



WPI

“Savage Whites” and the “Brethren in the Woods”

Methodist Voices of Native Survivance in Early-to-
Mid-19th-Century America and Canada

A Major Qualifying Project submitted to the faculty of
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

on April 30, 2014

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Submitted to:
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Abstract

United by similar commitments to their local communities and Native peoples at large, both Peter Jones and William Apess advocated for increased recognition of rights, new levels of respect, and self-determination for North America's indigenous populations in the mid-to-late 19th century. Comparable discussions of key topics—including the equality of races before God, the injustice of colonization, white Christian hypocrisy, and the introduction of alcohol by whites—highlight the pair's shared ideological foundations and a mutual dedication to the cause of Native survivance. The disparity between the public approaches favored by Jones and Apess derives not from fundamental disagreements in outlook, but instead from the differing demands of vastly dissimilar national and regional contexts. Put simply, the two leaders were separated more by setting and circumstance than by differences of ideology. Although he appears at first glance to be overly conciliatory and heavily assimilated, Peter Jones was in fact driven throughout his career by the same ethos that guided his Pequot counterpart—an ethos that emphasized survival, public presence, self-determination, and self-affirmation.

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Introduction

In the winter of 1815, a remarkable historical convergence occurred on the shores of Lake Ontario. Though they would not meet and were entirely unaware of each other, two important young Indians—both destined to become preachers, writers, and influential leaders—inhabited the same world for a brief period of time. On the western end of the lake, between the Stoney Creek settlement on the southern shore and the mouth of the Credit River to the north, 13-year-old Kahkewaquonaby lived and traveled with his mother’s band of Ojibwas—the Credit River Mississauga. Kahkewaquonaby would soon leave the troubled Mississauga and join his white father at his farm in Stoney Creek; while there, the young Native would adopt his English name—Peter Jones.¹ On the other side of the lake, near the Bay of Quinte, 17-year-old William Apess spent the winter with the local Mississauga and Mohawks, drinking rum and celebrating his release from the U.S. Army.² Apess, a Pequot Indian from Connecticut and a runaway, had fought in the War of 1812 and now found himself wandering through Upper Canada.³ Each in a critical phase of his life, Jones and Apess both struggled that winter to find identity and purpose while living on the wooded shores of Lake Ontario.

After returning to southern New England, Apess went on to establish himself as a published author and itinerant Methodist minister; he also gained considerable fame for leading

¹ Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 40-41.

² Barry O’Connell, introduction to *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, by William Apess, ed. Barry O’Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), xxxii-xxxiii.

³ William Apess, *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe*, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O’Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 130-131.

the 1833 Mashpee Revolt and for his provocative speech, *Eulogy on King Philip*. Peter Jones, like Apess, became a Methodist preacher as a young adult, and worked as a missionary and translator among the Natives of Upper Canada. He was also a noted community leader, but was not confrontational like Apess, choosing to advocate for his people largely within the confines of established white authority. Jones, within his lifetime, became a figure of significant repute; he traveled to England several times and was granted an audience with Queen Victoria. Apess and Jones were important individuals in early-to-mid-19th-century North American society: they were among the first Indians to produce widely published bodies of work, and were among the first to publish genuine self-written autobiographies. Their cultural impact was far-reaching and meaningful, and modern scholars—of both the United States and Canada—have recognized the magnitude of their contributions.

Surprisingly, scholars have yet to conduct in-depth, side-by-side examinations of the lives and writings of Apess and Jones, despite the striking biographical continuities between the two. The two leaders have been studied separately to a considerable degree. Since Barry O'Connell renewed interest in Apess with the publication of his annotated anthology in 1992, numerous studies have looked at various aspects of the Pequot's fascinating life and works. Rochelle Raineri Zuck has noted the importance of "Lost Tribes" theories within Apess's writings;⁴ Mark J. Miller has placed Apess's activism within the broader movement of Methodist reform;⁵ Daniel R. Mandell includes a study of Apess and the Mashpee within a wider

⁴ Rochelle Raineri Zuck, "William Apess, the 'Lost Tribes,' and Indigenous Survivance," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013).

⁵ Mark J. Miller, "'Mouth for God': Temperate Labor, Race, and Methodist Reform in William Apess's *A Son of the Forest*," *Journal of the Early Republic* 30, no. 2 (Summer 2010).

examination of ethnicity and race in Indian New England;⁶ and Jean M. O'Brien discusses Apess and the Mashpee at length in her book about the vanishing Indian myth.⁷ In addition, Patricia Bizzell has studied the influence of the jeremiad tradition on his writings,⁸ while Carolyn Haynes investigates Apess's deployment of the conversion narrative.⁹ Meanwhile, Karim M. Tiro and Laura E. Donaldson have each explored the Indian leader's formation of a Methodist-Pequot identity.^{10 11} Through these studies, scholars have correctly identified a number of noteworthy trends and patterns illuminated by Apess's career and writings that merit further exploration.

Although less attention has been given to the life and works of Peter Jones, the existing material includes studies that are both thorough and insightful. Most notable among these is Donald B. Smith's *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) & the Mississauga Indians*, which offers keen analysis as it methodically chronicles Jones's career and achievements.¹² Jace Weaver has studied the Mississauga preacher as an example of what he

⁶ Daniel R. Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008).

⁷ Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

⁸ Patricia Bizzell, "(Native) American Jeremiad: The 'Mixedblood' Rhetoric of William Apess," in *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic*, ed. Ernest Stromberg (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

⁹ Carolyn Haynes, "'A Mark for Them All to... Hiss at': The Formation of Methodist and Pequot Identity in the Conversion Narrative of William Apess," *Early American Literature* 31, no. 1 (1996).

¹⁰ Karim M. Tiro, "Denominated 'SAVAGE': Methodism, Writing, and Identity in the Works of William Apess, a Pequot," *American Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (December 1996).

¹¹ Laura E. Donaldson, "Making a Joyful Noise: William Apess and the Search for Postcolonial Method(ism)," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005).

¹² Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend*.

terms “communitism”—the imaginative process of Indian community building.¹³ Meghan C. L. Howey examines Jones’s theory of the origins of indigenous North Americans, placing it in the larger context of Indian writings that dispute the origin theories of the white establishment.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the volume of scholarship focusing on Jones has been limited by a seemingly widespread perception that casts him as an entirely Christianized person, lacking true “Nativity.” In one of the few studies directly comparing Jones to Apess, Irene S. Vernon declares that the Ojibwa was “completely transformed by the dominant,” leading to a “rejection of all that was Native.”¹⁵ The historical facts, as laid out in Smith’s *Sacred Feathers* and Jones’s own *Life and Journals*, do not support this assertion. Jones, for example, “kept all his life” an eagle feather given to him by the chief of the Mississauga at his traditional “naming feast.”¹⁶ He also insisted that each of his children receive traditional Mississauga names.¹⁷ As Jace Weaver puts it, “Jones and his family were deeply involved in Native community and passionate defenders of Native rights.”¹⁸ Although the Ojibwa leader was not nearly as militant as Apess, he still embodied Indian cultural values and self-affirmation; the ways in which Jones strove for rights, respect, and autonomy should not be ignored.

