Pennsylvania and New York. The education and training of interpreters took a decidedly different course after 1700 in an effort to ensure a continuing supply of proficient and knowledgeable individuals to fill the role.<sup>46</sup>

This new type of training for interpreters involved three elements: youth, residence among the Indians, and cultural as well as linguistic proficiency.<sup>47</sup> It first surfaced in concrete terms in a plan for "securing New York" submitted to the Board of Trade in 1696. For the first

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<sup>46</sup>There are numerous other examples of captives serving as interpreters, a phenomenon which continued throughout the colonial period. See, for example, WJP 10: 469; CCP 56: 34; NYCD 4: 657, 715; and IIDH, reel 6, May 25-Oct. 17, 1700 (III).

<sup>47</sup>The requirement focused on by most colonial officials, however, was youth. Governor Bellomont adhered to this conventional wisdom in his assertion to the Lords of Trade that the ministers requested by the Indians in 1700 "ought be young men or they will never be able to learn the Indian tongue." NYCD 4: 717. Twelve years later, SPG missionary Rev. William Andrews indicated that he concurred with Bellomont. Mohawk was "almost impossible for any to learn it perfectly except they begin with it when Children." Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 17. Throughout the eighteenth century, most officials agreed with Bellomont and Andrews, and recruited primarily young men for training as interpreters and missionaries, both of whom required mastery of an Iroquois language and a relatively sophisticated understanding of their culture to perform effectively. See, for example, ERNY 3: 1514; WJP 9: 127; and Johnson's "Measures Necessary to be taken with the Six Nations," encl. in James Delancey to Board of Trade, July 22, 1754, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., C05/1066, in IIDH, reel 16, July 22, 1754. Even the French "kept Young People in their [Seneca] Towns on purpose to learn the Indian Language, which many of them now spoke as well as themselves." Examination of Ghesaont by James Logan at Conestoga, July 20, 1721, in IIDH, reel 8, July 20, 1721.

time, the New York colonial authorities advocated deliberately sending "five or six hardy youths (of good natural parts and well understanding grammar) . . . to reside among those Indians [Iroquois] to learn their language perfectly" in order to become interpreters. Significantly, the plan called for the youths not only to learn the language, but to "be acquainted with their customs and manners, that thereby the government may have the better insight into their measures and designs, and with more facility treat with them whenever it is necessary."<sup>48</sup> Since the primary requirements for learning an Iroquois language and mastering the complexities of Anglo-Iroquois diplomacy seemed to be youth and residence among the Indians, the colonial authorities would attempt to ensure a supply of competent interpreters by sending young men to reside with the Indians to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. No longer could the supply of knowledgeable interpreters be entrusted entirely to the uncertain results of captivity or trade.

One of the first interpreters deliberately placed among the Indians to learn their language and diplomatic methods (albeit by his father, rather than colonial authorities) was Conrad Weiser. The Weisers came to New York with a group of about three thousand Palatine settlers under the sponsorship of Governor Robert Hunter in 1710.

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<sup>48</sup>NYCD 4: 184. See also ibid., 4: 229, 254, 258; and ERNY 2: 1133.

Hunter hoped they would provide labor for the production of much needed naval stores. When the endeavor broke up two years later, Conrad's father led a delegation to negotiate with the Mohawks for land at Schoharie for the now displaced Palatines. During the negotiations, as Weiser recalled in his autobiography, "a chief Of the Maqua [Mohawk] Nation Named Qua y nant visited my Father. [T]hey agreed that I should go with Quaynant to his country to learn the Maqua language."<sup>49</sup> The sixteen-year-old Weiser spent the next four or five months with Quaynant's family in a small Mohawk village south of the Lower Castle on Schoharie Creek. By the time he left in July 1713, his father's family had settled only a couple miles away. Weiser maintained close contact with his Mohawk family over the next fifteen years, frequently visiting them and spending time with them.<sup>50</sup>

Weiser's close acquaintance with the Mohawks and his adoption by and residence with Quaynant's family prepared him well for the role of interpreter. He not only became linguistically proficient, but had ample opportunity to observe Iroquois councils in action. His close friendship and familial ties with Quaynant placed him in an influential position with the Mohawks and enabled him to easily solicit their aid. By the time he relocated in Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, in 1729, his reputation as an interpreter was

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<sup>49</sup>Quoted in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 17.

<sup>50</sup>Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 17-18, 25-26; CRP 5: 471.

well established. He became active in Pennsylvania's Indian affairs as the "Province Interpreter" in the 1730s, a position he continued to hold throughout the 1740s and 1750s.

Weiser recognized the value of his own training and suggested that the government place young men to live among the Indians, perhaps with resident blacksmiths, to learn the language. He followed his own advice in 1750 when he recommended his sister's son, John Picket, to the Mohawks near Canajoharie "to learn the Mohacks Tongue perfect among them, to serve as Interpreter for Pennsylvania, &ca. after I am grown old and no more able to travel." Picket apparently already spoke the language "tolerable well" and was literate in English and German. He seemed a natural choice for the attention of the Mohawks, because he lived only a mile from their Upper Castle and had "the best opportunity to learn the Indian Language perfectly."<sup>51</sup> Although he never fulfilled his uncle's plans, Picket did become an interpreter. Nearly ten years later, in February 1759, he was paid £5.4.0 by William Johnson for serving as the interpreter to the minister at Canajoharie.<sup>52</sup> The following year Weiser took the plan one step further with his own son Sammy, even though he had always "been obstinately

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<sup>51</sup>CRP 5: 479.

<sup>52</sup>CRP 5: 479; WJP 3: 158.

determined that none of his Children should learn Indian."<sup>53</sup>  
 With the financial support of the Pennsylvania proprietors, Weiser placed his son and a tutor, Daniel Claus, with Brant's family at the Lower Mohawk Castle near Fort Hunter "to learn their Language and Customs for the Service of the Provinces."<sup>54</sup>

Another interpreter trained through an extended residence among the Indians was James Dean. Placed with a community of Oneidas and Tuscaroras at Oquaga on the Susquehanna River at the age of eleven, he remained with them for eight to ten years, learning their languages and customs. Occasionally a missionary visited the village and tutored him in the "arts and letters of civilized life"

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<sup>53</sup>Richard Peters to the Proprietaries, May 11, 1748, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, IV, 93, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, cited in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 323. Weiser may have felt that his own linguistic skills placed him too much at the beck and call of the colonial government. He may have hoped to spare his children from the difficult, peripatetic life that he had led. Sammy was apparently the only one of his children who received any kind of interpretive training.

<sup>54</sup>IIDH, reel 14, Aug. 12, 1751; Pennsylvania Register, ed. Samuel Hazard, 16 vols. (Philadelphia, 1828-1835), 4: 235-36. Weiser noted that Brant and his wife were glad to oblige him and received Sammy "as their own Child." Brant's wife's family was that to which Conrad himself belonged by adoption. "Weiser's Journal to Albany, 1751," Du Simitiere Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 14, June 10-Aug 2, 1751. Although Sammy stayed for less than a year, Daniel Claus, his tutor, remained with the Mohawks longer. Claus lived for some time with Chief Hendrick of the Upper Castle (c. 1754) and became under Sir William Johnson a prominent officer and interpreter in the Northern Department of Indian Affairs in the 1760s and 1770s. Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 112; CRP 5: 518, 6: 182, 7: 14.

(presumably at least reading, writing, and religious instruction) to prepare him for a missionary career.<sup>55</sup> In the late 1760s he entered Dartmouth College to serve as both a teacher of Oneida for Eleazar Wheelock's students and to be further prepared for his own mission among the Indians. Wheelock judged Dean a "great master" of the Oneidas' language, and noted he was "much esteemed as an orator among them."<sup>56</sup> More telling is the Oneidas' assessment of his abilities, for they said he was "the only white person whom they had ever known, who could speak their language so perfectly that they could not at once detect him, although he might be hid from view."<sup>57</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, nearly all knowledgeable individuals, Iroquois and English alike, agreed that the best method to obtain the requisite expertise in language and intercultural diplomacy was extended and early residence among the Indians.<sup>58</sup> Sir

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<sup>55</sup>William Tracy, Notices of Men and Events Connected with the Early History of Oneida County (Utica, N.Y.: R. Northway Jr., Printer, 1838), 12.

<sup>56</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon, in Connecticut; From the Year 1768, to the Incorporation of it with Dartmouth-College, and Removal and Settlement of it in Hanover, In the Province of New-Hampshire, 1771, Rochester Reprints, no. 6 (orig. publ. London, 1771); American Archives, ser. 4, 2: 152-53, in IIDH, reel 31, Mar. 16, 1755 (II).

<sup>57</sup>Pomeroy Jones, Annals and Recollections of Oneida County, New York (Rome, N.Y., 1851), 744.

<sup>58</sup>Following the death of Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, the Albany Commissioners focused their attention on Jacobus Bleecker as a possible replacement. They thought



William Johnson clearly expressed this opinion in his letters to the Lords of Trade. He stressed that it was "not during the period of a Governor's residence at an American Capital, of a Commandant at an Outpost, or of a Traveller in the Country" that colonial officials acquired a good understanding of Indian affairs. In fact, such superficial acquaintance with the Indians could "only mislead." Instead, "long residence amongst them, a daily intercourse with them, and a desire of information in these matters superseding all other considerations" imparted the required knowledge.<sup>59</sup> Although Johnson wrote primarily of mastering Indian affairs in general, his evaluation certainly applied to the even more complex problem of mastering an Indian language. Surprisingly, Johnson himself never resided among the Iroquois for an extended period, though he was unquestionably familiar with their language and culture from his years of trading among them, their frequent visits to his home in the Mohawk Valley, and his long liaison with Mohawk Molly Brant.

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"that with Some pains he will make a Very Good Interpreter." The "pain" they had in mind was a period of residency at Canajoharie in the Mohawk country "to Improve himself further in the Indian Tongue." Minutes of Indian Commissioners, Indian Records, RG 10, vol. 1820, 223-24v, Federal Archives Division, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 11, Jan. 27, 1742.

<sup>59</sup>DHNY 2: 947. See also Johnson to Lords of Trade [1765?], P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/66, in IIDH, reel 28, [after May 26, 1765].

The Six Nations also repeatedly stressed the importance of extended residence and immersion in their culture when learning their languages. In 1752-53, David Zeisberger and a Moravian companion were advised that they "ought to stay a year at least" at Onondaga, for they "could not possibly learn the language in two or three months." Zeisberger noted further that one of their Onondaga hosts, Anaharisso, thought "it would be better if each of us lived alone with the Indians; we would learn their language more quickly when separated, as when we were together we spoke much Asseronish ['Europeanish']."<sup>60</sup> The Indians also recognized the danger of mixing two languages. Yet another Onondaga, Annechwatckhe, advised Zeisberger not to spend the winter in Cayuga as planned, but to remain in Onondaga. Zeisberger explained that although he and his companion "now felt a little at home with them [the Onondagas], and had learned to understand their language tolerably well," Annechwatckhe feared that if they went to Cayuga, they "would be obliged to learn a different language, and that might mix the two. Hence it would be better to learn one language thoroughly and then proceed."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 129-30, 137, 170. "Asseroni" is Mohawk for "axe-maker," i.e. "European." Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country, 1634-1635: The Journal of Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, ed. and trans. Charles T. Gehring and William A. Starna (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1988), word list.

<sup>61</sup>Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 133, 139, 187.

Language was not the sole concern of the Indians, however. During the same visit to Onondaga, Zeisberger noted that the Indians indicated that if the council had any matters to confer on, they would meet in the house where the Moravians were staying, "in order that we might listen, see and learn how negotiations were carried on, when conducted according to their method. . . . They advised us to do much visiting; all houses were open to us, and we could have ample opportunity to learn and converse with the people."<sup>62</sup> Zeisberger promised to apply himself and follow the Indians' suggestions faithfully.

Though it occurred much less frequently, Indian youths were also sent to live among the colonists to learn English and presumably acquaint themselves with European manners and customs. During the Lancaster conference in 1752, for example, the "Northern Indians" (Six Nations) requested the return of a "little lad," the son of one of their number, Keishetas. His father had "ordered that he should live at Philadelphia, in order to learn English, to be an Interpreter."<sup>63</sup> The Indians thought the boy had had ample time to learn the language and that he should be sent home. In compliance with their request, the governor sent for the

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<sup>62</sup>Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 123, 119.

<sup>63</sup>Few examples of such placement, other than in schools, exist in the records. CRP 8: 756; Minutes of a Conference with the Northern and Western Indians at Lancaster, 1762 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1763), 24, in IIDH, reel 25, Aug. 11-29, 1762.

youth so he could go home with his family at the close of the conference.

Far more common than such personal arrangements for training Iroquois children as interpreters and missionaries was the establishment of Indian schools for the purpose. As early as 1697, the trend toward a formalized approach to the education of Indians was evident when Governor Fletcher reported on the progress of an Indian youth who had been living with his family for more than a year. Fletcher had "put him to school" and the fifteen-year-old could speak both Dutch and English. Unfortunately, according to Fletcher, the boy's mother visited and "inticed him away," ending a presumably promising career as an interpreter.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, in 1700 Governor Richard Coote, earl of Bellomont, entreated the Iroquois to "send two or three Sachems sonns out of each Nation to be kept at School at New York. . . to have them taught to write and read both English and Indian." Once the boys were "perfect in their writing & reading," they would be sent home and replaced by other youths. By this method, the Indians would always have individuals among them who understood English and could be "serviceable. . . upon many occasions."<sup>65</sup> Bellomont's scheme met with even less success than Fletcher's of three years before, because the sachems replied that they could

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<sup>64</sup>NYCD 4: 276.

<sup>65</sup>NYCD 4: 734.

not dispose of their children without their wives' consent.<sup>66</sup>

Despite their lack of early success, New York and Pennsylvania officials continued to encourage the education of Indians, at least in part to provide interpreters. By the mid-eighteenth century, most of the major outposts had a schoolmaster to teach reading, writing, and religious principles to young Indians from nearby villages.<sup>67</sup> In addition, a number of religious denominations, colleges, and organizations like the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel established specialized schools in locations removed from the Indian country. One of the earliest was located at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. In 1744, the Virginia commissioners to the Six Nations urged them "to send three or four of your Boys to Virginia, where we have a fine House for them to live in, and a Man on purpose to teach the Children of you, our Friends, the Religion, Language and Customs of the white People." The commissioners hoped by such means to supply a "Friend to go between them" when Conrad Weiser should be too old to serve

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<sup>66</sup>NYCD 4: 738. Colonial officials repeatedly encountered this reluctance of Indian parents to part with their children for extended periods, particularly when they were going into an institutional rather than a family setting.

<sup>67</sup>William Johnson set up two free English grammar schools for Mohawk children: one at the home of Nickus Brant under Collin McClellan, and another at Ft. Hunter. John C. Guzzardo, "Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo-American Empire," (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1975), 273.

in that capacity. Virginia's request was also declined, however, because the Indians loved their children "too well to send them so great a Way."<sup>68</sup> Acquiring and retaining Indian students remained a problem for schools throughout the colonial period.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps the most famous Indian school, and one which attempted to educate both Indian and English youths for service among the Indians, was Moor's Charity School established by Eleazar Wheelock in Lebanon, Connecticut.<sup>70</sup> Indian students, many of them from the Six Nations, received instruction in English language, manners, farming methods, and trades (such as blacksmithing and carpentry)--or "such Parts of Learning as may render them Most useful among their

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<sup>68</sup>Treaty at Lancaster, June 1744 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1744), 32-33, 36, in IIDH, reel 12, June 1744 (II). See also Colden, History 2: 188, 196-97.

<sup>69</sup>In 1766, missionary Theophilus Chamberlain resorted to somewhat questionable means of gaining students for his school at Canajoharie. Two nearby families refused to send their children, and Chamberlain apparently found it difficult to reason with them since the fathers rarely appeared in public except to get drunk. Finally, he took advantage of the celebration surrounding the birth of a child to extract a promise from the inebriated parents that the six eligible children would be sent to school. Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, In Lebanon in Connecticut, New England, Founded and Carried on by the Rev. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock, Rochester Reprints, No. 5 (orig. publ. London: J. & W. Oliver, 1769), 6. See also James Axtell, "Dr. Wheelock's Little Red School," The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 96, 100-101.

<sup>70</sup>The school was named after its benefactor, Colonel Joshua More.

Tribes and particularly to be fitted for Interpreters."<sup>71</sup> English students focused on traditional academic and religious subjects, as well as on learning appropriate Indian languages, since many were divinity students from Yale or New Jersey being fitted for service in Indian missions.<sup>72</sup>

More significant than Wheelock's curriculum were the methods of instruction he employed. First, he especially welcomed students who could serve as interpreters and language teachers for their fellows while pursuing their own studies.<sup>73</sup> Such activities not only assisted the colonial students in "learning the Indian Tongue. . . [and] fit them for Service among the Nations as Soon as they Shall be esteemed qualified in Other Respects," but helped the young natives learn English.<sup>74</sup> Second, during the summers,

<sup>71</sup>WJP 10: 279-80.

<sup>72</sup>Another "school" that prepared missionaries for service among the Six Nations by teaching language was that set up for the Moravians at Bethlehem in the 1740s. It catered entirely to the Brethren, however, and took in no Indian students. Kenneth G. Hamilton, trans. and ed., Bethlehem Diary, 1742-44 (Bethlehem, Pa.: Archives of the Moravian Church, 1971), 187, 192, 194, 195, 198, 203, 207, 214.

<sup>73</sup>James Dean, for example, became one of his pupils upon leaving the Oneidas and undoubtedly tutored fellow students in that language while learning Mohawk and several others himself. When he completed his course of studies at Dartmouth in 1773, Wheelock thought him particularly well suited as an itinerant preacher among the Six Nations and "to the tribes that can understand him to a thousand miles." Tracy, Notices, 12-13.

<sup>74</sup>WJP 5: 728. Conveniently, this provision also made the training more economical, since "the vast Expence and

Wheelock sent promising young English pupils nearing the end of their studies into the Indian country as schoolmasters. Indian youths often accompanied them or other missionaries as interpreters and assistants for on-the-job training.<sup>75</sup> Finally, since English and Indian youths attended together, each could easily learn about the other's culture, enhancing and deepening their understanding and knowledge.<sup>76</sup> Though intended primarily to prepare Anglican missionaries for service among the Indians, Wheelock's methods (combined with the multicultural nature of the student body) encouraged in-depth interpretive training both at the school and in the

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Trouble of Interpreters" could be eliminated. Eleazar Wheelock, A plain and faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut, Rochester Reprints, No. 1 (orig. publ. Boston: Richard & Samuel Draper, 1763), 18.

<sup>75</sup>In July 1763, Joseph Brant served Rev. Charles Smith as his interpreter during a visit to the Six Nations. Wheelock hoped Joseph would "be Much perfected in the English Tongue by Associating with Mr. Smith, and serving as his Interpreter." WJP 10: 729. Three years later, Rev. Samuel Kirkland traveled to his mission in the Indian country with three English youths from Yale, who were "to spend the ensuing Season in learning the Languages of such Tribes as they are likely to serve, when they have finished their School-learning." Eleazar Wheelock, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 2d ed., Rochester Reprints, No. 4 (orig. publ. London: J. & W. Oliver, 1767), 55; Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 9; WJP 5: 728.

<sup>76</sup>One close association formed at the school was that between Joseph Brant and Samuel Kirkland. Wheelock intended to send them to board together at New Jersey College in the fall of 1762. In that way, Kirkland could learn "something of the Mohawke Language Without any great Interruption to his other Studies, While Joseph in the Grammar School there May be perfecting himself in the English Tongue." WJP 10: 469-70.



field at Indian missions and schools. As a result, a number of his students like Joseph Brant and Moses later served competently as interpreters.<sup>77</sup>

Regardless of the formal training interpreters received (or failed to receive), all daily increased their knowledge of Indian (or English) language and culture as they performed their duties. This on-the-job training sometimes took a structured form, as with Wheelock's students, but frequently was more casual. Most often, a younger or less experienced interpreter served as an assistant to the primary interpreter at a conference, as did Arnout Cornelisse Viele at Albany in 1677 and William Printup, smith and interpreter for New York, at Harris's Ferry in March 1757.<sup>78</sup> The Indians employed similar

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<sup>77</sup>Wheelock's motives and overall success have been debated. For an overview of the history of the Indian school and an assessment of his methods, see Axtell, "Little Red School," and Margaret Connell Szasz, Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988). As for Wheelock's own assessment of his success with his Indian pupils, he noted that "many of them have gone immediately from my school into good, and reputable business, and such business as they were equal to, and generally to serve as school masters, but some as interpreters, etc. and nothing has prevented their being employed usefully, and respectably in various capacities till this day, but their want of fortitude to resist the power of those fashionable vices which were rampant among all their tribes. The current is too strong. . . for of all the number . . . , I don't hear of more than half who have preserved their character unstain'd either by a course of intemperance or uncleanness, or both." Wheelock, Continuation (1771), 19-20.

<sup>78</sup>LIR, 43-45, 47; and Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1822, pp. 444-446, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Can., Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 20, March 1, 1757. John Davison served as Weiser's assistant in 1756. CRP 7: 46.

"apprenticeships" for their own speakers and diplomats. In 1744, at the suggestion of the Albany Commissioners, the Mohawks and Oneidas brought along some of their young people, "that they may hear & See what passes between us to gain some Experience."<sup>79</sup>

Even less formal, but certainly no less valuable, were the training and information imparted by interpreters' mentors and advisors, whether Indian or European. William Johnson, for example, took Daniel Claus under his wing in 1754 when the young man left his home among the Mohawks. Johnson offered Claus lodging and "in Order not to be Looser of the Indian Language," gave him the keys to the Indian store so that his protégé could "see the Way of Indian Trade." In short, according to Claus, his mentor introduced him to "all affairs necessary & advantagous to my Employ."<sup>80</sup> Johnson similarly aided missionary Samuel Kirkland in November 1764 by imparting information on the Six Nations' manners and customs, including the conduct of public councils and the nature of adoption. Kirkland felt he had "derived great advantage" for his journey and mission while at Johnson Hall.<sup>81</sup> Even Conrad Weiser improved his

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<sup>79</sup>Min. of Ind. Comms., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1820, p. 303v, Publ. Arch. of Can., Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 12, Sept. 28-29, 1744.

<sup>80</sup>PA, ser. 1, 2: 116-17.

<sup>81</sup>Samuel Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth-Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), 4.

knowledge and skills early in his career by working closely with Shikellamy, a French-born adopted Oneida.<sup>82</sup>

Ultimately, Indians, métis, and Euro-Americans followed many different routes in becoming interpreters. No one type of training dominated throughout the period and systematic attempts at educating potential interpreters remained sporadic and limited in scope. Linguistic ability and chance continued to be vital factors in selecting interpreters for additional training either in schools, through residence with the Indians, or merely while on the job. Despite the seemingly chaotic nature of interpreters' education and experience, however, certain trends are apparent. During most of the seventeenth century, colonists had little interest in or need for regularized, systematic preparation of interpreters, because the need for translators was met through accidents of birth and the acquisition of rudimentary linguistic skills through the Indian trade. As intercultural relations became more complex, however, the maintenance of a supply of interpreters proficient in both Iroquois language and methods of business was crucial, and systematic training through government-sponsored residency among the Indians and in specialized Indian schools became more widespread.

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<sup>82</sup>See, for example, Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 154, 277. Onkiswathetami or Shikellamy was born French, but adopted as a captive by the Oneidas. HCID, 247.

Although interpreters still entered the ranks through the Indian trade or métis birth, by the mid-eighteenth century such experience was rarely sufficient to ensure their rise to prominence in Indian affairs. Nearly all interpreters who truly felt "at home" in the Indians' "manners and modes of expression" had a high level of linguistic skill and a cultural sensitivity and knowledge that had been honed and developed through long and close association with Indians.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 51.

## CHAPTER II

### "THE CHIEF CEMENT WHICH BINDS US TOGETHER"<sup>1</sup>: INTERPRETERS AND THE INDIAN TRADE

When the Dutch West India Company established Fort Orange as a permanent trade outpost near the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers in 1624, it laid the foundation for New Netherland's relationship with the Indians of the region. Lacking any serious territorial interests, the Dutch at Fort Orange and Beverwyck (later called Albany) concentrated their economic efforts on the profitable fur trade. In cooperation with the neighboring Indians, particularly the Five Nations, the Dutch worked to extract furs from the Great Lakes region, developing in the process a mutually dependent and beneficial relationship that fostered peaceful--though sometimes tense--coexistence. The strains often arose from differing Dutch and Iroquois views of their relationship.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AIA, 153.

<sup>2</sup>For more on the history of New Netherland and the Dutch relationship with the Indians, see Oliver A. Rink, Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press for the New York State Historical Association, 1986); and Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971). More recent ethnohistorical analyses, with some significant differences in interpretation, can be found in

Given their long experience with and primary interest in European-style commerce, the Dutch naturally saw the people of the Five Nations in commercial terms as suppliers of the valuable furs they needed for export to Europe. A relationship confined to simple economic exchange between themselves and the Five Nations would have been sufficient, perhaps even desirable, and they showed little curiosity about their Iroquois trading partners except in regard to securing a lucrative trade in furs. "Absorbed in their own lives, they knew little of Iroquois culture and did little to remedy their ignorance." As late as the 1650s, few Dutch had traveled beyond Mohawk lands, and probably none had penetrated further than Onondaga.<sup>3</sup>

Still, the economic and military importance of the Five Nations forced the Dutch to accept--at least in part--the Iroquois vision of their relationship. For the Five Nations, trade was not a commercial exchange governed by impersonal market forces but a personal, face-to-face expression of hospitality, reciprocity, and kinship.<sup>4</sup> In

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Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 75-104; and Matthew Dennis, Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press for the New York State Historical Association, 1993), 154-79.

<sup>3</sup>Dennis, Landscape of Peace, 142, 163-64, 171.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Dennis characterizes the Iroquois view of trade even more strongly as one of kinship. According to him, for the Five Nations, peace was impossible except with

fact, what Europeans called trade and what they considered diplomacy were inseparable in the Iroquois mind. The exchange of words of peace and gifts of peace "demonstrated and symbolized the shared climate of good thoughts upon which good relations and powerful alliances depended."<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately, neither the Dutch nor their trading partners became dominant enough to dictate fully the terms and nature of the trade. The reality of their relationship varied from encounter to encounter. Trade between the Dutch and the Five Nations was never a mere economic exchange, but took on broader diplomatic connotations of alliance and friendship.

The one immutable aspect of Dutch-Iroquois interaction was that trade was the glue that held the relationship together, and trade remained an important component of Iroquois-European relations throughout the colonial period.

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those tied to them by kinship and they neatly circumvented any difficulties by making outsiders into kinsmen. "Instead of constructing alliances in which negotiating parties remained fully discrete entities, the Five Nations sought complete mergers with others--the many became one." Dennis, Landscape of Peace, 7-8, 171-72. Dennis's emphasis on the kinship aspects of exchange in the Iroquois view of trade is a more extreme interpretation of the long-recognized importance of reciprocity and the accompanying climate of good thoughts and friendship to Iroquois concepts of peace and alliance. While overdrawn, his interpretation has some merit in helping to explain the differing goals and perspectives of the Iroquois and their European counterparts.

<sup>5</sup>Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 48-49. As one Iroquois orator told New York governor William Cosby in 1735, "the Trade & Peace we take to be one thing." AIA, 195.

As the Five Nations frequently noted, "Trade was the foundation of their Alliance or Connexions" with the English and was "the chief Cement which binds us together."<sup>6</sup> Even after trade ceased to be of primary economic importance to the English government, Sir William Johnson continued to assert that "an equitable, an open and well Regulated Trade with the Indians is and ever will be the most natural and the most efficacious means to improve and extend His Majesty's Indian Interest."<sup>7</sup>

In the early period of Dutch settlement, most meetings between the Dutch and the Five Nations focused on relatively simple trade concerns. By the mid-seventeenth century, however, negotiations moved beyond bartering for furs and trade goods and included other economic issues: liquor, guns and their repair, trade partnerships and disputes, and the problems caused by roving colonial livestock. The Dutch magistrates discovered that sustaining a profitable and stable trade became an increasingly difficult and complex challenge. Successful, long-term trade relationships and the maintenance of peaceful relations between the Dutch and the Five Nations came to depend upon effective linguistic communication.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>AIA, 153.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Elliot Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776 (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 209.

<sup>8</sup>For a much more detailed discussion of the development of linguistic communication between the Dutch and Indians in



Given the centrality of trade in Dutch-Iroquois interaction, it is not surprising that most early interpreters, such as Jan Thomassen (Witbeck) and Jacob Loockermans, were traders. Albany officials, Dutch ministers, and other traders came to rely on them, employing them to translate during meetings with their Indian customers and clients in order to avoid misunderstandings.<sup>9</sup> Many of these early interpreters were from the upper Hudson River region surrounding Fort Orange. Albany was ideally situated for the acquisition of peltry and for negotiations with the Indians of the Mohawk and upper Hudson valleys, and by the mid-seventeenth century Fort Orange-Beverwyck

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New York, see Lois Feister, "Linguistic Communication between the Dutch and Indians in New Netherland, 1609-1664," Ethnohistory 20 (1973): 25-38. See also Trelease, Indian Affairs, 9-12. For more information on Dutch-Indian trade at mid-century, see Thomas E. Burke, "The New Netherland Fur Trade, 1657-1661: Response to Crisis," de Halve Maen 59, no. 3 (1986): 1-4, 21; William A. Starna, "Seventeenth-Century Dutch-Indian Trade: A Perspective from Iroquoia," de Halve Maen 59, no. 3 (1986): 5-8, 21; and Trelease, Indian Affairs, 112-37.

Few examples of actual trade interpretation survive in the documentary record, but the basic nature of the trade jargon and translation skills employed by the traders are described by early seventeenth-century Dutch observers. Not until the 1640s, when conferences began to deal with broader economic concerns and became the official responsibility of the Albany magistrates do specific examples of interpreting of any kind begin to appear regularly in the records. These meetings probably were more formal in character than straightforward, day-to-day trade exchanges.

<sup>9</sup>Feister, "Linguistic Communication," 35-37. Despite the improved linguistic abilities of specific individuals, however, intercultural communication remained quite rudimentary and probably prevented the sharing of much complex cultural knowledge between the Dutch and the Iroquois until the end of the seventeenth century. Dennis, Landscape of Peace, 167.

(Albany) emerged as the center of Indian affairs in the colony. Conferences with the Five Nations were frequent occurrences at Fort Orange during the 1640s, and the town's Dutch magistrates, with the assistance of trader- interpreters, became adept at settling disputes and cultivating a good understanding with their non-European neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

The English inherited their predecessors' legacy of nearly a half-century of Albany leadership in Indian affairs when they took over the Dutch colony in 1664. They capitalized on that legacy of using trade to maintain peaceful relations with the Five Nations and employed many of the same experienced Albany magistrates, interpreters, and traders to administer and implement their own Indian policies until well into the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> The English also benefitted from the network of trade partnerships that existed between the Dutch and the

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<sup>10</sup>For a discussion of the emergence of Albany as a center for the control of Indian trade and affairs, as well as an analysis of Dutch, English, and Iroquois motives and policies, see Norton, Fur Trade, 7, 9-82, 222. New York's English governor, Thomas Dongan, recognized and strengthened Albany's position as the center of Indian affairs in 1686 when he granted the town a charter and a monopoly of the fur trade. For a description of the development of this monopoly, see ibid., 45-49.

<sup>11</sup>Norton, Fur Trade, 43. Though Norton is perhaps overly sympathetic toward Albany, he gives a good description of the fur trade and changes in New York Indian affairs during the late seventeenth-century. One significant development was the emergence of a special board to handle Indian affairs. For a more detailed discussion of the evolution of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, see ibid., 73-75.

Iroquois. A viable, friendly relationship between the Five Nations and their European neighbors required a stable system of alliances, and trade partnerships were one mechanism by which such connections were maintained. They were not a "haphazard affair, but were the result of carefully cultivated alliances between the two communities." These partnerships "involved whole families of traders and Indians, sometimes over two generations or more."<sup>12</sup>

The nature of the trade partnerships is revealed in the baptismal records of the Dutch Reformed Church. Dutch custom usually required that the sponsors of baptismal candidates be relatives. Dutch sponsorship of Indians therefore reveals the close nature of trade and kinship ties between the Dutch community and the Mohawks. Between 1689 and 1763, thirty-three members of the Dutch community sponsored an Iroquois child for baptism. Without exception, all were leading citizens and closely connected with Indian affairs; many were either Indian Commissioners or related to one.<sup>13</sup> Of these Dutch godparents, at least five were interpreters and another was the husband of an interpreter. Several interpreters sponsored more than one candidate. In fact, the sponsors of the first candidate admitted for baptism in 1689, Blind Paulus, were both interpreters.

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<sup>12</sup>Lois Feister, "Indian-Dutch Relations in the Upper Hudson Valley: A Study of Baptism Records in the Dutch Reformed Church, Albany, New York," Man in the Northeast 24 (1982): 90, 102.

<sup>13</sup>Feister, "Indian-Dutch Relations," 98.

Arnout Viele and Hilletie van Olinda translated his public confession, then stood as his godparents.<sup>14</sup>

Until at least the 1710s, the English authorities in New York continued to rely primarily on Dutch and Dutch-Iroquois traders and their families for their interpreters (see Appendix A). One of the most prominent was Dutch trader Arnout Cornelissen Viele. He seems to have successfully combined his business as a fur trader and his official duties as New York's provincial interpreter during the 1670s and 1680s. In addition to interpreting regularly at Anglo-Iroquois councils, he periodically lived and traded among the Onondagas.<sup>15</sup> Viele also traveled far to the westward in an effort to expand New York's trading contacts with the Indians of the Ohio Valley.<sup>16</sup> Other prominent Dutch or Dutch-Iroquois interpreters for the English during

<sup>14</sup>Feister, "Indian-Dutch Relations," 98, and tables 1 and 2, Appendix A. See also Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York, 1683-1809 (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), sect. 1, 49.

<sup>15</sup>Charles A. Hanna, The Wilderness Trail, or The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 1: 4; and entry for Jan. 20, 1691, Jacob Leisler's Letterbook, N. Y. Col. Mss., 36: 142, New York State Archives, Albany, in IIDH, reel 4, 1690 (II).

<sup>16</sup>Viele may have been with Jacob Lookerman's expedition to Michilimackinac and the Ohio in 1685. He definitely signed on as a trader for a similar expedition under Major MacGregory and a Mr. Roseboom in 1687. NYCD 3: 520; and David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1965), 17. He was also in the Ohio Country in 1692-94, again apparently working to expand New York's trade. Ibid., 21, 48-49; Hanna, Wilderness Trail 1: 143.

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were also the offspring of traders or were traders themselves: Jacques van Slyck, Hilletie van Olinda, and Gerrit van Slichtenhorst.

Other Albany officials and lesser interpreters were also drawn from the ranks of Dutch traders during the early years of England's administration of New York. Perhaps the best known were the Schuyler brothers, Peter (Quider) and Johannes. Both were prominent traders and Albany officials, serving in their turns as mayor and on the board of commissioners of Indian affairs.<sup>17</sup> Each proved valuable to the English as an Indian agent and envoy. Others who periodically served as interpreters during the late seventeenth century included Johannes Bleecker<sup>18</sup> and Robert Sanders.<sup>19</sup> Jacob Loockermans also continued to interpret from time to time.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>DCB 2: 602-3; 3: 586-87.

<sup>18</sup>For Bleecker, see NYCD 4: 341, 539; Council with Four Western Nations in Albany, May 16, 1798, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1041, in IIDH, reel 5, May 16, 1698 (II); CHM-E, 276; CCM, 149.

<sup>19</sup>For Sanders's activities, see Robert C. Winthrop Collection, vol. 2, doc. 143, Connecticut State Library, Archives, Hartford, Ct., in IIDH, reel 2, Sept. 19, 1669; MCARS 3: 334; ERA 2: 229-30; NYCD 3: 483, 485, 4: 46; N.Y. Col. Mss., 35: 99, in IIDH, reel 3, Sept. 9, 1687 (II); and Onondaga Answer to the Albany Officials, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO1/63, p. 282, in IIDH, reel 3, Sept. 14, 1687.

<sup>20</sup>For an example of Loockerman's interpreting after 1664, see N.Y. Col. Mss., 25: 124, in IIDH, reel 2, June 2-3, 1676.

For all of these individuals, the Indian trade was an inescapable part of their background, upbringing, and livelihood. It undoubtedly colored their training in Indian affairs and must have shaped their attitudes toward the Five Nations, the Dutch, and the English. Trade also influenced each interpreter's view of his or her role as an intermediary and translator. For most, involvement in the Indian trade was filtered through the European lens of commercialism rather than through the Iroquois lens of reciprocity and kinship. Only Hilletie, and possibly her brother, received their first exposure to the trade as members of the Five Nations. As adults, all except Hilletie pursued the fur trade as their primary occupation and seem to have viewed the Indians as valuable trading partners--keeping one eye on the profit column most of the time. It was in their own and the government's interest to avoid the problems that could arise from linguistic misunderstandings, and as interpreters their role was that of skilled translators. Few seem to have brought any deep knowledge or understanding of Iroquois culture or exchange to their activities in the intercultural arena. Their role as translator seems to have been circumscribed by European commercial considerations and the desire to maintain a lucrative trade.

Despite the shift in the emphasis of Iroquois-European relations by 1700 from largely economic issues to a preoccupation with military security and imperial expansion,

trade continued to be the linch-pin of New York's Indian affairs throughout the remainder of the colonial period. As Thomas Norton noted in his study of the fur trade in colonial New York, commercial relationships, of necessity, preceded diplomatic and military alliances with the Iroquois. "Political friendship with the Indians depended upon good economic relations arising from the fur trade."<sup>21</sup> Both colonial officials and Iroquois leaders recognized this truism and actively pursued good economic relationships as a means of securing and maintaining increasingly vital diplomatic and military alliances.

Just as the Indian trade continued to be an important element in English Indian policy throughout the eighteenth century, so it remained a proving ground for interpreters. Although few of the principal salaried interpreters pursued the fur trade as a primary source of income during their tenure as provincial or post interpreters, many acquired their first knowledge of Iroquois language and culture while trading with the Indians. John Butler, one of Sir William Johnson's most active and trusted interpreters and Indian officers, was the son of Captain Walter Butler, the commander of Fort Hunter. In 1742, Captain Butler brought his family, including 14-year-old John, to the Mohawk Valley. Within three years, John and his brothers were a part of William Johnson's trading network at Oswego. By

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<sup>21</sup>Norton, Fur Trade, 5.

1755, he apparently left full-time trading to work as a salaried interpreter and Indian officer in Johnson's Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>22</sup> William Johnson, George Croghan, and Arent Stevens also began their careers as traders.<sup>23</sup>

Other interpreters such as Jan Baptist van Eps took up the trade when they tired of interpreting or found their salaries inadequate. Van Eps may have been strapped for funds when he quit interpreting in 1712 and turned instead to trading. He petitioned several times for payments due him for making a series of trips to Onondaga. The New York government was particularly dilatory in paying its interpreters during the first decade of the eighteenth century, as witnessed by similar petitions for back pay from Van der Volgen and Van Olinda.<sup>24</sup>

The importance of maintaining "a free and reasonable trade" between the Iroquois and their European neighbors ensured a continuing demand for accurate and trustworthy translators in day-to-day commercial transactions. It was vital, as some Onondagas told Johnson in 1761, to have

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<sup>22</sup>DAB, 3: 361-62; DCB 4: 117; John Christopher Guzzardo, "Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo-American Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1975), 47.

<sup>23</sup>Croghan: DAB 4: 556. Stevens: Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 61, 109.

<sup>24</sup>CHM-E, 267, 310, 323; Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 365 n. 15. In addition to needing money, Van Eps may also have been tired of playing second fiddle to Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen after 1700.



interpreters who could prevent any "misunderstandings which otherwise may happen thro' our not understanding the Language of each other."<sup>25</sup> Like their predecessors, many eighteenth-century traders mastered enough Mohawk or another Iroquois language to trade profitably and without causing serious disagreements.

Some traders relied on their Iroquois consorts or wives to provide the necessary linguistic skills to conduct business. In fact, the commercial arena is one of the few in which female interpreters become visible in the surviving records. Both Molly Brant, William Johnson's Mohawk mistress, and Andrew Montour's second wife Sarah Aitse were well-known traders during the third quarter of the century. Like their male counterparts, however, they only rarely stepped into the diplomatic arena.<sup>26</sup>

Iroquois women had long engaged in the fur trade and were accustomed to bartering with Albany merchants for goods their families needed and desired. Hilletie noted that as a child she had accompanied her Mohawk mother to trade with the Christians.<sup>27</sup> Some traders, like Evert Wendell, Jr.,

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<sup>25</sup>NYCD 4: 980; WJP 3: 444.

<sup>26</sup>I know of no recorded instance of Molly's serving as an interpreter in a public treaty council. Sarah, however, apparently interpreted for William Johnson in March 1757 at Ft. Johnson. WJP 9: 634.

<sup>27</sup>"Journal of Jasper Danckaerts and Peter Sluyter," in Joel Munsell, comp. and ed., Collections on the History of Albany, 4 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1865-1871), 2: 362.

apparently even employed females as agents. A sizable proportion of Wendell's accounts were with women.<sup>28</sup> These women brought to their European husbands and lovers trading experience, insider cultural knowledge, and useful language skills. They also wielded vital influence behind the scenes. Through them, their male partners gained access to extended familial networks and trade partnerships, which were invaluable in obtaining and maintaining a successful trade. Finally, as James Sterling of Detroit quickly discovered, one could "carry on Trade much better & with a great deal less Expense" if one's wife served as his interpreter.<sup>29</sup>

Bilingual traders occasionally were called upon to interpret in diplomatic situations, particularly when a regular sworn interpreter was unavailable. When the post interpreter was "out of the Garrison on public business" in October 1770, Captain John Brown of Niagara found himself at a loss to treat with some Senecas who arrived at the fort. He was forced to employ two Dutch traders who understood the language and the absent interpreter's servant who also spoke it well in order to deal with his Iroquois guests.<sup>30</sup> Traders were also probably among the "common interpreters" who served in place of the public interpreter who was taken

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<sup>28</sup> Armour, "Merchants of Albany," 83-84.

<sup>29</sup> James Sterling Letterbook, 1761-1765, p. 131, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

<sup>30</sup> WJP 7: 943-44.

ill during a conference at Albany in 1746.<sup>31</sup> Still, though they would do in a pinch, few traders were proficient enough to serve as regular, salaried diplomatic interpreters by the mid-eighteenth century. Hendrick Wemple, who had lived for a number of years among the Senecas as a blacksmith and trader, had by the mid-1760s obtained "a tolerable understanding of their language especially for common conversation."<sup>32</sup> But "common conversation" was no longer adequate for more formal diplomatic and treaty negotiations.

Intimate daily contact made the traders not only familiar with Six Nations languages and culture, but familiar to their hosts. The Albany commissioners noted in 1734 that the traders "Converse with the Indians day and night, give them Presents and are at their feasts and Frolicks."<sup>33</sup> Many Indians chose to employ these same individuals as their interpreters during meetings with government officials or requested their appointment as messengers, resident agents, or post interpreters. Perhaps they preferred the devil they knew rather than an unknown

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<sup>31</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada Which Are Dependent on the Province of New York, and Are the Barrier between the English and French in That Part of the World, 2 vols. (London, 1747; repr. New York: Allerton Book Co., 1922), 2: 224.

<sup>32</sup>Samuel Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth-Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), 8.

<sup>33</sup>Commissioners of Indian Affairs to Governor William Cosby, March 4, 1734, Ayer Collection, Mss. #631, p. 1, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

one.<sup>34</sup> Traders' control of desirable European goods-- particularly gunpowder, ammunition, and alcohol--also allowed them (at least potentially) to exercise a great deal of influence over their Iroquois trading partners and clients. Colonial officials, always conscious of the potential mischief that could be caused by such influence, were often wary of traders chosen by the Indians to act as their interpreters.

