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Mediation and Middlemen Undone: The Demise of the Colonial Go-Between in Revolutionary New York

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MEDIATION AND MIDDLEMEN UNDONE:
THE DEMISE OF THE COLONIAL GO-BETWEEN
IN REVOLUTIONARY NEW YORK

A Master's Thesis

Submitted to the McAnulty Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts and Sciences

By

Jenna M. Lusk

May 2011

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ABSTRACT

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Thesis Supervised by Professor Holly Mayer

The American Revolution was revolutionizing for multiple reasons, and the changes in intercultural relations between the British Army, imperial and provincial leadership, and the Iroquois were some of them. The colonial go-between who had mediated exchanges between these two groups since contact and who could represent multiple parties fairly was destroyed during the American Revolution. Joseph Brant, a Mohawk, and Guy Johnson, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the British, were two go-betweens whose powers and roles as mediators were subverted, even extinguished, by the conclusion of the War for Independence. This thesis examines the events that precipitated this fate for Brant and Johnson and changed the future of intercultural mediation with the Iroquois in New York.

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Introduction

In the summer of 1754, representatives from Britain's seven most northeastern American colonies joined in a conference with their American Indian neighbors at Albany, New York. English gentlemen mingled with native leaders in private, and treated with Indian tribes in council. Over a hundred members of the Six Nations of the Iroquois, the Haudenosaunee, gathered amongst the colonial representatives to discuss issues over land and the restoration of the Covenant Chain, which was the seal of friendship between the British and Iroquois that had been fractured the previous year.

Discussion, treating, and gift giving all influenced the atmosphere of accommodation between the Iroquois and colonists during this treaty meeting. Both parties made important concessions, either about land in the case of the Iroquois, or over political authority, in the case of the British awarding the position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Sir William Johnson. Both parties did not make these decisions without critical thought about their implications, and both the Iroquois and British negotiated with their respective self-interests in mind.¹

The Iroquois and British had subgroups that complicated negotiations with one another. The Iroquois was a confederacy of six tribes: the Seneca, Onondaga, Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, and Tuscarora. The British, in turn, had both imperial and colonial parties represented at negotiations. The interests of these subgroups made mediation a challenging affair, especially during the Revolution when both groups divided. At that time, the Iroquois extinguished the council fire, and each tribe determined the nature of its participation in the war for its members. Of crucial importance to this essay is the Mohawk tribe, as its geographic position put it at the center of Anglo-Indian negotiations

over land. In 1754 the Mohawk knew that reaching agreements with the colonists would give them an ally in the future, just as the British knew their land deals would allow them to move onto Indian territory with more legitimacy. At the same time, as Timothy J. Shannon suggests, the Mohawk did not approach mediation to establish a patron-client deal with colonists, but instead they approached negotiations with people they considered “a partner.”²

This dialogue of partnership is most evident in a speech by Mohawk Hendrick during the Albany Conference. Shannon accurately points out how it distinctly identified the Mohawks’ awareness of their actions when they sold land to Pennsylvanians in 1754. Hendrick declared, “We are willing to sell You this Large Tract of Land for your People to live upon, but We desire this may be considered as Part of our Agreement that when We are all dead and gone your Grandchildren may not say to our Grandchildren, that your Forefathers sold the land to our Forefathers, and therefore be gone off them.”³ Hendrick and his fellow Mohawk knew that their land deal could be perceived as weakness and complacency, and they made sure the British knew otherwise. Instead, they emphasized that they made this deal as “Brethren,” a point they wanted both contemporaries and descendents to remember.⁴ Hendrick thus pointed out both the Mohawk’s contemporary and historical agency.

During this conference and future treaties, Iroquois and British officials gathered and corresponded as autonomous nations, as peoples who recognized that their interests depended on working with one another. Such work required intermediaries or negotiators who could operate on both sides to meet their own and each others’ interests because their survival as sovereign nations in America depended on it. By the conclusion

of the eighteenth century, however, the American Revolution had destroyed some of the peoples and powers key to this type of negotiation. The Iroquois remained an independent nation after the Revolution according to its members, but representatives of the new United States did not necessarily see them the same way. This difference in perception about Iroquois power wrecked the intermediaries' ability to negotiate as "Brethren" as they did in earlier times.

Colonial agents had been crossing the threshold of communication between American Indians and colonists in the New World from contact. In North America, the first settlers at Jamestown quickly discovered that peaceful communication between themselves and their Indian neighbors was imperative for survival. Colonists throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries recognized that specific individuals could cross that threshold more effectively than others. Because of this, a whole category of colonists and Indians emerged within North America—the colonial go-between.

These individuals were present through every stage of Anglo-Indian history in colonial America. They were identified then and are identified in history now as mediators, intermediaries, cultural brokers, and translators among other titles. The men, and women for that matter, who became colonial go-betweens possessed certain qualities that set them apart from other colonists who fostered relationships and communications with American Indians. One of the most important qualities that they possessed was their ability to forge ties between groups without necessarily exploiting negotiations for just one side. True, go-betweens were rarely neutral, but even as biased advocates they often tried and could serve multiple parties fairly. In many ways, what allowed go-betweens to succeed in forging relations was perception. As long as the parties perceived that they

were being treated fairly and obtaining a good deal, a peaceful negotiation would ensue. Such a perception was vital for Iroquois and British negotiations during the American Revolution, and even more so for the negotiations between the Iroquois and the United States after the Revolution.

In looking at the development of the go-between in colonial America, however, it is crucial to understand that the go-between role was not consistent throughout colonial history. The go-betweens at Jamestown did not function in the same capacity as the go-betweens who negotiated between the Iroquois and the colonists during the American Revolution. The contexts in which go-betweens functioned were not static, and in fact, place, time, and cultures determined the differences between intermediaries throughout history. As James Merrell points out, go-betweens worked within a specific context in the Pennsylvania frontier during the mid-eighteenth century, which differed from the work of go-betweens, as studied by Nancy Hagedorn, who attended Anglo-Iroquois councils during the same period. Similarly, the go-betweens during the Seven Years' War had to deal with different issues than those go-betweens working during the Revolutionary War. Time and place dictated the work and nature, or presence, of colonial go-betweens, and that was especially apparent in those who mediated between the Iroquois and British during the American Revolution as they had to respond and react to the events surrounding that war.⁵

This essay will take a look at two prominent go-betweens during the American Revolution. Joseph Brant, or Thayendanegea, was a Christian Mohawk of the Iroquois Confederacy and an active translator and mediator for the Iroquois and the British before and during the American Revolution. Colonel Guy Johnson gained the position of acting

Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1774. Working through the turbulent years of the Revolution, these two men served as advocates of their respective peoples and were dedicated to the process of negotiation. Brant and Johnson served on councils, traveled to England together, and placed themselves in the center of negotiations during the War for Independence. As go-betweens both Brant and Johnson had to enter what Richard White called the “middle ground,” though sometimes that ground more resembled the woods that Merrell presented.⁶

Joseph Brant rose to prominence amongst the British during the American Revolution. Brant started as an interpreter in the 1760s, but by the war’s beginning in 1775, he traveled as a diplomat, spoke on behalf of the Mohawk, and by extension other Iroquois, at councils, and became a well-known, and often feared, warrior. As a Mohawk, Brant first and foremost represented his own people. He spoke at both Iroquois and British councils on his tribe’s behalf. However, his dedication to serving his people did not inhibit his ability to act as a go-between forging connections. Brant understood that in order for his people to maintain their autonomy, they had to show their dedication to the British cause. Brant effectively advocated the autonomy of the Mohawk and other Iroquois while simultaneously dedicating himself to the British King and his war efforts. In fact, while visiting England in 1776, Brant addressed British officials by first saying, “The Six Nations who always loved the King.”⁷

In his role as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Johnson showed a similar zeal as a go-between. Johnson’s emergence as a mediator differed from Joseph Brant’s. Upon the death of his uncle, Sir William Johnson, Guy Johnson succeeded him as the acting Superintendent. As will be explained, Sir William Johnson’s superior reputation as a go-

between was one that could not be totally duplicated by his nephew. Even so, when Guy Johnson assumed his uncle's position, he tried to replicate his efforts to negotiate fairly with the Iroquois and he did succeed in those efforts before heavy warfare started. Guy Johnson knew he represented the British cause first and foremost, but through his negotiations with the Iroquois and the British he consistently promoted the benefits for each party in a convincing way. In such cases, both the British and the Iroquois perceived themselves as gaining the better deal.

As the War for Independence escalated, however, and alliances began to falter, the "middle ground" that was once present between the Iroquois and the British was swept away, and as it disappeared so too did the colonial go-between. The Revolution forced people to choose sides and declare allegiances and that, in turn, undermined mediation. The conflicts that arose out of the American Revolution challenged all go-betweens, Brant and Johnson included. Circumstances of the war decreased both men's ability to advocate for their respective sides while still maintaining fair negotiations. Furthermore, as the War for Independence escalated, Brant and Johnson found themselves serving as militant and political partisans rather than diplomatic intermediaries.

For Brant, British actions on the battlefield initiated his shift from that as primarily a go-between to that of a more ardent partisan adherent. Brant's influence as a warrior was well known, and the British relied on his abilities to lead Indian warriors into battle on the New York front of the war. However, while imperial British leaders saw Brant as an effective warrior, provincial leaders resented his ability to rally Indians for battle. Brant was viewed as overly confident by provincial British leaders, and a threat to

their authority, which undermined British willingness to use him as a go-between even as they dealt with him as an imperial ally.

Guy Johnson could no longer function as a go-between once he was ordered to remain in New York City in 1776. This stationary position kept Johnson away from warfare, and more importantly, away from the Iroquois. In order to be an effective go-between, one had to meet with the other parties to communicate face-to-face. Proximity was essential for go-betweens and especially for the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. However, the war made this impossible, and thus Johnson could no longer effectively represent the Iroquois to the British or the British to the Indians in the way expected of the Superintendent as Sir William Johnson had done. Furthermore, after the campaign season of 1779 that devastated Iroquois country and sent thousands of native refugees to Fort Niagara, Guy Johnson could not simultaneously provide for the natives and appease his British authority's budgetary concerns. It became clear that Johnson did not have the command of the position that Sir William Johnson had, and that he tended to acquiesce to the pressure around him, whether it benefitted the English or the natives, but rarely both. Johnson's desires to serve those around him, despite the consequences, contributed to his downfall as a go-between.

By the conclusion of the war, the colonial go-between no longer existed in New York. The old go-betweens could cross, even transcend many borders and boundaries, but the Revolution erected new barriers to such crossing. Those barriers included new power relationships and demands to take sides, instead of straddling them. Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson are just two examples of men transformed by events from advocates of their respective peoples who were dedicated to the process of negotiation and fostering

connections to adherents determined foremost to preserve, protect and empower their own people. For Johnson, protecting his reputation amongst the Indians and British was an objective as well.

The stories of Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson illuminate how the Revolution destroyed the colonial go-between as it swept away old relationships and established new borders. Since the work of go-betweens depended fundamentally on its context, the evidence on Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson is specific to New York. At the same time, the conclusions of this essay urge a larger consideration to future researchers—that the fate of go-betweens in New York occurred in other regions of America after the Revolution as well.

These two men are worth studying for multiple reasons. Primarily, they juxtapose nicely with one another, although it should be noted that Joseph Brant's influence in the Revolution is well known whereas little has been written about Guy Johnson, despite his position as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Northern Department. Though Brant's actions as a warrior are well recorded, little analytical attention has been given to his work as a mediator and his ability to undertake larger responsibilities with both the Iroquois and British. Furthermore, the research that does exist on Guy Johnson often focuses on his failures as a Superintendent in war-ravaged New York. However, Johnson served as an adequate and even commendable go-between in the early stages of the Revolution, and that deserves historical recognition, especially in juxtaposition to his later failures and demise as a go-between.

Second, both Brant and Johnson were influenced by their positions in the larger Johnson kin network. Brant and Guy Johnson were both relatives of Sir William

Johnson: Brant was the brother of Sir William Johnson's native wife, and Guy Johnson was his nephew and son-in-law. Because of this connection their paths crossed, creating a unique dialogue between the two of them that enriches the study of their work in the Revolution. Lastly, available sources for both Brant and Johnson allow extended analysis of their roles. Brant's actions in the Revolution have been recorded in a number of significant scholarly works, but more importantly, substantial primary source material is available. Though Johnson has not had a significant secondary work completed about him, primary resources concerning his career are abundant.

Examining the subject of go-betweens in the detailed way that this study intends requires a deeper look at previous scholarship. This can be approached in two ways. First, the subject of go-betweens has emerged in the historiography on American Indians in greater abundance in the last thirty years with the emergence of the new social history. While this concentration on mediators is rich, defining the role of the go-between has been difficult. Not only do historians differ on their definitions of go-betweens, but also with categorizing the men and women who served that role.

Such intermediaries received little attention in the historiography until the middle of the twentieth century with the formation of ethnohistory as a discipline.⁸ Irving A. Hallowell became one of the first in this field to look at how Europeans incorporated Native culture into their own, and by doing this he gave birth to a growing interest among anthropologists in cross-cultural mediation between Indians and colonists in America.⁹ Canadian anthropologist Robert Paine constructed a social scientific definition of cultural intermediaries, distinguishing between "the go-between," the "broker," the "patron," and the "client," all as different types of intermediaries.¹⁰ But it was not until the 1970s that

historians started to become interested in the specific study of intermediaries, most notably William T. Hagan, who in 1977 wrote on the orphaned Kiowa Joshua Given, who crossed Native and European boundaries.¹¹ After Hagan's work came a plethora of historiography on intermediaries that examined them in their own historical context. By the 1980s, the subject of intermediaries and cultural brokers blossomed along with the new social history of the era. Colin G. Calloway researched Simon Girty, Frederick J. Fausz looked at European interpreters in Virginia, and Patricia Galloway studied interpreters in French Louisiana. Since then, several historians have enhanced the scholarship on go-betweens, such as Frances Karttunen, Margaret Conell Szasz, Richard White, and James Merrell.¹² Each of these historians developed his or her own method of defining men and women as go-betweens; however, few adopted such rigid definitions as Paine.

Scholarship on go-betweens has paid particular attention to the Iroquois. Most notably, Daniel Richter has devoted a portion of his extensive research on the Iroquois in general to the subject of intermediaries in particular. Focusing on the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, he researched the political role of New York colonists and Iroquois go-betweens. Nancy L. Hagedorn has also contributed several articles to the subject of English and Iroquoian diplomatic interpreters in the late eighteenth century. Her scholarship emphasizes English and Iroquois go-betweens' perspectives of one another in mediations. Earle Thomas made a unique contribution by focusing on Molly Brant. In looking at a female go-between, Thomas diversified the field and opened the door to looking at more gendered implications of mediation.¹³

Two recent pieces of scholarship that address Iroquois go-betweens examine their roles in the American Revolution. Alan Taylor's *Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* focuses on two go-betweens, Joseph Brant and the Reverend Samuel Kirkland. Taylor's study takes a closer look at how these two men's roles as intermediaries created a border between natives and colonists. Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin expanded the historiography on the Iroquois in the Revolution in their recent book by focusing primarily on the Oneida and their alliance with the rebellious colonists. Like Taylor's, this study concentrates largely on Kirkland's role as a go-between and shows the impact that religion had in forming alliances during the Revolution.¹⁴

The second critical way of looking at the historiography of go-betweens is to understand the historical evolution of the go-between role in Colonial America, because that evolution shows many of the qualities that go-betweens possessed in the years preceding the Revolution. Because context is so important to this study and to the way that go-betweens were perceived in the past, looking at the historiography this way highlights one of the most important challenges to studying intermediaries—how to define them and whether one definition exists at all. Looking at this “elusive lot,” as James Merrell described them, does reveal that though few characteristics are universal, but in fact dependent on context, many are applicable to Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson during the American Revolution.¹⁵

The most common type of go-between in historiography is the translator. In the most obvious way, translators were important in Anglo-Indian relations because few colonists could actually speak Indian languages. However, this particular intermediary's

job involved much more than simply translation, because translation necessitated interpretation. Thus translators could manipulate messages for their own benefit. Because of this, not all interpreters should be categorized as go-betweens. Frederick J. Fausz's article, "Middlemen in Peace and War: Virginia's Earliest Indian Interpreters, 1608-1632," looks at three Indian interpreters who sought to "build bridges of understanding between vastly different peoples" but struggled to do so because colonists and natives believed they had "ambivalent loyalties," which "made them the most consistently misunderstood and mistrusted people of all."¹⁶ Fausz addresses two important issues that can clarify how to define go-between. First, he identifies an essential aspect of a go-between's job—trust. In order for a go-between to conduct negotiations effectively, there had to be a semblance of trust from both parties. Second, perception was paramount. Like the interpreters in Fausz's article, if a go-between's even-handedness was questioned, whether that perception was wrong or not, a meaningful negotiation was almost impossible. While mediators were often viewed with skepticism by many Natives and whites, it was the trust of the parties within negotiations that mattered—and go-betweens had to have qualities that merited trust.

Daniel K. Richter's article on New York "anglicizers" and Iroquois anglophiles who served as cultural brokers from 1664 until 1701 is one of the closest pieces of scholarship that looks at go-betweens in a similar context, during war, to the American Revolution. Richter uses colonial wars, specifically King William's War in the late seventeenth century, to argue that cultural brokers served to connect the communal and imperial interests of the Iroquois and English peoples in colonial New York. By allying themselves with the English under the Covenant Chain, the Iroquois became immersed in

that nation's political and economic relationships and conflicts with the French and the Dutch. In turn, Iroquois go-betweens had to understand imperial events with the English, emphasize the implications they would have on natives, and then assure their people that they were negotiating according to native protocol. This allowed native go-betweens to discuss imperial issues while still maintaining the trust of their people, who were familiar with the methods of communication these intermediaries used.¹⁷ Subsequently, the Iroquois became New York's main Indian allies in their wars against the French in Canada, often fighting against some of their own tribal members who had converted to Catholicism.

Richter recognizes the importance of context, both imperial and communal, to the work of go-betweens. The communal needs of both the Iroquois and the New York colonists dictated the way in which cultural brokers treated and communicated with one another, and that in turn influenced larger imperial issues.¹⁸ The idea that go-betweens prioritized their own people's interests is evident in the work of Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson during the Revolution. Both were advocates for their own people in their roles as mediators, essentially presenting that what was good for one was good for the other. The conflicts that came out of the Revolution however, rendered this type of advocacy, with its emphasis on equal benefits while seeking a perception of fair mediation, impossible. By the end of the American War for Independence, it would become clear that both could no longer define themselves as mediators, but only as partisans who fought to serve their peoples, and in the case of Johnson, whoever was immediately around him.

In an article on Andrew Montour, Nancy Hagedorn provides an in-depth look at how Montour worked as a cultural broker and an interpreter for the Mohawk and Delaware Indians' diplomatic exchanges with European colonists during the eighteenth century. Pointing out several relevant characteristics of interpreters, namely their "theoretically neutral role" and ability to inspire "confidence and trust" from English and Indian parties, she also stresses the status that came from working as a go-between.¹⁹ Hagedorn posits that when go-betweens, such as Montour, performed effectively and established trustworthiness improved status inevitably followed.²⁰ Hagedorn proves that Montour created a position for himself within the British sphere as an authority on Indian affairs. The influence that Montour possessed, and Sir William Johnson epitomized is crucial in looking at Guy Johnson's own motives and effectiveness as a go-between. Ultimately, both Brant and Johnson became recognizably influential among their peoples, but it is how they responded to and used this influence that differed and revealed their success or failure as go-betweens.

James Merrell's work has proved to be the most influential secondary source for this study. While Merrell disagrees with Hagedorn's notion of influence attached to the go-between's work, he illuminates several key issues in the history of go-betweens in his study of mediators on the Pennsylvania frontier during the eighteenth century. Merrell's book has to be interpreted with the knowledge that its context qualifies much of his study. In concentrating on frontier culture and the woods of Pennsylvania, Merrell gives much needed recognition to the work and influences of those go-betweens who penetrated the heart of native life for English colonists. Merrell concentrates on the dirty business of go-betweens who handled issues between individual natives and colonists at the

provincial level. These native and colonial men traversed unfamiliar territory in the Pennsylvania forest attempting to find common ground in the wilderness. Instead, they often created larger divisions between their peoples.

