

The Brothertown Tribe (1989)

The following article is excerpted from the book, A Man Called Sampson , written by Will and Rudi Ottery in 1989. The book traces the ancestry and progeny of Sampson, a Mashantucket Pequot Indian, born in what is now New London County, Connecticut - including brief descriptions of family connections to other historic native American family groups, the ancient Pequot tribe, the Pequot War, the Brothertown tribe of New York and the Brothertown tribe of Wisconsin. A copy of this book - donated by Will and Rudi Ottery - is available at the Deansboro Library. This excerpt is reprinted here with the kind permission of Will Ottery.

THE BROTHERTOWN TRIBE

A Man Called Sampson - chapter 2 - The Brothertown Tribe

The Brothertown tribe was founded by a Mohegan Indian named Samson Occom (1723-1792). To understand the history and formation of the Brothertown tribe, it is necessary to span the gap between the 1637 Pequot War and the period of Samson Occom.

The royal charters of the English colonists imposed a religious obligation and purpose to their colonization of America, but little effort was made to convert the natives to Christianity for many years. Nonetheless, there were men of integrity among the colonists, and one of these was John Eliot of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Eliot learned the language of the New England Indians, and taught the Indians in their natural environment. His tutor was a Pequot War captive from Long Island. In 1646, Eliot preached a well-received sermon at the Massachusetts wigwam of an Indian named Waban. Learning that these Indians were anxious to imitate the success of the colonists, he began to use his influence to help them. As a result of his efforts, a committee was appointed to purchase land for a self-governing Christian Indian town. As Eliot's first Christian Indian town became a reality, schools were established, fields were fenced and crops were cultivated in English style by the Indian men. Indian women began to use spinning wheels.

The first such settlement in Massachusetts, called Natick, was so successful that by 1649 Eliot's plan had to be enlarged. Realizing that all of the Christianized Indians in New England could not be collected at Natick, Eliot formed other Christian Indian towns. As his students were taught to read, Eliot discovered that they learned very quickly in their own language. He had printed his catechism for them in about 1654, followed by parts of the scriptures in 1663. When he came to feel that native teachers could accomplish more than Englishmen among the Indians, he trained Indian teachers for them. Then, in 1675, New England colonists and Indians fought each other a second time in King Philip's War. This was a twofold disaster in that it completed the breaking of the New England Indian tribes and destroyed nearly all of Eliot's Indian missions in New England.

Many of the Indian survivors of King Philip's War moved southward into Connecticut and Rhode Island. Several of Eliot's settlements were absorbed by Connecticut tribes along the Thames River. Among the Indians living at Mohegan during the late 1600s was a man who had formerly lived between the Shetucket and Quinebaug Rivers, and moved south to an area west of the Thames River. The name of that Indian was Tomockham, and he was the grandfather of Samson Occom. There is testimony that Tomockham was originally from a town near Union and that he had fought against the Mohegans, later living at Niantic. His son, Joshua Ockham, lived about a mile north of Uncas Hill in Connecticut. Joshua's son, Samson Occom, later built his home there, noting that his father was the first to have ever lived there. Subsequently, the village of Mohegan was settled at this location.

Samson Occom was born in the wigwam of Joshua Ockham in 1723. His mother's maiden name was Sarah Sampson. She was adopted in the Mohegan tribe because of her marriage, but she was a Mashantucket Pequot from Groton and a descendant of the famous Mohegan chief Uncas. Uncas himself was a Pequot, as were many other Indians at Mohegan. Samson Occom was known to be related to the Wauby, Poquiantup and Sampson families, and that relationship was said to be through his mother.

Sarah was the second wife of Joshua Ockham. Joshua was a hunter who followed game during its seasons and returned to Mohegan when winter snows prevented hunting. He died in 1742 or 1743, while both he and his son Samson were members of the Mohegan Tribal Council. Samson Occom wrote that he was born and brought up in heathenism at Mohegan until he was sixteen or seventeen, and that his parents lived in a wigwam and led a wandering life.

In 1713 a minister from Martha's Vineyard toured among the Indians of southern Connecticut, visiting the Narragansett and Pequot reservations, but missing the Mohegans who were hunting. He later visited the Mohegans, but they did not think they needed the visiting minister's religion because they had their own religion and they had seen that the colonists cheated the Indians of their lands, despite their religion.

From time to time, schoolmasters were appointed for the Mohegan Indians, but such attempts initially made no impression on Samson Occom. However, in 1734, Mohegan was located at the center of the most fervent religious awakening in New England. The ministers there were inspired to act on their obligations to the Indians by James Davenport, the brother-in-law of a Reverend Eleazar Wheelock of Lebanon, Connecticut. Bibles, psalters, primers and catechisms were distributed at Mohegan, and those who wished to were allowed to worship at the local church. Indians who gave evidence of fitness were admitted to fellowship. Among those admitted to fellowship was the widow Sarah Occom. Her son, Samson Occom, had also been converted.

Occom's mother knew that the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock at Lebanon, Connecticut taught the children of colonists. Samson Occom wanted to be instructed by this minister and scholar, so Sarah Occom contacted Wheelock and asked him to instruct her son. Occom began his education in 1743 and remained at Wheelock's school for four years. Neither Occom nor his mother could contribute any payment for his education, but his mother probably contributed some labor to the Wheelock family. Occom is often spoken of as one who was educated at Wheelock's Indian Charity School, but he was more than that. He was the means of its establishment.

In 1747, Occom left Lebanon to take charge of a school at New London, Connecticut. The following year he studied Hebrew, but after a year of study his eyes failed him, making it necessary for him to

give up all study for a time.

