

History as Archaeology

The “Schedule of Propositions of the
Indians and answers thereto from
Government ...”

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The Albany Indian Commissioners

- Under the Dutch in the early through mid 17th century, local court officials at Beverwyck, Fort Orange, and Rensselaerswyck handled diplomacy with upper Hudson peoples, including the Haudenosaunee, the Mohicans, the Abenaki, and their allies.
- When the English took power in 1664, the practice continued.
- A separate entity for Indian Affairs was created by Governor Edmund Andros in 1675, but its members were drawn from the same court officials as before.

Philip Pieterse Schuyler (1628-1683) was one of the court officials involved in negotiations with native people.



Andros made Robert Livingston (1654-1725) Secretary for Indian Affairs and he began keeping systematic notes on meetings. He was already Clerk for Albany and Rensselaerswyck.



Probably by Nehemiah Partridge, according to Sefan Bielinski at <http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov//albany/bios/l/rlivingston94.html#portrait>

Who were the Albany Indian Commissioners – cont.

- In 1696, Governor Benjamin Fletcher created a new body called the “Commissioners of Indian Affairs.” Later governors rearranged its membership periodically. Most members were magistrates of Albany and some also held other local offices, such as Commander of the Fort.
- The Covenant Chain connected them to peoples throughout eastern North America and well into the interior, from the Carolinas to the Great Lakes.

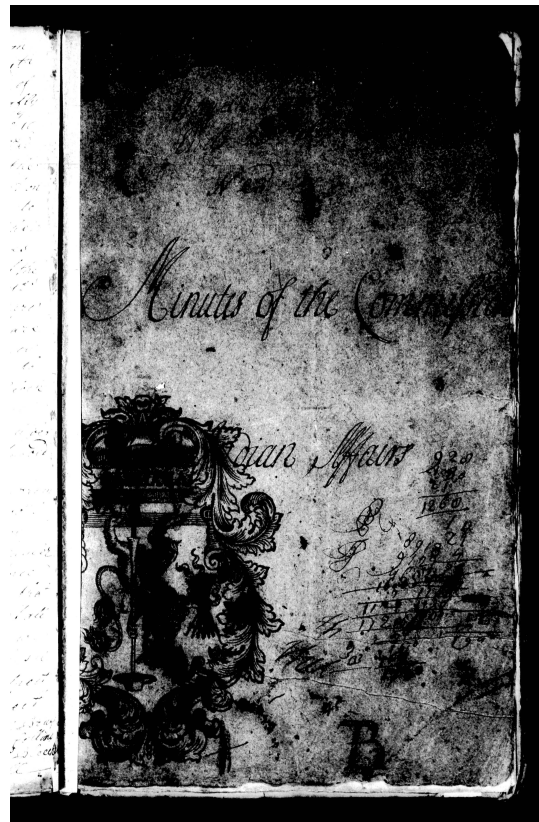
The “Four Indian Kings” who went to England in 1710 worked closely with the Albany Indian Commissioners



The Commissioners met in Albany's Stadt Huys, or City Hall.



The AIC records originally included four bound volumes of “Minutes,” covering the period from 1677-1748



History of the records

- The Johnson family took them to Canada during the American War for Independence.
- The two earliest volumes, covering 1677-1722, are lost.
- Library and Archives Canada holds the second two books, which cover 1723 to 1748, with gaps.
- Library and Archives Canada also holds the collection of notes that someone took on the first two volumes before they were lost.

They headed their notes "Schedule of Propositions of the Indians and answers thereto from Government"

28149 18 January 1702

Schedule of Propositions of the Indians and answers thereto from Government Begun the 20th December 1677 ending 26th September 1679.

Date 1677	Name of Tribe	Subject of Propositions	Indian Account Vol I Page	Answers from Government
20 Dec	Onidas	Relative the delivery of young Magikander	2 3	Delivery acknowledged
20	March Onida	Relative to the	6	sympathies

- The notes cover the time period 1677-1714
- They provide only minimal information before the end of 1704.
- The Schedule of Propositions is mostly valuable for 1705-1714.
- The notetakers, the dates they worked, and their purpose are not identified
- They were probably “not too careful” government employees (Charles H. McIlwain).
- Their notes began as an index, but gradually became more detailed.
- The bulk of the notes cover 1705-1714 and are more like a transcription.

Many entries for the period before 1700 were in Dutch.
The notetakers did not recognize it, labeling it "Indian."

no	date	John Gilbert	Indian no Interpretation	206
no	date	no name	Indian no Interpretation	207
no	date	no name	Indian no Interpretation	208
no	date	no name	Indian no Interpretation	209
no	date	no name	Indian	210

Hendrick Tejonihokarawa (ca. 1660-ca. 1735) appears frequently in the “Schedule of Propositions” notes for the period between 1705 and 1714. In 1710 he was one of the four “Indian Kings” who traveled to London with Peter Schuyler.



Pieter Schuyler / Quieder (1657-1724) also appears frequently during this period, along with his brothers Johannes Schuyler and Arent Schuyler and his cousins Abraham, Myndert and David Schuyler.



Painting by Nehemiah Partridge

Why “History as Archaeology?”