Significantly, go-betweens worked on various levels. Go-betweens during the American Revolution worked not only on a provincial but also on what may be deemed an imperial level. Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson were communicating between native tribes and the British government, not just between the tribes and New York and Canadian authorities. In fact, it was the tensions that arose between authorities on the provincial and imperial level that perhaps most challenged Brant's ability to mediate on New York's frontier and its battlefields in the War for Independence.

Merrell's examination of primary sources from journals to council minutes provides definitions of go-betweens that are invaluable to any study on the subject. These definitions illuminate the qualities that the British and natives looked for in go-betweens, especially in the time of Sir William Johnson, thus influencing what was expected of go-betweens in the War for Independence. Merrell points out that colonists looked for go-betweens with "Sound Hearts" who were "faithful and honest."²¹ In other words, colonists and natives actively looked for people with specific character traits who could work as go-betweens. But they did not simply fall into the role—they were selected for certain reasons. In Pennsylvania, as in New York, natives sought men of influence to be mediators.²² In New York, unlike Pennsylvania, the provincial and British governments sought men of influence and gave more status along with more influence to their go-betweens, like Sir William Johnson.

What the historiography indicates and what this study posits is that the context in which go-betweens functioned determined how they did their work. Certainly many were skeptical about go-betweens, but these skillful and unique mediators found ways to cross significant cultural divides and create change. Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson both became go-betweens because of their abilities to engender trust in their own people and those second parties with whom they were negotiating.

Another concept seen throughout the historiography is that war challenged go-betweens' work. Through each colonial war in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and especially in the Seven Years' War, go-betweens' work suffered. Although negotiations became especially important as wars proceeded, go-betweens' efforts to broker fairly quickly reached limits. Nevertheless, go-betweens continually resurfaced during the eighteenth century despite these limits. Shickellamy, an Oneida, became an influential go-between in the early eighteenth century, and Sir William Johnson's influence remained strong even after the Seven Years' War. But unlike previous times, the American Revolution broke the process by which go-betweens operated. With the subsequent formation of the United States the go-between's role was destroyed, certainly in New York and, it may be posited, elsewhere.

The period from 1770 until approximately 1800 created a new context in which go-betweens were to work. That particularly challenging era ultimately destroyed all the patterns and processes that defined the colonial go-between's role and status. As with the go-betweens in the early seventeenth century that Fausz wrote about, trust was an essential component in Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson's mediations. They found, however, that they could not sustain that for all parties. The Revolution changed the

weight of loyalty and trust in mediation. Go-betweens were no longer solely crossing boundaries to “build bridges of understanding” between two cultures who were establishing initial or maintaining old relations. They were creating alliances that would alter Iroquois and British autonomy in America.²³

Richter has seen something similar in the late seventeenth century and argued that Anglo-Indian relations dramatically worsened then as a result. The decline in the relationship of New York colonists and Iroquois during Richter’s period illuminates the same decline that took place less than a century later. As New York prospered economically, the colonists relied less and less on trade with the Iroquois. The lack of military aid that New York provided for the Iroquois during King William’s War further weakened the alliance. This all culminated in what Richter calls the “turning point” at the very end of the seventeenth century, when a group of Mohawk Indians were tricked by clergymen Dominie Godfridius Dellius, with the help of his converted Mohawk interpreter Hilletie, into signing a treaty that ousted the tribe from the majority of its lands. Although the chicanery of the New Yorkers was discovered and the treaty annulled, this did little to restore good relations between the colonists and the Iroquois, within which the Mohawk were highly influential, because the trust between the two parties had been violated. In the first years of the eighteenth century, the Iroquois officially showed their waning trust when they treated with the French to stay neutral in all future imperial wars.²⁴

This change in allegiance in 1700 and 1701 revealed an important aspect of the Iroquois’ role in colonial politics and wars that continued to the Revolution. The Iroquois formed alliances to guarantee their independence, and when that was challenged,

they broke such allegiances. The Iroquois did not stipulate a firm allegiance to either the English or the French, which was evident by how they volleyed between the two. This same idea can be applied to the English colonists. Their alliance with the Iroquois was to serve New York's economic and political interests, and when it was not needed, the colonial leaders no longer felt compelled to court the Iroquois. This concept of negotiation based on necessity was paramount during the Revolution.

Indeed, the Revolutionary period offered a similar contextual situation to that of the late seventeenth century, but it unfolded differently and in its results. The larger issues between the English and Iroquois in the late seventeenth century did not destroy colonial go-betweens' ability to mediate, for they still functioned effectively in subsequent years, as shown by Hagedorn and Merrell. The Iroquois chose to remain neutral between the French and English, which most likely increased their go-betweens' abilities to mediate between the two imperial powers. During the Revolutionary War, however, allegiances were firmly established, and the progression of the war determined the fate of colonial go-betweens. The War for Independence created clearer boundaries between the British, the Mohawk and other Iroquois who fought against the colonial rebels. Through this process, the belief that the English would continue to support the Iroquois and vice versa began to wane, and that challenged Brant and Johnson. Wartime consistently challenged their ability to demonstrate their loyalty to their own people and to their second party. Joseph Brant continued to fight alongside the British, but he consistently lost support from English officials during battle, leaving him with virtually no military support. When Guy Johnson became the official Superintendent of Indian Affairs, British authorities ordered him to be permanently stationed in New York City.

This made it impossible for Johnson to mediate between the British and their native allies. Both remained officially allies, but they worked primarily for one party, no longer two.

The growing distance between the Iroquois and their Superintendent and between Brant and British authorities only made their interest wane further in being fair mediators, which in turn heightened British and Iroquois mistrust. Yet, showing echoes of earlier interaction, although many British and even Iroquois were skeptical about Brant, his experience as a translator and his consistent bravery during battle lessened their apprehensions up until the end of the War for Independence. On the other side, Guy Johnson's kin ties to Sir William Johnson allowed him to enjoy Iroquois trust from the beginning of his tenure as acting Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1774. In fact, Johnson believed the Iroquois' "partiality" for him was "extremely natural" because of this kin relation.²⁵ Thus, both men had established reputations as mediators through 1775.

The Revolutionary War and its aftermath clouded these reputations and as well as weakened the trust that had developed between these two groups. British army officers started to resent the power and influence that Brant had during wartime, while, in return, contrasting orders from British provincial and imperial authorities on how to recruit natives for battle initiated Brant's aggravation with British provincials. As power struggles developed, war efforts became divided between British and Indian and undermined, even destroyed, Brant's ability to foster common action. Criticism over the 1778 Cherry Valley battle and subsequent events during the war showed Brant that he

could not trust the British military to provide the support he needed to maintain his part of their alliance.

Similarly, the war made it impossible for Guy Johnson to perform effectively as a go-between, as he, even more than Brant, lost significant influence with both parties. As early as 1777, the Iroquois were becoming annoyed with Johnson and British military leaders, because they continually flip-flopped on whether or not they wanted Indian aid. With Johnson in New York City, he could not easily address the Iroquois' concerns.

At the same time, it was not only the Indians who began to distrust Johnson's work as a mediator. Johnson's waning reputation became even more problematic, because his own people began to distrust his abilities to negotiate effectively for the British. Johnson officially gained the title of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs by 1777. He was not, however, the first choice for the position, as other leaders and Johnson kin were recommended.²⁶ Nevertheless, Johnson became Superintendent, but reaching his apogee within the British political hierarchy did nothing for Johnson's reputation as a go-between. Johnson was no longer in direct contact with the Iroquois, and the British military recognized how detrimental that was for a Superintendent and go-between, which demanded proximity and contact to those being represented. Colonel Daniel Claus, who had previously worked with the Iroquois in Canada, noted that the Iroquois responded more effectively to military, as opposed to civil leaders.²⁷ Furthermore, Johnson's inability to curb spending of the Indian Department's funds on native refugees also damaged his reputation with his own people. Ultimately, the lack of trust in Johnson's role as mediator came from both sides due to the challenges and circumstances of the war as well as by Johnson's faulty decisions.

The following chapters will take a closer look at Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson and how they represent the difficulties and ultimate demise of the go-between's role in Euro-Indian relations during the War for American Independence. By the end, it will become clear that the colonial era go-between was yet another casualty of the American Revolution. That becomes particularly evident when comparing Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson to the power and influence of Sir William Johnson, who successfully traversed the woods as both a go-between and a leader for his peoples.

Chapter One: Sir William Johnson—The Quintessential Go-Between and Creation of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs

Irishman William Johnson was one of the best, if not the best, colonial go-betweens holding the wampum belt between the Iroquois and the English. He “was able to fan the flames” of friendship between the English and Iroquois once again after years of an unstable alliance.¹ In doing so, William Johnson, the Irish opportunist, recreated himself into Sir William Johnson the provincial baronet, master trader, and Indian chief. He took the role of go-between and elevated it into the office and job of Superintendent of Indian Affairs after several years of diplomatic experience with the Iroquois. Sir William Johnson established precedents and practices that initially supported and may have ultimately undermined the work of Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson during the Revolution. They became go-betweens in his shadow and in both contemporary and historical accounts have suffered in comparison. At issue is the fairness of the comparisons, especially given the very different context of the War for Independence.

The young William Johnson traveled from Ireland to America in the late 1730s, escaping a contentious and diverse country that had already tested his ability for intercultural relations. In the early eighteenth century, Ireland was a kaleidoscope of peoples, cultures, and religions, and Johnson negotiated them all. While the Johnson family’s religious roots were Irish Catholic in origin, by the eighteenth century much of Ireland was under the control of Protestants. Furthermore, the French, English, and Spanish were all involved in the Catholic/Protestant wars in Ireland.² Johnson not only learned lessons from the conflict but also learned multiple languages, including Gaelic, Latin, and English. Thus, at an early age William Johnson was already exposed to the

kind of “balancing act” and learning the skills that were expected of go-betweens. The type of “multicultural” environment that Johnson was exposed to in Ireland and the adaptation it demanded served him well in America.³

Sir William Johnson came from a middle-class family in Meath, Ireland. Johnson’s father married into the prestigious Warren family and subsequently became a tenant, maintaining his farm as a dependent of his in-laws.⁴ Unlike his father, the younger Johnson had large ambitions. In Ireland Johnson began working for his uncle, Peter Warren, looking after his accounts while Warren was in America. When Warren married into the prominent De Lancey family of New York, he acquired vast tracts of land, one of which was in the Mohawk Valley. Recognizing his nephew’s careful handling of his business in Ireland, Warren decided that Johnson would be ideal for forming a settlement on his new land in America.⁵ With the means to get to America, Johnson crossed the Atlantic in the late 1730s.⁶ Upon arriving, Johnson discovered land near his uncle’s which was flatter and close to the river, making it perfect for a farm and store.⁷ Branching out from his uncle’s employ, Johnson purchased a tract under his own name, to the disdain of his uncle, who was “displeased” with his nephew’s decision.⁸ Thus, the dependency that characterized his family’s situation back in Ireland did not continue with the ambitious Irish immigrant in New York, as he set his own path as a trailblazer for wealth and success.

Sir William Johnson did not cross cultural boundaries with neighboring Indians for diplomatic purposes; he crossed them looking for wealth as a settler and businessman, and a good one. He maintained a store in which he sold goods to settlers and Indians, and then started trading in pelts as well.⁹ Johnson would become one of the wealthiest

colonists in New York through the fur trade at the trading post in Oswego.¹⁰ Self-interest certainly drove Johnson's business dealings, but it appears that he did not compromise his honor for money. One New York colonist lauded him for having "laid the foundation of his future prosperity on the broad and deep basis of honorable dealing, accompanied by the most vigilant attention to the objects he had in view," not sacrificing his "integrity on one hand, or inattention to his affairs on the other." That colonist, Anne MacVicar Grant, believed that Johnson was viewed with "universal confidence" as a businessman and as a trader.¹¹ She said that, from early on, in trading with Indians Johnson adopted an open-door policy. He would invite Indians into his home after they had gone on trading excursions, mixing his business endeavors with pleasure. She also remembered how it was not uncommon to see up to "five hundred" Indians being "liberally entertained by their friend" William Johnson.¹²

Through his business as a merchant, Johnson came into his role as a diplomatic go-between. As events that would soon turn into King George's War started to affect the New York frontier, Sir William Johnson became one of the main suppliers of provisions for the Indians aiding the British army. As a contracted merchant who provided cloth, ammunition, and food to the Indian and British soldiers, Johnson began corresponding with Governor George Clinton. These letters soon dealt with more than business transactions. By 1746, Clinton not only asked Johnson to supply the Indians with provisions, but he also "impowred" Johnson to supply them with whatever needed "to go against the Enemy upon your Orders."¹³ Johnson now had the authority to organize and send Indian warriors into war—ideally, a power that would not be given to any merchant, but only one who had some sway with the Indians and the trust of the government. Such

ability to influence diverse people is exactly what Clinton recognized in Johnson. Only a month before Clinton gave Johnson the authority to mobilize the Indians, he requested that Johnson “take some Pains to remove any bad impressions” the Indians would have of Clinton when he denied the Mohawk a conference.¹⁴ At that point, Sir William Johnson had acquired the role of an imperial go-between, entrusted as a communicant for Clinton.

It was not only Clinton who recognized Johnson’s potential as a mediator. In order to be an influential go-between, Johnson needed the trust of both the parties with whom he was dealing. As business partners, the Mohawk trusted Johnson, but in 1746, he became their diplomatic partner as well. Thus, Clinton’s request that Johnson should mobilize Indians if the need arose was possible in 1746, because the Mohawk nation “adopted him as a member” and made him an official war chief.¹⁵ In August 1746, Clinton officially gave Johnson the post of “Colonel of the Forces...of the Six Nations” and “Commissary of the Stores and [provisions]” for the Indians. Furthermore, Clinton outlined a number of duties for Johnson as Colonel, namely to organize Indian and settler troops, to appoint subordinates to help with enlistment, and to discipline the men under his command. One last instruction was especially telling. Johnson was to remain near the Indians to provide “Clinton with intelligence” and to give “further Encouragement” to the Indians to aid the English.¹⁶

Johnson’s transition from informal to formal go-between may be indicated by both parties giving Johnson a more formal title. An official title was not necessary for a diplomatic go-between to be successful, and few acquired such titles. The fact, however, that both the Mohawk and British recognized Johnson as an authority figure shows that both believed Johnson could be trusted with the responsibility of their diplomacy on an

imperial level. Few go-betweens had the opportunity to work on such a level, which makes Johnson even more of an anomaly, as he progressed from a provincial merchant and settler to an imperial diplomat. As further evidence of Johnson's importance, Clinton ordered him to live near the Mohawk, as proximity to them would be an essential aspect of his job. Both the Mohawk and Clinton were satisfied with their appointment of Johnson as their formal go-between. Clinton expanded Johnson's responsibilities, such as sending him to other Indian nations outside the Iroquois League for conferences on behalf of the British.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Mohawk spoke to Clinton of their trust in Johnson when they assured Clinton that for the last year they had "minded nor listened to nobody else," and that they intended to give information to Johnson so that "he may acquaint [Clinton] of it."¹⁸

If the Mohawk and Clinton were satisfied with Johnson's new position, Johnson himself was ambivalent. After a long silence in 1747, Johnson sent Clinton a letter, only two months before the conference between the Mohawk and Clinton noted above, expressing concern about his new position. He wrote that he felt "quite in the dark...without any intelligence or instructions, so that I don't know whether I am right or wrong."¹⁹ Despite Johnson's concern, it was evident that both Clinton and the Mohawks retained confidence in Johnson. Perhaps it was the absence of communication with Clinton that allowed Johnson to develop confidence in his decision making and would warrant his appointment to the position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs ten years later.

This thesis began with a scene from the Albany Conference in 1754, in which the Iroquois and English officially renewed their Chain of Friendship. And while there were

many authority figures involved with Indian affairs present at this conference, including commissioners from Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Maryland, it was the work of Sir William Johnson that solidified not just the Mohawk but the entire Iroquois union with the English once again.²⁰ That conference was convened because by 1753 the French were moving onto Iroquois and English land to build fortifications, alarming the native inhabitants.²¹ This created tensions between the Iroquois Confederacy and the British, who the Indians thought should provide protection as their allies. Tensions turned into neglect, according to the Iroquois, and they broke the Covenant Chain with the English in the same year. At a conference in 1753, one Iroquois, Red Head, spoke of the relationship between his people and the British over the previous years: “the Road between Us has been obstructed, and almost grown up [with] Weeds that our Fire is scattered; & almost extinct.”²² Ultimately, by 1753, the British provincial government needed someone to mend relations with the Iroquois, because reestablishing the Covenant Chain would assure them that the Iroquois would remain an ally if war broke out with France.

Another dilemma from two years prior resurfaced and affected Indian affairs in 1753. A conflict with the provincial government ultimately precipitated the appointment of Sir William Johnson as Superintendent. Governor Clinton and the provincial assembly in New York (as well as the other colonies’ assemblies) assigned additional Indian commissioners to deal with the Iroquois along with relying on Johnson, who had since become the New York’s Commissary of Indian Affairs after King George’s War ended.²³ However, Johnson’s frustration with the provincial commissioners, as well as the New

York assembly's habitual negligence in paying him for his work caused him to resign as the Commissary of Indian Affairs in 1751.²⁴

The failings of the other Indian commissioners illuminate the qualities that made Johnson an ideal go-between and prove that not all people facilitating communications between cultures should be defined as go-betweens. In 1753 Johnson noted that the commissioners had forgotten some of the essential elements for successful negotiations. Specifically, Johnson pointed out that the commissioners forgot presents to offer the Indians and had delivered their messages without a single string of wampum, both of which were customary in dealing diplomatically with the Six Nations.²⁵ For Johnson, it was clear that the commissioners had no previous knowledge of how to deal properly with the Iroquois, as "it is obvious to all who are the least acquainted with Indian Affairs, that they regard no Message or Invitation be it of what consequence or nature it will, unless attended or confirmed by a String or Belt of Wampum, which they look upon, as we our Letters, or rather Bonds."²⁶ Johnson's recognition of the Iroquois' cultural practices and their meanings set him and other successful go-betweens apart from others who dealt with Indian nations. To be effective, go-betweens required knowledge of Indian customs, and, as in Johnson's case, an appreciation of the other's culture.

Despite this division between the English and the Iroquois in 1753, Sir William Johnson found a way to reestablish the union between the two parties and it is his work leading up to and during the Albany Conference in 1754 that showed his superior abilities as a go-between. While Johnson understood that the Iroquois felt slighted, he did not necessarily agree with all of the grievances that the Iroquois communicated, and he told them so. Johnson not only convinced the Iroquois to attend the conference in Albany, but

he also effectively reprimanded them for breaking the alliance the previous year over what he saw as somewhat exaggerated claims. Ultimately, the Conference was a success, because the Iroquois reinstated the Covenant Chain at the conference. Johnson was a successful go-between, because he spoke to the Iroquois as a partner and was able both to criticize them but still remain friendly, especially with war between the French, Indians, and English imminent.

