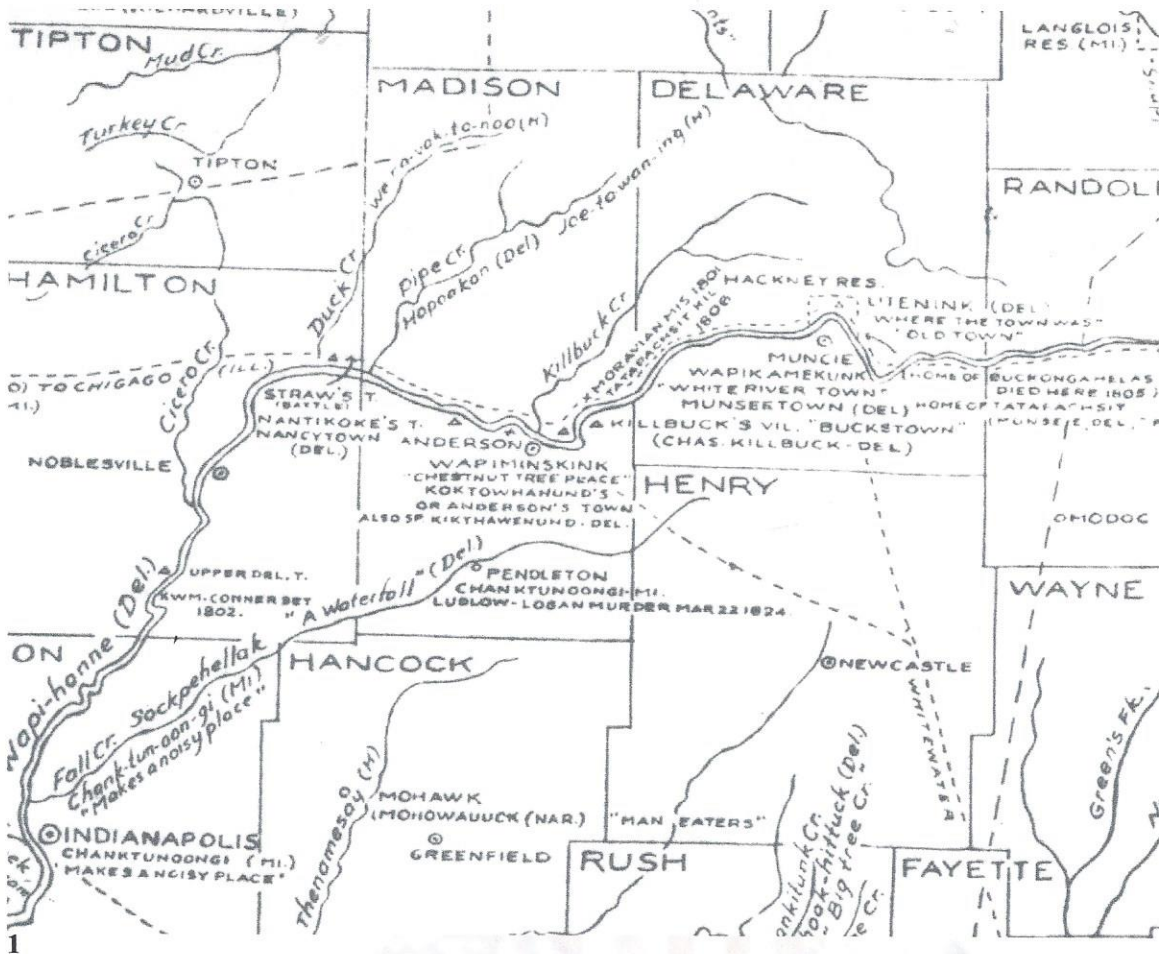


WHITE RIVER, INDIANA

By Caroline K. Andler



The ultimate emigration of the Brothertown Indians to another location in the far West was foreseen by Samson Occom before his death. He looked about him on the beautiful hills and valleys of the Oneidas and with prophetic gaze saw them thickly

¹ This is what the Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians encountered, an untouched forested wilderness sprinkled with Delaware villages along the only trail and major waterway. From the 1932 map entitled *Indiana The influence of the Indian upon its History-with Indian and French names for Natural and Cultural Locations, #122*, published by the Indiana Department of Conservation, the White River area of Madison County is shown as a well-developed part of the larger Delaware society in east-central Indiana. The Delaware or Lenni-Lenape, meaning "real men" had as many as fourteen villages along this west fork of the White River. Muncietown was a nickname given in the late 1700's to one of several small Indian villages, located along the East Fork of the White River, in eastern Indiana, and precisely located near the present-day Walnut Street Bridge in Muncie, that were dominated by Delaware (Lenni Lenepe) Indians.

populated by the whites. Doubtless he had many conversations on the subject with his friends, and prominent among them was Hendrick Aupaumut, the chief of the Stockbridge tribe. He it was who became the forerunner of the New York Indians in their subsequent removal westward.

