

## Influence of Missionaries in the Valley

WITHIN TEN YEARS of becoming a center of trade with the English, Onaquaga was visited by Christian missionaries from New England. Several came and went in the 1740's. Then in 1753, the Reverend Gideon Hawley, with Rebecca Kellogg Ashley as his interpreter, was sent to Onaquaga from the Indian Mission School in Stockbridge, Massachusetts to establish a permanent missionary outpost—the only one to ever exist among the Iroquois. The influence of these missionaries on the native people was profound in many ways beyond religion—none more so than the Rev. Hawley.

Although Rev. Hawley stayed only three years at Onaquaga, the Mission under him was very successful. He was forced to leave in 1756 in the wake of the French and Indian War. His interpreter, Rebecca Kellogg Ashley, remained at Onaquaga until her death in August 1757. Known to the Onaquagans as "Wausaunia"—loosely meaning "the bridge"—her story is both moving and historically significant.

Rebecca Kellogg was taken into captivity at age 8 in the infamous French and Indian raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts, in February 1704 and marched 300 miles north and west to a Mohawk settlement in Canada where she remained for the next 25 years with her older sister Joanna. She returned to New England in 1729 completely changed by her experience, but also possessed of an extraordinary knowledge of the Indian language which she used in long years of service as both teacher and interpreter.

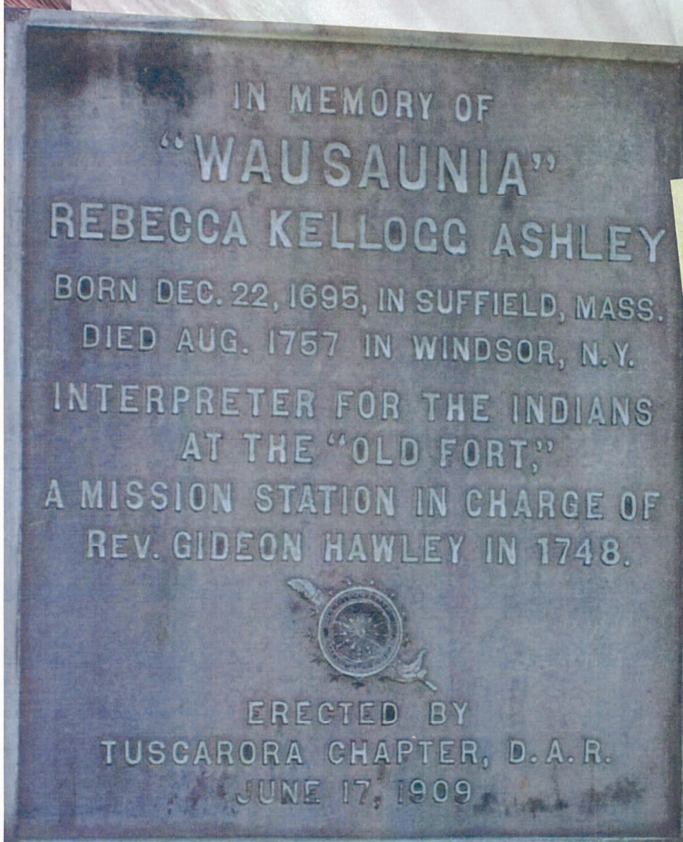
In a recorded statement made by 78-year-old Luther M. Smith in July 1908, he speaks of listening to his grandfather Mason tell of Indians returning to visit the grave of Mrs. Ashley many years after her death. They spoke of how great a loss they felt "in the passing of such an instructor as that white woman was". Some of them wept at her grave.

The Tuscarora Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution honored Rebecca Kellogg Ashley in 1909 with a memorial stone placed on her grave site. It still stands there today. By her coming among the people of Onaquaga in the 1750's, Rebecca Kellogg Ashley became the first known white woman to live and die in what would become Broome County.

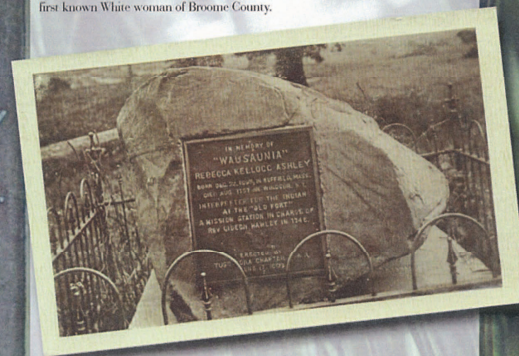
In all, the missionary presence in the Valley spanned the years 1747 to 1777, only ending with the onset of the American Revolution.



Map of interior New York showing the Fort Stanwix Treaty Line of 1763 separating Iroquois Territory and Tryon County. Note dotted treaty line running just east of Onaquaga. —Courtesy of Marjory Barnum Hinman



Old postcard picture of the stone memorial off Dutchtown Road in North Windsor dedicated by the Tuscarora Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1909 to honor the memory of Rebecca Kellogg Ashley, first known White woman of Broome County.



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