In a meeting with the Mohawk in 1753, at which time Johnson was convincing the tribe to attend the following year's conference at Albany, Johnson told them "I am ordered by your Brother the Governor to let you know, that your behaviour and demands were verry unreasonable and unusual while at New York."²⁷ Despite this statement, the Mohawk were receptive and the Chief of the Mohawk, Hendrick, responded with careful acknowledgement of Johnson's words: "Tho we are sensibly affected by our Bretherens neglecting us for some time past, and the private differences we have had with the Inhabitant. Yet for this time we agree to everything You request."²⁸ While the Mohawk responded favorably to Johnson's speech, Chief Hendrick did not specifically cite Johnson's superior negotiating abilities. Little over a month later, however, Red Head of the Six Nations explained the Iroquois' preference for dealing with Johnson. Red Head spoke of his people's satisfaction in dealing with Johnson who "[spoke] in [their] own way," which was more "intelligible" to them and the "Customs and Manners of [their] Forefathers."²⁹

Despite Johnson's success in quieting Iroquois hostility in 1753, by the time the Albany Conference took place in 1754 the Iroquois had not received any additional aid from the English in protecting their lands, and Johnson had not been reappointed as the

leader of Indian affairs. The Iroquois believed one reason for this lack of concern from the government was provincial commissioners' control over Indian affairs. Thus, a significant portion of the Albany Conference was dedicated to discussing, debating, and reinstating Sir William Johnson as the official go-between to and for the Iroquois. The fact that so much attention was paid to reestablishing Johnson's position is a testament to the value the Iroquois put on having an effective representative for their negotiations with the British. In a statement at the conference, Abraham, a sachem of the Mohawk tribe, said "We Embrace this Opportunity of laying this Belt...before all our Brethren here present, and desire them that [Colonel] Johnson may be reinstated and have the management of Indian Affairs, for we all lived happy whilst they were under his Management, for we love him and he us, and he has always been our good and trusty Friend."³⁰ Not only did the Iroquois fully trust Sir William Johnson—so essential for a true go-between—but they depended on him. Only days later, Chief Hendrick stated that "if [Johnson] fail us we die."³¹ The persistence of the Iroquois paid off, for one result of the Albany Conference was that Sir William Johnson was reinstated as the Colonel of the Six Nations, a position that he had held in 1746.³²

This tense time leading up to and including the Albany Conference not only showed the influence that Sir William Johnson had as a go-between, but it showed the qualities that the Iroquois sought in an Englishman who was to function in that role. They demanded someone who knew their own customs and respected them, and someone whom they considered a friend to their people. Furthermore, the Iroquois needed someone they could trust and who gave them the time and attention they deserved. Ultimately, it became clear that the English and Iroquois addressed their go-betweens

differently. The English saw Sir William Johnson as the holder of an official position, and the Iroquois saw him as an advocate and friend, but he was still a representative and intermediary for both. It would be these qualities that Guy Johnson would be expected to display twenty years later.

As war broke out between the French and English after the Albany Conference, Sir William Johnson's job became even more important. Before 1754, the specific requirements of the official go-between were not clear to the Indians, or to the jobholder himself. As Sir William Johnson adjusted to his role, he started to create and establish the duties of his position. This revealed some of the qualities that the British viewed as imperative for go-betweens, thus enabling Johnson to take what he knew about negotiations with the Iroquois and establish a position that served both. Furthermore, the fact that the Superintendent position was finally developed and solidified during the Seven Years' War makes the duties of that officer during wartime even more clear. This provides a valuable point of comparison for looking at the same position during the American Revolution.

As Colonel of the Six Nation forces, Sir William Johnson became involved in the mobilization of military operations of the Seven Years' War starting in 1754. Johnson believed in using Indians in the most advantageous way for the British, but at the same time, Johnson knew the strengths and weaknesses of Indian involvement. Johnson wrote in a letter to the acting governor of New York in 1754, James DeLancey, that gathering intelligence was a number one priority, and that "[their] safety depends" on having the "best Indians" with the militia do that job. At the same time, he knew he had to start the process of mobilizing the Indians early, because they were not all centrally located, but

Johnson was willing to adapt to this situation, even if it meant mobilizing Indians who “lived so scattered.”³³ Johnson understood that the Iroquois alliance would help determine the fate of British mobilization in New York. In doing so he acted in the interest of the British while still keeping the interests of the Iroquois at the forefront of British-Indian exchanges, ultimately showing each that what was good for one was good for the other. The skills he displayed made him ideal for the post of Superintendent that he would receive one year later.

This capability to cross the cultural divide became most evident in how Johnson successfully exercised control over the Iroquois element of military operations, making it a duty that would eventually officially fall under the command of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. In the summer of 1755, Johnson became more adamant about the organization of Iroquois warriors within military operations. Not only did his observations suggest his awareness about how best to utilize the Iroquois as military allies, but it showed his greater understanding of their culture, which allowed him to be an advocate for the Iroquois and the British simultaneously. Johnson communicated his ideas about the nature of Iroquois military involvement to Massachusetts Governor William Shirley, who had recently been promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the North American military forces. In a telling letter, Johnson wrote to his superior, “To establish the Indians into Companies of 100 men each with Captains, Lieutenants & Ensigns, is impossible, that sort of regularity cannot be obtained amongst those People.” Furthermore, he suggested that “their officers must be Interpreters and take care of them in all respects, besides doing their Duty as officers...Herein I expect the Governments will confide in me and they shall have no just cause for reproach.”³⁴

The way that Johnson communicated the benefits of his plan to Shirley, however, shows his growing command of his position. Johnson made the interest of the British the main priority in his letter to his superior. Johnson explained that “If the measures agreed upon against the French...should be laid aside, depend upon it, we shall loose [the Indians] for ever, nay I fear if we are not successful their opinion of us will be very fatal for our interest.”³⁵ Ultimately, whether he was speaking to the Iroquois or the British, Johnson knew his audience and he gave each group the perception that its needs were first and foremost.

In 1755, Johnson’s growing resentment of Shirley and the government’s lack of understanding of Indian culture would induce the Board of Trade to clarify the Superintendent’s job by the end of that year and give the post to Johnson. Conflict between Johnson and Shirley came to the boiling point when Johnson refused to issue multiple Indian escorts for Shirley on his travels from the town of Schenectady to Oswego. Johnson not only found it unnecessary for security, because Shirley traveled with a bodyguard, but also believed it was an unnecessary waste of funds.³⁶

By September of that year, Johnson made it clear to the Board of Trade that because of Governor Shirley’s actions, he must obtain full control of Indian affairs and not be subordinate to the colonial governors. Especially once the war intensified, Johnson saw himself as a direct go-between between the imperial center and Iroquois, not one between provincial governors and Indians. Johnson believed “that a Subordinate Power...with regard to Indian affairs & a Fund dependent upon the will & pleasure of his Majesty’s [Governors]” were “incompatible” with his “abilities and Inclinations to Conduct them.” Furthermore, if Johnson did not hold control of Indian Affairs, the

“British Indian Interest...[would] be unstable...and in the end totally lost.”³⁷ Johnson’s qualms about his position were addressed favorably by the members of the Board of Trade, who believed that “the Affairs of the Indians ought to be regulated, established, and conducted under some one general Plan and System, adapted to their particular Situations, and Comprehensive of every thing which can contribute to their Security.” The Board was “glad to have [Johnson’s] Opinion of what shall appear to [him] to be the most proper plan for the Direction of Indian Affairs.”³⁸ The position of Superintendent was officially commissioned by the Board of Trade and the King.³⁹ Thus, in New York, Johnson transformed the role of go-between for the British and the Iroquois from an unofficial one into a provincial diplomatic commission, and then finally to an imperially assigned position within the northern colonies.

Thus, the military operations that Johnson engaged in during the early years of the French and Indian War solidified his role as Superintendent of Indian affairs. Even more significant is that Johnson himself created the parameters of the Superintendent position, not the colonial governors nor the Board of Trade. Johnson understood that standard military organization would not work in mobilizing Indians in his militia. Instead he employed other go-betweens to act as interpreters and military leaders to bridge the cultural gap between the Indians and the militia. Furthermore, Johnson made the Superintendent a dominant position that the Board of Trade in London regarded as the sole go-between for the British government and the Iroquois. While Johnson became a stronger go-between who accommodated the needs of the Iroquois, his ultimate goal was always to maintain the Six Nations as an ally. At the same time, Johnson was not willing

to exploit the Iroquois to gain that goal, as he consistently communicated to his superiors their grievances over land and the Commissioners misrepresentation of them.

At the Seven Years' War's conclusion, however, Johnson faced another challenge to his abilities as a go-between, as the Treaty of Paris in 1763 and then the subsequent Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 gave more Iroquois land to colonial settlers. For all of the Iroquois but especially the Mohawk, these treaties were particularly devastating. The first gave away important hunting lands, while the second placed them in much closer contact with colonial settlers. In one letter, Johnson wrote that he had purposefully downplayed the Iroquois' anger over negotiations in 1768, because their anger "might be liable for misconstruction."⁴⁰ Regardless, it was with Sir William Johnson and his deputies that the Iroquois continued to negotiate and communicate. While imperial struggles between the Iroquois and the British continued on a larger scale, Johnson continued to be trusted by the Iroquois as their representative, as he made tours of Iroquois villages talking with sachems who recognized Johnson as a longtime ally.⁴¹ By 1768 Johnson had maintained his trustworthy reputation for nearly three decades becoming the quintessential go-between for both the Iroquois and British.

In April 1774, recognizing that his health was in decline, Sir William Johnson wrote to General Thomas Gage, Commander in Chief of the British forces in America, outlining the requirements of the Superintendent position and making suggestions about his successor. According to Johnson, the Superintendent needed "the Affections of the Indians." Firstly, proximity and attention to the natives was crucial, because it was "only by long Residence amongst them" that a future go-between could gain an understanding of their culture. Such knowledge of their "Politicks, Disposition, and Usages" was

necessary for understanding the “Manner in which Business [had] been conducted with them.” Finally, he needed to be an agent “under the immediate Direction of the Crown.” Proximity, knowledge of Iroquois culture and diplomatic practices, and power were all necessary for the future Superintendent of Indian Affairs, a position that Johnson called “so peculiar a Nature.”⁴²

Upon his death in 1774, however, no one possessed all the qualities to the degree that Sir William Johnson had. Although Guy Johnson became his uncle’s official successor, it would take two men, Guy Johnson and Joseph Brant, to do the same work as go-betweens that Sir William Johnson had performed singlehandedly. While this can be explained in part by character and culture, it is further explained by the context in which Guy Johnson and Brant worked. While the Seven Years’ War served as the foundation for building the go-betweens’ power and status, the War for Independence would break it down.

Chapter Two: A Change in Direction—Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson’s Ascent as Go-Betweens in the American Revolution

On a summer day in New York in 1774, members of the Six Nations gathered at Johnson Hall to meet with their go-between, Sir William Johnson, to discuss the state of affairs on the southern frontier around Virginia. This meeting, like others, started with Iroquois members offering a wampum belt to signify their continued alliance with the British before the Indians stated their concerns about how unrest in the South might impair future negotiations. Also, as in other meetings, the Iroquois acknowledged that the British were distracted with other matters besides Indian relations. One Seneca Chief even pointed out an ironic point when he said, “Brother, We are sorry to observe that your People are as ungovernable, or rather more so, than ours.”¹ This Iroquois recognized the trouble of the mounting revolution in his acknowledgement, but he still believed that the Iroquois concerns were of the utmost importance, and looked to his respected advocate, Sir William Johnson, in council.

The meeting did not reconvene until two days later, July 11, 1774, a Monday, with Sir William Johnson making an official speech to the Iroquois in the morning. Promising to bring “satisfaction” to the Iroquois’ grievances about settlers moving onto Indian land and stressing his support for his deputy Guy Johnson’s work on the Southern frontier, Sir William Johnson promised to “willingly do every thing in [his] power” to alleviate the growing situation in Virginia.² It was a promise that Johnson could not keep in person, but would leave for his nephew, because only hours after he made this speech he died unexpectedly in his home.³

The days following this conference were a tipping point in Anglo-Indian relations. Not only did the Iroquois lose their revered representative, but for them, they also lost a diplomat, military leader and a friend. All of these roles that fell under the responsibility of the Superintendent's office, but were truly the work of a go-between, needed to be transferred to someone just as trustworthy to maintain the Iroquois alliance. However, no one person possessed all of Sir William Johnson's abilities—and it would take both Guy Johnson and Joseph Brant to meet all of these intermediary roles for the Iroquois through the American Revolution. Immediately after Sir William Johnson's death, however, Guy Johnson and Joseph Brant started building their roles as diplomatic go-betweens. Guy Johnson not only became the Superintendent in title, but assumed its duties as a go-between as well. At the same time, and often along with Guy Johnson, Brant pledged Mohawk loyalty, but also communicated Mohawk grievances about settler encroachment to the British. In those hours after Sir William Johnson's death, however, the Anglo-Iroquois relationship experienced a difficult transition.

The Johnson family and dynasty lost its patriarch that afternoon, but more importantly to the natives, the Iroquois League lost its representative. As would be expected, disorder ensued at Johnson Hall, as “the Indians assembled in the most apparent Confusion.” Worse still, the Iroquois began to assemble “alarming” wampum belts to be sent out to their various tribes about losing their advocate.⁴ The Iroquois wanted to know who would represent them in affairs with the British now that their steadfast leader was dead, and the first person they looked to for answers was Guy Johnson. In the immediate situation, Johnson tried to be a go-between for the living and the dead as he did what he believed his uncle, as well as his government, would have

wanted. Johnson immediately settled the natives by promising to take over their affairs until official word came from London, thus preventing disarray throughout Iroquois territory.⁵

The next day, Guy Johnson met with Iroquois chiefs, which was actually a breach of native custom, in that Johnson should not have addressed their concerns before the traditional Condolence Ceremony. Accepting Johnson's break in tradition, the chiefs listened to his speech, in which Guy Johnson reported that his uncle, "agreeable to the desire" of the chiefs, had "recommended it to the consideration of the Great King" that he should take over as Superintendent upon his predecessor's death. Tellingly, Guy Johnson offered his opinion that, "though I feel myself at [present] unequal to the load, when I reflect on the conduct and character of that great and good man who left us yesterday, yet as I have long lived under his direction, and transacted, for many years, his affairs, and correspondences respecting you, I trust that the *Great Spirit* will give me strength, and wisdom to conduct those important matters in some measure corresponding with his great example."⁶ On July 13, 1774, Indians and British colonists gathered to grieve Sir William Johnson at his funeral. The following day the Iroquois gathered to perform their traditional Ceremony of Condolence for the man they considered one of their own.

It is unclear if Joseph Brant was at Johnson Hall that day. The documentation of the proceedings taking place does not provide a list of notable Indians in attendance, and even if it did, Brant still may not have been included on that list. Records noted only some Iroquois chiefs along with other Indians who made speeches. What is known is that after Johnson's death, Brant rejoined Guy Johnson as his interpreter, closely joining these

two men in their attempts to retain and even strengthen the British-Indian relations that existed under Sir William Johnson.

Sir William Johnson's death was a major blow at a critical time, for his successor had little time to confirm the connections he had made as the premier go-between. Issues about the southern frontier were becoming a major concern for the Iroquois. That situation developed into Lord Dunmore's War and was the premier issue for the Iroquois in 1774 and 1775, shaping their later involvement in the War for Independence. Specifically, colonial encroachment onto native territory in Virginia, instigated by Governor Dunmore, created massive tensions within the Iroquois Confederacy, which wanted to help the Shawnee, the primary tribe affected.⁷ One Shawnee noted in March of 1774 that Sir William Johnson had sent a Seneca chief into Virginia territory to "restor[e] good order" between the natives and Virginians.⁸ While the Iroquois were not the main actors in this small war, their involvement as mediators directly exposed them to the Virginia colonists' apparent lack of concern over taking land outside the Fort Stanwix Treaty Line. However, Iroquois involvement in Lord Dunmore's War went further than expected, and soon the main focus of the British was to stymie a larger war that would involve the Iroquois as well.

The Fort Stanwix Treaty had established a distinct boundary between the Iroquois and the white settlers. The division line established between the Indians and the British ran from as far south as modern Tennessee and through New York, and all of the territory that was signed away had long been claimed by the Iroquois.⁹ For the Virginians to settle past this dividing line was no small matter, when the natives had already given up a significant portion of their land.

What the Iroquois heard and saw in Virginia reverberated in their meetings with Guy Johnson directly after Sir William Johnson's death. Tyerhansera, a Mohawk chief and the son of Abraham, in noting this period of transition as a "very critical time," blamed "the *White People*" for the Iroquois' continued involvement in the southern affairs, because they continually provided liquor for the Indians, and would not "confine themselves within their limits" With a sense of urgency, the Mohawk chief warned Guy Johnson that "a flame which is as yet small" was burning, and "unless quenched in time...will overspread the country."¹⁰ Settling this brewing war was one of Guy Johnson's first tasks as the chief English go-between, and he succeeded. By November of 1774 Guy Johnson had successfully thwarted Iroquois involvement in the South, and refused the Shawnees official aid from the Iroquois. Ultimately, the Shawnee lost territory to the Virginia colonists, and the aid of an important ally in the Iroquois.¹¹

It was within the context of death, Indian-settler conflicts, and colonial-British tensions that Guy Johnson and Joseph Brant assumed their positions as leading go-betweens in British-Iroquois affairs. Both had lost a leader and friend in Sir William Johnson, and both faced considerable challenges in trying to take his place. Indeed, neither ultimately could. But to understand that failure, it is necessary first to examine how each man could be seen, both by natives and whites, as a possible replacement for Sir William Johnson.

Joseph Brant entered the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock's school in 1761. While this Indian and colonial school sought to prepare young men to act as missionaries, it gave Joseph Brant the skills to function as a go-between who could criss-cross the cultural divide between the Iroquois and the British independent of a mission for

Christianization.¹² Upon his arrival, Brant was described by Rev. Wheelock as “considerate, Modest, and manly spirited,” possessing potential for “the best Manner for Usefulness.”¹³ In particular, it was Brant’s growing command of the English language, his conversion to Christianity and, most importantly, his connection to Sir William Johnson, that made Brant so useful, especially as an interpreter. By 1763, he was being employed by his tutor, Charles Jeffery Smith, to interpret on a business trip.¹⁴ However, Brant’s acceptance by the British was not easy for his Mohawk kin to accept. At the same time Brant was being recruited by Smith, his sister Molly wrote him that she wanted him to come home, as the “Indians [were] displeased” with his schooling and the people with whom he was working.¹⁵ This skepticism from Molly Brant and the Mohawk may show that Brant’s development into a go-between was actually inhibiting his relations with natives, rather than serving them. Furthermore, this is often the dilemma noted about go-betweens by those who study them, that they had the most difficult jobs and that they were the most mistrusted peoples. However, another interpretation could be that a sense of skepticism or ambivalence was necessary from the parties with whom a go-between was mediating. Go-betweens were supposed to negotiate between two or more parties, but to suggest that either side would be pleased with the discussions, or not be skeptical about the mediator’s loyalty was nearly unrealistic.

Despite Brant’s dedication to his education at Wheelock’s school, he did not remain. When Pontiac’s Rebellion began in 1763, he joined British-allied natives and afterward worked as Sir William Johnson’s interpreter. From that point, Brant served as a representative of the Mohawk while simultaneously living like an English gentleman

and farmer.¹⁶ It is significant though, that practically from the beginning of his “career” Brant represented himself in two different ways: as a mediator or interpreter and as a warrior. This effort to combine diplomatic and military roles would define his work as a go-between during the War for Independence.

