Beyond Penn's Treaty

Letter

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AUTHOR: Henry Simmons (b. 1768)
SUMMARY: Letter from Henry Simmons to Israel Chapin, written while living at Cornplanter’s Village.

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Revered Friend,

I have made good to write a few lines, and do inform you, I have been stationed during this winter at a Complanters Village, about 9 miles from my two Companions, in the Exercise of Education the Indian Children, not only in literary knowledge, but in all other useful arts. It being the most eligible place for the Purpose, who improves as rapid as can be expected. Although at times (as I so freely) my Occupation is very trying and exercising, even to my very Soul, yet by the help of GOD, I hope to remain steadfast on the Truth, and the advancement of my Duty. Business, where with I am suited, not doubting the Lord's Providence, will one in the discharge of my Duty to Him, among the Natives of this Mountainous Country, for benefit from my near and Dear Relations and former Friends.

I am pleased to favour you with a few lines by the power of Information, respecting Oneida, whether their Bill is completed, as how many of our Soldiers, at the present, are stationed, and whether their Chiefs, the Principal Chiefs, are yet living, and whether they cannot receive any Allotment among them for the better. Or whether their Approaches are abroad all over, which we have bestowed amongst them. I can truly say my mind is often wasted over the Mountains, to Oneida, with an eye of Compassion towards the Natives there, with desires for their lasting Welfare.

P. S. A Complanters informed me yesterday, they had lately received an Epistle, that their Money had arrived at Canandaigua, and requested me to write to thee, on his behalf, in the following Words, to show you the reasons of his not attending with himself. I.e. He is not brave the Money's yet come, and he has understood that the Buffalo Indians are anxious of holding the Council at their Village, which if it is, he knows there will be much Disheart among them, as it has hitherto been the Case, which he does not want to see. And rather desires thee on that account, for not using thy Power, especially at such times, to suppose that Earl idiot among them - he knows that if the Council be held there, the Chiefs will hardly be able, and I wish not, he is certain they will be incapable of making a just division of the Money, which he thinks is his right, since he has before been called to all the Business on Business of Importance, and the Conductors past thereof, have fall on his Shoulders to. He wishes thee to know the Number of People who are under the care, which is 800 Souls, eight of whom he has sent for the Money, and two others to carry their provisions, his own Son, and his Niece. He wants thee to know the Sum of Money, in each man's Bank, that none may get lost, and desires thee to tell them now, as soon as possible, and to have the weight of them, whilst there, that they may not get Drunk. He also desires thee to send word by either of the officers of the people, who have been appointed for the purpose, to inform them of the steps which are being taken towards their betterment. I am in haste, my Affectionate Friend.

Henry Simons Jun.
Respected Friend, I have made free to write a few Lines, and do inform thee, I have been stationed during this Winter, at Cornplanters Village, about 9 miles from my two companions, in the Exercise of Educating the Indian Children, not only in Literal knowledge, but, also, in other useful arts, It being the most Eligible place for the purpose, who improves as rapid as can be expected, Although at times (I do confess) my Occupation is very trying, and Exercising, even to my very Soul; Yet by the help of God: Do I hope to remain steadfast in the Faith, and in the dive of my Duty Business, wherewith I am called; not doubting the Lord's Providence over me, in the discharge of any Duty to Him, among the natives of this Mountainous Country; far distant from my near & Dear Relations and former Friends

Be pleased to favour me with a few Lines, by the Bearer, of information respecting Oneida, whether their Mill is compleated, and how many of our Society, are stationed there, and whether Skene, & Anthony & Christian (the Principal Chiefs) are yet Living; and whether thou canst perceive any alteration among them, for better, Or whether thou apprehends our Labour all Vain, which we have bestowed amongst them. I can truly say my mind is often wafted over the Mountains, to Oneida, with an Eye of Compassion towards the natives there, with desires for their lasting Welfare.

I am in Heart, my affectionate Friend. Henry Simmons Jr.

Israel Chapin

P.S. Cornplanter, informed me yesterday, they had lately received an Express, that their money had arrived at Canendarqua, And requested one to write to thee, on his behalf, in the following Words, to shew the reasons of his not attending thither himself, (i.e.) He is not shure the Money is yet come, and he has understood, that the Buffalo Indians are desireous of holding Council at their Village, which if it is, he knows there will be much Drunkenness among them, as it has hitherto been the case, which he does not want to see. And rather Senses thee on that account, for not using thy Power, especially at such times, to suppress that Evil habit among them - he knows that if the Council is held there the Chiefs will hardly keep sober, and if they do not, he is certain they will be incapable of making a just division of the Money, which he thinks is his right, for as he has heretofore been called all the Treaties on Business of Importance, and the Arduous party thereof have fell on his shoulders &c. He wishes thee to know the number of People who are under his care, which is 362 Souls, Eight of whom he has sent for the Money, and two others to carry their provisions, his own Son, & Strong, he wants them to know the Sum of Money, in Each man's Pack, that none may get lost, and desires thee to dispatch them as soon as practicable, and to have the oversight of them, whilst there, that they may not get Drunk. He also desires thee to send him Word by Letter, at the return of his people, how matters are circumstance between him and Robert Morris, who says respecting some small matters betwixt them - H.S.