



Wahonatakláhkwa.

[s.l.]: [s.n.], 1970/1979

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Small Pox Epidemic

When the Oneidas first arrived here, a disease went around here – they got small pox. Here and there they were driven away. They couldn't buy anything. They became really poor. They struggled to eat. That is why my father Henry Cooper drew up a petition and gathered the Oneidas together. He showed them what he had created. It was all arranged except for the chiefs and the people to sign. First he read to them what he had written and they liked it since it was possible for many people to sign it. And both of the two clerics (priest and minister) signed it. They liked that kind of writing.

This was his issue, the man named Cooper, and he had been taught for ten years. When he was nine years old, he left and ran away and where he had gone was this school called Shantytown (Tanktown) they had raised up near Green Bay. There even Oneida people had a chance to learn. That is why he had gone there for them to teach him.

Soon several hundred had signed and then he sent it to Philadelphia where those called the Quakers live and the reason he sent it there was that it was the kind of writing that asks for help (a petition). At that time they were the kind of people that loved each other and greeted each other as brothers (and sisters). When his petition got there, they considered it and released a lot of money.

Then they selected one man. He set out and went by Chicago. There he traded some provisions and borrowed a boat just enough for it to get in. Then this man who found the boat docked it and it arrived in town. He traded so much that eight hundred still remained. He deposited it in a bank in town and left it.

He said, "It'll grow and add (interest) enough for one year and you will divide it among the elders and children who are poor, lame, and sick. It is still this way even now." And when he arrived, he met them at their meeting place. Then he told them that he traded full provisions in town.

Then he said, "Tomorrow you'll go after just what you can use." There were ponies and oxen in the morning and they hauled them. It was just filled up in the building where they met. Then they began to distribute the people just as many as there were. They reckoned amounts by the size of the family.