Joseph Brant enters the historical record gradually as a representative of the Mohawk. He appeared not only through his interpreting, but by speaking on his tribe’s behalf by the early 1770s. In a speech at a council with Sir William Johnson two days before the latter’s death, Brant spoke for the Mohawks, asking that the British not move onto their remaining land. In that statement, Brant showed his perception of the Iroquois as British allies, not subordinates. He said that his people “have seen that those Officers and Soldiers who served in this Country during the late War, have been rewarded with Tracts of Land in return for their services, and as we were aiding and assisting in the same cause, we must deem it a peculiar hardship in case we are not permitted to hold this little Remnant undisturbed.”¹⁷ As Karim M. Tiro posited about the Oneida in their alliance with the rebels, the Mohawk through Brant saw their involvement in British military operations as being partners with, not subordinates to, the British soldiers.¹⁸

Colonel Guy Johnson’s ascendancy as a go-between was clearly more closely connected to his relationship with Sir William Johnson, as his nephew and son-in-law. While little has been written on Guy Johnson alone, the picture painted of him has been uniform in most historiographies: he was shown as an incompetent. This assessment may be unfairly harsh. It should be noted that Guy Johnson joined his uncle in Indian affairs as soon as he arrived in America around 1756. So he started learning the business, so to speak, eighteen years before his uncle died. Furthermore, Guy Johnson served with

Joseph Brant in the military campaign at Lake Champlain in 1758. As Guy Johnson developed his skills of communicating with natives he gained the elevated position of Sir William Johnson's deputy in 1763, just as Brant was leaving school to join native forces in Pontiac's Rebellion.¹⁹ The Superintendent relied on his nephew to speak in councils that he himself could not attend. In 1768 when Sir William Johnson became ill, Guy Johnson took over Indian Affairs until he returned to his office. While Guy Johnson knew that his uncle could give "Superior Information," Sir William Johnson's reliance on his nephew showed that Guy possessed potential and merited substantial trust.²⁰

From that point, Guy Johnson fulfilled his duties as Sir William Johnson's deputy, which included being present at the council to discuss the boundaries of the Fort Stanwix Treaty, while at the same time commanding a regiment of the militia in Albany.²¹ In the early 1770s, Guy Johnson and Joseph Brant worked together again when Brant became an advisor assigned to Johnson in the Mohawk village of Canajoharie.²²

Ultimately these two men, who came from opposite backgrounds, one Indian and one an Irish immigrant, experienced a similar journey together despite their cultural differences. Neither forgot their roots as distinctly British or Native. While still serving as an intermediary, Brant did not hesitate to quit school to join native forces in Pontiac's Rebellion. Likewise, Guy Johnson remained dedicated to Sir William Johnson as a representative of the British. But, at the same time, they crossed cultural boundaries separately and together. Joseph Brant showed himself as a "promising youth" at Wheelock's school.²³ Guy Johnson built his residence in the middle of Mohawk country. And both served Sir William Johnson as intermediaries and warriors on different missions.

The debate over who should succeed Sir William Johnson has often been described by historians as inconsequential since they saw no option as optimal. Three men come up in historical discussions of candidates for the Superintendent's spot. Sir William Johnson's own son, John Johnson, was a natural choice, but he was not chosen because of his "Disinclination of having anything to do with Indians and their Affairs."²⁴ While Joseph Brant could never have actually been appointed as Superintendent, historian Alan Taylor posits that he would have been the best choice, because "better than anyone else of his generation, Brant could combine, or shift between, European gentility and Indian culture."²⁵ At the same time, Taylor avers that Guy Johnson, while possessing the skills to be Superintendent, lacked "discipline and talent."²⁶ While Guy Johnson's later actions in the War for Independence may well show such flaws, immediately before and after Sir William Johnson's death Guy Johnson's actions challenge such blanket criticism.

Sir William Johnson, in a letter to General Gage, personally recommended Guy Johnson as successor. Not only did Guy Johnson possess "so perfect a Knowledge of the Indians and their Affairs," but he was the natives' choice as well. When suggesting Guy Johnson, Sir William Johnson showed his superior understanding of the go-between role. Sir William Johnson consistently emphasized that the Superintendent role must be filled by someone the Indians viewed as trustworthy.²⁷ He understood that the perception of the Indians was foremost, and the trust of the Indians was what mattered in the role of Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

In looking at Guy Johnson's actions directly after Sir William Johnson's death, it becomes clear that his ability to communicate and negotiate with the Iroquois legitimized

Sir William Johnson's recommendation. That work should also cause us to challenge historians' dismissal of the younger Johnson's skills. His aggressive response to the confusion after Sir William Johnson died during such an important meeting with the Six Nations is important. Guy Johnson took the crucial step of stopping Iroquois natives from sending out wampum belts to their various tribes that would have caused chaos within the league. The Iroquois were already on the brink of entering Lord Dunmore's War and such news could have pushed some natives into rebellious action.

It is Guy Johnson's speech to the Six Nations at Johnson Hall on July 12, 1774 that demonstrates his command of his new responsibilities. It was crucial for the British to respect and maintain Indian customs while engaging in diplomatic trade negotiations. Furthermore, it was the go-betweens that arranged and maintained this recognition of native tradition.²⁸ They also apparently had to know when it could be put aside. In the day after Sir William Johnson died, Guy Johnson directly went against one Iroquois custom that "those who have suffered a great loss should [not] speak first."²⁹ However, though Johnson went against custom, he also stated that the reason he did so was because the Indians threatened to send out their wampum belts to alarm the other natives that their advocate had died and that they were without anyone to represent them to the British. While this incident may seem minor, it does show that Johnson was aware of how his actions would be perceived by the Iroquois, and that his breach of custom was warranted because of their threat. Such a display of authority then translated into real authority as the new acting Superintendent.

Furthermore, Guy Johnson also employed rhetoric in this important speech that showed his command of communicating with Indians. As Johnson told the Iroquois that

he would be taking over the Superintendent role until further notice from England, he stated that he trusted “that the *Great Spirit*” would provide him with the willpower to be just as influential as his predecessor. Johnson invoked the religious language of his audience, which not only showed respect for their culture, but an understanding of how he needed to be perceived in their eyes. He closed his speech in the same fashion, as he made an alternative suggestion to the Iroquois who wanted to send out their original “alarming” wampum belts. Instead, Johnson suggested that the Indians “Send these Words thro’ the Nations, assuring them that the fire still burns, and the *Road* is open to this place.”³⁰

As well intentioned as Johnson was during this speech, it was the native response that truly mattered in legitimizing him as the Superintendent. Johnson could not have asked for a better response from the Iroquois chiefs. One Oneida chief, Conoghquieson, expressed to Guy Johnson his “vast pleasure to find that the *Fire* which was in danger of being totally extinguished” by Sir William Johnson’s death was “for the present rendered bright by you.”³¹ Not only did the Iroquois acknowledge that Johnson had prevented the dissolution of the Iroquois and British alliance, but the same Oneida chief communicated the thanks of his “whole confederacy” that in accordance to their “request,” Guy Johnson was taking over Indian affairs. He also stated that Guy Johnson was “the only person that knows us, and our affairs” and without him confusion would ensue.³² In effect the Iroquois made Guy Johnson their choice and so they responded to his communication, which is what was important to the work of a go-between.

After the initial reactions to Sir William Johnson’s death passed, Guy Johnson solidified his new role and started to address larger issues with the Iroquois. Johnson

soon employed the help of Joseph Brant in this work, sending Brant to represent him at a meeting of the Six Nations in Onondaga. When Johnson reconvened with the Iroquois in December of 1774, it was reported to him that Brant had represented him well, but even more importantly, as an interpreter he had recorded everything “very exactly.”³³ This acknowledgement, obviously, was important enough that it was recorded in the proceedings at his council. It provided proof of the trust that the Iroquois had in Brant as a mediator and interpreter.

At this same council an Iroquois speaker made an interesting statement about the Six Nations’ future help to the British that is worth mentioning. The primary outcome of this conference was that the Iroquois decided no longer to aid the Indians on the southern frontier. However, the Iroquois speaker did name some conditions for their acting upon this decision, one of which was that the “white Men” of Virginia could not “invade any part” of their “country.” Furthermore, he reiterated the Iroquois’ pleasure with the councils with Guy Johnson thus far and stated that “the six Nations are not inclined to break our engagements, till we see ourselves lessened, or our affairs in danger.”³⁴ These conditions, especially the warning about what might happen should they feel “lessened,” foreshadow what would precipitate Joseph Brant’s decline as a go-between. In addition, this warning also reiterated the fact that, for the Iroquois, imperial and larger issues occurring in the colonies would affect how they continued to negotiate or otherwise treat with the British.

Issues surrounding Lord Dunmore’s War dominated diplomacy and thus much of go-betweens’ actions with the Iroquois until the spring of 1775, but it would be larger imperial events that changed the nature of British-Indian affairs. As the War for

Independence began, British colonial authorities in London had little interest in the Iroquois' concerns about land-hungry settlers. In a blunt letter to Guy Johnson, the Earl of Dartmouth, the Secretary of the State for the Colonies, wrote that "The present state of affairs in His Majesties Colonies, in which an unnatural Rebellion has broke out...precludes all immediate consideration in the Domestic concerns of the Indians under your protection."³⁵

The summer of 1775 marked the period in which the Iroquois were at a crossroads. The Six Nations could remain neutral or become allies to the British or to the rebelling colonists. Both sides jockeyed to influence the Six Nations, even holding simultaneous conferences in July 1775 with the rebels in Albany and the British in Montreal. While the rebels encouraged the Iroquois to stay neutral, the British argued for their alliance. The ultimate result however, which did not come about for another two years, was neither of the two options. Instead of the whole Confederacy allying with one side or the other or choosing neutrality, the Six Nations divided their allegiances. For the Mohawks, who were the weakest of the Six Nations, Joseph Brant was influential in determining their alliance with the British Loyalists. This go-between did his work well in keeping his people tied to their long-term allies, but, showing the nature of reciprocity he did this with his people's interests in mind. Reportedly, Sir Guy Carleton, the governor-general of the Quebec Province, had promised to Joseph Brant that in exchange for the Mohawk's alliance, any "losses [they] might sustain" would be "replaced."³⁶

As military operations got underway in Canada, tensions started to mount between Joseph Brant, Guy Johnson, and Carleton about Iroquois military involvement. While Guy Johnson encouraged the use of the Iroquois, Carleton was ambivalent. This

resulted in Carleton abruptly sequestering Johnson's powers in Canada and appointing a Superintendent specific to that region, Major John Campbell.³⁷ This decision precipitated Johnson to travel to London to make a case that his position included Canada and also to speak on the Iroquois' behalf. However, he did not go alone. Johnson brought Joseph Brant along with him, and together these go-betweens crossed the Atlantic to strengthen connections between the British and the Iroquois peoples.

Joseph Brant's journey to London from the fall of 1775 until the first half of 1776, one of his most official acts as a go-between for his people caused ambivalence about him among his own people. Alan Taylor aptly described Brant as possessing a certain "cultural hybridity" that became "too enmeshed in British culture for jealous rivals in the native world."³⁸ But for the time being, Brant had an opportunity to expand his work as a mediator by communicating with an imperial authority directly—an opportunity that would not come again until after the Revolution.

Joseph Brant's speech to Lord George Germain, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, exemplified his ability to negotiate on his people's behalf without threatening their alliance with the British. While Brant laid out his, the Iroquois', and, specifically, the Mohawks' grievances before Lord Germain, he consistently reiterated their loyalty to Britain and the King. Perhaps this was one reason why his people were ambivalent about his traveling to speak to the King, for to them loyalty was contingent, not absolute. At the same time, Brant's rhetoric also reflected that of his earlier discourse, in that he emphasized that the Iroquois were serving the British as allies, not subordinates, and should be treated as so. Brant's emphasis on equality between the British and Iroquois can be seen in his choice of language. Recognizing his audience, a talent that was key to

a good go-between's work, Brant began his speech to Lord Germain, telling him that his intentions when coming to London were to speak to their "Father the King" to describe the Indians' "attachment to His Majesty and his Government."³⁹ While the use of the word "Father" could be interpreted to show the dependency of the Iroquois, Brant employed the same language in describing the British as "children." After that brief and flattering introduction, Brant went into details about Iroquois grievances and how the British should address them.

Among these complaints was the recent thwarting of support given to the tribe in military operations in Canada. While exaggerating to an extent, when he said that the Iroquois "alone" defeated the invading colonists, Brant still addressed the lack of support the British army provided the Iroquois warriors during battle.⁴⁰ Referring to the British colonists as "White people," which in and of itself added a racial dimension to his discourse, Brant stated that the Iroquois "hope to see these bad children chastised." Further, he wanted to be able to tell his people, who had "always been faithful and ready to assist the King," how their complaint would be addressed.

Brant continued to list the various ways in which he and the Mohawk natives believed they had been "very badly treated by [the King's] people."⁴¹ Amongst these complaints were the taking of Mohawk land, and the presence of missionaries in their towns. He closed with a telling statement of the Mohawks' understanding of how they had been treated by the British. Brant stated, "Indeed it is very hard when we have let the Kings subjects have so much of our lands for so little value, they should want to cheat us in the manner of the small spots we have left for our women and children to live on. We are tired out in making complaints and getting not redress."⁴²

The last section of Brant's speech reveals an incredible amount of information about the Mohawks' perception of their position as allies to the British, as well as Brant's ability to communicate that perception. While Brant was listing the grievances of the Mohawk specifically and Iroquois more generally, he was not threatening the alliance with the British, but he was questioning British loyalty in that alliance. To Brant, the British were exploiting their alliance with the Mohawk and were doing so by taking some of the last parcels of Mohawk land. However, because of his role as mediator, Brant did not necessarily address the British in a threatening tone, but instead posed Mohawk grievances as a logical question, asking why the British would want to cheat their ally.

Furthermore, Brant's statement about Mohawk frustration about receiving no "redress" from the British is significant as well. As mentioned above, the Iroquois were concerned that the tribe should not feel "lessened" by their alliance. By pointing this out, Brant was truly representing the Mohawk and restating their needs to the British. But at the same time, it showed that the Mohawk saw themselves in an equal alliance with the British and expected to be treated as such. If Brant's tone was not threatening, it certainly should have been taken as uneasy, in that he was questioning the importance of the Mohawk alliance with the British.

However, if Joseph Brant was expecting a long response from Lord Germain, he was disappointed. In responding to Germain's "few words" of promise to take into account the Iroquois' concerns, Brant again emphasized the importance of doing so. Brant diplomatically stated that he took Germain's words seriously and that he expected the Mohawk "shall not be disappointed."⁴³ However, it is Brant's last statement to Germain that deserves further attention for it shows his efforts to control the transfer of

information between the British and Iroquois. In closing, Brant asked Lord Germain “not to listen to every story that may be told about Indians; but to give ear only to such things as come from our Chiefs and wise men in Council; which will be communicated to you by our Superintendent.”⁴⁴ Brant was pointing out who had proper information and who could properly transmit it—in other words, who was the approved go-between. He was confirming himself and Guy Johnson as the only trustworthy people to communicate between the British and the Iroquois.

While Brant’s main mission in London was to communicate the Mohawks’ concerns to Germain, and to speak on behalf of Guy Johnson, he also dabbled in the London social scene, impressing some of the locals. One spectator noted his attire, a mixture of Indian and British military garb, while also complimenting his “polished manners,” “intelligent cast of countenance,” and his “gentle” nature. The duality of Brant’s attire was reflective of the duality of his role as a go-between, able to bridge the cultural barriers between native life and that of British culture.⁴⁵

Guy Johnson also had business to take care of in London, and he addressed it in a report to Lord Germain on the state of Indian affairs. While Johnson recounted the events involving the Iroquois as far back as the French and Indian War, the most pertinent sections revolved around his work as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Keeping in mind that he was speaking to his superior and trying to gain authority as Superintendent in the Canada theatre as well as the Northern theatre in America, the rhetoric that Johnson used did show his understanding of the role he was fulfilling. In his report, Johnson wrote about the attentiveness that the role of Superintendent required, stating that he “was fully persuaded that an attention to [the Indians’] interests, with a

proper management of their concerns, will always secure their fidelity to the Crown.”⁴⁶

Not only did Johnson communicate essential aspects of the Superintendent’s role as a go-between, most notably that he was to “proper[ly]” represent them, but he did it in such a way as to show Lord Germain the benefits it would have for Britain. Like Brant, Johnson was aware of his audience when he was doing his work as a go-between.

Johnson’s statements about the proper role of the Superintendent were not just words. Although Johnson’s main objective in traveling to London was to increase his authority as Superintendent, he did not let that bury his job as a representative of the natives’ interests to the Crown. Johnson first established the imperative that Germain recognize the needs of the Iroquois if they were to be “rendered serviceable” in the current war or “on any future emergency.”⁴⁷ Then, in a lengthy section of his report, Johnson went into detail about the Iroquois’ grievances, which were reiterated in Joseph Brant’s speech to Lord Germain.

Guy Johnson, however, did not finish his report before addressing his foremost concern to the Secretary of State to the Colonies—that of obtaining the Superintendent position in Canada. Indeed, Johnson pointed out important points and qualifications that he possessed, highlighting his experience and his “influence” in Indian affairs. In essence, he had successfully completed his apprenticeship as a go-between and now could supervise other such officials and Indians as he worked on behalf of the government. Johnson pointed out his primary “ambition” as Superintendent, which was to “promote the interests of the government,” concluding his report by identifying Joseph Brant as someone who could speak on his behalf.⁴⁸

Johnson did not get what he wanted from his appeal to Germain. While Johnson was appointed the official, rather than “acting,” Superintendent of the Northern department, he was denied the position of Superintendent in Canada. The impact of this decision had greater significance for Johnson as a go-between, beyond simply limiting his power. When Johnson returned to America in July of 1776, shortly after the thirteen colonies had declared their Independence, he was ordered to station himself in New York City. While this order gave him a centralized place from which to serve as Superintendent, it removed him from direct contact with the Iroquois. It thus undermined his ability to act as a go-between. At this juncture Brant and Johnson would go their separate ways, although not permanently, but for about three years. However, as Johnson’s role as a mediator was reduced, Joseph Brant’s increased. It grew because of his duality as a go-between, that of a diplomatic as well as a military mediator for the Iroquois and the British. Upon his return to America, Brant began to mobilize the Mohawk and other Iroquois tribes for war.

In this early period of the American Revolution, these two men worked in tandem to be the go-between that Sir William Johnson had been on his own. Guy Johnson succeeded his uncle in title but only partially succeeded in his powers as a go-between. Johnson’s knowledge of the Iroquois language, customs, and diplomatic procedures gained him their trust. At the same time, the Iroquois could not and would not let go of the memory of Sir William Johnson. Their memory and comparison of Guy Johnson with Sir William Johnson would ultimately weaken Guy Johnson’s ability as a go-between. Furthermore, Joseph Brant became the primary representative of the Mohawk and Iroquois on an imperial scale during these early stages of the war. Brant understood

both the need and hazards of an alliance with the British, and he did not hesitate to communicate both of these concerns to the imperial government. Both men had excelled in their own ways as diplomats at the beginning of the Revolution, but greater challenges awaited them. Guy Johnson had to compete with his uncle's memory and Iroquois skeptics challenged Brant's diplomatic position. It would be their efforts outside the comfort of the treaty council or imperial diplomatic arena that would jeopardize their role as go-betweens as the War for Independence came to Iroquois country and New York.

Chapter Three: Joseph Brant—Zealous Go-Between or Iroquois Nuisance?

On an early August day in 1777 near the Oneida town of Oriskany, Joseph Brant sat waiting for a rebel unit to pass on its way towards Fort Stanwix. With him was a unit of Mohawk and white loyalists he called his “Volunteers,” all prepared to attack at any moment. Behind him were John Butler and a cohort of Seneca Indians, who had come for a council, but now found themselves armed for military action. They had a plan. The Loyalists and Indians were to attack Major General Nicholas Herkimer’s militia unit when it was close enough for a full-fledged assault from all sides. However, as Brant lay there, he heard the familiar sound of the Indian war cry before Herkimer had reached the agreed-upon point. The premature attack set off by that cry signaled the beginning of the Iroquois’ major involvement in the military actions of the War for Independence. The Mohawk, Cayugas, Onondagas, and now the Seneca were fighting for the British. On the other side, however, was the large group of Oneida in the rebel contingent. This battle was significant for many reasons: one was because it officially pitted Iroquois against Iroquois, and because it was one of the first battles in which Joseph Brant would show his leadership as a military go-between in this war.¹

Until this point, Brant’s skills as a go-between were most evident in his diplomatic efforts to communicate general Iroquois and specific Mohawk needs to the British provincial and imperial leaders. He attended countless treaties and conferences, served as an interpreter for the Superintendent, and made speeches on his people’s behalf. Then, after he returned from London and more intense military action began in New York and along its frontier, Brant proved to be an equally effective military go-between as well. Documents concerning Brant during the military campaigns of the New York

frontier, primarily up until 1779, reveal two crucial points about Brant. First, as a warrior Brant consistently proved his dedication to both the Indian and British cause. Until that dedication became challenged by British provincial leaders, Brant fought for the King and Iroquois equally. Second, Brant not only rallied the Indians with his own and the King's messages, but he was also successful in recruiting white men as well. In fact, in many cases, he was more successful in recruiting the latter rather than the former, in that white men outnumbered Indians under his command in the initial years of the war.²

Brant's actions thus legitimized the promises that he made to Germain in London. On the other hand, in what ultimately became more important they also showed his dedication to the survival of his people. In council, in native and English society, and on the battlefields of the frontier, Brant was able to cross two cultural boundaries for peace and for militant defense—at least for awhile; but as the war progressed and the British hope for success began to falter, Brant's allegiance to the British started to dwindle, until he became primarily an adherent to his people, serving the British only for the sake of trying to maintain Iroquois autonomy against new American expansion.

