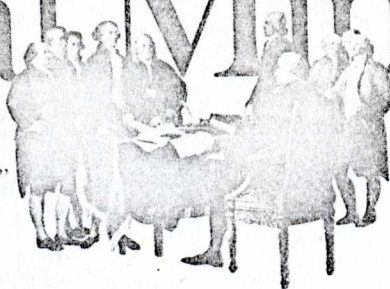


Bicentennial Minutes

*The full drama of our nation's
birth. Told as it happened
"200 years ago today."*



CBS Bicentennial Minutes

200 YEARS AGO TODAY...

On June 28, 1775,

two hundred years ago today,
the Americans got a

PLEDGE OF NEUTRALITY FROM THE ONEIDA INDIANS

Shooting Script
RT REW BE

Show # _____
Air Date: June 28, 1975
Shooting Date: _____
Location: _____

1. TITLES/LOGO IN

2. TITLES/LOGO OUT

Music: Theme in

3. FULL SCREEN CHROMAKEY BG/ENGRAVING CONFERENCE AT GERMAN FLATS. ROCKS AND BUSHES ARE IN FOREGROUND. NARRATOR WEARS SIMPLE, LIGHT-COLORED CONTEMPORARY CLOTHING.

Music: Theme out

NARRATOR

This is _____.

4. ZOOM TO MCU NARRATOR

Two hundred years ago today, at German Flats, New York, Oneida Indians pledged not to fight against the Yankees.

Music: Sneak under
Effects: In

NARRATOR/VOICE OVER

5. DISSOLVE TO ECU BG

DETAIL WIDEN AND PAN...

But they wouldn't fight the British either. The Oneida chiefs said "...we bear an equal affection to both Old and New England. Should the great King of England apply to us for aid, we shall deny him. If the Colonies apply we shall refuse..."

6. QUICK CUTS/
DETAIL/ONEIDA
CHIEFS...

The Oneida chiefs couldn't understand. "The situation is new and strange to us... we Indians cannot find in the tradition of our ancestors a similar instance." The conflict between brothers is "Unnatural."

Effects: Out

7. DISSOLVE TO
NARRATOR O/C

NARRATOR/ON CAMERA

The Indians asked the rebels not to involve other tribes in the war either.

Music: Sneak out

8. ZOOM TO ECU

"...let us Indians live in peace with each other and you white people settle your own disputes between yourselves."

I'm _____ and that's the way it was.

9. SHELL ID
FADE TO BLACK

ANNOUNCE

SELECTED DAY, JUNE 28, 1775

INDIAN DECLARATION OF NEUTRALITY

ON JUNE 28 THE ONEIDA AND TUSCARORA INDIANS OF THE SIX NATIONS IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY MET WITH NEW YORK PATRIOTS AT GERMAN FLATS, IN UPPER NEW YORK. MISSIONARY SAMUEL KIRKLAND PERSUADED THEM TO MEET TO REAFFIRM THEIR FRIENDSHIP AND ISSUE A DECLARATION OF NEUTRALITY IN THE HOSTILITIES BETWEEN AMERICA AND BRITAIN---THOUGHT TO BE THE FIRST AMERICAN NEUTRALITY PACT.

WITH BOTH THE PATRIOTS AND BRITISH ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE NORTHERN INDIAN NATIONS AS ALLIES, ALL FORMS OF COERCION WERE TRIED. THE BRITISH INDIAN COMMISSIONER, SIR GUY JOHNSON, USED ALL HIS POWERS TO RETAIN THE LOYALTY OF THE WESTERN NATIONS OF THE CONFEDERACY--ESPECIALLY THE MOHAWKS AND SENECA. SAMUEL KIRKLAND, MISSIONARY AND INTERPRETOR TO THE ONEIDAS, AND ARDENT PATRIOT, EXERTED HIS INFLUENCE TO KEEP THAT NATION FRIENDLY TO THE AMERICANS.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS KIRKLAND ARRANGED THE CONFERENCE AT GERMAN FLATS WITH THE LOCAL TRYON COUNTY PATRIOTS AND OFFICIALS FROM ALBANY. THE MEETING'S PURPOSE WAS TO REASSURE EACH SIDE THAT NO VIOLENCE WOULD ERUPT BETWEEN THEM. THEY HAD ALWAYS LIVED PEACEABLY, BUT NOW THERE WERE MANY RUMORS OF POSSIBLY PATRIOT ATTACKS ON THE TRIBES AND INDIAN RAIDS ON THE COLONISTS (INSTIGATED BY THE BRITISH). THESE FEARS WERE ALLAYED BY THE SMOKING OF THE PEACE PIPE.

THE ONEIDAS AND TUSCARORAS ALSO ISSUED A DECLARATION OF NEUTRALITY ADDRESSED TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW ENGLAND. THEY PLEDGED NEVER TO RAISE THEIR HATCHETS AGAINST THE AMERICANS, OR THE BRITISH, AND TO REMAIN ON OPEN AND FRIENDLY TERMS WITH THE PATRIOTS. THEY VIEWED THE WAR AS AN UNNATURAL CONFLICT BETWEEN BROTHERS: "YE ARE BRETHREN THAT ARE AT VARIENCE AND THIS IS THE REASON WE DESIRE TO BE NUTRAILS." (sic).