Three Iroquois found themselves in just that position on a visit to Philadelphia in December 1754. "They had brought with them one John Davison an Indian Trader, who they said spoke the Indian Language extreemly well and could interpret for them." Davison, however, had an unsavory reputation with the Pennsylvania governor, James Hamilton. About ten months earlier, Pennsylvania's Ohio Indian agent (also, incidentally, a trader), George Croghan, had complained that Davison made "a great Deal of Disturbance" at Logstown. Furthermore, according to Croghan, Davison could talk only "a Litle of the Indian Languidge." The agent hoped that the governor would order him "outt of the Wood." When confronted with Davison as interpreter in Philadelphia, Governor Hamilton charted a course that would not offend his Iroquois guests, while curbing the trader's potential for mischief. Appealing to the Indians' own

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<sup>34</sup>In 1709, the Oneidas asked the Indian commissioners to allow trader Stephanus Groesbeck and six others to accompany them to Canada as interpreters. CCM, 231.

reluctance to employ strangers in positions of trust, he asserted that Davison was unknown to him and ordered another trader who spoke the language, Michael Taffe, to attend the meeting to "assist" in the interpretation.<sup>35</sup>

Ideally, impartial and trustworthy interpreters could ensure that the Indians were "civilly used by the Traders in the disposall of their Bevers and Peltry" in addition to accurately translating whatever was said.<sup>36</sup> They would aid English officials in cultivating a good understanding with the Six Nations by heading off disputes, curtailing unfair trade practices, and avoiding misunderstandings. By the mid-eighteenth century, however, it seemed clear that most traders, whose "Ideas do not extend beyond the Circumference of a Beaver-Skin," were ill-suited for this role.<sup>37</sup> While successful traders usually had some acquaintance with an Iroquois language, few were "so much Masters of the Language, as to speak with that Propriety and Distinctness" required in formal council settings.<sup>38</sup> Most traders were able to earn an adequate living with fairly rudimentary

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<sup>35</sup>George Croghan to Governor Hamilton, Feb. 3, 1754, PA, ser. 1, 2: 119; CRP 6: 193. Davison accompanied George Washington from Logstown to Venango as his interpreter in early December 1753, see George Washington's Journal, enclosed in Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 15, Jan 29, 1754.

<sup>36</sup>NYCD 4: 980.

<sup>37</sup>WJP 7: 1040.

<sup>38</sup>Colden, History 2: 224.

linguistic abilities and few took the time from their trading to improve their skills.

The traders' longstanding reputation for avarice and deceit was an even more serious problem than their lack of skill.<sup>39</sup> Philip Livingston noted in 1737 that the traders with whom he dealt used "all the black art they are Master of to Cheat and deceive as if they had no Conscience nor Religion."<sup>40</sup> Fifteen years later, their public image had not improved. Indian traders appeared to Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia "to be a set of abandoned Wretches." New York Governor Hamilton agreed that they were "a very licentious People, and may have been guilty of many bad Practices." In short, traders were "Men of dissolute Lives, without Prudence or abilities," who were not to be trusted.<sup>41</sup>

Employing traders with questionable linguistic abilities and a reputation for untrustworthiness became particularly problematical in delicate diplomatic situations. Under the best circumstances, interpreters exercised considerable influence over the progress of negotiations and were, at least at times, expected to direct

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<sup>39</sup>For an account of questionable Dutch trade practices, see for example, Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1984), 65-66; and Burke, "New Netherland Fur Trade," 2.

<sup>40</sup>Norton, Fur Trade, 64.

<sup>41</sup>CRP 5: 628, 630, 633.

events toward a particular outcome.<sup>42</sup> Watchful government officials and Iroquois leaders were always aware that an interpreter might have hidden motives that could jeopardize their own more public aims during a treaty conference. Interpreters who regularly engaged in trade were automatically suspect, since their personal economic interests might tempt them to compromise their employer's goals.

No steps were taken to eliminate such potential conflicts of interest until after the Seven Years' War. As a result of the war, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Sir William Johnson faced the problem of managing a vastly enlarged region containing a great diversity of Indian groups, and in 1764 he drafted a comprehensive plan to regularize the handling of Indian affairs. Johnson believed that most Indian unrest arose from land encroachments by settlers and poor trade relations. To eliminate the latter problem, he proposed the implementation of a new, strictly controlled trading system that limited trade to designated posts throughout the region under Johnson's jurisdiction.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>One of the best examples of the potential effect of ulterior motives on treaty negotiations and the influence an interpreter could wield to direct events was the Logstown Treaty in 1752. For an account that emphasizes interpreter Andrew Montour's apparently dirty dealings, see Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1988), 37-45.

<sup>43</sup>Robert S. Allen, "The British Indian Department and the Frontier in North America, 1755-1830," Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, no. 15

To ensure compliance with trade regulations and to facilitate communication and eliminate misunderstandings, a commissary, smith, and interpreter were to be assigned to each trading outpost.<sup>44</sup> The commissaries were responsible for enforcing trade regulations, mediating disputes, gathering intelligence, and overseeing the smiths and interpreters assigned to their posts.

Although subordinate to the commissaries, the post interpreters were vital to Johnson's plans to maintain good relations with the Indians. In order to ensure their reliability, he felt it necessary to regulate their conduct, and the office of post interpreter was one of the most restricted within the Indian Department. Each received a yearly salary, plus provisions, lodging, and firewood. In return for the security of an assured income, these men resided entirely at the post to which they were assigned and were expected "to apply themselves diligently to their duty without accepting of any gratification from the Indians, or being concerned in any trade or business on pain of immediate Removal."<sup>45</sup> Interpreting was to be their sole activity, and abstention from trade was designed to prevent possible conflicts of interest and sources of Indian--or British--distrust. Johnson's plan codified a trend that had

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(Ottawa: Public Information Branch, Parks Canada, 1975), 18.

<sup>44</sup>WJP 11: 481.

<sup>45</sup>WJP 12: 51, 196-97.



begun with Lawrence Claessen, Jan Baptist van Eps, and Conrad Weiser and established--at least in theory--an official corps of professional interpreters in the Northern Department of Indian Affairs. Although some interpreters like Louis Perthuis balked at the restrictions on their freedom and threatened to "yield the place of Indian interpreter" unless they could "have the privilege of trade," most seemed to accept the limits set by Johnson.<sup>46</sup>

Johnson's scheme to expand and strengthen the Indian Department was never fully implemented. Although the Board of Trade agreed with his evaluation that "some Settled, uniform, System for the Management of Indian Affairs" was required, the drain placed on England's treasury by the war necessitated strict economies and reduced budgets by the spring of 1765.<sup>47</sup> Although he continued, against orders, to make new appointments in an attempt to implement his program, Johnson lost the battle in 1768 when Lord Hillsborough, president of the Board of Trade, issued another organizational plan, reducing the number of Indian officers in the Indian Department and returning primary responsibility for Indian affairs to the individual colonies.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>WJP 5: 345.

<sup>47</sup>WJP 4: 725.

<sup>48</sup>DHNY 2: 903, 906-7.

It is doubtful that Johnson could have completely severed interpreters' connections to the fur trade, even if he had succeeded in putting his plan into practice. Interpreting and trading were inextricably linked--each depended on the other. The trade relied on interpreters to keep relations with their Iroquois clients amicable, and many interpreters relied on the trade as a training ground if not for their livelihood. Trade was the cement that bound the Iroquois to their European neighbors, and interpreters were the binding agents that made the bond reasonably stable.

### CHAPTER III

#### "TO PRAY AND PREACH IN THEIR LANGUAGE"<sup>1</sup>:

#### INTERPRETERS OF RELIGION

For many years, Dutch preoccupation with the fur trade precluded any great interest in Christianizing the Indians of the Mohawk Valley. Despite the intellectual curiosity of a few Dutch clergymen such as Jonas Michaëlius, who at least superficially studied and wrote about the Indian cultures he encountered, the Dutch remained aloof from religious entanglements with their non-European neighbors until the late seventeenth century. In fact, as Daniel Richter has noted, before the mid-1660s "most Iroquois had little direct experience with either missionaries or Christianity."<sup>2</sup> What exposure they did have came from the French Jesuits, not from the Dutch. As two Onondagas noted in 1665, the Dutch "had neither sense nor tongues; the Iroquois had never heard

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<sup>1</sup>NYCD 4: 364.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 106.

them mention Paradise or Hell; on the contrary, they were the first to incite them to wrong-doing."<sup>3</sup>

The arrival of the Jesuits in Five Nations villages following the peace settlement between the French and the Iroquois in the mid-1660s signalled the beginning of a new era in Iroquois-European relations. No longer would warfare and trade be the only avenues of contact. The Jesuits initiated a more complex, sustained form of coexistence that involved the exchange of ideas and belief systems as well as that of furs, trade goods, arrows, and bullets.<sup>4</sup> This shift affected the Five Nations' relationship not only with the French, but eventually with the Dutch and the English as they found themselves competing for Iroquois souls as well as for furs and allies. By the late 1680s, it had become apparent even to the Albany Dutch that one means of securing furs and Iroquois military support was to win at least their religious loyalty, if not their immortal souls.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the activities of the Jesuits after 1665, the Albany Dutch (and English) made few missionary efforts among

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<sup>3</sup>JR 42: 111, cited in Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 106.

<sup>4</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1984), 128.

<sup>5</sup>Richter has convincingly shown that political and religious loyalties became intertwined during the imperial struggles of the late seventeenth century. Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 105-213.

the Five Nations--and even fewer Iroquois converts--before the arrival of Dutch Reformed minister Godfridius Dellius in Albany in 1683. Although Johannes Megapolensis, Rensselaerswyck's pastor during the 1640s, had dabbled in Mohawk language and culture during his tenure on the upper Hudson, he made little serious effort to convert the subjects of his curiosity to Christianity. Not surprisingly, he met with meager success. His successor Gideon Schaets was even less inspiring--to both his Dutch congregation and potential Iroquois converts.<sup>6</sup> Even Dellius's missionary efforts received little support from the English establishment. None of the ministers sent to Albany by the Dutch church were charged specifically with Christianizing the Indians. Not until 1712 would full-time missionaries be at work among the Iroquois on behalf of the English and Dutch.<sup>7</sup>

Dellius was the first Dutch clergyman to actively cultivate religious conversion among the Five Nations, though his motives were admittedly less than purely spiritual. He used the influence he gained among his Iroquois proselytes and converts first to support the political aims of his anti-Leislerian cohorts in Albany, and then, when that failed, to keep the Mohawks from defecting

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<sup>6</sup>Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 106.

<sup>7</sup>Lois M. Feister, "Indian-Dutch Relations in the Upper Hudson Valley: A Study of Baptism Records in the Dutch Reformed Church, Albany, New York," Man in the Northeast 24 (1982): 91-95.

to the French.<sup>8</sup> Later, in 1698, he was instrumental in securing a fraudulent deed to a large tract of land at Schaghticoke. Delliuss apparently realized what others in the administration were coming to acknowledge: politics, trade, and religious conversion went hand in hand on the New York frontier.

In all his endeavors, whether spiritual or temporal in nature, Delliuss owed his success to his interpreter, Hilletie van Olinda. Communication with the Five Nations, particularly of religious concepts, was a difficult business. Religious translation normally required greater linguistic sophistication than trade interpretation since it involved the accurate communication of abstract concepts as well as of words and ideas tied closely to the physical world. Even traders and interpreters proficient enough in an Iroquois language to carry on trade or simple diplomatic negotiations found their talents inadequate when it came to interpreting Christian doctrine.<sup>9</sup>

French missionaries had similar problems, despite their intensive immersion in Iroquois language and culture. As Récollet missionary to the Huron Gabriel Sagard noted, some Christian words were nearly untranslatable, not only for linguistic reasons but because of cultural differences

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<sup>8</sup>Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 177-78.

<sup>9</sup>J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664, Original Narratives of Early American History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 128.

between European Christians and Iroquois. "The mysteries of our holy religion," could not be explained to the Indians

except by pariphrases; that is to say, for one of our words we had to use several of theirs, for with them there is no knowledge of the meaning of Sanctification, the Kingdom of Heaven, the most Holy Sacrement, nor of leading into temptation. The words Glory, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Angels, Resurrections, Paradise, Hell, Church, Faith, Hope and Charity, and a multitude of others, are not used by them.<sup>10</sup>

Even something as "simple" as the Lord's Prayer or the trinitarian invocation was hard to translate because of the peculiarities of Iroquoian grammar and cultural taboos. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," for example, became "in the name of our Father, and of his Son, and of their holy Ghost." To complicate matters further, "Father" itself had to be omitted if anyone present had a father who had recently died.<sup>11</sup>

Given the subtleties and pitfalls of religious translation, few mastered it. Until a missionary acquired sufficient linguistic skills and sensitivity to preach and catechize without aid, he like Delliuss had to rely on an

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<sup>10</sup>Gabriel Sagard, The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons, ed. George M. Wrong, trans. H. H. Langton (Toronto, 1939; orig. publ. Paris, 1632), 73-74. A Jesuit found himself faced with similar cultural differences in 1640, noting that "even the parables and the more familiar discourses of Jesus Christ are inexplicable to them [the Hurons]. They know not what is salt, leaven, stronghold, pearl, prison, mustard seed, casks of wine, lamp, candlestick, torch; they have no idea of Kingdoms, Kings, and their majesty; not even of shepherds, flocks, and a sheepfold." JR 20: 71-73.

<sup>11</sup>JR 10: 119-21.

interpreter. Most of those who eventually learned to preach in an Iroquois language received their first instruction from a knowledgeable interpreter. Delliuss was "taught to pray and preach in their language" by Hilletie.<sup>12</sup> She was particularly well suited to the task since she was also a Mohawk-Dutch Christian convert, familiar with the cultural difficulties of translating Christian doctrine into words and phrases the Mohawks could understand.

Hillette's first exposure to Christianity was through the French priests who visited her Mohawk village. By the early 1660s she was living with a Dutch woman in Schenectady and was becoming well acquainted with the Protestant doctrine of the Reformed Church through the instruction of her mistress. She received baptism and by 1680 she, her brother, her husband, and her children all professed to be Christians. Upon Delliuss's arrival in the colony, she became his tutor and interpreter, helping him to win other Mohawk proselytes and converts. She interpreted the public confessions of a number of proselytes, stood as sponsor for baptismal candidates, and helped Delliuss translate several religious texts during the 1690s.<sup>13</sup>

Delliuss's interpreter's talents made her a convenient and effective aid in the dominie's Christianizing efforts,

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<sup>12</sup>NYCD 4: 364.

<sup>13</sup>Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of Albany, New York, 1683-1809 (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), 1:49, 50, 52, 73.



but he owed his successes to more than her linguistic abilities.<sup>14</sup> He was able to use her influence among the Mohawks and her strong Christian sympathies to "manage" his Indian proselytes and to further both his political and spiritual ends.<sup>15</sup> Hilletie served him well, and in 1702, she was appointed to assist the new minister Johannes Lydius, Dellius's replacement, "the bettar to enable him to serve them [the Indians] in the work of the Gospell."<sup>16</sup> Lydius, who owed much to the gains Dellius had made before him, also benefitted from the assistance of his predecessor's experienced and able interpreter.

Hilletie's contemporary, Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen performed similar services for Bernardus Freeman, the minister at Schenectady. He taught Freeman the Mohawk language and helped him translate passages from the Bible and the liturgy of the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>17</sup> For his services, Van der Volgen received an annual salary of £25. Missionary salaries, however, proved no easier to collect from the government than other monies for interpreting

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<sup>14</sup>Much of this material on Hilletie's religious background is taken from Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, 106-7, 178.

<sup>15</sup>NYCD 4: 364.

<sup>16</sup>N.Y. Col. Mss., 4: 983, cited in Jonathan Pearson, A History of Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley, ed. J. W. MacMurray (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, Printers, 1883), 342; NYCD 4: 983.

<sup>17</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 174, 342.

during the early years of the eighteenth century. In 1704, Van der Volgen had to petition Lord Cornbury for £37.10.0 due him as interpreter between the Five Nations and the government and between Bernardus Freeman and the Five Nations.<sup>18</sup> Whether or not he received the money, six months later he was ordered to perform similar duties for Johannes Lydius, Dellius's successor, and for the English missionary at Albany, Thoroughgood Moore, replacing Hilletie in that position.<sup>19</sup>

Few Dutch or English missionaries ever achieved complete independence from their interpreters. Like Dellius, Freeman, and Lydius, most continued to rely on them throughout their careers. Anglican missionary John Ogilvie, for example, had the assistance of several interpreters on his visits to the Five Nations during the 1750s. He instructed the Indians and preached to them "by the Assistance" of an interpreter on numerous occasions.<sup>20</sup> Samson Occum, one of Eleazar Wheelock's Mohegan graduates,

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<sup>18</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 342; N.Y. Col. Mss., 49: 47, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 7, May 4, 1704.

<sup>19</sup>CHM-E, 333.

<sup>20</sup>John Ogilvie, "A Journal of Time Spent at the Mohawk with some Occurrences," Coll. #12878, typescript, pp. 1-2, 8-9, 24, New York State Library, Albany, New York. Ogilvie rarely names his interpreters, but it appears that in August 1754, his "very Good Interpreter," may have been Jacobus Clement, since Ogilvie reported that he returned to Albany in company with Clement about a week later. Clement's skill would have been above the average since he served as the provincial interpreter following Van der Volgen's death in 1742.

also required the help of an interpreter when preaching to the Five Nations, who spoke different languages. In 1764 another missionary, Samuel Kirkland, served as Occum's interpreter for a Sunday morning discourse to the Indians.<sup>21</sup>

Missionaries also relied on their interpreters for less tangible aid. Since many of the men and women the clergymen employed were well known to the Five Nations as diplomatic or trade interpreters, they often wielded considerable influence among potential converts. In 1770, Harry Munro, an Anglican minister working among the Mohawks, wrote to Daniel Burton that he was "bound in gratitude to mention the infinite Obligations" he was under to Daniel Claus, protégé of William Johnson. According to Munro, Claus's "Influence among the Indians" was "great" because he was "Well acquainted with their Language & Customs; a true friend to Religion, & to the Church of England." The minister was particularly indebted to him for "the Pains he takes in translating my discourses to the Indians, which he does to their great Satisfaction." He also set a good example by attending divine services. Like Delliuss before him, Munro owed all his "satisfaction among the Indians" to his interpreter.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Samuel Kirkland's Journal, entry for July 31, 1774, Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 31, June-Dec. 1774.

<sup>22</sup>WJP 7: 962. Claus had been involved in religious translation and had aided the missionary efforts of the Anglican Church for quite some time. Almost a decade earlier, he corresponded with Johnson about proofreading and

At times, an interpreter's influence was crucial in avoiding ruptures in relations and keeping the lines of communication open between missionaries and their charges. During the fall of 1742, Conrad Weiser found himself in a delicate and potentially disastrous situation as he accompanied Count Nikolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf on a tour of several Indian villages in the Wyoming Valley. The trip was supposed to prepare the way for opening Moravian missions among the Indians there. Count Zinzendorf, however, seemed to succeed only in alienating potential converts. Among the Shawnees, he "made a complete mess of things," according to Weiser, by pitching his tent away from the Indians' huts, holding himself aloof, and having the bad manners to prospect for his hosts' source of silver. His hosts were convinced that Zinzendorf "had not come among them for love." Determined to save Zinzendorf and to salvage his own "good Name" among the Indians, Weiser worked tirelessly to "patch up a good Understanding with them again." He promised to give Zinzendorf "a talking to and punish him for his thoughtlessness." Weiser prevailed, but the trouble he had "in excusing the Count, to the Indians, (so that the Missionaries, who were to be sent out from Bethlehem, should

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correcting some Indian prayer books that were to be printed. He was also interested in several manuscript catechisms circulating among the Mohawks near Montreal that he felt "would be of vast service towards promoting Religion among the Indians" if they could be printed in primers for them. Daniel Claus to William Johnson, March 18, 1761, Claus Papers, MG19, F1, vol. 1, 34-38, Mss. Div., Pub. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 23, March 18, 1761.

not find the Lord's work hindered by all this commotion)" was considerable.<sup>23</sup>

Interpreters such as Weiser also mediated the exchange of religious ideas in informal settings. During the same journey with Zinzendorf, Weiser, the count, and Andrew Montour had an interview with Shawnee chief Kachhawatchiky. The conversation required a two-way translation, by Weiser into Mohawk and then by Montour into Shawnee and back again. Weiser noted that, though private and informal, "it was a serious conversation, and might have been sufficient to give the Count a full understanding of the Indian attitude to the Christian Religion."<sup>24</sup> About twenty-five years later, interpreter Joseph Brant provided at his house in Canajoharie the setting for a delicate discussion between Samuel Kirkland and three local headmen on several points of divinity that the missionary "thought not prudent to speak

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<sup>23</sup>Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 141-43. In remonstrating with the count at one point, Weiser noted that the Indians at Shamokin expected Zinzendorf to tell them of the purpose of his visit, as he had promised, upon his return. He told the count, "If you do not keep your promise, what will the Indians say? Will they not take you for a Liar and Suspect the whole Business, and be offended with you, and so put Obstacles in the way of the Missionaries." Weiser, exasperated with the count's continued insensitivity, threatened to wash his hands of him, noting that "up to now I have kept a good Name among them, and will not become a Liar now, but will rather go home alone by way of Shamockin and keep my word." Weiser also promised to report the count's behavior to Brother Spangenberg, "so he may know who has spoiled the Game" (p. 143). Weiser ultimately prevailed and the count went home by way of Shamokin.

<sup>24</sup>Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 144.

in Publick."<sup>25</sup> Recounting Brant's services to Christianity among "his poor Brethren" the Mohawks, Eleazar Wheelock noted that Brant's house was "an Asylum for the Missionaries in that Wilderness."<sup>26</sup> In 1768, Ralph Wheelock also availed himself of that asylum. Brant gave Wheelock lodging, introduced him to a chief of Onondaga, and interpreted during the meeting that followed.<sup>27</sup> The influence and connections that trusted, well-known interpreters brought to religious encounters could be crucial to the success of a missionary's labors.

Participation in mourning and condolence rituals and burials also provided opportunities for both formal and informal interpretation of religious customs and beliefs. Weiser took advantage of just such a situation in 1750 when, enroute from Oneida to Onondaga, he and his escort learned of the death of the Onondaga chief and speaker Canasatego. Along the trail, his old Indian companion sang a lamentation song about the "evil spirits" that now held sway. Later, as they rested, Weiser treated his companion with some rum and

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<sup>25</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, In Lebanon in Connecticut, New England. Founded and Carried on by That Faithful Servant of God, The Rev. Mr. Eleazar Wheelock, Rochester Reprints, no. 3 (orig. publ. London: J. and W. Oliver, 1766), 35.

<sup>26</sup>Wheelock, A Brief Narrative (1766), 32.

<sup>27</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, In Lebanon in Connecticut, New England, Founded and Carried on by The Revd. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock, Rochester Reprints, no. 5 (orig. publ. London: J. and W. Oliver, 1769), 45.

attempted to console him by reminding him that "nothing was certain in the world, and that the great Being that had created the World knew how to govern it, that . . . he would order every thing well, to which he [the Indian] said Amen in his way."<sup>28</sup> The interpreter who provided a coffin to bury an Indian woman killed by lightning at Schenectady in 1755 was engaged in a less explicit, though perhaps more tangible, exchange of religious culture.<sup>29</sup> In fact, though superficial, his actions had more immediate results in affecting Indian burial customs.

Religious translation frequently proceeded paragraph by paragraph and, at least on occasion, wampum was used to punctuate or validate the message of the speaker.<sup>30</sup> At Oneida in 1761, the chief speaker delivered a speech to Occum on a "religious Belt of Wampum." When he had finished, the belt was given to Occum's interpreter, who interpreted the speech to him.<sup>31</sup> Translation apparently proceeded line by line or section by section, depending on

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<sup>28</sup>CRP 5: 475.

<sup>29</sup>WJP 2: 583. Missionaries performed similar services. Bishop Cammerhof noted that when Shikellamy's four-year-old daughter died at Shamokin in 1748, the Moravians provided the wood and nails for the coffin. The resulting burial represented a melding of European and Indian custom, for the little girl was buried in her Christian coffin with a selection of native grave goods. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 272-73.

<sup>30</sup>This format is the same as that usually followed in diplomatic translation, see Chapter V, below.

<sup>31</sup>Wheelock, Brief Narrative (1766), 27.

the circumstances and the content of the speech or sermon. At divine services at Oquaga on June 4, 1769, Good Peter, the Indian clerk, repeated the Psalms in Oneida and the people joined in the melody. Later, James Dean translated the sermon the Reverend Richard Mosley delivered in English, repeating it "in Indian," sentence by sentence.<sup>32</sup>

Given the linguistic sophistication and cultural sensitivity required of religious interpreters and the superficial similarities in the mechanics of religious and diplomatic translation, it is not surprising that many interpreters who rose to prominence in the diplomatic field also served in the religious arena. Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, Hilletie van Olinda, Jacobus Clement, and Conrad Weiser all interpreted for missionaries or local ministers on occasion. Lawrence and Hilletie also translated written texts for use among the Iroquois. This intermingling of religious and diplomatic interpreting was a natural consequence of the relatively small number of skilled interpreters and the interrelatedness of politics and religion in eighteenth-century New York. As individuals knowledgeable about both cultures and with the linguistic abilities to facilitate communication between them, experienced interpreters found their talents in demand in all arenas of contact.

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<sup>32</sup>Richard Smith, A Tour of Four Great Rivers, the Hudson, Mohawk, Susquehanna and Delaware in 1769, ed. Francis W. Halsey (New York, 1906), 67.



Although some performed double duty as religious and diplomatic interpreters, others confined their activities primarily to the religious sphere. The most visible group of religious interpreters were those missionaries who achieved sufficient knowledge of an Iroquois language not only to preach and catechize on their own, but, like Samuel Kirkland, to serve when needed as interpreters for their less skilled colleagues.<sup>33</sup> Kirkland even served occasionally in the diplomatic arena, though he lacked the competence "to infuse the fire of Indian Oratory into his expressions" during treaty councils.<sup>34</sup>

Moravian David Zeisberger was another eighteenth-century missionary who spoke "the Indian Language" well.<sup>35</sup> During the 1740s, he traveled extensively among the Indians of Pennsylvania, sometimes in the company of Conrad Weiser. In 1745, he journeyed to Onondaga with Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg and the provincial interpreter. This exposure to Iroquois language and culture under Weiser's guidance made a deep impression and in the ensuing five years Zeisberger began to study Mohawk. By 1750, when he

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<sup>33</sup>Journal of Samuel Kirkland, entry for July 31, 1774, Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 31, June-Dec. 1774.

<sup>34</sup>Dewitt Clinton, Discourse [on the Six Nations] Delivered Before the New-York Historical Society, 1811 (New York, 1812), 36, cited in William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," HCID, 26. One cannot help but wonder whether his Oneida sermons also lacked "fire."

<sup>35</sup>CRP 7: 244.

accompanied yet another bishop, John Christian Frederick Cammerhof, on a journey to the Six Nations, he had acquired enough Mohawk to act as the translator of his companion's speeches.<sup>36</sup> To broaden his knowledge of Iroquois languages and culture, he spent the winter of 1752-1753 with the Onondagas, and hoped to visit the Cayugas as well.<sup>37</sup> Zeisberger was an unusually talented linguist among his contemporaries and his abilities were respected in both religious and diplomatic circles. By at least the early 1760s he had begun interpreting at treaty councils in Pennsylvania.<sup>38</sup>

Though less skilled than either Kirkland or Zeisberger, the Reverend Henry Barclay, a missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, also applied himself to learning the Mohawk language. He achieved a level of proficiency sufficient to teach a number of Indian children to read. In addition, with the help of his two

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<sup>36</sup>William M. Beauchamp, comp. and ed., Life of Conrad Weiser as it Related to his Services as Official Interpreter Between New York and Pennsylvania and as Envoy Between Philadelphia and the Onondaga Councils (Syracuse, N.Y.: Onondaga Historical Association, 1925), 48; William M. Beauchamp, ed., Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-1766, Onondaga Historical Association (Syracuse, N.Y.: The Dehler Press, 1916), 48.

<sup>37</sup>Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 129-30, 137, 170.

<sup>38</sup>For example, see his activities at Easton in 1761, Minutes at the Easton Conference, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., Amherst Papers, W034/33, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 1761; and at Philadelphia in March and April 1762, CRP 8: 698, 700. There is evidence that during his career he translated Delaware, Mohawk, Onondaga, and Cayuga.

colleagues, William Andrews and John Ogilvie, he translated the liturgy into Mohawk.<sup>39</sup>

Probably the most skilled missionary interpreter was James Dean, the son of a religious New England family. As a youth he lived with the Oneidas and Tuscaroras at Oquaga on the Susquehanna, learned their languages, and became "naturalized" to their customs.<sup>40</sup> He learned to read and write from the missionaries who periodically visited the village, and for about three years he served as interpreter to Presbyterian Ebenezer Moseby.<sup>41</sup> Shortly thereafter, in about 1770, he entered Dartmouth College and embarked on a missionary career of his own.<sup>42</sup> After his graduation, he accompanied the Reverend Sylvanus Ripley on a mission to the Indians at Penobscot. His intimate knowledge of Iroquois culture and his extraordinary linguistic and oratorical abilities gave him great influence among the Indians, and in 1775, he was sent as a missionary to the "Canadian Indians"

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<sup>39</sup>ERNY 4: 2677; Margherita A. Hamm, Famous Families of New York, 2 vols. (New York, 1902?), 1: 16.

<sup>40</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon, in Connecticut; From the Year 1768, to the Incorporation of it with Dartmouth-College, and Removal and Settlement of it in Hanover, In the Province of New-Hampshire, 1771, Rochester Reprints, no. 6 (orig. publ. 1771), 31.

<sup>41</sup>Smith, Tour of Four Rivers, 64-65. He received £50 in 1769 for his services.

<sup>42</sup>Wheelock, Continuation (1771), 31.

in an effort to keep them firm in their friendship to the colonies.<sup>43</sup>

Like that of trade, the religious sphere provided employment for a number of interpreters who otherwise would have found few public outlets for their talents. Indians, for example, were only rarely mentioned as interpreters in the records of formal treaty conferences, though logic insists that some were present as quiet checks on the accuracy of the translations offered by their European counterparts. Indian interpreters appear much more frequently in the annals of Indian missions, however. The Christians' message may have been more palatable to potential converts when delivered by another Indian. In addition, the missionaries' own purposes were served by parading these men and women--often converts themselves--through their journals and diaries as visible evidence of their successes.

An informal tradition of employing Indian converts as convenient and available interpreters goes back at least as far as Hiletie and Dominie Dellijs in the late seventeenth century. In the 1730s and 1740s other missionaries continued to follow his example and employed Indian converts as their language tutors and translators. Johannes and

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<sup>43</sup>William Tracy, Notices of Men and Events Connected with the Early History of Oneida County (Utica, N.Y.: R. Northway, Jr., Printer, 1838), 12; Eleazar Wheelock to Governor Trumbull, Dartmouth College, March 16, 1775, American Archives, series 4, 2: 152-53, in IIDH, reel 31, March 16, 1775 (II).

Isaac, both Indians, served Moravian missionary Hendrick Joachim Senseman among the Indians of Dutchess County for two years in the early 1740s.<sup>44</sup> Thirty years later at Oquaga, Indian clerk and convert Good Peter acted "as an interpreter for Mr. Crosby [the missionary there] till he should acquire the language more perfectly."<sup>45</sup>

Circumstances could not always be relied on to provide needed interpreters from among the ranks of Christian Indian converts. Eleazar Wheelock tried to remedy the deficiency by training Indian youths to serve as interpreters for the missionaries being educated at his charity school in Lebanon, Connecticut. Many of Wheelock's Indian students interpreted for missionaries in the field as part of their preparation for becoming missionaries or Indian schoolmasters.<sup>46</sup> One of Wheelock's protégés, Joseph Johnson, a Montauk or Farmington Indian, began his field work not as an interpreter, but as a school usher or assistant to David Fowler at Oneida in 1766. Two years later his command of Oneida was still not sufficient for him to serve as interpreter for Ralph Wheelock on a journey to Oneida and Onondaga, but by 1775 he had mastered enough Oneida to become their schoolmaster. By then he also was

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<sup>44</sup>ERNY 4: 2852-53.

<sup>45</sup>Samuel Kirkland's Journal, 1772-1773, Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 30, Oct. 1772-Nov. 1773.

<sup>46</sup>Wheelock, Brief Narrative (1766), 32; Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 71.

engaged in "preaching the Gospel to several different Nations of New England Indians and to the Oneidas, and in endeavoring to persuade the Indians to a civilized life and to embrace the Christian religion."<sup>47</sup>

Even highly skilled missionaries such as Samuel Kirkland, who could preach in Oneida without the aid of an interpreter, found Wheelock's students and other Indian converts useful. In 1766, Moses, a Mohawk, replaced Joseph Johnson as usher to David Fowler at Oneida. Three years later he was with Samuel Kirkland, engaged in a mutually beneficial exchange. Kirkland kept Moses nearby "to perfect him [Moses]" in the Oneida language. In return, Moses was able to assist Kirkland "as Interpreter when there is Occasion" for a Mohawk translator.<sup>48</sup>

Religious interpretation also offered one of the few public venues for female interpreters during the eighteenth century. Only two women ever became prominent diplomatic interpreters in New York, Hilletie van Olinda and Madame Montour, and both of them were gone by the late 1720s.<sup>49</sup> After their departure, no woman again achieved prominence as

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<sup>47</sup>Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 4, 46; American Archives, ser. 4, 2: 1047, in IIDH, reel 31, June 21, 1775 (II).

<sup>48</sup>Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 4, 17.

<sup>49</sup>Hilletie's interpreting ceased about 1707, and she died shortly thereafter. Madame Montour began interpreting about the time Hilletie stopped and continued to interpret at conferences until at least the early 1720s. She left New York for Pennsylvania in the late 1720s.

a regular, salaried interpreter for the province. Women remained active in other areas such as trade, but they only occasionally became visible in the records and rarely stepped into the diplomatic arena. Throughout the century, however, women interpreted publicly in religious situations. Some early female interpreters such as Hiletie performed in both spheres, translating during treaty conferences as well as for local ministers and missionaries. Later, when few were engaged to interpret in front of the council fire, some like Rebecca Ashley found employment before the altars and communion tables in Indian chapels and meeting houses.

Rebecca Kellogg Ashley acquired her knowledge of Iroquois language and culture during the twenty-five years she spent with a group of Canadian Iroquois as captive and adoptee. After her return to Massachusetts in 1728, she met and married Captain Benjamin Ashley. In 1752, they moved to the Indian Mission School at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where her husband had been hired as a teacher. At the school they met missionaries Gideon Hawley and Timothy Woodridge, with whom they journeyed to Oquaga the following year. Rebecca served as the mission's interpreter until her death in 1757. Hawley acknowledged her superior linguistic skill and knowledge when he agreed to hire both Rebecca and her husband, even though Ashley was "a fanatic, and on that account unfit to be employed in the mission." Ashley had to be employed, however, if the mission was to have the services of his wife as interpreter. She was "a very good

sort of woman, and an extraordinary interpreter in the Iroquois language"--and apparently worth the extra irritation and expense.<sup>50</sup>

Missionary efforts never assumed the importance among the Dutch and English of New York that they achieved in Canada under the auspices of the Jesuits. In the competition for control of furs and lands in the Great Lakes region, however, the competition for souls played a significant role. Iroquois souls often translated into warriors when the European powers took to the battlefield. To secure those souls, English and Dutch missionaries learned to pray and preach in the language of their non-European converts, often under the expert tutelage of an interpreter. The religious goals of the English government were inextricably entwined with its imperial and economic aims, and as a result religious interpreters often also found themselves involved in politics and trade. Many diplomatic interpreters acquired their first knowledge of the more subtle and sophisticated aspects of Iroquois

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<sup>50</sup>Rebecca's linguistic skill and knowledge were attested to by Rev. Gideon Hawley in a letter relating his experiences while on a mission in 1753. "It was also agreed that Mrs. Ashley should be our interpreter; and that Benjamin Ashley, her husband, should be employed, and have a salary. This could not be avoided, if we had his wife." Her services were so crucial to the mission, in fact, that her death in 1757 apparently precipitated its breakup. ERNY 5: 3401. See also Timothy Hopkins, The Kelloggs in the Old World and the New, 3 vols. (San Francisco, Ca., 1903), 58, 62, 63.



language and culture as religious interpreters. Others, denied access to the diplomatic arena, found through religious interpretation a stage on which to employ their talents and a means by which they, too, could play a role in the unfolding drama of cultural contact on the New York frontier.

#### CHAPTER IV

### "TO SUPPORT THE INTERESTS & INFLUENCE OF THIS GOVERNMENT"<sup>1</sup>: INTERPRETERS AS MESSENGERS, AGENTS, AND INDIAN OFFICERS

The maintenance of a stable relationship between the English and their Iroquois allies required more than periodic meetings across the trade counter, communion table, or even the council fire. Both English colonial officials and Iroquois leaders had to be able to communicate between more formal meetings. Messengers constantly traveled back and forth between the governmental centers of Albany and New York and the villages of the Six Nations, carrying news of the latest occurrences, warnings of approaching calamities, invitations to upcoming councils, and intelligence regarding the activities of mutual friends and foes. The success and reliability of this communications network depended largely on the abilities and trustworthiness of the messengers and agents who gathered the information and delivered the messages. Most of them were interpreters.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AIA, 80.

<sup>2</sup>Examples of interpreters serving as both couriers and messengers throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are too numerous to count, but see, for example, NYCD 3: 453; N.Y. Council Minutes, April 5, 1712, 11: 69-70, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 7, April 5, 1712; Min. of Ind. Commrs., April 14, 1729, Ind. Recs., RG, vol. 1819, p. 282, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada,

Interpreters' specialized skills and intimate knowledge of Indian affairs made them convenient and effective government messengers and agents. Since messages sent to the Iroquois had to be delivered (or at least translated into) an intelligible Iroquois language, the most basic prerequisite for service as a messenger was the ability to speak "good Indian."<sup>3</sup> Not surprisingly, those most frequently available for such service were the usual interpreters employed by the province, since they were already on the government's payroll and under its command.<sup>4</sup> The interpreters' familiarity with the individuals involved also allowed them to exercise considerable influence in persuading the Indians to take a desired action and to gauge more accurately their reactions.<sup>5</sup>

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Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, April 14, 1729; CRP 5: 73; and WJP 10: 395.

<sup>3</sup>Gov. Andros to Mr. Blathwayt, New York, Mar. 25, 1679, NYCD 3: 277. Andros noted that his message to the neighboring Indians regarding Indian depredations in Virginia and Maryland was undertaken by "two [Chris]tians speaking good Indian one being the usuall interpreter."

<sup>4</sup>In 1687, two interpreters, Arnout Cornelissen Viele and Jacques Cornelisse van Slyck, were sent to the western Iroquois with instructions that Arnout was to read the proposals and then in turn "to translate [it] to the Indians of the several nations." LIR, 140.

<sup>5</sup>In 1712, Gov. William Hunter of New York dispatched interpreter Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen to the Five Nations to persuade them to interpose their "authority" with the Tuscaroras and bring them to agreement with North Carolina. Gov. Hunter to Col. Edward Hyde, July 1712, N.Y. Col. Mss., 58: 2, in IIDH, reel 7, July 1712.

For many of the same reasons, interpreters also acted as messengers for the Iroquois. They possessed the requisite language skills, cultural knowledge, and access to government officials. Interpreters frequently were readily available to be employed as messengers since they spent a great deal of time with the Iroquois delivering messages and gathering information. Furthermore, many interpreters were also adopted Iroquois, which undoubtedly gave them additional legitimacy as representatives and envoys for the nations whose messages they carried.<sup>6</sup> In May 1750, for example, Andrew Montour was present during a council at George Croghan's in Pennsboro. Acting as speaker for the Six Nations Indians (primarily Senecas) who lived in the Ohio country, Montour indicated that he had been "commissioned" to relate to the governor of Pennsylvania a message that the Ohio Indians had received from the Miamis the previous winter at Allegheny. He was to give the governor the String of Wampum sent with message. The Indians hoped Shirley would "favour them with his answer . . . by Mr. Croghan, who is going this Summer to Allegheny."<sup>7</sup> Montour, a skilled and trusted interpreter as

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<sup>6</sup>Of the sixty-seven European interpreters who served the British among the Iroquois, at least ten were adopted by the Six Nations. Since another seven were métis, at least a quarter of the interpreters had more than professional ties to the Indians. Of the twenty-five most prominent interpreters employed among the Iroquois, five were métis, at least five were adopted, and one was an Indian (a total of 44%). See appendices A and B.

<sup>7</sup>CRP 5: 433. At the same meeting he also delivered

well as a councillor of the Six Nations at Ohio, was an ideal choice for the Indians to employ as messenger.<sup>8</sup> The fact that he was probably present at Allegheny when the original message was delivered and could report on it first hand was an added bonus.

Montour's contemporary and sometime mentor, Conrad Weiser, was also frequently employed as messenger for the Six Nations and others. In March 1755, he reported to Governor Robert Hunter Morris of Pennsylvania that the Shawnees had employed him to send a string of wampum with word that they planned to found a new town on the west branch of the Susquehanna at Otstuagy.<sup>9</sup> Five months later, in somewhat different circumstances, Weiser and Montour acted in concert as messengers during a council in Philadelphia to preserve the secrecy the sender desired. Scarouady, Oneida chief and "Half King" to the Ohio Six

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another message entrusted to him by the Wyandots of Ohio. For other examples of interpreters delivering messages for the Indians, see NYCD 4: 123; PA, ser. 1, 1: 223-24; WJP 10: 454; and Charles A. Hanna, The Wilderness Trail, or The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1911), 2: 2.

<sup>8</sup>The Council of the Six Nations at Ohio served a function similar to that of the League Council at Onondaga. They were peace chiefs who handled both the internal business of the Six Nations who lived in the Ohio Country and their diplomatic affairs. Their position was honorary, based on merit and ability. The League Council never recognized the authority of the Ohio Six Nations Council to act independently of the League at Onondaga, nor were the Ohio Councillors ever part of the greater Iroquois League Council.

<sup>9</sup>PA, ser. 1, 2: 259-60.

Nations, desired to say something of importance privately to the government about Braddock's recent defeat, "but fearing least some of the Indians should come along with him in case they saw him going to the Governors House, he had Delivered it to Mr. Weiser & Mr. Montour in a private Council held at Mr. Weiser's Lodgings." Weiser and Montour delivered the speech to the governor and then proceeded to advise him on an appropriate answer.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes colonial interpreters were employed to deliver messages between Indian groups. In March 1699 at Onondaga, the four western Iroquois nations reported on their recent contacts with the governor of Canada and spoke to interpreter Jan Baptist van Eps "with seven hands of Wampum and told him to tell the Maquasse [Mohawks] to appear at Onnondages in 25. days time att a generall meeting of all the Sachims of the Five Nations." They also sent a belt by Van Eps to the governor of New York requesting the presence of Colonel Peter Schuyler and Major Dirk Wessells at the upcoming council.<sup>11</sup> The Five Nations, then disunited in their approach to the French, may have found the provincial interpreter Van Eps a convenient go-between since he could deliver their message to the Mohawks while enroute to Albany

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<sup>10</sup>Report of the Philadelphia Conference, Mss. Class 970.4, No. M415 (Pt. 1?), entry for Aug. 22, 1755, pp. 15-16, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 17, Aug. 1755.

<sup>11</sup>NYCD 4: 498.

to oversee their request to the colonial government, thus killing two birds with one stone.<sup>12</sup>

Though most of the interpreters who appear in the records were of European descent, not all messengers were colonists. Iroquois messengers constantly roved between the Iroquois villages and Albany (and later Fort Johnson) carrying information and invitations. In November 1678, for example, Governor Edmund Andros sent a message to the Mohawks. Upon receiving it, they "sent a messenger of their owne to their neighbours" to forward the contents to the rest of the League.<sup>13</sup> Often these exchanges were strictly Indian business and did not require the involvement of an interpreter for the colonists. Iroquois messages directed to the British, however, usually required translation.<sup>14</sup>

Indian messengers were also employed by the English on occasion. This practice seems to have been particularly prevalent during the late 1690s, perhaps because of increased activity due to hostilities with the French and a shortage of highly skilled interpreters to serve in that

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<sup>12</sup>Similarly, James Sherlock, who as smith and occasional interpreter for the Senecas and Onondagas was living with the latter in 1761, acted as a messenger between the Onondagas and the Delawares at Chugnot above Diahoga. He was sent to demand the return of any English prisoners among them. Minutes of the Easton Conference, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., Amherst Papers, WO34/33, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 1761.

<sup>13</sup>NYCD 3: 277.

