in a fit of savage passion in the one from whose hands she was snatched, the unhappy woman became the victim. Upon the first intelligence of this event I obliged the Indians to deliver the murderess into my hands; and tho' I have punished him by our laws or principles of justice would have been perhaps un-precedented, he certainly should have suffered an ignominious death had I not been convinced by circumstances and observation, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that a pardon, under the forms which I prescribed and they accepted, would be more efficacious than an execution to prevent similar mischiefs.

The above instance excepted, your intelligence respecting cruelties of the Indians is false.4

Mohawks Side with the British (1778)

Introduction

Writing on June 27, 1778, Reverend Dan Claus's excerpted letter explains why the Mohawks chose to remain loyal to the British. Claus also defends Indian warfare as primarily defensive and praises the Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, for his moderation.

Indeed the Generality of Indians on this Continent saw it their political interest from the Beginning of this Rebellion to oppose the Rebels as much as in their Power, being sensible of the Americans having always had so great a Propensity of encroaching upon their Land by Soil Means & otherwise; and in particular became more & more troublesome to them in that Respect since the Conquest of Canada, and in short clearly foresaw that should they succed in their rebellious Plan & become Masters of the Continent they would soon overrun their hunting Territory allotted them by His Majesty in 1768. and expel them. However this Endeavour of theirs was greatly checked by an ill judged Delicacy in the Rules of this Country the two first Years, which had not been the Case the Rebellion in my We Opinion must have been check'd in its Bud and Thousands of Lives thereby saved.

Now the Rebels having openly threatened the Indians to extirpate them whenever in their Power & take Possession of their Lands, they are determin'd to carry on the war against them in the last Extremity. And I apprehend if Matters were settled to Morrow on Governments side they could not be brought so easily to make Peace with the Rebels after such Threats, being in general of an unforgiving, jealous & savage Temper. Yet notwithstanding this Conduct of the Indians in their own Cause as it were, the Rebels in Conformity to their gen' Character do their utmost to persuade & Influence the public agents Government of their being the Inquisite & Employers of Savage Exploits & Cruelties & which are published in their Papers with the most unjust & false Exaggerations, as I myself read in one of them touching our Affairs at Fort Stanwix, of which they published that enormous Untruth of Numbers having been murdered in cold Blood, when it can be made to appear with the greatest Truth that we merely acted defensively in preventing an Enemy to attack, dislodge & if in their power cut us to pieces; and not a Rebel was killed after being taken & brought to Camp, but as soon as possible purchased & released from the Indians & sent to this Place.

The Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant that was in London in 1776, has since his Return to his Country and Nation proved & distinguished himself the most Loyal & firmly attached Friend to His Majesty's Cause & Interest; he has requested his Warriors unswervingly to defend their Lands & Liberty against the Rebels, who in a great measure began this Rebellion to be sole Masters of this Continent and only for the Great King their father's inheriting & protecting them they must have perhaps 'er now been deprived of everything that was dear to them, wherefore they could not sufficiently exert themselves to expose the King's Cause, that was so nearly connected with theirs. He was the most active Chieftain in the last Campaign under me, & by my Directions has all last Winter prepared them, & the other day attached a rebel post called Cherry valley in Tryon County & cut off a party of upwars [of] 300 entirely. I am sure he must occasion some Diversion in favor of Sir Henry Clinton coming up Hudson's River as he keeps the whole Country alarmed. And 'altho' he is a thorough Indian born, he allows of no Cruelties as he Exploit his Proficiency in Christianity is amusing and incomparable, he has acquired the English Language so perfectly that he is the best Interpreter from that into ye Iroquois Language, and has translated [b] great part of the New Testament . . . 7

Mohawks Seek Assistance in Canada (1786)

Introduction

Joseph Brant rose as a Mohawk leader due to his connections with British officials such as Sir William Johnson. A devout Anglican, Brant translated the prayer book into the Mohawk language. In his letter to the American secretary of state, Lord Sydney, written on January 4, 1786, Brant reminds the British of Indian sacrifices during the rebellion. He pledges loyalty to the king and asks the government to assist his people in Canada.

My Lord,

The claims of the Mohawks for their losses having been delivered by Sir John Johnson, His Majesty's Superintendent General for Indian affairs, to General Haldimand, and by him laid before your Lordship, who cannot but be well informed of their sufferings, losses, and being drove from that country which their forefathers long enjoyed, and left them the miserable possessions of, is in consequence of their faithful attachment to the King, and the real
they manifested in supporting the cause of their country against the rebellious subjects in America.

