



Account of Indian Affairs in Oneida

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AUTHOR:	Jonathan Thomas (1768-1842)
SUMMARY:	Quaker schoolteacher to the Oneida in 1798.

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23
you from the miseries of war; We have always had your
welfare at heart, ever since our Grandfather, Onas* came
into this country; and the present time appears to us to be a
favourable one, again, to manifest our unalterable friendship
for you. We cannot forget the harmony that subsisted be-
tween our forefathers & the Indians during the first set-
tlement of this country, ~

Brothers; We have heard some of your chief men say that
they believed the Good spirit design that you should not
live much longer by hunting alone. the game is grown
scarce yet although your lands are much less than they
once were, they are with a small degree of Industry

* Onas implies William Penn

Transcription

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welfare at heart, ever since our Grandfather, ytf Onas * cam[e]
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-tween our forefathers and they ytf Indians during the first se-
-ttlement of this country ytf Brothers; we have heard some of your chief men say that
they ytf believed the Good spirit designs that you should not
live much ytf longer by hunting alone. The game is grown
scarce yet although your ytf lands are much less than they
once were, they are with a small ytf degree of Industry
ytf *Onas implies William Penn
ytf

23
abundantly sufficient to supply all your wants,
Brother, Our hearts are open to you. we are desirous
to help you to make the best use of your lands. We are
united in this matter and as we now enjoy peace and
tranquility, we are now ready to part with some of our
substance to make you more happy. Now we desire to
ask you a few questions we hope you will answer us candidly

Brother, Are you willing to be instructed in cultivating
your land and in the method which the white people take
to live plentifully

Brother, Do you desire to learn some of our useful
trades

Transcription

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trades, such as, blacksmiths, Millwrights Wheelwrights & Carpenters
that you may build houses and Mills and do other necessary
things to make your lives more comfortable, —

Brothers, Would it be agreeable to you that your children
should be taught to read & write and such other things as we
teach our children which is intended to render peaceful & happy

Brothers, We cannot doubt from the speeches of your wise
men at different times that these considerations are become
very necessary for you to attend to & we wish you would open
your hearts, do not hide your thoughts from us, we
desire none of your land nor any thing that you have
but only to do you & your children good think well

Transcription

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desire none of your lands nor anyytf thing that you have
but only to do you and your children good think well
ytf

(25)

of what we now propose to you, and send us an answer
as soon as you can

Brothers, We desire you would seriously reflect upon the
many difficulties you are under the hunger, fatigue &
cold you are subjected to in your present mode of living
& compare it with the comfortable manner in which you
may live under the blessing of the good spirit; by rais-
ing grain cattle and other necessaries on your land, &
~~if~~ ^{we hope that} your good understanding will incline you to think
as we do that your pursuing this mode of life in
which we are ready to assist you will be of lasting
advantage

Transcription


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then we hope that your good understanding will incline y^tf you to think
as we do that your pursuing this mode of life in
y^tf which we are ready to assist you will be of lasting
advantage y^tf

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advantage to you & your wives & children for generations
to come

Signed on behalf of your old friends the people
called Quakers in Pennsylvania New Jersey & parts adjacent
Philadelphia the fifth of the first M^o 1796 By

Henry Drinker
William Savery
Benjamin Swett
John Hunt
Thomas Harrison
John Elliott

Joseph Sansom
James Cooper
Joseph Hoan
John Biddle
John Stapler



Transcription

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to come ytf Signed on behalf of your Old friends the people
called ytf Quakers in Pennsylvania New Jersey and parts adjacent
ytf Philadelphia the fifth of the first Mo 1796 ytf By ytf Henry Drinkerytf Joseph Sansomytf Will

The foregoing Articles opened business for the young men to attend too which will be treated of & some observations made as they came in course; after some notice is taken about the house they rented — — — —

It was agreed that the young men should live in the house they rented as long as was thought needful for them or others to continue here. for the consideration of twenty Dollars per Annum & some repairs to be done to the house, all which they fulfilled, & cleared * several acres of land adjoining thereto and had several good crops of wheat, grass, turnips, & garden truck ^{before} after they

* see the lower part of the next page

Transcription

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1871 ^{give} they had enjoyed it two years our landlord became un-
easy & wished to enjoy it himself in consequence of this ~~and~~
& several other matters we thought it best to build on the
land set apart by the Nation for our use to instruct the young
Men, &c.