<sup>14</sup>See, for example, MCARS 3: 449-50.

capacity.<sup>15</sup> In December 1698, noting an opportunity for communication with their Iroquois brethren while several Iroquois were present in town, the mayor and aldermen of Albany decided to send a message by them to the Five Nations. After the contents were agreed upon, "Canondaghkira a Maquase Sachim was sent for, and two times seaven hands of Wampum given him, who promised to send the message foward [sic] to all the nations, and the messenger that was to carry the same was promised a match coat."<sup>16</sup>

Even when the English colonial government employed Indian messengers, interpreters were frequently involved because the multilingual nature of most messages required that interpreters brief the Indians on the contents of the messages they were to deliver. On April 26, 1756, the governor of Pennsylvania met with two Iroquois and one Delaware who were to carry a message to Wyoming for him. Provincial interpreter Conrad Weiser was present and "made them understand" it, after which the messengers were satisfied that the messages were good and agreed to "undertake the journey and deliver them faithfully."<sup>17</sup> In addition, trust only went so far. When circumstances made

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<sup>15</sup>In May and June 1697, Gov. Fletcher apparently employed Iroquois messengers on at least two occasions. NYCD 4: 280-81. The following year, the Commissioners of Indian Affairs in Albany also used Indians to carry messages on several occasions. Ibid. 4: 342, 491.

<sup>16</sup>NYCD 4: 491.

<sup>17</sup>Pennsylvania Register, ed. Samuel Hazard, 16 vols. (Philadelphia, 1828-1835), 8: 293-94.



the use of Indian emissaries more practical or desirable, they sometimes were accompanied by Europeans who understood the language to oversee the delivery of the message and to report back the results.<sup>18</sup>

The choice of appropriate Indian messengers often fell to the interpreters. Not surprisingly, the trustworthiness of messengers--whether Indian or not--was a major concern of colonial officials, particularly during times when tensions ran high between the French and the English. The interpreters' knowledge of the reliability of individual Indians enabled them to procure "trusty and faithfull" envoys when required.<sup>19</sup> The delicate nature of the business between the English and the Iroquois required "the Choice of so good Men to goe between us."<sup>20</sup> The Albany commissioners were so pleased with Van der Volgen's judgment in choosing messengers that they wanted him to go to the Mohawks in July 1729 to pick "a Couple of as Trusty Indians as you can" to be sent on a mission to Canada. They noted that if they

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<sup>18</sup>NYCD 4: 177.

<sup>19</sup>NYCD 4: 176. In other cases, interpreters chose to employ Indians because they were unable to complete a mission themselves. In November 1678, several interpreters and messengers were sent to deliver some news to the Five Nations, but could get no farther than the Mohawks. The message was sent on by several Indians chosen by the colonial delegation. Ibid. 3: 277.

<sup>20</sup>Council at Philadelphia, 1732, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Du Simitiere Collection, in IIDH, reel 10, Aug. 23-Sept. 2, 1732.

could "have Two as good Indians as the last It will Answer well."<sup>21</sup>

Not all interpreters chose as well as Van der Volgen, and the results could be disastrous. At Easton in 1761, the Iroquois informed "Brother Onas," the governor of Pennsylvania, that he had "frequently sent us messages by straggling Indians, Delawares & others, upon whom there is no dependance. They sometimes lose the Belts and Messages, and sometimes drink them away; but if they do happen to reach us, they are nothing but nonsense." They hoped that in future he would be sure to send all of his messages "by trusty Persons . . . , that we may be able to understand them rightly." They employed Samuel Weiser for that Purpose and suggested that the governor do the same.<sup>22</sup>

Colonial messengers were often no more trustworthy or reliable than their Indian counterparts. Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania wrote Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia regarding the problems of "the officiousness or self Interest of Traders thrusting themselves into the Carriage

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<sup>21</sup>Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 290v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, July 21, 1729. Similarly, in 1731, he was sent to invite the Senecas down to a meeting with the governor in Albany. While there he was to employ two of the "most Trusty proper Indians that you can procure" to go to Niagara and tell the Far Indians that the rumors of smallpox in New York were false and designed by the French to close the road to Oswego. Min. of Ind. Commrs., vol. 1819, 333v-334, in IIDH, reel 10, April 3, 1731.

<sup>22</sup>Minutes of a Conference at Easton, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., Amherst Papers, WO34/33, in IIDH, reel 24, August 1761.

of Messages." He lamented that, particularly among the Ohio Indians, "the old way of doing Business by Deputations of Indians waiting on the several Governments in Places assigned for the Purpose is neglected and disregarded by the Indians." As a result, no intelligence could be depended upon regarding the behavior and disposition of the Indians and the proper distribution of presents was also in jeopardy. Hamilton wanted to recommend that the Indians "Observe a greater Regularity in their publick Transactions, and not to send Messages by private Hands but to send them by Two or Three or more . . . of their own Body, with whom the several Governments may confer, and learn the true State of their Affairs."<sup>23</sup> When colonial officials doubted the reliability of envoys, steps were taken whenever possible to ensure the accuracy of their messages. When William Johnson sent several Indians to deliver a message of peace to Pontiac in 1765, he found it necessary to send along "an Interpreter well qualified and acquainted with these [western] Nations, to see that, the whole is properly and fully expressed to them."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>CRP 5: 633. In Anglo-Iroquois diplomatic dealings, it was customary for meetings between the two groups to occur at one of several recognized "fires." During the mid-eighteenth century, these locations were Albany, Philadelphia, and Onondaga.

<sup>24</sup>William Johnson to the Lords of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/66, in IIDH, reel 28, [after May 26, 1765]. Seventy years earlier in a similarly delicate and crucial situation, Gov. Fletcher of New York and the Albany Commissioners sent out several "trusty and faithfull Indians with one or two Christians that understand the Indian

Sometimes difficulties arose merely from the methods by which news was transmitted rather than because of the choice of the messenger. The oral culture of the Iroquois placed great emphasis on the precise accuracy of spoken messages and speeches, and traditional practice among the Six Nations minimized garbling by sending each message as far as intended directly by one reliable messenger. Messages also were accompanied by strings of wampum to ensure their veracity and to serve as a mnemonic device to aid the memory of the messenger. Tradition was breaking down by the 1750s, however, when Johnson addressed the Six Nations about a "New Custom lately introduced" among them for delivering messages. News received in the Iroquois villages was now sent "from one Castle to another," and often arrived "quite altered from what it was at first." Johnson found the practice "very inconvenient for our mutual Interest" and desired that they return to the "Old Custom."<sup>25</sup>

Colonial officials also relied on interpreters to advise them on the content and tone of messages.<sup>26</sup> In

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language" to invite Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas who had fled the French to a meeting with him in Albany in October 1696. Proceedings of the Council in Albany, August 10[?], 1696, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1039, in IIDH, reel 5, Aug. 1696, and Aug. 11, 1696.

<sup>25</sup>William Johnson's Journal of the Onondaga Proceedings, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, vol. 1, entry for Sept. 8, 1753, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 15, Sept. 8-10, 1753.

<sup>26</sup>Most of the extant examples appear in the Pennsylvania records for the mid-eighteenth century, possibly because by that time most of New York's Indian affairs were being

December 1754, Pennsylvania governor Robert Morris and his council met with Conrad Weiser about what had transpired between him and the Indians at Augwick the preceding September. Weiser's journal was read, and then "the Governour after consulting with Mr. Weiser" drew up the message "to be sent them by the first Opportunity."<sup>27</sup> Four years later, when informed of the great uneasiness among the Susquehanna Indians regarding English designs, the Pennsylvania council resolved to send messengers to reassure them. Logan and Peters were appointed as a committee to confer with General Forbes on the content of the messages, "and it was recommended to them to take the assistance of Mr. Weiser."<sup>28</sup> By the late 1760s, George Croghan occasionally acted in Weiser's former role, preparing messages for the Pennsylvania governor to send to the Indians.<sup>29</sup>

Interpreters contributed more than their knowledge of Iroquois languages to the successful maintenance of amicable communications. Their knowledge of Iroquois culture and methods of conducting business placed them in an excellent

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handled by Superintendent William Johnson, who felt perfectly well equipped to make such determinations on his own.

<sup>27</sup>CRP 6: 186-87.

<sup>28</sup>CRP 8: 128.

<sup>29</sup>WJP 6: 110. On Feb. 17, 1768, Croghan wrote to Thomas Gage that Governor Penn wanted to send a message to the Indians near Fort Pitt, "Which Messages I Am preparing for the Governor."

position to make sure the message was delivered properly and that it carried the desired weight. By the 1710s, a protocol for delivering messages was developing, though it apparently was honored more in the breach than the observance by the English. Teganissorens, speaking for the Iroquois, instructed New York officials on proper procedures during a meeting in Albany in June 1717. He noted that recent messages from the governor failed to include an account of the author and origin of the news conveyed about the building of a French fort at Irondequoit and were not accompanied by any present or token "according to Custom, which made us doubt of the truth of it."<sup>30</sup> The English and their interpreters took the lesson to heart and by the 1720s they regularly accompanied messages with belts or strings of wampum "to confirm" them.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to being solemnized by wampum, messages had to be carried by "proper Messengers" who knew the appropriate route to follow when carrying messages to the nations of the League and its council.<sup>32</sup> Such procedures

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<sup>30</sup>Proceedings of Council at Albany, June 1717, enclosed in letter of Governor Hunter, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1051, p. 211, in IIDH, reel 8, [June 13-17, 1717].

<sup>31</sup>Instructions to Jacob Bleecker from Commissioners of Indian Affairs, Jan. 2, 1746, Harmanus Bleecker papers, 1715-1872, Mss. and Special Collections, AV9902, p. 114, N.Y. State Library, Albany, New York. For examples of wampum use with messages, see Pennsylvania Provincial Records, vol. F, p. 147, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pa., in IIDH, reel 9, Oct. 11, 1722; WJP 1: 507; CRP 7: 548; and DHNY 2: 880.

<sup>32</sup>Treaties at Harris Ferry and Lancaster, March-May

could be very important, particularly in time of war when all messages and rumors had to be closely scrutinized for authenticity. Iroquois custom dictated that the Mohawks and Senecas serve as the eastern and western doors of the figurative League Longhouse, guarding and regulating the entrance of individuals and information into their territory. Messengers were expected to enter the Longhouse through the doors, so proper messages should be delivered to the Senecas or Mohawks first and then proceed toward the council at Onondaga.<sup>33</sup> Failure to observe such niceties could lead to misunderstandings and interruption of the smooth, orderly, and reliable flow of information. In 1762, Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania agreed to conform to the custom as a "very prudent Establishment . . . for the Dispatch and regular Transaction of Business."<sup>34</sup>

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1757, in IIDH, reel 20, March-May 20, 1757; CRP 8: 470.

<sup>33</sup>The same rules apparently did not apply to outgoing messages from the League. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Six Nations Council sent messages directly south from Onondaga to Pennsylvania.

<sup>34</sup>Explanations of this custom can be found in Treaties at Harris Ferry and Lancaster, 1757 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin & D. Hall, 1757), in IIDH, reel 20, March-May 20, 1757; and Minutes of a Conference with the Northern and Western Indians at Lancaster, 1762 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1763), in IIDH, reel 25, Aug. 11-29, 1762. It appears that Pennsylvania may have had more difficulty with this fine point of protocol, since the admonitions regarding breaches of it are directed at that colony. New York's geographical position vis-à-vis the League may have made them less vulnerable to such failure since the normal route into the Iroquois country naturally took them first to the Mohawks. Pennsylvania frequently sent messages and emissaries directly north to Onondaga.

Protocol became particularly important when special types of messages such as invitations to upcoming intercultural councils were delivered. As part of the larger protocol of forest diplomacy, the invitation message and council were particularly important and those involved had to carefully observe all aspects of expected behavior or they jeopardized the ensuing meeting.<sup>35</sup> For this reason, invitations issued by colonial officials were almost always delivered by interpreters rather than traders or other bilingual substitutes.<sup>36</sup>

Interpreters who delivered invitations to the Indians frequently found that their instructions also required them "to see them down" to the meeting.<sup>37</sup> Escorts were expected to "take Care" to arrive at the meeting site "by the said day"<sup>38</sup> and "to preserve good Order amongst them & prevent

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<sup>35</sup>For additional information about forest diplomacy and treaty protocol, see Chapter V below.

<sup>36</sup>For examples of interpreters delivering invitation messages, see NYCD 4: 494; AIA, 76, 99, 105; Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 259-259v, and vol. 1826, 4, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Aug. 20, 1728, and reel 28, Dec. 29, 1767-Mar. 12, 1768 (II); Harmanus Bleecker papers, 1715-1872, items 96, 105, 115, Mss. and Special Collections, N.Y. State Library, Albany, N.Y.; WJP 1: 315, 512, 524, 633, 10: 726, 801, 12: 451; and CRP 6: 150.

<sup>37</sup>Orders to Jacobus Bleecker, May 7, 1742, Harmanus Bleecker papers, 1715-1872, item #96, Mss. and Special Collections, N.Y. State Library, Albany, N.Y.

<sup>38</sup>Orders to Jacobus Bleecker, May 4, 1744, Harmanus Bleecker papers, 1715-1872, item #105, Mss. and Spec. Coll., N.Y. State Library; Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 270-270v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 12, May 4, 1744; Memorandum



their doing any Mischief to the Inhabitants on their way."<sup>39</sup> Neither was easy to achieve. Thomas McKee's experiences escorting a group of Indians from Lancaster to Shamokin in 1757 were not unusual. They left the Indian camp, but had not gotten far before they had to stop to bury a Tuscarora who had been killed by one of his own nation. "From thence with much Difficulty, by reason of the Indians excessive drinking" to John Harris's, where they were detained three days because of the smallpox death of another Tuscarora. They proceeded to Ft. Hunter where again, in spite of all he could do, McKee's charges "got into a drinking Frolick, which detain'd me Three Days." The remainder of the trip apparently passed without delay or mishap.<sup>40</sup>

According to Iroquois custom, escorts were also responsible for seeing that provisions were available for the Indians enroute to meetings, while in conference, and on the way home.<sup>41</sup> They often acted as the Indians' hosts

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of Abstract of Ft. Johnson Treaty Minutes, Logan Papers, vol. 11, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 18, Dec. 1755-Feb. 1756.

<sup>39</sup>WJP 1: 636.

<sup>40</sup>CRP 7: 597. Problems with alcohol were apparently quite prevalent, since many interpreters' instructions included explicit admonitions to prevent "Delivery of immoderate Spirits whilst They are on their Progress." Fairfax Journal at Winchester, Sept. 1753, enclosed in Governor Dinwiddie to the Board of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 15, Nov. 17, 1753. See also WJP 9: 466. Another common cause of delay was the Indians' penchant for deliberation and discussion enroute. NYCD 4: 714.

<sup>41</sup>See, for example, Orders to Jacobus Bleecker, Aug. 29,

during the conference, serving as escorts, seeing to their comfort, and letting them "want for nothing." In general, they "maintained throughout the long proceedings an atmosphere of friendly understanding without which the conference would have been a failure."<sup>42</sup> Providing for large groups could take up a great deal of time, energy, and money. While escorting chiefs Beaver and Shingas and a delegation of Ohio Indians to Lancaster in 1762, Christian Frederick Post kept busy procuring everything from unsalted meat and corn to kettles and horses for the lame. He noted that he "got much tired by furnishing these people with provisions, Waggon & horses."<sup>43</sup>

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1745, Harmanus Bleecker papers, 1715-1872, item #111, Mss. and Spec. Coll., N.Y. State Library; Wilbur R. Jacobs, Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763 (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1950), 153-54; WJP 1: 633, 635-36; Arent Stevens to Gov. Clinton, June 27, 1751, George Clinton Papers, 1697-1759, William Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich. The Indians expected no more than they offered colonial visitors. As Weiser noted of his journey to a council at Onondaga in 1743, "The time that We staid at Onondagoe we were well entertain'd with Homeny, Venison, Dried Eels, Squashes, and Indian Corn bread. They gave Us provision on the Road homeward, so much as we wanted." CRP 4: 668-69. For an explanation of the custom, offered to all travellers, see Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 224, 226.

<sup>42</sup>Hanna, Wilderness Trail 2: 16; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 71, 189. See also, WJP 12: 471; and Records of Conference at Boston, Aug. 22-Sept. 20, 1723, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/752, pt.1, in IIDH, reel 9, May 29-Sept. 20, 1723.

<sup>43</sup>PA, ser. 1, 4: 92-98, quote p. 96. In some cases, to avoid some of the expense and provisioning difficulties, interpreters were instructed to try to hold down the size of delegations, though with limited success. Min. of Ind.

From the government's perspective, messengers and escorts represented a substantial investment. At the most basic level, messengers had to be paid for their services, which frequently included charges for horse hire and provisions in addition to wages.<sup>44</sup> Payments could vary from a few shillings to almost £20. When the message involved an invitation to a meeting, with the attendant added expenses of presents and provisions for the groups escorted down, the cost went up precipitously. Initial gifts, usually consisting of knives, mouth harps, combs, rings, wampum, and other trinkets cost relatively little--often only a few pounds.<sup>45</sup> Escorts' expenses and the requirements of provisioning a large group of Iroquois emissaries and their families, however, could run into the hundreds of pounds. Arent Stevens's charges for bringing the Six Nations to Albany in 1746 totaled more than £268.<sup>46</sup> Given the expense

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Comms., vol. 1819, 10-10a, in IIDH, reel 9, April 2, 1723. Parties often numbered in the hundreds, and occasionally as many as a thousand. See, for example, WJP 1: 640, 9: 719; AIA, 21; and NYCD 4: 90.

<sup>44</sup>See, for example, CRP 3: 507-8; WJP 2: 568, 581, 597, 598, 643, 3: 159, 163, 9: 654; Min. of Ind. Comms., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 181-181v, 185-185v, and vol. 1821, 96, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 11, Mar. 20, 1740, and May 22, 1740, and reel 12, Sept. 13, 1745; and N.Y. Council Minutes, 8: 283, N.Y. State Archives, Albany, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 6, Oct. 27, 1701.

<sup>45</sup>See, for example, WJP 2:568-69.

<sup>46</sup>Account of Disbursements for Indians agreeing to join intended expedition against Canada, 1746, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1096, in IIDH, reel 13, Nov. 5, 1748. See also WJP 1: 831, 2: 574, 577, 595, 601, 602, 609, 613; CRP 3:

involved, not to mention the importance of their activities "to support the Interests & Influence of the Govt." against enemy intrigues, the choice of messengers and escorts could assume great importance.<sup>47</sup>

The selection of individual messengers became even more crucial when they took on the functions and duties of more or less independent agents of the government. On many occasions, Dutch and English interpreters became the "field representatives" of the Albany magistrates.<sup>48</sup> As temporary government agents, interpreters delivered presents,<sup>49</sup> attended Iroquois councils, made condolences, negotiated for prisoners,<sup>50</sup> and generally acted to keep the Six Nations firm in their attachment to the English.<sup>51</sup> When acting in

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425, 507, 605-7, 610; LIR, 58; Treaty with Six Nations at Philadelphia, In July, 1742 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1743), 25, in IIDH, reel 11, June 30-July 12, 1742; Arent Stevens to George Clinton, Schenectady, May 27, 1751, George Clinton Papers, 1697-1759, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 186.

<sup>47</sup>AIA, 80.

<sup>48</sup>HCID, 25.

<sup>49</sup>CRP 5: 291; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), 19; William M. Darlington, Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical, and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of His Contemporaries (New York: Argonaut Press Ltd., 1966), 160, 177; Hanna, Wilderness Trail 2: 1-3.

<sup>50</sup>WJP, 4: 771, 11: 722; MCARS 2: 48-49.

<sup>51</sup>The necessity of retaining the Six Nations' loyalty in the face of formidable French persuasions prompted more missions than any other. See, for example, AIA, 81; CCP 52: 9, 68: 428-29, 362; PA, ser. 1, 2: 28-29; CCM, 248; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 351v-352,

these capacities, interpreters had considerable latitude and discretion. As Jacob Leisler, de facto leader of the provincial government in January 1691, instructed Arnout Viele: "it is Committed to Your Wisdome & Conduct to act & do According to the Best of your Knowledge, Skill & Power to act & do in all things becoming such an agent as if you had particular Instrucons & directions."<sup>52</sup> The only resource available to agents in the field was experience, and knowing this, most colonial officials chose skilled, knowledgeable interpreters to act as their formal representatives among the Iroquois.

Interpreters sent among the Six Nations to deliver messages and act as escorts and agents also frequently gathered intelligence and reported on the activities of the Indians and their allies.<sup>53</sup> It was only natural that, having been employed in councils and treaties and as

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Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Dec. 24, 1731; and Min. of the N.Y. Provincial Council, Calendar of State Papers, 1700, Item #668, p. 442, in IIDH, reel 6, July 29-31, 1700.

<sup>52</sup>Jacob Leisler's Letterbook, N.Y. Col. Mss., 36:142, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 4, 1690 (II). See also NYCD 4: 500; WJP 3: 10; Instructions for George Croghan, March 5, 1768, Cadwallader Papers, G. Croghan, Section 34, Hist. Soc. of Penn., in IIDH, reel 29, March 5, 1768; CRP 4: 636.

<sup>53</sup>Ragnar Numelin noted that "Besides messengers, heralds and envoys we find even in early civilization couriers and interpreters, who frequently act as a kind of intelligencers, not to say [sic] spies." Ragnar Numelin, The Beginnings of Diplomacy: A Sociological Study of Intertribal and International Relations (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 145.

messengers, they were in a position to shed "Light into many Things relating to the Indian Affairs."<sup>54</sup> The intelligence they conveyed to their employers included information on population size and numbers of warriors, council proceedings, Iroquois attitudes and inclinations toward the British, and French activities in the region.<sup>55</sup> The gathering of such information was vital, particularly during wars with the French.<sup>56</sup> In 1748, the Pennsylvania council instructed Conrad Weiser "to use all means in your Power" during a planned visit to the Ohio Indians, "to get from them all kinds of Intelligence as to what the French are doing or design to do in these parts." He was not to satisfy himself "with generals," but to inform himself "truly & fully of the real dispositions of these Indians" and their reliability in providing security for

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<sup>54</sup>CRP 7: 173. Not all interpreters fulfilled this portion of their duties successfully. The Indian Commissioners at Albany noted in 1754 that "We shall Be Carefull About the Motions of the french But it is Impossible that We Can Know Every Individual thing that Passes Among the Indians, our Interpreter Lives to a Distance from here, and Never Gives us an Intelligence." Indian Commissioners to Gov. DeLancey, N.Y. Col. Mss., 79: 105, N.Y. State Arch., in IIDH, reel 17, Dec. 28, 1754 (II).

<sup>55</sup>See, for example, Proceedings of Indian Affairs, Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1822, 27, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 17, [June] 22, [1755]; CRP 4: 776, 7: 11.

<sup>56</sup>By far the majority of intelligence reports sent by interpreters regarded French "intrigues" and activities. See, for example, NYCD 4: 123, 497-98; AIA, 52, 54-55, 103; and Arnout Viele to Gov. Dongan, Onondaga, June 5, 1688, N.Y. Col. Mss., 35: 160, N.Y. State Arch. in IIDH, reel 3, June 5, 1688.

Pennsylvania. Finally, Weiser was "to make particular Enquiry into the number and Situation of the Indian Nations between these People's Settlements on the Ohio & the River Mississippi," because there might be some "disoblig'd with the French, [who] might easily be brought into Amity with the English."<sup>57</sup>

Weiser and his colleagues had a variety of means at their disposal to obtain information, but undoubtedly found the private networks of Iroquois friends and acquaintances built during long years of contact and interaction most useful. A private conversation with an "old friend" often yielded insights unavailable elsewhere. Indians reluctant or unable to speak candidly in public could sometimes be persuaded to let an interpreter "into the Secret" privately.<sup>58</sup> The Iroquois subjects of this scrutiny were aware of the intelligence-gathering activities of the messengers and interpreters among them and were often not

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<sup>57</sup>CRP 5: 292.

<sup>58</sup>William West to [?], Jan. 12, 1756, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., LO 757, in IIDH, reel 18, Jan. 12, 1756. Arent Stevens gained information in a private conference with Cayuga chief Schanarady in 1756. Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1822, 379, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 20, Nov. 22, 1756. Andrew Montour served as a reliable source of information for Weiser before he became an interpreter himself. CRP 5: 290. For additional examples, see WJP 3: 438, 7: 182, 8: 8, 11: 213; Letter of N.Y. Indian Commissioners to Gov. Clinton, Aug. 12, 1745, Mss. Class B., No. L82, vol. 4, fol. 115-116, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 12, Aug. 12, 1745; A Treaty Held with the Ohio Indians at Carlisle, In October, 1753 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1753), 5, in IIDH, reel 15, Oct. 1753; and Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 238.

averse to giving them "what News was Stirring" among the Indians.<sup>59</sup> In return, the interpreters' informants probably gained information that could translate into additional influence and leverage within their own political circles.

Interpreters and government officials sometimes sent well-known and trusted Indians as their agents to gather information on their behalf. George Croghan sent Delaware Jo, "one of our Friendly Indians," to the Ohio for intelligence in 1756.<sup>60</sup> As his superior, William Johnson, noted, "I have always made use of a few approved Chiefs of the Several Nations whose fidelity I have had occasion to put to the test on many occasions for above 20 years past who have never yet deceived me, and from who I have obtained timely advices of almost every thing of importance in Agitation." Johnson, however, did not take their loyalty or reliability for granted. He "made it their interest as much as I believe it is their Inclination to be faithful, and have gratified their predominant passion by seeming to ask their opinion, & to communicate matters to them which are of no importance 'tho' it is a high Compliment to them."<sup>61</sup> In wartime, this practice could extend to the procurement of

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<sup>59</sup>Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1822, 451, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 20, Mar. 4, 1757; NYCD 4: 803.

<sup>60</sup>CRP 6: 781.

<sup>61</sup>William Johnson to Earl of Shelburne, Johnson Hall, Aug. 14, 1767, Mss. French & Indian War Collection, 1754-1774, Mss. Box, Folder 2, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.



Iroquois scouts to spy on French military installations and activities.<sup>62</sup>

In their struggle against the French, the English quickly realized that it would be beneficial to have agents reside in the Iroquois villages for extended periods to promote their interests and "to watch the motion of the Indians and send us an account of their proceedings."<sup>63</sup> They could keep a closer eye on developments than could a messenger or agent sent on a specific, temporary mission. Some of the earliest agents to live with the Iroquois were the smiths sent to keep their guns and iron implements in good repair. By virtue of their position, smiths exercised considerable influence with their hosts and were often valuable sources of information about Iroquois and French activities.<sup>64</sup> Those who became bilingual sometimes also served as interpreters.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>LIR, 203-5; CCP 68: 380; Pennsylvania Register, 4: 205; John Butler to William Johnson, Jan. 30, 1759, encl. in Johnson to Thomas Gage, Feb. 6, 1759, GP, vol. I; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 233; MCARS 1: 259.

<sup>63</sup>NYCD 4: 494.

<sup>64</sup>Conference at Albany with New York Commissioners for Indian Affairs, N.Y. Col. Mss., 62: 2, N.Y. State Arch., in IIDH, reel 8, Sept. 25, 1719; and WJP 7: 1045.

<sup>65</sup>Wilbur Jacobs noted that smiths "served also as interpreters and often distributed presents on behalf of their government." Diplomacy and Gifts, 42. For examples of smiths acting as interpreters, see WJP 2: 325-26, 6: 681, 7: 21, 637, 9: 384. The two most prominent individuals who served in both capacities were Andrew Wemple and William Printup, Jr.

English smiths became a particularly important counter-influence to French agents active among the western Iroquois. The smiths' services in repairing firearms, kettles, and other goods were in such demand that according to Cadwallader Colden, "a Smith was in greater Esteem with these politicians [the Iroquois] than a Parson."<sup>66</sup> In fact, smiths became diplomatic bargaining chips for both the English and the Iroquois. In 1706, the Cayugas assured the Indian Commissioners that they would "not receive any French Priest amongst them if the Governor will send a Man of respect, an Interpreter, a Smith & a Brazier to reside amongst them."<sup>67</sup> The friendship and clientele the smiths cultivated were vital--both to their own livelihood and to the interests of the government that employed them. As a result, most treated their Indian hosts well. The Senecas noted in 1724 that smith Myndert Wemple, in addition to providing metalworking skills, was "very good kind & charitable to our poor people."<sup>68</sup> The good will the smiths' presence fostered and the influence they wielded proved useful to the English.

New York officials recognized the smiths' importance in maintaining good relations with their Iroquois allies. The

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<sup>66</sup>CCP 68: 418.

<sup>67</sup>AIA, 46.

<sup>68</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 91, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 9, [Sept. 17, 1724].

Commissioners of Indian Affairs asserted that "by all we can learn the said Smiths have given the Indians more Content than Ever has been done by any that hitherto have been sent thither."<sup>69</sup> By the 1720s, smiths and armorers spent every winter with the Senecas, receiving wages and trading privileges for their trouble.<sup>70</sup> Salaries paid to those who resided with the Iroquois for extended periods could be substantial. In 1724, Harmen Vedder was appointed captain of a party of smiths stationed among the Senecas at a salary of £50; his companions, Andries Brat, Hendrick Wemple, and Harmen van Slyck received £15, £25, and £25, respectively. Two years later, Joseph van Sice presented a petition for £20 pay for seven months' service as a smith for the same Indians.<sup>71</sup> Some smithing positions were quite desirable and became almost hereditary, passed from father to son or

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<sup>69</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 356v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, April 24, 1732.

<sup>70</sup>Thomas E. Norton, The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 80. By the mid-eighteenth century, it was customary to have smiths stationed among all of the western nations and the position became one of the standard post appointments made by William Johnson, along with commissaries and interpreters. Under his plan, however, smiths could no longer engage in trade.

<sup>71</sup>Jonathan Pearson, A History of the Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley, ed. J. W. MacMurray (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, Printers, 1883), 288. See also Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 277, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Oct. 9, 1728 (II).

nephew. Three generations of Wemples served as smiths among the Senecas during the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup>

Smiths, however, while effective in the fight against the French for the allegiance of the Six Nations, were not sufficient. French agents, interpreters, and smiths living among the Senecas used "all means by bribes presents & what arguments they are Capable of, to Draw off those Indians from their Dependence and Fidelity to His Majesty." To combat their influence, New York officials believed it to be "absolutely Necessary for the Security of the Six Nations to keep them firm to the British Interest that a Number of Proper persons with Smiths to work for the Indians be Posted at the Sinnakes Country to be Continually there."<sup>73</sup> The most proper persons suited for the task seemed to be the interpreters. Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen began to spend extended periods among the Six Nations "to watch the Motions of the French & to prevent their Influence to the prijudice [sic] of this Government" at least as early as 1706, and throughout the remainder of the colonial period

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<sup>72</sup>The first was Myndert Barentse Wemple (bp. 1691). His sons Hendrick (b. 1730-1790) and Myndert (bp. 1738-1789) also served as smiths, as did a younger nephew (?) Andries or Andrew. I would like to thank George R. Hamell of the New York State Museum for making his genealogical files on the Wemples available to me. Another multigenerational family of smiths were the Printups. William, Sr., and his son William, Jr., both served as smiths, while the latter also became a prominent interpreter under William Johnson.

<sup>73</sup>Commissioners of Indian Affairs to Gov. William Cosby, March 4, 1734, Edward E. Ayer Collection, Mss. #631, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill. See also AIA, 45-46, 48, 49, 70, 118.

many others did similar duty.<sup>74</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, however, William Johnson as Superintendent of Indian Affairs apparently found it inconvenient to be without his interpreters for extended periods and saw merit in separating the offices of agent and interpreter. He appointed separate Deputy Agents to represent him among more distant Indian groups.<sup>75</sup>

The English interpreters' success in keeping portions of the Six Nations Indians attached to the British interest in the struggle against France necessitated their further involvement when actual hostilities broke out. Few regular British military officers understood or spoke an Iroquois language and many found themselves "at a Loss for an Interpreter."<sup>76</sup> Intercultural war councils and consultations required clear comprehension of strategies, signs, and passwords if disastrous mistakes were to be avoided. Six Nations warriors and English military

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<sup>74</sup>AIA, 48. Montour, for example, was granted a commission under the lesser seal of Pennsylvania to go and reside over the Kittoctinny Hills and act as the colony's agent there. CRP 5: 566-67.

<sup>75</sup>The two best known were Thomas McKee and George Croghan, both of whom were bilingual and had served earlier in their careers as interpreters.

<sup>76</sup>CRP 7: 632; Henry Bouquet to Thomas Gage, Camp near Ft. Pitt, Oct. 2, 1764, GP, in IIDH, reel 27, Oct. 2, 1764. Lt. Col. John Caldwell, Commandant of Niagara, considered himself "a Stranger in this Indian World & unacquainted with the business" in 1774. He was undoubtedly only one of the last in a long line of similarly handicapped military officers. Lt. Col. John Caldwell to Guy Johnson, Niagara, Sept. 29, 1774, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., C05/75, pt. 2, in IIDH, reel 31, Sept. 29, 1774 (IV).

personnel fighting side by side on the New York frontier could find themselves in dire straits "for want of Understanding each other."<sup>77</sup> Both the English and their allies recognized the necessity of having officers in charge of the Indians who understood their language. Throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Six Nations repeatedly requested the appointment of officers who had "some Knowledge of their Ways & manners."<sup>78</sup> Whenever possible, New York officials obliged.<sup>79</sup> If it proved impossible, interpreters usually were assigned to accompany Iroquois war parties.<sup>80</sup>

During the Seven Years' War, Superintendent William Johnson took action to eliminate the problems caused by the monolingualism of British officers. He appointed his most

<sup>77</sup>On at least one occasion during the joint march on La Prairie in 1691, the security password for the night watch was an Indian word "Tisago," which apparently meant courage. NYCD 3: 803. For other similar situations, see CCP 54: 258; and Dinwiddie to Lords of Trade, enclosure, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 16, May 10, 1754; WJP 10: 170.

<sup>78</sup>WJP 1: 603-4. See also ibid., 11:272; Chiefs of Six Nations to Earl of Sunderland, May 22, 1710, HM348, Huntington Library, San Marin, Ca., in IIDH, reel 7, May 22, 1710; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 259-259v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 11, Sept. 30, 1743.

<sup>79</sup>The most active during the early period were Albany traders Peter and Abraham Schuyler. See, for example, NYCD 4: 13, 183; and Gov. Fletcher to [William Blathwayt], March 8, 1693, Cal. of State Papers, 1693-1696, Item #179, 45-51, in IIDH, reel 5, Nov. 19, 1694 (II).

<sup>80</sup>See, for example, WJP, 2: 16, 5: 260; Proceedings of Conference at Albany, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1050, in IIDH, reel 7, Aug 17-28, 1711 (II).

trusted interpreters as Indian Officers, a separate military rank that entitled them to a regular salary.<sup>81</sup> Johnson demanded that his Indian officers be "linguists, woodsmen, and masters of Iroquois culture."<sup>82</sup> His most prominent interpreters, Andrew Montour, Arent Stevens, John Butler, Thomas Butler, Daniel Claus, and John Johnston, all served as Indian officers.

The duties of an Indian officer were many and varied. Indian officers were expected "to Encourage the Indians to the performance of their Duty," see that they were properly supplied, prevent drunkenness and quarrels, and "carefully explain any Speech, or Message, which the Commanding Officer may think necessary to direct."<sup>83</sup> They raised parties of warriors "to go a Scalping" and recruited and led scouts for

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<sup>81</sup>Johnson demanded that his Indian officers receive the same pay as regular army infantry officers. John C. Guzzardo, "Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo-American Empire," (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1975), 109. He told William Shirley "that as the Duty of these officers will be more fatiguing & expensive by the extraordinary wear & tear of their Cloaths etc.," the same pay as British foot soldiers was reasonable. WJP 1: 500. The pay could be quite substantial in wartime. Johnson's lieutenants received 4/6 Sterling per day or more than £70 for six months' service. Captains received 10/ per day, or more than £150 for six months' service. See ibid., 2: 611-12, 3: 173.

<sup>82</sup>Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 108. In fact, according to Wilbur Jacobs, William Johnson told Commander-in-chief William Shirley that "the Indian officers had, first of all, to be interpreters." Jacobs, Diplomacy and Gifts, 149.

<sup>83</sup>WJP 4: 412-13.

the army.<sup>84</sup> The merging of the positions of interpreter and Indian officer during wartime made sense because their duties required similar skills. Both demanded intimate knowledge of English and Iroquois languages and customs. Both required the maintenance of "a good Understanding" between the English and their allies.<sup>85</sup> Most important, to perform efficiently and effectively, interpreters and Indian officers needed the confidence and trust of both the English and the Six Nations.

Interpreters fulfilled many different roles on the New York frontier besides that of translator. Throughout the colonial period they continually traveled back and forth across the intercultural divide delivering messages, gathering intelligence, and overseeing Iroquois activities as governmental agents and Indian officers. As varied as these roles appear on the surface, they required similar skills and were designed in all cases "to support the Interests & Influence of the Government" among the Six Nations by maintaining an amicable relationship between New York and her Indian allies in both peacetime and war.

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<sup>84</sup>WJP 1: 81. For recruitment activities, see also ibid., 2: 86, 581-82, 4: 336, 9: 536, 661, 666. For examples of scouting activities, see NYCD 3: 815, 4: 17-18; WJP 10: 140-42; CRP 5: 6; Gov. Dinwiddie to Horatio Sharpe, Jan. 7, 1755, Emmet Collection, EM47, Rare Books and Mss. Division, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, New York Public Library, New York, in IIDH, reel 17, Jan. 7, 1755.

<sup>85</sup>WJP 4: 321, 412.



CHAPTER V  
"ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF THE INDIANS"<sup>1</sup>:  
INTERPRETERS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
FOREST DIPLOMACY, 1690-1775

The roles interpreters played in the economic and religious arenas and as government messengers, agents, and Indian officers, though important, were often eclipsed by their activities at formal conferences between the English and the Iroquois. Nowhere was the interpreters' presence more obvious and prominent or their cultural brokerage more clearly in evidence. Active behind the scenes as well as before the council fire, they mediated the contact between Iroquois and English culture as they facilitated the exchange of words and promises. As they explained and translated the elaborate rituals and specialized oratory of Anglo-Iroquois councils, they brokered the exchange of

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<sup>1</sup>Conrad Weiser to Gov. Hamilton, April 22, 1749, PA, ser. 1, 2: 23-24. For examples of similar descriptive phrases, see CRP 4: 639-46; Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 109v-110, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 11, June 25, 1737; George Croghan's Journal in Minutes of Indian Affairs, Mss. 970.5, M665, #11, American Philosophical Society Library, Phila., in IIDH, reel 22, Mar. 15, 1758-April 12, 1760; and William Trent's Journal, July 5, 1759, Cadwallader Colden Papers, Croghan Section, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 23, April 3, 1759-April 18, 1763.

culturally rooted meanings and values. In fact, Anglo-Iroquois diplomatic protocol, or "forest diplomacy"--a construct of the bicultural middle ground between Iroquois and European cultures--was itself a product of the interpreters' brokering activities.<sup>2</sup>

During the last century, anthropologists and ethnohistorians have devoted considerable effort to describing the form and structure of forest diplomacy in eighteenth-century North America. As early as the late nineteenth century, ethnographers such as Horatio Hale began describing the Iroquois Condolence Council and drawing parallels between it and the ritualized openings of eighteenth-century Anglo-Iroquois treaty councils.<sup>3</sup> By the

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<sup>2</sup>The term "forest diplomacy" was first used by William N. Fenton, American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs and Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1957).

<sup>3</sup>Horatio Hale, The Iroquois Book of Rites, Brinton's Library of Aboriginal American Literature, no. 2 (Philadelphia: D. G. Brinton, 1883), 59-80; "An Iroquois Condoling Council," Royal Society of Canada Transactions, 2d ser., 1 (1895): 45-65; William M. Beauchamp, Civil, Religious, and Mourning Councils and Ceremonies of Adoption of the New York Indians, New York State Museum Bulletin, no. 113, repr. (Albany: University of the State of New York and State Education Department, 1981), 344, 393; William M. Beauchamp, The Iroquois Trail; or Foot-prints of the Six Nations, in Customs, Traditions, and History (Fayetteville, N.Y.: H. C. Beauchamp, Recorder's Office, 1892), 97, 143. Hale's and Beauchamp's accounts of the Condolence Council are apparently quite fragmentary. The only full-length account known was dictated in Onondaga by Seneca chief John Arthur Gibson to Alexander Goldenweiser in 1912. It has recently been translated and edited by linguist Hanni Woodbury. See Hanni Woodbury, trans. and ed., with Reg Henry and Harry Webster, Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onondaga by John Arthur Gibson, Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Memoir

mid-eighteenth century, all conferences began with a series of ceremonies designed to "remove all Obstructions to a good Understanding" before taking up the issues at hand.<sup>4</sup>

The first of these rituals commenced with the arrival and greeting of the visitors, Indian or English, "At the Wood's Edge." Focusing on the symbolic removal of obstructions that might have entered the travelers' eyes, ears, or throats during their journey, the ritual freed them to devote their full attention to the upcoming council discussions.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, scheduled conferences began with short versions of the Condolence Council, a series of ritualized exchanges featuring the mourning of any deaths that had occurred on either side of the council fire since the participants' last meeting. Designed to clear the lines of communication between the participants, the Condolence

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9 (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1992). William Fenton was the first to suggest that European-Iroquois councils were actually patterned after the Condolence Council. See Fenton, American Indian and White Relations, 22-24.

<sup>4</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada, Which Are Dependent on the Province of New-York in America, and Are the Barrier between the English and French in That Part of the World, 2 vols. (London, 1747; repr. New York: Allerton Book Co., 1922), 2: 65-66. For a clear discussion of the nature of conference proceedings in general, see William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change in the Process of Iroquois Treaty Making," HCID, 3-36.

<sup>5</sup>For a modern ethnographic interpretation, see Michael K. Foster, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils," HCID, 105-6. The ceremony is also referred to variously as the "Rubbing Down of the Body" or "Three Bare Words."

enabled them to speak "freely and candidly" to each other.<sup>6</sup> Although seldom fully described by English writers, these proceedings apparently took up an "abundance of time and consumed a large Quantity of Wampum." Most important, the ceremonies could not be dispensed with even though the English often found them "tedious" and "fatiguing." Until these courtesies had been received by both sides, the participants could not proceed to the business for which they had come.<sup>7</sup>

Recently, Daniel Richter, drawing on the work of John Reid, gave a plausible explanation for why this essentially political ritual for mourning dead chiefs and installing their successors might have been adapted for diplomatic use. Richter and Reid emphasize that in eastern North America, "'peace' was primarily a matter of the mind. . . . '[It] did not imply a negotiated agreement backed by the sanctions of

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<sup>6</sup>WJP 3: 442, 761. As Warren Johnson, Sir William Johnson's brother, described the ceremony in his journal in 1760, "the [Indians] goe in Mourning for their Relations, the white people condole with them, by clearing their throats to make them speak, they wipe away the Tears from their Eyes, & the Blood of the Deceased from their Bed & out of their Sight, that their Hearts may be chearful: this is done by giving them strings of wampum, & black Strouds, & by covering the Grave of the Deceased that they may mourn noe more over it." *Ibid.*, 13: 189. For other contemporary descriptions of these ceremonies, see WJP 1: 625-28, 3: 209, 430, 475-77, 483-85, 537-38, 761-62, 9: 174-79, 356-58, 589, 730-33, 796-97, 13: 428; CRP 5: 476-77, 7: 68, 508-10, 650-52; DHNY 2: 633. See also Foster, "Another Look," 107.

<sup>7</sup>CRP 6: 275, 7: 97. See also *ibid.*, 5: 474, 6: 180, 7: 47, 466. For an idea of the quantities and cost of the wampum consumed during the condolence ceremonies, see WJP 5: 248, 9: 18, 593.

international law and mutual self-interest. It was a matter of "good thoughts" between two nations, a feeling as much as a reality.'<sup>8</sup> Within this context, the condolence council's origins in the Deganawida myth and its links to the founding of the Iroquois League "make sense," as does the use of its rituals for clearing hearts and minds of bad or mournful thoughts, wiping tears, and clearing throats, ears, and paths in diplomatic situations--at least from an Iroquois cultural perspective.<sup>9</sup> Diplomatic use was merely a logical extension beyond the league of the use the ceremony served within it, namely the restoration of "good thoughts" and reason among the participants through the symbolic removal of the source of grief or discontent.<sup>10</sup> First in their dealings with the French, and later with the English,

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<sup>8</sup>Daniel K. Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse: The Five Nations in Early American History," in Beyond the Covenant Chain: The Iroquois and Their Neighbors in Indian North America, 1600-1800, ed. Daniel K. Richter and James H. Merrell (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 17-18; John Philip Reid, A Better Kind of Hatchet: Law, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Cherokee Nation during the Early Years of European Contact (University Park, Pa., 1976), 9-17. See also Fenton, American Indian and White Relations, 24.