In 1749, Samson Occom began to work among the Montauk Indians, where he remained for nearly twelve years. Montauk, on the eastern Long Island, was a favorite resort of Indians because of its fishing and hunting grounds. The Montauk Indians were not Christianized and most did not speak English. Occom spoke the same language as they did and he was acquainted with some of them. When he went fishing there in 1749 he held religious meetings with them; when it was time for his fishing party to return to Mohegan, the Montauk Indians invited him to set up a school among them. Occom was afraid the commissioners of the Society for the Propagation of Gospel would be displeased if he left his studies, but they agreed that this effort would be all right until his eyes were healed. Occom lived in a wigwam at Montauk and he moved with the tribe according to the season. His belongings were few and well-worn, except for the suit which he reserved for appearances among the white population. His circumstances at Montauk were those of poverty, so he sometimes diverted from his missionary work to engage in manual labor. To supplement his income, he made wooden spoons, ladles, gun-stocks, pails, piggins, churns and bound old books for the English people in nearby communities. He also wrote hymns, one of which can still be found in some hymnals, and which is reproduced on page 33. (Not included here).

Samson Occom was always successful as a teacher. He taught the alphabet by placing letters on cedar chips. His students progressed rapidly from learning to read their primers to reading the Bible. The Montauks also regarded Occom as their minister, and he held religious services, visited their sick and attended their funerals. When they needed letters or legal documents he drew them up for them, and as time passed their confidence in him became so great they made him a judge over them to settle disputes. Occom soon attained great influence over all of the Indian groups on that part of Long Island.

There were various mission opportunities available to Occom during the time he was at Montauk, but he had learned that the outdoor work that Montauk afforded was beneficial to his health. His work was also promising there, so he remained. The most influential Indian at Montauk was named James Fowler. Fowler welcomed Occom when he arrived at Montauk in 1749, and Occom taught the Fowler children. Occom's diary shows that in 1751 his attention was divided between the Bible and James Fowler's daughter Mary, whom he married in the autumn of 1751. From then on they were partners in the trials and tribulations of his missionary life. Two of her brothers became not only Occom's brothers-in-law, but the dearest friends of his life, whose efforts were interwoven with his to the end.

The time came for Samson Occom to be ordained in 1756. He was already in service as a minister and it was foreseen that a larger field than Montauk would soon claim him. There was no hesitation about ordaining him, but it was thought best for him to unite with the Presbytery because he was expected to engage in a Cherokee mission under Presbyterians. A few days after he was ordained, news came of warlike disturbances among the Cherokee which changed the plans. Had these disturbances been reported a few days earlier, Occom would have been ordained as a Congregational minister. Occom's examination for ordination was not a mere formality; among the subjects for which he had to show creditable knowledge were the learned languages. His talents were recognized by everyone and he was described as "an ornament to the Christian Religion and the glory of the Indian Nation." The sermon preached concerning Occom at his ordination was printed in 1761 to excite interest in the Oneida mission Occom was then to undertake.

The Oneida Indians in New York had requested that a minister be sent to them and Occom took David Fowler with him for a few months. The two left in 1761 to carry the gospel to the Oneida Indians.

These were the first missionaries sent out under the auspices of the Connecticut people. Occom and Fowler had an auspicious introduction to , and a favorable reception from, the Oneida Indians when Occom delivered an address to them. He had an interpreter while at Oneida, but did not feel this was a satisfactory way of communicating. He took a young Oneida Indian as his tutor and he and Fowler soon learned to speak fluently in the Oneida tongue. Occom went on a second Oneida mission without Fowler, and later had to return from a third mission in 1763 because missionary operations were suspended during the Pontiac War.

By the following year, Occom was employed as a missionary to the Niantic Indians and during that mission he was to serve neighboring Indians at the same time. Occom was pleased by this mission to tribes who knew and respected him. He lived at Mohegan and began to build a house for his large family. He is said to have had twelve children. His home survived until nearly 1900 and was a famous landmark.

During the time Occom served as a missionary to the Niantic Indians, an idea was forming to send Samson Occom to England on behalf of the Indian Charity School. This idea was formed because the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock was in need of funds and did not have a charter for an Indian school. It was thought that the presence of the Indian preacher in England would convince audiences of the usefulness of Wheelock's work. Occom was to represent the fruit of Wheelock's efforts - an Indian who had been converted from heathenism. This was not quite accurate because Occom had already been converted when he sought an education from Wheelock. The commissioners of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were opposed to Wheelock's idea because it was they who had maintained Occom while he was being educated.

Despite this, Occom was sent from Boston to London on December 23, 1765. He was not a novice. He had spoken before large audiences in Boston and New York and he was the embodiment of his cause. Always calm, dignified and self-possessed, he had the qualities esteemed in a minister. His sermons were simple and had the scent of the forest in them. His familiarity with the figures of speech of Indian oratory allowed him to speak best in his native tongue, but his habit of figurative expression passed successfully into his English speech.

In England, Occom was presented to the Earl of Dartmouth and after several days had met most of the religious nobility of London. The tabernacle in which he first preached was thronged. He made a favorable impression and from then on his success was assured. He was lionized everywhere he went and was flooded with invitations to speak. As religious people came to know him, they learned to value the spiritual earnestness of his character. He met the Countess of Huntington, with whom he was impressed, and she gave her support to the Indian Charity School. Occom also met John Thornton, Esq., who later maintained him in missionary labors, and he visited the Archbishop of Canterbury. Overtures of Episcopal ordination and dignities were made to Occom while he was in England.

Samson Occom met the king and visited the Houses of Parliament, the Abbey and the Tower. Although impressed with their magnificence, he contrasted it with the lot of his poor and uneducated people. His diary records that when he saw the attire of the nobles on the Queen's birthday, thought of his naked brethren in America. Occom had often gone hungry as a wilderness missionary, but in England he dined with the English nobility, conducting himself as if he had never lived in a wigwam. He spoke with a dry humor, never laughed at his own wit, and could entertain with conversations of Indian customs and stories of the wilderness.