- The notes were microfilmed out of order and then digitized, still out of order.
- They had to be reassembled in order to understand them.
- They are not the original artifact, but they are an impression left by it.
- Nonetheless they provide significant information, especially combined with Peter Wraxall’s *Abridgement*.
- For some sections, we have full contemporaneous copies, which are better than either Wraxall or the Schedule of Propositions.

Albany Indian Commissioner concerns 1705-1714

- Diplomatic Exchanges
- War and Peace
- Trade
- Land
- Displaced peoples

Diplomatic Exchanges

- The Commissioners met with the Five Nations and others on a regular basis to maintain the Covenant Chain.
- The Commissioners provided smiths to the Five Nations on a regular basis.
- They also provided powder, lead, liquor, cloth duffels, pipes, tobacco, metal goods, and other gifts.
- The Five Nations, Schaghticoke, and Mohicans brought gifts of furs and venison.
- The Commissioners worked with the Five Nations and others to retrieve prisoners taken in raids.
- All parties exchanged wampum with each other.

War and Peace

- During most of the time between 1705-1714, the Haudenosaunee, Dutch, Mahican, and Schaghticoke communities of the Mohawk, the Hoosick, and the upper Hudson all live in fear of attacks by the French and their native allies.
- The Commissioners of Indian Affairs are concerned with building defenses and sending out spies, both Indian and European.
- Paranoia is rampant, including European fears that all Indians will form a conspiracy against them and Indian fears that all Europeans will form a conspiracy against them.
- The Five Nations, the Mohicans, the Schaghticoques, and the Albany Indian Commissioners work to maintain peace and Covenant Chain relationships with groups on the St. Lawrence and elsewhere. Hendrick Tejonihokarawa plays an important role.
- The Five Nations work to support the Tuscaroras in their conflicts with the English, sometimes over the Commissioners' objections.
- New England looks for military assistance in its conflicts with the Abenaki and others, but the Five Nations and the Commissioners are reluctant to provide it, preferring to use diplomacy to try to resolve these conflicts.
- The Five Nations are at war with the Catawbas to the south, and with some "Waganhaes" (Anishinaabeg) nations to the west as far as Detroit / Tjuchsagronde, while forging alliances with other Waganhaes.

Trade

- Delegations come from Anishinaabeg nations and else where to trade, encouraged by Montour, a Caughnawaga Indian who decides to facilitate trade with Albany. The French see Montour as a traitor and murder him.
- After Montour is killed, his sister Esabel and his wife meet with the Commissioners and continue his work.
- Delegations of “farr Indians” continue to come to trade, saying that Montour sent them.

Land

- To meet the expenses of the war, the Commissioners begin to lease land at Schaghticoke to Dutch farmers after purchasing it from the Mohican owners. The Mohicans and Schaghticoke object; the Commissioners try to reassure them that the area is still set aside for Indian use.
- In 1710, the new English governor, Robert Hunter, revives a claim to Mohawk land at Schohary that an earlier governor, Lord Bellomont, had said was void. Hunter proposes to settle a group of Palatine Germans there.
- The Mohawks and Commissioner Hendrick Hanson confront Governor Hunter with documentation proving what Bellomont said.
- A settlement is negotiated. Hunter pays for the land, the Palatines settle there, but mistrust remains.
- The Mohicans and Mohawks begin meeting together in secret, although word reaches the Commissioners about it.

Displaced Peoples

- Even though they are now leasing out land at Schaghticoke to Europeans, the Commissioners continue to work with the Five Nations, Mohicans, and Schaghticoques to invite more native peoples to come to Schaghticoke including “Highlanders” from the lower Hudson, Abenaki nations, the Shawnee, the Conestogas, and others.
- Other peoples, including a group of “farr Indians” to the west, are working with the Five Nations to join them and even move to Iroquoia.
- Palatines from Germany settle in the area as well.

Other kinds of information

- Local Anglo-Dutch history
 - Albany revolved around relations with native peoples, but these are underemphasized in most studies of early Albany
 - Peter Wraaxall omitted what he considered “local affairs” such as the Ketelhuyn and Claverack raids.
- Ethnographic information
 - use of wampum, calumets, treaty protocols, agreements for hunting, requirements for passes
- Geography
 - the Commissioners, their interpreter, and the smiths sent to Iroquoia reported on their journeys in journals that contain information about geography and the location of villages.

Challenges in using these materials

- No Text Encoded Initiative software was available for this transcription.
- Names of people, places, and nations in the text are not standardized and can be hard to decipher.
- The Schedule of Propositions notes contain errors and gaps, and are garbled at times.
- If you have a contemporaneous copy, it is always the better source.
- If not, these notes used together with Wraxall are the best we have.

The Albany Indian Commissioners now have a website

- If all of the AIC Records were published as a unified series, it would be a tremendously valuable resource
- The website is not a substitute for a well edited, annotated, indexed, collection of the records, but it's a start.
- Hopefully the website will arouse interest and lead to print publication someday.
- [https://
thecommissionersformanagingtheindianaffairsatalban
y.wordpress.com](https://thecommissionersformanagingtheindianaffairsatalbany.wordpress.com)