

Brief Summary Notes Re Ancestry of Catharina Brant-Hill-Johnson **Kayakhon: Wife of Lt. John Young**

The 50 page tome detailing all of the evidence the author has gathered over 48 years of research on this subject can be a bit more than daunting to read and comprehend. Those who wish to dig into the full weight of evidence will find the study in its entirety [here](#) (Page 2). The author has created the following three - page summary of the highlights for those who prefer only the “bottom line” or the key facts.

Birthdate of Catharine: The Census of Niagara of 1 December 1783 indicates that Catharine, wife of Lt. John Young, was then age 36, so was born about 1747.

Diary Entries: In his diary published in 1793, Patrick Campbell reported that Lt. Young's wife was a, "*sister to one of the Chiefs of the Mohawke nation who succeeded Capt. David*". Based on the statements Capt. David's eldest son Aaron Hill gave to Campbell, Catharine's brother was a member of the Hill family on the maternal side, with the “honours and titles” of Capt. David going to his sister’s son – David’s nephew.

The Mohawk Hill Family: The first person recorded to hold the Bear Clan hereditary chief title of Capt. David Hill Karonghyontye (“Flying Sky”), namely Aghstawenserontha (“He Enters Wearing Rattles”), was his nephew Seth Hill Kanenkaregowagh (“Large Branch”). The latter was a son of Johannes Seth and Mary Hill Kateriunigh (“She Carries the News”), baptized in 1748 at the Albany Reformed Dutch Church. Seth was recorded as a Chief in 1793, and as “Capt. Seth” in 1797 – meaning that by the latter date (and doubtless much earlier) Seth had inherited two of his uncle’s “honours and titles”. David generally signed documents using only his “everyday” or personal name Karonghyontye. Only in the 1789 Deed transferring the Canajoharie Mohawk lands to the State of New York do we see his chiefly name, Astawenserontha (as well as his personal name). This was the pattern with Seth Hill Kanenkaregowagh until in 1805 when he (and the other Mohawks) began using their inherited titles on land deeds or minutes of Council meetings.

The children of Aaron Hill Oseraghete and Margaret Crine (Green) included eldest daughter Margaret Hill (who married Nicus Brant), sister of Mary Kateriunigh Hill (who married Hans Seth), and sons including Aaron Hill Kanonraron, John Hill Oteruyanente, as well as Capt. David Hill Karonghyontye.

Altered Baptismal Record: Her baptismal record of 6 June 1747 shows as parents Nicus Brant and Margaetje with Brant (Kanagaradunkwa) and Christina as witnesses. However close inspection of the original entry shows that the above names had been written over what the minister entered first – Hans and Maria. It would seem that Catharine's parents named on her baptismal certificate are her adopted family. The reason for the adoption (common among Mohawks) was likely that Catharine was not the child of Johannes (Hans), the husband of Mary Hill Kateriunigh (who was pregnant with Catharine when she married Johannes in 1747).

Biological Father: Catharine, the apparent eldest child in the family of Mary Hill Kateriunigh, may have been "Miss Curled Locks" of Canajoharie Castle, a daughter of Sir William Johnson. It is likely that he orchestrated a deal to have Catharine raised by the Brant family, Johnson's confidants among the Mohawk. He had used these "services" before for the raising of other known children. A gift of a gallon of rum and a "cagg" from Sir William to a Catharine of Canajoharie in September 1765 may have been a wedding gift, since this was the amount typically given by each of the fathers at a wedding - for example when Adam Young's father Theobald, and Catharine Elizabeth Schrembling's father Hendrick bought this amount at the Sanders Brothers Store in Schenectady just before the wedding of their children.

Hill Family Connections During the Revolution: By 1780 John Young's uncles Andrew Young and George Schrembling were given refuge in homes on the Mohawk Flats once occupied by prominent members of the Hill family including Capt. Aaron Hill Kanonraron and Capt. David Hill Karonghyontye – who were in the Niagara area fighting for the British. The Mohawk Flats were 30 miles from their homes at the start of the Revolution (1777 in that region) in the Canajoharie District. Mary Hill Kateriunigh, sister to Aaron and David, was still living there (where she owned more land than any other Mohawk), or with family across the Schoharie River at Ft. Hunter and the Lower Mohawk Castle with relatives. It seems apparent that this arrangement could only have transpired via a family connection between the Young and Hill families.