Throughout his tour in England contributions increased and immense audiences gathered. On one occasion the congregation was estimated at three thousand. His travels continued with a trip to Scotland in 1767, where more money for the education of Indians was donated. In Scotland, Occom was offered a Doctorate in Divinity from the University of Edinburgh, which he modestly declined. He had no desire for honors, he just wanted education for Indians. Occom was always liberal in his ecclesiastical views and never uttered a word against any sect. This tolerance augmented his success in England.

While in Europe, Occom delivered more than four hundred sermons and addresses - and more money was collected than had ever been collected for a colonial charity before. According to W. DeLoss Love, no one can read the correspondence relating to Wheelock's English mission without being convinced that the success of the mission was due almost solely to Samson Occom. In 1767, after two years in Europe, Occom returned to America and hearty congratulations at Boston. He left for Mohegan as soon as he could. He returned to America as a distinguished preacher, with many pulpits open to him to which he would not have previously been admitted. He was looked upon as the foremost Indian in the colonies and universally regarded with respect and affection.

The agreement under which Occom undertook the mission to England stipulated that his family would be supported by, provided for and cared for by Dr. Wheelock. However, Wheelock was remiss in supplying even some of their necessities. Occom's wife was in poor health and his children showed the need of parental concern when he returned to Mohegan. Occom was wounded by Wheelock's neglect of his family. For some time after his return, he declined missions which would have taken him away from his family, for he felt they needed his care. Occom had been warned that Wheelock would make him a tool to collect money in England and that when he returned to America Wheelock would set him adrift. So it was. At a time when Occom had reason to expect some consideration for the service he had given, he was stranded at Mohegan. He had left his employment to accommodate Wheelock, and having been used by Wheelock, Occom was discharged. When the trustees in England learned of this, they declared that Occom had been ill-treated and they provided a small annual fund for him. The Scotch Society also made him a grant.

However, his relationship with Wheelock continued to be disturbed, due primarily to two factors. First, Occom learned that Wheelock had decided to found a new school in New Hampshire with the funds Occom had collected in England for the Indian Charity School at Lebanon Connecticut. Occom felt that if the school was to be moved at all, it should be located among the Indians of Oneida county because a college in the woods of New Hampshire would be of no advantage to Indians, for whom the money had been collected. Second, Occom objected even more strongly to the fact that Wheelock intended to use the funds which were collected for Indians to educate white missionaries. Occom felt that the people in England had contributed funds to educate Indian youth and that Wheelock's plans were not intended to benefit the Indians. Samson Occom was never reconciled to these changes, but Wheelock did found Dartmouth College in New Hampshire with the funds.

Wheelock eventually had to explain why the funds collected in England had been perverted. He did so by saying he did not intend to divert the funds from the Indians, but thought the Indians would profit more by the education of white missionaries. Occom always felt that the money he collected in England had done no good for the Indians because it had educated only one Indian and one mulatto.

There were also other causes to disturb Occom's relationship with Wheelock. When Occom had been home only a few weeks, he was visited by a company of Oneida Indians who gave him an account of what had been happening at the western missions. They told him that Wheelock's son Ralph had

journeyed west on behalf of his father. Occom could see from their report that Ralph Wheelock had been irascible and domineering at Oneida. His offensive conduct to Samuel Kirkland, a white missionary to the Oneida Indians, had made it necessary for the Oneidas to defend Kirkland against Ralph Wheelock. They looked on Kirkland as their beloved father, and Ralph Wheelock stormed at the Indians, asking them if they thought Kirkland's power and authority were equal to his. He told them that Kirkland was no more than a servant to his own father. The tribe was mortally offended and Occom would not have carried the gospel to the Oneida Indians as a representative of the Reverend Wheelock under any circumstances.

Some time after this Iroquois group visited Occom, an occasion came when Occom was overcome with strong drink. Considering the drinking customs among the clergy of the time, it would have been more strange if Occom had never taken enough liquor to feel its effects. If it were not for this one instance, Occom might have been the only member of the clergy in Connecticut at that time to observe total abstinence.

However, this event greatly humbled Occom, though he was much more concerned about it than anyone else. Samson Occom went to the Suffolk Presbytery to accuse himself. The Presbytery decided that the sensations of intoxication that Occom condemned himself for were not from intemperate drinking, but from having drunk a small quantity of spirituous liquor after having been without food all day. Considering the ministerial rum accounts at that time, they may not have dared to risk condemning him.

In any case, Wheelock spread a rumor that Occom had experienced a greivous fall into the sin of intemperance in a public and aggravated manner. Although Wheelock paid for a considerable quantity of spirituous liquor himself, the rumor was spread far and wide. When Occom's English friends heard of it, they wrote that if these rumors were true, they feared that Wheelock's hard usage of Occom had driven him to it. Others told Wheelock how they felt about his neglect of Occom. Despite this, Wheelock magnified this one-time fault, wrote letters reproaching it and spread the report of it. He then used this as his reason for educating white students at Dartmouth College, instead of educating Indians with the funds Occom had collected in England.

Occom did not lapse into the habit of which Wheelock accused him. However, the suspicion followed him the rest of his life, and it is known that the same enemy kept these rumors alive. Occom was a very sensitive man. His conscience smote him for any misconduct, requiring him to confess misdemeanors which less sensitive men would have ignored. In confession Occom found peace and resignation to the will of God, however. There are abundant evidences of his subsequent good character. His entire life was otherwise completely exemplary. This was confirmed when the rumors were brought to the attention of the Presbytery in New York; after an investigation, they found nothing detrimental to Occom at all.

Occom ministered to the southern New England Indians when the lives of these Indians had become a burden compared to the lives of their ancestors. They were silently wasting away on their reservations, weakened by intemperance, licentiousness and disease. Service in colonial wars had caused many of their hardiest men to leave widows and orphans to struggle with multiplying miseries.

Mohegan, where Samson Occom lived, was at about the center of these Indians settlements, and in a sense Occom was a missionary to all the tribes of southern New England. He journeyed to Boston, New York and Philadelphia to keep interest in these Indians alive.