Transcription

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and several other matters we thought it best to build on the
ytf land set apart by the Nation for our use to ytf instruct they young
Men, &c. ytf ytf ytf



Transcription

ytf ytf On this page is a sectioned sketch that appears to be an outline of aytf building. In various rec

6 | to an article, which you say is contained in a late treaty,
then, in that case, you are to refund to our Committee all
and every part of the advance made by us towards said mill,
And we propose our Friends Jacob Taylor, and Enock Walker
to take the special care and superintendence, of building said
mill without making any charge on you for their trouble, &
we further propose that when said mill is erected, that
you call a general Council, and choose a suitable man a-
mongst yourselves to take the care of this mill, and to grind
all of your grain and to keep the mill in order and that
you agree upon some certain & fixed portion for this man to
have out of every grist that shall be ground, sufficient
to

Transcription

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Jonathan Thomas

His Book 1798



Transcription

ytf ytf ytf ytf

In the following sheets I propose to give a short account of
Indian affairs in this settlement (Oneida) for my own amusement
and the satisfaction of having our proceedings in black and
white to view at any time. How far I shall be able to set it
in its true light I cannot tell.

Transcription

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in its trueytf light I cannot tell ytf ytf

In the fall of the year 1795 at the yearly meeting held
in Philadelphia for Pennsylvania & New Jersey, The situation of
the Original Inhabitant of North America was laid before the
meeting, friends thinking it best to make a move in the con-
cern for the Civilization of some of this People, A committee
was appointed to take the matter particularly under their care
Shortly after their appointment the minutes of the yearly
meeting (on this concern) with ~~several~~ letters from the sachems
& chiefs of several Nations, were sent to the Quarterly and
monthly meetings throughout the yearly meeting with advice
to raise a fund for the use of this concern, from the several
Quarterly & monthly meetings about six thousand pounds
was raised, In the spring of the year 1796 several young
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Transcription

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to raise a fund for the use ofytf this concern. From the several
quarterly and monthly meetings about sixtytf thousand pounds
was raised. In the spring of the year 1796 severalytf young
men
ytf

men expressed a willingness to reside some time amongst
the natives (to wit) Jacob Taylor, Enock Walker, & Henry Timmon
with three of the Committee namely John Pierce, Joseph ^{son} ~~son~~

and James Cooper to accompany them & open a settlement
in some part of the Oneida reservation, (on which live
the Oneidas, Muhconick & a few Tuscororas) Also to visit several
other Nations and inform them ~~what~~ the design of ~~firm~~
was in coming forward in this way, the above named friends
came on horse back except Jacob Taylor who came by wa-
ter to convey some articles for the use of the settlement
& a few presents for the Indians, they arrived about the
^{middle} ~~beginning~~ of the 6th of this year amongst them, after
* see page 21 this book

Transcription

men expressed a willingness to reside someyt f time amongst the natives (to wit) Jacobyt f Taylor, ytf Enoch Walter, and Henryyt f Simmon with three of the committee namely John Pierce, Josephyt f Sansom and James Cooper toyt f accompany them and open a settlement in some part of the Oneida reservation, (one which lived a theyt f Oneidas , Muheconick and a few Tuscororas) Also to visit several other Nations and informyt f them* what the design of Friends was in coming forward in this way, theyt f above named friends came on horseback except Jacobyt f Taylor who came by water to convey some articles for theyt f use of the settlement and a few presents for the Indians, they arrivedyt f about the ytf beginning middle of the 6th Mo. of this year amongst them, afteryt f see page 21 this book ytf

viewing the situation of the Oneidas Muhheconick, and
Tuscaroras the concluded to settle the young men amongst the
former, & agreed to assist the muheconick & tuscaroras as
far as the following Article specifies