Mohawk Name of Catharine: Catharina's Mohawk name was Kayahkon, as seen in the 1789 Deed selling all the former Mohawk lands at Canajoharie. According to Philip Henhawk Tawiskaron the name means "She Breaks / Cuts All of Them".

Clan Matron: Via her maternal lineage, Catharine, as the eldest daughter of the surviving eldest daughter (Mary Hill Kateriunigh) placed Catharine and/or her daughter Elizabeth (Young) Nelles in line for being a Clan Matron for the Astawenserontha Bear Clan family. Her lineage allowed one of her grandsons to be appointed a Mohawk Chief.

An Obituary and Chief Tahanata: The 1896 obituary of Warner Henry Nelles, son of Warner Nelles and Elizabeth (Young) Nelles, describes how at age 17 (in 1817) he was made a Chief of the Beaver Tribe, being installed with wampum placed over his head (only done for the raising up of a Principal Chief), being titled Tahanata ("Towards His Village"). This was a Bear Clan Chief title linked to the Principal Chief Astawenserontha, who at the time was John Johnson.

The Wyandot – Huron Connection: Nelles replaced Chief Francis Cotter Tahatonne (a second cousin) who was the son of Capt. Seth's mother Margaret, who married first Paulus Sahnwadi (who died in 1788), then a White man Nicholas Cotter. By Paulus she had a son Paulus Karonghyontye, who was given the personal name of his mother's uncle Capt. David Hill. By Cotter she had a son Francis who inherited or was assigned (by his mother) a Principal Chief title linked to that of the Principal Chief Astawenserontha. Francis Cotter was convinced that as an Upper Mohawk he was the victim of discrimination so in 1817 left the Grand River to join the Wyandots at Anderton (near Detroit). This opened the door for young Warner Henry Nelles,

who was in the same maternal line going back to Mary Hill Kateriunigh. This special linked title was not seen with other chiefly titles, but shows with a bracket joining the two in a list of Chiefs by George Martin in 1815. This arrangement reflected the prominence of a Bear Clan faction known as “The Beavers” who maintained their ancient ties to the Wyandot – Huron refugees known as the Bear Clan adopted by the Mohawk in the 17th Century. Beaver was the name used by the Wyandot when referring to their people. It is not known whether Elizabeth (Young) Nelles or Margaret (Hill) Cotter assigned the title to Warner Henry Nelles – the Cotter family having abruptly left the Grand River in 1817.

The Brant Family Connection: This biological and adoptive link gave Catharine a close connection to both the Hill as well as Brant families. For example she was the half sister of Lt. Brant Johnson, a colleague of her husband during the War. She was also the step niece of Captain Joseph Brant Tayendinagea who also had a step family relationship to Brant Canagaradunckwa - he was not a biological descendant of the Brant family. Also his sister Mary Brant Konwatsijayenni was married to Sir William Johnson, providing more Brant relatives for both Catharine and Joseph. All very tangled and complicated, but welcome to Mohawk genealogy.

Admixture: DNA testing of descendants of Catharine show only minimal amounts of Native American biological ancestry, amounts entirely consistent with considerable European admixture. If Catharine’s father was Sir William Johnson (or any other White man) then she was at least 50% European. However, it is known that even her mother Mary was admixed – Mary’s uncle being “White Hans” Crine (Green), a ”whitish Indian”. One of Catharine’s cousins was known as John “Blue Eyed” Green Aronghyengtha during the War of 1812.

Conclusion: The "Sir William Johnson = father, and Mary Hill Kateriunigh = mother hypothesis”, as well as the Wyandot connection, seem to be on fairly solid ground (the full detailed study explores all available evidence) – but that is also for others to judge based on the weight of evidence.

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