ALTHOUGH THE ONEIDAS PLEDGED NEUTRALITY ON BEHALF OF ALL THE SIX NATIONS, IN TRUTH THEY HAD NO SUCH POWER. THE REST OF THE SIX NATIONS REMAINED LOYAL, AND FOUGHT FOR THE BRITISH. THE ONEIDAS AND TUSCARORAS, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF KIRKLAND, REMAINED ALLIED WITH THE AMERICANS AND WHILE THEY NEVER FOUGHT, DID SCOUT AND PLOT ENEMY MOVEMENTS DURING THE WAR. THEIR NEUTRALITY MADE IT EASIER FOR NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TO CONCENTRATE ON FIGHTING THE BRITISH, AND ATTEMPTS TO BRIBE AND THREATEN THE TWO NATIONS INTO VIOLATING THE PACT ^(WERE) UNSUCCESSFUL.

To: BE
From: EW

CONSEQUENCES OF ONEIDA NEUTRALITY PACT (JUNE 28)

Having declared neutrality, the Oneidas tried desperately to maintain it through the next years of the Revolution--and wound up getting a raw deal from both the British and the Americans--and they were attacked by their own people who sided with the British. Maintaining the neutrality was very costly to the tribe and the Iroquois Confederacy:

--The main body of the tribe remained in the Utica area until 1779. They fared very badly. They were in constant fear and expectation of attack from their fellow Iroquois--the Mohawks and Senecas and other Six Nations tribes--who were fighting for the British. They were also caught in the cross fire of the patriots and British fighting in upper N.Y. and Canada. They were getting it from all sides.

--Their situations was so untenable that small parts of the Onedia tribe began moving during the war years to Canada (the Niagara area) to escape the homeground strife.

--By 1779 the situation was so bad that the tribe itself had to leave in self defense. Though there are no documents extant which prove that they were forced to leave, the patriots put great pressure on them to leave their home area around Ft. Stanwix (Ft. Schuyler)

--Monies were authorized by New York and the Continental Congress in 1780 for a government sponsored removal of the Indians from the war zone. They moved to the Schnectedy area (southeast of their permanent settlement). For the next two years they lived there as refugees in what was not a formal "reservation" but a "squatting" situation where they lived in flimsy, temporary shelters. The ~~situation~~ conditions were "deplorable"--characterized by sickness and starvation. Though the government had promised them provisions when they moved, things were bad all over in 1780 and food first had to go to the Army, and being of last priority, the Oneidas went hungry.

--The Oneidas began staggering back to the Utica/Rome area around 1782.

--The neutrality pact the Oneidas signed on June 28, 1775 caused them to suffer the wrath of the Americans, the British and their fellow Iroquois.

(all information supplied by Walter Pilkington, editor of the Samuel Kirkland papers, Hamilton College Library.)

efw

Council of German Flats, 1775

June 28, 1775, a council was held at German Flats between the Onondas and Tuscaroras and certain Americans, and a deputation from Albany. It resulted in the declaration of neutrality on the part of these two Indian tribes.

Of this council, Mary Jemison writes: "Thus, at peace amongst ourselves, and with the neighboring whites, though there were none at this time very near, our Indians lived quietly and peaceably at home, till a little before the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, when they were sent for, together with the chiefs and members of the Six Nations generally, by the people of the States, to go to the German Flats, and there hold a general council in order that the people of the States might ascertain in good season who they should esteem and treat as enemies and who as friends, in the great war which was then upon the point of breaking out between them and the King of England."

The council was holden, at which the pipe of peace was smoked and a treaty made, in which the Six Nations solemnly agreed that if a war should eventually break out they would not take up arms on either side. With that the people of the States were satisfied, as they had not asked their assistance, nor did not wish it. The Indians returned to their homes, well satisfied that they could live on neutral ground...

About a year passed off, and we as usual were enjoying ourselves in the employments of peaceable times, when a messenger arrived from the British Commissioners, requesting all the Indians of our tribe to attend a general council which was soon to be held at Oswego. The council convened, and being opened, the British Commissioners informed the chiefs that the object of calling a council of the Six Nations was to engage their assistance in subduing the rebels who had risen up against the good King, their master, and were about to rob him of a great part of his possessions and wealth, and added that they would amply reward them for all their services.

The chiefs then arose and informed the Commissioners of the nature and extent of the treaty which they had entered into with the people of the States the year before, and that they should not violate it by taking up the hatchet against them.

The Commissioners continued their entreaties without success, till they addressed their avarice by telling our people that the people of the States were few in number and easily subdued; and that on account of their disobedience to the King they justly merited all the punishment that it was possible for white men and Indians to inflict upon them; and added that the King was rich and powerful both in money and subjects; that his rum was as plenty as water in Lake Ontario; that his men were as numerous as the sands upon the lake shore; and that the Indians, if they would assist in the war, should never want for money or goods. Upon this, the chiefs concluded a treaty with the British Commissioners in which they agreed to take up arms against the rebels and continue in the service of his Majesty till they were subdued, in consideration of certain conditions which were stipulated to be performed by the British Government and its agents.