Occom foresaw the end of his people if they remained in their ancestral homes surrounded by the white population. To cope with the deterioration of these New England tribes, he developed a plan for gathering the Christianized Indians into one tribe and moving them westward to a more favorable environment. On each reservation some Indians were being educated and had come under some Christianizing influence. These were the Indians who came to be designated Christian Indians.

The Pequot condition was inferior to other Indian settlements because of their Pequot War history and because so many men went into colonial wars that they had become almost a tribe of widows. No church ever existed among them and while some religious efforts were made, they came to naught. In 1734, a missionary from Natick visited the Mashantucket Pequots and influenced the Groton minister to accommodate the Pequot Indians in his meetinghouse. After that, the Pequots attended church and a school was established for them. Samson Occom was near and dear to them and was considered the bishop of their flock. Services were held in their schoolhouse when Occom or other Indians could preach to them.

Samson Occom also ministered to the Stonington Pequots when he was able. Some of the Stonington Pequots were quite advanced, and as early as 1738 their children had been gathered into a local school. In 1758, an Indian named Edward Nedson began an Indian school in his home which continued until his death in 1769.

The Narragansett tribe was still the largest Indian settlement in New England in Occom's time. Their sachems reigned over the Eastern Niantics and the Narragansetts at Charlestown, Rhode Island. These had some missionary visitations and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent them a minister. A small church was built to accommodate both Indians and whites on land given by a Narragansett sachem, and both races attended the church for about ten years. Then a minister came to live among the Indians and they formed their own church in 1742 and a small schoolhouse was built by 1745. This church became divided during the separatist excitement. Because the separatist elders would not ordain their choice, the Indian congregation ordained a Narragansett Indian named Samuel Niles by the laying on of (their) hands. Niles continued as their pastor until about 1776. Although Samuel Niles could not read, he was without blame in terms of morality, and he was a great influence over these Indians. Samson Occom preached to Niles' congregation on his tours.

The Western Niantics had a small reservation at Lyme, Connecticut. The commissioners at Boston decided not to establish a school there because the Indians were still hostile because of the ill treatment they had received regarding their lands. The Indians eventually became more favorably disposed and from 1742 to the time of the Revolutionary War, teachers were periodically sent to them. Philip Cuish of the tribe was a Baptist minister, and Samson Occom and other Indians preached there when they could.

The Tunxis Indian children at Farmington were received into town schools, but education did not thrive among them until 1732. At that time, interest was generated by a youth named John Mattawan who wanted an education so he could become a minister to his people. In 1737, he became their instructor and preacher. Mattawan laid the foundations of education and religion in the Tunxis tribe, but he died about 1748. The original Tunxis tribal membership had nearly died out by that time, but in 1725 remnants of the Quinnipiac Indians of East Haven, Connecticut and the Wangunk Indians of Middletown, Connecticut had joined them. The Quinnipiac Indians obtained educations at the Farmington, Connecticut school and some were advanced and exemplary Christians.

Samson Occom visited the Christian Indians at Framington, and Joseph Johnson of the Mohegan tribe

was probably directed to the Tunxis group by Occom. Johnson became their schoolmaster, and in 1773 he married Samson Occom's daughter, Tabitha. Johnson continued with the Tunxis until 1774, when he undertook a western mission. Many Tunxis Indians felt his influence and converted to Christianity. After Johnson left, Samson Occom kept this fire alive through frequent visits, until members of that tribe moved to Oneida country or to the Stockbridge Indian settlement at Massachusetts.

Members of the Montauk tribe on Long Island, New York were taught by David Fowler after 1767, but in 1770 Fowler took up the pioneer work of the emigration to Oneida country.

When plans matured for the emigration to Oneida country in New York, the emigration included the seven settlements of Indians which were associated with missionary operations - the Pequots at Groton, the Pequots at Stonington, the Mohegans, the Montauks, the Eastern and Western Niantics, the Farmington or Tunxis Indians, and the Narragansett Indians of Charlestown, Rhode Island. After the emigration took place, it was sometime called the emigration of seven tribes, but it was never expected that all of the members of any of these tribes would move to Oneida country. Only those drawn together by Christian influences considered it, but provision was made for families or individuals who wished to join them later.

The idea was to improve their condition by a removal from the corrupting influences by which they were surrounded. They needed larger and better lands because few acres on any of their reservations were suitable for agriculture. If they had to depend on the soil for their livelihood, they felt that they had to move to a new settlement where more and better lands were available. A missionary purpose was included in their plans. Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson, and the Fowlers were familiar with Oneida country and they were certain that lands could be obtained from their Indian friends. Occom felt that a living example of a Christian community was needed among the Oneida Indians, in addition to missionaries. Their plan was to establish a community to introduce religion and agriculture to the western Indians, while living among them.

Beyond believing that it was necessary for the Indians to depend upon the soil for their subsistence, Occom also believed that it was necessary for them to hold land which could not be alienated. This was because when problems arose these Indians were tempted to sell themselves out of house and home to solve them. Later history proved Samson Occom's assessment to be accurate.

Occom foresaw that old tribal relations would be broken up by the emigration, but that hereditary tribal instincts and customs would continue. So a new tribal government with rulers selected by the membership was decided upon. Their model was the Connecticut town government with which they were familiar. They would be voters and brothers and the name of their town would be Brothertown. John Eliot's surviving Indian town at Natick probably influenced Occom, but Brothertown was original and unique in American history in many ways.

Occom's ideas were carried out and his plan brought to life by his son-in-law, Joseph Johnson. Johnson negotiated with the Oneidas and unified the relationship of the New England Indians with them. The first step of the emigration plan was to gather the Indians at Mohegan in 1773. There it was decided to send representatives to look for suitable land in Oneida country. Joseph Johnson went to Sir William Johnson in New York, who sent a message to the Oneida Indians on the matter and promised to secure lands for them among the Oneida Indians. The Oneida Indians did promise land, and Joseph Johnson carried the news of the Oneida tribe's gift through the New England Indian settlements. It was then decided to ask the Oneida Indians for more than the ten square miles they had

promised, and Joseph Johnson and Jacob Fowler traveled to New York to confer with the Oneidas. At that meeting the Oneida Indians recognized the New England Indians of the seven towns as brethren and adopted them into the Six Nations, indicating that they planned to grant the New England Indians a considerable tract of land. Twelve Oneida chiefs ratified a pledge of eternal friendship, and Johnson and Fowler returned home.