Brothers of the stockbridge Nation
we are very glad to find that through the blessing
of the great spirit, and your honest Industry and frugal
sobriety you may soon be in a way to live comfortably with-
out being beholding to any body for help

Brothers As you cannot but thankfully acknowledge
this to be the care with your Nation in general & as you
know we want to help many of your Indian Brothers

Transcription

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ytf Tuscaroras the concluded to settle the youngytf men amongst the
former, and agreed to assist the Muheconick and Tuscaroras ytf as
far as the following article specifies:ytf ytf Brothers of the Stockbridgeytf Nation ytf W
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sobriety you may soonytf be in a way to live comfortably with
-out being beholding to anyytf body for help ytf Brothers As you cannot but thankfully acknowledge
this to be theytf care with your Nation in general and as you
know we want to helpytf many of your Indian Brothers a

little who stand in much more need than you do; we trust
you will not think hard of us if we do not do a great deal for
you at this time; But, Brothers in order to encourage you to be
still more industrious and saving, and to set a good example to your
Indian brother & Neighbours; who are far behind you in point
of civilization we have agreed to help you a little as follows—

1st Brothers, We agree to give you our smith Tools, all complete
and one of our friends Friends can instruct you a little in using
them; and also a share of our implements of husbandry which
we expect up by our friend Jacob Taylor whom we left behind
in order to bring them up by water

2nd Brothers We also are willing to encourage you in
building

Transcription

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in order to bring them up by water. 2nd Brothers We also are willing to encourage you in
building

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building a Grist mill by agreeing to advance three dollars
to you one of all the money actually to be paid for Materials,
Mechanical, labour and vitualing the workmen you finding
the timber and debvering it on the spot, and doing such other
parts of the buiness as you may be capable of without bri-
ng it into the general charge, of which we have agreed to pay
three fourths, we also agree that the 100 dollars lent to Captain
Hendrick by our comm^{tee} together with 40 Dollars lent to
John Sergeant by us for the use of the nation, shall be consider-
ed as a part of this advance and left in your hands for
the afforesaid purpose providing always that if the government
shall at any time pay the expence of said Mill agreeable
to

Transcription

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to your one of all the money ytf actually to be paid for Materials,
Mechanical, labour and vitualing ytf the workmen, you finding
the timber and delivering it on the spot, ytf and doing such other
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Hendrick by our ytf committee together with 40 Dollars lent to
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-ed as a part of this advance, and left ytf in your hands for
the aforesaid purpose providing always that if ytf the government
shall at any time pay the expense of said millytf agreeable to

to pay him well for his time and trouble, and to enable
him to keep the mill in ^{good} ~~order~~ repair which he ought to do at
his own expence out of his profits which you allow him, &
further we propose that you admit your Brethren the Tuscaroras
to enjoy part of the advantages of this mill

3rd Brethren We also propose to encourage you in keeping
up a school for the education of your children by agreeing to
pay part of the salary to your former Master John Quinney
if he will agree again to teach, we are willing to pay 25 dollars
a Quarter for one year at least, if you will agree to make up as
much more as ~~will~~ ^{to} encourage him to keep steadily, Our Friends
who stay amongst you will pay the money punctually when

Transcription

to pay him well for his time and trouble, ytf and to enable
him to keep the mill in good order repair ytf which he ought to do at
his own expense out of his profits, which ytf you allow him, and
further we propose that you admit your brothers ytf the Tuscaroras
to enjoy part of ytf the advantages of this mill. ytf 3rd Brothers We also propose to encourage you in keep
up aytf school for the education of your children by agreeing to
pay partytf of the salary to your former master John ytf Quinney
if he will agree again to teach; we are ytf willing to pay 25 dollars
a Quarter for one year at least, if you ytf will agree to make up as
much more as will to encourage ytf him to keep steadily. Our Friends
who stay amongst you will pay theytf money punctually when a

8] a certificate is produced to them signed by two of your Chiefs certifying that the school has been kept steadily for the length of time above mentioned for payment, the Tuscaroras being admitted to partake equally of the Advantages of this school. —