¹³ Jace Weaver, "Native American Authors and Their Communities," *Wicazo Sa Review* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1997).

¹⁴ Meghan C. L. Howey, "'The question which has puzzled, and still puzzles': How American Indian Authors Challenged Dominant Discourse about Native American Origins in the Nineteenth Century," *The American Indian Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (Fall 2010).

¹⁵ Irene S. Vernon, "The Claiming of Christ: Native American Postcolonial Discourses," *MELUS* 24, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 80.

¹⁶ Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend*, 242.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 189-191.

¹⁸ Weaver, "Native American Authors and Their," 54.

In dismissing Jones as overly assimilated and failing to compare him to his New England counterpart, scholars have overlooked a lucrative and insightful avenue of research. A number of striking parallels connect the lives of these two influential Christian Indians, and analyzing the ways in which these biographical continuities manifest themselves in both ideas and rhetoric reveals much about Christian Indian identity in early-19th-century North America. Weaver, in his book titled *That the People Might Live*, recognizes the utility of such an analysis and briefly compares Jones to Apess; although he identifies several key parallels that connect the two authors, Weaver does not construct a full-length, in-depth comparison.¹⁹ In a footnote within his introduction to *On Our Own Ground*, Barry O'Connell also briefly notes the similarities that link Jones to Apess: "Both became Methodist preachers, promoters and leaders of their peoples, and important writers. Peter Jones's writing was as extensive as Apess's. Both authored autobiographies and histories."²⁰ Closer examination reveals many more resemblances. Both Apess and Jones moved between white and Indian worlds as children, and both had difficulty coming to terms with their Native identities as a result. Each had his own struggle with alcoholism and its effects: for Jones, this struggle entailed dealing with the drinking that plagued his Mississauga community, and for Apess, it involved suffering at the hands of his alcoholic grandparents before developing a drinking problem of his own. Both men were racially mixed, and both had parents that would repeatedly exit and then re-enter their lives as children. Throughout their lives, Apess and Jones interacted frequently with tribes other than their own, establishing strong bonds and commitments in the process. Additionally, both men had powerful, life-altering experiences attending Methodist revivals while young. These many similarities

¹⁹ Jace Weaver, *That the People Might Live : Native American Literatures and Native American Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60-65.

²⁰ O'Connell, introduction to *On Our Own Ground*, xxxiii.

derive analytical significance not only from their ability to explain the ideological and rhetorical commonalities present within the two leaders' collective writings, but also from their usefulness in highlighting sources of the discrepancy between two dissimilar approaches to public engagement. With so much in common, it becomes easier to track the places where Apess and Jones diverged.

Perhaps the most meaningful source of difference between the two, the distinct national and regional contexts in which Apess and Jones maneuvered presented differing sets of challenges and opportunities. Jones and his Credit River Mississauga were located on the more sparsely populated lands of British-owned Upper Canada; the white settlers here had to rely on Native communities for survival in many cases, and this led to somewhat friendlier relations between races—at least during the early years of the 19th century. The system of government present in Canada further separated Jones's world from Apess's. Although the Crown repeatedly took advantage of Canada's Indian populations, it nevertheless maintained an official attitude that promised aid and protection. And because Britain desperately needed its critical Indian alliances in the event of another war with the U.S., it continued to enforce the Proclamation of 1763, which regulated private buying and selling of Native lands.²¹ Above all else, Jones's circumstances differed in that the hope of white-Indian cooperation had not yet been completely extinguished. Meanwhile, in southern New England, William Apess faced a very different situation. By the 1830s, Massachusetts and Connecticut were thoroughly settled, and the disenfranchisement of Natives had become systematic and institutionalized. The region's Indians found themselves marginalized and struggling to adapt to an industrialized society.²² On the

²¹ Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend*, 23-24.

²² Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, 109.

national level, President Jackson was overseeing the devastating Trail of Tears. In this context, compromise and cooperation seemed less viable. Comparing these disparate national and regional contexts reveals a great deal about Christian Indian activism and the varying forms it may take in the face of different authority structures. Too often, scholars of Native Americans fail to cross the U.S.-Canada border, and are thus blind to important wider contexts that may inform their approach. The stories of William Apess and Peter Jones did not end at the U.S.-Canada border, and neither should the story of Christian Indian identity and advocacy.

United by similar commitments to their local communities and Native peoples at large, both Peter Jones and William Apess advocated for increased recognition of rights, new levels of respect, and self-determination for North America's indigenous populations. Comparable discussions of key topics—including the equality of races before God, the injustice of colonization, white Christian hypocrisy, and the introduction of alcohol by whites—highlight the pair's shared ideological foundations and a mutual dedication to the cause of Native survivance. The disparity between the public approaches favored by Jones and Apess derives not from fundamental disagreements in outlook, but instead from the differing demands of vastly dissimilar national and regional contexts. Put simply, the two leaders were separated more by setting and circumstance than by differences of ideology. Although he appears at first glance to be overly conciliatory and heavily assimilated, Peter Jones was in fact driven throughout his career by the same ethos that guided his Pequot counterpart—an ethos that emphasized survival, public presence, self-determination, and self-affirmation.

While Apess is now generally accepted as embodying a genuine Native voice of assertion and survivance, scholars have not always acknowledged the authenticity of his Indian identity and perspectives. As Weaver points out, certain scholars—including, most notably, Arnold

Krupat—have defined Apess’s “Indianness” as being “submerged or obliterated by a Christian consciousness.”²³ By and large, recent scholarship has moved past this type of dichotomizing view, recognizing the complexities and nuances associated with socially constructed identities—particularly with identities formed among subjugated peoples. Apess, in order to be “effective as a defender of Indian rights” in his era, had to master, as Weaver terms it, a “subtle and difficult maneuvering between two worlds.”²⁴ The Pequot preacher deployed elements of his Methodist identity to better advocate for the cause of Indian survivance. The ability to successfully navigate the public worlds of established white authority allowed Apess to lead his communities through projects of preservation and assertion.

Peter Jones, in a manner that was more suited to his distinctive circumstances in Upper Canada, also carried out a “subtle and difficult maneuvering” between white and Indian cultures. Unfortunately, few scholars have fully appreciated the significance of Jones’s Native voice. Because the maneuverings of the Mississauga leader involved a greater degree of compromise and integration, he has been dismissed as being “completely transformed by the dominant.” As with Apess, a more considered and nuanced approach is needed: closely examining Jones’s life and works, one soon discovers the multitude of ways in which he used his engagement with the white public world to advocate for the autonomy of local communities. A comprehensive study comparing Jones to Apess reveals a great deal about different modes of responding to colonization and subjugation, as it illuminates the continuum of responses associated with varying forms of “subtle and difficult maneuvering.” Acknowledging this broad range of

²³ Weaver, *That the People Might*, 54.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

authentic Native reaction compels us as scholars to widen our search field as we seek out new Indian voices of survivance.

