

Quinney, John W. [Waun-Nau-Con] (? , 1797-21 July 1855), Stockbridge (Mohican) tribal leader, was born on New Stockbridge reservation near Oneida, New York, the son of Stockbridge parents. The Stockbridge had become an impoverished remnant of their former selves, reduced to the small refuge given them by the Oneida tribe. Belonging to the Algonkian linguistic group, the tribe who in their now extinct language called themselves the Muh-he-con-new, "like our waters, which are never still," had formerly owned the Hudson River valley from Manhattan Island to Lake Champlain, from Albany to the Berkshires. Their tragic fate at the hands of corrupt land speculators, fickle white policies, and grinding poverty, coupled with their heavy loss of life fighting for the United States during the Revolution informed the life of John Quinney. To rescue them from extinction, preserve their culture, and enhance their well-being principled his actions.

Nothing is known of his parents. He had a distinguished brother, Austin, a tribal leader, and a renown sister, Electa, first public school teacher in Wisconsin and missionary to the Cherokee. As a youth the elders of the tribe took particular interest in him seeing in his early displayed talents the future hope of the nation. When the government offered to pay for the schooling of three Stockbridge the tribe selected him as one to attend the common English school of Caleb Underhill at Yorktown, New York, from the autumn of 1810 until May 1, 1813. He showed great talent for statesmanship, demonstrated an extraordinary ability to express himself in English and Mohican, possessed a keen mind, and slowly gained the confidence of the tribe. By the time he entered manhood the entire business of the tribe had fallen upon him.

In his youth he joined the Presbyterian Church and eventually became, we assume from secondary references, a preacher in the faith. In 1818 he and Captain Hendrick, a Stockbridge officer in the Revolution, translated the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649) shorter catechism into Mohican, an unusual step for tribes who typically relied on missionaries for this work. The fragments of his manuscripts that have survived, his several speeches, and his official statements, memorials, and legal arguments consistently display a deep knowledge of the tribe's history and culture.

Prior to the War of 1812 the Stockbridge had decided to migrate to the West. Land speculators, pioneer pressures upon their reserve and the settlement of immoral whites on their border compelled them to depart. In southern Indiana their ancient friends the Miami had sold them sufficient land to start anew, but when the first migrating group arrived in 1818 they found the government alerted by speculators had moved quickly to take it away by a treaty, secured a few days before. The tribal protests, superbly argued and clearly stated, were made by Quinney, but made no impression upon a callous Congress. In 1821, and again in 1822 to enlarge it, the tribe directed him and two others to obtain land in Wisconsin, near Green Bay. Together with two other New York tribes ready to migrate, the Brothertown and the Oneida, they purchased seven million acres from the Menominee in a right in common. In 1825 through lengthy negotiation with the New York Legislature Quinney obtained a law that gave the tribe full and fair value for its remaining lands in that state.

Quinney organized and directed the tribe's removal from New York. For several years he proceeded gradually with annual groups to a reservation along the upper Fox River, near present day South Kaukauna. He escorted the bands, some of them the aged, achieved without loss of life. While in transit the Menominee with the aid of local French traders and the federal government questioned the

validity of the Stockbridge purchases and broke the contract, leaving the tribe without title in Wisconsin. The controversy consumed much time and considerable energy of the tribal leaders leading to major federal investigations and additional treaties. As part of the process Quinney traveled to Washington where he secured a new reservation, two townships in size, on the east side of Lake Winnebago, a day's journey from the old.

In 1833 Quinney framed a constitution for the tribe, that led to the abandonment of hereditary powers and implemented republicanism. The federal government delayed payment of tribal funds for years, plunging the members into private debts that meant the sale of the reservation to expunge them. By Quinney's clever device they sold half and saved the rest. The financial reverses coupled with aggressive white pressures kept the tribe in turmoil for years.

In 1843 Congress imposed citizenship upon the Stockbridge and allotted their lands to the members in fee simple absolute. Quinney resisted the act and formed a tribal faction known as the Indian Party to work for tribal ownership of the land, fearing that white speculators would soon acquire the allotted lands and the tribe perish. The Citizen Party Stockbridge assisted by speculators rose in opposition to resist his every move, sending delegates to Washington to counteract his efforts. Dire poverty dogged his steps. In the midst of the struggle to restore the land the contradictory government made a treaty with the tribe it had just abolished to move it west of the Mississippi River to a new home. He then worked with untiring zeal for removal, hoping it would preserve the old culture and finally permit the Stockbridge to have a permanent home. When fear of the Sioux and love of their rich soil in Wisconsin dampened the desire of members to remove he again turned to Congress lobbying it to repeal the citizenship act and restore the tribe to its own land, customs and government in Wisconsin. Opposition forces blocked a home in the rich farm land until 1856, when with

Quinney dead, federal officials by the crude use of whiskey, bribery, and deception located the tribe on its present poor sandy reserve near Bowler

In 1852 he again pressed his claim against the government for his expenditures on behalf of the poor tribe made over a period of thirty years. While dispute arose over his claim, he had kept exact records that his then opponents and later commentators never refer to in discussing the issue. Altogether Quinney had made nine visits to Washington for the tribe ^{bringing up} totaling almost six years of his life, neglecting personal business and sacrificing his private life. Little is known of his wife and children. He was the subject of oil paintings by Hamlin, King, and Catlin.

At his death in Stockbridge, Wisconsin, an anonymous tribal member eulogized him, lamenting the tribe had sustained "an irreparable loss."

Bibliography. Few of Quinney's papers survived. A thin folder can be found in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. In the same archive the papers of his nephew John C. Adams (1842-1895), an attorney and famous Stockbridge leader, contain many of his manuscripts while the papers of Cutting Marsh, a missionary to the tribe (1830-1848) are also important. The Museum of the American Indian Library has the Quinney-Miller family papers that have some material on John W. as well as his traditional deerskin jacket. In 1995 the Stockbridge tribe officially changed its name to Mohican. Its historical archives near Bowler contains copies of numerous materials on him.

His publications are mostly confined to official documents most often published in the Congressional serial set. His July 4, 1854, speech at Reidsville, New York, included in the audience descendants and participants of the tenant wars in the area whose eighteenth century ancestors had been led against the landlords by the Stockbridge; it is a classic of Indian and Mohican history. It

appears in Wisconsin Historical *Collections* 4 (1859), pp. 313-320, as "Speech of John Quinney." The same volume contains a "historical notice" of him by a tribesman, Levi Konkapot, Jr., entitled "The Last of the Mohicans," pp. 303-307, an anonymous Stockbridge obituary, "Death of John W. Quinney," pp. 309-311, and Quinney's "Memorial of John W. Quinney," pp. 321-333, to Congress dated 1852, that includes biographical information. *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism* (1818) is his only published work.

The secondary literature mentioning him include J. N. Davidson, *Muh-he-ka-ne-ok; A History of the Stockbridge Nation* (1893) and a portion of Joseph M. Schafer, *The Winnebago-Horicon Basin* (1937), both outdated. Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins. A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (1981) discusses Quinney but confuses Stockbridge politics. The Amos Hamlin portrait (1849) hangs in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The Gilcrease Institute of Tulsa owns the Charles B. King oil (1842), while the George Catlin portrait (1830) is in the Smithsonian.