A contributing factor to that transition was the constant tension between the imperial government in England and provincial British leaders over Indian affairs throughout the war. Similar issues had existed with Sir William Johnson's work as Superintendent, but tension during this war had larger consequences. During the military campaigns, the imperial government continually reiterated the importance of using the Iroquois as military allies, but some provincial leaders, such as Sir Guy Carleton and John and Walter Butler, found them to be a nuisance. This disagreement challenged Brant's recruitment and military leadership at crucial moments of the war. At the

conclusion of the war however, imperial and provincial positions dramatically flip-flopped. Once peace negotiations got underway, provincial leaders such as Frederick Haldimand and Brigadier General Allan Maclean continued to acknowledge Iroquois contributions during the war to their imperial leaders in order to provide their Indian allies with the land that the provincial leaders had promised the natives. The imperial government, however, jettisoned Indian issues in order to make peace. Worse still, eventually provincial British leaders, who had promoted Iroquois interests, such as Daniel Claus and Haldimand, followed suit. As Brant acted more the advocate—for the British no longer needed him as a go-between—he became a nuisance even to his most trusted former allies. While provincial and imperial leaders debated the fate of the Indians, Joseph Brant continued to plead on his people’s behalf, but his words no longer carried the impact they had when the Iroquois were considered allies instead of subordinates.

The perceived sense of equality that had existed in negotiations in the early 1770s no longer existed in 1783—and Brant knew this because of events throughout the war and because the British and United States put it in writing as they made peace. Regardless, Brant continued to speak on behalf of his people with the same loyalty he had in the years of the war. Before looking at the go-betweens’ fate, it is important to highlight the events that caused this native go-between to subordinate that role to that of leader.

Brant and Guy Johnson returned from England in the late summer of 1776.³ Once back in America, Brant left Johnson in New York City and immediately set out for home across enemy territory. Brant, and one of Johnson’s men who disguised himself as a

militiaman, requested the dangerous mission so he could “prepar[e] the Indians to cooperate with [the English] military movements.” While the plan to immediately mobilize the Iroquois natives seemed ideal at the time, Johnson quickly realized that there would be a delay, because Brant had to wait out the winter hunting season before he could field a significant group of Indian warriors.⁴ Nevertheless, Lord George Germain had high expectations that Brant “will succeed in his purpose” and “that a considerable body of the Indians will be in readiness to second any operations with Sir William Howe.” To show his approval with something other than words, he also sent a number of gifts for the Indians on a ship to America.⁵

Those gifts were significant for during the winter of 1776-1777 a competition ensued between the British and rebels to acquire the allegiance of the Iroquois. While the Mohawk allied with the British, the Seneca and the Oneidas continued to claim neutrality. Deciding not to stay idle during the winter, Brant started a tour of Iroquois country, making speeches on Howe and Guy Johnson’s behalf in the hope of gaining the King more Indian allies. However, as Brant made his way through Cayuga, Seneca, and Onondaga territory, neutrality seemed to prevail. Brant later found out that John Butler was spreading a contrary message to these same peoples to stay calm and not take up arms. Also, in the Oneida towns, the Reverend Samuel Kirkland dissuaded local Indians from allying with the British.⁶ Brant’s lack of success in getting more of the other Iroquois to join his unit of Mohawk warriors did not stop him from successfully recruiting Loyalists. In fact, he recruited enough white men to form his unit of “Volunteers” by the spring of 1777.⁷

It was with these men and the Indian warriors that he did recruit that the Mohawk go-between started to prepare for the battle season. Brant had his first confrontation with the rebel General Herkimer, in Unadilla, New York in early July. During this meeting, the two men met in a “peaceable manner,” but sized up each other’s forces. Furthermore, Brant told Herkimer that an expedition of natives and Loyalists was “intent to go to Oswego” and then to the rebels’ “Western Country,” but only after the British held a large council with the neutral Iroquois to convince them to join the mission.⁸ Brant’s threat was enough to alarm Herkimer, who believed that if the rebels did not receive reinforcements, the Loyalist natives would “make a ravage” of their land and Fort Stanwix.⁹ While Brant significantly exaggerated the forces that he had with him at that moment—he claimed to have five hundred men—he did not exaggerate the importance of the forthcoming council that Butler was planning to hold with the Seneca.¹⁰

At this council, which took place at the beginning of July 1777 at Irondequoit, the British met with the Seneca and proposed reinstating an alliance between them. The British did not get an immediate response, and the Seneca not only remained unsure after the first days of council but even restated their neutrality for a number of days. However, John Butler became more persistent, and like a good go-between, communicated how the Seneca would benefit from an alliance with the British. To improve his offer, Butler showered the Seneca with gifts, and then used the wampum belt that represented the Covenant Chain to seal the deal.¹¹ Butler used speeches and traded upon tradition and friendship, all coveted forms of expression to natives, to get the Seneca as his allies, and he succeeded. Thus, going into the St. Leger expedition, an attack on rebel-occupied Fort

Stanwix, Brant had his Volunteers and Indian warriors, and Butler had his own contingent of Senecas to provide support for the British army.

In preparation for the battle however, other issues arose between Brant and Butler, and also Daniel Claus, who had been named the Indian Superintendent of the St. Leger expedition. When Claus arrived at Oswego in July, he found Brant's 300 warriors "destitute of necessaries, ammunition, and some arms." Brant further complained to Claus that he had already asked Butler for more ammunition after his meeting with Herkimer, especially once Brant realized, and finally admitted, that he was in fact severely outmanned by the enemy, as Herkimer had an estimated 800-man force and Brant had a mere 200 men. To make his point clear, Brant told Claus that "as no person was on the spot to take care of the number of Indians with him...they wou'd become disgusted, and disperse, which might prevent the rest of the 6 Nations to assemble, and be hurtfull to the Exped[ition]."¹² The lack of supplies, coupled with Butler's earlier orders that hurt Brant's recruitment efforts, created significant tension between Brant and Butler. Brant wanted immediate action and he was ordered by imperial leadership to mobilize as many Iroquois as he could before the 1777 season. Butler's campaign to gain Iroquois allies but not immediately mobilize them interfered with both goals. The provincial leaderships' vision for the Indians' place in the war was not in tandem with that of the imperial leadership, especially Lord Germain who had emphasized the importance of the Iroquois to Johnson only months earlier. Furthermore, Butler's lack of attention to Brant's warriors would become a problem again in the future. However, before this particular expedition, Claus supplied Brant and started his units of Indians and Loyalists towards Fort Stanwix where they converged with Lieutenant Colonel St.

Leger's army who prepared for a siege.¹³ Another issue arose at Oswego concerning Butler's competence before the expedition got underway. Claus soon discovered that none of the additional Seneca that Butler had gathered from the Detroit region after his successful council came prepared for battle, for they had believed they were only coming for another council.¹⁴

Preparations for the attack on rebel-occupied Fort Stanwix were interrupted when Molly Brant, Sir William Johnson's widow and Joseph's sister, sent a message that a rebel force was on its way to the fort. Thus, from the Loyalists and natives preparing for the siege on Fort Stanwix, "400 Indians were ordered to reconnoitre the enemy," and were then joined by more natives to make a force of about 800.¹⁵ After waiting throughout the night for the approaching rebel force, the Loyalists and natives finally attacked the rebels the next day. The battle at Oriskany did not last long, but at least two hundred rebels died.¹⁶ It was a bloody battle, as the Indians made a "great Slaughter chiefly with Spears & Lances."¹⁷ Most notably, General Herkimer was seriously injured and died days later. The battle at Oriskany officially began a war within the greater war, one that pitted Iroquois against Iroquois. After the battle, to revenge the death of the Indians who died at the hand of the rebels (one was Sir William Johnson's son and namesake), the Loyalist-allied Iroquois burned an Oneida town, "destroyed their fields, crops," and "carried away their cattle." In retaliation, the Oneidas destroyed several Mohawk homes including Molly Brant's home at Canajoharie.¹⁸

In analyzing Brant's work as a go-between during this battle, one can see that Brant's allegiance as still firmly cast with both the British and the natives. Brant's efforts to recruit on Johnson and Howe's behalf, despite the natives' insistence on remaining

neutral, showed his dedication to the King's cause. In addition, his recruitment style, in that he promoted immediate action, indicated his fervent motivation. Daniel Claus acknowledged Brant's work, commending him for being "the most faithful and zealous subject His Majesty can have in America."¹⁹ Yet Brant equally showed his allegiance to his own people by advocating on their behalf for the correct provisions and supplies for battle. When Brant felt that his people were not provided with necessary supplies, he did not hesitate to communicate that to his British superiors and lay out the consequences of neglect—that the Indians would desert and the British expedition would fail.

Brant's careful balancing act was endangered by escalating tensions with Butler. Brant's allegiance to the British and his own people as well as his leadership and go-between roles also started to collide. As the war progressed, Brant's position of authority among the Iroquois and his Loyalists was continually questioned or thwarted by British leaders. This was rooted in the confusion among provincial and imperial leaders on how the Indians should be utilized. While Butler stressed the importance of having Indian allies and strove to get the Seneca's allegiance, he truly obfuscated his intentions when he went out to recruit them. Some of the Seneca Indians at Oriskany and Fort Stanwix had not expected to fight, because Butler had invited them to council not battle. Historians have suggested that Butler exploited them with the promise of trade, goods, and alcohol to attend the council with the actual intent of using them as warriors.²⁰ That was not how Brant recruited natives. In 1777, at least Brant had Claus to alleviate tensions that already existed between himself and Butler.

After the battle of Oriskany, the campaign season came to a close with a series of British defeats in New York, most notably St. Leger's failed siege of Fort Stanwix and

then General Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga. Seeing a possible opportunity to gain the rest of the Iroquois as allies, the rebels held a conference at Onondaga in the fall at which Joseph Brant took up his diplomatic work once again. Speaking on behalf of the Iroquois, Brant used "all the most cogent arguments" to point out that after the loss of their men at the battle at Fort Stanwix, they would remain allied with the British. Furthermore, foreseeing the "Subjection and Slavery" they would be "exposed to if the Rebels got the better" of them, Brant and his Seneca partner, Sakayengwaraghton, reaffirmed their alliance with the British.²¹ The rebels not only heard the words but saw beyond them as to why the Iroquois remained allied with the British despite the losing 1777 season. The rebels knew that the British had "a very capital advantage over [them] in their intercourse with the Indians as they have it in their power to afford them such ample supplies."²² With his and his peoples' allegiance firmly settled with the British, Brant retired for the winter of 1778 to plan the next campaign.²³

That spring, Brant's main objective was to gain enough recruits to attack the rebel towns of Cherry Valley, while Sakayengwaraghton would attack the Wyoming Valley.²⁴ While John Butler went with the Seneca, he and Brant had decided that Brant should remain focused on recruiting more Indians.²⁵ In the spring of 1778, Brant gained the allegiance of more Seneca and Cayuga Indians who had previously promised their neutrality to the rebels. These new recruits declared to the British in Niagara that they would join the Loyalist forces in the upcoming spring campaign, and then they "marched off" to "Aughwago" with Brant, who acquired even more recruits along the way.²⁶ As early as April of 1778, the settlers of Cherry Valley were sending out alarms because "the

Enemy” was to arrive in less than a month, and “fifteen hundred Indians and Tories” were “assembled” nearby.²⁷

The residents had reason to worry. In May, Brant attacked the Continental Army and militia with his new party of warriors at Cherry Valley.²⁸ Next, the Seneca leader, Sakayengwaraghton, and John Butler attacked the Wyoming Valley at the beginning of July, destroying a number of forts and almost a thousand rebel homes. Furthermore, the Indians scalped over 200 of those settlers.²⁹

For the duration of 1778, the Iroquois made numerous attacks on the New York backcountry of Tryon County, and while Brant was present at several, he was claimed to have led even more. During the summer campaign, Brant became so feared that rebel New Yorkers falsely accused Brant of heading at least three attacks.³⁰ In one of the accounts, recorded as “Brant at His Old Tricks,” a witness claimed that a wagon was attacked by a party of Indians “supposed to [be] headed by Brant.”³¹ According to Daniel Claus, Brant “was the Dread & Terror of the whole Country.”³² Brant was accused of being at the Wyoming Valley battle, but was actually in Oquaga at the time.³³ While many of these accounts were in fact untrue, Brant did participate in his share of attacks. In July, Brant attacked the towns of Springfield and Andrewstown before moving on to attack the German Flatts in September. There Brant destroyed the colonists’ “Buildings, Barns, Stacks of Grain” and drove out “a great number of horses & horn cattle.”³⁴

What is important about the summer of 1778 is the reputation that Brant acquired from both the British and the rebels. It was a powerful one in the short term, but one that would boomerang in the long term. In recognition of Brant’s success recruiting throughout the summer, and also for his other military actions, Daniel Claus commended

and acknowledged Brant and Sakayengwaraghton's ability to fight for their own peoples' "Cause & Liberty" while still "keeping sacred their Alliance, entered into with the Crown of Great Britain for near a Century Past."³⁵ At the end of the war when advocating for Iroquois autonomy was still a priority, Brant would remind British officials of this work as a go-between. At the same time, Brant's actions as a warrior made him one of the most feared Indians among the rebels. The veil between fact and fiction only increased the fear that the rebels had of Brant—to them he was the worst of "savages," and that reputation would color perceptions of him after the war.³⁶ Brant was the go-between of two enemies—thus rebels were even less inclined to accept him as a go-between in peace negotiations. In contrast, the British consistently hailed Brant for showing "dispositions of Humanity to Women & Children & Persons not found in Arms."³⁷

It was one thing for the British to hail Brant, but another to help him as he helped them. During the Cherry Valley battle in November of 1778, Brant experienced serious challenges to his authority as a war leader from the British that would resonate with him for the duration of the Revolution and affect his future actions as an ally. The most critical challenge came from John Butler's son Walter, who was in charge of the operation and like his father, created problems for Brant.

One particular incident occurred at the beginning of the campaign that solidified the tension between the two. Brant joined Walter Butler and the contingent of men that Butler called his Rangers. However, the two immediately did not get along, and Brant claimed that Butler's "usage of him since he joined him...& the Rangers" was "excessive ill." This tension got to the point where Brant "had thoughts of quitting" and leaving the whole expedition all together for winter quarters in Niagara. Brant may have done this

had it not been for the Indians serving in his party who “would not hear of it.”³⁸ Two important points can be taken from this incident. First, it was Brant’s loyalty to his own people that made him stay. Second, while it could be suggested that it was merely irritation that caused Brant to threaten to leave the expedition, one should not forget what one Iroquois speaker said to Guy Johnson in council in 1774: that the Iroquois would remain allies with the British until they felt “lessened.”³⁹ Thus it was one thing to be negligent with Brant’s supplies for battle as the senior Butler had done; but it was insulting to treat an ally in war so disrespectfully. Brant’s men saw that and reminded Brant that he could always bring problems with Butler to his superiors.⁴⁰

That is exactly what Brant did when he sent a letter of complaint to Mr. Edward Pollard, who worked for John Butler. It may be no surprise that Brant’s letter complaining about Walter Butler to his father’s assistant prompted a strongly negative reaction. The complaint did not help Brant’s reputation among the British provincial leadership, who believed that “Mr. Brant” did “not know the policy of this Place by his complaining to a person who...thinks it not his Interest to differ with a certain Gentleman in whose sight Mr. Brant is a great Eye sore.”⁴¹

The trouble between the Butlers and Brant only got worse before the Cherry Valley expedition got underway in November. When Brant indicated that he was going to abandon the mission, ninety of his Loyalist Volunteers were going to go with him. Once Brant decided to stay and lead the Indians, Walter Butler demanded that those ninety Volunteers serve under him instead of Brant. Deciding that they would rather desert than serve under Butler, the Volunteers abandoned the mission, leaving Brant with ninety less men for support.⁴² Months after the attack on Cherry Valley, Daniel Claus

would note how this incident resonated with Brant enough for Butler to seek redress and how it affected the overall battle. Claus stated in March 1779 that Butler planned to serve with Brant “to vindicate himself of his rash Behaviour to Brant last fall.” Furthermore, Claus blamed Butler’s actions for the fact that the battle at Cherry Valley had “not [been] more decisive.”⁴³

Claus was right—the battle at Cherry Valley on November 11, 1778 turned into a disaster for Walter Butler, who intended to attack the house holding the rebel officers and the fort, while leaving the unarmed alone.⁴⁴ What ensued was a bloodbath, for instead of following the plan, the Indians in the party attacked the town instead of the fortification, killing rebel and even Loyalist families. Both Butler and Brant were shocked at this, and Brant and some other Indians did try to save some of the families not yet ambushed.⁴⁵ One major in the rebel garrison described the attack, stating that “The enemy was very numerous; burnt all the buildings in the settlement, killed a great number of the inhabitants, men women & Children, carryed off many prisoners; some few that hid in the woods have got into the Fort.” Furthermore, “They collected all the cattle horses & Sheep they could and drove off.”⁴⁶ While many could credit Brant for trying to save some innocent inhabitants, the next day he joined Indians who returned to burn the remaining buildings.⁴⁷

Cherry Valley concluded the major fighting for 1778 and confirmed the icy relationship between Brant and Butler. The ties binding this go-between to the British started to loosen at Cherry Valley. This attack had a two-fold effect in that it weakened the alliance between the British and Indians, while spurring the rebels to greater efforts against the Indians. Gov. Clinton, only days after the raid, sent a letter to John Jay,

suggesting “more effectual Measures” be taken in the frontier. He further believed that a “proper Force” was necessary from the “Main Army” for an offensive attack.⁴⁸ This was exactly what the Continental Army planned, except that instead of a single force, it decided upon a three-pronged attack that would devastate Iroquois country along with their autonomy, thus making Brant’s position untenable.

Before that conclusion however, during the winter of 1778 and 1779, a change in provincial leadership benefited the Iroquois. General Frederick Haldimand replaced Sir Guy Carleton as governor of the Province of Quebec and became an important advocate for the Iroquois and friend to Joseph Brant. As Daniel Claus noted, Haldimand made immediate efforts to form a relationship with the Iroquois. Claus wrote Haldimand to tell him how his “Belt & Message of last Fall was so agreeable & well received by the 6 Nations.”⁴⁹ Haldimand himself addressed the Mohawk in April 1779 to reassure them that he would uphold the promises Carleton had made about restoring their land after the war.⁵⁰ Though Haldimand intended to keep his promises, the nature and course of the war ultimately rendered that promise impossible. As Haldimand assumed his new role, Guy Johnson returned to Niagara in 1779, thus reuniting the Iroquois with their Superintendent.