The next summer Samson Occom, Joseph Johnson and David Fowler viewed the land, met with missionary Samuel Kirkland, and went on to strengthen relations with their adoptive Oneida brethren. In October, the Oneidas transferred the deed for their gift of land to Occom's Christianized New England Indians.

Securing funds to facilitate the emigration had not yet been addressed. Joseph Johnson received some assistance from the Connecticut General Assembly. He also received collections when he preached in New York and went among the Indians of the seven towns exhibiting the deed for Oneida lands. During his visits to the seven towns, Johnson preached the emigration. It was believed that there were at least fifty-eight able working men who could be relied upon to go - ten from Mohegan, twenty from Narragansett, thirteen from Montauk, five from Niantic, and ten from Farmington. The two Pequot tribes were so deeply in debt that they could not plan to go immediately, but planned to go as soon as possible.

It was decided that those who could endure hardship should go first to prepare the way by building shelters, and raising food, before moving their families and the aged. These Brothertown Indians had obtained a choice tract of fifteen or twenty miles square, where they intended to settle as a Christianized body. They also intended to invite their western brethren to participate in their benefits and privileges. They proposed to use their own people as ministers and schoolmasters. Their ministers were to make excursions among the New York tribes and they planned to receive into their Brothertown school those children whose parents desired a Christian education for them.

The first group of Brothertown Indians set out for New York during the spring of 1774. When they arrived in Oneida country, they immediately built log huts, made gardens and planted cornfields. Then the Revolutionary War broke out. At that time, the colonies were concerned about the attitude of the Six Nations, who were allied with England. While we know now that the Oneidas remained faithful to the patriots, despite intense efforts to alienate them, it is not so well-known how much of the credit for this is due to the Brothertown Indians. They reached Oneida at a favorable time to raise their voices on behalf of their New England homes and friends. Samson Occom addressed his western Indian brethren urging them to maintain neutrality. It was the Brothertown Indians who inspired the "Declaration of Neutrality" addressed to the four New England provinces by the Oneida Indians in 1775. It is thought that one of the Brothertown Indians wrote it, and it is known that it was carried eastward by them.

The part the Brothertown Indians took in the American Revolution should have won them lasting honor among patriots. In that conflict their New York settlements were wasted, their habits demoralized and their youth killed. The lives of those who emigrated to Oneida would have been much different had it not been for the devastation of war. Most of the younger men returned to New England and enlisted as soldiers, with only a few remaining on their Oneida lands with their families.

The homes of the Brothertown Indians who remained in New York were the only houses for miles and they lived with hardship. Enemy dangers surrounded them. When they were finally driven off by the enemy, leaving all of their effects in haste, these Brothertown Indians were homeless. All they had

possessed in New England had been sold to emigrate. They traveled to the Housatonic home of the Stockbridge Indians, who had land where they could build huts and cultivate corn. They settled at West Stockbridge and Richmond in Massachusetts during the Revolution, intending to return to Oneida as soon as it was safe to do so. At Stockbridge, the Brothertown Indians experienced sickness and many were reduced to poverty. After the war, in 1780, they presented a petition to their old friends in Connecticut regarding their condition; the documents connected to that petition show that there were about forty-four Brothertown refugees at Stockbridge during the Revolutionary War.

Some published materials state that the Stockbridge Indians had secured a tract of land from the Oneidas before the Revolution, but this is in error. Although the Stockbridge had disposed of much of their land, they had no thought of emigration until the way was pointed out to them by their Brothertown friends. It was the influence of the Brothertown refugees who lived with them during the revolution that led the Stockbridge tribe to project a removal to Oneida country too. During their six years together, a friendship was formed between the two tribes which continues today.

When peace was restored in the colonies, the first companies of emigrants to cross the Hudson River were the Brothertown Indians from Stockbridge, led by David Fowler. A number of Stockbridge Indians accompanied the Brothertown when they returned to their Oneida homes in 1783. This was a return for the hospitality the Brothertowns had received. After a conference attended by the Stockbridge and Oneida chiefs, the Stockbridge were adopted by the Oneidas and were promised a six mile square tract of land. As the Brothertown Indians at Stockbridge returned to their homes in fertile New York valleys, Indians at their old New England settlements were preparing to join them.

It was then time for Samson Occom to push forward the Indian families that were still in New England. In 1784, a number of families sailed from London, Connecticut. Among the passengers of the Albany sloop on which the Brothertown Indians traveled were members of the New York General Assembly. Thus, Samson Occom began his acquaintance with the members of that body who influenced Indian affairs. At Albany, Occom preached at the Presbyterian meetinghouse, and a collection was taken up on behalf of his people. Then Occom returned to New England and Jacob Fowler guided the emigrants to their new homes.

Expenses for this group of Brothertown emigrants were considerable and Occom had given his personal note for their passage from New London, Connecticut to Albany, New York. This was the reason he did not go with them. In September, he returned to Oneida to visit his people, going by way of Farmington and Stockbridge, preaching wherever he had the opportunity along the way. Most evenings were spent with pioneer people, gathered in some cabin to sing his songs and hear his teachings. This type of tour made Occom well-known and won him the title "The Missionary of the Wilderness." Occom visited the New Jersey communities of Newark, New Brunswick, Trenton, and Princeton to collect funds for the Brothertown Indians, and also visited Philadelphia. His journeys proved opportunities to minister to settlements along his routes. Everyone knew him. He performed marriages, baptized children, visited and doctored the sick, attended funerals and addressed evening gatherings. He was as popular in woodsmen's cabins as he had been among the nobility of England.