From the promises made by the Governor and Commander-in-chief of Canada, that their losses should be made good, and that soon, when I left them, I was desired to put His Majesty's ministers in mind of their long and sincere friendship for the English nation, in whose cause they are not only engaged and they have so often fought and so freely bled,—of their late happy settlements, before the rebellion, and their present situation,—and to request their claims might be attended to, and that orders may be given for what they are to receive to be paid as soon as possible, in order to enable them to go on with the settlement they are now making in some measure stock their farms, and get such articles and materials as all settlements in new countries require, and which it is out of their power to do before they are paid for their losses.

Do my mentioning these matters, since my arrival in England, I am informed are given that this shall be done; which will give great relief and satisfaction to those faithful Indians, who will have spirit to go on, and their hearts be filled with gratitude for the King, their father's great kindness, which I pray leave, in their behalf, to acknowledge, and to thank your Lordship for your friendship.

JOSEPH BRANT, Captain, or Thayendanaaga.

Indians as Beasts of Prey (1783)

Introduction

The two excerpted letters, written on May 10, 1783, and September 7, 1783, illuminate General George Washington's desire to advance frontier settlement without instigating another "Indian War." Throughout, Washington remains clear about rewarding the efforts of American "warriors" through granting them Indians land. Washington's comparison of Indians with wolves, both beasts of prey, highlights the continuing Indian resistance to American expansion.

To Chevalier de Chamteilas, Newburgh, May 10, 1783

At present, both Armies remain in the Situation you left them, except that all Acts of hostility have ceased in that quarter and things have put on a more tranquil appearance than heretofore. . . .

We look forward with anxious expectation for the Definitive treaty to remove the doubts and difficulties which prevail at present, and our Country of our Newly acquired friends in New York, and other places within these states of whose Company we are heartily tired. Sir Guis, with whom I have had a meeting at Dobbs ferry for the purpose of ascertaining the Epoch of this event, ad

give me no definitive answer; but general assurances, that he has taken every preparatory step for it, one of which was that a few days before, he had shipped off for Nova Scotia upwards of 6000 Refugees or Loyalists, who apprehending they would not be received as Citizens of these United States he thought it his duty to remove previous to the evacuation of the City by the King's Troops.

The Indians have recommenced hostilities on the Frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia; killing and scalping whole families, who had just returned to the habitations from which they had fled, in expectation of enjoying them again in Peace; these people will be troublesome Neighbours to us unless they can be removed to a much greater distance and this is only to be done by purchase, or Conquest; which of the two will be adopted by Congress I know not. the first, I believe would be cheapest, and most consistent perhaps with justice. the latter most effectual.

To Marquis de Lafayette, Head Quarters, Newburgh, May 10, 1783 . . .

The Indians on the Frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania have lately committed Acts of hostility, murdering and Scalping many of the innocent Settlers, who were returning to their former habitations in hopes of possessing them in Peace. It is much to be doubted whether these wretches will ever suffer our Frontiers to enjoy tranquility till they are either exterminated, or removed to a much greater distance from us than they now are.

To James Duane, Rocky Hill, September 7, 1783

Sir: I have carefully perused the Papers which you put into my hands relative to Indian Affairs.

My sentiments with respect to the proper line of Conduct to be observed towards these people coincides precisely with those delivered by Gen. Schuyler, so far as he has gone in his Letter of the 29th, July to Congress (which, with the other Papers is herewith returned), and for the reasons he has there assigned; a repetition of them therefore by me would be unnecessary. But independent of the arguments made use of him the following considerations have no small weight in my Mind.

To suffer a wide extended Country to be over run with Land Jobbers, Speculators, and Monopolizers or even with scatter'd settlers, is in my opinion, inconsistent with the wisdom and policy which our true interest dictates, or that an enlightened People ought to adopt, and besides, is pregnant of disputes both with the Savages, and among ourselves, the evils of which are easier, to be conceived and then described; and for what? but to aggrandize a few avaricious Men to the prejudice of many, and the embarrassment of Government: for the People engaged in these pursuits without contributing in the smallest degree to the support of Government, or considering themselves as amenable to its Laws, will involve it by their unrestrained conduct, in inextricable perplexities, and more than probable in a great deal of Bloodshed.