Brant and Haldimand’s friendship began when Haldimand invited Brant to Quebec in March of 1779 to meet and discuss Indian affairs. In addition to the guarantee that Haldimand made about land, he also provided Brant and his volunteers with their long overdue pay.⁵¹ Brant was immediately taken by Haldimand and vice versa, and Haldimand wrote to Lord George Germain of Brant’s successes. Germain responded

positively noting that Brant should have “a claim to every mark of our regard,” sending “a commission signed His Majesty appointing him a Colonel of Indians.”⁵²

En route home, Brant received disturbing news about the conditions in the backcountry. The rebels had attacked the town of Onondaga and supposedly captured one of his children. This was the first issue Brant dealt with, which ended favorably with his discovery that the report was false when he arrived in Niagara. But tensions were running high as news of an imminent attack by the rebels had Indians in a panic, with many areas from the Mohawk territory and as far west as Detroit requesting aid.⁵³ British leaders in Detroit hoped that Brant would come there because of his skillful abilities to recruit Indians. Captain R. B. Larnolt wrote to Lieutenant Colonel Mason Bolton that he believed Brant and “his Warriors would have spirited up our Indians greatly they always rely more on what is said to them by one of their own color than anything coming from one of us.”⁵⁴ But instead of serving as a go-between for Bolton, Brant decided to head back into the New York frontier and made a serious raid on the town of Minisink on 20 July.⁵⁵ While Brant was sure an attack from the rebels was imminent, Haldimand believed that the rebels were no longer planning on the offensive. On 20 August, he addressed a council of Iroquois and downplayed “Apprehensions of the Rebels coming to attack” by simply saying “I cannot have the least Thought of” it.⁵⁶

Haldimand may have dismissed it, but General George Washington did not. The expedition that the rebels planned for 1779 had three main fronts. Washington and other military leaders devised an all-encompassing attack on Iroquois country. Major General John Sullivan would move north up the Susquehanna, General James Clinton would

move southward along the Mohawk, and Colonel Daniel Brodhead would hit the northern and western settlements.⁵⁷

The forces moved on 11 August, and the next day Sullivan destroyed the village of Chemung, burning all the buildings to the ground. Brant arrived three days later to see the damage and meet Butler and his Rangers. On 22 August, Clinton's forces, which had destroyed another five villages, met with Sullivan's at Tioga, and they joined together on 26 August. By this point, Brant had met up with both Butlers and a number of Indian warrior chiefs, who all believed they could defeat the rebels. But the first battle shook their confidence. Brant's men waited for Sullivan's unit to pass by, but rebel riflemen detected them early on 29 August. Severely outnumbered, Brant's forces had to retreat while the rebels ruined an entire town's perfectly good crops.⁵⁸

Sullivan's expedition continued until the middle of September, as his forces destroyed one Iroquois town after another. Some of the towns, like Kanadesaga, had up to fifty houses and acres of fruit orchards. On 14 September, Sullivan approached another town that had one hundred and twenty-eight houses and abundant fields that he ordered to be torched.⁵⁹ This scorched earth campaign was unimaginable for the Iroquois. At the same time, the aftermath was also hard to fathom for the British, as almost four thousand refugees sought shelter at Fort Niagara.⁶⁰

Sullivan's expedition did not break Joseph Brant's will, but instead made him even more desperate for more war. He continued to lead frontier raids throughout the campaign season of 1780 and recruit more Indians, who begged Daniel Claus to allow them to serve under Brant because they wanted to "be with a person they had confidence in & had volunteerly served under with much Satisfaction."⁶¹ Sullivan's campaign had

not broken the will of the Iroquois, but it certainly made their long-time friends doubt their prospects for maintaining autonomy. Although, the Iroquois still saw themselves as an autonomous nation that held “the Balance of Power on the Continent,” Daniel Claus, old friend of Brant, called this belief a “ridiculous Notion.” He said that the British “acquiesced” to this idea during the war, but implied it was seen more as a platitude than real recognition. Even more disparagingly, Claus claimed that “the only way to get them to act hearty is to make them [lose] Blood if they can be brought to it, when savage Revenge will out do all Bribery.”⁶² Coming from someone who had consistently been an advocate for the Iroquois, even when his peers doubted the value of Indian involvement in the war, Claus’ opinion showed the deteriorating confidence in the Iroquois dominance and the value of alliance with them. Claus’ perception of the Iroquois had changed, echoing those of others. The altered perceptions dramatically changed the British negotiations with their native allies, who according to Claus, had diminished to the state of subordinates and dependents. Contributing to the change was the shift to operations in the South. At that point, the Iroquois needed a decisive victory to regain some confidence from the British.

In 1781 Brant was sent to Detroit to help aid the Indians against George Rogers Clark. He was still there in the spring of 1782 when he heard about Cornwallis’ surrender. He immediately returned to Mohawk country, looking to conduct frontier raids, but his efforts were thwarted when he was called back to Oswego because of a “cessation of hostilities.”⁶³ In other words, Brant was no longer allowed to fight, because the British would no longer allow it. Brant was being told he could no longer defend his

people, which sounded to him more like an order a superior gave a subordinate, not an ally. By the conclusion of 1782, Brant knew that his people were in trouble.

Brant wrote of his concern over his people's fate to Sir John Johnson, Sir William Johnson's son and Guy Johnson's cousin, the new Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The same letter makes clear that Brant's power as a go-between had fatally weakened.

Although there was essentially an armistice or cease fire in place as the armies awaited diplomatic resolution, Brant wanted to continue fighting, especially after a group of Shawnees were attacked in Virginia. The Iroquois even proceeded to hold councils to try to arrange a war party. However, the diplomatic climate had changed, and the British representatives at the council no longer had incentive to treat with the Iroquois like they once had only a decade earlier when the Anglo-Iroquois alliance was essential to the British war effort. Brant pointed out in his letter to Johnson, that the Iroquois' speeches were "badly translated into English" at the councils and he feared, now, that the whole plan to arrange a war party would be forgotten. If the Iroquois could not continue fighting, Brant truly believed that "the Rebels would ruin [them] at last."⁶⁴

The beginning of this letter is telling on many levels, but most importantly it shows the decline of Brant's power as a mediator between Indian and English interests. Furthermore, it indicates that the natives' power to be autonomous was seriously in question for they awaited British assent to their plans. Brant was making a plea to Johnson to be allowed to fight, but to fight the native way—for retaliation and revenge. Furthermore, Brant pleaded to Johnson, "I am sure you will assist all you can to Let us have an Expedition Early in the spring Let it be great or small one, let us not hang our heads between our knees...I am not so well contented as I used to be formerly because

the Warriors are in want, they are treated worse & worse instead of better.”⁶⁵ There was a desperation to Brant’s words that indicates that his confidence was waning. Instead of acting as a leader demanding action, Brant returned to the go-between posture on behalf of his people, but that posture was a weaker one than it had been at the war’s onset. It was also clear that Brant was losing faith in the British because of their mistreatment of his warriors. In the past, Brant had demanded aid from the British as an expectation and given right as an ally. However, after the Iroquois had fought for so many years to only see their allies defeated, Brant was forced to beg for help. Based on Claus’s previous letter, it was obvious that the British no longer believed the Iroquois warranted the same respect. Once his people were seen merely as subordinates instead of allies, Brant could no longer make claims to Iroquois power in negotiations, which had once been a necessity for the British. It was also clear that Brant’s loyalties lay with his people first and foremost, and the subsequent events reinforced that allegiance. The American Revolution had forced Brant and his fellow Iroquois to choose sides, but the choices that were made and how they acted on them ultimately undermined their abilities to affect the balance of power to their own benefit.

In the next three years, Brant and the Iroquois dealt with a number of betrayals. The Iroquois now had two external nations to negotiate with—Britain and the United States. Brant was present at different negotiations with both, but the nature of mediation had changed because of the war and its aftermath. As word of the peace treaty reached General Haldimand, the Indians became restless to know the outcome, especially about how well the British had kept their promise to protect their lands.⁶⁶ Knowing the outcome, and hesitant to tell the Iroquois, British leaders were even more worried about

Brant's reaction. In fact, Brigadier General Allan MacLean suggested that Brant be "detained in Canada," because he "is much better informed and instructed than any other Indians, he is strongly attached to the interest of his Countrymen...he would be so much sensible of the miserable situation in which we have left this unfortunate People, that...he would do a great deal of mischief" if he remained at Niagara.⁶⁷ That "miserable situation" was not an underestimate, as the British did not negotiate anything on the Iroquois' behalf, but instead, left them out of the Treaty of Paris completely.

British authorities in America understood the magnitude of this betrayal, and tried to find a way to lessen its sting. In the same letter quoted above, Maclean described the Iroquois reaction to rumors of their betrayal. They told Maclean that "they never could believe that our King could pretend to cede to America what was not his own to give, or that the Americans would accept from him what he had no right to grant." The Iroquois reminded Maclean of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 in which they had made clear to Sir William Johnson that "they were the faithful Allies of the King of England, but not his subjects." Understanding their concern, Maclean promised to "stand by them at all Risks."⁶⁸ Maclean sent this letter to Haldimand, who immediately forwarded it to London and the King, expecting to get a response that which did not come.⁶⁹ Both Maclean and Haldimand wanted to prove to the Iroquois that they would not abandon them as the peace commissioners had done in Europe. But they could do little to satisfy the Iroquois desire to remain an autonomous power on the lands they held before the war.

Joseph Brant expected the British to come through and secure the Iroquois' former lands, and at a conference in September 1783 he reminded them of all the sacrifices that the Iroquois had made as allies. Brant stated that even though "the

Americans appeared to be more powerful,” the Iroquois had remained loyal to the King.⁷⁰ However, the British did not remain loyal to the Iroquois. Despite the efforts of Maclean and Haldimand, the imperial government in England did not share their concern for their Iroquois allies. The context of negotiation had changed—Brant’s words no longer had the power they once had when the Iroquois were believed to be essential to British power and plans in New York.

The next year, Brant started to correspond with American leaders who, like Brant, wanted to have a council to discuss the future of the Iroquois in the new nation. Before the council took place, however, James Duane, the chairman of the Congressional Committee on Indian Affairs, gave his assessment of the fate of the Iroquois nation in the United States. Duane warned that the Americans should not treat the Iroquois as an autonomous power, because if they would “adopt the disgraceful system of pensioning, courting and flattering them as great mighty nations...this Revolution...will have lost more than half its’ Value.” Duane further believed that the Iroquois should begin adhering to the practice of negotiation being established by the new nation, instead of the Americans appeasing the Indians with their traditional ways, especially the use of wampum and the sort of rhetoric that Sir William Johnson found so important and influential in negotiations. Duane ended his tirade on the Iroquois by making it known that “by separating from the Oneidas, and entering into a wicked war, they had weakened and destroyed themselves and that the publick opinion of their importance had long been ceased.”⁷¹ Based on Duane’s proposal for U.S.-Iroquois relations, the employment of go-betweens like Brant was rendered moot in the United States. Representatives of the Iroquois and United States would still hold conferences and treaties, but the conditions

had changed—the United States was in charge. The Iroquois may well have believed that they were just as autonomous as before the war, but the United States refused to accord them even the appearance of that status.

While Duane's proposal was structured for Congress in 1784, it did not apply to the negotiations between Governor George Clinton and the Iroquois that took place later that summer.⁷² Joseph Brant's speech and Governor Clinton's response show misperceptions by both parties in the negotiations and the decline of Brant's position as a go-between. Brant addressed the subject of the new boundary lines to be established between the Iroquois and the Americans, telling the governor and fellow commissioners that "a free & generous Trade will be carried thro' our Country" once they were established.⁷³ Brant communicated to the Americans that he indeed still thought of Iroquois lands as Indian country. Furthermore, Brant told the new nation that he hoped to take advantage of the council to discuss his people's qualms because the Iroquois "are left to Treat for ourselves and have a free and Independent power for that purpose."⁷⁴ While Governor Clinton responded amiably, he did make an important point clear. He stressed that once boundary lines had been established, the Iroquois had to agree to not sell any of their lands without "the Consent and approbation of Our Government."⁷⁵ While Brant believed that the Americans and Iroquois would be able to live peacefully, but separately, as two peoples in New York, it became clear that Governor Clinton held a contrary view. He maintained that the Iroquois were subordinate to the authority of the state government. While Brant's speech was taken into account, it was clear that Clinton believed he had the final say.

After this conference, Brant met with General Haldimand in 1784 in Quebec and expressed interest in returning to London to address the imperial government about his concerns about Iroquois land. Where once Brant had been welcomed to travel to England, he was now discouraged because Haldimand believed that the government had no interest in meeting with Brant about lands over which it no longer had jurisdiction. Soon thereafter Haldimand rejected Brant's suggestion and left for England.⁷⁶ Thus, Brant's closest ally within the British leadership, who had remained an advocate for Brant and his people after the war, believed that Brant's words would have no impact on the British government. Furthermore, while Brant was in Quebec, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix was settled in New York with Congress, in which the Iroquois lost the majority of their western lands.⁷⁷ Despite Brant's efforts to work with both the British and the Americans after the war, the fate of the Iroquois was decided without him.

Joseph Brant proved a loyal ally to the British through the war, both diplomatically and militarily. But the nature of the War for Independence destroyed his ability to be an effective go-between who could support one side while protecting the other. There was never a doubt that Brant and the Mohawk would join the British as allies in the war. The Mohawk connection to Sir William Johnson solidified that decision. As a go-between, Brant could work between the Iroquois and the British when they were allies, because they were partners. The tensions and then ultimately the losses of war undermined that partner relationship and ultimately the go-between role.

Brant recognized that the Iroquois were losing power in 1781, and it became evident in his communications with the Superintendent in 1782 that he could no longer look at Iroquois and English interests in the same light, because his people's interests

now came first in negotiations. Ultimately, the “zeal” of the Iroquois that the British constantly referred to during the war put the Iroquois into an especially difficult position with the victorious United States in 1783. Once the new nation had established the Iroquois’ subordinate and dependent status, Brant’s abilities as a go-between had little relevance to British leaders. Despite those abilities, Brant’s zeal as a warrior and his people’s dependency made the possibility of his acting as a go-between to the United States even more improbable.

Chapter Four: Guy Johnson—An Issue of Superintendent versus Go-Between

After a year's journey through enemy territory that capped a three-year absence from Iroquois territory, Guy Johnson arrived at Fort Niagara in the fall of 1779. The situation was not good. The fort itself was a structural disaster, long neglected and on the brink of collapse. But that was a distant concern compared to the growing crisis before him—nearly 4,000 Iroquois refugees were seeking shelter after the rebels had reduced their homes to ashes, town by town. This was unchartered territory for the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and Johnson was soon facing one of the largest challenges of his career. As he approached the dilapidated fort and the starving people inside, Johnson found himself between the proverbial rock and hard place, but he wanted to help the Indians at the same time he served his government, so he proceeded to negotiate as best he could between the two. What he could not have expected was the bitter outcome as he was pounded and ground between the two.¹

The nature of Guy Johnson's role as a go-between in the war changed dramatically once he returned from England in late summer of 1776. The influence he possessed before his trans-Atlantic trip dwindled as the war wore on, but the loss was not due to his lack of motivation or interest on his part. The nature of the Revolution and specifically the War for Independence dictated the course of his decline as a go-between, not just or necessarily his own shortcomings or self-interest. Two issues inhibited Johnson's work to mediate in the most effective way between the imperial government and the Iroquois Indians when he returned to America—the orders for him to remain in New York City and then the subsequent responsibility of thousands of Iroquois refugees at Fort Niagara that caused him to overspend the Indian Department's budget. In the first

case, Johnson was obeying orders, and in the latter he put the Indian refugees' needs above the requirements of his government. Did this show that Johnson was incompetent? Not necessarily; but it did show that he possessed flaws that his predecessor did not.

The most obvious way that Johnson's work as a mediator was affected by the war occurred when he landed back in America in 1776 and General Howe ordered him to remain in New York City. Although Johnson was still the official liaison between the imperial government, the provincial loyalist government, and the Indians, his distance from all three of those parties minimized his work as a go-between. Stationed in New York City, Johnson had to delegate his instructions to agents. Such delegation was not uncommon for the Superintendent, but in this case he could not supervise their work and address native concerns, which was particularly problematic in dealing with men like the Butlers. Johnson lost the direct connection and communication with the Indians that was vital to his job and which Sir William Johnson had laid out as a prerequisite for any Superintendent. The war transformed the position of the Superintendent into a bureaucratic position that administered from a distance rather than mediated face-to-face. By the time Johnson left New York City in 1778 to be reunited with the Iroquois he faced other problems that his direct contact with the natives could not resolve.

The other issue that challenged Guy Johnson's ability to mediate effectively between the Indians and the imperial government was a lack of money. Providing gifts and provisions for the Iroquois was one of the most, if not the most, important part of the Iroquois and English alliance, especially as a means to gain and retain allegiances from the natives over the rebels. Johnson tread treacherous ground as he tried to confirm alliances while both sides made demands of him. The natives wanted more goods and the

British government demanded that Johnson curb his spending. Trying to please both sides became increasingly difficult for Johnson, especially after the campaign seasons of 1778 and 1779 when Iroquois refugees needing shelter, food, and cloths poured into Fort Niagara. Johnson's overspending and his inability to provide sufficiently for Iroquois, would damage his reputation, ironically, more so with the British than the natives.

It was Guy's involvement in a fraud case that eventually caused his dismissal as Superintendent, not his failure as a go-between. But his lack of great success as a go-between has resulted in his work as Superintendent during the war consistently to be dismissed by historians. Those who evaluate him, when they do not ignore him, do so based on the negative impressions of Sir Guy Carleton, other British leaders, the government's criticism of his overspending, and the fraud case. Thus, it is necessary to readdress the causes of his decline and reevaluate his control of those causes.² Though Johnson's stationary position in New York City was a result of orders from his superiors, he made numerous pleas to British leaders to help him get to Niagara. Guy Johnson did make mistakes, especially when it came to overspending the Department's budget, but one cannot ignore that he did so with the goal of helping the burgeoning Indian population of refugees.

The War for Independence revolutionized the Superintendent's role as go-between, ultimately undermining the role as it had been defined by Sir William Johnson. The functions that Sir William Johnson laid out for the Superintendent were no longer possible once heavy military action began in 1777 in New York. The war itself made Guy Johnson's job virtually impossible to execute in the same manner that Sir William Johnson had during the Seven Years' War. While this could be expected, the native and

even English memories of Sir William Johnson complicated things. The example of Sir William Johnson's accomplishments with the Indians and English created impossible expectations for Guy Johnson. Regardless, when Guy Johnson arrived back in America in 1776 his expectation was to serve as his uncle had.

When Guy Johnson landed in New York in late July 1776 after an arduous journey that included harassing vessels attacking his ship, he fully anticipated only a brief stop before heading to Fort Niagara, where he planned to give "zealous attention to the trust reposed" in him as he prepared for the war's next campaign season.³ However, by that November, Johnson, upon General Howe's orders, was still in New York City; and he stayed there for about two years.

One such deputy was Daniel Claus, who had been with Brant and Johnson in London, hoping to get the Superintendent position for Canada. While he was in London, he made his case to Secretary William Knox, the Joint Under Secretary of State for the American colonies, by giving him an overview of the status of Indian Affairs in America.⁴ In his speech, Claus highlighted some of the most important aspects and duties of the Superintendent. While he was speaking about the position in the Canadian frontier, the suggestions he made were just as applicable to the Superintendent for the American northeast frontier. Whether or not Claus knew of Johnson's orders to stay in New York, his statements reveal how detrimental Johnson's situation was to his work.