To modern eyes, certain indigenous voices may initially appear entirely altered by the governing culture: the objectives and cultural values they embody might seem to belong solely to the dominant. Careful consideration of social and historical contexts, however, might often prove false these initial appearances. In certain settings, a philosophy of survivance will manifest itself in surprising ways—in the form of methods and approaches unfamiliar to observers of a different societal backdrop. As scholars, we must pay close attention to the circumstances within which an Indian voice maneuvers, attempting to precisely discern their impact on modes of activist response. Studies that compare similar Native figures—with comparable goals, philosophies, and personal histories—of dissimilar contexts become eminently useful when employed in such endeavors. These types of comparisons shed light on the divergent demands and influences of separate circumstances, and underscore the importance of varying forms of authority structures. With such perspective gained, we can identify the contributions made to the cause of Native survivance by figures like Peter Jones—figures that worked in less familiar contexts and used less expected methods. We then find that these voices are just as valuable as others in their ability to teach us about methods of advocating for self-determination and respect.

Shared Ideological Foundations: A Philosophy of Survivance

Given their distinctive methods and personas within the world of public discourse, it initially appears doubtful, to the modern observer, that Jones and Apess would have worked with the same ideological frameworks. Closer examination, however, reveals that this was in fact the case. Although the two did not necessarily express agreement on every specific point of doctrine,

the philosophical underpinnings that gave rise to their works and activist efforts were largely shared. As made evident through the leaders' writings and careers, they held in common foundational ideas about race, human rights, colonization, and social justice. The way in which Jones and Apess envisioned the place of Natives in a world of white authority was informed by an unwavering belief in the power of self-determination and public presence. Gerald Vizenor defines "native survivance" as "an active sense of presence over absence," entailing something "greater than the right of a survivable name";²⁵ in many significant ways, both Jones and Apess embodied and embraced this "sense of presence" as they fought to protect Native community and autonomy.

In order to be effective in these efforts, each leader had to correctly perceive the many injustices perpetrated through white hegemony. Apess, of course, is well-known and widely celebrated among modern readers for his adamant and unsparing critiques of white American society. As Karim Tiro notes, Apess, through his "numerous caustic polemics against white racism," launched an attack with a surprisingly "modern tone" against "the Puritans' providential conception of history."²⁶ Peter Jones, on the other hand, was more guarded and careful with his public critiques; this has compelled some scholars to categorize him as "thoroughly colonized," as Irene Vernon has.²⁷ Close attention to Jones's life, works, and contexts reveals a very different picture however. Despite his cautious navigations through the public realm, Jones shared with Apess a worldview that cast white society as the source of numerous problems within Indian

²⁵ Gerald Vizenor, *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1.

²⁶ Tiro, "Denominated 'SAVAGE': Methodism, Writing," 653.

²⁷ Vernon, "The Claiming of Christ," 79.

communities. As Jace Weaver explains, Jones was “a vociferous critic of Whites both for their failure to conform to the dictates of their religion and for their treatment of Natives in general.”²⁸

Jones, for reasons related to the exigencies of his circumstances, did not always impart to audiences the full extent of his thoughts on dominant white society. Nevertheless, to a degree rivaling Apess, Jones incorporated an awareness of white crimes into his guiding worldview.

The remarkable agreement between the foundational ideologies of Apess and Jones can be explained, in part, by the crucial parallels that connect their biographies. Although they operated in vastly dissimilar national and regional contexts, the two had in common numerous factors within their personal lives—especially as children and young adults. These important biographical factors account for key areas of philosophical accord. A shared commitment to evangelical Protestant Christianity, for example, framed their most fundamental beliefs about race and equality. Moreover, reformist Methodism frequently served as the vehicle through which Apess and Jones expressed their critiques of white-Indian relations under colonized society. Carolyn Haynes sees Apess’s involvement with the Methodist faith as a vital source for “intercultural knowledge” and a way of “renewing antiracist values” while “promulgating effective and humane social change.”²⁹ Jones’s interactions with Methodism—which, as with Apess, began at a young age—worked much to the same effect. Another key biographical correspondence, the bonds the two leaders developed with outside tribes help to explain a mutual dedication to pan-Indian causes. Jones’s connections to the Grand River Mohawks and Apess’s associations with Cape Cod Wampanoags inculcated in each activist a heightened awareness of the broader Native community; in their writings and public efforts, Jones and Apess

²⁸ Weaver, "Native American Authors and Their," 58.

²⁹ Haynes, "A Mark for Them," 40.

demonstrated a deep concern for the collective fate of North America's indigenous populations. Thorough scrutiny of the pair's collective works reveals a number of instances in which common life experiences resulted in shared foundational viewpoints. Such instances underscore the degree to which Apess and Jones were driven by similar personal motivations.

Complementing their similar underlying philosophies, a common set of rhetorical tools allowed Jones and Apess, in a number of places throughout their writings, to voice their comparable perspectives in an analogous fashion. Once again, their passionate Methodist faith stands as a central factor in producing this significant linkage. Evangelical Protestantism offered the two Natives a range of rhetorical and narrative forms that would have been familiar to most of their audience—particularly when addressing whites. The conversion narrative was an especially popular form among white readers of the era, and accordingly, Apess and Jones deployed the convention across their writings. Using this “readily recognizable and respected mode of expression,” Apess—in his autobiographical *A Son of the Forest* and elsewhere—“capitalizes on the unique permissions granted to Methodist converts to express emotion and rage and to encourage moral change in others,” as Haynes argues.³⁰ Jones, in an autobiographical sketch at the start of his *Life and Journals*, uses a conversion narrative of his own for similar purposes: describing white Christian hypocrisy as a major obstacle to his initial acceptance of Christ, Jones constructs a subdued but pointed critique of the dominant society.³¹ In addition to the conversion narrative, both authors also employed rhetorical appeals invoking the common rights of man. In his southeastern New England context, Apess drew upon the Revolutionary

³⁰ Ibid., 27-30.

³¹ Peter Jones, Rev., *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1860), 7.

language of inalienable rights and liberties;³² Jones, in British-owned Upper Canada, referenced the inherent rights of British subjects under the Crown.³³ Engaging in historical revisionism constituted another important rhetorical strategy shared by the two leaders. At various points in their texts, Jones and Apess deliberately rewrite popular historical narratives, usually to emphasize the role of whites in committing injustice.