After preaching at various locations to solicit funds for the Brothertown tribe, Occom returned to Mohegan, and in May of 1789 he moved his family to Oneida country. He had to leave most of his furniture and books behind, as well as the painting of him which had been made in England. Samson Occom's work was finished in New England when all of the Christian Indians who could be persuaded to emigrate had been brought to their promised land by this Indian Moses. At Oneida country, Occom ministered to a church composed of both Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians,

because the Stockbridge minister had not moved to Oneida with his people. Occom's diary supplies information on both Stockbridge and Brothertown families.

His diary also tells of how the Brothertowns met at New York to "form into a Body Politick" and name their town Brothertown, in Indian Eeyamquittoowauconnuck. The New England form of town government appealed to the Brothertown Indians because there was opportunity for individual independence. It appears that they may have gone to some extremes, however. For instance, at their first meeting they chose fence-viewers, although there was no fence for miles around. Through the years, the laws they made were largely ordinances relating to fences, highways, damage by dogs and stray cattle. Emphasis was also placed on service to the tribe, and if anyone was elected to office and declined to serve without reasonable excuse, the individual was fined. Those who accepted office and neglected their duties paid twice the fine. Women and widows were to work on the roads or at public business half as much as the men. If it was necessary for a woman to appear in court, she was required to apply to a suitable male to speak on her behalf. There were also stringent laws against immorality, profanity, drunkenness, theft, extortion, idleness, neglect of children and racially mixed marriages. If a person was intoxicated at a town meeting, he was punished as a great offender and sentenced to confinement in the stocks. Dancing or "frolicking" on Saturday or Sunday nights was forbidden, and it was unlawful to harbor or conceal a fugitive slave, servant or apprentice. The Brothertowns often made laws which were the laws of New England at the time, as they sought to secure the order and decorum of Puritan New England in their Indian community.

They made honest and earnest efforts to enforce their laws and in a considerable measure they succeeded. Because of the great laxity among the whites in the settlements around them regarding many things which they attempted to prohibit, they did not always succeed. However, they did fine offenders with vigor and there is no reason to believe the town was not well-governed. This does not mean they were free of all problems or vices, but they were as free of them as white frontier settlements were.

One of the main objectives of the emigration was to make these Indians into an agricultural people, and they did succeed in that. Barns were built, fields were enclosed, and they had stock of all kinds. In 1813, they had 2,000 acres cleared and under cultivation and they were considered advanced in agricultural knowledge. They had a gristmill, two saw mills, sixteen framed houses, eighteen framed barns, twenty-one ploughs, seventeen sleds, three carts and three wagons. Four Brothertown Indians were carpenters, two were blacksmiths, four were shoemakers, two were tailors, and five were weavers. During 1812, they manufactured 320 yards of woolen and 600 yards of linen cloth, produced 11,300 bushels of grain, and raised 3,400 bushels of potatoes. Their production of some of these products tripled by 1825. They had good roads and homes and were compared favorably with the white settlers around them.

Samson Occom had considered the problems of his people; he knew their weaknesses and he appreciated their difficulties. The prominent members of the emigration movement were one family by marriage. Other educated Indians participated who were connected by blood or marriage to some family in the tribe. Many of the founders had been pupils at the Indian Charity School and nearly every one of these was concerned with the founding of this Indian town. Occom's large circle of family connections became residents at Brothertown, and at his death he was surrounded by people whom he could call his own. These were his support as he battled on behalf of the landed rights of the Brothertown Indians.

The 1774 Oneida grant to the Brothertown Indians and their posterity "without power of alienation,"

extended about thirteen miles north and south. In 1785 when the Brothertown tribe had located at Oneida country, the Oneidas, at the instigation of white settlers, set up a claim that the Brothertown Indians had not fulfilled the conditions of the grant and that it was void. They proposed to give the Brothertown Indians 640 acres in lieu of their claim, and later proposed that the Brothertown Indians live at large on Oneida lands. Still later, they threatened to take back all of the lands if the Brothertown Indians did not accept their offer.

That was the situation until 1788, when it was necessary for the Oneida Indians to cede all their lands except their reservation to the state of New York in the Treaty of Fort Schuyler. At that time, the Oneidas made the reservation that the "New England Indians settled at Brothertown under the pastoral care of the Reverend Samson Occom and their posterity forever," and the "Stockbridge Indians and their posterity forever," were to enjoy their settlements on the lands given them. However, this treaty reduced the size of the Brothertown tract to two miles by three miles. The Oneidas agreed to this, but the state of New York would not disregard the 1774 Brothertown conveyance which Samson Occom had recorded in the office of the Secretary of State at Connecticut, and upon which he stood up for Brothertown rights. So, the General Assembly of New York provided that a tract should be laid out for the Brothertown Indians to include "all that part of the tract of land formerly given them by the Oneida Indians, which is included in the cession lately made by the Oneida Indians to the people of this state." This tract was six times larger than the reservation treaty and contained 24,052 acres, so Occom's wisdom and courage were rewarded.

Samson Occom had not been able to prevent some New England Indian interlopers from attaching themselves to the tribe. Some built huts on the tract and claimed equal rights with the founders without recognizing tribal authority. Elijah Wampy of the tribe drew up a petition, signed largely by the interlopers on Brothertown lands, and sent it to the General Assembly. An act of 1789 allowed leasing for a period of ten years. The Wampy party, who wanted to make leases to white settlers, began to do so. This resulted in Brothertown farms, which were in use, being leased to white settlers, causing a premium to be put on fraud. Occom wrote a petition and carried it to the General Assembly by the authority of the Brothertown trustees. Occom was known at Albany and had influence. "An Act for the relief of the Indians residing at Brothertown and New Stockbridge" was passed in 1791, which provided for an annual town meeting at which male Indians of twenty-one years should choose a clerk to preside and keep the records, a marshal, and three trustees. These were given the power to lay out lots for the Indian families and to lease a tract not to exceed 640 acres. The rents from this leasing were to be applied to maintaining a minister and free school, to bring actions for trespass against whites and to adjudicate cases of trespass or debt among the Indians.