<sup>9</sup>According to Iroquois tradition, the League was founded during a period of great internal strife and conflict. Deganawidah, the Peacemaker, taught the Five Nations to use the rituals called the Condolence Council as a means of transforming grief into good thoughts and feelings, allowing a return to harmony among the five Iroquois nations and the formation of the Great League of Peace. The Condolence continued to be used as a method for preserving good thoughts among members of the League and perpetuating its existence by providing a means of replacing dead chiefs on the League Council.

<sup>10</sup>Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change," 22.

"Iroquoian diplomats adapted the language and rituals of the Great Peace to create the protocol of intercultural diplomacy."<sup>11</sup>

The clearest theoretical description of the diplomatic use of condolence rituals is William Fenton's paradigm of forest diplomacy.<sup>12</sup> From his extensive knowledge of the twentieth-century ceremony and his reading of a variety of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treaty accounts and documents, Fenton has formulated an idealized protocol of Iroquoian diplomacy based on the condolence. The parallels include the opening of the road by an invitation offered on a string or belt of wampum, the greeting at the Wood's Edge, the clearing of eyes, ears and throats by the Three Bare Words, and the opening condolence ceremony of the actual council.

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<sup>11</sup>Richter, "Ordeals of the Longhouse," 22. Although the later, established forms of forest diplomacy seem to draw most heavily on Iroquois tradition and custom, there is ample evidence that similar concerns with opening and maintaining lines of communication and restoring "good thoughts" also existed in intercultural diplomatic rituals among non-Iroquois eastern Indian groups. The symbols and rituals varied, but the emphasis and purpose were essentially the same. The fact that the Iroquoian forms came to predominate may be due to European familiarity with them and their employment of them in dealings with other Indian groups.

<sup>12</sup>Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change," 21-30. See also Fenton, "Problems in the Authentication of the League of the Iroquois," in Neighbors and Intruders: An Ethnohistorical Exploration of the Indians of Hudson's River, ed. Lawrence M. Hauptman and Jack Campisi, National Museum of Man, Mercury Service, Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper no. 39 (Ottawa, 1978), 265.

In practice, the paradigmatic ceremony is almost never visible in its entirety, largely because of Iroquois (and presumably also the interpreters') "facility" in "accommodating its forms to the particular circumstances."<sup>13</sup> Many elements of the Condolence were readily transferable to diplomatic use and were particularly helpful in providing a model for regulating interaction between two temporarily estranged "sides" or groups: the rituals creating a clear mind and the rules governing the issuing of invitations, the exchange of wampum, the allotment of speaking roles, and the taking of turns during the meeting. In addition, the expected movement from sorrow to contentment and from disharmony to harmony during the Condolence Council also had a parallel in diplomatic councils, which were often called to alleviate existing or potential conflicts.<sup>14</sup>

By the 1750s and 1760s, some elements of the Condolence Council become standard to nearly all intercultural diplomatic exchanges and are clearly visible in extant treat accounts: the opening statement expressing "condolences" for losses on both sides, the symbolic opening of the paths of communication (usually by drying tears, opening throats,

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<sup>13</sup>Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change," 28. The diplomatic use of the Condolence and the internal use of the Condolence Council within the League served different functions, so one wouldn't expect to see the Condolence Council itself directly and completely replicated during treaty councils.

<sup>14</sup>Thanks to Michael Foster for pointing out the depth of the parallels out to me. Private communication, May 7, 1995.

clearing the path, and wiping away the blood or covering the graves of the dead), and the use of wampum to punctuate and regulate the exchange of propositions across the council fire. By tracing the appearance of these elements in extant treaty accounts, and particularly their use by English participants, it is possible to determine, at least in broad terms, that this recognized form of "forest diplomacy" emerged between about 1700 and 1740.

The development of a regularized, intercultural, diplomatic protocol during the first quarter of the eighteenth century may have resulted in part from changes in the needs and interests of Albany and English officials and in nature of Anglo-Iroquois contacts. During the period before 1690, the primary concern of both the Dutch and the English was trade, which could be handled on a relatively simple diplomatic basis. After 1690, the thrust of conferences and contacts more frequently focused on defense, alliance, and peace--complex and sensitive matters that required complex and sensitive diplomatic maneuvers. At precisely this point, when circumstances made it expedient for colonial officials to become more familiar with the niceties of Iroquois diplomacy and to apply them, the new breed of more experienced and knowledgeable interpreters like Jan Baptist van Eps, Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, and Conrad Weiser entered the diplomatic arena.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps

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<sup>15</sup>Mary A. Druke, "Iroquois Treaties: Common Forms, Varying Interpretations," in HCID, 93; Michael K. Foster,



earlier interpreters did not learn or pass on Iroquois diplomatic protocol because it was not necessary or because they failed to understand it as a result of their more limited contact with the Indians and their methods of doing business. The confluence of these factors probably accounts for the emergence of a more regularized protocol of forest diplomacy during these years, and the role of the interpreters in that development cannot be ignored.

Before the mid-1690s, key elements of the protocol paradigm are almost non-existent in the records of English intercultural diplomacy and are frequently absent from accounts of Iroquois behavior as well. This absence may only reflect European failure to record the ceremonies, but several factors argue against this facile explanation. First, on occasions when the Indians did offer condolences or speak on wampum or skins, the English seldom returned the gestures in kind. Second, the very possibility that these elements could be consistently omitted indicates either that they had not yet assumed central importance in diplomatic proceedings or were not fully comprehended by the men who recorded the conference proceedings. The French apparently conformed to the emerging protocol in their dealings with

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"On Who Spoke First at Iroquois-White Councils: An Exercise in the Method of Upstreaming," in Extending the Rafters: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Iroquoian Studies, ed. Michael K. Foster, et al. (Albany: State University of New York Press for the Center for the History of the American Indian of the Newberry Library, 1984), 183; and Dorothy V. Jones, License for Empire: Colonialism by Treaty in Early America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 30.

the Five Nations sooner than did the English, which argues for the latter's ignorance of a developing forest diplomacy as the most likely explanation for omissions in the records during the 1680s and early 1690s.<sup>16</sup>

In 1682 the Five Nations came to Albany to renew peace with the English following a series of Iroquois raids into Maryland and Virginia. During the conference the Albany commissioners and the agents for Maryland and Virginia clearly indicated their ignorance of appropriate diplomatic procedures. The English opened the conference with threats of war and demands for reparations prior to renewing peace. They gave no wampum and made little effort to remove bad feelings and obstacles to a good understanding. In their reply, the Mohawks prayed "that the Mischiefs done may be forgott & forgiven, . . . drank down like wine and may not remain in the heart, and to wipe off the tears and blood that is spilt," they gave two belts of wampum on behalf of themselves and the Onondagas. The Oneidas and Cayugas made

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<sup>16</sup>For accounts of some of these conferences between 1680 and 1693, see NYCD 3: 321-28, 347, 417-18, 438-44, 483-84, 485-86, 533-36, 557-61, 712-14, 771-72, 773-80, 805-9, 840-44; and DHNY 2: 164-70. It is unclear how far back Iroquois use of the condolence for diplomatic purposes extends. Their use of the condolence as a diplomatic device may itself be a product of contact--a bicultural adaptation of an established Iroquois political ritual to facilitate diplomatic interaction on the "middle ground" of the eastern Great Lakes and Mohawk and Hudson valleys. I wish to thank Bill Starna and Jack Campisi for encouraging me to examine this eminently plausible explanation more closely. Private discussion, Annual Iroquois Conference, Rensselaerville, N.Y., October 1994.

similar gestures.<sup>17</sup> The English agents failed to comprehend the significance of the Indians' actions, however, and told the interpreters to ask whether the Indians "expected that these Belts would wipe off the Blood their young men had spilt in Maryland." At the close of the day's meeting, "the four belts of peak were not taken up, but were left lying upon the ground & the Indians went away."<sup>18</sup> The following day, matters were smoothed over and the agents accepted the belts "for a beginning, and to beget a right understanding in order to our further Treaty"--a result, no doubt, of some behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the interpreters. The English gave no wampum in return, but covered the blood themselves with rolls of duffles.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the remainder of the 1680s and early 1690s, the English consistently failed to comprehend the nature of condolences the Indians offered and rarely returned them. When the Mohawks informed the Albany magistrates of the death of Canondondawe in April 1687, the commissioners merely indicated their sorrow, asserting that it was "a debt that nature owes & must be paid" and giving them 25 fathoms of "strung wampum" and a cask of rum.<sup>20</sup> Three years later

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<sup>17</sup>NYCD 3: 324.

<sup>18</sup>NYCD 3: 324-25.

<sup>19</sup>NYCD 3: 325.

<sup>20</sup>Propositions of Mohawk Tahaiadoris to Albany Magistrates, April 5, 1687, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO1/62, in IIDH, reel 3, April 5, 1687.

when the Mohawks offered condolences for the deaths at Schenectady in February 1690, the English indicated that "Your Coming heir according to the Custom of your ancestors to Condole ye death of the brethren murthred at Shinnectady is very acceptable," but again failed to return the gesture.<sup>21</sup> Even as late as June 1692, the English mentioned their grief at the losses the Indians suffered at Cadaraqui, but pointed out that it was "their own fault" and gave them no wampum.<sup>22</sup>

Until the late 1690s, the English apparently failed to comprehend the Iroquois' use of wampum; they rarely spoke on it as the Indians did. Their own use of wampum remained restricted to general presents. When the Iroquois presented belts, strings, or skins with their speeches, the English assigned them a monetary value to aid in determining the size of the general present to be given in return. These presents sometimes included bulk or strung wampum.<sup>23</sup> Accommodation was a two-way street, however, and in August 1694 the Five Nations tried to follow the English custom and gave only a general present at the close of the conference, offering no belts or pelts after individual portions of

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<sup>21</sup>DHNY 2: 167.

<sup>22</sup>NYCD 3: 840-42. At the same conference, the Oneidas chided the English for "accusing" or blaming each other and for speaking "only of the losse of the Christians and tak[ing] no notice of the losse of our Brethren the Maquaes who were killed" during the expedition against Canada.

<sup>23</sup>NYCD 3: 321-28, 438-44, 485-86, 771-72, 773-80, 4: 235-41.

their speeches. Their speaker explained to the Europeans across the fire that "we follow your Custome in giveing our Present altogether, and so gave a Parcell of Bever and Peltry."<sup>24</sup> Within five years, however, English practice changed and they began to follow the Iroquois custom, presenting belts and strings with condolence-type openings and to "enforce" specific requests or proposals. The first recorded instance in a conference setting seems to have occurred in February 1694 when Colonel Peter Schuyler gave belts with his proposals that the Indians have nothing further to do with the French. He presented the wampum in order to elicit a definite answer--indicating a new understanding of the protocol surrounding wampum and the fact that it required a response. Significantly, this incident occurred about one year after Jan Baptist van Eps's escape from captivity.<sup>25</sup> Throughout the remainder of the

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<sup>24</sup>Propositions of the Five Nations to Governor Fletcher at Albany, Aug. 15-20, 1694, N.Y. Col. Mss., 39: 184 [a9], N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 5, Aug. 15-20, 1694. The Iroquois' willingness to adapt to what they perceived as English custom at this point may reflect their increasingly weak position vis-à-vis both the French and English. Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 190-213.

<sup>25</sup>NYCD 4: 90. Other instances of "correct" wampum use in the 1690s include the Albany conference of June 1690 (NYCD 4: 279-82), Albany conference of October 1698 (NYCD 4: 407-9 and IIDH, reel 6, Oct. 21, 1698), and Albany conference of June 1699 (NYCD 4: 567-73). It was also during this period that the English began to consistently employ wampum strings, etc., in invitations to councils. See, for example, NYCD 4: 659.

1690s, English use of wampum during intercultural diplomatic exchanges became increasingly regular, until by the 1720s and 1730s they used it to punctuate their proposals and responses almost without fail.

In the mid-1690s, other aspects of English diplomatic behavior also changed. English condolences offered for the deaths of individual Indians or resulting from particular events began to appear in the records of Anglo-Iroquois councils.<sup>26</sup> After 1693, the English offered specific condolences for sachems who died or were killed<sup>27</sup> and for Indians who died as the result of specific accidents, attacks, or catastrophes.<sup>28</sup> In February 1693 following a

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<sup>26</sup>The progression was probably a very natural one, since most of the condolences offered by the Indians prior to about 1700 were also specific. They condoled the deaths of individuals and those resulting from particular events, such as a raid, expedition, or epidemic. See, for example, NYCD 3: 483, 806, 808; DHNY 2:164-70; and Propositions of Seneca soldiers to Albany Gov. Ingoldesby, Albany, May 31, 1693, N.Y. Col. Mss., 39: 63, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 4, May 31, 1693.

<sup>27</sup>For examples, in June 1699 for the death of Aqueendero of the Onondagas and in July 1701 for the son of Sadaganahaties of Onondaga and Sinnonnandduwan of Cayuga, see NYCD 4: 571, 906.

<sup>28</sup>The most common cause of death was probably war. For example, see NYCD 4: 41-42, 235-37; and A Journal of New York Governor Fletcher's Expedition to Albany, 1696 (New York: William Bradford, 1696) in IIDH, reel 5, Sept 17-Oct. 9, 1696(II). Specific accidents and diseases or epidemics were also causes for condolence, see NYCD 3: 808; Account of a Treaty Between Governor Fletcher and the Five Nations at Albany (New York: William Bradford, 1694) in IIDH, reel 5, Aug. 15-28, 1694; Propositions of Cayugas in Albany, N.Y. Col. Mss., 41: 118, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 5, Sept. 28, 1697 (II); Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 41, 43, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Sept. 8, 1733 (II), and

French attack on the Mohawks, Governor Fletcher apologized to the Indians for having no proper presents with which to condole their loss, but promised "to be with you at the beginning of summer to renew the antient covenant chain, . . . and to give you something to wipe off your tears for the losse of your relations, which I heartily condole." Even in this instance, however, despite his realization of the need to condole, Fletcher was apparently still insensitive enough to ask the Indians to attack Canada in the meantime. They reminded him that he had "been acquainted with us of old, that it hath always been our custom first to condole the death of those who are killed by the enemy, being all one heart, one blood one soul," and that they were "now in some manner drunk with the blood lately shedd" by the French. "It is not usuall for us whilst under such greife and anxiety as doth now seize us," they noted, "to pursue to revenge our selves of the enemy."<sup>29</sup>

Interestingly, many of these specific condolences were not part of opening ceremonies, but occurred during or after the regular business of conferences. In these cases, the

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Sept. 11, 1733.

<sup>29</sup>NYCD 4: 21-22; Governor Fletcher's Speech to the Five Nations, Feb. 25, 1693, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1038, in IIDH, reel 4, Feb 25, 1693, and Feb 25, 1693 (II). They further pointed out to the English that they had "lost your blood as well as wee & therefore the blood ought to be revenged unanimously by both sides." Fletcher did finally get around to condoling with the Indians as promised in July, see NYCD 4: 41.

ceremonies frequently involved the recognition of new Indian sachems and captains and do not seem to fit what later became the expected pattern of Iroquois diplomatic protocol, because business was concluded before grief was removed and the participants restored to a good understanding. Rather, they seem to adhere more closely to the original purpose of the Iroquois Condolence as a political ritual for mourning and replacing dead chiefs.

The Albany commissioners also began to send special emissaries to condole with the Iroquois in their towns and villages when they learned of particular losses. In 1691 they reported to the commander-in-chief in New York that the Mohawks had lost ninety men in two years. The commissioners felt that it would be "extreamly needful to condole the death of those Indians now killed by giving their friends a present of 1000 or 1200 gilders in white strung wampum to wipe off their tears. This we offer to Your Honor's consideracon as a business of no mean concern."<sup>30</sup> These condolence missions occurred with increasing regularity after 1700.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>NYCD 3: 815-16. An alternate source gives the recommendation as follows: "We must condole with them by giving them white-strung wampum to wipe off their tears. This is an important matter." See Albany Officers to Commander in Chief in New York, Dec. 30, 1691, Cal. of State Papers, 1689-1692, item 1968, 580-81, in IIDH, reel 4, Dec. 30, 1691.

<sup>31</sup>See, for example, NYCD 4: 891; Journal of Johannes Bleecker & David Schuyler's Trip to Onondaga, 2-29 June 1701, enclosed in letter of Lt. Gov. Nanfan, Aug. 20, 1701, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1046, in IIDH, reel 6, Aug 20, 1701



The general condolence openings or "usual Ceremonies of Condolance" so prevalent under William Johnson began to appear in accounts of council openings with some regularity during the 1740s. The ceremony expressed sorrow for the deaths of any individuals on either side of the fire and cleared away obstructions to a good understanding so that the business of the council could begin. Particular individuals were seldom named. The speaker merely "grieved for the Loss of your People who are Deceased since our Last Meeting," and wiped their listeners' tears.<sup>32</sup> By the 1750s, largely due to the influence of William Johnson and his

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(II); Petition of Lawrence Claesen, Oct. 3, 1706, N.Y. Col. Mss., 51: 167b, N.Y. State Arch., in IIDH, reel 7, Oct. 3, 1706; Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 40-41, 202v-203, 252, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 9, June 5, 1723, Sept. 9, 1727, and Sept. 9, 1727 (II); Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 290v-292v, 295-295v, in IIDH reel 10, July 21, 1729, and Sept. 27, 1729; AIA, 177. Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen was present on each of these trips.

<sup>32</sup>See Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 71-72v, 390v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Sept. 18, 1735, and reel 13, July 2, 1746. In 1743, the River Indians condoled the "Loss of all your people whether died by the course of nature or killed in war" since their last meeting, see Report to Indian Commissioners, Aug. 9, 1743, Harmanus Bleecker Papers, Mss. #AV9902: 101, N.Y. State Library, Albany. For examples of general openings, see WJP 1: 625-28, 3: 209, 430, 475-77, 483-85, 537-38, 761-62, 9: 174-79, 356-58, 589, 730-33, 796-97, 13: 428; CRP 5: 476-77, 6: 69, 7: 68, 508-10, 650-52; DHNY 2: 633; Treaties at Harris Ferry & Lancaster, March-May, 1757 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1757), 4-5, in IIDH, reel 20, Mar.-May 20, 1757; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1823, 333-336v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 23, Jan. 16-18, [1759]; Minutes of Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, MSS 970.5, M665, Croghan's journal, April-Nov. 1759, American Philosophical Society Library, Phila., in IIDH, reel 22, March 15, 1758-April 12, 1760.

officers, this opening ritual became so formulaic and predictable that it frequently appears in the records only as the "usual Ceremony of Condolance" with little or no explanation.

The introduction of standardized expressions of grief for any and all deaths at the openings of councils may have resulted from Johnson's attempt to streamline and rationalize the system of forest diplomacy. By offering general-purpose condolences at the opening of every conference, perhaps he hoped to eliminate some of the delays and difficulties caused by failure to remember to condole specific deaths. He may also have adopted it as the most obvious and efficient way of removing major obstacles to a good understanding during the upheavals of the Seven Years' War. Whatever the reason, these general opening statements of condolence and references to the opening ceremonies as "Ceremonies of Condolance" clearly became common under Johnson's administration.<sup>33</sup>

By the 1740s, conference protocol assumed most of the characteristics recognized in the forest diplomacy of the 1750s and 1760s. Reciprocal gestures of condolence and the ritual drying of tears, clearing of throats, hearts, and paths became customary,<sup>34</sup> and the outlines of treaty

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<sup>33</sup>WJP 3: 442, 761.

<sup>34</sup>For example, see NYCD 4: 896-908; CCP 68: 420; A Treaty of Peace & Friendship Made and Concluded between His Excellency Sir William Keith, Bart. Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, For and on Behalf of the said Province and

protocol are clearly discernible in the records of Anglo-Iroquois conferences from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Interpreters, particularly Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen who served as the provincial interpreter for New York between 1700 and 1740, undoubtedly played an active role in these developments. His long tenure in office and nearly single-handed control of diplomatic interpreting during those years, allowed him to wield considerable influence as an advisor to New York officials and fostered consistency in the practice and protocol of intercultural diplomacy. The deeper understanding of Iroquois culture, language, and methods of doing business acquired by Van der Volgen and the other interpreters that emerged after 1700, combined with their central role in diplomatic exchanges, also helps to explain the adoption of an essentially Iroquois ritual as the basis for Anglo-Iroquois interaction during the first half of the eighteenth century.

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the Chiefs of the Indians of the Five Nations, At Albany, in the Month of September, 1722 (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1722); Proceedings of a Conference at Albany, July 19, 1701, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1053, in IIDH, reel 6, [July 19], 1701; Proceedings of a Conference at Albany, 10-21 July 1701, encl. in letter from John Nanfan, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1046, in IIDH, reel 6, Aug. 20, 1701; Procs. of Conf. at Albany, Aug. 1715, encl. in Gov. Hunter to Board of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1051, 52 in IIDH, reel 8, Sept 29, 1715; Min. of Ind. Comm., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 40v-42v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 10, Sept. 8, 1733, Sept. 8, 1773 (II), and Sept. 11, 1733; Min. of Ind. Comm., vol. 1820, pp. 71-72v in IIDH, reel 10, Sept 18, 1735, and Sept. 20, 1735; Pennsylvania Provincial Records, I:90-91, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Bureau, in IIDH, reel 11, Sept. 28, 1736; and CRP 4: 663.

Though the rules and conventions of treaty protocol were understood by the most knowledgeable and effective Indian officials by the mid-eighteenth century, that did not eliminate the need for interpreters. According to the pattern preserved in contemporary Iroquois oral tradition, a conference ideally consisted of four stages.<sup>35</sup> The first three involved the invitation process, while the resulting scheduled council constituted the fourth. Each stage of the sequence amounted to a council in its own right.

Unfortunately, since substantive issues were taken up only at the final council, Europeans frequently neglected to record the earlier stages in detail. Still, examples of all of the different types of councils appear in the colonial records beginning in the 1740s and 1750s. Every phase of the sequence involved interpreters as translators, messengers, agents, and advisors for one side or the other, and in all of them interpreters played the role of cultural brokers.

Once the opening exchanges began, interpreters assumed a central role in the proceedings as translators. Protocol entitled each party to speak in its own language, so all speeches had to be translated into the language of the listeners by an interpreter. If more than one group sat opposite the speaker, each was accorded the same courtesy of hearing the speech in its own language. In the nonliterate

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<sup>35</sup>Foster, "Who Spoke First," 194-97; Foster, "Another Look," 104-8.

Indian cultures of the northeastern woodlands, the spoken word assumed great importance. Because memory constituted the primary historical record, it was imperative that everyone clearly understand all that transpired at treaty councils. Even when the parties involved were familiar with each other's languages, the repetition of a speech in the listener's tongue diminished the possibility of misunderstandings and undoubtedly reinforced the message in his mind. In addition, the privilege of hearing a speech in one's own tongue was viewed as a sign of the respect the speaker had for his listeners. Because of the diversity and difficulty of the Indian languages involved, several interpreters might be needed at a single conference, each taking his turn on the floor to translate the message.<sup>36</sup>

Although the image of the interpreter as translator is dominant, a closer look reveals that more was going on than first meets the eye. On the most basic level, translation required an interpreter familiar with the grammar and vocabulary of the two languages involved. The complex, stylized nature of public oratory, however, required significantly higher levels of linguistic competence than the translation of casual conversation. The translation of a council speech involved the distinct yet intertwined elements of accuracy of content and accuracy of form or

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<sup>36</sup>Foster, "Another Look," 102; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed. Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 1: 42; Colden, History, 2: 108; CRP 4: 580, 680, 5: 307, 8: 176.

style. Prominent, competent council interpreters were masters of both.

Metaphorical speech was probably the most obvious and culturally circumscribed of the "Indian forms" interpreters encountered in translating council speeches.<sup>37</sup> Indian orators frequently spoke in symbolic, allegorical terms that conveyed their opinions, moods, and values to sensitive and culturally informed interpreters. The Covenant Chain, the Tree of Peace, the path, and the fire symbolically expressed Iroquois perceptions of the relationship between themselves and the British while subtly conveying broader implications about the nature of alliances and how to maintain them in Iroquois culture. Relational forms of address, such as "Father" or "Brother" also contained vital clues to Indian perceptions of the Anglo-Iroquois relationship and the responsibilities each party owed to the other.<sup>38</sup> In order to find linguistic equivalents, interpreters had to have a clear understanding of the latent, culturally prescribed

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<sup>37</sup>Indeed Cadwallader Colden asserted that Iroquois "Speeches abound with Metaphors, after the Manner of the Eastern Nations," Colden, History, 1:xxxvi. For references to adapting speeches to "Indian forms" and idioms, see also Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 76; CRP 5: 733; WJP 13: 501.

<sup>38</sup>Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1984), 44, 192. For a discussion of the use of metaphor and relational forms of address, see William N. Fenton, "Structure, Continuity, and Change" and the "Glossary of Figures of Speech in Iroquois Political Rhetoric," in HCID, 11, 16-17, 21-24, 115-24.

meanings and values that the metaphors conveyed. During a conference at Lancaster in June 1744, for example, Conrad Weiser had to explain to the Englishmen present that Canasatego's allusions to a "strong and big Rock" and to the "big Mountain" referred to the Oneidas and Onondagas, respectively.<sup>39</sup> Interpreters used their knowledge not only in translating Indian speeches but also when called upon to advise their employers about how to respond to the Indians seated across the fire.

Adept at finding linguistic equivalents for unfamiliar forms and concepts, the best council interpreters also attempted to imitate the style, organization, and rhetorical devices employed by Iroquois and English speakers. The method of translation allowed the interpreter the latitude necessary to adapt a speaker's statement and his oratorical formula in the second language, since he usually waited until the end of a short speech or until the close of a section or proposal in a longer speech before giving a translation.<sup>40</sup> This practice allowed for the marking of sections of speeches with belts or strings of wampum.

Not all interpreters were proficient enough to perform in this manner, however. At Albany in 1746, for example, when the public interpreter was taken ill and could not fulfill his duties, "several were employed, who had

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<sup>39</sup>Colden, History, 2: 139.

<sup>40</sup>Foster, "Who Spoke First," 203 n. 5; Foster, "Another Look," 113 n. 20; CRP 7: 519.

Knowledge sufficient in the Language of the Six Nations, to make themselves be understood, and to understand what was spoke to them; yet none of them were so much Masters of the Language, as to speak with that Propriety and Distinctness that is expected, and usual on so solemn an Occasion. It was thought therefore proper, to make one of the Sachems understand the speech, by the Assistance of the common Interpreters, that he might be able to deliver it Paragraph by Paragraph, as it should be spoke."<sup>41</sup> The interpreter's ability to adapt disparate speech patterns and forms to rough equivalency during conferences demonstrated his skill as a cultural broker. It also made him an indispensable part of the basic communication process at Anglo-Iroquois councils.<sup>42</sup>

The proficient interpreter sometimes also exercised considerable discretionary power in rendering the content of speeches. By subtly altering the tone or style of a speaker's remarks the interpreter could direct the course of a series of exchanges toward a desired end or away from misunderstandings. As William Johnson explained to Lord

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<sup>41</sup>Colden, History, 2: 224; Samuel Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth-Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), 15. When no proficient orator was available locally, the Indians also commonly resorted to employing outside speakers to act for them. The vocabulary and knowledge expected of speakers was so highly specialized that few Indians attained the required level of skill.

<sup>42</sup>CRP 7: 206.



Hillsborough in 1757, he sometimes "softened" the translation of speeches "without deviating from their meaning, because I found them rather more animated than they often are, or than I desired." He believed that without his tempering of the Indians' "mode of Expression" their meanings "might be liable to misconstruction unless due allowance be made for them as Savages who have the most extravagant notions of Freedom, property, and independence."<sup>43</sup> Interpreters undoubtedly followed similar practices for similar reasons. Although such discretionary power could be abused by interpreters, most seem to have judged wisely, acting as true mediators trying to maintain amicable relations between the two sides of the fire.

Errors in judgment or translation could be disastrous and easily arose "from not knowing the distinctions amongst the Indians, or how to express their Ideas from the uncommon mode of Stile they make use of."<sup>44</sup> Even skilled interpreters could have difficulties on occasion. At a council in Philadelphia in February 1756, two interpreters, John Davison and Conrad Weiser, differed in their interpretations of part of a Seneca chief's speech. Unable to resolve the matter immediately, Weiser and Davison met with the Indians and settled between them the "true Interpretation," which was delivered by Weiser the following

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<sup>43</sup>DHNY 2: 946.

<sup>44</sup>WJP 11: 400.

day.<sup>45</sup> In 1757 Governor Denny attempted to prevent such occurrences by asking the Indians to give their speeches to the interpreters before speaking them in public, "that they might understand their Meaning before they were to deliver them."<sup>46</sup>

In addition to adapting "Indian Forms" to English (and vice versa), the interpreter had to be familiar with the Indians' manner of speech and delivery, since he was frequently called on to act as the appointed speaker for one side or the other. As speakers, interpreters had to "observe and perform all the ceremonies expected by and in use among Indians, from persons when the[y] spake on publick matters."<sup>47</sup> Depending on the nature of the speech or the ceremony of which it was a part, the words might be sung, chanted, or spoken "with the air and Gesture of an Orator," the speaker walking to and fro "with much composure and gravity in . . . [his] countenance."<sup>48</sup> Even Cadwallader

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<sup>45</sup>CRP 7: 49-50. A similar situation occurred during the Easton conference in July 1757 with the Delaware. On July 29, the Delaware "Teedyuscung's Speech to the Governor of Yesterday was carefully read, and appearing to be very obscure, it was thought proper to desire Mr. Croghan to call Teedyuscung and his Council, with the Interpreters, to a private Meeting, and desire them to explain it, which was done." Ibid., 7: 679.

<sup>46</sup>CRP 7: 517.

<sup>47</sup>CRP 8: 470.

<sup>48</sup>William M. Darlington, Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical, and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of His Contemporaries (New York: Argonaut Press, 1966), 52; John Bartram, Observations on the Inhabitants, Climate, Soil, Rivers, Productions, Animals,

Colden, who was ignorant of any Indian language, was struck by the Iroquois' "great Fluency of Words" and the "Grace in their Manner" when speaking. In a culture where no person had the power to compel obedience, the "Arts of Persuasion" alone prevailed. So high were the standards of elegant and fluent council speech, in fact, that few Indians "themselves are so far Masters of their Language, as never offend the Ears of their Indian Auditory. . . . They have it seems, a certain Urbanitas, or Atticism, in their language, of which the common Ears are ever sensible, though only their great Speakers attain to it."<sup>49</sup> To speak effectively, the council interpreter had to be familiar with these oratorical customs and the "ceremonials of publick meetings" and perform in the appropriate and expected manner.<sup>50</sup> If he could not, he employed someone else, usually an Indian, to speak for him.

As the conference proceeded and the appointed speakers exchanged words across the council fire, large quantities of wampum also changed hands since the passing of a wampum string or belt punctuated each proposal or section of a

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and other matters worthy of Notice . . . in his Travels from Pensilvania to Onondaga, Oswego and the Lake Ontario, In Canada (London, 1741), facs. repr. as Travels in Pensilvania and Canada, March of America Facsimile Series, no. 41 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), 58; William M. Beauchamp, Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-66, Onondaga Historical Association (Syracuse, N.Y.: The Dehler Press, 1916), 48; Beauchamp, Civil, Religious and Mourning Councils, 423; and CRP 4: 663.

<sup>49</sup>Colden, History 1:xxxiv-xxxv. See also Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 121; and Kirkland, Journals, 7.

<sup>50</sup>WJP 9: 380.

speech. The subject and gravity of the proposal or statement represented by the wampum determined the size, color, and pattern of the belt or string. So-called black or predominantly black strings and belts generally accompanied topics relating to death or war. Figures or emblems might also be worked into the larger, more important belts.<sup>51</sup>

Once a belt had been received across the council fire, protocol demanded that similar belts or strings accompany each portion of the respondents' reply. When responding, the speaker displayed the received belts and strings in the order they were delivered by laying them upon a table or hanging them across a stick and repeating what was said on each. At the end of every article he returned thanks, added his group's reply, and passed the new wampum across the fire.<sup>52</sup> The return of the original belt without one in reply indicated a rebuke or the rejection of the petitioners' proposal.<sup>53</sup> Apparently, the motive in

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<sup>51</sup>Beauchamp, Civil, Religious, and Mourning Councils, 388; Colden, History 1: xviii-xix; WJP 3: 450; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 222; Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 30.

<sup>52</sup>CRP 8: 218, 4: 702, 5: 151, 7: 145, 8: 181, 757; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 55, 146; Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 91, 165. Whether the wampum was hung across a stick or laid upon a table seems to have been a matter of setting and convenience--a table most often being used during councils in European settlements and a stick during councils in Indian villages or towns.

<sup>53</sup>WJP 2: 127, 379, 3: 446; Beauchamp, Moravian

presenting wampum was to elicit a formal response, since without it none was necessary or expected. The Indians paid no attention to any "Message or Invitation be it of what consequence or nature it will, unless attended or confirmed by a String or Belt of Wampum."<sup>54</sup> The exchange of wampum thus served as the principal means of regulating and structuring the flow of the council's business and ensuring the orderly succession of speakers from the two sides of the fire.<sup>55</sup>

Wampum's importance in Iroquois council protocol required the interpreter to be familiar with its uses and

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Journals, 222; Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 59-60. In one case at Onondaga in 1752, the return of the original wampum merely indicated a desire to refrain from responding until the proposals, with the original wampum, could be made to a larger public assembly of the Six Nations. See Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 115. In this sense it demonstrates the prospective function of wampum discussed by Foster. See note 52 below.

<sup>54</sup>DHNY 2: 625; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 228, 236, 239. Such informal discussion is sometimes referred to in the records as "discourse" or talk "in the bushes."

<sup>55</sup>Until recently, most research on wampum's function in Indian councils has focused on its uses as a validating or ratifying device and as a mnemonic aid in recalling the details of treaties as in WJP 3: 709. See, for example, George S. Snyderman, "The Functions of Wampum," American Philosophical Society, Proceedings 98 (1954): 469-94; and William N. Fenton, "The New York State Wampum Collection: The Case for the Integrity of Cultural Treasures," Am. Phil. Soc. Procs. 115 (1971): 455-56; or Druke, "Iroquois Treaties," in HCID, 89. As Michael Foster has recently pointed out, these are retrospective functions. He makes a convincing case for the prospective functions of wampum in his article, "Another Look at the Function of Wampum," see especially p. 108. The prospective uses of wampum are my primary concern here and are of most significance in considering the interpreter's role as a cultural broker.

significance. Because his English employers relied on his expert advice when planning the delivery of speeches and responses during conferences, the interpreter had responsibility for choosing the appropriate wampum. If none of suitable type or value was available in the government's council bag, the interpreter had to procure it, usually by employing some Indian women to make the needed belts or strings.<sup>56</sup> When the interpreter could not be present to make the selection himself, he sent his advice in writing to the governor or his representatives. Conrad Weiser, for example, wrote to Governor Hamilton in September of 1754 regarding a forthcoming council: "The Wampums are marked and your Honour will easily see to what Article they belong. The largest Belt of the Delawares is of very great Consequence and Importance, and ought to be answered in a very solemn manner by your Honour and the Council, including the House of Representatives, with a much larger Belt and a moving Speech." Weiser went on to assert that the Pennsylvania government "should give large Belts. The Wampums are cheap, and make, if worked into Belts and attended with proper Speeches, good Impressions."<sup>57</sup> Although the interpreters might not have fully understood

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<sup>56</sup>CRP 7: 216; Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 26; WJP 2: 579. The actual manufacturers of the belts and strings are rarely noted in the records, which generally only include expense account entries regarding the cost of wampum and of "making them up in proper belts." See, for example, WJP 2: 575, 599, 625, 639, 3: 159, 175, 8: 1095.

<sup>57</sup>CRP 6: 150.

the meaning placed on wampum by the Indians, they certainly knew what was required to make effective, proper impressions during Indian-European conferences. This information proved invaluable to the English colonial governments.

Beside the obvious necessity of being familiar with the Indians' language, manner of speaking, and the uses and functions of wampum, the interpreter also had to be sensitive to more subtle aspects of Indian behavior. One of the most difficult to deal with, given the impatience of the British, was the Iroquois' penchant for careful deliberation, which manifested itself in their slow and deliberate manner of speaking during public councils. Before beginning a speech, an orator frequently walked around the assembly "with a mediative aspect, as if collecting his thoughts."<sup>58</sup> Similar pauses often punctuated long proposals and addresses, as the speaker paced up and down for several minutes preparing himself to begin the next section of his talk. The interpreter had to be aware of the Indians' deliberateness of action so that he could present himself and his speeches with the proper decorum and avoid the possibility of misunderstandings caused by undue haste on the part of the English--or undue slowness on the part of the Indians.

While the English were frequently impressed by the gravity and poise of Indian orators and could perhaps

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<sup>58</sup>Hale, Iroquois Book of Rites, 151.

appreciate their careful habits of speech, they were less understanding about the Indians' insistence on respites both before and during conferences. In 1768 Governor Henry Moore of New York arrived at William Johnson's house for a conference and was offended by Colonel Guy Johnson's failure to bring the Indians to meet with him immediately. William Johnson later explained that the situation had not arisen from the unexpectedness or unwelcomeness of his excellency's coming, but because the Indians "declined doing business on the day of your Arrival;" as it was, they felt that "every thing was Conducted with Rather too much rapidity."<sup>59</sup>

Similar delays punctuated the business sessions once a conference began, since the Indians refused to return an immediate answer to a serious question, however obvious. Indeed there was "nothing they contemn so much as precipitation in publick councils."<sup>60</sup> Cadwallader Colden asserted that "Every sudden Repartee, in a publick treaty, leaves with them an Impression of a light inconsiderate Mind."<sup>61</sup> Consequently, conferences lasted many days when a

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<sup>59</sup>WJP 6: 399-400. For an ethnographic perspective on European versus Iroquois attitudes towards the opening and closings of speech events, see Michael K. Foster, "Iroquois Interaction Patterns," in Native North American Interaction Patterns, ed. R. Darnell and M. Foster, Canadian Ethnology Service, Mercury Series Paper, no. 112 (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1988), 22-36.

<sup>60</sup>Bartram, Travels, 58.

<sup>61</sup>According to Colden, even urgent messages were never delivered at the messengers' first approach. Rather they "sit down for a Minute or two, at least, in Silence, to recollect themselves, before they speak, that they may not



number of important points were to be raised and discussed, and private sessions, during which one side or the other considered its reply to a set of proposals, frequently interrupted the public councils.<sup>62</sup> The private councils provided the forum in which the principal issues were "first agitated, and the sentiments of the rest best known."<sup>63</sup> Even at these sessions, all deliberations were conducted "with Extraordinary regularity & Decorum," though debate could be quite animated.<sup>64</sup> Although the business transacted at these private conferences must have been voluminous, few English participants bothered to record them in detail, concentrating instead on the final results as revealed in public councils.

The interpreter often found himself involved in these private deliberations, particularly on occasions when the British and the Six Nations sat on the same side of the council fire. Protocol dictated that no one could speak for a tribe or group unless he had been mutually appointed by all he was to represent. Neither could anyone speak his private views during public sessions of the council.

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show any Degree of Fear or Surprize, by an indecent Expression." Colden, History, 1: xli.

<sup>62</sup>Bartram, Travels, 58; Colden, History, 2: 71, 83, 127; WJP 2: 795. Sometimes the English were forced to wait months rather than days for a reply, while the Indians returned to their homes to consult about an answer. See, for example, Ibid., 2: 796.

<sup>63</sup>DHNY 2: 943.

<sup>64</sup>WJP 12: 952.

Rather, whenever a proposal required a reply, those involved retired to carefully consider the issue privately and consolidate their position.<sup>65</sup> When acting together, the English and their Indian allies had to agree on the content of speeches, wampum, and a suitable speaker prior to each public session. Reaching such agreement could take a long time and required the participation of skilled diplomats and interpreters.<sup>66</sup>

During private sessions, the interpreter often served as the British government's representative and helped negotiate the details of the speeches and wampums to be delivered. On a journey to Onondaga in 1743, Conrad Weiser recorded that the Onondagas "held another Private Council, and sent for me and Shikellimo [Shikellamy]; every thing was discoursed over again, and we agreed that Canasatego should speak in behalf of the Government of Virginia; and the Wampums were divided into so many parts as there were Articles to be spoken of."<sup>67</sup> On other occasions the Indians requested an interpreter's presence during their deliberations so that he could advise them or answer

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<sup>65</sup>Foster, "Who Spoke First," 184.

<sup>66</sup>William Johnson complained to Lord Hillsborough in 1769 that his health, "already reduced to a very low state from severe fatigue in his Majesty's service, was . . . rendered much worse by being obliged to sit whole nights generally in the open woods in private Conferences with the leading men." DHNY 2: 943.

<sup>67</sup>CRP 4: 662-63. For further examples, see CRP 5: 476, 532, 670; and Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 35, 62.

questions. Conrad Weiser, an adopted member of the Six Nations Council as well as an English interpreter, apparently served the Indians in this capacity a number of times.<sup>68</sup>

The interpreter's presence was even more evident during private English councils where he acted as an advisor and consultant. One vital service he performed for his employers was the writing of speeches and replies to the Indians. In addition to putting the speeches into proper Indian forms, the interpreter often advised the governors and their councils about the content and tone of their messages. During the Lancaster Conference in 1757, for example, the Governor's Council met on May 14 to discuss the preceding day's events. "The Minutes of Yesterday's Conferences were produced by Mr. Croghan, and read, and it was then considered what shou'd be said to the Indians. . . The Governor on this desired to know what might be a proper Answer to the Indians, And Mr. Croghan giving the Heads of Answers to the Indian Speeches, which were read Paragraph by Paragraph, it was referred to him and Mr. Weiser to put them into Form."<sup>69</sup> Disagreements between interpreters regarding the appropriateness of a response could complicate and prolong private council sessions. Just three days before

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<sup>68</sup>CRP 6: 115; Colden, History 2: 157.

<sup>69</sup>CRP 7: 527. For other examples of interpreters engaged in writing speeches, see CRP 6: 186, 591, 7: 90, 653, 655; and Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1: 92.

this apparently amicable collaboration between George Croghan and Conrad Weiser, the two had disagreed on the tone that should be taken in another council speech. The address went through three drafts before they found an acceptable compromise.<sup>70</sup>

The interpreter also gave advice on a number of other aspects of the conference proceedings. Most important, he generally served as the primary source of information on Indian custom and protocol, advising English governmental representatives regarding the ceremonies and courtesies that were expected of them, the posture that should be assumed toward the Indians, proper procedures regarding wampum received, and even such fine points as who had the right to choose the place or time for an upcoming council.<sup>71</sup>

Presents given to the Indians at the close of a conference were also chosen by "advising with the interpreter as to the Quantity and Quality."<sup>72</sup>

A skillful diplomat or interpreter could manipulate protocol to gain the upper hand in council negotiations. The allocation of the roles of host and petitioner, for example, could be critical in the organization of a council,

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<sup>70</sup>CRP 7: 517.

<sup>71</sup>For example, see CRP 5: 147, 148, 7: 80, 146, 182, 206, 8: 149, 297; WJP 4: 330-31. Weiser engaged in nearly all of these activities at the Easton peace conference of 1758, which involved the English, the Six Nations, the Delawares and several other Indian groups. See Wallace, Conrad Weiser, chapters 59-61.

<sup>72</sup>Colden, History 2: 97; CRP 5: 683, 7: 95.

since the host group spoke first during the greeting phase of a council and gained a psychological "homefield" advantage over their guests. Even more critical was the position of the petitioners in a council. Since they spoke first during the business portion of the conference, they set the agenda of the council meeting, forcing the other group to respond to their proposals before introducing new topics for consideration.<sup>73</sup> Aware of such fine points of protocol, a knowledgeable interpreter could foresee and forestall problems and help his employers operate effectively within the system to meet their goals.