Claus provided a brief list of qualifications for the Superintendency. Such an official should be influential, patient, "good nature[d]," "well acquainted with [Indian] customs manners, and language," authoritative, and possess a good character. That sounded no different than Sir William Johnson's earlier advice, and indeed Claus stated

simply that “any one who has had the moderate acquaintance with the late [Sir William Johnson],” who “possessed the above qualifications, as much as any mortal possibly could be,” could understand the importance of the Superintendent’s job. Claus honed in on Sir William Johnson as the model go-between and the person to whom he had to compare himself to obtain the Superintendent’s job. With that precedent established, Claus continued to address the basic requirements for any Superintendent. The first one Claus noted was the importance of a Superintendent’s proximity to the Indians he represented. The reasons for this were simple according to Claus, because “Indians in general are fond of carrying secrets to their Superintendent, which they would not choose should come thro’ the mouth of an Interpreter.”⁵

Claus continued to make another crucial point about how the Superintendent should operate for the duration of the war—as a military liaison during war as well as, if not more than, a civil mediator for diplomatic purposes. Claus highlighted the critical nature of the Superintendent’s dual role as a military and civil go-between: “Indians in general show a greater esteem for the Military...than any man in civil life, all their politics being founded upon war. Wherefore it appears more natural and reasonable to carry on their affairs in a military channel, the services required of them being of a military nature.” Furthermore, Claus suggested that any Superintendent should “constantly reside at Niagara.”⁶

Claus’ objective when he made these suggestions was British success in the war. Claus also took into account the perception of the Iroquois who, according to Claus, “consider themselves a free and independent people, liable to no subjection or subordination.”⁷ Claus’s main interest was to become the Superintendent in Canada. For

Claus, though the Superintendent's duties during the Revolution would have to be adapted to the realities of the war. Claus made a distinction between a military and civil Superintendent and the imperial government did not totally ignore his suggestion. Claus became a Superintendent of the St. Leger expedition in 1777, but at the conclusion of that battle, his work in that capacity was over. However, on a larger scale, Guy Johnson, the Superintendent of the entire Indian Department, was supposed to possess both duties simultaneously, just like Sir William Johnson.

Using Claus's reasoning then, Guy Johnson's post in New York City inhibited him from performing the basic requirements of his job as a go-between. Not only was Johnson nowhere near Niagara or leading the Iroquois on military campaigns, but Indians and Loyalists had to traverse significant enemy territory to even reach him in New York City.⁸ Johnson's lack of military involvement did not go unnoticed, and was addressed the following year of the war. In a letter to Lord Germain, in 1778, Johnson made an interesting statement, suggesting that some officials were questioning his military title as Colonel of the Six Nations, which, like in Sir William Johnson's time, was a title that accompanied that of Superintendent. Johnson wrote, "I have some good reasons to apprehend that difficulties may arise respecting my Rank as Colonel of the Six Nations, which seems the more extraordinary, where Men never in any service are Colonels...I could wish this point was obviated."⁹ Johnson somewhat disparaged his role by reaffirming that he was not being used in any military capacity at all. More significantly, this statement shows that Johnson's staying in New York City and his distance from military action made him feel the need to defend himself.

As Johnson could no longer act as a direct mediator for the natives, he had to rely on several different channels to engage in any sort of communication. He still sent out several orders during the war, but he struggled with some of his deputies to have them properly carried out. As noted in chapter three, Brant's efforts to recruit other Iroquois allies, directed by Johnson, were countered by the messages of peace by John Butler. This not only aggravated Brant, but the entire Iroquois people. By 1777 the Iroquois no longer knew whom to listen to, and they addressed this concern to commissioners of the Indian Affairs Department. In reply to their complaint, these representatives tried to ease Iroquois concern by pointing to a lack of clear communication between their provincial and imperial superiors. To show sympathy, the commissioners acknowledged that "[Butler] and his master Guy Johnson ever since these times of Trouble have said and done contrary things...In one breath [Butler] makes himself a Lye, or would attempt to make the Chiefs of the six nations Fools."¹⁰ In 1777, with Johnson in New York City and Butler trying to command affairs on the frontier, there was an obvious lack of direction for the Iroquois that only Guy Johnson's personal attendance could have alleviated.

This lack of involvement, especially the length of seclusion, was not welcomed by Johnson. In nearly every letter Johnson wrote to Lord Germain or Secretary Knox, he suggested that he should move upcountry or move past the enemy to join native forces. However, as Johnson wrote in April 1777, because of the "situation" in New York City, Howe believed the Superintendent should remain at his post, and communicate by sending instructions to the natives via messengers across the countryside.¹¹ This method only caused confusion, but it was not in Johnson's nature to disobey Howe and try to travel to Niagara.

While distance was one obstacle that Johnson had to deal with, another requirement that Claus believed vital to the Superintendent's role was providing the natives with fair trade and monitoring the distribution of enough provisions. These responsibilities were crucial to assure that the Indians received what they needed for their families, and to avoid disputes between the natives and colonists. Unfair exchanges could "create ill blood & disputes, & perhaps affect a whole nation."¹² As Superintendent, Johnson was responsible for this duty and maintaining the peace, and his first means of business when he returned to America was to provide the Iroquois with supplies for the spring military operations. Johnson realized that the "articles sent out last year are much damaged and deficient" and, also knew, as Claus emphasized, provision of supplies was "an essential consideration in affairs with Indians."¹³

Unfortunately, with Johnson stuck in New York City, the responsibility for providing provisions and supplies fell to his deputies. Again, as Brant's efforts to prepare his warriors for the 1777 battle against Fort Stanwix made clear, the distribution of supplies was not handled with care. As Claus had warned, it almost caused a major dispute. Claus later accused John Butler of overspending his budget for the St. Leger expedition, claiming Butler had spent in one expedition three times as much as Claus had spent in fifteen years of service, including a two-year war. Furthermore, Claus believed that Butler passed these off "as expenses to be charged to Col. Johnsons Department, and *he* an entire stranger to it."¹⁴ Thus, conflicts existed because of a lack of guidance on how to apportion expenses and provisions between the loyalist and Indian forces. Johnson's distance affected the distribution of supplies and caused friction that may

possibly have been avoided had he been able to control the exchanges himself as Sir William Johnson had done when he was Superintendent.

From New York City Johnson fervently requested provisions because he understood how vital they were to maintaining the Iroquois alliance. The provisions were not simply gifts—they were necessities because of the effect that war had on the native people. His empathy with them not only explains his spending, but it emphasizes his persistence as an Indian advocate. Johnson recognized that the “loyalty of the Indians is a great obstruction to their levies...for they are very badly supplied with arms and ammunition, and as they never lay up more provisions than become absolutely necessary for family consumption, they can only carry on the war in flying partys.” While worrying about providing enough supplies for the Iroquois, Johnson also had to offer the natives the traditional gifts integral to Indian negotiations.¹⁵ Johnson was in a precarious situation. Maintaining the Iroquois alliance demanded that the British supply the Indian warriors and provide them with the traditional gifts, as well as shelter for the warriors and eventually their refugee families. Nonetheless, Johnson was not to overspend the Department’s expenses. All of this, combined with his absence from Fort Niagara, was a recipe for disaster. As it turned out, the situation only worsened as the war progressed.

After the devastating, scorched-earth campaign season of 1778, thousands of Iroquois refugees started to seek shelter at Fort Niagara. The additional Iroquois families added to the dismal situation at this already dilapidated fort already holding hundreds of troops. They completely depleted the food supply for the winter, and even more so for the military the following spring.¹⁶

For Johnson, however, the fall of 1778 initially brought some good news—he could finally leave New York City and make his way to Niagara. The journey was not easy, and he had to go by boat instead of by land, traveling up to Canada, and then making his way down to Fort Niagara. As a result Johnson did not reach northern Canada until February 1779, but once he reached Halifax he was detained.¹⁷ Johnson made it to Quebec in fall of 1779, an entire year after his departure from New York. Upon his arrival, Johnson attended a conference with the Iroquois leaders in Quebec, who assured General Haldimand that they would welcome Johnson back, as his connection with Sir William Johnson had made him a fervent friend and ally.¹⁸ Johnson stepped back into his role and met with a group of Senecas who wanted to gather a contingent of native warriors to go down to New York. General Haldimand told Johnson that the British could not provide enough provisions to support that effort.¹⁹ Facing a problem that would persist in future negotiations, Johnson had to deny their request.

After the conference, Johnson received orders from General Haldimand to cut the costs of the New York frontier garrisons, starting with those attributed to the Indians. General Haldimand painted a dismal picture of the Indian Department. The inability to provide provisions was bad enough, but it added insult to injury in light of the Iroquois' fervent loyalty to the King's cause. Haldimand regretted the lack of finances to provide for their Iroquois warriors. The Iroquois, Haldimand wrote, "have long requested assistance & it has been faithfully promised these three years past, but a want of Provisions, the difficulty of Transporting them to such a Distance, & the prodigious consumption owing, not only, to the necessity of feeding the Indians while collected, but supporting Entirely all Women & Children" of the various tribes, had made providing

any assistance an impossibility in 1779.²⁰ Little less than a month later, thousands more Iroquois refugees came to Fort Niagara after fleeing their towns upon news of Sullivan's campaign.²¹

The circumstances were looking dimmer and dimmer for Johnson, as he approached an almost inconceivable dilemma, caught between the Indians and his own government. To ameliorate an impossible situation, Johnson tried to encourage some Indians to settle at nearby posts, but it hardly helped.²² Furthermore, immediately upon arriving at Niagara, Johnson faced criticism from the natives, especially those who were most influential. In a letter to Claus, Molly Brant criticized Johnson's "hasty temper" and warned that "whatever is promised or told [to the Indians], it ought to be performed" otherwise it could be "Dissadvantagious" to the British efforts.²³

Such demands put Guy Johnson in a most precarious position at Fort Niagara. Johnson found it hard to refuse the requests of chiefs, sachems, and other prominent natives. While this was a testament to his loyalty to the Iroquois and their efforts, it also further depleted the Department's budget.²⁴ Fort Niagara was struggling, and while Johnson made efforts to relocate many refugees and cut some expenses, the Indian Department was still overspending. While this shows that Johnson proved to be loyal to the Iroquois at Niagara in 1779, it is also clear that he tended to acquiesce to whomever he was closest. In New York he followed the orders to stay at his post; in Quebec, he followed Haldimand's orders to stop the Canadian Senecas from forming a war party; and now in Niagara, he provided for the Iroquois refugees despite the impact on the Indian Department's budget. In this way, Guy Johnson did possess a character flaw that hurt his work as a go-between.

At the same time, the depletion of the Indian Department's budget cannot be attributed solely to these bad choices by Johnson. The situation at Niagara was well beyond repair by this point, and it continually deteriorated as more refugees came into the fort. Still, Johnson tried to disperse the natives to other settlements, and in a report to Lord Germain, he stated that he had relocated almost 4,000 refugees.²⁵ Johnson had chosen several different possibilities for settlement and appointed different leaders, including Joseph Brant, to guide the refugees to their new homes.²⁶ While the plan was successful as Indians moved to two villages, Cattaraugus and Buffalo Creek, which were not destroyed in Sullivan's campaign and Carleton Island. Johnson pointed out, however, that the movement of Indians increased expenses as well.²⁷

General Haldimand also noted that in the fall of 1780 not only native but also Loyalist families were still arriving at Niagara. Furthermore, Haldimand suspected that merchants around the forts had been raising prices for provisions because of the high demand. Haldimand noticed products such as "rum & those in demand for the Indians" had spiked in price, and he believed merchants were selling goods to the Indians that were completely unnecessary.²⁸ This problem only grew with a significant proportion of the Iroquois demanding large amounts of goods still residing at Niagara going into the winter of 1780. At the same time, Johnson still purchased most goods from overpriced local merchants and traders, despite General Haldimand's warnings.²⁹

While Johnson tried to decrease his overall expenditures as pressure increased from above, he also had a difficult time saying no. He believed his expenditures were not only just, but would benefit the Crown's cause. As Johnson told Lord Germain, the Indians who resided at Niagara "expected to be maintained [there] during the War"

because of the “faithful services and sufferings” they had endured on behalf of the British. Nor did Johnson believe it was “prudent to refuse a people, who independent of their sacrifices for Govern[ment], are the security in a great measure of all this communication and who give the example to the rest.”³⁰ Johnson continued to show his devotion to the natives and his appreciation of their sacrifices.

At this point, Johnson found it impossible to appease the natives’ needs and serve the British government’s interests. If Johnson followed Haldimand’s orders, he would experience severe backlash from the natives, as Molly Brant warned. At the same time, if Johnson did not cut the expenditures of the department, he would face punishment from Haldimand and embarrassment among British authorities. Johnson was at a standstill. The situation confirmed that he could not act as a simple go-between who facilitated connections between groups and he had to make a choice and become a partisan. He could no longer serve both parties equally. Ultimately Johnson never got the opportunity to make that decision, for in the fall of 1781, he was ordered to go to Quebec for investigation in a fraud case with the trading firm Taylor & Forsyth. This trading company was making clandestine deals with British leaders. As it turned out, the government was unknowingly paying Taylor & Forsyth for ten times the amount of product the company was actually supplying. Members of the British leadership were, in turn, pocketing a portion Taylor & Forsyth’s profit. While Johnson was never indicted for being a part of the deals, the suspicion was enough to ruin his career and tarnish his reputation. Shortly there-after, in 1782, he was replaced by Sir John Johnson as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs.³¹

Guy Johnson's story illuminates the decline of the colonial go-between—especially the most powerful one of Superintendent—in the Revolutionary age. Sir William Johnson had established the position as both a bureaucrat and a go-between; however, Guy Johnson could not maintain that dual role. When Johnson worked the bureaucratic end of his job in New York City, he failed as a go-between to the natives. Likewise, when Johnson served as a go-between to the Iroquois at Niagara, he could no longer effectively serve his own government. Johnson could not maintain his status with the British government and position with the Iroquois at the same time. Furthermore, it did not help that Sir William Johnson's legacy transcended time for the Iroquois and the British. Neither party forgot that, unlike his nephew, Sir William Johnson could and did serve both parties at once as a go-between. Neither paid much attention to the very different circumstances under which the two Johnsons labored. Guy Johnson served as the Superintendent during a particularly challenging time marked by revolution as well as war. Wars had challenged go-betweens in the past, but this was a very different war. The American Revolution made it impossible for Guy Johnson to serve as his uncle had, because he did not have the autonomy or power that Sir William Johnson had possessed.

From 1776 until his arrival in Niagara in 1779, Johnson served more as an informant or distant diplomat for the Iroquois, rather than as a go-between. During these years, Daniel Claus proved to be more of an imperial go-between for the Iroquois than Guy Johnson. Then once he had arrived at Niagara, Sir William Johnson's legacy continued to plague Guy Johnson. Trying to maintain the close relationship that Sir William Johnson had with the natives, Guy Johnson worked to appease the Indians, especially prominent families, in order to maintain the alliance. However, the war had

depleted the British Indian Department's finances and thus Guy Johnson had neither the government support nor the freedom from government control that Sir William Johnson did. Guy Johnson could no longer serve the British and natives at the same time, whereas Sir William Johnson had always been able to meet the needs of the natives while remaining staunchly dedicated to the needs of the British. Where Sir William Johnson was able to cross back and forth between the British and the natives as Superintendent, Guy Johnson consistently faced obstacles in either direction to doing the same. The legendary position of go-between that Sir William Johnson had created could not withstand the unprecedented demands of the Revolutionary War.

Conclusion

By the end of the War for Independence, it was clear that the Iroquois and the British no longer negotiated as “Brethren,” as the Mohawk chief Hendrick had extolled their relationship in 1754 at the conference in Albany.¹ By the 1780s ever increasing barriers between the British and the Iroquois affected the way that go-betweens could mediate between the two groups. The American Revolution had so disturbed the roots of intercultural communications and accommodation between the Iroquois and British peoples that it had rendered the go-between role almost powerless. Both Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson’s experiences demonstrate that.

Joseph Brant was not always the most trusted native within the Iroquois tribe, but his people had consistently relied upon him to speak on their behalf. Cultural mediators, as the historiography has shown, were always looked upon with a skeptical eye, but this did not stop them from doing their work. His diplomatic power with the British, however, deteriorated once heavy warfare began in New York in 1777. This stemmed from the conflicting plans of the provincial and imperial British leaders for the Iroquois as a British ally. The provincial government’s continuous interference in Brant’s work to recruit Iroquois and supply his warriors during the war then impaired his ability to work as a military go-between, in accordance with imperial wishes. Finally, by the end of the war, even the imperial leadership no longer saw a place for Brant’s mediation, not just militarily but politically. Officials thwarted his efforts to fight for and serve both the Iroquois and British.

Guy Johnson’s work as a go-between declined when he could no longer serve the dual Superintendent role of bureaucrat and mediator. Once he returned from England in

1776 and was ordered to remain in New York City his distance from the backcountry became the principle cause of his inability to work as a mediator until he returned to Fort Niagara in 1779. While stationed in the city, Johnson could not work under any of the criteria that Sir William Johnson and, later, Daniel Claus defined for the intermediary aspect of the Superintendent's role. And yet, even when he reached Fort Niagara in 1779, and could possibly act as a proper go-between to the Iroquois, he found that he could no longer effectively serve his own government or native allies. Guy Johnson clearly did not possess the autonomy or command that his predecessor had in the same role. At the same time, Johnson's work as the Superintendent should not be dismissed as mere incompetency, as has been the trend in historiography on this period.

The decline of the go-between can be seen in other British leaders as well. Daniel Claus often served as the Iroquois' imperial go-between from 1776 until 1779 while Guy Johnson was in New York City. However, by the end of the war, Claus' perception of the Iroquois had changed as well, which was evident in his letter to General Haldimand in 1780 disparaging the League's claims to autonomy.² Claus, who was once an advocate for the Iroquois, viewed the Indians in 1780 as subordinates to the British.

Ultimately, it can be concluded that this precipitous decline of the go-between throughout the War for Independence was based at least in part upon the nature of alliance between the British and the Iroquois as well as upon the personalities involved. When the British needed the Iroquois, the work of the go-between became prominent. Joseph Brant was recognized for his finest work as a mediator when he was recruiting natives to fight for the British and when he met his people in council to offer their alliance to the Crown. Even when he met with British leaders in England and had the

opportunity to speak directly with the imperial government about what the Mohawk expected of them as allies, he did so only after confirming his allegiance to the British. During the early stages of the war when fighting was centered in New York, the British believed they could only win with the aid of the Iroquois. When the war moved south that need diminished, as did the need to mediate fairly with the Iroquois. After it became clear that the British were going to lose the war, the Iroquois in general and Joseph Brant specifically became a nuisance to British leaders.

Similarly, after the war, when the British no longer controlled the New York territory, the Superintendent position became one that was strictly bureaucratic. In 1784, the new Superintendent, Sir John Johnson, left New York and sailed for Montreal, where he would serve far from the Indians at Niagara or those who remained in New York.³ The Superintendent, once an ardent go-between for these two peoples, no longer had power in New York, and thus the British government no longer needed him to remain in Iroquois territory to mediate. Thus, the distance that had diminished Guy Johnson's work as a go-between became a permanent fixture of the Superintendent's job.

After the War for Independence, examples of go-betweens working for the Iroquois and the British could only be found west in Detroit or north in Canada—but not in New York. Also, the nature of diplomacy had changed in that the Iroquois had changed and lost significant power. While negotiations still took place, the autonomy that the Six Nations possessed before the war had been greatly diminished.

In the new United States, the outlook for fair mediation with Indians was bleak. In his study on Captain Hendrick Aupaumut, a Mohican from New York, Alan Taylor shows how this native's endless efforts to negotiate with the Americans were consistently

thwarted by both parties. Taylor points out that in the United States a permanent boundary, one defined by race not just culture or nation had been established between Indian and American. This racial barrier further undercut the role and power of go-betweens. Aupaumut's mediation was doubted by Americans because he was racially categorized as a savage, and he was doubted by natives because "they defined him culturally as having become a 'Yankee.'"⁴ Eventually, negotiations between the United States and Indians were controlled by the government's Indian agents, leaving the native perspective out of mediation completely.⁵

Thus the end of the war closed the chapter on a set of people who had been able to cross the cultural divide between the Indians and British so effectively that they defined much of the diplomacy of the colonial period. The Revolutionary War was revolutionary for many reasons, and the decline of the go-between in New York was one of them.

Endnotes:

Abbreviations:

DRSNY—*Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*.

DHNY—*The Documentary History of the State of New York*.

Introduction:

¹ Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2000), 166.

² *Ibid*, 166.

³ Hendrick, Conference in Albany, July 5, 1754, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 4, George Edward Reed, L.L.D., ed., (Harrisburg, PA: W.M. Stanley Ray, 1900), 2:704, and quoted in Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire*, 166.

⁴ Hendrick, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2: 704; Shannon, 166.