As soon as the treaty was finished, the Commissioners made a present to each Indian of a suit of clothes, a brass kettle, a gun and tomahawk, a scalping knife, a quantity of powder and lead, a

German
Flats
Treaty

later --
1777

piece of gold, and promised a bounty on every scalp that should be brought in. Thus richly clad, they returned home after an absence of about two weeks, full of the fire of war and anxious to encounter their enemies."

(The council at Fort Oswego convened in July, 1777. Mrs. J. errs in making that council meet only one year after the council between the Colonies and the Indians. See Severance's note in Seaver's ed. of Mary Jenison, p. 394.)

H.C.L. and
Declaration of Neutrality, 1775

(The first declaration of neutrality issued on the American continent. This is the original document, written by an Oneida Indian, one of Samuel Kirkland's pupils, and signed by 12 sachems of the nation. It was addressed to the people of New England, and a copy of it was taken by a delegation of the Indians to Hartford, Providence, and other towns in the eastern part of the country. Other papers in our possession show why the Oneidas were unable to carry the rest of the Six Nations with them in the matter of neutrality.)

Kanonharoghare, June, 1775.

These may Certify all whom it may concern. That we the Chiefs, head men, councilors warriors, & youngmen of the Onoida nation, this day assembled together considng of affairs of importance, we say that these may certify all whom it may concern that we are altogether for Peace, and not only we of the Onoida nation. But other nations with whom we are connected. our desire is to be neutrail in these critical times—in these times of great confusion: we desire not to meddle with any disputers that are now in agitation. Let our English Brethren be assured of this truth that if we were called to assist them against any other Power that would not find us Backward in the Least. But we would Evidence to the world our regards for the English nation by fighting for their defence as in time past altho at the expence of our own lives, and Let all our New England Brethren be fully assured by these lines and the token of friendship we send with lines, that no one shall prevail with us, or persuade to take up arms against you our English Brethren. we will not give you the least disturbance—and we will exert our uttmmost Endeavours to keep our Brethren the Six nations and others further Back from distrubing you in the Present difficult times. So Let all be easy in their minds we are for Paece; ye are Brethren that are at varience and this is the reason we desire to be neutrails. we are in sincerity your very dear and true-friends Indian of the Onoida nation and we hope that peace may be restored soon between Great Britain and her Colony

Wrote by Jacob Reed, an Onoida Indian, the Interpreter.

(The Indian "signatures" follow, written by Reed rather illegibly. Among them are the names of Thomas, Skenendou, and Handreckko, whom we know as particular friends of Kirkland, often mentioned in his correspondence.)

FORCE VOL II

ADDRESS TO THE ONEIDAS AND TUSCARORAS.

On the 28th of June, 1775, the *Oneidas* and *Tuscaroras* assembled at the *German Flats*, where they were met by the inhabitants of that District, and the Delegates from *Albany*. The inhabitants of the *Flats* delivered to them the following Speech:

Brothers: We are glad to have you here to return you thanks. We should have been much pleased to have spoken with you at the appointed place; that is, by your Superintendent, where of late you kept your council fire; but since his removing so far from us, we do not think it wrong or imprudent to communicate our sentiments of peace to you here. It is at this place, brothers, it has often been done, and here again we renew it, and brighten the old chain of peace and brotherly love.

Brothers: We cannot see the cause of your late council fire, or Superintendent, going away from among us. We did him no harm, and you well know that none of us ever did, and you may depend on it there was no such thing meant against him. He told our people he was going up to *Thompson's* (*Cosby's Manor*) to hold a council fire with our brothers, the *Five Nations* there. We helped him to provisions to support you there, and every thing we had that he wanted. But he is going away from among us, and told some of our people that he would come back with company which would not please us; which, if true, it is certain his intentions are bad; and he may depend, that whatever force he may or can bring, we regard not.

Brothers: Our present meeting does not arise from any unfriendly thoughts we entertain of you, or from any fear of ourselves. It is purely on account of the old friendship which has so long been kept up between us; that friendship we want to maintain. It is that friendship which will be an equal benefit to us. It is as much wanted on your side as ours.

Brothers: We cannot too much express our satisfaction of your conduct toward us, by your late proceedings with the Superintendent, at the carrying place, for which we are also obliged to you, and do not doubt but that your conduct will be blessed with greater benefits than any other of those who will hurry themselves into mischief, which can never be of any other benefit to them, but sorrow for the innocent blood that may be shed on an occasion where-with they have no concern. We look to you, particularly, to be men of more understanding than others, by the benefits you have received in learning; wherefore we confide and trust the more freely in you, that you can communicate to the other Tribes and Nations the error they want to lead you into; and cannot doubt but your wisdom and influence with the other Nations will be attended with that happy success which will hereafter be a blessing to you and your posterity.

Brothers: What we have said is supposed to be sufficient to convince you that our meaning is for our joint peace and friendship, in which we hope that we and our children may continue to the end of time.

New York Patriots

Pledge Friendship

to Oneidas + Tuscaroras

at German Flats.

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