As illustrated by the above examples, Apess and Jones held in common an underlying ideology of survivance that was often expressed in similar ways and had as its points of origin shared life experiences. This fact is significant, as it points to difference in societal circumstances as the primary factor in explaining the pair's disparate public approaches. Offering further support for this line of reasoning, comparable discussions of key topics found within the ministers' collective writings highlight specific points of ideological convergence; mapping out these points of convergence allows us to clearly perceive the contours of this uniting philosophical framework. A few of these common topics are particularly noteworthy and merit investigation: the equality of races before God, the injustice of colonization, white Christian hypocrisy, and the whites' introduction of alcohol. Jones and Apess dealt with these topics frequently and did so passionately; they clearly felt these issues deserved special notice.

The Equality of Races Before God

Serving as a precursor to many other points of ideology, the pair's shared belief in the equality of races before God emphasized the moral transgression inherent within systems of

³² William Apess, *Eulogy on King Philip, as Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street, Boston, 1836*, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 280.

³³ Peter Jones, Rev., *History of the Ojebway Indians: with Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity* (London: A. W. Bennett, 1861), 217-218.

social hierarchy. Jones and Apess insisted that God, in his infinite love and wisdom, would not relegate entire sections of humanity to positions of inferiority. As they made this theological argument, the Native leaders challenged the faith and morality of dominant white society, which sought to subjugate Indian peoples even as it proclaimed to respect all of God's creation. From their positions as committed Methodist ministers, Jones and Apess could effectively and poignantly make this type of contention; in fact, it was Methodism's intrinsic anti-establishment and egalitarian impulse that pointed them toward these arguments in the first place. In one of his earliest encounters with the evangelical faith, Jones was told by an animated exhorter that "our Lord Jesus Christ...had died for Indians as well as for white people"; soon afterward—"on the glorious morning of the 5th of June, 1823"—Peter Jones experienced his rebirth.³⁴ A young William Apess was likewise attracted to Methodism's egalitarian ethos and doctrines of equality. In an early section of his autobiography, he describes a life-changing spiritual experience at a revival: "I felt convinced that Christ died for all mankind—that age, sect, color, country, or situation made no difference. I felt an assurance that I was included in the plan of redemption with all my brethren. No one can conceive with what joy I hailed this *new* doctrine..."³⁵ Thus, for both Jones and Apess, Methodism's emphasis on equality before God was a critical part of its appeal. In this sense, their experience with the faith mirrored that of thousands of other Indians during the era. "Evangelical religion," as Daniel R. Mandell explains, "served to organize and empower the lower classes," and for this reason found wide acceptance among minorities during

³⁴ Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by*, 12-13.

³⁵ William Apess, *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apess, a Native of the Forest*, 1829, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 19.

the Second Great Awakening.³⁶ Methodism and other evangelical denominations stood apart from the established religions of authority, which stressed formalism and exclusionary practices.³⁷

As ministers and leaders of Native communities, Apess and Jones energetically continued their denomination's egalitarian tradition, applying its viewpoints to their activist endeavors. In their written works, they convincingly argued—typically from a theological point of view—for the doctrine of racial equality. The most basic form of this argument, repeated throughout Jones's and Apess's texts, focused simply on a fundamental religious truth: God created all of mankind, and made man in his own image. To deny the humanity of a certain population, then, was to deny the wisdom of God's creation. As he employs this reasoning in *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians*, Apess also offers a forceful statement of self-affirmation in the face of racism: "I would ask the white man if he thinks that he can be justified in making just such a being as I am, or any other person in the world, unhappy; and although the white man finds so much fault because God has made me thus, yet if I have any vanity about it, I choose to remain as I am, and praise my Maker while I live that an Indian he has made."³⁸ Here, as he affirms his own identity, Apess also affirms the wisdom of God in making the Indian. Simultaneously, Apess calls into question the faith of the racist white man, who "finds so much fault" with a part of God's creation. In a similar manner, Jones too emphasizes what he calls the "unerring Word

³⁶ Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, xviii.

³⁷ Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 160.

³⁸ Apess, *The Experiences of Five*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 130.

of God”—the basic truth of mankind’s equality as divine creation.³⁹ As he puts it in one sermon, God, through “infinite goodness and mercy,” “provided means for the salvation of all people”—“not only for the white people.”⁴⁰ In another sermon, Jones contends that “the Great Spirit” understands “the Chippewa tongue” just as well as “the English tongue”: God, in fact, “made all languages,” and “we are all his children.”⁴¹ Using “the Great Spirit,” a traditional Native phrase, as a synonym for “God” not only underscores Jones’s cultural hybridity, but also the argument he is making about equality. Tellingly, and not surprisingly, Apess too made use of the phrase at key moments in his writing.

Jones and Apess deployed other important formulations of theological equality arguments in their essays, speeches, and autobiographies. In one such construction, references to the Biblical moment of mankind’s creation furnish proof for racial equality: if all of humankind descends from Adam and Eve, then we are all equals of the same progenitors. At the outset of his autobiography, Apess presents this logic in an unadorned manner: “We are in fact but one family; we are all descendants of one great progenitor—Adam.”⁴² Establishing all of humankind as family, Apess deliberately calls attention to the injustice and sinfulness inherent to racist practices. In his *History of the Ojebway Indians*, Jones references this line of reasoning in an equally straightforward way, stating that “the whole human race originally sprang from one

³⁹ Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 32.

⁴⁰ Peter Jones, Rev., *The Sermon and Speeches of the Rev. Peter Jones, alias, Kah-ke-wa-quon-a-by, the Converted Indian Chief* (Leeds: H. Spink, 1831), 6.

⁴¹ Peter Jones, Rev., “Rev. Mr. Jone’s Sermon on Prayer,” 1832, in *The Methodist Preacher: Monthly Sermons from Living Ministers*, ed. Ebenezer Ireson (Boston: Kane & Co., 1833), III & IV: 274.

⁴² Apess, *A Son of the Forest*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 4.

pair”; the existence of a single pair of common ancestors confirms equality among human races—the fact that “God hath made of one blood all nations of men.”⁴³ Once again employing references from scripture, Apess—with inspiration from other authors of the era—developed another case for the inherent racial equality of Indians: known as “the lost tribes theory,” this argument identified America’s Native peoples as the descendents of the ten lost tribes of Israel.⁴⁴ This bold claim allowed Apess to move beyond mere equality, as he could, as Zuck puts it, “frame American Indians as a chosen people with a covenantal relationship to the Christian God.”⁴⁵ From this position, Apess was able to launch scathing critiques of white sins and hypocrisy. In *The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ*, he asks, given the Indians’ status as the lost Israelites, “have not the great American nation reason to fear the swift judgments of heaven on them for nameless cruelties, extortions, and exterminations inflicted upon the poor natives of the forest?”⁴⁶

As is revealed in his *History*, Jones did not subscribe to the “lost tribes” theory that Apess so heavily favored. This may have reflected, as Meghan C. L. Howey argues, his awareness of emerging theories about the Mound Builders that drew upon the “lost tribes” theory; these theories surrounding the Mound Builders posited the notion that it was a vanished group of whites who constructed the mounds, not any group of Natives. The idea that a lost population of

⁴³ Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 32.