So early as the year 1791, this chief, accompanied by several of his nation and Good Peter, the aged father of the faith among the Oneidas, went on an embassy to the Miami tribe. The ostensible purpose of this visit was the introduction of Christianity; but he seems also to have done some prospecting, with a view of locating a large tract of land on White river, now in Indiana, to which the Stockbridge tribe somehow had acquired a claim. A council was held there in 1802 with the Delaware who had removed thither, Hendrick Aupaumet being chief of the Stockbridge delegation.² A friendly compact was then made between them. For two years thereafter Captain Hendrick was engaged in perfecting this relationship in behalf of the Oneidas and their wards, the Indians of New Stockbridge and Brothertown,³ who, for a time after their removal to New York, had been so closely united under Occom's pastorate as to form one church that held public service alternately at Aupaumet's among the Stockbridges and at David Fowler's among the Brothertowns.⁴

The Miami invited the Stockbridge and Delaware "to come and dwell with them in their Western home."⁵ The invitation had been extended by the Delaware, whom, "after an Indian fashion, the Stockbridges called their grandfathers."⁶

Stockbridge letter to "Esq. Tuchy and other Peace Makers and Chiefs of the Brothertown Indians," July 8, 1808: "The Brothertown Indian chiefs in behalf of their Tribe to the Stockbridge Indians Due, to 4400 mostly blue wampum to make and compleat a large belt sent in May last to Capt. Hendrick by Jacob Tonk and others to be delivered by said Hendrick in a speech to the west Indians, the purport of which will be to form a union with the Stockbridge Indians to consult the peace, friendship and happiness of said western Indians, and to confirm a gift of said western Indians of a large country of land to the Stockbridge and Brother Indians, to be thereafter confirmed by the general government." Ask for #21 for the wampum. Signed Joseph Shauquethqueat, Solom Q. Hendrick and Bartholomew Calvin. -attached note from Brothertown Peacemakers (John Tooky, John Skeesuck, and Samuel Scipio) to Brothertown Superintendants to pay the same. Notes that the meeting with western Indians at White River took place last May.⁷

² *A Report to the Secretary of War*, Dr. Morse, App., pp:110-111.

³ "Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England" W. DeLoss Love; "The Last Remove" p316

⁴ "The Coming of the New York Indians to Wisconsin." Wisconsin Historical Collections 4, p. 159-160.

⁵ "The Coming of the New York Indians to Wisconsin." Wisconsin Historical Collections 4, p. 159.

⁶ "The Coming of the New York Indians to Wisconsin." Wisconsin Historical Collections 4, p. 159.

⁷ New York State Archives, Record Series A0832-77, NY State Comptroller's Office, Indian Annuity Claims and Receipts, Boxes 1-4, Boxes 1-2 are various tribes. Box 3 is Brothertown and Stockbridge Superintendents' Reports. Box 4 is Cayuga and Oneida materials.

Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, 2003.260. Records of the NY State Comptroller's Office and other Affiliated Depts. Box 17. Loose Item:

By a vote of the town on April 4, 1809, the Brothertown Indians appointed John Tuhie, Sr., John Scheesuch [Skeesuck], Sr., Henry Cuship, [Cusick] and Jacob Fowler as delegates to communicate with the Delaware.⁸ The Brothertown appointees delivered the following speech on July 3, 1809, which was read in the town meeting:

Speech of the said delegates, July 3, 1809, to the Delaware, and the rest of the Wawponohkies, as follows:

"BROTHERS - We sent our salutation to you last year, with a promise that we would pay you a visit, we are very glad that the Good Spirit has enabled us to sit with you at this council-fire today.

"BROTHERS: - Our ancestors and your forefathers were in friendship with each other, but the covenant which they have made with your forefathers has been forgotten by us. Nevertheless, when we heard you were in trouble, we were sorry, and when you were promoting peace among yourselves and your neighbors, we rejoiced.

