



NEWS RELEASE

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Johnson's Final Council and Funeral to be Re-enacted at Johnson Hall

(Johnstown, NY, July 15, 2014).....The final July 1774 diplomatic Indian Council at Johnson Hall, and the subsequent death of Sir William Johnson, will be reenacted during the "Death and Diplomacy: The 240th Anniversary of Sir William Johnson's Final Council, Death and Funeral" special event on July 19 and 20 at Johnson Hall State Historic Site.

The event will begin at 11am on Saturday with a lecture by Mohawk storyteller and author Darren Bonaparte on "The Wampum Chronicles: A Rotinonhsion:ni Cultural History". Bonaparte will introduce visitors to a time when colonists and natives alike engaged in wampum diplomacy by the Great Council Fire.

At noon, 2pm and 4pm the Akwasasne Retirenenhawi will perform traditional songs from the Haudensaunee culture. At 1pm a re-creation of the final Indian council, based on original council minutes, will be presented in front of the Mansion. At 2:30pm, a talk on the fur trade at Johnson Hall will take place at the former site of Sir William's Trade House. The final council re-creation will continue at 3pm, which will include the collapse of an ill Sir William Johnson during the meeting, and the announcement of his death shortly after. The Mansion will then be opened between 4pm and 5pm to portray a home in traditional 18th century mourning, including Sir William's coffin and draped mirrors and portraits.

Throughout the afternoon Olaf Jansson will demonstrate 18th century blacksmithing skills near the site of the original blacksmith shop. Glenn Bentz will discuss Haudenaunee History at his temporary camp in front of the Mansion. Rich Hamell, retired Monroe College professor, will present his highly researched collection of reproduction wampum belts, and will discuss the history and process of making wampum from shell to belts. Hamill will be set up in Sir William's room in the Mansion.

On Sunday the event continues with an open house draped in mourning from 10am to 1pm. At 1pm Sir William's funeral procession will form in recorded order and mourners dressed in appropriate period mourning attire will bear the casket of Sir William to St. Johns Church. At 2pm Father Thomas Pettigrew will deliver the funeral service using one of the original surviving sermons delivered on July 13th, 1774. The mansion will then reopen between 3pm and 5pm for an open house.

Parking for the event will be at the Johnstown High School. A shuttle service will operate between Johnson Hall and the school parking lot throughout each day.

Regular guided tours of the mansion and of the grounds will not be offered during this weekend.

"Death and Diplomacy" is co-sponsored by the Friends of Johnson Hall and supported by a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these events do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Johnson Hall State Historic Site is located at 139 Hall Avenue in historic Johnstown, just off West State Street (State Highway 29 West). For more information on this year's special events at Johnson Hall, visit www.nysparks.com or write darlene.rogers@parks.ny.gov to be placed on the Site's emailing list.

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