Given the complexities and subtleties of council protocol and custom, it is hardly surprising that breaches of protocol occurred. "The manner of saying things to Indians depends so much on Forms & a narrow Observation of them and their Dispositions at the Time of speaking to them"

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<sup>73</sup>For a fuller explanation of the speaking order at conferences and its implications, see Foster, "Who Spoke First." As he points out, Teedyuscung seems to have been particularly adept at using protocol to his advantage and employed it to gain the upper hand at Easton in 1756. Easton lay in territory whose ownership was disputed by the English government of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Indians. Teedyuscung managed to seize the initiative from an inexperienced Governor Denny and act as host at the opening of the council, subtly bolstering his claim to Easton as Delaware territory. Once the business phase began, the Delaware again seized the advantage by speaking first and setting the agenda for the conference. See *ibid.*, 190-91, 200-201. It is interesting to note that a similar seizure of the initiative at Easton in 1758 gained him no advantage, but rather the anger of his own counselors and the Six Nations. See Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 538-39.

that it seemed impossible at times to avoid offending them.<sup>74</sup> Some mistakes engendered no more than laughter and mild embarrassment, as an inexperienced interpreter filling in for Weiser at Albany in 1746 discovered. Following the expected procedure, he "returned the Yo-hah at the End of every Paragraph, and having done the same at the Time they [the Indians] declared War [on the French], it occasioned Laughter among them; upon which, observing his Mistake, he began the War-Shout, in which all the Indians joined."<sup>75</sup>

Not all breaches were so easily mended. On several occasions the English overlooked or forgot expected ceremonies, creating a temporary lapse in good relations and bringing the proceedings to a halt until the oversight was remedied. In 1755 the Mohawks complained to the governor of Pennsylvania that the governor of New York had failed to remove the hatchet from their hands at the close of hostilities against the French. According to Indian custom, before peace could be made between two offending parties and normal relations restored, the hatchet of war had to be removed from their hands and heads. New York's oversight kept the Mohawks from dealing with that colony and led them to approach Pennsylvania instead. At Easton in 1758, Conrad Weiser avoided a similar breach by convincing Governor Denny of the necessity of observing the ceremonial removal of the

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<sup>74</sup>CRP 7: 488.

<sup>75</sup>Colden, History 2: 239.

French hatchet from Delaware, Shawnee, and western Iroquois hands, as well as English heads, before proceeding to the business of peace-making.<sup>76</sup> At other times, Indians delayed meetings with the English because "Young Warriors and not Counsellors" brought the invitation message or because the wampum sent was "no more than Strings."<sup>77</sup> Ultimately, given the disparity of the cultures in contact, it is surprising that more misunderstandings did not occur, and interpreters must receive a good deal of the credit.

One means of avoiding mistakes was the interpreters' frequent employment of Indians as advisors and speakers during councils. An interpreter sometimes found it personally advantageous to secure the services of a knowledgeable Indian to "serve him as his private Counsellor, and direct him what Measures to take" to ensure a desired result.<sup>78</sup> When unsure of the proper procedure or ceremony called for on a particular occasion, the interpreter generally engaged an Indian to act in his place as his representative. While attending a conference at

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<sup>76</sup>For 1755 incident, see CRP 6: 283. For a description of events at Easton in 1758, see Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 536, 539-40.

<sup>77</sup>CRP 7: 515, 516, 649.

<sup>78</sup>CRP, quote 6: 112; also 4: 661, 7: 216. Shikellamy, a former French captive and adopted Oneida, served Conrad Weiser as his personal advisor and friend on many occasions early in his career. See, for example, Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 154. As Wallace remarks in reference to Shikellamy's death in 1748, Weiser had actually "depended" on the Indian for advice and "blundered dangerously when he first found himself without it." Ibid., 277.

Onondaga in 1743, Conrad Weiser was forced to ask Canasatego "to speak for me in Open Council, as I would tell him, Article by Article . . . because . . . it required some Ceremonies with which I was not acquainted."<sup>79</sup> Even after years of experience among the Indians, interpreters sometimes found themselves at a loss and had to engage surrogate speakers.<sup>80</sup> Under such circumstances, however, the interpreter carefully briefed the Indian speaker beforehand and closely monitored him for accuracy during the council to see that he "acquitted himself of his Trust faithfully, and had delivered the Sense of the Speech clearly and distinctly."<sup>81</sup>

Interpreters could also use their discretionary powers to decide what to interpret in order to avoid breaches of protocol and misunderstandings. At Easton in 1758, Weiser and Montour avoided an open misunderstanding between the Six Nations and the Delawares by refusing to interpret a heated denunciation of the Delaware chief, Teedyuscung, by Nickas, one of the Mohawk speakers. If they had publicly translated the speech and entered it into the records, the Delawares

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<sup>79</sup>CRP 4: 663.

<sup>80</sup>In 1758, Weiser interpreted the substance of the governor's opening speech at Easton, but as "his Memory did not serve him to remember the Several Ceremonies [there]in, . . . he desired Nichas, a Mohock Chief, to do it for him, which he did." CRP 8: 177.

<sup>81</sup>Colden, History 2: 224-25; WJP 3: 164, 11: 207; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 51, 53, 116; Bartram, Travels, 59; CRP 5: 520, 670.



would have been forced to act upon it. Weiser and Montour, by choosing not to translate it in open council and by persuading the Indians to allow them to interpret it for the Governor and his Council privately the following morning, diffused a potentially disastrous situation and allowed the antagonists to clear the air.<sup>82</sup> On other occasions, interpreters, while translating, may have used their power more subtly to smooth over or tone down potential points of discord or disagreement.

Although the majority of available information pertains to interpreters in the service of the English, the Iroquois and their allies also required the assistance of cultural brokers to "prevent Misunderstandings arising" between them and their English brethren.<sup>83</sup> Unfortunately, since written records were kept only by the European participants, the surviving information on interpreters serving the Indians consists primarily of observations made by Europeans. Although most of the individuals employed by the Indians as interpreters seem to have been Indians or métis, they sometimes employed Euro-Americans, usually interpreters, in much the same way that the English secured the services of Indians as speakers and advisors.<sup>84</sup> In addition, although there are few recorded examples of interpreters advising

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<sup>82</sup>CRP 8: 189; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 542-43. See also, CRP 6: 281; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 175.

<sup>83</sup>WJP 10: 505, 8: 212.

<sup>84</sup>See, for example, CRP 7: 137.

Indians on European diplomatic procedures and customs, Indian demands for written copies of deeds and treaties, as well as the incorporation of toasts into council ceremonies, were undoubtedly due in part to the interpreters' experience and advice. Neither the Indians nor the English could function effectively in council without the assistance of interpreters.

Once the business of a conference was completed the meetings were closed with yet another series of ceremonies in which the interpreter often played a central role. Conrad Weiser reported at Onondaga in 1743, that "after all was over, according to the Ancient Custom of that fire, a song of friendship and Joy was sung by the Chiefs, after this the Council fire on their side was put out. I with the same Ceremonee put out the fire on behalf of Assaryquoa & Onas [the governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania], and they departed."<sup>85</sup> Feasting, toasts, and the exchange of presents usually followed the extinguishing of the council fire.<sup>86</sup> Even during these festivities, the interpreter's presence was centrally felt and seen. During the great dinner at the Lancaster treaty in 1744 the interpreter, again Conrad Weiser, "stood betwixt the tables, where the Governor sat, and that, at which the sachems were placed, who, by order of

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<sup>85</sup>CRP 4: 668, 5: 477; Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 167-68. See also Beauchamp, Civil, Religious, and Mourning Councils, 425.

<sup>86</sup>Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 194-95, 222; Beauchamp, Moravian Journals, 119.

his Honour, was desired to inform the Indians he drank their healths, which he did."<sup>87</sup> After all was concluded, the visitors took their leave of their hosts and departed on their homeward journey.

The interpreter performed a vital service for both the Iroquois and the English as they confronted each other across the council fires of New York and Pennsylvania during the mid-eighteenth century. During public council sessions and behind the scenes, they were actively involved in mediating during the intercultural exchanges that occurred during Anglo-Iroquois conferences. Satisfaction of the demands made upon them required special skills and an intimate knowledge of more than one culture. The image of the interpreter as translator, while important, represents only one facet of the variety of complex roles he played as go-between for the English and their Indian allies.

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<sup>87</sup>Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 193.

## CHAPTER VI

### "A GREAT DEAL DEPENDS UPON THE INTERPRETERS"

Throughout the colonial period, the British and the Iroquois confronted each other daily across the fur traders' counters, the communion tables, and the council fires of New York and Pennsylvania. In nearly all of these encounters, interpreters played a crucial role as cultural mediators, translating words and promises and brokering the exchange of values and ideas as well as that of material goods. A competent, trustworthy interpreter could ensure the success of a meeting between the British and her Six Nations allies, just as the employment of an unreliable one could spell disaster. In June 1754, the Lords of Trade recognized the importance of selecting proper interpreters when they issued instructions to the new governor of New York regarding a forthcoming conference with the Six Nations to be held in Albany. "As a great deal depends upon the Interpreters," they admonished, "We desire You will be particularly careful to appoint such as are well acquainted with the Indian Language, and Men of Ability and Integrity."<sup>1</sup>

Many historians of early America have argued that colonial officials often failed to find the reliable,

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<sup>1</sup>CRP 6: 60.

trustworthy interpreters the Lords of Trade desired. Most assert that interpreters were, at best, "crude, unlettered frontiersmen, who could not express themselves well in any language," and, at worst, completely unscrupulous, greedy souls who had the colonial governments completely at their mercy as they pursued their own nefarious ends.<sup>2</sup> These judgments are too harsh, for while not all interpreters were complete masters of an Indian language or without ulterior motives in their dealings with the Iroquois, those who interpreted repeatedly over many years were generally both competent and trustworthy.

Interpreters' motivations were not necessarily altruistic, however, and many found the rewards of interpretation substantial. For many of the Europeans, interpreting and cultural brokerage offered a means of cultivating ties with the Iroquois and exercising an influence in Indian affairs that could prove beneficial to their economic ambitions in expanding their trade contacts and land holdings. The potential economic rewards undoubtedly played a large role in motivating, for example, the early Dutch traders like Gerrit van Slichtenhorst and

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<sup>2</sup>Milton W. Hamilton, "Sir William Johnson: Interpreter of the Iroquois," Ethnohistory 10 (1963): 272. For other examples, see Isabel Thomas Kelsay, Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 113; and Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1984), 64.

Robert Sanders, and their later British counterparts like George Croghan. For métis, Indians, and women, interpreting may have offered, in addition to the material rewards of a salary, clothing, and provisions, the less tangible benefits of prestige and influence in arenas that otherwise might have been closed to them. But interpreting was not without its drawbacks: long absences from home and family, physical hardships imposed by constant travel, financial strains resulting from the failure of recalcitrant colonial assemblies to pay salaries promptly, the emotional stress of sustained involvement in complex intercultural negotiations, and, sometimes, physical danger. Unfortunately, few interpreters recorded their thoughts and actions, and little is known about the details of most interpreters' lives.

One interpreter about whom a great deal is known is Andrew Montour. His career illustrates both the benefits and the problems and complexities of cultural brokerage.<sup>3</sup> Born into the culturally mixed family of a prominent métis interpreter, Andrew seemed destined to fulfill the role of

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<sup>3</sup>All of the material on Andrew Montour in this chapter appeared in substantially the same form in Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent': Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772," in Between Indian White Worlds: The Cultural Broker, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman, Ok.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 53-60. James H. Merrell gave a different interpretation of Montour and his motivations in "'The Cast of His Countenance': Reading Andrew Montour," a paper he presented at the conference "Through a Glass Darkly: Defining Self in Early America," sponsored by the Institute of Early American History and Culture in Williamsburg, Va., November 1993.

cultural mediator. Straddling the cultural divide was not easy, however. His brother and sisters never rose to the same prominence that he did, though they occasionally served as interpreters. One sister, a Moravian convert at New Salem, Ohio, was described in 1791 as "a living polyglot of the tongues of the West, speaking English, French & six Indian languages." Her absence from the ranks of official interpreters may perhaps be explained by her gender; as a woman, she might never have learned the diplomatic and political protocol required of a council interpreter. Lewis, Andrew's brother, presented a different case altogether. Although occasionally employed as a messenger and interpreter, colonial officials never fully trusted Lewis and suspected that he was "a Frenchman in his Heart." Circumstances that fostered Andrew Montour's career as cultural broker, seem to have combined with other factors to work against his brother and sister.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to personality, circumstance, and skill, Montour's personal motives and ambitions gave impetus to his career. On the most basic level, interpreting offered him a measure of financial security in the form of both material and monetary rewards for his service. During the 1740s,

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<sup>4</sup>William M. Darlington, Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical, and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of His Contemporaries (New York: Argonaut Press, 1966), 157; Dinwiddie to Board of Trade, enclosed in William Trent's Journal to Ohio, July-Aug. 1753, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 15, Nov. 17, 1753; CRP 5: 692, 6: 149; Croghan to Peters, Feb. 3, 1754, PA, ser. 1, 2: 118.

Pennsylvania rewarded Montour "for his trouble" on a mission-by-mission basis, relying on Conrad Weiser's reports of his conduct to determine the nature and extent of remuneration. Most of these "rewards" consisted of a combination of cash, clothing, and supplies. Montour also reaped considerable benefit from lands granted him by both his English employers and his Indian sponsors.<sup>5</sup> By 1748, however, Montour became dissatisfied with the sporadic, uncertain nature of these payments, apparently believing them incommensurate with his importance to the interests of the government. As a result, Andrew upped the ante and, in return for his services at Lancaster, he "pitched upon a place in the Proprietor's manor, at Canataqueany." He expected the government to build him a house and furnish his family with supplies. His demands alarmed even Weiser, who was "at a lost what to say of him. . . . He seems to be very hard to please."<sup>6</sup> The Pennsylvania government agreed with Weiser's concerns, but bowed to the inevitable as escalating

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<sup>5</sup>CRP 5: 290, 566; Darlington, Gist's Journals, 164; Weiser to Richard Peters, May 2, 1754, Penn Manuscripts, Indian Affairs, vol. 2, Hist. Soc. of Penn., in IIDH, reel 16, May 2, 1754; Charles A. Hanna, The Wilderness Trail, or The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 1: 245.; Thomas Penn Letterbook, 1752-1772, nos. 55 & 69, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

<sup>6</sup>Weiser to Richard Peters, Lancaster, Aug. 4, 1748, PA, ser. 1, 2: 12, 31; Wilbur Jacobs, Diplomacy and Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and Northwest Frontiers, 1748-1763 (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1950), 105; Hanna, Wilderness Trail, 1: 226; Darlington, Gist's Journals, 159.



tensions with the Indians and French put Montour's special talents ever more in demand.

By 1750, Montour's rewards from the Pennsylvania government assumed a more standard monetary form, but he apparently remained dissatisfied and accepted a salaried position as Virginia's interpreter in 1753. His continuing dissatisfaction may also have encouraged his defection to Sir William Johnson and New York in 1756. Initially, Andrew's move to the Northern Department of Indian affairs paid handsomely: he drew a substantial yearly salary of £100 sterling as an interpreter and Indian officer. When hostilities with the French drew to a close and his duties as an Indian officer declined during the early 1760s, however, circumstances changed. At the end of 1762, his salary was reduced from £182.10.0 to a mere £50. Pontiac's uprising offered a short reprieve, as Montour's services as an Indian officer were again in demand, but his primary income between 1763 and 1771 remained his interpreter's salary of £50 sterling per year.<sup>7</sup>

Interpreting also offered other, less tangible rewards. Most significant was the importance that attached to Montour as a representative of the English colonial government and as a speaker and councillor for the Indians. Such prestige,

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<sup>7</sup>Darlington, Gist's Journals, 160, 163; CRP 5: 540; Hanna, Wilderness Trail, 1: 204, 241; WJP 3: 329, 734, 877, 914, 10: 560, 637, 12: 642, 732, 804; GPW 9: 15, 85, 89, 10: 41, 14: 94, 17: 90, 23: 124, 27: 8, 14, 72, 29: 55, 31: 49, 51.

however, also had its drawbacks. Indian culture required hosts and public figures to provide travelers and guests with hospitality, victuals, and entertainment. As a private citizen, Montour must have found these demands a strain on his meager financial resources. Governor Hamilton reported to the Assembly in 1750 that Weiser's appointment of Montour to handle business at Ohio gave him "a sort of publick Character which has put him to some Trouble and Expence." Four years later during a sojourn at Montour's plantation, Weiser recorded the exact nature of the trouble. Weiser found "about fifteen Indians, Men, Women, and Children, and more had been there but were now gone." Almost every day Indians came from Ohio "with some Errand or another, witch always wanted some Victuals in the Bargain." Weiser gave him £10 of the government's money. At about the same time, Governor Sharpe of Maryland noted that Montour's service during Washington's campaign against Fort Duquesne had resulted in "no small Detriment" to his "private affairs & credit," which induced Sharpe to advance him £45. The financial burdens associated with interpreting undoubtedly contributed to Montour's debts during the early 1750s.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>CRP 5: 455, 6: 151; Hanna, Wilderness Trail, 1: 254; "Sharpe to Dinwiddie, December 10, 1754," in Archives of Maryland, Correspondence of Governor Horatio Sharpe, 1753-1757, ed. William Hand Browne (Baltimore, 1888), 1: 139, cited in Howard Lewin, "A Frontier Diplomat: Andrew Montour," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 33 (April 1966): 153-186.

Despite the financial hardships, however, Montour seems to have found satisfaction in his public role. Maybe it answered an internal longing for a sense of identity and belonging. Whereas separate métis societies emerged in the Great Lakes region and Middle West, no such development occurred in the East. This lack of a separate métis society may have forced children of mixed unions to identify with either the Europeans or the Indians. Montour's behavior indicates that he may have been troubled by the necessity of making such a choice. In fact, it may have been his inability or reluctance to choose that prompted Montour to seek a role and identity in the middle. Montour's position as interpreter, Indian officer, and member of the Ohio Six Nations council provided him, perhaps, with clearly delineated roles within the confusing morass of intercultural relationships in his life. Interpreting offered a measure of prestige and influence in both worlds as long as he maintained the fine balance between the two and performed satisfactorily. In the European world Montour gained respect, financial rewards, and a measure of influence based on his sway among the Indians and his demonstrated skill and integrity. The Indians esteemed and accepted him as speaker, councillor, and friend--as long as he remained trustworthy.

In a sense, Montour's frequent forays back and forth between European and Indian cultures trapped him permanently in the no-man's-land in the middle, regardless of his

personal inclinations. In the records, and perhaps even in his own mind, Montour's identity fluctuated between "Mr. Montour" the European interpreter and "Sattelihu" or "Eghnisera" the Indian speaker and councillor.<sup>9</sup> Partly the result of his métis heritage, this "identity crisis" must have been aggravated by the need to constantly rove back and forth between the disparate cultures that produced him, assuming vastly different roles as diplomacy, politics, and even self-interest demanded.

Montour's English employers mirrored his confusion. From the beginning of his career, Montour occupied an ambiguous ethnic position in the minds of his European employers, as Count Zinzendorf clearly revealed in his description of their first meeting at Shamokin in 1742. Montour's "cast of countenance is decidedly European and had not his face been encircled with a broad band of paint, applied with bear's fat, I would certainly have taken him for one." His elaborately European dress, combined with distinctly Indian facial paint and ear ornaments, reflected his eclectic mixing of the material cultures of his heritage.<sup>10</sup> His selective adoption of specific aspects of

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<sup>9</sup>"Sattelihu" and "Eghnisera" were Montour's Indian names, the latter given to him upon his elevation to the Ohio Six Nations Council. Darlington, Gist's Journals, 175; "Logstown Treaty (c. 1774 copy)," pp. 28-29, in IIDH, reel 15, May 28-June 13, 1752.

<sup>10</sup>Darlington, Gist's Journal, 175; William C. Reichel, ed., Memorials of the Moravian Church (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870), I: 95.

Indian and European material culture did not necessarily indicate personal confusion about his cultural identity, however, since such mixing was typical among both Indians and European traders and Indian agents. Regardless of his own perceptions, the ambiguity and confusion surrounding Montour's varied cultural identities and roles remained unresolved for many colonial officials throughout the 1740s and early 1750s. Pennsylvania officials continued to have difficulty deciding whether to classify him as an Indian or a European at treaty councils, listing him at times with the Indian attendees and at others as "Mr. Montour." They usually settled for the simplest solution and equated his identity with his role. He was "white" when acting as an English agent or fulfilling the role of interpreter and Indian when serving as the Indians' speaker or councillor.

Whether Montour suffered similar confusion about himself is unclear, but he exhibited the strains of his intercultural position in several ways. First, his successive marriages indicated the difficulties of maintaining a stable home and family life while constantly on the move between treaty sites and cultures. While the reasons for the breakup of his first marriage are uncertain, the second, to Sarah Ainse, was apparently dissolved by mutual consent after the family relocated to New York in the mid-1750s. Part of the stress on his second marriage

probably resulted from his indebtedness and drinking, much in evidence during that period.<sup>11</sup>

Andrew Montour's newfound prestige as a cultural broker after 1750 coincided with his debt and drinking problems. In 1753 Montour nearly went to jail for a £50 debt. Richard Peters, who bailed him out because Pennsylvania required his services at Onondaga, indicated that the problem lay with Sarah, his wife. While her extravagances may have contributed to the family's financial difficulties, she cannot be held solely accountable. In addition to the burden placed on the family by the necessity of providing food and hospitality to visiting Indians, Montour's drinking also played a role. In 1760, long after his marriage to Sarah ended, Montour again found himself threatened with imprisonment--this time because of a tavern debt.<sup>12</sup>

More serious than his indebtedness, and perhaps also more indicative of his inner turmoil and insecurity, were Montour's drinking bouts. The first recorded instance of drunkenness occurred during a conference at Aughwick in

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<sup>11</sup>WJP 2: 695, 9: 634, 10: 481; DCB 6: 7.

<sup>12</sup>"Peters to Richard Hockley, 1753," in "Notes and Queries," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 39 (1915): 239; William Johnson to George Croghan, Ft., Johnson, May 14, 1760, Cadwalader Papers, 6 Croghan, Section 33, Misc. Docs., Hist. Soc. of Penn., in IIDH, reel 23, May 14, 1760; WJP 5: 120. Another indication of Montour's indebtedness and inner confusion may be found, perhaps, in his adoption of the alias "Henry" Montour during the early 1750s. Lewin, "Frontier Diplomat," 168-69; Witham Marshe, Lancaster in 1744, ed. William H. Egle (Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Steam Book & Job Print, 1884), 28-29.

September 1754. Weiser described Montour's shocking behavior in a letter to Richard Peters:

He abused me very much Corsed & Swore and asked pardon when he got Sober. Did the Same again when he was drunk again. Damned me more then hundred times so he did the governor & Mr. peters for not paying him for his trouble & Expences, he is vexed at the new purchase told me I cheated the Indians, he Says he will now Kill any white men theat will pretent to Setle on his Creek, . . . Saying he was a Warrior. . . . I left him drunk at Achwick.<sup>13</sup>

The resentments and hostilities Montour voiced while his inhibitions were diminished by alcohol indicated his psychological confusion. He was dissatisfied with the Pennsylvania government's payments for his interpreting and clearly resented Weiser. When combined with the concern he expressed about Weiser's allegedly unfair treatment of the Indians during a recent land deal and his emphatic reference to himself as "a Warrior," these sentiments reveal his strong subconscious identification with the Indians. However, as soon as he was sober, he courted Weiser's forgiveness and "Asked pardon for offences given" in a conscious effort to maintain his coveted though precarious position as Pennsylvania's interpreter.<sup>14</sup>

By the late 1750s and early 1760s, Montour found a measure of security and peace under Johnson's tutelage and employ, though his drinking apparently continued to be a

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<sup>13</sup>Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 371.

<sup>14</sup>Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 371-72; Hanna, Wilderness Trail, 1: 232.

sporadic problem. Once he left Johnson's immediate service for his post at Fort Pitt, however, he again succumbed to boredom and perhaps melancholy for his lost prestige, returning to "his drunken frolicks." Ultimately, his weakness for alcohol led to his death and ended an impressive career.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, since Montour never recorded his thoughts and feelings, all musings about his motives and desires must remain largely speculative. His behavior, however, strongly suggests that he probably identified himself primarily as Indian in his values and beliefs but found it necessary to adopt many English ways to maintain his position as interpreter. His successive marriages, indebtedness, and drinking also suggest that he found this in-between ethnic role difficult to maintain. The need to suppress or ignore personal inclinations that at times conflicted with the behavior required by his position as an English agent and interpreter must have caused Montour considerable stress.

Ironically, while his position as an interpreter in one sense offered him a clearly defined intercultural role, its mediating nature made a clear choice of ethnic identity nearly impossible; by definition, he had to be able to identify with both sides. His role as cultural broker,

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<sup>15</sup>WJP 3: 4, 7: 685, 11: 873; Major Isaac Hamilton to General Thomas Gage, January 22, 1772, cited in Lewin, "Frontier Diplomat," 186.



which required the delicate balancing of two cultures externally for the sake of the groups he served and internally within himself, trapped him permanently on the cultural frontier between European and Iroquois culture. Montour, as the "repository of two cultures," belonged fully to neither, and that ambiguity was probably at the root of many of his personal and professional problems. Although Montour's difficulties were perhaps more pronounced because of his mixed ethnic heritage, his European counterparts undoubtedly experienced similar stresses while trying to maintain their position as people who had been "divided . . . into two equal parts."<sup>16</sup> And, though their role had its rewards, all interpreters probably discovered that maintaining a life balanced on the razor's edge of the cultural dividing line was far from easy.

Despite the difficulties of life as an interpreter, between 1664 and 1775 more than 175 men and women of varied ethnic and occupational backgrounds took on the role. Most of them, like Montour, were known for their integrity. Failure to represent both the English and the Indians fairly and accurately could easily lead to misunderstandings, so the ideal interpreter was one known to be "equally faithful in the Interpretation of whatever is said to him" by either

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<sup>16</sup>Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada, Which Are Dependent on the Province of New-York in America, and Are the Barrier between the English and French in That Part of the World, 2 vols. (London, 1747; repr. New York: Allerton Book Co., 1922), 1: 111.

side.<sup>17</sup> As historian Richard L. Haan has noted, "an interpreter who did not speak 'from the heart' was soon out of a job."<sup>18</sup>

Contemporary opinions of the most prominent seventeenth- and eighteenth-century interpreters confirm Haan's assessment. Both the Pennsylvania Council and the Six Nations, for example, believed Conrad Weiser to be "a true good Man," who spoke the Indians' words and those of the British "and not his own." The Council often rewarded him for the "many Signal Services" he performed, for "his Diligence & Labour," and for "his Skill in the Indian Languages and Methods of Business."<sup>19</sup> Weiser's contemporary, William Printup, Jr., was held in similar esteem by his employer Sir William Johnson, who said Printup

<sup>17</sup>CRP 4: 581.

<sup>18</sup>Richard L. Haan, "The Covenant Chain: Iroquois Diplomacy on the Niagara Frontier, 1697-1730" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1976), 52.

<sup>19</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), 17; CRP 4: 576-77. For other glowing reports on Weiser, see Treaty of Friendship with the Six Nations at Philadelphia (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1737), 9, in IIDH reel 10, Sept.-Oct. 14, 1736; Treaty with the Six Nations at Philadelphia, in July 1742 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1743), 23; and ibid., repr. (London: T. Sowle Raylton and Luke Hinde, [date?]), x, in IIDH, reel 11, July 2-12, 1742, and July 2-12, 1742 (II); Colden, History 2: 110-11, 113; Gov. Thomas to Govs. Gooch and Bladen, Jan. 20, 1744, Peters Papers, vol. 2, p. 2, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 12, Jan. 20, 1744; Thomas Lee to Conrad Weiser, Aug. 30, 1744, Peters Papers, vol. 2, p. 19, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 12, Aug. 30, 1744; Minutes of the Easton Conference, 1761, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., Amherst Papers, WO34/33, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 1761; and CRP 4: 581, 667, 678.

spoke "the Indian language best of any in the Province" and was "the best possible guide and interpreter."<sup>20</sup> Favorable evaluations of the abilities and trustworthiness of Arnout Cornelissen Viele, Hilletie van Olinda, Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, Jan Baptist van Eps, George Croghan, Andrew Montour, and others can also be found throughout the records of early Pennsylvania and New York.<sup>21</sup>

Well known and generally respected interpreters had their critics, however. Lawrence van der Volgen was "at a great Loss some times for words, for all he is look't upon to under stand the Indian Language So well," noted an Anglican clergyman.<sup>22</sup> Richard Peters thought Andrew Montour "a dull stupid creature," but also admitted that he was the "only person fit to be trusted with Business" among the Ohio Indians.<sup>23</sup> And according to Peter Wraxall, Arent Stevens

<sup>20</sup>Hamilton, "Sir William Johnson," 275; WJP 1: 308. The Indians concurred with Johnson's opinion of Printup, and requested his appointment to reside among them as a smith and "at the same time to serve as an interpreter between the officer and us." Ibid., 9: 384.

<sup>21</sup>See, for example, NYCD 3: 483, 777, 844; Logstown Treaty (c. 1774 copy), Dinwiddie Papers, 1744-1752, Mss. 4, V8194, D6197, a1, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va., in IIDH, reel 15, May 28-Jun 3 13, 1752; Darlington, Gist's Journals, 160, 184-185;

<sup>22</sup>Cited in Daniel K. Richter, "The Ordeal of the Longhouse: Change and Persistence on the Iroquois Frontier, 1609-1720" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1984), 465. At such times, Van der Volgen, like Weiser, hired an Indian to assist him.

<sup>23</sup>Richard Peters to the Proprietaries, Nov. 6, 1753, cited in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 345; Richard Peters to [Thomas Penn], Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 6, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 18, April 25, 1756.

was "very unequal to his office."<sup>24</sup> Despite their supposed shortcomings, all three retained their positions and continued to interpret regularly for more than twenty-five years. Had their shortcomings been truly serious, they undoubtedly would have been dismissed.<sup>25</sup> Even the best interpreters sometimes suffered lapses in judgment that threw their loyalty, trustworthiness, or abilities into question. Usually, the demand for their services outweighed other considerations, and they were quickly reinstated.<sup>26</sup>

Occasionally, experienced interpreters found themselves temporarily unable or unwilling to fulfill their role. Conrad Weiser professed himself incapable of complying with Governor James Hamilton's request that he accompany the

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<sup>24</sup>When Wraxall explained further, however, it became clear that Stevens's deficiencies were not in regard to his understanding of an Iroquois language, but rather that he was a "very indifferent Judge either of the English or Dutch." Wraxall, whose responsibility it was to record all Indian proceedings as Johnson's secretary, could "scarce made Sense when he translates out of Indian into either" European language. The fact that Stevens was "the Son of a Negro Woman" probably did not make him any more acceptable to the secretary. Wraxall admitted he knew nothing of his honesty. AIA, 212, 155; CRP 6: 15.

<sup>25</sup>Alcohol occasionally caused problems for some interpreters. At one time or another, David Owens and Conrad Weiser, like Andrew Montour had drinking troubles and could not be trusted when in their cups. WJP 4: 723, 9: 164, 625, 11: 873.

<sup>26</sup>Arnout and Hilletie temporarily fell from grace during their careers, though not because their skills or abilities were lacking. Arnout was removed from office for political reasons as a result of his support of the Leislerians. Hilletie's involvement in a fraudulent land deal with the Rev. Godfridius Dellius caused her temporary fall from favor. NYCD 4: 329, 540-41.

colony's commissioners to a meeting with the Six Nations in Albany. He finally agreed to go, but asked to be excused from serving as the principal interpreter during the conference, "inasmuch as from a Disuse of the Language He is no longer Master of that Fluency he formerly had, and finding himself at a Loss for proper Terms to express himself is frequently obliged to make Use of Circumlocution, which would picque his Pride in the View of so considerable an Audience." He noted that his understanding of the spoken language, however, was unimpaired, and he promised to attend the sessions and "Use his Endeavour that whatever is said by the Indians be truly interpreted to the Gentlemen."<sup>27</sup>

Although historians like Francis Jennings have asserted that "no one was capable of checking up on the interpreter," and that "he could slant speeches in ways advantageous to himself," there were actually a number of checks and restraints on council interpreters.<sup>28</sup> Weiser's employment at Albany in 1754 as an observer to verify the accuracy of the interpreters' translations was not unusual. On many occasions, multiple interpreters were employed to assist each other and to ensure accuracy. Arent Stevens noted in

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<sup>27</sup>CRP 6: 49. Weiser's request was somewhat curious, since he had been active among the Indians of Pennsylvania throughout the spring. His contact with the Six Nations was limited, but he certainly had not been out of practice with their language for any great length of time. Perhaps he wanted the freedom to observe Johnson, his emerging rival, without the constraints imposed on formal, sworn interpreters.

<sup>28</sup>Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 63.

1745 that he was pleased that there would be "Several Interpreters calld in aid of the provincial Interpreter" at a planned meeting in Albany, since by that means "the Truth may be better discovered."<sup>29</sup>

In addition to formal arrangements for multiple interpreters to verify and clarify translations at treaty conferences, informal checks for accuracy were usually also performed. By at least the mid-eighteenth century, rudimentary bilingualism was quite widespread among Indian Department officials. Although few Europeans were capable of performing formally as council interpreters or speakers, many could understand what was said well enough to judge whether the substance of the interpreter's version was accurate. Likewise, the ability to understand and even speak English was increasingly common among the Six Nations. In fact, on one occasion in 1744, Weiser warned a delegation of colonists he was escorting to an Indian camp for a visit to watch what they said to each other since "most of [the Indians] understood English, though they will not speak it when they are in treaty."<sup>30</sup> Most council speeches, then, were "publicly interpreted in the Hearing of several who

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<sup>29</sup>Memorandum from Arent Stevens, Horsmanden Papers, Selections relating to the Six Nations (#25?), New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 12, Oct. 5, 1745.

<sup>30</sup>Witham Marshe, Lancaster in 1744, 12. Johnson issued a similar warning in 1755, WJP 1: 642.

understood the Indian Language well" and who could point out mistakes and make corrections when necessary.<sup>31</sup>

Other measures also helped ensure the accurate translation of speeches at treaty conferences. The oral culture of the Six Nations made them cognizant of the necessity for absolute accuracy and clear understanding of the spoken word. Iroquois speakers often repeated a received speech back to the interpreter "in order to know if he had understood him right" before responding. If the interpreter told him he had "taken the true Sense" of the proposal, the speaker proceeded.<sup>32</sup> In addition, treaty protocol required the repetition of a proposal before offering an answer, which served much the same purpose, helping to ensure accuracy and minimize misunderstandings. Finally, before delivering their speeches in public, interpreters often consulted their Indian colleagues to clarify the translation of difficult passages, eliminating problems before they could arise.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Colden, History, 2: 235. For other examples, see Public account of the Albany Conference of 1746, published in New York, by James Parker, 1746, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1095, in IIDH, reel 13, Aug.-Sept. 1746; Account of News from the Six Nations Country, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 3, p. 47, Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 22, May 6, 1758; CRP 6: 193, 7: 205, 207; WJP 4: 61.

<sup>32</sup>Canasatego employed this method at Lancaster in 1744. CRP 4: 702.

<sup>33</sup>CRP 5: 517.

Few eighteenth-century interpreters acted completely without scrutiny of their activities and translations, and circumstances argue for the accuracy of most of their translations. The records of their translations as preserved in the surviving minutes of treaty councils also testify to the skill of the interpreters in rendering Indian forms of speech into English or Dutch. Often, a clear difference in style between speeches made by Iroquois and European speakers is evident. The interpreters, whether or not they fully understood the connotations and subtleties of Iroquois metaphors and figures of speech, seemed quite adept at capturing their essence in English and Dutch. The sentiments expressed by the Indians are clearly and lucidly expressed even when they are decidedly uncomplimentary to the English.<sup>34</sup> As one contemporary observer noted, the Indians expected interpreters to translate faithfully; to do otherwise was "a very great crime with them."<sup>35</sup> Those judged guilty soon found themselves unemployed by either

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<sup>34</sup>See, for example, Abstract of Intelligence from Arnout Viele from Onondaga (P.R.O., Kew, Engl., C05/1039, in IIDH, reel 5, Feb. 18, 1695) and compare the stylistic differences between the two parts of the report. Also see Conrad Weiser's Report of Albany Conference, Oct. 1745, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, vol. 1, Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 12, Dec. 7, 1745; and Extract of Conference at Johnson Hall, March 1768, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 3, entry for March 8, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 29, March 4-12, 1768. Almost any formal conference yields examples of stylistic differences between European and Indian speakers.

<sup>35</sup>Logan to Penn, 1733, cited in Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 314.



side, since an interpreter who lost the trust of the Indians was of little use to the British.<sup>36</sup>

Trustworthiness was also extremely important to the British. As Peter Wraxall noted, "It surely dos not require any detail of Reasoning to evince how very important the Capacity & Integrity of an Interpreter is to the public."<sup>37</sup> The most obvious measure employed by the British to ensure the faithfulness of provincial and conference interpreters in the performance of their duties was to require them to swear an oath. Sworn interpreters promised to "faithfully & truly Execute the office of Interpreter," not to conceal anything that they might learn by virtue of their office, and to do all in their power "that shall tend to the good of the province with Respect to the Six Nations of Indians."<sup>38</sup> In the aural culture of early New York, "the swearing of a public oath had more than symbolic significance. An oath involved a binding public commitment, a rendering of integrity before temporal listeners as well as the Ultimate

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<sup>36</sup>One contemporary noted that in order to engage the Indians' interest, colonial officials had to be sure to "employ such Interpreters the Indians have the greatest confidence in." Note concerning the Six Nations grant to Pennsylvania at Albany, July 1754, Add. Mss. 33,030, British Library, London, in IIDH, reel 16, [July 1754-July 1755].

<sup>37</sup>AIA, 212.

<sup>38</sup>Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1820, 156v, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 11, Jan. 6, 1739.

Auditor."<sup>39</sup> Oaths were taken seriously and few risked the consequences--temporal or eternal--of swearing falsely.<sup>40</sup>

The provincial government of New York also offered one other inducement to encourage interpreters' loyalty and trustworthiness. After about 1695, most regular, sworn interpreters received a salary. Colonial officials undoubtedly hoped that a steady income would eliminate the need for interpreters to seek other forms of material reward from the Indians and encourage them to remain trustworthy and faithful.<sup>41</sup> Sir William Johnson forbade salaried interpreters from following any other trade or receiving extra remuneration for their services. For the most part, the system seems to have worked well and there is little evidence that the most prominent regular interpreters intentionally misled the Indians. Interpreters who made a habit of dishonest conduct lost the trust of the Iroquois and the British as well as their positions.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Michael Kammen, Colonial New York: A History, A History of the American Colonies in Thirteen Volumes, ed. Milton M. Klein and Jacob E. Cooke (Millwood, N.Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 97.

<sup>40</sup>Even court cases could be decided on the basis of a sworn oath, and individuals were convicted of wrongdoing solely because of their refusal to swear that they were innocent.

<sup>41</sup>There was some debate about how much salary was sufficient to attract a man "of Genius & Character" to the position. In 1738/39 the salary was £60 per year, a sum that Peter Wraxall thought was clearly too small. AIA, 212.

<sup>42</sup>Still, some interpreters did act outside the constraints of disinterested translation and crossed the line into dishonesty and fraud. Cadwallader Colden noted

Those interpreters who posed the greatest risk to both the Iroquois and the British were not the familiar, sworn interpreters employed by the colonies, but strangers. In the face-to-face society of early America, the evaluation of an individual's character and ability rested primarily on personal contact and knowledge. Strangers were unknown quantities and could be dangerous. At Easton in 1762, for example, the necessity of relying on the interpretations of George Croghan and Andrew Montour greatly upset the Delawares, not because they knew them to be untrustworthy, but because they did not know Croghan and Montour personally and could not be sure.<sup>43</sup> British officials expressed similar reluctance to rely on the trustworthiness of strangers. When the Onondagas requested that Governor James Hamilton of Pennsylvania appoint James Sherlock as their resident interpreter, Hamilton replied that since Sherlock was "quite a Stranger" to him, he could not consent "to

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his own experiences with untrustworthy interpreters during his surveying missions among the Mohawks. The Indians spoke often and "with much vehemence" about "some cheat as to their Lands," but Colden was unable to determine the details. He had to rely on his interpreters and "suspected that they had not fairly interpreted what the Indians spoke to me." The Indians "had the same suspicions for they several times by signs expressed their earnest wish that we could understand each other." It is unclear who the interpreters were, but the chances are good that they were not from among the regular salaried ranks of the provincial interpreters, but rather were individuals he hired on his own. The Colden Letterbooks, 2 vols., New-York Historical Society Collections, 9-10 (1877-1878), 9: 180.

<sup>43</sup>WJP 3: 778, 915, 7: 899-900.

employ him as an Interpreter" for the government until he had "Experience of his Abilities and good Disposition."<sup>44</sup>

Although the integrity and ability of interpreters was occasionally in doubt among their contemporaries, the absolute necessity of their involvement in Indian affairs was rarely questioned. Experience taught that the lack of competent interpreters caused delays and misunderstandings. Conrad Weiser's late arrival at the Easton conference in July 1756, for example, forced Governor Robert Hunter Morris to "put off opening the Council 'til to Morrow."<sup>45</sup> At Easton, Weiser's absence was temporary and soon remedied. Fourteen years later it became permanent and Weiser's death was keenly felt by the Six Nations and their Pennsylvania brethren. Both were left sitting "in Darkness" and "at a great loss for want of well understanding what we say to one another."<sup>46</sup>

By the mid-1760s, William Johnson was convinced that interpreters were "essential." Without them "the business of the Department [of Indian Affairs] could not be

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<sup>44</sup>Minutes of Conferences Held at Easton, In August, 1761 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1761), 8, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 3-12, 1761.

<sup>45</sup>Material pertaining to Pennsylvania Indian Affairs, Mss. 970.4, M415, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 17, Aug. 7, 1755-Dec. 3, 1792; CRP 7: 206. For other examples of delays caused by the absence of an interpreter, see ibid., 7: 296, 8: 149-50; and WJP 12: 542.

<sup>46</sup>CRP 8: 638. See also, ibid., 7: 770-71; and Bouquet to Gage, Oct. 2, 1764, GP, vol. 25.

conducted."<sup>47</sup> When experienced interpreters were unavailable, temporary substitutes were appointed until more suitable arrangements could be made.<sup>48</sup> Though these men and women were often less skilled and potentially less trustworthy than the regular, salaried interpreters, Johnson and his colonial colleagues usually decided that any interpreter was better than none in an emergency. The Six Nations apparently agreed that interpreters were vital, since they repeatedly requested the appointment of resident interpreters, post interpreters, escorts, and messengers to prevent "misunderstandings which otherwise may happen thro' our not understanding the Language of each other."<sup>49</sup>

The nature of the demand for interpreters changed between 1664 and 1775. During the late seventeenth century, few Europeans had mastered an Indian language and even fewer Iroquois had learned English or Dutch. Both sides relied on interpreters primarily for intercultural linguistic

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<sup>47</sup>DHNY 2: 903, 906.

<sup>48</sup>For examples of the use of temporary substitutes, see CRP 7: 296; DHNY 2: 873; WJP 9: 919-20, 922.

<sup>49</sup>Records of Indian Affairs, Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1824, 61, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 24, July 21, 1761 (II). For examples of Indian requests for the appointment of interpreters, see Recs. of Ind. Aff., vol. 1822, p. 444; vol. 1824, p. 299; and vol. 1825, p. 59; in IIDH, reel 20, March 1, 1757; reel 25, Sept. 8-15, 1762; and reel 26, Jan. 18, 1764; and WJP 10: 505, 11: 29, 357; CRP 8: 632. When no suitable appointee was available, the Indians frequently provided their own interpreters. For example, see PA, ser. 1, 1: 295; CRP 7: 60; and WJP 11: 262.

communication. By the early eighteenth century, however, the need for interpreters and the reasons behind their continued indispensability in Indian affairs were more complex. As bilingualism spread among the colonists and the Iroquois, considerations other than the need to facilitate day-to-day linguistic communication came into play.<sup>50</sup>

By the early eighteenth century, new demands were being made on interpreters as intercultural contacts increasingly focused on diplomatic and military concerns rather than trade. Linguistic competence now required more than "the mastery of a set of grammatical rules." Interpreters also had to learn "a set of cultural rules which include[d] the appropriate ways to apply grammatical rules in all speech situations possible for that society."<sup>51</sup> The rise of forest diplomacy with its emphasis on protocol and oratorical speech created a new set of cultural rules and a need for interpreters who had not only mastered an Iroquois language, but were competent to perform in the specialized arena of intercultural diplomacy. While many Indian officers, traders, and missionaries mastered the grammatical rules of

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<sup>50</sup>By the 1760s all of Johnson's upper-level Indian Department officers--the superintendent, deputies, and assistants--knew at least one Indian language. Many traders and missionaries were also familiar with an Iroquois tongue, and through the latter's efforts more and more Indians became conversant in English.