⁵ James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier*, (New York: Norton, 1999); Nancy L. Hagedorn, “‘A Friend to go between Them’: The Interpreter as Cultural Broker during Anglo-Iroquois Councils, 1740-1770,” in *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (Winter, 1988): 60-80.

⁶ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2006).

⁷ Speech of Captain Brant to Lord George Germain, March 14, 1776, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, eds. E.B. O’Callaghan and B. Fernow (Albany, New York: New York, 1853-87), 8: 671.

⁸ The historiography presented here comes primarily from that provided by Margaret Conell Szasz in her work *Between Indians and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 6.

⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 11-12.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 14-15.

¹² Colin G. Calloway, “Simon Girty: Interpreter and Intermediary,” in *Being and Becoming Indian: Biographical Studies of North American Frontiers*, edited by James A. Clifton (Chicago: Waveland Press, 1989); Frederick J. Fausz, “Middlemen in Peace and War: Virginia’s Earliest Indian Interpreters, 1608-1632,” in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 95, no. 1 (Jan. 1987); Patricia Galloway, “Talking with Indians: Interpreters and Diplomacy in French Louisiana,” in *Race and Family in the Colonial South*, edited by Winthrop D. Jordan and Shelia L. Skemps, (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1987); Frances Karttunen, *Between Worlds: Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Margaret Connell-Szasz, *Between Indians and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

¹³ Hagedorn, “‘A Friend to go between Them’”; Earle Thomas, *The Three Faces of Molly Brant: A Biography* (Kingston, Ontario: Quarry Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006); Joseph T. Glatthaar and James Kirby Martin, *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006).

¹⁵ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 55.

¹⁶ Fausz, “Middlemen in Peace and War,” 43.

¹⁷ Daniel K. Richter, “Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics: New York-Iroquois Relations, 1664-1701,” in *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (Jun., 1988): 54.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁹ Nancy L. Hagedorn, “‘Faithful, Knowing, and Prudent’: Andrew Montour as Interpreter and Cultural Broker, 1740-1772,” in *Between Indians and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, edited by Margaret Conell Szasz, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 50.

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- ²⁰ Ibid, 56.
²¹ Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 67.
²² Ibid, 58-59.
²³ Fausz, "Middlemen in Peace and War," 43.
²⁴ Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics," 63-65.
²⁵ Colonel Guy Johnson to the Earl of Dartmouth, Guy Park, December 14, 1774, *DRSNY*, 8: 517.
²⁶ Governor Tyron to the Earl of Dartmouth, New York, January 5 1776, Ibid, 8: 651.
²⁷ Daniel Claus to William Knox, Whitehall, 1777, Ibid, 8: 701

Chapter One: Sir William Johnson—The Quintessential Go-Between and The Creation of Superintendent of Indian Affairs

- ¹ Richter, "Cultural Brokers and Intercultural Politics," 66.
² Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2005), 20 and 32. Overall, O'Toole's biography goes extensively into Johnson's Irish ancestry, and should be relied on for insight into that subject. William Johnson changed titles several times until he became "Sir" William Johnson. Amongst these were Colonel and Major General, Baronet, and Superintendent. To avoid confusion with Colonel Guy Johnson and to remain consistent, unless he is otherwise clearly delineated, Sir William Johnson will consistently be addressed by his honorific.
³ Ibid, 35 and 34.
⁴ Ibid, 24.
⁵ Ibid, 36-37.
⁶ Ibid, 38.
⁷ James Thomas Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet: A Biography of Sir William Johnson* (Syracuse, New York: University of Syracuse, 1959), 22.
⁸ Sir William Johnson to Peter Warren, May 10, 1739, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. James Sullivan, 5 Vols. (Albany, New York: The University of the State of New York, 1922), 1:4-5.
⁹ Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet*, 23-25.
¹⁰ William Leete Stone, *The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson, Bart*, 2 Vols. (Albany, New York: J. Munsell's Sons, 1865), 1:81. It should be mentioned that the William Johnson Manuscripts were damaged in a fire at the New York State Capitol in 1911. Consequently, the manuscripts recorded in Stone's biography of Johnson, and those collected by E.B. O'Callaghan in *The Documentary History of the State of New-York*, 4 Vols. (Albany, New York: New York, 1849-1851) are the most extensive collections of Johnson's papers that are available.
¹¹ Anne MacVicar Grant, *Memoirs of an American Lady with Sketches of Manners and Scenery in America as they Existed Previous to the Revolution* (New York: Dodd, Meads, and Company, 1901), 15.
¹² Ibid, Grant, 17.
¹³ George Clinton to Sir William Johnson, August 27, 1746, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Sullivan, 1:59.
¹⁴ George Clinton to Sir William Johnson, July 25, 1746, Ibid, 1:54.
¹⁵ Stone, *The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson*, 209.
¹⁶ George Clinton to Sir William Johnson, August 28, 1746, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Sullivan, 1:60-62.
¹⁷ George Clinton to Sir William Johnson, December 2, 1746, Ibid, 1:67-68.
¹⁸ Mohawk speaker at a Conference between Governor Clinton and some Mohawks, July 16, 1747, Albany, *DRSNY*, 6:384.
¹⁹ Sir William Johnson to Governor Clinton, May 17, 1747, Mount Johnson, Ibid, 6:360-61.
²⁰ List of Attendees at the Albany Conference, July 1, 1754, in *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. E.B. O'Callaghan, 4 Vols. (Albany: New York: 1849-1851), 2:571.
²¹ Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet*, 144.
²² Speech by Red Head of the Six Nations, September 10, 1753, *DHNY*, 2:638.
²³ O'Toole, *White Savage*, 89.
²⁴ Ibid, 92-95.
²⁵ Extract of a Letter from Sir William Johnson, March 26, 1753, *DHNY*, 2:624-25.
²⁶ Ibid, 2:625.

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- ²⁷ Sir William Johnson, A Meeting with the Mohawks at Mount Johnson, July 26, 1753, *Ibid*, 2:631.
- ²⁸ Mohawk Hendrick response at Mount Johnson, July 2, 1753, *Ibid*, 2:632.
- ²⁹ Speech made by Red Head of the Six Nations, September 10, 1753, *Ibid*, 2:640.
- ³⁰ Speech by Brother Abraham, July 2, 1754, *Ibid*, 2:582.
- ³¹ Speech by Chief Hendrick, July 5, 1754, *Ibid*, 2:590.
- ³² Flexner, *Mohawk Baronet*, 125.
- ³³ Sir William Johnson to James DeLancey, September 8, 1754, *DHNY*, 2:643.
- ³⁴ Sir William Johnson to Governor Shirley, June 19, 1755, *Ibid* 2:663.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, 2:664.
- ³⁶ Stone, *The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson*, 502-504.
- ³⁷ Sir William Johnson to the Board of Trade, September 3, 1755, *DHNY*, 2:688-89.
- ³⁸ The Lords of Trade to Sir William Johnson, October 9, 1755, Whitehall, *Ibid*, 2:702.
- ³⁹ O'Toole, *White Savage*, 153.
- ⁴⁰ Sir William Johnson to Lord Hillsborough, August, 20, 1769, Johnson Hall, *DHNY*, 2:946.
- ⁴¹ Sir William Johnson to Lord Hillsborough, August 26, 1769, Johnson Hall, *Ibid*, 2:949.
- ⁴² Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, April 20, 1774, Johnson Hall, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Milton W. Hamilton, 14 Vols. (Albany, New York: The University of the State of New York, 1951), 8:1128-1130.

Chapter Two: A Change in Direction—Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson’s Ascent as Go-Betweens in the American Revolution.

- ¹ Serihowane, at a Meeting with the Six Nations, July 9, 1774, Johnson Hall, *DRSNY*, 8: 476.
- ² Sir William Johnson, at a Meeting with the Six Nations, July 11, 1774, Johnson Hall, *Ibid*, 8: 478.
- ³ Some historians have claimed that Johnson took his own life, but the true cause of Johnson’s death is unknown. For more information on the debate about the cause of Sir William Johnson’s death and the origins of the suicide theory see, Francis O’Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 314.
- ⁴ “A Meeting with the Six Nations at Johnson Hall,” July 11, 1774, *DRSNY*, 8: 479.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, 8: 479.
- ⁶ Colonel Johnson addresses the Iroquois Chiefs, July 12, 1774, Johnson Hall, *Ibid*, 8: 479.
- ⁷ Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant: 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 135-36.
- ⁸ Shawnee Speaker to Alexander McKee, quoted in the journal of McKee, March 8, 1774, *DRSNY*, 8: 462.
- ⁹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 127.
- ¹⁰ Tyerhansera, July 14, 1774, Johnson Hall, *DRSNY*, 8: 481.
- ¹¹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 143.
- ¹² Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 3.
- ¹³ Eleazar Wheelock to Sir William Johnson, November 2, 1761, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Sullivan, 3: 556-57.
- ¹⁴ Mr. Charles Jeffery Smith to Sir William Johnson, January 18, 1763, *DHNY*, 4: 325.
- ¹⁵ Eleazar Wheelock to Sir William Johnson, May 16, 1763, *DHNY*, 4: 211.
- ¹⁶ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 51-52.
- ¹⁷ Joseph Brant, July 25, 1772, Johnson Hall, *DRSNY*, 8: 304.
- ¹⁸ Karim M. Tiro, “The Dilemmas of Alliance: The Oneida Indian Nation in the American Revolution,” in *War and Society in the American Revolution: Mobilization and Home Fronts*, eds. John Resch and Walter Sargent (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 216.
- ¹⁹ For Guy Johnson’s incompetence see Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 103-104; Graymont’s *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 182-183; Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 175; For information on Johnson’s military career and promotion to deputy see Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 62 and 90.
- ²⁰ Guy Johnson to the Earl of Hillsborough, June 20, 1768, Guy Park, *DRSNY*, 8: 77.
- ²¹ Sir William Johnson to Lt. Governor Colden, November 23, 1769, Johnson Hall, *DHNY*, 2: 958.
- ²² Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 75.
- ²³ Mr. Charles Jeffery Smith to Sir William Johnson, January 18, 1763, *DHNY*, 4: 325
- ²⁴ Lieutenant Governor of New York Cadwallader Colden, quoted in Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 72.

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- ²⁵ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 86.
²⁶ *Ibid*, 72.
²⁷ Sir William Johnson to Thomas Gage, April 20, 1774, Johnson Hall, *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, ed. Hamilton, 8: 1130.
²⁸ James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods*, 275.
²⁹ Guy Johnson, July 12, 1774, Johnson Hall, *DRSNY*, 8: 479.
³⁰ *Ibid*, 8: 479.
³¹ Conoghquieson, Chief of the Oneida, July 14, 1774, *Ibid*, 8: 480.
³² *Ibid*, 8: 481-482.
³³ Gorah Uraghquadirha, December 1, 1774, Guy Park, *Ibid*, 8: 519.
³⁴ Unnamed speaker for the Iroquois, December 3, 1774, Guy Park, *Ibid*, 8: 521.
³⁵ Earl of Dartmouth to Guy Johnson, July 5, 1775, Whitehall, *Ibid*, 8: 592.
³⁶ Joseph Brant, quoted in Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 155.
³⁷ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 86-87.
³⁸ *Ibid*, 86.
³⁹ Joseph Brant, March 14, 1776, *DRSNY*, 8: 670-71.
⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 8: 671.
⁴¹ *Ibid*, 8: 671.
⁴² *Ibid*, 8: 671.
⁴³ Joseph Brant, May 7, 1776, *Ibid*, 8: 678.
⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 8: 678.
⁴⁵ Baroness Riedesel, quoted in Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 86.
⁴⁶ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, January 26, 1776, *DRSNY*, 8: 656.
⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 8: 656.
⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 8: 657.

Chapter Three: Joseph Brant—Zealous Go-Between or Iroquois Nuisance?

- ¹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 197 and 203-207.
² *Ibid*, 192.
³ Colonel Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, August 9, 1776, Staten Island, *DRSNY*, 8: 681-682.
⁴ Colonel Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, November 25, 1776, New York, *Ibid*, 8: 687-688.
⁵ Lord George Germain to Colonel Guy Johnson, January 14, 1777, Whitehall, *Ibid*, 8: 695-696.
⁶ Gavin K. Watt, *Rebellion in the Mohawk Valley: The St. Ledger Expedition of 1777* (Tonawanda, New York: Dundurn Press, 2002), 51-55.
⁷ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 190.
⁸ General Herkimer to General Schuyler, July 2, 1777, Canajoharie, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 81.
⁹ *Ibid*, 82.
¹⁰ Watt, *Rebellion in Mohawk Valley*, 82.
¹¹ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 120-122.
¹² Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, October 16, 1777, Montreal, *DRSNY*, 8:719-720.
¹³ *Ibid*, 8: 720.
¹⁴ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 125-126.
¹⁵ Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, October 16, 1777, Montreal, *DRSNY*, 8: 721.
¹⁶ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 206.
¹⁷ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 321.
¹⁸ Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, November 6, 1777, Montreal, *DRSNY*, 8:725
¹⁹ *Ibid*, 8: 724.
²⁰ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 126.
²¹ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 322.
²² Commissioners of Indian Affairs to Henry Laurens, January 12, 1778, Albany, *Ibid*, 104.
²³ Joseph Brant to Daniel Claus, January 23, 1778, Niagara, *Ibid*, 106.
²⁴ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Ibid*, 322-323.
²⁵ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 218.
²⁶ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 323.

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- ²⁷ Benjamin Dixon, "A Warning from Cherry Valley," April 4, 1788, Albany, *The Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York, 1777-1795, 1801-1804*, 10 vols. (Albany, New York: The State of New York, 1899-1914) 3: 126-127.
- ²⁸ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 323.
- ²⁹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 216-220.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, 217-218.
- ³¹ J. Gregg to Governor George Clinton, "Brant at His Old Tricks," June 11, 1788, Fort Schuyler, *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 3:449-450.
- ³² Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 323.
- ³³ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 221.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*, 223-224 for information on July attacks; Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 324 for German Flatts.
- ³⁵ Daniel Claus, "Anecdotes of Brant," *Indian Affairs Papers*, 324.
- ³⁶ J. Gregg to Governor George Clinton, "Brant at His Old Tricks," June 11, 1788, Fort Schuyler, *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 3: 450.
- ³⁷ Taylor and Duffin to Daniel Claus, October 26, 1778, Niagara, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 167.
- ³⁸ Taylor and Duffin to Daniel Claus, November 15, 1778, Niagara, *Ibid*, 173.
- ³⁹ Unnamed speaker for the Iroquois, December 3, 1774, Guy Park, *DRSNY*, 8:521. See Chapter 2, page 12 for fuller quotation.
- ⁴⁰ Taylor and Duffin to Daniel Claus, November 15, 1778, Niagara, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 173.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid*, 173.
- ⁴² Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 183.
- ⁴³ Daniel Claus to General Haldimand, March 17, 1779, Montreal, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 191-92.
- ⁴⁴ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 186.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 186-189.
- ⁴⁶ Major Whiting to General Hand, November 13, 1778, Fort Alden, Cherry Valley, *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 4:286.
- ⁴⁷ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 189.
- ⁴⁸ Governor George Clinton to John Jay, November 17, 1778, *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 4:290.
- ⁴⁹ Daniel Claus to General Frederick Haldimand, March 17, 1779, Montreal, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 191.
- ⁵⁰ General Frederick Haldimand to the Mohawks, April 7, 1779, *Ibid*, 193-194.
- ⁵¹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 240.
- ⁵² Lord George Germain to General Haldimand, April 10, 1779, Whitehall, *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 38 vols. (Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 1874-1928), 10:331.
- ⁵³ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 247.
- ⁵⁴ Captain R. B. Lernoult to Lieut. Col. Mason Bolton, June 23, 1779, Detroit, *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 19: 439-440.
- ⁵⁵ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 250.
- ⁵⁶ General Frederick Haldimand with Onondaga and Cayuga Representatives, August 20, 1779, St. Louis, Quebec, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 231.
- ⁵⁷ Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 193-194.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 204-213.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 216-218.
- ⁶⁰ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 270.
- ⁶¹ Daniel Claus to General Frederick Haldimand, December 9, 1779, Montreal, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 243.
- ⁶² Daniel Claus to General Frederick Haldimand, May 15, 1780, Montreal, *Ibid*, 257.
- ⁶³ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 327-328.
- ⁶⁴ Joseph Brant to Sir John Johnson, December 25, 1782, Niagara, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 284-285.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 285.
- ⁶⁶ Brigadier General Allan MacLean to General Frederick Haldimand, May 18, 1783, Niagara, *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 20:117-118.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 20:120-121.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 20:118.
- ⁶⁹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 342.

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- ⁷⁰ Joseph Brant, September 7, 1783, “Transactions with Indians at Sandusky,” *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 20: 178-179.
- ⁷¹ James Duane, 1784, “James Duane Expresses His Views on the Indian Question,” *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 8: 329-330.
- ⁷² Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 358.
- ⁷³ Joseph Brant, September 7, 1784, Fort Schuyler, *The Public Papers of George Clinton*, 8:366-367.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 8: 367.
- ⁷⁵ Governor Clinton, September 10, 1784, Fort Schuyler, *Ibid*, 8: 373.
- ⁷⁶ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 363.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 366.

Chapter Four: Guy Johnson—An Issue of Superintendent versus Go-Between

- ¹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 236-237, 270-71.
- ² Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 103-104; Graymont’s *The Iroquois in the American Revolution*, 182-183; Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 175.
- ³ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, August, 9, 1776, Staten Island, *DRSNY*, 8:682.
- ⁴ See footnote 1 for brief biography on William Knox, *Ibid*, 8:803.
- ⁵ Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, March 1, 1777, No. 1 Ryder Street, *Ibid*, 8: 700-701.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, 8: 701.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, 8: 700.
- ⁸ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, November 25, 1776, New York, *Ibid*, 8:687.
- ⁹ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, September 10, 1778, New York, *Ibid*, 8:752.
- ¹⁰ “Indian Affairs Department Reply to the Indians Concerning their Meeting with Butler at Niagara,” May 27, 1777, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 75-76.
- ¹¹ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, April 7, 1777, New York, *DRSNY*, 8: 707.
- ¹² Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, March 1, 1777, No. 1 Ryder Street, *Ibid*, 8: 701-702.
- ¹³ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, November 25, 1776, New York, *Ibid*, 8: 688.
- ¹⁴ Daniel Claus to Secretary Knox, November 6, 1777, Montreal, *Ibid*, 8: 724.
- ¹⁵ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, June 8, 1777, New York, *Ibid*, 8: 712.
- ¹⁶ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 236-37 and 245.
- ¹⁷ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, February 11, 1779, Halifax, *DRSNY*, 8: 758.
- ¹⁸ “Conference of General Haldimand and the Deputies from the Five Nations,” August 20, 1779, Quebec, *Ibid*, 8: 778.
- ¹⁹ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, September 5, 1779, Montreal, *DRSNY*, 8: 775.
- ²⁰ General Haldimand to Lord George Germain, September 13, 1779, Quebec, *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 10: 359-360.
- ²¹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 270.
- ²² *Ibid*, 270.
- ²³ Molly Brant to Daniel Claus, October 5, 1779, Carleton Island, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 236.
- ²⁴ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 103-104.
- ²⁵ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, October 11, 1781, Niagara, *DRSNY*, 8: 813.
- ²⁶ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 289.
- ²⁷ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, October 11, 1781, Niagara, *DRSNY*, 8: 813; Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 289.
- ²⁸ General Haldimand to Lord George Germain, October 25, 1780, Quebec, *Collections of Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society*, 10: 444-45.
- ²⁹ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 299-300.
- ³⁰ Guy Johnson to Lord George Germain, October 11, 1781, Niagara, *DRSNY*, 8: 813.
- ³¹ Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 103-104.

Conclusion

- ¹ Hendrick, Conference in Albany, July 5, 1754, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2: 704; quoted in Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire*, 166.

² Daniel Claus to General Frederick Haldimand, May 15, 1780, Montreal, *Indian Affairs Papers*, 257.

³ Kelsay, *Joseph Brant*, 378-379.

⁴ Alan Taylor, "Captain Hendrick Aupaumut: The Dilemma of an Intercultural Broker," in *Ethnohistory*, vol. 43, no. 3 (Summer, 1996), 448.

⁵ *Ibid*, 450.

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