Brothers We further propose for your encouragement in Agriculture, Industry &c. that for the term of two years from the third month next, we will give the following premiums to any Individual Indian of the Stockbridge, or Tuscaroras Nation living on this reservation upon the conditions hereinafter mentioned 1st For every 50 bushels of wheat raised in one year within said term by any one farmer of either of these two nations, on his own land not worked by any white people the sum

Transcription

aytf certificate is produced to them signed by two of your Chiefs
ytf certifying that the school has been kept steadily for the length
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mentioned: 1st Forytf every 50 bushels of wheat raised in one
year within said term byytf any one farmer of either of these
two nations, on his own land norytf worked by any white people the sum

sum of two Dollars, 2nd For every 100 bushels of Indian 9
corn raised in like manner, Afforesaid the sum of two dollars
3rd For every 100 bushels of potatoes raised as Afforesaid
the sum of one dollar & an half; 4th For every three Tons
of hay raised as afforesaid and put into a stack or barn
the sum of two dollars; 5th For every 12 yards of linen
Cloth made by any Indian woman out of flax raised on
her or her husbands farm and spun in her own house
the sum of one dollar to be paid to the woman
6th For every 12 yards of woollen Cloth made as afore-
said out of the wool of her own or her husbands sheep
spun in like manner as afforesaid the sum of one dollar
to

Transcription

of two dollars, 2nd For every 100 bushels ytf of Indian
corn raised in like manner; aforesaid the sum of two ytf dollars
3rd For every 100 bushels of potatoes raised as ytf aforesaid
the sum of one dollar and an half; 4th For every three ytf Tons
of hay raised as aforesaid and put into a stack or barn
ytf the sum of two dollars; 5th For every 12 yards of linen
Cloth made ytf by any Indian woman out of flax raised on
her or her husband's ytf farms and spun in her own house
the sum of one dollar to be paid to ytf the woman
6th For every 12 yards of woolen cloth made as ytf afore
-said out of the wool of her own or her husband's sheep
ytf spun in like manner as aforesaid the sum of one dollar

10] to be paid to the woman; Now the conditions of
obtaining the above premiums are that the persons applying
shall produce a certificate signed, at least by two of the Chiefs
of his or her particular Tribe certifying the particular Quan-
tity of grain, Cloth, &c, for which said premium shall be
demanded and that it was raised or made, in the manner
above particularly specified and also that the applicant
has not to the best of their knowledge been intoxicated
with strong drink at least for the space of one ^{full} year
before such application be made, And we further pro-
pose that any man or Woman of these two Nations by
producing

Transcription

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obtaining the above premiums are that the personsytf applying
shall produce a certificate signed, at least by two of theytf Chiefs
of his or her particular Tribe Certifying the particulartytf Quan
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demanded and that it was raised or made, in the manner
ytf above particularly specified and also that the applicant
has not toytft the best of their knowledge been intoxicated
with strong drink atytf least for the space of one full year
before such application beytf made, And we further pro
-pose that any man or woman of these twoytf nations by
produceing

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producing a Certificate from two of the chiefs, as aforesaid
that he or she is highest or foremost in any one or more
of the above particulars, or any other person in that Nation.
He or she shall be entitled to a Double premium, for
the particular in which he or she shall be so highest or
foremost, And our Friends Jacob Taylor, Henry Simmons
& Enock Walker, are hereby authorized and desired to
pay the above mentioned premiums agreeable to what
is herein above particularly mentioned.

Sixth Month 1796

After several councils with the Oneidas the following
agreement

Transcription

ytff producing a Certificate from two of the chiefs, as aforesaid
that ytf he or she is highest or foremost in any one or more
of the above ytf particulars, or any other person in that Nation,
He or she shall be ytf entitled to a Double premium, for
the particular in which he or ytf shall be so highest, or
foremost, And our Friend, Jacob Taylor, Henry ytf Simmons
, and Enoch ytf Walker, are hereby authorized and desired to
pay theytf above mentioned premiums agreeable to what
is herein above ytf particularly mentioned ytf ytf ytf
agreement

ytff ytf

Sixth Month 1790 ytf

16 Brothers; If we think there is encouragement to undertake more another year, we shall ask you for it seasonably, and agree together where it shall be.