<sup>51</sup>Dell Hymes, cited in Gillian Sankoff, "A Quantitative Paradigm for the Study of Communicative Competence," in Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking, ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (Cambridge, Engl.: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 18.

an Iroquois language, few became truly competent to perform in the diplomatic arena.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, interpreters were indispensable on the New York and Pennsylvania frontier because the British and the Iroquois decided that they were. Interpreters, as cultural brokers, served as crucial conduits of cultural knowledge and provided the necessary cross-cultural links without which communication and intercultural exchange would have been impossible. They participated in all types of cultural interaction from the formal, public arena of treaty councils to the day-to-day exchanges across the fur trader's counter. In bridging the cultural divide between the British and the Iroquois, interpreters profoundly influenced the shape of cultural contact in early America; without their involvement, Anglo-Iroquois confrontations undoubtedly would have taken a much different, bloodier form.

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<sup>52</sup>When exchanges moved beyond common conversation, they could understand what was said, but found themselves unable to function adequately as speakers and interpreters. Samuel Kirkland noted, for example, that Hendrick Wemple (who had lived among the Senecas as a smith for many years) could understand their language "pretty well for common conversation but can only poorly comprehend a 'public' speech delivered in an oratorical style and dress." Samuel Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth-Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), 14. See also, An Account of Conferences Held and Treaties made, Between Major-General Sir William Johnson, Bart. and the chief Sachems and Warriours of the . . . Indian Nations in North America (London: A. Millar, 1756; facs. repr. Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Press, 1930), vii.

## APPENDIX A

### A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF INTERPRETERS AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775

Between 1664 and 1775, at least 186 men and women of varied ethnic and occupational backgrounds acted as interpreters between the French and English and their Indian neighbors in Pennsylvania, New York, and the Ohio country to the west. About half worked among the Iroquois in what is today central New York (See Table 1).<sup>1</sup> A few found the role congenial and became prominent players in the Indian affairs of New York and Pennsylvania. Most, however, assumed the position only temporarily, often serving publicly only once or twice when circumstances demanded.

An analysis of the number of interpreters active for the British among the Iroquois during each decade between 1664 and 1775 reveals the kinds of conditions that required

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<sup>1</sup>The statistical data contained in this appendix, as well as in all of the tables and charts, is derived from the information contained in appendices B and C. They contain all individuals who were noted as having interpreted at least once, including those working for the French. Due to the bias of the sources used, only the most prominent interpreters for the French among the Iroquois were encountered. Eleven individuals who interpreted only for the French are included in Table 1, but are excluded from all charts and tables thereafter, since the analysis focuses on interpreters working for or with the British.



TABLE 1  
 ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF INTERPRETERS  
 IN NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA, 1664-1775

INTERPRETERS' ETHNICITY	NO. WORKING AMONG		TOTAL
	IROQUOIS	NON-IROQUOIS	
British	24	27	51
Irish	5	3	8
Dutch	34	4	38
French	16	23	39
Huguenot	2	2	4
German	4	2	6
Moravian	1	1	2
Métis	7	3	10
Dutch métis	4	0	4
French métis	3	2	5
British métis	0	1	1
Indian	14	23	37
Mohawk	2	0	2
Oneida	6	0	6
Onondaga	1	0	1
Cayuga	1	0	1
Seneca	1	0	1

TABLE 1 (CONT.)

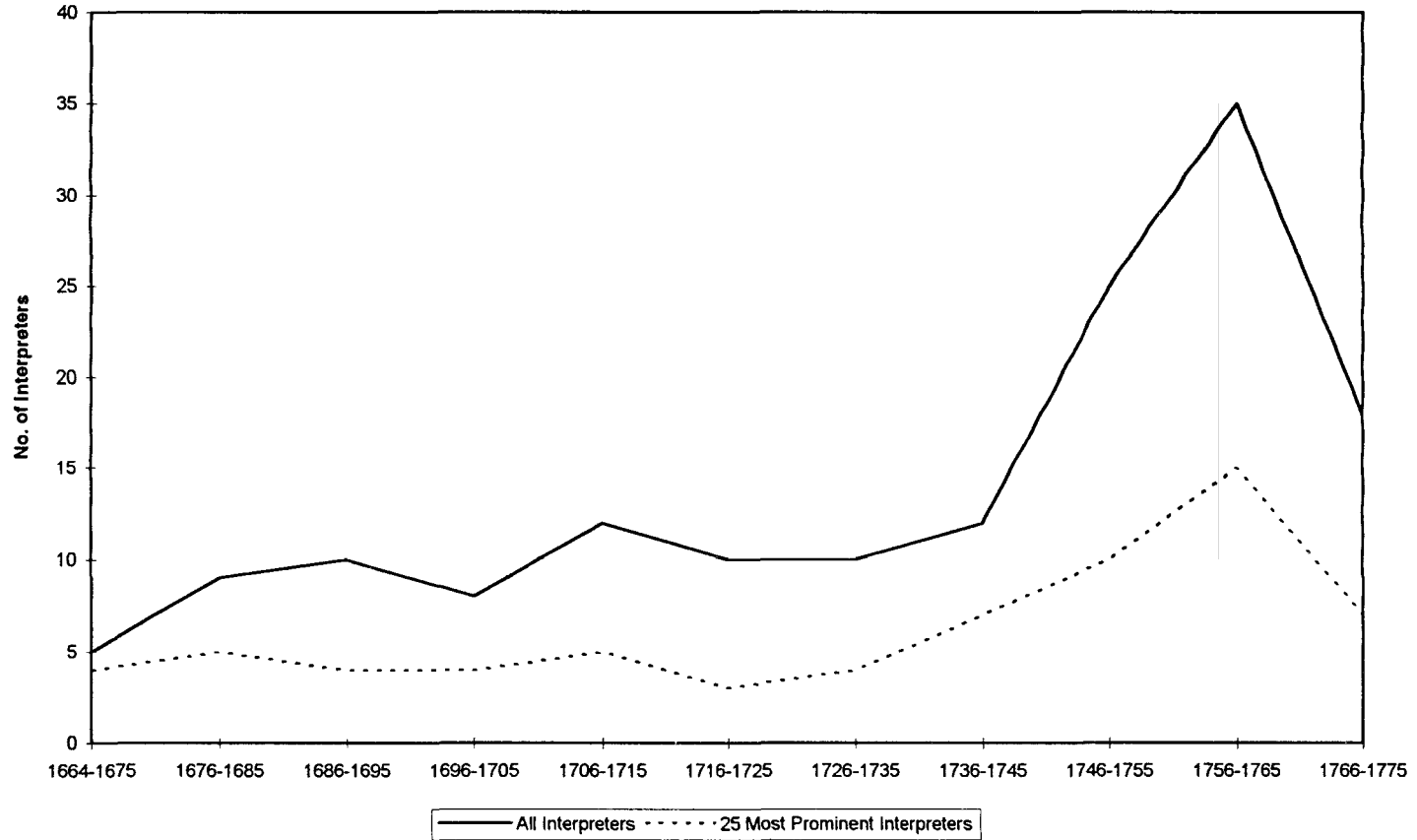
INTERPRETERS' ETHNICITY	NO. WORKING AMONG		TOTAL
	IROQUOIS	NON-IROQUOIS	
<b>Indian (cont.)</b>			
"Mingo"/Ohio Iroquois	1	1	2
Conestoga/Susquehannock	0	2	2
Delaware	0	15	15
Conoy	1	1	2
Nanticoke	0	1	1
Shawnee	0	1	1
Unknown	1	2	3
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>186</b>

the involvement of interpreters (see Chart 1).<sup>2</sup> During periods of hostility between the French and the English such as King William's War (1689-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), King George's War (1744-1748), and the Seven Years' War (1754-1763), the number of interpreters working among the colonial powers' Indian allies rose. In Chart 1, the decades corresponding to these conflicts illustrate the trend with peaks of activity in 1686-1695, 1706-1715, and the twenty years from 1746-1765. British attempts to keep the Iroquois firm in their attachment to the English, to engage their warriors in military campaigns against the French, and eventually to negotiate a peace resulted in numerous diplomatic conferences involving interpreters. In addition, the successful coordination of joint military operations required the participation of bilingual Indian officers and translators. As George Washington noted during his campaign against Fort Duquesne in 1754, an interpreter

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<sup>2</sup>The values for this chart were calculated by counting the number of interpreters for the British active during each decade. If an individual's interpreting spanned more than one decade, they are counted as active in all that are appropriate. As a result, the sum of the totals for each decade is much greater than the actual number of individuals active during the period as a whole. Most métis, who were primarily either Dutch- or French-Indian in background, were classified for this chart as belonging to the European ethnic group represented in their background since they usually seem to have been identified by contemporaries as belonging to that group. In cases of second-generation métis, where the ethnic mixtures and identities are a bit more complex, a judgment was made as to the group with which they seemed to have been most closely identified. Arent Stevens, for example, with an English father and a Dutch métis mother, seems to have been most closely associated with the Dutch cultural background on his mother's side.

**CHART 1**  
**Number of Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775**



could be "of Singular use. . . in conversing with the Indians." Without one, a commander unfamiliar with the Indians' customs could find himself "at a loss how to behave."<sup>3</sup>

Many of the additional interpreters who were active during wartime filled the role only temporarily. They were supported by a base of primary interpreters, most of whom were provincial interpreters like Conrad Weiser, or Indian Department interpreters like William Printup, Jr., who served regularly over the long-term, in peacetime and war.<sup>4</sup> This underlying foundation of prominent interpreters is clearly illustrated in Chart 1. The remarkable stability of the number of principal interpreters active from 1664 to 1735, despite King George's and Queen Anne's wars underscores the temporary nature of the additional interpreters employed during those conflicts.

The dramatic increase in the number of interpreters, both temporary and professional, active between 1756 and

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<sup>3</sup>Washington to Gov. Dinwiddie, June 3, 1754, in The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1932-1944), 1: 72.

<sup>4</sup>For a list of twenty-five most prominent interpreters, see Chart 5. The criteria for choosing these twenty-five individuals was consistent, regular, and sustained employment as an interpreter over a period of at least three years. Most were diplomatic interpreters. More than half were provincial or Indian Department interpreters who drew a salary for their services and whose activities could be classified as "professional," since they pursued interpreting as a full-time occupation.

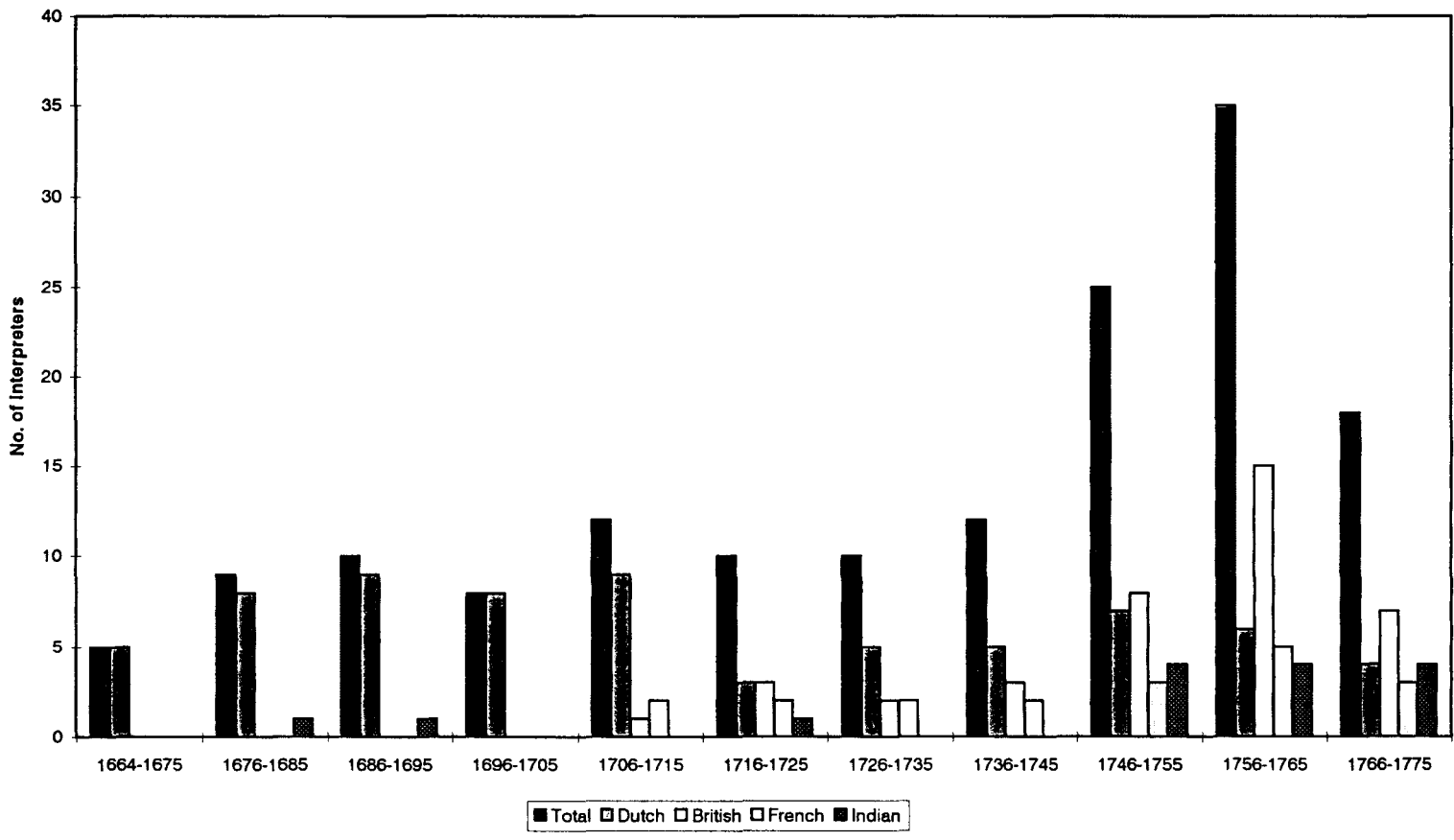
1765 requires additional explanation. Much higher stakes were being contested during the last intercolonial war and both the French and British administrations at home and in their colonies were much more directly involved in the conduct and outcome of that conflict. Probably more significant, however, was the appointment of Sir William Johnson as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department in 1755.<sup>5</sup> His attempts during the next ten years to rationalize and regularize the conduct of Indian affairs and trade led to the appointment of numerous additional interpreters and Indian officers. The high proportion of British interpreters who were active (see Chart 2) is probably an indication of Johnson's rising influence as Dutch Albany's monopoly on the control of Indian affairs finally declined.

The decade immediately following the British conquest of Canada reflects several significant changes in the context of Anglo-Iroquois relations after 1765. First, the British government's heavy expenditures during the war led to drastic reductions in Johnson's Indian Department budget, with the result that many interpreters were no longer on the payroll. Those interpreters who had served primarily in the military as Indian officers also found that their services were no longer required. Second, the removal of the French threat lessened the urgency and importance of maintaining

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<sup>5</sup>WJP 1: 465-76.

**CHART 2**  
**Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters for the British Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775**



the degree of diplomatic involvement with the Six Nations that had been required during the war. Third, Johnson found himself in charge of a vastly increased area with non-Iroquois inhabitants. While the number of English interpreters among the Six Nations declined, the number of French and English interpreters active among their former enemies to the north and west greatly increased. The Iroquois and their interpreters now acted on a much broader stage and accordingly assumed a smaller role.

The periods during which fewer interpreters were active also indicate significant developments in Anglo-Iroquois relations. The first, the decade from 1696 to 1705, encompasses the negotiation and signing of the Grand Settlement of 1701 between the French and the Five Nations.<sup>6</sup> While the peace settlement engendered a great deal of diplomatic interaction between the English and their Iroquois allies, fewer individual interpreters were involved as the result of another development. By 1700, two new provincial interpreters, Jan Baptist van Eps and Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, handled most of New York's interpreting duties.<sup>7</sup> They had recently returned from

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<sup>6</sup>On the peace settlement of 1701, see Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 187-215.

<sup>7</sup>For more detailed information on Van Eps and Van der Volgen and their captivities, see Chapter I.



prolonged captivities among the Indian allies of New France and were uniquely well qualified to undertake the delicate diplomatic duties the circumstances required. The lack of overt military conflict during this period largely eliminated the need for additional, temporary interpreters.

A second, much longer apparent lull in activity occurred between 1715 and 1736. Again, appearances can be somewhat deceiving, since one of the most important developments in intercultural diplomacy occurred during precisely these years of seeming inactivity. Van der Volgen remained provincial interpreter and handled most diplomatic interpreting until his death in 1742. Relative peace and stability in intercolonial affairs, combined with the consistency in practice and protocol fostered by his nearly single-handed control of diplomatic interpreting, fostered the emergence of the regularized system of treaty protocol known as forest diplomacy.<sup>8</sup>

The men and women who interpreted for the British during the one hundred years between the fall of New Netherland to England in 1664 and the beginning of the American Revolution came from five different ethnic backgrounds: Dutch, British, French, German, and Indian (predominantly Iroquoian). The métis, though a significant element among interpreters, cannot be said to collectively form a truly separate cultural group at this period in New

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<sup>8</sup>For an in-depth discussion of the development of forest diplomacy, see Chapter V.

York and Pennsylvania. Though unique in their bicultural background and exposure to two cultures from childhood, most were raised in and identified with the culture of one or the other of their parents; no separate, distinctive métis culture arose. Despite British control of the colonial governments of New York and Pennsylvania during the century under consideration, most interpreters among the Iroquois were Dutch (38%), followed by the British (27%), Indians (16%), métis (8%), French (6%), and Germans (4%) (see Table 2). The relatively large number of Indian interpreters is somewhat misleading, since most interpreted only once or twice. Only one Indian, Joseph Brant, achieved any prominence as an interpreter.

More significant than the overall ethnic distribution of interpreters are the changes that occurred during the period (see Charts 2 and 3).<sup>9</sup> Among all interpreters active among the Iroquois for the British, those of Dutch extraction predominated until at least 1716 and remained in the majority until the period of King George's War. This trend is particularly clear in Chart 4.<sup>10</sup> For at least fifty years after their takeover of New York, the British

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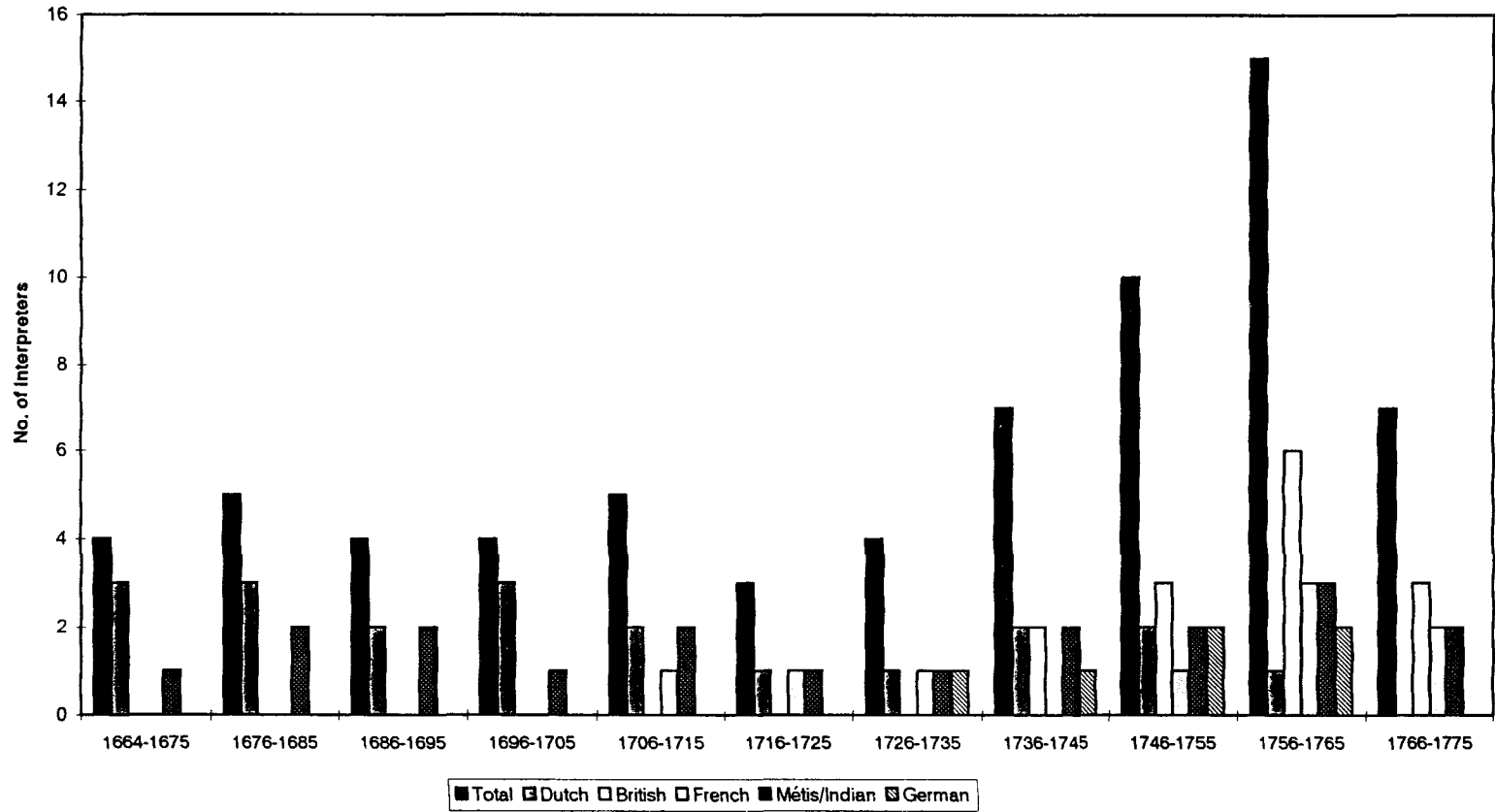
<sup>9</sup>Data compiled in the same manner as for Chart 1. See note 2 above.

<sup>10</sup>In Chart 3, because of the significance of métis interpreters among the most prominent twenty-five, they have not been counted with their European identification group, but have been pulled out into a separate group. Since only one Indian served as a primary interpreter, that category has been combined with the métis for this chart.

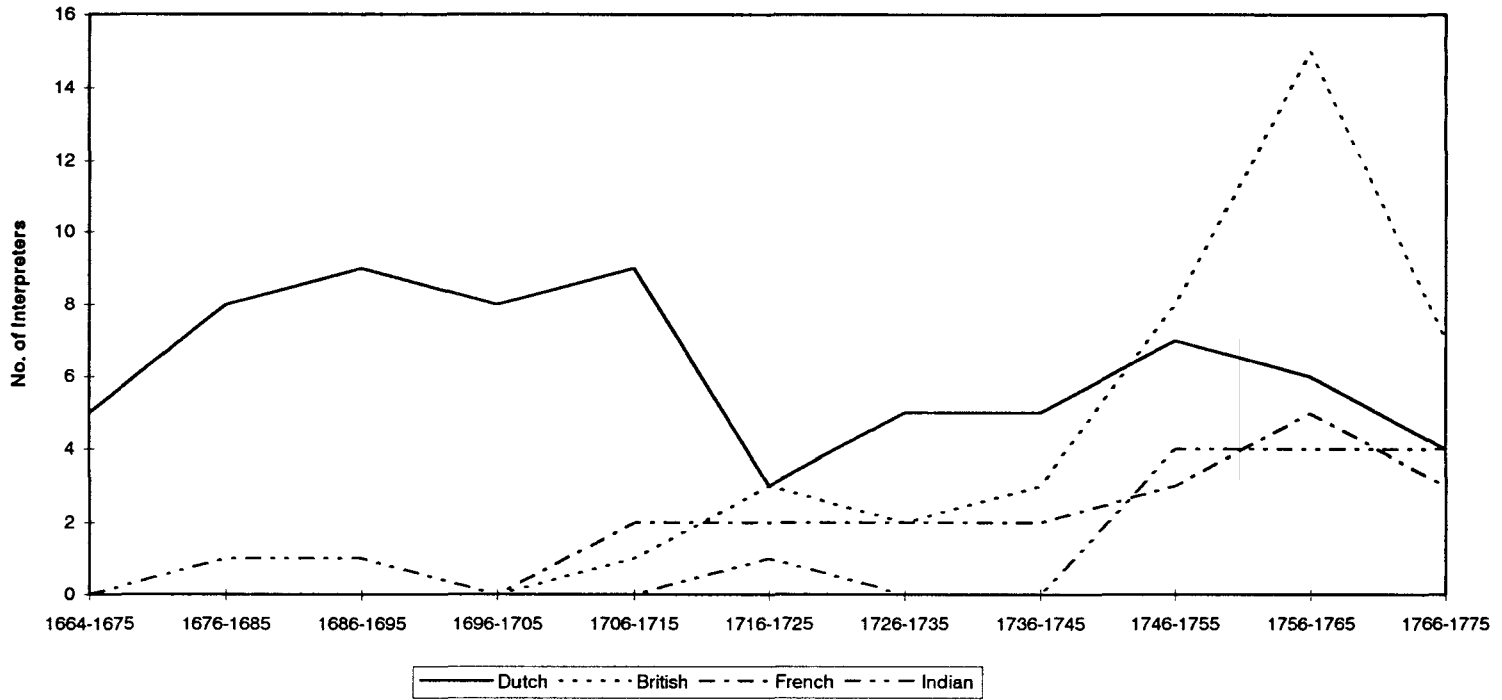
TABLE 2  
 ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE BRITISH  
 AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	# WORKING FOR BRITISH	% OF ALL FOR BRITISH
<b>British</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26.97</b>
Irish	5	5.62
<b>Dutch</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38.20</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.62</b>
Huguenot	2	2.25
<b>German</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.49</b>
Moravian	1	1.12
<b>Métis</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.87</b>
Dutch métis	4	4.49
French métis	3	3.37
<b>Indian</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15.73</b>
Mohawk	2	2.25
Oneida	6	6.74
Onondaga	1	1.12
Cayuga	1	1.12
Seneca	1	1.12
Mingo (Ohio Iroquois)	1	1.12
Conoy	1	1.12
Unknown/unspecified	1	1.12
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.12</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**CHART 3**  
**Ethnic Distribution of Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British**  
**Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775**



**CHART 4**  
**Trends in Ethnic Distribution of Interpreters for the British**  
**Active among the Iroquois, 1664-1775**



were forced to rely on Dutch interpreters in their dealings with their Iroquois neighbors, and the Dutch exercised a virtual monopoly on all interpreting positions. Among the principal twenty-five interpreters, the same trend is evident until at least 1706. When the importance of Dutch-métis among that group is taken into account, Dutch dominance can be extended into the mid-1730s, since three of the four métis interpreters active between 1664 and 1736 had Dutch backgrounds and were strongly identified with the Dutch communities of Albany and Schenectady: Jacques Cornelise van Slyck, Hilletie van Olinda, and Arent Stevens. Finally, a comparison of Chart 3 and 4 makes it clear that British dependence on the Dutch for temporary interpreters during times of crisis was even more pronounced. Not until the advent of Sir William Johnson in the mid-1750s did the British begin to control interpreting positions within their own administration.

Interpreters' occupations were as varied as their cultural backgrounds. Among all interpreters for the British, traders (22%), missionaries and religious personnel (12%), smiths (11%), Indian Department officials (3%), Indian officers (3%) and military officers (2%) all served as interpreters in addition to those who pursued interpreting as a full-time occupation (18%) (see Table

3).<sup>11</sup> Significant also were the number of Indians who interpreted and had no specified occupation (10%). The predominance of traders and missionaries is not surprising, since these individuals were often familiar with Iroquois culture, at least on a basic level. Nearly all of the men and women who served as provincial or Indian Department interpreters, fifteen out of sixteen, were among the twenty-five most prominent interpreters during the period.

The pattern changes quite drastically when the occupational distribution of only the most prominent interpreters is analyzed (see Table 4). Among this group, provincial and Indian Department interpreters dominated (60%), followed by traders (16%), and Indian Officers (12%). Only one smith, one missionary, and one Indian Department official ever became prominent interpreters, and military officers and Indians (at least those without another occupation such as Indian officer) disappear entirely. Three of the four traders who served did so during the first thirty-five to forty years after 1664, and then they, too, virtually disappeared from the ranks of prominent interpreters (see Chart 4). Traders, smiths, missionaries, military officers, and Indians, while frequently called on

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<sup>11</sup>The tabulations made here are based on my sense of how they earned their primary income during the period during which they interpreted. It is a bit difficult to determine, because an individual's occupation often changed during his or her lifetime.

**TABLE 3**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS AMONG INTERPRETERS**  
**FOR THE BRITISH AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775**

<b>PRIMARY OCCUPATION</b>	<b>NO. OF INTERPRETERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
Trader	20	22.47
Provincial or Indian Department Interpreter	16	17.98
Smith	10	11.24
Missionary or Religious Interpreter	11	12.36
Indian Officer	3	3.37
Military Officer	2	2.25
Indian Dept. Official	3	3.37
Indian (no occupation specified)	9	10.11
Unknown	15	16.85
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>



**TABLE 4**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS OF THE TWENTY-FIVE MOST**  
**PROMINENT INTERPRETERS FOR THE BRITISH AMONG THE IROQUOIS**  
**1664-1775**

<b>PRIMARY OCCUPATION</b>	<b>NO. OF INTERPRETERS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</b>
Trader	4	16.00
Provincial or Indian Department Interpreter	15	60.00
Smith	1	4.00
Missionary or Religious Interpreter	1	4.00
Indian Officer	3	12.00
Military Officer	0	0.00
Indian Dept. Official	1	4.00
Indian (no occupation specified)	0	0.00
Unknown	0	0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00</b>

to interpret in an emergency, apparently lacked the depth of knowledge or level of linguistic skill required of those regularly employed by New York, Pennsylvania, and Johnson's Indian Department.

Certain occupations clustered among interpreters from particular ethnic backgrounds (see Table 5). Of the Dutch interpreters whose occupations are known, for example, sixty-two percent were either traders or smiths among the Indians. Overall, sixteen percent of all interpreters were Dutch traders and eight percent were Dutch smiths, and these were the largest identifiable groups among interpreters. The British were predominantly missionaries (25%) or professional interpreters (21%), and those two groups combined were twelve percent of all interpreters. Most métis interpreters (57%) pursued that occupation full-time, while most Indians (64%) had no "occupation"--at least as defined by European observers--at all. Those who did worked primarily for missionaries as religious interpreters (60%).

Among the most prominent interpreters, the pattern again changes, but not unexpectedly. Provincial and Indian Department interpreters predominated among most ethnic groups, though among the English just as many were Indian officers. Only one Indian, Joseph Brant, became prominent, and he, too, was really an Indian officer rather than a salaried interpreter. Overall, full-time métis interpreters (16%) vied for dominance with their Dutch counterparts

TABLE 5  
 FREQUENCY TABLE OF ETHNICITY VS. OCCUPATION FOR INTERPRETERS  
 FOR THE BRITISH AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775

	British		Dutch		French		German		Métis		Indian		Unknown		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Trader	3	3.37	14	15.73	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	2.25	1	1.12	0	0.00	20	22.47
Interpreter	5	5.62	3	3.37	3	3.37	1	1.12	4	4.49	0	0.00	0	0.00	16	17.98
Smith	1	1.12	7	7.87	1	1.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.12	10	11.24
Missionary/ Rel. Interp.	6	6.74	1	1.12	0	0.00	1	1.12	0	0.00	3	3.37	0	0.00	11	12.36
Indian Officer	2	2.25	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.12	0	0.00	3	3.37
Military Officer	1	1.12	1	1.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	2.25
Indian Dept. Official	2	2.25	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	1.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	3.37
Indian	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	10.11	0	0.00	9	10.11
Unknown	4	4.49	8	8.99	1	1.12	1	1.12	1	1.12	0	0.00	0	0.00	15	16.85
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26.97</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38.20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.62</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.87</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15.73</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00</b>

(16%), and Dutch traders (8%) remained a significant element of the group.

Several groups of interpreters deserve special consideration: métis, Indians, and women. Métis, collectively considered as bicultural individuals, accounted for sixteen percent of the most prominent interpreters for the British between 1664 and 1775 and seven métis interpreted during the period (see Tables 5 and 6). The four Dutch métis (57%) were all from the same family: Jacques Cornelisse van Slyck, Hilletie van Olinda, and Lea Stevens were siblings born of a Dutch trader and a Mohawk woman, while Arent Stevens was Lea's son by an Englishman, Jonathan Stevens. All grew up in the Dutch community of the lower Mohawk Valley centered on Schenectady. The remaining three, Madame Montour and her sons Andrew and Lewis, were French métis, but had firm ties to the British because of their close connections with the Oneidas. Madame Montour, an Oneida captive during the 1690s, later married chief Carondawana and had several children by him, including Lewis and Andrew. The familial ties of these interpreters were significant. The first generation used their bilingualism to bridge the gap between the cultures that produced them, forging a role for themselves in the shifting world of intercultural affairs--a role that they passed on to at least some of their children.

Indians also constituted a significant subgroup among interpreters for the British (16%) (see Table 2). Of the

TABLE 6  
 FREQUENCY TABLE OF ETHNICITY VS. OCCUPATION FOR THE TWENTY-FIVE MOST PROMINENT  
 INTERPRETERS FOR THE BRITISH AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775

	British		Dutch		French		German		Métis		Indian		Unknown		Totals	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Trader	1	4.00	3	12.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	16.00
Interpreter	2	8.00	4	16.00	3	12.00	1	4.00	4	16.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	15	60.00
Smith	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00
Missionary/ Rel. Interp.	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00
Indian Officer	2	8.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	3	12.00
Military Officer	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Indian Dept. Official	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	4.00
Indian	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24.00</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28.00</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16.00</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8.00</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100.00</b>

fourteen who served, eleven (79%) were active after 1751, largely as a result of the general increase in diplomatic activity surrounding the Seven Years' War. Most of those who interpreted during the 1750s and early 1760s, or about half, interpreted only once or twice. Significantly, of the five who interpreted after 1761, four were the product of missionary training. Joseph Brant and Moses, both Mohawks, were students of the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, while the Oneidas, Jacob Reed and Thomas, were converts of the Reverend Samuel Kirkland. The dominance of educated, Christian Indian interpreters among Indian interpreters after 1760 reflected the increasing professionalism of the interpreter corps of the Indian Department under Sir William Johnson, and was echoed in the extensive employment of John Brainerd's Christian Delawares in Pennsylvania (see Appendix C).

Women accounted for only seven percent of all interpreters among the Iroquois and only two ever achieved prominence in the diplomatic arena: Hilletie van Olinda and Madame Montour. One other, Rebecca Kellogg Ashley, achieved some notoriety as an interpreter in the religious sphere. Of the six women who interpreted--or at least whose activities were recorded--half were métis (Madame Montour, Lea Stevens, and Hilletie van Olinda), two were former captives (Peggy Johnson and Rebecca Ashley), and one was an Indian (Sarah Ainse). If Molly Brant (who undoubtedly

interpreted though was never recorded as doing so) is included, the latter count rises to two.

The absence of European women who were never captives is striking. The only colonial women who interpreted did so as a result of their captivity among the Indians. Significantly, they already led unconventional lives. Ashley lived with the Caughnawagas for almost twenty-five years before returning to colonial society and marrying Benjamin Ashley. Peggy Johnson married the half-Mohawk son of William Johnson, Brant Johnson, and lived with him among the Mohawks of Canajoharie. Stepping into the unconventional role of female interpreter probably did not seem particularly strange to these two women or to those who employed them.

Both women who achieved diplomatic prominence--in fact all of the métis women--served before about 1720. After that date, the British apparently found enough professional male interpreters to fill their needs. It may also indicate that by the 1720s a stigma attached to female métis that barred them from participating in public councils. Molly Brant and Sarah Aïnse, the two Iroquois women, were both traders. Both, however, also had marital (or at least sexual) ties to William Johnson's Indian Department. Brant's connection as Johnson's housekeeper and mistress is well known. Sarah Aïnse was the second wife of interpreter Andrew Montour, a connection recognized and honored even

after her marriage to Montour ended in the mid-1750s.<sup>12</sup> Without the aid of extraordinary circumstances, few women would have interpreted in the public arena of Anglo-Iroquois intercultural affairs.

The women and men who achieved prominence as interpreters among the Iroquois were those who served for many years, building up a store of experience, knowledge, trust, and influence. Although length of service among the twenty-five principal interpreters varied considerably, most (72%) served between nine and thirty years (see Chart 5). The average (mean) length of service was about eighteen years, with the median falling at fifteen. Those who served the longest before 1775, Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen (1700-1742), Conrad Weiser (c. 1730-1760), and Andrew Montour (1742-1772), came to exercise tremendous influence on Indian affairs in New York and Pennsylvania.

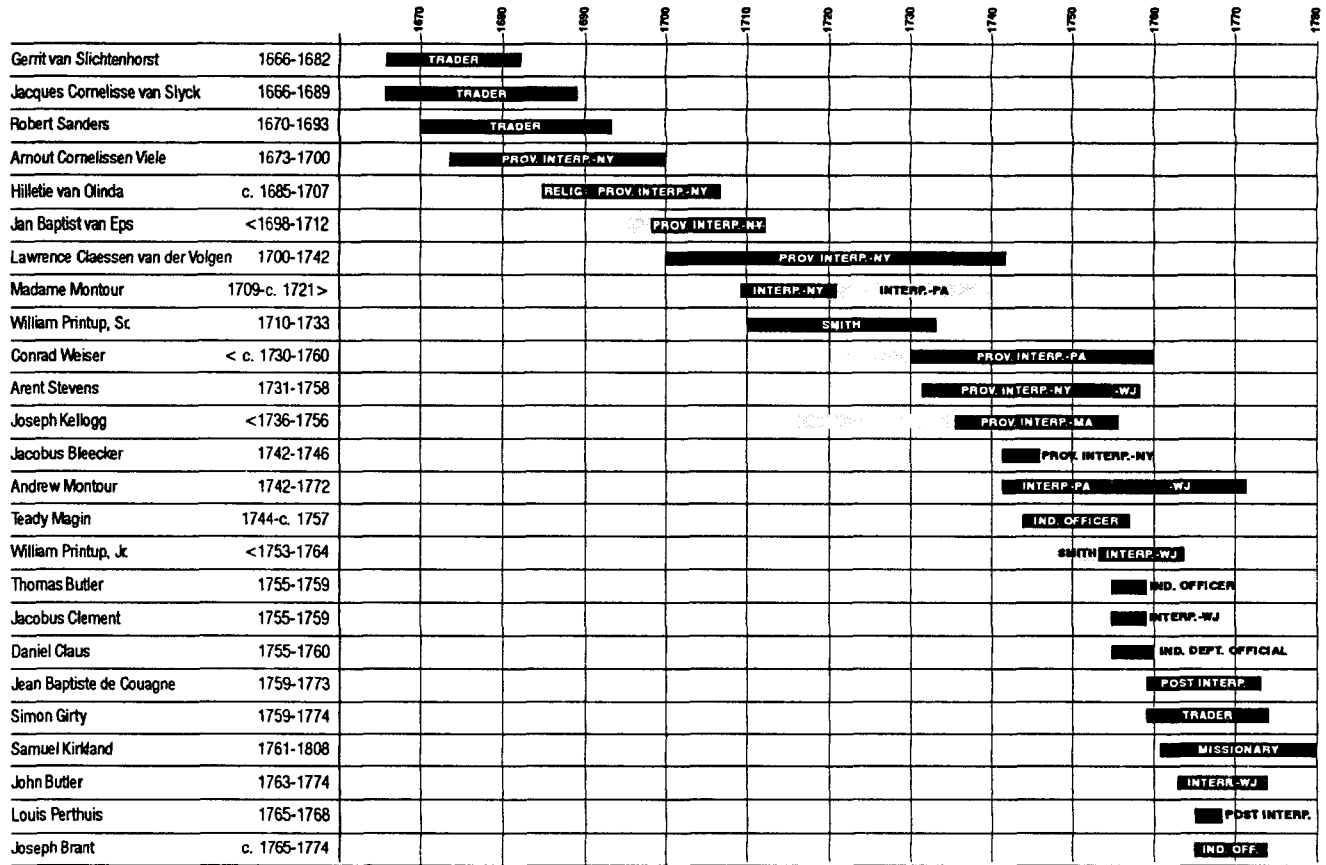
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<sup>12</sup>WJP 2: 695, 3: 160, 10: 480-83.



CHART 5

Length of Service of the Twenty-five Most Prominent Interpreters for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775



## APPENDIX B

### INTERPRETERS AMONG THE IROQUOIS, 1664-1775<sup>1</sup>

**Adogaow** ["The Great Oneyde"]. Oneida. Interpreted for two Praying Indians from Canada at Onondaga, 1695.

**Ainse, Sarah** [Hands, Hance; Sally; Sarah Montour] (1728-1823). Probably Oneida. Second wife of interpreter Andrew Montour. Trader at Ft. Stanwix by 1759, later at Michilimackinac and Detroit. Possibly interpreted (probably Oneida or Mohawk) for William Johnson at Ft. Johnson, 1757.

**Ashley, Rebecca.** See Rebecca Kellogg.

**Baker, John.** English. Interpreted at Niagara, 1767.

- \* Indicates the interpreter is one of the twenty-five most prominent who worked for the British among the Iroquois, 1664-1775. The criteria for choosing these individuals was consistent, regular, and sustained employment as an interpreter over a period of at least three years. Indian officials who rarely interpreted, such as William Johnson, are not considered prominent *interpreters*.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in the following biographical sketches came from one or more of the following sources: DAB; DCB; DHNY; NYCD; JR; CRP; WJP; Charles A. Hanna, The Wilderness Trail, or The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911); Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady, from 1662 to 1800 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976); Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies fo the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany, from 1630 to 1800 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976); "Persons Participating in Iroquois Treaties," HCID, 229-255. Sources given in individual footnotes are usually in addition to one or more of those given above.

**Barclay, Henry** (1712-1764). Anglo-Dutch. Catechist and missionary to Mohawks at Ft. Hunter, 1736-1746. Translated liturgy into Mohawk. Interpreter (Mohawk) for Cadwallader Colden at Albany, 1746.<sup>2</sup>

**Bleecker, Anthony** [Bleeker, Bliker, Blyker, Bluecker, Bleiker; Antony, Tunis] (bp. 1718-c. 1765). Dutch. Smith among the Senecas, 1743. Messenger and agent to Six Nations for New York, 1745-1754. Pilot and interpreter (Seneca) for John Bradstreet during Cataragui expedition, 1758, and at Sandusky, 1764.<sup>3</sup>

\***Bleecker, Jacobus** [Bleeker; Jacob] (1715-1747). Dutch. Resided with the Senecas, possibly as a smith, 1734-35, and with the Mohawks at Canajoharie to perfect him in their language, 1742. Sworn interpreter (Mohawk and possibly Seneca) for New York, replacing Lawrence Claessen van der Volgen, 1742-46.<sup>4</sup>

**Bleecker, Johannes Janse** [Bleeker; Johannes Jr., John Jr., Capt. John] (1668-1738). Dutch. Son of Dutch trader and Albany official, Jan Janse Bleecker. Trader, Recorder, and Indian Commissioner at Albany. Occasional interpreter (probably Mohawk) at Albany, 1698-1710.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>See also Cadwallader Colden, The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada Which Are Dependent on the Province of New York, and Are a Barrier between the English and French in That Part of the World, 2 vols. (New York: Allerton Book, Co., 1922), 2: 222; ERNY 4: 2677.

<sup>3</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1821, 92, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 12, Aug. 29, 1745; CHM-E, 569, 610; Account of Monies paid by Lt. Col. Bradstreet for Pilots & Interpreters on expedition to Cadarague, 1758 (Box 2, folder 4), and Receipt of Henry Bleecker, Jr., June 30, 1766 (Box 2, folder 5), John Bradstreet Papers, 1754-1782, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.; Bradstreet to Gage, Oct. 5, 1764, GP, vol. 25, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

<sup>4</sup>AIA, 225; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 62-63, 223-224v, 240, 241v, 242-243, 259-259v, 270v-271, 309, 315-316v, 339-341, 345v-348v, vol. 1821, 58-60, 65-66, 92, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reels 11-13; Harmanus Bleecker Papers, 1715-1872, items 96, 103, 105, 106, 109, 111, 114, 115, 126, New York State Library, Albany, N. Y.; CCM, 346.

<sup>5</sup>LIR, 178; CCM, 231; Account of conference enclosed

**Bleecker, Johannes** [Blaker; John J., John] (bp. 1731-1811). Dutch. Merchant and trader at Albany. Interpreter (probably Mohawk) at Niagara, 1767.