By the time Occom returned to Brothertown, about two thousand acres had been taken up by white settlers. When the time came for the Indians to organize their town government and elect trustees, they were too demoralized to do so. They thought nothing could be done about the two thousand leased acres. Occom again appealed to the General Assembly and in 1792 they re-enacted the measure. However, white settlers continued to crowd in and urge the Wampy party on. Occom became unpopular with these white settlers and the Oneidas had not forgiven him for maintaining Brothertown rights against them so successfully. He was surrounded by enemies. Only those faithful, intelligent, substantial and religious Indians who had entered into the emigration plan with him saw that he was fighting on their behalf.

By 1792, Samson Occom was worn out by his battles for Brothertown rights and survival; he was an old man before his time. To find peace, he moved from Brothertown to the Stockbridge branch of his flock in his sixty-ninth year. He died that year, believing he had done all he could for his Brothertown

Indians. His interment was at a Brothertown burial ground, which was in use only to about 1812. The tops of its fieldstone markers had now been broken off and trees have grown through and around them. Occom's fieldstone marked grave is there. It was to have been in the keeping of his brother-in-law and loyal friend, David Fowler. The traces of this burial ground would have been swept away had not the descendants of David Fowler raised an engraved white marble slab over Fowler's grave before they moved to Wisconsin.

The leasing of land continued at Brothertown after Occom's death and within two years, all of the Brothertown Indians saw that Occom had been right. In 1794, they addressed a complaint to Governor Clinton of New York against the trespassers on their lands. Governor Clinton took action and ordered the ejection of the trespassers, as had been authorized by Act of 1792, and the General Assembly made a decision which was favorable to the Brothertown Indians. Commissioners were appointed to divide six to ten thousand of their acres into lots, notwithstanding any leases by white residents thereon. The remainder of the lands were to be sold to those leasing them and the money invested as the Brothertown fund.

Because he had maintained their claim, Occom blessed the Brothertown people after his death with the income from this fund. It was expended for their benefit for many years. It provided them with industrial advantages, secured them educations and ministered to their necessities; its benefits followed them in their second emigration to Wisconsin. Occom had died in battle, but the victory was his.

After his death, the Brothertown Indians fell prey to religious factions. They had only ministers and exhorters from among their own people, and they were torn and rent to pieces by Seventh Day Baptist teachers and assailed by Methodist preachers of questionable character. The steady Indians did not know which way to turn or how to preserve their nation from the division and animosities which they felt would prove the tribe's ruin. In early 1793, there were Methodists, Baptists, Separatists and Presbyterians among the Brothertown, but by year-end they were a congregation of Baptists with Separatist tendencies. The Methodists barely survived.

In the meantime, the superintendents had decided that it was best to have a white man act in the capacity of teacher for the Brothertown Indians; in 1798, they settled on a Quaker named John Dean. When the Brothertown Indians received word of this, they feared Deans's religious views, and a petition was sent to the governor. The petition stated that they did not wish to be made proselytes by any people and wished the liberty of acting according to the dictates of their own consciences in both religion and teaching of their children. However, since John Dean was the only available person of suitable character, he was hired.

Dean found that the Brothertown Indians learned readily. When he died in 1820, his son Thomas Dean became the Brothertown schoolmaster. Thomas Dean was able to direct the Brothertown Indians without offending their independence and, from the first, won their confidence and affection even more than his father had. The Brothertown Indians looked upon him as their white father. He was their surveyor and lawyer, encouraging them in building, manufacturing and improving their village.

During his more mature years, Dean continued his service to the Brothertown Indians. Samson Occom had foreseen that an ultimate emigration to another location would occur. The Brothertown Indians had considered attempting a new settlement at White River, Indiana in 1812, but was prevented this and many enlisted in the United States service. Some never returned. Some did go to White River with their Stockbridge brethren about 1818, but disappointment awaited them because

the United States government had purchased the large tract on which they had intended to settle. A few of these returned to New York. They appealed to the government to regain their lands, but to no avail. Their trials discouraged them and sickness wasted their numbers. Several years later a remnant found their way to Green Bay, Wisconsin. So the first Brothertown attempt to emigrate from New York came to naught.

Because they were surrounded by encroaching white settlers, the emigration fever later visited the Brothertown Indians again. Thomas Dean saw the wisdom of another removal and he journeyed to Washington on their behalf and to Wisconsin for them. His efforts were successful. The negotiations of the New York tribes with the Menominee and Winnebago Indians in Wisconsin in 1821 make a confusing story, but the result was the purchase of a large tract to contain 2,000,000 acres for \$2,000. In September of 1822, another treaty was made for the New York Indians to acquire all right, title, interest and claim to another tract for which they agreed to pay \$3,000. The Brothertown Indians were represented in these treaties and they formally united in the affair in 1824 when the town of Brothertown voted that a purchase of land be made at Green Bay. George Sampson was one of the Indians appointed to act in this matter with Thomas Dean. The Brothertown Indians bought a tract on the Fox River which was eight miles wide and thirty miles long for \$950.

The remnant from White River left at once, and the rest prepared to go. They had to sell their lots at Brothertown and arrange their affairs. While they were doing this, the Menominee and Winnebago Indians repented of their bargain and denied the claims of the New York tribes. The United States government investigated. Then, notwithstanding these treaties which had several times been ratified and acknowledged, the government proceeded to purchase from the Wisconsin tribes a title to all of their lands. When that treaty went before the United States Senate, ratification was refused until three townships east of Lake Winnebago were granted to the Stockbridge, Munsee and Brothertown Indians - in addition to the 500,000 acres west of the Fox River which the Brothertown Indians had purchased.

