

## John Sergeant Sr. Biography

### SERGEANT, SR., JOHN

**Honorific(S):** Rev.

**Birth:** 1710 in Newark, NJ

**Death:** 1749-07-27 in Stockbridge

**Affiliation**

New England Company

**Education**

Yale

**Faith**

Congregationalist

**Nationality**

British colonist

**Occupation**

Reverend

**Residence(S)**

- Newark, NJ (from 1710 to 1725)
- New Haven, CT (from 1725 to 1734)
- Stockbridge (from 1734 to 1749)

**Marital Status**

Married to Abigail Williams.

**Biography**

John Sergeant was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1710. He went on to receive two degrees in theology from Yale, in 1729 and 1732. He was serving as a Yale College tutor when the New England Company sponsored him, along with Timothy Woodbridge (who was John Eliot's great-grandson), to missionize in Mohican country in western Massachusetts, a mission that lasted 40 years. Konkopat, a Mohican sachem who worked with English ministers in the Connecticut River Valley, finally convinced his tribe to allow missionaries to come into their community. Within two years, the NEC began Stockbridge, a Christian Indian town that would help christianize Indians and foster defenses against the French and their Indian allies. The NEC proposed settling four British families in Stockbridge to

keep Sergeant and Woodbridge company as well as to serve as "models of civility" for the Indians. These families were led by Ephraim Williams, a speculator in Indian lands. Sergeant married Williams's teenage daughter, Abigail. Because of Williams's interest in acquiring Native lands, many Stockbridge Indians became suspicious of Sergeant. Overall, though, the Indians were favorably disposed towards developments at Stockbridge. Sergeant went on to learn the native language and translated religious texts for Indian use. In the 1740s, several Oneida families sent their children to Stockbridge to study at Sergeant's Indian boarding school. In 1744, Sergeant and several Stockbridge Indians visited Onaquaga and established relationships between their communities. For the next decade, however, the Williams family exploited the Indians and secured thousands of acres of Mohican lands. When Sergeant died in 1749, the Williams family took control of the Indian school and its funds. Due to poor management, the Stockbridge boarding school soon closed. The noted theologian Jonathan Edwards succeeded Sergeant in 1750 as the Stockbridge Indian missionary.

[Documents written](#)

[Documents received](#)

[All related documents](#)

#### **Sources**

Silverman, David J. Red Brethren: The Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2010. Print. Jones, Electa Fidelity. Stockbridge: Past and Present; Or, Records of Old Mission Station. Springfield, MA: Samuel Bowles & Company, 1854. Web. Love, W. DeLoss. Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1899. Web.

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