\***Brant, Joseph** [Thayendanega] (c. 1742-1807). Mohawk. Great grandson of Mohawk chief Hendrick [Theyanoguin] and brother of Molly Brant. Protégé of William Johnson. Attended Eleazar Wheelock's school, 1761-1763. Missionary interpreter for Charles Jeffry Smith, 1763. Translated religious texts into Mohawk at Ft. Hunter for missionary John Stuart, c. 1771. Spoke at least three Six Nations languages fluently, Mohawk and probably Oneida and Onondaga. Indian Department officer and interpreter (Mohawk, plus Oneida and Onondaga?) for William Johnson, c. 1765-1774.<sup>6</sup>

**Bruyas, Jacques** (1635-1712). French. Jesuit missionary among the Oneidas, 1667-1670, among the Mohawks, 1670-1679, and at Sault St. Louis (Caughnawaga), 1679-1693, 1698-1712. Became Superior of the Iroquois missions in 1670. Wrote a Mohawk grammar, catechism, and prayer book. Agent and interpreter (Mohawk and Oneida) for Governor-General of Canada during negotiations with the Iroquois in 1684 and 1699-1701.

**Burns, Charles**. English. Interpreter at Mount Burnet, 1723.<sup>7</sup>

\***Butler, John** (bp. 1728-1796). English. Son of British military officer and brother of interpreter Thomas Butler. Trader at Oswego for William Johnson, c. 1745-1755. Indian officer and agent, 1755-1763. Interpreter (probably Mohawk?) for William Johnson, 1763-1774.<sup>8</sup>

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in Letter of Col. Hunter, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1050, in IIDH, reel 7, May 7, 1711.

<sup>6</sup>For detailed biography of Brant, see Isabel Thompson Kelsay, Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1984).

<sup>7</sup>CCM, 293.

<sup>8</sup>Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1823, 186; vol. 1824, 411, 413, 458, 486, 505, vol. 1825, 22, 59-60, 66, 69, 70, 76, 78, 90, 416, vol. 1826, 9, 47, 52, 69, 88, 116, vol. 1830, 1, 37, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reels 21, 25-26, 28-29, 31; Correspondence and Journal of William Johnson, Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1827-1828, 120, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reel 30, Feb. 18, [1771] (II);

\***Butler, Thomas** (c. 1725-1759?). English. Brother of interpreter John Butler. Trader at Oswego for William Johnson, c. 1744-1755. Indian officer and agent, 1755-1759. Interpreter (probably Mohawk) for William Johnson, 1755-1759.<sup>9</sup>

**Campbell, James**. Irish. Trader at Oswego. Interpreter (probably Oneida) at Bull's Fort near Ft. Stanwix, 1756. Possibly resident agent for William Johnson among the Oneidas, 1759.

**Chabert de Joncaire de Clausonne, Daniel-Marie** [Joncaire Chaber] (bp. 1714-1771). French. Son of Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire and brother of Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire. Resided at various times among the Ottawas, Ojibwas, and Shawnees, though his closest ties were to the Senecas. Adopted son of Senecas, married a Seneca woman. Replaced his brother as principal French agent among the Iroquois in 1748. Active as agent and interpreter (primarily Seneca) among the Six Nations, c. 1740-1761. Trader at Detroit, 1767-1771.

**Chabert de Joncaire, Louis-Thomas** [Sononchiez] (c. 1670-1739). French. Captured by Senecas shortly after his arrival in New France as a member of the governor's guards, late 1680s; adopted by them and retained close ties with them throughout his life. Played significant role in negotiations leading to peace of 1701. Responsible for persuading Senecas to allow building of

Extract of Conference at Johnson Hall, March 1768, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 3, entry for Mar. 4, 1768, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 29, March 4-12, 1768; Proceedings of Conference at German Flats, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/71, pt. 2, in IIDH, reel 30, July 15-24, 1770; Joel Munsell, ed. and comp., Collections on the History of Albany, 4 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell, 1865-1871), 1: 362; GPW, vol. 9, pp. 15, 85; John Christopher Guzzardo, "Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo-American Empire" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1975), 46, 109.

<sup>9</sup>Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 121; Charles R. Canedy, "An Entrepreneurial History of the New York Frontier, 1739-1776" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1967), 126; Minutes of Conference at Ft. Johnson, AB 36, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 22, March 24, 1758 (III); Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1822, 433-434, vol. 1823, 174, 198, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reels 20-21.

Fort Niagara; commander there, 1720-1726. Agent and interpreter (Seneca) among Iroquois, 1690s-1639.

**Chabert de Joncaire, Philippe-Thomas** [Nitachinon] (bp. 1707-c. 1766). French. Son of Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire and brother of Daniel-Marie Chabert de Joncaire de Clausonne. Presented to the Seneca at the age of 10 by his father to be trained as his successor. Succeeded his father as principal agent among the Iroquois for New France, 1735. Resigned post due to ill health, 1748. Interpreter for Pierre-Joseph Céloron de Blainville's expedition to the Ohio Valley, 1749. Stationed among Delawares and Shawnees at Logstown and Venango, 1750-1755. Back among Senecas, 1755-1759. Captured at fall of Fort Niagara, 1759. Agent and interpreter (Seneca) among Iroquois, c. 1725-1759.

**Chaumonot, Pierre-Joseph-Marie** [Chomonot; Joseph-Marie; Échon, Héchon] (1611-1693). French. Jesuit missionary among the Huron, 1639-1691. Noted specialist in the Huron language. Missionary at Onondaga with Father Claude Dablon, 1655-1658. Present at negotiations with Onondagas at Montreal, 1658. Ambassador to Onondagas for governor of New France in 1659 and 1661. Interpreter (Huron and Onondaga) at Quebec, 1666.

\***Claus, Daniel** [Christian Daniel] (1727-1787). German. Tutor to Samuel Weiser, 1749-1750. Accompanied Conrad Weiser to Iroquois, 1750, began compiling vocabulary while with the Onondaga. Pennsylvania governor and Conrad Weiser arrange for Samuel Weiser and him to learn Mohawk, 1751. Lived at Canajoharie, some of the time with Hendrick [Theyanoguin], who instructed him in language, history and customs of Six Nations, 1751-1755. Indian officer, deputy secretary, and interpreter (Mohawk), 1755-1760. Deputy Superintendent for Canadian Indians, 1760-1775.<sup>10</sup>

\***Clement, Jacobus** (bp. 1718-?). Dutch. Son of Joseph Clement. Appointment as much needed second interpreter to assist Arent Stevens, requested by Canajoharie

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<sup>10</sup>PA, ser. 1, 2:116; Conrad Weiser's Journal of a Trip to Albany, 1751, Du Simitiere Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 14, June 10-Aug. 2, 1751; Daniel Claus to Richard Peters, July 10, 1755, Pennsylvania Provincial Records, vol. N, p. 100, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pa., in IIDH, reel 17, June 21, 1755.

Mohawks, 1755. Interpreter (probably Mohawk or Oneida), 1755-1759.<sup>11</sup>

**Clement, Joseph.** Dutch. Father of Jacobus Clement. Carpenter and interpreter at Oswego, 1727-1733.<sup>12</sup>

\***Couagne, Jean-Baptiste de** [Du Coigne] (bp. 1720-after 1795). French. Trader in Illinois country, late 1730s. Captured and adopted by Cherokees, c. 1747. Trader at Detroit and Lake of the Woods, 1747-1749. Came to Ft. Edward, 1750-1751. Lived among Iroquois, as trader, early 1750s. Loyalty to English suspect at outbreak of Seven Years' War, but eventually cleared. Post interpreter (Seneca and Ojibwa) at Niagara for William Johnson, 1759-1773.<sup>13</sup>

**Croghan, George** (d. 1782). Irish. Migrated to Pennsylvania, 1741. Trader in western Pennsylvania and upper Ohio River valley and Pennsylvania's Indian agent in the west, c. 1745-1754. Named by Scarouady to represent the Indians in dealings with governor of

<sup>11</sup>PA, ser. 2, 6: 464, 465, 480, 485, 488; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1822, 3, 180, 184, vol. 1823, 247, 268, 334, 344, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa, in IIDH, reels 17-19, 22-23; CHM-E, 625, 627; Proceedings of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, N.Y. Col. Mss., 79: 46, 80: 4, N.Y. State Archives, Albany, in IIDH, reel 16, Sept. 27, 1754, and reel 17, Jan. 21, 1755; Memorandum of Abstract of Ft. Johnson Treaty Minutes, Logan Papers, vol. 11, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 18, Dec. 1755-Feb. 1756; William Johnson Minutes, June-July 1756, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1274, in IIDH, reel 18, Sept. 10, 1756; William Johnson to Maj. Gen. Abernathy, April 28, 1758, encl., Amherst Papers, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., WO34/39, in IIDH, reel 22, April 28, 1758 (II); Extracts of William Johnson Proceedings, LO 1269, A & B, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 19, July 1-12, 1756.

<sup>12</sup>CCM, 304, 318; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Publ. Arch. of Canada, Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 342.

<sup>13</sup>Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1824, 81, vol. 1825, 122, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reels 24, 26; William Johnson's Minutes of Conference at Detroit, Amherst Papers, WO 34/39, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., in IIDH, June-Sept. 18, 1761; GPW, 9: 15, 85, 25: 68-71, 26: 89, 28: 52-53, 29: 75, 31: 19-20, 33: 28-29, 35: 69; Edward P. Hamilton, trans. and ed., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bouganville, 1756-1760 (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 89.

Pennsylvania, 1753. Interpreted (Delaware and probably Seneca?) for Pennsylvania, 1752-1756. Married daughter of Mohawk chief Nickus, 1757, their daughter Catherine later married Joseph Brant. Deputy Superintendent for Ohio and Pennsylvania Indians (and occasional interpreter) for William Johnson, primarily at Fort Pitt, 1756-1772.<sup>14</sup>

**Cuyler, Abraham.** Dutch Interpreted mortgage of land at Schaghticoke by two Mahicans, 1686. Oneidas requested him as one of several interpreters for trip to Canada, 1709.<sup>15</sup>

**Dagneau Douville, Alexandre** (1698-1774). French. Trader and military officer. Strong ties to Miamis. Interpreter at Fort Frontenac, 1736, 1743. Interpreter for conference with Iroquois at Quebec, 1748. Commander at Sault-Saint-Louis (Caughnawaga), 1750-1754. Commander at Fort Presque Isle, 1754. Retired in 1756.

**Davison, John.** English. Trader? Apparently strong ties to Ohio Six Nations. Interpreter for George Washington, 1753. Interpreter employed by Half King (Tanaghrisson), 1754, and Old Belt (Kaghswaghtaniunt), 1754 and 1756. Occasional interpreter (Seneca?) for Pennsylvania, 1754-1756.<sup>16</sup>

**Dean, James** (1748-1823). English. Lived with Oneidas and Tuscaroras at Oquaga, c. 1759-late 1760s. Kept "an english School" at Oquaga, 1767. Attended Dartmouth College, graduated 1773. Noted orator in Oneida language. Interpreter (Oneida) and agent to the Oneidas for Continental Congress during the Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For detailed biography of George Croghan, see Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan: Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1959).

<sup>15</sup>ERA 2: 358; CCM, 231.

<sup>16</sup>Penn Manuscripts, Official Correspondence, vol. 3, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 23, Nov. 30, 1758 (II); Copy of Speech of Half King, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, vol. 2, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 16, April 18, 1754; Edward Ward's deposition, May 7, 1754, encl. in Dinwiddie to Lords of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 16, May 10, 1754.

<sup>17</sup>William Tracy, Notices of Men and Events Connected



**Douw, Johannes.** Dutch. Interpreter at Oswego, pre-1749.

**Farmer, Johannes Harmanse.** Dutch. Oneidas request he accompany them to Canada as one of several interpreters, 1709.<sup>18</sup>

**\*Girty, Simon (1741-1818).** Anglo-Irish. Family taken captive by French and Indians at surrender of Ft. Granville, 1755. Family split up, Simon given to Senecas, adopted, then released with other captives of the Ohio Indians in 1759. Interpreter (Seneca and Delaware) for traders about Ft. Pitt, 1759-1774. Closely associated with the Delawares, appearing at conferences as a Delaware chief and warrior, 1764-1765. Interpreter and pilot for Maj. Isaac Hamilton's trip to Illinois and post interpreter at Fort Pitt, 1772. Scout and interpreter for Lord Dunmore, 1774. Briefly employed as interpreter for George Morgan, American Deputy Commissioner for Indian Affairs, 1775. Deserted American cause during the Revolution, 1778. Interpreter for British at Detroit, 1778-1796.<sup>19</sup>

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with the Early History of Oneida County (Utica, N.Y.: R. Northway, Jr., Printer, 1838), 12-14; Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, in Lebanon, in Connecticut; From the Year 1768, to the Incorporation of it with Dartmouth-College, and Removal and Settlement of it in Hanover, In the Province of New-Hampshire, 1771 Rochester Reprints, no. 6 (orig. publ. London, 1771), 31; Pomeroy Jones, Annals and Recollections of Oneida County, New York (Rome, N.Y., 1851), 744; American Archives, ser. 4, 2: 152-53, 1541, 1594-96, in IIDH, reel 31, March 16, 1755 (II), June 27-28, 1775, and July 6, 1775.

<sup>18</sup>CCM, 231.

<sup>19</sup>Speech of Silver Heels to Charles Edmonstone at Ft. Pitt, Sept. 20, 1769, GP, vol. 87; GPW, 33: 8a-c, 34: 79, 35: 44, 48; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1825, 225, 237, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 27, Oct. 13-Nov. 17, 1764; Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 4, p. 45, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 27, Oct. 1764; George Croghan's Journal to Illinois, Gratz Collection, Croghan Papers, vol. 1, p. 12, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 27, Feb. 28-May 10, 1765; Ft. Pitt Speech, Sept. 21, 1769, GP, in IIDH, reel 30, Sept. 20, 1769; Extract of Journal at Ft. Pitt, pp. 17, 34, 56, Chalmers Collection, Astor, Lenox & Tilden Fdns., Rare Books and Mss. Division, New York Public Library, New York, in IIDH, reel 31, May 1-Aug. 29, 1774. For more detailed biographies of Simon Girty, see Consul Willshire

**Groesbeck, Stephanus** [Groesbeeck; Stephen, Stevanus, Steven] (1662-1744). Dutch. Trader and Indian Commissioner. Oneidas request he accompany them to Canada as one of several interpreters, 1709. Interpreter for Albany Indian Commissioners, 1711.<sup>20</sup>

**Grois, Etienne de** [Dégrois; Stephen] French. Interpreter (Iroquois, possibly Oneida) for Col. John Bradstreet, 1764.<sup>21</sup>

**Gunn, Mr.** English. Accompanies missionary Charles Smith to Onohokwage [Oquaga] as interpreter (probably Oneida) in 1765.<sup>22</sup>

**Hoit, Winthrop.** English. Captured and adopted by Caughnawagas. Sent by Ethan Allen to deliver letter to Caughnawagas, explain it to them "in Indian" (probably Mohawk), and treat with them, 1775.<sup>23</sup>

**Johnson, Peggy** [Mrs. Brant Johnson]. English? Apparently one of the captives released at close of Seven Years' War, 1765. Married William Johnson's half-Mohawk son, Brant Johnson. Became interpreter for Canajoharie Mohawks among whom she lived with her husband.<sup>24</sup>

Butterfield, History of the Girtys (Cincinnati, 1890). See also Thomas A. Boyd, Simon Girty, the White Savage (New York: Minton, Balch, 1928).

<sup>20</sup>CCM, 231.

<sup>21</sup>Receipt of Dégrois, Jan. 23, 1765, John Bradstreet Papers, 1754-1782, box 2, folder 5, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.; Enclosure in Bradstreet to Thomas Gage, GP, vol. 25.

<sup>22</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the State, etc. of the Indian Charity-School, at Lebanon, in Connecticut; From Nov. 27th, 1762, to Sept. 3d, 1765, Rochester Reprints, no. 2 (Boston: Richard and samuel Draper, 1765), 12.

<sup>23</sup>American Archives, ser. 4, 2: 714, 784, 892, 976, in IIDH, reel 31, May 29, 1775 and June 2, 1775.

<sup>24</sup>James Thomas Flexner, Lord of the Mohawks: A Biography of Sir William Johnson, revd. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), 278; Minute Book of the Committee of Safety of Tryon County, ed. Hanson and Frey (New York: Dodd Mea and Co., 1905), 39, in IIDH, reel 31, July 10-11, 1775.

**Johnson, Sir William** [Warraghiyagey] (1715-1774). Irish. Merchant-trader, military officer, provincial and crown agent for Indian affairs. Came to America in 1738, heavily involved in the Indian trade at Oswego. Became very influential among the Six Nations, especially the Mohawks. Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, 1755-1774. Occasional interpreter (Mohawk), throughout his career, though very few documented instances.<sup>25</sup>

**Johnston, John.** English? In Seneca country, possibly as a smith, 1762. Indian officer, 1764-1765. Smith at Cayuga, 1769. Interpreter (probably Seneca and possibly Cayuga), at Sandusky, 1764.<sup>26</sup>

**Kakouenthiony** [Cachointioni, Caghswoughtiooni, Casswettune, Kaghswoughtioony, Kaghswoughtioni, Red Head] (fl. 1748-1756). Onondaga. Council member and speaker. Translated Peter Wraxall's speech of Edward Braddock's war proposal into an Iroquois language (probably Onondaga) at Mt. Johnson, 1755.<sup>27</sup>

**Kayahsota** [Kayashuta, Gaiachoton, Geyesutha, Guyastua, Kayashoton, Kiyasuta, Kiashuta, Quiasutha] (c. 1725-c. 1794). Seneca chief. Interpreter (into Seneca) for Six Nations at meeting at Johnson Hall, July 1765.

**Keeman, H.** [Keman, Heeman]. Dutch? Interpreter (Mohawk or Oneida) and messenger for Albany officials, 1687.<sup>28</sup>

\***Kellogg, Joseph** (1691-1756). English. Brother of Martin and Rebecca Kellogg. Captured at Deerfield, 1704. Remained at Caughnawaga one year, then delivered to French, naturalized, 1710, employed as interpreter on trading expeditions. Convinced to return to New England by his brother Martin, 1714. Appointed

<sup>25</sup>Most recent biographies: Flexner, Lord of the Mohawks, revd. ed.; and Milton W. Hamilton, Sir William Johnson, Colonial American, 1715-1763 (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1976).

<sup>26</sup>Enclosure in John Bradstreet to Thomas Gage, Oct. 5, 1764, GP, in IIDH, reel 27, Oct. 5, 1764; Enclosure in Bradstreet to Gage, Dec. 5, 1764, GP, in IIDH, reel 27, Dec. 5, 1764 (II); GPW, 10: 41.

<sup>27</sup>Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 265.

<sup>28</sup>LIR, 129; Oneida proposals to officials of Albany, Sept. 3, 1687, P.R.O., Kew, CO1/63, in IIDH, reel 3, Sept. 3, 1687.

interpreter, Indian officer, and agent for Massachusetts, 1716. Commander and/or interpreter at Ft. Dummer [Brattleboro, Vt.], 1724-1740. N.Y. officials requested him to settle at Albany in 1726, but he declined. Appointed Massachusetts interpreter to the Six Nations, 1736. Appointed Massachusetts' general interpreter to the Indians, 1740. Interpreter for Mohawk children at Stockbridge mission, 1749-1751. Accompanied William Shirley to Oswego as interpreter, but died during the trip, 1756. His greatest expertise was in Mohawk. Regarded as the best interpreter of his day in New England.<sup>29</sup>

**Kellogg, Martin** (1686-1753) [Captain Kellogg, Killogg, Callagh, Callick]. English. Brother of Joseph and Rebecca Kellogg. Captured at Deerfield, 1704, escaped and returned to Deerfield May 1705. Captured again while scouting, 1708, apparently held at Quebec until ransomed, c. 1712. Accompanied commissioners seeking return of captives from Canada, 1714. Served as Indian agent and interpreter for Massachusetts. Had care and charge of twelve Indian boys from the Hollis School at Stockbridge, 1748-1751. Sent as agent to Hendrick (Mohawk), 1751.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Timothy Hopkins, The Kelloggs in the Old World and the New, 3 vols. (San Francisco, 1903), 1: 59-63. See also, ERNY 5: 3401; CCP 53: 203; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, p. 3, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 9, Jan. 7, 1723; Report of Massachusetts Commissioners to Six Nations at Albany, Massachusetts Archives, vol. 29, pp. 178, 187, Boston, Mass., in IIDH, reel 9, Sept. 28, 1724; Joseph Kellogg to William Shirley, Dec. 3, 1744, Mass. Archives, vol. 31, pp. 518-520, in IIDH, reel 12, Dec. 3, 1744; Petition to Spencer Phipps, Mass. Archives, vol. 32, pp. 360-361, in IIDH, reel 15, May 30, 1753; Collections of the Maine Historical Society, vol. 4, pt. 6 (1856): 124, in IIDH, reel 10, Aug. 27-Sept. 1, 1735; Memorandum of Joseph Kellogg's transactions at Mt. Johnson Indian Conference, June 21-July 4, 1755, Sir William Johnson Papers, 2:84, Mss., N.Y. State Library, Albany, in IIDH, reel 17, [July 17], 1755.

<sup>30</sup>Hopkins, Kelloggs, 55-58. See also Eleazar Wheelock, A plain and faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and Present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut, Rochester Reprints, no. 1, (orig. publ. Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 21; Min. of the Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1821, 58-60, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 12, May 16, 1745; Conrad Weiser's report on Albany Conference, Oct. 1745, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, vol. 1, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 12,

**Kellogg [Ashley], Rebecca** (1695-1757). English. Sister of Joseph and Martin Kellogg. Captured at Deerfield, 1704. Remained with the Indians (apparently Caughnawagas) in Canada until 1728. Married Benjamin Ashley after her return. Employed Rev. Gideon Hawley as interpreter for his mission at Oquago, 1752-1757. She was reputed to be an excellent interpreter; her death in 1757 supposedly broke up the mission.<sup>31</sup>

\***Kirkland, Samuel** (1741-1808). English. Entered Eleazar Wheelock's school as first white student, 1760. Sent to Mohawks to learn language, 1761. Taught among Mohawks, 1764. Missionary to Senecas at Canadasaga [Kanatasake], adopted, 1764-1766. Missionary to Oneidas at Canowaroghare, 1766-1808. Interpreter (primarily Oneida) on many occasions, 1761-1808. Active agent among Oneidas for Americans during Revolution.<sup>32</sup>

**La Corne, Luc de** [Chaptes (Chap, Chapt) de La Corne; La Corne Saint-Luc] (c. 1711-1784). French. Military and Indian officer. Merchant-trader throughout upper Great Lakes region, especially active at Detroit, Michilimackinac, and Sault Ste. Marie. Reputedly spoke four or five Indian languages fluently. Interpreter (Seneca?) for Gov. Vaudreuil, 1755, and again in 1756.

**La Force** [La Forge]. French. Indian officer or interpreter at Fort Duquesne, c. 1754. Interpreter (Onondaga, Oneida, or Cayuga?) at Oswegatchie [Sulpician mission of La Presentation], c. 1757-1763. Accompanied mission

Dec. 7, 1745; Conrad Weiser's Journal to Albany, 1751, Du Simetiere Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 14, June 10-Aug. 2, 1751; Report of Commissioners of Massachusetts, Mass. Archives, vol. 32, 203, in IIDH, reel 14, Oct. 8, 1751.

<sup>31</sup>Hopkins, Kelloggs, 1: 63. Letter of Rev. Gideon Hawley, July 31, 1794, in ERNY 5: 3401-4.

<sup>32</sup>Samuel Kirkland, The Journals of Samuel Kirkland: Eighteenth-Century Missionary to the Iroquois, Government Agent, Father of Hamilton College, ed. Walter Pilkington (Clinton, N.Y.: Hamilton College, 1980), xv-xviii; Eleazar Wheelock, A Brief Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, 2d ed., Rochester Reprints, no. 4 (orig. publ. London: J. & W. Oliver, 1767), 57; Eleazar Wheelock, A Continuation of the Narrative of the Indian Charity-School, In Lebanon in Connecticut, New England, Founded and Carried on by The Revd. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock, Rochester Reprints, no. 5 (orig. publ. London: J. & W. Oliver, 1769), 1, 3-4, 64.

Indians with Montcalm's army as one of their interpreters, 1757.<sup>33</sup>

**Last Night.** Conoy. Interpreted (Seneca into Delaware) at Philadelphia, 1761. Speaker for Pennsylvania governor during condolence offered to Seneca George at Shamokin, 1769.

**Le Moyne de Longueuil et de Châteauguay, Charles** [Charles Le Moyne; Akouessan] (1626-1685). French. Father of Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt. Came to New France, 1641. Indentured employee of Jesuits in Huronia, 1641-1645. Interpreter for French, 1645-1684.<sup>34</sup>

**Le Moyne de Maricourt, Paul** [Taouestaouis, Stow Stow] (1663-1704). French. Son of Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil et de Châteauguay. Traveled as youth with his father and brothers, mastering various Indian languages. Military officer. Adopted by Onondaga. Apparently gifted orator in Onondaga. Employed as emissary to Onondaga during peace negotiations, 1699-1701. French agent and interpreter among Iroquois, 1695-1704.

**Lydius, John Henry** [Lidius Lydieus; John Hendricks, Johannes Hendricus, Jean-Henri] (bp. 1704-1791). Dutch. Father minister at Albany Dutch Reformed Church, also to local Iroquois, 1700-1710. Fled to Montreal, converted to Roman Catholicism, 1725. Trader and interpreter. Involved in illegal traffic between Montreal and Albany, until banished from New France, 1730. Returned to New York and reentered illicit trade, 1732. Unpopular with both French and Albany Commissioners, 1740s. Regarded as expert on Six Nations, and counsellor to William Johnson, late 1740s. Served as William Shirley's military agent to Six Nations, becoming Johnson's rival, c. 1746-1755. By 1764, isolated and distrusted by all sides.

**\*Magin, Teady** [McGin, McGinn, McGinis; Teddy, Tidy] (d. c. 1757). Irish? Trading client of William Johnson at Oswego, 1740s-1755. Reportedly had much influence among Oneida, 1746. Indian officer and interpreter,

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<sup>33</sup>Pennsylvania Register, ed. Samuel Hazard, 16 vols. (Philadelphia, 1828-1835), 4: 329; Hamilton, Adventure in the Wilderness, 150.

<sup>34</sup>Lahontan, New Voyage to North-America (repr. 1970), 1: 84, in IIDH, reel 3, Nov. 2, 1684.

1744-1748. Agent for William Johnson, c. 1750-c. 1757. Commissioned Indian officer and interpreter, 1755.<sup>35</sup>

**Maray de La Chauvignerie, Michel** [Marest?, Morasaw?] (d. c. 1731?). French. Served Charles Le Moyne de Longueuil as interpreter (Onondaga) among the Onondagas, c. 1711.<sup>36</sup>

**Meanner, John** [Meinor, Menar, Mainor; aka Jack Cork, Jacob Cork]. British. Served part of Andrew Montour's company of scouts under Washington at Ft. Necessity, 1754. Post interpreter at Ft. Pitt, 1763-1772.<sup>37</sup>

**\*Montour, Andrew** [Henry Montour, Sattelihu] (1710s-1772). French métis-Oneida. Son of Madame Montour and Carondawana, brother of Lewis Montour. Grew up among Oneida in New York and Delaware and Shawnee on Susquehanna River. Interpreter (Mohawk, Oneida, Delaware, Shawnee, Miami, and others?) and agent for Pennsylvania, 1742-1756. Often acted as speaker for Indians. Made Councillor by Ohio Six Nations, 1752. Commissioned by Virginia to raise company of scouts for Washington, 1754. Moved to New York, 1756. Indian Officer and interpreter for William Johnson, 1756-1765. Post interpreter at Ft. Pitt, 1766-1772.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 47, 61, 73; Procs. of Ind. Commrs., encl. in Gov. DeLancey, N.Y. Col. Mss., 79: 48, N.Y. State Archives, Albany, in IIDH, reel 16, Sept. 27, 1754; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1823, 174, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 21, [June] 25, [1757]; New York Council's Report to Gov. Clinton, July 30, 1746, George Clinton Papers, 1697-1759, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich., in IIDH, reel 13, July 30, 1746; Account of Provisions to the Indians, 1746, P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1096, in IIDH, reel 13, Nov. 5, 1748.

<sup>36</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind., Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 344v-345, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 10, July 26, 1731.

<sup>37</sup>Pennsylvania Register, 4:329; GPW, 9: 15, 23: 123, 27: 7, 15, 28: 72, 77, 29: 53, 31: 49, 52.

<sup>38</sup>For a summary of his public career, see Howard Lewin, "A Frontier Diplomat: Andrew Montour," Pennsylvania History 33 (April 1966): 153-86. For his role as a cultural broker, see Nancy L. Hagedorn, "'Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent': Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772," in Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman, Ok.: University

- Montour, Lewis** (b. 1710s?). French métis-Oneida. Son of Madame Montour and brother of Andrew Montour. Trader. Occasional interpreter and messenger for Pennsylvania, mid-1750s.
- \***Montour, Madane** (c. 1685?-c. 1750). French métis. Identity still unclear, but possibly Elizabeth or Catherine Couc. Mother of Andrew and Lewis Montour. By her own account, captured by Iroquois at age 10, adopted by Oneida, c. 1695. Raised by them, married Oneida chief, Carondawana, who was killed in 1729. Employed as interpreter (Oneida and probably Mohawk?) in New York, 1709-c. 1721. Attended conference in Philadelphia, 1727. Moved to Pennsylvania, 1729, and remained active in Indian affairs until early 1740s.<sup>39</sup>
- Moses**. Mohawk. One of six Mohawk students at Wheelock's school, 1763-1765. Usher to missionary Titus Smith at Onohokwage [Oquaga], 1765. Schoolmaster among Mohawks with Jacob Fowler, 1766, then goes with Fowler to the Oneidas as his usher and interpreter.<sup>40</sup>
- Newkirk, John**. English. Interpreter for Colonel Mercer at Oswego, c. 1756, taken captive when post attacked by French.
- Nicholas, Joseph**. English? Interpreter for Tuscaroras at Johnson Hall, accompanied 160 of them from North Carolina, 1766. Post interpreter at Ft. Pitt, 1772.<sup>41</sup>

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of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 44-60.

<sup>39</sup>William Hunter, in the DCB, identifies her as Elizabeth Couc, but I'm not convinced, for reasons I have explained elsewhere. For her own account of her life as told to Witham Marshe, see Witham Marshe, "Journal of the Treaty . . . at Lancaster in Pennsylvania, June 1744," Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 1st ser., 4: 189-91. See also, Gov. Hunter to Commissioners of Indian Affairs, N.Y. Col. Mss., 58: 5, N.Y. State Archives, Albany, in IIDH, reel 7, Aug. 13, 1712; CHM-E, 407; CCM, 248, 281.

<sup>40</sup>Wheelock, Plain and Faithful Narrative (1763), 35; Wheelock, Continuation (1765), 8, 13, 31; Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 2, 4.

<sup>41</sup>GPW, 34: 69, 78; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1825, 415, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 28, Dec. 18, 1766.



**The Owl.** Ohio Iroquois? Indian Interpreter to Mingos, 1754.<sup>42</sup>

\***Perthuis, Louis** [Pertuis, Oho]. French. Indian officer and interpreter (Iroquois) for French at Carillon [Ticonderoga], 1756-1757. Obtained pass with De Couagne, another interpreter, to trade at Toronto, 1762. Collects prisoners from among Senecas and Delawares for William Johnson, 1765. Interpreter for Johnson, 1765-1768.<sup>43</sup>

**Phillips, Philip** ["the Low Dutchman"]. Dutch. Captured by French-allied Indians, apparently Caughnawagas, c. 1747, refused to return with released captives at the close of the war in 1748. Attacked George Croghan's trading party with group of Caughnawagas and other Indians, 1753. Interpreter at Ft. Stanwix, 1768. Referred to as the Caughnawaga interpreter, not salaried by the province, 1770.<sup>44</sup>

**Picket, John.** Anglo-German? Nephew of Conrad Weiser. Taken to live with the Mohawks to learn the language, 1750. Interpreter to the minister at Canajoharie, 1758-1759.

\***Printup, William, Jr.** [Printop, Prentop, Brentop; Cha-aw-go-cheth-e-taw-go, Saggudderiatghta] (1710s?-c. 1789).

<sup>42</sup>Gov. Dinwiddie to Lords of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1328, in IIDH, reel 16, May 10, 1754.

<sup>43</sup>Correspondence and Journal of William Johnson, Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1827-1828, 19, 49, 52-53, 68, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 28; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1826, 7, 9, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 28, Dec. 29, 1767-March 12, 1768 (II); Copy of a Conference at Johnson Hall, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/66, in IIDH, reel 28, July 4-14, 1765.

<sup>44</sup>CHM-E, 603; William M. Darlington, Christopher Gist's Journals with Historical, Geographical, and Ethnological Notes and Biographies of His Contemporaries (New York: Argonaut Press Ltd., 1966), 193; Jonathan Pearson, A History of the Schenectady Patent in the Dutch and English Times; Being Contributions toward a History of the Lower Mohawk Valley, ed. J. W. MacMurray (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, Printers, 1883), 303; Correspondence and Journal of William Johnson, Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1827-1828, 84, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 28, Aug. 29-Sept. 9, 1766; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1826, 116, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 29, Sept. 15-Nov. 9, 1768; GPW, 23: 158.

French Huguenot. Son of William Printup, Sr. Lived near Ft. Hunter. Smith among the Onondagas, Senecas, and Mohawks, for William Johnson, 1750-c. 1765. Interpreter for Peter Kalm, 1750. Interpreter (Mohawk) for William Johnson, 1753-1764. Johnson said he spoke "the Indian language best of any in the Province" in 1750.<sup>45</sup>

\***Printup, William, Sr.** (c. 1685-?). French Huguenot. Father of William Printup, Jr. Smith and interpreter (Mohawk) among the Mohawks, Oneidas, and Onondagas, 1710-1733.<sup>46</sup>

**Reed, Jacob.** Oneida. One of Samuel Kirkland's pupils. Interpreter who wrote and signed declaration of neutrality, 1775.<sup>47</sup>

**Reighman, Albert** [Ryckman?]. Dutch? Trader and interpreter at Ft. Ontario, 1760. Possibly interpreter for Ogastass (Seneca) in 1766.<sup>48</sup>

**Roseboom, Johannes** [Rooseboom; John] (c. 1661-1745). Dutch. Trader. Indian Commissioner, 1710-1712, 1728-1730. Oneidas requested he accompany them on trip to Canada as one of several interpreters, 1709.<sup>49</sup>

\***Sanders, Robert** (1641-1703). Dutch. Trader. Interpreted and witnessed deeds, 1670 and 1685, for Albany magistrates, 1671-1672, 1684, 1687, and at conferences in 1687, 1690-1691, and 1693.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Stephen L. Lawton, comp. "Records and Documents of William Printup," (typescript, 1980), on deposit with Montgomery County Department of History and Archives, Fonda, N.Y. My thanks to George L. Hamell of the New York State Museum for passing this information on to me.

<sup>46</sup>Lawton, "Records and Documents of William Printup."

<sup>47</sup>Declaration of Neutrality, June 1775, Kirkland Papers, Burke Library, Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 31, June 1775 (II).

<sup>48</sup>Speech of Ogastoss [Seneca], Sir William Johnson Papers, Col. Mss., 12:149 (burned), N.Y. State Library, Albany, in IIDH, reel 23, April 9, [1766].

<sup>49</sup>CCM, 231.

<sup>50</sup>John Miller, New York Considered and Improved, 1695, Intro. and notes by Victor Hugo Paltsits (Cleveland, Ohio: Burrows Brothers Company, 1903), 102; MCARS 1: 255, 327,

**Satcheechoe.** Cayuga. Interpreter and messenger to the Five Nations for Pennsylvania Governor Keith, 1722.<sup>51</sup>

**Scarouady** [Scarrooyady, Skaroyady, Monacatoocha, Half King] (fl. 1751-1756). Oneida. Oneida chief and successor to Tanaghrisson as Half King of the Ohio Six Nations. Led delegation to Winchester, Va., and Carlisle, Pa., to solicit aid against the French, 1753. Acted as interpreter for the Miamis' speech at Carlisle, which was delivered by Andrew Montour.<sup>52</sup>

**Schuyler, Abraham** (1663-1726). Dutch. Cousin of Peter and John Schuyler. Trader, Military/Indian officer, and agent, 1687-1726. Only noted as an interpreter on three occasions: on a mortgage from Mahicans to Robert Sanders, 1698; recommended by Hilletie van Olinda, 1699; during a meeting with messengers from Canada, 1724.<sup>53</sup>

3:450; Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 17; ERA 2: 283; Proceedings of a Council at Albany, Colonial Papers, folder 4, Item 2a, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va., in IIDH, reel 3, July 31-Aug. 6, 1684; N.Y. Col. Mss., 36: 20, N.Y. State Archives, in IIDH, reel 4, Jan. 6, 1690.

<sup>51</sup>A Treaty of Peace and Friendship Made and Concluded between His Excellency Sir William Keith, Bart. Governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, . . . and the Chiefs of the Indians of the Five Nations, At Albany, . . . September, 1722 (Philadelphia: Andrew Bradford, 1722), 2.

<sup>52</sup>Treaty Held . . . at Carlisle, October 1753 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1753), 7, in IIDH, reel 15, October 1753.

<sup>53</sup>LIR, 110-111, 211; ERA 2: 358; David A. Armour, "The Merchants of Albany, New York, 1686-1760" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1965), 17, 19, 20; CHM-E, 176, 221, 261, 271, 300, 320, 475, 477; CCM, 176, 210, 231, 293, 302; CCP 68: 372; AIA, 69, 116, 163; Peter Schuyler Account for Indian Disbursements, BL 189, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 3, [ca. 1688]; Chiefs of Six Nations to Earl of Sunderland, HM 348, Huntington Lib., in IIDH, reel 7, May 22, 1710; Peter and Abraham Schuyler to Lord Sunderland, HM 22270, Huntington Lib., in IIDH, reel 7, May 22, 1710 (II); Report of Messengers from Canada, vol. 29, 152-153, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, in IIDH, reel 9, 1724 (II); Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1819, 91v-92, 93, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 9, [Sept. 17, 1724], and Sept. 19, 1724; Gov. Burnet to Lord Carteret, June 25, 1723, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1085, p. 99, in IIDH, reel 9, June

**Schuyler, Johannes** [Capt. John] (1668-1747). Dutch. Brother of Peter Schuyler and cousin of Abraham Schuyler. Military/Indian officer and agent. Popular among Iroquois and the Schaghticoke Indians. Commissioner of Indian affairs, 1711. Appointed to negotiate with Iroquois by Lt. Gov. William Dummer of Massachusetts. Noted as an interpreter only once, at meeting between Lord Cornbury and the River Indians at Albany, July 1702.<sup>54</sup>

**Sherlock, James.** Possibly a runaway slave or "deserter" mentioned as a smith among the Senecas at Chenussio, c. 1764. Interpreter (probably Onondaga) at Easton, 1761, with close ties to the Onondaga, among whom he apparently had been living. They requested he be appointed to reside with them as their interpreter. Possibly the James Sherlock sent as messenger to the Chickasaws, 1772.<sup>55</sup>

**\*Stevens, Arent** [Stephens, Steevens; Aaron, Aarant, Arendt] (bp. 1702-1758). Dutch-Mohawk/English. Son of Lea Stevens. Interpreter (Mohawk) for New York, 1731-1746. Resident agent among the Senecas, 1746. Became "private agent" of Gov. Clinton in Indian Affairs, bypassing the Albany Commissioners, 1746. Appointed Provincial Interpreter, 1747. Interpreter (Mohawk) for William Johnson directly, 1755-1758; one of two serving Johnson directly, the other being William Printup, Jr. Jacobus Clement was appointed to assist him. Interpreting was Stevens's primary employment for more than twenty years.<sup>56</sup>

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25, 1723.

<sup>54</sup>Journal, July 14-Sept. 9, 1690, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1039, in IIDH, reel 4, July 14-Sept. 9, 1690; CHM-E, 256, 263, 269, 278-281, 333; CCM, 144, 172; Armour, "Merchants of Albany," 109; CCP, 372; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, pp. 43, 59-59v, and 135-136, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 9, June 5, 1723 (IV), Oct. 7, 1723, and June 11, 1725; Journal of Proceedings with Six Nations, Mass. Archives, vol. 29, in IIDH, reel 9, Oct. 10-26, 1723; Mass. Archives, vol. 29, p. 150, and vol. 51, pp. 429-430, in IIDH, reel 9, 1724, and May 30, 1724 (II).

<sup>55</sup>John Wilkins, "Journal of Transactions and Presents Given to Indians from 23 December 1768 to 1772 March 12," GP, vol. 138, no. 20, p. 50; Minutes of a Conference Held at Easton, In August, 1761 (Phila.: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1761), 8, 11, 16, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 3-12, 1761.

<sup>56</sup>Selected references: CCM, 314, 353, 367, 368, 383,

**Stevens, Lea** [Lea van Coppernol]. Dutch Mohawk. Mother of Arent Stevens, and probably the sister of Hilletie van Olinda and Jacques Cornelissen van Slyck. Interpreted deed, 1714.<sup>57</sup>

**Taggojerhos.** Oneida. Asked by Cayugas to be their interpreter during a meeting in Albany, 1685.<sup>58</sup>

**Thomas.** Oneida. Convert of Samuel Kirkland, 1767. Interpreter (Oneida and Seneca) for Ralph Wheelock, 1768.<sup>59</sup>

**Toanohiscoe.** Indian. Interpreter "for the Six Nations" at Logstown, 1751.

**\*Van der Volgen, Lawrence Claessen** [Van der Volge; often just Lawrence Claessen or Claes; also Lawrence Claesse Purmerent] (c. 1677-1742). Dutch. Captured during French and Indian attack on Schenectady in 1690 at age 13, adopted and remained with them (probably Caughnawagas?) until c. 1699. New York's primary provincial interpreter (probably Mohawk) and Indian agent, 1700-1742. He was the most prominent and influential interpreter in New York for more than forty years, and played a major role in the development of the forest diplomacy protocol.<sup>60</sup>

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384, 385, 387, 388; CHM-E, 596, 599, 603, 605, 616; AIA, 155, 228, 241, 244; Armour, "Merchants of Albany," 247-248; Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 110; PA, ser. 2, 6:469, 472, 489, 490, 493; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1820, 198-198v, 214, 227, 349-350, vol. 1821, 96, 100, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reels 11-13; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1822, 177-178, 230, 355, 359, 377, 444, 450, vol. 1823, 60, 74, 148-150, 213, 217, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reels 18-21; Conrad Weiser's Journal to Albany, Du Simitiere Papers, Lib. Co. of Phila., Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 14, June 10-Aug 2, 1751.

<sup>57</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 191.

<sup>58</sup>LIR, 88.

<sup>59</sup>Wheelock, Continuation (1769), 46-48, 56, 59, 67, 70.

<sup>60</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 173-174. References to his activities as provincial interpreter are too numerous to list here, but see, for examples, AIA, 75-224, passim; LIR, 163, 188, 191-192, 914, 212, 224; CHM-E, 276, 287, 293, 308, 312, 316, 324, 337, 350, 358, 374, 407, 409, 416, 424, 450, 468, 474, 485, 492, 499, 524, 535; CCM, 158, 160, ,

**\*Van Eps, Jan Baptist** [Van Epps, Van Epe] (1673-after 1730). Dutch. Father of John B. van Eps. Captured at Schenectady at age 17, 1690, escaped three years later in 1693. Interpreter (Mohawk and possibly Onondaga?) and messenger for New York, 1698-1712. Many of his activities, particularly after return of Van der Volgen, seemed to focus on Onondaga.<sup>61</sup>

**Van Eps, John B.** [Jan Baptist van Eps, Jr.; John Baptist van Eps] (1713-after 1773). Dutch. Son of Jan Baptist van Eps. Trader at Oswego by 1740. Commissioner? at Oswego, 1748. Interpreter, 1768.<sup>62</sup>

**\*Van Olinda, Hilletie** [Hilletie van Slyck; Helletie, Hille, Hilletje] (c. 1645?-d. 1707). Dutch-Mohawk. Sister of Jacques Cornelisse van Slyck and possibly Lea Stevens. Came to live at Schenectady, as a servant?, 1663. Converted to Christianity by 1680. Interpreter (Mohawk) for Rev. Godfridius Dellius, c. 1685-1699. Provincial interpreter, 1690-1707. She came into disfavor with Governor Bellomont in 1699 due to her involvement in Dellius fraudulent land dealings with the Mohawks, and was threatened with removal from her post. After a brief hiatus, c. 1700, however, she reappeared as a council interpreter in 1701 and apparently continued to interpret until her death.<sup>63</sup>

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166, 168, 171, 173, 181, 185, 195, 204-205, 211, 212, 217, 218, 219, 221, 231, 248, 276, 281, 285, 291, 291, 294, 300, 302, 304, 323. There are also numerous references in IIDH, reels 6-11.