⁴⁴ William Apess, “The Indians: The Ten Lost Tribes,” 1831, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O’Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 32.

⁴⁵ Zuck, “William Apess, the ‘Lost,’” 2.

⁴⁶ William Apess, *The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ*, 1831, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O’Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 106.

Israelites had wandered America seemed to support the theory of white-built mounds. Perhaps wishing to avoid such cultural misappropriation, Jones thus favored a theory of ancient Native presence—one in which the accomplishments of the Mound Builders belonged to Indians.⁴⁷

Instead of assertions centered on the lost Israelites, Jones used the notion of the “white savage” to further support his ideas about equality and as a means to launch attacks on white hypocrisy. Throughout his speeches and writings, Jones effectively employs the “white savage”—or the “white heathen,” as he is sometimes labeled—as a symbol of problematic attitudes toward Natives. Even in his daily life, Jones would identify instances of “white savageness.” In a journal entry from 1829, he relates an encounter with an obstinate white disbeliever: “Surely this man with all his advantages is a greater heathen than my poor pagan brethren in the woods. The Lord have mercy upon this poor white heathen!”⁴⁸ In Jones’s mind, the existence of the “white heathen” demonstrates the equal capacity of whites to live in a debased, unconverted state; although the dominant culture focuses almost exclusively upon the unconverted Indian, Jones is able to point out white heathens with all the societal “advantages.” Being eminently aware of both white privilege and popular attitudes that cast Natives as especially savage, Jones is left incredulous and frustrated at the sight of a “heathen” within the advantaged white world. Here, then, he uses the “poor white heathen” to comment on both racial equality and hypocrisy among whites. Jones, however, did not relegate his thoughts on the white savage to the private world of his journal. In an 1831 sermon preached before an English audience in Leeds, Jones used his notion of the white savage to again highlight hypocrisy and sin: “I cannot see into this: how it is that your children, or that so many of you, my white

⁴⁷ Howey, “The question which has puzzled,” 452-453.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by*, 213-214.

brothers and sisters, after living in this gospel land, and after having the Bible in your hands, should live unconverted. O God have mercy upon the heathen of this land..."⁴⁹ Jones's language works through a poignant reversal of expectations. His audience expected to learn about white efforts to convert heathens in Indian lands, but instead found themselves before an Indian attempting to convert heathens in the world of the whites. This dramatic reversal not only highlights hypocrisy, but also racial equality: through the unsparing jeremiad of a Native preacher, Jones's audience likely realized that "savages" exist among every group of people.

Apess also used occasionally the "white savage" convention to argue for the equality of races. At the start of his essay titled "The Indians: The Ten Lost Tribes," he asks his readers about the nature of race and sin: "Is not the white man as sinful by nature as the red man? Uneducated, and unrenewed by divine grace, is he not a heathen, is he not an enemy to God and righteousness, prone to the commission of every crime, however flagrant in its nature and its tendencies?"⁵⁰ In much the same manner as Jones, Apess argues that man's common sinful nature demonstrates the equality of the white and Indian races before God.

A frequent topic of discussion for both writers, the equality of races before God was the concept that Jones and Apess used as a foundation for constructing further arguments, typically about the dominant society and white hypocrisy. Another of the pair's key shared topics, the injustice of colonization, was discussed on strict terms of racial equality before God.

⁴⁹ Jones, *The Sermon and Speeches*, 9.

⁵⁰ Apess, "The Indians: The Ten Lost," in *On Our Own Ground*, 113.

The Injustice of Colonization

As a subject instrumental to Jones's and Apess's common ideological underpinnings, the topic of the many injustices associated with white colonization was often the principal focus in their writings. When they discussed these injustices, the two Native activists were uncompromising in their vision and rhetoric. Unequivocally, they condemned the numerous crimes committed by exploitative settlers and authority figures against North America's indigenous communities. Apess and Jones were keenly aware of the popular historical narratives that cast savage Indians as the principal cause for early conflicts within colonial North America; they sought to correct these misrepresentations of history, and pointed to white settlers as the chief aggressors in these early armed clashes. The pair refused to stop at historical revision, however. They brought their critiques of colonization into the present day, emphasizing the ongoing nature of white crimes against Native communities. Each leader referenced frequently the brutal American relocation efforts being overseen by President Jackson, and rhetorically connected the regional injustices they fought locally to this devastating Trail of Tears. At the foundation of their critiques of colonization was a shared viewpoint that classified the continent's indigenous peoples as the original proprietors and rightful possessors of the North American landscape and its natural resources. To further bolster their criticisms, and to correct yet another aspect of the historical record, Jones and Apess highlighted the kindness and generosity with which these original proprietors greeted the pale-faced newcomers at their shores—the white settlers that would eventually become their oppressors.

Perhaps the most famous aspect of his writings, Apess's treatment of white colonization is rightfully celebrated as a trenchant and relentless critique of settlement, expansion, and the oppression that followed. In his published works, the Pequot minister regularly engaged in a

compelling form of historicism that re-appropriated key elements from the dominant white culture—including, most notably, the rhetoric and ideals of the American Revolution. The well-known *Eulogy on King Philip*—an 1836 address delivered in Boston that was published the same year—best exemplifies Apess’s uncompromising approach to the topic of colonization. Hilary E. Wyss, in her book *Writing Indians*, skillfully describes the brilliance of Apess’s most famous work: “In this document Apess adapts revolutionary rhetoric...to his own purposes. Apess argues for King Philip’s status as a true revolutionary hero, one to rival George Washington; thus he writes Native Americans and their struggle into the history of America, not as villains or tragic victims but as heroes to be celebrated.”⁵¹ Just as he rewrote the role of King Philip within the historical narrative, Apess also altered the status of the so-called “Pilgrim Fathers:” “[Injuries] upon injuries, and the most daring robberies and barbarous deeds of death that were ever committed by the American Pilgrims, were with patience and resignation borne [by King Philip], in a manner that would do justice to any Christian nation or being in the world...”⁵² In this version of early colonial history, the Pilgrims—typically associated with piety and a rigorous Christian ethic—are the perpetrators of “daring robberies” and “barbarous deeds of death.” The popular historical narrative casts the Pilgrims as heroes in American history; here, Apess unambiguously casts the English exiles as reprehensible villains. King Philip, far from being the savage he was popularly considered, was the true Christian in the exchange, striving to act with “patience and resignation.” In concise and piercing fashion, Apess’s historical reversal captures the injustice of contact and early colonization.

⁵¹ Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity*, 156.

⁵² Apess, *Eulogy on King Philip*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 278.