"BROTHERS: - Our forefathers have had the same fate your ancestors have met with; they have had a long war with the white people. Our people were then numerous, but after many years of storm or war, they made peace, then they found their numbers much lessened, and the white people possessed of their native country, as they have done to your forefathers, and for that reason we have had to move from place to place, as you have also done.

"BROTHERS: - Although we live a great distance from you and in among the white people, ever since we were in being, still we feel our minds drawn towards people of our own color.

"BROTHERS: - We now take hold of your hand, to renew that friendship which subsisted between our ancestors and yours, which has been forgotten for a great length of time, this friendship is extended to the whole of the confederacy, on our part we shall teach our children how to maintain this friendship, that it may last to the latest of our generations.

"BROTHERS: - We take your council-fire to be the front door at which we should enter at first, and here we put down our talk and request you to communicate the same to the whole of the confederacy.

(One belt of wampum delivered.)

"BROTHERS :- As you have a sad experience for many years past, you

⁸ Jones' Annals of Oneida County, pp. 267-270, *citing* to Brothertown Town Records, pp. 58-60.

understand well what poverty is, therefore, we now lay our case before you, as we have not land enough to contain all our people in the east, we should feel happy if you would consider us: May the Great Good Spirit enable us to keep this friendship always bright."⁹

(Delivered a white belt of wampum, with three black streaks on it, containing ten rows of wampum.)

Answer to the above:- White River, July 3, 1809

"At a General Council held by the Wawponohkies (to wit) :-Delaware, Mohiconick, Monssy, Wescoopsey, and Nanticoke Nations, at which time Working Pomseon, a principal chief of the Delaware Nation, delivered a speech to the deputies of the four towns which stand on the banks of the Grand River and River De Trench, also to the Mohekons, and the remnant of the seven tribes of Indians who reside at Brothertown, in the State of New York, as follows:-¹⁰

"GRAND-CHILDREN, BROTHERS, AND FRIENDS: - I am happy to see you. I salute you all. It is a happy thing that we are met together so many of us, the remnant of the Wawponohkies, to deliberate upon the welfare of our respective tribes."

"Grand-children: - While we were sitting by the side of this river, in a dismal situation, about twelve months ago, our grand-children, the chiefs and head warriors of the Miamies, arrived and sat where you now sit, and we were sitting where we now are, our business with them was to settle the difficulties which did arise on account of this land."

"Grand-children :- With great satisfaction I now mention to you that last fall the Miami and ourselves have removed all cause of uneasiness, and we have had a confirmation by the President of the United States, whereby we are assured we may live on these lands without molestation."

"Grand-children Brothers, and Friends: - Be it known to you that you have the same privilege as we have to this land, we can not point out a particular spot for to live on, but you may take your own choice wherever you should be suited on undivided land along this river, there you may build your fire-place."

"Grand-children, Brothers, and Friends: - All our chiefs, head warriors, and young men send their salutations to your chiefs, heroes, and young

⁹ Jones' Annals of Oneida County, pp. 267-270 citing to Town Records, pp. 58-60; *History of Marshall Township* (1851): A Chapter from Annals and Recollections of Oneida County, as published by Pomroy Jones in 1851 at p. 8.

¹⁰ *Town Records* located at Hamilton College, NY; "*The Coming of the New York Indians to Wisconsin.*" Wisconsin Historical Collections 4, p. 159.

men: Be it known then that our union is full and complete, and established to-day; therefore, let your eyes be fixed on this place, that your minds may not be fluctuating as heretofore, but easy and settled. This speech is to you all, as we have become one people."

(Different strings of wampum delivered. Two strings of white wampum to the Brothertown people.)¹¹

The Brothertown leadership sent the following responsive correspondence to the Delaware on June 6, 1811, accepting their offer of land and setting forth their plan to move to land on the White River in 1812.

To the tribes Composing the Confederation of the wit (i.e.) Dellawars, Mohiconick, Monsey, Wsoopsey & Nanticoky Nations.

Fathers, Brothers & friends: We are sorry that we can not go & see you and talk to you face to face this Spring but it is so with us at this time that we can not see you this Spring – therefore we ~~sent~~ send you our talk and the sentiments of our hearts to you on paper by our Brothers, the Muhheconiks –

Fathers & Brothers: We rejoice ~~to hear~~ in our hearts to hear that the clouds of misunderstanding between the Delewares & Miami's have been blown away and that they enjoy the clear sky & sunshine of peace & friendship to set in –

Fathers & Brothers – Though the path is so long between us and you, and the many sufferings we have - we hope to see you again and talk to you face to face.