<sup>61</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 176-79, 354; CCP 68: 381; CHM-E, 285, 384; LIR, 179-180, 188, 204-6, 214-16, 218-19; CCM., 133, 138, 139, 142, 148, 149, 158, 182, 183; and see IIDH, reels 5-7, esp. 6.

<sup>62</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1820, 200-201, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 11, Dec. 5, 1740.

<sup>63</sup>"Journal of Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter," Collections on the History of Albany, ed. J. Munsell, 4 vols. (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1865-1871), 2: 362-63, 370; Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 20-21, 183, 276; Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1992), 106-107, 178, 192-93, 211; LIR, 166, 185; N.Y. Col. Mss., 36: 30, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 4, Feb. 25-26, 1690; Instructions to Reyer Schermerhorn and Hendrick

- \***Van Slichtenhorst, Gerrit** [Van Slichtenhorse] (d. 1684). Dutch. Came to Rensselaerswyck with his father, Brant van Slichtenhorst, in 1646. Merchant/trader and Albany official. Interpreter (probably Mohawk) for Albany Commissioners, 1666-1682.<sup>64</sup>
- \***Van Slyck, Jacques Cornelisse** [Akus, Ackes; Akus Cornelis; Aques Cornelyssen Gautsh; Itsychosaquachka] (1640-d. 1690). Dutch-Mohawk. Sister of Hiletie van Olinda and possibly Lea Stevens. Trader and tapster in Schenectady. Interpreter (Mohawk) and agent for Albany Commissioners, 1666-1689.<sup>65</sup>
- Vedder, Harmo.** Dutch. Trader? Smith among Senecas, 1723-1725. Interpreter at Oswego, 1731-1732.<sup>66</sup>
- \***Viele, Arnout Cornelissen** [Aernout Cornelisse] (1640-c. 1704). Dutch. Brother? of Cornelis Cornelisen Viele. Trader. Provincial interpreter (Mohawk and/or Onondaga?) and agent for the Albany Commissioners, 1673-1700. Frequently resided among the Onondagas, 1680s-1690s. Involved in opening up trade to western Indians, with MacGregory and Roseboom in 1687, and on Susquehanna and Ohio in 1692. Ran afoul of the royal government for his support of Leisler in 1690, but quickly reinstated because his services were in such demand.<sup>67</sup>
- Viele, Cornelis Cornelissen.** Dutch. Trader and tapster. Brother? of Arnout Cornelissen Viele. Apparently interpreted (Mohawk) at least occasionally before 1671,

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Hansen, Nov. 12, 1700, encl. in Bellomont to Board of Trade, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1045, in IIDH, reel 6, Nov. 28, 1700; CCM, 77, 97, 100, 204, 205, 210; CHM-E, 291, 327, 337, 349.

<sup>64</sup>LIR, 34, 36, 43, 44, 67.

<sup>65</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 17, 169, 188-89, 412; LIR, 29, 31, 45, 80, 111-13, 120, 127, 131, 132, 133, 139, 140, 156-57; ERA 2: 200.

<sup>66</sup>CHM-E, 447, 488, 514; CCM, 299, 316.

<sup>67</sup>Armour, "Merchants of Albany," 11-13, 19, 20-21; ERA, 1: 173, 182-83, 2: 64, 84-85, 151-53, 190-92, 195-97, 199-200, 230, 260-61; MCARS 1: 327, 3: 334, 343, 388; AIA, 14, 23; LIR, 39, 45, 55, 70-71, 74-75, 136-37, 140, 147, 156-57; CHM-E, 171, 173, 174, 199; CCM, 26, 50, 138, 140; IIDH, reels 2-5.

and thereafter when regular interpreter unavailable, as in 1672 and 1687.<sup>68</sup>

**Vorss, Peter Jan** [Peter De Vos]. Dutch. Interpreter (Mohawk) for Massachusetts agents, 1678.<sup>69</sup>

**Ward, Edward, Captain.** English. Military officer. Interpreted for Col. Hugh Mercer and Gen. John Forbes, 1759. Probably the same Edward Ward who later acted as Assistant Agent for George Croghan at Ft. Pitt, 1761.<sup>70</sup>

**\*Weiser, Conrad** [Tarachiawagon, Siguras] (1696-1760). German. Father of Samuel Weiser. Came to N.Y. with Palatine Germans, 1710. Placed with Mohawks near Schoharie to learn Mohawk language, 1713-1714. Interpreter (Mohawk) for Schoharie area, 1719-1729. Moved to Tulpehocken, Pennsylvania, 1729. Provincial interpreter and agent for Pennsylvania, c. 1730-1760. Primary architect of Pennsylvania Indian policy for almost thirty years.<sup>71</sup>

**Weiser, Samuel** [Sammy] (c. 1730-?). German descent. Son of Conrad Weiser. Placed with Mohawks to learn language in preparation for taking over his father's position, 1751. Traveled with his father, acting as messenger, 1753-1760. Interpreter (Mohawk) at Easton, 1761. His father's plan never came to fruition, and Sammy disappeared from the records of Indian affairs after a short trial of him by the Pennsylvania government.

**Wemple, Andrew** [Wempel, Wemp; Andries]. Dutch. Cousin(?) of Barent, Hendrick, and Myndert Wemple. Blacksmith. Mended Indian axes for John B. van Eps, 1766. Smith and interpreter at Ontario, 1769-1770.

<sup>68</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 18, 209, 412; MCARS, 3: 68; LIR, 136, 137.

<sup>69</sup>CHM-E, 71; John Pinchon to Capt. Salisbury, July 20, 1678, N.Y. Col. Mss, 27: 160, N.Y. State Arch., in IIDH, reel 2, July 20, 1678 (II).

<sup>70</sup>Hugh Mercer to John Forbes, Jan. 8, 1759, Bouquet Papers, Add. Mss. 21,655, fol. 26, British Library, London, in IIDH, reel 23, Jan. 8, 1759; William Trent's Journal, Cadwalader Papers, Croghan Section, p. 71, Hist. Soc. of Penn., in IIDH, reel 23, April 3, 1759-April 18, 1763.

<sup>71</sup>For a detailed biography of Weiser, see Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945).



- Wemple, Barent Myndertse** [Wempel, Wemp] (bp. 1732-1771). Dutch. Smith. Son of Myndert Barentse Wemple and brother of Hendrick Wemple, Jr. Smith among the Senecas for New York and then William Johnson. Interpreted (Seneca) occasionally, 1747, 1756-1757.<sup>72</sup>
- Wemple, Hendrick Myndertse** [Wempel, Wemp] (1730-1790). Dutch. Smith. Son of Myndert Barentse Wemple and brother of Barent Wemple. Smith among the Senecas, c. 1748-c. 1765. Later, interpreter for General Herkimer, 1777, and General Sullivan, 1779.<sup>73</sup>
- Wemple, Myndert Barentse** [Wempel, Wemp; Mynerdt] (1691-1789). Dutch. Smith. Smith among the Senecas, c. 1723-1756. Undoubtedly also interpreted, though no specific references to that activity.<sup>74</sup>
- Wendell, Abraham** (c. 1715-?). Dutch. Trader. Resident agent in Seneca country, 1734-1735. Interpreter at Oswego until 1743-1744.<sup>75</sup>
- Wendell, Johannes**. Dutch. Trader? Interpreted occasionally, 1684-1687.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup>I wish to express my thanks to George Hamell of the New York State Museum for allowing me to use his genealogical files on the Wemples.

<sup>73</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 288-289; Guzzardo, "Johnson's Official Family," 63, 73, 112; Kirkland, Journals, 14; CHM-E, 651; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG 10, vol. 1819, 270-272v, 277-278, 304-307, 294, vol. 1820, 198-198v, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 10, Oct. 5, 1728; Oct. 9, 1728 (II); Oct. 5-7, 1728; Sept. 4, 1729; and reel 11, Sept. 24, 1740; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., vol. 1825, 258, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 27, [Jan.] 31, 1765 (II).

<sup>74</sup>Pearson, Schenectady Patent, 288, 420; CHM-E, 621; Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1819, 91v-92, 92-94, 97, 97v, 115v, 168v, and vol. 1821, 93, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 9, [Sept. 17, 1724]; Sept. 19, 1724; Sept. 19, 1724 (II); Sept. 20, 1724; Oct. 11, 1725; Sept. 13, 1726; and reel 12, Aug. 30, 1745.

<sup>75</sup>Min. of Ind. Commrs., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1820, 62-63, 270-271v, Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 10, June 10, 1735, and reel 12, May 4, 1744.

<sup>76</sup>ERA 2: 229-30; Diary of Proceedings of Council at Albany, 30 July-5 Aug. 1684 and 6 Aug.-15 Sept. 1687, Gwynn Mss., Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and

**Wessells, Dirck.** Dutch. Albany agent and military officer. Interpreted on two occasions, 1695 and 1702.<sup>77</sup>

**Zeisberger, David (1721-1808).** Moravian. Moravian missionary. Emigrated to Georgia, 1738, then to eastern Pennsylvania, 1740. Lived with Onondagas and Cayugas to learn their languages, 1745. Missionary to Delawares at Shamokin, late 1740s. Eventually conversant in Onondaga, Cayuga, Mahican, Ojibwa, and other Delaware dialect. Occasional interpreter for Iroquois, 1745-1763. Missionary at Friedenshütten in northern Pennsylvania, late 1760s. Migrated and founded mission settlement at Schönbrunn in Ohio, 1772.

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Art, Tulsa, Ok., in IIDH, reel 2, 1684, 1687.

<sup>77</sup>New York Council Minutes, 7: 125-127, N.Y. State Arch., Albany, in IIDH, reel 5, April 8, 1695, April 13, 1695.

## APPENDIX C

### INTERPRETERS AMONG NON-IROQUOIS GROUPS

#### IN PENNSYLVANIA AND THE OHIO COUNTRY, 1664-1775<sup>1</sup>

- Ainsse, Joseph-Louis** [Ainse, Hains, Hins] (1744-1802). French. Trader at Michilimackinac, 1763-67. Reputedly mastered nine Indian languages (probably all Central Algonquian). Post interpreter at Michilimackinac, 1767-1779.
- Askew, Jonas**. English (?). Interpreter (probably Shawnee) at Conestoga, 1709.
- Asquash, Jacob**. Nanticoke. Interpreter at Philadelphia, 1771.
- Augustas**. Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware) for Christian Frederick Post at Wyoming, 1758.
- Benjamin** [Ben, Indian Ben]. Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware) for Teedyuscung at Easton, 1756.
- Bisailon, Peter** [Bezellon, Bizailon, Bizailion; Pierre] (c. 1662-1742). French. Coureur de bois in New France, 1686-1688. Pennsylvania trader with Jacques Le Tort and others, 1688-c. 1710. Trader for James Logan at Conestoga, 1712-c. 1740. Interpreter (Delaware) at Conestoga and Philadelphia, 1717-1736.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in the following biographical sketches came from one or more of the following sources: DAB; DCB; DHNY; NYCD; JR; CRP; WJP; Charles A. Hanna, The Wilderness Trail, or The Ventures and Adventures of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911); Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies of the Descendants of the First Settlers of the Patent and City of Schenectady, from 1662 to 1800 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976); Jonathan Pearson, Contributions for the Genealogies fo the First Settlers of the Ancient County of Albany, from 1630 to 1800 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976); "Persons Participating in Iroquois Treaties," HCID, 229-255. Sources given in individual footnotes are usually in addition to one or more of those given above.

- Bloit, Pero** [De Blois?]. French. Interpreter for William Johnson at Fort Chartres, 1770.<sup>2</sup>
- Broadhead, Gerrit.** English? Interpreter (Delaware) at Kingston, 1761.
- Brunsdon, Barefoot** [Bringdon]. Interpreter (Delaware) for Walking Purchase, 1737.<sup>3</sup>
- Cadot, Jean-Baptiste** [Cadotte] (bp. 1723-c. 1803?). French. Trader in Upper Great Lakes region, particularly at Sault Ste. Marie, 1742-1765. Assistant Commissary at Michilimackinac, 1766-1767. Interpreter (Ojibwa) at Michilimackinac, 1766-1768.<sup>4</sup>
- Calvin, Stephen.** Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware), 1756-1761.
- Campbell, Joseph.** British, probably Irish or Scots. Trader in the Ohio country. Interpreter at meeting at Old Town, 1753. Considered untrustworthy and "corrupted" by the French by George Croghan.
- Cartlidge, John.** English. Trader for James Logan at Conestoga, c. 1716-1722. He and his brother Edmond murdered a Seneca at Conestoga in 1722. Interpreter (Delaware) at Conestoga, 1717-1722.<sup>5</sup>
- Chartier, Martin** (?-1718?). French. Coureur de bois. Fled Canada and settled among the Shawnees at Ft. St. Louis,

<sup>2</sup>GPW, 29: 82, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Francis Jennings, The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies from Its Beginnings to the Lancaster Treaty of 1744 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1984), 333; Thomas Penn Letterbook, 1752-1772, #42, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

<sup>4</sup>GPW, 13: 102, 15: 31, 17: 90; William Johnson to John Watts, Oct. 4, 1769, and William Johnson to Thomas Gage, July 25, 1771, William Johnson Correspondence, French and Indian War Collection, 1754-1774, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

<sup>5</sup>Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 290-91; Pennsylvania Council at Philadelphia, DuSimitiere Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, March 6, 1721; Conference at Conestoga, Du Simitiere Collection, Lib. Co. of Phila., Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, April 6-7, 1722.

by c. 1692. Trader among Shawnees. Interpreter (Shawnee) at Conestoga in 1711, 1717.<sup>6</sup>

**Chartier, Peter.** French-Shawnee. Son of Martin Chartier. Trader at Conestoga. Interpreter (Shawnee) at Philadelphia, 1732. Returned to French interest and led parties of French and Shawnees against Pennsylvania traders in Ohio Valley, 1745.<sup>7</sup>

**Chesne, Ellepolle** [Meni Chesne, Minichesne]. French? Interpreter for John Bradstreet, 1764. Interpreter (Ottawa) at Detroit, 1765-1767. Deserted his post to go to winter with Pontiac, Sept. 1767.<sup>8</sup>

**Chillaway, Job.** Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware, probably Munsee) at Philadelphia and Easton, 1760-1761.<sup>9</sup>

**Civility** [Tagoleless, Tacuttelence]. Conestoga. Most prominent Conestoga chief of early eighteenth century, descendant of Susquehannocks [Iroquoian] and often employed to translate between "Mingo," or the Ohio Iroquois language(s), and Shawnee into Delaware in Pennsylvania, 1719-1731.<sup>10</sup>

**Coot, Lawrence.** Interpreter (Delaware) for River Indians, 1693.

**Couagne, Jean-Baptiste de** [Du Coigne]. See Appendix A.

**Croghan, George.** See Appendix A.

<sup>6</sup>Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 198-99, 235, 269.

<sup>7</sup>Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 199, 269; Pennsylvania Register, ed. Samuel Hazard, 16 vols. (Philadelphia, 1828-1835), 5: 114; Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., Wilderness Chronicles of Northwestern Pennsylvania, (Harrisburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1941), 19.

<sup>8</sup>Enclosure in John Bradstreet to Thomas Gage, Dec. 1764, GP, in IIDH, reel 27, Dec. 5, 1764 (II); GPW, 13: 102.

<sup>9</sup>Minutes of Philadelphia Conference, HM 8249, Huntinton Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 23, July 11-16, 1760-1761.

<sup>10</sup>PA, ser. 1, 1: 229, 295; Conference at Conestoga, April 1722, Du Simitiere Collection, Lib. Co. of Phila.; Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, April 6-7, 1722.

**Dagneau Douville, Alexandre.** See Appendix A.

**Davidts, Joris Christoffels.** Dutch. Interpreted (probably Mahican) deposition of two Catskill Indians (Mahicans), 1670.<sup>11</sup>

**Dehaitre.** French? Interpreter at Detroit, 1752-1754.<sup>12</sup>

**Farly, Jacques [Jacob].** French. Interpreter for the Ottawas with Montcalm's army, 1757. Post interpreter (Southern Ojibwa/Ottawa) at Michilimackinac, 1762-1763. Instrumental in securing release of Capt. George Etherington, Lt. William Lesley, and others from their Chippewa captors after the attack on Michilimackinac in 1763.<sup>13</sup>

**Farmer, Edward.** English. Occasional sworn interpreter (Delaware) for Pennsylvania, 1712-1722.<sup>14</sup>

**Freeman, the Indian.** Delaware? Interpreter (probably Delaware) for meeting at Philadelphia, 1740.

**Ganaway Tom.** Delaware? Interpreter (Delaware) at Conestoga conference, 1722.<sup>15</sup>

**Gaultier de Verville, Charles.** French. Post interpreter at Fort Edward Augustus [formerly Fort La Baye], 1762-1765.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup>ERA 3: 315.

<sup>12</sup>Stevens and Kent, Wilderness Chronicles, 68.

<sup>13</sup>Edward P. Hamilton, trans. and ed., Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bouganville, 1756-1760 (Norman, Ok.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 151; Letter of Jacques Farly to Maj. Gladwin, Feb. 12, 1764, encl. in Gladwin to Gage, March 24, 1764, GP, vol. 15; GPW, 9: 85.

<sup>14</sup>Pennsylvania Provincial Records, vol. D, 280-82, 288-89; vol. F, 97-98, 102, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pa., in IIDH, reels 7-8; Proceedings of Two Treaties . . . at Conestoga and Philadelphia (Philadelphia: A. Bradford, 1729), in IIDH, reel 10, May 26-June 5, 1728.

<sup>15</sup>Du Simitiere Collection, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, April 6-7, 1722.

<sup>16</sup>GPW, 9: 15.

- Girardot.** French. Interpreter at Fort Chartres, Sept. 1766.
- Girty, James.** Anglo-Irish. Brother of Simon Girty. Captive of Shawnees, 1755-1759. Apparently interpreted in neighborhood of Ft. Pitt.<sup>17</sup>
- Girty, Simon.** See Appendix A.
- Gomas, Gabriel.** Interpreter at Albany, 1666.<sup>18</sup>
- Gouchea, Monsieur.** French. "King's Interpreter" at Fort Edward Augustus, 1763.<sup>19</sup>
- Grey, John.** Irish. Recommended as interpreter/messenger to Delaware, 1757.
- Harlan, Ezekiel.** English? Interpreter (probably Delaware) at conference with Pennsylvania governor (in Philadelphia?), 1723.
- Harper, John.** English. Pilot and interpreter for Capt. John Grant, 1764.
- Hendricks, Jacobus.** German? Interpreted (Delaware) at investigation of murder of a Conestoga Indian by Cartlidge brothers, 1722.<sup>20</sup>
- Henry, Lewis.** English. Pilot and interpreter for Major Isaac Hamilton trip to Illinois, 1772.<sup>21</sup>
- Hertel de Saint-François, Joseph-Hippolyte** [Chevalier Hertel] (1738-1781). French. Military officer and interpreter. Stationed at Ft. Carillon [Ticonderoga], 1757. Led Indian war parties, 1759. After Seven Years' War, joined English Protestant community at Montreal. Led Iroquois party from Caughnawaga sent to Detroit under Bradstreet, 1764. Employed on several

<sup>17</sup>Thomas A. Boyd, Simon Girty, the White Savage (New York: Minton, Balch, 1928), 37.

<sup>18</sup>LIR, 34.

<sup>19</sup>James Gorrel's Journal of Events at Fort Edward Augustus, Oct. 12, 1761-Aug. 13, 1763, GP, vol. 138, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup>Council at Philadelphia, Du Simetiere Collection, Lib. Co. of Phila., Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, April 6-7, 1722.

<sup>21</sup>GPW, 35: 58, 63.

missions by Henry Bouquet, 1765. Interpreter for the Abenakis at St. Regis, 1769-1770.

**Hewling, Jacob.** English? Interpreter (Delaware, probably Unami), 1756.<sup>22</sup>

**Hewling, Marcus.** English? Interpreter at meeting with Delawares, 1744.

**Hickman, Jo:.** English? Interpreter (Shawnee) at conference at Pittsburgh, 1759.

**Huron Andrew** [French Andrew]. Huron? Employed as interpreter and messenger at western posts, 1763-1764. Occasional interpreter for George Croghan at Ft. Pitt and Detroit, 1765-1767.<sup>23</sup>

**Isaac.** Indian. Interpreter for English school teacher, Joseph Shaw, among Indians of Dutchess Co., N.Y., 1744.<sup>24</sup>

**"Jonathan's Son".** Ohio Seneca? Son of Jonathan [Kayenquiregoa], who accompanied Scarouady and Montour to Onondaga and Philadelphia in 1756. He interpreted at informal meeting at Israel Pemberton's house during that trip.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Treaty Between New Jersey and the Indians at Crosswicks, January 8-9, 1756 (Philadelphia: William Bradford, [1756]), in IIDH, reel 18, Jan. 8-9, 1756.

<sup>23</sup>George Croghan's Journal to Illinois, Gratz Collection, Croghan Papers, vol. 1, p. 12, Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 27, Feb. 28-May 10, 1765; Croghan Journal in The New Regime, 1765-1767, British Series, (1916), 2: 15, in IIDH, reel 27, Feb. 28-Oct. 8, 1765; Croghan to Thomas Gage, May 26, 1766, GP, in IIDH, reel 28, May 26, 1766; George Croghan, Journal of a Trip to Detroit in 1767, ed. Howard H. Peckham (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1939), 37.

<sup>24</sup>ERNY 4: 2852.

<sup>25</sup>Substance of occasional Conversation at Israel Pemberton's, April 19, 1756, Friends Historical Association, Manuscripts, vol. 1, Haverford College Library, in IIDH, reel 18, April 19, 1756; Indians (Separate Box), Miscellaneous Documents Folder, Hist. Soc. of Penn., in IIDH, reel 18, [April 19, 1756] (II).



- Kirk, Alice.** English. Sworn interpreter (Delaware) at two conferences at Philadelphia, 1722.<sup>26</sup>
- Kneebuckle, John.** English? Interpreter (Munsee) at Philadelphia conference, 1770.
- Knickerbacker, Johannes.** Dutch. Interpreter (Mahican) for meetings with Schaghticoke Indians, 1703, and River Indians, 1722.<sup>27</sup>
- La Bute, Pierre Chesne** [Le Bute, Labutte, Labute; Pierre Chesne, Pierre Chenne; Peter]. French. Interpreter for Bradstreet, 1764. Post interpreter (Ottawa) at Detroit, 1761-1772.<sup>28</sup>
- La Guthrie.** French. Interpreter with Lt. Fraser on journey to Illinois, 1765.<sup>29</sup>
- Le Tort, James** [Jacques]. French Huguenot descent. Pennsylvania trader, 1704-1742. Interpreter (Delaware) for Pennsylvania, 1721-1728.
- McKee, Alexander** (c. 1735-1799). Irish-Shawnee. Son of Thomas McKee. Entered Indian Department as Assistant Agent for Indian Affairs to George Croghan at Ft. Pitt, 1760. Recommended to Henry Bouquet as interpreter, 1763. Strong ties to Ohio Indians, especially Shawnee; married a Shawnee woman and lived among Shawnee on Scioto River in early 1770s. Loyalist during American Revolution, deserted from Ft. Pitt, 1778. Indian

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<sup>26</sup>Pennsylvania Provincial Records, vol. F, 102, Penn. Hist. and Mus. Comm., Harrisburg, in IIDH, reel 8, May 11, 1722; Pa. Prov. Coun. Recs., vol. F, 125, in IIDH, reel 8, July 30, 1722.

<sup>27</sup>LIR, 205; Gov. Burnet to Lords of Trade, encl., P.R.O., Kew, Engl., CO5/1053, in IIDH, reel 9, Nov. 21, 1722.

<sup>28</sup>GPW, 17: 90, 26: 102, 105, 28: 92, 94, 32: 48, 51, 33: 20, 23, 35: 67; Statement of Montresor and Hay, Detroit, Sept. 11, 1764, encl. in John Bradstreet to Thomas Gage, Dec. 5, 1764, GP, in IIDH, reel 27, Dec. 5, 1764 (II); Abstract of losses of the inhabitants of Detroit by fire, 1763, Bradstreet papers, Box 2, Folder 7, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

<sup>29</sup>Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, vol. 1 (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904), 148.

officer and interpreter for British at Detroit, 1778-1796.<sup>30</sup>

**McKee, Thomas.** Irish. Father of Alexander McKee. Pennsylvania trader along Susquehanna River by 1740s. Married Shawnee woman (possibly a white captive). Accompanied Conrad Weiser to Shamokin as Shawnee interpreter, 1743. Interpreter (Shawnee and possibly Delaware) agent for Pennsylvania and the Crown, 1756-1758. Assistant Agent to George Croghan at Ft. Pitt, 1759-1760. Recommended by Croghan, appointed assistant agent along Susquehanna River, 1762.<sup>31</sup>

**Maisonville, Alexander** [Alexis Loranger dit Maisonville]. French. Employed as express and interpreter at Detroit and by George Croghan, c. 1765. William Johnson appointed him as his agent on the Wabash, 1771.<sup>32</sup>

**Menard** [Menards, Maynard, Minard, Menare; St. Jean?]. French. Interpreter (Ottawa?) at Montreal, 1763. Interpreted for William Johnson, 1764. Post interpreter at Fort Chartres, 1770-1771.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup>See also Walter R. Hoberg, "Early History of Colonel Alexander McKee," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 58(1934):26-36; Hoberg, "Tory in the Northwest," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 59(1935):32-41; and Frederick Wulff, "Colonel Alexander McKee and British Indian Policy, 1735-1799" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1969).

<sup>31</sup>PA, ser. 1, 3: 744; Minutes of Pennsylvania Indian Affairs, Mss. 970.5, M665, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 22, March 15, 1758-April 12, 1760; William Trent's Journal, Cadwalader Papers, Croghan Section, pp. 18, 27, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 23, April 3, 1759-April 18, 1763; Minutes of Pittsburgh Conference, Indian and Military Affairs in Pennsylvania (1737-1775), Mss Class 974.8, Pi 9, pp. 731-746, Am. Phil. Soc. Lib., in IIDH, reel 23, July 1759.

<sup>32</sup>George Croghan's Journal to Illinois, Gratz Collection, Croghan Papers, vol. 1, p. 12, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 27, Feb. 28-May 10, 1765; Croghan, Journal, 17 n. 4; William Johnson to Thomas Gage, Nov. 16, 1771, William Johnson Correspondence, French and Indian War Collection, Mss. box, folder 2, Am. Antiq. Soc., Worcester, Mass.

<sup>33</sup>GPW, 29: 82, 84; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1824, 487, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 26, Aug. 25, 1763 (II).

- Mickty, Joseph.** British? Interpreter (Nanticoke?) at Philadelphia, 1761.
- Miranda, George.** British? Interpreter (probably Delaware) at Quaker Meeting House in Philadelphia, 1740.
- Montour, Andrew [Henry].** See Appendix A.
- Owens, David [David Owens Frazier?].** British. Probably the son of Pennsylvania trader John Owens. Trader, c. 1747-1754. Entered military during Seven Years' War and apparently deserted; living with the Minisinks on Susquehanna River, 1760-1761. Purportedly had an Indian wife and children, whom he murdered. Interpreter (Delaware, probably Munsee?) for Col. Henry Bouquet, 1764. Interpreter for William Johnson, 1765.<sup>34</sup>
- Peggy.** Conestoga Indian? Interpreter for Conestogas at Lancaster, 1760.
- Pepy, Joseph [Peppy, Pepee, Peepy, Peepe, Pippy; Jo; Delaware Jo; Waghoolalenun, Wewnlalalent, Weholelahund, Wewalalinlent].** Delaware. Converted by Rev. John Brainerd and part of his congregation of New Jersey Delawares, early 1750s?. Moved away to Tioga in 1755, ended up in Bethlehem in 1756. Eventually returned to Brainerd, possibly after creation of Brotherton reservation in 1758. Messenger and agent to Ohio Indians for George Croghan and William Johnson, 1756-1759. Interpreter (probably Northern Unami?) for the Delawares, including Teedyuscung, 1755-1762. Indians request his presence at Wyoming to act as messenger to Six Nations, 1761. Interpreter for John

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<sup>34</sup>PA, ser. 1, 4: 60-61; Recs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1825, 226, 233, 238, 261, vol. 1827-1828, 19, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 27; Philadelphia Conference, July 1760, HM 8249, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 23, July 11-16, 1760-1761; Minutes of Conference at Camp at Tuscaroras, Penn Mss., Official Correspondence, vol. 4, p. 45, Hist. Soc. of Penn., Phila., in IIDH, reel 27, Oct. 1764; Henry Bouquet to David Hay, Nov. 18, 1764, Bouquet Papers, Additional Mss. 21,651, fol. 60v, British Library, London, in IIDH, reel 27, Nov. 18, 1764; William Johnson to Henry Bouquet, Dec. 17, 1764, Bouquet Papers, Add. Mss. 21,651, fol. 94v, Brit. Lib., London, in IIDH, reel 27, Dec. 17, 1764 (II).

Brainerd, 1767-1772. Most of his interpreting was for the Delawares, not the English.<sup>35</sup>

- Pisquetomen** [Peasquitoman, Pesqueetomen] Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware, probably Southern Unami?) for Delaware chiefs Sassoonan, 1731-1736, and Nutimus, 1742. Accompanies Christian Frederick Post to Ohio, 1758.<sup>36</sup>
- Pomapechtoa.** Delaware? Interpreter (Delaware into Shawnee) for the Indians at Conestoga, 1728.
- Post, Christian Frederick** (c. 1710-1785). Moravian. Emigrated to Pennsylvania, 1742. Moravian missionary to Indians east of Hudson River, learned Mahican, married Wampanoag woman, 1743-1744. Sent to Iroquois country with David Zeisberger to learn Six Nations language(s), 1745-1746. Married Delaware convert and living in Wyoming Valley, 1747. Indian agent and interpreter (primarily Delaware) for Pennsylvania, 1755-1760. Missionary in Ohio country, 1760-1762. Left Moravian service, 1762.
- Pumpshire, John** [Pumshire] (c. 1740-1757). Delaware. Possibly father of Eleazar Wheelock student of same

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<sup>35</sup>Records of the Moravian Mission among the Indians of North America, Box. 323, Folder 2, Item 1, Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., in IIDH, reel 19, June 25, 1756 (III); Material pertaining to Pennsylvania's Indian Affairs, Mss. 970.4, M415, American Philosophical Society Library, Phila., in IIDH, 433 17, Aug 7, 1755-Dec. 3, 1792, 1755; Easton Conference, 1756, Huntington Free Library and Reading Room, Library of the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Fdn., Bronx, N.Y., in IIDH, reel 19, July and Nov. 1756; Minutes of Conferences Held with the Indians at Harris's Ferry and at Lancaster in March, April, and May 1757 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1757), 3-4, in IIDH, reel 20, March-May 20, 1757; Procs. of Ind. Aff., Ind. Recs., RG10, vol. 1823, 192, Fed. Arch. Div., Publ. Arch. of Canada, in IIDH, reel 21, [July] 31, 1757 (III); PA, ser. 1, 4: 90; James Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 264.

<sup>36</sup>Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 311-14, 343; Treaty with the Indians of the Six Nations at Philadelphia, In July, 1742 (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1743), 20, in IIDH, reel 11, June 30-July 12, 1742.

name, 1754-56. Interpreter (Delaware, probably Northern Unami) for Teedyuscung, 1756-1758.<sup>37</sup>

**Ridgeway, Mr.** British? Interpreter (probably Delaware) at Conestoga, 1722.<sup>38</sup>

**De Riviere, Monsieur.** French. Post interpreter at Michilimackinac, 1766-1768.<sup>39</sup>

**St. Germain, Monsieur.** French. Interpreter at Detroit, 1761.

**St. Martin, Jacques [James].** French. Indian officer and interpreter (Huron) for the French, 1755-1757. Post interpreter at Detroit, 1761-1762, 1765-1766.<sup>40</sup>

**St. Martin, Joseph.** French. Miller at Detroit, 1763. Post interpreter (Huron) at Detroit, 1769-1772.<sup>41</sup>

**Schuyler, Johannes [John].** See Appendix A.

**Scull, James.** British? Interpreter (probably Delaware) for meeting at Philadelphia, 1731.

<sup>37</sup>Eleazar Wheelock, A plain and faithful Narrative of the Original Design, Rise, Progress and present State of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut, Rochester Reprints, no. 1 (orig. publ. Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 30; James Dow McCallum, ed., The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians, Dartmouth College Manuscript Series, no. 1 (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College Publications, 1932), 16, 29-30.

<sup>38</sup>Council at Philadelphia, Du Simetiere Collection, Lib. Co. of Phila., Hist. Soc. of Pa., Phila., in IIDH, reel 8, March 6, 1721.

<sup>39</sup>GPW, 13: 102, 15: 31, 17: 90.

<sup>40</sup>Stevens and Kent, Wilderness Chronicles, 68; Hamilton, Adventure in the Wilderness, 95, 150; GPW, 8: 61, 9: 76, 13: 102; James Sterling Letter book, 1761-1765, pp. 84-85, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich. Possibly the same person as Joseph St. Martin. See note 40, below.

<sup>41</sup>Sterling Letterbook, 100; GPW, 26: 102, 107, 28: 92, 95, 32: 48, 50, 33: 20, 22, 35: 67. Probably a relation of James St. Martin, or possibly the same person? In 1763, James appeared in the Commissary's accounts at Detroit for supplying large quantities of flour. GPW, 8: 61, 9: 76.

- Scull, John.** British? Brother of Nicholas Scull. Pennsylvania trader. Interpreter (Delaware) for Pennsylvania, 1728-1731.<sup>42</sup>
- Scull, Nicholas.** British? Brother of John Scull. Pennsylvania trader. Surveyor General of Pennsylvania, 1750s. Interpreter (Delaware) for Pennsylvania, 1728-1745.<sup>43</sup>
- Shakawtawlin [Sam]** (d. 1731). Delaware? Interpreter (Delaware) at Conestoga and Philadelphia, 1728.
- Showydooungh [Indian Harry].** Delaware?. Interpreter (Delaware?) on deed dated 1701, and at Conestoga, 1710.<sup>44</sup>
- Smith, Captain [Indian Smith, Ousewayteichks].** Conoy? Interpreter for Conoys and others (Conoy, "Mingo," and Shawnee to Delaware), 1720-1723.<sup>45</sup>
- Snake's Son.** Shawnee? Interpreter (Shawnee) at Pittsburgh, 1759.
- Souligney, Pierre (fils).** French. Post interpreter at Fort Edward Augustus [La Baye], 1761-1762.<sup>46</sup>
- Spring, Cornelius.** Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware) at Philadelphia, 1742.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Copy of Indian Treaty at Philadelphia, May 1729, Du Simitiere Collection, Library Co. of Phila., Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 10, May 26-27, 1729; Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 46.

<sup>43</sup>PA, ser. 1, 1: 224; Treaty with the Indians of the Six Nations, at Philadelphia, in July, 1742 (Phila.: B. Franklin, 1743), 20, in IIDH, reel 11, June 30-July 12, 1742.

<sup>44</sup>Proceedings of Council at Conestoga, July 31, 1710, Penn Mss., Indian Affairs, 1:34, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 7, July 31, 1710.

<sup>45</sup>Minutes of Albany Treaty, 1722, Mss. Class. 970.5, No. T692, p. 4, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, in IIDH, reel 8, Sept. 1722.

<sup>46</sup>GPW, 9: 15.

<sup>47</sup>Treaty held with the Six Nations at Philadelphia, in July 1742 (Phila.: B. Franklin, 1743), 9, 20, in IIDH, reel

**Sterling, Angelique** [Mrs. James Sterling, Angélique Cuillerier dit Beaubien]. French. Married James Sterling, a British trader at Detroit, and served as his interpreter, c. 1765. She was "used to trade from her infancy," and said to be "the best interpreter of the various Indian languages" at Detroit.<sup>48</sup>

**Stille, Isaac.** Delaware. Interpreter (Delaware, probably Northern Unami and Munsee?) for Pennsylvania and Delawares, especially Teedyuscung, 1758-1770. Accompanied Christian Frederick Post and Pisquetomen to Ohio country, 1758. Called Teedyuscung's interpreter, 1761. Associated with Brainerd group of New Jersey Delawares that included John Pumpshire and Joseph Pepy.<sup>49</sup>

**Teaffe, Michael** [Taffe, Taeff, Taafe]. British? Pennsylvania trader, partner of George Croghan and William Trent, c. 1750. Assisted in interpretation at meeting in Philadelphia, 1754.

**Tattamy, Moses** [Tatamy, Tetamy, Titami, Tittamy, Totamy, Dideamy]. Delaware. One of Brainerd's New Jersey Delaware converts. Interpreter for Delawares, 1756-1761. Often associated with John Pumpshire and Teedyuscung.<sup>50</sup>

11, June 30-July 12, 1742.

<sup>48</sup>Sterling Letterbook, 131, 150, 160.

<sup>49</sup>Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 253-55, 261, 267-68, 280; Treaty between New Jersey and the Indians at Crosswicks, January 8-9, 1756, in IIDH, reel 18, Jan. 8-9, 1756; Pennsylvania Register, 4: 75, 5: 372; Minutes of a Conference at Easton, October 1758 (Phila.: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1758), 4, in IIDH, reel 22, Oct. 7-26, 1758; PA, ser. 1, 3: 622-24; Easton Treaty, 1761, HM 8249, Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca., in IIDH, reel 23, July 11-16, 1760-1761; Minutes of Easton Conference, P.R.O., Kew, Amherst Papers, WO34/33, in IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 1761; Minutes of a Conference with the Northern and Western Indians at Lancaster, 1762 (Phila.: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1763), IIDH, reel 24, Aug. 11-29, 1762.

<sup>50</sup>William A. Hunter, "Moses (Tunda) Tatamy, Delaware Indian Diplomat," in A Delaware Indian Symposium, ed. Herbert C. Kraft (Harrisburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1974), 71-88; Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 330, 350; Treaty between New Jersey and the Indians at Crosswicks, Jan. 8 and 9, 1756 (Phila.: William Bradford, [1756]), in IIDH, reel 18, Jan. 8-9, 1756; Copy

- Thomassen, Gabriel** [Tomasen]. Dutch. Son of Dutch interpreter Jan Thomassen? Interpreter for court trial of two "northern" Indians, 1672, and for a deed from the Mahicans, 1684.<sup>51</sup>
- Tucker, Joseph.** English. Interpreter for trader James Sterling at Detroit until 1765. Post interpreter at Michilimackinac, 1768-1771.<sup>52</sup>
- View, Constant.** French? Interpreter at Ft. Chartres, 1763.
- Woodbridge, Timothy** [Solohkuhwauneh] (d. 1774). English? Schoolmaster at Stockbridge, from c. 1735. Deacon at Oquaga. Public interpreter for Mahicans at Albany, 1754.<sup>53</sup>
- Wray, John.** English? Pennsylvania trader. Interpreter (Shawnee?) at Philadelphia, 1732.
- Young, Jacob** [Jacob Claeson]. Dutch? Trader on Susquehanna River. Employed as agent to the Susquehannocks by Maryland, 1661. Interpreter for meeting with Onondagas, 1679.<sup>54</sup>
- Zadowski, Anthony** [Sadowsky; Antony]. Shamokin trader, 1728. Interpreter at Philadelphia council, 1734.

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of Minutes at Easton, Nov. 1756, Am. Philos. Soc. Lib., Mss., in IIDH, reel 19, Nov. 6-17, 1756; Minutes of Pennsylvania Council meeting, Logan Papers, vol. 11, Hist. Soc. of Pa., in IIDH, reel 20, April 30, 1757 (III); George Croghan's Proceedings, May-Aug. 1757, P.R.O., Kew, CO5/1068, pp. 71, 78, 92v, in IIDH, reel 20, May 23-Aug. 7, 1757; Minutes of a Conference at Easton, October 1758 (Phila.: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1758), 4, in IIDH, reel 22, Oct. 7-26, 1758; Minutes of Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, Mss. 970.5, M665, nos. 7 and 9, Am. Philos. Soc. Lib., in IIDH, reel 22, Mar. 15, 1758-April 12, 1760.

<sup>51</sup>MCARS, 1: 327; ERA, 2:242.

<sup>52</sup>Sterling Letterbook, pp. 150, 160; GPW, 26: 92-93, 29: 90-91.

<sup>53</sup>Axtell, Invasion, 197-200.

<sup>54</sup>See Francis Jennings, "Jacob Young: Indian Trader and Interpreter," in Struggle and Survival in Colonial America, ed. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 347-361; Jennings, Ambiguous Empire, 127-128, 151, 159; LIR, 43-44, 51.



ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES

- AIA                    Wraxall, Peter. An Abridgment of the Indian Affairs Contained in Four Folio Volumes, Transacted in the Colony of New York, from the Year 1678 to the Year 1751. Edited by Charles H. McIlwain. Harvard Historical Studies, no. 21. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1915; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968.
- CCM                    Calendar of Council Minutes, 1668-1783. [Compiled by Berthold Fernow.] New York State Library Bulletin 58 (March 1902). Albany, N.Y.: University of the State of New York, 1902.
- CCP                    Colden, Cadwallader. The Cadwallader Colden Papers. 9 vols. New-York Historical Society Collections, vols. 50-56, 67-68. New York: New-York Historical Society, 1917-1937; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1937.
- CHM-E                Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State, Albany, New York. Vol. 2, English Manuscripts, 1664-1776. Edited by Edmund B. O'Callaghan. Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1866.
- CRP                    Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania (spine title Colonial Records). Edited by Samuel Hazard. 16 vols. Harrisburg, Pa.: Theophilus Fenn, 1838-1853; vols. 1-3 repr. Philadelphia: Jo. Severns and Co., 1852).
- DAB                    Dictionary of American Biography. Edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone. 22 vols. New York: Scribner, 1928-1944.
- DCB                    Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Edited by George W. Brown, et al. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966- .
- DHNY                Documentary History of the State of New York. Edited by E. B. O'Callaghan. 4 vols. Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1849-1851.
- ERA                    Pearson, Jonathan, comp. Early Records of the City and County of Albany, and Colony of Rensselaerswyck (1656-1675). 4 vols.

Albany, N.Y., 1869. Vols. 2-4 revd. and ed.  
A.J.F. Van Laer, Albany, 1916-1919.

- ERNY Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York. Edited by Hugh Hastings and Edward T. Corwin. 7 vols. Albany, N.Y.: James B. Lyon Printer, 1901-1916.
- GP Thomas Gage Papers, 1754-1783, American Series. William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- GPW Thomas Gage Papers, 1754-1783, Warrants. 36 vols. William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- HCID Jennings, Francis, William N. Fenton, and Mary A. Druke, eds. The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press for the Newberry Library Center for the History of the American Indian, 1985.
- HNAI Handbook of North American Indians. Edited by William C. Sturtevant. Vol. 15, Northeast, edited by Bruce G. Trigger. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978.
- IIDH Iroquois Indians: A Documentary History of the Diplomacy of the Six Nations and Their League. Edited by Francis Jennings, et al. Woodbridge, Ct.: Research Publications, 1984. Microfilm.
- JAH Journal of American History.
- JR The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791. Edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites. 73 vols. Cleveland, Ohio, 1896-1901.
- LIR The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723. Edited by Lawrence H. Leder, introduction by Paul A. W. Wallace. Gettysburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania History Association, 1956.
- MCARS Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady, 1668-1673. Translated and edited by A. J. F. van Laer.

3 vols. Albany, N.Y.: University of the State of New York, 1926-1932.

- NYCD                    Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York. Edited by E. B. O'Callaghan. 15 vols. Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1853-1857.
- PA                        Pennsylvania Archives. 9 series, 138 vols. Philadelphia and Harrisburg, 1852-1949.
- WJP                    Johnson, Sir William. The Papers of Sir William Johnson. Edited by James Sullivan, et al. 14 vols. Albany, N.Y.: University of the State of New York, 1921-1965.
- WMO                    William and Mary Quarterly.

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Edward E. Ayer Collection

William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

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