Both in *Eulogy* and in other texts, Apess effectively conveys the ongoing nature of the white crimes that began at Plymouth and Jamestown. Perhaps the best example of his attention to contemporary issues of injustice, *Indian Nullification* chronicles, through collected public responses and interspersed commentary, the activist efforts Apess led at Mashpee. The collection includes an 1833 public appeal—signed by “Marshpee,” but certainly written at least partially by Apess—that pointedly connects the Wampanoags’ situation to the condition of the Cherokees in Georgia:

As our brethren, the white men of Massachusetts, have recently manifested much sympathy for the red men of the Cherokee nation...we, the red men of the Marshpee tribe, consider it a favorable time to speak. We are not free. We wish to be so, as much as the red men of Georgia. How will the white man of Massachusetts ask favor for the red men of the South, while the poor Marshpee red men, his near neighbors, sigh in bondage?⁵³

The effective language employed here calls attention to local injustice and the hypocrisy of the Massachusetts whites who express interest in Cherokee concerns while ignoring the condition of the long-oppressed Mashpee on Cape Cod. By connecting their “revolt” to the Trail of Tears, Apess and the Mashpee establish American oppression of Native populations as a widespread and systematic process that desperately needs to be addressed. Moreover, the authors affirm their place within a larger, pan-Indian community of national scope. In this manner, Apess (and his co-authors) successfully shed light on, and then contextualize, a troubling local issue facing the area’s Native inhabitants. This ardent public appeal represents just one example of Apess’s sharp perception of the nationwide problems that affected his communities. Even the title of his

⁵³ William Apess, *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts Relative to the Marshpee Tribe*, 1835, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O’Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 205.

Mashpee account, *Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts*, reflected a deep understanding of national issues and their implications for Natives.

Given that Jones adopted a more cooperative public tone and conveyed a greater willingness to culturally integrate, the unyielding criticisms he leveled toward white colonization and settlement might surprise modern observers. Jones, as he sought to explain the troubling condition of Indian communities in North America, refused to attribute his people's sufferings to Native inferiority. Throughout his writings, both private and public, Jones expressly identified white immorality and colonization as the sources of the Indian's hardships. In the introduction to his *History of the Ojebway*, Jones includes a fiery condemnation of the sinful white settler:

Oh, what an awful account at the day of judgment must the unprincipled white man give, who has been an agent of Satan in the extermination of the original proprietors of the American soil! Will not the blood of the red man be required at his hands, who, for paltry gain, has impaired the minds, corrupted the morals, and ruined the constitutions of a once hardy and numerous race?⁵⁴

A powerful statement about the "extermination" of Native peoples at the hands of "the unprincipled white man," this passage would not seem out of place in Apess's *Eulogy for King Philip*. Here, the Indian is the rightful owner of "the American soil," while it is the white man who acts as "an agent of Satan."

Always considering practical implications and political exigencies, Jones toned down his fierce rhetoric when he presented this critique in a speech or public address. He did not, however, alter his vision of white colonization and the resultant suffering among Indians, as his 1840 address to the Governor-General reveals:

⁵⁴ Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 29.

We are the original proprietors of this country, on which your white children have built their towns, and cleared their farms... Our people were once numerous, free, and happy, in the enjoyment of the abundance which our forests, lakes, and rivers produced... When the white man came into our country, our forefathers took him by the hand, and gave him land on which to pitch his wigwam. Ever since that time he has continued to flow to our shores... For many years we have been made very poor on account of the introduction among us of the fire-waters and other evils, which have killed or ruined many of our fathers.⁵⁵

Although his language is much more subdued here, Jones presents to the Governor-General the same conception of white settlement and subsequent injustices: Natives, once again characterized as the land's "original proprietors," fall victim to the "evils" associated with white settlers and colonization. Again, Jones is arguing that it is the immorality of the colonizers, and not any type of Native racial inferiority, causing the Indians' suffering. In constructing this formulation of settler-Indian interaction, Jones challenged the popular historical narratives of the day, in much the same way as Apees. The Mississauga preacher, though less explicit with his historicism, clearly had knowledge of, and an interest in, the power of popular historical narratives. In a telling anecdote related in his published journals, Jones describes an interesting conversation held aboard a stagecoach with "an inquisitive Yankee passenger." After learning of Jones's identity as a Canadian and Native, the passenger informed Jones of the hatred among the Mohawk Dutch for Indians of Upper Canada—"on account of the Indians having killed thousands of them during the Revolutionary War." Jones replied with the following: "Do you not know that thousands of the poor Indians have been slain by the *sword* of the *white man*, and *tens of thousands* by the white man's *fire-water*?"⁵⁶ While popular histories tend to deemphasize or

⁵⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁵⁶ Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by*, 203.

ignore the sufferings of Native populations, Peter Jones worked to raise awareness of the injustices his people had endured. In that respect, Jones and Apess were certainly very similar.

The Hypocrisy of White Christians

Repeated observations on the flagrant hypocrisies of white Christians formed the basis for another key point of convergence in the guiding, foundational ideologies of Apess and Jones. Often, the two ministers—taking full advantage of their positions of religious authority—emphasized the ways in which whites, in both the past and present, acted contrary to the gospel of Christ, in spite of a professed Christian faith. Discussions of white Christian hypocrisy often served to reinforce points of argument related to other important topics, including racial equality and the injustices of colonization. Using his anti-establishment Methodism as sanction, Apess, as Laura Donaldson contends, could “launch a trenchant critique of Christianity’s imperialist complicities.”⁵⁷ With the same method, Jones could also draw attention to problematic contradictions between religious thought and social practice. In considering the implications of widespread Christian hypocrisy, the two authors did not limit their attention to “imperialist complicities” alone. In addition, Jones and Apess reflected on the role of hypocrisy in the propagation of the gospel, the Indians’ quest for rights, and popular conceptions of racial difference. As made evident throughout their writings, the two Natives assigned to their beliefs on white hypocrisy a central role within their larger philosophical frameworks.

The revised historical narratives of Jones and Apess, so critical to their articulation of the injustices inherent to colonization, depended heavily on the inclusion of critiques based on notions of white religious hypocrisy. As Patricia Bizzell notes, the primary purpose of Apess’s “revisionist history” was “to undermine English claims that they were doing God’s work in

⁵⁷ Donaldson, “Making a Joyful Noise,” 186.

attempting to exterminate the Indians.”⁵⁸ Unsurprisingly, as a result of this purpose, Apess regularly included discussions of Christian hypocrisy in his revisionist histories. In his *Eulogy for King Philip* especially, Apess cast light on the “pretended zeal for religion and virtue” that was present among the Pilgrims and early white settlers in general.⁵⁹ He wonders, near the beginning of the speech, how the English colonists “could go to work to enslave a free people and call it religion”; ultimately, he decides the vexing question is “beyond the power of [his] imagination.”⁶⁰ Later in the address, Apess considers seriously the possibility that “these same Christians” would have also considered it “the command of God that they should lie, steal, and get drunk, commit fornication and adultery.”⁶¹ Apess is quick to remind us that these pretended Christians, the so-called “Pilgrim Fathers,” are celebrated in our popular histories as heroes and models of virtue. In many places throughout his writings, Apess used this line of argument to call into question popular narratives of history.