Fathers & Brothers – By the help of the great & good spirit we expect either next fall or in spring that some of our Chiefs and young men will go to see you again and smoke the pipe of peace with you.

Brothers – We thank you for good offers you have been pleased to make us of the privoledg [sic] of having lands in your country for us to live upon and we expect in the course of this face or in the offering to with your consent to make choise [sic] of a spot to build our fire place.

Grand Fathers & Brothers – The Chiefs head men & young men of the seven tribes, to wit, Mohegans, Farmingtown, Montock, Pequot, Stonington, Narraganset and Nehanticks now inhabiting the town of Brothertown send

¹¹ Jones' Annals of Oneida County, pp. 267-270 citing to Town Records, pp. 58-60; History of Marshall Township (1851): A Chapter from Annals and Recollections of Oneida County, as published by Pomroy Jones in 1851 at p. 8.

this salutation to the Chiefs head warriors and young men of the Confederation of the West.

Fathers Brothers & friends may. We hope that the great & good spirit will enable us to better strengthen the chain of friendship that we may become the children of one man –

In behalf of the above named Nations, we here unto set our hands at Brothertown this 16 June 1811.¹²

During this period Tecumseh became powerful,

The War of 1812 deterred many of our ancestors from moving to White River and many enlisted in the United States service. Finally, when peace had been restored, the town voted, January 13, 1817, for five representatives to go to the White River area “in pursuit of a tract of land sought for by their (our) delegates sent there in the year 1809, and to get a title to it.”¹³ On May 31, 1817, the five Brothertown representatives and their attorney, agent, and captain made sail for their journey by boat from Oneida Creek at Deansboro, New York to White River, Indiana.

The boat crew consisted of chiefs and leading men of the Brothertown tribes, as follows: Paul Dick, Jacob Dick, Thomas Isaacs, Charles Isaacs, and Rudolphus Fowler. There were also two Indian women aboard, Sarah Dick and Betsy Isaacs, wives of chiefs. The only white person in the company was Thomas Dean, their attorney, agent, and captain, then only 34 years old.¹⁴

The Stockbridge tribe also was preparing to remove. Two families went in 1817 and more the next season. On the twenty-fourth of July, 1818, Rev. John Sergeant assembled the tribe in anticipation of this pilgrimage. The old church then dismissed and formed into a new body eleven of their number, for whom he transcribed the Confession of Faith and Covenant in English, adding in their own language a Covenant especially adapted to their circumstances.¹⁵ On the fifteenth of August following, some having gone and more than being ready to depart, another meeting was held, at which the chief, Hendrick Aupaumut, in a “large speech” presented to them from the old church a copy of Scott’s Bible “to read on Lord’s Days and at other religious meetings.” So they said farewell, and were gone to return no more.

¹² Original draft of letter with corrections in the Otto Heller Collection, in the possession of J. Walentoski.

¹³ See Love, p. 317.

¹⁴ “The Journal of Thomas Dean: A Voyage to Indiana in 1817,” by Thomas Dean, p. 274.

¹⁵ This Covenant was signed by Deacon Joseph Quinney, John M’Taksin, Robert Konkapot, John Bennet, Betsy Bennet, Esther T., Margaret Q., Hannah K., Catherine M.d, Dolly N., and Mary K. —*Sergeant’s Journal; Report of the Select Com. Of the Sec. For Prop. The Gos. Among the Indians and others in North America*, Cambridge, 1819, p. 14; Dr. Morse’s *Report App.*, p. 122; and *Muhhekaneok*, Davidson, pp. 20ff.

Some Brothertown families went with this latter company, which soon overtook the first. Among them were Elder Isaac Wauby and some of his followers, and Samson Occom, a grandson of the minister. Pually Fowler, having married Timothy Jordan of the Stockbridge, traveled west with her husband's tribe.

The area where the Union Mission Church was located would be near the meeting of three rivers; the Wabash, Patoka and White River. Today the actual settlement area would be in the middle of the bridge going across to Mount Carmel, Illinois.

