

Recollections of Rev. Eleazer Williams

By Gen. Albert G. Ellis

My acquaintance with Mr. Williams began in November, 1820, when he was residing at Oneida Castle, Oneida County, New York.

It was at his earnest solicitation that I went to live with him, the proposal being made by Mr. Williams through an aged friend of my father, Mr. Samuel Sackett. Williams had obtained the confidence of Mr. Sackett; and, at his request, I consented to visit him at Oneida with my old friend who introduced us. I found Williams very earnest to please, and captivate. He held up a most glowing picture of the advantages I was to derive by joining him; chief among which was leisure to pursue studies and acquire an education. He had learned from Mr. Sackett that I had left the printing business for the express purpose of improving myself in general knowledge, and especially in mastering the English language, and the common branches of the mathematics, and that with such intent I was at that very time attending a grammar school at Verona, my native place, three miles from Oneida. Notwithstanding the fine promises of Mr. Williams, I had many misgivings; but finally, on the urgent advice of my old friend, who was like a father to me, my own having died many years previous, I consented to make trial of a life with the Rev. Eleazer Williams, at Oneida Castle.

I had a two-fold purpose to fulfill, that of schoolmaster to some Oneida children, and companion to Mr. Williams, who in turn, was to teach me the languages, Latin, Greek, and French. I joined him about the middle of November, 1820; found him living in the old homestead of the old head chief of the Oneidas, dead some years before, Skanandoah, at the famous old butternut orchard. Williams appeared quite comfortable; had but little