Jones, with an approach that mirrors Apess’s, also encouraged his readers to rethink historical narratives by emphasizing the religious hypocrisy of key actors. In his *History of the Ojebway*, the Mississauga leader identifies “European settlers” as “[poor] deluded beings” who lack excuse for their destructive behavior, coming from a privileged “land of light and knowledge.” He goes on to state that, “whatever their pretensions to Christianity may have been,

⁵⁸ Bizzell, "(Native) American Jeremiad: The 'Mixedblood,'" in *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance*, 42.

⁵⁹ Apess, *Eulogy on King Philip*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 279.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 282.

it is evident the love of God was not in their hearts.”⁶² In labeling Europe a “land of light and knowledge,” Jones is either deliberately toying with the expectations of white audiences, or is inadvertently revealing a measure of respect for European culture. Regardless, his narrative of white settlement works much to the same effect as Apess’s, refuting popular assumptions of “a seamlessly glorious and singular American story,” as Barry O’Connell puts it.⁶³ By shining the spotlight on the religious hypocrisy of the Pilgrims and early settlers, Jones and Apess not only drew attention to the offenders, but also to the victims.

Apess and Jones also brought their discussions of white Christian hypocrisy into the present, ensuring that audiences understood the problem to be enduring and not something relegated to the past. Relating personal experiences with the dominant culture’s hypocrisies, the ministers made tangible the realities associated with this enduring problem. For this reason, each of their autobiographical works include compelling accounts of encounters with insincerity and pretense. As mentioned previously, Jones described his early perception of white hypocrisy as a critical impediment to his initial acceptance of Christian faith. In his *Life and Journals*, he gives the following account:

...I had been halting between two opinions. Sometimes whilst reading the Word of God, or hearing it preached, I would be almost persuaded to become a Christian; but when I looked at the conduct of the whites who were called Christians, and saw them drunk, quarreling, and fighting, cheating the poor Indians, and acting as if there was no God, I was led to think there could be no truth in the white man’s religion, and felt inclined to fall back again to my old superstitions.⁶⁴

⁶² Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 29-30.

⁶³ O’Connell, introduction to *On Our Own Ground*, xxi.

⁶⁴ Jones, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by*, 7.

When he regarded Christianity as “the white man’s religion,” Jones could see no value in the faith; given the obvious and egregious sins committed regularly by supposedly Christian whites, “there could be no truth” in the religion. Only later, after witnessing a purer form of Christian worship and learning of its egalitarian doctrines, did the young Peter Jones come to accept Christ as his savior. Through this account, Jones makes it clear that he adopted Christianity *in spite* of its associations with white culture—certainly not *because* of them. Reinforcing this impression, he includes within his published diaries, at several points, the testimonies of chiefs who refuse to convert to Christianity; as an ardent Methodist missionary, Jones tries of course to sway the Native elders, but he seems to also respect their arguments against conversion—which always include, notably, references to white hypocrisy.⁶⁵ Like Jones as a boy, the chiefs—having only encountered sinful whites—cannot see the value of a religion with immoral and unrepentant followers. Jones places value on this line of reasoning, recognizing its ability to transpose accepted models of the preacher-convert relationship. According to the popular model, it is the “savageness” of the Indian convert that obstructs proselytization; according to the model of Jones and the recalcitrant chiefs, it is the savageness of *the white preacher* that obstructs the conversion process. Fitting with the “white heathen” convention, this formulation highlights white sin through startling reversal.

Apess, like Jones, detailed his personal encounters with white Christian hypocrisy and duplicity throughout his autobiographical works. In *A Son of the Forest*, for example, the Pequot minister vividly describes several life experiences that highlight the continuing presence of hypocrisy in the dominant white and Christian culture. He first tells of Mr. Furman, a friendly white guardian to whom Apess was “bound out” as a child. Throughout the early sections of the

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 124.

narrative, Mr. Furman is described as kindly and religious—not the type to view Natives with scorn. The young Apess learns a lesson about the duplicity of whites, however, after he is falsely accused of a crime; Mr. Furman, without looking into the truth of the allegations, proceeds to whip Apess severely, calling him an “Indian dog” as he does so.⁶⁶ Later in the narrative, a slightly older Apess learns another lesson about white hypocrisy while attending a Methodist camp meeting in New London, Connecticut. At these revivals, which are powerful and formative events for Apess, he notices that “many people went to these meetings to make fun.” Apess wonders how those considered “ladies and gentlemen” could “so far disgrace themselves as to scoff in the house of God and at his holy services.” Drawing once again upon the white savage convention, Apess decides that “[such] persons let themselves down below the heathen, in point of moral conduct.”⁶⁷

Through their detailed accounts of personal encounters with white Christian hypocrisy, Jones and Apess made clear the continued existence of duplicitous and disingenuous thought within dominant white culture. Combined with their treatments of hypocrisy in the colonial past, their testimonies made palpable the ever-present and oppressive influence of unjust white authority.

The Introduction of “Fire-Water” Among Indians

Both Apess and Jones had intense personal experiences with alcoholism and its effects; as children and as adults, they witnessed despair and destruction as the white man’s “fire-water” tore through their families and communities. Fittingly, the two leaders frequently pursued the topic of alcoholism within their writings, and incorporated their thoughts on the issue into the

⁶⁶ Apess, *A Son of the Forest*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

fundamental worldview that they shared. In conceiving of alcohol's relationship to Native society, Jones and Apess developed remarkably similar visions of the devastating social ill. According to their conception of the problem, exploitative whites stood apart as the principle source of alcohol's persistent and destructive power over Indian communities. Native problems with fire-water were the result of brazen white abuses, not inherent racial weaknesses and savagery. To resist the constant temptation presented by the white man's booze, Apess and Jones agreed that a thoroughgoing Christian faith acted as an effective remedy.

As children, each leader had his own indelible experience with alcoholism and its effects. These formative encounters would serve to frame the social viewpoints they would develop later on in life. For Apess, his first experiences with alcoholism occurred while living with his Pequot grandparents as a child. As explained in *A Son of the Forest*, his grandmother and grandfather would frequently get drunk and beat him; on one occasion, Apess was nearly beaten to death and suffered broken bones as a result.⁶⁸ Jones suffered through a similarly horrific ordeal as a child: while living with a drunken chief and his band, Jones, as Donald Smith explains, was once left "outside in the intense cold for several days without food." The incident left Jones—or Kahkewaquonaby, as he was then known—unable to walk for several months; he never fully recovered from his injuries.⁶⁹ Remarkably, neither Jones nor Apess faulted their caretakers for these terrible events. In both cases, it was the fire-water, and the whites who introduced it, that received blame. Apess explains this reasoning in his *Experiences of Five Christian Indians*:

⁶⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend*, 67-68.