However, before all Brothertown representatives arrived in the White River territory, the United States government and the Delaware Tribe negotiated a treaty by which the Delaware surrendered their land. The most significant and far-reaching treaties were those negotiated in September and October of 1818 at St. Mary's, Ohio.¹⁶ Commissioners signed these pacts with the Potawatomes, Weas, Delawares, and Miamis. In essence, the agreements provided for the complete cession of the middle third of Indiana in return for compensations, annuities, and some individual land grants. Only in the cases of the Miamis and the Weas did the treaties specify land grants to the tribes; in the case of the Delawares, the government promised specific western territories and allowed the Indians to remain on their present lands until 1821. Most of the Delawares left Indiana between 1818 and 1821 after ceding their lands in the Treaty of St. Mary's (Ohio). It was estimated that the White River Delaware numbered 800 people at the time of their removal to present-day Kansas and Oklahoma.

Thomas Isaacs, Charles Isaacs, and Betsy Isaacs moved west with the Delaware to Indian Territory near Kansas and Oklahoma.¹⁷ Rhodolphus Fowler, Paul Dick, Jacob Dick, Sarah Dick, and Thomas Dean (attorney and agent of the Brothertown Tribe, who also acted for the Stockbridge and Oneida tribes)¹⁸ returned by schooner to Buffalo, New York and then traveled to Brothertown.¹⁹ Many Stockbridge continued on west, along with some of the Brothertown, first spending several years in Indiana, penniless and near starvation. Immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of 1821, with the Menominee tribe in Michigan Territory, the remnant began their wearisome trek to Green Bay to join the main party, who had made preparations to leave their New York homes. They had only Indian trails to follow, large streams to cross, and scarcely enough food to last them on their way. In 1822 they arrived at Kaukauna. Albert G. Ellis wrote, "The small immigrant party of some 50 Stockbridges

¹⁶ Treaty of St. Mary's Stat. 189, October 6, 1818, Proclaimed January 15, 1819.

¹⁷ See Love, p. 318.

¹⁸ The Journal of Thomas Dean: A Voyage to Indiana in 1817, p. 277.

¹⁹ The Journal of Thomas Dean: A Voyage to Indiana in 1817, p.336.

which came on this year, located late in the fall at Grand Kakalin.”
Sickness had wasted their numbers. Elder Wauby and others had died.
.Thus after 4 years of disappointments and hardship they had at last
arrived at a place they could call home.

.A teacher, in a school in the town of Howard, Brown County, Wisconsin,
wrote the following letter, in the John C. Adams papers at the Wisconsin
Historical Society.

“(I was) teaching school in the town of Howard, Brown County, when
over one hundred of these Indians passed on the highway and such a
miserable looking (?) to behold. They seemed poverty stricken, and most
of them, destitute of clothing, hardly covering their body. It was between
ten or eleven o’clock forenoon when passing the schoolhouse, so I stepped
out and spoke to them, and found that they could speak English quite well,
better than the average Indian tribes. I ask them, where they came from,
they told me they came from the East, from what part they would not tell.
Then they asked me how far the Stockbridge and Brothertown settlements
was. I told them, sixty or seventy miles in Calumet Co. I asked them if
they were connected with those tribes, they answered they had met with
them often in the Eastern States. After this talk started they pursued their
course due west. They found the settlement after, as I heard. They did not
sojourn there long. Went west and know not where. That is the last I ever
seen or heard of the Munsey Indians. I am sorry that my information is
meager.”

On another sheet of paper, same handwriting was a note with the
following information:

“In regard to the Delaware Indians hoping you will be able to obtain the
right information from some one residing at or near Fond du Lac or Brown
County. I will ever be at your service where required. More Anon. You
will please notice, in my narrative taken when at my place, that I
inadvertently omitted to state to you that in the year 1848-49 I taught
school in the town of Howard, Brown Co. for nearly two years. P.P.
Pierre.

After returning to New York, several Brothertown members petitioned
President James Monroe, the Senate, and House of Representatives for
reimbursement for the money they expended in procuring the land
promised by the Delaware in Indiana.²⁰

²⁰ Letter dated February 8, 1825 to President James Monroe, the Senate, and the House of Representatives
from the following: William Dick, Asa Dick, George Samson, Randal Abner, Eliphalet Marthers, Laten
Dick, Jacob Fowler, John Seketer, Abram Skeesuck, Aaron Poquiantry, Jacob Dick, James [unreadable]



surname], John Coyhis, Elkanah Dick, Emanuel Johnson, James Kindness, William [unreadable surname],
Levi Skeesuck, Joseph [unreadable surname], Samuel Skeesuck, Joseph Palmer, and James Niles.