The township for the Brothertown Indians contained 23,040 acres, and the Brothertown Indians could see that this was only a fraction of the land they had bought and paid for. The boundaries of the tract west of the Fox River were changed too. They protested, but there was little they could do because some of them were on the land and wanted to settle down and their brethren in New York were waiting fixing of their location. They finally accepted this agreement in 1832.

That was the status of Brothertown lands until 1838 and the conclusion of the Treaty of Buffalo Creek. Gaining government possession of the 500,000 acre tract purchased by the Brothertown Indians was the object of that treaty. The New York Indians then had title to this half million acres, by virtue of the Brothertown purchase. In addition, they owned the lands upon which they lived. The half million acres which the government had come to the New York Indians as a consequence of the agreement of 1822 and was made valid by the payment of \$950 by the Brothertown Indians. The Brothertown Indians had obtained the money from the fund Samson Occom had fought to retain.

The New York Indians deeded these 500,000 acres of Green Bay lands to the government in 1838 and in return were to receive a permanent home for all New York Indians. This permanent home was to be located on a tract of 1,824,000 acres of land west of the state of Missouri. They were to move there within five years, or at the time appointed by the President. The government was to appropriate \$400,000 to aid them in this removal. However, no time was appointed, no appropriation was made and the Kansas lands were never conveyed to the New York Indians. Instead, the government sold them to white settlers.

Until the late 1960's, the only thing the government had done to fulfill its agreement in payment for the half million acres of Green Bay land was to have a government agent conduct 201 Indians from New York to the Little Osage River and leave them in Kansas unprovided for in 1846 - to starve and die during the winter. Thirty-two of the 201 Indians survived or remained there and even these had their lands taken from them by Kansas settlers.

Before that Kansas tragedy, the emigration to Wisconsin had begun. The first families to emigrate from Brothertown, New York to Green Bay, Wisconsin left New York in 1831. The General Assembly of New York allowed them to sell their land in 1827 and the proceeds of common lands were to be expended in the removal of the poor. If there was any money left it was to be used to build a schoolhouse at their new home.

The Brothertown Indians emigrated to Wisconsin under favorable circumstances because they had experience and knowledge of government, and the means necessary for a good start in a new community. Although the distance was too great to transport their effects, the Erie Canal from Utica to Buffalo allowed them to reach Green Bay by the Great Lakes. As company after company made ready for their pilgrimage to Wisconsin, some of the aged were laid in their graves - among them David, George and Abel Sampson, their mother Sarah Sampson, David's wife Olive Sampson, and Olive's mother Philena Hutton. An enumeration in 1837 gave the number of Brothertown Indians as 360, and about 250 were in Wisconsin in 1843. Some few did not remove and some who did so returned to New York to die at their old home - but the Brothertown of Samson Occom had really melted away.

The Wisconsin township granted to the Brothertown Indians by the treaty of 1832 extended four miles north and south on Lake Winnebago and eight miles east and west. There were two roads laid out in parallel lines and between these a road called Military Road was built. The village of Brothertown is located on what was called Military Road. In 1839, the Brothertown Indians received citizenship in the United States and in the same year their town was laid out in lots. Although a certain locality of their township was called Pequot, the Brothertown Indians first named their town Deansborough in honor of Thomas Dean. It was later known as Manchester, but the Brothertown Indians soon named it Brothertown in remembrance of their old home - and that name continued.

Their county, called Calumet, was formed one year after their admission to citizenship. The first election was held in one of their homes, as was the first session of the county commissioners. One Brothertown Indian was the first postmaster in Calumet County, two were justices of the peace who performed marriages and three served as members of Wisconsin's legislature. But before long, their county organization had to give way to one in which white settlers participated, most of them German. The Brothertown Indians formed no new ecclesiastical organizations in Wisconsin and after the arrival of their elders they had preachers of their own. About 1840 a Methodist church was organized and a small meetinghouse built.

During the early years of their Wisconsin town, the Brothertown Indians made encouraging progress in agriculture. Their farms were cleared and substantial buildings were erected. A number of them were skilled in trades. The work on the first steamboat built on Lake Winnebago was done largely by Deacon David Fowler.

A change began to take place before 1900, as it became necessary for more and more Brothertown Indians to sell their land to meet their bills for taxes and necessities. This was because the original

land allotments to support each family unit could not, when children and grandchildren were grown, be stretched to support the large families of several married children and married grandchildren. Because there were few employment opportunities in rural Calumet County, it had become necessary for younger generations to seek employment elsewhere to support their families. Some eventually worked for the railroads, others on the lakes and still others turned to trade. Some Brothertown Indians moved further west to Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Dakota and elsewhere. More of them just moved to employment at Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, Green Bay and neighboring communities where there was work. A few went to northern Wisconsin to work in Michigan peninsula mines. Brothertown Indians who had married into Stockbridge, Oneida or other tribal lines eventually made their homes on those reservations. By the early 1900's, over half of the Brothertown Indians are said to have left Calumet County.

This scattering of the tribe was inevitable. The upheaval of the ancestors of the Brothertown Indians from their many homes began with the landing of the New England colonists. In the face of land reductions and ever-encroaching white settlements, descendants of these early Indians were pushed relentlessly westward. By 1900, it became impossible for the Brothertown Indians to subsist as a tribal family group due to the lack of adequate land resources to accommodate normal, generational population increases. Despite economics which prevented Brothertown families from living in proximity to each other, groups of Brothertown Indians have always gathered at reunions, funerals, weddings and picnics with various elders acting as contact people. Regaining their tribal status has always been a rallying point for them, also.

Tribal recognition has been a fundamental objective of Brothertown Indians since they were unknowingly stripped of their tribal status in accepting citizenship in 1839. Although not yet recognized by the federal government, the Brothertown Indians continue as an operative tribe in Wisconsin, recognized by other Indian tribes and by the state of Wisconsin.

(End of Chapter 2: The Brothertown Tribe)

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