My sufferings certainly were through the white man's measure; for they most certainly brought spirituous liquors first among my people. For surely no such sufferings were heard of, or known among our people, until the burning curse and demon of despair came among us: Surely it came through the hands of the whites.⁷⁰

Once again, as with other key topics, Jones and Apess point to exploitative white society as the source of a widespread issue among Native communities. As Mark J. Miller so aptly puts it, Apess “uses intemperance as an organizing theme for the white destruction of Indian communities”;⁷¹ Jones employs the subject in the same manner.

In their assessments of Native problems with alcohol, Apess and Jones paint vivid pictures of alcoholism's far-reaching effects and portray manipulative whites as the clear source of the issue. For Jones, “drunkenness” is the “polluted source whence flowed poisonous waters that contaminated and deadened every good feeling of the heart. No people, as a body, can be more addicted to this crying sin than the natives of America.”⁷² As a result of alcoholism's influence, Jones frequently sees within Indian communities “husbands beating their wives” and “children screaming with fright”—“such scenes of degradation as would sicken the soul of a good man.”⁷³ Fueling these “scenes of degradation” are the conniving white traders that use their “fire-waters” and “a little maneuvering” to cheat Natives and turn them into easily duped alcoholics.⁷⁴ Mirroring the stark vision of Jones, Apess, at the beginning of “An Indian's

⁷⁰ Apess, *The Experiences of Five*, in *On Our Own Ground*, 121.

⁷¹ Miller, “'Mouth for God': Temperate,” 227.

⁷² Jones, *History of the Ojebway*, 167.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

Looking-Glass for the White Man,” characterizes “rum” as “that burning, fiery curse, that has swept millions, both of red and white men, into the grave with sorrow and disgrace.”⁷⁵ To the vision of Jones, Apess adds one more element: racial equality. Before the “fiery curse,” whites and Indians alike are helpless; just like God, the fire-waters act as an equalizer.

In their comparable discussions of racial equality before God, the injustices of colonization, white Christian hypocrisy, and the introduction of alcohol by whites, Peter Jones and William Apess demonstrate a shared and underlying philosophical foundation. As they develop impassioned arguments about these important topics, the two leaders invoke key ideals related to Native survivance. Ultimately, Jones and Apess use these four topics to express the same commitments to self-determination, self-affirmation, and public presence for Indian populations.

Conclusions: The Differing Contexts and Maneuverings of Jones and Apess

Undoubtedly, Apess and Jones selected very different methods of public engagement. In southern New England, Apess favored an overtly confrontational public demeanor—an approach that consistently renewed its challenges to white authority, without necessarily waiting for response. In Upper Canada, Jones chose a more cooperative and collaborative approach, remaining open to certain integrationist methods—assuming their deployment would occur on Native terms. While neither leader adhered to strict guidelines in his public dealings, the two activists, on the whole, stuck to a preferred personal style.

⁷⁵ William Apess, “An Indian's Look-Glass for the White Man,” 1833, in *On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot*, ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 155.

Foundational disagreements in ideology do not account for these differing public styles; as revealed by the above textual analysis, Jones and Apess largely shared their philosophical underpinnings. Although Jones was less willing to present the full extent of his beliefs in certain contexts, he nevertheless shared Apess's most important and fundamental ideas about the Native identity and social role. Jones and Apess may not have agreed point-for-point on every specific area of doctrine, but they unquestionably agreed on the level of ideological foundations. It was their differing national and regional contexts—and the disparate sets of demands that attended these contexts—that resulted in Jones's and Apess's distinct public approaches.

The Native communities led by Peter Jones were located on the sparsely populated lands of British-owned Upper Canada. Often, the white settlers of the region had to rely on Native tribes for continued existence, and this produced somewhat cooperative relations between white and Indian races—at least earlier on in the 19th century. Also, the British Crown, although it frequently took advantage of Upper Canada's Native populations, nevertheless maintained an official position that pledged assistance and security.⁷⁶ Because it needed its Indian allies in the event of another conflict with the United States, the British government continued to enforce the Proclamation of 1763, which regulated private buying and selling of Native lands.⁷⁷ Above all else, Jones's circumstances differed in that the hope of white-Indian cooperation had not yet been completely extinguished; Jones, and the community leaders he worked alongside, believed that the Crown, if not its colonial representatives, might respect Native land rights going into the future. After all, Jackson's forced relocation was occurring in America, not in Canada, and Britain's progressive standpoint on abolition gave further reason for hope. Within these

⁷⁶ Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend*, 22-24.

⁷⁷ Carl Benn, *Native Memoirs from the War of 1812* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 4.

circumstances, working within the authority structure still seemed viable, and indeed, the most effective option for implementing change and advocating for self-determination among Indians.

The contexts in which Jones operated contrasted sharply with the contexts of Apess, in antebellum southern New England. By the 1830s, Massachusetts and Connecticut were thoroughly settled, and the disenfranchisement of Natives had become systematic and institutionalized. As Carl Benn explains, “permanent Euro-American settlement had begun early in the seventeenth century, and [Apess’s] ancestors had been forced onto reservations beyond living memory...”⁷⁸ Life on New England’s reservations frequently entailed poverty, widespread alcoholism, and conflicts with neighbors. Moreover, the prospect of amiable white-Indian relations had been obliterated 200 years ago, during the brutal Pequot War; the region’s Natives now found themselves marginalized and struggling to adapt to an industrialized society.⁷⁹ In this context, concession and cooperation seemed much less viable. Beyond any type of doubt, America’s state and federal governments would not respect the full rights of Natives. Apess knew this fact first-hand: in Mashpee, it had taken considerable action (what white authorities deemed a “revolt”) and quite some time to enact only a modest degree of change.

Given the vastly different demands of these disparate contexts, it is not surprising that Jones and Apess would have to adopt differing public approaches, even with a shared foundational ideology. In his comparison of Apess and Black Hawk, Carl Benn identifies the importance of “geographical origins,” “social contexts,” and “the pressures placed on [Natives] by white society” in determining the “fundamental realities” for indigenous American peoples

⁷⁸ Benn, *Native Memoirs from the War of 1812*, 121.

⁷⁹ Mandell, *Tribe, Race, History*, 109.

living in the 19th century.⁸⁰ These types of factors were certainly significant in the lives of Jones and Apess: owing to the “pressures” exerted by their national and regional contexts, the two leaders were forced to adapt their public methods to best suit their circumstances. Examining the lives and works of Apess and Jones, we see not only the influence of context, but also the power and flexibility of survivance philosophies; in two very different contexts, the same ideology of survivance managed to manifest itself, each time in a positive manner fitting the unique needs of the social situation. In the future, as we look for additional voices of Native survivance, we should consider this flexibility and the multitude of manifestations that result. Frequently, we may find in a figure that initially appears assimilated and conciliatory surprising methods of survivance and assertion. In celebrating a voice like William Apess, we should not overlook a valuable figure like Peter Jones.

⁸⁰ Benn, *Native Memoirs from the War of 1812*, 120.

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