Brothers; You know it is hardly practicable for all to learn together; we will begin with a few, who must stick to the work the rest will see how the get forward. It will be ready to take their turn, when it comes round we want to engage six or eight sober young Men as Apprentices till next spring; Brothers; we suppose you will be willing that we should feed our Horses, Cattle &c, upon the common & that you will allow us some Grap lots, to provide hay for them in the winter, to cut firewood railing & timber for

Transcription

Brothers; if we think there is ytf encouragement to under
-take more another year, we shall ask you for ytf it seasonably,
and agree together where it shall be ytf Brothers, you know it is hardly practicable for all to learn
ytf together; we will begin with a few, who must stick to the
work they ytf rest will see how they get forward. and will be
ready to take their ytf turn, when it comes round we want
to engage six or eight sober ytf young Men as Apprentices
till next spring; Brothers; we suppose you ytf will be wis
-hing that we should feed our Horses, Cattle, &c., ytf upon the com
-mon and that you will allow us some Grass lots, to ytf provide
hay for them in the winter. to cut firewood railing and ytf timber for

Agreement was come to, proposed on the 25th and agreed
on the 30th of the 6th 1796

Brothers of the Oneida Nation

first, You now know that we are sent to you by your, ~~old~~ friends
the people called Quakers, of Pennsylvania & parts adjacent, not
merely to make you presents, which will soon be spent leaving
you poor and needy, but to shew you how the white people
manage to raise a great deal of food & cloathing off, of
a little land, that you may become able to support your
selves & your children comfortably, without being beholden
to

Transcription

Agreement ytf was come to, proposed on the 25th and agreed
ytf on the 30th of the 6 Mo 1796 ytf ytf Brothers of the Oneida ytf
they ytf people called Quakers, of Pennsylvania and parts adjacent, not
ytf merely to make you presents, which will soon be spent leaving
you ytf poor and needy, but to shew you how the white people
manage to ytf raise a great deal of food and clothing off, of
a little land; that ytf you may become able to support your
-selves and your children ytf comfortably, without being beholdng to

Nation ytf First, You now know t

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to any body, and have something to spare for the old & infirm
as well as to lay by against times of scarcity.

Brothers

Remember that we have left all that was near & dear
to us at home, not to get your Lands from you, or any thing
that ~~you have~~ ^{is yours} but to visit you in love and to stay with
you, if happily we may put you in a way, to enjoy the manifold
Blessings of all bountifull Creator, now we have seen & reflected
upon your situation & consulted one another for ~~your~~ the future
prosperity of your whole Nation & the three Tribes you have
kindly

Transcription

to any body, and have something to spare ytf for the old and infirm
as well as to lay by against times of ytf scarcity — ytf Brothers
Remember that we have left all that was near and dear
ytf to us at home, not to get your Lands from you, or any thing
that ytf you have is yours but to visit you in love and to stay ytf with
you, if happily we may put you in a way, to enjoy theytf manifold
blessings of all bountiful Creator; now we have seen and ytf reflected
upon your situation and consulted one another for your ytf the future
prosperity of your whole Nation and three Tribes you have
kindly

kindly permitted to settle on your lands; and we have put our
conclusions in writing, that it may be known what we are willing to
undertake for you, & what we desire you to do towards it yourselves
for we mean to set before you a clear Example if you will agree
to follow it, Now Brothers We trust that we possess your
confidence unmixed with any jealousies or fears & we request you
to listen Patiently & attentively, to what we are going to propose to
you for your own good and if any part of it displeases you tell
us so & we will consider it; Brothers, Three of our friends
intend to stay with you for these purposes, namely Jacob Taylor
Henry Simmons and Enock Walker, but they are not bound
to remain by any thing but good will; neither are they
obliged

Transcription

kindly permitted to settle on your lands and we have put our
conclusions in writing, that it may be known what we are willing to
undertake for you, and what we desire you to do towards it yourselves
for we mean to set before you a clear Example if you will agree
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confidence unmixed with any Jealousies or fears and we request you
to listen Patiently and attentively, to what we are going to propose to
you for your own good and if any part of it displeases you tell
us so and we will consider it; Brothers, Three of our friends
intend to stay with you for these purposes namely Jacob Taylor
Henry Simmons and Enoch Walker; but they are not bound
to remain by anything but good will; neither are they obliged

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obliged to work more than they think necessary nor to be alto-
-gather among you as they are to go sometimes to Tuscarora stock
-bridge & Brothertown, we earnestly desire that none of you may
discourage them by swearing, idleness, drunkenness or misbehavior;
for these things are very disagreeable to us, as you know they are
to the good spirit; Brothers, you know we must have some
land to work upon and we should like to ~~to~~ begin upon that part
of the common that lies west of the path from Skanandoah
to stockbridge, south of the road to onondaga, East of the bound-
-ary of the old fort & north of skanandoah creek excepting any
part thereof now occupied by your families
Brothers

Transcription

obliged to work more than they think necessary nor to be altogether among you as they are to go sometimes to Tuscarora y Stockbridge and Brothertown , we earnestly desire that none of you may discourage them by swearing, idleness, drunkenness or misbehavior; for these things are very disagreeable to us, as you know they are to the good spirit; Brothers, you know we must have some land to work upon and we should like to begin upon that part of the common that lies west of the path from Skanandoahs to Stockbridge , south of the road onondago ; East of the boundary of the old fort and north of skanandoah creek excepting any part thereof now occupied by your families
Brothers

17

for building in your woods use your saw mill & smith shop
when we have occasion for them; & sometimes work your
Horses & oxen, when you are not using them

Brothers; You will understand that our friends are to live plen-
tifully, as their own people do at home, & their live stock is to
be kept upon the produce of their labour, in the first place
one eighth part of the remainder is to be reserved for the relief
of your old & infirm People, the rest to be divided among the
young Indian Apprentices, that they may enjoy the fruit of
their labour, & have something to begin with for themselves when
other apprentices are taken in their stead provided they
behave well: but in case of continued Idleness & drunkenness

Transcription

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Drunkennes, swearing or misbehavior in any of them, our
friends must not keep bad company, & we request you to appoint
three of your Chiefs to unite with our three friends as Judges
that, if four of them agree the person offending may be just-
ly discharged. Your Brothers, Our stay amongst you
will depend upon several circumstances, and particularly
the encouragement we may have to hope that your Nation
will in time become sober industrious & frugal, laying up
something for yourselves against sickness & Old age. When-
ever we leave you the improvements we make on your
lands will belong to you: but the cattle & other things
we bring with us we shall consider as our own.

Transcription

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The Indians replied on the 30th of the 6th in substance
as follows, Brothers, we find no difficulty in accepting
your proposals as to any thing but the place you chose
(see the fifth paragraph) many of our people are against
parting with any of the commons, because we have hardly
pasture enough for our cattle now. & if we lesen it they will
be famished & break down the fences & get at the corn, besides
which we are afraid our young men will disturb you sometimes
there when they get in liquor, Brothers we think it
right to propose another place to you which we think
may suit you better. we will go & shew it to you
Upon this the spot was viewed, & mutually agreed on

Transcription

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ytf

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Anthony Mononleyo house, & running nearly south by a tree
marked to a tree marked as far as Shanandoak creek extend
ing eastward into the woods without limitation. And Antho
Mononleyo being willing to lease his house it was engaged
for the use of the settlement. It was also agreed that they sh
should have liberty to enclose what they might want
of the flats for hay or pasture, (agreeable to the 8th para
but the Indians did not choose to engage their oxen, except
their young ones to be broke; or their horses, because
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were appointed as Judges under the 9th paragraph 21

In confirmation of all which preceding agreements we
have hereunto interchangeably set our hands the 6th
day of the 4th Mo 1796

through inattention the following letter was omitted in
its proper place, which I think justly claims room in this
account it was sent previous to friends settling amongst them
A circulatory letter from the committee of the Indian
institution to the six Nations of Indians

To our Indian Brethren of the six Nations
Brothers; We rejoice that you are now at peace and
we pray to the good spirit that he may continue to preserve
you.

Transcription

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